

Relative clauses in the *Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi*

My paper will present the results of a corpus-based analysis of the relative clauses in *Llyfr Ancr Llanddewibrefi* (Oxford, Jesus College MS. 119, 1346). In his edition of the manuscript containing religious texts that are all with one exception translations, John Morris-Jones comments repeatedly on the construction of relative clauses in this text as one of the best examples of ‘the effect upon literary Welsh of translation from Latin’ (Morris-Jones 1894: xxvi-xxvii). The construction he criticises mostly (cf. also Morris-Jones 1913: 288; Morris-Jones 1931: 104 and Sims-Williams 2016: 151-2) is the one described in *The Syntax of Welsh* in the following way (for Modern Welsh):

‘In archaic literary style, an overt demonstrative pronoun, such as *yr hwn* ‘that one (masc.)’, may be used as a relative pronoun:

y	dyn	yr	hwn	a	gafodd	y	wobr
the	man	the	DEM.MS	PRT	get.PAST.3S	the	prize
‘the man who got the prize’							

This usage was largely modelled on foreign languages, and has mostly fallen out of use (for details, see Richards 1938: 75)’ (Borsley, Tallerman, Willis 2007: 119).

The same construction is characterised as ‘imitation of the syntax of Latin or of the dominant neighbouring languages, rather than natural developments in speech’ (Borsley, Tallerman, Willis 2007: 335)

On the whole these constructions have been often regarded as one of the ‘traces of translation’ (see Evans 1964: 66, 69; Luft 2016: 171-2, 176 with a collection of examples and discussions from earlier scholarship).

It is therefore worthwhile to investigate the evidence of the Book of the Anchorite in its entirety and not just selected examples.

First the relative frequency of the so called ‘proper relative clauses’ vs sentences with overt demonstratives in different texts of the manuscript will be presented. Attention is also being paid to the semantics of the clauses, since according to John Morris-Jones the overt demonstratives ‘are also employed even when the antecedent is expressed, if the relative clause is coordinate, that is, introduces a new idea instead of merely qualifying a noun in the principal sentence’ (Morris-Jones 1931: 98), that is there is a possible distinction being made between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses. Secondly, the variation of different types of overt antecedents (e.g. *yr hwnn*, *y gwr*, *ar yr hwnn*) will be analysed. Thirdly, the data of these religious texts will be compared to the corpus of canonical Middle Welsh prose, including the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* and *Culhwch ac Olwen*.

This quantitative approach allows on the one side to refine our understanding of different forms and semantics of relative clauses in Middle Welsh and on the other hand to map individual texts of the manuscript in a continuum from the language of the native tales to a specific register of translated texts and thus elaborate the conception of stylistic choices within the language of Middle Welsh prose.

References:

- Borsley, Robert D.; Tallerman, Maggie; Willis, David (2007): *The Syntax of Welsh*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, D. Simon (1964): *A grammar of Middle Welsh*. [Dublin]: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (Mediaeval and modern Welsh series. Supplementary volume).
- Luft, Diana (2016): Tracking ôl cyfieithu. Medieval Welsh translation in criticism and scholarship. In *Translation Studies* 9 (2), pp. 168–182. DOI: 10.1080/14781700.2015.1118404.
- Morris-Jones, John (1913): *A Welsh Grammar, Historical and Comparative: phonology and accidence*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press.
- Morris-Jones, John (1931): *Welsh syntax. An unfinished draft*. Cardiff: The Univ.of Wales Press.
- Morris-Jones, John; Rhys, John (Hg.) (1894): *The Elucidarium and other tracts in Welsh from Llyvyr agkyr Llandewivrevi ("The book of the anchorite of Llandewivrevi") A.D. 1346* (Jesus college ms. 119). Oxford: Clarendon Press (Anecdota Oxoniensia, 1,6).
- Sims-Williams, Patrick (2016): John Morris-Jones and his *Welsh Grammar*. In *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* 22, pp. 134–153.