DAS ALTE ÄGYPTEN
UND SEINE NACHBARN

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CELTIC SYNTAX, EGYPTIAN-COPTIC SYNTAX

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For Helmut, a warm wise friend for many decades: a bouquet of flowers he loves.

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(0) Preliminary: The “non-geographical Sprachbund”. The “Eurafrican hypothesis”

(0.1) H. J. Polotsky’s “Syntaxe amharique et syntaxe turque” (1960a), the Master’s only article in a properly speaking General Linguistics (typological-comparative) genre, the paper opening Polotsky’s Collected Papers (Jerusalem: the Magnes Press, 1971), has drawn little attention outside the small circle of the Jerusalem School and its adherents, perhaps because of an hermetic quality of style, as well as the exclusive Ethiopistic forum of publication. And yet, it is a wonderful fruit of Polotsky’s annus mirabilis, an insightful and sensitive exposé of an instance of the non-geographical, cross-genealogical Sprachbund and what may be called the historical-connection-indifferent typological rapprochement. As is generally realized today, the Sprachbund phenomenon is varied and complex, reflecting the variety of languages-in-contact scenarios and their historical configuration. The relatively rare non-adjacent or non-geographical Sprachbund is less well understood and falls between the stools of typological and genetic comparison, and goes, to mix metaphors, against the grain of conventional comparativist temperament.

The “Eurafrican” (so Wagner in Transactions of the Philological Society 1969) hypothesis, first outlined in modern times at least as early as 1900 by John Morris-Jones, has
been for most of the last century associated almost exclusively with the names of Julius Pokorny and his disciple, Heinrich Wagner. I believe it now deserves detailed and objective re-appreciation, in view of the considerable expansion in our knowledge of Celtic and the advance in the unveiling of the languages commonly known as Afro-Asiatic or Hamito-Semitic, and especially of Egyptian and Coptic. Although it is generally not clear which languages are invoked on the Afro-Asiatic side — "Semitic" (which languages?) "Egyptian" (which phase or phases in its near four millennia of evolution?), Arabic, North-West Semitic, Accadian, Berber — a vagueness contributive to the scepticism with which the theory is still regarded (not that there is a generally accepted idea about hierarchies and chronologies inside the Celtic branch of Indo-European); nor is there any real confidence about either the chronological parameters, or the hierarchical structuring of syntactical and non-syntactical comparata of the comparison.

Julius Pokorny published on the subject insistently for almost half a century, starting between the wars and going on until the late Nineteen Fifties (Zeitschrift f. Celtische Philologie, vols. 15–25, Die Sprache 1 [Havers Festschrift] 1949 and elsewhere), with his last contribution on the subject in Celtica 5 (1960). His disciple Heinrich Wagner's early essays overlapped his teacher's in the late Fifties, then carried on the defence of their unpopular hypothesis until his own death in 1988. The most systematic and daring is the brilliant Das Verb in den Sprachen der britischen Inseln (Tübingen 1959). His manifesto-like last address of the question was published in 1977 (Zeitschrift f. Celtische Philologie 42). I do not propose to rehabilitate here the hypothesis or vindicate Wagner — for he still needs vindicating — although I do believe his views were often misunderstood and summarily dismissed. On this point, I stand by what I wrote in 1995 (section 7, p. 208f.). On the other hand, the convergence of linguistic means is in itself a phenomenon worthy of attention, regardless of the probability of contact (cf. "our" Ludwig (Christian) Stern's sober words, à propos of the functional similarity of Welsh ynweu to Coptic NTO4, with a short list of other striking affinities of Welsh and Egyptian, apud Shisha-Halevy 1995:213).1

1 Stern is still very much a mystery person. I do not find any reference to his work in the recent conferences devoted to German Celtology (the last in Berlin, 1998) or nineteenth-century "Celticism" and "Celtomania", although he was, with Kuno Meyer, the founder and until his death the co-editor of the Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie (established in 1897), the editor of the Würzburg Old Irish glosses, the translator and editor of the works of Dafydd ap Gwilym. In spite of his impressively broad philological scope (early and modern Irish, Middle and Modern Gaelic, Middle and Modern Welsh), one cannot help noticing the absence of any original grammatical insight. His total break with Egyptology may have been due to resentment at the conferring of the Berlin chair of Egyptology on his erstwhile pupil and protégé Adolf Erman (Stern turned down calls to the Leipzig and Göttingen chairs). Incidentally, in addition to Stern's functional comparison of Coptic
The Afro-Asiatic hypothesis finds some mainstream proponents in current Celtic linguistics. First, Theo Vennemann (see his 1994 and 1997) who has revived and rephrased the old hypothesis (so far as I can see he ignores Egyptian, which is a more cogent obvious comparatum for the 5–6 millennia B.C. than Arabic); then R. Hickey (1997), who, following Vennemann, specifies the compared family as “Afro-Asiatic (specifically Semitic)”, and uses Arabic as the typical A.-A. comparatum (even up to suggesting a North African Urheimat for Arabic. This, considering Vennemann’s dating of the “Atlantic” population (one of the two postulated sub-/adstratal groups exerting influence on (North-) West-European Indo-European languages, the other being “Vasconic”: Vennemann 1995) to the 6th millennium B.C., makes his leaving Egyptian out incomprehensible to me. Hickey enumerates “word-order”, conjugating prepositions, relative forms of verbs, the binary article system and determination syntax of construct chains as striking points of affinity — all discussed below in the present study. (Syrian) Arabic, and word-order, is also Borsley’s comparatum, in Head-Driven Phrase-Structure Grammar (1995). Jongeling (2000) compares Welsh and Biblical Hebrew, focussing on the VS and Determinatum — Determinans order features and the Nominal Sentence, enumerating several other features. Two eminent structuralists stress the need of taking non-Indo-European languages, specifically Semitic and Egyptian, into account for understanding Celtic syntax. A descriptive linguist of Irish of no less a stature than David Greene (see 1966:43ff., with a list of Irish-Hebrew affinities, 1967:172 comparing dò to Hebrew l-); and no less a and Indo-Europeanist and descriptivist than K. H. Schmidt (1977) who, discussing certain features of Celtic word-order and focussing on the frontal extraposition of nominals, explicitly and emphatically points to the need of extra-Indo-European — specifically, Egyptian and Semitic — reference to account for its prevalence in Celtic, attempting to show (233ff.) “daß die Probleme der inselkeltischen Wortstellung nicht einfach im Rahmen der vergleichenden indogermanischen Sprachforschung betrachtet werden können”. Schmidt goes even further: “Jedenfalls gleicht die normalinselkeltische Wortstellung eher der ägyptischen und nordwestsemitischen als derjeniger irgendeiner indogermanischen Sprache. Daß dies ein reiner Zufall ist, kann ich, mit Morris Jones and Pokorny, nicht glauben.” Schmidt does not mention H. Wagner in this explicit statement,
which shows him to be the foremost and most outspoken modern supporter of the Afro-Asiatic hypothesis.²

While considering the affinities presented here to be at least of "coincidental or purely 'structural' interest" (so Wagner 1987:20), I believe Wagner's sequel "and, therefore, of no historical interest at all" is a non sequitur. The possibility of an early linguistic link—in any of several specific contact scenarios—between western Europe and (North?) Africa can hardly be denied; nor can the interest in such a link.

As pointed out above, both Afro-Asiatic and Celtic flanks of the conventional comparison are vague and problematic. The former means in effect, rather haphazardly, Berber, Egyptian and perhaps, to a lesser extent or in a farther focus, Semitic languages, old and modern. In fact, Berber and Egyptian could probably do alone, considering the extensive Atlantic-to Red Sea territory of the Berber languages before the coming of the Arabs). On the other hand, the conception of "Celtic" in this context is not any sharper, with Goidelic and Brythonic Celtic, Celtiberian and Continental Celtic (a cover term for various languages and dialects only dimly perceived and resolved), and the relative chronology of diffusion and genetic scenario and structure very speculative.

And then, what does the "attestation of a feature" actually mean? Does the very presence of a feature as documented in a text suffice, with no regard to its systemic perspective significance? (Incidentally, many if not most phenomena presented here need further special study to be precisely understood within their subsystems; most are here rather summarily presented). The total absence of a feature in one of the languages of the comparison calls in itself for attention: so for instance the absence of the embracing negation in Irish (and Goidelic).

Passing on to the Egyptian flank, it must be recalled that Coptic as we know it—with Bohairic probably its most "Egyptian" dialect—did not "evolve out of Demotic", itself a written phase of nearly one thousand years. Many features are attested only in later phases of the language, on both flanks of the comparison; but this means no more, no less than attestation a phase of written documentation, not the absence of the phenomenon

² A recent study of some importance is Orin D. Gensler's PhD dissertation (1993), which, I believe, deserves critical appraisal. The work is flawed with basic descriptive errors, which I feel seriously compromise the efforts to put the claims of the Celtic/African Sprachbund on a sound structural basis. In the present non-polemick context, I shall only mention the often erroneous evaluation of Egyptian-Coptic. Sahidic, notoriously "ohne Eigenschaften" among dialects, stands here for Coptic (with information drawn from Lambdin's textbook, and not from the rich grammatical literature of the 19th and 20th century). The typological sketch (p. 542ff.) abounds in errors (e.g. in basic categorial information, or the information on the verb clause, including details regarding word order, or the Nominal Sentence). The same is true for Egyptian too: MB only, and based on Gardiner's Grammar: almost every statement is exceptionable in some respect.
in earlier phases. (Alternatively, the emergence of a feature may be due to structural
causes). "Egyptian", in the past a vaguely telescoped and largely undifferentiated concept,
with ME taken as representative and Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar* the main or only
source of reference, is nowadays, following a century of study, finely resolved into
phases — from OE to varieties of Coptic, with each subtly different typologically.

Celtic is famously involved in a second substrate question, now very much en vogue,
with a real historical scenario, and itself a substrate — its influence on English (studied in
the past by Visser, Pressler, Pedersen, and others). This topic is now fully rehabilitated,
but even until recently it was almost as uneasy as the Pokorny-Wagner hypothesis. More-
over, the internal IE genetic prising of Celtic apart from the traditional Schleicherian Italic
branch, and its alternative associations, especially with Eastern Indo-European: Hittite
and Indo-Arian (a topic discussed from the Nineteen-Fifties on by H. Wagner, M. Dillon,
K.-H. Schmidt, C. Watkins and others) is enriched not only by the more sophisticated
models of areal linguistics but also by to the supplementing of phonology, formal mor-
phology and lexicon as reconstructive criteria with a growing consideration and precision
of typologies of syntax and subsystemic structure.

(0.2) The present essay, addressed to Egyptologists — hence sparing, even laconic in
quoted Egyptian material and discussion — is, beyond a programmatic and reasoned an-
notated check-list of briefly illustrated3 Celtic-Afroasiatic isoglosses, also an attempt at a
rational typology of specimen affinities, putting the compared features in their structural
(systemic) and hierarchical context. Like Polotsky's article referred to above, the present
one is purely typological, with no historical axe to grind. (In fact, not all features pre-
ented here are affinities; yet all are comparables). It is not concerned with cluster analysis
or with quantification, calculating the probability of an array of agreeing *features* being
coincidental, but with structuring the comparison by identifying and scanning comparable
*systems*, contextualizing them systemically, with reflections on essence and ranking of
features — if not actually achieving these tasks, at least raising necessary questions. This,
I believe, endows the features studied with additional dimensions and depth, and renders
them less flat and less trivial. This is in fact indispensable for testing the commensurate-

3 In both Irish (from short stories, novels and autobiographies by Liam O'Flaherty; Pádraic Breathnach,
Pádraic Ó Conaire, Myles na gCóraleen, Peig Sayers) and Welsh (stories, essays and letters by Kate Roberts to
Saunders Lewis; and by Saunders Lewis to Kate Roberts) material I have tried to present a more colloquial
register. (The nearest corpus we have in Coptic to a comparable register is perhaps Nitrian Bohairic: consider
for instance the Nominal Sentence, the Focalizing Conversion or the post-negator ηN).
ness of features, to weigh them for structural constraints, significance and rank instead of merely cataloguing them in an unstructured way; some turn out to be related to others as corollary or implied. Moreover, being unobliged to establish a significant convergence of "isoglosses", we may — indeed, we must — dwell on differences in such features as are comparable: and indeed, the detailed account of such differences make the comparison more reasoned. (While holding that the systemic perspective makes such affinities as there are — amounting to a real Sprachbund — multidimensional and more cogent, I do not advocate here for an historical background to the Celtic-Afroasiatic Sprachbund, but certainly not against it).

Another perspective, here not taken up for reasons of space, is diachronic: the detailed profile of linguistic evolution provides as much of a typological fingerprint as synchronic systems and subsystems. While it is certainly not the case in linguistics that "nothing makes sense except in the light of evolution", as has been claimed for biology, synchrony alone is but the lesser half of contrastivity, especially since different languages enter comparison for different features in different phases. (It may of interest that the strength of clustering of affinities with Egyptian is higher for Welsh and generally Brythonic than for Irish and Goidelic as we know it.) As a matter of principle, important is, I believe, not the (negative) exclusion of other languages from the "isogloss" in question, but the (positive) feature of the convergence of traits. As in the case of the list of features in Trubetzkoy's famous typological characterization of IE, this is a cumulative and combinatorial typological claim: several of the features here presented are, alone and per se, well attested in other Indo-European languages; others are not (Thus, É. Benveniste's criticism of Trubetzkoy's systematic characterization, by pointing out that it also fits the genetically unrelated Takelma does nothing but establish yet another non-geographical cross-genealogical Sprachbund, of which there must be dozens). "Agreement" in features may — indeed, must — be approximate and partial, owing to the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of linguistic phenomena; relations (as of paradigmatic opposition, or syntagmatic expansion), sub- and mini-systems (e.g. of pronouns) as well as patterns are the viable and valid comparata, and not constituent elements per se. I must again stress that the treatment in the present paper is perfunctory: all phenomena presented are without exception more complex than can be conveyed in the present scope.

The fundamental questions of the soundness and meaning of categorial comparison between languages have been formulated and well answered by Lazard (2001 [1992]).
Let me quote hereas entirely relevant to the comparison executed in the present paper one or two sentence from his short and satisfying paper (p. 61–2) "C’est en ce sens qu’il existerait non pas, à proprement parler, des ‘categories’ interlangagières, mais des notions invariantes autour desquelles les catégories des langues particulières, en quelque sorte, se cristalliserait préférentiellement.” These “notions invariantes” are (p. 62) either “des domaines qui, dans toutes les langues, fournissent (ou peut-être seulement tendent à fournir) des notions grammaticalisées”, or “des zones focales, c’est-à-dire que les notions qui y sont situées sont particulièrement propres à être grammaticalisées”. Then, “chaque langue découpe dans chaque domaine ses catégories grammaticales”.

(1) Syntagmatic Basics: Grundstellung(en) — basic nexus and expansion word-order or sequencing and its corollaries

(1.1) Word-order, perhaps most conspicuously of other linguistic phenomena of syntax, evades and often excludes genealogical comparison and reconstruction. In Celtic as in Egyptian-Coptic the syntagmatic sequence is rigid per pattern, that is to say, it is fundamentally grammemic, being the constitutional distinctive property of clausal, sub- and hyper-clausal patterns (Steinthal-Misteli 1893:275 “[we see] wie viel der Ägypter durch das einfachste Mittel, durch die blosse Stellung ausdrückt”.

Even without invoking the conventional unmarked #VS# sequence for Celtic and Egyptian verb clauses, with the notion — problematic in its very essence — of an universally viable pattern-independent sequence, similarities of sequence are remarkable. Here are a few highlights.

(a) The “Determinatum to Determinans” sequence is basic in Welsh and Irish non-compound-juncture sequence (cf. Schmidt 1972:40f.). In the noun phrase, the Welsh (and Irish) noun lexeme follows its (definite, possessive or zero) article, which is its nucleus — it expands it partitively. It follows the quantifier, which follows or commutes with the articles. The satellital noun (adjective or substantive) follows its substantival nucleus in often complex construct chains, the relative (adjectival) and appositive (substantival) clauses follow their antecedents.

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4 When Gardiner 1937:20f. extols “the logicality and clarity of Egyptian syntax”, Coptic is excluded: “Coptic being in the main a language of translation from the Greek, is as regards word-order almost completely under the influence of the originals”: this is entirely wrong, showing how insensitive Gardiner was in all matters Coptic. “Symmetry of arrangement” “orderliness and symmetry” as “national characteristics” in everyday life — recall the "Mumiengeist" and the "monumental way of expression" attributed to the Egyptians by the 19th-century Völkerpsychologie linguistic typologists, when the structure (let alone the periodization) of Egyptian was imperfectly understood.

