THE DOUBLE ARTICLE AND RELATED FEATURES OF GENITIVE SYNTAX IN OLD IRISH AND MIDDLE WELSH

This paper examines the internal structure of the OIr. and MW genitive syntagm, and in particular the interaction of ART (article) and PRO (genitive pronoun) with the major constituents HEAD, the head noun of the genitive, N, the noun which modifies HEAD, and the satellites of HEAD and N, namely A (adjective), DEM (demonstrative pronoun), and NUM (numeral). Both OIr. and MW are VO (verb-object) or 'head-initial' languages. Modifying or limiting elements usually follow those modified or limited: relative clauses, adjectives and modifying nouns in genitives follow their HEAD. The linear order of constituents in genitive expressions in both languages under discussion is HEAD – N. In some other languages HEAD is preceded by N, e.g. the English 's-genitive has the structure N – HEAD.

The following are the observed combinations of ART and PRO with HEAD and N. Types A–D are common to both languages, types E–G are peculiar to OIr.:

(A) HEAD – ART – N

OIr.: (1) trimrechtrad natíntathach (Ml. 2 d 5)
‘through the variegation of the interpreters'

MW: (2) penn yr orsed (PKM, 10.16)
‘the top of the mound'

1 Based on a chapter from an MA thesis entitled 'The syntax of the article in Old Irish and Middle Welsh' (University College, Dublin, 1988). I would like to thank Professors Proinsias Mac Cana, Próinsias Ní Chatháin, Brian Ó Cuív, T. Arwyn Watkins, and Pádraig de Brún for their advice and help.


2 In OIr. poetry and law-texts HEAD is sometimes preceded by N, e.g. conamg laech (LU, 8314) 'a warrior of destruction'. On the proposed genitive in OIr. see J. Carney, 'The dating of early Irish verse texts', Éigse 19 (1982–3) 177–216, p. 201; R. Thurneysen, A grammar of Old Irish (Dublin 1948) 158 § 230.

(B) ART – HEAD – N

OIr.: (3) allm in brithemnacte sin (Wb. 6 b 26)
‘that day of judgement’

MW: (4) y peir dadeni (PKM, 44.9–10)
‘the cauldron of rebirth’

(C) ART – HEAD – ART - N

OIr.: (5) dungabail innammarithemnachtae (Ml. 31 b 3)
‘to the taking of the treachery’

MW: (6) y corph y wrec
‘the body of the woman’

(D) HEAD – N

OIr.: (7) imbhad mbec
‘an abundance of bees’

MW: (8) ilathen aryant (PKM, 33.19)
‘a staff of silver’

(E) PRO – HEAD – ART – N

OIr.: (9) a aimh in meicc (V. TRIP., 889)
‘the name of the son’

(F) ART – HEAD – PRO -N

OIr.: (10) in lobra a galair (LU, 10757)
‘the infirmity of his disease’

(G) PRO – HEAD – PRO – N

OIr.: (11) a nggraige senlaitha mo námh (LU, 9319–20)
‘the swift old steeds of my enemies’

Type A occurs in both languages with two definite nouns. ART need not precede HEAD, because HEAD is always definite in this position. In fact ART need only appear before the last noun of a sequence of nouns in a genitival relationship in order to mark all the constituents as definite. In other words, definiteness is regressive in the genitive syntagm in Irish and Welsh. So we can get complex configurations like the following, in which all the constituent nouns are definite although only the last in the sequence has an overt article:

OIr.: (12) da rind ága 7 imgona airthirhuascirt in betha (LL, 31112–13)
‘the two points of battle and slaughter of the northeast of the world’

There is in Old Irish a group of words which tend to resist the article – a feature also of other older Indo-European languages. This resistance is neutralised to some extent when the word in question appears as _n_, so that a word like _demun_ ‘demon’, which rarely appears with _art_ up to the Middle Irish period, may take _art_ if it appears as _N_:

(14) _fri ri na ndemna_ (_LU_, 720)
   ‘against the king of the demons’
(15) _fri shuagaib na ndemna_ (_LU_, 2211)
   ‘against the hosts of the demons’

These two instances exhibit type A where one might expect type D. 

The following examples are from the Old Irish glosses. In each case _N_ has _art_, whereas when it is not a constituent of a genitive expression it has a tendency to resist _art_:

- deacht ‘godhead’: Wb. 2 b 10, 5 c 16, 32 c 15, 32 b 7, Ml. 25 d 6, 66 c 6, 67 c 12
- spirut ‘spirit’: Wb. 5 d 18, 6 d 11, 9 c 30, 12 a 11, 12 b 33, 21 c 2
- recht ‘law’: Wb. 3 c 4; Ml. 46 c 20
- _Pétarlaic_ ‘Old Testament’: Wb. 4 d 25
- _domun_ ‘world’: Wb. 5 c 14, 30 a 18, 15 d 18; Ml. 59 d 3, 67 b 17
- _Assair_ ‘Assyrians’: Ml. 34 b 14
- _persan_ ‘person’: Wb. 22 a 11; Sg. 197 b 10, 200 a 4
- _doinecht_ ‘manhood’: Wb. 32 c 14; Ml. 25 c 8
- _grian_ ‘sun’: Ml. 118 c 12

Type B is the case where _head_ is definite and _N_ lacks the article. Count-nouns do not occur frequently in this type of genitive and examples such as _ind apstaíl soscelae_ (Ml. 42 b 7) ‘the apostles of the Gospel’ are infrequent. Note that _soscelae_ is a word which tends to resist the article in Old Irish: cf. Wb. 14 c 8; _LU_, 9735–6. I would say that the modifying noun in this type of genitive has a quasi-generic meaning and this genitive provides a means of testing capability of nouns in Irish. Type B is found frequently in Old Irish and Middle Welsh. In classical Old Irish prose and in Middle Welsh prose, type D is usually found when both _head_ and _N_ are indefinite. Nor is this the case in Old Irish law-texts or in the oldest poetry in either language, where type D is the most productive genitive. In these registers both _head_ and _N_ can be definite without any overt mark. As an indication of this, in six law-texts twenty-five genitives occurred with _art_ while three hundred and twenty occurred without it.⁶ Even in

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⁶ This sample was taken from the published law-texts _Bretha Cronice_ (ed. D. A. Binchy, _Ériu_ 12 (1933) 1–77), _Coibnes Uisc Thairde_ (ed. idem, _Ériu_ 17 (1951) 52–85), _Bretha Déin Chócht_ (ed. idem, _Ériu_ 20 (1960) 1–66), _Gáetha Camtaind_
classical OIr. prose we find instances of type D where we would expect type A, e.g. *ardor us brudne* (LU, 7785) ‘at the entrance of the hostel’. Both head and n are definite in this example. Similar examples occur in MW prose, e.g. *eithafead bót* (Llyfr Coch, 170.27) ‘the extremities of the world’. We might expect type A here. The opposite also occurs, i.e. type A is found instead of type D, e.g. *oc fumi* in *tuirec* (LU, 4949) ‘cooking a boar’, where *forc* is a first mention.

Types F and G are extremely infrequent in OIr. Of type F only ten other examples have been found. These occur at CIH ii 357.3, iii 745.32; SR, 4658; Gábhatha Camíniad, § 38 gloss; Lismore Lives, 3159, 4450–51; V. Trip., 3084; ML. 24 a 13 b; PH, 2726–7, 4938–9. Only five other examples of type G have been recorded in OIr.: CIH i 86.15–16, i 94.28–7, ii 480.24, iii 967.35; LL, 14642.

