

9 Historical syntax

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In this chapter, we turn to the historical development of Welsh syntax, concentrating mostly on the Middle Welsh period (1150–1400) to the present-day. Welsh has undergone major changes in a number of areas, particularly in word order, negation and the syntax of embedded nonfinite verbs. This chapter will give an overview of the main changes, as well as looking at some areas of syntax where the language has remained fairly conservative (agreement, *wh*-constructions, noun phrases). The major issues that will be considered are:

- (i) the status of non-VSO word orders in Middle Welsh
- (ii) the grammaticalization of aspect markers
- (iii) the shift of negation from preverbal to postverbal position (Jespersen's Cycle)
- (iv) the integration of mutation from phonology to syntax
- (v) the spread of predicate marker *yn* and word order changes in the syntax of the copula
- (vi) the emergence of main-clause affirmative particles from earlier pronouns
- (vii) the emergence of clauses introduced by the preposition *i* 'to'

9.1 WORD ORDER IN MAIN CLAUSES

9.1.1 Verb-second structures

Pre-modern stages of all the Brythonic Celtic languages are characterized by a verb-second (V2) constraint in main clauses. While this constraint has survived in Breton and Cornish, the major development in Welsh finite main clauses has been the emergence of a dominant VSO word-order pattern.

The most characteristic syntactic pattern of Middle Welsh is the main-clause construction known traditionally as the abnormal sentence. In this construction, one constituent precedes a verbal particle and the finite verb. The preverbal constituent is typically one familiar from the preceding discourse, and it is generally accepted that the abnormal sentence is a fronting device that allows topic–comment order to be realized (Fife 1988). The topic–comment nature of the word-order rule has been demonstrated for a number of Middle Welsh texts. The main studies are Poppe (1989, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1993); Watkins (1977–8, 1983–4, 1988, 1990, 1993). Examples are given in (1)–(3). The form of the particle, which is common to the abnormal sentence and to relative clauses and *wh*-questions, is determined by the nature of the preverbal constituent. It appears as *a* after a nominal element fronted from subject position, as in (1); from object position, as in (2); or from the object of a preposition, as in (3).

- (1) Riuedi mawr o sswydwyr a gyuodassant y uynyd...
numbers big of officials PRT rise.PAST.3P up
'Great numbers of officials got up...' (PKM 16.18–19)
- (2) Ac ystryw a wnaeth y Gwydyl.
And trick PRT made.3S the Irish
'And the Irish played a trick.' (PKM 44.11)

- (3) Y prenneu ereill a deuei ffrwyth arnunt...
 the trees other PRT grow.IMPF.3S fruit on.3P
 ‘Fruit grew on the other trees...’ (YSG 4387–8)

A nonfinite verb (verbnoun) may be fronted over the auxiliary *gwnuethur* ‘do’. Normally, direct objects are fronted together with the verb, as in (4), although there are some examples where objects remain, as in (5). Other complements (for instance, prepositional-phrase complements) and adjuncts may freely move or remain (Lewis 1928: 181–2). In all cases, the particle is *a*.

- (4) [VP Kyrchu tref arall] a wnawn.
 head-for.INF town other PRT do.1P
 ‘We shall head for another town.’ (PKM 54.3)
- (5) [V Gwyssyaw] a oruc Arthur milwyr yr ynys honn.
 summon.INF PRT do.PAST.3S Arthur soldiers the island this
 ‘Arthur summoned the soldiers of this island.’ (CO 922–3)

An adverbial phrase, as in (6), or a fronted prepositional-phrase complement, as in (7), is followed by *y(d)*:

- (6) Yn Harlech y bydwch seith mlyned ar ginyaw...
 In Harlech PRT will-be.2P seven years at dinner
 ‘In Harlech you will be at dinner for seven years...’ (PKM 45.2–3)
- (7) Ac ar y kynghor hwnnw y trigwyt.
 and on the advice that.MASC PRT settle.PAST.IMPERS
 ‘And on that decision they agreed.’ (PKM 20.21–2)

When a predicate adjective phrase or noun phrase is fronted, it is followed by soft mutation of the verb, but no particle:

- (8) Llawen uu pob un wrth y gilid o honunt.
 happy be.PERF.3S every one towards each-other of.3P
 ‘Everyone one of them was (became) happy towards each other.’ (PKM 6.17–18)

The term ‘abnormal’ derives from the fact that the usual word order of modern Welsh is verb-initial. From a modern perspective, then, this construction is ‘abnormal’. However, as recent studies have shown, this is statistically the overwhelmingly most frequent word-order pattern in Middle Welsh. Verb-initial main clauses in fact account for an insignificantly small proportion of main clauses, being largely confined to coordination contexts (see section 9.1.2 below). The distribution of word-order patterns found in affirmative main clauses in studies of a number of Middle Welsh texts is given in Table 9.1. From there it can be seen that abnormal sentences with fronting account for upwards of 90% of main clauses in all texts, with adverbial phrases, followed by subjects and nonfinite verbs and verb phrases being the most commonly fronted elements.

The status of the abnormal order in Middle Welsh has been controversial. According to a prominent account of the development of Welsh word order (Mac Cana 1973; Watkins 1977–8; Fife 1988; and Fife & King 1991), topicalization in the abnormal order was a literary fashion in Middle Welsh, unrepresentative of the spoken language of the period. It is claimed that the order was introduced from south-eastern dialects, which once formed a dialect continuum with the forerunner dialects of Breton and Cornish, and which supposedly formed the basis of the literary language (Mac Cana 1973, 1979, 1991, 1992). This hypothesis is intended to account for a paradox in the history of the language. In Old Welsh both the verb-

initial order as in (9) and the abnormal order as in (10) are attested. It has generally been claimed that the verb-initial pattern is the usual one (Watkins 1987), although the evidence is sparse and difficult to interpret.

	word-order pattern					V1 (%)	sample size
	verb-second main clauses clause-initial constituent (%)						
	Adv	S ^{NOM}	S ^{PRO}	O ^{NOM}	V/VP		
<i>Branwen</i>	41	17	16	8	14	4	181
<i>Breuddwyd Maxen</i>	43	5	16	20	8	9	154
<i>Breudwyt Ronabwy</i>	45	12	6	9	26	2	139
<i>Culhwch ac Olwen</i>	25	16	12	12	26	9	253
<i>Ked. Amlyn ac Amic</i>	47	5	7	6	32	3	293
<i>Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys</i>	39	24	22	4	10	0	67
<i>Manawydan</i>	24	6	31	12	27	0	154
<i>Pwyll</i>	38	11	22	10	17	3	376

- Adv Adverbial phrase/clause (incl. adverbial complement)
- S^{NOM} Nominal subject
- S^{PRO} Pronominal subject
- O^{NOM} Nominal object
- V/VP Verbnoun/nonfinite verb phrase
- V1 Verb in initial position

Sources: Poppe (1989, 1990, 1991a, b, 1993), Watkins (1977–8, 1983–4, 1988, 1993).

Table 9.1. Distribution of word order patterns in affirmative main declarative clauses in Middle Welsh.

- (9) ...prinit hinnoid .iiii. aues... **OW**
 buys that four birds
 ‘That buys four birds...’ (Ox. 234.33)
- (10) Gur dicones remedaut elbid anguorit... **OW**
 man created wonder world PRT+1P.ACC+redeem.3S
 ‘The man who created the wonder of the world redeems us...’ (Juv. 5a–b)

Similarly, in contemporary Welsh, verb-initial orders predominate. It is therefore tempting to believe that the intermediate period must also have seen dominant verb-initial main-clause order.

However, there is considerable evidence against this. First the ‘abnormal’ pattern is the dominant main-clause order in all medieval Brythonic languages, and its properties are virtually identical in all three. Examples from Middle Breton are given in (11)–(14). Note in particular that the use of particles is identical in the two languages: *a* after a subject (11) or object (12); *e(z)* (Middle Welsh *y(d)*) after an adverbial phrase; and no particle but a soft mutation after a predicate noun phrase (14). Moreover, since similar topicalization structures are productive in modern Breton, there is no reason to doubt their true productivity in earlier stages of that language. For statistical studies of the distribution of the various word-order patterns in a Middle Breton text, see George (1987–8, 1990).

- (11) Cesar a respontas deze... **B**
 Cæsar PRT reply.PAST.3S to.3P
 ‘Cæsar replied to them...’ (Ca. 12)
- (12) ...hac an holl doueouse ... a meux an oll dispriset...
 and the all gods-those PRT have.1S the all renounced
 ‘...and I have renounced all those gods...’ (Ca. 8)
- (13) ...hac en continant ez aparissas an eal dezy **B**
 and immediately PRT appear.PAST.3S the angel to.3SF
 ‘...and immediately the angel appeared to her...’ (Ca. 13)
- (14) Ma guir cares vizey... **B**
 my true love will-be.2S
 ‘You shall be my true love...’ (B 506)

Middle Breton also has fronting of nonfinite verbs, just like Middle Welsh. As in Middle Welsh, either a nonfinite verb alone, or a nonfinite verb phrase may be fronted over auxiliary ‘do’ (*ober*). The former option is illustrated in (15), parallelling (4); the latter option is illustrated in (16), parallelling (5).

- (15) ...[v fezaff] agra en holl tut sauant: **B**
 beat.INF PRT+do.3S the all people wise
 ‘...she beats all the wise people...’ (Ca. 12)
- (16) [vP Gouernn en splann un queffrann didann haff an bet ...
 govern.INF in splendour a part under-me the world
 euelpenn] a mennaff... **B**
 as head PRT want.1S
 ‘I want to govern in splendour a part of the whole world under me as its head...’ (B 34)

A similar variety of orders is attested in Cornish (George 1990, 1991). Further syntactic similarities in points of detail discussed below also lead to the conclusion that the abnormal order in Middle Welsh is sufficiently close to the other medieval Brythonic Celtic languages that speakers of Middle Welsh must have had productive control over the complexities of the construction, and that it therefore reflects spoken usage.

These word order patterns have been interpreted as a verb-second (V2) constraint in Middle Welsh (Willis 1998) and modern Breton (Schafer 1994, 1995), and such a constraint appears to have held for all three medieval Brythonic languages. This V2-constraint is broadly comparable to that in modern continental Germanic languages, such as German, Dutch and Swedish. According to these analyses, the particle is a complementizer (in C). It agrees in form with a topic constituent, which moves to form the specifier of the complementizer phrase. There is therefore a unique clause-initial topic position. The movement is analysed as A'-movement, of the same type as the movement of the *wh*-word in *wh*-questions. Whether the verb also raises to C in these languages as in Germanic is difficult to determine. In the following discussion it is assumed that the verb raises to adjoin to particles in C. Thus the left edge of a main clause will have the general form given in (17), a formal instantiation of the basic template given in (18).