(b) In Welsh, the preposition o- is grammaticalized as a partitive *nota relationis*; Irish *de* has a similar role. Cf. E *n(j)-*, Coptic *N*- and *NTɛ*- which, in alternation with sequenced juxtaposition, serves a operator of nominal expansion.

(c) Demonstratives are gender-number-concording pronominal adjectives, expanding their nuclei (they may also be pronominal ("substantival").

(Welsh *hwn*, *hon*, *hwnnw*, *honnw*, *hyn* etc.; Irish *sin*, *seo*, *siúd* etc.), alongside partitive nuclear status of (plural/neutric) demonstratives in Welsh (cf. the partitive syntax of Egyptian *nn* *n*).

**Welsh**

* y dyn, y ferch “the man”, “the girl”
* y dyn doeth “the wise man”
* y ferch ddoeth “the wise girl”
* un olwg “one look”
* plant eraill “other children”
* yr Harbrwr Perl “the harbour-of-pearl” = “Pearl Harbour”
* peiriant amser H.G. Wells “H.G. Wells’s time machine”
* y gyda’r nosau tawel “the quiet evenings” (gyda’r nos “evening”)
* y cwarfo plant “the children’s meeting”
* colofnau’r feranda “the columns of the porch”
* ar bensiwn gweddu gweinidog “on a minister’s fitting pension”
* un rhwy berson calon feddal “any soft-hearted person”
* llyfrgell wych iawn fy nhad “my father’s really splendid library”
* yr haf hafel hwn “this yellow summer”
* hyn o fyd “this world” (“this of world”)
* hynny o fryniau “these hills” (“theses of hills”)
* yn ddigalon o berffaith “depressingly perfect” (“ADV [depressing of perfect]”)
* yn fabiaid o wael “babyishly ill” (“ADV [babyish of ill]”)
* yn ofnadwy o bwysig “terribly important” (“ADV [terrible of important]”)
* creadur o ddyn “a creature of a man”
* naw mil o weithiau “nine thousand times” (“of times”)
* paned o de “a cup of tea”
* rholynt brafh o giper “a nice roll of kipper”
* rhyw fotwm corn o’ nifail “some animal-horn button” (horn of animal”)
* ddanodd o ddyn “a toothache of a man”

**Irish**

* an mac rí “the king’s son”
sé bhullán “six bullocks”
an fhalla “a single wall”
an mbarránach buí sin d’athair atá agat “that yellow scoundrel of a father you have”
an sumachán ãd de dhlídóir “that plump youngster of a lawyer”
a leithéid d’hean “such a man!” (“his- like of a man!”)
fámaire cait “an idle-stroller of a cat”
sléá fir “a splinter of a man”
duine de na fir “one of the men”
duine de mo saghas “a person like me” (“of my kind”)
Ba mhór an imní dó an tAthair Ó Dónaill “He was greatly concerned, Father Ó Donnél”.

(d) Composition sequences: a different, close-juncture syntax. In Welsh, the in initio compositi constituent — substantive or adjective — is generally linked morphophonemically (by lenition6) to the in fine compositi one. One noun (incl. adjective) precedes another as an i.i.c. constituent of an endocentric compound. The i.f.c. noun here is equally nuclear, expanded by the i.i.c. element. Adjectives i.i.c. are structurally different signs, members of a different paradigm and category, formally and semantically distinct from their adjunctal homonyms (cf. Barri 1975);7 they have accordingly different signifieds: Welsh hen i.i.c. is not “old as against young”, or rather actualizing one special sense of the overall range, contributing to a lexicalization of the complex. It must be noted that the compound-juncture nucleus is similar to the nuclear word-formational suffixes, expanded by preceding lexemes: rhyddiaith “prose” (rhydd “free”, iaith “language”) is in principle analogue to rhydd-deb “freedom” (-deb, abstracting suffix). Juncture too is a distinctive feature of patterns, in addition to constituent categories, sequence and boundaries.

In the case of adjective + substantive exocentric compounds (various forms of the Bahuvrīhi type), we have a juncturally closest nexal set, with the substantive (marked by belonging to an inalienable lexical semi-open list) thematic, the adjective rhematic.

In Írish, endocentric adjective+substantive compounds are conventionally written as one word i.e. typographically compound. In Welsh, such writing (today hyphenated) signifies exocentricity in the case of inalienability of the substantive. Welsh has two sequences for Bahuvrīhis (Zimmer 2000:176ff.):

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6 Lenition is the main mutation, specific initial morphophonemic change of the lexical component, famously common (if specific) to all Celtic languages. Lenition may be conditioned e.g. by prepositions; used pertinently as conversion, marking the status of a noun, or a junctural link, as a Fügemorphem.

7 The i.i.c adjective seems opposed to the attributive non-compound adjective as inherent to incidental (compare the inherent vs. incidental predication of a noun: see below.)
Welsh

hen ferch “old maid”
i’m hen gartref “to my old home”
hen bobl “old folks” “old people”, (vs. pobol hen “people who are old”)
y gwir artist “the true artist”
yr ugeinied ganrif “the 20th century” (also holl “whole, entire”, pob “every”, nesaf “nearest” etc.)
um unig dro “one single time” (vs. y gath unig “the lonely cat”)
mawr ddiolch i chi “thank you greatly”
Sut fywyd a gafodd “What-kind of life did she have”
gwibdaith “excursion” (gwib “wandering”, taith “trip”)
ffermdai “farm-houses” (tai “houses”)
penglum “end-knot”
gwaglaw “empty-hand[-ed]” (llaw “hand”)
bron-wen “white-breasted”
llaw-goch “red-handed”
croendew “thick-skinned, callous”
calon-feddal “soft-heated” (meddal “soft”)

Irish

seanchailín “old maid”
seanchara “old friend”
fiorchneas “true skin”

(e) Pre-infinitive adjectives occur in Welsh as i.e. in verbal compounds, similarly to preverbs in Indo-European, where the preverb may be related to the verbal element as close-juncture-scope expansion to its nucleus, but an inverse analysis — the preverb a nuclear adverbial, specified by lexeme — cannot be ruled out; in Welsh, the preverbal element is written separately, but linked by lenition. Comparable are the Coptic conjugation mediators (also known as pre-lexemic modifiers or verbal preextensions) PΠKЄ-,
PΦΟΥЄ-,. (P)ΨΠΠ-,. Bohairic Χ- (Shisha-Halevy 1986:124ff., Layton 2000:146f.)
which may well be nuclear.

Mi daer weddial “I fervently pray” (gweddial “I pray”)
Newydd weld eich llwythr “Just seen your letter” (gweld “see”)
wedi llwyrr flino “having been completely exhausted”
fy mod yn yn mawr drysori “my greatly treasuring”
Mawr obeithiaf “I sincerely hope” (lit. “greatly”)
wedi llawn ddyfod ato’i hun “having fully come to himself”
Yr ydym yn hen gyfarwydd “We are acquainted of old”
Y deuthum i wir werthfawrogi Tos “I came to truly appreciate Tos”.
(f) Pre-adjective modifiers are equally nuclear; the *nota relationis* (partitive) construction confirms this analysis:

mór hwyrt “so late”
Bu eif yn dra amyneddgar “he was extremely patient”
yn daf gôn ffnrnc “quite furious”
hynn o bryn “remarkably rare” (“of rare”)
diwrnod annisgwyl o braf an unexpectedly pleasant day” (“of pleasant”)
yn ddifrifol o sâl “seriously ill”.

(g) In the Welsh and Irish verbal-nexus (“finite verb”) pattern, the non-topicalized actor actant (theme) follows the verbal base (rheme) as a feature of its valential matrix. This is not the case in the personal infinitive (or *i- cum infinitivo* pattern: below), which is equally nexal, verbal and finite. The non-topicalized object actant (s) — viewable as expansion, see (a) — follows the verbal nexus (its placement arranged within the valency matrix); the predicative (rhematic object actant) follows the non-rhematic one.

*Welsh*

Cusannodd ef hi “He kissed her”
Fe’i gwnaeth hynny hi’n waeth “This made her worse”

*Irish*

Sháigh Tadhg a cheann timpeall an dorais agus chonaic sé Colm ag ligeann a síthe “T. stuck his head around the door and saw C. taking a rest”.

(h) The periphrastic verbal constructions (see below) open with a zeroeable copular element (*Welsh* *mae*, *Irish* *tá*) which is not distinctly verbal. As for ME *jw* “in Spitzenstellung” (see Schmidt 1977:2190f. with n. 24; Shisha-Halevy 1995:165 n. 29.; 2000: 80) to compare with these Celtic cases of clause-initial copula: indeed, *jw* is copular in a similar sense, but not in any nominal-rheme pattern; it may well be a thematic constituent of the nexus. In fact, *jw* has alone (so Helmut Satzinger in a forthcoming article), like *mae*, the role of an affirmative existential statement.

(i) In the Nominal Sentence pattern set, both sequences rheme-to-theme and theme-to-rheme are encountered according to pattern, with the first macrosyntactically unmarked: see below.

(j) One of the most familiar tagmemic landmarks of Celtic is nominal extrapolation or segmentation, effecting some degree of topicalization (which however may be devalued and grammaticalized to an advanced degree of thematization): cf. on Celtic, Mac Cana
1973; for Irish, Ó Siadhail 1989:210f. ("narrative fronting"); on Old Irish, Mac Coisdealbha *apud* Sornicola 1988:131ff.; on Middle Welsh, Shisha-Halevy 1999:179ff.; Schmidt 1977, esp. 225f., explicitly addresses the Celtic/Egyptian angle (earlier pointed out by Pokorny and Wagner). Whether or not the so-called Abnormal Sentence in Middle Welsh (#Substantive/Pronoun + relative Verb#: Mab. Pwyll *Ef a weleid uarchauc yn dyuot* "he saw a rider coming", *Amser a doeth udunt e uynet e gyscu* "time came for them to go to bed") constitutes a special-non initial form of the verb following an extraposed substantive or pronoun has not in my opinion been conclusively settled. My own view (Shisha-Halevy 1995:153ff.) is that the AS is a formalized and devalued presentative (like French "Il y a mon ami qui est venu"), not a topicalizing construction.

The topicalizing extraposition has been generously discussed for ME by Westendorf, Doret, Junge and others. for LE, where the marked front placement is accompanied by a segmental marker *jr*-, see Satzinger 1976: *jr*- topicalizes adverbials too, which instructs us concerning the presetting adverbial (Erich Poppe has addressed the topical function of Middle Welsh adverbials in a series of corpus-based studies, from 1989 on: he resolves the frontal placement into thematic (our topical), focal and connective-linking roles: a distinction important for Coptic, where focal initial adverbials are usual). Considering the degree of devaluation of focalization patterns such as the Cleft Sentence (below), a corresponding symmetrical devaluation of the topicalization construction (familiar from Bohairic Coptic) is but to be expected.

(2) Syntactic Statuses, Categories, Slots and their Marking

(2.1) Conversion. Following Polotsky’s brilliant essay of 1960 on the Coptic converters, and the application of this notion to Egyptian (esp. LE and Demotic), the conversion approach to pre-nexal (or post-nexal) elements marking the micro- or macro-syntactic status of the nexus or clause has been applied to Modern Greek (Barri 1981, with a broader conception) and Old Nubian (Browne 1982:31); also to Middle Welsh (Shisha-Halevy 1995, esp.139ff.); the Romance “translatif”, following Tesnière, for- the generalized “that” conjunction is a similar notion. Irish conversion has not yet been adequately studied (interrogation *an-/nach-,* negation *ni-,* relative and “that” *a- go-/ná-*; possibly also — in a different slot and paradigm — the preterite augment *do-/lenition*, and others: cf. Ó Sé 1991:66ff.). In Old and Middle Irish, the sharp morphological distinction be-
tween the so-called conjunct and absolute forms is associated also with respectively post-converter (converter base) and unconverted allo-forms of the verb (cf. Schmidt 1974: 42ff.) The Irish Absolute and Conjunct (post-conversion or conversion base) allomorphs are junctural allomorphs. The latter form is in fact a non-initial alternant of the verb (the so-called Bergin's Law). Negation is incorporated in Old Irish into the very form of the verb (cf. the negative bases of later Egyptian): cf. Schmidt 1970.

Admittedly, we have here to a degree a petitio principi, for the identification and determination of conversion and converters (say, from traditional conjunctions) is essentially a postulate. However, Celtic, like Egyptian, is conspicuously poor in conjunctions (while rich in converbal forms, see below); the sentiment expressed in Hamp 1973 that "inordination" (Einordnung) is the most one can claim in the way of textual integration of clauses in Celtic. Indeed, the sub-/coordination model fits very uneasily on any language, once macro-syntax becomes a prime issue and analytic phase; but on Celtic — and Egyptian — the old Graeco-Latin model hardly begins to do justice to the system of intratextual and interclausal relations.8 Note that while converters multiply during the evolution of Egyptian, from one in OE to four in Coptic, this is not the case in Welsh and Irish, which are first attested at an advanced stage of development.

(a) Note the complete or partial matching of relative (adjectivizing) and nexus-substantivizing conversion. (True relative forms, synthetic rather than conversional, occur in all Celtic systems).

Welsh — relative converter; a-/y(r)-, neg. na(d)-t (ModW forms); y- merges "that" form and relative (indirect with resumptive pronoun, or adverbial); na(d)- merges "that" form and relative.

y noson gyntaf y daeth "the first night he came"
plant nad yw yn Gymry na Saeson "children that are neither Welsh nor English"
 yr hyŷn a dymunwê "that which I would like"

y gwaith y gallwn ei wnewud ond na wnaf "the work that I could do but won't do" ("could do it")
y bardd a oedd ym Mangor yr un pryd â mi "the poet who was in Bangor the same time as me"
y dosbarth y codwyd ef ohono "the class from which he rose" ("was raised")
y Morfa sy'n gorwedd rhwng y pentref a'r môr "the sea-marsh that lies between the village and the sea" (in the statal-existential nexus pattern, the relative occupies the first (theme) position: Copt. ṇτKH).

8 See also Boyle 1973, Ó Siadhail 1984 for sub-/coordinate agus "and", ach "but" in ModL (see below). See also Jongeling 2000:114ff. for Welsh a- as compared with Biblical Hebrew wo-.
Irish — relative a-/mutation (lenition/eclipse), neg. nach, nár-

Is frinneach go raibh é ráite os ñeal nach le mo mháthair a rugadh mé “It’s true that it was said that it was not to my mother that I was born”.

“That” form — nexus-substantivizing converter¹

Welsh — mai-/y(r)-, neg. na(d)-

Nid y bydd ganddynt wrthwynebiad “Not that they will have an objection”

Dywedodd mai mynd ag ef adref i’w fam yr oedd “He said that he was bringing it home to his mother” (“that it was bringing ... that he was”)

Neydd da iawn i mi yw bod gennych stori wedi ei gorffen “It’s really good news to me that you have a finished story”

hyd y gwn i “so far as I know”.

Irish — go-, a-/mutation (lenition/eclipse)

B’fhactras dom ar an bpoinite gur ag ceapadh go raibh mo chuidse caite agam a bhí sé “It seemed to me at that point that what he thought was that I had spent my own part” (“that it is thinking that my own part was spent by me that he was”)

... le go bhfeicfí an bheirt againn in éineacht chuir sé glas ar an doras “it is in order that the two of us be seen together that he put a lock on the door”.

Irish agus (Welsh a(c)-) may be seen as a “circumstantial” converter, exclusively of the existential-statal nexus pattern; also adnominal to a non-specific (indefinite) nucleus:

(MW) Gwereic a bronnu genit “a woman with breasts” (“she having breasts”)

Chuaigh an mháthair agus Máire isteach agus iad cosa nochtaithe “the mother and Máire came in, barefoot” (“they being feet-bared”)

brataithe le pollán agus iad lán de uisce sáile “speckled with little pits full of salt water” (“they being full”).

(2.2) Converbs, less felicitously “gerunds”, are non-finite or finite adverbal-status verb forms (see Haspelmath and König 1995: no discussion of Celtic) which are either full rhemes in the existential-statal pattern, or rhematically adjoined to nexal patterns or noun phrases (cf. Frans Plank’s “koprädikativ”). These interesting forms are as prominent a feature in Celtic as in Egyptian; when rhematic, they constitute periphrastic tenses (see below). The Welsh converbs, and most of the Irish ones, have the written form of a preposition followed by infinitive — in Irish generally unmutated (ar- + infinitive is an exception), in Welsh unmutated (yn-, wedi-) and lenited (i-, am-, wrth-,

¹ With the existential-statal nexus, the Welsh infinitive bod (Irish beith seems less grammaticalized) “to be in existence” is the substantivizing operator: a chreadf fod hyn beth rhyfedd iawn. “and I believe that this is a really strange thing” (Cf. ME wro for substantivizing jw-nexus, also Demotic hpr). Nominal Sentences have a different substantivizing converter, in Welsh (mai-) as in Egyptian.
In Irish, the converb has a distinctive actor expression (marked by dó-: see below).

yn dweud “saying”

wedi gorffen “having finished”

am fynd “about to go”.

Irish has a somewhat richer converb inventory:

(1) ag + infinitive, i(n)-{poss. article}+infinitive (intransitives of motion or posture), ar+infinitive (mostly statal), tar éis+infinitive (“after” — forming perfect tenses, see below), le+infinitive, chun+infinitive (future tenses).

Tosaíonn sí ag crónán os íseal “She began murmuring softly”

Íše ina súf le m’ais ar an urlár “she sitting beside me on the floor”

agus ag titim i mo chodladh dom... “and me falling asleep”.

Focalized by Cleft Sentence:

Ní ag magadh atáim “I’m by no means mocking” (“It’s not mocking that I am”).

(2) The -tai(te) stative participles and participial derivative adjectives — converb homonyms in specific slots:

Bhí cailín óg suite ar chathaoir in aice leis “a young girl was seated on a chair near him”

Ba chailín Í má bhí sí pósta fín “She was a girl, even though she was married”

Bhí sí go buartha mísísta “She was sorrowfully displeased”

and (3) even non-verbal adjectives, in rhematic status:10

Tá sé te “It is hot”

D’éiríodar súghach “They grew tipsy”

Bítraith sé trom, fuar, é “He felt him heavy, cold”.

This rich and versatile converb repertory is a deeply significant typological feature of Celtic, not least as a main building-stone of the periphrastic conjugation. In fact, together with the clausal infinitive roles, where the infinitive is used with auxiliaries for Aktionsart and focalization signalling, the converb constitutes a formidable analytical factor, dwarfing the synthetic “finite verb”. This is a factor famously common to Celtic and Egyptian throughout their respective histories; Coptic “durative” CōTTI (the CōTTI homonym that is subject to the Stern-Jernstedt rule, of adverbial commutation, missing for verbs of move-

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10 Mac Cana 1999:162ff. discusses “anomalous uses” of yn + infinitive, which he considers to be the “present participle”; the distinction between the converb and participle is at times tenuous and needs considerable theoretical sophistication, but often very clear (the English ing-converb is quite distinct from its participial and verbal-noun homonyms in cases like “walking home, I met my old teacher”). It is the rhematic slot that neutralizes the two deverbal forms, adverbal and nominal respectively. The special roles discussed by Mac Cana — narrative, coordinated to narrative infinitives, “epitactic” — cease to be anomalous once the converb, not participial nature of the form is identified, for at least most of them are typical converb roles.
ment) and the stative \textit{cotpi}, the former originating in pre-position-infinitive converbs,\footnote{The \textit{m-}infinitive verb \textit{in} for verbs of movement begs the comparison with Irish \textit{t-} ("in") + (poss,article) + infinitive for a comparable lexical subclass.} the latter in a finite verb alongside \textit{sdfm} and \textit{sdfm nf}"circumstantial" forms, in later phases to be analyzed in the circumstantial conversion.

(2.3) Substantives and adjectives in Welsh share a lenition-marked slot that merges the Adverbial Adjunct or Preset, the Rhematic (including the predicative complement of forms of \textit{bod}) and the Object Actant (for finite personal verb forms)/ the Possessem of the \textit{mae gan} - verboid / the Existant (in certain cases) / the Presentate following the presentatives (see below).\footnote{See Sanders 1984 on the general affinity of adverbials and objects.} Welsh lenition in the above merging slot corresponds neatly to the Arabic accusative in "\textit{Hål}" role/status. The lenited word is italicized:

\begin{quote}
Pam na gymerwch chi \textit{lasiad} o win "Why don't you have a glass of wine?"
pan ocddem \textit{blant} "when we were children"
Mi fûm o flaen yr ustusiaid \textit{fore} trannoeth "I was before the judges the next morning"
Y mae'n ddifyr \textit{bob} tudalen ohono "It is amusing in every one of its pages"
Mi ddaeth rhwy Mrs. Williams \textit{yma} \textit{ryw ddiwrnmod} "A certain Mrs. Williams came here some day"
Fu oyma \textit{erioed} \textit{gi} "There hasn't ever been here a dog"
Dyma \textit{ddydd eich} pen blwydd "Here's your birthday".
\end{quote}

Substantives and adjectives share also an \textit{yn}-marked slot merging the Adverbial Adjunct\footnote{The \textit{yn-} + ADJ derivation of Celtic is similar to the Romance derivate in \textit{-ment, -mente}.} and the Rhematic, including the rhematic object actant (see Tischhäuser 1971). \textit{yn-} + Lenition + adjective/substantive is a single synchronic entity (whatever its disparate origins: cf. Watkins 1962; Tischhäuser 1971). The functional cluster of Coptic \textit{N-} (\textit{<} Egyptian \textit{m-}) comes to mind (cf. Shisha-Halevy 1986:250 s.v. \textit{N}; 1999:212 n. 84):

\begin{quote}
pan penodwyd ef \textit{yn} bennaeth "when he was appointed chief"
Gallwai rhai ef \textit{yn} gachgi "Some called him coward"
... cael ei golter a'i dennyn \textit{yn} ddiscownt "... getting his collar and leash at a discount"
Yr oeddwn \textit{yn} \textit{yn} \textit{fore} "I was there early in the morning"
Nid doeth bod \textit{yn} \textit{rhy} obeithiol ynghyrch ci "It's unwise to be too hopeful about a dog"
Mae pob beth \textit{yn} \textit{mynd ymlaen} \textit{yn} dda...ond fob pobeth \textit{yn} araf, ac mae'r \textit{twydd} \textit{yn} \textit{wlyb} ...
\end{quote}

"Everything is proceeding well ... only that everything is slow, and the weather is wet ..."

\begin{quote}
Daethant \textit{yn} \textit{nes} at \textit{ei gilydd} "They came closer to one another"
Bwyttaodd \textit{y} leill ef \textit{yn} \textit{foneddigaidd} ... "The others ate it in a genteel way"
Yn \textit{fodus}, \textit{mid} \textit{yw} pob \textit{un ohonynt} \textit{yr} \textit{un fath}. "Luckily, all of them are not of the same kind"
Mi glywais alw \textit{hwn-a-hwn} \textit{yn} \textit{ddanodd o ddyn} "I have heard call this-and-that a 'toothache of a man'"
\end{quote}
(3) Pattern Repertory: Nexus and Rhematics

(3.1) The existence in Celtic of three nexus patterns (Shisha-Halevy 1995:134ff.), with an additional existential/presentative pre-nexal pattern — a repertory strikingly similar to the Semitic-Egyptian one — is of prime typological significance.

(I) Existential-Presentative pre-nexal statements. These are not instances of theme/rheme interdependence, but an explicit or implicit clause pattern which, introducing a nominal or pronominal element into discourse, is presupposed by any nexal pattern which refers to it or resumes it through its theme. The presentate is marked as object actant — in Welsh by lenition (when noun), in Irish (when pronoun) by placement.

(a) Existential

Welsh mae/oes (allomorph following certain converters, including negators); 14
Irish tábhfuil (allomorph following certain converters, including negators).

(b) Presentative (or Deictic-Existential): an element rare elsewhere in Indo-European (and impossible to translate exactly into English: "Here's" is but an approximative make-shift rendering).

Welsh dyna (interlocutive/nunegocentric; marked for other functions) / dyna (largely unmarked); Middle Welsh llyma/lyna (Shisha-Halevy 1998:184ff.; 1999:220ff.).


Dyma fy neges i bedd "Here's my message today"
Dyma'ch llythyr chi yn fy nghyrraed "Your letter has reached me" ("Here's your letter reaching me")
Dyma i chi enghraifft "Here's an example for you"
Dyma fi yn eistedd i geisio ateb eich llythyr "I'm sitting down to try and answer you're letter" (Here I am sitting down ..."

A dyma finnau. Wel dyna fo, gallai fod yn waeth. "And here I am. Well, there it is: it could be worse".

In Irish, the presentatives are homonymous with demonstratives:

sin, seo (proximal — interlocutive/nunegocentric)

siúd (distal — delocutive)

Sin rámhairn duit "Here's a spade for you"

14 The very existence of mae/oes, a special, non-verbal existential statement - affirmative (but negatable), non-verbal (in fact, the verb "be" does not correspond to any single Celtic entity) is an important point of agreement.
*Seo leat, seo linn,* with the preposition “to, for”; cf. Welsh dyna ichi (Shisha-Halevy 1998:190), both paralleled exactly in Semitic, Egyptian and Berber.

**Narrative constructions — nexus presented in narrative:**

Seo chugam í “Here she is, coming towards me”, literally “la voici vers moi”

... agus siúd ina suí d’aon phlap le mo thaobh í “... and there she was, sitting down with a plop at my side”

Note the matrix-final placement of the independent pronoun í “she”, proving (in its similarity to the placement of the pronominal object actant: cf. Ahlqvist 1975/6) the actancial nature of the presentates.

Seo anuas Pádraig Ó Diorán, píce ar a ghualainn “Here’s Pádraig Ó Diorean coming down, a fork on his shoulder”.

Cf. also “seo, seó” (“now, now” or “there, there!”).

In Egyptian-Coptic, LE *ptr* is comparable rather than OME *m.k.* We do not to my knowledge find presentative narrative tenses in any phase of Egyptian (*m.k sdm.n.f* and *ptr sdm.n.f* are not properly speaking narrative forms); Coptic *είC, είC-ΩHHTΕ* (etc.: Shisha-Halevy 1984a). Presentatives, with essential focussing and narrative roles, also in Berber (*ha-*), Hebrew (Biblical and Modern: *hinneh*), Arabic *inna-* , Old Babylonian *anumma* [information by Dr. Eran Cohen], El Amarna Accadian *inûma*.

(II) Existential-statal nexus of an adverbial and adverbial-slot themes. This pattern is as important in Welsh/Irish as the Bipartite one is in LE — to — Coptic and the *jw-lmk/lzero*-introduced adverbial-rheme pattern is in ME. In principle, it may in Welsh be introduced by existential or presentative exponents:

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    mae
    dyrna
    “Il y a”
    “Voilà”

    Henri’n anffydiwr / Greta adref yn sydyn / Paul yn cysgu
    “...and there she was, sitting down with a plop at my side”
    “Henry an unbeliever / Greta suddenly (at) home / Paul asleep”
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Some highlights and illustration:

(a) the adverbial rheme:

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15 The Welsh and Irish presentative with the allocutive “to, for” possessive preposition (*W ichi, I leat; Shisha-Halevy 1998:190*) is immediately comparable with LE *ptr n.k* (e.g. P. Sallier I 4.5, P. Sallier II 35), also Hebrew and Arabic.

16 Welsh *mae*, Irish *té*, usually conceived of as verbal (more likely than not, due to the filter of the “be” translation into West European languages and especially English), is in fact very much like ME *jw* - it is even zeroed in similar circumstances, e.g. in exclamation (*Ól an bua ag an namhaid “Oh, the enemy has the victory!*) or wish (*Dia sa teach “May God be in this house”).
Mae nhad eisoes yn ei wey “Dad is already in his bed”
Mae’r ddau wrth ochrau’i gilydd yn y cwpwrdd yn y parlwr “The two are side by side in the cupboard in the parlor”
Tá deifir bheag orainn “We have to hurry a little” (“There is a small hurry upon us”)  
Tá mise anseo le dhá uair “I’ve been here for two hours” (“I’m here”).

(b) Periphrastic verbal tenses are constituted by predicking the converbs (adverbial verb forms: see above) in the existential-statal nexus matrix, to form full-fledged tenses; this is immediately and strikingly comparable with the Egyptian preposition + INF set, which arrives in Coptic with the special CωTM durative converb, marked as such only by its structural identity profile, i.e. its commutation and expansion properties (Shisha-Halevy 1986 Chapter Three). In Welsh, two prepositional phrases, viz. yn+ infinitive (“in”), wedi + infinitive (“after”), are fully grammaticalized into converbs, other prepositions are but partly so, as is evident by their conditioning lenition of the infinitive’s initial consonant.

Periphrastic tenses are temporally complex, since they commute in two temporal paradigms, namely the converbal one (here illustrated) — which signals the basic temporal point of reference — and the auxiliary nuclear one, which is variable in most tenses (and the infinitive) and pinpoints and locks precisely the temporal reference.

The yn-converb is focalizable (e.g. in the response constituent of dialogue) in a form homonymous with the infinitive, without the morphological yn-mark (which is zeroed; cf. again Coptic converbal CωTM), which, however reappears in a second coordinated yn-converb:

Treio bod yn ffeind oedd Cwlin “Cwlin was only trying to be friendly” (“Its trying ... that he was”)  
Meddw i am y parti heno yr ydw i ac yn cael mynd anall “I’m thinking of the party tonight and of being able to go out” (“It’s thinking ... that I am”; note the second coordinated yn-converb).

The converbs are negatable (usually, it is the theme-converb nexus that is negated):  
am fy mod i’n fychan a ddim yn prifio “because I am small and not growing up”.

**Welsh**

- *yn-* “in”, forming a special complexive present tense (not generic, but not always actual or durative):  
A ydych yn hoffi stori fer Aberteifi? “Do you like the best Aberteifi short story?”

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18 The preposition *yn-* is not zeroed as focus in a non-converbal prepositional phrase:  
Ella mai yn y lleuad y gwelwn i o nesa “Perhaps it is in the moon that I’ll see him next”.

Dyma’ch llythyr chi yn fy nghyrfaedd y bore yma “Your letter has reached me this morning” (“Here’s your letter reaching me ...”)

Yr wyf yn mynd i Lerwl i fwrw’r Pasg “I’m going to Liverpool to spend Easter”

- wedi “after”, forming perfect tenses (the only temporal constituent absent in Egyptian):
  
  Yr wyf i wedi teimlo unigrwydd ar brydia “I’ve felt loneliness at times”
  Yr wyf wedi dechrau ysgrifennu nofel “I’ve started writing a novel”

- am- “for”, forming a tempus instans, or an intentional future tense; typically interlocutive:
  
  Yr wyf am awgrymu testun stori fer i chwi “I’m going to propose to you a subject for a short story”

- i- “to, for”, forming a deontic future tense:
  
  I ba le yr wyf i anfon? “Whither am I to send?”

Irish has a richer system:

- ag- “with, by”, forming an eventual dynamic present:
  
  Tá muid ag tabhairt turais na hÉireann “We’re making a tour of Ireland”
  Bhínn ag dul ar scoil gach lá, is bhí ag éirí liom. “I used to go to school every day, and I was successful” (“... it succeeded for me”)

- in-{a-}- “in {his}” with many verbs of motion or posture; always intransitives; forming a statal present tense:
  
  Bhíos i mo shuí “I was sitting”
  Bhí fear iasachta ina sheasamh ann “A stranger was standing there”

- ar- “on”, forming a statal-qualitative present tense:
  
  Bhí a dhá súil ar lasadh “His two eyes were flaming”

- chun- “towards”, forming an intentional-instans future tense:
  
  Táimse chun imeacht uabhdh ar feadh támáil “I’m going to leave you in a while”

- le- “to”, forming a complex, deontic and potential-mode future:
  
  Céard tá le feiscint agat? “What is there for you to see? (the agentyvity that is ... in the “possession of action” (see below for the possessive agentyvity in the Irish perfect tense)

  “An Fear Buile le feiceáil anseo!” “The Madman to be seen here!”
  gan morán le rá aige “without him having much to say” (“... much to be said by him”)
  Agus tá tá le póсадh “And you are to marry.”

- tar éis- “after”, forming a perfectum praesens
  
  Tá Sitric tar éis teacht as a phluais “S. has come out of his cave”

- -te/ta statal converb (“past participle” or rather Indo-European -tós derivate)
  
  Tá tú féin sátsta, ar ndóigh? “You yourself are satisfied, I hope?”
  Bhí cailín óg suite ar chathaí ir in aice leis “A young girl was seated near him”
Ba chailín í má bhí sí pósta féin “She was a girl even though she was married” (note the neat opposition between the inherent-essential Nominal Sentence rheme cailín “girl” and the incidental existential-statal rheme pósta “married”).

(c) The possessive verboid (see below) is a case of grammaticalized rhematic prepositions gan- (Welsh) and ag-/le- (Irish). Irish ag- also provides a matrix for the possessive perfect tense (cf. Ó Sé 1992) where the formal possessum is nexal, with a stative -ta/te thematic:19

Tá sé déanta agam “I have done it”

(d) “Periphrastic noun predication” — incidental or circumstance-referred noun predicate: Irish in-{a-}, substative (more rarely, adjective), Welsh yn- (lenition) + adjective or substantiate: see below.

