

**Method in the Madness:  
Vowel length, schwa and the quality of consonants in the  
orthography of Early Old Irish**

RMA thesis

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## **Statement on plagiarism and fraud**

I hereby declare that I have not committed plagiarism or fraud in this thesis.

Lian Blasse, 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2015

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## Preface

I would like to express my gratitude here to those who have helped me writing this thesis. Aaron Griffith for supervising me. Peter Schrijver for convincing me to do this Research Master and suggesting topics for this thesis. Stefan de Hoop for his patience and mental support. Iris de Wolf, Hanna van Gorcum and Anne Rutten for proofreading parts of the penultimate version. Finally, I would like to thank Lars Nooij, who is the only one to have survived five years of Celtic Studies with me. Thank you for being my partner in crime.

## Abbreviations

GOI	= Thurneysen, Rudolf <i>Grammar of Old-Irish</i> (Dublin 1946).
WbI	= The <i>prima manus</i> of the Würzburg glosses
Wb	= The Würzburg glosses, second and third glossators
CH	= Cambrai Homily
GP	= Glosses on Philargyrius
BA	= Irish parts of the Book of Armagh
OI	= Old Irish
OG	= Hogan, Edmund SJ, <i>Onomasticum Goedelicum: locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae. An index, with identifications, to the Gaelic names of places and tribes</i> (Dublin 1910).
PC	= Proto-Celtic
LHEB	= Jackson, Kenneth, <i>Language and History of Early Britain</i> (Edinburgh 1953).
Thes. Pal.	= Stokes, Whitley and John Strachan, <i>Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus</i> vol i (1901).
Lat.	= Latin
DIL	= <i>Dictionary of the Irish Language</i> (Royal Irish Academy 2013).

## Chapter I: Introduction

### 1.1 *Incipit*

In the seventh century, the Irish wrote down their language, Old Irish, in the Latin alphabet for the first time. The Irish had already been familiar with Latin and its alphabet for a few centuries, as it had inspired the Ogam alphabet that was used to inscribe wood and stone. It was very useful for that purpose, but it was quite inefficient for more extensive messages. The Irish had been satisfied using Latin in the Latin alphabet for writing in manuscripts, but for some reason that changed, and a few centuries after the coming of Christianity, which brought the Latin language to Ireland as a language of religion, we find manuscripts with Irish next to Latin. In these early sources, the Irish text is often used to explain the Latin, which may explain why the scribes put the Irish language into writing: for educational purposes. Sometimes the Irish translates the Latin (GP 360.II.72 *uiminibus .i. flescaip* 'twigs, that is, twigs', or CH 245.3-6 *et tollat crucem suam, ocuis ticsath a chruich, et sequatur me, ocuis numsechethse*) or it explains a peculiar grammatical feature of the word (Wb 17c9 *magnum .i. macdath* 'a big thing, that is, a great wonder' to explain the substantive use of the adjective) or it explains the Latin in a different way. This was apparently necessary for the Irish people who had never learned Latin as a native language, but had to learn the language from books or teachers as a second language.

The orthography of these early sources sometimes seems a bit awkward and constructed; it is clear that the scribes were not yet used to expressing their native language in the letters of a language with a very different phonology than their own. These sources are therefore often, probably subconsciously, perceived as experiments, as if the scribes who wrote them were just trying things out to see whether it would work. This is of course a great underestimation, as this thesis will show.

A few features of the orthography of these Early Old Irish sources are peculiar from a Classical Old Irish perspective, or peculiar in the sense that the orthography is not consistent or stable. This thesis will look at three of those features and attempt to show that the seemingly random and experimental orthography of these features has more structure and more elegance than was previously thought.

These three features are: vowel length, the schwa and palatalized consonants. All three of these are important features of the phonology of Old Irish and all three were apparently difficult for

the Irish scribes to spell, since the orthography of all three features varies greatly.

Long vowels, spelled in Classical Old Irish by adding a *fada*,<sup>1</sup> are either unmarked in these sources, marked by a *fada* or marked by doubling the vowel. Is there a system or structure behind this threefold system of marking a long vowel? Was there a difference in pronunciation between the *fada* and doubling?

The schwa, spelled in Classical Old Irish as *a*, *e*, *ai* or *i*, depending on the quality of the surrounding consonants, can be spelled in these early sources as *a*, *o*, *e*, *i*, *u*, *ui* and *ai*. Does this mean that these early sources retained the original vowel and that the schwa had not yet appeared in the language in this phase, or had the vowels already collapsed? If so, is there a reason behind the usage of the 'new' Classical Old Irish system and the system of spelling the original vowel?

The palatalized consonants, spelled in Classical Old Irish by the adding of a glide vowel *i*, *e*, *a* or sometimes *o* before or after the consonant, are sometimes spelled with an *i* or *a* glide in these sources, but are often left out. Is there a reason why the glide vowels are spelled in some forms, and are left out in others?

## **1.2 Theoretical framework**

### *1.2.1. Early Old Irish and Classical Old Irish*

What exactly is meant by Early Old Irish as opposed to Classical Old Irish in this thesis?

Old Irish is usually defined as the state of the Irish language in the earliest manuscripts up to 900, when it had become Middle Irish. However, most textbooks on the grammar of Old Irish are based on the Old Irish glosses (Milan, St. Gall and second and third hands of Würzburg) and later texts, ignoring or giving special treatment to the earlier sources, calling them 'archaic'. The term 'archaic' does not do these sources justice, in my opinion, as 'archaic' may imply that the texts were made to look older as opposed to actually being older. Therefore I will not use the term 'archaic Irish' or 'archaisms' except when I mean that the scribe was consciously trying to make the text look older than it is. Even if we do not really know if the scribe of the Book of Armagh and the *prima manus* of the Würzburg Glosses were trying to make their texts look older,<sup>2</sup> it would not make sense to use the term 'archaic'.<sup>3</sup>

I have decided to call these sources Early Old Irish, since it reflects exactly what these

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<sup>1</sup> Or left unmarked.

<sup>2</sup> We know that the scribes of the Cambrai Homily and the Glosses on Philargyrius were not trying to make the text more archaic, as they did not know Irish and they must have copied what they saw in front of them.

<sup>3</sup> I am certainly not the first to renounce the term 'archaic' meaning 'old', in modern scholarship this is quite a common view.

sources are without interpreting anything: sources that were written early in the Old Irish period. By Classical Old Irish I mean the Old Irish sources that reflect the 'standard' grammar of Old Irish the most, and show a relatively stable orthography and phonology. These Early Old Irish sources show scribes fiddling with an orthography that was still very new, and many sound laws are happening right in front of our eyes,  $\acute{e} > ia$ , for example. The differences between Early Old Irish and Classical Old Irish are few and mostly orthographical, but since this thesis focuses on orthography, the distinction between the two is necessary and therefore the two different terms will be used for the sake of clarity.

The term 'Early Old Irish' will mostly be used to describe the four sources this research is based on, to contrast them with the standard orthography, phonology and grammar of Classical Old Irish. In no way, however, does this mean that these four sources are the only ones that contain the early features that will be discussed: it is just a matter of convenience.

### *1.2.2 Ogam Irish*

The definition of Ogam Irish is easily established: all Irish words and names written in inscriptions in the Ogam alphabet. This excludes Irish in the Ogam alphabet in manuscripts.

In this thesis Ogam Irish does not necessarily mean a different stage in the linguistic development of Irish. Even if most of the inscriptions are from an earlier state of the language, it represents a different (orthographical) tradition that had its influence on the way manuscript Irish developed. As McManus already stated,<sup>4</sup> there was no Ogam Irish completely isolated from manuscript Irish. There was a gradual transition, with Ogam inscriptions sometimes using manuscript features and manuscript Irish containing features that are clearly descended from Ogam Irish (spelling, for example invocalic <*b*> to mean /*b*/ instead of /*v*/). Ogam Irish influenced early manuscript Irish, and the other way around.

### *1.2.3 British Latin*

By British Latin I mean the form of Latin that was spoken by the Irish in the seventh and eighth centuries, because the orthography of that particular form of Latin was used to establish the orthography of Irish and has influenced it, just as the orthography of Irish later influenced the orthography of Latin in Irish manuscripts. The exact form of Latin as spoken by the Irish in this period is difficult to establish. The Irish were second language learners and did not speak the

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<sup>4</sup> McManus 1986: 7-13.

language as a mother tongue. However, it is known that Christianity and with it proficiency in Latin came to Ireland via Britain. Latin and its alphabet had been known previously, since the Ogam alphabet is modelled on the Latin alphabet, but it seems that the Irish people themselves started to speak Latin only when Christianity came to Ireland. So, the Latin that the Irish spoke must have resembled the British variant of Latin.

The exact development from Classical Latin to British (Vulgar) Latin can be the subject of an enormous number of theses and it will therefore not be discussed in detail here. As it seems that the spelling of British Latin must have largely stayed the same as Classical Latin, except in epigraphy, there is at least one part of British Latin that we can be sure of, namely the orthography. The phonology has been studied by Kenneth Jackson in *Language and History in Early Britain*, and even if it has not been unchallenged in all respects, it has a good overview of all sound laws in Latin and British Celtic in this specific period<sup>5</sup> and remains the standard reference work for medieval British Latin.

#### *1.2.4 Orthography and explanation of the features discussed in this thesis*

My definition of orthography is: the convention by which the different phonemes of a language are represented by different graphemes, or not represented at all. In modern times, orthography often reflects older pronunciation, as it has become petrified in some way. This is why we speak of a 'standard' orthography today, which was certainly not the case for orthography before the invention of the printing press. There were orthographical conventions in the Middle Ages, but there was no standard as such, since scribes could modify the text not only lexically but also orthographically and they could add updated spellings.

The Early Old Irish sources do not only have the fluid orthography typical for the early medieval period, but also an orthography that had just started to develop. The Early Old Irish sources show experimentation with different conventions for features that were lacking in the pronunciation of Latin. The Irish features missing from Latin are palatalized consonants, the schwa as a phoneme, the fricatives /*ǰ*, *ɣ*, *ʋ*, *x*/, and the opposition between lenited and unlenited /*r*; *l*, *n*/. A new convention had to be devised to express these phonological features, since there was no Latin equivalent. In the Early Old Irish sources, lenited and unlenited consonants in particular were not expressed, and an orthographical convention was only devised in later Old Irish. The areas where the Irish scribes had trouble devising an orthographical convention were the palatalized consonants,

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<sup>5</sup> LHEB 694-699.

the schwa, and vowel length. The latter is quite strange, since Latin had vowel length as well, but the Irish apparently felt that the Latin convention to express vowel length, i.e. not indicating it at all, was not sufficient. This will be further discussed in chapter 2. One other element of orthography where the Irish had trouble in the earliest manuscripts is the spelling of lenited and unlenited stops; where Classical Old Irish and Latin spell intervocalic <*p, t, c*> for /*b, d, g*/, we sometimes find <*b, d, g*> in these manuscripts. This has bothered quite some scholars over the years, but Carney suggested that the Irish were used to spelling <*b, d, g*> for /*b, d, g*/ from the Ogam convention,<sup>6</sup> and that the earliest manuscripts show some confusion between the two orthographical traditions.<sup>7</sup>

The remaining features (vowel length, schwa and palatalized consonants) that show some confusion or experimenting in the Early Old Irish period will be discussed in this thesis. A further examination of the spelling of /*l, ll, n, nn, r, rr*/ and /*b, d, t, c, g*/ may be interesting, but this unfortunately cannot be dealt with here.

### **1.3 Methodology**

Research like this, focusing on scarce material, must be quantitative as opposed to qualitative. To answer the question 'how are three features expressed in orthography?' all examples of an expression or lack of expression of that particular feature are needed. Therefore, each of these three features has its own appendix, corresponding to the chapter in which the feature is discussed. These appendices contain all instances of the feature in the corpus (which will be explained in 1.4). Since the features are quite different, each appendix is structured differently. How each appendix is structured is explained at the beginning of the corresponding chapter.

I am looking for a certain pattern behind the fluctuating spelling of one feature. In looking for a pattern, I have tried forming hypotheses after looking at all instances of that feature, to avoid seeing things that are not really in the data, but would confirm my hypothesis. However, it was inevitable that some hypotheses arose as I started to collect data and for this reason all data are in the appendices, so that all the steps of my reasoning can be traced back.

The hypotheses that came to mind are tested to see if they are in accordance with the data in the individual chapters. There are a few approaches that are followed to form hypotheses that would explain a difference in orthography:

- Phonology: the fluctuating spelling reflects a difference in pronunciation.

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<sup>6</sup> Which was derived from the Latin alphabet when the pronunciation of <*b, d, g*> was still /*b, d, g*/.

<sup>7</sup> Carney 1979: 417-418.

- Location: the location of the feature in the word explains whether a feature should be marked or unmarked.
- Influence of other orthographies: the fluctuating spelling can be explained by either Ogam Irish or British Latin.
- Retaining of older features in orthography: the original pronunciation has disappeared and orthography sometimes reflects the older state of the language and sometimes the newer state.

Where it is relevant, the etymologies of the forms will be given in the appendices. These reconstructions are from Matasović,<sup>8</sup> DIL, Pedersen<sup>9</sup> and GOI. If an etymology is from another source, this will be noted. All these etymologies have been remodelled by myself to reflect the state they were in before apocope. Reconstructing all these words to pre-apocope state was not the primary focus of this thesis, so in some forms only parts of the word have been reconstructed.

It is sometimes difficult to imagine how one would go about devising a new orthography for one's own native tongue using the alphabet of another language. Fortunately, there is an account in Old Norse, written by the First Grammarian, on how Old Norse is supposed to be spelled using the Latin alphabet. He explains very clearly how he goes about this, which is useful for our understanding of the way scribes tackled this problem. Of course, Old Norse is not Old Irish, and there is a gap of a few centuries, but since Old Norse was written down in a Christian environment and in manuscripts as well, I do think there could be parallels. Therefore, I will sometimes use this text to see how the First Grammarian dealt with a certain problem.<sup>10</sup>

## ***1.4. The sources***

### ***1.4.1 Descriptions of the manuscripts and texts***

#### ***1.4.1.a The prima manus of the Würzburg Glosses***

The Würzburg Glosses (M. th. f. 12. Universität Würzburg<sup>11</sup>) are one of the main corpora for Classical Old-Irish, containing the Pauline epistles with Latin and Old Irish glosses. The source of the glosses seems to be the commentary of Pelagius.<sup>12</sup> The 36 folios are made up of two columns and are written in Irish minuscule.

<sup>8</sup> Matasović (2009).

<sup>9</sup> Pedersen (1913).

<sup>10</sup> Haugen (1972).

<sup>11</sup> A facsimile can be found online at [vb.uni-wuerzburg.de/ub/mpthf12/index.html](http://vb.uni-wuerzburg.de/ub/mpthf12/index.html) including information about the content, codicology, provenance and secondary literature.

<sup>12</sup> Thes. Pal. I xxiii.

The date of the manuscript is much disputed and opinions have differed from the seventh century<sup>13</sup> to the tenth century.<sup>14</sup> Thurneysen dates the Latin text and the first stratum of glosses to about or before 700AD,<sup>15</sup> although he later suggests that the dating must be posited somewhere in the eighth century.<sup>16</sup>

The manuscript contains three hands, but only the first stratum called the *prima manus* will be used for this research, since it contains many linguistic fossils and it is written in Early Old Irish. The *prima manus* has been dated to the late seventh or early eighth century, meaning the glosses predate the manuscript and that they were copied from an earlier exemplar. The Latin main text is written in the same hand.

The glosses of the *prima manus* are short, every gloss containing only one phrase or just one word. Ó Néill suggests that, because of their brevity and the lexical nature of the glosses, they were intended for an audience of beginners.<sup>17</sup>

The glosses were edited by Zeuss in *Grammatica Celtica*<sup>18</sup>, by Stokes in *The Old-Irish glosses at Würzburg and Carlsruhe*<sup>19</sup> and in the *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*.<sup>20</sup> In 2001 a lexicon with all the forms in the Würzburg Glosses appeared.<sup>21</sup> More recently, Ó Néill has corrected some minor mistakes in the transcriptions of the *prima manus*.<sup>22</sup> However, I have checked the glosses with the online facsimile and I have some corrections, additions and comments on his transcription, which can be found in section 1.4.2.

#### 1.4.1.b The Cambrai Homily

The Cambrai Homily (MS 619, Bibliothèque de Cambrai Municipale) is a fascinating manuscript with an even more fascinating history. It is made of vellum and the minuscule is divided into two columns. It consists of 72 leaves, but the text of the homily itself consists of only three leaves. The scribe has supplied us with a clear dating, as he says '*Explicit liber canonum quem Domnus Albericus episcopus urbis Camaracinsium et Atrabatensium fieri rogavit. Deo gratias.*

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<sup>13</sup> Suggested by Traube, cited by Thurneysen 1901: 51.

<sup>14</sup> De Jubainville 1883: cxxix.

<sup>15</sup> Thurneysen 1901: 52.

<sup>16</sup> GOI 4.

<sup>17</sup> Ó Néill 2002: 233.

<sup>18</sup> Zeuss 1838: 1026-1041.

<sup>19</sup> Stokes 1887: 1-194, translation on 238-337.

<sup>20</sup> Thes. Pal. I: introduction to the manuscript xxiii-xxv, edition of the glosses 499-712.

<sup>21</sup> Kavanagh (2001).

<sup>22</sup> Ó Neill 2002: 230-242.

*Amen.* 'Here ends the Book of Canons that Lord Alberic, bishop of the city of Cambrai and Arras, had asked to be made. Give God thanks, Amen.' This Alberic was bishop of Cambrai and Arras from 763 up to 790, so the manuscript must have been written in that time.<sup>23</sup> The text is a homily that deals with the two quotations from scripture; *abneget semetipsum* and *et tollet crucem suam*. It contains a reference to the *Homilia in Evangelia* by Gregory the Great and an unknown, possibly Irish, practice of distinguishing between three kinds of martyrdom, *dercmartre* 'red martyrdom', *glasmartre* 'green martyrdom' and *bánmartre* 'white martyrdom'.<sup>24</sup> The date of composition of the text is unknown, with a *terminus post quem* of 600 AD regarding the reference to Gregory the Great, but the text can hardly be composed shortly after that. Fergus Kelly dates the text to the mid-seventh century,<sup>25</sup> Thurneysen dates it to the second half of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century,<sup>26</sup> because of archaic features like *tu-*, *to-* for Old Irish *do-*, *-nd-* in the definite article (*dundaib*), the retention of *ē* and *ō* for Old Irish *ía* and *úa* (*feda* for *fiada*, *ood* for *uad*, but *dea* for *día*). The retention of unstressed *e* and *o* will be discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.

It is known that the scribe of the Cambrai Homily did not know Irish, since 'the words are often wrongly divided, and there are many clerical errors resulting from the scribe's unfamiliarity with the Irish script'.<sup>27</sup> This can be seen in a few mistakes he makes, for example, there is no difference in abbreviation strokes and the *fada*, since he would not know which words were not expanded. Frequent words like *amail* are sometimes copied as *amcul*, a mistake which makes sense if the scribe did not know Irish and was not familiar with the script. Also, *a* and *u* are confused, as are *u* and *ii*.

When looking at the small parts of Latin that were edited in Thes. Pal., I get the strong impression that he was not fluent in Latin either. For example, the quite recognizable *in nomine Dei*, is written 244.16 *Inno mine dī*, and a confusion between *u* and *n* can be seen in the following; *in inuentute* is written 247.25 *inuuentute*. Another mistake in spacing is *p̃uer tentibus* for *peruertentibus*. A scribal error or mistake in solving an abbreviation, combined with incorrect spacing, is *per abstinen* for *perabstinem*.

Certainly, he was more familiar with Latin than with Irish since there are fewer mistakes, but the same mistakes that he made in Irish were made in the Latin parts. It would be interesting to

<sup>23</sup> Thes. Pal. I xxvi, and Le Glay 1831: 246-7.

<sup>24</sup> Ó Néill 1981: 137-147.

<sup>25</sup> Kelly 1976: xxxiii.

<sup>26</sup> Thurneysen 1901: 54.

<sup>27</sup> Thes. Pal. I xxvi.

study the rest of the manuscript, to see if these mistakes happen throughout the manuscript. Some questions will likely remain unanswered concerning the Cambrai Homily.

Now, why would there be an Irish homily in a manuscript dedicated to a French bishop? The theory is that a leaf with a part of this homily was inserted in the pages of the exemplar, causing the scribe to copy it as if it was a part of the surrounding text. However, the surrounding Latin was never really edited; all the editions of this manuscript focus solely on the Irish parts and some Latin before and after the Irish text.

This manuscript appears in *Catalogue descriptif et raisonné des manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Cambrai*, a catalogue of manuscripts in the library of Cambrai written in 1831. The author is quite surprised about the Irish part of the manuscript, and asks himself the same question as above, 'Si ces phrases sont de l'ancien irlandais, on ne conçoit pas trop pourquoi Albéric aurait conservé ce langage étranger dans une allocution destinée aux peuples Francs dont il avait la direction. Ne serait-ce pas plutôt la langue celtique qu'on parlait en France et dans les Iles Britanniques avant que la langue romane se fût formée de la corruption du latin mêlé avec les idiomes indigènes?'<sup>28</sup>

The text was first edited in *Grammatika Celtica*, by Zeuss<sup>29</sup> who supplied it with a Latin translation of the Irish text. He calls it '*Sermonis de abnegatione et compassione fragmentum e codice Camaracensi*'. Stokes and Strachan took it up in the *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus* in 1903, with a small introduction to the manuscript<sup>30</sup> and they supplied a *textus restitutus*, or restored text, as well as an English translation of the Irish.<sup>31</sup> This is the edition that is still used to this day, and it was used by Thurneysen for the *Grammar of Old Irish*, where he seems quite angry about the scribe's ignorance of Irish, 'transcribed – with every misreading which the Irish script could suggest – by a Continental scribe ignorant of Irish.'<sup>32</sup>

Since the edition of the *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus* there has not been an updated edition of the text. As there are quite a few mistakes in that transcription, my comments, additions and corrections can be found in section 1.4.2.

#### 1.4.1.c The Glosses on Philargyrius

There are three manuscripts that contain Old Irish glosses on Virgil's *Bucolica*: Codex

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<sup>28</sup> Le Glay 1831: 247.

<sup>29</sup> Zeuss 1871: 1004-1007.

<sup>30</sup> Thes. Pal. I xxvi.

<sup>31</sup> Thes. Pal. 244-7.

<sup>32</sup> GOI 9.

Parisiacus Lat. 7960 (abbreviated N<sup>33</sup>), Codex Laurentinus Plut. XLV. Cod. 14 (abbreviated L<sup>34</sup>) and Codex Parisinus 11308 (abbreviated P<sup>35</sup>). N and L are from the tenth century; P is the oldest manuscript, dating to the ninth century.<sup>36</sup> According to Thes. Pal., N and L come from the same source, as does P, even though the latter is more extensive and more correct than N and L. These manuscripts have some errors in common, which suggests that the exemplar already contained these errors. These errors must originate from the scribe's 'ignorance of the Irish language and his unfamiliarity with the script',<sup>37</sup> as all manuscripts are written in a continental hand. Lambert notes all mistakes that are frequently made in these glosses: omission of *f*, confusion of *f* and *s*, confusion of *r* and *s*, confusion of *r* and *t*, confusion of *b* and *h*, confusion of *b* and *d*, confusion of *d* and *o*, confusion of *c* and *o*. Furthermore there are errors in abbreviations.<sup>38</sup>

Linguistically, these glosses have been compared to the Book of Armagh in Thes. Pal., and Thurneysen has discussed some features of some of the forms.<sup>39</sup> The main problem with these glosses is the high number of errors that were made in copying, making the glosses difficult to interpret. This means that many forms from this source cannot be used. The most recent edition is by Lambert.<sup>40</sup>

In giving references to the forms of GP, the code of the gloss is given with the letter of the manuscript following it, for example, IV.50 P. If a manuscript is not indicated, all manuscripts have the same form.

#### *1.4.1.d The Book of Armagh*

The Book of Armagh (MS 52, Library of Trinity College, Dublin<sup>41</sup>) consists of 221 folios in two, sometimes three, columns. Stokes was of the opinion that the entire manuscript was written by a scribe called Ferdomnach (†845)<sup>42</sup>, but Sharpe has argued that although Ferdomnach was the master-scribe and that he assigned parts of the manuscript to two other scribes.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> P in Thes. Pal.

<sup>34</sup> Online images of the manuscript can be found on <http://teca.bmlonline.it/TecaRicerca/index.jsp?tipoRice=riceBase> → *segnatura* → Plut.45.14.

<sup>35</sup> P2 in Thes. Pal.

<sup>36</sup> Lambert 1986: 86.

<sup>37</sup> Thes. Pal. I xvii.

<sup>38</sup> Lambert 1986: 94-5.

<sup>39</sup> Thurneysen 1901: 53-54.

<sup>40</sup> Lambert (1986).

<sup>41</sup> The manuscript is on digitalcollections.tcd.ie in its entirety.

<sup>42</sup> Thes. Pal. I xiii-xiv.

<sup>43</sup> Sharpe 1982: 10-13.

The manuscript contains multiple texts: texts on Saint Patrick and his *Confessio*, material from the New Testament and the Life of Saint Martin. These texts are mostly in Latin, apart from some place and personal names and the notes. These will be used here.

An edition of the entire manuscript appeared in 1908<sup>44</sup>, and the Irish parts of the Book of Armagh were published in the *Thes. Pal.*,<sup>45</sup> which will be the edition used here. Sharpe has discussed the palaeography and codicology of the manuscript in detail in 1982.<sup>46</sup>

The two sections of the Book of Armagh that will be used are the Notes in the Book of Armagh and the Names of Persons and Places in the Book of Armagh. The latter is a Latin text with Irish names, and it is generally very messy and a large part of these names have an unknown etymology and may not even be known in later Irish. This means that particularly the Notes will be used.

#### ***1.4.2 The transcriptions; corrections, comments and additions***

The transcriptions I use for this thesis are made by humans and therefore prone to error, just like the scribes copying the manuscripts over a thousand years ago. Therefore I checked the transcriptions for errors and incompleteness. I have found some errors that make a difference for my research, but I also corrected smaller mistakes even when they were not relevant for this research per se, in order to help others who will use these sources for other purposes.

In most of the sources I have followed the editorial practice of the editor himself. For example, in the transcription of the Cambrai Homily, *Thes. Pal.* has shown every letter that is in superscript or subscript etc., however, this was not done for every letter which is in superscript or subscript in the manuscript. For that reason I have emended those letters. In the Book of Armagh, letters in subscript or superscript are not denoted in the transcription and consequently I have not done so either. The ligature & for *et* I have corrected as well, since ligatures like *æ* are also left in these transcriptions. The ligatures for *oe*, *ec*, *ti* etc., I have left, since they are not transcribed as such.

Since I was not able to obtain a facsimile edition of the manuscripts P and N that contain the GP or was able to view those manuscripts themselves, I have not corrected those transcriptions. The transcription of L seems to be correct, so there are no comments etc. on GP.

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<sup>44</sup> Gwynn 1908.

<sup>45</sup> *Thes. Pal.* I xiii-xvii, 238-243, 259-271.

<sup>46</sup> Sharpe (1982).

1.4.2.a prima manus of the Würzburg Glosses.

Wb 7b17a: Left out of Thes. Pal., Ó Néill reads *pr(o)umthe*. The first *p* however is the Latin abbreviation for *pro*, so his reading is correct but I would note it as *proumthe*, as it is printed in Kavanagh as well. Ó Néill's suggestion to read this *prumthe* makes no sense to me. Next to the gloss is another gloss (by another hand) reading *promthe in iriss*, with the same abbreviation but without the <*u*>. This abbreviation is probably influenced by the Latin form both glosses belong to; *probum*. I do not see why we should not just leave *proumthe* for the *prima manus*, as in Kavanagh.

Wb 9b22: Ó Néill *isam* for *i sam*<*ail*> or *.i. sam*<*la*>. Thes. Pal. read *isam*<*laid*>. This gloss is very difficult to read from the online facsimile, I can only make out the *m* clearly.

Wb 15c26: Ó Néill reads *laimirsni*, Thes. Pal. amends to *laim*<*imm*>*ir-sni*. Ó Néill mentions there is no indication of missing letters in the manuscript, but there is a stain in the vellum right before the gloss, so I would not exclude the possibility of missing letters.

Wb 17c4a: Ó Néill reads *manam*, but it has an abbreviation so it must be noted as *manam*, as was printed correctly in Thes. Pal. and Kavanagh.

Wb 24c23: Ó Néill reads *caindleoir*, but there is no *e*-glide so it must be *caindloir* as in Thes. Pal. and Kavanagh.

1.4.2.b The Cambrai Homily.

244.19 *getsemet* must be *g&sem&*

244.19 *ettol* must be *&tol*

244.20 *let* must be *l&*

244:20 *et* must be *&*

244:21 between *insce* and *inso* there is a small slanted stroke; /

244.22 *arfeda* must be *arfeda*·

244:24 *ne-lu doine* must be *ne-ludoine*

244:33 the *b* in *nimrathib* is quite strange; it does not look like the regular *b* in this hand. It resembles a *t* but with a quite large stroke on top of it. I suspect the scribe must have written *t* and emendated it to a *b* after he noticed his mistake.

245:2 *semetipsum* must be *sem&ipsum*

- 245.2 *ettol* must be *&tol*
- 245.3 *let* must be *l&*
- 245.5 *et* must be *&*
- 245.8 *cometsam* must be *com&sam*
- 245.8 *dear* must be *de ar*
- 245.14 *assindber* must be *assindbe'r*.
- 245.15 *etno* must be *&no*
- 245.16 The abbreviation marker on *t* in *acruciatudicit* is not fluctuating but it is straight.
- 245.16 *et* must be *&*
- 245.16 *duobus* must be *duob*;
- 245.17 there is indeed a slightly slanted stroke on *-is* in *modis*, but it is certainly not a length accent, which it may appear to be if one uses the Thes. Pal.
- 245.17 The abbreviation marker in *crucemdni* is not fluctuating but it is straight.
- 245.17 *baila* must be *bail a*
- 245.18 *p̃abstinen* must be *pabstinen* with a horizontal stroke through the vertical stroke of the *p*.
- 245.20 *aut p̃* must be *autp* with a horizontal stroke through the vertical stroke of the *p*.
- 245.21 *n̄sām* must be *n̄rām*.
- 245.24 *exibet* must be *exib&*
- 245.26 *inui* must be *inui·*
- 245.29 The stroke through the *l* in *apostol* is not fluctuating but straight
- 245.34 *mabeth ·* must be *mab&·*
- 246.4 The abbreviation marker on the *r* in *nern* is not fluctuating but it is straight
- 246.8 I highly suspect *calar* to actually read *cular*.
- 246.10 *ap̃ ·* must be *aṗ̄*.
- 246.11 *etego* must be *&ego*
- 246.11 There is a slanted stroke, /, after *nonuror*. It could also be a length marker on the *e* of *ego* in the following line.
- 246.15 *apstol* must be *apostol*
- 246.24 *adciā* must be *adc;ā*
- 247.2 *duduini* must be *duduin;*
- 247.4 *ceruce* has been corrected by Ní Chatháin to *ceni cesa*.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ní Chatháin 1990: 417.

247.5 *nalaubir* must be *naliaibir*. The reading of Thes. Pal. makes more sense, and it could be an open *a* and a *u* with slight disconnected strokes, but since this hand never writes an open *a* in this manner and always connects the strokes of the *u*, I prefer the reading *naliaibir*. It must be a copying mistake, as the sequence *iai* is also not spelled flawlessly. The scribe probably noticed while he was copying the *a* in *iai* that his exemplar had *au*, so the second stroke of the open *a* is straight, to hide his mistake. So this must be a copying mistake from *nalaubir*.

247.20 *ilaubair* must be *ilaubuir*

247.20 *archrist* must be *archr,ist*

247.25 · must be ,

### 1.?.2.c *The Notes in the Book of Armagh*

238.7 *forcuisin* must be *forcuisin*, as there is nothing abbreviated.

238.8 *drommo·nit·* must be *drommo.nit*.

238.9 *fote·laront* must be *fote.laront*

238.10 *léni* must be *léni*

238.15 *benignus* must be *benignus*

239.6 *reliquit* must be *reliquit*

239.7 *sempiternum* must be *sempiternum*

239.7 *Et* must be &

239.11 *regnum* must be *regnum*

239.12 *muinæ* must be *muine*

239.16 *cummen* must be *Cummen*

239.18 Thes. Pal. says in a footnote 'MS crann, with punctum delens over *r*'. This is true, but since the punctum delens often appears in this source, it is strange it was not noted before. The reading is *crann*.

239.20 *senmessib* must be *senmessib*.

240.1 *odræ* must be *odrę*

240.1 *cremthinnæ* must be *cremthinę*

240.5 *uero* must be *uero*.

240.8 *et* must be &

240.9 *hoc* must be *hoc*.

240.10 *hiberniam* must be *hiberniam*

240.11 *iserninus* must be *iserninus*

240.13 *hiberniæ* must be *hiberniē*

240.24 *et* must be &

241.4 I do not see a / in this line.

241.12 *fripátricc* must be *fripátricc*

241.17 7 must be &

241.17 *fácab* must be *Fácab*

241.17 *tir* in *diamuintir* has been written vertically under *muin*.

241.18 from *tecan* to *fedelmid* in 241.19 the words are written below each other. The next paragraph starts on the same line as *tecan*.

241.18 *tecán* must be *tecan*

242.1 *et* must be &

242.3 *asbert* must be *asbert*.

242.4 *icúil* must be *hiciúil*

242.5 *Asbert* must be *asbert*.

242.13 *cumanchán* must be *Cu manchán*

242.14 *Dlomis* must be *DLomis*

242.17 *Birt* must be *birt*

243.5 *linguam* must be *linguam*

243.6 *non* must be *non*

243.7 *conetur* must be *conetur*

243.9 *et* must be &

### *Names in the Book of Armagh*

The transcription of the names does not contain any errors, except for the fact that the names are printed in the Thes. Pal. as if they all start with a capital letter, while they often start with a lowercase letter. Furthermore, I would like to add that many of the names have dots on the letters, probably to denote that the names are in the vernacular, similarly to the *prima manus* of the Würzburg glosses.

### 1.4.3 Defence of the sources

As we have seen in the section above, none of these sources were written in contemporary manuscripts, and two sources (which means four manuscripts in total) were written by a continental scribe who did not know Irish and contain many mistakes. Overall, this does not seem like a good selection of sources to base research on. Only the *prima manus* of the Würzburg glosses and the Book of Armagh seem like reliable sources. However, the former also contains a few mistakes (like *dronei* for *drochgné*) and the latter seems to contain the least archaic forms of all these sources.

So why would these sources be useable for research? When one researches Classical Old Irish, it is logical that these are not the sources that will be used, not only because of the archaic character, but because of these shortcomings. However, when one researches the Early Old Irish period, these sources are simply the only sources of considerable size there are in existence. Even though the state of the language is not contemporary to the manuscripts themselves, an older phase of the language has been retained in these sources for different reasons, for example, a scribe who does not know Irish will not be able to modernize and therefore retains older spellings or forms. So it may seem ironic, researching spelling in sources with many erroneous spellings, but there is simply no other way to study the Early Old Irish period. We simply have to make do with 'imperfect' sources, because disregarding them due to errors in manuscripts would mean Early Old Irish could never be studied again. Even though these sources contain mistakes, are not contemporary to the language, etc., they can still tell us many things about the language, orthography and the interplay between Irish and Latin, and they are therefore still viable for research.

The decision to use these particular sources was mainly based on the dating, the length of the sources and the orthography.

These are the last sources that are linguistically earlier than the main Old Irish corpus of glosses (Milan, St. Gall and Würzburg, second and third hand), and they show the Irish language in an older state. Additionally, modern scholarship is in relative agreement about the dating of the sources. There are also other texts that have been dated to the period before the Classical Old Irish period, for example the *Apgitir Chrábaid*, but these were often orthographically and/or linguistically modernized by the scribes and can therefore not be used for a study on the orthography of the Early Old Irish period. Another argument is the length of the sources. They contain enough material to compare different spellings within each source, so there is virtually always more than one example

of a certain feature. Therefore, sources with little material from this period, like some computus manuscripts, have been left out.

## Chapter II: The spelling of long vowels

### 2.1 The orthographical conventions of Ogam Irish, Classical Old Irish and British Latin

#### 2.1.1 Ogam Irish

Early Old Irish distinguished length in five vowels; /ǎ/ : /ā/, /ĕ/ : /ē/, /ĭ/ : /ī/, /ǫ/ : /ō/, and /ũ/ : /ū/. In the earliest Irish material, i.e. the Ogam inscriptions, length is almost never expressed: (327) DVNOCATI for OI *dúnchad*. MacNeill puts this forward as one of the primary features where manuscript Irish differs from Ogam Irish; '(Ogham Irish;) There is no distinction of long and short vowels. (MS. Irish;) A sign of quantity is placed over long vowels.'<sup>48</sup> This is a difference between Ogam and manuscriptal orthography that has been refuted by McManus, who argues that MacNeill compared 'probably early Ogam inscriptions with late MS spelling, ignoring the later stones and the early MS orthography.' He shows that there are many transitional spellings to be found in both Ogam and in manuscript Irish. He disagrees that Ogam never distinguishes length in vowels. He mentions the orthographical tradition for spelling -AGNI for /-ān/, or the doubling of consonants to show vowel length; -ANN for -án.<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, Ogam seems to have had a way of distinguishing length in vowels, although it was far from a consistent practice. However, spelling vowel length in MS Old Irish sources is also inconsistent, as we will see.