- (17)
-
- ```

graph TD
 CP --> Spec["Spec
TOPIC"]
 CP --> C_prime["C'"]
 C_prime --> C["C"]
 C_prime --> TP["TP..."]
 C --> MW["MW: a / y(d)"]
 C --> VT["V+T"]

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(18) topic – particle – verb

There are a number of other properties of verb-second topicalization in the medieval Brythonic languages that make it parallel to A'-movement in *wh*-constructions. Long-distance topicalization is possible from an embedded nonfinite clause. This pattern, which is illustrated in (19), is exactly the same pattern as that found in Middle Welsh relative clauses (see section 6 below).

(19) Toat y neuad a tebygei y vot yn eur oll.  
 ceiling the hall PRT suppose.PAST.3S 3SM be.INF PRD gold all  
 'The ceiling of the hall he supposed to be all gold.' (BM 3.3)

Furthermore, reconstruction of anaphoric relations is found in V2-structures. Thus, in (20), 'e 'his' is understood as having *y marchawc* 'the knight' as its antecedent. Such anaphoric relations would normally be taken to mean that 'e *varch* has A'-moved from a lower clausal position, one below *y marchawc*.

(20) A 'evarcha gymerth y marchawc...  
 and his horse PRTtook the knight  
 'And the knight took his horse...' (P 12.4)

This verb-second system is complicated somewhat by rules of adverb placement. There has been considerable discussion in the literature on 'multiple frontings' in the Middle Welsh abnormal sentence. These are instances where a number of constituents precede the verb, leaving it apparently in third or even fourth position or later. An extreme example is given in (21).

(21) Ac [o 'r dywed] [gan wuyhaf grym a llafvr] [gwedy kaffael o 'r  
 and of the end with greatest power and toil after get.INF of the  
 Brytanyeyt penn e mynyd], [en e lle] [wynt] a dangossasant...  
 Britons top the mountain in the place they PRT showed.3P  
 'And in the end with the greatest power and toil once the Britons had gained the top of  
 the mountain in that place they showed...' (Brut y Brenhinedd 784–5, Poppe 1991b:178)

It has been suggested that the multiple frontings are an indication that the abnormal sentence in Middle Welsh is a literary device pursued to extremes (Fife & King 1991:89–90). Tallerman (1996) suggests that these cases motivate an analysis of the Middle Welsh abnormal sentence as multiple adjunction of both arguments and non-arguments to CP.

The most important objection to these analyses is that, in cases of multiple fronting, apart from clear instances of left dislocation, all the preverbal elements except one must be non-argument adverbials. At maximum one of the preverbal constituents may be an argument, and this argument must 'count' for the purposes of determining the form of the preverbal particle. So, in (21), the particle is *a*, the form required by the fronted subject *wynt* 'they'. All the other fronted elements are all adverbial. This is the typical pattern. Crucially, we never find two arguments, say a subject and an object, or a subject and prepositional-phrase complement, in fronted position.

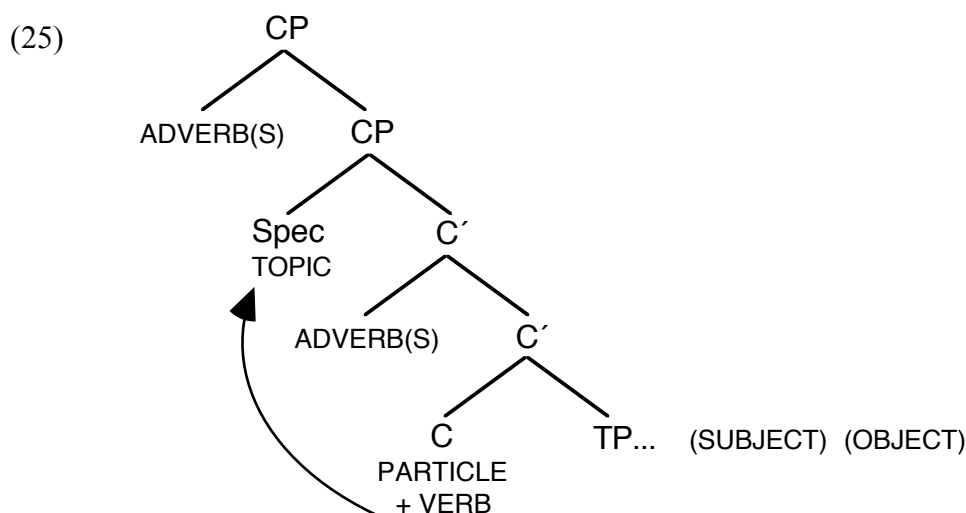
Adverbs may be placed before a topicalized argument as in (22), or between the topicalized argument and the preverbal particle, as in (23). Again, the facts are the same in Middle Welsh, in the (a)-examples and in Middle Breton, in the (b)-examples. The Cornish data are generally parallel, see George (1991: 212). The strict parallelism again suggests a productive system.

- (22) a. Hir bylgeint Guydyon a gyuodes.  
 Early-morning Gwydion PRT get-up.PAST.3S  
 'Early next morning, Gwydion got up.' (PKM 82.5–6)
- b. ...ha goudese ny a rento dict respond. **B**  
 and after-this we PRT give.FUT to.2S response  
 '...and after this we shall give you a response' (Ca. 6)
- (23) a. Gwalchmei yn ieuentit y dyd a deuth y dyffryn...  
 Gwalchmai in youth the day PRT came to valley  
 'Early in the day Gwalchmai came to a valley...' (P 59.9–10)
- b. ...ha neuse an rouanes dre an carantez he deffoye cōmeret ouz  
 and now the queen throughthe love had.3sf taken towards  
 an guerhes sanctes Cathell, a yez en nos... **B**  
 the virgin saint Catherine PRT went in-the night  
 '...and now the queen through the love that she had taken towards the virgin saint  
 Catherine went in the night...' (Ca. 19)

Adverbs preceding the topic can be analysed as adjoined to the top of the clause (CP). Since left-dislocated elements are generally considered to adjoin to CP, such an analysis predicts that left dislocated elements and adverbs will be ordered freely relative to one another. This prediction is indeed borne out:

- (24) Arglwyd ... rac guelet gwr kyuurd a thidi yn y gueith hwnnw,  
 lord lest see.INF man of-such-rank as you in the act that  
 punt a geueis i o gardotta, mi a 'e rodaf it...  
 pound REL received.1S I from beg.INF I PRT 3S-ACC give.1S to-you  
 'Lord ... lest I should see a man of such rank as you in that act, a pound that I received  
 from begging, I shall give (it) to you...' (PKM 62.9–11)

Adverbs appearing between the topic may be adjoined to C' or adjoined to TP if the verb does not raise to C. The result is that a unique topic position [Spec, CP] is maintained. Consequently there is only one landing site for movement to a preverbal position, and only one argument may be moved there. Adverbials on the other hand may be freely adjoined around this topic. For further details see Willis (1998). The basic tree-structure for the verb-second construction is given in (25), representing the template in (26).



- (26) (adv<sub>1</sub> – adv<sub>2</sub> – adv<sub>3</sub>...) – topic – (adv<sub>4</sub> – adv<sub>5</sub> – adv<sub>6</sub>...) particle verb (subject) (object)

Breton has essentially maintained this system to the present day (see Schafer 1995), although perhaps with less tolerance of adjoined adverbs. In Welsh, however, topicalization of constituents other than subjects and adverbs became less frequent. The evidence of informal texts suggest that by the seventeenth century the spoken language alternated only between VSO and SVO order in main clauses. The verb-second constraint, which required a preverbal topic in most main clauses, was lost. A crucial role seems to have been played by the phonological erosion of the preverbal particles, omitted (or used interchangeably) in informal texts from the sixteenth century. Omission of *a* after a subject topic is shown in (27); and omission of *y(d)* after an adverbial topic in (28) (see also Evans 1968a: 335).

- (27) ...a Jessu gwnnwys y olwc y vynydd... EMW  
 and Jesus raised his look up  
 ‘And Jesus looked up.’ (RhG i.85.16–17, 1550–75)
- (28) Yn vffern perait gyffro... EMW  
 in hell caused.2S commotion  
 ‘In hell you caused a commotion...’ (TWRP, ‘Y Dioddefaint’ 825, 1552)

It seems that the loss of the particles in speech obscured the nature of the verb-second constraint, and triggered a reanalysis in the structural position of preverbal adverbs. In Middle Welsh, a preverbal adverb would have been the only preverbal constituent in such cases as (6) above, hence it would have filled the topic position, with the preverbal particle appearing as *y(d)* in agreement. Others, those in multiple fronting constructions such as (21)–(24), would have been in adjoined positions, and did not trigger topic-particle agreement. With the loss of the particles, the distinction between adverbs in the topic position and adverbs in adjoined positions was lost, and all preverbal adverbs were analysed as adjoined elements. Since such elements are typically optional, the innovation of absolute verb-initial main clauses was a natural consequence. These are attested freely from the sixteenth century, outside of the limited environments (typically coordination) where they were allowed previously.

- (29) Gorvüost ar dy elynion... EMW  
 overcame.2S on your enemies  
 ‘You overcame your enemies...’ (RhG i.22.28–9, c. 1514)

Affirmative SVO orders remained alongside the new VSO patterns. Since the sixteenth century, however, the use of SVO order in Welsh has declined to the extent that it has disappeared entirely from most dialects in neutral main clauses. Extensive variation between SVO and VSO, showing complex stylistic conditioning, appears in prose texts from the sixteenth century on (Currie 2000). The shift is partly due to the emergence of affirmative markers from preverbal pronominal subjects (see section 4.3 below), and to the continued spread of periphrastic verb-initial constructions (see section 1.6 below), as well as competition from VSO orders of the type in (27). On agreement patterns in V2-structures, see section 1.7 below.

### 9.1.2 Expletive subjects and the emergence of the preverbal particle *fe*

Alone among the medieval Brythonic languages, Middle Welsh had an expletive construction. The expletive subject *ef* (the masculine third-person singular pronoun) appears in the preverbal topic position when the clause contains no other topic constituent:

- (30) Ef a doeth makwyueit a gueisson ieueinc y diarchenu...  
 it PRT came squires and lads young to+3SM-GEN disrobe.INF  
 ‘There came squires and young lads to disrobe him...’ (PKM 4.8–9)

Effectively, then, *ef* acts as a dummy topic.

Expletive subjects are restricted in their distribution in Middle Welsh. They are found with unaccusative verbs in presentational contexts as in (30). In this case the only restriction on the subject is that it should refer to an entity new to the discourse, whether it is definite or indefinite. They also occur as the subject of impersonal forms of the verb:

- (31) ...ac eissoes ef a anet meibon idaw ef...  
 and yet it PRT be-born.IMPERS sons to.3SM him  
 ‘...and yet sons were born to him...’ (YCM 30.6–7)

A third environment for the expletive subject is in main clauses with an extraposed clausal argument. In (32), the clausal subject of *damweinaw* ‘to happen’ is (obligatorily) extraposed rightwards. An expletive subject must appear in the preverbal topic position.

- (32) A gwedy gwascaru y llu dan y coedyd ef a damweinawd y  
 Andafter scatter.INF the force among the woods it PRT happened to  
 Ywein ... kyrchu y coet...  
 Owain attack.INF the forest  
 ‘And after scattering the force among the woods, Owain ... happened to attack the forest...’ (BT 96.28–9)

The expletive subject *ef* is only ever found in preverbal topic position. Where there is some other topic in a main clause, or in a subordinate clause, it is never found.

Although this represents the distribution of the expletive subject in canonical Middle Welsh texts, by late Middle Welsh (from the end of the fourteenth century at the latest) the range of contexts in which the expletive subject is found expands to include clauses with transitive verbs:

- (33) Ef a danuon Duw ... taryan itt...  
 it PRT send God shield to-you  
 ‘God will send a shield to you...’ (YSG 247–8)

There was a sharp increase in the use of this construction in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, evidenced in less literary texts. At this period the expletive subject appears in various reduced forms such as *fe*, *fo* and *e*, and was reanalysed as a verbal particle (affirmative main-clause complementiser). Compare *vo* in (34), which seems essentially to function as an affirmative marker.

- (34) ...vo drôdd dy ateb y lleuad y ’w gwrthwyneb.  
 FO turned your answer the moon to its reverse  
 ‘...your answer turned the moon around.’ (TCh 10.17–18)



*Fo* is a phonologically reduced form of the reduplicated (strong) pronoun *efo* plus preverbal particle *a*; *fe* is a reduced form of a variant of this, *efe*. *E* is the direct descendent of the Middle Welsh expletive *ef a*. The three competed as preverbal particles for a while, with *fe* coming to dominate in late modern Welsh.

The spread of this construction in Welsh naturally led to a significant increase in the frequency of VSO word orders, and has been a significant factor in the spread of dominant VSO word order in Modern Welsh.

### 9.1.3 Verb-initial order

#### 9.1.3.1 Absolute and conjunct verbal morphology

Old Welsh shows some survivals of an earlier division between absolute and conjunct verbal endings, found productively in Old Irish. Absolute forms were used when the verb stood at the beginning of the sentence, with conjunct forms elsewhere. Although the distinction had largely been lost before Old Welsh, some evidence of the distinction remains. In the third person singular some absolute endings in *-(h)it* and *-yt* are found in Old Welsh. In (35), the absolute form of the third person singular past tense of the verb ‘to give’ is found, *rodesit*, rather than the conjunct form *rodes*. For further details, see Rodway (2002).

- (35) *Rodesit Elcu guetig equs...*  
 gave-ABS Elgu afterwards horse  
 ‘Elgu gave afterwards a horse...’ (SM)

