

Elliott Lash
“Transitivity and Subject Position in Old Irish”

This article is concerned with some fine-grained distinctions in the syntax of subjects in Old Irish. Old Irish (7th–9th century) is typically described as a VSO language, but there are a number of sentences in the corpus in which the subject is not immediately after the verb. In this paper two case studies are conducted the results of which show that (a) non-final late subjects are confined to non-transitive and ‘atypical transitive’ clauses having the general form VXS_Y, and (b) the position of final late subjects in the schema VXS# can be understood in descriptive terms as ‘right-dislocated’ and motivated largely in information structure terms (i.e. Topic-Comment, Focus-Alternative), although a small residue of examples are similar to the VXS_Y-type of case in being ‘atypical transitives’. The descriptive term ‘atypical transitive’ is introduced here to cover morphologically transitive clauses (with accusative marked direct objects nouns, or pronouns that can replace such nouns) that behave syntactically more like non-transitive clauses. There are four types: negative clauses with bare indefinite objects, clauses with object-oriented floating quantifiers, clauses in which a pronominal object serves to ‘detransitivize’ the verb, and clauses containing a verb of motion whose direct object is the goal of movement.

Forthcoming in the Transactions of the Philological Society (TPHS) 118.1

This is a pre-print version reflecting changes made in peer-review but is not the publishers PDF.

1. Introduction

The rough outlines of Old Irish grammar, especially its phonology and morphology, are well known, but a great deal of work is still to be done. An adequate understanding of the syntax of Old Irish, for instance, is still very much a desideratum. In constructing such an understanding, however, we encounter one of the main problems that linguists who work on dead languages face – namely that, in discovering the extent of syntactic variation, it is difficult to successfully apply the sorts of grammaticality tests that have been applied to currently spoken languages. Corpus studies, of the kind represented by the ERC Chronologicon Hibernicum project¹ help to alleviate some of this difficulty, and combining corpus observations with observations derived from the larger cross-linguistic dataset described and analysed by syntactic theory can sometimes expose grammatical subtleties and place them in a comparative and chronological context. As an example of the type of phenomena in a dead language that can only be studied adequately using the methodology outlined here, one may consider the position of the subject relative to the verb in Old Irish. The “basic” word order in Old Irish was Verb + Subject + Object (VSO), as in (1).²

1. *ro-car* *Crist* *in=n-aeclais*
 PRF·love_{PST.3SG} Christ_{NOM} the_{ACC.SG}=church_{ACC}
 “...Christ loved the church.” (Ml. 65^d5)

¹ The research for this article was completed with funding provided by the *Chronologicon Hibernicum* (Maynooth University, ERC Consolidator Grant 2015, H2020 #647351). In developing this paper, I have received useful input from my colleagues David Stifter, Fangzhe Qiu, and Bernhard Bauer. I would also like to acknowledge Lars Nooij for helping to tag the corpus of Old Irish examples and Daniel Watson for some helpful suggestions. Thanks are also due to audiences at the Tionól (DIAS, 2015), the thirty-first ICM (Maynooth, 2017), the fourth general meeting of the Societas Celtica Europea (Bangor, 2017), and two anonymous reviewers.

² Old Irish examples are presented in three lines. On the first line is an edited text with words separated according to the following guidelines. A raised dot is inserted between preverbs or conjunct particles (both of which may incorporate clitic pronouns) and the verbal stem. Angled brackets are placed around letters not found in the edition that should be inserted, round brackets around letters that are found that should be deleted a macron over a vowel if it is long, and a diaeresis to indicate possible hiatus. Length marks found in the edition cited are omitted if over short vowels. Hyphens between the letter *n* and a following vowel indicate nasalization. Square brackets are added to indicate certain syntactic constituents, which are labeled in subscript. The first letter of an example is capitalized if the example is a full sentence and the initial letters of proper names are also capitalized. Curled brackets indicate discontinuous constituents. An equal sign is placed between items sharing one stress.

The second line consists of a linguistic gloss using the following abbreviations: 1 = 1st person, 3 = 3rd person, 3SF = 3rd singular feminine, 3SM = 3rd person singular masculine, 3SN = 3rd person singular neuter, ACC = accusative, COP = copula, DAT = dative, DIST = distal, EMPH = emphatic substantivizer, FEM = feminine, GEN = genitive, HAB = habitual, IMPF = imperfect, MASC = masculine, NEG = negative, NEUT = neuter, NOM = nominative, PL = plural, PRF = perfective augment, PROX = proximate, PRS = present, PSS = passive, PST = past, PTCL = particle, PV = preverb, REL = relative/subordinate, SBJ = subjunctive, SG = singular, VOC = vocative.

The third line consists of a translation and a citation to a standard edited version of the text. Citations of POMIC (the *Parsed Old and Middle Irish Corpus*) also contain a reference to the standard edited version as well. Glosses are cited using the folio and column system employed by Stokes and Strachan 1901/1903. The Latin commentary is cited by page and line number in Stokes and Strachan 1901. Examples from Táin Bó Cúailnge are cited by page and line number using O’Rahilly’s (1976) edition.

Languages with basic verb-initial word order, either VSO or VOS in transitive clauses, constitute a substantial minority of the world's languages. Dryer (2015), for instance, shows that about 9% of languages (total sample: 1377) are verb initial, while Hammarström (2015), using a much larger set of languages (total sample: 5230), shows that the percentage may be as much as 13%. In comparison to languages of the more common SOV and SVO type, the syntax of verb-initial languages has not received nearly as much attention. The Insular Celtic languages, of which Old Irish is the oldest attested representative, is the only subgroup of Proto-Indo-European to have innovated verb-initial syntax. Because of the important position of Old Irish within this family, it is crucial to make use of all of the evidence it provides for variation within the basic verb-initial framework, in order to better understand the landscape of possible grammatical variation among natural languages and also to better understand the mechanisms of historical change that shaped the Proto-Indo-European language family. Doing so will result in a more complete, accurate, and better-grounded understanding of the verb-initial patterns found in Insular Celtic languages.

Previous research has already uncovered quite a few deviations from the “basic” VSO word order in Old Irish. These are intrinsically interesting because they help to highlight syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic factors that play a role in the construction of the Old Irish clause. For instance, verb-final orders such as Bergin's Law constructions (Ahlqvist 1980, Bergin 1938, Binchy 1979-80, Breatnach 1984, Carney 1979, Corthals 1999, Doherty 2000, Eska 2007, Eska 2008, Greene 1977, Henry 1977, Kelly 1986, Mac Coisdealbha 1998, McCone 1989, 1997, 2006, Newton 2006, Wagner 1967, Wagner 1977, Watkins 1963) have been shown to be largely stylistic variants used in particular genres. Other variations from VSO order, such as the *nominativus pendens* construction (Mac Cana 1973, 1996; MacCoisdealbha 1998) in which an NP precedes the verb, had a pragmatic function, serving to introduce new information at the beginning of texts or sections of text.

Besides these constructions, there are other variations from the basic VSO order that involve non-strict VSO clauses in which one or more constituent intervene between the verb and the subject. This is schematically represented in (2), where X represents the first of potentially several intervening constituents. The abstract schema in (2) gives rise to various non-VSO clause types, which have been previously discussed in Mac Giolla Easpaig (1980) and Lash (2014). This paper aims to better understand the factors which influence the use of orders of the type in (2).

2. V X (...) S (...)

Mac Giolla Easpaig (1980) concentrates on clauses having absolute clause-final subjects and objects, where the subject or object is preceded by at least one other item not counting the verb. (3) and (4) represent typical examples of this type. Clauses like (3) are referred to below as final-subject constructions, and the subjects of such clauses are called absolute clauses-final subjects.

3. *Luid* *īarom* pp[do=Chill Lassre] Sbj[ind=ī *Brigit*.
gOPST.3SG ADV to=churchDAT LassarGEN theNOM.SG=EMPH BrigitNOM

“Then Brigit went to Cill Lasse.” (Mac Giolla Easpaig 1980: 34)

4. *Ní-thuca* SBJ[*Díā*] PP[*and*] AdvP[*anocht*] OBJ[*in=fear=sin*].
 NEG·bring_{PRF.PRS.SBJ.3SG} God_{NOM} in_{3SG.NEUT} tonight the_{ACC.SG}=man_{ACC}=DIST
 “May God not bring that man here tonight.” (Mac Giolla Easpaig 1980: 31)

Mac Giolla Easpaig argues that, in final-subject constructions, the word order is due to various factors, including contextual discourse-related ones as well as formal (phonological and syntactic) characteristics of the subject. The final-object construction (4) will be set aside here, although it is likely that the same factors found in final-subject constructions are also at play in final-object constructions. In section four, Mac Giolla Easpaig’s analysis will be investigated in more detail and modified where necessary.

Lash (2014) concentrates on the different interpretations that subjects receive when placed before or after discourse-oriented adverbs such as *danó* “also, besides”, *didiu* “therefore, hence”, *ém* “indeed”, *íarum* “then, afterwards, thereupon”, *trá* “so, then” (etc.), and the epistemic prepositional phrase [*la* NP] “in NP’s opinion/it seems to NP that” (Lash 2014: 281-282, ex.11). Consider (5a) and (5b), which show that the subject may appear before or after the adverb *danó*. The sequence in (5b) corresponds to the schema in (2).

5. a. *mā(d)=do·airli* SBJ[*sale*] *danō* OBJ[*ind=lāim*]
 if=PV·touch_{PRF.PRS.3SG} spittle_{NOM} ADV the_{ACC.SG}=hand_{ACC}
 PP[*oc=praind*]
 at=eating_{DAT}
 “now, if spittle falls into the hand while eating...”
 (POMIC, *Monastery of Tallaght*, s.251; Gwynn and Purton 1911: 142, §38)
- b. *do·be<i>r* *danō* SBJ[*rí Locha Léim*] OBJ[*a=gíall*] PP[*do=ríg*]
 PV·give_{PR.S.3SG} ADV king_{NOM} L. L. his=hostage_{ACC} to king_{DAT}
Cíarraige] PP[*fria=folta* *tēcti*]
*Cíarraige*_{GEN} toward.his=obligations_{ACC} proper_{ACC.PL}
 “...the king of Loch Léim also gives his hostage to the king of Cíarraige in accord with his proper obligations.”
 (POMIC, *West Munster Synod*, s.31; Meyer 1912: 316.17-18)

The discourse-oriented adverbs can be used to distinguish between at least two post-verbal positions for clause-medial subjects. These two positions are distinguished as follows: the pre-adverb position (ex. 5a) is home to given/old information while the post-adverb position (ex. 5b) hosts new information. More specifically, old information means either that the subject of a given clause is also the subject of the immediately preceding section of discourse or that the subject is a highly salient individual in a given text, for instance Cú Chulainn in the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*. New information refers either to wholly new subjects in a given discourse, or newly reintroduced subjects in a context where the subject of the discourse abruptly changes. The two positions are further distinguished on the basis of specificity: specific items are found before the adverb, while non-specific items are found afterwards. Lash (2014) calls the two positions Subject-1 and Subject-2 respectively. Here,

the two positions are instead called Pos1 and Pos2 because it will be shown below that at least the first position is not exclusively a subject position.

Lash (2014: 282-285) argued that the discourse-oriented adverbs are similar to German modal particles (Coniglio 2006, Bayer and Obenauer 2011, Bayer 2012). Because of their highly context sensitive nature, they are obviously not necessary in every clause. Nonetheless, even in clauses lacking discourse-oriented adverbs, the same kind of varying placement of the subject as mentioned above is found. Therefore, although they are useful in diagnosing positions, they do not themselves create (or license) these positions.

The fact that there seem to be two positions for subjects in any kind of clause falls in line with the results of much research into the construction of verb-initial clauses (see McCloskey 2011 for a clear exposition of the basic analysis with references). In brief, at the heart of each sentence is an “eventive core”, consisting of the verb and all of its arguments (Arg) or other complements (X) but excluding those functional elements which, among other things, encode tense, aspect, modality, and polarity (Langacker 1974). The distinctive characteristic of VSO languages is that the inflected verb must be moved from the eventive core and positioned at or near the clause-initial position. Additional work has demonstrated that, in the syntactic space between the eventive core and the position of the fronted verb, there are several positions which may, in principle, host the subject. In other words, Arg1 (the subject) also moves to occupy either Pos1 or Pos2. Because discourse-oriented adverbs may distinguish between Pos1 and Pos2, they, too, are found in this space. (6) provides a basic outline of the Old Irish clause that takes into account the kind of derivation sketched here. Movement of an element away from the eventive core is indicated by crossing it out.³

6. [Clause V Pos1=Arg1 (ADV) Pos2=Arg1 [_{Eventive Core} V Arg1 (X)]]

Lash (2014: 305) further proposes that Pos1, at least, is not exclusively a subject position, since non-NPs, or non-subject NPs can also occur there, as was mentioned briefly above. This is so because Pos1 is, as already stated, a position associated with given/old information. As long as an item is old information in the appropriate sense, or specific in the appropriate sense, it can appear in Pos1, in which case the grammatical subject will appear in Pos2 with the appropriate interpretation, as is exemplified by (7).

7. *Luid* NP-ADV [*in=fecht* *n-aile*] *danō* SBJ [*araile* *fer*]
 g_{OPST.3SG} the_{ACC.SG}=time_{ACC} other_{ACC.SG} ADV some_{NOM.SG} man_{NOM}
 pp [*día=dūscud=som*].
 to.his=wake_{DAT}=3SM
 “On another occasion some man went to wake him.” (TBC¹ 15.464)

³ A more precise analysis is found in Lash (2014: 297, ex. 52), which is adapted in (i).

i. [PoIP Pol [CP C [FP ‘Subj1 F [AdvP Adv [TP ‘Subj2’ T ...]]]]]

Here, Subj1 (= Pos1) is specifier of FP, Subj2 (=Pos2) is specifier of TP (tense phrase). Properly identifying FP is beyond the task of this paper. In brief, it may be a modal projection as suggested in Lash and Griffith (2018) and Lash (2014), or one of the various subject-hosting projections discussed in Cardinaletti (1997, 2004) and Haerberli (2002) (see also Biberauer 2011 for an overview). PoIP = polarity phrase and CP is the complementizer phrase which host the verb after verb movement.

In (7), the constituent that precedes the discourse-oriented adverb is a nominal adverbial phrase of time. Since the adverb is not strictly necessary, the main factors of interest in (7) are the fact that a non-subject constituent occupies Pos1 and the grammatical subject is in Pos2. In this paper, this type of clause is called the late-subject construction.

The late-subject construction is surprisingly common, although it does not seem to have been previously discussed in the scholarly literature. It is attested at least once, and frequently more than once, in each of the major sources of contemporary Old Irish. The following clauses are thus merely representative of its frequency in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. Observe that like the verb in (7), all of the verbs in these examples are non-transitive; this term is used here to mean both intransitive and passive verbs.⁴

⁴ Passive verbs are also included, since they could generally speaking only have one NP argument, just like intransitives. There are at least two types of passive construction in Old Irish: the NP-promotion passive and the arbitrary subject passive (Graver 2011). In the NP-promotion passive construction the verb lacks an external argument. The internal argument of the verb is therefore “promoted” to the position that an external argument in a prototypical transitive clause would have occupied. This promotion is indicated morphologically by nominative case assignment to the internal argument. Agents in passives can be marked with an oblique phrase headed by *do* “to, for”. Consider the contrast between the hypothetical examples (i) and (ii).

- i. *As·beir* *in=mbréithir*.
 PV·say_{PRS.3SG} the_{ACC.SG}=word_{ACC}
 “He/she says the word.”
- ii. *As·berar* *in=briathar* *dó*.
 PV·say_{PRS.PSS.3SG} the_{NOM.SG}=word_{NOM} to_{3SG.MASC}
 “The word is said by him.”

In the arbitrary passive construction, the verb has an intrinsic external argument, namely, a null arbitrary pronominal meaning something like “one, someone, something, people”. This construction allows infixed 1st/2nd person object pronouns (iii), where it is the only construction available; In some texts, full NP objects with accusative case are also found in this construction (iv). Verbs participating in this construction may occasionally be intransitive (v).

- iii. *Nom·berar* *·*.
 PV.me·carry_{PRS.PSS.3SG} *pro*
 “One carries me / I am carried.”
- iv. *nach=dál* *ocus=nach=oirecht* *con·rísar* *a=túathu* *ocus=rígu*
 any=meeting_{NOM} and=any=assembly_{NOM} PV·meet_{PRS.PSS.3SG} their=tribes_{ACC} and=kings_{ACC}
 “whichever meeting and whichever assembly at which their tribes and kings are encountered / one encounters their tribes and kings...” (POMIC, *Epistle of Sunday*, s.152; O’Keeffe 1905: 210, §33)
- v. *Tíagair* *·*.
 go_{PRS.PSS.3SG} *pro*
 “One goes.”

Because arbitrary passives are at least sometimes transitive according to the methodology discussed in section 2.3 (specifically, examples iii-iv), and sometimes non-transitive (example v), they have been treated here as inherently ambiguous and are omitted from consideration where they co-occur with overt noun phrase subjects and objects. In TBC¹, the following examples were omitted: 74.2428 (*co cloth* “and was heard”), 74.2432 (*co cloth*), 74.2437 (*co cloth*), 74.2447 (*co cloth*), 75.2451 (*co cloth*). These five examples have both

8. *Do·adbadar* AdvP[*híc*] SBJ[*bríg inna=persine dod·iccfa*]
 PV·show_{PRS.PSS.3SG} here might_{NOM} the_{GEN.SG=PERSON_{GEN}} PV·it·come_{FUT.3SG}
as=mó dē fo·cialtar.
 COP_{PRS.3SG.REL=MORE} of_{3SG.NEUT} PV·heed_{PRS.PSS.3SG}
 “It is shown here the might of the person who will so come, who is (for that reason all) the more to be taken heed of.” (Wb. 29^c4) (my translation)
9. *Brethae* PP[*hō=suidiu*] SBJ[*mór du=sētaib*] PP[*do=Abimeleäch*]
 bring_{PST.PSS.3SG} from=that_{DAT} much_{NOM} of=treasures_{DAT} to=Abimelech_{DAT}
 PP[*hi=terfochraic marbtha David.*]
 in=recompense_{DAT} killing_{GEN} David_{GEN}
 “Much treasure was brought from the latter to Abimelech as the price of slaying David.” (Ml. 52^{x00})
10. *Acht=do·asilbthær* PP[*triit=som*] SBJ[*gnim t=c<h>ésad*]
 but=PV·ascribe_{PRS.PSS.3SG} through_{3SG.NEUT=3SN} action_{NOM} or=passion_{NOM}
 PP[*do=neuch.*]
 to=someone_{DAT}
 “But through it action or passion is ascribed to someone.” (Sg. 209^a1)
11. *Do·ber<r>* PP[*frit*] SBJ[*á=l<in>*] *laë* PP[*ō=thūs*]
 PV·give_{PRS.PSS.3SG} to_{2SG} the_{NOM.SG=number_{NOM}} days_{GEN} from=beginning_{DAT}
bliad<ne>] c[*<con>·rici a=laë frecndairc i·mbí.*]
 year_{GEN} until·reach_{PRS.2SG} the_{ACC.SG=day_{ACC}} present_{ACC.SG} in·be_{HAB.2SG}
 “The number of days is placed by you from the beginning of the year until you reach the present day in which you are.”
 (*Glosses on Bede’s De Temporum Ratione*; Stokes and Strachan 1903: 36.32-33)
12. *Du·lluid* PP[*īar=suidiu*] SBJ[*Pātricc*] PP[*cu=Fíacc*].
 PV·come_{PST.3SG} after=that_{DAT} Patrick_{NOM} to=Fíacc_{ACC}
 “Patrick came afterwards to Fíacc.”
 (POMIC, *Book of Armagh Additamenta*, s.83; Bieler and Kelly 1979: 176.31)

The fact that instances of the late-subject construction can be found, albeit in small numbers, in sources as varied as the main glossed corpora (Würzburg (Wb.), Milan (Ml.), and St. Gall (Sg.)), as well as the smaller collections of ninth-century glosses and relatively short continuous prose texts, such as the *Book of Armagh Additamenta*, indicates that this syntactic construction was a well-established part of the language of the eighth and ninth centuries. Furthermore, its presence in such short texts and the fact that it is used both in glosses as well as in more literary compositions might imply that it represents a real fact about the functional and formal syntax of early Irish, rather than being among the stylistic

an apparent subject *ní* “something” and an apparent object: *Ailill, Medb, Fergus, Ailill, and Fergus* respectively. One example of a passive verb with an infixed indirect object pronominal was also omitted, namely, 108.3560 (*dommárfas* “was shown to me”) (for the construction, see Thurneysen 1917: 50-51, Lash and Griffith 2018: n.15 and n.16). In Ml., there are no such examples.

constructions like Bergin's constructions or tmesis which have been argued to reflect Latin influence (McCone 1989, Breatnach 1984, Corthals 1998).

As noted above, the verbs in (7-12) are all non-transitive; that is, they are either intransitive or passive verbs. This is intriguing because one might assume, naively, that the late-subject construction would be available in both non-transitive and transitive clauses, given that constituents in Pos1 encode given/old information and that many different kinds of constituents may be given/old. In transitive clauses, for instance, the non-subject constituent in Pos1 might plausibly be a previously mentioned object NP. This expectation, however, seems not to be realized; there are in fact vanishingly few clauses with a late clause-medial subject that contain a previously mentioned object NP in Pos1. Thus, another key characteristic of the late-subject construction is that the verb is typically non-transitive. In other words, the order in (13) seems to be essentially unattested or very rare, although this assertion will be qualified by the end of this paper.

13. VOSX(Y), where X and Y are adverbial or prepositional phrases (or possibly other kinds of constituents)

The initial hypothesis that will be tested in this paper may be stated as follows:

14. The late-subject construction, in which some non-subject constituent occupies Pos1 and the subject is in Pos2, is significantly more likely in non-transitive (intransitive or passive) clauses than in transitive clauses; put differently: non-transitive clauses are much more likely to allow non-subjects to occupy Pos1 than are transitive clauses.

The hypothesized difference between transitive and non-transitive clauses with regard to the accessibility of Pos1 for non-subjects is not entirely unexpected from a cross-linguistic point of view given that (some) non-transitive clauses, namely unaccusative clauses consistently behave differently from transitives with regard to a number of different diagnostics. For an overview of some of the characteristics of intransitive as opposed to transitive clauses, see Levin and Hovav (1995). Indeed, Lash and Griffith (2018) have shown that unaccusative intransitives and passives in Old and Middle Irish are distinct from transitive verbs in occasionally allowing their subjects to remain in their base position within the eventive core, while the usual subject position in the space between the initial verb and the eventive core is, in such cases, occupied by a null expletive. In light of such a difference based on the transitivity of the clause, the generalization offered in (14) would not be surprising.

The rest of the paper presents the results of two quantitative case studies that aim to show that some version of the hypothesis in (14) is an accurate generalization about the clause structure of Old Irish. The paper is structured as follows. In section two, the corpus itself is introduced, as well as a methodological definition of transitive and non-transitive clauses that will be used to classify the data. Section three consists of a description of the results of a quantitative case study investigating whether there is a correlation between the late-subject construction and transitivity in the *Milan Glosses* (ML) and recension one of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (TBC¹). The result is that a correlation exists: in at least TBC¹, clauses allow different positions for their subjects depending on whether they are transitive or non-

transitive. Further discussion of several confounding factors leads to a slightly modified version of the hypothesis that highlights the difference between prototypical transitive clauses and atypical transitive clauses of various kinds: negative clauses with bare indefinite objects, clauses with object-oriented floating quantifiers, idiomatic phrases with “petrified” infixed pronouns, and clauses whose main verb is a verb of motion with an associated infixed pronoun. It appears that atypical transitive clauses behave in a similar way to non-transitive clauses with respect to the placement of the subject in the late-subject construction. Section four focuses on describing a second case study that deals with the subject in final-subject constructions. The results of this case study lend support to the modified hypothesis of section three. Section five concludes the paper with some suggestions for further research.

2. Corpus Description and Methodology

2.1 Overview

The corpus used in this paper consists of two texts, MI. and TBC¹. Both texts are written in Old Irish, although the genre and to some extent the evidential value of the texts must be regarded as different. Each text presents its own challenges. On the one hand, MI. is a series of one-word notes on as well as longer translations or paraphrases of a Latin text, and does not necessarily represent a unified, continuous text. TBC¹, on the other hand, is broadly speaking a continuous prose text. Although this might imply that TBC¹ is better suited as a corpus for a syntactic study, that conclusion is tempered by the fact that MI. is found in a manuscript of the Old Irish period, while TBC¹ is found in manuscripts post-dating the Old Irish period. Because of this long history of transmission, the potential that later mediaeval scribes have edited the text by introducing Middle Irish usages in some place must always be borne in mind. These differences between the two texts will be expounded on in more detail below.

2.2 Description of Milan Glosses and Táin Bó Cúailnge

MI. is a collection of 8,443 Irish glosses in the early ninth-century manuscript *Codex Ambrosianus C 301 inf* (Stokes and Strachan 1901: xiv, Best 1936: 21, 36). The glosses are closely associated with the Latin text found in the manuscript, the bulk of which is a commentary on the psalms likely written by the fifth century Julian of Eclanum, whose work drew upon and partially translated an earlier commentary in Greek by Theodore of Mopsuestia (for discussion of the authorship and references see McNamara 2000: 43-49). The text of the glosses that is used here is drawn from the Milan Glosses Database, a recently developed morphologically tagged digital lexicon (Griffith 2013). The language of the glosses can be ascribed to the ninth century on the basis of the date of the manuscript. However, at least some of the glosses have eighth-century linguistic features, the entire collection being understood generally as a witness to the language of the late eighth century and early ninth century (Stokes and Strachan 1901: xviii; see also Lash 2017b: 146, McCone 1985, and McNamara 2000: 48, 55, 95, 106, 144).

MI. represents a very large and varied corpus. Much of it is not directly relevant to the goal of this paper. In order to test the hypothesis in (14), what is of interest here are

only clauses containing a finite verbal form, an NP subject, and some further constituent. This is because one would like to know where the subject can occur in relation to the verb and the second constituent: is it more likely to occur before or after the second constituent in transitive or non-transitive clauses? Since ML contains 7,753 finite verb forms, it was necessary to exclude some of the data to make the work more manageable. With that in mind, all clauses whose sole finite verb was a form of the copula were discounted, since the word order of copular clauses is different from other clause types and the copula (at least in its very frequent third person forms) should be classified rather as a particle than a verb (Ahlqvist 1972: 271, Lash 2011, 2017a, MacCoisdealbha 1998). Clauses containing the substantive verb were also excluded and reserved for future investigation. After all exclusions, there were 467 clauses left as a basis for the analysis in section three.

The edition of TBC¹ used here is O’Rahilly (1976), who bases her text on the version found in the eleventh/twelfth-century *Lebor na hUidre* and the fourteenth/fifteenth-century *Yellow Book of Lecan*. Although the manuscripts containing this text are from the middle and early modern Irish period, the text itself has been dated to the ninth century or somewhat earlier (O’Rahilly 1976: ix). The entire text has approximately 36,000 words. The database for this paper was derived from a list of 4,083 finite verb forms assembled by Van Loon (2013). This list contains all finite verb forms found in TBC¹, with the exception of those found in passages marked *r.* for *retoiric* (short verse texts that are frequently characterized as ‘archaic’ and that have stylistic, stylistic, and lexicographical peculiarities markedly different from normal prose or gloss texts). However, as with ML, only finite clauses that contain an NP subject and one further constituent are relevant to the goals of the paper. After exclusions (see immediately preceding paragraph), 824 clauses remained as the basis for analysis in section three.

Every finite clause in the corpus was classified according to the following three factors: clause type (transitive vs. non-transitive), subject position, and the presence/kind of an intervener. Each of these factors will be described in the following subsections.

2.3 Clause Type (Transitive vs. Non-Transitive)

Transitivity is in fact a complex notion and it is not a straightforward process to decide whether a given verb is transitive or non-transitive. Morphological, syntactic, and semantic criteria usually align, but occasionally there are mismatches. In order to minimize confusion and prevent biasing the results, the methodological decision made was that transitive clauses are clauses that had the syntactic frame/schema in (15), which represents a verb and two required arguments (irrespective of order), together with other optional material. Because both NP and the XP are required arguments of the verb, the clause would either be incomplete or have another meaning in their absence.

15. V {[NP] [XP] (...)}

In (15), NP is the subject, while XP could be one of the following syntactic and morphological complements.

16. a. **Object Noun Phrase**
Ithid _{SBJ}[*cāch* *diib*] _{XP=OBJ}[*biād* *alaili*].

Eat_{PRS.3SG} each_{NOM} of_{3PL} food_{ACC} other_{GEN}
 “Each of them eats the food of another.” (Ml. 137^{c2})

b. **Infix (+nota augens or a PP/Adv adjunct or both)**

arind·eroīma[=som]_{OBJ} SBJ[*Dīa*] XP=PP[*samlid*]
 that.him·protect_{PRS.SBJ.3SG}=3SM God_{NOM} like_{3SG.NEUT}
 “...may God protect him thus.” (Ml. 39^{c22})

c. **Embedded clause**

Cun·ic SBJ[*cid=a=cumachtae*] *ndoīndae*]
 PV·can_{PRS.3SG} even=the_{NOM.SG}=power_{NOM} human_{NOM.SG}
 XP=C[*ndu·n·ema* *in=duine* *ar=alailiu*].
 PV·protect_{PRS.SBJ.3SG} the_{ACC.SG}=people_{ACC} for=other_{DAT}
 “Even human power is able to protect one man against another.”
 (Ml. 74^{b14})

d. **Embedded do+VN phrase**

Ni·cumcat SBJ[*īdail*] XP=do+VN[*nī* *donaib=adamraib=sin*
 NEG·can_{PRS.3PL} idols_{NOM} anything_{ACC} of=the_{DAT.PL}=marvels_{DAT}=DIST
do=dēnum].
 for=doing_{DAT}
 “Idols can do none of those marvels.” (Ml. 60^{b6})

e. **Embedded VN phrase**

γ=im·folīgai SBJ[*sōn*] XP=VNP[*legad* *dōib=som* *γ=techt*
 and=PV·cause_{PRS.3SG} that_{NOM} melting_{ACC} to_{3PL}=3PL and=going_{ACC}
hi=pīana]
 in=torments_{ACC}
 “...and that causes them to melt and go into torments.” (Ml. 94^{b3})

f. **Quoted phrase**

in=tan *as·mbeir* SBJ[*apstal*] XP=QUOTE[*cum dicat*]
 the_{NOM.SG}=time_{NOM} PV·say_{PRS.3SG} apostle_{NOM} cum dicat
 “when the apostle says, ‘cum dicat’...” (Ml. 25^{d18})

g. **Relative Antecedents that represent the direct object, where XP = PP/AdvP adjunct**

dind=amru *du·rigēni* SBJ[*Dīa*] XP=PP[*erib*]
 of.the_{DAT.SG}=wonder_{DAT} PV·PRF.do_{PST.3SG} god_{NOM} for_{2PL}
 “...because of the wonder that God did [the wonder] for you.” (Ml. 67^{b17b})

For the purposes of this paper, finite clauses in which [XP] in the schema in (15) did not correspond to any of the XP types in (16) were counted as non-transitive clauses. In such clauses, XP could be any of the kinds of constituents in (17). Crucially, XP is never a required argument in these cases.

17. a. **Prepositional phrase with conjugated preposition**

γ =*du-tét* SBJ[*bréntu*] XP=PP[*as*]
 and=PV·come_{PRS.3SG} stench_{NOM} out_{3SG.NEUT}
 “...and a stench comes out of it.” (Ml. 22^b1)

b. **Adverbial Phrase**

For-berad SBJ[*mu=chland*] XP=ADVP[*beüs*].
 PV·increase_{IMPF.3SG} my=clan_{NOM} still
 “My offspring used to continue to increase.” (Ml. 88^a10) (my translation)

c. **Prepositional Phrase**

Rethait SBJ[*uisci*] XP=PP[*inna=medón*], *són*.
 run_{PRS.3PL} water_{SNOM} in.their=center_{DAT} that.is
 “Waters run in their center, that is.” (Ml. 138^d6)

d. **Passive Verb, Prepositional Phrase**

Ar-osailther SBJ[*hires*] XP=PP[*tri=degním*].
 PV·open_{PRS.PSS.3SG} faith_{NOM} through=good.deed_{ACC}
 “Faith is opened through good work.” (Ml. 14^e15)

2.4 Subject Position and Intervener Types

As mentioned above, the “basic” position for NP subjects is immediately after the verb: VS for intransitive and passive verbs and VSO for transitive verbs (or VS if the object is incorporated into the verb as an infixed pronoun). These basic clauses can be augmented by prepositional or adverbial phrases, which are abbreviated as X, giving VSX and VS(O)X⁵ respectively. Occasionally, there is more than one prepositional or adverbial phrase. These additional prepositional or adverbial phrases are signified as Y, Z, and ... (for any further elements). This gives VSXY(Z...) and VS(O)XY(Z...). Descriptively, clauses having late subjects deviate from this basic order because the subject is not directly after the verb. Some of the various permutations of these elements are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

I	II	III
VS...	V...S...	V...S#
1. VSX	1. VXS _O Y	1. VS
2. VSXY	2. VXS _O YZ(...)	2. VXS
3. VSXYZ(...)	3. VXS _O YZS(...)	3. VXS
	4. VXS _O YZS...	4. VXS
		5. VXS...S

Table 1: Intransitive Clauses

I	II	III
---	----	-----

⁵(O) indicates that the object can either be a full NP constituent or incorporated into the verb as an infixed pronominal item. In the tables, infixes are indicated using subscript O (types I.6-7, II.6 and III.6-7 in Table 2).

VS...	V...S...	V...S#
1. VSO	1. VXSO	1. VOS
2. VSOX	2. VXSOY(Z...)	2. VOXS
3. VSOXY(Z...)	3. VOSX	3. VOXY(Z...)S
4. VSXO	4. VOSXY(Z...)	4. VXOS
5. VSXOY(Z...)	5. VOXSY(Z...)	5. VXOY(Z...)S
6. V _o SX	6. V _o XSX(Z...)	6. V _o XS
7. V _o SXY(Z...)		7. V _o XY(Z...)S

Table 2: Transitive Clauses

In the case studies discussed in sections three and four, the word order types in columns II and III in the above tables are examined. The hypothesis in (14) means that one should not expect there to be many clauses of the types found in II and III of Table 2. Clause types where there is only one non-object intervener that precedes the subject are fundamentally ambiguous (essentially the clause types in table 1, II.1,2, III.2 and Table 2 II.1,2,6). This is because the intervener, X, can stand for two different things in different syntactic positions. Recall that Pos1, which is the position targeted by given/old information, is located to the left of a position that may host a discourse-oriented adverbs. The intervener can be either a constituent expressing given/old information in Pos1 (18a) or a discourse adverb in a position lower than Pos1 (18b).

18. a. *Luid* _{PP}[*úadib*] _{SBJ}[*in=tarb*] _{PP}[*īar=sin*] _{PP}[*asin=dúmud*].
_{gOPST.3SG} _{from}_{3PL} _{the}_{NOM.SG=bull}_{NOM} _{after=that} _{out.the}_{DAT.SG=camp}_{DAT}
 “The bull went from them after that out of the camp.” (TBC¹ 31.995)
- b. *Fo-cheird* _{PV}·_{throw}_{PRS.3SG} _{ADV} *danō* _{SBJ}[*Dubthach*] _{OBJ}[*gar*] _{PP}[*for=Maine*].
{PV}·{throw}_{PRS.3SG} _{ADV} _{Dubthach}_{NOM} _{spear}_{ACC} _{on=Maine}_{ACC}
 “Then Dubthach throws a spear at Maine.” (TBC¹ 75.2460)

Because the main question is whether or not transitive and non-transitive clauses differ with regard to what can occupy Pos1, examples where the intervener consists only of a discourse-oriented adverb or an epistemic *la* phrase (which is functionally equivalent to discourse-oriented adverbs) are irrelevant. This necessitates removing all such examples, so that only those examples that are relevant for testing the hypothesis remain, in particular examples in which the sole intervener is not a discourse-oriented adverb or epistemic *la* phrase but rather a non-subject item in Pos1.⁶

⁶ The examples of both clause-medial late subjects and absolute clause-final subjects that were excluded because the sole intervener is a discourse-oriented adverb are: Ml. trans. 22^d7, 24^d25, 58^a11 (x2), 115^b2, 128^d9; Ml. non-trans. 21^c3, 26^c6, 27^c4 (here, the intervener is the negative polarity item *etir* ‘at all’, which is counted as a discourse adverb for convenience), 45^c9, 53a1, 55^c1, 56^b1, 64^b6, 65^c16, 72^d1, 100^b9, 111^c14, 114^a2; TBC¹ trans. (morphological glosses are only given if the inflection is not clear from the English translation) 7.210 (*dosfóibair* “attacked them” (3sg.pret.)), 9.261 (*lelgatár* “licked” (3pl.pret.)), 20.627 (*dafic* “comes there”), 20.646 (*rochlunithar* “hears”), 30.947 (*dagéini* “does it”), 30.949 (*ésgid* “cuts off”), 37.1171 (*tomna* “swims” (3sg.subj.pres.)), 39.1256 (*atbeir* “says it”), 50.1622 (*dogniat* “do”), 50.1624 (*thánic* “came” (3sg.pret.)), 58.1904 (*gabais* “took” (3sg.pret.)), 64.2073 (*ro gabsat* “have taken” (3pl.pret.)), 72.2368 (*follaig* “hid” (3sg.pret.)), 75.2460 (*focheird* “throws”), 76.2489 (*dointai* “turns”), 102.3375 (*rathaigis* “noticed” (3sg.pret.)), 121.4045 (*farrumae* “betook himself” (3sg.pret.)), 96.3181 (*danéici* “examined him”), 103.3402

The overall data (467 clauses in ML, 824 clauses in TBC¹) are presented in tables 3 and 4. The data are arranged into immediate post-verbal subjects, late clause-medial subjects (VXS#), absolute clause-final subjects (VXS#) and omissions, according to the immediately above discussion.

ML	Tr	Non-Tr	Total
VSX	206	165	371
VXSY	6	5	11
VXS#	29	36	65
omission (discourse adverb)	6	13	19
Total	247	219	466

Table 3: The data from ML.

TBC ¹	Tr	Non-Tr	Total
VSX	319	388	707
VXSY	3	20	23
VXS#	11	34	45
omission (discourse adverb)	19	30	49
Total	352	472	824

Table 4: The data from TBC¹

3. Quantitative Case Studies

3.1. Case Study 1: The late-subject construction

In this section, all instances of the late-subject construction in ML and TBC¹ are examined to determine to what extent these two texts provide evidence for the hypothesis in (14). In both texts, a full NP subject is placed immediately after the verb in the overwhelming majority of both transitive and non-transitive examples; nevertheless, there are a good number of examples in both texts of the kinds of late-subject clauses that we are principally concerned with in this section. In order to discover whether there is some significant correlation between clause type and subject position, two-tailed Fisher's Exact tests were performed on all the relevant data. There are two variables with two values each:

(*léicsis* “permitted it”); TBC¹ non-trans. 8.227 (*dobreth* “was given”), 10.308 (*dognither* “is done”), 11.336 (*tiagait* “go” (3pl.pres.)), 17.522 (*dollotár* “came” (3pl.pret.)), 23.721 (*tecait* “come” (3pl.pres.)), 25.811 (*tothéit* “comes”), 31.974 (*luid* “went”), 32.1024 (*conérracht* “rose” (3sg.pret.)), 48.1547 (*téit* “goes”), 48.1560 (*ro bítha* “have been killed”), 48.1566 (*berair* “is brought”), 49.1598 (*teit* “goes”), 50.1632 (*ro imráidset* “have spoken together”), 52.1686 (*guitter* “let it be asked”), 52.1695 (*guitter* “is asked”), 53.1721 (*guitter* “is asked”), 53.1733 (*dointáth* “turned back” (3sg.impf.)), 53.1741 (*ro soich* “goes off”), 59.1940 (*tic* “comes”), 60.1945 (*tic* “comes”), 60.1968 (*tánic* “came” (3sg.pret.)), 60.1969 (*gabais* “began” (3sg.pret.)), 60.1975 (*tánic* “came” (3sg.pret.)), 61.1982 (*ro chomraicset* “have met” (3pl.pret.)), 116.3842 (*thanic* “came” (3sg.pret.)), 116.3844 (*thánic* “came” (3sg.pret.)), 123.4088 (*rethaid* “runs”), 123.4109 (*llotar* “went” (3pl.pret.)), 124.4125 (*fochesath* “was removed”). Additionally, 1.21 (*doecmalta* “were gathered”) was omitted, although it has two interveners: *danó* and *iarum* respectively. This decision was taken following Lash (2014: 286-288), where it is argued that *iarum* is a temporal adverb and the subject is actually quite low, in fact in its base position within the eventive core. Accordingly, like other omissions, this example gives no information about differences between transitive and non-transitive clauses with regard to what elements can occupy Pos1/Pos2.

clause type (transitive and non-transitive) and subject position (subject early: VSX and subject late: VXS_Y) The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between clause type and subject position. Tables 5 and 6 are 2x2 contingency tables of the data.

MI.	Tr	Non-Tr	Total
VXS _Y	6	5	11
VSX	206	165	371
Total	212	170	382

Table 5, $p = 1$, significant at $p < .05$

TBC ¹	Tr	Non-Tr	Total
VXS _Y	3	20	23
VSX	319	388	707
Total	322	408	730

Table 6, $p = .0022$, significant at $p < .05$ ⁷

There is no significant correlation ($p = 1$) between verb type and subject position in MI. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected for MI. In contrast, there is a significant correlation ($p < .0022$) in TBC¹, so the null hypothesis can be rejected. This means that there is a correlation between verb type and subject position. Thus, it seems that the hypothesis in (14) is upheld by the data. Just from inspection, it seems that non-transitive clauses in TBC¹ are more likely than transitive clauses to have a late clause-medial subject.

3.2. Confounding Factors

Despite the fact that there is some significant correlation between subject position and verb type in TBC¹, MI. shows no such significant correlation. But this is perhaps not surprising because TBC¹ and MI. are two quite different types of texts; as discussed in section two, TBC¹ is a long narrative with a somewhat complicated transmission history, while MI. is a series of glosses, which, though to some extent copied, are roughly contemporary with the manuscript. Because of these differences between the two texts, it is not necessarily the case that the correlation between non-transitive clauses and the late-subject construction found in TBC¹ would be replicated exactly.

The fact that MI. is a series of glosses represents a major complication for the hypothesis in (14) in at least two respects. First, since MI. does not form a continuous text in the same way as TBC¹, but rather a series of discrete units (one-word glosses, individual clauses, or short series of clauses) commenting on particular Latin passages, in all cases it is quite plausible that the glosses have a closer link with the Latin passage that they are associated with than with each other, at least in most instances. The second complication arises directly from this fact. One must be sensitive to the possibility that that some kind of interference from Latin might obscure “normal” Old Irish syntax. If it can be shown that there are still certain differences between transitive and non-transitive clauses even despite these complications, the hypothesis would be vindicated.

First, it should be borne in mind that the sample sizes of the two texts are quite

⁷ The results of an earlier version of this test, based on a differing set of exclusions, is reported in Lash and Griffith (2017: fn. 24). In both versions, there is a significant correlation between clause type and word order.

different. In section two, it was shown that TBC¹ has 824 and ML has 467 clauses with a noun phrase subject and a second constituent. The difference between these two numbers is a little less than 2:1. Moreover, if transitive, intransitive, and passive clauses in the corpus as a whole are taken into account, a great disparity between the two texts emerges. In TBC¹, there are 990 clauses with a noun phrase subject (including both clauses with a subject and a second constituent and clauses which consist of the verb and the subject noun phrase alone) out of a total of 2,711 clauses. In ML, however, there are 780 such clauses out of a total of 4,427 clauses. This is summarized in table 7.⁸

	NP-subject	Non-NP subject	Total
ML	780	3,646	4,426
TBC ¹	990	1,721	2,711
Total	1,770	5,367	7,137

Table 7: Clauses with NP subject compared to Clauses with non-NP subjects

The sample size of clauses having an NP-subject in ML may be just too low to show any effect. This difference in sample size between ML and TBC¹ is possibly due to the fact that they represent two different types of texts, as discussed above. It is plausible that clauses in ML might lack an overt NP subject, or have a pronominal subject more often than a narrative text like TBC¹, since glosses more often refer back to subjects found in the main Latin text of the commentary and thus might more often employ pronominal reference. (18) shows the results of a chi-square test comparing the difference in the proportion of NP subjects to the proportion of non-NP subjects in each text.

18. a. ML: 82.38% non-NP subjects (n = 3646) vs. 17.62% NP subjects (n = 780)
 b. TBC¹: 63.48% non-NP subject (n = 1721) vs. 36.51% NP subjects (n = 990)
 c. Relationship between the two variables is significant ($\chi^2(1) = 322.0292$, $p < .00001$).

These results clarify the hypothesized difference between the two texts. They show that the sample size of the data in TBC¹ is more useful for determining if there is a correlation between the position of NP subjects and verb type because there are simply more NP subjects in TBC¹ as compared to non-NP subjects. Despite the lack of significant results from ML, it is argued below that it probably does not differ fundamentally in its underlying grammar from TBC¹. With this in mind, consider Tables 8 and 9, which list only clauses where the subject is far from the verb, either in a late-subject construction or in a final-subject construction.

ML	Tr	Non-Tr	Total
----	----	--------	-------

⁸ For reference, the major data points for both texts are presented in Table 7'.

Text	Total Finite Verbs	Clauses w/ substantive verb, copula, <i>ol</i> "says", or Latin verbs	Total Clauses (V + extra constituent)	Clause = VSX/VXS(Y)	Clause = VS#	Clause = V(X)Y
ML	7,749	3,323	4,426	467	313	3,646
TBC ¹	4,091	1,380	2,711	824	166	1,721

Table 7': Breakdown of data in ML and TBC¹

VXSY#	6	5	11
VXS#	29	36	65
Total	35	41	76

Table 8: Distribution of late subjects as a function of verb type

TBC ¹	Tr	Non-Tr	Total
VXSY#	3	20	23
VXS#	11	34	45
Total	14	54	69

Table 9: Distribution of late subjects as a function of verb type

Note that, in both Ml. and TBC¹, there are a number of transitive examples with subjects far from the verb. If hypothesis (14) is correct, one wonders why such examples are found at all, and additionally whether these examples exhibit any special characteristics that could help to narrow down the hypothesis. The focus of this subsection is clause-medial late subjects in transitive clauses in both Ml. and TBC¹, that is, the upper row of Tables 8-9. The 6 examples of late subjects in transitive clauses in Ml. are listed in (19), while the 3 from TBC¹ are listed in (20).⁹

19. a. *amal=ara-mberat* NP[*biuth*] SBJ[*in<n>a=cethrai*]
 as=PV_{REL}·enjoy_{PRS.3PL} world_{DAT} the_{NOM.PL}=cattle_{NOM}
cen=dechur inna=sástu frisa-comrac<at>
 without=distinction_{ACC} the_{ACC.PL}=foods_{ACC} with_{REL}·meet_{PRS.3PL}
 “...as the cattle enjoy without distinction the foods that they meet with.”
 (Ml. 69^a19)
- b. *Ara-mmuinfetar* NP[*fēid*] SBJ[*huili doīni talman*]
 PV.him-honor_{FUT.3PL} honor_{DAT} all_{NOM} people_{NOM} land_{GEN}
trissa=n-adamrae=sin.
 through.the_{ACC.SG}=marvel_{ACC}=DIST
 “All men of the earth will honor Him through that marvel.” (Ml. 61^a16)
- c. *nacha-romarb[=som]*_{OBJ} SBJ[*Dīa*] *i=ndīgail*
 NEG_{REL}.them·PRF.kill_{PST.3SG=3P} God_{NOM} in=punishment_{DAT}
neich do-rigēnsat fri=Duid
 something_{GEN} PV·PRF.do_{PST.3PL} to=David_{ACC}

⁹ Non-transitive examples are set aside here. The 5 examples from Ml. are Ml. 47^b6, 52^x00, 77^b11, 56^a13, 53^a17; the 20 examples from TBC are: 14.423 (*arsisetar* “stuck” (3pl.pret.)), 15.464 (*luid* “went” (3sg.pret.)), 17.533 (*tiagait* “go” (3pl.pres.)), 19.601 (*bérthar* “will be brought”), 28.908 (*anaid* “waits”), 31.995 (*téit* “goes”), 45.1454 (*hétar* ‘is found’), 46.1504 (*mebaid* “broke” (3sg.pret.)), 51.1668 (*thacmainget* “extend” (3pl.pres.)), 52.1682 (*dorairngired* “has been promised”), 56.1818 (*congairther* “was called”), 64.2085 (*dollotár* “went” (3pl.pret.)), 68.2240 (*congáirtis* “used to cry” (3pl.impf.)), 96.3181 (*tégit* “go” (3pl.pres.)), 97.3192 (*fuigébhtar* “will be found”), 101.3355 (*dobrethai* “was given”), 102.3361 (*docertar* “fell” (3pl.pret.)), 123.4086 (*scendit* ‘sprang’ (3pl.pret.)), 124.4143 (*dolodar* “went” (3pl.pret.)), and 15.462 (*dobreth* “was given”), which has two interveners between the verb and the subject. It is thus comparable to ex. (31b) in Lash (2014: 288, 31b). Lash and Griffith (2018: 122-126) argue that the subject is in fact in its base position within the eventive core in these kinds of examples.

“...that God did not slay them in punishment for something which they had done to David.” (Ml. 23^b5)

- d. *arind·eroīma*[=som]_{OBJ} *SBJ*[*Dīa*] *samlid*
that.him·protect_{PRS.SBJ.3SG=3SM} God_{NOM} like_{3SG.NEUT}
“...may God protect him thus.” (Ml. 39^c22)
- e. *7=ma=atam·scartis*[=se]_{OBJ} *tra* *SBJ*[*inna=fochaidi*]
and=if=PV.me.separate_{PST.SBJ.3PL=1SG} then the_{NOM.PL=tribulations_{NOM}}
a=sin
from=there
“...and if the tribulations were to drive me from there” (Ml. 59^a21)
- f. *Ni·cinní* *OBJ*[*aimsir*] *SBJ*[*donec*] *hi=sunt.*
NEG·define_{PRS.3SG} time_{ACC} donec in=here
“(The word) ‘donec’ does not define time here.” (Ml. 128^a4)
20. a. *At·bail*<|> *PP*[*fo=chétóir*] *SBJ*[*Fer Báeth*] *isinn=gлинд.*
PV.it·throw_{PRS.3SG} under=first.hour_{DAT} F._{NOM}B._{NOM} in.the_{DAT.SG=glen_{DAT}}
“Fer Báeth falls dead at once in the glen.” (TBC¹ 55.1788)
- b. *Dos·icfe* *OBJ*[*uile*] *SBJ*[*ell* *condolbae*] *oc=aicsin*
PV.them·come_{FUT.3SG} all_{ACC} feeling_{NOM} kinship.tie_{GEN} at=seeing_{DAT}
in=meic *isind=nith* *már=sin.*
the_{GEN.SG=boy_{GEN}} in.the_{DAT.SG=conflict_{DAT}} like=that
“They will all feel the ties of kinship when they see the boy thus in that great conflict.” (Lit. “The feeling of affection for kin will come to them all...”) (TBC¹ 116.3834)
- c. *Co·n·accai* *OBJ*[*ní*] *SBJ*[*int=i* *Cú* *Chulaind*]:
so.that-see_{PRS.3SG} something_{ACC} the_{NOM.SG=EMPH} C_{NOM} C_{GEN}
Bude mac Báin ó Sléib Chulind cosin
Buide_{NOM} son_{NOM} Bán_{GEN} from Slíab_{DAT} Cuilinn_{GEN} with.the_{DAT.SG}
tarb *γ=cóic* *samaisci* *déac* *imbi.*
bull_{DAT} and=five heifers_{NOM} ten around_{3SG.MASC}
“And Cú Chulainn saw something: Buide mac Báin from Slíab Cuilinn with the bull and fifteen heifers around him.” (TBC¹ 46.1491)

There are two broad clause types represented by the examples in (19-20). First, there are clauses in which the sole intervening element is a constituent that can, for syntactic and stress-based reasons, appear nowhere else (19a-e). Second, there are clauses that have a fully stressed noun phrase that intervenes between the verb and the subject (19f, 20).

In (19a-b), the intervener is an NP complement in the dative case: either *biuth* “world” or *féid* “honor”. The verbs *ar·beir* “consume” and *ar·muinethar* “honor” are two instances of a small group of verbs that are always followed by dative complements in particular senses. Other collocations include *beirid díriug* “to carry off” and *fris·cuirethar*

céill “to attend to”. Even the verbal noun of most of these verbs must be accompanied by the dative complement, cf. *airbert biuth* “enjoying, using” and *airmitiu féid* “honoring, respecting”, *frecor céill* “attending to”. The verbal noun phrase *breth díriug* “carrying off”, which corresponds to *beirid díriug*, appears to be unattested. It seems that, in such cases, the verbal root and the dative complement should be treated as a compound. That is, in some syntactic sense the two units are inseparable. Such cases are comparable to object incorporation in English, a situation in which a single-word object is ‘incorporated’ into the verb so as to form a complex compound verb. An example of this is ‘to take advantage of’. The dependent status of ‘advantage’ is clearly shown in passivization: “We were taken advantage of”, where the word ‘advantage’ is ‘frozen’ and cannot become a syntactic subject.¹⁰

A situation of a similar nature is found in (19c-e). In these examples, the intervening element is a *nota augens*, an emphatic pronominal item. The *nota augens* is an unstressed element that is directly dependent on a preceding constituent in the sense that it must cliticize to a constituent that contains a morpheme with which it agrees in some features. In (19c-d), this is the third person infix pronoun, in (19e), the first person infix pronoun found in the verbal complex. Because it must cliticize to the verbal complex, there is no other place for the *nota* to appear. Syntactic operations dealing with subject placement are apparently incapable of breaking the morphophonological bond between the *nota* and its host. So, again, there is mismatch between syntax and morphology.¹¹ In both of the cases of mismatch between syntax and morphology, it seems that one item, either the dative complement or the *nota*, is syntactically incorporated into the other item, the verb, before stress is assigned.

The other clauses have a fully stressed noun phrase intervener. This group consists of (19f) and (20a-c). The last example, (20c), will be discussed further below as it is slightly different from the first three (19f, 20a-b). The classification of these three clauses as transitive was a methodological decision, based on the guidelines discussed in section 2.3. In (19f), the verb is followed by two noun phrases, one of which is an object. In (20a-b), the clauses are classified as transitive because in both instances, they contain an infix pronoun (compare ex.16b); moreover in (20b) the infix pronoun is co-referential with a full NP object, *uile* “all”. Despite these methodological considerations, these clauses exhibit special features that distinguish them from other transitive clauses.

(19f) occurs on a Latin passage that makes a distinction between two usages of the word *donec* in the Bible, one in which it heads clauses having to do with sempiternity and another in which it heads clauses having to do with eternity. One might suppose that

¹⁰ I thank an anonymous reviewer for the example.

¹¹ Griffith (2013: 67-70, 2015: 203-205) argues that third person *notae augentes* always serve to mark a continuing topic, that is, old information. It makes sense, therefore, that they have to be in Pos1, which, as was discussed above, is associated with old information, while Pos2 is associated with new information. Griffith also notes that the anaphor *suide* typically marks new information. In its clitic form, namely *-sidi* (3rd sg. fem. acc.), it is found after the *notae augentes*, as shown in (i), cited from Griffith (2015: 197). The order *notae augentes* > *-side* corresponds exactly to the order of Pos1 (old information) > Pos2 (new information), although it must be clearly stated here that *sidi* is the object not the subject.

i. *Ros failigestar=som=sidi.*
 PRF.it(3SF) manifest_{PRET.3SG}=3SM=3SF
 “He has manifested it (the word = fem. *briathar*).” (Wb. 31^a9)

the unusual word order could be influenced by Latin. However, this is not the case, as a direct comparison between the gloss and the Latin clause shows (21). The subscript numbers indicate words or phrases that have the same or similar translation.

21. *Ní cinní₃ aimsir₄ donec₂ hisunt₁* (linguistic glossing above)
 “(The word) *donec* does not define time here.” (Ml. 128^a4)
 gl. híc₁ donec₂ [non est]₃ [finis indicium sed æternitatis]₄
 here donec not is end_{GEN} sign_{NOM} but eternity_{GEN}

Because the unusual order in the Irish does not echo anything in the Latin, it seems likely that the Irish word order reflects authentic Old Irish syntax. One property of this sentence that distinguishes it from other transitive clauses in the corpus and which could be crucial in explaining the unusual word order is the fact that the object is a bare indefinite noun phrase under the scope of negation. This fact suggests a connection with the phenomenon of incorporation, in which a bare indefinite noun with maximally narrow semantic scope forms a close bond with its governing verb, thereby creating a compound verb. Cross-linguistically, these structures exhibit intransitive, not prototypical transitive syntax (see Massam 2009 for an overview for this phenomenon).¹²

In (20a), the verb *at-bail<l>* literally means “throws it away”. One could analyze the subject as an instigator of the action of throwing and the unspecified “it” (presumably corresponding to “life”) as the undergoer of the action. However, this appeal to etymology is ultimately unhelpful. The subject, *Fer Báeth*, is semantically non-agentive. Rather, it represents the undergoer of the action expressed by the verb. Given the other attestations of this construction (see eDIL s.v. *at-bail(l)*), it does not seem plausible that the expression *at-bail<l> Fer Báeth* could be used to convey an agentive meaning such as “Fer Báeth throws it (= his life) away” (i.e. “he commits suicide”). An argument against attributing this kind of agentive meaning to the expression is that the primary word meaning “life” in Old Irish is *bethu*, a masculine noun. If the pronoun were at all referential, the verbal complex would be *at-mbaill*, with a masculine infix. The fact that the pronoun chosen here is neuter implies that it has a formal syntactic role to play, essentially detransitivizing the verb. Moreover, the presence of the pronoun has become an integral part of this expression. That is, it is not possible to replace it with a full noun phrase. The semantic contribution of the infixed pronoun therefore does not correspond straightforwardly to its contribution in typical transitive clauses. Rather, the verb to which the pronoun is infixed undergoes what I call “pronominal conversion” to become a kind of intransitive verb (see conclusion for some details).

Example (20b) also lacks key features of a prototypical transitive clause. The verb *dos-icfe* expresses movement and its subject expresses something that undergoes movement. The infixed pronoun and the coreferential QP *uile* “all” together ostensibly represent a discontinuous object. But, more accurately they represent the goal of movement. Unlike in prototypical transitive clauses, there is no agentive subject here and the object does not represent something that has undergone a change of physical or internal state. Moreover, because the object pronoun is associated with the quantifier *uile*, one may

¹² I thank an anonymous reviewer for this point. The compound verbs created by incorporation of a bare indefinite object are in some sense comparable to the compound verbs created by incorporation of dative complements, discussed above. I leave further investigation of these phenomena to future research.

perhaps ascribe the special word order to the presence of the quantifier. Indeed, the fact that the same word order is found in (22), where the pronoun and associated quantifier do in fact represent an affected object and not a goal of movement, shows that both affected and non-affected quantified objects can be before the subject. This fact seems to imply that an analysis involving the syntax of object-oriented floating quantifiers is necessary.

22. *Dos-n-airc*<*h*>*elæ* OBJ[*hule*] SBJ[*int=saltair*].
 PV.them-restrain_{PRS.SBJ.3SG} all_{ACC} the_{NOM.SG}=psalter_{NOM}
 “The psalter may restrain them all.”
 (POMIC, *Monastery of Tallaght* s.254; Gwynn and Purton 1911: 142, §39, my translation)

Based on the above, a plausible reason for the fact that at least some transitive clauses have late clause-medial subjects seems to be that they are atypical in certain features (for instance, negation + bare indefinite object, object = goal of movement, floating quantifiers, pronominal conversion) and, furthermore, that such atypical transitive clauses pattern with non-transitive clauses. A stronger way of stating this is that ‘atypical transitive clauses’ are in fact non-transitive clauses even though they seem from a morphological point of view (presence of an accusative nominal object or infixed pronoun, for example) to be transitive.

The hypothesis proposed above in (14) should now be revised in order to take account of examples like (19f) and (20a-b). The new hypothesis, with updates in bold, is (23).

23. **New Hypothesis**

The late-subject construction, in which some non-subject constituent occupies Pos1 and the subject is in Pos2, is significantly more likely in non-transitive (intransitive or passive) clauses **or atypical transitive clauses** than in prototypical transitive clauses; put differently: non-transitive **or atypical transitive clauses** are much more likely to allow non-subject constituents to occupy Pos1 than are **prototypical transitive clauses (with the exception of dependent items such as *notae augentes* or dative complements)**.

If one adopts this hypothesis, then the apparent large number of transitive clauses with late subjects in both Ml. and TBC¹ that was noted above is deceptive. In fact, the ability of non-subject constituents to occupy Pos1 in prototypical transitive clauses is highly curtailed. It is only possible if the constituent is dependent on the verb. In non-transitive or atypical transitive clauses, however, Pos1 can regularly host non-subject items, such as prepositional or adverbial phrases in intransitive and passive clauses and in clauses whose verbs have undergone pronominal conversion, as well as bare indefinite or non-affected quantificational objects in atypical transitive clauses.

The final sentence exhibiting a late subject was (20c), which is repeated here.

20. c. *Co-n-accai* OBJ[*ní*] SBJ[*int=i*] *Cú* *Chulaind*]:
 so.that-see_{PRS.3SG} something_{ACC} the_{NOM.SG}=EMPH C_{NOM} C_{GEN}
Bude *mac* *Báin* *ó* *Sléib* *Chulind* *cosin*
 Buide_{NOM} son_{NOM} Bán_{GEN} from Sliab_{DAT} Cuilinn_{GEN} with.the_{DAT.SG}

tarb γ =*cóic* *samaisci* *déac* *imbi*.
 bull_{DAT} and=five heifers_{NOM} ten around_{3SG.MASC}
 “And Cú Chulainn saw something: Buide mac Báin from Slíab Cuilinn
 with the bull and fifteen heifers around him.” (TBC¹ 46.1491)

Given the presence of the emphatic substantivizing particle *i*, which is very often associated with deixis (cf. *intí-sin* “that person”, *an-i-siu* “this thing”), it is very likely that the subject is right-dislocated in this example, since emphasis and deixis are often associated with marked information structure (see the discussion surrounding examples (38)). Under this analysis, the final parenthetical comment, which clarifies the object, would also be right-dislocated in a way comparable to the examples schematized in (41). If this analysis is correct, (20c) does not constitute a problem for the hypothesis, as the discussion below surrounding examples (38) and (41) should make clear.

4. Case Study 2: Final-Subject Constructions

4.1 The Hypothesis

In section three, it was shown that late clause-medial subjects in prototypical transitive clauses are only possible if the intervener is an item that is syntactically dependent on the verb, such as a dative complement or a *nota augens*. All other cases of late clause-medial subjects are found in non-transitive and atypical transitive clauses. In this section, the rather large number of transitive final-subject constructions will be examined. These examples, along with non-transitive final-subject clauses were summarized above on the lower row of tables 8 and 9.

It is inherently difficult to test the hypothesis in (23) on final-subject constructions with one constituent intervening between the verb and the subject. This is because, out of context, every example is potentially ambiguous between two structures: either the intervener is in Pos1 and the subject is in Pos2 (24a) or the subject has been dislocated to the right edge of the clause and the intervener is in its base position within the eventive core (24b).¹³ Only the structure in (24a) is relevant for testing the hypothesis. Structures with right-dislocation have no bearing on the validity of the hypothesis.

24. a. [Clause V Pos1=X Pos2=Subject [_{Eventive Core} V Subject X]] = VXS
 b. [Clause [_{Eventive Core} V X] S] = VXS

Recall that Mac Giolla Easpaig argues that the word order in final-subject constructions can in general be ascribed to either formal (phonological and syntactic) characteristics of the subject or contextual, discourse-related ones. Essentially, he claims that the subject is typically either very long or the final subject arises from some kind of pragmatic emphasis

¹³ It should be emphasized that the use of the term “right-dislocation” in this paper is meant to be purely descriptive and no theoretical claims about the precise mechanism are being made. The author is aware that there is some amount of skepticism about the existence of rightward movement in the syntactic component (Kayne 1994) and that what is called “right-dislocation” here can be handled via leftward movement (Walkden 2014, Wallenberg 2015).

in the final-subject construction. If this analysis is right, one may safely assume that right-dislocation plays a role in most instances of the final-subject construction; see, for instance, Wasow 1997 for a link between Heavy-NP shift and right-dislocation. But, this assumption is only valid in so far as a methodology can be developed that will specify how any given clause conforms to the analysis: i.e. the task is to make explicit precisely which discourse conditions are associated with right-dislocation and what kinds of structurally long subjects may be final. The focus of subsection 4.2 below is the development of precisely this methodology.

Once this is done and clauses are categorized according to these two triggers (i.e. long subject or special discourse context) for right-dislocation, one of two results will be obtained: either all final-subject constructions in the corpus will have been so categorized, or there will be a small remainder of examples that do not appear to conform to the categories of analysis. The first result means that one can continue to assume that hypothesis (23) is valid, as there is reason to suspect given the results of the discussion in section three, since there will be no counterexamples that bear on the hypothesis. The second result means that the hypothesis remains valid only to the extent that those examples that remain are non-transitive (including atypical transitive) clauses. If any are prototypical transitive clauses, the hypothesis must be reconsidered.

4.2 Reinterpreting Mac Giolla Easpaig (1980) in Information Structure Terms

Before the results of the analysis are presented, Mac Giolla Easpaig's methodology and analysis are examined in order to point out some weaknesses and to develop a more streamlined understanding of the factors that lead to an absolute clause-final subject. Updating the analysis will have the welcome result of providing a more watertight methodology for determining when an absolute-final subject does not conform to Mac Giolla Easpaig's general types.

As mentioned previously, Mac Giolla Easpaig's final-subject types fall into two groups: final-subjects with particular "formal" characteristics and final-subject constructions with right-dislocation triggered by some discourse-related characteristics. Concentrating first on the "formal" group, one finds an absolute clause-final subject when the subject is a noun phrase modified by a relative clause, a so-called long noun phrase consisting of a number of nouns, or a single noun phrase qualified by a number of adjectives or complement noun phrases. Finally, Mac Giolla Easpaig claims verbal nouns functioning as the subject always occupy a clause-final position. These noun-phrase types are summarized in (25). The syntactic structures ascribed to these situations represent my own analysis.

25. a. [NP N [CP Relative Clause]]
 b. [NP [NP] [NP]_{-appositive}]
 c. [NP N ADJ(...)]
 d. [NP VBN]

Mac Giolla Easpaig's analysis of this formal group is basically that the divergence from normal order is due to "stylistic" considerations, among which he singles out "sentence rhythm", that is, prosody. This is undoubtedly a good hypothesis, but it is difficult to prove

for a dead language since there is little direct access to the prosody. It also assumes that prosodic information may influence the form of syntactic representations (rather than being itself shaped deterministically by syntax). This conception is controversial, however. Because of the quite intricate theoretical issues involved that cannot be adequately addressed in this paper, several more straightforward problems with Mac Giolla Easpaig's analysis of the examples involving long NPs and verbal nouns as subjects will instead be discussed.

First, his formulation of the syntactic features associated with the absolute clause-final subject is not very precise. It is not clear exactly what constitutes a noun phrase that consists of a number of nouns. His examples are cases in which a noun is qualified by an appositive noun phrase, as in (26).

26. *Gabais* OBJ[*caille*] PP[*la=Pātraic*] SBJ[*Lassar ingen Anfolmithe*
take_{PST.3SG} veil_{NOM} with=Patrick_{ACC} Lassar_{NOM} daughter_{NOM} Anblamath_{GEN}
di=cheniul Cáichāin.
of=face_{DAT} Cáechán_{GEN}
“Lassar, daughter of Anblamath, of the race of Cáechán took the veil from Patrick”
(POMIC, *Book of Armagh Additamenta*, s.6; Bieler and Kelly 1979: 172.25-26)

But, one might wonder about other instances of noun phrases consisting of a number of nouns. What about noun phrases with coordinate NPs? Certainly some coordinate NPs can be final subjects within their clause (27a), but this is not obligatory (27b).

27. a. *Ō=ró·sinset* OBJ[*a=láma*] PP[*chuci*] SBJ[*in=draí*
After=PRF·stretch_{PST.3PL} their=hands_{ACC} to_{3SG.NEUT} the_{NOM.SG}=magus_{NOM}
γ=in=chumal]
and=the_{NOM.SG}=slave.girl_{NOM}
“After the magus and the slave girl stretched their hands to it”
(*Middle Irish Homily on Betha Brigitte*; Stokes 1877: 56.35)
- b. *Fo·dáilter* PP[*īar=suidiu*] SBJ[*biād γ=lind*] *dóib*.
PV·distribute_{PSS.3SG} after=that_{DAT} food_{NOM} and=drink_{NOM} to_{3PL}
“Food and drink was distributed to them afterwards.”
(*Fled Bricrem*; Mac Cana and Slotkin 2014: 12.187)

A further imprecision in Mac Giolla Easpaig's analysis is the claim that the noun phrases represented by the structures in (25a) always appear in final position. This is in fact not quite accurate. Mac Giolla Easpaig himself points out that there are instances of clause-medial noun phrases modified by relative clauses (28).¹⁴

¹⁴ Mac Giolla Easpaig also points out that there are even examples where the noun modified by the relative clause is separated from the relative clause by several constituents (i), although he claims that this latter type is rare. In fact, it is quite common in copular clauses and clauses containing the substantive verb (ii).

- i. *No·bērad* SBJ{*bean*} OBJ[*mac*] *dō* SBJ-REL {*nad·festa* *a=cenēl*}.
PTCL·bring_{CND.3SG} woman_{NOM} son_{ACC} to_{3SG.MASC} NEG_{REL} know_{PST.SBJ.PSS.3SG} her=people_{NOM}

28. *Do·bertis* SBJ[*meic in=poirt in-ro-alt Pātraic*]
 PV·bring_{IMPF.3PL} boys_{NOM} the_{GEN.SG}=place_{GEN} in-PRF·rear_{PST.PSS.3SG} Patrick_{NOM}
mil dia=māithrib asna=miltenaib.
 honey_{ACC} to.their=mother_{SDAT} from.the_{ACC.PL}=beehives_{SDAT}
 “The boys of the place in which Patrick was reared used to bring honey to their mothers from the beehives.” (Mulchrone 1939: 8, ll 167–8)

Furthermore, although Mac Giolla Easpaig claims that examples like (28) with clause-medial noun phrases are only possible if the noun phrase is relatively short, it is unclear that that this is the correct generalization since POMIC contains at least one example of a very long noun phrase modified by a relative clause in clause-medial position (29).

29. *Do·lluid* SBJ[*alaile cennensis genere, fora-tarat sua*]
 PV·come_{PST.3SG} certain_{NOM} Kells_{GEN} birth_{ABL} on_{REL}·give_{PRF.PST.3SG} his_{NOM}
 ux_{OR} *miscuis*], *co=Brigti da=chobair.*
 wife_{NOM} hatred_{ACC} to=Brigit_{ACC} for.his=help_{DAT}
 “A certain man of Kells by origin, whom his wife hated, came to Brigit for help.” (POMIC, *Bethu Brigitte*, s.601, Ó hAodha 1978: 16.537)

Moreover, his strong claim that “a verbal noun functioning as the grammatical subject or object always occupied clause-final position” must be weakened. A search in POMIC revealed that a more accurate generalization is that verbal nouns which function as nominalizations may be found clause-medially (30a), while verbal nouns which function as participle or gerund clauses are typically found clause-finally (30b).

30. a. *do·forthrom* SBJ[*cotlud*] *fair isin=derrthach*
 PV·overpower_{PST.3SG} sleeping_{NOM} on_{3SG.MASC} in.the_{DAT.SG}=oratory_{DAT}
 “...sleep overpowered him in the oratory.”
 (POMIC, *Vision of Laisrén*, s.2; Meyer 1899: 114)
- b. *dlegair* pp[*dó*] SBJ[*daul astig statim iarum*]
 require_{PRS.PSS.3SG} to_{3SG.MASC} going_{NOM} outside at.once ADV
 ne presentī illō moritur
 NEG presence_{DAT} him_{DAT}die_{PRS.3SG}
 “...he is obliged to go out of the house at once thereafter, so that he does not die in his presence.”

“A woman whose people would not be known would bear him a son.”
 (*Togail Bruidne Da Derga*; Knott 1963: 3.88)

- ii. ‘*Ar=nicon·fil* SBJ{*gnīm*} *iter=nem* γ =*talmain* SBJ-REL{*no·geissed*
 for=NEG·be_{PRS.REL.3SG} deed_{NOM} between=heaven_{ACC} and=earth_{ACC} PTCL·ask_{PST.SBJ.3SG}
dī do=Christ},’ *ar=Mel, armbad ēra dī.*
 for_{3SG.FEM} to=Christ_{DAT} said=Mel_{NOM} for_{REL}.COP_{PST.SBJ.3SG} refusal_{NOM} to._{3SG.FEM}
 “‘For there is nothing in heaven or earth which she might request of Christ,’ said Mel, ‘which would be refused her.’” (POMIC, *Bethu Brigitte*, s.535; Ó hAodha 1978: 14.475-476)

(POMIC, *Monastery of Tallaght*, s.416; Gwynn and Purton 1911: 153, §65)

This makes better sense given Mac Giolla Easpaig’s prosody-based explanation, since participle or gerund clauses will typically be long constituents containing a complement phrase, such as a noun phrase as the object of the verb or a prepositional phrase as the subject. Even so, verbal nouns functioning as participle or gerund clauses need not be clause final (31).

31. *dlega*<̇>*r* *do*=*neuch* *SBJ*[*a*=*chongmāil* *ūadi*] *īar*=*n-anm-chardini*
 require_{PRS.3SG} to=someone_{DAT} his=keeping_{ACC} from_{3SG.FEM} after=soul-friendship_{DAT}
Petir *ind*=*Libris Clementis*
 Peter_{GEN} in=*Libris*_{ABL} *Clementinis*_{GEN}
 “...one man ought to keep away from her according to the confession of Peter in
libris Clementinis.”
 (POMIC, *Monastery of Tallaght*, s.88, Gwynn and Purton 1911: 132, §14, my
 translation)

So far, it has been argued that assuming that the length of constituents plays a role in their placement is dubious and furthermore that even defining what constitutes a long constituent is difficult. So, the general approach adopted by Mac Giolla Easpaig, which links final-subject constructions to factors like sentence rhythm (or prosody), might need to be rethought. The assumption adopted here is that all or almost all of the “formal” examples of absolute clause-final subjects might in fact be better understood by appealing to information structure, just like the clause-final subjects in the discourse-related group which is discussed immediately below.

As mentioned before, what is called here the discourse-related group of examples consists of cases in which, according to Mac Giolla Easpaig, an absolute clause-final subject bears special emphasis. For him, this means that the sentence or clause expresses a prohibition or a taboo, a wish or a request, any kind of heightened feeling or dramatic conflict, or contrast between it and another sentence or clause in the immediate context. Additionally, he notes that if a previously mentioned subject or object is reintroduced as the topic of discourse after a break of several sentences/clauses, it is typically in the absolute sentence-final position.

With the exception of cases that express contrast, or those in which a subject or object is reintroduced after a break of several sentences/clauses, the defining feature of the discourse-related group seems to be the extremely vague idea of emphasis. Mac Giolla Easpaig’s appeal to notions such as prohibition, taboo, wishing, requesting, dramatic conflict and heightened feeling is an appeal to rather abstract aspects of the culture of medieval Ireland, as derived from the surviving corpus of texts, including aspects of societal knowledge. In short, his analysis is primarily based on pragmatically-based discourse structure. However, determining what the pre-existing knowledge that Old Irish speakers/listeners may have had is no straightforward exercise. Moreover, Mac Giolla makes no attempt to determine what this pre-existing knowledge consists of, assuming it to be a settled matter. This means that Mac Giolla Easpaig’s interpretation of variant word order in light of this “knowledge” remains vague and, at times, unhelpful. Moreover, because our assumptions about early Irish culture may or may not differ considerably from

Mac Giolla Easpaig's, this is not merely a problem with the methodology, but an issue of whether it is reproducible. Practically speaking, a successful application of his analysis to any particular newly encountered absolute clause-final subject cannot be guaranteed, thereby leaving the unusual word order unexplained.

An analysis in terms of the fundamental concepts of *information structure* deals specifically with the question of how participants in a discourse (for example, a text or a conversation) organize the form of their contribution and in particular with the order in which they choose to present its various subparts. Organizing principles like these can be discerned from the evidence of any language, and much has been learned about them over the past forty years since Mac Giolla Easpaig (1980). When considering the form of Old Irish clauses, making use of such advances in understanding has great potential and can avoid the problems with appealing to very abstract aspects of culture. One influential strain of research on information structure is represented by Krifka (2007) who defines the following four key notions:

32. a. Focus
- b. Givenness
- c. Topic
- d. Comment

Each of these are explicitly defined in relation to the immediate linguistic context of an utterance and are more predictive of word order variation, than pragmatically-based notions such as taboo, etc. Focus characterizes a linguistic unit that indicates the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions in the immediate context (Krifka 2007, ex.6). Givenness characterizes a linguistic unit whose denotation is already present in the common ground: the set of propositions whose truth participants in a discourse implicitly commit to, at least temporarily. In other words, Givenness represents a piece of information that is known to the participants, specifically because it has been introduced at some point in the current communicative exchange. Topic and Comment are related terms. Loosely speaking, a Topic is what a clause or an utterance is about. More particularly, a Topic is an entity or a set of entities under which the information expressed in the Comment is “stored” in the common ground (Krifka 2007, ex.39) for later reference. A Comment, therefore, is a piece of information that introduces properties of a Topic. A useful analogy might be to say that a Topic is a label for a drawer in a filing cabinet or the name of a directory on a computer, and a Comment is the contents of that drawer or directory. It should be noted that the use of the word *Topic* in the term *Topic-Comment* is distinct from and must not be confused with the word *topic* in aboutness topic or familiar topic. Whereas aboutness topics and familiar topics, both dealing with Givenness (i.e. old information), can be subsumed under the general term *Theme*, the term *Topic-Comment* can be applied to any structure that introduces a new relationship between two constituents, the Topic and the Comment, both of which can be new or old information. Participants in a conversation package the information they are conveying as Focus, Givenness, Topic, and Comment, and in so doing, they are constantly changing in particular ways the set of propositions, that is, the common ground upon which a conversation is based. Consider (33) in light of this kind of analysis. In this and all examples in which information structure is referred to, slashes and the upright pipe (|)

designate information structure constituents. Such constituents do not necessarily correspond directly to syntactic constituents, for which brackets are reserved.

33. a. *Ocus=ro·boí* *hic=aithisiugad* *Pátraic.*
 and=PRF·be_{PST.3SG} at=reviling_{DAT} Patrick_{GEN}
 “And he(i.e. *in=druí* “the magus”) was reviling Patrick.
- b. *Ro·pritch* *Pátraic* *dóu.*
 PRF·preach_{PST.3SG} Patrick_{NOM} to_{3SG.MASC}
 “Patrick preached to him(i.e. the magus).”
- c. */ɾ=ró·creit* *do=Dia* *ɾ=do=Pátraic/COMMENT* */in=druí/*_{TOPIC}.
 and=PRF·believe_{PRS.3SG} to=God_{DAT} and=to=Patrick_{DAT} the_{NOM.SG}=magus_{NOM}
 “And the magus believed in God and in Patrick.”
 (Mac Giolla Easpaig 1980: 31)

Mac Giolla Easpaig claims that the placement of the final subject in (33c) is merely due to some kind of heightened feeling, specifically having to do with the idea that the teachings of Patrick are superior to his rivals. Because of this superiority, his rival ceases to revile Patrick and instead believes in God and in Patrick. The whole idea of “believing in God and Patrick” is, therefore, placed in a prominent position relative to the subject. Although this seems straightforward, the superiority of Patrick’s teaching is not directly stated by the text, but merely implied. Such implications, though sometimes clear, are typically highly dependent on the non-linguistic (social/political/etc.) context, which at such a great remove in time, are difficult to access. Moreover, even if historians have helped to make sense of such information, one can never entirely be sure which cultural notion may be relevant for analyzing any particular clause. For instance, in (33) instead of saying that “belief in God and Patrick” is in a prominent position, one may as well say that conversion is the main idea and, thus, that the converted individual, the magus (*druí*), is placed in an unusual position. The analysis is in some sense right but wholly particular to this clause. This means that appealing to notions like heightened feeling could be arbitrary and therefore unhelpful. For these reasons, it seems best to stick to the somewhat less arbitrary notions of information structure. Applying these notions to (3), one may observe that the Topic (‘what the text is about) is the magus, and since he was previously mentioned, the magus’ existence is also a Given piece of information in the common ground. The excerpt under discussion updates the common ground by packaging one of two alternative ideas (reviling vs. belief) as a Comment that applies to the Topic, such that one of the attributes of the magus is that he now believes in God and Patrick. The special word order, in this case, is a strategy of making clear that the file drawer/Topic labelled magus is being updated with new information, in the form of the preceding Comment.

This can be applied fruitfully to other cases as well. One further example will be helpful. Mac Giolla Easpaig claims that the following case of non-canonical word order is due to special emphasis on the fact that the clause expresses a taboo that bears special significance for the narrative.

34. *Bérae* */OBJ[mac]/*_{GIVEN} *dē* */ɾ=nī·marba* *eómu/*_{COMMENT}

bear_{FUT.2SG} son_{ACC} from_{3SG.NEUT} and=NEG·kill_{PRS.SBJ.3SG} birds_{ACC}
 /_{SBJ}[*in=mac=sin*]/_{TOPIC/GIVEN}
 the_{NOM.SG=SONNOM=}DIST
 “You will give birth to a son because of it and that son may not kill birds.”
 (Mac Giolla Easpaig 1980: 30)

Mac Giolla Easpaig’s appeal to the idea of taboo is highly culturally specific and difficult to apply consistently. Appealing to information structure makes the analysis more straightforward. In the immediate context, a new Topic is introduced into the common ground: a son (*mac*). At the time of utterance and just after, the common ground contains no information about this entity; that is, the participants have no presuppositions about the topic. The next clause, with the variant word order, changes the common ground: some property expressed by the Comment “he may not kill birds” is assigned to the Topic, which is now Given. The newly assigned property may give rise to culturally specific implications like ideas about taboos, but the particular packaging of the information is merely a Topic-Comment structure. The intent of the packaging is merely to update the common ground in a particular way.

An approach based on information structure is superior in two respects to Mac Giolla Easpaig’s analysis. First, it is not dependent on culturally specific notions, or vague ideas of emphasis, so the analysis becomes more predictive. Secondly, the approach helps to unify various disparate categories of examples as either Topic-Comment structures or Focus structures. This can be clearly seen in an information structure analysis of (35), which was not analyzed by Mac Giolla Easpaig.

35. *amal=nad·frescat* OBJ[*bás*] SBJ[*inna=cethrai*] *ní·bí* *danō*
 as=NEG_{REL}·expect_{PRS.3PL} death_{ACC} the_{NOM.PL=cattle}_{NOM} NEG·be_{HAB.3SG} ADV
cid=a=frescis<*ī*>*o* *in=baís* *etir*
 even=their=expectation_{NOM} the_{GEN.SG=death}_{GEN} at.all
lasna=doīmi=so
 with.the_{ACC.PL=men}_{ACC}=PROX
 “i.e. as the cattle do not expect death, there is moreover not even an expectation of death at all with these men... (Ml. 69^{b3})

It is not certain how to apply notions like heightened feeling or special emphasis to this example since they are not clearly defined. Nonetheless, because Old Irish society apparently viewed cattle as important, one might therefore think that cultural importance can lead to linguistic prominence by way of special word order. But this is certainly stretching things a bit; and, in any case, there are examples of the phrase *inna=cethrai* “the cattle” in the normal subject position. Furthermore, this clause makes explicit the fact that there is no contrast between the expectations of the cattle and the expectations of the men, so one cannot appeal to Mac Giolla Easpaig’s idea of contrast. Moreover, the noun phrase *inna=cethrai* is not long by any definition, so this cannot be a factor. Finally, the noun phrase cannot be said to have been reintroduced after a break, since the only context here is the immediate Latin context. So, Mac Giolla Easpaig’s approach does not apparently achieve descriptive adequacy. It is, however, straightforward to apply an information structure analysis to this clause, since there are two alternatives being conveyed: the

relationship between the cattle and the expectation of death and the relationship between the men and the expectation of death. The clause is an instance of a Focus structure. In particular, the type of focus is additive rather than contrastive (Krifka 2007: 33). That is, the two alternatives are being identified as similar, rather than different. This Focus structure is schematized in (36); for similar examples see the discussion surrounding examples (48-49) below.

36. /amal=nad:frescat bás/FOC:ALT1A /inna=cethrai/FOC:ALT1B /ní-bi danō
cid=a=frescis<i>o in=báis etir/FOC:ALT2A /lasna=dóini=so/FOC:ALT2B

4.3 Final-Subject Constructions in the Milan Glosses

With this as background we can return to the data from TBC¹ and Milan. The main task of this section is to classify examples as being instances of either (24a) involving Pos1/Pos2 or (24b) with right-dislocation. Consider the data from Ml. first. Table 8 showed that there are twenty-nine examples of absolute clause-final subjects where the verb is transitive. It also showed that there are thirty-six examples of absolute clause-final subjects where the verb is non-transitive. Clause-final subjects that follows multiple intervening elements are probably involve ‘extra-clausal’ right-dislocation because there only so many possible intraclausal positions available for the intervening elements and for the subject itself there is at most three: Pos1, Pos2, and its base position within the eventive core (for further arguments in favor of a right-dislocation analysis of this type of sentence, see Lash and Griffith 2018). Examples of this kind are therefore excluded from the table below and are not discussed here, although it is an open question whether the omitted examples would conform to the analyses adopted here; I leave this for future research.¹⁵ Table 10 displays all of the remaining examples where the subject is in the absolute clause-final position and there is only one intervener which is not a discourse-oriented adverb between verb and subject. On the basis of the previous revision of Mac Giolla Easpaig, the examples in the table are arranged according to the features that are arguably relevant for explaining the absolute clause-final subject.

¹⁵ The omitted non-transitive examples are: 37^a10, 37^b24 (*sanctis, infirmitates*), 81^c14, 83^d9, 100^b4. The omitted transitive examples are: Ml. 20^a19, 24^a19 (*inti bis isindencae* “the one who is innocent”), 44^d16, 61^b17, 92^a7, 126^b16, 126^c16 (*moab* “Moab”, *indmat achos afind choriu* “washing his footin a white-basin”), 135^a13. The phrases in parentheses are the subjects of omitted clauses, where a gloss contains two (or more) clauses. Ml. 24^a19 has two absolute clause-final subjects, but only one is counted in Table 10. In Ml. 37^b24 and Ml. 126^c16, both absolute clause-final subjects have been omitted from Table 10. Although it only has one intervener, namely *són* “that, that is”, Ml. 51^a18 is omitted from Table 10, though it is given below in (i). It was omitted because there is a possibility that the phrase *nach noib* “any saint” is included in the parenthetical phrase. That is, it may be that the gloss should be translated as in (a) rather than (b), which is the translation in Stokes and Strachan (1901).

- i. a. *intan imme-romastar són nach=noib ara-cuintea dālgud*
when PV_{REL} sin_{PRS.SBJ.3SG} that.is any=saint_{NOM} that=seek_{PRS.SBJ.3SG} forgiveness_{ACC}
Dē isind=aimsir=sin
God_{GEN} in.the_{DAT.SG}=time_{DAT}=DIST
“When one (that is, any saint) sins, may he seek God’s forgiveness at that time.”
(Ml. 51^a18)
- b. “That is, when any saint sins, that he should seek the forgiveness of God at that time.”

Verb Type	Formal	Topic-Comment	Focus-Alternative	Pos1 / Pos2	Other	Total
Intransitive	7 ¹⁶	6 ¹⁷	13 ¹⁸	2 ¹⁹	3 ²⁰	31
Transitive	1 ²¹	4 ²²	6 ²³	1 ²⁴	8 ²⁵	20
Total	8	10	19	3	11	51

Table 10: Absolute-Final Subjects in ML with one (non-discourse-oriented adverb) intervener

The first three columns, Formal, Topic-Comment, Focus-Alternative represent situations for which a structure with right-dislocation is probably the best analysis of the absolute clause-final subject. Of these three, the “Formal” column records cases in which purely formal or structural characteristics of the subject, as opposed to information-structure properties, are responsible for its clause-final position. The Formal column includes clauses whose subjects are either long NPs or verbal noun phrases acting as gerund or participle phrases. This criterion is “formal” in the sense that the crucially relevant characteristics are related to the form of the subject (syntactic category or length). As representatives of this category consider (37).

37. a. *Tu-ucthar* pp[*hi=cech=bētru*] SBJ[*indas fograigte*
 PV-understand_{PRS.PSS.3SG} in=every=language_{DAT} way_{NOM} sound_{PRS.3PL.REL}
inma=dūli γ =*du-n-aidbdet* *etarcnae* *ndé*
 the_{NOM.PL}=elements_{NOM} and=PV_{REL} show_{PRS.3PL} knowledge_{ACC} god_{GEN}
trisin=n-oipred *ndo-gnīat* γ =*in=n-imthanud*
 through.the_{ACC.SG}=work_{ACC} PV·do_{PRS.3PL} and=the_{ACC.SG}=alternation_{ACC}
fil *foraib*].
 be_{PRS.3SG.REL} O_{3PL}
 “Understood in every language is the way in which the elements sound and show forth the knowledge of God through the work that they do and the alternation that is on them.” (ML. 42^{c2})
- b. *Air=nī:foircnea* OBJ[*in=fīni*] SBJ[*hithe neich*
 for=NEG·destroy_{PRS.3SG} the_{ACC.SG}=vine_{ACC} eating_{NOM} something_{GEN}
dī *anūas*]
 from_{3SG.FEM} from.above
 “For eating something from it from above does not destroy the vine...”
 (ML. 102^{a15})

¹⁶ ML. 32^{c17}, 42^{c2}, 46^{b1}, 48^{a11}, 113^{d5}.

¹⁷ ML. 14^{b12}, 16^{c10}, 46^{c20}, 55^{a10}, 55^{d2}. 110^{d16}.

¹⁸ ML. 21^{c3}, 32^{c15}, 34^{d5}, 38^{d8}, 40^{c15}, 43^{d20}, 44^{a11}, 54^{d7}, 59^{a18}, 71^{c9}, 77^{a15}, 101^{c6-7}, 127^{d14}.

¹⁹ ML. 38^{c9}, 66^{b3}.

²⁰ ML. 31^{a5}, 54^{d5}, 136^{c11}.

²¹ ML. 102^{a15}.

²² ML. 34^{a27}, 37^{a10}, 42^{b27}, 44^{b1}.

²³ ML. 22^{d9}, 24^{a19}, 69^{c7}, 69^{b3}, 74^{b1}, 132^{a1}.

²⁴ ML. 48^{c34}.

²⁵ ML. 19^{d16}, 22^{c8}, 30^{b20}, 34^{b6}, 86^{d12}, 106^{c11}, 107^{b1}, 108^{a9}.

The next step is the classification of Topic-Comment structures and Focus-Alternative structures. In the following discussion, reference is occasionally made to the Latin text of the Commentary on the Psalms or the Psalms themselves. In all cases, the translation is my own.

4.3.1 Topic-Comment

In this section, I discuss clauses that seem to be instances of a Topic-Comment structure, and thus, by hypothesis, have right-dislocation. The term Topic-Comment refers to a linked pair of constituents, the Topic and the Comment, whose pairing updates the common ground. The main feature of the special word order (i.e., the right-dislocated subject) is to highlight the update. The dimension of Givenness of either constituent is irrelevant in determining whether the common ground is updated. Rather, what is important is the new relation between the two constituents that right-dislocation signifies.

The criteria in (38) were used to identify clauses that involve a Topic-Comment structure.

38. a. The subject NP contains a deictic element that refers to an item previously mentioned in the same sentence.
b. Frame Repetition (for a definition and examples, see below)

For the most part, the type in (38a) has the structure found in (39), which is exemplified by (40). In each of these clauses, the deictic subject is a Topic constituent that, in some way, refers back to the Topic expressed by the constituent labeled Ground. The constituent between the Ground and the Topic, the Comment, adds more information to what has been previously established about the Topic, thereby updating the common ground.

39. Ground[= introduction of Topic] - Comment - Topic

40. a. */hūare is=sanctis co=n-oīnchēill and* (i.
because COP_{PRS.3SG}=sanctis with=one.sense_{DAT} in_{3SG.NEUT} i.e.
co=noībi nammā) do·beram=ni do=thintūd
with=holiness_{DAT} only PV.give_{PRS.1PL}=1PL for=translation_{DAT}
in=suin ebraidi sluindes ilsésu
the_{GEN.SG}=word_{GEN} hebrew_{GEN} signify_{PRS.REL.3SG} many.senses_{ACC}
γ=ilimliuchtū la=ebreu:/GROUND /do:gní
and=many.meanings_{ACC} with=Hebrews_{ACC} PV·do_{PRS.3SG}
doidngi γ=chumdubairt/COMMENT /in=sin/TOPIc
difficulty_{ACC} and=doubt_{ACC} the=DIST
“Because it is *sanctis* with one sense in it (i.e. with ‘holiness’ only) that we use to translate the Hebrew word that signifies many senses and many meanings for the Hebrews, **that** causes difficulty and doubt...” (Mt. 37^a10)
- b. */In=roithiud roithes a=laith<e> alaiill*
the_{NOM.SG}=impulse_{NOM} impel_{PRS.REL.3SG} the_{NOM.SG}=day_{NOM} another_{ACC}

riám/GROUND */du·adbat* *etarcnae* *nDcé*/COMMENT */in=sin*/TOPIC
 before_{3SG.NEUT} PV·show_{PRS.3SG} knowledge_{ACC} God_{GEN} the=DIST
 “The impulse by which the day impels another before it, **that** shows the
 knowledge of God.” (Mt. 42^b27)

- c. */A=n-uile* *do·rairngert* *Dīa*
 the_{NOM.SG=all_{NOM}} PV·PRF.promise_{PST.3SG} God_{NOM}
trisin=recht=sin *du=neuch* *mud·comálnabadar*/GROUND
 through.the_{ACC.SG=law=DIST} to=anyone_{DAT} C.it·fulfill_{FUT.3SG}
/do·indnastar *dín*/COMMENT */a=n-uile=sin*/TOPIC
 PV·grant_{FUT.PSS.3SG} to_{1PL} the_{NOM.SG=all_{NOM}=DIST}
 “All that God promised through that Law to anyone who will fulfill it, **all of**
that shall be given to us.” (Mt. 46^c20)

The type of Topic-Comment structure called Frame Repetition generally has the structure found in (41), which is exemplified by (42). In each case, the information that is known about a previously given Topic is updated by means of the Comment constituent. In so doing, a new relation in the common ground is created. The Comment itself contains a cataphoric item, that is, an element that co-refers with a later constituent. Here, the cataphoric item is called the Frame and its later co-referring expression the Frame Repetition. The word Frame is appropriate because together the Frame and Frame Repetition surrounds the Topic like a picture frame surrounds a picture. If examples of the type schematized in (41) are cases of right-dislocation, one must say that two items are dislocated: the Topic and the Frame Repetition. This kind of double right-dislocation is comparable to (20c). This seems intuitively unproblematic, since in all cases, the Frame Repetition is merely a parenthetical comment that further specifies the frame itself.

41. Comment (contains a cataphoric Frame expression) - Topic - Frame Repetition

42. a. */Is* *|airi|*FRAME *do·ralad* *ar=thuüs*/COMMENT
 COP_{PRS.3SG} for_{3SG.NEUT} PV·PRF.put_{PST.PSS.3SG} for=start_{DAT}
/in=salm=so/TOPIC */quia* *is=do=best<at>aid*
 the_{NOM.SG=psalm_{NOM}=PROX} because COP_{PRS.3SG=of=morality_{DAT}}
in:fét/FRAME
 PV·tell_{PRS.3SG}
 “It is for this reason **this psalm** was put first: because it speaks of morality.”
 (Mt. 14^b12)
 gl. *est ergo moralis psalmus*
 is therefore of.morality psalm
 “It is therefore a psalm pertaining to morality.” (Commentary to Ps.1,
 Stokes and Strachan 1901: 11.16)

- b. */|Dēde|*FRAME *imme·folngi* *dund=ī* *con·tuarcar*/COMMENT
 two.things PV_{REL}·cause_{PRS.3SG} to.the_{DAT.SG=EMPH} PV·crush_{PRS.PSS.3SG}
/a=chomtuarcan/TOPIC */i. á=sémigud* *combi=tanu*

its=crushing_{NOM} i.e. its=attenuation_{NOM} so.that.COP_{HAB.3SG}=thinner
dē *nō* *a=bruüid* *damō*/_{FRAME}
 from_{3SG.NEUT} OR its=breaking_{NOM} ADV
 “[There are] two things which crushing it causes to what is crushed: its
 being attenuated so that it is all the thinner or even its being broken in
 pieces” (Ml. 34^a27)
 gl. *nam id quod contritum est, amisa soliditate, ad nihilum*
 for that which crushed is lost solidity to nothing
ipsa sui uel tenuitate uel infirmitate perducitur
 itself its either by.attenuation or weakening is.brought
 “For that which is crushed, solidity having been lost, it is brought to
 nothing either by attenuating or by weakening it.” (Commentary to
 Ps. 13, Stokes and Strachan 1901: 80.2-4)

With regard to (42a), the Latin text introduces both the Topic, that is, the psalm in question (*psalmus*), and a comment about the psalm, namely that is about morality (*moralis*). The Old Irish gloss adds to this common ground the fact that the particular psalm under consideration is put first in the book of Psalms because of its focus on morality. In (42b), the common ground is also updated, but in a slightly different way. The Old Irish gloss and the Latin text both speak of something that has been crushed (OIr. *dundí con-tuarcar*, Latin *id quod contritum est*). But the Old Irish is not a straightforward paraphrase of the Latin. While the Latin text speaks of further operations performed on the thing that has been crushed (*tenuitate* “attenuating” and *infirmitate* “weakening”), which ultimately result in a state of nothingness (*nihilum*), the Irish reinterprets the passage. What were in the Latin further operations to be performed, become in Irish the final states that have been caused: *á=sémigud* “its being attenuated” and *a=bruüid* “its being broken in pieces”. Because of the slight change in emphasis, the gloss can be understood as updating the common ground.

The clauses in (43) are similar to the Frame Repetition examples in function, but lack a Frame constituent. In these examples, the Topic has just previously been introduced in the Latin, but new information about the Topic is mentioned in the Comment; thus the relation between the Topic and the Comment updates the common ground.

43. a. /*Do-rímther* *hí=libur* *Essaiæ*/_{COMMENT} /*á=scel=so*/_{TOPIC}
 PV-recount_{PRS.PSS.3SG} in=book_{DAT} *Isaiah*_{GEN} *the*_{NOM.SG}=story_{NOM}=DIST
 “**This story** is recounted in the book of Isaiah...” (Ml. 16^c10)
 gl. *Similis autem signi nouitas in diebus Ezechiae*
 similar ADV of.miracle strangeness in days of.Hezekiah
regis apparuit, quando sol reuocatus est, per ea spatia
 of.king appeared when sun turned.back is along the intervals
quae fuerat emensus, quo factus [leg. facto] motus
 which it.had measured.out by.which fact moved
Asiriorum rex misit dona Ezechiae.
 of.Assyrians king sent gifts to.Hezekiah
 “A similar strange wonder appeared in the days of King Hezekiah, when the
 sun turned back along its intervals which it had measured out; moved by

which fact the king of the Assyrians sent gifts to Hezekiah.” (Commentary to Ps. 2, Stokes and Strachan 1901: 18.6-9)

- b. /Ro·siächt cor·rici nem/COMMENT /a=trōcaire./TOPIC
 PV·reach_{PST.3SG} upto heaven_{ACC} his=mercy_{NOM}
 “His mercy reached to heaven.” (Ml. 55^d2)
 gl. Psalm: *IN CAELO*
 in Heaven
 Commentary: *pro: usque in caelum; altitudine caelorum quantitatem*
 for up to heaven in.height of.heavens greatness
exaggeravit misericordiae.
 he.exalts of.mercy
 “For ‘up to heaven’; in the height of the heavens he exalts the greatness of mercy.” (Commentary to Ps. 36 (35), Stokes and Strachan 1901: 180.7-20)
- c. /Du·ucthar tria=ros/COMMENT /a=n-i no·labraifitis./TOPIC
 PV·bring_{PRS.PSS.3SG} through.their=eye_{ACC} the_{NOM.SG=EMPH} C·speak_{CND.3PL}
 “That which they would say is brought forth through their eye.” (Ml. 55^a11)
 gl. *cum in prospectum inimicorum incedero, oblica*
 when in view of.enemies I.come.upon by.crooked
significatione oculorum oblocuntur in uisu
 sign of.eyes they.are.gainsaid at sight
 “When I come upon a view of enemies, by the crooked sign of eyes they are gainsaid at sight.” (Commentary to Ps. 35 [34], Stokes and Strachan 1901: 177.13-14)
- d. /Nach=dú hi·tadbadar beüs/COMMENT /á=n-i
 any=place_{NOM} in·show_{PRS.PSS.3SG} still the_{NOM.SG=EMPH}
 as=deus/TOPIC is=du=folud nephchumscaighthu
 COP_{PRS.REL.3SG=deus} COP_{PRS.3SG=to=substance}DAT unchangeable_{DAT}
 as·ber<r>.
 PV·say_{PRS.PSS.3SG}
 “Any place in which the [word] *deus* is found from now on, it is applied to an unchangeable substance.” (Ml. 110^d16)
 gl. Psalm: *A SÆCULO ET USQUE IN SÆCULUM TÚ ES DEUS*
 from eternity and up to eternity you are God
 “From eternity unto eternity, you are God.”
 Commentary: *id est inmotabilis* (leg. *immutabilis*)
 that is immovable
 “That is, ‘unchangeable’.” (Commentary to Ps. 90 [89], Stokes and Strachan 1901: 374.15)

With regard to (43a), the Latin text tells the story of King Hezekiah and the backwards movement of the sun. In the Irish gloss, this topic is referred to by the term *á=scel=so* “this story”. While the Latin text gives a brief outline of the story, it does not discuss its source. The Irish gloss updates the common ground by giving the source for the story.

A similar update to the common ground occurs in (43b). This glosses a piece of Latin commentary which in essence corrects the text of the Psalm itself: from *in caelo* “in Heaven” to *usque in caelum* “up to Heaven” in the commentary. In doing so, the Latin commentary introduces the term *quantitatem ... misericordiae* “greatness of mercy”. The glossator basically paraphrases the Latin but slightly changes the idea expressed by specifying that this “greatness of mercy” (*a=trōcaire* “his mercy”) is what extends up to Heaven. Because the paraphrase is not exact, the common ground has been updated.

A comparable instance of an inexact paraphrase is found in (43c). Here, the gloss is actually a paraphrase on an Irish word *fris·labratar* “to speak against”, which translates the word *oblocuntur* in the Latin commentary. The gloss expresses the same idea as the Latin through an inexact paraphrase but in a more straightforward way. Here, the Comment *du·ucthar tria=rosc* corresponds, more or less, to *oblica significatione oculorum* and the Subject/Topic is the inexact but clarifying paraphrase of *oblocuntur*.

Finally in (43d), the update to the common ground involves informing the reader of the psalm in question of a new way of understanding its words. Specifically, the glossator clarifies the Latin commentary by saying that the word God (the Topic) should be understood from now on as the reference of the expression “unchangeable”, which is supplied by the Latin commentary.

4.3.2 Focus

There are two types of focus examples in ML., which are listed in (44).

44. a. Parallel Focus: The clause defines a difference or similarity between two alternatives.
- b. Answer Focus: The clause is an answer to an explicit question and singles out one (or more) of many potential alternatives as the answer to the question.

Parallel focus is the most common variety, and can be itself divided into two groups: structures involving one pair of focused alternatives and structures with two or more pairs of focused alternatives. The first type has the structure in (45) and is exemplified in (46), which gives one transitive and one intransitive example. Further instances of clauses involving Focus with one pair of alternatives and an absolute clause-final subject are: ML. 21^c3, ML. 38^d8, ML. 54^d7, ML. 71^c9, ML. 74^b1, ML. 101^c6-7. For some discussion of these, see the appendix. In each of the examples in (46), the Focus alternative consists of the predicate or parts of the predicate while the subject constituent is backgrounded. In (46a) the two alternatives are, essentially “body” and “soul”, while in (46b) the two alternatives are “shines to him” and “dark to the enemies”.

45. Structures involving one pair of focused alternatives
Focused Alternative 1 + Background (= Final Subject) + Focused Alternative 2

46. a.

<i>/A=n-as=n-esngabthi</i>	<i>in=corp</i>	.i.
when=COP _{PRS.REL.3SG} =surpassed	the _{NOM.SG} =body _{NOM}	i.e.
<i>hu=as-ringaib</i>	<i>corp/FOCUS:ALT1</i>	<i>/fulach</i>
after=PV·PRF-surpass _{PST.3SG}	body _{ACC}	endurance _{NOM}

inna=fochodo/BACKGROUND */do·tēt* *tarum*
 the_{GEN.SG}=suffering_{GEN} PV·come_{PRS.3SG} ADV
dochum=ind=folaid *tanaidi* *inna=anmae*/FOCUS:ALT2
 toward=the_{GEN.SG}=substance_{GEN} subtle_{GEN} the_{GEN.SG}=soul_{GEN}
 “When the body is surpassed, i.e. after **the endurance of suffering** has
 moved beyond the body, then it comes to the subtle substance of the soul.”
 (Ml. 22^d9)

- b. */γ=as·toīdi* *dō*/FOCUS:ALT1 */int=soilse* *bis*
 and=PV·shine_{PRS.3SG} to_{3SG.MASC} the_{NOM.SG}=light_{NOM} be_{HAB.REL.3SG}
inna=medón=si/BACKGROUND */γ=is=dorchae* *donaib=naimtib*
 in.its=midst_{DAT}=3SF and=COP_{PRS.3SG}=dark to.the=enemies_{DAT}
bīte *frië* *anechtair*/FOCUS:ALT2
 be_{HAB.REL.3PL} against_{3SG.FEM} outside
 “...and **the light which is in its midst** shines to him and it is dark to the
 enemies who are outside it. (Ml. 40^c15)

The second focused alternative may also precede the subject. Consider (47), in which each alternative is under the scope of a particle: the interrogative particle *in* “whether [it is the case]” and the disjunctive *fa=naic* “or not”. The type of focus in this example is usually termed “verum focus”: focus on the truth or falsity of a proposition (the classic reference for this phenomenon is Höhle 1992; a recent contribution which provides a good overview and a discussion of verum focus in Modern Irish is Bennett *et al.* 2019). A comparable example with the same ordering of information structure constituents is found in Ml. 127^d14, which is not exemplified here.

47. *Ba=cumdubart* */in·étaste*/FOCUS:ALT1 */fa=naic*
 COP_{PRS.SBJ.3SG}=doubtful Q·obtain_{CND.PSS.3SG} or=not
trisna=guidi/FOCUS:ALT2 */a=n-í* *ro·gáid=som* .i.
 through.the_{ACC.PL}=prayers_{ACC} the_{NOM.SG}=EMPH PRF·pray_{PST.3SG}=3SM i.e.
a=soīrad/BACKGROUND
 his=deliverance_{NOM}
 “It is doubtful whether or not **that which he prayed for, i.e. his deliverance,**
 would be obtained through the prayers.” (Ml. 43^d20)

In addition to examples like (46-47), which involve only one pair of alternatives, there are also cases of multiple foci. Examples of multiple foci involve several clauses, comprising of at least two predicates and two subjects. The predicates and the subjects are both focused alternatives. At least one of the predicates contains focus particles, such as *immurghu* “however”, or *etir* “at all”. One predicate is typically a negative version of the other predicate, that is, it contains a negator, such as *ní* “not”. The typical structure of these clauses is given in (48), and exemplified in (49) by one transitive and one intransitive clause. To these, compare also (35-36), above.

48. Structures involving more than one pair of focused alternatives

50. *intan=as·mbeir=som /cia do·bēra ic do=Sión/QUESTION*
 when=PV·say_{PRS.3SG}=3SM who PV·give_{FUT.3SG} salvation_{ACC} to=Zion_{DAT}
/fo·éitsider hi=suidiu/BACKGROUND /deus/FOCUS
 PV·understand_{PRS.PSS.3SG} in=this_{DAT} Deus
 “When he says, ‘who will give salvation from Zion?’, **Deus** is understood here.”
 (Mt. 34^{d5})

The Focus examples in (51) are in some ways similar to (50) although they are not responses to questions.

51. a. *ómun epertae /nad·rabae remdeicsiu Dé*
 fear_{NOM} saying_{GEN} NEG_{REL}·PRF.be_{PST.3SG} providence_{NOM} God_{GEN}
dīm=so/FOC:ALT1 /intan=do·rata form/BACKGROUND
 for_{1SG}=1SG when=PV·PRF.give_{PST.PSS.3PL} on_{1SG}
/inna=fochaidi/FOC:ALT2..
 the_{NOM.PL}=tribulations_{NOM}
 “the fear of saying that there was no providence of God for me, when **the tribulations** were inflicted upon me” (Mt. 59^{a18})
- b. */ní=bec dia·ndergēni forcem a=sailm/FOCUS*
 NEG=small_{NOM} from_{REL}·PRF.make_{PST.3SG} conclusion_{NOM} his=psalm_{GEN}
/int=i Duäid/BACKGROUND
 the_{NOM}=EMPH David_{NOM}
 “it is no small thing by which he has made the conclusion of his psalm, **this David...**” (Mt. 69^{c7}) (my translation)
 gl. *iteravit enim hanc sententiam, et non de nihilo*
 he.repeated now this sentence and not out.of nothing
 finem fecit, ut sepe insensibilitatem istam ingratae mentis agitare.
 end made that again insensibility this of.thankless mind he.rouses
 “Now, he repeated this sentence and, not out of nothing, made an end, (but rather) to again rouse the insensibilities of the thankless mind.”
 (Commentary to Ps. 49 [48], Stokes and Strachan 1901: 237.15-16)
- c. */Fo·sissetar a=pect<h>u/BACKGROUND /ind=firien/FOC:ALT1*
 PV·confess_{PRS.3PL} their=sins_{ACC} the_{NOM.PL}=righteous.ones_{NOM}
γ=as·berat is=airi ro·uctha
 and=PV·say_{PRS.3PL} COP_{PRS.3SG}=for_{3SG.NEUT} PRF·bring_{PST.PSS.3PL}
i=ndoōri fo=bīth a=pecthae noch=is
 in=captivity_{ACC} because.of their=sins_{GEN} but=COP_{PRS.3SG}
/a=persaim inna=pecthach/FOC:ALT2 as·berat=som
 from=person_{DAT} the_{GEN.PL}=sinners_{GEN} PV·say_{PRS.3PL}=3PL
a=n-ī=sin.
 the_{ACC.SG}=EMPH=DIST
 “**The righteous ones** confess their sins and say that it is for this that they have been brought into captivity: because of their sins; but it is in the role of sinners that they say that.” (Mt. 132^{a1})

(51a) and (51c) are similar because the focused alternative in both is the subject itself, and not the predicate as in most other Focus structures. (51b) on the other hand is comparable to (50) because the focus itself introduces two (or more) possible alternatives, without explicitly mentioning them. The Focus structure in (51b) was likely a response on the part of the glossator to the Latin context. The gloss is a further specification of the main gloss *ní du nephní* “not for nothing” on the Latin *non de nihilo* “not out of nothing”. The double negative perhaps prompted the glossator to find a special means of expressing the same thing in Old Irish, namely, putting the entire clause in focus.

4.3.3 Sub1-Sub2 and Other

The review in subsections 4.3.1-4.3.2 has shown that the majority of examples can be analyzed in a way that is compatible with an updated version of Mac Giolla Easpaig’s categories, as defined in section 4.2, in particular, they can be seen as structures involving right-dislocation (cf. ex.24b). There is a small residue of examples which cannot be so analyzed. They do not fit into either the “formal” group (long NP / verbal noun phrase) or the information structure group (Topic-Comment or Focus-Alternative) of examples. These examples fall into two columns in Table 10: examples that seem to involve the two subject positions (Pos1/Pos2) identified by Lash (2014) and schematized as (24a) and the ‘Other’ column. Examples which seem to be straightforward instances of (24a) are discussed here first, before turning to cases summarized in the column labelled ‘Other’.

Final-subject constructions which can be analyzed as in (24a) involve an absolute clause-final subject that can be plausibly defined as a switch topic. Within a given discourse made up of several sentential units, the term switch topic refers to cases where the subject in one clause or group of clauses is replaced in a following clause by the introduction of a wholly new constituent as subject or the reintroduction of an already known subject as the new topic. Unlike Topic-Comment structures, the key notion that is relevant for understanding Pos1/Pos2 structures is therefore Givenness (cf. the discussion under (32)).

In (53), the switch from one topic to another occurs within the Old Irish gloss itself. The clefted portion of the sentence *is dé rogab dauid insalmsa* “it is about that that David sang this psalm” refers back to the constituent labeled as Given. The subject of this is David. In the (conjoined) clause after this cleft, the new subject *intí crist* “that Christ” represents a piece of the Given material that is marked as a switch topic both by the special word order (i.e. the final-subject construction) and special morphology (i.e. the emphatic substantive particle *í* “one”). Note that clefting syntax itself is not necessarily related to contrast, but it is related to information packaging in some way. (53) shows that the clefted constituent can repeat previous mentioned information to set it apart from new information that updates the common ground. Clefted constituents may also introduce a cataphoric Frame constituent, which will then be expanded upon later on, as was exemplified in (42). For more on clefting, see MacCoisdealbha (1998), Schram (2016), and DiGirolamo (2018).

53. /*din=tuidecht* *du·ndechuid* *Crīst* *hi=tech*
of.the_{DAT.SG}=coming_{DAT} PV·PRF.come_{PST.3SG} Christ_{NOM} in=house_{ACC}

inna=sacard .i. *hi=tegdais* Annæ γ =Cafae
 the_{GEN.PL}=priests_{GEN} i.e. in=house_{ACC} Annas_{GEN} and=Caiaphas_{GEN}
 γ =di=techt *dō* *dochum=Po<nt>felait* *īarum*
 and=of=going_{DAT} to_{3SG.MASC} toward=Pontius.Pilate_{GEN} ADV
isin=matain *rēsin=cheēssad*/_{GIVEN} /is=*dē*/_{OLD}
 in.the_{DAT.SG}=morning before.the_{DAT.SG}=passion_{DAT} COP_{PRS.3SG}=of_{3SG.NEUT}
ro·gab |Duäid|_{NEW} in=salm=sa γ =din=chēsad
 PRF·sing_{PST.3SG} David_{NOM} the_{ACC.SG}=psalm=PROX and=of.the_{DAT.SG}=passion_{DAT}
ro·cēs /īar=sin/_{OLD} /int=*i* *Crīst*/_{NEW}
 PRF·suffer_{PST.3SG} after=that the_{NOM.SG}=EMPH Christ_{NOM}
 “Of the coming by which Christ came to the house of the priests, that is, to the house of Annas and Caiaphas and of His going to Pontius Pilate afterwards in the morning before the Passion, it is **about that** that David sang this psalm, and of the Passion that **Christ** suffered after that...” (Ml. 44^{b1})

In contrast to (53), the clauses in (54) show that the switch from one topic to another is accomplished by reintroducing an item (the new topic) after it was first mentioned earlier in the Latin context, or in the preceding Old Irish glosses on the same stretch of Latin text. The reintroduced item becomes the new topic replacing whatever topic the immediately preceding gloss was concerned with.

54. a. /*Ilanman* *do·mbe<i>r* /*dōib*/_{OLD} /*Du(ä)id*/_{NEW}
 many.names_{NOM} PV·give_{PRS.3SG} to_{3PL} David_{NOM}
 “[It is] many names which **David** gives to them.” (Ml. 48^{c34})
- b. /*Du·bērthar* /*dōib*/_{OLD} /*du=inducbál=su*/_{NEW}
 PV·give_{FUT.PSS.3SG} to_{3PL} your=glory_{NOM}=2SG
 “**Your glory** will be given unto them.” (Ml. 66^{b3})
- gl. *illæ promisiones tuas ... uirginitatis studio persequentur*³
 those promises your of.virginity with.zeal pursue
 “those who pursue your promises ... with the zeal of virginity”
 (Commentary to Ps. 45 [44], Stokes and Strachan 1901: 223.7-8)

(54a), especially, seems like a good instance of the Pos1/Pos2 schema. It seems unlikely to have a Topic-Comment structure; that is, reading it as an attempt to update what is known about David (i.e. updating the common ground by filling the file labeled “David” with the information “the many names which he gives to them”) seems rather implausible. Rather, the Pos1/Pos2 schema makes much more sense: *dōib* “to them” refers to salient entities given in the context (namely, the Assyrians), and *Du(ä)id* “David” to a discourse-old individual newly reintroduced as topic. Likewise in (54b), *dōib* “to them” refers to salient entities given in the context (i.e., in particular, “those who pursue your promises with the zeal of virginity”) and *du=inducbál=su* “your glory” is reintroduced here as a new topic, after being first introduced in a previous psalm verse (see Stokes and Strachan 1901: 222.16). For a full interpretation of this section of the commentary (concentrating on the original Greek version) that highlights the connection between these two sections of the text, see Hill 2006: 591-595).

Although (54a) is a good example of the Pos1/Pos2 schema, it seems to be a counterexample to the hypothesis that prototypical transitive clauses should not allow non-subjects in Pos1. The example does not have any of the characteristics of atypical transitive clauses as defined in this paper (see ex. 23 and immediately preceding discussion as well as the conclusion), although one should note that the clause is relative and the constituent that is putatively in Pos1 is a goal or beneficiary phrase. It may be that both of these factors play a role in allowing more ‘lenient’ word order. More research, however, is necessary.

The Other column in Table 10 presents yet another problem for the hypothesis. It appears at first sight that there are more transitive examples than non-transitive examples in this group (eight transitives to three non-transitive). This would invalidate the working hypothesis in (23), because, as discussed in 4.1, examples that could not be analyzed in “formal” or information structure terms should be non-transitive or atypical transitive clauses. However, there are some confounding factors that tip the balance “in favor” of the non-transitive examples. For instance, out of eight transitive examples in the Other category, six have elements intervening between the verb and its subject that cannot occur in any other position. These intervening elements are the same dependent elements encountered above (see ex.19a-d), namely, *notae augentes* and *dative complements* in quasi-compounds (the loci for these examples are Ml. 19^d16, 30^b20, 34^b6, 86^d12, 106^c11, 108^a9).

In the context, the two other examples in (55) cannot be analysed as involving right-dislocation of the subject, either in a Topic-Comment structure or a Focus-Alternative structure. Both examples merely translate or paraphrase the Latin but with a different word order. They therefore establish the common ground. They are rather examples of atypical transitive clauses in the following sense. In (55a), the clause is negated and there is a bare indefinite object, and the verb in (55b) has undergone pronominal conversion by means of a seemingly “meaningless” neuter infix pronoun.²⁶

55. a. *arna-esngaba* OBJ[*mod*] SBJ[*a=cuindrech*]
 that.NEG-exceed_{PRS.SBJ.3SG} measure_{ACC} the_{NOM.SG}=chastisement_{NOM}
 “...that the chastisement may not exceed measure.” (Ml. 22^c8)
 gl. *rogat tamen ut ita in sé uindicetur*
 he.asked however that thus in himself he.may.be.punished
ne castigatio modum accensa indignatione non (ut) teneat
 lest chastisement measure by.aroused anger not (that) attains
 “He asked, however, that he may be punished in himself thus that the
 chastisement not exceed measure with anger having been aroused.”
 (Commentary to Ps. 6, Stokes and Strachan 1901: 35.17-18)
- b. *Imme-airicc* *du=Emán* SBJ[*in=salm=so*].
 PV.it.suits_{PRS.3SG} to=Eman_{DAT} the_{NOM.SG}=psalm_{NOM}=PROX
 “This psalm is suitable to Eman.” (Lit. “this psalm suits it to Eman”)
 (Ml. 107^b1)
 gl. Psalm: INTELLECTUS EMÁN HISRAHELITÆ

²⁶ Note that (55b) has a close counterpart in Ml. 74^b1, which has the same verb with the same VOS word order. There, however, there is a clear Focus-Alternative motivation for the word order, given that the entire context introduces contrasting alternatives. No such motivation can be found for (55b).

thinking.of Eman(=Heman) Israelite (=the Ezrahite)
 “Thinking of Eman the Israelite [Heman the Ezrahite]” (Ps. 88 [87], Stokes
 and Strachan (1901: 363.1).

Since atypical transitive clauses in general seem to pattern like intransitive and passive clauses in allowing late clause-medial subjects, the fact that these atypical transitive clauses also allow absolute clause-final subjects is not surprising. It appears, therefore, that there are no prototypical transitive clauses with absolute clause-final subjects that cannot be explained on the basis of “formal” factors on the one hand, or in information structure terms on the other. This result is expected according to the working hypothesis found in (23).

There are three non-transitive clauses in the Other column remaining to be discussed. These are listed in (56).

56. a. *Fo-roxlad* *hu<a>dib* *SBJ[a=n-ires]*.
 PV·PRF.take.away_{PST.PSS.3SG} from_{3PL} their=faith_{NOM}
 “Their faith has been taken from them.” (Ml. 31^a5)
 gl. *inimutionem possuit pro defectu. ita Symmachus ait: quoniam fides*
 weakening he.put for absence thus Symmachus says now faith
est exacta⁵ de medio, ac si diceret: apud nullum remansit studium curaque
 is taken from midst as if he.had.said with none remained zeal care.and
ueritatis apud nullum fidelis uel sermo uel familiaritas inuenitur,
 of.truth with none faithfulness or conversation or intimacy is.found
omnes sese ad simulationis ac fallendi studia contulerunt.
 all self to of.falsehood even to.be.deceived pursuits have.devoted
 “He used ‘weakening’ for ‘absence’. Thus Symmachus said: ‘now that faith has been taken from amongst them’, as if he had said: ‘zeal and concern for truth remains with no one; with no one is found faithfulness or conversation or intimacy; everyone has devoted themselves to pursuit of falsehood even to be [thereby] deceived.’” (Commentary to Ps. 12 [11], Stokes and Strachan 1901: 67.19-22)
- b. *naru-etarscara* *frii* *SBJ[a=caire]*
 NEG_{REL}.PRF.separate_{PRS.SBJ.3SG} against_{3PL} their=reproach_{NOM}
 “...that their reproach may not part from them.” (Ml. 54^d5)
 gl. *sinum sanctus David pro indiuisa adhesionem sepe ponit; si tamen*
 bosom blessed David for inseparable adhesion often puts if at.least
non de uestimento loquatur, sinum dicit, ut est illud: redde uicinis
 not of garment he.speaks bosom he.says so is this declare to.neighbors
nostris septuplum in sinu⁵ eorum, ac si diceret; inseperauile
 our seven.times in bosom their as if he.should.say inseparable
obproprium adfige merentibus.
 blame affix to.those.who.deserve
 “The blessed David often uses ‘bosom’ for inseparable adhesion; at least if he does not speak of a garment, he says ‘bosom’, that is this: as if he should say ‘declare seven times to our neighbors in their bosom’. Affix inseparable

blame to those who deserve it.” (Commentary to Ps. 35 [34], Stokes and Strachan 1901: 175.16-176.1-3)

- c. *Do aithminedar do=Dīa [in=popul].*
 PV remind_{PRS.3SG} to=God_{DAT} the_{NOM.SG}=people_{NOM}
 “The people remind God.” (Ml. 136^c11)
 gl. *Praedicens quippe profeta ea quae circa populum in*
 foretelling in.fact prophet those which around people in
*Babilone gesta sunt inducit ipsum populum uelut commonentem*¹¹
 Babylon worn are he.describes this people as.if reminding
Deum quantam beatus David curam religionis et diuini cultus
 God how.much blessed David care of.religion and divine cult
 “The prophet, foretelling in fact those things which are worn around the
 people in Babylon, he describes this people even to remind God how much
 diligence in divine service and worship the blessed David had.”
 (Commentary on Ps. 32 [31], Ascoli 1878: 569)

In each of these, the position of the subject cannot be ascribed to the “formal” characteristics of the subject or by morphology (as in instances with *notae augentes* and dative complement interveners). All examples have a subject that is a simple unmodified NP (*á=n-ires* “their faith”, *a=caire* “their reproach”, *in=popul* “the people”) and in all cases the intervener is a prepositional phrase. Moreover, the absolute clause-final subject cannot be analyzed in information structure terms. No alternative pairs are introduced in any example, nor are they instances of a Topic-Comment structure in any straightforward sense. Recall that all of the examples of the final-subject construction that were classified above (section 4.3.1) as Topic-Comment structures had one thing in common: what is known about the Topic constituent is being added to or updated in the Comment constituent. In this way the common ground is updated. Clauses in which the common ground is not updated have not been classified as Topic-Comment structures. This pertains especially to Old Irish clauses in which the Latin text is paraphrased either word for word or idea for idea, with no new material added or rearranged. In such cases, the common ground established by the Latin text is repeated in the Old Irish with no update. Since the Latin text and the glosses are interrelated, the common ground established by the Latin is not distinct from the common ground established by the Irish. Therefore, clauses of this type cannot be considered as Topic-Comment structures in the strict sense. This observation holds for the clauses in (56). Each clause in Irish is merely a paraphrase of the Latin (see footnotes), and therefore does not update the common ground by introducing any new information about a given topic, or by introducing contrasting alternatives. Since the Old Irish so closely paraphrases the Latin, although it does not replicate the Latin word order in any case,²⁷ each of the constituents in the clauses are, in a sense, Given in the

²⁷ A gloss which does in fact replicate the Latin word order virtually precisely and which is equally difficult to ascribe to a Topic-Comment or Focus-Alternative structure is Ml. 38^c9. The main reason for the gloss seems to be the fact that the syntax of the Latin text (given below) is itself problematic. The gloss reads:

- i. *intan=ro·comallad<a> i=ngnīmaib_{SBJ}[inna=testimni taircheta de=som]*
 when=PRF·fulfill_{PST.PSS.3PL} in=deeds_{DAT} the_{NOM.PL}=texts_{NOM} prophesy_{PST.PSS.3PL} of_{3SG.MASC}=3SM
 “when the texts that were prophesied of Him were fulfilled in deeds...” (Ml. 38^c9)

immediate context. Thus, one may ascribe the special word order to the Pos1/Pos2 schema (cf. ex.24a). Since both constituents are given, the choice between which item is placed in Pos1 and which in Pos2 is to some extent free and possibly dependent on the relative prominence of each item in the glossator's understanding of the passage as a whole.

Given these facts, it seems that an explanation for the absolute clause-final subject in the non-transitive clauses in (56) along the lines of section 4.2 is not possible. If this is so, the distribution of absolute final subjects in the Milan glosses displays a pattern which is predicted by the hypothesis in (23): only in non-transitive or atypical transitive clauses may the subject be placed in the absolute final position without either a special information structure motivation on the one hand, or a morphological or NP-internal motivation on the other. The fact that hypothesis (23) is upheld by the data in MI. means moreover, that there is no reason to doubt the validity of hypothesis (14).

4.4 Final-Subject Constructions in TBC¹

The observations made above with regard to the absolute clause-final subjects in MI. also hold for absolute clause-final subjects in TBC¹. Table 9 showed that there are eleven clauses containing transitive clauses with absolute clause-final subjects in TBC¹. As in the discussion of MI., examples with more than one intervener between the subject and the verb are omitted from the following discussion. The three omitted clauses (main verbs in parentheses) were: TBC¹ 21.659 (*téit* 'goes'), TBC¹ 77.2520 (*raclunethar* 'hears it'), and TBC¹ 77.2540 (*trascraid* 'throws'). Also excluded from discussion are the thirty-four non-transitive examples, because they either consist of straightforward cases of right-dislocation or are expected given (14).²⁸ The remaining eight examples are divided into

gl. *nam prius in similitudine dictum fuerat et figura; proprie ergo et secundum uerum,*
 for first in allegory said had.been even symbol properly therefore and according true
intellectum qui ipsis rebus impletus est, Domino conuenit, ad quem cum pertinere impletae
 sense which in.these things fulfilled is Lord it.suits to whom when to.pertain fulfilled
sint rés loquuntur
 are things said

"For firstly it had been said as an allegory, even a symbol; properly therefore, and according to the true sense, which is fulfilled in these things, it suits the Lord, to whom ..."
 (Stokes and Strachan 1901: 100.2-5, my translation).

The last six words of the Latin are problematic as they stand in the manuscript. Stokes and Strachan (fn. a) write "leg. *pertinere cum*", which is certainly how the Irish glossator took it, reading *cum* 'when' as *intan* 'when', *impletae sint* "are fulfilled" as *rocomallad ingnimaib* and *rés loquuntur* "things are said" as the subject with the verb as a relative clause, as if "things which are said". Nonetheless, the Latin syntax is still problematic since there are two finite verbs in the *cum* clause: *sint* and *loquuntur*. Hill's (2006: 200) edition of the Latin text reads *ad quem eum pertinere impletae sine dubio res loquuntur*, which in the context should be translated as "to whom the factual outcomes (lit. 'things fulfilled') no doubt reveal (lit. 'claim') that it pertains." Because the Irish is clearly an attempt to match the Latin precisely, even if the Latin in the manuscript is not particularly coherent, this example is probably not probative of any generalization for Irish grammar.

²⁸ The omissions (some of which have two interveners) are: 5.151 (*ro scáig* "has finished" (3sg.pret.)), 7.204 (*tháet* "comes"), 10.288 (*ro lá* "has cast"), 11.333 (*dofuircet* "come upon"), 12.358 (*innister* "let be told"), 12.360 (*adfessa* "were told"), 13.400 (*adfessa*), 18.558 (*chomraiced* "was joined"), 20.624 (*tardad* "has been given"), 20.651 (*doberar* "is given"), 33.1043 (*dotháet* "comes"), 39.1242 (*adgignethar* "will be made good" (3sg.fut.)), 39.1246 (*luid* "went" (3sg.pret.)), 40.1266 (*doléicfithe* "would be allowed" (3sg.cnd.)), 40.1289

three groups: clauses with subjects that consist of Long NPs, examples that can be analyzed involving either Topic-Comment structures or Focus, and all other examples. Table 11 summarizes these three groups, which will be discussed in turn below.

TBC 1	Long NP	Topic-Comment	Other	Total
Tr.	2	2	4	8

Table 11: Types of absolute clause-final subjects in TBC¹

The two examples involving a Long NP subject are listed in (57).

57. Long NP

- a. *Atot-ágathar* *d̄ia=mbrath* _{SBJ}[*Ailill* *Aie*
 PV.you-fear_{PRS.3SG} for.their=betraying_{DAT} Ailill_{NOM} Aí_{GEN}
lia=slúagad].
 with.his=hosting_{ACC}
 “Ailill of Aí and his host fear that you will betray them.” (TBC¹ 8.235)
- b. *Ni-imgeb* *comroc* *ná=comlond* *ná=comrom*
 NEG.avoid_{PRS.3SG} battle_{ACC} nor=conflict_{ACC} nor=contest_{ACC}
_{SBJ}[*in=láech* *dod-ánic* *.i. Lóegaire* *Búadach*
 the_{NOM.SG}=warrior_{NOM} PV.it-come_{PRS.3SG} i.e. Lóegaire_{NOM} Búadach_{NOM}
mac *Connaig* *meic* *Ilech* *ó=Impuil* *antúaid*].
 son_{NOM} Connaid_{GEN} son_{GEN} Iliach_{GEN} from=Immail_{DAT} from.north
 “The warrior who came there, Lóegaire Búadach macc Connaid maicc
 Iliach from Immail in the north, shuns neither battle nor conflict nor
 contest.” (TBC¹ 111.3653)

(57a) is distinctive in several respects. First, the subject consists of an NP with an embedded PP. It is not, however, entirely certain whether an NP with an embedded PP counts as a Long NP (see the discussion in section 4.2). The example may have a different explanation. The second distinctive property of the example is the verb *ad-ágathar* “fears” itself. It takes, as its complement, an infinitive-like phrase with an overt subject that can be case-marked as if it were the object of the main verb. In this context, the apparent object of the verb, namely, the infixed second person singular pronoun *-tot-*, is simultaneously the subject of the verbal noun phrase *dia=mbrath* “for their betraying/for betraying them”. This fact implies that the entire clause is not transitive in the same way as prototypical transitive clauses; in particular, the verb *ad-ágathar* in this instance directly selects a clausal verbal noun-phrase complement and not an NP object that undergoes change

(*lil* “followed” (3sg.pret.)), 48.1567 (*mil[l]ter* “is violated”), 50.1622 (*guitter* “is asked”), 52.1681 (*fonascar* “is bound”), 53.1734 (*rubad* “has been struck”), 56.1815 (*ro ráté* “was told”), 58.1875 (*dorairngired* “has been promised”), 58.1878 (*dobreth* “was given”), 75.2475 (*hétar* “is obtained”), 87.2872 (*tic* “comes”), 97.3196 (*adcúas* “has been told”), 101.3338 (*docer* “fell” (3sg.pret.)), 102.3367 (*dolluid* “came” (3sg.pret.)), 103.3388 (*dollotar* “went” (3sg.pret.)), 109.3581 (*foigébthar* “will be found” (3sg.fut.)), 110.3629 (*rogénair* “has been born”), 121.4023 (*ferfaid* “will fight” (3sg.fut.)), 122.4066 (*imsoi* “turns away”), 123.4093 (*dobretha* “were given” (3pl.pret.)), 124.4137 (*fárgaibthea* “were left”).

through the action of the verb. A third special feature of the clauses in (57a) is that it is found in poetry and as such its value as evidence must be weighted differently to clauses taken from prose. As for (57b), the subject is straightforwardly a Long NP because it is a noun phrase modified by a relative clause and accompanied by a parenthetical noun phrase.

The examples in (58) are likely to be Topic-Comment structures.²⁹ In both, the subject incorporates the emphatic substantivizing particle *i* as well as a deictic.

58. Topic-Comment

- a. /*Torbais* *Conchobar* $\gamma=a=muintir$ /COMMENT
 dismay_{PST.3SG} Conchobar_{ACC} and=his=household_{ACC}
 $a=n-i=sin$ /TOPIC
 the_{NOM.SG}=EMPH=DIST
 “That dismayed Conchobar and his household,…” (TBC¹ 18.579)
- b. /*Maitt-i* *immi=seom*/COMMENT /*in=dabach*
 break_{PRS.3SG-3SG.MASC} around_{3SG.MASC=3SM} the_{NOM.SG}=tub_{NOM}
 $i=sin$ /TOPIC.
 EMPH=DIST
 “That tub bursts (itself) about him.” (TBC¹ 25.815)

As shown above (ex. 38a, 40), deictic subjects are frequently topics. The context of both examples makes this analysis likely here as well. In (58a), the deictic subject refers back to an entire clause, or even a group of clauses, that describes a situation that dismays Conchobar and his household. This context (in English) is given in (59). In the Irish text, sentence (58a) follows immediately after this sequence.

59. “At that point the boy arrived. The dog made for him. He still kept on with the play; he would throw his ball and then throw his hurley after it so that it struck the ball, neither stroke being greater than the other. And he threw his toy spear after them and caught it before it fell. And though the dog was approaching him, it interfered not with his play.” (O’Rahilly 1976: 141)

In (58b), the deictic subject refers back to the tub mentioned in the immediately preceding clause, as can be seen in (60). The verb and prepositional phrase in (58b) constitute a Comment about this previously mentioned Topic.

60. $\gamma=fo$ -*cherdat* *i=ndabaig* *n-úaruisci*.
 and=PV.it.throw_{PRS.3PL} in=tub_{ACC} cold.water_{GEN}
 “And they threw him into a tub of cold water.” (TBC¹ 25.814-815)

²⁹ Another possibility is that (58b) is an atypical transitive clause because the apparent object pronoun functions in fact to intransitivize the clause in much the same way as unaccusative reflexive clitics familiar from Romance languages do. The clause is, therefore, similar to instances of the other cases of pronominal conversion in Old Irish, which were mentioned above (ex. 20a).

Of the four examples classified here as Other three have an intervener between the verb and the subject that is a *nota augens* coreferential with an infix object pronoun (*inim-áigetar=sa* “do they fear me?” TBC¹ 46.1491, *ním-erchoī=se* “it will not hinder me” TBC¹ 52.1708, *ta-n-autat=som* “it attacks him” TBC¹ 61.1999). The context of these examples has therefore not been inspected, since these constitute straightforward syntactic exceptions to the general word-order pattern for transitive clauses. The fourth clause in the Other category is (61).

61. *condid-tánice* *rīa=cách* _{sbj}[*Senoll* *hÚathach*]
 until.him-come_{PST.3SG} before=each_{DAT} *Senoll*_{NOM} *Horrible*_{NOM}
 “...until Senoll the Horrible came to him ahead of the others” (TBC¹ 95.3144)

Under the assumptions made here, (61) cannot involve right-dislocation: neither an account based on the “formal” characteristics of the subject nor an information structure account will work. First, the subject is by no means a Long NP. Second, the information structure categories, Topic-Comment and Focus-Alternative, are irrelevant since in TBC¹ the subject *Senoll hÚathach* is newly introduced here for the first time, and therefore the clause establishes the common ground and does not update it (cf. the discussion under example (57)). Additionally, the intervener is not a dependent element like a *nota augens* or a dative complement. Since the subject is newly introduced, this example in fact corresponds closely to examples involving Pos1 and Pos2. Nonetheless, the hypothesis in (23) is not violated because (61) is an atypical transitive clause in which the infix pronoun represents a non-affected indirect object (i.e. the goal of movement) (compare also ex. 20b).

6. Conclusion

What has been accomplished in this paper is a sharpening of the descriptive analysis of Old Irish word order, such that it is no longer possible to merely say that the language is VSO without qualifying that statement with a number of caveats. There are a number of examples where the subject is not immediately after the verb. Here, I have distinguished between late clause-medial subjects (VXS_Y) and absolute clause-final subjects (VXS_#). It was argued that final-subject constructions may in turn be classified into right-dislocation examples on the one hand and examples that are essentially similar to late-subject constructions (i.e. VXS_Y without Y), on the other hand. These two possibilities were summarized by the structures in example (24). Right-dislocation was tied to special information structure or “formal” factors like the length of the subject. These two situations contrast with late-subject constructions and those final-subject constructions that are similar to late-subject constructions, which either have a bound morpheme, like a dative complement or a *nota augens*, intervening between the verb and the subject or have the interesting property being non-transitive or atypical transitive clauses. The term “atypical transitive”, introduced here, applies to four types of clause: negative clauses where the intervener is a bare indefinite object (cf. ex. 19f, 55a), clauses where the verb has undergone pronominal conversion (cf. ex. 20a, 55b), clauses containing an infix pronoun that is coindexed with an intervening floated quantifier (cf. ex. 20b, 22), and

clauses in which the object does not undergo change but rather is the goal of movement (ex. 20b, 61).

The suggestion that the features summarized here play a role in determining the special word order of their clauses is one that needs to be further investigated. For instance, the information structure analysis in section four needs to be applied to the larger Old Irish corpus, especially the Würzburg Glosses (Wb.) and the Saint Gall Priscian Glosses (Sg.). If these texts also exhibit the main categories of exceptions to strict VSO while also exhibiting right-dislocation of subjects motivated by “formal” characteristics or information structure, then the hypothesis proposed in this paper that prototypical transitive clauses are essentially rigidly VSO and non-transitive or atypical transitive clauses are more flexible will be considerably strengthened. As an early indicator that an analysis of Wb. and Sg. will in fact confirm this hypothesis, I draw attention to the VOS(X) examples in (62), which involves a negative clause with a bare indefinite object.

62. a. *Ní-airic*<*c*> *ní* *césad* *Crīst* *amal=sodin*.
 NEG-effect_{PRS.3SG} something_{ACC} suffering_{NOM} Christ_{GEN} like=that_{ACC}
 “Therefore, Christ’s Passion does not bring anything to pass.” (Wb. 19^b2)
- b. *Nī-dénat* *firtu* *úili*.
 NEG-make_{PRS.3PL} miracles_{ACC} all_{NOM}
 “All do not work miracles.” (Wb. 12^b20)

The discussion has also opened up a number of avenues for further research that involve testing and refining the proposals made here. For instance, the origin and extent of “pronominal conversion” in Old Irish should be explored more. Recall that pronominal conversion refers to the use of infixed pronouns to convert an transitive verb into an intransitive. In this usage, the pronouns have traditionally been called “petrified infixed pronouns”. There are few such verbs in Old Irish, including *at-baill* “dies” (lit. “throws it out” or perhaps “kills it off”), *imme-airicc* “is suitable to, fit” (lit. “finds it around”), *ara-chrin* “to wither” (lit. “breaks it” or “separates it”), *imme-ricc* “succeeds, happens, befalls” (lit. “reaches it around”). Research in preparation by the author compares the Old Irish process to certain verb-pronoun combinations found in the Romance languages and in Greek, for which Espinal (2009) argues the pronoun serves to detransitivize the verb and convert an agentive argument into a non-agentive one. Like these languages, the Old Irish pronoun appears to act like a piece of verbal morphology that has the effect of demoting one of the arguments through the rearrangement of the argument structure of the verbal roots/stems. A particularly well attested form of pronominal conversion is the reciprocal construction involving the prefixation of *imma*^N (preverb *imm* + 3rd sg. masculine pronoun) to a verbal root to produce various kinds of reciprocal constructions (Dedio and Widmer 2017). Pronominal conversion is just one of several kinds of argument structure-changing strategies in Old Irish, such as NP-promotion passivization, reflexive verbs (Thurneysen 1946: 251, Irslinger 2017: 109, ex.10, Irslinger 2014: 180f.), and the anti-passive use of *imma*^N (Dedio and Widmer 2017: 197).

Another crucial task for further discussion is to develop a theoretical account for why atypical transitives as defined here behave as a class with respect to word order at all. In other words, are there shared formal syntactic characteristics of negated clauses with bare

indefinite objects, clauses with floating quantifiers, detransitivized clauses formed with the addition of pronominal morphology, and clauses with movement verbs whose direct object is the goal of motion? An additional, and important, challenge, would be to integrate the observations made here with a theory that can make robust predictions about syntactic distinctions between transitive and intransitive verbs. One promising theory that does so is a phase-based approach to generative syntax (Chomsky 2001, 2008). Future research will therefore make use of this approach to show that atypical transitives share certain formal syntactic features with prototypical intransitives.

References

A. Abbreviations

eDIL

Toner, Gregory (director), Maxim Fomin, Grigory Bondarenko, Thomas Torma, Caoimhín Ó Dónaill, and Hilary Lavelle (eds), 2007. *eDIL: electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language*, revised ed. Online: Royal Irish Academy, 2013–present. URL: <dil.ie>

POMIC

Lash, Elliott, 2014. *The Parsed Old and Middle Irish Corpus*. Online: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. URL: <<https://www.dias.ie/celt/celt-publications-2/celt-the-parsed-old-and-middle-irish-corpus-pomic/>>

SR

Greene, David (ed. and trans.), *Saltair na rann*. Online: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. URL: <<https://www.dias.ie/celt/celt-publications-2/celt-saltair-na-rann/>>.

B. Primary Sources

Ascoli, Graziado Isaia, 1878. *Il Codice irlandese dell'Ambrosiana* (Archivio glottologico 5), Rome: Ermanno Loescher.

Best, Richard I., 1936. *The commentary on the Psalms with glosses in Old-Irish preserved in the Ambrosian Library (MS. C 301 inf.), collotype facsimile, with introduction*, Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

Bieler, Ludwig (ed. and trans.) and Fergus Kelly (contr.), 1979. *The Patrician texts in the Book of Armagh* (Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 10), Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

Gwynn, Edward J. and Walter J. Purton (eds. and trans.), 1911–1912. ‘The monastery of Tallaght,’ *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 29 C, 115–179.

Knott, Eleanor, 1963. *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 8). Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

Mac Cana, Proinseas and Edgar Slotkin (eds. and trans.), 2014. *Fled Bricremn*. URL: <<https://irishtextssociety.org/texts/fledbricremn.html>>

- Meyer, Kuno (ed. and trans.), 1899. ‘Stories and songs from Irish manuscripts,’ *Otia Merseiana* 1, 113–128.
- Meyer, Kuno (ed.), 1912. ‘The West Munster synod: the Laud genealogies and tribal histories,’ *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 8, 315–317.
- Mulchrone, Kathleen (ed. and trans.), 1939. *Bethu Phátraic: The tripartite life of Patrick [I. Text and sources]*, Dublin: Hodges Figgis.
- O’Keeffe, James G. (ed. and trans.), 1905. ‘Cáin Domnaig,’ *Ériu* 2, 189–214.
- O’Rahilly, Cecile (ed. and trans.), 1976. *Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
- Ó hAodha, Donncha (ed. and trans.), 1978. *Bethu Brigte*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
- Stokes, Whitley (ed. and trans.), 1877. ‘Betha Brigte: On the life of Saint Brigit,’ in Whitley Stokes (ed.), *Three Middle-Irish homilies on the Lives of saints Patrick, Brigit and Columba*, Calcutta, 49–87, 138–140.
- Stokes, Whitley and John Strachan (eds. and trans.), 1901–1903. *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus: a collection of Old-Irish glosses, scholia, prose, and verse*, 3 vols, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Republished by Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980).

C. Secondary Sources

- Ahlqvist, Anders, 1972. ‘Some aspects of the copula in Irish,’ *Éigse* 14, 269–274.
- Ahlqvist, Anders, 1980. ‘On word order in Irish,’ in Elizabeth C. Traugott, Rebecca Labrum and Susan Shepherd (eds.), *Papers from the 4th international conference on historical linguistics*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 107–113.
- Bayer, Josef, 2012. ‘From modal particle to interrogative marker: a study of German *denn*,’ in Laura Brugè, Anna Cardinaletti, Giuliana Giusti, Nicola Munaro, and Cecilia Poletto (eds.), *Functional heads: The cartography of syntactic structures, vol. 7*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 13–28.
- Bayer, Josef and Hans Georg Obenauer, 2011. ‘Discourse particles, clause structure, and question types,’ *Linguistic Revue* 28, 449–491.
- Bennett, Ryan, Emily Elfner, and James McCloskey, 2019. ‘Prosody, focus and ellipsis in Irish,’ *Language* 95.1, 66–106.
- Bergin, Osborn, 1938. ‘On the syntax of the verb in Old Irish,’ *Ériu* 12, 197–214.
- Biberauer, Theresa and Ans van Kemenade, 2011. ‘Subject positions and information-structural diversification in the history of English,’ *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 10, 17–69.
- Binchy, Daniel A., 1979–80. ‘Bergin’s law,’ *Studia Celtica* 14/15, 34–53.
- Breatnach, Liam, 1984. ‘Canon law and secular law in early Ireland: the significance of Bretha nemed,’ *Peritia* 3: 439–59.
- Cardinaletti, Anna 1997. ‘Subjects and clause structure,’ in Liliane Haegeman (ed.). *The New Comparative Syntax*, London: Longman, 33–63.
- Cardinaletti, Anna 2004. ‘Toward a cartography of subject positions,’ Luigi Rizzi (ed.). *The Structure of CP and IP: The cartography of syntactic structures, vol. 2*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 115–165.
- Carney, James, 1979. ‘Aspects of Archaic Irish,’ *Éigse* 17.4, 417–435.

- Chomsky, Noam, 2001. 'Derivation by Phase,' in Michael Kenstowicz (ed.), *Ken Hale: A Life in Language*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1–53.
- Chomsky, Noam, 2008. 'On Phases,' in Robert Freidin, Carlos P. Otero, and Maria Luisa Zubizarreta (eds.), *Foundational Issues in Linguistics Theory: Essays in Honor of Jean-Roger Vergnaud*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 133–166.
- Coniglio, Marco, 2006. 'German modal particles in the functional structure of IP,' *University of Venice Working Papers in Linguistics* 16, 57–95.
- Corthals, Johann, 1999. 'Zur Entstehung der archaischen irischen Metrik und Syntax,' in Heiner Eichner and Hans Christian Luschützky with Velizar Sadovski (eds.), *Compositiones Indogermanicae in memoriam Jochem Schindler*, Prague: Enigma, 19–45.
- Dedio, Stefan and Paul Widmer, 2017. 'S, A, and P argument demotion with preverbal *imm-(a-^N)* in Old and Middle Irish,' *Études Celtiques* 43, 187–206.
- DiGirolamo, Cara, 2018. 'Word order and information structure in the Würzburg Glosses,' in Ana Maria Martins and Adriana Cardoso (eds.), *Word Order Change*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 143–162.
- Doherty, Cathal, 1999. 'Tmesis and verb second in Early Irish syntax,' *Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistic Society* 25, 98–108.
- Dryer, Matthew S. 2013. "Order of subject, object, and verb". In Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (eds.), *World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, Munich: Max Planck Digital Library. URL: <<http://wals.info/chapter/81>>
- Eska, Joseph, 2007. 'Bergin's rule: syntactic diachrony and discourse strategy,' *Diachronica* 24.2, 253–278.
- Eska, Joseph, 2008. 'Grammars in conflict: phonological aspects of the Bergin's rule construction,' *Keltische Forschungen* 3, 45–62.
- Espinal, M. Teresa, 2009. 'Clitic incorporation and abstract semantic objects in idiomatic constructions,' *Linguistics* 47.6, 1221–1272.
- Graver, Jenny, 2011. 'The syntax and development of the Old Irish autonomous verb,' in Andrew Carnie (ed.) *Formal Approaches to Celtic Linguistics*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 41–64.
- Greene, David, 1977. 'Archaic Irish,' in Karl Horst Schmidt and Rolf Ködderitzsch (eds.), *Indogermanisch und Keltisch: Kolloquium der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft am 16. und 17. Februar 1976 in Bonn*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 11–33.
- Griffith, Aaron, 2011. 'Old Irish pronouns: agreement affixes vs. clitic arguments,' in Andrew Carnie (ed.), *Formal Approaches to Celtic Linguistics*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 65–94.
- Griffith, Aaron, 2013. 'Irish *suide* / *-side* 'the aforementioned',' in Anders Ahlqvist and Pamela O'Neill (eds.), *Festschrift for Malcolm Broun*, Sydney: Sydney University Celtic Studies Foundation, 55–73.
- Griffith, Aaron, 2015. 'Diachrony and the referential hierarchy in Old Irish,' in Sonia Cristofaro and Fernando Zúñiga (eds.), *Typological hierarchies in synchrony and diachrony* (Typological Studies in Language 121), Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 191–216.
- Haeberli, Eric 2002. *Features, categories and the syntax of A-positions: Cross-linguistic variation in the Germanic languages*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Hammarström, Harald, 2015. The basic word order typology: an exhaustive study.

- Conference paper: Closing Conference Department of Linguistics, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. URL <https://www.eva.mpg.de/fileadmin/content_files/linguistics/conferences/2015-diversity-linguistics/Hammarstroem_slides.pdf>
- Henry, Patrick, 1978. 'Bergin's Law and syntactical subordination in Irish,' *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 36, 54–56.
- Hill, Robert, 2006. *Theodore of Mopsuestia, commentary on psalms 1–81*, Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Höhle, Tilman, 1992. 'Über verum-fokus im Deutschen,' in Joachim Jacobs (ed.), *Informationsstruktur und Grammatik* (Linguistischer Berichte Sonderhefte 4), Tübingen: Niemeyer, 112–141.
- Irslinger, Britta, 2014. 'Intensifiers and Reflexives in SAE, Insular Celtic and English,' *Indogermanische Forschungen* 119, 159–206.
- Irslinger, Britta, 2017. 'Detransitive strategies in Middle Welsh: The preverbal marker *ym-*,' in Erich Poppe, Karin Stüber, Paul Widmer (eds.), *Referential Properties and Their Impact on the Syntax of Insular Celtic Languages* (Studien und Texte zur Keltologie, Band 14), Münster: Nodus, 101–43.
- Kayne, Richard, 1994. *Antisymmetry in Syntax*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Krifka, Manfred, 2007. 'Basic notions of information structure,' in Caroline Féry, Gisbert Fanselow and M. Krifka (eds.), *The notions of information structure* (Interdisciplinary Studies on Information Structure 6), Potsdam: University Press. 13–55.
- Langacker, Ronald, 1974. Movement rules in functional perspective. *Language* 50.4, 630–664.
- Lash, Elliott, 2011. *A synchronic and diachronic analysis of Old Irish copular clauses*. University of Cambridge, Ph.D. Thesis.
- Lash, Elliott, 2014. 'Subject positions in Old and Middle Irish,' *Lingua* 148, 278–308.
- Lash, Elliott, 2017a. 'Evaluating directionality in the internal reconstruction of pre-Old Irish copular clauses,' *Indo-European Linguistics* 5.1, 77–129.
- Lash, Elliott, 2017b. 'A Quantitative Analysis of e-i variation in Old Irish *etar* and *ceta*.' *Ériu* 67, 139–166.
- Lash, Elliott and Aaron Griffith, 2018. 'Coordinate subjects, expletives, and the EPP in Early Irish,' *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 19.1, 87–156.
- Levin, Beth and Malka Rappaport Hovav, 1995. *Unaccusativity*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Mac Cana, Proinseas, 1973. 'On Celtic word-order and the Welsh 'abnormal' sentence,' *Ériu* 24, 90–120.
- Mac Cana, Proinseas, 1996. 'Narrative openers and progress markers in Irish,' in Kathryn Klar, Eve Sweetser, and Claire Thomas (eds.), *Celtic florilegium: Studies in memory of Brendan O Hehir*, (Celtic Studies Publications 2), Lawrence, MA: Celtic studies publications, 104–20.
- Mac Giolla Easpaig, D., 1980. 'Aspects of variant word order in early Irish,' *Ériu* 31, 28–38.
- MacCoisdealbha, Pádraig, 1998. *The syntax of the sentence in Old Irish: selected studies from a descriptive, historical and comparative point of view*, (Buchreihe der Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie 16, Graham Isaac (ed.)). Tübingen: Niemeyer.

- Massam, Dianne, 2009. 'Noun incorporation: Essentials and extensions,' *Language and Linguistics Compass* 3.4, 1076–1096. UR: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2009.00140.x>.
- McCloskey, James, 2011. 'The Shape of Irish Clauses,' in Andrew Carnie, *Formal approaches to Celtic linguistics*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 143–177.
- McCone, Kim, 1985. 'The Würzburg and Milan Glosses: our earliest sources of 'Middle Irish',' *Ériu* 36, 85–106.
- McCone, Kim, 1989. 'Zur Frage der Register im frühen Irischen,' in Stephen N. Tranter, and Hildegard L. C. Tristram (eds.), *Early Irish Literature: media and communication*, (ScriptOralia 10), Tübingen: Narr, 57–97.
- McCone, Kim, 1997. 'Delbrück's model of PIE word order and the Celtic evidence,' in Emilio Crespo and José Luis García-Ramón (eds.), *Berthold Delbrück y la sintaxis indoeuropea hoy: actas del Coloquio de la Indogermanische Gesellschaft, Madrid, 21-24 de septiembre de 1994*, Madrid: Ediciones de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 363–396.
- McCone, Kim, 2006. *The origins and development of the Insular Celtic verbal complex*, (Maynooth Studies in Celtic Linguistics 6), Maynooth: Department of Old Irish, Saint Patrick's College.
- McNamara, Martin, 2000. *The Psalms in the early Irish Church*, (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 165), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Newton, Glenda, 2006. *The development and loss of the Old Irish double system of inflection*, University of Cambridge, Ph.D. Thesis.
- Schram, Iris, 2016. "Tidings of Cú Chulainn, it is those which are here related": *How cleft sentence and nominativus pendens express emphasis in the Táin Bó Cúailnge*, Utrecht University, RMA Thesis.
- Thurneysen, Rudolf, 1917. 'Irisches,' *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der Indogermanischen Sprachen* 48.1/2, 48–75.
- Thurneysen, Rudolf, 1946 [1980]. *A Grammar of Old Irish: An Enlarged Edition with Supplement*, D.A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (trans), Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
- Van Loon, Daan, 2013. *The usage of the historical present in Old Irish narrative prose*, Utrecht University, RMA Thesis.
- Wagner, Heinrich, 1967. 'Zur unregelmässigen Wortstellung in der altirischen Alliterationsdichtung,' in Wolfgang Meid (ed.), *Beiträge zur Indogermanistik und Keltologie: Julius Pokorny zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet*, Innsbruck: Innsbruck Sprachwissenschaftliches Institut, 289–314.
- Wagner, Heinrich, 1977. 'Wortstellung im Keltischen und Indogermanischen,' in Karl Horst Schmidt, and Rolf Ködderitzsch (eds.), *Indogermanisch und Keltisch: Kolloquium der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft am 16. und 17. Februar 1976 in Bonn*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 204–235.
- Walkden, George, 2014. 'Object position and Heavy NP Shift in Old Saxon and beyond,' Kristin Bech and Kristine Gunn Eide (eds.), *Information structure and syntactic change in Germanic and Romance languages*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 313–340.

- Wallenberg, Joel C. 2015. ‘Antisymmetry and Heavy NP Shift across Germanic,’ in Theresa Biberauer and George Walkden (eds.), *Syntax over time*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 336–349.
- Wasow, Thomas. 1997. Remarks on grammatical weight. *Language variation and change* 9, 81-105.
- Watkins, Calvert, 1963. ‘Preliminaries to a historical and comparative analysis of the syntax of the Irish verb,’ *Celtica* 6, 1–49.

Appendix

In the text (ex. 45-46) clauses involving Focus with one pair of alternatives and an absolute clauses-final subject were discussed. I provided only a few examples there. Here I provide the rest of the examples for completeness. I only note the subject and the two alternatives.

1. MI. 21^{c3}
Late subject: *ani as mane* “that (word) which is *mane*”, ALT1: *trimiberar dindaimsir matíndisin* “it is transferred from that morning time”, ALT2: *æperr dindfailti bis indi* “so that it is said of the joy which is in it”.
2. MI. 38^{d8}
Late subject: *a clói<ne>* “their iniquity”, ALT1: *inta<n> dorocht forsnapechachu* “when it was avenged upon the sinners”, ALT2: *7 intan rosoirtha ind firien* “and when the righteous were delivered”.
3. MI. 54^{d7}
Late subject: *mernigde* “my prayer”, ALT1: *roli<l> díim* “it has adhered to me”, ALT2: *7 nidechuid huaim* “and it has not departed from me”.
4. MI. 71^{c9}
Late subject: *an ecce* “the (word) *ecce*”; ALT1: *is duthaidbsin ind imdaigthea tuccad sunt* “it is to indicate abundance that it is put here”, ALT2 *ní dufailsigud* “it is not to manifest”.
5. MI. 74^{b1}
Late subject: *insalmso* “this psalm”, ALT1: *is fursundud 7 is foillsigud dund eregim 7 dund immiud coinedar duaid* “an illumination and a manifestation of the complaint and of the trouble that David laments” ALT2: *.i. intituil robói huas ciun crist isin chroich .i. immeairic dusuidiu 7 ducéssad crist* “the title which is over Christ on the Cross, it is suitable to that and to the Passion of Christ”.
6. MI. 101^{c6-7}
Late subject: *ám manifestare fil is indsalm* “the (word) *manifestare* which is in the psalm”, ALT1: *ISSÍ ciall gaibes in testimin so corici aliter .i. is do saidisiu for hirubinaib condárbais frendarcus du fortachtae dumaib trebaib so diasoirad .i. triub effraim rl. 7 is foforngartaid tra fosin dutiagar* “This is the sense which this text utters as far as *aliter*, namely, it is for this that You (sg) sit on the Cherubim, that You (sg) may show the presence of Your (sg) help to these tribes

for their deliverance, to wit, the tribe of Ephraim, etc.; and it is as an imperative, then, like that, that it is construed.”, ALT2: *ISSi immurgu inso inchiall hua aliter sis* .i. *is do saidisiu adæ for hirubinaib dothoisigecht 7 choimdinecht donaib trebaib so 7 is fo infinit dutiagar fu<n>dulso* “This, however, is the sense from *aliter* onwards, namely, it is for this that You (sg) sit, O God, on the Cherubim, to lead and to rule these tribes, and it is as an infinitive that it is construed this time... ”.

In (5) and (6) I have underlined the main contrasting parts in each alternative clause. In (5) the subject “the psalm” is repeated twice. The alternatives mention two possible interpretations of the psalm’s content: one in which the psalm applies to David’s experiences and the other in which the psalm applies to Christ’s experiences. In (6) the subject “the (word) *manifestare* which is in the clause” is repeated twice (with slightly different spelling each time). The alternatives introduce two possible grammatical (and semantic) interpretations of the word; either it is to be understood as an imperative or it is to be understood as an infinitive.

Gloss Ml. 44^a11 may count as a Focus-Alternative Structure when read together with the preceding gloss 44^a10. These, together with the Latin context are found in (7-9). The alternatives seem to be “first concretions ... in the womb” and “when it is brought forth”. Superscripts in the Latin indicate position of the respective glosses. (9a) is the text of the Psalm, (9b) the text of the commentary.

7. */arnaib=cétnaib coiteicthib .i. imme:folngar dund=síl*
 for.the=first_{DAT} concretions_{DAT} i.e PV_{REL}·cause_{PRS.PSS.3SG} from.the_{DAT}=seed_{DAT}
ferdu iarná=esfóit isin=mbroin mǎthardi/FOC:ALT1
 manly_{DAT} after.its=emmission_{DAT} in.the_{ACC.SG}=womb_{ACC} motherly_{ACC}
 “on account of the first concretions, namely, what is formed from the man’s seed after its emmission into the mother’s womb” (Ml. 44^a10)
8. */intan=do:fuissemar sechtair/FOC:ALT2 /a=síl=sin/BACKGROUND*
 when=PV·create_{PRS.PSS.3SG} forth the_{NOM.SG}=seed_{NOM}=DIST
₇=gainethar hōn=mǎthir is=and
 and=be.born_{PRS.3SG} from.the_{DAT.SG}=mother_{DAT.SG} COP_{PRS.3SG}=in_{3SG.NEUT}
is=ainm dō fructus.
 COP_{PRS.3SG}=name_{NOM} to_{3SG.NEUT} fruit
 “When that seed is brought forth and is born of the mother, then a name for it is fruit.” (Ml. 44^a11)
9. a. *FRUCTUMEORUM DE TERRA PERDES - ET SEMEN EORUM A*
 fruit their from earth you.will.destroy and seed their from
FILIIS HOMINUM
 sons of.men
 “YOU WILL DESTROY THEIR FRUIT FROM THE EARTH - AND
 THEIR SEED FROM THE CHILDREN OF MEN”
- b. *utrumque de filiis recté dicitur; nam et semen propter prima*
 both of children rightly is.said for both seed because first

*coagulata*¹⁰, *et fructus*¹¹ *propter absolutam effigiem corporis consequenter*
concretions and fruit because finished form of body consequently
et proprie dicuntur.
and properly are said

“Both are rightly said with regard to the children; for, both seed on account of the first concretions and fruit on account of the finished bodily form in consequence and properly are said.” (Commentary to Ps. 20.11, Stokes and Strachan 1901: 123.23-24 - 124.1-3).