(III) The Nominal Sentence

A highly interesting complex of phenomena, a set or even set of sets, this is by no means a “verb-less” predicative construction, but a special nexal matrix, with no reference to the verb whatsoever. It has been extensively discussed for Egyptian-Coptic and Semitic; rather underplayed in Welsh (less so in Irish): see Shisha-Halevy 1998, Chapter Three and Appendix II; 1999. Some highlights:

(a) The rheme-initial, pronominal-theme-second pattern set is not in any way focalizing, emphatic or marked (Shisha-Halevy 1998:122f., pace Van Hamel 1949:22ff.)20. This unmarked sequence is well known in Egyptian-Coptic and Semitic. In Irish, the initial rheme is often but not always marked by is- and its past form ba-:

Teimlad yw hwn “This is a feeling”
Blwyddyn y Parciau Genedlaethol yw hi “It’s National Parks Year”
Buachail é Peadar “He’s (quite) a chap, Peter” (expanded delocutive theme)

(b) Welsh yw and ín/pw are not a verb form, nor always copular. When not copular, they are pronominal themes and predicators. The problem in Celtic lies in the “etymological” tyranny of diachrony as well as the ready translation by “be” of a complicated system where neither a statal-existential nor noun/pronoun nexus pattern sets use a “be” verb at all. In fact, there are in Welsh three synchronic yw homonyms:

yw₁ = pronominal theme, following its rheme.

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19 This construction occurs for transitives only, a fact that recalls the limitation of the ME circumstantial-narrative sdmn.f (reaching as a systemic feature all the way to Coptic, where the opposition of dynamic vs. stative converbs obtains in the durative nexus pattern only for transitives, and intransitives occur only as the stative convorb).

20 See Jongeling 2000:99ff., without however drawing conclusions as to the nature of Welsh yw.
yw₂ = copula, following the theme and preceding the rheme.

yw₂ = allomorph of mae in the statal-existential nexus pattern in special conditions (esp. following the negative converter).

Synchronically, Irish is too is a "Demonstrative Particle" (so Greene 1958), and not a verb: in the Irish syntactic tradition it is known neutrally as a "clitic morph" (iairmbéarla); a prefixed element usually marking the rheme immediately following; in the case of CS, marking the focus. (In fact, is is not unlike European c'est or it's, Berber "particule pré-dicative" d-).

(c) The Cleft Sentence is formally a type of NS — see in detail below. Note that ANOPK ñC (jnkw pw) "it's me" (rather "It's I") differs from Welsh fy sy' ma ("I [am] who-is here"), but agrees with Irish Is me, as also with the non-Celtic (Germanic and Romance) West European languages, which are also the core of the Cleft-Sentence topic (expanded by a relative verb-nexus).

(d) The bimembral or binominal pattern, with no mediating pronouns, is well established from Old Welsh (cf. Mac Cana and Watkins 1958:20f.) and Old Irish on. Note in particular the naming constructions. See also Shisha-Halevy 1998:154ff.:

Celwydd y peth "This thing is a lie"
Druan othonoch "poor you!"
Gwell i chwi'r drwg a wyddoch na'r drwg na wyddoch "The evil you know is better for you than the evil you don't know"
Mo dheartháir Seán an fear sin "This man is my brother S."
Bónapart m'ainm "My name is B."

(e) The "Na't Sababi" is an intriguing construction, in which an entire nexus of rhematic adjective and thematic (high-specificity — possessed, marked as inalienable) noun has adjoined or rhematic nominal status. See Mac Cana 1966 for Welsh and Irish; Shisha-Halevy 1998:167ff. for Modern Welsh, 1999:185f. for Middle Welsh; See Polotsky 1978, Goldenberg 2002 for Arabic.

chwerw ei blas "bitter of taste" ("bitter its taste")
harwd ei ddiwyg, ei wyneb-dalen, ei brintio "(a book) lovely of form, of paging, of printing" ("lovely its ...")
un poenus ei sgwrs a'i gwmni "one painful of conversation and company" ("painful his ...")
ffraeth ei dafod "swift of tongue" ("swift his ...").
The construction concurs functionally with exocentric bahuvrihi-type compounds, which are juncturally word-formational constructs. The specific difference is here the lenition, the absence of possessive with the thematic element, and in Irish the formal possessor nucleus -ach.

calon-feddal “soft-hearted” ("heart-soft")
gwag-law “empty-handed” ("empty-hand")
fuar-ghlór-ach, már-lámh-ach "cold-voiced", "big-handed".

Egyptian has two types of comparable phrases, but to my knowledge no real Na ’t Sababī construction is attested:

(a) jgr n d’bw.f - "excellent of fingers", possessed inalienable, with nota relationis;
(b) dšr irty “red of (two) eyes” = “red-eyed”: compound, ūn possession.

Naming constructions in binominal patterns, occurring from early Irish, belong here only in a sense, for their adjunctual linkage — this is another special case of binominal matrix:

aicme becc i Clú, Catrice a ainn “a small tribe in Cliu, Catrige by name”

Cf. the old nexal naming pattern in Egyptian and Coptic (X ṅn.f, X P|NTq); also Demotic mw tf X “whose mother is ...”.

(f) Distinguishing in Welsh and Irish the interlocutive
un o r bobl yna wyf i “I’m one of these people”
Cé thú? (cf. Coptic NTK-NIM?) “Who are you?”

from the de locuti ve pattern
Ai chwî yw Gwrandawr y Faner? “Is y Faner’s Listener you?” or “Are you y Faner’s Listener?”
... addoli Duw yw unig amcan addysg “worshipping God is the only goal of education”
Is iontach “It’s amazing”

— and either from the copular (theme-initial, rheme-final) pattern (Shisha-Halevy 1998:11f., 114f., 1999:192ff.):

Ei gred o ydyw mai addoli Duw yw unig amcan addysg “His belief is that worshipping God is the only goal of education”

Nid fy mwriad yw busnesa “It is not my purpose to meddle”

— is a basic typological trait shared with Semitic and Egyptian.

(g) The Irish NS pattern set has, in addition to the basic forms, some especially fascinating members.
The cataphoric formal pronominal rhyme:

Is é a casadh leat ná an Cat Mara “That’s what you met, the Sea-Cat”

The double anaphoric-pronoun theme, enframing the rhyme phrase, with junctural and information-structure significance:

Ba i bean mo dheartheach, Pádraic, i “She was my brother P.’s wife” ( “She was my brother P.’s wife, she was”).

Rhemes focalized by various means, mostly pronominal:

Fear an-deas ba ea é “He was an extremely nice man” (ea neutric focalizing pronoun)

Is i an Ghaeilge an teanga is deuchasach dúinn go léir “it is Gaelic, the tongue that is native to all of us” (i thematic cataphoric pronoun).

A bimembral included nexus pattern predicating adjectives occurs in Irish, as complex focalized rhyme in a special (nexus-focussing?) expressive Nominal Sentence pattern (Shisha-Halevy 1998:208f.). Remarkable is here the obligatory specificity of the nominal theme:

Is blasta an phroinn i sin “this is a tasty meal indeed”

Go deimhin, is saoisc an tár i “Indeed, it is a pleasant land”.

(h) The endophoric theme occurs in Celtic and Egyptian-Coptic (cf. Shisha-Halevy 1987, 1998:124), “internally” referent to its very rhyme:

Gardd rhyfedd yw hi “It’s a strange garden”

Stori yw hi “It’s a story”

Ní haon tine i “It’s no fire”.

(i) A major, well-known feature: the Nominal Sentence proper, predicating an inherent, absolute quality is opposed in Welsh and Irish as it is in Egyptian and Berber to an incidental or circumstance-dependent noun predication pattern, in which the rhyme is marked adverbially: Welsh yn-, Irish in-\{a\} — (\{a\} is the possessive article concording with the theme, and thus providing aditional cohesion inside the nexus). Compare Egyptian jw....m-, Coptic O- N- (cf. Shisha-Halevy 1998:193ff., 201ff.).\(^{21}\) Some details:

Welsh:

Adjectival predicates are not incidental, since not in real opposition to the NS. In fact, this is the adjectival-predicate pattern in Welsh comparable to the special Egyptian adjectival-predicate pattern.

mae’r eglwys yn hynod o hardd “The church is remarkably beautiful”

Pam yr ydych chi’n ddigalon “Why are you sad?”

\(^{21}\) The second case of Irish grammaticalized “in” corresponding to Egyptian m-, the first being the m- + infinitive conveerb for intransitives and verbs of movement.
Paid iti a bod yn rhy siŵr “Don’t be too sure”
Yr oedd yn anodd penderfynu “It was difficult to decide”

However, adjectives substantivized (by a formal nucleus un “one”) are pertinently incidental:

Mae’r seflyf yn un dorcalonnus “The situation is a heart-breaking one”.

Substantival and complex predicates are pertinently incidental:
Yn wîr, mae colli hen bobl y dyddiau hyn yn golli oes na welwn byth mohoni eto “Indeed, losing old people these days means losing an age we shall never see again”
Ond, ac mae hyn yn ond go fawr “But, and it’s a rather big but, “...
pan oeddwn i’n blentyn “when I was a child” (note the temporal clause, not compatible with the inherent NS)
Mae’n beth mawr i ni “It’s a big thing for us”
Mi fasa hynny yn beth od iawn “This would be a rather strange thing”.

Irish usually predicates in this pattern substantives and complex phrases:
... agus mé i mo pháiste “when I was a child”
An taobh spéire úd tá sé ina ghorm agus ina dhearg agus ina chorcra anois “That side of the sky, it is blue and red and purple now”
Bhí an ait ina raic aici “She had the place a wreck”
Bíse i do chailín mhaith anois “You be a good girl now”.

More rarely, adjectives (many opposed to their inherent predication in the Nominal Sentence):
Nuair a bhíadh Tomás aici ina aonar “When she had Thomas alone”.

Unlike Welsh, Irish may focalize the incidental rhyme (leaving the grammaticalized preposition í to mark the theme! — in fact, this preposition, be it resident in the rhyme or theme, is the exponent of incidentality).

Cheapfá gur páiste a bhí ionam “You would have thought that I was child” (“that it is a child that I was”)
Nach fear a bhí ionam? “Wasn’t I a man?” (“Wasn’t it a man that I was?”)

(j) The Welsh “Rhematic Word Class Pattern”, with the rhyme constituency overruling the Parts of Speech classification (Shisha-Halevy 1998: 154ff., esp. 158f.). The theme is an infinitive, a “that” clause or clause-referent “this”. This too seems to be a partial correspondent of the Egyptian adjectival-predicate “nfr sw” pattern.\(^\text{22}\)

Da iawn gennyf glywed “It’s really good for me to hear ...” (note the thematic lenition)
Dim diolch i mi fod fy nghyfraeg yr hyn ydyw “No thanks to me that my Welsh is what it is”.

\(^{22}\) In fact, there are several in Egyptian: jnk + Adjective and Adjective + pw, ousted by the “nfr sw” pattern, ousted in its turn by the Nominal Sentence following the disappearance of the adjective as a word-class.
The construction is less developed in Irish:

Sean go raibh an smaoineamh céanna ina chloigeann “The same thought was probably in his head” (“Probably that ...”).

The status of this construction (also encountered in Modern Hebrew and Greek) in Coptic-Egyptian: must still be explored. In Coptic, the Conjunctive may be a:theme forms in a similar pattern (e.g. following ΔΑΝΚΗ, ΝΑΝΟΥΣ, ΜΕΠΑΚ, ΓΕΝΟΙΤΟ etc. ...; in LE, compare #Adjective + possessive article + infinitive#.

(k) A minor but I believe noteworthy prosodic feature in Welsh: #Rheme yw hwn + expansion# — the demonstrative adjective is interposed immediately following the pro-nominal theme, before an expansion of the rHEME (Shisha-Halevy 1998:134 + n.43): Cf. Coptic ΝΟΥΣ ΝΙ ΝΑΙ ΝΤΑΥΥΚΩΛΠ “Those are the ropes that broke” (Shisha-Halevy 1984b:182ff.).

(IV) Verbal nexus,23 by which is meant the so called synthetic (in Egyptian, “suffix conjugation”) — the verbal base followed in clause juncture by personal thematic suffixes.

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23 There is unfortunately call here for a critical marginal note on the Celtic/Egyptian comparative perspective of the verbal nexus, alias “verb”, à propos of the Egyptological information contained in a recent paper by the Celtic linguist Graham R. Isaac (2001). Where Gardner’s Grammar used to serve until recently as a source of typological information and reference, as it were a window into the phenomenology of Egyptian (especially Old and Middle Egyptian) for non-Egyptologists, following nearly a century of sophisticated linguistic work we are certainly in need of another updated compendium or reference source. Antonio Loprieno’s Ancient Egyptian: a Linguistic Introduction, (1995) is apparently the current authority on facts of Egyptian grammar. However, this work, considerably eclectic, while reporting on milestones in the evolution of Egyptian linguistics, packages this information in a model and theory that are open to vivid objection, to say the least. The same work does much worse on Coptic, where Loprieno does not even keep track of research nor seem to realize the extent of syntactic differentiation between Sahidic (here as often = Coptic tout court ) and other dialects (and other dialects, highly idiosyncratic syntactically, keep emerging in Coptic almost as I write this). For the uninitiated, this is a downright stumbling-block.

In his paper, Graham R. Isaac compares the Irish conjunct and absolute verbal forms with (respectively) allegedly marked and unmarked suffix-conjugation (“sdfm”) forms, in ME (of all phases in the near-4000 years of Egyptian history — certainly not the clearest, earliest or most typical). Following Loprieno, Isaac presents as consensual and unproblematic the bipartition of “emphatic” (“marked”) vs. all other sdfm forms (“unmarked”), thereby wholly ignoring any morphological or syntagmatic/paradigmatic-identity characteristics of the latter forms, not to mention their textual and macrosyntactic functioning, as well as mode of negation (for instance, the differentiation of tm — a clear mark of the nominal status of the form — and n...js...). A random selection of erroneous statements in Isaac 2001:

p. 156 ‘the simplest, unmarked category is sdfm’ — this is simply wrong, whatever sense — formal or functional — one gives “simple” and “unmarked”; while vocalic morphology is almost unknown, its existence is proven; so is the consonantal, syntactic and paradigmatic differentiation of the forms.

p. 157 ‘sdfm he hears ... he makes irf idem’ is a giant step backwards, reminding one of the purely mythical sdfm sn “der Bruder hört” of pre-scientific Egyptology.

p. 161 “The sdfm.n.f forms itself does not show any opposition between emphatic and non-emphatic forms”, with no word about the distinctive passive sdfm.n.tw.f, distinctive n...js and tm negation, macrosyntax, lexical correlates as well as some not negligible consonantal morphology. (Here and for the sdfm, the basic distinction of relative and non-relative forms is ignored).
(3.2) The Personal Infinitive (borrowing the Portuguese term for a corresponding form). A general topic of considerable importance is of the way an infinitive is supplied with an actor ("verbalized"; Mac Cana 1997:193ff.; see Richards 1949). The main Welsh and Irish constructions constitute a nexus pattern — a whole nexus packaged as infinitive for syntactic integration purposes. We find in Welsh a morphological form, or one nearing the morphological, by the joint criteria of sequence stability and close-juncture properties. I am referring to the Welsh *i cum infinitivo* "iddo ganu" ("for-him-to-sing": see Shisha-Halevy 1995:147 + n. 29, 1998:56ff. 162, 183): highly morphologized, always in this order (typically, although not invariably, with closest juncture): *i* (homonymous with the preposition "to, for") marks the theme-agent, the infinitive follows, lenited (this is the copular lenition, actually creating and marking the nexus. The form is affirmative only; its tensing is *atemporal*, which is not the least of its many points of interest: it must be remembered that, unlike Latin, the Welsh infinitive is not tense-characterized. Its distribution in terms of syntactic integration is extensive, and it alternates in other environments with several other "that" forms, e.g. the converter y- for verbal nexus, and the infinitive *bod* "be" for the statal-existential "adverbal-theme" nexus; the nominal actor also may expand the infinitive, either in a construct chain or marked by the *nota relationis o-" on the part of":

er dymuno ohonof weled gorffen y llyfr "although I wish(ed) to see the book finished" ("despite wishing on my part").

Examples:

*i*nd wyf yn meddwl i chwi gyfarfod fy merch Nesta "I do not think you have met my daughter Nesta" ("for you to meet")

Things get even shakier when Isaac approaches Coptic (p. 164ff.), completely ignoring half a century of research: here too Isaac would find unmarked (Basic or First Tenses) and marked (Second Tenses!) verb forms (p. 165). Coptic SVO is taken to have developed from ME VSO (! p. 167), whereas Coptic is still clearly VS (indeed, arguably still a "*sdfm*" language), if we understand the conjugation bases rightly.