The existence of absolute verbal morphology points to an earlier stage of the Brythonic languages where VSO was the unmarked order in main clauses, or at least a major word-order pattern. The most likely scenario for the earlier development of Brythonic word order is that VSO word order gave way to a verb-second system as a clefting (focus) construction was generalized to all main clauses (on the clefting construction, see also section 9.7.2 below). This is a variant of the earliest view (Richards 1938: 104–6) that the ‘abnormal’ verb-second order was the result of the influence of clefts on the SVO order. For other views see Lewis (1942) and Mac Cana (1973). Lewis argues that preverbal particles were inserted into SVO structures to host object clitics. Mac Cana (and following him Isaac 1996) suggests that the abnormal sentence developed from left-dislocation structures.

Even in the later medieval Brythonic languages verb-initial orders do appear, but they are restricted to well-defined environments, most notably in coordination contexts and with the verb ‘to be’.

#### 9.1.3.2 VSO in coordination contexts

In all the medieval Brythonic languages verb-initial orders appear productively in the second of a pair of conjoined clauses (and any subsequent clauses). The preverbal particles provide clear evidence for the syntactic structure involved. Middle Welsh and Middle Breton data are presented here, following the analysis in Willis (1997). For Cornish, see (George 1990: 231).

In two clauses sharing a subject in preverbal topic position in both clauses, the second subject may be omitted, as in (36). Syntactic effects remain: the particle *a* in the second clause indicates agreement with a subject topic. This seems to indicate coordination at a level below the subject but above the verb: subject [ [particle – verb] AND [particle – verb] ].

- (36) a. ... mi a rodaf Pryderia Riannon it ac a waredaf  
 I PRT give.1S Pryderi and Rhiannon to-you and PRT remove.1S  
 yr hut a 'r lletrith y ar Dyuet.  
 the spell and the magic from on Dyfed.  
 '...I shall give Pryderi and Rhiannon to you and remove the spell and magic from Dyfed.'  
 (PKM 64.18–20)
- b. goudese honsaluer Iesus-Christ a aparissas dezy gant vn nompr  
 after-this our saviour Jesus Christ PRT appeared to-her with a number  
 bras a aelez ha guerheset hac alauaras dezy... **B**  
 big of angels and virgins and PRT+said to-her  
 'After this our saviour Jesus Christ appeared to her with a great number of angels and virgins and said to her...'  
 (Ca. 21)

In (36), the second clause is apparently verb-initial, but the particle *a* preceding the verb in this clause indicates that there is a nominal topic. In (36), the presence of *a* could be due to agreement with topic of the first clause. However, in (37), the topic in the first clause is an adverb, triggering the particle *y(d)/ez*. The presence of the particle *a* in the second clause cannot be due to this adverb. The only solution seems to be to posit the presence of a null topic in the topic position of the second clause. This topic is understood as referring to Sabot. 'Sabot' is the topic of the second clause; it is also the subject; hence we find particle *a*. The Breton example is essentially identical. Once again, the near identity in structure in a complex construction between Middle Welsh and Middle Breton suggests that speakers of Middle Welsh had a productive, non-learnèd grasp of the syntax of this construction.

- (37) a. ...ac yna y kyuodes sabot ac \_\_\_a elvis ar bovn...  
 and then PRT arose Sabot and \_\_\_PRT called on Bown  
 'And then Sabot arose and called on Bown...'  
 (YBH 2825–6)
- b. ...euel maz testify an scriptur sacr, ez cryont vengeancz, hac  
 like as testifies the scripture holy PRT cry.3P vengeance and  
 à so alyes dré punishment diuin castiet en betman...  
 PRT is often through punishment divine punished in-the world-this  
 '...as the holy scripture testifies, they cry vengeance and are often punished in this world...'  
 (GK 2.96.4–6)

This analysis is further supported by the fact that in Middle Welsh there is no restriction on the syntactic position occupied in the first clause by the element corresponding to the gap in the second. In (38) the gap in the second clause has a topic understood as 'Peredur, Bwrt and Galâth', corresponding to no single syntactic element in the first clause.

- (38) Ac yna **Paredur a Bwrt**<sub>i</sub> a gymerassant y tal blaenaf y'r tabyl,  
 and then Peredur and Bwrt PRT took.3P the end front to-the table  
 a **Galaath**<sub>j</sub> ehun a gymerth y tal arall, ac \_\_\_<sub>i+j</sub>a aethant  
 and Galâth himself PRT took the end other and \_\_\_<sub>i+j</sub>PRT went.3P  
 ac ef tu a 'r dref.  
 withit towards the town  
 'And then Peredur and Bwrt took the front end of the table, and Galâth himself took the other end and (they) carried it towards the town.'  
 (YSG 5599–601)

Clauses introduced by *y(d)/ez* + a verb are sometimes analysed as VSO. Almost all of the cases of verb-initial order in Table 9.1 are of this type. Examples of the sort of clauses involved are given in (39). In the light of the foregoing discussion, it would be desirable to account for the appearance of *y(d)/ez* rather than *a* in the second conjunct in terms of

agreement with a topic. This can be achieved by positing an adverbial null topic in the second conjunct in (39). Its contribution to the meaning is to provide narrative continuity in the absence of any topic, roughly equivalent to ‘and then’ (see analyses of verb-initial clauses in V2 languages, for instance Diesing 1990 on Yiddish, and Sigurdsson 1990 on Old Icelandic). If this analysis is accepted, then cases such as (29) are actually part of the verb-second system, and not an exception to it.

- (39) a. ...ac efa deuthy 'r weirglawd. Ac y deuth [y]  
 andhe PRT came tothe meadow and PRT came the  
 wreic ohen a 'r vorwynaty gwrllywt.  
 woman very-old and the maiden to the man grey  
 ‘...and he came to the meadow, and the very old woman and the maiden came to  
 the grey man.’ (P 38.9–10)
- b. Neuse ann droucberger so conuertisset en un men  
 now the bad shepherd is turned in a stone  
 mabr ... Hac ez lauar Sante Barba... **B**  
 marble and PRT says Saint Barbara  
 ‘Now the bad shepherd is turned into a marble stone ... and Saint Barbara says...’  
 (B 383)

These coordination rules have not survived the loss of verb-second. Since acquisition of the null topic depended on the presence of the particle *y(d)/ez*, the phonological erosion of the particle introduced verb-initial clauses into the language that did not need to be analysed as part of the verb-second system. This in itself probably contributed to its abandonment. For instance in the sixteenth century sentences like (40) are found, where only the form of *a(c)*, ac before a vowel, indicates the loss of the particle *y(d)*. Soon afterwards, even this is lost, indicating that the second of conjoined clauses was already being analysed as verb-initial.

- (40) ...efaeth anyssbrydoedd ac ef ... ac yr agores y  
 it went evil-spirits with him and PRT opened the  
 ddayar, **ac llyngkawdd** y wyref oll. **EMW**  
 earth andswallowed his men himall  
 ‘...evil spirits took him to eternal torment, and the earth opened and it swallowed all  
 his men.’ (DFf. 162.3–5, 1595)

### 9.1.3.3 Verb-initial order with ‘be’

In Middle Welsh, verb-initial order is required with the present tense of *bot* ‘be’ in (41), and occurs optionally (alongside verb-second) with the past tense in (42) versus (43). The special relative form *yssyd* can be substituted for present-tense *mae* in V2-orders.

- (41) Ie, ... y mae yno ryw ystyr hut.  
 yes PRT is there some meaning magic  
 ‘Yes, ... there is some magic meaning there.’ (PKM 10.10, see Watkins 1993:122)
- (42) Arglwyd, ... yd oed yn ediuar gennym ni gwneuthur hynny.  
 lord PRT was PRD sorry with.1P us do.INF that  
 ‘Lord, ... we were sorry to have done that.’ (YSG 4679–80)
- (43) A drws y pebyll a oed yn agoret...  
 and door the tent PRT wasPRD open  
 ‘And the doorway of the tent was open...’ (P 10.11)

Since *bot* ‘be’ was also used as the auxiliary in the periphrastic progressive and perfect constructions, the rise of these constructions also helped to generalize verb-initial order (see section 1.6.2 below).

## 9.2 PERIPHRASTIC VERBAL FORMS

Although the early stages of the Brythonic languages expressed virtually all tenses, moods and voices synthetically, the modern languages are characterized by extensive use of periphrastic verbal forms. Particularly noticeable are the emergence of periphrastic forms for the passive and progressive.

### 9.2.1 Periphrastic aspectual constructions

All Brythonic languages have innovated periphrastic progressive constructions of the form ‘be’ + subject + aspect marker + verbnoun. In all cases the aspect marker has arisen historically from a preposition. In Welsh, the marker developed out of *yn* (+ nasal mutation) ‘in’ with loss of nasal mutation; and in Breton and Cornish it developed from MBr. *ouz*, C. *orth* ‘by’ (for details, see Hewitt 1990).

In Middle Welsh, the most frequent use of *yn* + verbnoun is as an adjunct, often to a noun phrase (cf. modern French *en*):

- (44) ...ef a welei varchawcyn dyfot yn y erbyn...  
 he PRT saw.IMPF knight YN come.INF towards-him  
 ‘...he saw a knight coming towards him...’ (P 61.17–18)

However, it is also used as a periphrastic verbal form, albeit not as frequently as in modern Welsh:

- (45) Ac y mae Matholwch yn rodi brenhinaeth Iwerdon y Wern uab Matholwch...  
 and PRT is Matholwch prog give.inf kingdom Ireland to Gwern son Matholwch  
 ‘And Matholwch gives the kingdom of Ireland to Gwern son of Matholwch...’  
 (PKM 41.9–10)

The periphrastic construction in (45) has greatly increased in frequency in modern Welsh, replacing the synthetic forms entirely in expressing the present tense. The development of the new periphrastic present tense in this way led to a realignment of the tense-aspect system, such that the former synthetic present-tense paradigm has largely been shifted into a function as a modal future (see Poppe 1996, Haspelmath 1998: 36–7). Scottish Gaelic has undergone a similar development (Poppe 1996: 151).

The construction in (45) probably arose from a reanalysis of cases where *yn* appeared after *bot* ‘be’. So, in cases like (46), there would once have been potential ambiguity as to whether the prepositional phrase headed by *yn* was an adjunct or an aspectual complement of ‘be’. At some point the second option was chosen over the first and the construction was reinterpreted as referring to a single event.

- (46) ...wythnos y bu yn bwrw marchawc beunydd...  
 week PRT was.PERF YN throw.INF knight every-day  
 ‘...for a week (there) he was, unseating a knight every day...’  
 or ‘for a week he unseated a knight every day...’ (P 41.12)

Judging from the existence of examples such as (45), this change had already taken place by the Middle Welsh period. The construction is already used with stative verbs in Middle Welsh:

- (47) Ac nyt yttoed Selyf yn gwybot pa ffuryf y gallei wneuthur  
 and NEG was Solomon PROG know.INF which way PRT could.3S make.INF  
 peth a barhaei yn gyhyt a hynny...  
 thing PRT last.COND.3S PRED as-long as this  
 ‘And Solomon didn’t know how he could make something that would last as long as  
 that...’ (YSG 4435–7)

Welsh has at least one other aspect marker used in this way, namely the perfect marker *wedi* which has emerged from the preposition *wedi* (MW. *(g)wedy*) ‘after’. As shown in (48), this is present already in Middle Welsh, where, however, it is extremely rare. Again, it seems likely that a reanalysis of *wedi* from preposition to aspect marker has contributed to its status as the unmarked perfect construction in modern Welsh.

- (48) ...yny doeth rybudyeu idaw, a menegi uot y crydyon wedy  
 until came warnings to.3SM and indicate.INF be.INF the shoemakersWEDY  
 duunaw ar y lad.  
 conspire.INF on 3SM.GEN kill.INF  
 ‘...until warnings came to him, indicating that the shoemakers had conspired to kill  
 him.’ (PKM 58.17–19)

## 9.2.2 The periphrastic passive

The Brythonic languages have no inherited passive forms, although impersonal (subjectless) verbal forms fulfil much the same function. Breton and Cornish have developed a new periphrastic passive using a past participle on the model of French and English. Middle Welsh also developed a periphrastic passive, this time using the verb *caffael* (modern Welsh *cael*) ‘get, receive’ as an auxiliary. The internal argument raises to subject position leaving a genitive object clitic (but no overt object) accompanying the verb. A Middle Welsh example is given in (49) (from Evans 1964:164). Although rare in Middle Welsh, the construction has become extremely productive in modern Welsh.

