RETURN TO DATIVE ANMAIMM¹

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ABSTRACT

The long dative singular ending -(a)im(m) is found in only one class of nouns in Old Irish: the neuter n-stems. Although this form has been the topic of discussion in numerous treatments of the noun in Old Irish, a convincing scenario for its origin has yet to be put forward. This paper, following a suggestion made by C. Marstrander in his 1911 paper ‘Dative anmaimm’, attributes the unexpected final -m(m) of the ending to a rule of progressive assimilation, whereby *-mmVn > *-mmVmm in Proto-Insular-Celtic or Proto-Irish. This type of change is quite common cross-linguistically and also has an exact parallel in Avestan.

1. INTRODUCTION.

In many of the consonant stems in Old Irish there are two types of dative singulars: ‘short’ and ‘long’. This is true in the earliest attestations of the language. For example, in stems in a lenited velar we find a short dative singular cath(a)ir ‘city’ as well

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 16th Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference. I would like to thank an anonymous reader from Ériu, Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, Joe Eska, Jay Friedman, Stephanie Jamison, Jay Jasanoff, Ron Kim, Masato Kobayashi, Jared Klein, Joseph Nagy, Stefan Schumacher, Jeremy Rau, Olga Thomason, Brent Vine, Calvert Watkins, Ilya Yakubovich and all the students of the UCLA Program in Indo-European Studies for their help with this paper.
as a long form *cathraig*. It is often thought (cf. GOI §315) that the short dative continues the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) endingless locative (cf. Vedic Sanskrit loc. sg. *aśman* ‘stone’). However, given the productivity of the loc. sg. ending *-*i throughout the rest of Indo-European, it would be surprising for Old Irish to maintain an archaism such as the endingless locative while losing productive *-*i. McCone (1978) has convincingly demonstrated that by assuming the general apocope of *-*i in Proto-Insular-Celtic (PIC), one may reconstruct PIE loc. sg. *-*i as the original ending of the OIr. short dative. He also shows that long dative singulars of the animate consonant stems are for the most part not inherited but have borrowed their forms from the accusative singular on the model of consonant stems such as the t-stem *carae*, accusative/dative singular *carait*.

McCone’s scenario can account for all long dative singulars in Old Irish except for those found in one class of nouns: the neuter n-stems. Here a noun such as *ainm(m)* ‘name’ (cf. GOI §328) has a long form *ann(a)im(m)* beside a short form *ainm(m)*. Unlike in other consonant-stem paradigms, the accusative (= nominative) singular could not have provided the basis for these forms. So far, no one has given a wholly

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2 Cf. McCone (1978, 28). Stems in a lenited dental (e.g. *cin* vs. *cinaid* ‘fault’), feminine n-stems (e.g. *toimte* vs. *toimtin/toimtiu* ‘opinion’) and masculine n-stems (e.g. *brithem* vs. *brithemain* ‘judge’) also have short and long dative singulars.

3 Cf. McCone (1978, 35-38). In this insightful treatment of short and long dat. sg. forms of the masc./fem. C-stems, McCone builds upon Cowgill’s work (1975, 57) on the absolute/conjunct distinction of the Insular Celtic verb, for which Cowgill posits a sporadic apocope of *-*i (now aptly called the Cowgill apocope) in PIC. This means that at some subsequent stage Old Irish replaced the form of the original dative in *-*ey with locative -i, which has numerous parallels within Indo-European (e.g. PIE loc. sg. *-*i > post-Mycenean Greek dat. sg. *-*e). Note that within the Celtic language family, Old Irish would not be alone in the extension of *-*i to the dat. sg. in the C-stems, as Gaulish demonstrates this phenomenon as well (e.g., *Brigindoni*, to Nom. sg. *Brigindu*; cf. Dottin [1920, 119]; Lambert [1994, 50]).

4 They were once thought to continue the PIE dative ending in *-*ey (cf. GOI §315).

5 For a detailed historical account of the neuter n-stems in Old Irish and Indo-European in general, see Stüber (1998, 45-83).
satisfactory account of the origin of the ending -(a)im(m). In fact, with the exception of McCone (1978, 30-33), Matasović (1996) and De Bernardo Stempel (1999, 103), previous scholarship has devoted little more than a few sentences to the problem. This paper aims to rectify this situation, first by giving a fuller account of the dat. sg. of neuter n-stems, and second by presenting the likeliest scenario of its origin.