#### 2.1.2 Classical Old Irish

By the time Irish had a 'steady' orthography and many manuscripts in the Irish language were produced, we see three orthographical conventions when it comes to indicating vowel length. An acute accent, also called an apex or in MacNeill's words 'a sign of quantity' but in the Irish tradition mostly known as a *fada* (Modern Irish for 'long'), was used to differentiate between long and short vowels: *bán* for /bān/ and *athair* for /āθər/. This convention proved most successful and is still used today in Modern Irish orthography.

Length could also be indicated by doubling of the long vowel; *reet* for /r'ēd/ and *le* for /le/, however, this is very rare and is practically limited to the Early Old Irish sources. We will have a closer look at doubling in the rest of this chapter.

However, besides these conventions, in manuscript Irish, from the Early Old Irish period up to the early Modern Irish period, length was very often not indicated at all: *de* for /dē/ and *de* for

<sup>48</sup> MacNeill 1908/1909: 337.

<sup>49</sup> McManus 1986: 8.

/dē/, as McManus also objected in reaction to MacNeill's criterium of differences between Ogam and manuscript Irish; 'The use of the length mark or the doubling of the vowel is far from consistent in the early MS tradition',<sup>50</sup> and even the later Old Irish sources show little consistency in using the *fada*; *riga* for *ríga* (Ml. 84<sup>b</sup>1)

### 2.1.3 British Latin

The orthography of British Latin resembles the Ogam inscriptions in one very important aspect; a lot of sound changes had taken place but the orthography, developed long before these changes, failed to represent those changes immediately. For example, the diphthong /ae/ had developed into /ē/ in the first century already but was still spelled <ae> in most cases.

Latin, just as Irish, distinguished length in five vowels; /ǎ/ : /ā/, /ě/ : /ē/, /ĩ/ : /ī/, /ǒ/ : /ō/, and /ũ/ : /ū/, and long vowels could appear in every position of a word. A lot changed in this system in later Latin. The opposition long : short became affected by stress, giving way to a new system where 'all unstressed vowels were short, and all stressed vowels in open syllables were long, in closed syllables short ... so the old *vǎlēś*, *dīxī* became *vālēs*, *dīxī*.<sup>51</sup>

Long vowels were almost never marked in Latin orthography. Sometimes an apex, the precursor of the *fada*, was used to distinguish between long and short vowels, but most certainly not consistently, and in the Latin parts of the Early Old Irish sources there is practically no length indication. This confirms that the Irish were not used to marking long vowels when writing Latin.

## 2.2 Early Old Irish

### 2.2.1 Why indicate length?

Obviously, the Early Old Irish scribes experimented with spelling vowel length, which may seem strange since medieval Latin distinguished length in vowels as well, but did not express it orthographically. So why did the Early Old Irish scribes feel the need to do so? It seems that trying to orthographically distinguish long and short vowels was not one of the major problems those first scribes chose to deal with. Looking at two of the early Old Irish sources, even though they are famous for the doubling of vowels combined with the use of the *fada* to indicate length, in fig. 1 we can see that the actual numbers paint quite a different picture.

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<sup>50</sup> McManus 1986: 9.

<sup>51</sup> LHEB 270.

Fig. 1: Short and long vowels in the Cambrai Homily and the *prima manus* Würzburg glosses<sup>52</sup>

		CH	WbI
Short vowels:	unmarked	436	125
	<i>fada</i>	0	0
	doubling	0	0
Long vowels:	unmarked	53	29
	<i>fada</i>	2	0
	doubling	9	1
	other	0	2 <sup>53</sup>

From this table we see that in CH, even though the use of the *fada* and doubling can be no coincidence or error, 82% of the long vowels are unmarked. This shows us that the Latin convention of spelling length, i.e. not indicating it at all, was followed for a large part in the Cambrai Homily. This goes for WbI as well, where length is marked in only 9% of the cases, and all the three examples where a long vowel is marked, it is each time marked in a different way and therefore, every length indication is one of its kind in WbI.

If the scribes were really concerned with indicating vowel length, the length indication should not be as meagre as it is in these two sources. However, even if this is the case, there are still 14 examples of a long vowel where it is marked, which is significant and therefore has to be explained.

There are nine examples in the Cambrai Homily where length is expressed orthographically. The *fada* only appears twice; *ticsál* (245.10) and *bán* (247.2). It is quite important to stress that there is no difference in the manuscript between a *fada* and an abbreviation marker. This must be a side-effect of the scribe not knowing Irish and therefore not recognizing a word in an abbreviated form. There are not many abbreviations in the Irish part of the homily. *Ihū* for *ihesu* (244.22) is an abbreviation in Latin as well. In the Irish we only have *erñ* for *ernail* (246.5). Furthermore, the ligature <&> is sometimes used for the combination /et/, as in *mab&* for *mabeth* (245.34). From these facts we can conclude several things. a) the original contained the *fada*, b) the original contained abbreviations. We cannot say if abbreviation markers and the *fada* were identical in the

<sup>52</sup> Schwas are ignored in this table, since they are not in the extremities of long : short. This means that the short vowels in this table are /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/. Diphthongs and glide vowels are disregarded for this reason as well. All these vowels can be found in Appendix I.

<sup>53</sup> I will discuss these two examples in detail later on.

original.

Doubling of vowels appears nine times; *ood, ee, duun, bees, duun, baan, reet, dee, chrust*. In all these cases the doubled vowel is long. The last example needs some explanation. The *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus* takes *chrust* to be a scribal error for *chriist*, which must be correct as it is a very understandable mistake to make, for the *u* can resemble *ii* in the insular script sometimes. On the other hand, the scribe of CH writes very clearly and in his hand the *u* can be distinguished from *ii* quite easily. A look at the manuscript shows that the reading *chrust* is not all that clear as well; a small stain covers the bottom part of the two strokes and, in fact, I am not sure if it really reads *u* or *ii*. Fortunately, both readings would lead to the same conclusion, which is that it must stand for *Chriist*, whether this is the actual reading of the manuscript or not.

Very few long vowels have been marked in the *prima manus* of the Würzburg Glosses. Length is only marked by doubling in one example, i.e. *soos* (Wb 20a8, OI. *súas*), glossing the Latin *sursum*. In other cases like *mar* (Wb 18a5, OI. *már/mór*), long vowels are unmarked. Very interesting is that the scribe of the *prima manus* must have known the practice of marking a vowel with a *fada* to show vowel length, since he placed a small stroke on every gloss in Old Irish to identify it as Irish as opposed to Latin, and 'he took care to locate the strokes above consonants, as if aware that placing them above vowels might cause them to be confused with acute accents. This hypothesis, if correct, would imply that he was aware of the function of accent marks, but perhaps did not wish to use them because they were not present in his exemplar.'<sup>54</sup>

A particular interesting case is *haecosc* (Wb 27d17) for Classical Old Irish *écoscc* (Wb 6<sup>d</sup>6), where the length indication is parallel to the Latin orthography of /ē/.<sup>55</sup> When Classical Latin /ae/ became /ē/, the orthography did not change so /ē/ was still represented as <ae>. Combining this fact with the lack of other length indication in the *prima manus* leads to the conclusion that this text uses Latin conventions more than it uses specifically 'Old Irish' conventions like doubling and the *fada*, and that this was a conscious decision.

*Dronei* (Wb 22b18), glossing the Latin *turpitude*, must be interpreted as *droch-gné*, 'vile practices', and it therefore spells /ē/ as <ei>. This is unique in these early Old Irish manuscripts, although it is known from Classical Old Irish, as a compensatory lengthened /ē/ sometimes is spelled as <ei> in Wb. In other sources there are 'only isolated examples of this spelling, such as

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<sup>54</sup> Ó Néill 2002: 231.

<sup>55</sup> Also, an <h> is spelled where there is no /h/ in pronunciation. This also is a typical Latin influence on Irish orthography; see GOI 19-20, Schrijver 1997: 222.

*chéitbada* (gen. sg.) Ml. 98B5.<sup>56</sup> The example *dronei* however, is a defective spelling, so I do not count <ei> for /ē/ as an orthographical convention.

I will now return to the question that was formulated earlier, i.e. why the Irish scribes thought length indication was needed. After all, if someone knows the language, they will know what vowel quantity to pronounce, whether this is indicated by spelling or not. Thinking back on the First Grammatical Treatise in Old Norse, this problem is dealt with as well; '...there is another distinction in the vowels (...). This is a distinction which changes the meaning, according to whether the letter is long or short, just as the Greeks write a long letter with one shape and a short one with another. They write short *e* so: ε, and the long *e* so; η ; they write short *o* this way; o, and long *o* this way; ω. I, too, wish to make this distinction because it changes the meaning (...) and I shall mark the long ones with a stroke to distinguish them from the short: *far, fār; ramr, rámr...*<sup>57</sup> The First Grammarian chooses the same convention to denote length as the Irish. Even though he is very clear on how Old Norse should be spelled, his convention is not consistently followed by the Old Norse scribes themselves.<sup>58</sup> This could be a parallel with the Irish, maybe they knew they should denote length, whether with doubling or with a *fada*, but for some reason they fail to use this 'rule' consistently.

Not unimportantly, as we have seen, the system of vowel length in Irish was quite different from the one in Latin, since in the latter it had become dependent on stress, whereas in Irish unstressed long vowels existed in abundance; *cenél, ticsál*, etc. Long vowels were always stressed in British Latin and they only occurred in open syllables. This means that the Irish scribes were used to unmarked long vowels in stressed position in an open syllable, and knew that a vowel in this position could either be interpreted as being long or short. However, long vowels did occur in other positions in Old Irish and therefore, long vowels in unstressed position or in open syllables in stressed position in Irish had more reason to be marked, because they would be pronounced short automatically by someone used to Latin orthography.

Stressed long vowels in open syllables need not be marked in British Latin and therefore, the Irish stressed long vowels in open syllables did not have to be marked either. If this hypothesis is true, we should expect to find the following:

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<sup>56</sup> GOI 37.

<sup>57</sup> Haugen 1972: 19.

<sup>58</sup> Haugen 1972: 39.

Fig. 2: Latin vowel length only occurred in the first category, meaning 2-4 must have a tendency to be marked in Irish.

long stressed vowel	in open syllable (1)	→	unmarked
	in closed syllable (2)	→	marked
long unstressed vowel	in open syllable (3)	→	marked
	in closed syllable (4)	→	marked

If this hypothesis turns out to be true, length marking was conscious decision, contrasting with the earlier view that the Early Old Irish scribes were only experimenting and that there was no logic behind their actions. It does not, however, explain why some long vowels are not marked, because a scribe could always make an (subconscious?) decision not to mark a long vowel, like in WbI. This hypothesis may explain why they did decide to mark some long vowels.

In Appendix I, each lemma in the Cambrai Homily has received a number, corresponding to the category to which it belongs (so 1 for a long vowel in stressed position in an open syllable, etc., as in fig. 2). From this we see the following:

- cat. 1: 33 unmarked, 2 marked
- cat. 2: 11 unmarked, 8 marked
- cat. 3: 6 unmarked, 0 marked
- cat. 4: 2 unmarked, 1 marked

This shows that nine out of eleven examples of marked length are to be classified as category 2 and two are from category 1. These last two should not have been marked according to this hypothesis.

If we include the marked long vowels from GP, we see that this tendency to mark categories 2, 3 and 4 is present there as well. The doubled IV.76 L *mleen* (2) and II.18 P *criib* (2) do not fall in the first category.

WbI is not really suitable to test this hypothesis, since the scribe consciously made the decision to stay with the Latin conventions as much as possible, even though two long vowels are marked in an 'Irish' way. These last two, *dronei* (4)<sup>59</sup> and *soos* (2), are marked according to this hypothesis. There are, however, many unmarked vowels from category 2, 3 or 4.<sup>60</sup> 13 out of 29 unmarked long vowels are from category 1.

Even though the data are not conclusive, the tendency to mark long vowels in categories 2, 3

<sup>59</sup> This example is doubtful because of its defective spelling.

<sup>60</sup> See Appendix I.

and 4 is clearly visible. Since it is a tendency and not a set rule, it is not unexpected that there are unmarked long vowels that should have been marked according to this model, for the scribes could always decide not to mark a long vowel, as the *prima manus* appears to have done, and the scribe of the Cambrai Homily appears to have done in some cases. This tendency can explain why some long vowels were marked, not why other are unmarked. I can imagine that when scribes became more comfortable in writing in Irish instead of Latin, length marking spread and they began to spell length in stressed position in open syllables as well. Perhaps we are witnessing the beginning of this process in these early sources, since older sources are lost to us. For clarification, all numbers dealing with this hypothesis can be found in fig. 3.

Fig. 3:

Should have been marked but are unmarked:	32 <sup>61</sup>
Should have been marked and are marked:	12 <sup>62</sup>
Should have been unmarked but are marked:	3 <sup>63</sup>
Should have been unmarked and are unmarked:	49 <sup>64</sup>

### 2.2.2 Doubling and the fada; the data

We are left with two conventions of marking long vowels that were used side by side. In other languages, different conventions are mostly used by different authors or different scribes, therefore the convention can change with the scribe or author. In the Early Old Irish sources this does not seem to be the case, as the *fada* and doubling are used by the same scribe in the same text. This gives the impression that there might be, in fact, a difference between the two conventions. Possibly they somehow represent a different pronunciation. In GOI, Thurneysen carefully suggests this as well; 'In archaic texts, and also in Arm., length in vowels may be shown by doubling (...). In Wb. also doubling is frequent, but (...) is restricted to long final syllables (...). On the other hand, spellings like *licthe* 'saved' *a chéele* 'his fellow', are quite exceptional. This restriction shows that doubling is intended to express something more than mere length, perhaps a pronunciation bordering on disyllabic in certain positions of the word in its clause or in slow speech. Words in which vowels formerly constituting two syllables have become monosyllabic by contraction show

<sup>61</sup> 19 (CH), ? (GP), 13 (WbI).

<sup>62</sup> 7 (CH), 3 (GP), 2 (WbI).

<sup>63</sup> 2 (CH), 1 (GP).

<sup>64</sup> 33 (CH), ? (GP), 16 (WbI).

similar fluctuation in spelling.<sup>65</sup>

As far as I know, no other scholars have commented on Thurneysen's careful statement, nor have there been any other explanations. Therefore, it might be very interesting to have a systematic look at the examples of doubling in the corpus and see if a reason for doubled vowels having a different pronunciation than vowels marked by a *fada* can be found.

Below is a list of the examples of doubling in the earliest sources and these will be discussed in 2.2.3. With every lemma the pronunciation, etymology and other relevant information will be given.

*Wurzbürg, prima manus (WbI)*

<i>soos</i> Wb 20a8	'above'	/sōs/	< *sōs	OI <i>suas</i>
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*Cambrai Homily (CH)*

<i>baan(martre)</i> <sup>66</sup>	'white'	/bān/	< *bānoh	OI <i>bán</i>
<i>bees</i> 245.33-4	'usage'	/b'ēs/	< *bēsu	OI <i>bés</i>
<i>chriist</i> 245.14	'Christ'	/x'r'īst/	< Lat. <i>Christus</i>	OI <i>Chríst</i>
<i>dee</i> 247.15	'of god'	/d'ē/	< *dēwi	OI <i>dé</i>
<i>duun</i> 245.11/246.3 <sup>67</sup>	'to us'	/dūn:/	< *duni <sup>68</sup>	OI <i>dúnn</i>
<i>ee</i> 245.6	'it'	/ē/	< *ē <sup>69</sup>	OI <i>é</i>
<i>ood</i> 244.15	'from him'	/ōđ/	< *ōđon	OI <i>úad</i>
<i>reet</i> 247.3 <sup>70</sup>	'thing'	/r'ēd/	< *rēdun	OI <i>rét</i>

<sup>65</sup> GOI 19-20.

<sup>66</sup> 246:30. The form *bán* with a *fada* can be found in the CH as well; 247:1.

<sup>67</sup> Note that in Thes. Pal. 245:11 *duun* is changed to *dúnn*. The form *dunn* is found in the Cambrai Homily as well in 245:7. Interestingly enough, Stokes and Strachan changed *duun* into *dúun* in 246:3. This seems to be an editing mistake to me. A look at the manuscript itself does affirm the *lectio codicis* as the scribe makes an obvious distinction between *u* and *n*, which is not always the case in the insular script. If the exemplar of the Cambrai Homily did not make a clear distinction, it could be that the scribe of the Cambrai Homily copied *u* instead of *n*. This could be the reason for Stokes and Strachan to adapt the original manuscript reading to *dunn*, but it does not explain why they left *dúun*. They probably added the *fada* to match the convention of Wb and BA by adding a *fada* to a doubled vowel. Later in this chapter I will discuss this convention and I will explain why it is not a convention that we use to correct other orthographical conventions. Taking the original manuscript form to be correct, which is maybe a dangerous thing to do with a manuscript that was copied by a non-Irish speaker, I will use the original reading here. However, this example shall be used with caution.

<sup>68</sup> This form must have suffered some analogy.

<sup>69</sup> Either from \**es* or \**eis* (Schrijver 1997:53).

<sup>70</sup> Stokes and Strachan have changed this form to *réet*, so they added a *fada* once more.

*Glosses on Philargyrius (GP)*

There is no indication of length, apart from some dubious examples of doubling.

*Criib* II.18 P ? /c'r'īd'/ ? ?

Lambert emends this to *criid*.

*gaau* X.60 'spears' /ga.u'/? < \*gaiuhūh<sup>71</sup> OI *gau*

Lambert's edition has *gu*. I cannot confirm this reading because I have not seen the manuscript, but even if it reads *gaau*, this example is not useable for vowel length because etymologically it should either be disyllabic or a diphthong.

*geel* V.39 L

Thes. Pal. I reads: '*gehel cae* in P., leg. *gel-scé*.' This means that the doubling is an error here and it will be disregarded in this study.

*mleen* VI.76 L 'groin' /m'l'ēn/ < \*mlakn- (?)<sup>72</sup> OI *blén*

*nelii* IX 36 P, leg. *nelu*

*Book of Armagh (BA)*

The *fada* is used extensively in the Irish material in the Book of Armagh. However, there are also some examples of doubling to be found. The BA uses a combination of the *fada* and doubling, for example in *nii* and *attáa*.<sup>73</sup>

Notes in the Book of Armagh

<i>attáa</i> (240.24)	'it is'	/attā/	< *attā	OI <i>attá</i>
<i>chuúrsagad</i> (242.11)	'reproaching'	/chúrsəγəd/	< Lat. <i>curas agere</i>	OI <i>cúrsagad</i>
<i>dee</i> (259.10)	'of God'	/de:e/	< *d'ēw'i	OI <i>dé</i>
<i>dóo</i> (242.21)	'to him'	/dō/	< *to-o <sup>74</sup>	OI <i>dó</i>
<i>duchooid</i> (241.11)	'who has gone'	/duchōd'/	< *tocomwād'e	OI <i>do-coïd, do-cuaid</i>
<i>imdídnaad</i> (241.13) <sup>75</sup>	'releasing'	/imdīdnəd'/	< *amb'i-d'ī-donadu	OI <i>imdídnad !!</i>
<i>nii</i> (241.1)	'not'	/n'ī/	< *n'īh	OI <i>ní</i>
<i>poolire</i> (241.17)	'tablets'	/pōlār'e/	< Lat. <i>pugillare</i>	OI <i>pól(a)ire</i>

<sup>71</sup> Schrijver 1995:384.

