

Some peculiarities of the Milan glosses



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SOME PECULIARITIES OF THE MILAN GLOSSES¹

ABSTRACT

The relative uniformity of Old Irish has lead many scholars to conclude that Old Irish represents a written standard of the language. Despite this impression having been, at least partially, derived from the canonical Old Irish of the glosses of Milan, Würzburg and St. Gall, there are a few distinct ways in which Milan deviates not only from expected Old Irish forms, but also from its contemporaries. These variations are enough to demonstrate that the scribes of Milan were certainly not operating with the same variety of Old Irish as the other two corpora, though whether it be an issue of dialect or a competing standard remains to be seen. This paper will provide collections of four such variations and will discuss potential origins of them.

THE MILAN GLOSSES (c. 800) are considered one of the canonical texts of Classical Old Irish, alongside the glosses of Würzburg (c. 750) and St. Gall (c. 850), and the relative uniformity of the language within them, as well as the Old Irish corpus as a whole, has led scholars to conclude that Old Irish likely represents a written standard of the language (cf. McCone 1985: 102; Stifter 2009: 60).

Despite this relative uniformity, variations between the language of *Wb.*, *ML.*, and *Sg.* do exist. While some variations appear to be orthographic (cf. Strachan 1903a; 1903b), others have different origins: the Latin *spiritus*, Old Irish *spiurt*, has been borrowed into *ML.* and Turin (c. 700) as genitive singular *spiurto*, while appearing in *Wb.* as nominative singular *spirut* genitive singular *spirito/spirto* (cf. McManus 1983: 71); the doubled superlative form *-imem* appearing only in *ML.* and the *Poems of Blathmac* (cf. Carney 1964: 120; Stifter 2015: 84 n. 120; Ó Muirheartaigh 2018: 137–8) and identified by Thurneysen as a potential diatopic marker (*GOI* §§16, 371), has been demonstrated by Ó Muirheartaigh (2018) to be an imitation of Latin superlatives; the fluctuation between the *-o/-u* vocalism in particles and preverbs, with *ML.* showing a distinct preference for the forms in *-u*, has a possible phonological basis (Malthaner 2023) and may not be strictly orthographic.

As the corpus which is in the chronological middle, any distinct variations in *ML.* will always be the most convincing as evidence of synchronic, and

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potentially diatopic, variation as they cannot be attributed to simply being the result of diachronic development: an archaism present in *ML* but not shared by *Wb.*, or an innovation in *ML* that is not shared by *Sg.*, can indicate a preference or decision on the part of the scribe.

Any particular variation in which *ML* stands in isolation will, therefore, always be of increased interest, but the most considerable evidence for synchronic variation will come from those variants in which *Wb.* and *Sg.* are united in opposition to *ML*: a common ‘archaism’ present in both *Wb.* and *Sg.* with an innovation present in *ML*, or an innovation in *Wb.* and *Sg.* that is not present in *ML*, may suggest that *ML* was not operating within the same diatopic or diastatic variety of the language as *Wb.* and *Sg.* Of course, the possibility of *Sg.* adhering to a more rigid, earlier standard of Old Irish and editorialising away any innovative features cannot be entirely discounted;² nevertheless, variants in which *ML* is unique are features of keen interest.

This paper will identify four features in which *ML* is distinct from both *Wb.* and *Sg.* by showing a distinct preference for a form that is not shared by the other two, thus suggesting that *ML* was operating with a different written standard.

STRESSED *E* AS *Æ*³

To begin with a minor orthographic variant, but a variant nonetheless: the usage of the *æ*/*æ* ligature in place of *é*/*e* is prevalent in *ML*, while being not as common in either *Wb.* or *Sg.* This usage is well-known (cf. *GOI* §24) and so its presence in the glosses was expected; however, while it is hardly predominant, and *ML* certainly uses *é*/*e* more consistently⁴ than it utilises *æ*, it still uses this form more than either *Wb.* or *Sg.*

	<i>Wb.</i>	<i>ML</i>	<i>Sg.</i>
Occurrences	99	700	16

Figure 1: *æ* for *e*

In both *Wb.* and *ML*,⁵ a significant number of *æ* are attested in forms of *día* ‘god,’ namely 44 in *Wb.* that show the ligature, roughly 56% of the total 78 gen./voc. sg. attestations, and 491 attested with the ligature in *ML*, approximately 92% of

²The language of the glosses of *Sg.* itself contains features that are both earlier and later than the language in *ML*, and Strachan consequently concluded that the glosses ‘are not homogenous, but heterogenous, coming from different sources and being of varying antiquity’ (Strachan 1903b: 470).

³For the purposes of this collection, instances of *ae* were included, as it often can be difficult to distinguish *ae* from *æ*.

⁴A full collection of examples of stressed *é*/*e* remains underway, as it is a rather substantial undertaking, and does have the potential to impact the discussion here.

⁵Collections from the glosses were primarily conducted via the *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, however they were additionally checked against existing parsed corpora and databases: Hofmann (1996); Kavanagh and Wodko (2001); Griffith and Stifter (2013); and Bauer, Hofman and Moran (2017).

the 532 gen./voc. sg. attestations. Sg. only has one occurrence of the ligature with *día* and it is within a compound and therefore does not bear the primary stress: *bandæ* Sg. 53b1 'goddess'. In both *Wb.* and *ML.* the majority of the occurrences happen in place of *é*: *æclis* *Wb.* 28d31 for *eclais* 'church'; *ætach* *Wb.* 32c11 for *étach* 'garment', as examples; *bæs* *ML.* 127d15 for *bés* 'habit/custom', *du-ærget* *ML.* 56b13 for *do-érget* 'that they forsake' *ær[a?]sigthi* *ML.* 127a4 for *ér[a?]ssaigthe* 'made void' as examples.