2. Hypothesis I: Old Irish anmāimn < *-ŋ-bhi, *-ŋ-mi.

2.0. Our first step is to decide whether this form is an archaism or an innovation, as is regularly the case in morphology. Early explanations suggested that the ending -(a)im(m) is inherited, continuing either PIE *-ŋ-bhi or *-ŋ-mi (cf. Zupitza 1904, 404-5). These endings, PIE *-bhī(s) and its Germanic and Balto-Slavic variant *-mi(s), are found in almost all of the IE branches and usually carry a plural meaning: Sanskrit -bhis, Avestan -biš, Armenian -bk‘, Continental Celtic -bi, Germanic -m, and Balto-Slavic -mi. In some instances they are also reconstructed as having a singular sense; cf. Armenian -b/-w/-v, Homeric Greek -φι and Balto-Slavic *-mī/mī. However, the reconstruction of *-ŋ-mi6 for Celtic (see Streitberg [1900, 13]; Hamp [1965, 225, n. 2]; Hamp [1996, 209] and Matasović [1996, 59-63]) is problematic. No other branch continues both *-m- and *-bh-case endings, the latter of which Celtic clearly reflects (Gaul. -be, OIr. -(a)ib, etc.). Recognizing this, Lewis and Pedersen (1937: 180) felt that -(a)im(m) was more likely to be a continuation of PIE *-ŋ-bhi, equating anmāimn with Armenian instr. sg. anuamb ‘with a name’.

2.1. However, to reconstruct *-ŋ-bhi would not explain the palatalization of the final consonant of -(a)im(m),7 due to the early apocope of *-i in PIC: *-ŋ-bhi > *-am-bi > *-amb > **-amm. This could be rectified by positing *-ŋ-bhis: *-ŋ-bhis > *-an-bis > *-am-bis > *-am-bi > *-amb’ > -aimm. However, there is no evidence that indicates

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6 This form is also found in Balto-Slavic; cf. Old Lithuanian akmen-i-mi ‘with a stone’ (< *-mī), Old Church Slavonic kamen-i-mu ‘id.’ (< *-mi).

7 Of course, the same argument applies to the reconstruction of *-ŋ-mi.
*-bhis* was utilized as a singular case formant in PIE; on the contrary, Greek and Armenian both point to an s-less *-bhi*. Cowgill ([1975, 67-68]; see also Mccone [1978, 32]) suggests that the old instrumental plural *-an-bis*, having been replaced by *-an-o-bis* in its original dative plural function, was retained in the neuter *n*-stems and then reinterpreted as a singular. But why would *-an-bis* be reinterpreted as a singular? Moreover, it would be quite unusual for the plural form to be extended into the singular, no doubt the commoner of the two. Even so, the palatalization of the final consonant of *(a)im(m)* could be justified on analogical grounds; see section 4.2 below.

2.2. Other problems arise. For instance, Thurneysen (GOI §332) objects that *(a)im(m)* cannot continue PIE *-bhi*, because “the ending is never written -mb.”\(^8\) But as Mccone (1978, 32, n. 27) points out, Thurneysen’s objection is “probably not fatal”, “if we assume that in unstressed syllables as in proclitics (e.g. *imm* ‘around’ < *embi(s*) mb was assimilated to *m(m)* early.” This assimilation, as De Bernardo Stempel (1999, 103) suggests, would have to have occurred at a very remote date in unstressed positions,\(^9\) making the survival of *(a)im(m)* in the neuter *n*-stem paradigm in PC more likely. Otherwise, a speaker would have associated -b- with the form of the dat. pl. and then would have eliminated it through paradigmatic pressure in favor of the short dat. sg. However, De Bernardo Stempel’s view cannot be maintained, in light of the recently discovered Gaulish form *ananbe* (Lambert 2000, 89), which proves that if there had

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\(^8\) Strangely, Marstrander (1911) states that the *n-* of the suffix apposed to the ending *-bhi* would “form the awkward consonantal group -nb-.” But these are not grounds for objection; the group is by no means “awkward” and an assimilation of *-nb*- to -mb- is almost to be expected, just as we assume for Mycenean <ki-to-pi> /khitómpphi/, instr./loc. pl. to Greek nom. sg. χιτόν (Rix [1992, §173]; Meier-Brügger [1992, F302]). Cf. also *h₂/gw* > *anban > *amban* > ... > OIr. imb ‘butter’.