- (49) ...ni a gawn yn goganu gan yr unben...  
 we PRT get.1P 1P.GEN disgrace.INF by the chieftain  
 onys guahodwn.  
 if+NEG+3S.ACC invite.1S  
 ‘...we’ll be disgraced by the chieftain ... if we do not invite him.’ (PKM 84.26–7)

## 9.3 AGREEMENT PATTERNS AND NULL ARGUMENTS

### 9.3.1 General principles of agreement

Medieval Brythonic languages all have verbal paradigms manifesting rich subject-verb agreement licensing null subjects. There are also object clitics which may co-occur with overt pronominal objects or with a null object (see section 9.8 below). Prepositions show agreement

with their objects and similarly allow either overt or null objects. In most respects the properties of the agreement system are identical to those of the modern literary languages.

With the exception of subject-verb agreement in V2-structures (see section 9.3.2 below), rich agreement is found with a (null or overt) pronominal subject, and default third-person singular agreement is found with a nominal subject, as in modern Welsh.

One difference between Middle Welsh and the modern language concerns postverbal lexical subjects, which sometimes co-occur with full agreement in Middle Welsh, as in (50) (Evans 1971). These have generally been attributed to foreign literary influence (Morris-Jones 1931:191 and Evans 1971, but contra this Lewis 1942:16–17), and were probably not possible in spoken Middle Welsh.

- (50) ...kymryt eu gwledeu ...a orugant Pryderi a Manawydan.  
 take.INF 3P feats PRT did.3P Pryderi andManawydan  
 ‘...Pryderi and Manawydan had their feast...’ (PKM 37.7–8)

### 9.3.2 Subject-verb agreement in V2-structures and the ‘mixed’ sentence

It is generally said that, in Middle Welsh affirmative verb-second (‘abnormal’) structures, the verb usually agrees in person and number with a subject in preverbal topic position (Fife 1988: 116–18, Fife & King 1991: 139 although Evans 1964: 180 is more cautious), as in (51) (compare also (1) above).

- (51) Ac ar hynny y deu urenhina nessayssant y gyt am perued  
 and on that the two king PRT drew-near.3P together at middle  
 y ryt e ymgysuaruot.  
 the ford to meet.INF  
 ‘And then the two kings approached one another in the middle of the ford to meet.’  
 (PKM 5.19–20)

On the other hand, in Middle Breton and Middle Cornish, the verb remains in the ‘default’ third-person singular form in this environment. Even in Middle Welsh, however, agreement is not always observed, as seen from example (52) (see Evans 1971). This fact may suggest an early period where both patterns were productive (cf. Koch 1991: 38).

- (52) Y gwyr a wiscawd amdanunt...  
 the men PRT dressed.3S around.3P  
 ‘The men got dressed...’ (PKM 29.22)

The agreement in Welsh in (51) is problematic, given the fact that in other A’-constructions (*wh*-questions, relative clauses) there is no subject-verb agreement when subjects are extracted.

In negative clauses, the verb agrees with a preverbal subject in all the medieval Brythonic languages.

A related construction in Welsh shows absence of agreement parallel to Breton and Cornish. This is the mixed sentence, similar in appearance to the abnormal sentence, but having a focus interpretation. As in the abnormal sentence, the order is fronted constituent – particle – verb, but agreement between a fronted subject and the verb is absent:

- (53) Mi a ’e heirch...  
 I PRT 3SF.ACC seek.3S  
 ‘It is I who seek her.’ (CO 562)

Unlike the abnormal sentence the mixed sentence may be embedded, using one the embedded-focus markers *panyw* and *(y) may*, illustrated in (54), or *(y) taw*.

- (54) ...menegwch ydaw ... [p]an yw o 'm anuod inheu y  
 indicate.IMPER to.3SM PANYW of 1S unwillingness I PRT  
 gwnaethpwynt hynny; ac y may brawt un uam a mi a wnaeth hynny...  
 made.IMPERS that and Y MAY brother same mother as me PRTdid that  
 'Tell him that it was against my will that that was done; and that it was my brother  
 who did it...' (PKM 33.21–3)

There are further syntactic differences between the mixed and abnormal sentences; see Evans (1964: 179–81); Fife and King (1991: 83ff.); and Tallerman (1996).

These cleft markers are reasonably transparent as sequences of complementizer *pan* or *y(d)* + part of the verb 'be' (*yw* or *may*). It seems that a reanalysis took place reducing the construction from two clauses, an existential copular clause plus a relative clause, into a single clause, with *panyw* etc. being reanalysed as a clefting particle taking a clausal complement in the process (Tallerman 1996: 117–18). The fact that in Middle Welsh the particle *y* may be omitted, resulting in *may*, suggests that the reanalysis may already have taken place by this time, since otherwise this particle is not optional in the language.

### 9.3.3 The decline of null arguments

Null arguments have been declining for some time in Welsh, primarily through reanalysis of the word division between inflectional endings and pronouns. In some dialects of Welsh the ending of the preposition or verb has been reanalysed as part of the following pronoun and consequently a morphologically poorer inflected form has been generalized, see Jones (1988: 143–5). Consider possible colloquial paradigms for the preposition *gan* 'with' and the past tense of the verb *gweld* 'see' in Table 9.2.

|     | <i>gan</i> 'with'<br>coll. northern | <i>gweld</i> 'see'<br>coll. southern |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1S  | gynno fi                            | weles i                              |
| 2S  | gynno chdi                          | weles ti                             |
| 3SM | gynno fo                            | welodd e                             |
| 3SF | gynno hi                            | welodd hi                            |
| 1P  | gynno ni                            | welso ni                             |
| 2P  | gynno chi                           | welso chi                            |
| 3P  | gynno nhw                           | welso nhw                            |

Table 9.2. Colloquial agreement paradigms.

Null arguments are not permitted with the ambiguous forms in such dialects. Evidence of a move away from null arguments is found at least as early as the sixteenth century (cf. their relative rarity in the slander cases in Suggett 1983).

### 9.4 MORPHOLOGICAL CASE

The continental Celtic languages exhibited a full system of six cases. A similar system of morphological case marking had already been lost by the time of the earliest records in all

Brythonic languages (see Koch 1983a). Pronominal object clitics are the only exception (see section 9.8). A rare attested productive instance of morphological case in the Brythonic languages is the following example from Old Welsh, where the genitive form *nyf* (spelt *nym*) of *nef* ‘heaven’ appears (cf. OIr. *nem* ‘heaven’, gen. *nime*):

- (55) Ath uodi gwas nym gwerth na thechut... OW  
 PRT+2S be.SUBJ+you abode heaven.GEN because NEG flee.IMPF.2S  
 ‘May you have the abode of heaven because you did not flee...’ (CA 233)

Traces of an earlier case system remain, however, in certain fossilised forms, such as W. *erbyn*, C. *erbyn* < ar ‘on’ + dat. of *pen* ‘head’; W. *heddiw*, Br. *hiziv* < dat. of demonstrative + dat. of *dydd/deiz* ‘day’; MW. *dywieu* etc. ‘Thursday’ < dat. of *dyd* ‘day’ + *Ieu* ‘Jupiter’; and W. *eleni*, Br. *hevlene* ‘this year’ and MW. *yrlluned*, Br. *warlene* ‘last year’ from an oblique case form of the word for ‘year’ (Morris-Jones 1913:414, 436; Lewis and Pedersen 1937:162, 164, 171; Fleuriot 1964:238–41). In MBr. *pemdeiz*, MW. *beunydd* ‘every day’, the nasal consonant shows the effect of an earlier accusative inflection.

## 9.5 NEGATION

In Middle Welsh negation is marked by the negative marker *ny(t)* preceding the verb, most frequently in initial position, as in (56).

- (56) Ny welei ef y twrwr rac tywyllt y nos.  
 NEG saw.IMPF he the commotion for so-dark the night  
 ‘He could not see the commotion because the night was so dark.’ (PKM 22.23)

Negative main clauses are optionally verb-second. A constituent may be moved to precede the negative marker and the verb, although this is not compulsory. The fronted order, shown in (57), contrasts with the non-fronted order in (56). In the majority of cases, there is no topicalization in negative main clauses in Middle Welsh (Watkins 1990).

- (57) A hynny ny thygywys idaw.  
 and that NEG availed to.3SM  
 ‘And that didn’t work for him.’ (PKM 11.2)

Fronted objects (and fronted nonfinite verbs) in negative main clauses optionally induce the appearance of an object agreement clitic *-s* on the negative marker. This possibility is shown in (58). The optionality of the clitic is shown in (59).

- (58) ...a hynny nys gallei.  
 and that NEG+3S.ACC could  
 ‘...and that he could not do.’ (YSG 1780–1)
- (59) ...ac attep ny chauas ef genthi hi yn hynny.  
 and answer NEG received he with.3SF her in that  
 ‘...and he received no answer from her in that (respect).’ (PKM 7.12–13)

The availability of optional topicalization across negation is also a feature of Middle Breton and Cornish (George 1990: 231, 234).

Main clauses like the one in (59) have been analysed as left-dislocation structures (Isaac 1996: 58–9), with the fronted object in an extracausal position and the *-s* object clitic either fulfilling the direct-object function or licensing a null element in object position. However, non-referential quantified noun phrases may precede the verb in this construction as



in (60). These are cross-linguistically resistant to left dislocation, suggesting that sentences like (60) involve topicalization rather than left dislocation.

- (60) ...eissyoēs dim o Seint Grealnys gweles ef.  
 however none of Holy Greal NEG+3S.ACC saw he  
 ‘...however, he did not see the Holy Greal at all.’ (YSG 1335)

Negative object relative clauses show the same pattern with *-s* (see section 9.10 below).

### 9.5.1 The shift of negative-polarity indefinite pronouns to negative quantifiers

Middle Welsh also has negative polarity items such as *dim* ‘anything’, *neb* ‘anyone, any’ (cognate with Breton *neb* ‘any’), *e(i)ryoet* ‘ever’ and *byth* ‘ever’. These occur in negative (61), interrogative (62), and conditional / subjunctive contexts only.

- (61) Ny wnn i dim y wrth honno...  
 NEG know-1S I DIM about her  
 ‘I know nothing about her...’ (PKM 54.9)
- (62) ...a dywed y di ymi dim o ’th negesseu?  
 Q tell.2S you to-me DIM of your errands  
 ‘...will you tell me anything of your errands?’ (PKM 12.18–19)

Both *dim* and *neb* have become negative quantifiers (see Rouveret 1994: 128–9), used in a negative sense in the absence of the negative marker *ni(d)* or other mark of negation. Evans cites the following example from as early as the fourteenth century, although such examples are sporadic until the modern period:

- (63) ...y neb a wybu wneuthur pob peth o dim...  
 anyone REL knew make.INF every thing from DIM  
 ‘...he who knew how to make everything from nothing...’  
 (*Llyvyr Agkyr Llandewivrevi* 60.13–14, Evans 1964:107)

Other negative quantifiers have also emerged from phrases once used as the equivalent of indefinite pronouns, for instance, *dim byd* ‘nothing’ < *dim yn y byd* ‘nothing in the world’ or *nunlle* ‘nowhere’ < *yn un lle* ‘in any place’.

### 9.5.2 The Welsh Jespersen’s Cycle

The mutated form of *dim* has become a marker of pure negation in own right, initially as a marker of emphatic negation, where it generally appears in sentence-final position. This position is typically that of adverbials, and suggests that at this stage *ddim* functioned as a negative adverbial right-adjoined to the verb phrase. This use attested from the mid-thirteenth century (Willis 2007). A Middle Welsh example is given in (64).

- (64) ...ac nyt argwedwys idaw dim.  
 and NEG harm.PAST.3S to.3SM DIM  
 ‘...and it didn’t harm him at all.’ (YCM 27.18)

In early modern Welsh, *ddim* acquired the status of an unemphatic marker of negation, positioned between the subject and the aspect markers:

- (65) Ni buasai rai ddim yn derbyn y trydydd...  
 NEG would-havesome DDIM PROG accept.INF the third  
 ‘Some wouldn’t have accepted the third...’ (HLITN 67.27)

It appears to have undergone reanalysis from an adverbial to a simple marker of negation, analogous to the development of French *pas* from noun ‘step’ > minimiser ‘at all’ > marker of negation. Ultimately, postverbal *ddim* became obligatory in negative main clauses in spoken Welsh and informal written Welsh. The preverbal marker *ni(d)* has itself been eroded, surviving only as a soft or aspirate mutation on verbs in negative sentences and in special negative forms of the verb ‘be’ (*nid ydwyf* ‘I am’ > *dydw*) and, in some dialects, of other verbs. As a result *ddim* has become the primary marker of negation in spoken Welsh.