Type C is found sparingly in OIr. and hardly ever in MW. The construction is known as the double article.

The collection below is a large body of examples from Old and Middle Irish. It is not intended to be exhaustive.

Cáin *Adamnán*7 (end of 7th cent.), 8 26 § 41
Lambeth Commentary9 (c.725), lines 136, 144, 251, 321–2, 322–3, 325–6, 427
Cáin *Domnaig*10 (1st half of 8th cent.), lines 37, 83, 89
Wb. (c.750), 11 4 a 7, 5 a 5, 11 a 19, 7 c 8 twice, 7 d 9, 9 c 10, 9 d 5, 5 c 16, 21 c 2
Bretha Dén Chécht12 (c.750), § 17
Hamnica minora13 (c.750), lines 94, 164, 440.
Poems of Blatha14 (c.750–70), 30.342
Féilre *Oengusso*,15 (797–808), 16 § 333, 268 § 101
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31 c 3, 31 d 1, 34 b 14, 35 b 16, 36 a 25, 37 b 4, 37 b 21, 37 b 27, 42 c 4, 43 d 18, 44 b 33, 44 d 11, 45 b 8, 46 d 6, 48 a 21, 50 c 11, 56 b 24, 57 d 8, 59 d 3, 61 c 2, 62 b 20, 62 b 23, 66 c 6, 67 b 19, 68 b 9, 72 b 27, 72 d 16, 73 c 9, 74 c 8, 75 c 4, 76 a 3, 77 d 7, 81 a 4, 81 c 8, 90 c 67, 90 c 27, 92 d 5, 93 b 11, 99 a 10, 102 a 14, 111 b 26, 118 d 20, 121 a 6, 122 d 7, 122 d 11, 132 c 8, 127 d 14, 136 b 1, 142 b 2

Sg. (c.845), 18 b 9, 7 b 18, 12 a 3, 14 a 9, 32 a 8, 33 a 26-7, 33 a 28, 39 a 29, 50 a 6, 136 a 2, 149 a 5, 157 b 2, 168 a 3, 198 a 13, 198 a 20, 198 b 3, 200 a 4

LU, 170 (Seo Aedhlaes Mundæ, 11th cent.), 19 453 (commentary on Amra Cholaim Chille, 11th cent.), 20 1364-5 (Dá Brón Flítha Nime), 1630 (Táin Bó Fidais), 1708, 1767, 1860, 1914 (Immmam Curaig Maile Dún, 9th cent.), 21 1939, 1948-9 (Fís Adomnán), 2308, 2319-20 (Scéla Lai Brídha, 11th cent.), 22 2722 (Scéla na Ésérgi), 2951 (Aidechach meic Maireda, 11th cent.), 23 5180 (Táin Bó Cúailnge, 9th cent.), 24 7054, 7074, 7674 (Togail Bruidne Da Derga, c.900), 25 9112-13 (Fled Brícend, 2nd half of 9th cent.), 26 10016 (Echaim Condla Chaim), 10088 (Immmam Brain meic Fbail, 9th cent.), 27 10751-2 (Tochmarc Emere)

LL, 1804 (Do Flaththusaib hÉrenad), 3695 (Suidiged Tígc Mídchúarda), 3801 (Dingnaí Témrach), 31671, 8147-8, 10367 (Táin Bó Cúailnge), 12478 (Scéla Chonchobuir), 31082, 31114, 31669, 32577-8, 31672-3, 31767-8, 31930, 31942-3, 32161, 32214-15, 32216-17, 32428 (Togail Tóth), 33146-7 (Táin Bó Fraich, c.750), 28 33785-6 (Tochmarc Ferbas), 34648-9, 34872 (Mesca Uílad), 35283 (Orgain Dind Rig, beginning of 10th cent.), 29 37320, 37321 (Cath Maise Macrímé, 1st half of 9th cent.), 30

YBL, 31 p. 62 a 14-16

18Thurneysen, Grammar, 6 § 7.
20ibid.
22Strachan, 'Middle Irish declension', 203.
23ibid.
24R. Thurneysen, Die irische Helden- und Königsliste bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert (Halle 1921) 112.
31R. Atkinson (ed.), The Yellow Book of Lecan facsimile (Dublin 1895).
The collection comprises three hundred and fifty-eight examples of type C. Not included in this collection are instances in which N is an inherently definite noun, i.e. a proper noun:

(16) in tres láechaicmi Herend (LU, 1620)
one of the three warrior classes of Ireland

32Scéila Cano meic Garthnám (2nd half of 9th cent.), 2.58
33Betha Colmán meic Luachán (12th cent.). 52.10, 52.12, 84.10, 104.19, 104.25
34V. Tř. (895-936), 7-8, 334, 329, 926, 1993-4, 2066, 2166
35SR (988), 141, 325, 413-14, 3703, 6225-6, 5925, 5907-8, 6115-16, 7289, 8281, 8312
36CIH, i 62.15-16, ii 369.35
37Tenga Bhithe-Nas (10th cent.), §§ 3, 5 (x 2), 11, 22 (x 2), 57, 60, 95, 129, 151
38Echthu Cormaic, 186 § 5
39Aur aicet na nÉces, lines 81-2, 233, 252, 255, 355, 376, 392, 394, 395, 423, 429, 509, 662, 733, 919, 920, 925, 932, 958, 1039, 1057, 1100, 1128, 1134, 1140, 1181, 1199, 1260, 1296, 1513, 1666, 2548, 2565, 2773, 2781, 2784, 2789, 2790, 3276, 3424, 3848, 3854, 3860, 3992, 4013, 4048, 4226, 4228, 4238, 4278, 4370, 4431, 4444, 4544, 4650, 4873, 5275, 5513, 5660, 5664, 5783, 5822, 5828
40Imtheacht Énisa, lines 241-2, 802-3, 920-21, 1021-2, 1033, 1744-5, 1784-5, 1795, 1813, 2353-4, 2472, 2751-2
41PH (c. 1150), 5-6, 37, 48, 152, 347, 404-5, 1086-7, 1487-8, 1490, 1546-7, 1597, 1612-13, 1904-5, 2975, 3064-5, 3375-6, 3424, 3516-17, 3522, 3610, 3812-13, 4290, 4299, 4347-8, 4579, 4581, 4675, 4678, 4713-14, 4719, 4826-7, 4830, 4928-9, 4938-9, 4941, 4944, 4982, 4992, 5217-18, 5426-7, 5440-41, 5474, 5484, 5514, 5516, 5527-8, 5539, 5562, 5729, 5840-41, 5845, 5848, 5893, 5894-5, 5929, 5967, 6024, 6045-6, 6099, 6120, 6140, 6173-4, 6186-7, 6213, 6344-5, 6389, 6374, 6589-90, 6790, 6838, 6919, 7241, 7468-9, 8032, 8114, 8307-8, 8312-13
42Lismore Lives, 663-4, 676-7, 732, 834, 978, 1917, 3315, 2600, 2642, 3754-5, 3883

The collection comprises three hundred and fifty-eight examples of type C. Not included in this collection are instances in which N is an inherently definite noun, i.e. a proper noun:
Double Article in Old Irish and Middle Welsh

(17) forsin muinciund mór Mara Caisp (LL, 194)
'on the great surface of the Caspian Sea'

The following similar instances have been recorded:

A chóicid choín Chairpri cruaid⁴⁰ (c. 770–800), 184.12
ML, 16 c 5, 41 a 11, 65 c 16, 121 a 6
LU, 576, 1392, 1586, 1620, 3226, 3461, 3656, 4338, 4609, 5257, 6440,
7890, 7929, 8112, 8277, 8412, 8421, 8788, 9817–18
LL, 30, 66, 1101, 1105, 3065, 3808, 3881, 7483–4, 7910, 9595, 9578–9,
12507, 12509, 12510–13, 14408–9, 14438, 22810, 23199, 23229, 31763,
31897, 31926, 32529
YBL,⁴¹ p. 134 a 50, 137 a 15
V. Trip., 425–6, 814
Betha Colmáin mac Lúacháin, 4.10, 22.7, 42.3–4, 42.4, 54.18–19, 56.3,
58.3–4, 76.16, 78.17, 80.15–16, 102.8–9, 102.11, 102.12
SR, 5198
Imhechla Éniasa, lines 42, 94, 379, 1347, 1658, 1692–3, 1706
Echtra Cormaic, 186 § 4, 187 § 6
PH, 5–6, 48, 3856–7, 4281, 4541, 4899
Auracept na nÉces, line 5350
Lismore Lives, 1790, 1837, 3346–7

Analysis of Type C

Type C occurs most frequently when head is accompanied by a modifier. This is the only sub-category of type C that is productive in OIr. and for which it is possible to produce useful statistics. The nominal modifier may be pre-modificatory, a, num, or post-modificatory, a, dem, as the following examples will show:

(18) frissalind serb inúrsachta (Wb 7 d 9)
'with the bitter drink of reproval'
(19) isin chorthair thuascertaig in domain (LL, 31942–3)
'in the northern part of the world'
(20) in cora coilecnd na fine (CIH ii 369.15)
'the common fishing weir of the kin-group'
(21) na hui lí arrachta na n-idal (V. Trip., 334)
'all the spectres of the idols'
(22) isind aidchi si na casc⁴²
'on this eve of Easter'
(23) in tress p ersu na diadachta uaisle (PH, 3951)
'the third person of the noble divinity'

⁴¹R. Atkinson (ed.), The Yellow Book of Lecan facsimile (Dublin 1896).
The above genitivcs have the configuration [head – mod] – art – n. The tendency for head to take art is particularly marked in the glosses, so that genitivcs with the above configuration rarely appear without art. In fact in Wb., Ml. and Sg. only ten examples were found lacking art: Wb. 1 a 3, 3 a 14, 3 d 22, 12 b 33 Ml. 26 d 12, 38 c 7, 65 b 14, 105 b 7, Sg. 200 b 10, 215 b 7. Six examples have art in Wb. 4 a 7, 7 d 9, 9 c 10, 9 d 5, 11 a 19 (x 2). Seventeen examples have art in Ml. 15 a 2, 22 d 9, 25 a 8, 31 a 12, 31 b 24, 31 c 3, 37 b 21, 44 d 11, 48 a 21, 59 d 3, 62 b 20, 62 b 23, 66 c 6, 68 b 9, 99 a 9, 121 a 6, 138 b 1. Twelve examples have art in Sg. 7 b 9, 7 b 18, 12 a 3, 14 a 9, 32 a 8, 33 a 26, 27, 39 a 29, 50 a 6, 156 a 2, 149 a 5, 157 b 2, 198 a 13.

This tendency for head to take art when modified is not as marked in other forms of OIr. prose. Thus in LU, twelve examples occur with art while twenty-three occur without it:


In the first four volumes of LL eighteen examples were found with art and forty-nine examples without it.

With: 1804, 3695, 3801, 8147–8, 10367, 12478, 31082, 31114, 31669, 31930, 31942, 31671, 31672, 31767–8, 32161, 32214–15, 32577–8, 32428.

The percentages are:

Glosses 78%
LU 34%
LL 27%

The statistics are misleading in so far as they show a gradual decrease in the frequency of this type of genitive during the OIr. period. The relative chronology of texts has little to do with the frequency of the genitive in question. It is rather a question of register. Religious texts show a proclivity for type C, it being used more stylistically than syntactically. In these religious texts (Fis Adomnán, Scéla na Ésírgi, Lambeth
Commentary, V. Trip., PH, Tenga Bhith-Nua, Féilire Óengusso, SR, Wb., ML.) we can even find the same words appearing in this type of genitive.

(25) in tres perso na deachta úsála (LU, 2308, cf. PH, 1086–7, 3951, 6185–6, 6838)

‘the third person of the noble Godhead’

The most common type of modifier of HEAD is DEM, and it is doubtful whether DEM has any deictic force in these religious texts. In the long text, PH, for instance, there are twenty-nine examples of enclitic -sa, -se, and six examples of sin.


sin: 5–6, 404–5, 2975, 3375, 4678, 8114.

The question poses itself as to why ART tends to precede HEAD when it is modified. The phenomenon is easily explained when the modifier is DEM, since these lexical items rarely appear in OIr. without ART in combination with nouns, and the absence of ART before nouns followed by DEM in genitives results in an intuitively felt gap before HEAD.43

All modifying elements — whether DEM, NUM or A — increase the specification of HEAD, and this is sometimes marked with ART. Modifiers introduce the mechanism of contrastive emphasis into genitives — if HEAD is modified and N is not, then it follows that HEAD must have more emphasis than N or that HEAD is the more topical constituent of the genitive. In such a situation ART may appear before HEAD in surface syntax.

That ART and PRO may be used as indicators of contrastive emphasis in genitives is proved by the following examples:

(26) . . . etir a taírnghere γ inomallad intaírngheri (MI. 122 d 7)

‘. . . between the promise and the fulfilment of the promise’

43 Thurneysen, Grammar, 300 § 475, says that nouns followed by a demonstrative particle lacking the article appear to be scribal errors, but an example that occurs in Carney, Poems of Bleátmac, 32.361, cén hice ‘without these things’, is guaranteed by metre (ibid., xxii). Other instances are also found, e.g. belbhain (MI. 53 c14) ‘that life’, iar sétain (SR 1687) ‘after that way’, illeth-see (Lismore Lives, 1962) ‘in this direction’, re taec selbh, sro (Bheth Colmáin mac Lácaín, 12.30) ‘together with the psalter’, cia aolgh sa (Imbechtu Emsae, line 1318) ‘who are these hosts’, hifgar digammsa ‘into the sound of digamma’ (Sr. 14 a 6). The Royal Irish Academy’s Dictionary of the Irish language s.v. digammmas takes this as a mistake for digamma, but -sa could well be the clitic demonstrative: ‘into the sound of this digamma’. Two examples have been recorded in which a noun is followed by the reflexive fein and lacks the article: ducharthaí feisin (MI. 131 c 3) ‘of the city itself’, do chrann feisin (Sr. 61 b 8) ‘for the tree itself’.
(27) dodechor etir ammann innacrann γ ammann a toraid
innacrannsin (Sg. 61 b 3)
' to make a difference between the names of the trees and names of
the fruit of those trees'

In both examples we have two occurrences of the same noun faírne
and crann. The first occurrence is co-ordinated with a genitive in which
the second occurrence is N. HEAD is contrastively emphasised in the
first example by ART and in the second by a proleptic PRO. In fact most
eamples of the proleptic genitive PRO display contrastive emphasis.

PARTITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

This section contains an analysis of partitives and genitiv es in MW
in which HEAD is modified. It will become apparent that in many cases
where we would find a genitive in OIr. we get a partitive in MW. Of par-
ticular concern will be the role of ART with modifiers in the MW partitive
and genitive. The section begins with a discussion of the distribution of
the partitive vis-à-vis the genitive in both languages.

The partitive is used in both OIr. and MW when HEAD is a single
entity or a group constituting a subset of N, e.g. HEAD – [PP – ART] – N.
This will suffice as a working definition of the partitive.

