

The (co-)evolution of ‘partitive constructions’ in Breton and (Gallo-Angevin) French

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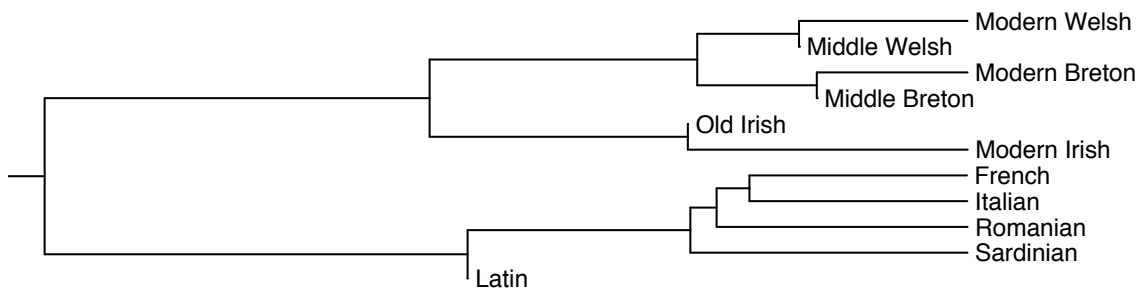


Figure 1: Insular Celtic and some Romance languages

Old Breton	700–1100	poorly attested
Middle Breton	1200–1650	attested from 1500
Early Modern Breton	1650–1800	well attested, hardly ever investigated
Modern Breton	1800–	well attested

Table 1: Breton: Stages, approximative dates, and attestation

- (1) a. *hon diliuret a pep drouc*
 1PL deliver.IMP.2PL of all evil
 ‘deliver us from all evil’ H, p. 6; 1576
- b. *na alle ... enem deliura anez-a*
 and.not be_able.IPF.3SG REFL free.EN of-3SG
 ‘and was not able to free herself from it’
 propositional argument; Speret Santel 1656, p. 85; 1656



Figure 2: Breton geography and dialects

- (2) a. *prennit un dra benac*
 buy.IMP.2PL a thing INDEF
 ‘Achetez quelque chose!’ Qu; 1632
- b. *prenit a bara*
 buy.IMP.2PL of bread
 ‘achetez du pain!’ pseudo-partitive; Qu; 1632
- (3) a. *pan o-guel-af*
 when 3PL-see-PRS.1SG
 ‘when I see them’ G 821; 1581
- b. ... *beuraige; dicouraichaff; anez-aff; pan taff-er*
 beverage awful of-3SG.M when taste-PRS.IMPERS
 ‘... an awful beverage; quand on *en* goûte’ real partitive; M 2482; 1575
- (4) a. *na-m leso*
 so.that.not-1SG leave.FUT.3SG
 ‘so that he will not leave me’ Barbe 1557, p. 174
- b. *palamour na ezneuez muy anez-i*
 since NEG know.PRS.2SG more of-3SG.F
 ‘since you don’t know her any longer’ Ca. 34; 1576
- c. *ne desir-omp quet a trae-zou superflu*
 NEG desire-PRS.1PL EMPH of thing-PL superfluous
 ‘we don’t desire any superfluous things’ Bellarmin 1625, p. 68
- (5) a. * *Achetez de pain!*
 buy.IMP.2PL of bread
- b. *Achetez du pain!*
 buy.IMP.2PL PART bread
- (6) a. *Manjar (de) carn* (Gsc.)
 eat.INF (of) meat
- b. *Vòli d’oulivas* (Prov.)
 want.PRS.1SG of olives

- (7) *Il rentre du travail – Il en rentre.*
 he return.PRS.3SG of.the work he therefrom return.PRS.3SG
- (8) a. *Il est fier de ses enfants. – Il en est fier.*
 he be.PRS.3SG proud of his children. he en be.PRS.3SG proud
 b. *Il parle de sa femme. – Il en parle.*
 he speak.PRS.3SG of his wife he en speak.PRS.3SG
- (9) *J'ai bu un verre de ce vin*
 I-have.PRS.1SG drink.PTCP a glass of this wine.
J'en ai bu un verre.
 I-EN have.PRS.1SG drink.PTCP a glass
- (10) *J'en ai bu un (verre de vin)*
 I-EN have.PRS.1SG drink.PTCP one (glass of wine)
- (11) *J'en ai bu (du vin) (mass)*
 I-EN have.PRS.1SG drink.PTCP (wine)
- (12) *J'en ai bu un (vin très bon)*
 I-EN have.PRS.1SG drink.PTCP one (very good wine)
- (13) ... *ha-m bugale so anez-e try*
 and-1SG children is.REL of-3PL three
 ‘... and my children, of which there are three’ G 59; 1581
- (14) *Et nous ne désirons pas de choses superflues*
 and 1PL NEG desire.PRS.1PL NEG of thing.F.PL superfluous.F-PL
- (15) *Ne mangiez de char ne*
 NEG eat.IMP.2PL of meat NEG.COMP
ne bevez de vin
 NEG drink.IMP.2PL of wine
 (*La Queste de Saint Graal*, 1225–123, 129.14; apud Jensen 1990, p. 129)
- (16) *I manje pàs de la chè ...*
 3SG eat.PRS.3SG NEG PART meat

	obligatory scope of negation	under gender/number like PA	preference for semantic class	postverbal position in non-dislocated structures
Modern French	+	–	–	+
Old French	–	–	–	+
Gallo	+	+	–	?
Middle Breton	optional	–	–	+
Modern Breton	wide-spread	–	–	+

Table 2: Synthesis

- (17) *e tispinfes an-e*
 PTCL spend.SUBJ.2SG a-3PL
 ‘you would spend them (sc. all the écus)’ EN 804; late 18th

prefixed	<i>a</i> marking
79	19

Table 3: Marking of pronominal direct objects in *Louis Eunius ou le Purgatoire de saint Patrice* (EN; late 18th cent.)

	nouns	pronouns
19th cent.	some <i>a</i> -marking	prefixes mentioned in grammars
20th cent.	some <i>a</i> -marking	prefixes disappear
21th cent.	some <i>a</i> -marking	generalized <i>a</i> -marking (except Vannetais)

Table 4: Evolution of *a*-marking and prefixing (outline)

- (18) *an teodoù fall – hag ez eus anezho e kêr – ...*
 ART tongues bad and PTCL be.PRS 3PL in town
 ‘The detractors – and they exist in town! – (do this and that)’ Ledunois 2002, p. 236
- (19) *ur brezhoneger ez eus anezhañ*
 a speaker_of_Breton PTCL be.PRS 3SG.M
 ‘he is a speaker of breton’ Ledunois 2002, p. 237
- (20) *hogos dez eu anez-y*
 close day be.PRS.3SG of-3SG.F
 ‘it will soon be morning’ expletive; Pa. 3742; 1530

Abbreviations

- Ca. Emile Ernault (1887). “La vie de sainte Catherine”. In: *Revue Celtique* 8, pp. 76–95.
- EN G. Dottin (1911). *Louis Eunius ou le Purgatoire de Saint Patrice*. Mystère, Texte du XVIII^e siècle. Paris: Champion.
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Abbreviations used in the glosses

1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, ART = article, COMP = complementizer, EMPH = emphatic (particle), EN = event nominalization/noun, F = feminine, FUT = future, IMP = imperative, IMPERS = impersonal, INDEF = indefinite, INF = infinitive, IPF = imperfect, M = masculine, NEG = negative, PART = partitive, PL = plural, PRS = present, PTCL = particle, PTCP = participle, REFL = reflexive, REL = relative, SG = singular, SUBJ = subjunctive.