\(^9\) In stressed syllables *-mb-* remains, e.g. *camb* ‘crooked, wry’.
been such an assimilation, it could only have occurred at a much later date, perhaps as late as PIC.  

2.3. As we have just seen, from the formal point of view a derivation of OIr. -(a)im(m) from *-ŋ-bhi presents a number of obstacles. However, there are further objections. To begin with, no other Celtic language provides any trace of a singular use of *-bhi, which we might expect to find in the rich case morphology of the Continental Celtic languages or through an isolated archaism in the Brythonic languages. Furthermore, it seems incredible that this form would have remained only in the neuter n-stems and would not have been utilized in other nominal paradigms in Old Irish. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, although *-bhi is utilized in a singular sense in Arm. -b/-w/-v and Hom.Gk. -φτ, it is uncertain that this usage existed in PIE as well.  

3. HYPOTHESIS II: OLD IRISH -(a)im(m) AS AN INNOVATION.

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10 Also note that the expected dat. pl. form *-am-bis → *-an-o-bhis at a rather late date, at a stage within PIC (cf. Schumacher [2000, 120]) or late PC, which is evidenced by forms such as annanbe, even though thematicized forms are also found in later Transalpine Gaulish (Lambert 1994, 53). If we assume that -(a)im(m) is the continuation of *-ŋ-bhi(s), this implies that one of the following scenarios had occurred:

a) The neuter n-stem paradigm, having no inherited plural (Meier-Brügger [2002, 202]), continued the singular use of *-bhi until a new dat. pl. was analogically created on the model of the o-stem (masc.) nouns. Given forms such as Gaul. anuana and annanbe, this scenario is highly implausible.

b) Neuter nouns in PC acquired a plural paradigm, creating homophonous dat. sg. and dat. pl. forms *-ambi(s) (< *-ŋ-bhi(s)) in the n-stems. Not until PIC was a new dat. pl. form created by analogy with the o-stem dat. pl. This scenario is also not very attractive.

11 For competing views on this matter, see Meier-Brügger (1992, F302) and Rix (1992, §173) as well as Hajnal (1995).
3.0. It thus appears unlikely that Old Irish -(a)im(m) comes from either *-ŋ-bhi or *-ŋ-mi, which means that we must view the form of the long dat. sg. as some sort of innovation from an earlier stage within the prehistory of Old Irish. Pokorny (1925, 43) suggests that the palatal unlenited -m in the short dative singular of the neuter n-stems led to the replacement of -n’- with -m’-. However, the expected outcome of PIE *-men-i is *-m’ (via *-men > *-mʔ > *-m’), not *-min’. One may argue that a hypothetical form *-min’ could continue the original PIE Dat. sg. ending *-men-ey, but this ending would be otherwise unattested in the OIr. nominal system and does not provide us with a very attractive solution.

3.1. McCone (1978, 32) realizes that there would be no reason to model *-(a)in(n) > -(a)im(m), since n(n) occurs throughout the plural of the neuter n-stem paradigm. Instead, he suggests that because other types of neuters made a distinction between the dat. sg. and the nom./acc. sg., forms which were identical in the neuter n-stems, there was “pressure towards the creation of a distinct dat. sg.” Since there was no exact model on which to base a new dat. sg. in the neuter n-stems, the solution was “the repetition of an extra syllable -VC’”. After the loss of final syllables n(n) was only associated with the plural in these stems...and so it was the m(m) of the root that was repeated in the singular.” However, nowhere in the nominal system of Old Irish do we find a model for such a development, making McCone’s solution slightly implausible.

3.2. If -(a)im(m) is not an inherited archaism and is also not the result of analogy, then it must be the product of sound change. This was seen by Marstrander (1911), who recognized that it is not by chance the desinence -(a)im(m) is found only in neuter men-

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12 “Das auslautende m(m) statt n ist von der kurzen Form übernommen.” Thurneysen (GOI §332) deems this solution possible but draws no definitive conclusion.