(28) Irish: duine den fhoireann; Welsh: un o'r tim
'a player of the team'

The genitive in this instance would imply that the team in question has
only one player. But the situation is more complex than this in OIr.
and MW. In OIr. we find examples of the partitive in which both HEAD
and N are definite, e.g. at LL, 36566, the phrase in lae ch do r omanchaib
occurs, in which both constituents are definite. The equivalent genitive
would be lae ch na rómánaich. However, there is a clear semantic distinc-
tion here between the constructions. In lae ch do r omanchaib can only
mean 'the Roman warrior', and is so translated by Meyer.44 Lae ch na
rómańaich can only mean 'the warrior of the Romans', implying that in
this situation the Romans have only one warrior.

Similar prepositional phrases are found in OIr. and Mid.Ir. which do
not differ semantically from their genitive counterparts:

(29) indi dubcend oc Diarmait (LU, 1043) = di dubcend Diarmata
'the two black-headed horses of Diarmait'
(30) na tri meic oc Nabcodon (LU, 2501) = tri meic Nabcodoin
'the three sons of Nabcodon'

It is in such phrases as the above that I would see the genesis of the
development that took place in Eastern Gaelic by which the genitive
PRO was largely replaced by the syntagm ART – NP – PP (inflected). In
Scottish Gaelic we would say an laigh agam 'mo theach', an cú agam

44K. Meyer, 'Anecdota from Irish MSS. IX', Irisleabhar na Gaeilge 4 (1893)
215–17, p. 217.3.
'mocht'. In both OIr. and MW the genitive pro can be replaced by the syntagm ART – NP – PP (inflected), e.g.

OIr. in scíath dó (LU, 7983) 'his shield'
Mid.Ir. in cet bás dó (PH, 1213) 'his first death'

MW y damned udunt (Llyfr Coch, 28.30) 'their teeth'

There is one syntactic environment in OIr. in which partitive and genitive are in free variation. This is when HEAD is a relative copular sentence introduced by the relative particle a, and contains a predicative A, e.g.

(a) a mbad soirem na mbad seisc dind folud (LU, 5607–8) [literally, 'what would be noblest of the women and what would be dry of the kine'] 'the noblest of the women and the dry kine'
(b) Berar 'n-as [= a n-as] blicht dond alaid dó γ 'n-as dáer na braiti (LL, 9017; cf. LU, 4979–80)

'Let those of the cattle that have milk and those of the captives that are base-born be given to him'

We shall now examine genitives and partitives in MW in which HEAD is modified by A, DEM and NUM. The two available syntagms have the following structures:

GEN. [HEAD – mod.] – ART – N
PAR. ART – [HEAD – mod.] – PP – ART – N

The choice between genitive and partitive is determined by the modifier and its occurrence with ART. If the modifier is such that it invariably occurs with ART in combination with nouns then the partitive tends to be used. If the modifier can occur in combination with nouns without ART then the genitive is used. Therefore, we should expect the partitive when the modifier of HEAD is DEM or a superlative A since in combination with nouns superlatives and demonstratives normally take ART. In the following analysis all genitives and partitives in which HEAD is modified have been listed. The analysis is based on the texts

When a superlative adjective follows the noun it modifies, there is a strong tendency for the noun to take the article. In Llyfr Coch there are 101 instances of nouns with the article modified by a superlative. Only 18 instances were recorded which lacked the article: ART – NP – SUP. A, 3.8, 4.9, 9.3, 11.9, 11.12, 11.24, 13.5, 17.24, 20.8, 25.1, 25.2, 45.4, 48.27, 48.30, 52.10–11, 54.16, 55.3, 68.19, 71.25, 73.22–3, 73.27, 79.6, 80.13, 83.20, 86.15–16, 88.12–13, 88.21, 89.6, 93.14–15, 97.1, 97.12, 98.2, 98.10, 110.22–3, 113.2, 113.29, 117.26, 124.20–21, 130.13, 132.30, 132.37, 132.47, 148.11–12, 151.30, 152.1, 155.14, 155.20, 159.6–7, 159.8, 163.1, 164.17, 164.24–5, 167.21–2, 170.3, 185.18–19, 191.16–17, 204.2, 205.15, 206.15–17, 207.2–3, 211.17, 211.26, 211.21, 213.26–7, 214.6, 218.15, 219.4–5, 224.17, 225.26, 227.8, 227.9, 227.10, 227.16, 228.20, 232.15, 233.12, 236.27, 238.9, 239.30, 241.9–10, 251.13, 252.23, 256.5, 257.27, 258.22, 259.29, 263.12, 268.5, 269.22–3, 270.16, 270.17, 273.19, 276.6–7, 277.31, 279.28, 288.21, 291.3, 292.4, 293.11; NP – SUP. A 4.1–2, 5.3.25, 60.10, 83.3, 83.7, 87.6, 91.13, 126.19–20, 131.3, 151.6, 154.38, 183.27, 195.7–8, 218.24, 276.12, 281.11, 281.14, 287.12.
Llyfr Blewyrd, Llyfr Coch, PKM, BB. The conclusions and statistics only are given here. All the examples can be found in the appendix to this paper.

(i) The modifier is a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Llyfr Blewyrd, gen:</th>
<th>1.5, 3.22, 9.19–20, 16.11–12, 18.27, 22.11, 27.1, 35.1, 43.23, 43.24, 62.12, 65.9, 67.8, 74.22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Llyfr Blewyrd, par:</td>
<td>65.27–8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: gen</td>
<td>14, par 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB, gen:</td>
<td>171–2, 352, 512, 623, 689–90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: gen</td>
<td>5, par 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llyfr Coch, gen:</td>
<td>95.7, 97.27, 112.20–21, 181.26, 202.16–17, 235.4–5, 239.20–21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llyfr Coch, par:</td>
<td>202.14, 222.20–21,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: gen</td>
<td>7, par 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKM, gen:</td>
<td>4.23, 13.1–2, 13.19–20, 40.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKM, par:</td>
<td>42.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: gen</td>
<td>4, par 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are thirty genitives and four partitives in the MW texts. In conclusion then we may say that there is a tendency to use the genitive when HEAD is modified by a.

(ii) The modifier is a superlative a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Llyfr Blewyrd, gen:</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Llyfr Blewyrd, par:</td>
<td>1.17, 6.21, 7.7–8, 11.21, 22.22–3, 28.21, 72.25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: gen</td>
<td>0, par 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BB, gen:</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total: gen</td>
<td>0, par 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Llyfr Coch, gen:</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Llyfr Coch, par:</td>
<td>82.20, 83.18–19, 83.20, 87.6, 91.13, 93.14–15, 148.11–12, 185.19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: gen</td>
<td>0, par 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PKM, gen:</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PKM, par:</td>
<td>71.14, 90.8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: gen</td>
<td>0, par 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All eighteen examples in which HEAD is modified by a superlative a are partitives. It seems therefore that there was a strong tendency in MW to avoid the genitive here. I suggest that the reason for this situation is that superlatives always occur with definite nouns in MW prose. Superlatives never modify HEAD in genitives, because genitives require automatic deletion of ART before HEAD, unlike partitives. There
is another reason, however although it is purely conjectural: Welsh differs from OIr. in the syntax of superlative and comparative as – in Welsh they may and usually are used attributively.\(^46\) In Irish they must, up to the present day, be used predicatively. The transition from predicative to attributive emanated from the use of superlatives and comparatives in \(\emptyset\) – copular sentences, e.g.