Breton has experienced a broadly similar, but independent, series of developments, innovating a new postverbal negative marker *ket* (Middle Breton *quet*), the source of which is ultimately unknown. Cornish has been the most conservative of the Brythonic languages with respect to negation, preserving the preverbal negative marker *ny* alone (Lewis 1946: 48–9; Poppe 1995: 103). On negation throughout Brythonic see also Poppe (1995).

### 9.5.3 Definite direct objects in negative sentences

This use of *a* is paralleled by Middle Welsh *o*, which may mark definite direct objects after the negative marker *dim*. Already in Middle Welsh it is found both in partitive senses (66) and in more neutral contexts (67).

- (66) ...heb anuon dimo ’r bwyd udunt...  
 withoutsend.INF NEGof the food to-3P  
 ‘...without sending any of the food to them...’ (YSG 1823)
- (67) Vy enw i, ... ny elly di wybot dim ohonaw...  
 1S-GEN name 1S NEG can-2S you know.INF NEG of-3SM  
 ‘My name, you cannot know it...’ (YSG 590)

By the seventeenth century, a reduced form of *ddim o* had evolved into a negative marker used before definite objects, subjects of unaccusative verbs and before nonfinite verbs in the periphrastic tenses:

- (68) ...ni chei di yn wir moth neges. EMW  
 NEG get-2S you indeed MO+2S-GENrequest  
 ‘...you’ll never get your request.’ (HGC 14.15.4, c. 1640)
- (69) Ni bu ar Fôr moi chystled... ModW  
 NEG was-PERF on sea MO+3SF-GEN like  
 ‘There was never its like on the sea...’ (ER 1.2.8, 1782)
- (70) ...am ryw negess ni allai mo’i wnevthyd... EMW  
 for some errand NEG could MO+3SM-GEN do.INF  
 ‘...for some errand that he couldn’t do...’ (RhG ii.50.28, 1582)

## 9.6 MUTATIONS

The phonology of the mutations has, in so far as can be determined from the textual record, remained constant in the attested historical period. The soft mutation of /g/, formerly /ɣ/ became zero at a very early period, as a result of the loss of /ɣ/ everywhere by regular sound change. For details of the phonology of mutation in modern Welsh, see chapter 1.

Mutations were once predictable from the phonological environment, specifically the final segment of the preceding word. By the time of Middle Welsh, however, mutations can be predicted only by reference to a list of arbitrary triggering environments, as in modern Welsh. However, there are differences in these environments as compared with the modern language.

The overwhelming majority of mutations are triggered by individual lexical items on the initial consonant of the word immediately following them. These have remained largely constant. Discussion will be limited here to those mutations triggered by a particular syntactic structure. For details of mutations within the noun phrase, see section 9.11 below.

Mutations are indicated sporadically in Middle Welsh texts. In general, if mutation is indicated orthographically that can be taken as evidence that a particular context was a mutation trigger, but absence of mutation is inconclusive. Investigation of mutation rules therefore has to be done by generalizing from cases where mutation is indicated. Absence of mutation can be inferred only from larger numbers of cases where it is not indicated in the orthography or from cases of alliteration in poetry.

### 9.6.1 Direct-object mutation in Welsh

In Middle Welsh soft mutations on subjects and objects occur if the immediately preceding word is a mutation trigger. If a noun phrase immediately follows a verb and that verb is a mutation trigger, it mutates irrespective of whether it is a subject or an object. Verb forms triggering mutation include imperfect and pluperfect verbs in *-ai*, the past tense of the verb ‘be’ and its compounds (*bu* and *-fu*) and other forms of the verb ‘be’. Other verbs (including present tense verbs, the present subjunctive in *-(h)o* and past tense verbs in *-odd*, *-s* and *-th/-t*) leave the radical of the following noun phrase (Morgan 1952: 182–233). For instance, an imperfect verb form triggers soft mutation on the subject in (71), and on the object in (72).

- (71) Ny angassei                      Uendigeituran eiryoet y mywn ty.  
 NEG contained.PLUPERF Bendigeidfran ever in house  
 ‘Bendigeidfran had never fitted inside a house.’ (PKM 31.12)
- (72) Ac ef a welei lannerch yn y coet...  
 and he PRT saw-IMPF glade in the forest  
 ‘And he saw a glade in the forest...’ (PKM 1.13–14)

In the sequence verb – *pro* subject – lexical object, the null subject is transparent to mutation. If, however, the subject is overt in a VSO sequence, the mutation of the subject depends on whether the verb is a mutation trigger, and whether the object mutates depends upon the nature of the subject. Objects after personal pronouns mutate. Mutation after lexical subjects is variable. *Wh*-trace may, like *pro*, be transparent to mutation.

Mutation of subjects triggered by a preceding verb was lost in early modern Welsh. Evans (1968b) finds that the mutation of the subject of the verb ‘be’ was declining by the late sixteenth century, although mutation of the subject of imperfect and pluperfect tense verbs remained usual. On the other hand mutation spread to the objects of those verb forms that had not originally triggered it. There is some evidence of this spread already in Middle Welsh. The result is the modern situation in which the direct object of a tensed verb mutates, whereas the subject does not (see chapter 7 on this in modern Welsh).

Morgan suggests that the crucial factor in these developments was the fact that objects mutated after subject pronouns, whereas there was no parallel context in which subjects mutated frequently. Consequently a high proportion of objects mutated, but a much lower proportion of subjects. This set the scene for the generalization of direct-object mutation in modern Welsh.

### 9.6.2 Syntactic triggering of an adjective mutation

In Middle Welsh, as in modern Welsh, adjectives modifying masculine or plural nouns do not normally undergo mutation. However, if a comparative adjective modifies a noun in a negative or interrogative clause, it must undergo mutation, whatever the gender and number of the noun it modifies. Thus, in (73), *ansyberwyt* ‘arrogance’ is masculine, but the adjective that modifies it must mutate because the clause is negative (*mwy* > *uwy*).

- (73) Ny weleis ansyberwyt **uwy** ar wr...  
 NEG saw.1S arrogance greater on man  
 ‘I have never seen greater arrogance in a man...’ (PKM 2.14–15)

This is another case where a mutation is triggered syntactically. In this case the relevant trigger environment is that a comparative adjective must be c-commanded by a negative or interrogative operator to undergo mutation. This mutation survived into early modern Welsh but no further (Morgan 1952: 66–7).

## 9.7 COPULAR CONSTRUCTIONS AND INVERSION STRUCTURES

### 9.7.1 Delayed subjects and objects in Middle Welsh

Delayed subjects, that is, subjects that appear after complements or adjuncts of the verb, are relatively common in Middle Welsh, compared to Modern Welsh, where they are quite rare. There are two types of inversion in Middle Welsh. In the first, exemplified in (74), either a heavy noun phrase is postposed or the clause is strongly presentational. The noun phrase may not be a pronoun, and there are no restrictions on the verb. This type remains in modern Welsh.

- (74) ...kanys ny wisgawd arueu eiryoet uarchawc urdawl well noc ef.  
 since NEG wore arms ever knight honourable better than he  
 ‘...since a better knight than he never bore arms.’ (YSG 3972–3)

The second type is restricted to unaccusative verbs, but allows pronominal subjects. It also seems to be pragmatically neutral:

- (75) a. ...yn y deudecuet dydwedy Calan Mei yd aeth [pp o  
 in the twelfth day after May-Day PRT went from  
 ’r byt hvn] ef y tragywyd[avl] teyrnas wlat nef...  
 the worldthis he toeternal kingdom land heaven  
 ‘...on the twelfth day after May Day he went from this world to the eternal  
 kingdom of the land of heaven...’ (BD 207.22–3)
- b. Pa neges y dodyvch [APyma] chwi?  
 what missionPRTcome.PERF.2P here you  
 ‘On what mission have you come here?’ (CO 476–7)

Delayed objects, that is, direct objects that appear after other complements or adjuncts of the verb, are also found in Middle Welsh. Again this seems to be pragmatically neutral and may apply to any noun phrase including a pronoun, as in (76).

- (76) Gellwng [AP y mywn] wy...  
 let.IMPER in them  
 ‘Let them in...’ (PKM 81.27)

Delayed subjects and objects (except of the presentational/heavy NP-shift type) have both been lost in the transition to modern Welsh. The loss of delayed subjects with unaccusative verbs in (75) may be linked to the loss of the expletive *ef* construction discussed in section 9.1.2 above. For further discussion, see Evans (1965).

### 9.7.2 Copular constructions

The verb ‘be’ had five present indicative paradigms in the third person in Old and Middle Welsh: *mae*, *yw*, *oes*, *ys* and *ysydd*. As in Modern Welsh, *yw* functions as the regular negative and interrogative of *mae* if the subject is definite; *oes* fulfils the same function if the subject is indefinite; *ys* is used only as a copula; and *ysydd* is found in A’-constructions (*wh*-questions, relative clauses). Historically, *mae*, *yw* and *ys* have all been used in affirmative copular constructions, but, in Welsh, *mae* has spread at the expense of *ys*.

Typical of Old and early Middle Welsh are copular constructions of the form copula – predicate – subject. The form of the copula is *ys* (imperfect *oed*, preterite *bu*, future *byd*):

- (77) Ys gohilion **hwnn**...  
 is remains that-one  
 ‘He is what remains...’ (CO 472)

The *ys*-copula is found in Old Breton as *is* (Fleuriot 1964: 321) but was lost early, being replaced by a construction involving the equivalent of *yw* (Modern Breton *eo*). The Middle Welsh copula system is very similar to that found in the modern Goidelic Celtic languages. The cognate of *ys* (*is*) has survived productively in Scottish Gaelic, and, in particular, in Irish.

The negative of *ys* is *nyt* (imperfect *nyt*, preterite *ny bu*), identical in form in the present with the negative marker itself, but presumably still a verb in this context, since sentences containing it do not need another verb:

- (78) Dioer ... nyt da **dy** **gynghor uynet y ’r gaer**...  
 certainly NYT good your advice go.INF tothe castle  
 ‘Certainly ... your advice to go to the castle is not good...’ (PKM 56.1–2)

This construction is found also with right dislocation of the predicate noun phrase when the predicate is definite:

- (79) Ys hwy yr rei **hynny**, Nynhyaw a Pheibyaw...  
 YS they the ones those Nynniaw and Peibiaw  
 ‘Those are Nynniaw and Peibiaw...’ (CO 598)

The type in (79) represents an archaic pattern, even in Middle Welsh, in that the pronoun and the right-dislocated element agree. More usually, the masculine singular pronoun *ef* is found with predicates of all person/number combinations. By the time of most Middle Welsh texts *ys ef* ‘it is he’ has been reduced to *sef* and reanalysed as an expletive element permitting right dislocation of a focused (new) element (Evans 1958):

- (80) Sef a doeth dy nyeint ueibion dy chwaer.  
 SEF PRT came your nephew sons your sister  
 ‘Your nephews, your sister’s sons, were the ones who came.’ (PKM 74.10)

In modern Welsh *sef* has grammaticalized as an adverb meaning ‘namely’.

The Middle Welsh copular construction described above and illustrated in (77) has been replaced by a construction of the form (particle +) copula – subject – predicate marker *yn* – predicate.<sup>1</sup> In Middle Welsh, a similar construction with the order copula – predicate marker *y(n)* – predicate – subject is, broadly speaking, required in clauses with a nonfinite verb (Watkins & Piette 1962: 300):

- (81) a. Duw ... a wyr bot yn eu **hynny** arnaf i.  
 God ... PRT knows be.INF PRD false that on.1S me  
 ‘God ... knows that that is a wrong against me.’ (PKM 21.2–3)
- b. ...a thebygu y uot yn wannach o hynny **ef**.  
 andthink.INF 3SM.GEN be.INF PRD weaker from that he  
 ‘...and thinking that he was weaker as a result of that.’ (BD 47.27–8)

In finite clauses, the older order copula *ys* – predicate – subject is still commonly found, but, already in Middle Welsh, the predicative marker begins to appear in tensed clauses. Note that, when it is used in tensed clauses, the subject generally precedes the predicate. In this construction the copula has the forms present *mae* (negative *nyd yw*), preterite *oed* (negative *nyd oed*):

- (82) Kyn kyuyll y ’r ulwydyn, yd oed **ef** yn holl iach.  
 befor end tothe year PRT was he PRD recovered  
 ‘Before the end of the year he was recovered.’ (PKM 90.19–20)

Finally, in late Middle Welsh and early Modern Welsh, this subject-predicate order spreads back to clauses with a nonfinite verb:

- (83) ...a dywedut vot **kanmwyaf y tir hynny** y[n] gyuanned.  
 ...and say.INF be.INF most the land that PRD inhabited  
 ‘...and they say that most of that land is inhabited.’ (FfBO 46.13–14)

For further details, see Richards (1934) and Watkins & Piette (1962).

## 9.8 PRONOUNS

Pronouns in Middle Welsh vary in the main according to syntactic environment rather than case. The four simple series are given, according to the traditional classification (Evans 1964: 49–58), in Table 9.3. Large-scale homophony means that the contrast between independent

<sup>1</sup>The predicative marker *yn* may derive historically either from an earlier oblique (probably instrumental) form of the definite article, or from a construction involving the preposition *yn* ‘in’ (Richards 1934: 107–12). The parallel development in Old Irish of a copular construction involving the preposition *i n-* ‘in’ (e.g. *Atá sé i n-a rígh* ‘He is a king,’ lit. ‘He is in his king’) has been used to support the second view. However, in Welsh the preposition *yn* requires a nasal mutation, the predicative marker a soft mutation, a fact which argues against their common origin and is consistent only with the first hypothesis (Watkins & Piette 1962: 295–9). Most plausible is the suggestion that *yn* spread from functioning as an adverb marker to become also a predicate marker: it is used as the adverb marker, regularly in Welsh, commonly in Cornish (*yn*), and sporadically also in Middle Breton (*en/ez*). The distribution suggests that *yn* was used solely as an adverb marker in the parent language. In Welsh it was generalized into the predicate marker function, in Breton it was (eventually) lost completely, and Cornish retained the conservative pattern (Watkins & Piette 1962: 299–301). Presumably this spread could have been the result of reanalysis of verb phrases of the type ‘stand *yn* steadfast’, where ‘*yn* steadfast’ might reasonably be interpreted either as an adverb ‘steadfastly’ or as a secondary predicate. See also Gensler (2002).

and affixed pronouns and between accusative and genitive infixed forms operates only in a small number of person-number combinations.

|                   | INDEPENDENT | DEPENDENT              |                                     | AFFIXED |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
|                   |             | ACCUSATIVE<br>(OBJECT) | GENITIVE<br>(POSSESSIVE)            |         |
| first sing.       | mi          | 'm                     | vy <sup>N</sup> ('m)                | i       |
| second sing.      | ti          | 'th <sup>S</sup>       | dy <sup>S</sup> ('th <sup>S</sup> ) | di      |
| third sing. masc. | ef          | 'e (h-), -s            | y <sup>S</sup> ('e <sup>S</sup> )   | ef      |
| third sing. fem.  | hi          | 'e (h-), -s            | y <sup>A</sup> ('e <sup>A</sup> )   | hi      |
| first plur.       | ni          | 'n                     | yn ('n)                             | ni      |
| second plur.      | chwí        | 'ch                    | ych ('ch)                           | chwí    |
| third plur.       | wy(nt)      | 'e, -s                 | eu ('e)                             | wy(nt)  |

Table 9.3. Traditional classification of personal pronouns in Middle Welsh.

With some exceptions discussed below (notably with the accusative dependent series), the distribution of these is broadly the same as in modern Welsh. Independent pronouns are used for the subject in preverbal topic position, for the direct object when used without a corresponding accusative agreement clitic and for the object of an uninflected preposition. They are also found in a number of miscellaneous other ‘strong’ contexts, for instance, standing alone, as predicates and in apposition. They cannot follow a verb showing agreement, and therefore have essentially the same distribution as lexical noun phrases.

The accusative and genitive series are essentially object agreement clitics. The accusative clitics attach to the end of the particle preceding a finite verb; the genitive clitics precede a nonfinite verb. Genitive clitics also attach to nouns, indicating the possessor noun phrase (see section 9.11). Both series license a null pronoun in the argument position itself. This argument position may be filled. If it is, then pronouns of the affixed series are used. Null subjects are permitted in postverbal position, although they are not obligatory, and once again affixed pronouns may be used in their place. After inflected prepositions, either an overt affixed pronoun is possible or a null pronoun.

Examples of these pronouns in use are given in (84). In (84), the subject is a first person pronoun, moved to the topic position, where an independent form *mi* is required. The second person singular accusative object agreement clitic *'th* attaches to the preverbal particle *a* in preverbal position. It is doubled by an affixed pronoun *di* in postverbal position. The same doubling is found between the genitive clitic *'m* preceding the noun *lle* ‘place’ and the affixed pronoun *i*.

- (84) Mi a 'th rodaf di y 'm lle i yn Annwuyñ...  
 1S.IND PRT 2S.ACC put.1S 2S.AFF in 1S.GEN place 1S.AFF in Annwfn  
 ‘I shall put you in my place in Annwfn...’ (PKM 3.8)

In the third person the accusative form *-s* is used after negative markers *ny* and *na*, and after various particles and complementizers (for instance, affirmative particle *neu*, complementizers *o* ‘if’ and *ony* ‘unless’).

The possibilities for null arguments are shown in (85). The subject is null, identified as second person singular by the form of the verb *dechreueist*. A genitive agreement clitic precedes the nonfinite verb *llad*, allowing the postverbal object to be null.

- (85) Canys dechreueist uy llad, gorffen.  
 since started.2S 1S.GEN kill.INF finish.IMPER  
 ‘Since you have begun to kill me, finish (it).’ (PKM 5.28)

Middle Welsh also had a strength distinction manifested on the independent and affixed series of pronouns. In addition to the simple forms given above, there is also a conjunctive paradigm of both independent and affixed pronouns, and a reduplicated paradigm of independent pronouns. These are given in Table 9.4.

|               | INDEPENDENT<br>CONJUNCTIVE | AFFIXED<br>CONJUNCTIVE | INDEPENDENT<br>REDUPLICATED |
|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ‘I’           | minheu                     | inheu                  | mivi                        |
| ‘you (sing.)’ | titheu                     | ditheu                 | tidi                        |
| ‘he’          | ynteu                      | ynteu                  | efo                         |
| ‘she’         | hitheu                     | hitheu                 | hihi                        |
| ‘we’          | ninheu                     | ninheu                 | nini                        |
| ‘you (plur.)’ | chwithheu                  | chwithheu              | chwichwi                    |
| ‘they’        | wynteu                     | wynteu                 | wyntwy                      |

Table 9.4. Paradigms of conjunctive and reduplicated pronouns in Middle Welsh.

These have the same distribution as their simple counterparts. The conjunctive pronouns are used in contrastive contexts (for instance, topic shift, see Mac Cana 1990), and the reduplicated series are emphatic. Examples of conjunctive pronouns are given in (86). The subject in topic position is a first-person independent conjunctive pronoun. The affixed conjunctive pronoun *ditheu* occupies the object position, where it doubles an accusative agreement clitic *'th*.

- (86) A minheu a 'th rodaf titheu idaw ef.  
 and 1S.IND.CONJ PRT 2S.ACC give.1S 2S.AFF.CONJ to.3SM 3SM.AFF  
 ‘And I shall give you to him.’ (P 50.24)

Reduplicated pronouns are shown in (87) in subject and object position. Note that when they occupy object position, reduplicated pronouns may not co-occur with object agreement clitics.

- (87) Miui a rodaf vyg cret ... na charaf i tidi...  
 1S.REDUP PRT give.1S 1S.GEN oath NEG love.1S 1S.AFF 2S.REDUP  
 ‘I give you my word ... that I do not love you...’ (P 36.1–2)

### 9.8.1 Loss of accusative clitics

In Middle Welsh independent pronouns are required as the objects of imperatives (88), where there is no preverbal particle for an object clitic to cliticize onto. With other finite forms of the verb, an accusative object clitic (optionally doubled with an affixed pronoun) is more usual, as in (84), although the bare independent pronoun is possible (89).

- (88) Ellwng ef.  
 release.IMPER 3SM.IND  
 ‘Release him!’ (PKM 62.25)



- (89) kanys heb dy genyat ti y gwnaeth duw di  
 for without 2S.GEN permission 2S.AFF PRT made God you.IND  
 ‘...for God made you without your permission...’  
 (‘Cynghorau Catwn’, *BBCS* ii.23.21, Evans 1964:50)

The pattern with an independent pronoun in direct object position has spread at the expense of the pattern with agreeing clitic and affixed pronoun. In spoken Welsh, the accusative clitics have become largely obsolete. In some northern varieties they remain at least at an underlying level, since their mutation effects remain. For instance in (90), the verb *lladdodd* does not mutate, even though it is preceded by the particle *mi*, a soft mutation trigger. Absence of mutation here can only be explained as the result of deletion of an accusative object clitic *'i*, which blocks mutation.

- (90) ...mi lladdodd Rofar ni o. ModW  
 PRT killed Rover 1P 3SM  
 ‘...our Rover killed him.’ (Gŵr Pen y Bryn 203)

Also in some northern dialects, the accusative clitics were replaced by genitive ones with finite verbs:

- (91) “...os na nei di, mi dy ladda di”  
 if NEG do.2S you PRT 2S.GEN kill.1S you  
 “...if you don’t, I’ll kill you.” (Gwen Tomos 29)

### 9.8.2 Effects of phonological reduction of pronouns

The history of both simple and reduplicated independent pronouns in Welsh has been one of phonological reduction. In Middle Welsh, simple independent pronouns are clearly full pronouns, failing standard tests for clitic status. For instance, in (92), simple independent pronouns may be conjoined to form a complex subject.

- (92) A phan vu barawt bwyt, ef a hi a aethant y eisted y gyt...  
 and when was ready food he and she PRT went.3P to sit.INF together  
 ‘And when food was ready, he and she went to sit together...’ (*YSG* 3279–80)

By early modern Welsh, such coordination was no longer possible. Similarly, in Middle Welsh, a preverbal subject pronoun could be modified by an emphatic reflective such as *ehun* ‘himself’, but this too died out in early Modern Welsh. It seems that, by this time, preverbal independent subject pronouns cliticized to the front of the verb.

Similar weakening of the reduplicated series was underway too. Reduplicated subject pronouns begin to be found as expletive subjects in the sixteenth century, as in (93). This suggests that they were no longer understood as emphatic.

- (93) ...**y vo** a uu y kyuriw dymesdyl yn Gymhrv y dethwn yma... **EMW**  
 3SM.REDUP PRT was the such storm in-Wales the day that  
 ‘...there was such a storm in Wales that day...’ (RhG i.32.16–17, c. 1530)

Furthermore, phonologically reduced forms appear, for instance, in (94) *vo* is a reduced form of the Middle Welsh masculine third person singular reduplicated pronoun *efo*.

- (94) **Vo** aeth oddiwrth yr holl gythrelied... **EMW**  
 he went away-from the all devils  
 ‘He went away from all the devils...’ (TWRP, ‘Y Dioddefaint’ 777, 1552)

The full paradigm of the reduced reduplicated forms is given in Table 9.5.

|               | EARLY MODERN<br>WELSH FULL FORMS | SEMI-REDUCED<br>FORMS | REDUCED<br>FORMS     |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| ‘I’           | myfi                             | y fi                  | fi                   |
| ‘you (sing.)’ | tydi                             | y di                  | di<br>thdi* (> chdi) |
| ‘he’          | efo / efe                        | y fo / y fe           | fo / fe              |
| ‘she’         | hyhi                             | y hi                  | hi                   |
| ‘we’          | nyni                             | y ni                  | ni                   |
| ‘you (pl.)’   | chwychwi                         | y ch(w)i              | chi                  |
| ‘they’        | hwyntwy                          | ynhwy                 | nhw                  |

\* After *a*<sup>A</sup> ‘and’, *â*<sup>A</sup> ‘with’, *â*<sup>A</sup> ‘as’, *gyda*<sup>A</sup> ‘with’ and *efo*<sup>A</sup> ‘with’.

Table 9.5. Reduction of pronominal forms in early modern Welsh.