Only 18 examples from *Wb.* are of short vowels, ten of which are of the word *ecne* such as *æcne* *Wb.* 8a10 'wisdom'; two are of *eternne*, *ætarcne* *Wb.* 12c32 'understanding'; and the rest are single instances of a particular word, such as *æitiud* *Wb.* 29a13 for *etiud* 'clothing'.

Sg. is different, in that the majority of examples are short vowels. The only long vowels represented are *æscæ* Sg. 61a26 for *éscæ* 'moon', *ætrud* Sg. 68b9 for *étrad* 'lust', *hællned* Sg. 55b11 for *éilned* 'pollution' and *æsi* Sg. 207a1.

ML. also has 18 instances of *æ* for a short *e*, such as *ælsud* *ML.* 56b26 for *elsud* 'desire', *æsnadud* *ML.* 24c01 for *esnadud* 'delaying' and *ni ærbarad* *ML.* 31b20 for an augmented past subjunctive third singular of *as-beir*, *-érbarad*.

Part of what makes this particular orthographic feature interesting is that, while *ML.* prefers the form *er-* to represent the preverb *ar-* (cf. *GOI* §§16, 823), there are only two instances of that *er-* written with the ligature, despite it occurring rather frequently in other instances: *isærutsu* *ML.* 2d08 (second singular prepositional pronoun) and *ærgartha* *ML.* 69a21 of *airgartha* 'prohibited' which has one other attested form in *ML.* of *ergartha* *ML.* 121d6. Without a fuller collection of all instances of stressed *é/e* in *ML.*, it is impossible to draw conclusions as to why this may be the case.

TRE

The preposition *tre*, from Proto-Celtic **trē*, is consistent in its tonic positions across all three corpora of glosses, without any variation of forms (cf. *GOI* §856). The pretonic forms, however, are distinctly different in *Wb.* and Sg. from those in *ML.*

Wb. uses *tre* and *tri* somewhat interchangeably, but with a minor preference for *tre*, as seen in the table below. *Wb.* across the board tends to show a significant amount of variation without distinct preferences for any particular form. Sg. as well has a preference for the form *tre*; however, with only thirteen occurrences of *tri*, it gives it a more significant preference than *Wb.*, which perhaps indicates an intentional preference on the part of the scribes of Sg. Both are in contrast to *ML.* which has no occurrences of pretonic *tre* whatsoever.

Other preverbs are consistently spelled in the forms with the relative particle, regardless of any other written preference. With *tri*, however, *Wb.* uses both forms, though with a preference for *tre* as of the five attestations, only one appears as *tri*: *tresaníccatar hili* *Wb.* 27c20 'through which many may be saved' beside *trisambí* *Wb.* 3d21 'through which is'. Similarly, with combinations with third singular and first plural possessives *Wb.* shows variation: *triagnáissi* *Wb.* 10a3 'through her companionship' beside *treagnímosom* *Wb.* 29d29 'through

	<i>Wb.</i>	<i>ML</i>	<i>Sg.</i>
<i>Tre</i>	70	—	48
<i>Tri</i>	62	195	13
Total	132	195	61

Figure 2: *tre*, *tri*⁶

his deeds’ and *trebarnimradud Wb.* 27a1 ‘through thinking of you’ beside *tribarnebconabtheititsi Wb.* 9d24 ‘through your incontinence’.

Sg., as the smallest corpus, unsurprisingly has the fewest examples and thus the least by which to compare, and as such its usage of *tri* is harder to definitively categorise, particularly owing to its clear preference for *tre*, as there are only a few instances of particular occurrences: *trisa nacomoltar Sg.* 215a12 ‘by which is joined’ is the only example with a relative particle, and there are equally only three examples of a possessive pronoun all of which take the form *tria*: *tria folud feisin Sg.* 211b5 ‘by its own substance’, *triatimdirecht Sg.* 35a2 ‘through their service’ and *tria nemnad Sg.* 3a11 ‘through their doubling’ showing the expected raising in hiatus.

In other instances, *tri* does not seem to be relegated to particular situations or limited to any particular formation, i.e. it is not limited to accompanying a palatal consonant, which could perhaps have influenced the choice of spelling of the preposition, nor are any of its occurrences exclusive to *tri*, as they are equally found with *tre*: *tri immaircidetaid Sg.* 213b8 ‘it is through the consequence’, *tri atarcud Sg.* 197b4 ‘through anaphora’, *tre intsamail Sg.* 6a11 ‘through imitation’. They are used interchangeably, with *tre* or *tri* appearing before an identical form: *tri digbail Sg.* 188a8 ‘through diminution’ beside *tredigbáil Sg.* 9a13 ‘through taking away’; with the article *trisinnigenitin Sg.* 209b31 ‘through the genitive’ alongside *tresin brethir Sg.* 138a1 ‘by the verb’; *trithóbae Sg.* 195b1 ‘through concision’, *trithóbæ Sg.* 201b3 but equally there is *trethóbae Sg.* 118b2.

As noted above, *ML* contains both the most occurrences of the preposition and preverb but equally shows no variation. It is consistent in its usage of *tri* in all contexts, unlike *Wb.* and *Sg.*

As a comparison, Lash (2017) has theorised that the variants found in *eter/iter*, particularly those that begin with an initial *i-*, are a later form, developing during the Classical Old Irish period and eventually becoming more prominent in later sources, albeit still not particularly favoured. The basis of his argument is a combination of the fact that there are more variants in *i-* in

⁶This table includes all instances of *tre/tri*, including those with the relative marker, possessives, the article, before nouns, etc. The only instances left out were the prepositional pronouns as they are entirely consistent across all three sets of glosses and do not show any variation, with all persons except for third singular feminine and third plural beginning with *tri-*, and adhere to the expected form. Additionally, the relatively rare form *tremi-*, the pretonic preverb, is not included in the above. There is some variation in those cases as well, however: within *Wb.* both pretonic attestations (*Wb.* 8a5, *Wb.* 25d14) appear as *tremi-*, there is no pretonic attestation in *Sg.*, but in *ML* there is still a preference for *tri* in pretonic position: *trimirucad ML.* 2b17; *trimiberar ML.* 21c3; *trimiberar ML.* 31b22; *trimedirgedar ML.* 54a22 stand beside *tremithait* [leg. *tremethait*] *ML.* 43c14 and *tremiteiched ML.* 54c21, as well as two instances of tonic *tre-*.

Sg. (and a collection of other minor glosses) than in *Wb.* and *Ml.* together with a comparison with the form *ceta*. He argues that *ceta* became more commonly spelt as *cita* by the late-eighth century while *etar* began appearing more often with its *i*-variant in the ninth century. He notes that the *i*-variant is more likely to occur in pretonic complexes, and that this is ‘unsurprising’ as *ceta* too appears as *cita*, with the *i*-variant in pretonic complexes. *Wb.* and *Ml.* combined contain only five occurrences of *it*- beside 239 of *et*-, and Sg. and the other minor collections have 20 occurrences of an *i*-variant beside 120 instances of an *e*-variant (Lash 2017: 150–1), showing an increased potential for the *i*-variant. Equally, while Sg. and the later glosses show more occurrences of *cita* for *ceta* than in *Wb.* and *Ml.*, Sg. and the other minor glosses have only 11 attestations while *Wb.* and *Ml.* combined only contain nine (Lash 2017: 153).

This is an interesting comparison to the case of *tre/tri*, as while the forms of *eter/iter* that use *i*- appear to be increasing in popularity over the Old Irish period, Sg. shows significantly less usage of *tri* than even *Wb.*

GENITIVE SINGULAR -O AND -A

The genitive singular endings *-o* and *-a* in both the *i*-stems and *u*-stems are the product of original long final vowels that preceded pre-apocope final consonants, and once those consonants were lost, the original long vowels were subsequently shortened (cf. *GOI* §93) such as *fedo* the genitive singular of *u*-stem masculine *fid*, from **widōs*.

The *i*-stems have traditionally been understood as originating from the Indo-European *-ois*, with seeming supporting evidence of Ogham inscriptions with *i*-stem names ending in *-ōs* (*Deagos*, *Allato*) which can suggest that this diphthong must have been treated differently than in *-oi*, which became *-ī*, *-i* (*GOI* §303.) The *u*-stems would have originated as the ending **-ous* (*GOI* §311) and thus their similarity with the *i*-stems is coincidental and cannot have been expected to have developed identically. McCone (1994: 117, §18.3) has instead suggested that the *i*-stem *-ois* naturally became *-īs*, and then adopted the *u*-stem *-ōs* to distinguish the genitives from the nominative and accusative plural, and Jasanoff (1990: 183) has alternatively argued that the *-o* was borrowed from the original *-ous* of the *u*-stems (cf. Schumacher 2004: 70 n. 65).

These original endings would result in a genitive singular of *-o*, and the *-a* byform is observed by Thurneysen (*GOI* §95) as being interchangeable with its *-o* predecessor from about the beginning of the eighth century onwards. McCone (1996: 139) believes that, instead of merely being interchangeable, *-o* and *-a* merge to *-a* rather early, reducing the final unstressed phonemes to four instead of five (*-a*, *-e*, *-i*, and *-u*), noting that *Wb.* contains attestations of both endings while the *-a* is the ‘normal’ ending ‘from *Ml.* onwards’, a label with which Griffith (2022: 149) disagrees. Based on the contrast of Early Old Irish nominative singular *fēda* (*Thes.* ii 244.22) and genitive singular *fēdot* (*Thes.* ii 244.32), both forms of *fiada* in the Cambrai Homily, McCone (1996: 139) states he is ‘tempted’ to suggest that during the middle of the seventh century *-o* was lowered to /ɔ/, and that it was this sound that could be either

represented graphically as *-o* or *-a* in *Wb.* before being unrounded to *-a* and spelt accordingly in *ML*.⁷

In his article on the language of *Sg.*, Strachan (1903b) undertook a collection of the forms both in *Sg.* and *Wb.*, though not in *ML*, and his article on *ML* exclusively (Strachan 1903a), does not include a collection of these forms in that corpus either. In his collection, Strachan (1903b: 472–3) notes a different distribution in different sections of the *Sg.* codex: pp. 1–40 show an equal balance of the two forms of the ending; pp. 50–150 show more occurrences of *-a*, and *-o* is rare; on pp. 150–202 *-o* is common and *-a* is rare; on pp. 202–10 *-a* is more common; pp. 215–16 show *-o* only.⁸

Unfortunately, Strachan does not explain the logic behind the compartmentalisation of these sections, as surely changing the boundaries of these divisions would change the apparent results. The reason for the division is not immediately obvious, beyond being based on the variation of *-o* and *-a* (cf. Griffith 2022: 145–6): pp. 1–40 cover Priscian’s books 1–3, pp. 50–150 span books 4–8, pp. 150–202 are comprised of books 8–12 and pp. 202–10 contain only books 12–13. Even so, Strachan’s divisions do not correlate with the books themselves: for example, book 8 is pp. 138–63 of the manuscript, and is inexplicably broken up by Strachan’s sections. The divisions also have little to do with hand, as there is evidence of the main glossator writing throughout the manuscript (Hofman 1996: 14), thus the motivation behind these divisions is unclear. While the implication of these divisions *could* be that glosses were copied from a separate source or inserted by a different scribe perhaps, that is never explicitly stated, leaving Strachan’s intentions behind these divisions entirely opaque (cf. Lambert 1996: 189).