\((33)\) wr well no Chynon\(^47\)

\textit{'a man better than Cynon'}

In the above example the relative copula a \(\textit{fei}\) has been deleted between \textit{gwr} and \textit{guell} but the lenition caused by the copula is preserved because this is an interrogative sentence. At some stage in the development of Welsh the superlative also must have been used predicatively in the same manner as the comparative above. The fact that superlatives show an overwhelming tendency not to modify \textit{head} in genitives may be a vestige of the predicative use of superlatives. The genitive syntagm would not have been possible under such circumstances – the partitive would have to have been used.

\((34)\)  
\textbf{GEN} \(^\ast\) y gwr a \textit{fei fwyaf y fyddin} 
\textbf{PAR} y gwr a \textit{fei fwyaf o'r fyddin} 

\textit{'the best man of the army'}.

Of the five examples found in the texts in which \textit{head} is modified by \textit{dem}, all are partitive, the reason once again being that \textit{dem} always takes \textit{art} in combination with nouns. As regards numerals the ratio is \textit{gen} 13, \textit{par} 8.

The statistics on type \textit{C} in OIr. raise the question as to why it is found more frequently in the glosses than in other forms of OIr. prose. Apart from the fact already mentioned that Wb. and Ml. are Biblical glosses and type \textit{C} is used stylistically in the religious register of OIr. and

\(^{46}\) When used attributively superlative adjectives may be preposed or postposed in MW. When preposed they are never preceded by the article. There are two syntactic environments in which superlative adjectives appear before the noun they modify. Firstly, when they constitute the first arm of an identificatory copular sentence, e.g. disemylaf gwereic... oed \textit{(Llyfr Coch, 4.17-18)} 'she was the most unaffected woman'; teckaf morwyn oed \textit{(Llyfr Coch, 39.11)} 'she was the most beautiful maiden'; gweir kywaryd ym y byt oed \textit{(Llyfr Coch, 61.8-9)} 'he was the best storyteller in the world'; also \textit{Llyfr Coch, 27.30, 82.3, 83.10-11, 114.17-18, 127.26, 152.6, 173.9-10, 175.28, 201.23-4, 203.1-2, 244.6, 258.8}. Secondly, when they are preceded by the predicative particle \textit{yn}, e.g. ar uernines y gyt ac wynt yn deckaf gwereic o'r a welsei neb \textit{(Llyfr Coch, 4.10-11)} 'and the queen with them, the most beautiful woman that anyone ever saw'; Yn eu yna a mair gwr yndow ac yn delediwhaf gwas o'r welas dyn ycycoet \textit{(Llyfr Coch, 73.19-20)} 'And he himself there with a man's physique and (he was) the most handsome lad that a man ever saw'; also \textit{Llyfr Coch, 80.16, 84.27-8, 85.14, 215.14-15, 215.19, 216.28-9, 220.17, 220.18-19, 224.24}. Superlative and comparative adjectives are always used predicatively in OIr. The only exception to this rule known to me is \textit{saeb} 'pervasive': it doin saibib em dogniat inso \textit{(Ml. 3 a 8)} 'they are most perverse people who do this'.

\(^{47}\) I/. Williams (ed.), \textit{Gweuni Aneirin} (Caerdydd 1938) 8.200.
Mid.Ir., many of the examples found in the glosses exhibit the influence of the Latin text, just as one might expect. Consider the following example. The lemma is the dative form *captioni*, glossed by the genitive expression.

\[ (35) \text{dungabail innammraithemnachtae (Mi. 31 b 3)} \]
\[ 'to the taking of the treachery' \]

When it is specifically **head** in the genitive expression, rather than *n*, which glosses the Latin text then **art** may precede **head**. We might say that **art** functions as an indicator of focussed emphasis. It augments **head**, marking it as the more important constituent of the genitive. Similarly at *Thes.* i 259.21 the lemma is *pro exageratione*, which is glossed as:

\[ (36) \text{arin dumugud inna pecthe ón (Mi. 76 a 3)} \]
\[ 'for the exaggeration of the sins'. \]

Once again **head** has **art** because there is a one-to-one correspondence between it and the Latin *exageratione*. **head** is the more important constituent of the genitive. At *Thes.* i 542.6 the lemma is *aedesia uniuersa Christi*:

The Irish text reads:

\[ (37) . . . i. in chatlach inna fer (Wb. 7 c 8) \]
\[ 'the universe of the men' \]

There is one-to-one correspondence between the Latin adjective *uniuersa* and the **head** of the genitive in *chatlach*. In the following examples the **head** of the genitive is given and the word in the lemma with which it has a one-to-one correspondence.

innatim threc h ta (Mi. 42 c 4): sermonis
bonaib imbedaib (Mi. 45 b 8): copiis
aforcenn (Mi. 59 b 1): terminus
afuar (Mi. 81 c 2): prouidentiae
intoscuugud (Mi. 72 b 27): successio
indauglair (Mi. 73 c 9): auctoribus
infoircnihidot (Mi. 102 a 14): exterminatorem
aforcital (Mi. 103 b 6): docendi
bonaib coscaib (Mi. 111 b 26): castigationibus
trissammrechtrad (Mi. 122 d 11): ornatum
intesami (Mi. 142 b 2): fiduciam
tresingenitin (Sg. 201 a 2): in genetium

A somewhat different example occurs at *Thes.* i 80.21. The Latin reads *plaga . . . illa qua coesi sunt, qua magnitudine sui Deum esse in medio iustorum evidentissime comprobuit*. i. *plaga*. The Irish text reads:
glossing *qua magnitudine*, according to the editors. Although there is no one-to-one correspondence between the Latin and Irish, *plaga* is contextually 'well known' or 'given' information and *art* is used to mark this. All the examples discussed in this section show the influence of the Latin text. An example that occurs at *CII* ii 369.35 can be explained by the same process. The original text reads *Im cors dūn*, which is glossed by *issin dūn coîtcend na fine* 'in the common fort of the tribe'. There is a one-to-one correspondence between *dūn* in the original text and *dun* in the gloss.

There is a proclivity to mark *head* with *art* in surface syntax in a discourse situation where *head* is fully specified by references to it in the preceding discourse. These references contain a noun which is co-referential, though not necessarily lexically identical, to *head*. This might be stated another way: the more well established a noun is in the discourse at hand, the more likely it is to take *art* if it appears as *head* in a genitive expression, as the following examples show:

(38) *innaplage innanasar* (*MI* 34 b 14)

'of the disaster of the Assyrians'


'Now this beatitude has appeared in its proper place. For he who fulfils these beatitudes is likened to a sick man. It is such a one’s habit that he cannot eat a meal until his sickness lightens. Thereafter he eats and is expected to live. Similarly the sinner: thirst for justice does not lay hold of him until he fulfils the beatitude of poverty.'

(40) *innuaisletaid* i. *ní dignéd Duid innuaisletaid innafindbuidi* adflad-lar isin salmo (*MI* 14 b 4)

'The height, that is, David would not have ascribed the height of bliss that is declared in this psalm'

(41) *huandisiu* i. *huandimhíud innanámat* (*MI* 72 d 16)

'from this, from the abundance of the enemies'

(42) *Bun 7 Meccun sin olsé da chometaib ind rig insin da mac Máffir Thuill*. Imda na cometaidi ind rig (*LU*, 7672–4)

'“They are Bun and Meccun,” said he, “the two guards of the king, the two sons of Máffir Thuill. The apartment of the guards of the king”.'

Carney and Bieler, 'Lambeth Commentary', lines 129–35.
Further examples occur at Wb: 13c 26, Ml: 28c 19, 43: 18,
and Sg: 61b 3.