The point I actually wish to make is that in the kind of typological comparison we're concerned with, the *comparata* facts must be extremely well-founded, and if our information must be second-hand, theories, even though *en vogue*, must needs be carefully weighed and double-checked (taking research literature into account). Isaac reveals here easy-going confidence in a field out of his competence, and superficial treatment of intricate linguistic issues which he would surely resent in Celtic. In ME of all phases, the *mrrf* ("emphatic") is still clearly a substantial "that" form, while the circumstantial ("adverbal", converbal) and perfective and prospective *sdfm* forms are well distinct and established, both by such consonantal morphology as there is, by structural tests of identity and by text-grammatical roles.

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24 The phenomenon occurs elsewhere in Romance, cf. Ledgeway 1998, who makes a distinction between "personal" and "inflected" infinitives.

25 One of the show-pieces of the "Celtic Englishes", English *for ... to* is a feature of standard colloquial English and of north-western British (Devon, Northumberland etc.) and Irish-English as well as many American English dialects; it is more limited; in standard English, it does not occur with prepositions, but mainly as theme of *be*-constructions, appositive to *it*, or as object actant: "arranged for me to ..." "could not stand for me to ..."
Moreover, dłó marks the theme in other predication patterns:

An dóigh leat ... gur tirim choiché dúinn? “Does it seem to you ... that we are ever dry?” (“that it is ever dry for us?” — where tirim “dry” is adverbial or at least neutralizes adjective and adverb).

Coptic TPE4ΩTM (as component of in ETPE4-, ΩMHPTPE4-, MNCA TPE4- etc.) is a partly comparable case of personalized infinitive, with nexus obtaining between -4- and ΩTM. The outil grammatical TPE-, originally the infinitive of the auxiliary “cause” with a dependent “subjunctive” of the auxiliary “do” (“cause that ... does”) is actually the copular mechanism, effecting the predicative nexus.


(4.1) Envelope focussing is an important basic principle of clause-focussing grammar in Welsh (see Shisha-Halevy 1998:28ff. with examples, and cf. Mac Cana 1973:104 “various nuances of emphasis affecting the substance of the whole sentence”): a broad focus overlay on the clause as a whole; a second set of signals, mostly cotextual, resolves a more restricted location of the focus. The formal means specified below need cotextual and environmental frames to be precisely decoded. For the comparable situation of the Coptic Focalizing Conversion (alias Second Tenses), cf. Shisha-Halevy 1986, Chapter Two; 1998:30f. n. 13.

(4.2) The Cleft Sentence pattern set

(a) I find in this context significant, not so much the very occurrence of the CS — a phenomenon anything but rare, even though not panglottic — but its value (cf. Shisha-Halevy 1995:156 n. 65 + reff.: the focality grading of its focus. This point, to be settled structurally, is of importance inasmuch it involves the paradigmetics of focalization in general, the triggering of focalization constructions and, more specifically, the precise determination of CS functions. Although it is frankly difficult to scale and grade focality, it is a common experience for students of Egyptian-Coptic to find French (and particular colloquial and dialectal) mise en relief constructions matching Egyptian ones; Welsh and Irish CS roles seem to match Egyptian correspondents even more closely.

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27 For instance, cases of CS conditioned by certain foci; in Egyptian, Welsh, and Irish, by interrogative adverbs and pronouns; in Irish and Welsh (probably in Egyptian too — this needs special study), by certain adverbials (Irish minic “often”, ar éigeān “hardly” etc.).

gofynnodd MW imi anfon ei nofel "MW asked me to send his book" ("for me to send")
côt sîl a wnâi iddi edrych yn dewach "a seal coat that would make her look fatter" ("a seal coat that made her look fatter")
Cofiai bregethwr ... ddefnyddio y gair rebals "I remember a preacher ... using the word rebels" ("for a preacher...to use")
er mwyn iddo fynd ymlaen "for the sake of him going on"
fel y bu imi ysgrifennu ato ef "as it happened that I wrote to him" ("for me to write")
Peth naturiol yw i chi wyliitio "It's a natural thing for you to lose control of yourself".

A modal role is noteworthy:
imi fod yn blaen "Let me be direct" ("for me to be direct")
Pluen yn eich cap yw ei ganmol, dim ond i chwi beidio a disgwyl eich canmol ganndo ef "so long as you don't expect to be praised by him" ("but for you not to expect ...") — the negation expressed lexically by the negative verb peidio)
Dim ond imi gau fy llygaid, a gwelaf "I only have to close my eyes, and I see ..." (But for me to close me eyes).

There is no straightforward Irish correspondent for this construction. However, the preposition dó (in fact, the cognate of Welsh i) marks the theme-agent for the converbs (see above. Note the typical final placement) as for rhematic adverbials (cf. Greene 1967):
ag breathnú dom ar an spéir agus ar an bhfharraige.."as I look at the sky and at the sea ..." ("looking on my part ...")
i mo lúí anseo san fhéar dom "I lying down there in the grass..."
ag cromadh os cionn na soitheach stáin úd dóibh "they crouching above those tin vessels"
tar éis dó teacht "after he arrived" ("after arriving on his part").

This use seems to be an extension of the role of dó as theme-marker for adverbial rhemes (typically, it occurs with prepositions, forming the equivalent of adverbial clauses:
Más sa leabha féin dúinn "even if we’re in bed" ("even if it’s in bed on our part")
Ní mar sin don ghasúr "Not thus the boy"
Naoi mbliana mar sin di "Nine years like this on her part".

However, dó occurs also as theme-agent of infinitive, not only as valency rection (e.g. of adjectives, as in "It is easy for him to understand this": See Caerwyn Williams 1980: 78ff.), but also free of rection in special patterns:
Cad chuige dhi glas a chur ar an doras? "Why should she put a lock on the door?" (lit. "why for her to put ...")

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26 Peidio negates the imperative (in its imperative form paid, the infinitive in some slots, and serves as a negative pró-nexus form. The very existence of a "negative verb" recalls Egyptian and other African languages.
(b) Formally speaking, there is a significant difference between Welsh and Irish. In the former language, different topic-forms are compatible with adverbal and (pro)nominal foci — a “that”-form converter in the former case vs. adjectivalizing (“relative”) conversion in the latter; in Irish, we find the relative converter a- used also for adverbal focus (a subpattern has go- “that” also for nominal foci). See Ahlqvist 1978, Shisha-Halevy 1987; 1995:189 n. 153, 1998:169ff. for Modern Welsh, 1998:215ff. for Irish, 1999:186ff. for Middle Welsh). This matches the Egyptian forms, and by and large the Coptic ones. The Celtic CS does not contain a pronoun — the thematic core of the CS — “it (is)”, c'(est)” in North-West-European;^3 -p3- / -пе- in Egyptian-Coptic (cf. the enclitic or proclitic demonstrative - hu’, ze-, - zu- in some old and modern Semitic languages); but let it also be remembered that a pronoun-less CS pattern is attested throughout the history of Egyptian, from the so-called Participial Statement to the #FOCUS + et- # pattern in all Coptic dialects (also, the CS with circumstantial topic in LE and Shenuztean Coptic: Shisha-Halevy 1986:84ff.).

**Welsh**

Ychydig iawn o hyfra a brynaf yrwan “It’s quite few books that I buy now”

Y fi a’i cynigiodd “It’s I who suggested it” (The interlocutive pronominal focus has delocutive topic form).

Pwy ddywedodd y gallai llas olygu lladdodd a lladwydd? “Who is it that said that llas could mean ‘killed’ and ‘was killed’”?

beth a ddigwyddodd? “What happened?” (“What is it that happened?”)

Myfi sydd ar bai “It’s I who am to blame”

Sut y gallaf i ddyfod i Riwbina? “How can I come to Rhiwbina? ("How is it that ...")

Yn Rhiwbuna y byddwn yn byw. “It is in Rh. that we shall live”

Ar frys y gwnaf bob dim yrwan “It is in haste that I do everything now”.

**Irish**

Mé féin a chniotáil iad “It’s I myself who knit them”

T’ainm atá uaidh “It’s your name he wants”

Teach beag aolbhán neamhfholláin gur mhaireamar ann “It’s a small whitewashed unhealthy house that we lived in there”

Sasanach bhí sa ngiolla ... d’fhág ar an mbóthar thú an ea? “The manservant ... who left you on the way was English, wasn’t he?” “It’s English that the manservant that left you on the way was, wasn’t he?”

Is fada a bhí an Seanduine ina aonar “It’s long that the Old Man was alone”.

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29 See H. Gaidoz 1903 “La prétendue particule verbale a”, ZCPH 4:525-6 (1903), comparing Parisian and Béarnais French. Compare to a degree MÉ ji- and m.k.
(c) In both Welsh and-Irish the adjective (and verbal topic) joins the adverbial and (pro)nominals as focalizable in the CS (with “be” topic); this is to my knowledge not the case in Egyptian (Coptic does not have the adjective as a distinct word-class at all, and Egyptian-Coptic does not have a “be” verb). However, the Focalizing Conversion focalizing its own stative rheme (Shisha-Halevy 1986:76ff.) takes care of this role, at least in part: €κλοβε “It’s crazy you are”.

Nid teg a fyddai ei gyhoeddi “Making it public will not be fair” (“It’s not fair that making it public will be”)

Tybiodd mai da fyddai gair yn ei bryd “a timely word would be good” (“it’s good that a timely word will be”)

Nach cráite atáim “Am I grieved!” (“Isn’t it grieved that I am!”)

an duine marbh — máis marbh a bhí sé ... “the dead man — if dead he was ...”


Be sy, Leusa? — William ’cw sy’n gas wrth’i “What is it, Leusa?” — “That William is being nasty to me” (“C’est W. qui m’est ennuyant”)

Y cloc-larwm ’cw ddaru stopio yn y nos (explaining being late for work) “The alarm-clock happened to stop in the night” (“C’est le réveille-matin qui s’est arrêté pendant la nuit”).

In Irish, the nexus-rhematizing CS, in a special packaging as (exclamative, affective) rhetorical question, formally focalizes an actant; in narrative, this is a device of Free Indirect Discourse (“Erlebte Rede”):

Nach é a croi bhí ag léinnigh nuair chonaic sí é! “Was her heart jumping when she saw him!” (“Wasn’t it her heart that was jumping ...”)

Nach ort atá an magadh “Aren’t you one to mock!” (“Isn’t it on you that the mocking is”).

(e) The delimitative narrative CS, formally focalizing a verb lexeme (infinitive) by the topical auxiliary “do”, “it is (INFINITIVE) that he did”: Middle Welsh #(INFINITIVE) a wnaeth# (Mac Cana 1997, Shisha-Halevy 1998:30f. etc.), strikingly corresponding to Egyptian prt pw ir.n.f “It is coming out that he did” (see Hintze 1952:36f., the only special study of the construction) delimiting episodes by defining a supportive auxiliary framework — a narrative texturing device: non-concatenating off-peak event expression; in MW, inter-episode/scene boundary signal (note the lexemic constituency: in Egyptian,
almost only verbs of motion — with indications of a broader constituency in the scant early ME occurrences; in MW including verbs of motion and posture, but extending beyond them).

Middle Welsh (Mabinogi: Pwyll, Branwen):

Dilit ymendid a wnaethant y nos honno “They continued conversing that night” (“It’s continuing ... that they did”)

A’r eil nos eisted y gyt a wnaethant “and the second night they sat together” (“It’s sitting together that they did”)

Ac ar hynny, kerdet a wnaeth y seithwyr parth a Hardlech “And then the Seven journeyed towards Harlech”.

Not so in Modern Welsh or Irish, where focalizing the infinitive extends far beyond narrative texturing functions:

Yr oedd mam wedi treio pob dim ... ond marw wnaeth o “Mother had tried everything ... but it died” (“but it is dying that it did”)

Nid oedd arnaf lawer o awydd mynd ... Beth bynnag, mynd a wneuthum “I hadn’t much desire to go, but go I did” (note that the focus here is on the nexus rather than on the verb lexeme).

Dá bhfísceafé é ... ní gáire a dhéanfá “If you saw him, you would not laugh” (“It is not laughing that you would do”).

(f) The narrative-opening Cleft Sentence is an especially striking case of its delimitative role (see Mac Cana 1973:106ff. for MW and MI exx.)

Beirt ghásúr óga ab ea Deasún agus Aodán “D. and Ao. were a couple of young boys” (“It is a couple of young boys that D. and Ao. were”)

An rúscadh a dhúisigh é “It is the stirring that woke him up”

Sa traesin a thriallas idir Baile Átha Cliath agus Binn Éadair a chonaic mé don chéad uair é “It is in the train that went between Dublin and Binn Éadair that I saw him for the first time”.

Luch a bhí ann “Once there was a mouse” (“It’s a mouse that was there”).

In Middle Irish we have the CS as regular/formal (“formulaic”) opening construction:

Is and asbert ... “Then said ...” (“It’s then that said ...”).

(g) The CS-like form topicalizing or thematizing the finite verbum dicendi/interrogandi when following or inserted (as “Schaltesatz” — see Kieckers 1912, 1913) in the quoted speech, to introduce direct discourse in narrative. The quoted segment is apparently rhetorical, in a binominal #Rheme — Theme# Nominal Sentence pattern; this thematization is effected by inversion in other languages (“said he”, “dit-il”, “fragte sie” etc. When a narrative present, this is opposed also in tense to the preterite (or rather unmarked—narrative)
ar- + delocutive (ar-sé/sí/see/aen/sise), arsa- + locutive or nominal (arsa-mé/mise, arsa-Seán):

“A chairde cléib”, a deirimise, “Chuala sibh ...” “O dear friends”, I said (“is what I said”), “You have heard ...”

“Feicim ceann!” a scairt. “I see one!” he shouted (“is what he shouted”) “Cen aois tú?” a d’fhiafraos “How old are you?” I asked (“is what I asked”) “Tabhair dhom cáis!” a d’ordaigh Eric. “Give me some cheese!” ordered Eric (“is what E. ordered”).

Coptic Π€ξάς (p3-[j]dd.f) # is comparable, when it follows or is inserted in the quoted discourse (colloquial French “....” qu’il me dit and similar is a close parallel).

(4.2) The nexus-rhematizing, perspective-focussing and superordinating verbal-nexus converters fe- (delocutive sphere, detached) and mi- (interlocutive sphere, involved) are highly important means of information articulating and highlighting in Modern Welsh, especially in narrative. For examples, see Shisha-Halevy 1995:170ff. Fe recalls Coptic Π€ in combination with a nexus, e.g. the future in apodosi or with the preterite converter Π€-, Ν€- as a relief chunk marker in narrative In MW, we find the nexus-focussing converter neu- (cf. Breton na-, see Fleuriot 1984): Shisha-Halevy 1995:162ff.

(Mab. Math) Ie ... neu-r-gaus ef enw “Indeed: he has got a name (now)”.

(4.3) Beyond clause-scope focussing and clause-constituent focussing (including nexus focussing) by various means, we find in Celtic and Egyptian-Coptic (also in Berber and Semitic) a special kind of pronominal-linkage focuser of adverbial status: the augens (“particula augens” is used by Zeuss in the Grammatica Celtica) — Polotsky’s Verstärker in 1961, roughly the Arabic ta’qīd. This is a pronominal or pronoun-containing entity that is prosodically marked, by enclisis or stress reduction, as strongly linked to a prime (pro)nominal entity, and (re)affirms it, often with adverbial modification, specification and status.

(a) In Welsh we encounter special augential pronominal sets (cf. Evans 1959; Rowlands 1981, Rolant 1985):

(1) The so-called “auxiliary” affixed/suffixed pronouns (-i, -di, -ef etc.: see a special discussion in Mac Cana 1975/6), suffixed to possessum nouns, finite verbs and pronominal forms of prepositions (see below), concord in person/number with the pos-

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30 The relationship between ddim and dim as well as other Welsh “negation complements” are investigated in Borsley and Jones 2000 in the framework of Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar.
sessive pronouns, personal suffix of verb or preposition respectively. This set seems to have the lightest identity-affirming role value, often elusive to translation into English:

Alla'i byth gwneud gwraig i Alfan "I won't ever be able to make a wife for Alfan''
Mi gymera i dy air di "I'll take your word"
'machgen i "my boy"
Tynnodd ef un o'r Cymru Coch oddi ar ei silff "He took one of the Red Wales on its shelf"
araf i, iddo fo "on me", "for him" —

contrasted with a zero or unmarked term in

... a'm gwybodaeth innau am fy nheulu yn hynod o brin "... and my own knowledge about my family extremely scanty"

ei gelyn mawr yn y gaer oedd eira "His great enemy in the winter was snow"
Cofiaf achlysur ei gael yn dda iawn (of a photograph) "I remember the occasion of getting it very well"

Eisteddwch i lawr "Sit down"
Eisteddodd wrth y piano "She sat down to the piano".

