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1. Introduction

In his very positive review of Professor William Gillies’s Festschrift (McLeod et al. 2010) in *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 27, Colm Ó Baoill, ‘having tried, unsuccess-fully, to find faults in the contributions’, thinks he ‘finally found one in the title, *Bile ós Chrannaibh*, where there ought to be no lenition following the prepos-ition ós’ (Ó Baoill 2010: 128). As the co-editor, who suggested the title for the Festschrift and who argued for the retention of lenition in this instance, it seems appropriate to outline here, with Professor Ó Baoill’s encouragement, the justification for the form ós chrannaibh with lenition. It is hoped that the evidence and analysis presented below may be of more general interest for the light it sheds on the historical development of the preposition ós in the Gaelic languages, and, moreover, for reinforcing the value of Scottish Gaelic evidence in helping us to identify one possible explanation for lenition follow-ing ós.

It is true that the conventional view is that ós is a non-leniting prepo-sition and Thurneysen ([1946] 1993: 527, §850C) notes it as such for Old Gaelic. McCone (1994: 177, §31.2; 190, §33.6) accordingly derives the prepo-sition and preverb from *ōxs < Insular Celtic *(o)uxs(i) < Indo-European *(s)(o)upsi (cf. Greek hupsi), implying that the final -i was somehow lost in Goedelic. Matasović (2009: 303–04) similarly derives the preposition from *ounxsos although he suggests that the zero grade of the Proto-Indo-European root may be preserved in the preverb uss- / üss- < *uxso- (for which see Russell 1988). That ós was originally non-leniting in Gaelic seems to be supported by the evidence of Old Gaelic and the majority of Gaelic dialects (though not all) in Ireland, Scotland and Man; the lack of lenition following ós can be illus-trated by the complex prepositional forms and similar constructions *os combhair, os cionn, os coinne, os meán, os méid*, which are common in Modern Irish; cf. Scot-tish Gaelic *os cionn, os bàrr*, etc. The entry in *DIL* for ós does not contain any examples of leniting ós, which perhaps perpetuates the notion that ós is a non-leniting preposition (*DIL* s.v. ós *(ús)*). However, there is ample evidence for leniting ós in Gaelic from the Middle Gaelic to Modern Gaelic periods, and, as we shall see below, there is also dialectal evidence from County Kerry for
2. Bile ós chrannaibh

The title of Professor Gillies’s festschrift, *Bile ós Chrannaibh*, with lenition following *ós*, was taken from a Classical Gaelic poem (*Cid iu ndílaid na daini*) of 16 stanzas in strict *deibhidhe* metre composed by Professor Osborn Bergin for the occasion of Professor Rudolf Thurneysen’s seventy-second birthday, which was celebrated in Dublin in 1929. Bergin’s poem, dated 14 March 1929, was subsequently published in the journal *Éige* 2.4 in 1940 by Professor Daniel A. Binchy (1940) in a brief obituary following Thurneysen’s death in August 1940.

Professor Ó Baoill (2010: 128) is correct when he says that *chrannaibh* is not lenited in the published edition of the poem (Binchy 1940: 287). However, a typescript copy of the poem in my possession clearly shows lenition in ‘Bile ós chrannaibh’ (stanza 9a) (see Appendix). This typescript was given to me by Professor Gillies in the early 1990s when I lectured at the University of Edinburgh, the text having been given to him originally in the early 1980s by Professor Kenneth Jackson, his predecessor in the Chair of Celtic at Edinburgh. Jackson may have acquired the typescript in the early 1930s when he studied at University College Dublin under Osborn Bergin and Gerard Murphy (Gillies 2004). There can be little doubt that this typescript is the text upon which Binchy’s edition of the poem was based. A comparison of both texts shows that Binchy made a small number of editorial alterations to the original text and it seems certain that it was he who decided upon emending *bile ós chrannaibh* to *bile ós chrannaib* in the published text. Other minor changes he made are:

- 'na mese for na mese (§2a)
- connáich for connab (§5c)
- iat for iat (§6a)
- 'na rathrémimm for na rathrémimm (§8c)
- ind físs for ín fiss (14c)
- 'sa deich for ta deich (15a)
- 'na fein for na fein (§16c)

Lenition of *c* is regularly rendered as *cb* in the unpublished and published version of the poem (*dia chess* (§5d), *bad chuibdi* (§5d), *een chace* (§6c), *do cbách* (§10d), *ó Charatnád* (§12b)) and there can be no doubt that lenition was intended by Bergin in the phrase *Bile ós chrannaibh*. Given Professor Gillies’s personal connection with the original typescript text, his professional interest in primary sources, and the further confirmation of lenition in the phrase *ó Chrannaibh* in the Book of the Dean of Lismore (see below), I felt that it was entirely fitting to retain Bergin’s lenition in the title of the Festschrift.

3. Historical evidence for leniting *ós*

Leniting *ós* (also *ús* and *ás* / *as*, for which see L. Bretnach (1994: 329, §13.22) and *DIL* s.v. *ós* (§42)) occurs in sources ranging from the Middle Gaelic to Modern Gaelic periods. In his *Grammar of Old Irish*, Thurneysen ([1946b] 1993: 527, §850C) notes ‘ó is, (h)úas, with the dative, apparently without lenition in Old Irish, though leniting in the later language’. Bergin, who studied with Thurneysen (Binchy 1940: 286) and who was one of the translators of Thurneysen’s *Handbuch des Altrischen* into English, was also well aware of the leniting potential of the preposition *ós*. In fact, leniting *ós* occurs in a number of texts edited by him, e.g. *ós sionnshbrothaibh* (alliterating with *cail* in *Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh’s* poem, *A chlárseach Cionnaí I Chogair*, which Bergin edited in the year 1923 in the journal *Studies* (see Bergin [1970] 1974: 67, §9d). A number of instances also occur in the *Irish Grammatical Tracts*, edited by Bergin, e.g. *ós*
fheart (rhyming with Eóghain) \(\text{IGT, ii: 1266}\), \(\text{os chleith (IGT, ii: 1425)}\), \(\text{ós chuitil (IGT, ii: 1508)}\), \(\text{ós bhail (IGT, ii: 1561 (= IGT, v: §90cd))}\), \(\text{ár Bhánba (IGT, ii: 1552)}\), \(\text{os choisrthiab (IGT, ii: 2123)}\). The preposition \(\text{ós} / \text{úas}\) is explicitly noted as a leniting preposition by a number of editors, e.g. van Hamel in his glossary to \(\text{Compert Con Calainn and Other Stories}\) ([1933] 1956: 22); Mac Cionnaith in his glossary (‘foclóir’) to \(\text{Dioghlaím Dána}\) (DD: 593); James Carmichael Watson in his glossary to \(\text{Mesca Ulad}\) ([1941] 1967: 120); Vernam Hull in his glossary to \(\text{Longes Mac n-Uisínn}\) (1949: 180); Thomas F. O’Rahilly in his description of the grammar of \(\text{Desiderius}\) ([1941] 1955: xxv) and Eleanor Knott ([1957] 1981: 125) who, in her glossary to \(\text{Irish Syllabic Poetry}\), notes that \(\text{ós ‘regularly lenites, but in some phrases, as: os chionn, the lenition is often absent.}\) Father Dinneen, in his \(\text{Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla}\), notes \(\text{ós as ‘formerly aspirating’}\) (Dinneen [1927] 1953: 826, s.v. \(\text{ós}\)).

Lenition following \(\text{ós}\) is found with all lenitable consonants (including the dentals \(\text{d, s, t}\)) as the following selective examples illustrate. My overall collections suggest that lenition occurs most commonly with \(\text{c}\) and \(\text{f}\), with \(\text{os chionn}\) counting for a large portion of all examples of lenited \(\text{c}\):

\textbf{The Book of Leinster}

\(\text{os chlaind (LL, i: 6, l. 181)}\)
\(\text{os cblaind (LL, i: 9, l. 265)}\)
\(\text{os chind (LL, i: 166, l. 5045)}\)
\(\text{ós ccháib (LL, i: 103, l. 3281)}\)
\(\text{nas Cbionchobur (LL, ii: 404, l. 12554)}\)
\(\text{nas chianba (LL, iii: 507, l. 15753)}\)
\(\text{nas chind (LL, v: 1141, l. 33609)}\)

\textbf{Lebor na hUidre}

\(\text{os chind (LU, 69, l. 1. 2014)}\)
\(\text{és cind (LU, 140, l. 4456)}\)

\textbf{Félire Óengusso (Stokes [1905] 1984)}

\(\text{úas fhlaithib (24, §177e)}\)
\(\text{nas [f]laithib (possibly alliterating with fhlaithib) (81, §11b)}\)
\(\text{os chrichaib (141, §17a)}\)

Examples from classical verse include:

\(\text{os bharr (BM: 262, §21b)}\)
\(\text{ós Bhóinn (TD: 118, §69b)}\)
\(\text{ós bhóidhbhadhulb (W. J. Watson 1922: 228)}\)

\(\text{os ccháib (ABM: 626, no. 447, §1a)}\)
\(\text{ós ccháib (BOF: 294, §16c)}\)
\(\text{ós cheithridh (POR: 2, §9b)}\)
\(\text{os cheimnih (ABM: 459, no. 333, §1c)}\)
\(\text{os chionn (DD: 464, §10b)}\)
\(\text{os chionn (ABM: 107, §10c)}\)
\(\text{ós chion (IF, ii: 250, §26b)}\)
\(\text{ós chionn (DD: 200, §6b)}\)
\(\text{ós chionn (TD: 166, §45c)}\)
\(\text{ós eblár (TD: 118, §68d)}\)
\(\text{os choill (TD: 34, §41c)}\)
\(\text{os choill (TD: 198, §27c)}\)
\(\text{os cholbha (RC, ii: 228, §1c)}\)
4. Dialectal evidence for leniting ós

Non-lenition following ós is the norm in all Gaelic dialects. However, lenition is found in os chionn (os x’un, as x’un, os x’un), os coine (as xin’i) and optionally in os (b)hambair (os kor’, os kur’, os xor’, os xur’, as kor’, as kur’, as xor’, as xur’) in the Irish of Corca Dhuibhne (Ó Sé 2000: 216). It also occurs commonly following the preposition as as ‘out of’ in this dialect although there are some exceptions (Ó Sé 2000: 181, §391). Seán Úa Súilleabháin (1994: 492, §3.3; 503, §6.2; 510, §6.23) suggests that leniting ar (‘out of, from’) (which is ahistorical) in Corca Dhuibhne has affected historical ós in this dialect. However, given the historical presence of leniting ar it seems more likely that the opposite is the case, i.e. that leniting ar, which is frequently realised as as in this dialect (albeit in variation with ós / as) and other dialects (very often as ar only), has affected the preposition a / as (‘out of, from’).13

4.1 ós > as

I present here some of the evidence for the development ós > as in Gaelic dialects. The development can be seen as a reduction common in proclitic elements although influence from the preposition as (‘out of, from’) cannot be ruled out.

Irish: os, os, os, os, as, as, as, as, as, os, is, as

(a) as
os as + cionn but b’inn os cionn bin’i g’úin (Ó Cuív [1944] 1980: 43, §147; 101, §294)15
os as + cionn (Holmer 1940: 51, §66)
os as + aird (Sommerfelt 1922: 124, §416; 126, §422)

(b) as ~ os (óis)
os os, as os + cionn (Stockman 1974: 12, §124; 125, §1016)
as is, os, os (Hamilton 1974: 308)
os, os, as os, os + cionn; as os + coine; os os, as as + combair (Ó Sé 2000: 216, §432)

(c) as
as as + cionn, combair, coine (Ó Curnán 2007, i: 86, §1.20; i: 211,
§1.173; iii: 1441–42, §7.106; iii: 1847, §10.7

5. Contamination with other prepositions

On the confusion of as and os, we may note os as in both os nar ndéidh (the complex preposition as déidh) and os mo chionn in Antrim Irish (Holmer 1940: 51, §66). On contamination with the preposition go (and / or i goi), note go as gos to and aird (Sommerfelt 1922: 124, §416; 126, §422), a contamination product which is attested in the earlier literature (gos aird, gos aird, DIL s.v. aird); cf. also os i sial > i goi sial (Ó Curnáin 2007, i: 86, §1.20) and os / os cionn iasol (Lavin forthcoming: §327); cf. iasol (Ó Dónaill [1977] 1998: 275, s.v.).

Scottish Gaelic forms with labial consonantal onset (bhos, fos) may indicate possible confusion with the preposition bho and / or os. The development in os n-osal > fos n-osal may have been semantically motivated through the interpretation of the phrase as meaning something like 'below low', which would offer a neat parallel to os (n-)áird 'above high'. Examples of fos and bhos include: fos ceann (for fos ceann), fos ina (for fos ináird) (Chaimbeull 1798: 86, 108); bhos air ceann (‘above us’) (Mc Pharson 1812: 3); fos do chionn, fos laimh, fos n-áird ~ os n-áird, fos n-osal, etc. (Munro [1828] 1843: 195, n. 3); fos osal ~ fos n-osal, fos n-osal, os cionn ~ fos cionn (E. Mac Eachainn [1842]: 221, 285); fos cionn, bhun fos cionn (MacDonald [1937] 1980: 33, l. 29; 42, l. 371; Mark 2003: 311, s.vv. fos, bhos, os); fos cinn (Borgstrom 1941: 101, §59; 117, §106; Dorian 1978: 144, 115; Wentworth 2003: s.v. above), fos n-ise (Dieckhoff 1932: 90, s.v. fos cionn, fon n-osal [věš]; Dwelly [s.v. fos] notes fos as the Badenoch form of os. For seems to be the most commonly occurring form in modern Scottish Gaelic dialects; see, for instance, fos fos (Borgstrom 1941: 117; Wentworth 2003: s.v. above) although bhos also occurs, e.g. bhos du chionn, bhos cionn (Caimbeul 1979: 29, 42, 77). For further examples from Scottish Gaelic sources, see below.

The development os > bhos / fos in Scottish Gaelic is paralleled by the development ò > bho (‘from’) and may be independent. Both developments are evidenced from the early sixteenth century in Scotland. The poem Mòr a-nocht ma chumba fein in the Book of the Dean of Lismore furnishes us with a number of examples: bhos cionn (ms waskin), bhos ar geionn (ms vos ir g{l} in, bhos a chionn (ms vos a chinn), bhos do chionn (ms vos a chin) (Meek forthcoming: XXII, §§20b, 42b, 44b, 51b; cf. McLauchlan 1862: 24, 25, 28, 29), however, not all examples have the initial labial consonantal element, e.g. os cionn (ms oskin) from the same poem (Meek forthcoming: §19a; cf. McLauchlan 1862: 24, 25). The development is also witnessed in the preposition ò > bho in this manuscript, e.g. ò (ms wo) (W. J. Watson 1937: 82, §6d).

Manx erskyn (Broderick 1984–86, ii: 153) suggests influence from the preposition a(ò)rn and is found as early as Bishop Phillip's translation of the Book of Common Prayer in 1610: erskyrn, er y-skyrn, er an skínn (Moore and Rhys 1895, i: 128, §§37; 162, §§38; 452, §29). We may compare ar a briinn for as cionn in Ó Curnáin (2007, iii: 1439, §7.105) and the variant fur's niosal referred to below (MacLeod 1978: 128, l. 1810; 468).

6. (f)os n-osal (os n-iseal) and (f)os n-áird in Scottish Gaelic

In Scottish Gaelic, forms with and without n-provocation are found in constructions involving the (f)os with áird and isal (iseal). Focusing here only on those examples with n-provocation, Scottish Gaelic sources provide evidence for the following main forms (ignoring the absence of accents), with os n-osal and os n-áird being the most common:
The following examples are intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive:

The Book of the Dean of Lismore (early 16th century)

* os n-àird (McLauchlan 1862: 118, 119; W. J. Watson 1937: 234; McLeod and Bateman 2007: 290)26

The Fernaig Manuscript (c. 1699)

* fos n-ìosal (Mac Farlane [1923]: 88, 89, §16a; 296)
* fos n-ìosal (Mac Farlane [1923]: 114, 115, §14a; 296)
* fos n-ìosal (Mac Farlane [1923]: 164, 165, §10h)
* fos n-àird (Mac Farlane [1923]: 164, 165, §11b) (cf. also Fraser 1926: 120).27

* Combechrninneachd Orannaigh Gaidhealach os n-àird (Mac Domhnuill 1776: 224).

* Earail Dhurachdach do Pheacaich Neo-ionpaichte os n-ìosal (Smith [1781]: 121)

* Coir Mhor a Chriosduidh os n-àird (Guthrie 1783: 5)28

* Orain Ghaidhealach os n-àird (Mac'Coinnich 1792: 60, IVb)
* os n-àird (Mac'Coinnich 1792: 102, §XIIh)

* The Book of Common Prayer / Leabhar na h'Urrnuigh Choitchionn os n-àird (Stewart 1794: 299, §8; 300, §2)
* os n-ìosal (Stewart 1794: 319, §22; 323, §7; 392, §6)

* An Saighidear Criosduidh os n'aird (Broughton 1797: 20)

Nuadhr Orain Ghailach

* fo snard [sic] (Chaimbeull 1798: 108)

* Combechrninneacha do dh' Orain Taghta os 'n aird (Mac-an-Tuairneir 1813: 177)

* Original Song and Poems os 'n aird (MacKay 1821: 175)

* A Practical Grammar fos n-ìosal (Munro [1828] 1843: 195, n. 3)

* MacEachen's Gaelic-English Dictionary fos n-'ìosal, *os n-'ìosal (Mac Eachainn [1842]: 285)29

* Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa fos n-'ìosal (Mac-coinnich 1844: 84, 310)

* Metrical Reliques of “The Men” in the Highlands os n-ìosal (Rose 1851: 141)

* An Gaidheal os n-ìosal (Camshron [1871] 1873: 55)

* Am Fhileadh Gaidhealach os n-ìosal (H. MacKenzie 1873: 90)

* Leabhar nan Gleann fos n-ìosal (Henderson 1898: 113, 118, 266)

* fos n-àird (Henderson 1898: 284, 288)30
Provected n- in these expressions is found only in Scottish Gaelic. I have explained the Manx form injil [ìnd’uim] (‘low’) as a development of ıseal and as being due to rhinoglottophilia, i.e. the development of spontaneous nasalisation in vowels adjacent to voiceless consonants characterised by heavy airflow (Ó Maolalaigh 2003a: 109–17). It is possible that the nasalisation in this case originated in nasalised forms such as n-ıseal, perhaps even in the expression os n-ıseal although it seems not to be evidenced in surviving Manx sources so far as I am aware.

7. The relative copula as a possible origin for leniting and nasalising osL/N

Leniting osL may be accounted for in a variety of ways. One possible explanation is that it may have arisen due to contamination with the leniting relative form of the copula asL, with which it could be homophonous or near-homophonous. (For other possibilities, see section 8 below.) Recall that os is realised as ìs and as in Middle Gaelic (L. Breatnach 1994: 329, §13.22; DIL: s.v. ó (hias)) and as as /as/, /as/ in modern dialects. If correct, this raises the possibility that the labial-initial forms bhos of the preposition in Scottish Gaelic may in origin derive from, or have been influenced by, the relative future or present subjunctive forms of the copula, bes, bàs, bus (Thurneysen [1946] 1993: 488, §802; 490, §808; DIL: s.v. is); for the lenited form bhús in Early Modern Gaelic, see, for instance, TD: lxviit, T. F. O’Rahilly ([1941] 1955: xxxii) and McManus (1994: 417, §7.27).

It is perhaps strange that the copula might influence a preposition in this way, when there are no immediately obvious semantic connections. Nevertheless, such influence provides a neat explanation for the Scottish Gaelic variants (f)os n-ıosal and (f)os n-áird with prothetic n-, which, I claim, could derive ultimately from nasalising relative forms of the copula such as aì, bafì. The Glengarry forms given by Dieckhoff fos’n ísel fos’n isle sìl’ [ ìs ìsle] (Dieckhoff 1932: 90, s.v. fos’n íosal 11, s.v. as ísle)

The Milan glosses provide three examples of n-ìsal following relative forms...
of the copula:

feilighthir as nísel in dúnacht (‘it is shown that the humanity is lowly’)  

air domminfide bed nísel intí dia (‘for it would have been thought that  
that God was mean’) (ML 40c17) (Stokes and Strachan [1901–03] 1987, i: 109; Stifter and Griffith 2012) [emphasis added].

arna toimante bed nísel som (ML 96b18) (‘lest it be supposed that He was  
lowly’) (Stokes and Strachan [1901–03] 1987, i: 327; Stifter and Griffith 2012) [emphasis added].

In cleft sentences in which isel or ard was fronted and topicalised following  
the nasalising or leniting relative copula, it is possible to see how the adverbial  
force of the relative forms as n-isel / as n-ard and as isel / as ard (respectively)  
may have been associated with the prepositional phrases ós isel ~ *ás isel / ós  
aírd ~ *ás aírd, thus potentially providing new analogical variants ós n-isel ~ *ás  
n-ísel / ós n-íosL ~ *ás n-íosL for the prepositional phrases.  
This can be illustrated by the hypothetical examples:

*in tan as n-ard (n-)éigid / (n-)éiges in bantocht (‘when it is aloud that the  
womenfolk cry out’).

*éigid in bantocht ós aírd (the womenfolk cry out aloud).

Semantic considerations would suggest that ós isel is secondary and has  
been modelled on ós aírd; however, the relative clauses as n-isel, as isel may have  
played a part in establishing the forms ós n-isel, ós isel.

The basis for analogy or transference from the leniting copula asó to the  
preposition ós is admittedly difficult to envisage. Perhaps the homophonous  
or near-homophonous nature of both forms was sufficient to trigger analogical  
leinition in the preposition. However, it is possible that the leniting relative  
clause as chenn (‘who is leader’) provided an analogical basis for the introduction  
of leinition in the prepositional phrase ós ciunn > ós chenn. The semantic  
cross-over between constructions containing as chenn (a1–a3) and ós ciunn (b)  
can be illustrated by the following hypothetical examples:

(a1) *Medb as chenn Connacht (‘Medb who is leader / head of the Connacht people’)
(a2) *Medb as chenn do Chonnachtaib (‘Medb who is leader / head of the Connacht people’)
(a3) *Medb as chenn ar Chonnachtaib (‘Medb who is leader / head of the Connacht people’)
(b) *Medb (tí) ós ciunn Chonnacht (‘Medb who is above / leader of the Connacht people’)

We have already noted that lenition following ós is particularly common in  
the phrase ós chinn; perhaps lenition following ós was first established in this  
phrase, from which it spread to other environments.

7.1 A possible parallel: níosaó

As a possible parallel to leneting and eclipsing ós, we might refer to the  
leniting comparative particle níosó and its by-form, níosó, which synchronically  
causes eclipse of fear in some Munster dialects: níosó bhfearr (Úa Súilleabhain  
1994: 499, §4.2; Ó Sé 2000: 151, §324; LASID, ii: 164, s.v. fearr (pt 15, Coolea);  
205, s.v. fearr (pt 18, Waterville)). This is a particularly apposite example in  
the present context as níosó and níosó contain the relative copula; for níosó, see Lewis  
Breathnach (1990: 1; 1997: 2, 4). R. A. Breathnach (1990: 2, 3), following Robert  
L. Thomson (1970: 133, n. 816), would explain níosó as being based on níosó  
but with contamination from ‘such adverbial comparative stereotypes as mó sa mbó,  
liú sa liú’;  
R. A. Breathnach (1990: 2, 3) relates sa in such expressions to the Old  
Gaelic particle assa which expresses ‘continuous increase’ (Thurneysen [1946]  
1993: 238, §377), albeit with influence from the leniting relative copula asó.  
This assa is noted as a gaminating particle by Thurneysen ([1946] 1993: 153,  
§243 (3); 238, §377), the editors of DIL (s.v. ‘assa’) and R. A. Breathnach (1990: 3),  
presumably on the basis of messa assa-mmessa (Wb. 30c25) with apparently  
geminated mm. This form and others cited in DIL are, however, also  
compatable with an eclipsing particle assaó although some (asa ferr, asa mo) are  
ambiguous and could conceivably contain a leniting particle asóó: asóó asaferr  
(Wb. 15c5), mooassamoo, asóó asaferr (Wb. 23b1), ferr assa (isa v.L.) ferr, cóile sa cóile,  
mó ‘sa mó (DIL: s.v. ‘assa). Given the existence of the dissylabic relative form  
of the copula, asa (L. Breathnach 1980: 1), it is possible that Early Modern and
Modern *nósa (for which see R. A. Bretnach 1990) may derive from *ni + relative *asa. Perhaps the particle which is inserted between comparatives contains the nasalising / leniting relative copula *asa*/*asā*, where the final vowel may have been interpreted as the relative copula *as* + 3 person possessive pronoun (cf. L. Bretnach 1980: 1, 2).

If *nósa bhfearr represents a genuine instance of historical eclipsis, it would suggest that the nasalisation here can also be traced to the nasalising relative copula, which in turn would provide evidence for the nasalising relative copula in southern Gaelic dialects. It is possible, however, that *nósa bhfearr*, rather than deriving from eclipsed bhfearr, represents an instance of lenition, based on a backformation *bhfearr extrapolated from bhfearr.38 As far as I can tell, *nósa bhfearr* occurs only in dialects in which leniting *nósa* occurs. A back-formation *bhfearr* could conceivably have been extracted from a nasalised form such as *go mb'fhearr* (= go mbhearr) or a reduplicated form such as *ba bh'fhearr* (= ba bhfearr) (LAID, ii: 46, s.v. feár (pt. 4, south Tipperary)). Alternatively, *nósa bhfearr* could be based on past / conditional *nio bhfearr* / *nio bh fearr*.

7.2 A further possible relict of the nasalising relative: *Is ann*

The more frequent occurrence of nasalising relative clauses in the Milan Glosses when compared with the Würzburg Glosses, conventionally dated earlier than Milan, has been implicitly explained by some on chronological grounds (e.g. McClain 1980: 22; Ó hUiginn 1986: 63, 70; Ahlqvist 1985b: 327, §1.4.1). However, it is possible, especially given the short time difference between their compilation (perhaps as little as c. 50 years), that the differences can be explained on dialectal grounds. Indeed, McClain (1985: 96–97; 1989: 79–80) has argued that the prepositional nasalising relative (i.e. preposition + -(g)a') is a northern Gaelic dialectal feature. Whatever about the contentious historical origin of the nasalising relative (e.g. Pedersen 1913: 233; Thurneysen 1946) 1993: 323–34, §510; Watkins 1963: 29, n. 2; L. Bretnach 1980: 7–8; McClain 1980: 21–22; Ahlqvist 1983: 10–12; 1985: 138; 1985b: 339–41; Ó hUiginn 1986: 76–84; McClain 1994: 197–99, §§34.4–34.6; Schrijver 1997: 91–113), it is tempting to speculate that it too may have been predominantly a northern dialectal feature in the latter part of the Old Gaelic period at least. If the origin suggested here for *ó n-iSEL* and *ó n-aIR* is correct, its survival only in Scottish Gaelic is consonant with a northern, possibly even a Scottish, locus for the productive nasalising relative. If correct, its frequent use in the Milan Glosses may provide support for a further Scotticism in these glosses, and possibly lend further tentative support for identifying the scribe, Diarmait, with ‘Diarmitus alumnus Daigiri’ (AU 814.9), abbot of Iona (814/831×849) (Clancy 2003–04: 229–30).

The nasalising relative has been described as a marker of oblique grammatical cases, which includes ‘the accusative and a number of other cases, all of a more or less adverbial nature’ (Ahlqvist 1985b: 334). We may compare L. Bretnach’s (1980: 8) derivation of the nasalising relative from *ybom* which he suggests may have developed as ‘a general adverbial relative marker’. It is tempting to connect the possible northern locus of the nasalising relative, which functioned as an adverbial relative marker, with the development of *ann* as a distinctive marker in Scottish Gaelic to topicalise non-nominal elements (Moffatt-Pender 1903; Ahlqvist 1978).40 More specifically, it is possible that it was nasalising relative forms of the copula, especially those with vocalic auslaut, when used to front ‘adverbial’ elements, such as adjectives and prepositional phrases, that provided the impetus for the development of the productive copula + *ann* topicalisation marker in Scottish Gaelic, whereby the relative nasal segment was subsequently reinterpreted as the prepositional pronoun *ann* < Old Gaelic *an* (‘in it’).41 We may speculate that nasalising relative forms of the copula with vocalic auslaut would have developed into forms with nasal coda as a result of the particular system of eclipsis / nasalisation which evolved in Scottish Gaelic (cf. *gin* < *ge* *án* < *á*, *an* < *ná*, etc; see Ó Maolalaigh 1995–96; 2008: 244–50), e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{asa} & \rightarrow \text{*asan} \\
\text{ata} & \rightarrow \text{*atan} \\
\text{ba} & \rightarrow \text{*ban}
\end{align*}
\]

This can be illustrated by the following two hypothetical sentences based on Ml. 57c12 and Wb. 6a13 respectively:43

\[
\begin{align*}
*\text{amal ba n} & \text{gair no mbíth (‘as it was briefly that it existed’)} \\
= & *\text{amal ban gair no mbíth} \\
> & *\text{amal b’ann gair no mbíth (by reinterpretation as copula + ann)}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
*\text{amal ba ndo thabirt díghle birt in claideb sin (‘as it was to inflict punishment that he bore that sword’)} \\
= & *\text{amal ban do thabirt díghle birt in claideb sin}
\end{align*}
\]
> *amal b’ann do thabirt diglac birt in daideb sin* (by reinterpretation as copula + ann)

This explanation provides a convincing basis for the development of *is ann*, etc. as a productive topicalisation marker in Scottish Gaelic for non-nominal (i.e. adverbial) elements; if correct, it may in turn provide evidence for the productivity of the nasalising relative in the northern Gaelic area. The proleptic use of *ann / and* to anticipate an adverbial element (*is and rogab artúis tes* ‘it began in the south’ [emphasis added])\(^{46}\) and the ‘sentence-connective’ use of *is and found in Middle Gaelic (Ahlqvist 1978: 70)\(^{46}\) may have provided the model for the reinterpretation of the nasalising relative copula when it ceased to be productive.

8. Other explanations for leniting *ós*

Other sources for lenition following *ós* include the following possibilities:

(a) Lenition could be analogical, based on other compound prepositions containing *ceann / cionn*, e.g. *ar chenn, ar chionn, di / do chiann, fo chienn, imm chenn* (DIL, s.v. *ceann*), modern *á* / *bhe chionn*. Analogy with the preposition *á* cannot be ruled out (based on the common *áa* in pronominal forms of both *á* and *ót*).\(^{47}\) We have noted above our impression, based on literary sources, that lenition following *ót* occurs very commonly with *c*, particularly in *ót chionn*. It is possible that lenition following *ót* first established itself in the phrase *ót chionn*, spreading to affect other words containing initial *c* - from there to words with different initials.\(^{48}\)

(b) Lenition could have arisen in *ót cionn* due to anticipatory correlative lenition based on a following lenited initial, particularly in the case of a lenited *ch*, e.g. *ót chionn chaibh / chaigh* (LBrun. 139, l. 3674; BOH: 294, §17a; TD: 238, §56a),\(^{49}\) i.e. *ót chionn chaibh / chaigh* leads to *ót chionn chaibh / chaigh*; for examples of the latter, see, for instance, T. F. O’Rahilly ([1941] 1955: 45, ll. 1262, 1288).\(^{50}\) While lenition may have originated in the phrase *ót cionn > ót chionn* and spread to other environments, its development originally as anticipatory correlative lenition may not have been confined to *cionn*.

(c) The development *ót cionn > ót chionn* may have been phonetically motivated. It has been noted that the velar stop is the most ‘fricative’ of the plosives. It has the longest duration of postaspiration and preaspiration and has been shown to often have two visible releases on spectrograms; see for instance, Fry ([1979] 1982: 124); Ladeefoged ([1975] 1982: 268); Ladeefoged et al. (1998: 10, 12); Nance and Stuart-Smith (2013: 137, 138,144–45); Ó Maolalaigh (2010: 369); cf. Ohala (1983: 195) on the observation that ‘velar stops and voicing show the greatest incompatibility’. As Ó Curnáin (2007, ii: 1756, §9.81; cf. iii: 1776, §9.101; iii: 1785–86, §9.113; ii: 1788–89, §9.115) has noted in the context of the frequent ahistorical lenition of broad and slender *c* in the Irish of Connacht, it is possible that salient friction of *c* may have led to this friction being reinterpreted as being phonological. In the case of *ót cionn > ót chionn*, this may have been reinforced by the existence of *lenited chenn / chiann* in the likes of *ar chenn, ar chiunn, di / do chiunn, fo chienn, imm chienn* (DIL: s.v. *cenn*), modern *ó / bhe chiann*. The acoustic impression of a fricative *ch* (for underlying *c*) may also have been triggered by assimilation with the preceding heavy airflow voiceless fricative -s of the preposition *ót*.

(d) Cluster reduction in sandhi resulting in the loss of *f* may have been interpreted as lenition, i.e. *ót + fV- > ót + V- = ót + bV-*.\(^{51}\) We have noted above our impression based on literary sources that lenition following *ót* occurs frequently with *f*. Perhaps ‘lenition’ developed in this way with *f* and spread to other phonemes.

(e) It is theoretically possible, though perhaps unlikely, that leniting *ót* may represent the survival in some varieties of a reflex of an older variant form with final vowel as in Welsh *scl* and / or that it arose through contact with a Brittonic language.

9. Loss of lenition following *ót* and defricativisation in continuous clusters

Once in existence, the productivity of lenition following *ót* may have been reduced through levelling with other dialects or registers which did not have leniting *ót*, through analogy with non-leniting *at* (‘out of, from’), or through delenition / dissimilation, whereby s+fricative clusters were reduced to s+stop clusters as part of the general facultative tendency (not hitherto reported) in Gaelic to defricativise one of the members of continuous+continuous clusters. Defricativisation in s-clusters is evidenced in:\(^{52}\)

Word internally

*coisém (< *cuischém)*

*aosal* / *aogal* / *ochsa* / *ochsal*. The grammatical tracts have the following variants: *aogal*, *aogall*, *aogal*, *ochsal*, *ochsal* (IGT, ii: §12, ll. 16–17);
The detailed discussion in the grammatical tracts of the powers of s (cumhachda soil), in particular, that s does not cause defricativisation (of ch or pl) in compound words (e.g. cneaschiumb, measboill, mesabhainn, glaispeann) provides counter evidence for defricativation following s (IGT, i: 10–11, §30). However, one wonders if the need for such an explicit discussion of the matter implies an underlying tendency for defricativisation following s in certain vernacular varieties or lects.

Variation in the mutual effects of the preposition os (i.e. os, os, os) is paralleled by similar variation in the preposition ar / air (deriving from earlier ar, for, iar), e.g Scottish Gaelic air ais ~ air n-ais, iar ndul / ar dhul / air falbh, etc. Where such variation exists, the tendency is for one variant to be adopted as the unmarked form or as the norm, with other variants retained as marked variants or lost entirely. We might compare the merger of ar and for in Irish as leniting ar (e.g. ar Shéamai) but as non-leniting ar in phrases denoting states (e.g. ar buile, ar crith, ar meise, etc.) and the mirror opposite in Scottish Gaelic, i.e. air Seumas vs air bhool, air crith, air mbía, etc. (Ó Maolalaigh 2008: 193).

10. Conclusion

This paper establishes the textual basis for leniting os in the Festschrift title Bile ós Chrannaibh. It also sets out the evidence for leniting and nasalising os in Gaelic, and suggests as one possibility an analogical origin based on the leniting and nasalising relative copula of the older language. If correct, it illustrates how the conservative nature of Scottish Gaelic, which retains nasalising os, lost in all other varieties of Gaelic, provides a potentially crucial key for better understanding the history of the preposition os in Gaelic. This solution suggests new possibilities for our understanding of the development of is ann / b’ ann in Scottish Gaelic as a productive marker of topicalised non-nominal elements. Other possible phonological and analogical explanations and factors are also considered, especially in the case of leniting os.

Given the frequency of lenition following os during the Early Modern period, it seems that leniting os may have been more widespread in Gaelic dialects than previously thought. If so, its subsequent disappearance can be accounted for as the result of a general facultative defricativisation rule in continuous + continuous clusters (not previously reported) and / or the elimination of
variation in the initial mutation in favour of more established or prestigious
non-lenition, possibly involving analogy with the non-leniting preposition as.

Appendix: Copy of Osborn Bergin’s poem *Cid dia ndálait na daini*

Original text of Osborn Bergin’s Classical Gaelic poem in honour of Rudolf
Thurneysen’s seventy-second birthday, which was celebrated in Dublin in
1929. Bergin’s poem was published in *Éigse* 2.4 (1940) by Daniel A. Binchy fol-
lowing Thurneysen’s death in August 1940. See also *Irish Bardic Poetry* (1970),
pp. x–xi. Professor Kenneth Jackson gave this text to Professor William Gillies
who in turn gave a copy to the present author.

**Do Rudolf Thurneysen**

14.3.1929

*Cid dia ndálait na daini,
cid dia canait cáemlaídi,
a fáilte cia rót fotrhúair,
in sláinte no in sét sárlúaig?*

*Sét móréálaí na mese sund,
a lorg ní sirthi sechund:
écse in betha búain leissem,
betha slúáig a sláintesem.*

*Scél in lega, búan a blad,
ní saí cá’ch lasnach cumán:
ciar bét, ropa garb a glac,
ro marb tria ét a fialmac.*

*Ásait and a colainn Méich,
as cach alt, as cach óenféith,
tuíle gelfís iarna guin,
luibe legis cach lobair.*

Fich a athar nir an de,
scailis na scotha arise,
connach fess dia fuil i cri
cia luib dia chess bad chuibdi.

Na luibusin cid iat ann,
crét acht sous na sáerchland?
múchad mian is écht eon chosc
in Dian Cécht rodas cummasc.

Minas táirsed in sui slán
co ngliccus glére Germán,
minbloga iar creich cnúas Gaidel,
gúass a beith for bithscailed.

*Tánic co fíal diar fáesam
Rudolf rigda Thurneysen
na rathrémimm tar Muir Menn,
tuir athlégind na Hérend.*

*Bile ós chrannaib cláir Banba,
lócharnd áesa heladna,
gell glanta cacha caingne,
ar n-altra, ar cenn comairle.*

*Cech scol, cech scélaige bind,
cech fili, cech fer légind,
acht co mbeth tráth sin tigsí,
do chách ba tech tairismi.*

*Roán is Roae in dána,
senchaidí na senTána,
cia ros básait Cú na cless,
sund ro ásair clú comdess.*

*La cách ropad machdad már
ó Charatnáid co Cathán,*


IGT = Irish Grammatical Tracts, ed. by Osborn Bergin: IGT, i, Ériu 8 (1916); IGT, ii: §1–§11, Ériu 8 (1916); IGT, ii: §12–§87, Ériu 9 (1921–23); IGT, ii: §88–§207, Ériu 10 (1926–28); IGT, iii, iv, Ériu 14 (1946); IGT, v, Ériu 17 (1955).


ML = Milan Glosses


SGDS = Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland, ed. by Cathair Ó Dochartaigh, 5 vols (Dublin: DIAS, 1994–97)


Wh. = Würzburg Glosses

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Abbreviations

ABM = A Bardic Miscellany: Five Hundred Bardic Poems from Manuscripts in Irish and British Libraries, ed. by Damian McManus and Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh (Dublin: Department of Irish, Trinity College Dublin, 2010).


Endnotes

1 Mc Cone (1994: 190, §33.6) suggests that the final -s is òs / òas is analogical based on òasum, etc. and the model of is : ísum, etc. as *òxs might be expected to yield (non-leniting) *ó < *òh.
2 The preposition os is occasionally found in other constructions in Scottish Gaelic, e.g. os coinneamh (D. M. N. C. 1921: 55, 74); os cùl (Guthrie 1786: 174); os cùl šs k’uìi (‘behind’) (S. MacEachann 1983: 52); os làimh in phrase gabh os làimh (‘undertake, engage in’) (Dwelly: s.v. làimh); fo sk’innol (‘opposite’) (S. MacEachann 1983: 52), which might be represented by *fos coin(n)ail or possibly *fos coin(n)el; the (written) transcription may conceivably be for fósk’innal (fos coinnail).

3 Examples of leniting os are, however, to be found under other headwords in DL, e.g. os chliathblaí, os chind, os chiomn, bòil is os chnair, os fhìdhbhadhadh. (DL: s.v. cliath, aidb, cn, cnair, dos).

4 These examples can be easily accessed in McManus (2010).

5 MacCionnith (DD: 593) implies lenition when he notes that os frequently does not lenite in the manuscripts (‘is minn nach seògheann a’s gna l.’). We may compare the observation, in his article on lenition and eclipse in Classical Gaelic verse, that lenition is ‘less regular’ after the prepositions gu, tar, ar and os (McKenna 1941: 65); also his comment that ‘os, us aspires irregularly,’ in his edition of lomhcharbh na bhFialeachd (IF: xxvii).

6 The glossary to Jackson’s (1990: 189) edition of Aislinge Meic Con Glinne lists the preposition ‘os, us’ as a leniting preposition. The only ‘clear’ instance of lenition following this preposition in this text, however, is ias c[h]ëtich (Jackson 1990: 34, l. 1048), where the lenition is editorial. I can confirm that lenition does not in fact occur in the Leabhar Brec copys of this text, upon which Jackson’s edition is based; this is reflected in Meyer’s (1892: 87, l. 14) earlier edition which has us cleithi without lenition. The description of prepositions in the appendix on language in Aislinge Meic Con Glinne does not include any discussion of the preposition os.

7 This reading is from the seventeenth-century manuscript, Rawlinson B 502.

8 This reading is from the fifteenth-century manuscript, Rawlinson B 505.

9 This reading is from the twelfth-century manuscript, Rawlinson B 502.

10 Angus Matheson (1964: 1; 11, n. 2c) edits as ò dheallradh, noting ‘For ò MS. has os, which I do not understand.’

11 For the variant partlaing, etc., see DL: s.v. partlaing.

12 Interestingly, McLauchlan (1862: 84–85) transcribes the Dean’s manuscript as os cromadh (os cromadh). Lenition also occurs following os in this poem with os cheithribh (os cheathraibh) and os fhearaibh (apparently alliterating with eòinsear) (Gillies 1996: 221, §§7a, 9a); the editors of Reliquiae Celticae print os ceithra (RC, v: 96–97); McLauchlan (1862: 84–85) has os chiarbhhe for this form. Note also os bhor (os os word) which occurs in another poem in the Dean’s manuscript (RC, v: 72; McLauchlan 1862: 42–43).

13 The form os-bhàrr (‘besides, moreover’) occurs in MacAlpine’s (1832) 1858: 198) pronouncing dictionary but this may be based on, or influenced by, bhàrr (‘moreover’) (Dwelly: s.v.). This normally appears as os bàrr in Scottish Gaelic; see Dwelly: s.v. Lenition following fos in fos chean gach Coradh in an initial printing of Chaolbhail (1798: 15) is most likely a printer’s error; a corrected version of this os has os cromadh Coradh. On the two versions of this book, see Flahive (2008: 82–83).

14 Dinneen (1927) 1953: 826, s.v. os notes that os is ‘now of[en] as’.


16 Cf. as ceann for os ceann in The Spiritual Songs of Dougald Buchanan (Buchanan [1767] 1913: 34, l. 49).

17 We may compare ar ciomn for as ciomn in the speech of one speaker in Iorras Aithneach (Ó Curnáin 2007, m: 1439, §7.105).

18 On possible contamination between bo < os and bhos < os in Scottish Gaelic, we may note the following forms from Sutherland Gaelic: Cha d’ thàinn bhos mi (‘he has not come for (lit. since) a month’) for bho (ciomn) mi (Is fhada bhos nach fhac mi thu (‘it is long since I have seen you’) for bho nach fhac mi thu; bhos a thàinn e (‘since he came’) (Robertson 1907: 117). However, the final -h here may be abstracted from the likes of *is mis bho [...] and / or ‘is fhada bho [...]’ influenced analogically by gus (‘until’).

19 For an alternative explanation of the labial element, deriving it from the relative copula form bhos, see section 7 below. Calder ([1923] 1980: 37, §33) analyses the bhos ciomn as prothetic f. On possible cross-contamination between the adverb a-bhos and the preposition os in Scottish Gaelic, we may note os is thall (‘near and far’) for (a-)bhos is thall in the earliest editions of Duncan Ban’s poems (MacLeod 1978: 166, l. 2329; 478). On the use of fà in an adverbial expression meaning ‘secretly’, we may compare fo làim (DL: s.v. làim).

20 On the variant isosal, see n. 24.

21 Fos ciomn also occurs from a number of informants in the fieldwork section of DASG (Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic) at the University of Glasgow, e.g. Aultbea (collected December 1969), Bunloit (collected May 1969) and Loch Tay (collected 1975).


23 All of these forms have been edited as os in Ross’s edition (1939: 156, §21b; 162, §47b; 164, §49b; 166, §56b).

24 Modern Irish has iséal and the variant *íosal does not occur as a variant in Classical verse. The autograph manuscript copy of Brian Merriman’s Cúirt an Mheoneiche / The Midnight Court, however, has go híosal (L. P. Ó Murchú 1982: 48, l. 905). In Scottish Gaelic both forms iséal and íosal occur: iséal occurs in western dialects including a contiguous area from Harris, the Uists, eastern and southern Skye, West Inverness-shire southwards to Islay, Kintyre and Arran. Íosal is found in dialects to the north and east of the íosal-area: see SGDS (532). The innovative Scottish Gaelic form íosal is doubtless a backformation with oblique isle implying an underlying íosal based on the analogical model of uasal → uaise. On the collocation of iséal and uasal, see DL: s.v. íosal.