There is a related type which is possibly to be explained by the
occurrence of associative anaphora in the discourse:

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Further examples occur at Wb: 13c 26, Ml: 28c 19, 43: 18,
and Sg: 61b 3.
There is some positive evidence which supports the analysis of these genitives as single constituents or phrases: they are largely indivisible with respect to post-nominal modifiers, i.e. HEAD and N are in such close syntactic association that lexical items rarely intervene between them. In the long text PH sixteen examples of the genitive expression in Coimhdu nu ndula were recorded and only twice did it occur with A: lines 6374, 6173–4. In these examples A is preposed.

Syntax of co-ordination

ART may appear before HEAD in the syntax of co-ordination. Now co-ordination in OIr. and Mid.Ir. can be accompanied by conjunction reduction of the categories preposition, PRO and ART. The following illustrate conjunction reduction of ART:

(53) angaibther isindhuninu l croit (Wb. 12 c 44)
   'what is played on the pipe or harp'
(54) sechis indfrithorcunsón 7 digal (MI. 87 a 11)
   'that is, the offence and punishment'
(55) imon rig 7 deoraid 7 annais (Belha Colmáin maic Lúcháin, 102.4)
   'with the king and strangers and mercenaries'
(56) in duibsin 7 dearrtan
   'storm and thunder'
(57) for an domattaid 7 dáidbre (PH, 4234)
   'on the want and poverty'

Similarly, when HEAD consists of a series of co-ordinated nouns ART may appear before the first noun in the sequence, the remaining nouns lacking ART:

51 Birchey, Sídla Cno maic Garthnáin, 2.88.
52 On the term 'conjunction reduction' see P. Kiparsky, 'Tense and mood in Indo-European syntax', Foundations of Language 4 (1968) 30–57, p. 30 n. 4. Examples of conjunction reduction of PRO are trísa mith-son 7 bennachtain (PH, 4299) 'through his pledge and his blessing' and no-scrochand 7 marbnd (PH, 4198) 'he hangs and kills them', the latter illustrating the reduction of a pronominal infix.
53 Calder, Imthchúa Eanna, line 224.
(58) ... in gairguba 7 golgairi 7 iachtaich 7 eignmeach 7 maigrneach in tshloigh mormuirnigh na namat. 54.

'... the cry of sorrow and lamentation and yell and shout and wailing of the tumultuous host of the enemy...' 

Alternately ART may precede all the constituents of HEAD:

(59) dindbhéstatu etndind tinchosc innandoine (Wb. 5 c 16)}

'from the morality and from the teaching of human beings'

(60) cosmailius innaréatae tanide 7 innacumscaighthe inmenman frisna gnirmu corphí (Ml. 15 a 2)

'a comparison of the subtle things and of the motions of the mind with the bodily actions'

(61) tar in cladh t har in cora a ferainn fein (CIH iii 745.32)

'over the bank or over the fence of his own territory'

(62) doriacht in Scithedca tuascertach 7 in Ethiopacda descertach. 7 in tinnacda aiththerach in domain (LL, 32576-8)

'he reached the Scythian north and the Ethiopian south and the Indian east of the world'

(63) in tóescach 7 in tinsaitin na fola (LL, 37321)

'the spilling and the shedding of the blood'

(64) in grian 7 in gainem in mara (LU, 1883)

'the gravel and the sand of the sea'

In the above six examples HEAD consists of two co-ordinated nouns. In the following example the first noun is co-ordinated with the genitive syntagm but is independent of it. HEAD receives ART here under the influence of the first noun, which is preceded by ART:

(65) sechis inna diamri t inna imdoirsean inna loc cossecarthae (Ml. 92 d 5)

'that is, the secret places, or the vestibules of the consecrated places'

Examples of type C remain which do not fit acceptably into any of the above categories. In the case of the following examples, as in the cases involving co-ordination, the occurrence of double ART in the second clause seems to lend balance or symmetry to the statement:

(66) indithis tete inpeccad issi tete in pían innadiglae (Ml. 28 c 19)

'the circuit by which the sin comes, by that comes the punishment of the vengeance'

54 Calder, Imthechta Éniosse, lines 528-9
(67) it uilliu innammaini doralaissiu damsia indatae indánaí innanguide rongadsa daitsiu a dáé (Ml. 43 d 18)
more abundant are the riches which you have given me than the gifts of the prayers that I have prayed unto thee O God'

A common factor in the following is that the double art occurs in a relative clause and head is not modified: Ml. 24 d 12, 27 b 15, 37 b 4, 37 b 16, 90 c 67, 118 d 20, Sg. 198 b 3. These examples may involve cataphoric occurrences of the double article.

Type E: PRO - HEAD - ART - N
Consider the following examples:

(68) Amal ro bátar and trath nóna deód lai co n-accatai bachlach móir forgrainne chucu isa tech. Indar leó ni rabí la Ultú láth gaile rosassad leth méite fair. Bà úathmar 7 bá granni a innas in bachlaig (LU, 9182–5)
As they were there one evening at the end of the day they saw a great hideous churl coming towards them into the house. It seemed to them that there was no warrior of the Ulaid that was half as big as him. Terrible and ugly was the manner of the churl'

In the text the word bachlach appears as new information and is immediately specified by λ - móir. When it occurs a second time it is pronominalised. The third reference to bachlach is a genitive expression headed by a proleptic genitive PRO.55 Genitives of this type typically occur in such a discourse situation. They must be co-referent to a pronoun or a noun which is close to them, since pronouns refer over short distances. If the distance between references is too long the topicality of the modifying noun increases, precluding the use of PRO before HEAD and the normal unmarked genitive type λ is used. In the following examples, note that the distance between references is slight:

(69) Atchiat úadbh iar sin sliab már isind insi 7 imráidset techt dia déiscin na hindse ass (LU, 1744–5)
They saw a big mountain on the island and they rowed onwards to view the island from it'

(70) Cid díamháipthai na báethlaegu ol in b-áegaire már hisin. Caírn hi lai a mmaithre na hloega ol Germáne (LU, 1751–2)
"Why do you frighten the tender calves", said that big shepherd.
"Where are the mothers of these calves", said German.

55 In copular sentences the pronoun can anticipate a noun in the nominative and a genitive need not be construed, e.g. bidh mor a cata in gein . . . (Lismore Lives, 1838) 'great shall be the dignity of the infant . . . '; cf. (LU, 7778). In Ériu 2 (1906) 24 § 7 (apparatus), R. I. Best suggests emending Círtho móir a nert a colaind to . . . nert a chomlaind, thereby constituting a genitive and omitting the proleptic pronoun. Perhaps such an emendation is unnecessary.
(71) Boi coire feile la Laignieu. Buchat a ainm. Tech n-Œged fer nHerend a thech in Buchet (LL, 35341–2)
  ‘The Laigin had a cauldron of generosity called Buchet. Buchet’s house was the guesthouse of the men of Ireland’

(72) Dothiagat ángil ara chend a láma foena fris. Fo chen duit. tair im uchta. Cucumsa doraga ol alaile. Is comthrom dano a maith γ a saich ind firse (LL, 36443–5)
  ‘Angels came before him, their arms languid against him. “Welcome, come into my bosom”. “To me he shall come”, says another. Equal are the good and the evil of this man’.

Pokorny saw in the proleptic genitive PRO, an instance of ‘das nicht-indogermanische Substrat im Irischen’. He noted that the possessive suffix is used with the same proleptic force in Coptic and Berber, e.g.