13 Cf. McCone (1978, 32): “However, they cannot possibly be inherited, since a ‘long’ form going back to before the loss of final syllables would have become *-(a)in(n). Furthermore as n(n) occurs throughout the plural of this class, there could be no reason to remodel *-(a)in(n) to -(a)im(m).”
stems.\textsuperscript{14} He writes (ibid.): “It seems evident that such forms as *anmimmn, *céimimmn, *garmimmn, etc. have in Irish become annimmn, céimmimmn, garimmn, under the assimilating influence of the preceding m.” To explain the form in question Marstrander thus utilizes a simple sound change: the distal assimilation between two phonological segments similar in their feature composition (cf. Kiparsky 2003, 334). This type of assimilation is quite common cross-linguistically and may occur between vowels (e.g. Germanic umlaut and Celtic vowel infection [GOI 46ff.]) or between consonants (e.g., ‘Italo-Celtic’ *p > k” / … k”; cf. Latin quinque, OIr. cóic ‘five’ < *k’enk’e < PIE *penk’e).

Marstrander (1911) attributes the restriction of the phenomenon to the dat. sg. to pre-Celtic differences in accentuation. For example, he derives anm(a)im(m) from tri-syllabic *hn̓mén-i and reconstructs nom./acc. pl. and gen. pl. anmann from disyllabic *gmnna and *gmnóm, respectively. However, he bases his theory on an incorrect reconstruction of these forms; the PIC reconstruction of the nom./acc. pl. should be *anman-ā and the gen. pl. *anman-ōm (Stüber 1998, 48). More importantly, Marstrander in no way succeeds in explaining the reasons for the limitation of this change to the neuter gender: “as by far the greater number of these stems was neuter, the change of -inn to -imm was confined to this gender.”

3.3. Though Marstrander’s hypothesis ultimately misses the mark, his intuition remains right on target. Clearly the simplest explanation lies in the change of *-minn to -mimm at some stage in the prehistory of Irish. However, before positing such an idea we must explain several factors. First, we must explain the distribution of -(a)im(m). We must show why the form in question is limited solely to the dat. sg. of the neuter n-stems. Why do the masc./fem. n-stems not have forms such as dat. sg. **brithemaim to brithem ‘judge’? Here the clue lies in the consonants: in the masc./fem. n-stems the -m- of the

\textsuperscript{14} A similar observation was already made by Zupitza (1904, 404-5).
The historical suffix is almost always lenited, while in the neuter n-stems the -m- of the suffix is always unlenited. Therefore, it is logical to assume that an absence of lenition is a factor in this change. It is also significant that the final consonant of -(a)im(m) is an unlenited /m/. This indicates that the preceding consonant to which the original final *-n# has been assimilated was also unlenited, if an assimilation of this type did take place.


4.0. I propose that we follow Marstrander’s intuitive hypothesis and assume the progressive assimilation of a sequence *-MVn- to -MVM-. It remains to be seen at what point in time and in what configuration this change occurred. If it happened in a sequence *-MVnV# as perhaps in, for example, Sanskrit gen. sg. máma ‘of me’ (< *mána; cf. Avestan mana and Old Church Slavonic mene), then it is possible that the change could have occurred at any number of points within the prehistory of the language. However, to assume that the change occurred in this sequence, we must limit the assimilation to the sequence *-meni# or *-menV[+front] in order to account for lack of assimilation in the nom./acc. pl. and gen. pl. (there is no **anmamm or the like), which I find improbable, or we must assume sporadic sound change in the dat. sg. alone. Though it is true that both assimilation and dissimilation tend to be irregular types of sound change, let us not quite yet abandon the Neogrammarian concept of regular sound change for the present discussion.

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15 To my knowledge, the only exception is menmae ‘mind’ < PC *men-men-s; cf. GOI §331. Dat. sg. menmain (< acc. sg. *menmain < *men-men-n) must be assumed to be secondary, as the expected form is **menmimm (< *men-men-i).

16 Masc./fem. mon-stems derive from *-a-mon- or *-iy-a-mon- (see Watkins [1962, 182-185]; Stüber [1998, 146-8]). The lenition of -m- is generally assumed to have occurred at a stage in PC or, at the very least, in PIC (cf. McCone [1996, 96-97]).