The reduced forms of the reduplicated pronouns were very similar in form to the simple independent pronouns and merged with them, with variant forms coming to be distinguished by new factors. For instance, whereas in late Middle Welsh both reduplicated *efo* (later also *efe*) for emphasis and unemphatic simple *ef* were possible in postverbal subject position, in spoken modern Welsh the reduced reduplicated forms *fe* / *fo* came to be used after a vowel (for instance, *deuai fe* ‘he’d come’), with the simple form appearing after a consonant (for instance, *daeth e* ‘he came’). Stylistic variation also arose, with descendants of Middle Welsh reduplicated forms (*fi*, *di*, *fo/fe* and *nhw*) being more colloquial, and variants descended from Middle Welsh simple forms (*mi*, *ti*, *ef* and *hwy*) being more formal.

Another effect of the phonological reduction of pronouns is that preverbal subject pronouns were reanalysed as affirmative verbal particles. In the eighteenth century, doubling with both preverbal and postverbal subject pronouns appears in colloquial Welsh for the first time. For instance, in (95), preverbal independent pronouns, *mi* and *ti*, are doubled by postverbal affixed pronouns *i* and *di*.

- (95) a. *mi dewes i fy spectol gartre* **ModW**  
 I left.1S I 1S glasses at-home  
 ‘I left my glasses at home.’ (BLI. 8.22)
- b. *Ti elli di fyn’ d lle gwelech di ’n dda.* **ModW**  
 you can.2S you go where see.SUBJ.2S you PRD good  
 ‘You can go wherever you please.’ (PN 13.19)

This seems to be evidence that by this time the preverbal subject pronouns had become main-clause affirmative complementizers, agreeing with the subject and the verb. This is confirmed by the fact that, at the same time, conjunctive subject pronouns disappear from preverbal position in low-style texts and must be placed in a postverbal position. That is, sentences of the type in (96) are replaced with sentences of the type in (97).

- (96) Felly nineu aethom i weled y *'Lecsiwn.*  
 so we.CONJ go.PAST.1P to see.INF the election  
 'So we went go to see the election.' (GBC 20.7–8, 1703)
- (97) Os lleddis i fy mab fy hun //Mi af inne i run ddihenudd.  
 if kill.PAST.1SI 1s son 1s self PRT go I.CONJ to the-same death  
 'If I killed my own son, I shall go to the same death.' (HGC 35.19–20, c. 1716)

Finally, in the mid eighteenth century, agreement between complementizer and verb ceases to be enforced consistently. In particular, the first-person marker *mi* (98) and the masculine third person marker *fe* (99) appear before all person/number combinations and acquire the status of general affirmative main-clause complementisers, a status that they have maintained today. The doubling construction in (95b) has died out, although it was maintained until the twentieth century in parts of the southeast.

- (98) Mi welen yno ffenest... **ModW**  
 MI saw.3P there window  
 'They saw there a window...' (Ellis Roberts, *Dwy o Gerddi Newyddion*, 1759, Lloyd 1937: 98)
- (99) Fe fydda fi bôb Boreu yn gorfod gweiddi... **ModW**  
 FE will-be-1S I every morning PROG have-to.INF shout.INF  
 'Every morning I'll have to shout...' (BDaf. 16.25–6)

## 9.9 SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

### 9.9.1 Embedded finite clauses

Embedded tensed clauses in Middle Welsh are verb-initial clauses of the form complementizer – verb – subject – object, essentially as in modern Welsh:

- (100) A chyt archo ef yti rodi yr eil...  
 and though implore.SUBJ he to-you give.INF the second  
 'And though he implore you to give him the second...' (PKM 3.19–20)

As in modern Welsh (section 0.0), embedded finite clauses may act as complement to a preposition, as in (101), although the set of prepositions that allow this has changed slightly.

- (101) Ac yn y lle, y gyt ac y doeth y 'r mor, annyan y  
 and in the place together-with PRT come.PAST.3S to the sea nature the  
 mor a gauas...  
 sea PRT get.PAST.3S  
 'And there and then, as he came into the sea, he acquired the ee of the sea...' (PKM 77.24–5)

Embedded verb-second order is confined to embedded clefts (section 9.7.2) and to positions after a few complementizers, such as *canyys* 'since'.

### 9.9.2 Embedded infinitival clauses

#### 9.9.2.1 Ergative embedded clauses

In Middle Welsh, as in modern Welsh, clausal complements of verbs that take propositions as their complements (declarative and epistemic verbs) must contain a nonfinite verb under certain circumstances, even though they fill a finite gap in the paradigm of clause types. The set of verbs involved includes *clybot* ‘hear’, *credu* ‘believe’, *dywedut* ‘say’, *gwelet* ‘see’, *gwybot* ‘know’, *medylyaw* ‘think’, *mynegi* ‘indicate’, *ryuedu* ‘marvel’ and *tebygu* ‘suppose’. If the complement clause is affirmative and refers to an event preceding that of the main clause, then it is syntactically nonfinite, as in (102). On the other hand, embedded questions and clefts, embedded negative clauses and conditional and future clauses after these verbs are finite as in (103).

- (102) ...mi a gibleu dyuot y ’r Deheu y ryw bryuet ni doeth y ’r  
 I PRT hear.IMPF.1S come.INF to the south the sort creatures NEG came to the  
 ynys honn eiroet.  
 island this ever  
 ‘...I have heard that creatures the like of which have never come to this island have  
 come to the south.’ (PKM 68.16–17)
- (103) ...mi a tebygaf y byd gwr idi yn y lle...  
 I PRT suppose.1S PRT will-be man to.3SF soon  
 ‘...I suspect that he will be her husband soon...’ (P 63.20–21)

The nonfinite type in (102) manifests an ergative pattern of argument marking not found in modern Welsh. With an unaccusative verb, such as *cleuychu* ‘fall ill’, *cyuodi* ‘rise, get up’, *dyuot* ‘come’, *hanuot* ‘come from, originate’, *mynet* ‘go’, *marw* ‘die’, *troi* ‘turn (intrans.)’ or *tyfu* ‘grow’, the sole, internal argument behaves as a direct object, following the verb if it is lexical, as with *y ryw bryuet* ‘the sort of creatures’ in (102). If it is pronominal, it appears as a genitive object clitic, as with third-person plural marker *eu* in (104).

- (104) Ac wynteu a dywedassant eu hanuot o lys Arthur.  
 and they PRT said.3P 3P.GEN originate.INF from court Arthur  
 ‘And they said that they were from Arthur’s court.’ (YSG 4614–17)

Effectively, then the subject is marked using a pattern identical to that found with direct objects of nonfinite verbs in other contexts, for instance, the control clause in (105).

- (105) Tranoeth y bore ... y parawd Arthur eu bedydyaw.  
 next-day the morning PRT caused Arthur 3P.GEN baptise.INF  
 ‘The next morning Arthur had them baptised.’ (P 39.28–30)

Conversely, if the embedded verb is unergative, such as *kerdet* ‘walk’ or *marchogaeth* ‘ride’, or transitive, such as *gwneuthur* ‘do’, *llad* ‘kill’ or *rhoi* ‘give’, a completely different pattern is found, and the external argument (subject, agent) is marked using the preposition *o* ‘from, of’:

- (106) a. A gredy di ... gwneuthur o Duw Adaf?  
 Q believe.2s you make.INF of God Adam  
 ‘Do you believe that God made Adam?’ (YCM 30.4–5)

- b. Yr ymdidan yssyd yn dywedut ...uarchogaeth ohonaw...  
 the story is.REL PROG say.INF ride.INF of.3SM  
 yny doethhyt y vanachlawc...  
 until came as-far-as monastery  
 ‘The story says that he rode ... until he came to a monastery...’ (YSG 1112)

Under some circumstances, the internal argument (subject, theme) of an unaccusative verb may be marked using this pattern. Manning (1995) suggests that [+human] is the conditioning factor, with [+human] noun phrases allowing *o*. It is certainly clear that if the subject is conceived of as being agentive, marking with *o* is more likely. An example where this seems to be the case is given in (107).

- (107) ...dan amot mynet o 'th tad a phawb o 'r yssyd y danaw  
 under condition go.INF of 2S.GEN fatherandeveryone of PRTis.REL under.3S  
 y wrha y 'r amherawdyr Arthur...  
 to pay-homage.INF to the emperor Arthur  
 ‘...on condition that your father and everyone who is under him should go to pay  
 homage to Emperor Arthur...’ (P 39.8-9)

Here, it looks as though *o* is used in order to highlight the conscious and deliberate nature of going to pay homage; zero-marking (*mynet dy dad...*) would merely state the change of location. Most of these exceptional examples are with a pronominal subject, hence another possibility in keeping with the typology of ergative systems is that it is pronouns that may be marked with *o*. In other languages with ergative systems (for instance, Dyirbal), it is common for there to be ‘split’ ergativity with pronouns exhibiting nominative-accusative patterns of marking, with ergativity being manifested only with lexical noun phrases. Given that the tenseless clauses in question are restricted to past-tense contexts, it may also be that Middle Welsh is independently split ergative for perfectivity in a way comparable to such languages as Hindi.

Tenseless clauses of the type in (102), (104) and (106)–(107) are also found in various other syntactic environments, such as the clausal complement of various prepositions (*cyn* ‘before’, *gan* ‘for, since’, *rac* ‘in front of, lest’, (*g*)*wedy* ‘after’), adjectives (*ryued* ‘strange’, *drwc* ‘bad, sorry’) and nouns (*amot* ‘condition’, *cred* ‘belief’). Examples with a nonfinite complement clause to a preposition are illustrated in (108) (unaccusative pattern) and (109) (transitive pattern).

- (108) A gwedy eu diflannu...  
 and after 3P.GEN disappear.INF  
 ‘And after they had disappeared...’ (P 47.9)
- (109) ...gwedy y adnabot o 'r rei guarchaedic ef...  
 after 3SM.GEN recognize.INF of the ones besieged him  
 ‘...after the besieged ones had recognized him...’ (BD 146.4)

They are also found in main clause contexts, either in a series of conjoined main clauses where only the first is specified for tense and person, or independently (the so-called ‘historic infinitive’, Fowkes 1991):

- (110) Ac yna y gyrchu o 'r marchawc ef yn llityawc...  
 and then 3SM.GEN attack.INF from the knight him PRD angry  
 ‘And then the knight attacked him angrily...’ (P 14.18)

For fuller discussion, see Lewis (1928: 182–4), Manning (1995), Morgan (1938) and Richards (1949–51).

In the transitive construction, both subject–object order, as in (109) and (110), and object–subject order, as in (111), are attested. However, the former outnumbers the latter by a substantial margin (Morgan 1938: 204), which seems to suggest that the subject–object order is basic, with object–subject order being derived by extraposition of the subject.

- (111) A gwedy adnabot hynny o Ywein...  
 and after recognize.INF that of Owain  
 ‘And after Owain had recognised that...’ (BT 78)

Note also that although the order lexical subject – pronominal object is attested (as in (109) and (110) above), the order lexical object – pronominal subject is rare. Assuming that extraposition of pronouns is dispreferred, this confirms that subject–object order is basic.

Complement clauses of this type have become severely restricted. By the seventeenth century the number of verbs involved in the construction had shrunk to just one, namely the verb *bod* ‘to be’, and even before this there is considerable uncertainty as to their historically correct syntax. The pattern with *bod* ‘be’ remains in contemporary Welsh (compare discussion of *bod*-clauses in chapter 3). In other environments, the older construction has been replaced by the *i*-clause, see section 9.2.2.2 below.

A parallel construction existed in Middle Breton, but was already far more restricted in distribution, occurring with a very narrow set of embedded verbs, consisting perhaps only of three unaccusative verbs *bout/bezaff* ‘be’, *donet* ‘come’ and *monet* ‘go’. Similar data are found in Cornish, but apparently only with the verb *bos* ‘be’ (George 1993: 460).

### 9.9.2.2 The innovation of *i*-clauses

In chapter 3, two types of modern Welsh infinitival clauses introduced by *i* ‘to’ were distinguished: finite *i*-clauses, exemplified in (112), found as complements to declarative and epistemic verbs and nouns, and as complements to prepositions; and nonfinite *i*-clauses, exemplified in (113), found as complements to verbs of expectation, volition and various other control verbs, nouns and adjectives. Both types may be the complement of a preposition.

- (112) Dywedodd Steffan [i Nia baentio ’r llun].  
 said Steffan to Nia paint.INF the picture  
 ‘Steffan said that Nia had painted the picture.’  
 (113) Byddai ’n syniad da [i Nia baentio ’r llun].  
 be.COND.3S PRED idea good to Nia paint.INF the picture  
 ‘It would be a good idea for Nia to paint the picture.’

As was seen there, in the former case, the event of the *i*-clause is real and anterior to that of the main clause; in the latter case, the event of the *i*-clause is potential, with generic or future time reference.

There are broadly two types of account of the origin of these patterns. Lewis (1928: 182–4) relates them to the syntax of control verbs and adjectives and other superficially similar verbs. A number of control verbs, such as *erchi* ‘ask’, *peri* ‘cause’ and *adolwyn* ‘ask’, required a prepositional-phrase complement headed by *i* ‘to’ in Middle Welsh. This indirect object had to act as controller for the unexpressed subject (PRO) of the embedded clause (object control):

- (114) A chyt archo yti<sub>i</sub> [PRO<sub>i</sub> rodi yr eil...]  
 and though ask.SUBJ.3S to-you give.INF the second  
 ‘And though he may ask you to give him the second...’ (PKM 3.19–20)

Lewis suggests that it was ‘by analogy’ with this group that the construction with *i* marking the subject in all nonfinite clauses spread. Miller (2004) adopts a related approach, but, focusing in particular on the nonfinite type in (113), suggests specifically that there was an early reanalysis of the verb *peri* ‘cause’, with the diffusion supported by the existence of superficially similar constructions with control adjectives such as *iawn* ‘right’.

A second type of account links the construction to verbs of happening or finishing. Morgan (1938: 209–13) distinguishes the two types of *i*-clause, and concentrates on the historical origin of the finite type. He argues that this has its origins in impersonal uses of the verb *daruot* ‘finish, happen’. *Daruot* takes two arguments: a prepositional-phrase experiencer headed by *i* ‘to’, and either a noun phrase (115) or a verb phrase (116) for the event (theme).

- (115) A gwedy daruot idaw y ginyaw...  
 and after finish.INF to.3SM 3SM.GEN dine.INF  
 ‘And after he had finish his dinner...’ (O 379–80)
- (116) A gwedy daruot im goruot ar bob camhwri...  
 and after finish.INF to-me overcome.INF on every feat  
 ‘And after I had mastered (finished mastering) every feat of arms...’ (O 33–4)

He suggests that loss of *daruot* in (116) gave rise to the modern Welsh finite *i*-clause.

Richards (1949–51: 78–81) notes that a number of predicates, notably *damwein(y)aw* ‘happen’, allowed an ergative complement clause in (117) and an indirect object followed by a control clause in (118):

- (117) Ynghyfrug hynny y damweinawd [dyuot lluo o ’r Flemisseit o Ros  
 in-means this PRThappened come.INF force of the Flemings from Rhos  
 y Gaer Uyrddin]...  
 to Carmarthen  
 ‘In this way it happened that a force of the Flemings came from Rhos to Carmarthen.’  
 (BT 98.6–7)
- (118) ...efa damweinyawd [y wynt][dwyn yr ysgraff ymeith odynd hys yn  
 itPRT happened to wind take.INF the boat away from-there as-far-as  
 ynys arall bell].  
 island other distant  
 ‘It happened to the wind that it took the boat away from there to another distant island.’  
 (YSG 4175–6)

He suggests that this alternation spread to other verbs which did not originally have it.

All accounts are compatible with the suggestion that a reanalysis took place, with one generation of speakers interpreting the *i* – NP sequence as indirect object of a main-clause verb, and the next interpreting it (in some cases) as subject of the embedded clause, illustrated for a control structure source in (119).

- (119) [PP *i* NP] [TP PRO verb ...] ⇒ [CP [C *i*] [TP NP [VP verb ...]]]

For instance, according to the Lewis-Miller account, we could say that a verb like *erchi* ‘ask’ acquired a second possible complement pattern. The sentence in (114) might easily have been (mis)interpreted as also having the meaning ‘although he may ask [someone] that you give him the second’, with object of ‘ask’ and subject of ‘give’ distinct. The subcategorization

frame of the verb would be extended to allow for this second possibility and a new type of embedded clause would be created.

- (120) Stage I  
*erchi* ‘to ask’ \_\_\_ [PP *i* NP] IP
- Stage II  
*erchi* ‘to ask’ \_\_\_ [PP *i* NP] IP  
 \_\_\_ [CP [C *i*] [IP ... ]]

Once embedded clauses headed by *i* became possible with this verb, their appearance generally in contexts where embedded nonfinite clauses were possible was a natural consequence.

The earliest examples of the spread of *i*-clauses come from canonical Middle Welsh texts. However, these are extremely rare – Miller (2004: 243) cites the two examples, both nonfinite *i*-clauses, that have been noted to date – and are open to dispute (Morgan 1938: 209–10):

- (121) ...ny thebygaf *i* y un o hyn uynet ar dy geuyn di.  
 NEG suppose.1S I to one of these go.INF on 2S back you  
 ‘I do not think that any of these people will (want to) go on your back.’ (PKM 25.16)

More general use comes only from late Middle Welsh onwards. At this time, we find finite *i*-clauses as objects of prepositions (122) and complements of declarative and epistemic verbs (123).

- (122) A gwedy idaw disgyn, wynt a barassant ystabyll y’w varch...  
 and after to.3SM dismount.INF they PRT cause.3P stable to 3SMhorse  
 ‘And after he had dismounted, they had a stable prepared for his horse...’  
 (YSG 525–6)
- (123) Pan wybubobyl y wlat ymi dyuot odyno yn vyw...  
 when knew people the country to-me come.INF away PRD alive  
 ‘When the people of the country realised that I had come away alive...’ (FfBO 57.1)

Although superficially contradictory, these various accounts may be compatible with each other. Lewis (1928) does not distinguish between finite and nonfinite *i*-clauses, but he seems to envisage that the pattern spread from control verbs to both types. Miller’s (2004) account is similar, but restricts itself essentially to the nonfinite type. Reanalysis of the syntax of control verbs is reasonable as a source for this type, but this proposal makes less sense for the origin of finite *i*-clauses, since they exhibit a past-tense / anterior restriction on their interpretation. The proposals of Morgan (1938) and Richards (1949–51), on the other hand, account straightforwardly for this restriction, but it is hard to see how they could account for the generic or future meaning of nonfinite *i*-clauses. A reasonable conclusion is that modern Welsh *i*-clauses have two sources: finite *i*-clauses derive from reanalysis of raising verbs such as *daruot* ‘finish, happen’ and *damwein(y)aw* ‘happen’; and nonfinite *i*-clauses derive from reanalysis of control verbs such as *erchi* ‘ask’ and *peri* ‘cause’.

## 9.10 *WH*-CONSTRUCTIONS

In most cases, *wh*-constructions in the medieval Brythonic languages have properties identical to the those of topicalization in the V2-construction discussed above (section 9.1.1). Examples



here are given from relative clauses, but the same properties are found in *wh*-questions and other *wh*-constructions.

As in modern literary Welsh, the basic distinction is between relative clauses formed using the particle (complementizer) *a* and those formed using the particle MW. *y(d)* (ModW. *y(r)*), MBr. *ez*. The former is obligatory in extractions from subject position (124) and the direct-object position of a synthetic verb (125). In relative clauses formed on subject position, the verb does not agree with the extracted subject, but appears in a default third-person singular form. Note that although in Middle Breton and Cornish this pattern is identical to that found with V2-structures, in Welsh there is a contrast between relative clauses, where there is no agreement, and V2-structures, where there is full agreement (see section 9.3.2 above).

- (124) *y megineu a oed wedy eu gossot yg kylch y ty*  
the bellows PRT was.3S PERF 3P.GEN set.INF around the house  
‘the bellows that were set up around the house’ (PKM 36.15)
- (125) *a ’r arglwydiaeth a gaussam ninheu*  
and the government PRT receive.PAST.1P we  
‘...and the government that we had...’ (PKM 8.15–16)

With relative clauses formed on other positions, usage is variable in the medieval languages, with both particles generally possible. For instance, (126) shows both particles used in the formation of relative clauses on the object of a preposition in Middle Welsh. In these cases, full agreement is generally required at the extraction site. For instance, in (126) the preposition *yndi* agrees with the feminine singular antecedent in both cases.

- (126) a. *ffiol eur a anho llawndiawt y brenhinyndi*  
vialgold REL fit-PRES-SUBJ full drink the king in-3SF  
‘a golden vial that the king’s fill of drink would fit into’ (LIB 3.22)
- b. *Nytoed long y kynghanei ef yndi.*  
NEG wasship REL fit-IMPF-SUBJ he in-3SF  
‘There was no ship that he could fit into.’ (PKM 40.10–11)

This variability has been removed in the development of literary Welsh, which has generalized the particle *y(r)* in all cases except clauses formed on subject position and the object position of a synthetic verb. Colloquial Welsh has continued the Middle Welsh pattern more faithfully, deleting the particles, but leaving the mutation effect of *a* (on loss of *a*, see section 9.1.1 above), and generalizing it (see chapter 4).

Overt relative pronouns are a feature of literary varieties of all the medieval Brythonic languages, for instance, *yr hynn* ‘the one’ and *y rei* ‘the ones’ in (128) below (compare also Middle Breton *pere* ‘which ones’ in this function). Their use seems to reflect imitation of the syntax of Latin or of the dominant neighbouring languages, rather than natural developments in speech.

In the negative, relative clauses formed on subject position show full subject-verb agreement, as in (127). The contrast between affirmative and negative clauses here again demonstrates the parallelism between relative clauses and V2-structures.

- (127) *gwraged a meibona dynyondidraha diwala, ny ellynt ... nac*  
women and boys and men meek contented NEG could.IMPF.3P neither  
*ymladeu na ryueloed*  
battles nor wars  
‘women and boys and meek, contented men, who could not undertake either battles or wars’ (P 7.13–16)

In negative object relatives an object agreement marker *-s* optionally attaches to the negative marker in Middle Welsh:

- (128) a. Medylyaw yd wyf ... yr hynn ny medylyut ti amdanaf i.  
 think.INF PRT am the that NY think.IMPF.SUBJ.2S youabout.1S me  
 ‘I’m thinking what you wouldn’t think about me.’ (PKM 86.10–11)
- b. Llawer o betheu enryued ... y rei ... nys credei neb  
 many of things strange the ones NYS believe.IMPF.3S anyone  
 ‘Many strange things that no one would believe.’ (FfBO 46.8–9)

Again this parallels verb-second main-clause structures. The negative relative marker, Middle Welsh *ny(t)*, homophonous with the main-clause negative marker, has given way to modern Welsh *na(d)*, homophonous with the negative marker used in subordinate clauses. The optional object agreement has been lost.

### 9.11 NOUN PHRASES

All insular Celtic languages have a definite article from their earliest attested stages (Welsh *y(r)*, Breton and Cornish *an*, Old Irish *ind*). The gender mutations and other aspects of the use of article have remained essentially the same since Middle Welsh.

In Middle Welsh, agreement within the noun phrases is indicated, as in modern Welsh, by mutation patterns, with feminine nouns triggering mutation on adjectives (see section 5.4.1). At earlier periods, morphological marking of gender and number was more widespread than today.

In general singular forms of nouns are used with numerals, although the phrases themselves are syntactically plural. In Middle Welsh, however, a few nouns have special numerative forms for use after numerals (*brawd* ‘brother’, numerative *broder*, plural *brodyr*; *blwydyn* ‘year’, numerative *blwyd/blyned*, plural *blynnyded*; *llwdn* ‘young animal’, numerative *llydn*, plural *llydnod*). Some other nouns appear in forms identical to the plural after numerals (*chwaer* ‘sister’ ~ *chwioered*; *gwraig* ‘woman’ ~ *gwraged*; *merch* ‘girl’ ~ *merchet*; *iarll* ‘earl’ ~ *ieirll*; *march* ‘horse’ ~ *meirch*; *tarw* ‘bull’ ~ *teirw*). Four nouns appear in the singular after *deu* ‘two’ (*mab* ‘son’, *gwas* ‘servant’, *gwr* ‘man’ and *dyd* ‘day’) but in numerative forms after other numerals (namely, *meib*, *gweis*, *gwyr* and *dieu*). Most of these gave way to the singular in later Middle Welsh.

Phrases headed by a numeral present particular difficulties of agreement in Middle Welsh. Adjectives are plural if the adjective has a separate plural form, despite the fact that the head noun may be singular:

- (129) a. deu was ieueinc  
 two servant.SING young.PLUR  
 ‘two young servants’ (PKM 81.23)
- b. deu vilgi vronwynyon vrychyon  
 two greyhound.SING white-breasted.PLUR speckled.PLUR  
 ‘two white-breasted speckled greyhounds’ (P 48.9–10)

Remnants of an earlier dual number survive in the mutation patterns in phrases headed by *deu* (masc.) or *dwy* (fem.) ‘two’. Here adjectives in Middle Welsh undergo soft mutation regardless of gender (cf. also (129b)):

- (130) dwy genedyl vvdrion  
 two.FEM nation.SING dirty.PLUR  
 ‘two foul nations’ (BY 36)

In all cases, Modern Welsh has followed Breton and Cornish in generalizing the singular.

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