(73) Kunef en Abraham
  ‘sein Schoss von Abraham’ = ‘Abrahams Schoss’

Type E is found most frequently when N – the modifying noun – is animate, indeed it occurs frequently when N is a human noun. This characteristic may be a function of the genitive PRO, i.e. possession is a concept that is thought of chiefly in terms of our own species.


N is inanimate: Wb. 25 b 27; Ml. 36 c 20, 138 a 3, Sg 47 b 5, LU, 1928, 2446, 2480, 8739, 10178–9; LL, 8039, 23092, 32295, 35342, 35468–9; V. Trwp. 2777; Lismore Lives, 2019, 3866.

One noun ainm ‘name’ has a proclivity to appear as head in type E when the genitive is the second arm of an identificatory copular sentence.

(74) Botha a ainm in puirt sin (LU, 5379)
  ‘Botha is the name of that place’

(75) Áth Carpati a chomainm inn atha (LL, 8806–7)
  ‘Áth Carpati is the name of the ford’

(78) Cormac Snithene a aimh in meicc (V. Trip. 889)
'Cormac Snithene is the name of the son'

Cf. LL, 8827; V. Trip. 1509–1510, 1657, 2315.

The constructions discussed in this paper suggest that there is a
hierarchy of definiteness in the OIr. genitive syntagm. In this respect
the behaviour of ART and PRO in the genitive syntagm mirrors their
behaviour in normal discourse functions in Old Irish.57 Type A, HEAD –
ART – N, is the normal unmarked construction for two definite nouns. It
seems best to regard type A as having a covert ART before HEAD which
is phonologically null. Under certain circumstances this covert ART is
phonologically realized. One such circumstance is when HEAD is fully
specified by references to it in the preceding discourse. In this respect
type C has a higher degree of definiteness than type A. Type E, PRO –
HEAD – ART – N, occurs when N the modifying noun is coreferential with
a pronoun or a noun which is close to it. Type E has a higher degree
of definiteness than types A and C, indicated by PRO, which appears
before HEAD. In fact type E is intermediate between type C and full
pronominalisation, i.e. PRO – NP. The difference between type E and
full pronominalisation is illustrated by the following example:

A mboi Pátraic oc baitáed Óengussa, luid ernted na bachlaí tréina
thragid Óengusso (V. Trip., 2297–8)
'When Pátraic was baptising Óengus, the point of the crozier went
through the foot of Óengus'.

Full pronominalisation here, i.e. tréina thagid, would of course result
in ambiguity. Type E circumvents this ambiguity and simultaneously
indicates a higher degree of definiteness than types A and C through
retention of PRO.

Type C is very much peripheral in MW. The examples found number
less than twenty. Most occur in translation literature and probably result
from this fact.58 Four examples occur in The White Book Mabinigion,59
only one of which is found in Llyfr Coch – Mabinigion, 154.29–30 =
Llyfr Coch, 223.2–3: meibion y brenhin ydiodeyfed ‘the sons of the
king of suffering’. In most of the examples N, the modifying noun,
is inherently definite. Along with the examples cited in Grammar of
Middle Welsh and Y Bibyl Ynghymraec we may add: a’r hon Gymry
oll ‘and that of all Wales’ (Llyfr Blegywyd, 2.11); a’r honn y brenhin
a’r vrenhines ‘and that of the king and queen’ (6.2); y nauvetyl yd Meı

57 On the scalar or hierarchical nature of definiteness see K. C. Kosuth, 'Definite
default in Old Icelandic', American Indian and Indo-European studies: papers in
honor of Madison S. Beeler (ed. K. Klar et al., Trends in Linguistics, Studies and
58 See T. Jones, Y Bibyl Ynghymraec (Caeredydd 1940) 67–8; D. Simon Evans, A
grammar of Middle Welsh (Dublin 1954) 25.
59 Ed. J. Gwenogvryn Evans, Pwylheli 1907.
the ninth day of May' (21.18); o' r' kalan Mei 'from the first day of May' (48.17).

In *A historical morphology and syntax of Breton* (Dublin 1975) 46 § 1.2, Roparz Hemon states that in genitives like *an thron an agés* 'the
throne of the angels', *ar ruin an ifern* 'the ruin of hell', the word *an*
before the modifying noun is not the definite article but a contraction
of the preposition *a* 'of' and the article, i.e. *a + an*. He notes that in
Middle Breton *art* is sometimes found before *head* when *n* is inherently
definite, e.g. *an les lesu* 'the court of Jesus'.

George Broderick lists five examples of double *art* in Manx: 60 *os*
*K'ed an g'au* 'in the trade of the smith', *eg b'd'o'n na gríson* 'at the
foot of the stairs', *web an raid in buis* 'out of the way of the cow', *an lai
d'gu'n* 'Juan's house', *na prósúin na 'Kágo* 'the prisoners of war'.

Type C is widely attested in Modern Irish, though its range of usage
is not as broad as in the OIr. and Mid.Ir. periods. It seems not to be used
in the syntax of co-ordination or as an indicator of contrastive emphasis.
Nevertheless there are four subcategories which can be distinguished.

(i) The case where *head* is accompanied by a modifier:

(77) *os na guibsea na gabhalóige*61

'from these tips of the fork'

(78) *an t-an-challán na bpaíisti* 62

'the great noise of the children'

(79) *fan chasaír mhór sin na dtonn*63

'about that great tumult of the waves'

(80) *sa pointe deanach a[n] bhais*64

'in the late point of death'

(81) *an sa nglean so [na] ndeór*65

'in this valley of tears'

(ii) The case in which *n* is an inherently definite noun:

(82) *insa Cúige Uladh*66

'in the province of Ulster'

61 Dublin, University College, IFC MS 1174, p. 33.
62 Example supplied by Dr Seosamh Watson, from the speech of Na Cruacha, Co.
Donegal.
64 M. Kennedy, *The spiritual ra* (Monaghan 1800) 111. This example and nos.
81-4 were brought to the author's attention by Dr Malachy McKenna.
65 ibid., 29.
66 H. Wagner and C. Ó Baoill, *Linguistic atlas and survey of Irish dialects IV*
(Dublin 1988) 13 s.v. Uladh.
(83) a[n] chlann bocht so dhíbírtha Eabh\(^{67}\)
'this poor banished family of Eve'

(iii) The case where the whole genitive phrase functions as one syntactic constituent.

(84) an bhean an tóighe\(^{68}\)
'the woman of the house'

The examples from Modern Irish prove that the double article always was a habitual syntax. The importance of register is particularly evident in some texts such as *Auráicept na nÉces* and Sg. glosses. Examples occur in these texts in which the double article merely indicates the nominal nature of certain items, and it is difficult to imagine these genitives being construed without a double article:

(85) forsin beithi-luis-nin in oghain\(^{69}\)
'in the B-L-N of the Ogham'

(86) in condélg in etéchliu in cheternail ind *Auráicept*[a]\(^{70}\)
'the comparison of the unallowable of the first part of the primer'

(87) ind ·e· timmorte indeoguir (Sg. 12 a 3)
'the short e of the diphthong'

(88) ind ·l· inna dédensillabe (Sg. 14 a 9)
'the l of the last syllable'

Some of the examples of the genitive syntagma in Old Irish, and of the double article and prolepsis in particular, have been explained in terms of their role in reference. The majority of examples, however, involved non-referential definiteness. The methodology employed in this paper has been to accommodate the greatest number of examples into the least number of categories. The idiosyncratic nature of a dead written language makes it difficult to arrive at one overriding principle which determines the occurrence of the double article. Indeed some of the examples invite a more textually orientated approach, but such an approach has been avoided, and as many examples as possible have been explained in terms of their role in reference.