Overall, both types of ending exist across all three corpora, albeit in different distribution.⁹ *Wb.* favours the *-o* ending with it occurring 64% of the

⁷Griffith (2005: 48) does not agree with McCone that *fēda* should be understood as representing an original *fēdo* owing to the fact that u-stem final *-o* is consistently written as *-o*, and confusion between *-o* and *-a* does not appear consistently until *Wb.* He would instead view *fēda* as representing a phonemic *-a*, with the *-a* appearing in the pre-Ogham change of *-o* to *-a* in unaccented final syllables (Griffith 2005: 57).

⁸There are no relevant cases on pp. 41–9, and there is a single genitive singular of the adjective *remšuidigtheo* on p. 212 (*Sg.* 212a10) which is inconclusive as the ending is unexpanded. It is not stated explicitly by Strachan, merely implied, that there are no relevant attestations on these pages and thus it was necessary to check.

⁹There are irregular forms found within the glosses in addition to the expected *-o* and *-a* endings. *Wb.* has three attestations of words with both i-stem and ā-stem flexion showing ā-stem genitive endings: *buithe Wb.* 14d7 ‘being, existence’, *taidchrece Wb.* 21a6 ‘buying back’, *brithe Wb.* 25d3 ‘carrying, bearing’. Both *buithe* and *brithe* are verbal nouns that have replaced the nominative with the dative and which occasionally show ā-stem flexion (cf. *GOI* §294b), though as an original ā-stem, *buithe* can be viewed as an ā-stem inflection, as can *taidchrece*. Although *brithe* is not an original ā-stem, there is evidence that the ā-stem and i-stem inflections were occasionally confused (cf. Schmidt 1972), and thus this too can be regarded as an ā-stem inflection. *Wb.* also contains *búade Wb.* 24a17 ‘victory’, a neuter i-stem, and Thurneysen (*GOI* §301n) suggests that all instances of *búad(a)e* should perhaps be understood as genitive plural, and not singular. *ML* contains only three apparently irregular forms: *fuile ML* 22b1 ‘blood’ and *fule ML* 37c4 as well as *tomais ML* 20a21 ‘measuring’ but these are also easily explained. There is already some confusion between o-stems and u-stems in the Old Irish period (cf. *GOI* §309), and thus the palatalised genitive singular ending of *tomais* is not altogether surprising. Though the Milan Glosses Project

time, *ML* prefers the *-a* ending, utilising it 65% of the time and while with a less distinct preference, *Sg*, prefers the *-a* ending as well, 53% of the time.

	<i>Wb.</i>	<i>ML</i>	<i>Sg.</i>
<i>-o</i>	134	112	53
<i>-a</i>	77	206	59
Total	211	318	112

Figure 3: Final *-o* and *-a*¹⁰

This appears to run contrary to McCone’s (1996: 139) suggestion that *-a* was ‘the normal form from *ML* onwards’, as it would be expected to be predominant in the later *Sg*. Any level of fluctuation between the endings, which exists across all three corpora of glosses, indicates that the two sounds had already fallen together, as they would not have been considered appropriate alternatives for each other if their sounds had not been considered to be equivalent by the scribes. Thus, this particular fluctuation is likely a variation that is distinctly orthographic, though it does reflect a phonological change.

Furthermore, as the sound change had clearly already taken place, the nearly equivalent usage of *-o* in *Sg*. can potentially be regarded as a conservative writing feature that retained an older spelling – as presumably at some stage there was an initial stage in which *-o* was always written – that then progressed towards a stage in which *-a* was predominant, with the intermediate stage represented by the three corpora in which *-o* and *-a* are liable to alternate, although I have yet to encounter an attestations of an expected final *-a* written as *-o*. As the reduction of unstressed final vowels was undoubtedly already present in *ML*. (cf. Strachan 1903a: 51–2; McCone 1985) and therefore *Sg*. as well, it is additionally possible that spellings with final *-a* may represent not only the change of *-o* to *-a*, but also the ultimate shift to /ə/.