This opposition carries varying weight and function in dialogue and in narrative; there are cases where the augens fulfills in effect a morphological role. It serves as a boundary signal for the possessed noun phrase:

ei [egluro manwl, golau] ef — "Its careful, lucid explanation"

(2) The so-called “conjunctive” pronoun set (innau (inne, finne), tithau, hithau, yntau etc.; see Mac Cana 1990): confronting highlight:

• the second or last of two (pro)nominal referates:

"..." Gofynnodd y lleill mewn corws "..." ebe hithau "..." asked the others in chorus "..." Said she
ni, Bwda, Cwlin, Nedw a Ledi Miew a minnau "we, Bwda, Cwlin, Nedw and Ladi Miau and myself"
Mac Harri a hithe'n hhapus, mae'n debyg? "Harry and she are happy, it seems?"

• “also”, “too”:

... a nesaodd yn swil at Mari. Yr oedd arni hithau eisiau ei anwesu. "... and came shyly closer to
Mary. She too wanted to caress him"

Mac gen innau gorff! "I too have a body!"

• Sheer contrast:

Yr ym fffol iawn yn aros mewn lle ddi-awyr fel hyn, a hithau mor braf allan "We are foolish
enough to stay in an airless place like this, while it's so nice outside"

Mae'n ymddangos fod Paul yn gyrru'n o wylt a hithe'n niwl "It seems Paul (was) driving madly, it
being foggy"

"Does ar Mari ddim o eisio'ch gweld chi — 'Does arna innau ddim o eisio i gweld hithau chwaith
"Mary has no wish to see you" — "I have no wish to see her either".
(3) The much rarer “doubled pronoun” (myfi, tidy, hihi ...) marks true pronominal focus:

(MW Mab. Branwen) Miuy a uydaf pont “It’s I who will become a bridge”

(MW Mab. Pwyll) “(There will be no man or woman who will know) na bo tidi wwyf i a miui a af i’th le di” “that it is not you that I am; and it is I that will enter into your place”.

(4) — hun, hunan affixed to possessive articles, delocutively postposed to a noun, has a clear adverbial role, similar to “-self”:

Yr oedd hi’n dweud wrthi’i hun nad oedd ganndi ddim dewis “She told herself that she had no choice”

Fe’i hunodd ei hun â dioddef ei bobl “He united himself with the suffering of his people”

Er bod rhieni Dylan Thomas yn siarad Cymraeg, ychydig iawn a wyddai’r hardd ei hun “Although Dylan Thomas’s parents spoke Welsh, The poet himself knew little (“It was little that the poet himself knew”)

Y oedd arnaf cisiau mynd adref ... a chael bod yn y ty fy hun “I wanted to go home ... and be in the house by myself”.

(b) Irish has a suffixed augential morph — se/sa (synharmonically regulated. Earlier phases have a richer morphological system) — “emphatic particles” (so e.g. E. Lewy, ZCP 27 (1959) 10ff.; Schmidt 2002 or “contrastive/emphatic grade” (Ó Sé 1996): tú — tusa, mé — messe/mise and so on.

- in agitated, affective, expressive syntax:

(Mother about her son, who is accused of stealing a bracelet) Níor ghoid mo mhacsa tada riamh ... ach bhí náire air romhamsa nuair a fuairas amach go raibh an bráisléad imithe ... bhí náire air go sìstfinnse gur dhíol sé é “My own son never stole anything ... but he was ashamed of me when I that the bracelet was gone ... He was ashamed that I should think that he stole it”

Seo anois, a Nóra, a chrof, tioraimh do shuíle agus ól cupán tae liomsa “There now, Nora, dear heart, dry your eyes and have a cup of tea with me”.

- Focalizing or insisting on a pronominal element (also with the Cleft)

An ndéanfas rud mar sin liomsa? “To me shall such a thing be done?”

Ní raibh rún ar bith agam imeacht./ — Cheap seisean go raibh./ — Cheap sé ... mar níl fios a ghnóta i gcéart aige

Bíse i do chailín mhaith anois “You be a good girl now”

Is ormsa bhí sé ag féachaint “He was looking at me” (“It is at me that he was looking”).

- Marking contrast between persons:

B’ait an inargadh a bhí ann, ceapas, agus d’imigh linn beirt go mbbrisfinnse mo leathshaobhain i dteach ól a bhí i ngar don abhainn “It was strange, the deal that was made, I thought, and off we went, the two of us, that I may break my half-sovereign in a tavern that was close to the river”.

- Keeping two (pro)nominal referates continuously apart — the augens marks the second or latter referate of the two. In fact, this is a type of ongoing topicalization:
(4.4) Italic-marked focus, of all nexus constituents including the nexus itself, is peculiar to modern written language:

Yr wyt ym dy garu di “I do love you”
Chewch chi ddin mynd adre “You won’t get to go home”

(4.5) Negation-focussing post-negator: ddin in Welsh, a linked, probably adverb-marked homonym of the “pronominal substantive” dim “some/anything”31 and mo- (a grammaticalized, drastically reduced form of (d)dim o- “nothing of”, are post-negators that seem at least partly to carry negation-focussing force. The so-called embracing negation characterizes Brythonic — indeed, this is among the sharpest demarcation criteria of the two Celtic sub-groups — and is of course an isogloss that exceeds Europe to include African languages (Berber, Egyptian-Coptic) and Arabic dialects. (Cf. Bernini and Ramat 1996; see Shisha-Haleyv 1998:139ff.). The Egyptian post-negators concerned are js (early), jwn3 (late): Demotic jn, Coptic an. Now in Egyptian, neither js nor jwn3 are “automatic”, that is, may be considered carrying a negative charge by themselves, as in the case of French pas or Italian mica. So too ddin and mo- (in the Nominal Sentence pattern, mo- (as negator of the Nominal Sentence, constituting with pronouns or specific nouns a special negative theme). All — including λN in Nitrian and New Testament Bohairic Coptic (see Shisha-Haleyv 1981) — are usually opposed to zero, that is, mark when present some insistence or focussing of the negation itself: “a jot”, “at all”. In that sense, “Jespersen’s Cycle” (Poppe 1995) is in these languages only in its inception. Incidentally, the presence or absence of post-negators appears to be regulated by a great

31 Some special Celtic/Afroasiatic affinities in specific prepositional functional ranges are very striking, and have long been noted. Six examples: Six examples: Six examples: Six examples: Six examples: Six examples:

(a) Modl (already in Ol; not in Welsh) le-lar- pronominal reflexive Aktionart marking, following intransitives and especially verbs of movement: Ghuais liom “I moved away”, Ghuais siad orthu “They set out”. The preposition ar- occurs with other verbs; imperatives have a special status: Thosaolodar orthu ag iarraidh na bothain a tharraingt ó cheile “They began to try to tear the books apart”; Brostaigh ort “hurry!”, Foighid leat “Calm down, be patient”, Oibireag leat “Work on/away!”, cf. Shisha-Haleyv 1986 for Middle Egyptian r.f (again, with a special post-imperative status), LE to Coptic (esp. Bohairic) n.f.

(b) Le- marking the possessor with indefinite possessa (Irish) - kinship inalienables: cf. Egyptian n-, Semitic l-, Welsh i- (cognate to Irish dó): geiriau ag edd yn derfyniad iddynt “words that have the ending edd”; mac liom “a son of mine”.

(c) Irish le/chun-, welsh i- Preceding the ininitive in the existencial-statal nexus pattern, as a present-based future tense: Cf. jwfr sdm, all the way to CATHOL. (For ex., see the periphrastic conjugations above).

(d) The combination of Welsh, Irish ar- against, Irish ag-/Welsh gan- “with, by” in the existencial-statal nexus pattern, to convey the notion of indebtedness: Mae gennyf arno ddu “He owes me ...” , Nfl pingin acu orn “I do not owe them a penny” (Arab. alayka li dinar “you owe me one dinar” Greene 1966:45).

(e) Attitudinal / affectedness nasal patterns, with the affected prepositionally marked. Egyptian n-: nfr n t Lurk. LV 123, bin-wyri n (Admon. 6,8); Irish le-/lar- Tá ocras orm “I’m hungry”, Cad tá ort? “What’s the matter with you?” (cf. Egyptian jh r.k?), Is ait liom “It seems strange to me”. Welsh correspondent here is gan: Gwll ganddnynt fod ar eu pennau eu hunain “They prefer to be alone” (“Better for them ...”).

(f) The “to, for” + “you”: allocutive preposition actant following presentatives: Welsh i chi: Dyma i chi Frenhines Sheba “Here you have the Queen of Sheba”, Irish leat: Seo leat “Here you are”.


... agus bhí tusa agus Alf ann “and you and Alf were there”
Deirimse leat, a Leitheoir “I tell you, Reader”
“...” arsa mise, “...” ar scisean — “...” said I, “...” said he
Is dócha nach bhfeiceann siad níthe ar an mbealach céanna linn-ne “Apparently, they don’t see things the same way as we”
Má bhí daoine ann fadó a chaith na céadta bliain agus iad ag ceapadh nach raibh ann acht lá ... rinne síse rud nós ionsaí fós “If there were people long ago who spent hundreds of years while thinking that no more than a day had passed ... she did something even stranger”.

- Singling out a pronominal referate:

Is móir an seasamh aigne duitse é, A Mharcais “It’s a great peace of mind for you, M.” (“For you of all people”)
Bhí na daoine ag teacht amach ... agus ísé ag fhéachaint orthu. Bhí cuid acu ann agus d’fhéachaidís úirthe is agus ar mhá dá saghas “People were coming out ..., she observing them. There was part of them that would look at her and at women of her kind”.

(c) Irish féin, in some respects analogue to W hun — but not combined with the possessive article, is clearly adverbal:
Tá tú féin sásta, ar ndóigh? “You yourself are satisfied, I suppose?”
(If pennies are falling) féach gur i do phoca féin a thitid “look to it that it is into your own pocket that they fall”.

The formal and functional profiles of OI personal pronouns have recently been presented in Schmidt 2002. Basic is the distinction of fully stressed or absolute vs. clitic, the former featuring as rhemes and themes in Nominal Sentence patterns, the latter infixed or suffixed in verb forms, or in augens (“emphasizing particle”) role (291f.) — Schmidt examines this category formally, etymologically and comparatively, but offers no functional details; the augens set is by implication considered to be pronominal.

is Dia-som “He is God”
maic-ni dosom “We (are) sons of his”

The so-called independent pronouns in Irish, which, when object-actantial, occur as a marked final boundary signal for the verbal actancy matrix, may have originally served as “reinforcing pronouns” for an infixed “weak” objective pronoun which later disappeared: see Ahlqvist 1975/6.

(d) For the Coptic augentia, see Polotsky 1961, Shisha-Halevy 1986, Chapter Six; all occur as early as Late Egyptian, some even earlier. For the Middle Egyptian augens r.f., see Shisha-Halevy 1986b.
many parameters beside the familiar registerial ones: the pre-negator morphology; the status of the clause; the presence of expansion of the verb; negation incidence — negation of the verbal nexus or of the clause; textemic factors — dialogue, narrative, free indirect discourse; and so on):

'Dydw i ddim wedi cysgu dim neithiwr “I have not slept a wink last night” (note the compatibility of the grammaticalized post-negator *ddim* and the lexical actant *dim*).

'Doedd piau Robert Robertts, mono i “It belonged to Robert Roberts, not to me”

Nid Enid Blyton mohonom “I’m not Enid Blyton”, opposed to: Nid ... ydw (i)

Hyd yn oed yn ei thymr wylltaf ... hyd yn oed yn ei syrffed ffyrnigaf, ‘doedd hi ddim wedi bwriadu iddo ddiflanu o’i bywyd ... “Even in her wildest mood, ... even in her fiercest surfeit, she had not meant at all that he should disappear from her life”

'Doedd gando fo ddim matis i edrach “He had no match to look”

Ddaru o ddim cysidro nad oedd yna ddim ty i gael bwyd ar y mynydd “He did not happen to consider that there was no house to be had to get food on the mountain”

Ni welsai mohoni’n crio o’r blaen “He had never seen her cry before”.

(4.6) Note the use in Welsh of homolexemic topicalization of the infinitive for nexus focussing (cf. the so-called Tautological Infinitive, also attested in Egyptian):

Ond am siarad, yr oedd yn medru siarad “But talk he could” (“But as for talking, he could talk”).

(4.7) Narrative and Dialogic Functions

(a) Narrative roles of the Cleft Sentence: see above, §4.1 (c–f); see also Mac Cana 1996.

(b) The Narrative Infinitive is important in Welsh (in various syntactic configurations: coordinated “hyper-event constituent” infinitive, “log book infinitive”, presented infinitive and others), less prevalent in Irish. For Welsh, see Fowkes 1991; Poppe 1995b:145ff. (relating the MW narrative infinitive to the narrative present); Shisha-Halevy 1997; Mac Cana 1997:190f. It is well attested in Egyptian (as in several Semitic languages).

Mi godais a mynd “I arose and went”

Darlennais eich stori fer dair wythnos yn ôl a’i hoffi “I read your short story three weeks ago and liked it”

Cyrraedd yno tua 6.30 ... Cadw fy llygaid ar y cloc, yfed tri sierri a siarad yma ac acw ... ac yna ddau funud i saith ffarwelio’n bendant ... “Arrived there about 6.30 ... Kept my eye on the clock, drank three sherries and talked here and there ... and then at two minutes to seven said farewell firmly ...” (all Welsh verb forms are infinitives).

(c) Dialogue: the Responsive, marked in Welsh by conversion (zero converter and distinct negative converter, in Irish by morphology and juncture manifest e.g. by pronomi-
Ga’i? (Cewch) “May I?” (“You may”)
Oes’na rywbeth o’i le mewn parti Nadolig? “Is there anything wrong in a Christmas party?”
Wyddoch chi beth ydw i’n feddwI ...? “Do you know what I think?”
(MW Mab. Pwyll) a uyd llawn dy got ti uyth? “Will your bag ever be full?”

Irish
An rhabhair i nDún na nGall an uair sin ...? — Bhíos “Were you in Donegall that time?” “I was” An bhacfa tú an titim? (— Chonaic) “Did you see the fall?” (— I did”).

(5) Juncture Features

All or most features presented here have a more or less salient junctural aspect. Under the present heading I refer to selected striking and/or representative further instances. On Welsh and Coptic cf. Shisha-Halevy (Forthcoming a, b).

(5.1) The verb-stem ≠ theme-actor boundaries

Irish cuirfe=sé “he’ll put” is contrasted juncturally with cuirfidh-Seán “Sean’ll put”, with closer juncture between verb stem and pronominal actor, less close between base and nominal actor: see Greene 1973:127f., Ó Sé 1991:65, Ó Buachalla 1997): the nominal actor-theme too is joined in close juncture to the verb stem, but its linkage is less close than that of the pronominal actor-theme. A similar situation obtains in Egyptian; the pronominal allomorphs of bases and converters in Coptic join their theme-actor-themes in a juncture less close than the pre-suffixal allomorphs. This ensues from the relatively looser juncture of interlexemic or grammeme=lexeme boundaries compared with inter-grammemic ones. Incidentally, the 3rd sgl. masculine is in Welsh a non-person (cf. Benveniste’s “la non-personne”, apud Schmidt 2002:291 with n.14) or zero-person base (cf. Greene 1958; “the depersonalization of the third person present”, Evans 1971:42).

(5.2) Junctural factors in pronominal resolution

(a) The so-called impersonal “seventh” person in Welsh and Irish is, exactly like — tw in Egyptian, a passive marker when preceding an actantial personal suffix or noun phrase:
Fe’i lladdwyd o yn y fan “He was killed on the spot”
Is firinneach go raibh é ráite os íséal nach le mo mháthair a rugadh mé “It’s true that it was said that it was not to my mother that I was born”

But an agent actant when final in the valency matrix:
Maddeuer imí “May I be forgiven”
Léifear “One shall read” (“Si leggerà”)
nal zeroing) is a familiar show-piece of Celtic: see Greene 1972; Shisha-Halevy 1995: 183ff., 185, n.144 (with further references, also to Berber and Nubian); Thomas 1973/4. It is a higher-order thematic in relation to the thematic nexal ("yes/no") question, but more generally reactive to any clause form:

Fyddwch chi yn y seiat heno, Mr. Vaughan? — Byddaf. "Will you be at the Seiat tonight, Mr. Vaughan?" — "I will"

Mae’n debyg ych bod chi wedi darllen bod Tom a finnau wedi cael ysgariad. — Do. "It seems you have heard that Tom and I have got a divorce" — "Yes I did"

Puost ti yn i chusanu hi o’r blaen? — Naddo. "Did you kiss her before?" ("Were you kissing ...") — "No I didn’t"

Oes, y mae llawer iawn ohonof fi yn Bet "Yes indeed, there is a lot of me in Bet" (responsive focussing)

MW (Mab. Pwyll) Arho ti! — Arhoaf yn llawen "Stop, you!" — "I will, gladly"

MW (Mab. Pwyll) Dos y eisted — Nac af “Come and sit down” ("Come to sit down") — "I won’t".