\(^{67}\text{Kennedy, *Spiritual Rose*, 29.}\)

\(^{68}\text{Wagner and Ó Bacáill, *Atlas iv* 293.4.4.8.}\)

\(^{69}\text{Calder, *Auráicept na nÉces*, line 392.}\)

\(^{70}\text{ibid., lines 378–7.}\)
APPENDIX: examples from Middle Welsh

(i) The modifier of head is a

*Llyfr Blegywrd*: holl eglwyswyr y teyrnas (1.5–6) ‘all the churchmen of the kingdom’; llawn diawd y brenhin (3.22) ‘the full drink of the king’; holl negesseu y brenhin (9.19–20) ‘all the transactions of the king’; march penwyawd y brenhin (16.11.12) ‘the daily horse of the king’; henn gyfrwy eu henn ffrynd eu amwy y brenhin (18.27) ‘the old saddles and the old bridles of the team-horse of the king’; holl gyfrwy eu vrenhines (22.11) ‘the old saddles of the queen’; holl weith y brenhin (27.1) ‘all the work of the king’; holl affeith eu gweithred (35.1) ‘all the accessories of an act’; trwy vreint eglwysic yr abadaeth (43.23) ‘through the ecclesiastic privilege of the abbacy’; yn llys bennwyawd y brenhin (43.24) ‘in the daily court of the king’; oll dotrefyn y by (62.12) ‘all the furniture of the house’; holl lestri y llyn (65.9) ‘all the vessels of the drink’; ar holl awenn y wreiddio (67.8) ‘on all the equity of his wife’; a’r llestreit bwlch o’r emynyn (65.27–8) ‘and the partly used vesselful of the butter’; holl adeiliad y tat (74.22) ‘all the building of the father’.

*BB*: holl crefft wyd e dynas hwnnw (171–2) ‘all the craftsmen of that city’; holl ywyd e bys (352) ‘all the youth of the island’; holl kedernyt e Brytanynt (512) ‘all the strength of the Britons’; holl rann er enys (623) ‘the whole part of the island’; holl gwynda e teyrnas (689–90) ‘all the noblemen of the kingdom’.

*Llyfr Coch*: holl wyryd y guroeth (95.7) ‘all the noblemen of his kingdom’; holl giwta wyr y coranneit (97.27) ‘the whole tribe of the Coranians’; merchet eur dyrchogion yr yno honn (112.21) ‘the gold torqued women of this island’; holl gogled eu meirch (181.26) ‘all the saddle-girths of their horses’; ar yr neill law yr gwr (202.14) ‘on the one side of the man’; ar neill law y gwr mwyn (202.16–17) ‘on the one side of the gentleman’; a’r pryd du o’r garn (222.20–21) ‘with the black worm of the mound’; ar neill law y urwrelyn (235.4–5) ‘on the one hand of the maiden’; ar neill law y brenhin (239.20–21) ‘on the one hand of the king’.

*PKM*: o holl lyssod y dayar (4.23) ‘of all the courts of the Earth’; ar holl wraged a morwnyno y byt (13.1–2) ‘on all the women and maidens of the world’; holl uranned y llys (13.19–20) ‘all the wealth of the court’; holl wyryd ymlad Iwerdon (40.15) ‘all the fighting men of Ireland’; o’r holwyr o’r deu canwyd (42.25) ‘of all the men of the two hundred’.

(ii) The modifier of head is a superlative a

*Llyfr Blegywrd*: y deuder lleuc doethaf o’r wyr (1.17) ‘the twelve wisest laymen of his men’; y dyn diwethaf o’r llys (6.21) ‘the last man of the court’; y gyfrwy eu henn ystauell (7.7–8) ‘the last man of the
chamber'; wedwy yr wythnos gynntaf o Veí (11.21) ‘After the first day of May’; y llwryn goreu o’r anreith (22.22–3) ‘the best young animal of the spoils’; a’r maen issaf o’r vreuan (28.21) ‘the lower stone of the quern’; y’r brawt hynaf o’r brodyr oll (72.25) ‘to the eldest brother of all the brothers’.

BB: er ranw wuyhaf o’r dyd (295–6) ‘the best part of the day’.

Llyfr Coch: y wynyd uchaf o'r byt (82.20–83.1) ‘to the highest mountain in the world’; y ynys dechaf o’r holl wyt (83.18–19) ‘to the most beautiful island in the whole world’; byt yr ymyl eithaf o’r ynys (83.20) ‘as far as the furthest edge of the whole island’; Llynghes wuyhaf o’r byt a welynt yn aber yr auon (87.8) ‘they saw the biggest fleet in the world in the mouth of the river’; gweisson doethaf o’r byt (91.13) ‘the wisest lads in the world’; y ranw wuyhaf o’r llwydyn (93.14–15) ‘the best part of the year’; yn gyncoch yr gwael doethaf o’r byt (148.11–12) ‘as red as the reddest blood in the world’; y rei goreu o’r byt (185.19) ‘the best ones of the world’.

PKM: y dref uchaf o Arllechwoed (71.14) ‘the highest town of Arllechwoed’; yn y geing issaf o’r vyn (90.8–9) ‘in the lowest branch of the tree’.

(iii) The modifier of HEAD is DEM

Llyfr Ble gywryd: no examples
BB: no examples
Llyfr Coch: no examples
PKM: y geing hon yma o’r Mab ynnogyon (27.27, 48.12, 65.24, 92.27) ‘this branch of the Mabinogi’; y’r wydic honn o wyr Ynys y Kedyrn (44.15–16) ‘of this desolation of the men of the Isle of the Mighty’.

(iv) The modifier of HEAD is NUM

Llyfr Ble gywryd: y deudec lleyc doethaf o'e wyr (1.17–18) ‘the twelve wisest laymen of his men’; y deudec swydauc arbenic liys (17.1) ‘the twelve special officers of the court’; Nawuetttyd o galan gayaf (20.5) ‘the ninth day of the Calends of winter’; y nawuetttyd Mei (21.18) ‘the ninth day of May’; y nawuetttyd o’r vn mis hwnnw (20.9–10) ‘the ninth day of that same month’; o naw afffeith galanas (30.11) ‘of the nine acts accessory to a felony’; yrwgyg y deu dyn plwyf (38.21) ‘between the two men of the parish’; a phedeir keinhawc o gwastodyn (87.14–15) ‘and the four pennies of the grooms’; Eil dyd o Whefrawr (88.14) ‘the second day of February’; ar y petwyrwdr ar huynt o’u gyfnnesseitl (90.18–19) ‘on the three and twenty of his kinsmen’.

BB: a thryded ranw e kyuceth (24) ‘one third of the kingdom’; thryded ranw Ffreync (64–5) ‘one third of France’; dev neydeint e brenyn (250) ‘the two nephews of the king’; thryded cyswedva arsechop (915–16)
‘one of three archbishoprics’; a phedeyr gwraged e pedwar brenyn (980) ‘and the four wives of the four kings’.

*Llyfr Coch*: y ter rann y byl (86.7–8) ‘in the three parts of the world’; am y tryded wylua or nos (98.20) ‘for the third watch of the night’; ar dwy ysgwyd yr ehauc (131.12) ‘on the two shoulders of the salmon’; pymhet ran y iwerdon (137.1–2) ‘the fifth part of Ireland’; deu weisson ystauell y iarles (187.25) ‘the two chamberlains of the lady’.

*PKM*: y pedwyryd ar ugeint o utibyon guyrda (72.21) ‘one of twenty-four sons of noblemen’.

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