<sup>72</sup> GOI 78.

<sup>73</sup> Stokes and Strachan altered some of the readings in the CH to this construction as well; *duun* > *dúun* and *reet* > *réet*. However, since this does not occur in the manuscript itself, I will ignore their editorial change here.

<sup>74</sup> Schrijver 1995:59.

<sup>75</sup> 241:13. This doubling does not represent a long vowel but a schwa, see chapter 3.

<i>pool</i> (241.18)	'Pól'	/pōl/	< Lat. <i>Paulus</i>	OI <i>Pól</i>
<i>thoorund</i> (242.6)	'to mark out'	/thōrānd/	< * <i>tohorind</i> - <sup>76</sup>	OI <i>thórann</i>

Where doubling is used to denote hiatus:

<i>feec</i> <sup>77</sup>	'raven'	/f'e.ex/	< * <i>fehaxoh</i>	OI <i>fiach</i>
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Names of persons and places

<i>Aii</i> (262.2)		/ai:/		OI <i>Aí</i>
<i>Aloo</i> (271.34)		/alō/		?
<i>boóin</i> (264.29)		/bōn'/		OI <i>bóin</i>
<i>Boonrigi</i> (269.15)		/bōnr'əy'i/		?
<i>Coonu</i> (266.44)		/cōnu/		OI <i>cónu</i>
<i>Neel</i> (263.33)		/Nēl/		OI <i>Níall</i>

Since this collection of examples is quite meagre, it seems useful to use later examples of doubling as well. All the examples of doubling in the two other strata of the Würzburg Glosses are in Appendix I, firstly the doubling to denote length and secondly the doubling to denote hiatus.

### 2.2.3 Discussion

A quick look at the data instantly shows that there is one big difference in the use of doubling in CH/GP/WbI and BA/Wb, namely, combinations between the *fada* and doubling are numerous in the latter. It seems highly artificial to me, as it does not seem to matter on which of the two vowels the *fada* is placed. I suspect they reflect a confusion, or a convention to deal with confusing orthography, which arose because of two different conventions to spell long vowels. A long vowel could either be spelled by doubling or by marking it with a *fada*, and the length could even be ignored and not spelled at all. So if a scribe wanted to write a long vowel, there were three options and there does not seem to be a difference at all. A scribe had to make this choice every time he encountered a long vowel, so it is not shocking that he asked himself the same question as we did earlier, 'why are there three ways to spell a long vowel if there is no difference in pronunciation?', leading to a combination of these two conventions.<sup>78</sup> Adding to the confusion is

<sup>76</sup> Pedersen 1913: 603.

<sup>77</sup> 259.31, 259.39, 260.9.

<sup>78</sup> This combination is also used in *maá* 'greater, more' in the Computus material. Bisagni and Warntjes also suggest that this convention 'must be a compromise between the old and the new way of indicating a long vowel.' Bisagni and Warntjes 2008: 103.

that there is no difference in spelling hiatus and long vowels when a long vowel is doubled, even though hiatus was almost always expressed in spelling and length did not have to be, as we saw earlier. When we compare the orthography of hiatus and long vowels in Wb and BA, we can see that the combination of a *fada* and doubling occurs often in examples where doubling is used to denote length. This probably means that scribes added a *fada* to doubled vowels to make it perfectly clear that these words contained a long vowel, and that they should not be pronounced with hiatus. This also means that if there ever was a phonological difference between doubling and the *fada*, BA and Wb cannot be used as conclusive evidence, since the scribes clearly thought they meant the same thing. However, since the scribes of Wb and BA may have used sources where this confusion had not yet arisen, there may be some traces of the original system to be found in these two sources.

Therefore, WbI, CH and GP deserve an isolated analysis. Unfortunately, these three sources only offer us only ten trustworthy examples<sup>79</sup> of doubling. This is why I cannot disregard the evidence from Wb and BA altogether, as it can be useful as secondary evidence to confirm or discard hypotheses that arise from the evidence from these sources. Even though the examples of doubling are scarce, there are some elements which I deem noteworthy and will be explored now.

There are a few hypotheses that come to mind about why long vowels may have sounded different;

- 1) The etymology; doubled vowels have a different etymology than vowels spelled with a *fada*.
- 2) If the vowel is stressed it is spelled by doubling, if it is unstressed, it is spelled with a *fada*.<sup>80</sup>

- 1) The etymology; doubled vowels have a different etymology than vowels spelled with a *fada*.

This hypothesis continues Thurneysen's suggestion that a doubled vowel may have been pronounced longer than a regular long vowel. As Thurneysen mentions later on, there might have been an intermediate quantity: '... only two quantities, long and short. According to later bardic teaching there was also an intermediate quantity (*síneadh meadhónach*). This may have already existed in Old Irish in cases where the mark of length appears only sporadically. But no definite conclusion can be reached for our period.<sup>81</sup> Maybe the vowels with a *fada* were pronounced with this intermediate quality? If there ever was such a difference in pronunciation, it must have disappeared quite early, as the confusion between doubling and the *fada* is already present in BA.

<sup>79</sup> I use only these ten examples because the other examples are just too obscure to use as evidence. These are; *criib*, *nelii*, *gaau* and *geel* from GP. It is unclear what the underlying form of *criib* is, so we cannot know the pronunciation nor the etymology. *Geel* does not contain a long vowel, nor does *gaau* (it is either disyllabic or a diphthong) even though their vowels are doubled. *Nelii* must be read as *nelu*.

<sup>80</sup> Note that every word can still also be written without any length indication without problems in Old-Irish.

<sup>81</sup> GOI 31.

To prove this hypothesis, it must be proven that the ten trustworthy examples are pronounced longer than vowels with a *fada*, so maybe they came from hiatus, or from multiple syllables that were contracted to one. Or is there another possibility that the vowel had more than regular vowel length? In the next table the development of these examples can be traced from Proto-Celtic to Classical Old Irish.

Fig 4: Developments from Proto-Celtic up to Classical Old Irish

Reconstruction	Soundlaw(s)	Attested form	Soundlaw(s)	Classical Old Irish
* <i>sōs</i>		<i>soos</i>	$\bar{o} > ua$	<i>suas</i>
* <i>bānos</i>	Apocope	<i>baan</i>		<i>bán</i>
* <i>banssu</i>	Apocope, compensatory lengthening	<i>bees</i>		<i>bés</i>
Lat. <i>Christus</i>	Apocope	<i>chriist</i>		<i>Chríst</i>
* <i>dēwi</i>	Apocope, loss of /w/	<i>dee</i>		<i>dé</i>
* <i>do-sni</i>	Raising, compensatory lengthening	<i>duun</i>		<i>dúnn</i>
* <i>eis</i>	* <i>ei</i> > * <i>ē</i> , * <i>s</i> > * <i>h</i> > $\emptyset$	<i>ee</i>		<i>é</i>
* <i>aw-d-</i>	* <i>aw</i> > $\bar{o}$	<i>ood</i>	$\bar{o} > ua$	<i>úad</i>
* <i>rentum</i>	Apocope, compensatory lengthening	<i>reet</i>		<i>rét</i>
* <i>mlakn-(?)</i>	Compensatory lengthening	<i>mleen</i>	?	<i>blén</i>

In the case of *soos* and *ood*, we could say that the change to the diphthong had already happened, or was still happening, by the time of WbI. A diphthong, in contrast with a regular long vowel, is pronounced as two sounds in one syllable. The Greek word *δίφθογγος* literally means 'two sounds'. Perhaps this may have triggered a double spelling, so it may represent the development where /o/ became /úa/. By the time of Old Irish the preposition *ó* still sometimes appears as /úa/ and

it has forms with /ua/, which may mean that the Old Irish speaker was well aware of the connection between the two. There even are some examples of an intermediate stage between /o/ and /ua/; *óas* and *tóare*.<sup>82</sup> This confirms that there was an intermediate stage where the /o/ sound was still intact but already had turned into a diphthong, maybe /oa/.

*Bees*, *reet* and *mleen* are interesting examples where an explanation for the doubling is more difficult to find. In the cases of *reet* and *bees*, the long vowel comes from the loss of the nasal before a voiceless consonant, in the case of *mleen*, the loss of the velar before a nasal triggered the lengthening of the vowel. I see no way to argue how this long vowel might have sounded longer than a regular long vowel in Old Irish, but it is clear that it must have sounded differently, as sound laws affect compensatory lengthened /ē/ differently; it never turns to /ia/, and it is sometimes spelled as <éi>.<sup>83</sup> The speakers of Old Irish could not have known that this /ē/ had a different etymological background, so except for a difference in pronunciation, there is no good reason why the vowel would be treated differently. And if it sounded differently, why not spell it differently as well?

However, there are three examples where the vowel was already long in Insular Celtic and is still long in Classical Old Irish, i.e. *baan*, *ee* and *dee*. And to add to the counterevidence, /bān/ appears as *bán* next to *baan* in CH. In Wb, the distribution between original long vowels and non-original long vowels is roughly fifty-fifty, see Appendix I.

Thurneysen's suggestion that doubled vowels may represent longer than regular vowel length was cautiously formulated, as it was not possible for him to examine the evidence this closely. In my opinion, it has hereby been refuted. The etymology of the examples is just too different, and even if we really want to look for every small aspect of the etymology that could point to a different pronunciation, exactly the same can be done for examples with a *fada*.

Furthermore, there is no other evidence for a third quantity in vowels. Thurneysen's suggestion that a third quantity could explain why some vowels are unmarked and some are marked, is obviously incorrect, as the choice of marking a vowel in Early Old Irish depended on stress and whether the syllable was closed or open (see chapter 1.2.1) in the early sources, and in later sources the decision to mark a long vowel seems to be arbitrary.

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<sup>82</sup> GOI 40. Similarly; CH's *dea* for *día* < \**dē*.

<sup>83</sup> GOI 37.

2) If the vowel is stressed it is spelled by doubling, if it is unstressed, it is spelled with a *fada*.

Stress in Old Irish was normally on the first syllable of the word, or on the first syllable after the preverb since preverbs don't take full stress. We can see that stress was quite extreme in Irish, as the consequences of a shift in stress were considerable; *dobeir* with the stress on *-beir* became *tabair* when stress shifted to the first syllable. If stress had such an effect on a syllable, perhaps this also meant a difference in the pronunciation of long vowels, depending on the stress?

Since most monosyllables are stressed and the examples with doubling in the eighth century sources are all monosyllabic, the hypothesis arises that doubling was perhaps used to denote length in stressed position and the *fada* to denote length in unstressed position. This would explain a difference between doubling and the *fada* through a difference in pronunciation, but this difference would have been so small that devising two different orthographical conventions seems redundant.

However, if one thinks back to the Latin long vowels, this hypothesis gets more interesting. As was explained above (1.2.1), whether long vowels are marked is influenced by position. If the long vowel is in unstressed position, or in stressed position in a closed syllable, it may receive marking, in the form of a *fada* or doubling. What if stressed vowels in closed syllables (2) were marked with one orthographical convention, and unstressed vowels, either in open (3) or closed (4) syllables, were marked with the other?

This would mean that the *fada* was used to mark long unstressed vowels (3 and 4). Doubling on the other hand may be a way to indicate length in stressed long vowels in closed syllables (2).

CH *ticsál* (4) might confirm this theory, but *bán(martre)* (2) does not.

If we look at BA and Wb however, only seven examples (*Aloo*, *chenéel*, *épéer*, *gabáal*, *indocbáal*, *thinóol* and *tintúuth*) out of 84 show length in unstressed position by doubling. This is only eight percent. Also, Thurneysen called spellings where doubling was used to denote length in non-final syllables 'quite exceptional', as he says that doubling, in Wb, is restricted to long final syllables. If we translate this to precise numbers, we see that all examples of doubling in CH/WbI/GP, 10/16 in BA and 61/70 in Wb are in long final syllables, which can be no coincidence. This means that a few of these are unstressed long final syllables, which is not in accordance with the theory that the length marking depends on stress because some of these long final syllables are unstressed. Also, once again, two examples of the *fada* contradict this: *bán* and *ticsál*.

It may seem unlikely that for such a small phonetical difference two entirely different orthographical conventions were developed. And even though doubling in the later sources is used more in stressed position than in unstressed position, two examples of the *fada* we have in the

earliest Irish sources refute such a hypothesis, which is quite significant with so few examples of the *fada* in those texts: only 3 examples of the *fada* in 3 texts. It can be no coincidence that out of all these examples of doubling, 89,1% is in a monosyllable or final syllable, just as Thurneysen mentioned, but since there are examples of the *fada* in the same position, I suspect this is not a feature of the pronunciation of doubled vowels, but it may just be a feature of Old Irish vowel length, appearing mostly in monosyllables or final syllables.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

The earliest scribes who wrote in the Irish language were so used to writing in Latin, that they may not have seen a reason to mark stressed long vowels in open syllables. Latin did not mark those, so why should they? However, long vowels in Irish occurred in other positions as well, so to make sure the reader understood that these vowels should be pronounced long, in most cases these vowels were marked, either by doubling or by a *fada*. After a while a process started that can be witnessed in the Cambrai Homily already, where length indication spread to the stressed long vowels in open syllables as well. This process was completed in the Classical Old Irish period, where the position of the long vowel in the word was no factor in length indication anymore. Consistent length marking came in use only when Irish spelling was standardized.

It seems that there was no difference in pronunciation between a long vowel marked by doubling or by a *fada*. Why would there then be two conventions to spell vowel length? I think this is a question that cannot be answered with certainty, because of the lack of sources but also because we cannot know exactly what went on in the mind of the medieval scholar who wrote the first Irish words in the Latin alphabet.

There is an explanation that might fit, but there is no way to prove it. It is not unthinkable that different persons had the idea of putting the Irish language in the shape of Latin letters, isolated from one another, and devised their own convention on how to write long vowels. We must remember that the earliest manuscripts with Irish text we have are from a wide range of locations. Only the Book of Armagh was written in Ireland, the rest of the manuscripts were all written in different monasteries on the continent. One scholar may have solved the problem on how to mark long vowels by doubling the vowel, another by placing a *fada* on the vowel. As the Irish monks spread through Ireland and the continent, these two conventions could have spread as well and were both adapted as accepted ways to mark long vowels.

This explanation is just speculation on why two distinct orthographical conventions were

adopted by Old Irish scribes. It is *ad hoc* and we would expect more aspects of orthography showing two or more conventions if there were more scholars who put the Old Irish language on paper first, isolated from each other. However, maybe these are still to be found in other peculiarities of early Old Irish spelling, such as the spelling of voiceless stops and spirants?

For the moment, it seems that there is no difference in pronunciation between a doubled vowel and a vowel with a *fada*, nor does there seem to be a distribution between the two. Indicating length was, however, not a random occurrence but it depended on the position of the long vowel.

### Chapter III: The spelling of schwa /ə/

#### 3.1 The orthographical conventions of Ogam Irish, Classical Old Irish and British Latin

##### 3.1.1 Ogam Irish

Unstressed non-final short vowels had not yet merged to /ə/ in the Primitive Irish period,<sup>84</sup> which is globally the period in which we find the Ogam inscriptions.<sup>85</sup> This means that the Ogam inscriptions retain the original vowels in unstressed non-final position; 118 VEQREQ for *fiachrach* /f'iaxrəx/.<sup>86</sup> The following example has I for /e/ in schwa position; QRIMITIR for *cruimther* /crum'θ'ər/ (< British Latin \*premiter < Lat. presbyter),<sup>87</sup> but it might not represent a schwa, and even if it did, it happens so occasionally that it is negligible. Thus, it seems that there was no fixed orthographical convention to express a schwa in Ogam.

##### 3.1.2 Classical Old Irish

The following system of spelling schwa can be seen in the Old Irish sources, where there are four graphemes to spell this phoneme;

/CəC/	<CaC>	<i>peccad</i> (Ml 49 <sup>c</sup> 9) /p'ekəd/
/C'əC/	<C'eC>	<i>aimser</i> (Ml. 24 <sup>d</sup> 9) /am's'ər/
/C'əC'/	<C'iC'>	<i>ro-fitir</i> (Wb 18 <sup>d</sup> 6) /rəf'id'ər'/
/CəC'/	<CaiC'>	<i>briathraib</i> (Sg 216a1) /b'r'iaθrəβ'/
	<CiC'>	<i>eclis</i> (Wb 16d6) /egləs'/

Stifter adds, 'In the vicinity of labial sounds (*m, b, p*) schwa can be represented by *o* or *u*, e.g., the personal name *Conchobor*.<sup>88</sup>

According to McCone, /ə/ had several allophones, depending on the quality of these consonants, as the spelling of /ə/ differs greatly depending on the quality of these consonants. He must be right, and I deem it only logical that the schwa in a labial environment (/m, b, p/) was a separate allophone as well, as it also receives a significant orthographical treatment.

The phonetics of the schwa are, according to McCone:<sup>89</sup>

/CəC/ = [a]	/C'əC'/ = [ɪ]
/C'əC/ = [e]	/CəC'/ = [ɪ]

<sup>84</sup> McCone 1996: 135-6.

<sup>85</sup> McManus 1996: 120.

<sup>86</sup> McManus 1996: 120.

<sup>87</sup> Idem 120.

<sup>88</sup> Stifter 2006: 22.

<sup>89</sup> McCone 1996: 135.

### 3.1.3 British Latin

A phonetical schwa had developed in British Latin, for example, some nominal endings had collapsed to a schwa. However, it seems that this schwa was not a phoneme as it is in Irish and since phonemes and phonetics do not behave the same in orthography. The orthographical convention of phonetic [ə] in Latin cannot be compared with the orthographical convention of phonemic /ə/ in Irish.

In conclusion, there was no Latin orthographical convention to spell /ə/, nor was there a convention in Ogam, so the scribes of Early Old Irish had to devise one themselves.

