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Functions and Distribution of Determiners in Old English Genitive Noun Phrases

Valeria Giofré

Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the distribution and function of the determiners *sē, sēo, þæt* in Old English genitive noun phrases.

The hypotheses presented stem from the analysis of the Old English version of Bede's "*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*". Data shows, on the one hand, that determiners display a peculiar distribution, as their position varies according to the relative order of the genitive modifier and the head noun in genitive noun phrases, be it "genitive+noun" or "noun+genitive". On the other hand, their function does not seem to be as clear-cut as is usually described in grammar textbooks, since determiners appear to be used in a bridging context, oscillating between pragmatic or semantic definiteness.

The discussion in this paper provides a functional description of determiners on the basis of the type of genitive noun phrase as a contribution to the debate on the status of determiners in Old English. Additionally, it provides a hypothesis concerning the apparent correlation between determiners and "head + modifier" structures where they appear to be six times as frequent as in "modifier + head": the hypothesis is that this correlation is not casual, but may have originated from appositive structures of the kind "Head-Noun+[DET+Adj/N$_2$]".

Key words

Old English; Old English syntax; genitive noun phrases; determiners; definiteness; pragmatic definiteness; semantic definiteness

1. Introduction

The analysis of the Old English version of Bede's "*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*" (henceforth OEHE) for the main purpose of studying genitive noun phrases (henceforth Gen NPs) has led to an investigation into the distribution and functions of the determiners *sē, sēo, þæt* as modifiers of these structures.[1]

As is widely known, Gen NPs are the oldest, unmarked structures in Old English (henceforth OE) and they were used to convey what Aikhenvald (2013: 4–6) refers to as "associative relation" – i.e. a macro-function encompassing a variety of semantic relations ranging from possession to the "verbal" relations, i.e. subject and object genitive, to the locative relation – that is syntactically encoded by any such structures in which two entities entertain a relation of dependency.

Moreover, the internal constituents of Gen NPs are usually ordered according to two different patterns: thus we have "Modifier + Head structures" (henceforth GN phrases) which are also the most frequent ones and "Head + Modifier structures" (henceforth NG phrases) representing the less frequent word-order.

The systematic presence of the determiners *sē, sēo, þæt* as modifiers of Gen NPs in the OEHE has proven to be somewhat puzzling for two main reasons:

1. If OE is a synthetic language where definiteness in NPs is conveyed by case marking, what is the nature of the determiners *sē, sēo, þæt*?
2. Should we interpret them as demonstratives, articles or halfway through the midway along the grammaticalization cline of determiners, as assumed by De Mulder-Carlier (2011: 532 –533)?

The analysis of the OEHE has also revealed a regular pattern in the use of determiners modifying Gen NPs. Indeed, four different structural patterns have been identified:

(a) In GN phrases the surface structure is always $Det+N_1+N_2$, where Det can be in agreement with either noun. Thus we may have either of the following deep structures:

Agreement with the modifier

(1)   *For **þære cirican** stealle* 'For [the] state of that church' (OEHE 2, 14).[2]

Agreement with the head

(2)   *Se **Godes** wer* 'God's man' (OEHE 1, 23)

(b) On the contrary, in NG phrases the possibilities are:

N+[Det+N]

(3)   *Æfter synne **þæs ærestan monnes*** 'After the first man's sin' (OEHE 1, 21–22)

[Det+N]+[Det+N]

(4)   *Fram þam biscope **þære Romaniscan cyricean*** 'From that/the bishop of the Roman church' (OEHE 1, 30–31)

[Det+N]+N

(5)   *In þære þeode **geleafsumra folca*** 'In that nation of faithful people' (OEHE 2, 24–25).

Moreover, it has been noted that the function of the genitive determiners in these structures is not as clear-cut straightforward as it is usually assumed to be, since sometimes they seem to convey a pragmatic definiteness (i.e. traditional anaphoric function) while at other times a more semantic kind of definiteness (i.e. retrievability of the referent from world knowledge, background or the like).

Finally, the data has also suggested that genitive determiners occur more frequently in NG structures.

All these considerations have led to a series of questions concerning the status of determiners in Old English[3]:

- What is the function of determiners in Old English?
- Why do Gᴇɴ NPs show four different structural patterns when modified by determiners?
- Why do determiners seem to be more frequent in NG structures than in GN ones?

This article attempts to answer these questions. Section 2 summarizes the pragmatic and semantic parameters used to investigate the function of determiners. Section 3 focuses on the distribution and function of determiners in GN structures, whereas section 4 deals with the distribution and function of determiners in NG structures. Finally, section 5 summarizes the hypotheses and draw some conclusions relative to the questions posed above.

2. Pragmatic and semantic parameters

The Old English determiners have been analyzed according to two main parameters or criteria:

- type of definiteness;
- context of use/function.

Himmelmann (2001) and De Mulder-Carlier (2011) distinguish between two types of definiteness: pragmatic and semantic definiteness. In particular, De Mulder-Carlier (2011: 528–529) states that an article – a less grammaticalized or strong article, as defined by the authors – "expresses pragmatic definiteness [...] when the identification of the referent relies on the specific context of utterance", whereas a weak, more grammaticalized article "conveys semantic definiteness [when] the referent of the definite expression is identified independently of the specific context of utterance". In this sense, an article conveying semantic definiteness signals that "the descriptive content of the NP allows the identification of the referent in a univocal way, by virtue of its structural links with a frame of accessible knowledge" (De Mulder-Carlier (2011: 531).

Each type of definiteness is associated with a number of different contexts of use. On the basis of the classifications provided by Lambrecht (1994: 74–116), Himmelmann (2001: 831–834), Trovesi (2004: 76–106; 123–142; 149–163) and De

Mulder-Carlier (2011: 528–532) – each of whom uses different labels to refer to the pragmatic or semantic contexts of use of determiners – three different contexts of use were identified for each kind of definiteness:[4]

- *Pragmatic definiteness* which is associated with the following uses:

Immediate situation or deictic use: when the definite NP refers to an element visible in the speech setting.

(6) *Ða þæt þa Pehtas 7 Scottas geacsedon, þæt hi ham gewitene wæron, […], þa wæron hi ðe baldran gewordene, 7 sona **ealne norðdæl ðysses ealondes** oð ðone weall genoman 7 gesetton.*
'When the Picts and Scots found out that they had retreated to their lands, […], they became bolder by this and soon they seized and occupied all the north part of this island down to the wall'.   (OEHE, L. