

### III. Morphology

#### 1. The Article

##### 1. The definite article

(a) The full form of the definite article is /an/. Historically, the definite article is derived from Common Celtic *\*sindos* and would have /nn/ in Middle Cornish, but as this article is never stressed its actual form is /an/.

A more archaic form /en/ occurs also, most frequently in P (Herniman, p. 250; and see also L&P 361 and HPB 224(1)). The latter is the only form of the definite article in the *Charter Endorsement* (CE 16); in P it occurs 59 times, as opposed to 267 instances of /an/, in later texts the form /en/ is even more rare. Apart from this chronological shift there seems to be no reason behind the use of <an> or <en> in the texts.<sup>1</sup>

(b) The fact that article plus noun may be written as one word reflects the unity felt in such a group (which also is an accent-group). Some examples of article + noun are:

/en/: <en grey3> /en gres/ 'the belief' CE.16; <en enevow> 'the souls' P.17d; <ol en da ha|n drok kepar> 'all the good and the evil alike' P.24d; <en colyek> 'the cock' P.86a; <en toll> 'the hole' P.182a; <en gew lym> 'the sharp spear' P.218c; <en tas> 'the father' O.1, 4, 1974, D.197, 829; <a|fyn|en trois> 'from the end of the foot' O.1758; <en gueel> 'the rods' O.2065, 2079; <en guyr> 'the truth' O.2234; <en fer> 'the fair' D.360; <en den-ma> 'this man' D.1277;

/an/: <An dus vas> 'the good people' P.4a; <an|goff> 'the smith' P.156c; <an tyr marya> 'the three Marys' P.253a; <war an karrygy> 'on the rocks' O.478; <an fosow>, <an fossow> 'the walls' O.2320, 2454, 2485; <an pynakyl> 'the pinnacle' D.88; <an bugel> 'the shepherd' D.893;

For mutations caused by the article see II.2(1-3, 14), 6 and 7#.

(c) After the prepositions /dhe/ 'to' and /trogha/ 'towards', the conjunction /ha/ 'and', and the particle /re/ 'by' (in oaths), the definite article is reduced to /n/. The orthography in such cases never makes use of apostrophes or dividing strokes, and shows clearly that the group preposition (or particle or conjunction) plus article plus noun was seen as a whole. Examples are:

/dhe/: <3e|n meneth olyff> 'to the Mount of Olives' P.52a; <ha 3e|n dor an goys ha|n lyn (...) deveras> 'and to the ground the blood and the water (...) flowed' P.221c; <the|n sacrefys> 'to the sacrifice' O.469; <the|n gorhyl> 'to the ark' O.1047, 1124; <the|n mor ruyth> 'to the Red Sea' O.1622; <the|n castel> 'to the city' D.174; <the|n fo> 'to the flight' D.2159, 2314;

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<sup>1</sup> In O.565 the line runs <mab adam a fals huder> and is generally translated as 'the son of Adam the false deceiver', taking <a> for the article here. This would most probably be a writing error. An alternative translation might however be 'the son of Adam, Oh false deceiver', which would need no emendation and does make sense in the context just as well.

/ha/: <ha|n sperys sans> ‘and the holy ghost’ P.3c; <en tas ha|n map ha|n spyrys>, <en tas ha|n mab ha|n spyrys> ‘the father and the son and the [holy] ghost’ O.4, 13; <ha|n dour> ‘and the water’ O.1098; <ha|n maystri bras> ‘and the great power’ D.148; <ha|n ebel> ‘and the foal’ D.193, 201, 219;

/re/: <re n|offeren>, <re|n oferen> ‘by the mass’ CE.33, D.764; <re|n ordyr a recevys> ‘by the order which I received’ O.2160; <re|n arluth dev> ‘by the Lord God’ O.2537, D.1631, 1700, 2353, etc.; <re|n geth hethev> ‘by this day’ D.1588;

/trogha/: <trogha|n dor> ‘towards the ground’ O.201; <troha|n daras> ‘towards the portal’ O.349;

Sometimes, when the following word begins with a vowel, sandhi is shown by the fact that the <n> representing the article is added either not to the preceding particle, but to the following word, or is written twice, as for instance in:

<re n|offeren> /re’n oferen/ ‘by the mass’ CE.33; <a n|eyl tu> /a’n eyll tu/ ‘on the other side’ P.105c; <3e|n-n|empynnyon> /dhe’n ympynnyon/ ‘to the brain’ P.134c; <3e|n-n|e3yn gwyls> /dhe’n edhyn gwyls/ ‘for the wild birds’ P.206c;

(d) After other words this reduction is never written, though the metre does sometimes require it. This is rare, however, and the following are the only examples found in P:

<l-3|esa an venyn ganse> /ydh eje’n venen ganse/ ‘the woman was with them’ P.33b; <henna ve3a an guella gwas> /henna vedhe’n gwella gwas/ ‘that one would be the best fellow’ P.112d; <mar posse a|n n|eyll tenewen> /mar posse’n eyll tenewen/ ‘if he leant on the one side’ P.205c; <a-wotta an le may-3|ese> /awotta’n le maydh eje/ ‘behold the place in which he was’ P.255d.

After the preposition /dre/ ‘through’, where one would expect reduction, the article always seems to keep its full form in P (the combination <dre an> does occur five times in P.182a, 216d, 218d, 221b, 231d). In D <dre an> occurs three times (D.2138, 2141, 2376), while <dre|n> is found once (D.2382). In the other texts the reduced article is found after /dre/ regularly.

(e) When following the preposition /yn/ ‘in’, the article merges with /yn/ and the result is [In]. A convenient way to transcribe this is /y’n/, but in the orthography this merger is never shown and especially when a non-lenited noun follows it is often hard to decide whether <yn> contains the article or not and should thus be transcribed either /yn/ or /y’n/ (the preposition does not cause any mutation, the article causes lenition in feminine singular nouns).

<y|n dre> ‘in the town’ (/tre/) P.29a, 30c, 97b, D.363, 617; <y|n templys> ‘in the temples’ P.30c; <y|n deweth>, <y|n dyweth> ‘in the end’ P.40d, 236d, D.5; <y|n nos hag y|n geyth> ‘by night and by day’ O.458, 1516; <an try person y|n drynsys> ‘the three persons in the Trinity’ O.1734, 2660;

Sometimes analogy, based on comparison with similar constructions with other prepositions within the corpus of Middle Cornish literature (or, with less conclusive force, with Breton or Welsh cognates) must lead to the decision to read /y’n/ for <yn> in

a number of instances, like e.g. /y'n pow/ besides /y'n wlas/ and /y'n dre/; or <y|n preson> 'in the prison' P.124a, because the same stanza has <a|n preson> for 'from the prison' P.124d. But in cases like e.g. <y'n nef> in P.46c it is hard to decide whether to read 'in heaven' (as English idiom would require), or 'in the heaven' (as analogous to /y'n wlas/, etc. Both in Breton and in Welsh the Lord's Prayer contains the article in this phrase: MB *e'n neff* (cf. LILIC p.83, line 2), *W yn y nefoedd* 'in the heavens'). The answer to this particular question is given by the rather frequent <the|n nef> 'to the heaven', as is found in e.g. D.79, while also <Dev a thanfon thyn a|n nef> 'God will send to us from heaven' O.1319; <ef a thanfon a|n nef> 'he shall send from heaven' D.1163 must contain the preposition /a/ 'from'. Less clear is <y'n yffarn> 'in hell' P.66d, 212d, 213d, but here <3e yffarn> 'to hell' P.212a probably indicates that no article is needed before /y'farn/ 'hell'. Likewise <y'n nos> 'in the night' P.250c, probably contains the article as does /y'n jydh/ 'in the day'.

The same problem also arises with <y'n nos haneth>, <haneth yn nos> 'this same night' in P.49b, 52b, 63b, 239c, and <y'n nos oll> 'all night' P.241c, where it could be argued that the adverbs /haneth/ 'tonight' and /oll/ 'all' already define /nos/ and might thus make the definite article superfluous. See also e.g. <y'n hanow du> 'in the name of God' P.30b, 93a; and <y'n prys hanter nos> 'at midnight' (lit. 'in (the) time of midnight') P.76c. An indication that the article is indeed included in phrases like these, are the parallel constructions <y|n geth hythyw> 'on this day' (lit. 'in the day today') D.831 and <y|n geth nagh y|n nos> 'by day nor by night' D.2269, where the initial mutation of /dydh/ shows the presence of the article. (See also 1.3 below#.)

Similar are <y'n leyff crist> 'in the hand of Christ' P.138a, <y'n mernans crist> 'on the death of Christ' P.214b, <y'n corf Ihesus> 'in(to) the body of Jesus' P.218c, 227a, 228d. In these cases, parallels with <dhe|n> (P.180a for /leuv/; P.98d, 117b and 126d for /mernans/; P.234c and 241b for /korf/) suggest the reading /y'n/ for <y'n>.

**Note.** Phrases like /yn-mysk/ and /yn-kres/, both meaning 'among, amidst' (lit. 'in the centre (of)'), and /yn-mes/ 'out' (lit. 'in(to) the field'), /yn-le/ 'instead' (lit. 'in the place (of)'), etc., are in fact composite prepositions and are to be compared with B *e-mesk*, *e-kreiz*, *e-lec'h* and W *ymysg*, *yng nghanol*, *i-maes*, *yn-lle* with the same meaning and clearly without the article.

(f) The preposition /a/ 'of, from' and the definite article merge into [an], written <an> and conveniently transcribed /a'n/. Examples are:

<a|n par3 ma> 'on this side' EC.18; <a|n nef(f)> 'from the heaven' P.18d, 58b, 72c, etc., O.105, 118, 439, etc.; <a|n|wlas>, <a|n wlas> 'from the land' P.246d, O.343; <a|n|barth cleth> 'on the left hand' P.259d; <a|n keth eghen> 'of the same sort' O.211; <a|n wethen> 'of the tree' O.176, 230, 240; <a|n fleghys> 'of the children' D.432; <a|n pen the|n colon> 'from the head to the belly' D.1743;

(g) Sometimes the syntax has to lead to the decision whether to read /an/ or /a'n/ (see 1.3 below#). Examples are /ha'n vyrtu a'n pregoth/ 'and the import of the preaching' P.23b, and /an vyrtu a'n lavar Krist/ P.68a, but /rann vras an penshon/ 'a large share of the proceeds' P.38b.

## 2. The indefinite article

(a) Despite the many claims that Breton would be the only Celtic language having an indefinite article, Middle Cornish has one too. As in many other languages it was originally the numeral 'one' and came into being through the development of a special semantic function of this numeral. In Middle Cornish the indefinite article describes 'limited indefiniteness' and can often be translated 'a certain'. It is often, but far from always, used to indicate a person who (or a thing which) is going to play a specific role in the story told.

The form of the indefinite article is /unn/. Since the phoneme /u/ could occur in stressed syllables only and was lowered to /y/ elsewhere (not yet in P; cf. I.12#), it is likely that in Middle Cornish the indefinite article was stressed. This is also the case in Breton, especially before monosyllabic nouns where article + noun form a compound (cf. Kervella 76). In P the indefinite article it appears 42 times.

Some examples are:

<vn lam beghan> 'a little pace' P.53c; <vn den henwys sentury> 'a man named Centurion' P.208a; <vn flough yonk> 'a youth' P.254c; <vn el> 'an angel' O.215; <vn venen> 'a woman' O.419, 620, 919; <vn be da> 'one good load' O.1057; <vn skyber efan> 'a spacious barn' D.638; <vn adla> 'an outlaw' D.1686; <un boba>, <un bobba> 'a dunce, a fool' D.1778, 2385;

(b) The sequence of preposition plus indefinite article /yn unn/ appears once as /y'unn/ in <y vn teller> 'in a place' D.501. To make the metre fit this group must have been disyllabic.

### 3. Syntax of the article

(a) The definite article is used before all definite nouns, except when a noun is already defined by another noun in a genitival relation. Examples of this latter instance are:

<gulas nef> 'the land of heaven' P.4a, 23d; <mab marea>, <Mab marya> 'the son of Mary' P.9c, 52a, 54a; <gurek an goff> 'the wife of the smith' P.158a; <frut an wethen a skyans> 'the fruit of the tree of knowledge' O.167; <lafur ha duwon an bys> 'the labour and the sorrow of the world' O.851; <corf an debel venen> 'the body of the wicked woman' O.2251; <gour an chy> 'the man of the house' D.633; <the resons an doctors bras> 'to the arguments of the great doctors' D.1822;

The article is omitted also when the first of the two nouns in such a genitival construction is a verbal noun, as in:

<herdya an gyw> /herdhye an giw/ 'the thrusting of the spear' P.221a; <bos an laddron> 'the being of the thieves' P.229a; <formye an bys> 'the shaping of the world' O.11; <lesky an sacryfys> 'the burning of the sacrifice' O.1324; <guyskel an mor> 'the striking the sea' O.1665; <dyswruthyl an fals profus> 'the doing away [with] the false prophet' D.562; <rak dyswyl an cristenyon> 'for the undoing of the Christians' D.979;

(b) Both nouns are preceded by the article when they are connected by the preposition /a/ 'of, from' or the conjunction /ha/ 'and':

<ha|n virtu a|n pregoth> 'and the import of the preaching' P.23b; <en da ha|n drok>

'the good and the evil' P.24d; <An lader a|n barth dyghow> 'the thief on the right side' P.193a; <an mor ha|n tyryw> 'the sea and the lands' O.26; <an tas (dev) a|n nef> 'the father (God) of the heaven' O.480, 660, 679, etc.; <an dour ha|n eys> 'the water and the grain' O.1559; <an profus a nazare> 'the prophet of Nazareth' D.2197; <an comners a|n pow> 'the commoners of the country' D.2470;

(c) In D the definite article is sometimes used before a proper noun with the meaning 'the one referred to'. The most frequent example is <an ihesu> 'the Jesus' D.1568, 1699, 1744, etc.

(d) Sometimes, the definite article is used where in English one would expect a possessive pronoun, as in <The|n levff arall> 'to the/his other hand' P.180a, <y|n tenewyn> 'in the/his side' P.221b. This happens only when it is clear from the context that a possessive is meant.

(e) When preceded by the preposition /yn/, the indefinite article can be used to form adverbial phrases:

<yn vn payment> 'as a payment' P.39d; <yn vn fystene> 'in a hurry' (i.e. hurriedly) P.48b, 158c, 176a, 241d, 248a; <yn un ro> 'as a gift' P.72c; <yn un scolchye> 'skulkingly' P.74b; <yn vn hanas> 'whispering' (lit. 'in a whisper') P.79d; <yn vn garme> 'making an outcry' (lit. 'in a shouting') P.168a; <In vn stevya> 'in a rush' P.239a; <yn vn lam> 'in a short time' (lit. 'in a jump') O.885;

And probably also <yn vn tonek> 'in one flock' (i.e. 'as a flock') P.257c; <dvn yn vn rew> 'let us go in one row' ('in procession') D.239; <yn vn ro> 'in succession, successively' D.1164.