### 3.2 The data of Early Old Irish

All the instances of schwa<sup>90</sup> in this corpus can be found in Appendix II. With every lemma, the spelling of /ə/ and the quality of the surrounding consonants is given (so, CaC or CiC' etc.). When the etymology of the lemma is known, the original vowel and the etymology are given in the next columns. If the etymological vowel comes from anaptyxis, the vowel is given as ə. The etymologies of the names in the BA are often unknown. Sometimes an interpretation is given, which comes from Uhlich's *Die Morphologie der komponierten Personennamen des Altirischen*. The reconstructions of those interpretations are from the *Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*.<sup>91</sup>

The spelling is regularly ambiguous. For example, *foditu* could either be /fod'ət'u/, /fodət'u/, /fodətu/ or /fod'ətu/. If the Old Irish spelling is known, we can deduce the quality of the consonants from Old Irish spelling. Using the same example, we see other instances of this word spelled as *fodaitiu* (Sg 137<sup>b</sup>10) and *foditiu* (Wb 30<sup>c</sup>23), meaning the <d> is neutral and the <t> is palatal, and the spelling of *foditu* can be therefore described as CiC', assuming the quality of the consonants was stable.

If we know the etymology, we can, again, deduce the quality of the consonants. Also, we can see if the spelling follows Classical Old Irish orthography, if it retains an original vowel or if a non-etymological spelling is used.

However, if neither the Old Irish spelling nor the etymology is known, and in some cases the meaning of the word is not even clear, there is no way to decide the quality of the consonants and therefore those examples shall not be used. These lemma can be recognised by the '?' in the third column.

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<sup>90</sup> All short vowels in unstressed non-final position, except sometimes /u/. The <u> is taken up in this Appendix if it is spelled for a schwa, which becomes clear from the etymology or from Classical Old Irish spellings.

<sup>91</sup> Matasović (2009).

Every source will be individually discussed in the following sections. The spellings that follow the Classical Old Irish conventions will not be discussed. The data are discussed in unison in chapter 3.3.

### 3.2.1 *The prima manus of the Würzburg glosses*

The Classical Old Irish convention:

CaC	6		
C'iC'	4		
CaiC'	3	CiC'	5
C'eC	4		

Deviations from this pattern:

CeC	3	CoC	4
C'iC	1		
C'eC'	1		
CaC'	4		

There are some exceptional spellings. Firstly, C'iC will be discussed. The lemma in question is Wb 22d10 *aithirgabú*, for Classical Old Irish *aithergabu* or *athargabu*. Pedersen notes it as a compound in *aith-for-*,<sup>92</sup> coming from *\*ate-wor-gab-*, meaning the etymological vowel is /o/ and *aithirgabú* is therefore obviously not an etymological spelling. This spelling is quite a peculiar example and I have no logical explanation for this spelling.

*Praidchas* from Latin *praedīcare* is unclear. The consonant cluster should be palatal in accordance with the Latin form, but from other attestations<sup>93</sup> we can see that the cluster is always spelled as being neutral in the Classical Old Irish period. It is possible that this older form could retain an original palatal consonant cluster, denoted by the glide vowel <i>, but then we would expect C'eC as a schwa spelling, not C'aC. This <i> could also be spelled by analogy with the Latin <ae>, meaning the cluster is not palatal at all.

The spelling CaC' appears relatively often, in the forms Wb17c4a *m'anam* (OI *m'anim/ainim*<sup>94</sup>), Wb 18a25 *cenathe* (hapax)<sup>95</sup> and perhaps Wb 22b18 *enchache* (OI *engaige*?) and

<sup>92</sup> Pedersen 1913: 529.

<sup>93</sup> DIL s.v. *pridchaid*.

<sup>94</sup> This form appears as *anaim* and *ainim* side by side in Old Irish: Wb 3d11 *ainim* and *anaim* Ml 116b9. I take it this form *anam* must have been parallel to *anaim*, but it might be that the *n* is palatal in this form. There is no way to be sure.

<sup>95</sup> Wb 18a25 *cenathe* 'absent' is a curious word. It glosses Latin *absens* so the meaning is quite clear, however, this

Wb 19d13 *sabati* (OI *sabaiti*?). All these forms (except possibly *enchache*, as there is no etymology) retain original /a/, which must be the reason for these strange spellings. This will be further discussed in section 3.3.2.

Wb 15b21 *toirsech* has C'eC', as it must be a plural form: *nitam toirsech* 'we are not distressed', for OI *toirsig* or *toirsich* (as in Wb 26d21). It therefore retains the original vowel /e/.

Wb 17d1 *Cetarcoti* < \*c'eθrukod-id'ejo<sup>96</sup> contains original /o/.

The lemmata with CeC are Wb 9b15 *esbetu* (OI *esbatu*), Wb 24c11 *fresdel* (OI *frestal*), Wb 9c5 *fugell* (OI *fugall*) and Wb 13d24 *roslogeth* (OI *ro-slogad*). *Esbetu* is not an etymological spelling, as it is a derivation of *esba(e)* 'uselessness'. *Fresdel* is the verbal noun of *fris-indlea*, which is a derivation of *-indell-*, so this <e> goes back to an original /e/. *Fugell* also has original <e> since it is a verbal noun of *fo-gella*. *Roslogeth* <\*roslogeθ'i also retains original <e>, just as it retains original /θ/ for OI /ð/.

The lemmata with CoC are Wb15b22 *frisbrudemor* (OI *fris-brudemar*) Wb 15b23 *dergemorni* (OI *dergemar-ni*), Wb 17b23 *folog* (OI *fulach*) and Wb 7a5a *tuercomlassat* (OI *dercomlassat*).

The <o> in *frisbrudemor* is interesting. Thes. Pal. notes that the deponent ending is a 'literal and unidiomatic translation of the Latin deponent.' Another deponent form in WbI is *dergemorni*, also an active verb with a deponent ending, influenced by the Latin, and also spelled *-mor*. Once again, Thurneysen bases his reconstruction of the first person plural deponent ending on these two forms and says that these forms 'doubtlessly preserve the earlier vocalism'.<sup>97</sup> The reconstruction \*-*moro* is supported by other evidence as well (for example the Latin ending *-mur*).<sup>98</sup> These two forms therefore retain an original /o/. However, Wb 15c20 *laimirsni*, also a deponent form, does not retain the old deponent ending *-mor*. Thurneysen explains the form of the first person plural absolute of

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word is not known from other Irish sources. DIL has it as a compound of *cen* 'without' and *aithe* 'recompense', which does not make semantic sense to me. Perhaps it is the same word as Sg. 213b6; *cenadid* (glosses *absque*), in which case it might be a hapax: *cen(ae)* 'without (it)' + adjectival suffix *-de*. In both scenarios, <th> should be palatal. (Griffith: personal communication)

<sup>96</sup> Wb 17d1 *cetarcoti* 'forty' is also a mysterious form and the exact quality of the second <ɾ> is unknown, which is crucial to see if we are dealing with CoC' or CoC. The form can be interpreted as *cetharchot* plus, once again, the adjectival suffix *-de*, since the Latin form which it glosses is an adjective as well. In this case, the <ɾ> should be palatal. (Griffith: personal communication)

<sup>97</sup> GOI 367.

<sup>98</sup> Kortlandt reconstructs Italo-Celtic 1 pl. dep. *-moro*; Kortlandt 2007: 145, and Cowgill 1983: 77.

the deponent inflection by analogy with first person ending *-mi*, which would have caused the ending to become palatal.<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, Cowgill explains the palatal ending by the much debated particle *\*es*, which would have caused the palatalisation of the final consonant. The particle *\*es* has now been replaced by *\*eti* in the particle-theory,<sup>100</sup> which would also explain the palatal final consonant. One other sound law affected the form *laimirsni*, namely syncope, accounting for the palatal *m*.<sup>101</sup>

*Folog* and *tuercomlassat* have an etymological <*o*>; *folog* is the verbal noun of *fo-loing* where the nasal is dropped to form a verbal noun<sup>102</sup> and *tuercomlassat* comes from <*\*-comenlasad-*.

This means that of the fifteen examples with spelling deviating from Classical Old Irish thirteen forms retain the original vowel. Most of these are <*a, o, e*> for etymological /*a, e, o*/, but there are some forms with Classical Old Irish spelling that do not retain old *\*a, \*e* and *\*o*: We have seen Wb 15c20 *laimirsni*, where the /*o*/ of the first plural deponent ending *-mor-* was lost. Wb 12c17 *forcanit* does not retain the etymological *\*e* in the second person plural *\*-ete* either, and the same goes for the second person plural imperative form Wb 18a11 *dilgid*. These two forms use Classical Old Irish spelling, where we would expect <*e*> as if these vowels had not yet collapsed to schwa. Original *\*a* is lost in *rectire* < *\*Lat. suffix -ārius* and *sabati* < *Lat. sabbatum*.

### 3.2.2 The Cambrai Homily

The Classical Old Irish convention:

CaC	21		
C'iC'	10		
CaiC'	7	CiC'	12
C'eC	6		

Deviations from this pattern:

CuC	3	CoC	9	CeC	4
C'aC	2				
CuiC'	2				
CiC	1				
C'oC	1				

<sup>99</sup> GOI 367.

<sup>100</sup> Schrijver 1997: 147-158.

<sup>101</sup> Cowgill 1983: 78.

<sup>102</sup> GOI 447.

The forms of *ocus/ocuis* have not been taken up in these numbers, because the exact status of the last syllable is unclear: it might be a schwa, it might not be. For the reconstruction I follow Griffith,<sup>103</sup> but since these forms are so unclear, I will not use these examples.

Once again there are some peculiar spellings. A strange form is 247.4 *caris* for Old Irish *caras* (<\*karas-). This must be scribal error.<sup>104</sup> 247.19 *tuesmot* (OI *do-esmet*) has C'oC, which is an etymological spelling for original /o/.

The examples with CuC or CuiC' are 246.7 *cessuth* (OI *céssath*), 247.14 *forcetul* (OI *forcetal*), 247.12 *tondechomnuichuir* and 247.20 *laubuir*.

*Cessuth* has unetymological <u>, as it is a verbal noun of *césaid* and has the protoform \*c'edsuθu-. This form is emended to *céssath* in Thes. Pal., as it may have been a confusion between <a> and <u>, which are palaeographically similar in some hands.

*Forcetul* has a schwa which arose as a secondary vowel; \**forcadlo* (Welsh *cathl*).

There are two cases of C'aC, namely two instances of *coicsath* (OI *coicsed*), 245.13 and 246.26. This is an original <a>, as it is a verbal noun of *con-césa*.

247.12 *tondechomnuichuir*, emendated in Thes. Pal. to *tondeccomnuccuir*, is an example of CuiC'. The etymology is \*-*coŵ-anax-or*, meaning the <o> is etymological, the <u> is not. The <ui> could be a scribal error for <ai>, since <a> and <u> strongly resemble each other in insular script, but there are some other spellings of this form in *-uir*,<sup>105</sup> next to forms in *-air*. I will discuss this further in 2.3.4.

247.20 *laubuir* (Thes. Pal. reads *laubair* but I am sure the manuscript reads *laubuir*) retains old /u/ <\*lauburi- < Lat. *labor*.

The forms with CoC are 244.32 *arfedot* (OI *fiadat*) 246.18, 246.19 *frithorgon* (2x) (OI *frithorcun/frithorcon*), 247.8 *saithor* (OI *saethar*), 247.17 *tuthegot* (OI *do-thíagat*) and 247.13 *apstolaib* (OI *abstalaib*). *Arfedot* and *tuthegot* both have original <o>; \**fēđodoh* and \**tu-tēyod-*.

*Saithor* for OI. *saethar* gives us the impression that it also contains an original <o>, but there is no consensus on the exact etymology of the word. Matasović reconstructs PC \**saytro-*, which would mean that <o> is an epenthetic vowel. Thurneysen, however, says, 'if the spelling *saithor saithar* is trustworthy, there was also a (collective) suffix *-uro-*.'<sup>106</sup> *Sáeth* is in fact a u-stem,

<sup>103</sup> Griffith 2009: 6.

<sup>104</sup> Uhlich 2015: 4.

<sup>105</sup> DIL s.v. *do-ecmaing*.

<sup>106</sup> GOI 170.

so a reconstruction PC *\*sayturo-* would make sense.

*Frithorgon* is a verbal noun constructed of the verbal root *\*fris-org-* and a verbal noun suffix in *-en*. The second <o> is therefore not etymological. The first <o> however, is etymological, so the second <o> might just be a hypercorrect spelling, parallel with the first <o>, as the pronunciation of both vowels was /ə/. Cf. OI spelling *frithorcun, frithorcon*.

*Abstolaib* also retains the /o/ of the Latin *apostolibus*. This form also contains Classical Old Irish CaiC', which suggests that <o> might be spelled here as a parallel with the Latin form. This presumes that the Irish were aware of the fact that *apstol/apstal* is a loanword form *apostol*. As Latin <p> was pronounced /b/, I see no reason to think they did not recognise *abstal* as a Latin loanword. Latin *apostolus* is also often glossed with *apstal*.<sup>107</sup> It is spelled in CH with <p> once and it is unsynocopated: 246.15 *noeb-apostol*, so they must have been aware of the connection between the Irish and the Latin. There is however one unconformity in this reasoning, namely, if the <o> comes from the Latin, why would the scribe spell <b> instead of Latin <p>?<sup>108</sup> It might be an inconsistent hypercorrect spelling, but it remains troublesome.

The forms with CeC are 246.5-6 *nundem* (OI *nundan*), 246.14 *autrubert* (OI *at-robot*) and 246.23 *dommetu* (OI *dommatu*). *Nundem* has etymological <e> ; *\*nu-n-devoh*, as does *autrubert*; *\*as-ro-bert-*.

*Dommetu* < *\*dommejaθuθ-* contains an etymological spelling <e> for original /e/. It could also be a later formation from *dommae*, in which case <e> would also be original /e/.

Again, there are some forms that do not retain their original vocalism: eight exx. out of 22 have an unetymological spelling. 245.9 *fristossam*, 247.23 *aranetathami* and 245.12 *ar foimam* for example do not retain original <o> from the first plural ending *-omos*. It can be seen that the Cambrai Homily does not retain all original vocalisms.

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<sup>107</sup> DIL s.v. *apstal*.

<sup>108</sup> The spelling of /b, d, g/ where Classical Old Irish and British Latin would spell /p, t, c/ is an interesting feature of Early Old Irish orthography which unfortunately will not be discussed in this thesis. See Carney 1979: 417-18.

### 3.2.3 The Glosses on Philargyrius

P: The Classical Old Irish convention:

CaC	7		
C'iC'	12		
CaiC'	5	CiC'	5
C'eC	6		

Deviations from that pattern:

CoC	1	CeC	2
CaC'	1		
CuiC'	1		
CoiC'	1		

N: The Classical Old Irish convention:

CaC	3		
C'iC'	1		
CaiC'	3	CiC'	1
C'eC	3		

Deviations from that pattern:

CuC	1	CoC	1	CeC	2
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L: The Classical Old Irish convention:

CaC	10		
C'iC'	12		
CaiC'	7	CiC'	5
C'eC	2		

Deviations from that pattern:

CoC	1	CeC	4
CaC'	1		

I will not discuss every manuscript individually, as most words that occur in multiple manuscripts have the same vocalism. Exceptions will be noted, of course.

CuC only appears in II.18 P *gabur* and it is a secondary vowel that arose from anaptyxis. It

is spelled *gabor* or *gabar* in Classical Old Irish, with <o> probably because of the labial /b/ (see section 3.1.2). The original quality of the epenthetic vowel is unknown, but I think it is safe to say that spellings with <u> and <o> have to do with the labial.

CoC appears in all three manuscripts in I.48 P *chechor*, N *cethor*, L *cechor* (OI *cechar*) 'slough, bog', which has an unknown etymology. There is no labial consonant to round the vowel, so it must be an original vowel, a non-etymological spelling or scribal error.

CeC is represented in IX.5 PL *toceth* (OI *tocad*) and VIII.12 *arget* (OI *argat*). *Toceth* has etymological <e> (< \**togeth-*), and so does *arget* <\**arged* < \**arganto-*.

Then there are some exceptional spellings; CaC', CuiC' and CoiC'

VII.4 *Sulbari* (OI *sulbairi*) has CaC'. It is an etymological spelling; <\**solafar'i* and the palatal /r/ has not been denoted in orthography.

VIII.107 *Conbochuil* < \**bōhxol'i* has CuiC' and does not retain original /o/. Perhaps again a scribal error where the scribe copied *u* instead of *a*? Whatever the explanation, this form does not retain the original vowel.

VII.48 N *astoid* (glossing *turgent*), *astaid* in L, *asto.i.et* in P, for OI *attait* 'they swell'. <o> for <a> might be a scribal error.

### 3.2.4 Notes in the Book of Armagh

The Old Irish convention is followed in the following cases;

CaC	74		
C'iC'	32		
CaiC'	8	CiC'	63
C'eC	25		

In these lemmata, the Old Irish convention is not followed.

CuC	5	CoC	4	CeC	7
CuiC'	8				
CaaC	1				
C'oC	1				
C'iC	1				
CaeC'	1				

CaaC: 241.13 *imdídnaad* < \**imdīdnaθ*- must be a scribal error for *imdídnað*.

C'oC, 239.18 *senairotib*, contains an original /o/: < \**s'énar'ihotoβ'ih*. The significance of the retaining of /o/ in a palatal environment will be discussed in section 2.3.3.

239.13 *Buachaele* for OI *búachaille* has CaeC', which is very strange. It is unique in this corpus, which means it probably should not be regarded as a serious convention.

The form 238.6 *coicid* has C'iC, since it is a nominative; *Hae sunt fines quintae partis .i. coicid caicháin* 'Caichán's fifth' and therefore the final consonant must be neutral (< \**cog'eθoh* < \**kwenkwetos*). The < *i* > is not etymological and must be an error.

The formations with CuC and CuiC' for a schwa are a numerous in this source. There is only one form where < *u* > or < *ui* > retains original /u/; 240.18 *mmennut* (< \**mendudō*), and since this is a dative singular form, the < *u* > could be analogical. In the following cases, < *u* > or < *ui* > does not retain original /u/; 238.13 *iartabuirt* (< \**tobert-*), 238.19 *manchuib* (< Lat. *monachibus*), 240.16 *láthruich* (< \**-ax-*), 242.1 *adopuir* (< \**-ber'eθ*), 241.6, 242.1 *domnuch* (2x) (< Lat. *dominicus*). It is unclear whether these forms retain /u/; 241.5 *Themuir* (< \**T'eŋrih*), 241.18 *Diarmuit* (OI *Diarmait*), 242.6 *dothoorund* (verbal noun of *do-foirndea*), 242.10 *chrimthunn* (< \*?) and 238.7 *Forcuisin*

< *u*, *ui* > very often are spelled for Classical Old Irish < *a*, *ai* > in this source, so it seems. It is not unique in this respect, thinking back to *tondechomnuchuir* in CH. I will come back to this in section 2.3.4.