If this is presumed to be the case, then it would logically follow that as the oldest, *Wb.* would conform most closely to the original spelling of final *-o*, *Sg.* to the younger and encroaching *-a*, and *ML*. would be somewhat in the

(Griffith and Stifter 2013) gives both *fuile ML*. 22b1 and *fule ML*. 37c4 as genitive singular, and thus would make them irregular, O’Rahilly (1973: 141) has discussed their plural meaning, and it seems more likely that in both cases we are here dealing with a genitive plural form with singular meaning, in which case they show regular *i*-stem inflection, especially as *ML*. also has *fola ML*. 37d6 (this word has been discussed by Joseph (1988: 171–2 n. 4) and the potential merger of an originally neuter *fuil* and a feminine *fuil*, both with the same meaning of ‘wound,’ or ‘blood’). *Sg.* has twenty examples of ‘irregular’ endings. Some, such as *choibnis Sg*. 9b9, *Sg*. 28a19 ‘relationship’ are similarly explained as above, while the majority end in *-e*. Final vowels *-o -a*, spelled *-eo -ea* with glide vowels after a palatal consonant, after the reduction to /ə/, were often spelled as simply *-e* after a palatal consonant (*GOI* §99), with examples from the glosses such as genitive singular *suidigthe Sg*. 193b4 ‘established.’ The increased presence of these endings in *Sg*. is likely due to the Middle Irish development of reduction of final unstressed vowels to schwa, which was certainly underway in some capacity during the period of the glosses (cf. McCone 1985; *GOI* §99) and is indeed present, though to a lesser extent, in both *ML*. and *Wb.* (cf. Strachan 1903a: 51–2).

¹⁰I am enormously grateful to Dr. Aaron Griffith for providing a second set of eyes on this collection, and pointing out some errors and exclusions that appeared in an earlier draft of this article.

middle. But this is not what is represented by the three corpora, and while the impetus behind the norms of *Sg.* is possibly orthographic conservatism, the tendency of *ML.* to prefer the *-a* ending indicates that the scribes were using either an alternative, or innovatory orthographic standard to that preferred by the scribes of both *Wb.* and *Sg.*

CACH AND CECH

The pronoun *cách* is consistent across all three corpora of glosses (as *cāch*), but its unstressed pronominal form shows wider variation. *ML.* heavily prefers the innovatory *cech* with only 26 occurrences of *cach*, contrasted with 126 of *cech*. The more popular *cech* is undoubtedly a secondary form as not only did the form never contain an original *e*, but proclitic short *e* regularly became *a*.

	<i>Wb.</i>	<i>ML.</i>	<i>Sg.</i>
<i>cach</i>	83	26	64
<i>cech</i>	13	126	2

Figure 4: *cach* and *cech*

Cach occurs across all cases and genders in *ML.*, and no case or gender shows any particular preference for *cach*: it occurs three times as a masculine nominative singular (cf. *ol cach diib fri alaile ML.* 114c15 ‘says each of them to the other’), three times as neuter nominative singular (cf. *airthuccai cach chenel hí coitchet chenas* [leg. *coitchenas*] *aninsci sidi ML.* 42c8 ‘for each nation together understands its speech’), three times as masculine accusative singular (cf. *ruucthar fricachré ML.* 35b10 ‘it can be applied to everything’), and once as accusative neuter singular (cf. *la cachmaith ML.* 105d4 ‘with every good thing’). It occurs nine times in the feminine accusative singular, eight of which are in the phrase *cach le cáin / cach lacéin* (cf. *ML.* 40b8 ‘at the one time’) and only once in a different phrase: *fri cach crieid ML.* 85c14 ‘as any clay’. It also occurs once as a feminine genitive singular *cach afrithare ML.* 111a5 ‘every watch’ (for *cacha frithare*) following *cechlathi*; once as a masculine dative singular (cf. *coitchen do cach peccad sôn ML.* 56b41 ‘common to every sin’); once as a masculine genitive plural *fri tige cach n aithech ML.* 92d15 ‘to the houses of any subjects’; and once as either accusative/dative neuter singular *forcachleth ML.* 22b1 ‘on every side’. From the preceding examples alone, it is evident that there is no predominant semantic or grammatical context in which *cach* was preferred in *ML.*, indicating it was not an issue of distinctive or preferential usage of the form in opposition to *cech*. Equally, it does not appear that the subsequent consonant colour had any effect, meaning that the scribes were not attempting to concord the neutral vowel of *cach* with a subsequent neutral vowel, for example.

Sg. on the other hand, almost exclusively uses *cach*, with sixty-four occurrences and only two of *cech*, one accusative singular feminine *cech consain Sg.* 7a4 ‘every consonant’ and once in a genitive masculine or neuter *cech muid Sg.*

190a3. *Wb.* likewise prefers *cach*, with eighty-three instances against thirteen of *cech*: thrice in nominative singular masculine (cf. *orabad cech brathair Wb.* 34a4 ‘so that each brother should be’); once as nominative singular feminine (*cechirngide dongneid ituil dée beddlichthech Wb.* 5c20 ‘let every prayer that you make in God’s will be lawful’); once as accusative feminine singular (*cedumelmis cechtuari Wb.* 10c21 ‘if we consumed every food’); thrice in the genitive singular, once masculine and twice neuter (cf. *foditiu cech imnid Wb.* 1c18 ‘endurance of every tribulation’, *fobésad cech dachpreceptoro Wb.* 4a2 ‘according to the practice of every good preceptor’, *cid atobaich cendilgud cech ancridi dognethe frib Wb.* 9c20 ‘what impels you not to forgive every injury that may have been done to you’); both masculine and neuter in the dative singular (cf. *ocech cenélu serbe Wb.* 2a22 ‘of every kind of bitterness’, *oscech anmimm ainmnigther Wb.* 21a14 ‘over every name that is named’, *hicechcaingnīm Wb.* 33c8 ‘in every fair deed’); and once as a nominative plural feminine *issí didiu trebaire chollno cecha dethidnea domundi doimradud cen imradud nanemde Wb.* 3d30 ‘this then is “prudence of the flesh”, to consider all mundane cares without considering the heavenly’.