Irish

An rabbais i nDún na nGall an uair sin ...? — Bhíos “Were you in Donegal that time?” “I was”

... thosaigh sí ag gol. — Níor dhein, a dhiabhail! — Ó, dhein. “She began to cry.” — “She didn’t, by the devil!” — “O yes she did”.

The phenomenon of special reactive clause-forms is known in African languages (I know of Berber, Nubian, Ethiopian). The Egyptian-Coptic responsive grammar has not been studied yet. Coptic has some interesting tensed pro-nexal forms: the negative set ṁtō ṉnɔ ñmɔn wɔ, as usual in Egyptian, more sophisticated compared with the affirmative set cē aŋa, and is homonymous with conjugation bases which are the "real" verbal forms, other than which we find only verb lexemes and, in the present, two adverbial verb forms or converbs, namely the adverbial infinitive and the stative). These responsive pro-forms are comparable with Welsh naddo (pret.) / nage (naci) (pres.), in symmetry with the affirmative do and ie (Shisha-Halevy 1995:58ff.).

(d) Welsh and Irish have each a special interrogative converter for nexal ("yes/no") questions, (affirmatively) in Modern Welsh lenition with verbal nexus (more formally and earlier, leniting a-) or ai- with non-verbal nexus; also, some allomorphs and zero with specific word-order. Irish has leniting an- and its allomorphs or alternants. (for MW and the interrogative conversion in general, see Shisha-Halevy 1995:179ff.). Egyptian jn- (jw-) comes to mind.

Welsh

Wyt ti’n sêl? "Are you ill?"
And again, passive when an instrumental (gan-) actant occurs
Golygywd ganddo “It was edited by him”.

(b) The symmetry in the distinction in Irish for the delocutive persons between an
agent actant (m. sé, f. sí, pl. siad)
Sheas sé “He stood up”
and the object actant pronoun (é, i, iad)
D’fhreagair gan aon chúthail é “He answered it without any shyness”
is broken by the latter also serving, like the Late Egyptian so-called (delocutive) depend-
dent pronoun, as prefixed pronominal theme for the existential-statal (adverbial-rheme)
nexus pattern — following the converters agus (circumstantial) and zero (situational):
... agus é slán ó fhuacht “he being safe from the cold”
Eisean ag iomramh; íse ar an stiúir “He rowing, she at the rudder”
And as pronominal theme for various Nominal Sentence patterns:
Lá breá é “It’s a nice day”.

(5.3) “Univerbation”. Opposing the possession verboid mae gennyf / arnaf/imi (non-
rhematic prepositional phrase) + Substantive to mae N gennyf (rhematic prepositional
phrase). The possession verboid — possessedness being a special form of existence is of
twofold junctural interest: (1) the close juncture between existential and possessor-
location; (2) the lenition of the possessum in the affirmative:
Mae gin y Llywodraeth ddynion “The government has people…”
Mae gen i deimant am fy ngwyddw “I have a diamond round my neck”
‘Does-gen i ddim pres “I have no money”
as against
O leiaf yr oedd Arwyn ganddi “At least she had Arwyn”
Y mae arnaf chwant gofyn i chwi … “I have a desire to ask you…”.

Compare in Bohairic Coptic the difference between 亶yόντα+ (N) Subst. and 亶yον + (indef.) Subst. + 亶τά+.

(5.4) The inflecting or conjugated prepositions (less aptly called “prepositional pro-
nouns”) are among the most familiar features of Celtic, and their similarity to Berber,
Coptic and Semitic is common knowledge.\(^{32}\) Whatever the diachronic account of this

\(^{32}\) For Old Irish, see now Schmidt 2002, with the complete syntagmatic distribution of prepositions,
phrased in constituent prosodic terms from a diachronic perspective; observe that Thurneysen’s “position C.
Pretonic before a dependent case” and “position D: Before a suffixed personal pronoun” still beg the synchronic
question of junctural difference.
new-formed pre-personal base: ΚΑΤΛ-/ΚΑΤΛ-PO=, ΠΛΡΛ-/ΠΛΡΛ-PO=; as far as I know, prepositions like ΛΝΤ! have no pronominal compatibility. This is interesting, inasmuch it indicates motivation direction and marking, the pronominal allomorph being the marked term; it is also instructive of the borrowed form, which (like the so-called Greek infinitive in Bohairic Coptic and other dialects, follows εΠ- “do”) is not what it seems.

The pre-personal base is of closer juncture than the pronominal one; for many Coptic prepositions a prepersonal allomorph is supplied by a grammaticalized, more or less transparent, synchronic or diachronic inalienable noun in the pre-personal possession form, e.g. δΝ- ΝΩΗΤ= “in” (ΩΗΤ “inner part”) or ΕΙ- ΕΩΤ= “on” (ΩΤ= “back”).

(5.5) Evolution from relative pronoun to converter (cf. Shisha-Halevy 1995:41, n. 17). This phenomenon, occurring within modern Indo-European (e.g. πον in Modern Greek, or the non-pronominal che in Italian so-called “weak” relative clauses) and associated with the coexistence of relative pronouns and “general subordinators” that also occur adnominally, is still of typological importance. Junctorially, we encounter here

(a) gender-number concord linking pronoun to antecedent, while the relative converter is linked differently, by resumptive anaphore;

(b) the relative pronoun may occupy any (pro)nominial clause-constituent slot and link the whole clause, the relative converter only marks clause-syntactic or discourse-syntactic status (contrast Coptic ΤΕΣΙΜΕ εΤ-ΣΜΟC with ΤΕΣΙΜΕ εΤ-ΣΜΟC, both concurrent constructions in most dialects, although the latter is fairly rare in the written language). The Egyptian relative adjective (O/ME) becomes pronominal in LE, and in Demotic and Coptic progressively acquires converter properties, without ever attaining full converter-hood even in Coptic. The construction of the demonstrative as nucleus of the relative converter — ΠΑΙ εΤ- (Sah.) and ΦΗ/ΘΗ/ΝΗ εΤ- (Boh. and other dialects), with Middle Welsh yr hyn a- (Shisha-Halevy 1995:145 + n. 26) is of relevance here (and is another strong point of affinity), being arguably the last phase of the evolution in point, where the circle does a full turn and the gender-number link is re-established by means of a formal (in both cases, pronominal) antecedent — as it were, an analytic relative pronoun. Both in Coptic and in MW this is symptomatic of translation literature — from Greek in the case of Coptic, from Latin in the case of Middle Welsh.

(5.6) A differentiation in the form of the nominal expansion of a feminine nucleus in Welsh, signifying a difference between appurtenative/associative and attributive (“adjecti-
special pronominal fusion, what this phenomenon means, synchronically and structurally speaking, is that in the scope of the [prep. + noun] phrase, the noun is not com-
muutable with a personal pronoun: a special pre-personal allomorphic base precedes spe-
cial morphophonemically complicated pronominal suffixes. The analyzability of the pro-
nominal forms is occasionally less immediate than of the pronominal ones, but still clear.

The junctural significance of this phenomenon is twofold: first and foremost, in the
difference in linkage between the pronominal and pre-personal (pronominal) allomorphs,
which is related to the commutability asymmetry just mentioned, second, in the very mor-
phosyntactic phenomenon of synthesis between preposition and pronoun (the expec-
tence of rection between preposition and noun is properly in the conditioning of mutation — in
Welsh mostly lenition, rarely nasalization and aspiration).

The alternant bases are hierarchically structured — the presuffixal is derived from the
pronominal (which is formally unmarked) by consonantal or vocalic extensions, which
may in turn condition modifications of the base. Examples:

Welsh

gan- “with, at, possessor marker”

i- “to, for, possessor marker”

ar- “on, against”


genny-f 1st sgl. (the vowel and doubling secondary)

ddd-o 3 sgl. masc., (dd-i) 3 sgl fem.

arma-f 2 sgl., arn-ynt 3 pl.

Irish

le- “to, with, possessor marker”

ag- “by, with, possessor marker”

as- “from, out of”,


lio-m 1st sgl., lea-t 2nd sgl. l- e-i 3 sgl.
aige 3 sgl. masc., aic-i 3 sgl. fem.
as- “from, out of”, asa-inn 1 pl., asa-ibh 2 pl., ast-u 3 pl.

Like the 3rd sgl. of the verbal bases, the Irish 3rd-sgl-masc. form may, as a non-per-
son term of the paradigm, have a zero form:

air (ar-), de (de-), as (as-).

Conjugated prepositions are of course familiar in Berber, Semitic and Egyptian. The
consonantal orthography of Egyptian generally hides the phenomenon, except for the an-
cient allomorphs (and allographs) of two important prepositions, namely r- vs. ir=, m-
vs. im=. In Coptic, with its new writing system, both allomorphs fully emerge. It is sig-
ificant that Greek-origin prepositions cannot be combined pronominally other than by a

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33 The a/o vocalism is non-phonematic but a mark of the final bounday (or cessation) of frontality.
34 The neutric demonstrative is resumed in Demotic by the feminine: Setne I 5/18 n3y-lw.n r-bw-n3y
db3t.s, 5/19 jwf hpr jw.k wh3.s n jr-p3-nty mr.k's jrm.j.
val”) relationship, may be interpreted as junctural, with the attributive term of higher linkage; cf. the Coptic opposition of the notaе relationis N- and NTее- in several dialects of Coptic, and perhaps between the “direct” and “indirect genitive” in ME. This is in fact a differentiation between association and attribution (syntactic “substantive” and “adjective”):

- poen cefn “backache”
- siambr cefn “back room”.

(5.7) A remarkable final placement of the pronominal object actant (including prepositional phrases) in Modern Irish (cf. Ahlqvist 1975/6):

Niор chualathas riamb roimhe sin ag cascainí нá ag casaidi č “He was never heard cursing or complaining before this” (č is the object of the impersonal: “They never heard ... him”).

Sporadic exx. occur in Middle Welsh:

(Mab.Branwen) ... a chledwch a’y wyneb ar Ffreinc ef “and bury it with its face (turned) towards France”.

The object here serves as a sharp final-boundary signal for the valency matrix of the verb. A similar construction of the “dependent pronouns” does not to my knowledge occur in pre-Coptic Egyptian, and in Coptic personal-pronoun objects are usually suffixed to infinitives or verboids; however, the final position of dependent pronouns or of MMOQ must yet be specially studied.

(5.8) Reference juncture and contours in Welsh: masculine, feminine and zero delocutive in alternation or opposition, as pronominal grammemic referents to “neutric” ungendered referates.

(a) Non-phoric reference

feminine referent

bod ynddi hi “be with it” “Dwyt ti ddim yn’i hi” “You’re not with it”
mair’ gaeaf oedd hi ar y brithyll “that it was winter for the trout”

(b) Exophoric reference:

feminine referent

Fel hyn y bu hi “that’s how it was”

Mæn ymddangos fod Paul yn gyrru’n o wylt a hithe’n niwl — “meteorological” hi “It seems Paul was driving madly while it was foggy”.

(c) Anaphoric reference:

*masculine referent: fuzzy reference*

Hynny ydw'i n i wneud (masculine resumption of the neutric demonstrative *hynny*, for which the gender/number complex category is neutralized): “This is what I’m doing”

Beth ydy o o'r ods bod yn wahanol i bawb? “What does it matter, being different from everyone?”

Dyna fô, y hi fyddai raid byw efo fô, nid y fi “There it is, it’s her that would have to live with him, not me”.

(d) Cataphoric reference

*feminine referent*

Dwad i mi ... sut y bu hi iti fynd i’r capel “Tell me ... how did it happen/how was it that ...”

Dydy hi ddim yn saff gyrru deryn i’r awyr “It’s not safe to send a bird to the sky”.

*zero referent - only with yn- adjectival rhemes (see above):*

'Roedd yn rhaid iddyn nhw gael bwyd “It was necessary for them to get food” (the lenition excludes interpretation of cael “get” as the direct theme of roedd yn rhaid, and marks the infinitive as complement)

Mae’n well gin ful siwgr “A mule prefers sugar” (“It’s better for a mule, sugar”).

In Egyptian, notwithstanding the overall evolution from OE to LE (so conventionally held; but possibly merely the documentation of different dialectal norms) from feminine to masculine expression of the neutric pronoun, we still see a complicated distribution of both feminine and masculine in Demotic and Coptic, with dialectal differences (for Sahidic Coptic, see Shisha-Halevy 1986: Chapter Five).

(e) Irish uses the singular masculine pronoun for all types of neutric reference:

Tá sé ina cheaminas “It is a marriage” (formal performative pronouncement)

Tá sé ag cur sneachta “It is snowing”

Le fada bhí sé gearla ag Pádraic d’Áine go dtógfadh sé ann i. “For long it was pledged by Pádraic to Áine that he would take her there”.

(f) Cataphoric reference by heralding pronominals, e.g. to “that” clauses and other un-gendered substantival segments, to Proper Names, and of a formal pronominal to a lexical rheme (Shisha-Halevy 1998:211ff.) is typical of Irish: See MacCoisdealbha 1998: Chapter Two. It is extremely common in Coptic too (Shisha-Halevy 1986: Chapter Five):

Is é a casadh leat ná an Cat Mara “That’s what you met, the Sea-Cat”

Is é ainm agus soinne dó ... Micheálangaló Ó Cúnasa “That’s his name and surname, Micheálangaló Ó Cúnasa”

Sin an Béarla ceart ar bróga, *boots*or “That’s the correct English for boots, *boots*or”.
(g) "One” as anaphoric representant, gendered (fem. or masc.) and numbered: \( u_n^{\text{fem.}} \) and \( u_n^{\text{masc.}} \), pl. \( rhai \) in Welsh (Shisha-Halevy 1998:74–90), proclitic \( oY^{\text{fem.}} \) and \( oY^{\text{masc.}} \) in Coptic (with \( oY^{\text{fem.}} \) and \( oY^{\Delta} \) respectively their non-proclitic rhematic anaphores in the Nominal Sentence: \( oYN_\circlupe \sigmape^\Delta \rho_\appa\epsilon^\psilon^\Delta \sigma_\mathrm{\Delta} \ \gamma_\nu\nu\nu\pi\alpha\nu\pi\nu^{\epsilon\tau\sigma\nu} \ \epsilon\rho_\omicron \ \chi\epsilon\cdot oY_\nu\nu\nu\epsilon_\iota \ \kappa_\epsilon\sigma \epsilon \ \pi_\omicron \ \nu_\iota \ \tau_\epsilon \). \\

(5.9) Determination exponence outside and inside the construct chain construction as symptom of (i.a.) juncture opposition; see Ó Searcaigh 1958 for Irish; Greene 1966:34 (on "fear an tf" ("man-of-the-house") “a construction which Irish has in common with the other Celtic languages, and with Hebrew: 35 a noun qualified by a definite noun cannot it-

self have the article. But Irish has more flexibility than Hebrew in that a noun followed by another noun in the genitive can have the article as long as the second does not...”. This means in fact that both terms cannot in principle be marked for specificity (which is in it-

self inexact — and unstructural to boot, seeing that the notae relationis exist to “prise” the nominal complex apart for the very purpose of determining both components.

Welsh

\begin{itemize}
\item y long olew “the oil-tanker”
\item y pren afalau “the apple-tree” (“the tree-of-apples”)
\item y pentwr llythyr “the heap of letters”
\item y siamber gefn “the back room”
\item yr Ysgol Gymraeg “the Welsh School”
\item ei brechdanau cig “her meat sandwiches” ("sandwiches-of-meat")
\end{itemize}

as against

\begin{itemize}
\item pen arall y sir “the other end of the shire”
\item Crefft y Stori “the Craft of the Story”
\item tafarn y pentref “the village tavern” (specific, since there is only one).
\end{itemize}

Observe the number characterization of both terms (uncommon):

cerrig beddi “stones of graves” (not "grave stones").