17 Where <M> = unlenited /m/, <V> = any vowel and <n> = lenited /n/.

This leaves us with the following, more likely, change: word-final *-MVn# assimilated to *-MVM#. It is not yet known when this change occurred, but it appears there are only two possible dates of occurrence. The first is at a very early stage of Proto-Goidelic (PG), or perhaps even Proto-Insular-Celtic, soon after the Cowgill apocope, when loc. sg. *-men-i > *-men. The second possibility is in late PG, after the apocope of final short vowels. However, to follow the latter hypothesis one must assume the continuation of *-ey into PG, which, as discussed in section 3.0, was most likely eliminated at an early date in favor of PIE loc. sg. *-i. Moreover, if we assume that the change occurred at a later date, we would once again be faced with explaining why there are no forms attested such as nom./acc. pl. and gen. pl. **anmamm. For these reasons, the former scenario is much more likely: word-final *-MVn > *-MVM after the Cowgill apocope, soon after the split of PG from PIC.

4.1. This new word-final *-MeM# remained unchanged until a late stage of Primitive Irish. One may argue that to reconstruct PIC word-final *-M and assume its continuation into Old Irish would be unsubstantiated, but it is clear that this phoneme was present in PIC and had survived into Classical Old Irish: cf. the form am ‘I am’ (< *emm < PC/PIC *emmi [cf. Gaulish ɩɯɯ ‘am’] < PIE *h₁esmi). In this instance, it is clear that OIr. unlenited -M was once a true geminate *-mm#, the product of an earlier *-sm-. This fact may provide us with a clue as to why word-final -M was retained. Geminated sequences are regularly continued into Old Irish--witness the retention of word-final geminate *-dd# < PIE *-nt(i)# (GOI §208; PC *beronti > *beront > *berodd > •berat ‘they carry’). For this reason, our sound change may be better viewed as *-mmVn > *-mmVm, with the expected retention of a word-final geminate.

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19 Retention of ungeminated final -m would be surprising in light of its frequent loss in other Indo-European languages. Word-final -m# is often elided in Latin prosody though -n# is not, and Sanskrit frequently deoccludes -m in word-final position, while -n remains (Kobayashi [2004, 91-96]).

20 Many thanks to J. Jasanoff and C. Watkins for their help on this matter.
We have established that a sound change of \*-*mmVn > *mmVm\* best explains the unexpected final -m(m) in the long dative singular form of the neuter n-stems. However, we still must account for the presence of palatalization in the ending -\*(a)im(m), which may be attributed either to sound law (see Schrijver [1992, 192-4] for discussion) or to analogy. Should the former prove untrue, we must assume that palatalization resulted from analogy. It is conceivable that palatalization was introduced on the model of the other two classes of neuter consonant stems in Old Irish, the t-stems (cf. déit\textsuperscript{21}, dat. sg. of dét ‘tooth’) and the s-stems (cf. sléib < *-es-i, dat. sg. of slíab ‘mountain’).

Another possible source lies in the remaining long datives of C-stems, which invariably show palatal quality of the final consonant (GOI §315). Such analogy is comparable to the replacement of nasalization by lenition in the short dative of the neuter n-stems (e.g. aímm\textsuperscript{N} \rightarrow aímm\textsuperscript{b}) on the model of other dative singulars in the language (GOI §315).

Now I admit that it does not seem immediately obvious why dat. sg. \*-Men should have become \*-MeM, while nom./acc. sg. \*-Man remained unchanged. Three factors, working together, may have contributed to the analogical replacement of \*-MaM by \*-Man:

1. The vast majority of neuter n-stems in Old Irish are verbal nouns (Stüber 1998, 51) and tend to be used in the oblique. This is reflected in the extension of zero grade of the root from the weak cases into the strong in PIC (e.g., nom./acc. sg. *nōman ‘name’ \rightarrow *anman) as well as the tendency in later Irish to generalize the form of the dat. sg. in verbal nouns (cf. Stüber 1998, 23). Thus the nom./acc. sg. was a less frequent and less salient form, and so any phonological change affecting it is more likely to be reversed than in the dat. sg.