The shortened form *cach* of *cách* < **k̑āk̑o-* is entirely regular, but *cech* does not have any etymological basis (GOI §491). Thurneysen’s suggestion that *cechtar* was remodelled on the basis of *nechtar* (cf. GOI §491) is not a sufficient explanation for *cech*, as there was concurrently *nach*, the unstressed form of *nech* from **ne-k̑os*, and there would have been no need to remodel *cach* to *cech* in a similar way. It potentially may have been influenced by the conjunct particle *cacha/cecha* (cf. GOI §491), albeit this form is not present across the three corpora of glosses with the exception of *cacha orr Sg.* 12b7 ‘whichever he may slay’, so while possible, the argument is inconclusive. Indeed, an etymological origin for *cecha* is equally mysterious: aside from positing it as the potential original for *cech* (cf. GOI §491; LEIA C–3) no suggestions as to its origins have been put forward. As it stands, there is no clear origin for the innovatory *cech*.

Obviously, the innovation, whatever its origins, had already occurred by the time of *Wb.* as it is optionally present and without any particular context or reason. *Sg.* accords with *Wb.* in its preference for the expected *cach*, albeit with minimal attestations of *cech*, and therefore *cech* cannot be considered a feature of diachrony alone, as it was not a feature that saw increased usage over time, and indeed, shows significantly less usage in *Sg.*, the youngest of the three corpora. *Ml.*’s significant preference is innovatory, especially as it stands against both *Wb.* and *Sg.*, and unusual, as there is little else by way of fluctuation between *a* and *e* in unstressed positions within *Ml.*

Although all of these features may appear to be relatively minor on their own, when considered holistically, and taking other points of variation into consideration (such as the different borrowing of *spiritus*; the fluctuation in the *-o/-u* vocalism, the doubled superlative *-imem*, the preference for *er-* in the particle *ar-*), it would appear that *Ml.* represents a different variety of Old Irish from that of *Wb.* and *Sg.* The features discussed here cannot be linked to a particular pronunciation, and therefore cannot be viewed definitively as

evidence of diatopic variation, though examples such as the variation in *-o/-a* and *cach/cech* may belie an underlying spoken distinction. At the very least, even if all of the features are viewed as purely orthographic, they do provide evidence that *ML* adhered to a different written standard than that of *Wb.* or *Sg.*

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APPENDIX: GENITIVE SINGULAR ENDINGS OF I-STEM AND U-STEM NOUNS

Wb.: -a

(brá)th(a) 26b7, áeccalsa 7c8, æccalsa 9c7, aecolsa 12b18, aecolsa 13a27, áissa 16d7, anamchairtessa 12b14, betha 15d9, brátha 23c29, brátha 26a1, brátha 29a28, caesta 26d8, cáingnima 20d16, caingnima 29a28, cáingnima 4d6, césta 27c21, colna 20a6, comdithnatha 14b11, cosnama 6b1a, cotulta 25c12, crochtha 26d4, cúrsactha 7d9, cúrsagtha 14d6, cúrsagtha 26b23, daggníma 6a11, dagim-rata 3d5, dánigthea 21c22, deirchóintea 21b1, dénma 12b21, dénma 12b31, dénma 15d38, desimrechta 26b18, dilgutha 14c19, dílgutha 18b20, dula 5b29, ecolsa 11d6, elutha 11c11, etarscartha 13c1, etarscartha 23a20, fessa 26d15, focheda 25a12, fognama 10b22, fognama 22b21, fognama 3c11, gnúsa 15a20, immarmussa 29a15, immormusa 14a15, incholnigthea 27c21, indlína 9d5, liussa 13b6, máma 11c11, messa 4c24, moga 17a13, nebchomalnatha 14a15, nerta 31b11, óesa 10c11, óisa 22b15, óisa 22b17, óisa 8c3, óissa 16d7, pecctha 18b20, pecctha 31c22, pecctha 3b6, pecctha 29a28, pecctha 9d5, rechta 18c9, rechta 27a24, rechta 28c23, recta 21c1, sáitha 25d16, sásta 9c31, smachta 18c18, srotha 32c16, testassa 15a3, testassa 16a26, testassa 24c16, trátha 25c23.

Wb.: -o

aecilso 22c11, áisso 29a13, asithichtho 6a5, beotho 11a19, betho 10b3, betho 10b1, betho 10b15, betho 13c7, betho 14b10, betho 1a3, betho 29a8, betho 31b18, bratho 25d20, brátho 25d20, brátho 29c2, césto 32d3, césto 3d24, cholno 19a17, cimbedo 93b20, cllno 3d23, collno 3d1, collno 3d30, colno 20c20, colno 21b11, colno 22d13, colno 31d2, colno 31d3, colno 4a9, colno 6b4, colno 7c13, colno 9c10, crochtho 8a5, cumsanto 33b7, daggnímo 6a8, dagnímo 6a11, dáno 27d10, dílhotho 2c17, droggnímo 6a8, drogimrato 3d5, drognímo 27c13, dúlo 13b28, ecolso 13a3, ferto 12a9, fesso 14d30, firinnigtho 3d22, flaitheo 26a5, flatho 23d31, flatho 26a5, flatho 26a10, flatho 9d2, fochatho 17d28, fognamo 3d14, foilsichtho 12d15, gnímo 3c23, gnímo 3d6, imraitheo 3d6, incholnichtho 4d27, inspirito 12b33, inspirito 21c2, inspirito 21d5, inspirito 24c13, inspirito 4a7, intairmchrutto 15b6, láin-pectho 26a4, nachdatho 5c19, oipretho 3c14, pecctho 27b10, pecctho 5c8, pectho 13d27, pectho 14c19, pectho 14d1, pectho 14d4, pectho 14d27, pectho 21b4, pectho 21b5, pectho 22b21, pectho 25d8, pectho 29a15, pectho 3c14, pectho 3c38, pectho 3d20, pectho 5c19, pectho 9b12, pectho 9b13, pectho 9d5,