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35 Modern Hebrew too opposes in non-possessive construct syntagms, a bracketing definite article to the definite article governing the expansion only ("infixed article"). As in many Semitic languages, the nucleus is often morphologically marked. Here, too, the signified is junctural: in the closer, bracketed term of the opposition the second constituent is a compound i.f.c. or even attributive:

\begin{itemize}
\item ha-beit=sefer ("the school" (’the book house’), ha-beged=yam “the swimsuit” (’the sea wear’), opposed to
\item khod=ha-sakfn “edge of the knife” (’the knife edge’), shmurat= ha-khula, “The Khula reservation”, ‘arba’at ha-
\item hamanot “the four portions” ; talmidey=ha-kitá “the pupils of the class”, khadar=ha-shená “the bedroom” (the
\item sleeping room”), ‘ish =ha-sharia “(the) Man of the Year”.
\end{itemize}
In Middle Welsh, the \textit{notae relationis} \textit{o} and \textit{i} - operate in suppletion (usually in cases of nucleus/expansion double specificity (cf. Ó Gealbháin 1991): the nucleus hyperspecific:

\begin{itemize}
  \item y dyn diwethaf o’r llys “the last man of the court”
  \item y geing hon yma o’r Mabynnogyon “this here branch of the Mabinogion”
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Irish}

\textit{an-} \(N_1\) \(N_2\) (genitive)
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{an mac ri} “the prince” (“the son-of-king”)
  \item \textit{mo leabhairin amhrán} “my song-booklet”
  \item \textit{an cúpla focal úd} “that couple of words” (actually, \textit{an […] demonstrative} determination, with the placement of the demonstrative signalling noun-phrase boundary)
  \item \textit{an tF lóistin} “the boarding-house”
\end{itemize}

as against

\(N_1\) \textit{an-l na-N_2} (genitive)
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{i mbreachsholas na maidine} “at the glimmer of the morning”
  \item \textit{ar dhoras ár seomra codlata} “on the door of our bedroom” (the two constructions in contrast)
  \item \textit{torann na gcapall} “the noise of the horses”
  \item \textit{le béal an bháis} “to the mouth of death”
  \item \textit{bean an tF} “the lady of the house”
\end{itemize}

as against

\textit{an-N_1} (…) \textit{an-\textit{/na-} N_2} (genitive) (see Ó Searcaigh 1958), in cases of hyperspecific nucleus (\(N_1\):
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{an bhean úd na fheasa} “that woman of the fortune-telling”.
\end{itemize}

Also suppletively, with the nota relationis \textit{de-}:
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{an dara lF den} tseachmhain “the second day of the week”.
\end{itemize}

In Late Egyptian, where clear definite articles first appear systematically, this is a complicated issue in need of special study, conjointly with the question of the two concurrent noun-expanding constructions, \textit{viz.} — the immediate (“direct”) and the \textit{n-} mediated (“indirect”). (For the Bohairic Coptic set of noun-expansion constructions, a difficult complex with several parameters hierarchically operative, see Shisha-Halevy 1994):

\textit{hrw t3-mnt} “the swallow’s voice”
\textit{jmmt p3-hr} “West of the Necropolis”

as against
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{t3 nbd \textit{5nt}} “the hair-lock”
  \item \textit{t3 yf jst h3rw} “his crew of Syrians”
  \item \textit{t3-jpt rmt} “the number of people”
\end{itemize}
p3-wh'3pd "the fowler" (compounding)
t3 't-shb3 "the school" (compounding)
as against
t3-hrrt p3-5 "the flower of the cedar"
p3-shb3y p3yf jh3yt "the door of his stable"
t3-jpt t3-snwt pr-Imn "The jpt-measure of the granary of the Temple of Amun"
t3-wsht Hr "the hall of Horus"

with the nota relationis
p3-100 n dbn n sntr "The 100 deben of frankincense"
'rny-n-njw X t3-hbst n rhty Y "Citizenship X, the concubine of washerman Y"
p3y.sn-jtr n hry-rnpt "their yearly tribute" (attribution).

(5.10) Finally, a case of cotextualizing and grammaticalization of reference: the delocative masculine pronoun and augens frozen to enclitic sentential particle in Middle Welsh ("adverbially", S. Evans 1970: 51 note). It is in Middle Welsh weakly adversative ("however"), in narrative a paragraph-opening inter-paraphrastic connector:36

(Mab. Pwyll) Y neuad ynteu a gyweirwyt y Pwyll ... "but the hall was prepared for Pwyll"

(ibid.) "(this feast) I shall not allow to be given to anyone). Blwydyn y heno ynteu, y byd gwled darparedic yn y llys honn i titheu "But a year from tonight, there shall be a feast spread in this court for you only".

Modern Welsh ("then", cf. Greek ὅτι)
O'r gorau ynte mi gymera i dy ai di "Well then, I'll take your word".

Ynteu also has a disjunctive role ("or"); in colloquial Welsh interrogative clauses, clause-final (yn)te serves as final-boundary marker and tag (cf. colloquial German ... oder?).

Comparable from the junctural and to a degree functional aspect is Irish leis "too, also" — a colon-enclitic particle homonymous with the 3rd person sgl. masculine of the preposition le- ("with"), often with a weak contrastive force and focussing effect:

Má bhí Béarla maith ag mo mháthair ... bhí an Ghaielge aici ar áilleacht, leis. "If my mother had good English, her Irish, however, was a beauty"

Bhí bean chróonna sa tigh, leis, máthair sheor an tí. "There was however an elder woman in the house, the mother of the head of the household".

Compare Coptic ṮO4 ("independent" pronoun or lexical augens; also δωδέκα): see Shisha-Halevy 1995:212f., quoting Ludwig (Christian) Stern, who comments in one of

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36 Incidentally, Old and Middle Irish are "particle languages" like OE, ME and Coptic.
his reviews in *Zeitschrift f. celtische Philologie* 3 on this similarity, as a rare echo from his Egyptological past (see here note 1.); 1999:190 n. 64.

(6) **Noun Specificity**

(6.1) Determination and specificity. Determination is a conveniently short name for a syndrome: a combination of signalled characterizations (of which articles are but one relatively straightforward set) of a nominal or other element, signifying individuation, genericity, familiarity and more generally specificity. In Irish, and to a slightly lesser extent Welsh, both noun-centered languages (Greene 1966:31), the importance of determination implications is paramount, and certainly recalls later Egyptian (from LE to Coptic).

(6.2) The articles in Celtic form a privative binary category, “definite” vs. *zero*: so in Welsh and Irish; so too in Berber and Semitic in general (with some exceptions, such as Neo-Syriac — in a special Sprachbund with Turkish — and certain westernized modern languages, such as Modern Hebrew and Arabic dialects); Coptic dialects have ternary systems, with a “one” type indefinite article; Egyptian, from LE on, often shows a ternary opposition, and ME is considered to be an “article-less” phase. However, this is unsatisfactory: there is apparently no way for a ternary set to develop directly from a system with no article at all, skipping the binary phase, although the relationship between the definite and indefinite terms is tenuous and devious, if at all observable. But we do not I believe have to postulate a theoretical binary system (e.g. *p3* - *t3* - *n3*-, vs. *zero*) in the evolutive course of Egyptian: there are ME texts which seem to reveal such a system (e.g. the Heqanahte papers, and probably many others); it is the articular status and grading of demonstratives — and it is well known that there is no clear-cut demarcation between some of these and definite articles, which may well be and usually are deictic — that must be settled. (It must also be realized that when we have only written documentation, *freezing états de langue* which may well not have been spoken at all, the difficulty of perceiving article usage is considerable. Even in LE, even in early Demotic, the indefinite article — a latecomer — seems to be restricted and sit somewhat uneasily on the basic binary opposition, with the zero term rather extended.) Unfortunately, there is to date no special corpus-based study of determination for ME.

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37 The fact that in Welsh and Irish the demonstratives are adjectival facilitates the differentiation between determinators and demonstratives.
At any rate, Welsh and Irish have no indefinite articles; Welsh un- (two masculine and feminine homonyms) is either a number pronoun ("one") or an anaphoric pro-form (again, masc. and fem., with a plural rhai), see Shisha-Halevy 1998 Chapter Two; Irish aon- is either a number pronoun or, in negative environment, a generic determinator ("any", "no").

(6.3) Instances of structural sensitivity to specificity grading (determination): nucleus-specificity-sensitive expansion grammar.

(a) zero-determined nucleus + adverbial (including verb, see above):

gairiau ag edd yn dderyniad iddynt "words with edd as their termination"
i bobl yn garedig atoch "to people kind to you"
ar graig uchben y lli "on a rock above the flood"
pobol wedi mynd o’u co "people that went out of their mind"
aiith ac iddi asgwrn a gwed a language with bone and blood"
lythyr gennych chi "a letter by you".

Note especially Welsh a(c), a(g), / Irish agus + [NEXUS] as circumstantial converter, adnominally annexing as "relative" to non-specific nucleus (cf. Shisha-Halevy 1995:160 (n. 75), 1998: 1999:226ff.):

(MW) gwrac a bronneu genti "a woman with breasts" ("she-having breasts")

Bhí daoine sa chúchas anacht agus nforbh eol dóbh a ainm baiste "There were people in the neighbourhood that did not know his Christian name"

Má bhí daoine ann fádo a chaith na céadta bliain agus iad ag ceapa naíoch naíoch ann ach lá ... rinne sí se rud níos iontaí fós "If there were people long ago who spent hundreds of years while thinking that no more than a day had passed ... she did something even stranger".

As is well known, Coptic expands a non-specific nucleus with the circumstantial converter, Coptic’s analytic answer to the finite verb (circumstantial or adverbial sdmt) of earlier phases; indeed, except for very special cases, the relative is incompatible with non-specific nuclei in Egyptian:

\[ \text{\texttt{2ENPWME EYWIEWAX}} \]

Middle Egyptian:

\[ \text{msdr djf mw hw3 "an ear giving forth an offensive fluid".} \]
\[ s \text{ wnm.n.f k3w nw nht "a man who has eaten fruit of the sycamore".} \]

(b) In Middle Welsh, the generic nucleus is compatible as antecedent with un-marked negative adnominal verb clause (ni-, not na(t)- : Shisha-Halevy 1995:159ff.)
(Mab. Manawydan) Ac ny wydyat ef uot un keleuyn yno ny bei lygoden am pob un “And for aught he knew, there was no single stalk at which there wasn’t a mouse”.

(6.3) Cancelling of the phoricity of anaphorics in the determination of relative clause — generic relative clauses — is of considerable importance in later Egyptian (esp. in Demotic and Coptic: p3-nty-, πετ-, φετ-). The compound determinative pronoun intf in Old Irish constitutes a special formal antecedent of relative clauses to form generics (otherwise it is used to mark Proper Names as anaphoric). See Thurneysen 1946:§ 474:

intf bed tressa “he who/whoever is (should be) stronger”.

See in this connection also Sornicola 1988:125ff., for the prevalence of what she calls indefinite topicalization: “introduction of a preposed nominal by an indefinite modifier head, translatable as “whoever, whichever, what, every, any etc.”. Note here the gnomic and proverbial role (Sornicola 1988:141, n.42), striking for anyone familiar with Egyptian (esp. Demotic) and Coptic didactic and legal-preceptive textemes.

(6.4) The “definite” article in address (“vocative”, a case of pragmatic specificity: see S. Evans 1949, Shisha-Haley 1989:49ff.). This is of course also the case in Egyptian-Coptic (also Semitic languages):

Dowch chwi y Cymry yma “Come here, you Welshmen”
Cysgà’r diaul bach “Go to sleep, you little devil”
Nid ddoe y ganed dy nain, y twypyn “It’s not yesterday that your granny was born, you idiot”.

(6.5) Possessedness (in Celtic and Egyptian-Coptic, a special case of located existence) is an important case of specification.

(a) Possessive determinators or articles characterize a noun for possessedness In Welsh (fy-, dy-, ei1, ei2 etc.), Irish (mo-, do-, a1-, a2- etc.). They are nicely comparable with later Egyptian correspondents, although the Celtic possessives have no deictic and possessum-concording constituent element.

(b) In Irish, cuid (lexically “lot, portion”) is grammaticalized — following the possessive articles, preceding the genitival possessum — to a pronominal expressing marked inalienable possession:

mo chuid méar “my fingers”
ag lobbadh a chuid feola “his blood”
a cuid airgid “her money”.

Locutively, in the absence of a noun lexeme — the vocative or exclamative a chuid! “my dear!” or the 1st sgl. possessive article with cuid alone: mo chuid, ...“my own” (endearing).

(c) The possessive articles are focalizable in Celtic and Egyptian by means of the augens (see above):

fy nhad innau “my dad”

Níor ghoid mo mhacsa tada riamh “My son has never stolen anything”

(d) In Welsh, the prepositions gan- and i- are grammaticalized possessor-markers for predicative possession, while the adnominal possessor marker for non-specific possessum nuclei is i-. The initial consonant of the possessum is lenited following the possession verboid, which fuses the existential mae / nid oes with the possessor-marker. A second possession-predicating pattern occurs only adnominally, following non-specific nuclei (and the circumstantial converter a-). Modern Irish has three possessor-marking prepositions, namely ag- (unmarked), le- and dó ; their respective precise functions have not yet been clarified yet, but have probably to do with degrees and kinds of association and possessum specificity (dó appears to mark closer or inalienable association):

Welsh

Y mae imi gyfeillion “I have friends”
Mae i eiriadur ei beryglon “A diary has its dangers”
Mae arnaf ofn “I am afraid” (“I have fear”)
Nid oes ganddo glust fain “He does not have a fine ear” (note that nid yw ganddo would not be possessive, but “there is not with him” ... and similar)
hen fodryb i mi “an old aunt of mine”

Perthynas ichi, Mrs. Morgan? — Nage. Ffrind i Mr. Ellis “A relation of yours, Mrs. Morgan?” — “No. A friend of Mr. Ellis’s.”

Yr oedd crys nos i Ceredig yn rhywle ... yr oedd gan Ceredig wn llloft hefyd. “There was a nightshirt of Ceredig’s somewhere ... Ceredig also had a dressing-gown”
cyfaill imi sy’n fardd “a friend of mine who is a poet”
iaith ac iddi asgwrn a gwaed “a language with bone and blood” “(a language and to-her...”).

Irish

Tá trua agam dó “I have pity for him”
Níl neart agam air “I can’t help it” (“I have no power over it”)
Is agam a bhí an greann! “Was I amused!” (“Was it I that had the fun!”)
Bhí fear tí agam fós a fhad a bhi Muiris agam “I had a man of the house still, as long as I had Muiris”
Tá fear maith agat “You have a good man”
(the shoes) Bhíodar agam, ac ní rabhadar: I hâd them, but did not
mae liom “a son of mine” (in Old Irish: macce dom; Greene 1967:172)
mar bhí corránach iníne le mo dheartheair, Seán, lé béal an bháis “since a boy of a daughter of my brother’s, Seán, was near death”

inión do Sheán Bán “a daughter of White Seán’s”

Bhí cara dlíis ag Muire arbh aimh di Bríde “There was a close friend of Muire whose name was Bríde”

Mac dó is ea Tomás agus mac deirfear dó is ea Seán Ó Dálaigh “Tomás is a son of his, and Seán Ó Dálaigh is a nephew of his”

Is minic a cheapaim nach thá ar chor ar bith “I have often thought you are not mine at all”

Ach ba le Tomás í “But she was Tomás’s”

Cé leis túsá? Le Tomás Sayers “Whose are you?” “Tomás Sayers’s”

Seanpháirtí liomsa is ea Maire “Máire is an old partner of mine”.

But ag- and le- do not only express possession — they also have their respective lexical, ungrammaticalized meaning (not easy to render in English — “to, for, with” cover part of the range; Hebrew ל and Arabic ñind are a closer match; indeed, this subtle semantic range is arguably yet another Celtic/African affinity):

Mise mar athair mór agat “I’m like a grandfather for you”

Láithi lín ar a cheann aici “She had one of her hands on her head”

Bhí an obair a bhí idir lámha agam róchrú a dom “The work I had in hand was too difficult for me”

ag loscadh an chraicinn den scornach agam “burning the skin off my throat” (“... off the throat for me”)

isteach i seanasc a bhí liom “into an old sack I had with me”

fámaire cait a bhí againn, agus sicín le Maire .... ina bhéal aige “an idle cat we had, a chicken of Máire’s in his mouth” (“in the mouth with him”)

Bhí cúpla prótaí fuar liom mar phroíonn “I had a few cold potatoes for a meal” (“for me as a meal”).

(e) Irish “this ... / a ... of mine”, hyper-specific and hypo-specific possessa — cases of divergence from the specificity grading which the possessive article (a portmanteau morph, of specificity and possession) imposes on the noun phrase:

Mícil seo againn “This Mícil of ours”

Tir seo againn “This land of ours”.

Compare in Coptic ÓY- /ΠΛ- NTε-, also Late Egyptian postponed .... jnk.

(f) In Irish, the noun cuid “part, portion, lot” is grammaticalized, forming with the basic possessive articles a compound possessive to indicate inalienable possession: see above.

(g) A special possession pattern in early Irish recalls the Semitic-Egyptian construction of a cataphoric formal-pronominal possessor (possessive article), specified by a nominal one in the genitive (Ó Gealbháin 1991:137ff., type ‘E’):

a innas in bachlaig “the churl’s manner” lit. “his-manner of the churl”
a mmaithre na lloegsa “the calves’ mothers” lit. “their-mothers of the calves”.

This construction was compared to the Coptic κοῦν plunged construction by Pokorny as early as 1930 (ZCPh 18: 247f.). However, this must be seen in the light of Irish strikingly favouring the cataphoric construction (see above).

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