\textsuperscript{21} While Thurneysen (GOI §325) lists déit as the dat. sg. of ‘tooth’, we expect it to be dét (< *dent < *denti). This form is attested once in the glosses (Mi. 117\textsuperscript{d}5), once in the Cóir anmann and is also the standard form in the later language (Breatnach 1994, 248). For these reasons, it seems unlikely that dét is a “faulty spelling” (GOI §325) in Mi. 117\textsuperscript{d}5 and probably should be viewed as an inheritance. This is not to say that the palatalized form déit (Sg. 67\textsuperscript{b}10) is itself a scribal error, as it is possible that this form had acquired final palatalization secondarily as well.
2. The nom./acc. sg. of C-stems was always marked with a zero-ending in Old Irish. This fact would have created pressure to restore analogically the suffix *-man-, which was continued only in the plural (cf. nom./acc. pl. *an-man-á, gen. pl. *an-man-an, etc.), based on the model of other C-stems such as *dant ‘tooth’:

*dant : *dant-á :: X : *anman-á, where X = *anman.

3. One must not overlook the tendency in the prehistory of Old Irish to mark the nom./acc. sg. of neuter nouns with an *-n#, typically attributed to analogy with o-stems and n-stems (cf. GOI §311). Nom./acc. sg. *nertan ‘strength’ (OIr. nertN) and *kridiyan ‘heart’ (OIr. crídeN) both historically ended in *-an, while i-stem mori-n ‘sea’ ← mori (OIr. muirN) and u-stem *doressu-n ← *doressu ‘door’ (OIr. dorusN) have acquired their final *-n secondarily. It is thus reasonable to assume that a speaker would have remodeled **-MaM to *-Man by this same tendency:

*anma-m → *anma-n > aim.

4.4. As the vast majority of neuter n-stems in Old Irish (and, for that matter, PIE) were original (s)men-stems, it follows that the ending -(a)im(m) is the expected, inherited continuation of the dat. sg. ending *-i for the majority of nouns in the paradigm. However, a handful of nouns in the neuter n-stem paradigm do not continue the suffix *-(s)men-. For example, there are two original en-suffixed nouns, gein ‘birth; infant’ (from an early [perhaps Proto-Celtic] *génh1-ŋg22) and imb ‘butter’ (< PC *amban < *h2g/nŋg-ŋ, cf. Old High German ancho, Latin unguen, etc.). In addition, a single heteroclitic noun is continued through OIr. arbor ‘corn’, from *h₁.ėrh₁/wg/*h₁.ėrh₁-wen-. We must assume that the more common form -(a)im(m) was analogically inserted into the paradigm of these nouns23 at some point in time (cf. Marstrander 1911, 20). The question remains, then: what became of their inherited dat. sg.?


23 Also műr ‘morsel’ (< PIE *mēms-ro-; originally an o-stem noun, cf. Greek μῆμα ‘thigh’), neim ‘poison’ (< PIE *nēm-ŋ, originally a men-stem to the root *nem- ‘zuteilen’ with geminate simplification; cf. Rasmussen [1999, 647]) and srūaim ‘stream’ (< *srew-man).
4.5. Outside of the neuter *(s)men*-stems, the reflex of *(−)-en-i* was the short dat. sg., a simple mark of palatalization. For example, we expect\(^{24}\) a short dat. sg. \(**gein^L\) (\(\leftarrow\)^{25} \(*gein^{N}\ < *geni\ n- < *gen-en < PC *gen-en-i*) or \(*airb\ < PIE *h₂h₂h₂-wen-i*)\. This small group of nouns—no doubt due to their common occurrence in the language—helped make the short dat. sg. an alternative form in Irish. We may therefore set up a two-sided proportional analogy:

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\begin{align*}
\text{nom./acc. sg. } & a\text{inn} : \text{dat. sg. } an\text{maimm} : \text{nom./acc. sg. } gein : \text{dat. sg. } X (X = gein\text{imm}) \\
\text{nom./acc. sg. } & gein : \text{dat. sg. } \star\star\text{gein} : \text{nom./acc. sg. } a\text{inn} : \text{dat. sg. } X (X = a\text{inn})
\end{align*}
\]

The spread of the short dat. sg. form to original *(s)men*-stems would have been greatly aided by the numerous \textit{inherited} short dative singulars of the masc./fem. \(C\)-stems, which we saw above.\(^{26}\) Evidence from the Cambrai Homily and the Glosses\(^{27}\) shows that the short and long forms were both utilized in the earliest stage of the attested language, though the short form was much less common. This may be attributed to the vast number of *(s)men*-stem nouns that made up the class of neuter \(n\)-stem nouns.