rechto 13d26, rechto 15a34, rechto 19b12, rechto 19d11, rechto 1d16, rechto 20a7, rechto 20a12, rechto 21b13, rechto 24a7, rechto 26a8, rechto 2b13, rechto 2c15, rechto 2c18, rechto 31d1, rechto 31d4, rechto 31d6, rechto 7c19, recto 15a20, recto 15a31, recto 19b16, recto 19b19, recto 19c14, recto 2b26, recto 31b14, recto 3c4, recto 3c36, recto 3d11, recto 4d12, recto 4d22, recto 6a27, recto 1d15, recto 4d11, rélto 12d15, spirito 12a17, spirito 12d21, spirito 14c42, spirito 20b16, spirito 21c22, spirito 27c28, spirito 29d21, spirto 12a11, spirto 15b20, spirto 22b8, spirto 23b26, spirto 3d20, spirto 5d18, spirto 6d11, spiruto 9c30, tairmthecto 3d6.

ML: -a

ærchoiltea 26d13, adartha 116b04, adrada 49a23, adrada 73d3, aimsea 104a1, airechsa 131c5, bela 112b12, bendactha 120c8, besa 117d1, besa 31d12, bésa 45d1, betha 46d6, betha 68d9, bratha 40a19, bruithea 34a26, catha 34c11, cesta 74d13, chatha 84c9, cheitbada 98d5, chétbada 98d2, chometa 55d6, chosmailsea 39c22, choteicthea 145a3, choteicthea 84b7, chuarsacha 54c14, clointa 127c22, coimchloda 63d3, coitcensa 37a19, comallada 122d4, croctha 16c5, cuindrigthea 41d1, daerguda 61a27, denma 17b26, denma 19a10, denma 34b10, denma 35b25, denma 35c10, denma 35c11, denma 35d18, denma 38d20, denma 47c13, denmada 27b13, dercada 127a10, desmrechta 22b1, dilguda 124b3, dilguda 46b29, dilguda 46d2, dilguda 98d6, dilgutha 126b5, dilgutha 51c19, dilgutha 55d5, dromma 51a8, dúrtha 84b8, ercheltha 63c16, escumluda 62b1, fertae 16c9 (*GOI* §925), fina 77d5, flatha 14a2, flatha 90a5, fochoda 59b10, fognama 84c12, fola 37c6, forcitlada 30d12, forsingigthea 109c6, frithgnama, fuasnada 16b12, fuasnada 16b12, fuiilema [leg. fuillema] 36a25, gena 55a18, gnima 129a1, gnima 19a10, gnima 35c10, gnima 35d14, gnima 36a13, gnima 37b4, gnima 42c17, gnima 46a2, gnima 48c10, gnima 55c18, gnima 56c1, gnima 56d5, gnima 68d8, gnima 73a10, gnima 80d2, gnimae [leg. gnima] 44a23, gnma [leg. gnima] 23c5, gotha 95d13, héluda 86c1, huachta 94b23, iata 46a8, imdaigthea 71c9, labartha 59a11, labartha 89d1, labartha 89d3, labrada 42c4, labrtha [leg. labartha] 89d2, legtha 38c9, lénda 129d13, londassa 107c14, londassa 20b16, londassa 59a17, londassa 92b12, marbtha 52x00,¹¹ messa 103c9, messa 103d1, messa 109c14, messa 137b07, messa 26a5, messa 69d1, messa 90a11, molta 145c2, oclachsa 46b22, pectha 30d14, pectha 103c12, pectha 123d8, pectha 124b3, pectha 126b4, pectha 127b6, pectha 144d3, pectha 24c2, pectha 33b5, pectha 34a23, pectha 43a3, pectha 54a5, pectha 58a13, pectha 58c6, pectha 71c13, pectha 76a5, pectha 77a7, pectha 77c6, pectha 88a4, rechta 74b5, relta 60a1, réta 37a14, reta 46a18, retha 93b4, sechtaigha 30d17, sechtaigha 31a7, soertha 112c12, soertha 136d2, soertha 35c3, soertha 55d6, soirtha 112a1, soirtha 116b1, soirtha 35c4, soirtha 40b7, soirtha 46b26, soirtha 51d19, soirtha 67a9, soirtha 84c3, soirtha 84c15, sóirtha 92b8, sortha 45b2, tairmtechta 74b5, tairmtechta 74b7, tessa 94b24, tinchitlada 76b1, tinda [leg. tintuda] 139a1, tinduda 125b8, tinruda 47c16, tindhuda 57a9, tintuda 103d22, tintuda 110b6, tintuda 115b5, tintuda 126c11, tintuda 2b3, tintuda 2d11, tintuda 3a8, tintuda 3a14, tintúda 45d2, tintuda 46c5, tintuda

¹¹The gloss number here is provided by Griffith & Stifter (2013), as *Thes.* (I, 164) does not provide one for this lengthier gloss.