Strange cases are 238.18 *aedocht* and 242.19 *aidacht*. These terms both mean 'testament, bequest' but the attestations of this word are quite erratic: 'Also *audacht*, *idacht*, *udacht*, *edocht*, *aidachta*.<sup>109</sup> The etymology of this word is not clear either, as there were suggestions it came from Latin *ēdictum*,<sup>110</sup> or from *adoptare*,<sup>111</sup> or that it is a native word that can be reconstructed as \**aduktu-*.<sup>112</sup> These different etymologies would have quite a different effect on this particular study, as a loanword from Latin would mean that the etymological vowel is /i/ or /o/ and a native etymology would mean that the etymological vowel is /u/. Since the last example explains the erratic first syllable by infection of the \**u*, I am inclined to favour that etymology, meaning neither *aedocht* nor *aidacht* retain the original vowel.

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<sup>109</sup> DIL s.v. *aidacht*.

<sup>110</sup> Pedersen (1909): 209.

<sup>111</sup> DIL s.v. *aidacht*.

<sup>112</sup> Ward (1973): 184.

CoC is represented by 238.18 *aedocht* (discussed above) and 242.18 *oitherroch* (vn of *ad-eirrig* < \**ad-ess-rek-o-*), 241.10 *nifetorsa* (< \**-fedor-*) and 240.17 *Cathboth* (< \**kaθuboθoh*, Ogam CATTUBUTTAS). These forms all have unetymological spellings, except for *Cathboth* but do note that *Cathboth* contains a labial and the /o/ is therefore not unconventional from a Classical Old Irish perspective per se.

CeC can be found in 239.15 *dirróggel* (< \**d'īrogel-*), 242.7 *combed* (< \**kombeθ-*), 242.15 *conepert* (< \**konadberto*), 238.12 *atrópert* (< \**-berto*) and 239.15 *ochter* (< \*?). These are all etymological, except maybe for *ochter*, as the etymology is unknown. It may represent older /e/.

### 3.2.5 Names in the Book of Armagh

The Classical Old Irish convention:

CaC	47		
C'iC'	28		
CaiC'	17	CiC'	24
C'eC	30		

Deviations from this pattern:

CuC	12	CoC	13	CeC	9
CuiC'	23				
CuC'	1				
C'eC'	3				
C'iC	1				

Discussing the etymologies of the names in this part of the Book of Armagh is difficult, because there are too many (place)names that have not been reconstructed yet.

CuC' appears in 271.25 *Loiguri*, and since that name appears throughout this text as *Loiguri/Loiguire*, see section 3.3.4 for a discussion on <u, ui> for <ai>. There are strikingly many CuiC' spellings in this source. However, only four names are responsible for this high number; *Loiguire/Loiguri*, *Macuil*, *Rochuil* and *Tochuir*.

C'eC' and C'iC are strange, even for Early Old Irish. The C'eC' forms are *Fedelmttheo* (appears twice, 270.35 and 270.44, genitive of *Fedelmid*) and 270.32 *Fedelmedo* (also appears as *Feidilmido*, with an additional C'iC spelling). In Old Irish this name is also spelled *Fedelmid*, but in later Irish it appears as *Feidlimid*. *Fedelmid* must reflect /*f'ed'əlməd'*/, and *Fedelmttheo*

/F'ed'al'm'θ'o/ may preserve older /e/, or perhaps the spelling of <e> is based on the nominative form.

### 3.3 Discussion

#### 3.3.1 Status of schwa in Early Old Irish

In GOI and Thes. Pal. it seems that the authors have taken these early sources very seriously and they base the reconstructions of the words on the orthography in these sources. However, as McCone says as well, these sources must have been written after the merger of the unstressed vowels,<sup>113</sup> because of spellings like *fristossam*. As can be noticed from all these etymologies, there are plenty of etymological spellings, which seems to hint that these sources are early enough to have been witnesses to an older pronunciation. Be that as it may, there are more than enough spellings that are certainly not etymological, which contradicts the view that the schwa had not yet arisen by the time of these sources. Spellings like *conepert*, *atrópert*, *iartabuir* and *adopuir* appear side by side, and it seems to me that the spellings of <e>, for example, that are etymological, cannot prove that the vowel was still pronounced /e/. This means that the seemingly etymological spellings cannot be fully trusted, as we cannot be sure if /i, o, a, e, u/ represent the original vowel or if they are hypercorrect spellings, like *oitherroch* from *ad-eirrig* < \**ad-ess-rek-o-*.

Even though, in reconstructing the words and names, GOI and Thes. Pal. tend to trust these spellings, even if there is no other cognate in the Celtic languages or even an Old Irish spelling to show the quality of the surrounding consonants; 'Unaccented *ě* and *ǒ* between non-palatal consonants are preserved: *Clocher* = *clochar*,<sup>114</sup> and '-er, -ar (neut. O-stem); e.g. *Cloch* 'stone': arch. *Clocher*, later *clochar* 'heap of stones'<sup>115</sup>. Matasović reconstructs this collective suffix \*-ro-,<sup>116</sup> and the reconstruction \**klukā* for *cloch* would mean that the etymological vowel is /a/ <\**kloxaro*. Whatever the exact reconstruction, whether <e> is an etymological spelling is still unclear and Thes. Pal. and Thurneysen should not have trusted these spellings so much. The form *frithorgon* < *frithorgen* also proves that /o/ was sometimes spelled for another vowel.

To demonstrate this, the next figure contains the exact numbers of etymological, non-etymological and unknown spellings.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> McCone 1996: 136.

<sup>114</sup> Thes. Pal. I xiv.

<sup>115</sup> GOI 170.

<sup>116</sup> Matasović s.v. \**klukā*

<sup>117</sup> BAnames is not used in this figure, as there are just too few reconstructions to paint an accurate picture.

Fig. 5: All CoC and CeC spellings.

		Etymological	Non-etymological	Unknown	Vowel not preserved <sup>118</sup>
CoC	WbI	5	X	X	2
	CH	7	3	X	9
	GP <sup>119</sup>	X	X	1	3
	BA	3	1	X	11
CeC	WbI	4	X	X	X
	CH	2	1	X	2
	GP	1	2	X	1
	BA	4	1	2	10

The distribution of etymological, non-etymological and Classical Old Irish spellings proves that /i, o, a, e/ had already become schwa, and that the non-etymological spellings show that the etymological spellings are either a coincidence, which is highly unlikely, or must be based on the orthography of earlier manuscripts.

The question of earlier manuscripts is intriguing. We know that there have been earlier manuscripts in the Irish language, as CH, WbI and GP are all copies of earlier manuscripts. However, it is not known if there might have been more texts that have been lost to us. It is usually agreed upon that these early texts are the one of the first attempts of scribes writing in the vernacular, but if the language of the Cambrai Homily dates to the late seventh or early eighth century, there must have been manuscripts with at least pieces in the vernacular at least 50 years before the date of 763-790 (when the Cambrai Homily was written). In the case of the Würzburg glosses, they have been dated to the beginning of the eighth century, or 700, as well,<sup>120</sup> which is also when some Irish fragments appear in computus manuscripts.<sup>121</sup> These fragments also suggest that the schwa had already developed from /i, e, a, o/: *etar(laithide)* from *\*eder* < *\*inter*<sup>122</sup> and *cethirmat* next to *decmed*.<sup>123</sup> Apparently, the scribes were used to write <i, e, a, o> in unstressed non-final position where they were pronouncing them as a schwa, or perhaps not yet as a phoneme but still as an allophone, leading to hypercorrect spellings such as *frithorgon* and *ad cotedae*.

<sup>118</sup> This row must be used with caution; as not every etymology is known, this number may have to be higher.

<sup>119</sup> I have counted every lemma once, even if it appears in more manuscripts. So *chechor/cethor/cechor* is counted as one, etc.

<sup>120</sup> Thurneysen 1901: 51.

<sup>121</sup> Bisagni and Warntjes 2008: 77.

<sup>122</sup> *Idem*: 93.

<sup>123</sup> *Idem*: 97.

There is no other explanation of these data, except that all <*i, e, a, o*> in the Early Old Irish sources must have already been pronounced /ə/ from at least 700 onwards.

### 3.3.2 Retention of /a/

There is one other element about the merger of /*i, e, a, o*/ that we can deduce from these data. As was already mentioned in Thes. Pal., we can see an orthographical retention of short *o* and *e*. This is easily spotted, as the Classical Old Irish convention would not have <*o, e*> in a CəC environment.<sup>124</sup> There is no study on the retention of /a/ in CəC position, because Classical Old Irish would spell a schwa as <*a*> in this environment and it is impossible to see if the pronunciation was schwa or /a/. Yet, we have seen that by the time of these sources, all unstressed vowels in non-final position (except *u*) were pronounced schwa. So there are orthographically etymological spellings like *adobragart* (<\*-*garto*), but it is impossible to see if the scribe decided to spell <*a*> because he had an older source that retained the original vowels in front of him, or if he decided to spell <*a*> because that is the Old Irish convention for a CəC environment.

Despite all this, it seems very likely that there were at least some etymological spellings of <*a*>, namely in non-CəC environment. Candidates are *anam* (WbI, CaC'), *cenathe* (WbI, CaC'), possibly *enchache* (WbI, CaC'), possibly *sabati* (WbI, CaC'), *sulbari* (GP, CaC') and *coicsath* (CH, C'aC). These forms all<sup>125</sup> retain original /a/ and that can be no coincidence. Of course, we could be dealing with the absence of a glide vowel after *a* (see chapter 4) and that may influence the data. However, it appears that some of the CaC spellings may be etymological as well, even though we cannot distinguish between the original vowel and the schwa in that position. Thus, *a* was probably retained in pronunciation as long as *o* and *e*.

An explanation of CaiC' side by side with CiC' could be the spelling of *-i* after a neutral consonant in final position. This could be spelled with an *a*-glide, *bliadnai*, or without an *a*-glide, *bliadni*. Perhaps this convention spread to the position of the schwa as well, although I do think we would expect more *a*-glides in WbI and CH if an *a*-glide in final position is responsible for CaiC', as there are quite some CaiC' spellings in these sources but next to no *a*-glide (see chapter 4).

Therefore I suspect CaiC' to have its origin in an etymological /a/, but with an added glide vowel. It would be a logical explanation for the two conventions of CiC' and CaiC' used side by side. When /*i, e, o, a*/ collapsed to schwa, it gave way to interchangeable CaiC' and CiC'. To see

<sup>124</sup> Except for CoC in labial environment, see chapter 2.1.2.

<sup>125</sup> Except *enchache* since there is no etymology.

whether this is true, we would expect a majority of CaiC'-spellings having an etymological /a/.

Fig. 6: etymology of CaiC'

	Etymological <a> in CaiC'	non-etymological <a> in CaiC'
WbI	3	X
CH	3	4
GP	5	4
Banotes	5	3

It can be seen from these numbers that in WbI CaiC' always preserves an original /a/ and in later sources the distribution becomes approximately fifty-fifty. These numbers may not be definite proof, but it does suggest that CaiC' spellings have an origin in etymological spellings of /a/.

The confusion between CaiC' and CiC' can already be seen clearly in CH and GP, as we find as many non-etymological spellings as etymological spellings, and, for example, *laubir* and *laubair* in the same text.

### 3.3.3 Retention of /i/ and the role of palatalisation

So might original *i* have been retained in pronunciation just as long as *o*, *e* and *a*? We have the same problem as we had with <a>, in that C'aC' was spelled <i> in Classical Old Irish, whether that <i> is etymological or not. With original /i/ we have one further problem, which is that /i/ often causes palatalisation of the preceding consonant and sometimes of the following consonant. This means that there will rarely be a spelling CiC, whether that <i> is original or not. The only spelling of <i> we have in these sources that is not CiC' or C'iC' is *aithirgabú* (CH, C'iC). This <i> is not etymological, however. That points to the conclusion that we have no way of telling if /i/ was retained as long as /e, o, a/.

Looking at the data of these early sources, it seems quite clear that these vowels were retained longer in neutral position, and collapsed when there were palatalized surrounding consonants. This is the reason why Thes. Pal. gave only <e> and <o> in neutral position attention in regard to etymological spellings. The following suggests that only original /o/ in neutral position sometimes appears in the orthography of the early sources, whereas original /o/ in a palatalized environment (meaning C'VC, CVC' or C'VC') is almost never retained in orthography.

Fig. 7: Retention of /o, a, e/ in neutral and palatalized environments

	Spelled <o>	Spelled otherwise
original <CoC>	15	8
original <C'oC'/C'oC/CoC'>	2	19
	Spelled <a>	Spelled otherwise
original <CaC>	31	4
original <C'aC'/C'aC/CaC'>	20 <sup>126</sup>	18
	Spelled <e>	Spelled otherwise
original <CeC>	17	13
original <C'eC'/C'eC/CeC'>	16 <sup>127</sup>	19

The data of /a/ and /e/ are skewed by the fact that they became accepted ways to spell a schwa. It is, however, striking that original /a/ in neutral position is very rarely spelled with another vowel, which was to be expected since CaC is either etymological or a Classical Old Irish spelling. Furthermore, /e/ is spelled otherwise quite often in neutral position. I assume this has to do with <e> becoming a way to spell schwa after a palatalized consonant and before a neutral consonant, and maybe that is why the scribes substituted <e> with <a>, or <o> as a hypercorrect spelling.

The fact that only /e/, /o/ (and /a/, I believe) in mostly neutral position have survived in the orthography of these sources, must mean that these and other vowels in palatalized environment became schwa before the vowels in neutral position. This makes phonetic sense, as well, as the presence or absence of palatalized consonants made four different allophones of schwa in the Classical Old Irish period.

Therefore I suggest  $a, e, i, o > \partial / C'_C', C_C', C'_C$ , and thereafter, and quite possibly influenced by the first sound law,  $a, e, i, o > \partial / C_C$ .

### 3.3.4 <u> or <ui> for a schwa

There is one problem that has appeared from these data that has not been discussed yet, namely the numerous spellings in <u> or <ui> for a schwa.

Following are all the examples from these early sources:

<sup>126</sup> This includes CaiC', as I suspect it to be a + glide vowel.

<sup>127</sup> This includes C'eC which is regular according to the Classical Old Irish convention.

WbI X

CH *forcetul, tondechomnuich, cessuth, laubuir*

GP *gabur, conbochuil*

BA1 *Forcuisin, sescunn, iartabuirt, manchuib, láthruch, mmennut, adopuir, themuir, domnuch*  
*2x, diarmuit, dothoorund, chrimthunn*

BA2 *Loiguire 7x, Macuil 3x Sabul 2x, Drummut 2x, Loiguiri 11x, Sannuch, fochluth, Rochuil,*  
*Tamnuch 2x, Achud 2x, Tochuir 2x, Deruth, Loiguri*

*Lóegaire* comes from *lóeg* 'calf' and *aire* 'leader' according to Uhlich,<sup>128</sup> Thurneysen explains it as a borrowing from Latin *-ārius*.<sup>129</sup> Mac Eoin disagrees with both, as names in *-aire* are *io*-stems and *aire* 'leader' is a velar stem. He thinks that the suffix *-aire* is an modernized Old Irish form of a suffix *-uire*, attested in the Ogam inscription CONURI for *Conairi*. He reconstructs names in *-aire* as *\*-urios* in the nominative and adds that these names are not syncopated.<sup>130</sup> This theory accounts for some names in *-uire*, but our material with <*u, ui*> has more forms that cannot be explained by this suffix.

The explanation cannot be found in the etymologies, since these are all quite different words and we cannot devise new etymologies for all these forms. The explanation must be phonological, then.

The following are which consonants appear with <*u, ui*>; /*d*/ 6, /*ḍ*/ 2, /*l*/ 9, /*c*/ 4, /*x*/ 14, /*r*/ 30, /*s*/ 2, /*th*/ 4, /*v*/ 6, /*b*/ 1, /*nn*/ 4, /*n*/ 5, /*m*/ 3, /*ṽ*/ 1, /*g*/ 19. These consonants appear with <*u, ui*> most; /*ch, r, l, g*/. It seems to be that a schwa can be spelled as <*u, ui*> in some of these circumstances, but a definite rule is impossible to formulate.

This section was just a small study of the forms in the four early sources. The spelling of <*u, ui*> also occurs in Classical Old Irish but there has not been a good study of when this happens and why. It might be a good focus for new research in the future.

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<sup>128</sup> Uhlich 1993: 270.

<sup>129</sup> GOI 172.

<sup>130</sup> Mac Eoin 2005: 152-155.

## Chapter IV: Glide vowels

### 4.1 The orthographical conventions of Ogam Irish, Classical Old Irish and British Latin

#### 4.1.1 Ogam Irish

Irish is one of the few languages that has a phonemic opposition between palatalized and non-palatalized consonants. Palatalisation occurred in three stages, the first, second and third palatalisation.<sup>131</sup> These developments partly happened during the Ogam period, as the first palatalisation took place before lowering and there are examples of lowering in Ogam; -CUNAS (< PC \**kunos*) and -CONAS.<sup>132</sup> The third and last palatalisation happened after the loss of final syllables, a process that can be seen in Ogam as well; 263 LUGUDECCAS and 74 COMOGANN.<sup>133</sup>

There is no straightforward orthographical convention for spelling palatalized consonants in Ogam, although there are some possible examples of a palatalized spelling; MAQ(Q) or MACCI for *maic*,<sup>134</sup> and 145 QRIMITIR for *cruimther*. However; 103 CARRTTACC for *Carthaich*, -AN(N) for *-áin*, and ANM for *ainm*.

#### 4.1.2 Classical Old Irish

Palatalized consonants in Classical Old Irish are usually denoted by so-called glide vowels.<sup>135</sup> The quality of the consonant can be inferred from these surrounding glide vowels. These glide vowels can be <*a*, *e*, *i*>, which are placed before or after the consonant in question.

The *i*-glide can be used after a stressed vowel where the following consonant is palatalized, or after a palatalized consonant before /*u*/: *úaisliu* for /úas'l'u/.

The *e*-glide can be used after a palatalized consonant before /*a*/ or /*o*/: *doirseo* for /d<sup>x</sup>or's'o/<sup>136</sup>

The *a*-glide can be used after or before a neutral consonant: *carae* for /kar<sup>x</sup>e/

There is also an *o*-glide, which originated in Early Modern Irish. It denotes a following neutral consonant: *eochu* for /ex<sup>x</sup>u/. It does not appear in Old Irish.

The downside of these orthographical conventions in Old Irish is that it is in no way a consistent practice. Ambiguous spellings like *tabarte* for either *tabairte* or *tabartae* occur

<sup>131</sup> McCone 1996: 115-120.

<sup>132</sup> Idem: 115, 110.

<sup>133</sup> Idem: 119.

<sup>134</sup> This may seem like a pre-apocope form, but McManus argued that after apocope, the spelling MAQQI/MACCI remained intact to denote the palatalized final consonant. McManus 1991: 124.

<sup>135</sup> And by the spelling of schwa if the palatal consonant was preceding or following the schwa, see chapter 3.

<sup>136</sup> The 'x' in superscript denotes a neutral consonant in this chapter.

throughout the Old Irish period.