\(^{24}\) Admittedly, no short dat. sg. form is attested in this small class of nouns. This fact does not necessarily argue against our proposed theory, but rather necessitates an early date for the analogical spread of forms between the two types of neuter \(n\)-stems.

\(^{25}\) Lenition (instead of expected nasalization) in this case is due to analogy with other datives (cf. GOI §315) as is the case with the form of the long dat. sg. \(-(a)im(m)\); see above.

\(^{26}\) Conversely, it may be said that the spread of the long dative singulars in Old Irish was facilitated by the situation in the neuter \(n\)-stems, where there were two inherited dat. sg. forms.

\(^{27}\) See Hessen (1912, 239-241); McCone (1978, 31); Stüber (1998, 22). The long dat. sg. form is attested in both the Cambrai Homily (7\textsuperscript{th} c. AD) and the ‘prima manus’ of the Würzburg glosses (700 AD). In addition, the form occurs eighty-five percent of the time in the earliest glosses (Würzburg, Milan and St. Gall).
4.6. We may see a nice parallel to our proposed phonological rule in Gathic and Younger Avestan,\(^{28}\) where the sequence *-mVn# developed to -mVm# in word-final position\(^ {29}\) but retained its original form elsewhere (see Hoffmann/Forssman [2004, 89,109], de Vaan [2003, 396-7]). For example, the nom./acc. plural of nāma ‘name’ is nāmām (< *nāmān# < *-mōn), while the nom./acc. dual is nāmōnī (Hoffmann-Forssmann [2004, 144]). Similarly, an endingless locative with suffixal lengthened grade shows -mqm: loc. sg. cašmqm ‘vision’ < *cašmān#, while a locative in -i keeps the original shape of the suffix, loc. sg. cašmaēnī. Just as in Proto-Goidelic, the change of *-mVn# to *-mVm# may be seen best in nouns that were formed with the PIE suffix *-men- (> Avestan -man-). In fact, I have been unable to locate a single instance of this change outside of the man-stems. This immediately brings the ad hoc nature of our hypothesis into question: if this change is reconstructed without question for Avestan, why should we not do the same for Old Irish?

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

5.0. Nearly 100 years ago, Marstrander suggested that the unexpected form of the ending in dat. sg. anaimm ‘name’ is the result of a very simple and well-established linguistic process: namely, the assimilation of two similar phonological segments in an unstressed final syllable. We have seen that this hypothesis holds many attractions over its alternatives. First, our hypothesis explains both the long and short dat. sg. forms without reconstructing cases otherwise unattested in Old Irish (C-stem dat. sg. in *-ey and the singular use of *-bhi). Second, by assuming this phonological change, we do not invoke an unmotivated analogical change. Lastly, this type of progressive assimilation has numerous parallels from languages around the world, and there is even a comparable change in Avestan. One may argue that the change that we have posited is ad hoc, due to its complete restriction to the neuter men-stems. However, let us remember that most--if

\(^{28}\) According to de Vaan (2003, 396), this is a regular rule only in the Gāthās. However, M. Kobayashi points out to me (p.c.) that this rule is not always obeyed (cf. acc. pl. dāmqn ‘homes’ [Y.46.6]).

\(^{29}\) Strictly speaking, any labial onset triggers this rule.
not all cases of the change of \(^*-mVn\)\# to \(-mVm\)\# in Avestan are found precisely in the neuter men-stem paradigm.\(^{30}\) This does not mean that other examples of this change do not exist within Old Irish, for it is quite possible that future research will unearth other examples of progressive assimilation of \(^*-mmVn\)\# > \(-mmVmm\)\#. However, until then, I propose that we follow Marstrander’s insightful suggestion and utilize the change of \(^*-mmVn\)\# to \(^*-mmVmm\)\# to explain the long dat. sg. form of the neuter n-stems, incorporating it into the myriad changes reconstructed for the complex prehistory of Old Irish.

\(^{30}\) We should also keep in mind that because grammatical forms and roots often behave differently with regard to sound change, analogical remodeling may have eliminated many, or perhaps even all, additional examples of this change. Cf. Kobayashi (2004, 91): “It is true that there is some asymmetry between roots/stems and endings in their susceptibility to sound changes. Analogical restitution driven by paradigmatic uniformity typically applies to roots or stems, and the fact that endings consist of a smaller set of phonemes than do roots might be the result of such asymmetry.”
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