47d2, tintuda 50b12, tintuda 50c21, tintuda 53c6, tintuda 54c3, tintuda 54d19, tintuda 58a14, tintuda 61a12, tintuda 61c7, tintuda 62a14, tintuda 62b24, tintuda 63a1, tintuda 64b7, tintuda 65c1, tintuda 65c8, tintuda 66b9, tinda 66d19 [leg: tintuda]), tintuda 67a3, tintuda 67c11, tintuda 67cd3, tintuda 67d16, tintuda 73d8, tintuda 77b2, tintuda 80d1, tintuda 82a4, tintuda 83b12, tintuda 83c4, tintuda 83c9, tintuda 84c18, tintuda 86a3, tintuda 87d7, tintuda 88c10, tintude 47a14, triba 66c8, tuailngigthea 96b20.

ML: -o

ainsedo 23c21, ainsedo 67d24, ainsedo 68c14, ainsemo 35a18, airilteo 138c7, aiso 31c1, aiso 54a13, aiso 65c3, aiso 66d5, aiso 67a9, aiso 67b1, aisso 27c2, aisso 54a19, atlaichtho 66c5, béso 27a9, betho 128d15, betho 16c5, betho 54a15, betho 56b24, betho 88a3, broto 32c10, chataigtheo 128a11, chathaigtheo 67d19, chatho 34a20, chatho 83a11, chomainsedo 42b28, chosmailseo 107c16, chosmailseo 62a2, chuindrigthedo 24b8, dilgudo 32d15, dolo 42b11, dulo 85b16, dumichtho 44d4, eslabrigtheo 93a24, fatho 74d13, feidligtheo 15a5, fers 103d26, ferso 107c16, ferso 138c18, fino 77d3, fino 77d6 , fino 77d7, flatho 137b5, foammamigtho 67c2, fochodo 22d9, fochodo 50d8, fochodo 64a2, fochodo 77d6, forgnuso 40a20, frithchathaigtho 16a12, geno 82c5, gessedo 73b13, glanto 51a20, gnímo 15a2, gnimo 15a3, gnimo 15a5, gnimo 23c25, gnimo 23c26, gnuso 47d8, homno 128d7, iarfaichtheo 35c29, iarfaichtho 45d19, iarfaichtho 57d1, iarfaigtho 24b10, indedet 61a18 , labartho 123b14, loichtho 62a19, molto 126b18, molto 51d10, omno 128d9, pectho 126b6, pectho 49b7, pectho 53b21, pectho 60b19, pectho 60b19, rebo [leg. trebo] 66d24, rechto 46c8, rechto 46c20, rechto 60b12, rechto 63a15, rechto 74b7, rechto 75d5, rechto 97a14, retho 42c19, reto 20a19, reto 44d6, sechtaigtho 30d6, sechtaitho 31d13, srotho 93b11, suidigtho 111c4, thomtho 26d2, threb 67b1, threbo 66d1, threbo 66d5, threbo 66d11, threbo 66d16, threbo 66d22, threbo 66d23, threbo 67a1, threbo 67a6, threbo 67a9, threbo 67a9, threbo 67a13, thribo 66c15, thribo 66d1, thribo 72d1, thribo 72d2, tobrúchto 64c15, toimseo 20a21, toimseo 35c23, trebo 100b5, trebo 106d10.

Sg: -a

aimmerda 32a8 (dual), ainmneda 209b28, alta 95a5, bindiusa 23a3, c(h)esta 209b28, cesta 143a3, cesta 26b15, chest 142b1, chesta 148b14, chésta 208b14, chesta 77a7, chocda 64b9, choitchennsa 203a14/15, dana 156b4, denma 184b3, dénma 212a11, ehta 46b5, etha 17b13, etha 65a10a, etha 69b3, etha 70a1, feda 121a1, feda 12a5, feda 70a12, fersa 101a2, fersa 148b15, forgnusa 203a2, foxlada 207a1, foxlada 78b3, gnia 147a1, gnima 140b4, gnima 142b1, gnima 144b1, gnima 145b4, gnima 148b13, gnima 148b18, gnima 178b1, gnima 26b15, gnima 77a7, gona 37b20, hetha 51b6, i(n)tliucta 3a4, immognama 2b3, instliuchta 210b2, intlichta 210a5, intliuchta 198b4, intliuchta 3a8, intsluchta 209b30, lectha 11b2, mora 112, mora 94a3, netha 64a9, netha 67b20, nihelsa 14a2, nihelsa 6b5, nintliuchta 3a3, renda 73a12, róida 203-4, tesa 5a8.

Sg: -o

ainmnedo 201b1, ainmnedo 209b11, ainmnedo 215a9, ainmnedo 92a92, air-ebthado 200b9, aitrebthad 198a13, aitrebthado 198a12, aitrebthado 198a17,

aitrebthado 200b10, aittrebthado 204a2, aittrebthado204a1, cesto 140b4, chest 196b2, chésto 140a5, chesto 144b1, chésto 178b1, chésto 194b1, chétbutho 25b7, denmo 2a7, dulo 76b7, dúlo 76b8, dúlo 76b8, fedo 33b6, fedo 35b12, ferso 136a1, ferso 136a2, fino 122a2, forgnuso 198a4, forgnuso 216b3, gnimo 149b7, gnimo 153a2, gnimo 153a3, gnimo 154a4, gnimo 188a28, gnimo 188b2, gnimo 194b1, gnimo 196b2, gnimo 197a11, gnimo 209b28, gnimo 28a21, gnúso 215a12, gotho 200a6, gotho 3b1, gotho 5a4, hetho 60a4, immognomo 188b1, innriccso 59b3, innstliuchto 26a9, lino 162b2, reto 187b1, sotho 65a6, srotho 35b7, togarthado 215a9.

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