### 4.1.3 Medieval British Latin

Latin did not have a phonemic opposition between palatalized and neutral consonants. In the medieval Latin period, the /c/ and /t/ became /ts/ before a front vowel. This sound law did not, however, have the same outcome as the same phonemic palatalisation as in Irish. Even though we may use the same term, it is a very different development and medieval speakers would not have seen any link between the two. The account of the Old-Norse first grammarian deals with these sounds as well; 'The letter here written *c*, which most Latin writers call *ce* and use for two letters, *t* and *s*, when they join it with *e* or *i*, although they combine it with *a* or *o* or *u* as *k*, as the Scots spell it with all the vowels of Latin and call it *che*...' <sup>137</sup> This account suggests that Irish speakers in the twelfth century had preserved, or restored, the pronunciation of <*c*> as a stop, while Latin pronunciation had softened the <*c*> to /*ts*/. However, if the Irish spoke Latin with an Irish accent they must have pronounced /*c'*/ before a front vowel and /*c<sup>x</sup>*/ before a neutral vowel. Where this was a phonemic opposition in Irish, it was a phonetic opposition from a Latin perspective and it makes sense that the first grammarian would not have understood the difference.

As Latin did not have a system of palatalisation similar to the Irish, the Irish scribes had to devise an orthographical convention themselves without a Latin tradition to base it on.

## 4.2. The Early Irish Data

### 4.2.1 Introduction

In Appendix III all instances of the glide vowel and all instances of a missing glide vowel in the early sources can be found. All different glides are listed in different columns, and the *i*-glide is separated into two categories: the *i*-glide where the syllable is stressed and the *i*-glide where the syllable is unstressed. <sup>138</sup>

The problem is, what exactly counts as a missing glide? As was stated before, Classical Old Irish was not consistent in spelling glide vowels, so does Early Old Irish *torbe* for *torbae* therefore count as an instance of a missing *a*-glide if Classical Old Irish could spell a form in the same manner (Wb 11<sup>b3</sup> *torbe*)? It would mean that we are judging the Early Old Irish material from an non-existent ideal orthography. This part of the research does not focus on the comparison with Classical Old Irish because of this, it merely focuses on the distribution of glides that already appear

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<sup>137</sup> Haugen 1972: 25.

<sup>138</sup> And containing a long vowel or a /*u*/, so they are not schwas. For schwa spellings, see chapter 3.

in the text. Since the *a*- and *e*-glide occur in some forms, I have counted them as missing glides if they are absent in other forms. The *o*-glide does not appear in these sources and I have therefore not counted it as a missing glide.

Also, there is one category of glide vowels that is almost always spelled, namely the glide vowels that denote the palatalisation of a consonant which is morphologically important, meaning the spelling of the palatalized consonant is necessary for case marking or if it constitutes a verbal ending. If there is no glide in these cases, there is no orthographical distinction between, for example, *mac* (nom. sg.) and *maic* (gen. sg.). Forms like these are clear examples of a missing glide. I will get back to this in section 4.3.2.

Every source will now be discussed individually and thereafter I will discuss the data as a whole in 4.3.

#### 4.2.2 The prima manus of the Würzburg Glosses

One of the striking things in this source is the total lack of an *a*-glide. There are some missing *i*-glides as well.

Ó Néill lists one form with an *e*-glide; Wb 24b32 *caindleoir* 'a candle-bearer, an acolyte'<sup>139</sup> (from Latin *candelārius*). He corrects Thes. Pal. which has the transcription *caindloir*.<sup>140</sup> However, looking at the manuscript I clearly read *caindloir*, meaning there is no instance of the *e*-glide in WbI.

There are five forms that deserve some discussion: *dersciddu*, *errend*, *rulaimur* and *praidchas*.

Wb 23b8 *dersciddu* 'better things', leg. *derscaigthiu* or *derscichthu*, is miscopied and it seems totally unusable. If the form should be *derscaigthiu*, we would be dealing with a missing glide. Uhlich argues that <dd> is a miscopying of <chd>,<sup>141</sup> and in that scenario we should take the form seriously, but since that consonant cluster is neutral, it is not important for this study.

Wb 20d5 *errend* 'marks' is a curious word. The meaning is apparant from the Latin it glosses, but other attestations in Irish are rare and the quality of either consonant is unknown. Therefore this example is not useable.

Wb 17c21 *rulaimur* 'I dare' appears to have an *i*-glide which is unexpected when we look at

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<sup>139</sup> Ó Néill 2002: 241.

<sup>140</sup> Thes. Pal. I xxiv.

<sup>141</sup> Uhlich 2015:3.

other spellings of these forms in Old Irish: *ro-laumur* (Wb 17a8), *-lamur* (Saltair na Rann 1259) and *ro-lomur* (Ml. 21<sup>b</sup>5). It may be a defective spelling, but it seems to be an exact parallel with the different spellings of /lag'u/ 'smaller': Ml 23a13 *laigiu*, Wb 6b12 *lugu* and *laigu* from the Computus material.<sup>142</sup> This lemma shows the same fluctuating quality of the consonant. The /u/ in the following syllable must have had some influence on the preceding consonant. Etymologically, the /m/ in *rulaimur* must be palatal: <\*laŋiōr, as is the /g/ in *laigiu* because of the comparative ending \*-iūh. This means that <i> in *rulaimur* must be a glide, and that there is a glide missing after the <m>, similar to *laigu* in the Computus fragment.

Wb 12c27 *praidchas* 'who preaches' is unclear. It seems to contain an *i*-glide as well, however, I think this is not the case. I suspect that the <i> here is spelled by analogy with the Latin *praedicare*, as all other forms of this verb have *prid-*; *pridchaid* Wb 13<sup>a</sup>22, *pridchas* Wb 12<sup>c</sup>23 and *ro prithach* Ml 50<sup>d</sup>17. We have seen earlier that WbI relies on Latin spelling more than the other sources, but if this spelling was indeed influenced by the Latin form *praedicare*, the scribe must have been aware that the Irish *pridchaid* was derived from it and there is no way to know that for sure.

#### 4.2.2 The Cambrai Homily

A particularly upsetting example is *asber* 244: 22 for Old Irish *asbeir*. It is a form where a glide vowel would be extremely useful. Without the glide vowel this form could not only be a 3 sg. pres., but also a 1 sg. pres. subj. *as-ber* and a 1 sg. fut. *as-bér* (as length marking is not consistent in these sources, see chapter II). An Irish speaker would know from the context which form is intended, but it is peculiar that the glide was already in use in this source but that in a crucial form like this, the glide was left out. There are similar forms that do have the glide vowel; *asbeir*; *assindbeir*; *assindbeir*.

The *a*-glide seems to appear in *trechenelæ* 246.27, the same form appears also als *trecenele* 247.21. The Latin ligature <æ> was used to spell short or long /e/ in Irish.<sup>143</sup> So does this count as a glide vowel + /e/? Or is *cenelæ* equal to *cenele*? I will come back to this in 4.3.1, but for the time being I have listed them as an *a*-glide.

#### 4.2.3 Glosses on Philargyrius

The absence and presence of glides in this source differs from manuscript to manuscript.

<sup>142</sup> Bisagni and Warntjes 2008: 103.

<sup>143</sup> GOI 18.

Where P and N have no *a*-glides, L has four instances of <æ> in the place of an *a*-glide. L and P have a number of missing *i*-glides, where N only has *molchi* V.37 for *muilchi*. Missing *a*-glides are in seven examples of *subi* in all manuscripts, but P has some more examples of a missing *a*-glide in, for example, *aldi* II.30 and in *derce* II.18. These data are obviously less straightforward than WbI and CH.

The *e*-caudata appears in V.42 P *menbrę* for OI *membrae*. The *e*-caudata will be discussed in 4.3.1.

An ambiguous case is I.12 P *huich* as the headword is not known.

#### 4.2.4 Notes in the Book of Armagh

The first example of an *e*-glide appears in this source: *fichtea* 'twenties'.

*Toidached* 238.12 and *odræ* 240.1 are ambiguous spellings. *Toidached*, as in *Druimm Toidached*, is a placename.<sup>144</sup> It is listed in OG in this spelling, so it is probably a diphthong instead of a glide vowel. *Odræ* is part of a personal name, *Maile odræ*, translated in Thes. Pal. as *Mael-odar*, and once again I could not find other attestations. If this *odar* is the same as the element *odor* 'dark of complexion' which often appears in personal names, it may derive from the root for 'water' *\*udenskyo-* (although Matasović notes that 'the semantic difference is considerable'<sup>145</sup>) and the consonant cluster must be neutral.

#### 4.2.5 Names of persons and places in the Book of Armagh

Once again, there are many spellings in <æ> and once again, there are many personal names where the quality of consonants is unknown and therefore we cannot say if there is a glide missing and if yes, what glide.

The use of the *i*-glide seems to be quite consistent: there are only two instances where the glide was left out and more than 150 instances where an *i*-glide does appear. Three forms with an *e*-glide appear in this text.

### 4.3 Discussion of the data

In looking for a pattern in the spelling of glide vowels, I used three main approaches: a semantic or morphological approach, a phonological approach and an approach focusing on location of the glide in the word. Firstly, however, the ligature <æ> must be discussed.

<sup>144</sup> OG s.v. *druimm toidached*.

<sup>145</sup> Matasović s.v. *\*uden-sk-yo-*.

### 4.3.1 The ligature <æ> as containing a glide vowel

So can we regard the ligature <æ> as containing an *a*-glide? There is no difference in pronunciation of <æ> and <ae>, as they both would have been pronounced as /e/ after a neutral consonant. Evidence of <æ> after a palatal consonant would confirm that we should read <æ> as /e/ without a glide. There are three forms that might be a suitable candidate: BANotes *bicæ* 241.18 seems to show that <æ> does not contain an *a*-glide, as the <c> is palatalized in this case (gen. sg. f. *bicce* 'small'). The other candidates are BANames *Coluimbcillæ* 269.39, which should be *cille*, and *rithæ* for *rithe*.<sup>146</sup> However, even if /C'e/ might be spelled <C'æ> here, it does not necessarily mean that <æ> could be spelled after every consonant, no matter what the quality, since these are three examples in an extensive source. We would expect more <C'æ> spellings if there was no 'rule' on when to use <æ> and there is the fact that /C'e/ is almost exclusively spelled <C'e>: *uaimse* 241.11, *anfolmithe* 238.16 etc.

It seems that, after a neutral consonant, <æ> and <ae> and <e> are all perfectly acceptable spellings according to these sources. The spelling <ae> seems later than <æ> and <e>, as BA is the only one with <ae> spellings and even in this source, the <æ> spelling is in the majority compared to <e> and <ae>:

Fig. 8: the distribution of <æ>, <ae> and <e>

	<æ>	<ae>	<e>
WbI	X	X	4
CH	1	X	5
GP	4	X	1
Banotes	18	4	1
BANames	41	5	4

Interpreting the data, I propose the following scenario. /C<sup>x</sup>e/ was spelled <e> when Irish was first written down. Then, probably based on the Latin, /C<sup>x</sup>e/ was spelled by <æ> or the *e*-caudata<sup>147</sup> next to <e>. Perhaps the <a> in <æ> spread, motivating <ae> spellings: when *cenele* could be spelled *cenelæ*, it could therefore also be spelled *cenelae*. This shift made <e> for /C<sup>x</sup>e/ redundant or inept, as <e> could also mean /C'e/. The preference for <æ> and <ae> can be seen in the Book of

<sup>146</sup> Thes. Pal. has *muinæ*, which may have been a suitable candidate, but the transcription has an error and the form is actually *muine*.

<sup>147</sup> Bisagni and Warntjes 2008: 93 suggest this for the use of *e*-caudata in the Computus fragments. See also GP 361.V.42 *membrae* (in P2) and 46.20 *membrae* (in L).

Armagh. Then, possibly this <a> spread even further, so that BA *ungi* could be spelled *ungai* as well, eliminating the ambiguous <e> for either /C<sup>x</sup>e/ and /C'e/.

This analysis would mean that the ligature <æ> does not really function as a glide vowel + <e>, but rather has inspired it. Following are the examples we have with an actual *a*-glide vowel:

BAnotes *cullae, ungai, ungae* (2x), *ad cotedae, machae*

BAnames *Greccae, machae* (3x), *Chungai, inscae, Irai*

As we can see, there are very few examples of an actual *a*-glide. Probably, the ligature <æ> and the *a*-glide + <e> were seen as one and the same thing by the time of the Book of Armagh. This means that the *a*-glide was not yet in use by the time of WbI, CH and GP.

In conclusion, the *a*- and *e*-glide will be excluded from the following research, since they were both still in their infancy in the latest source of this corpus, and there is probably no further reason why they do not appear in WbI, CH and GP. Therefore, the following research will focus on the presence and absence of the *i*-glide.

#### 4.3.2 Semantic or morphological approach

The first approach uses the hypothesis that a glide vowel was spelled if the quality of the consonant was morphologically or semantically important, for instance in case marking or in denoting a different lexeme. If this hypothesis would be valid, it would mean that the examples where there is no glide vowel are forms where the palatalisation does not matter for the meaning of the word. 'Does not matter' in this case means it would not be ambiguous for the Irish speaker. So in some words the quality of the consonant does not need to be expressed for the Irish speaker to recognize which form is meant. This is the case in words where, for example, the nominal case or verbal ending is not marked by the quality of that particular consonant, but by another consonant or by a suffix of some sort. An example; *cruche* (ā, f. gen. sg.) has a case marking in -C'e. The quality of the consonant is not denoted by spelling here, cf. OI *cruiche*, but the suffix -e clearly expresses a genitive singular and there is no confusion about which form this must be.

However, the form *asber*, cf. OI *asbeir*, has verbal ending -C' and if the palatalized consonant is not expressed orthographically the form becomes ambiguous. The glide vowel is therefore morphologically important. In forms like *grode* (s, n.), which can be multiple cases (gen. sg., nom/acc/gen. pl), the quality of the consonant is unimportant even though the form itself is ambiguous. Therefore, I have not counted those forms as 'semantically important' since the

orthography is not responsible for the ambiguity of the form. A form where the glide is semantically important is, for instance, WbI *coir* which could also be *cor* 'heart' etc.

Whether the glide vowels are important can be found in Appendix III after the columns of the etymology.

In all sources we can see that there are only three examples of a missing *i*-glide where it is semantically or morphologically important. In Cambrai Homily, *asber* is an ambiguous form and it has bothered quite some scholars over the last century. CH also has *anme* which must be *anmae* (gen. sg. n. of *ainm* 'soul') but could also be interpreted as *ainme* (gen. sg. or acc. pl. f. of *ainim* 'blemish'), but we have established that there was no *a*-glide yet to make this form less ambiguous. In the Glosses on Philargyrius there is the form *meli*, which could be /*m'e<sup>h</sup>i*/, acc/dat. sg. or nom/acc pl. f. of *méla* 'shame' or /*m'el'i*/ gen. sg. or nom. pl. of *meile* '?

As we can see, the number of examples where the lack of a missing glide would be confusing for the Irish speaker is small.

Yet, the number of examples where the glide is present and also semantically or morphologically important is also quite small. Looking at WbI only three exx. out of 17 with an *i*-glide have a glide vowel where it is semantically or morphologically important; *boid*, *coir*, and *foili*: The glide in *boid* is important for case marking. Without a glide *coir* could be interpreted as *cor* 'heart', *cór* 'chorus' or *cor*, verbal noun of *fo-ceird*. If *foili* would have no glide (*foli*) it could be interpreted as *folai*, which is also a form of *fola* 'cloak'. If the hypothesis that glide vowels were spelled where it is semantically or morphologically important is the whole truth, we would expect a higher number of examples where the glide is important in the list of forms that have a glide vowel. Also, forms like CH *asber* and GP *meli* contradict this.

Therefore, I do not think this hypothesis presents the whole truth, but I do think that it was a factor in orthography; if the scribes did not care about semantically or morphologically ambiguous spellings, why would they invent the glide vowel in the first place? Morphology and semantics must have been a factor in the spelling of the glide vowel, but apparently it was not the only factor.

#### 4.3.2 Phonological approach

The second approach in finding a pattern in the scattered glide vowels is the phonological approach. It rests on the hypothesis that glide vowels are spelled more with some consonants or some vowels than with other consonants or vowels. This would mean that the palatalized quality of

the consonant must have sounded more distinct with some consonants or vowels than with others.

#### 4.3.2.a Consonants

In the fig. 9 all consonants where a glide is used can be seen with the number of instances per source.<sup>148</sup> No straightforward pattern arises from these numbers. The percentages can be misleading since some of the consonants appear quite rarely, with or without a glide. For example, there are consonants that have a 100 percentage of presence, while there are just a few examples of a present glide with that particular consonant. This high score does not really mean anything in those examples.

Therefore I will only take the consonants that have over 15 attestations into consideration. These are /s, r, l, n, d̄, θ/. From these phonemes, there are three consonants that have a shocking high percentage of presence, i.e. /l/ (95,2%), /n/ (97,1%) and /d̄/ (92%). Perhaps these consonants sounded more distinctly palatalized in comparison to other consonants or in comparison to their neutral opposites.

Fig. 9: Presence and absence of glide vowels defining following consonants<sup>149</sup>

	Phoneme	Presence	Absence	Presence/total
Plosives	/p/			
	/t/	2 <sup>150</sup>		2/2=100%
	/c/	7 <sup>151</sup>		7/7=100%
	/b/	4 <sup>152</sup>		4/4=100%
	/d/	9 <sup>153</sup>	1 <sup>154</sup>	9/10=90%
	/g/	4 <sup>155</sup>	1 <sup>156</sup>	4/5=80%
fricatives	/f/			
	/θ/	16 <sup>157</sup>	3 <sup>158</sup>	16/19=84,2%

<sup>148</sup> The different instances of the same word in the manuscripts of GP are counted as one example; the <æ> is counted as an *a*-glide. Names of persons and places in the Book of Armagh is not used in this table..

<sup>149</sup> These are all instances of *i*-glides defining a following consonant. The *i*-glides defining a preceding consonant will be discussed later.

<sup>150</sup> 1 (GP), 1 (BA).

<sup>151</sup> 3 (CH), 4 (BA).

<sup>152</sup> 2 (WbI), 2 (BA).

<sup>153</sup> 1 (GP), 7 (BA).

<sup>154</sup> 1 (WbI).

<sup>155</sup> 2 (GP), 3 (BA).

<sup>156</sup> 1 (GP).

<sup>157</sup> 1 (WbI), 1 (CH), 1 (GP), 13 (BA).

<sup>158</sup> 1 (CH), 2 (GP).