25 The forms fos n-íosal and fos n-áird may have influenced fàinsear (‘under consideration’, etc.) (Dwelly: s.v.). This has the variant forms fonsear, fonsear, fonsear (Dickiehoff 1926: 193); cf. Munro ([1828] 1845: 195, n. 3), who analyses this as fos n-ear in his discussion of the preposition os / fos. That fos- near was understood by some at least to contain the preposition os is supported by the form os-near: Cha tug a haon dhiu, gu so, os-near a cuid áiridh so do’n chàis [emphasis added]. (MacGille-fhaollain 1900, m: 307, col. 2) On the origin
We may compare the following superlative example from the Agallamh: *ni bhfuil dhobh le do-léici osnaid n-aird* ('he let out a loud sigh'); for the example, see Maolalaigh (1922: 256, 315, 316).


Dwelly has *os-àird* but not *os n-àird* (Dwelly: s.v.).

Song composed by the bard, Ewen Macdonald (c. 1860–1941), ‘a native of Strathglass, who lived for many years at Milness in the Braes of Glenurquhart’ (Barron 1978: 132).

Note that Stifter and Griffith (2012) provide corrected readings which are slightly different to those of Stokes and Strachan ([1901–03] 1987: 48) and Strachan ([1909] 1976: 107, 142). The English translations of these three examples are from Stifter and Griffith (2012).

We may compare the following superlative example from the Cás Domnaig epistle: *nach tan bus n-islem cech bendchopar Arad Mòra* (‘whenever every other tower of Ara Mor is lowest’) (O’Keefe [1905] 1971: 202, 203, §20) [emphasis added].

Calder ([1923] 1980: 20, §13.I) suggests that ‘The [relative] eclipse remains in os n-àird publicly, os n-iosal secretly’ but the example he provides (*laid fiadh’s n-iosalaid dhew* ‘They secretly shedding tears’) suggests that he may have interpreted *fos n-iosal* as a prepositional relative clause (containing the copula?), i.e. *fas*dh/fo + s + an. Fraser’s (1926: 120) suggestion that the *n- of Scottish Gaelic os n-ionsal and os n-àird ‘may be due to the analogy of […] gach n-uair and the like’ seems far-fetched.

I have also considered the possibility of nasalising *os* having been influenced by the noun phrase *osna ard / n-àird* in phrases such as *do-léici osnaid n-àird / do-léici osna ard / n-àird* (‘he let out a loud sigh’); for the example, see *doléici n-osnaid as trummu each n-osnaid* (L.U. 72, l. 2133). It is perhaps possible to see how *os n-àird* might have arisen or spread due to contamination between the likes of *do-léici osnaid n-àird / osna ard and *do-léici osnaid os n-altar*. On the collocation of *osna and os àird, see tic a osa os aird hsa* from the Agallamh Bheag (Hyde 1924: 80).

The editors of DIL derive *nios* and *niosa* from *ni + as* (DIL: s.v. *ni*).

Us Súilleabhaín (1994: 499) makes the unlikely suggestion that *fearr* is eclipsed in *niosa bhfavour* in order to separate the final vowel of *niosa* from the initial vowel of *favour* if *fi* were lenited (‘d’fhonn an dá ghuta, a bheadh í ndiaidh a chéile dá cimheofl an f, a scartaint’). He compares *ni bhfavour, thus following T. F. O’Rahilly’s ([1932] 1976: 44) explanation of the apparent eclipse in *ni bhfial, ni bhfavour* and *ní bhfiosghe* as instances of a glide developing between *ni* and a following *u*. Even if O’Rahilly’s analysis were correct, the development of a labial glide / fricative could not be argued for in the case of *niosa bhfavour* since there is no rounded vowel present from which a labial glide could develop. For a contrary view which derives these *ni bhf- forms from eclipsis, see M’Caughey (1968).
numeral trí, which is due to the influence of trí cheud, where lenition is expected historically before originally neuter nouns such as ceud < cét (Ó Maolalaigh forthcoming).

49 Lention of cách in the phrase os cionn chàich is still found in modern Scottish Gaelic; see, for instance, Murchison (1988: 14, 53).

50 We may compare the anticipatory correlative h-provection in ò hàit go hàit (for ò ait go ait), ò ham go ham (for ò am go am) and the notion of continued lenition in, for instance, mo mhaide bhreá (for mo mhaide breá) (Ó Curnáin 2007, in: 1701, §9.15; 1819, §9.152). I hope to discuss the effects of serial or continued lenition in phrases containing numerals in Scottish Gaelic elsewhere, e.g. mu shia mhothaí (‘about six months’) (Ó Maolalaigh forthcoming).

51 We may note the ‘lenition’ (or loss) of f following the copula is and comparative níos / nas in some Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects, e.g. <fearr / for / fiù / farasta > -s (fh)earr / (fh)ior / (fh)bú / (fh)urasta (Ó Curnáin 2007, iv: 170, §1.112(iv); iii: 1797-98, §9.127); -s + fais(e) / faide / fearasta / fearr > -s + (fh) aisg(e) / (fh)aid(e) / (fh)earsa / (fh)arsaing / (fh)ears (Oftedal 1956: 199, §244; 248, §305). In such cases we cannot be certain whether these patterns reflect an original leniting relative form of the copula or genuine -s/ f cluster reductions.


53 For what are presumably re-formations in Scottish Gaelic, see cois-cheum, cois-cheumaigh, cois-cheumach (Dwelly: s.vv.).

54 Also perhaps anuas comb fada le < anuas chomb fada le; however, co here may be a by-form of chomb (Ó Cúiv 2007, r: 455, §3.37).

55 Forms with -b are under-represented in the discussion of Ó Maolalaigh (2003b) as the focus was on third person plural prepositional forms. Nevertheless, the table in Ó Maolalaigh (2003b: 171) should have included -ob for 2 and 3 pl. Scottish Gaelic forms, e.g. 2 pl: asaib, bhuaib, dhib, eadaraib, fodaibh, leib, romhaib, ruib, tromhaib (Borgstrom 1941: 115–17; Wentworth 2003: s.vv. before, between, from, off, out of, through, to, with); 3 pl: bhodhaib voob, fodaibh fsoob, romhaib rasob, tromhaib trisob (M. Ó Murchú 1989: 292, 345, 391, 419); and also -b' for 2 pl. southern Connacht forms, e.g. tharaib harshb' (Ó Curnán 2007, in: 142, §1.79(iii)).

56 On the importance of emphatic suffixes in the development of the endings of second and third person plural prepositional pronouns, see Ó Maolalaigh (2003b: 172).

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