	Phoneme	Presence	Absence	Presence/total
	/x/	7 <sup>159</sup>	2 <sup>160</sup>	7/9=77,8%
	/β/	10 <sup>161</sup>	1 <sup>162</sup>	10/11=90,9%
	/ḃ/	23 <sup>163</sup>	2 <sup>164</sup>	23/25=92%
	/ɣ/	8 <sup>165</sup>		8/0=100%
nasals	/nn/	4 <sup>166</sup>		4/0=100%
	/m/	6 <sup>167</sup>		6/0=100%
	/n/	34 <sup>168</sup>	1 <sup>169</sup>	34/35=97,1%
	/ñ/	6 <sup>170</sup>		6/0=100%
liquids	/ll/	4 <sup>171</sup>		4/0=100%
	/l/	20 <sup>172</sup>	1 <sup>173</sup>	20/21=95,2%
	/rr/	1 <sup>174</sup>		1/0=100%
	/r/	41 <sup>175</sup>	7 <sup>176</sup>	41/48=85,4%
sibilants	/s/	13 <sup>177</sup>	4 <sup>178</sup>	13/17=76,5%

The glides that follow a palatalized consonant have been collected in fig. 10. In all of these examples, the palatalisation of the consonant had already been denoted by a glide before the consonant, or by the spelling of the schwa. It can be seen that the glide that follows the consonant does not appear often, but it is not absent often either, in comparison with the glides that precede the palatalized consonant. It must be noted that the /n/ and /ḃ/, which had a high percentage of presence when it was defined by a preceding glide, never have a missing following glide. Therefore these

<sup>159</sup> 1 (WbI), 5 (CH), 1 (GP).

<sup>160</sup> 2 (CH).

<sup>161</sup> 1 (CH), 2 (GP), 7 (BA).

<sup>162</sup> 1 (BA).

<sup>163</sup> 1 (WbI), 1 (GP), 21 (BA).

<sup>164</sup> 1 (WbI), 1 (GP).

<sup>165</sup> 3 (GP), 1 (BA).

<sup>166</sup> 3 (GP), 1 (BA).

<sup>167</sup> 6 (BA).

<sup>168</sup> 5 (CH), 7 (GP), 22 (BA).

<sup>169</sup> 1 (BA).

<sup>170</sup> 2 (WbI), 1 (CH), 3 (BA).

<sup>171</sup> 1 (WbI), 3 (BA).

<sup>172</sup> 1 (WbI), 4 (CH), 3 (GP), 12 (BA).

<sup>173</sup> 1 (GP).

<sup>174</sup> 1 (GP).

<sup>175</sup> 5 (WbI), 12 (CH), 5 (GP), 19 (BA).

<sup>176</sup> 1 (WbI), 3 (CH), 3 (GP).

<sup>177</sup> 2 (CH), 5 (GP), 6 (BA).

<sup>178</sup> 1 (WbI), 1 (CH), 1 (GP), 1 (BA).

consonants are almost always spelled with a glide, which suggests they were pronounced with a more distinct palatalisation as opposed to their neutral opposites.

Fig. 10: Presence and absence of glides that define a preceding consonant.

	Present	Absent
<dd> (probably /θ/)		1 (WbI)
/n/	2 (CH), 4 (BA)	
/d/		1 (CH)
/s/	1 (BA)	1 (GP)
/t/	1 (BA)	2 (GP)
/l/		1 (GP)
/r/	5 (BA)	
/ḏ/	7 (BA)	

#### 4.3.2.b Vowels

McManus says 'the MS tradition is very consistent in writing the glide after *a* and this consistency undoubtedly points to the existence of a distinguishable articulatory movement' and 'there is MS evidence for its (the glide vowel, red.) absence, particularly after *e*. Thus in the Book of Armagh one finds 'a filio *Fechach* filii *Nell*' (264.23-5, compare 'filium *Neill*' 263.28) and 'ad *Ferti* virorum *Feecc*' (259.31, compare '*hi Ferti* virorum *Feicc*' 263.17-18). One might refer to *as-ber* in the Cambray Homily alongside *as-beir*; and to examples in the Milan glosses such as *leth* for *leith* (128a1).<sup>179</sup> It seems that there is something going on with the vowel after which a glide is spelled. Hence I collected all the vowels after which a vowel appears in fig. 11.<sup>180</sup>

McManus was right that after short /a/, the palatalized consonant is almost exclusively indicated by a glide, only 2 exx. out of 89 have no glide. However, the percentages do not really differ from those of /o/ and /u/ and their long counterparts, and they should be added to the list of vowels that are almost exclusively followed by a glide vowel if the following consonant is palatalized.

Multiple scholars, including McManus, have suggested that a spelling a glide after short /e/ may not have been necessary in these early sources. In these sources, multiple examples of a glide

<sup>179</sup> McManus 1986: 11.

<sup>180</sup> These are only the glides that follow the relevant vowel, so the glide in for example *aittium* is not included in this table. Again, the instances in multiple manuscripts in GP of one word are counted once.

after short /e/ can be found and the percentage is significantly lower than for /a/, /o/ and /u/.

Fig. 11: glide vowels after vowels

	Phoneme	Presence	Absence	Presence/total
Short vowels	/a/	90 <sup>181</sup>	2 <sup>182</sup>	90/92=97,8%
	/e/	18 <sup>183</sup>	15 <sup>184</sup>	18/33=54,5%
	/o/	21 <sup>185</sup>	1 <sup>186</sup>	21/22=95,5%
	/u/	67 <sup>187</sup>	2 <sup>188</sup>	67/69=97,1%
Long vowel	/a:/	5 <sup>189</sup>		5/5=100%
	/e:/	5 <sup>190</sup>		5/5=100%
	/o:/	10 <sup>191</sup>		10/10=100%
	/u:/	2 <sup>192</sup>		2/2=100%

It can be summarized that back vowels /a, o, u/ appear with a glide almost exclusively, and front vowel /e/ almost always appears with a glide but has a lower percentage of instances where the glide vowel is spelled. This conclusion makes sense, since front vowels are closer to palatalized consonants than back vowels, so the distance from /e/ to a palatal consonant is small and the distance from /a, o, u/ to a palatal consonant is bigger.

It must be noted that the examples of <e> with a following glide are confined to palatalized consonants in word-final position.

#### 4.3.3 Location of glides

One final factor in the spelling of glide vowels seems to be the location of the palatalized consonant in the word; whether it defines a word-final consonant (/C'#) as in *boi'd*<sup>193</sup> or word-internal (/C'-) as in *ai'thira'gab'u*.

<sup>181</sup> 6 (WbI), 15 (CH), 13 (GP), 56 (BA).

<sup>182</sup> 1 (CH), 1 (GP).

<sup>183</sup> 5 (CH), 2 (GP), 11 (BA).

<sup>184</sup> 3 (WbI), 5 (CH), 5 (GP), 2 (BA).

<sup>185</sup> 4 (WbI), 5 (CH), 3 (GP), 9 (BA).

<sup>186</sup> 1 (GP).

<sup>187</sup> 9 (CH), 10 (GP), 48 (BA).

<sup>188</sup> 1 (WbI), 1 (BA).

<sup>189</sup> 5 (BA).

<sup>190</sup> 1 (GP), 4 (BA).

<sup>191</sup> 4 (WbI), 6 (BA).

<sup>192</sup> 2 (BA).

<sup>193</sup> Note that these are all monosyllables or words in /u, o/ in this case, as the glide vowel would otherwise be a schwa spelling. The discussion of the data of the schwa and the glide vowel will be discussed in unison in chapter 5.

It is sometimes said that the glide in the early MS tradition mostly appears word-finally, or to define the quality of the following consonant (*aiñcis*) and not the preceding consonant (*duiniu*). To see whether this statement is true, I collected all the numbers in the following table.

Fig. 12: position of *i*-glides

		Presence	Absence	Presence/total
Word-final		97 <sup>194</sup>	2 <sup>195</sup>	97/99=97,8%
Word-internal	total	122 <sup>196</sup>	20 <sup>197</sup>	122/142=85,9%
	/_C'/	102 <sup>198</sup>	14 <sup>199</sup>	102/106=96,2%
	/C'_/	20 <sup>200</sup>	6 <sup>201</sup>	20/26=76,9%

It is definitely not true that there are quantitatively more word-final glides than word-internal glides; it even seems to be the other way around. However, this is only the case because there are simply more word-internal palatalized consonants than there are palatalized final consonants. The percentage of marked word-final palatalized consonants (97,8%) is indeed significantly higher than marked word-internal palatalized consonants (85,9%).

When we look at the word-internal glides, we see that the glides that mark a following palatal consonant have a higher percentage of presence (96,2%) than glides that mark a preceding consonant (76,9%).

#### 4.4 Conclusion

None of the three approaches yielded straightforward results, however, they all seem to explain some part of the data and gave such results that we cannot deny that all these factors all have something to do with the spelling of the glide vowel; semantics, morphology, phonology (mostly the vowels) and position of the palatalized consonant.

These three elements are strongly linked and there must be a correlation between all these factors. For example, word-final palatalized consonants are often semantically or morphologically important, which must mean that the high results for both categories (position of the palatalized

<sup>194</sup> 4 (WbI), 17 (CH), 7 (GP), 69 (BA).

<sup>195</sup> 2 (CH).

<sup>196</sup> 11 (WbI), 16 (CH), 21 (GP), 74 (BA).

<sup>197</sup> 4 (WbI), 5 (CH), 8 (GP), 3 (BA).

<sup>198</sup> 1 (WbI), 2 (CH), 6 (GP), 95 (BA).

<sup>199</sup> 4 (WbI), 4 (CH), 6 (GP), 5 (BA).

<sup>200</sup> 9 (WbI), 18 (CH), 30 (GP), 15 (BA).

<sup>201</sup> 13 (CH), 11 (GP), 2 (BA).

consonant and semantics or morphology) have influenced each other. It can also be no coincidence that a glide vowel appears after *e* only in word-final position, where it is semantically or morphologically important.

In conclusion, there is an interplay of factors that decide whether a glide is spelled or not. The following rules can be summarized from these results:

A glide vowel is almost always spelled

- after the back vowels /*a, o, u, o:, a:, u:*/
- to define a word-final consonant, or a preceding a word-internal consonant
- if it is semantically or morphologically important
- before or after /*n, d*/

A glide vowel is sometimes left out, but often spelled, when

- it follows /*e*/ in word-internal position
- it follows a word-internal consonant and the quality has already been denoted by a preceding glide vowel or a schwa spelling

These 'rules' may be coincidental (as I suspect the distribution of the glide with /*n, d*/ to be, for example) but there are some rules where it would indeed be common sense to spell or leave out a glide vowel, for example, after /*e*/ there is less need for an *i*-glide than after a back vowel, and there is less need for a glide vowel word-internally than word-finally, where the glide vowel is often the only indication of case or verbal ending.

Whether these results actually reflect a conscious decision by the scribes or if the distribution of the glide vowels is coincidental is difficult to say. It is however very clear that the distribution of marked palatalized consonants cannot be explained by one factor and with every explanation there seems to be a certain randomness to when these rules were applied and when they were not.

#### ***4.5 Schwa and the quality of consonants***

Up to now, I have kept the data of the schwa spellings apart from the data of the spellings of the glide vowels. This was a matter of convenience, as I wanted to discuss both features of Irish phonology in their own environment. However, these two features are so closely linked, as the spelling of the schwa depends on the quality of the surrounding consonants, that they must be dealt

with in unison as well.

I am mainly concerned by the spelling CaiC' for a schwa here, as this spelling must have been interpreted by the Irish scribes to contain glide vowels. As I have argued in chapter 3, I suspect CaiC' to have its origin in etymological /a/ with a glide vowel <i> to denote the palatalisation of the following consonant. The truth is, however, that not every form in these sources with CaiC' still contains an etymological /a/ and that the scribe who decided to write CaiC' instead of CiC' cannot have been aware of the etymology of that particular vowel. Therefore, the CaiC' spelling spread to other words which do not have /a/ as an etymological vowel after all unstressed short non-final vowels had collapsed to schwa. It can be seen that the spelling CaiC' spreads from WbI, where all CaiC' spellings contain original /a/, to the later sources where the etymological vowel is rarely retained. It is striking that the Notes in the Book of Armagh has a preference for CiC' whereas the Names, GP and CH do not share that preference. This is possibly a hypercorrection on the part of the scribe of the Notes: recognizing the spelling CaiC' spread at the cost of the spelling CiC', he may have corrected CaiC' spellings to CiC'.

So did the spelling CaiC' influence the *i*-glide and the *a*-glide? It seems significant that of the two graphemes, only the <i> is obligatory in CəC', and the <a> seems to be optional. This echoes the use of the *i*-glide, but, as we have seen, the *a*-glide was not yet used in these sources.

This probably has to do with the etymology of that particular schwa. In WbI, all of the CaiC' spellings are from an etymological /a/, so the <a> there cannot really be seen as a glide vowel, as the scribe of WbI might have just copied the form CaiC' which was underlyingly /CaC'/. As CaiC' spellings spread to other lemmata which had an etymology in another vowel, the <a> in CaiC' spread to non-schwa position. Then the *a*-glide came into existence because the <a> was seen as a glide, as it denotes a preceding neutral consonant.

This explanation makes sense on a phonetic level as well. Phonetically, the schwa was pronounced [ɪ] in CəC' position. In a form like CH *lobri* the last vowel would also be phonetically [ɪ], so it seems reasonable that a spelling <ai> for [ɪ] in schwa position would spread to other positions as well.

So multiple origin theories on the *a*-glide have been discussed, the first being influence from the Latin ligature <æ>, discussed in 4.3.1, where the ligature was used to spell /e/ after a neutral consonant, and the <a> spread as a glide vowel after a neutral consonant before /e/ or /i/. The second being influence from the schwa spelling <CaiC'> from \*CaC', where the etymological

spelling CaiC' was interpreted as containing a glide vowel and the <a> spread to other positions in the word to function as a glide vowel following a neutral consonant and before a front vowel. Perhaps both <æ> and CaiC' < \*CaC' have had their share in the origin of the *a*-glide vowel in all positions in the word.

Whether one of these hypotheses is correct is difficult to say.

## Chapter V: conclusion

### 5.1. All conventions

This thesis has explored three features of orthography that are somewhat erratic. In the last table of this thesis the difference between Classical Old Irish and Early Old Irish can clearly be seen.

Fig. 14: How do Classical Old Irish and Early Old Irish spell the following features? The features where Early Old Irish has a convention which is not used in Classical Old Irish are in bold.

		Classical Old Irish	Early Old Irish
Long vowel		1) <i>fada</i> 2) not marked	1) <i>fada</i> <b>2) doubling</b> <b>3) doubling + <i>fada</i></b> 4) not marked
Schwa	CəC	CaC	1) CaC <b>2) CoC</b> <b>3) CeC</b> <b>4) CuC</b>
	CəC'	1) CaiC' 2) sometimes CiC'	1) CaiC' 2) CiC'
	C'əC	C'eC	C'eC
	C'əC'	C'iC'	C'iC'
Quality of the consonant	neutral	1) <i>a</i> -glide /C'_i,e 2) not marked	1) <i>a</i> -glide /C'_i,e <sup>202</sup> <b>2) e-caudata /C'_#</b> <b>3) ligature &lt;æ&gt; /C'_#</b> 4) not marked
	palatal	1) <i>i</i> -glide /C'_ and /a,o,u_C 2) <i>e</i> -glide /C'_o,a	1) <i>i</i> -glide /C'_ and /a,o,u_C 2) rare examples of <i>e</i> -glide <sup>203</sup> /C'_o,a <b>3) not marked</b>

Early Old Irish has more orthographical conventions than Classical Old Irish for these features,<sup>204</sup> but it is not the scattered chaos it may seem to be. There are certain rules for when what

<sup>202</sup> Only in BA.

<sup>203</sup> Only in BA.

<sup>204</sup> I have not looked at the orthography of Classical Old Irish here, so there might be more conventions that are not widespread or not discussed in the standard reference works on Old Irish. For example, there are probably some examples of the ligature <æ> used in /C'\_# position in Classical Old Irish as well. The point is that these conventions are not widespread and standard in Classical Old Irish.

convention was supposed to be used. Be that as it may, many of these conventions got mixed up, and many never even made it to the Classical Old Irish period.

So, coming back to the main question, is there a pattern or logic behind the seemingly erratic orthographical conventions of these three features in Early Old Irish? Is there a method in the madness? The answer is yes, partly.

There seems to be a reasoning behind the choice of the scribe to use length marking, based on which position in the word the long vowel is located. As the scribes were used to writing in Latin, they had to find a way to denote long vowels in unstressed position, or stressed position in a closed syllable, as Latin did not have long vowels in those positions. To clarify that the reader would have to pronounce a long vowel and not a short vowel in this position where he would not be used to pronouncing a long vowel because of Latin, the scribe could either double the vowel or place a *fada* on it. There does not seem to be any difference between doubling and the *fada*.

The spelling of the schwa was quite complicated for the scribes of these sources, as they pronounced all unstressed vowels in non-final position except for /u/ as a schwa, but the exemplars they used retained some of the original etymological vowels. Some of these have survived in the sources that were discussed in this thesis, some of these vowels are spelled in the Classical Old Irish convention, some of these vowels were hypercorrect spelled with <e> or <o>. From the data, it can be seen that vowels in unstressed non-final position collapsed to schwa earlier if the surrounding consonants were palatal. Shortly thereafter, the non-final unstressed vowels in neutral environment also collapsed. This sound change, having taken place short before the writing of these sources, is responsible for the chaotic orthography. So in this feature, there seems to be more confusion than logic.

The seemingly random distribution of glide vowels appears to be an interplay between different factors. There are some elements that trigger a following *i*-glide, like a back vowel, or the palatalized consonant to be defined is /n/ or /d̪/, or the palatalized consonant is word-final and/or morphologically or semantically important. The lack of a glide vowel can be explained by the same factors: either the preceding vowel is /e/ or the particular palatal consonant has been denoted to be palatal by another glide vowel (like in *suidu* for *suidiu*).

## 5.2. *Explicit*

Even though these sources have received a very different treatment than Classical Old Irish or later sources by scholars, these sources must be treated just like any other Old or Middle Irish

source. The scribes of Early Old Irish made mistakes, just as their later colleagues who wrote in Old or Middle Irish, they hypercorrected old spellings and got confused by their own language. Fortunately for us, these scribes have retained some older forms that are very helpful for the study of language reconstruction and there are many things that can be concluded from this study, beside the answer to the main question. Once again, it is shown that the influence of Latin (orthography and phonology) on Irish cannot be understated. Furthermore, the early scribes of Irish were hypercorrecting, either in spelling the schwa (*esbetu* for *esbatu*) or because of Latin influence (*praidchas* for *pridchas*). The system of glide vowels shows a gradual growth throughout the Irish period: starting with just the *i*-glide defining following consonants in the earliest Irish texts, the birth of the *a*-glide and the *e*-glide in the Book of Armagh and when these glide vowels became fixed elements of Irish orthography, the *o*-glide appears in late Middle Irish.

I am confident many more lessons can be learned from these sources, however small and prone to errors they may be. At any rate, the last has not yet been said on the subject of the spelling CuiC' and the spelling of the plosives. Perhaps these features are not the only ones that have some method in their 'madness'.

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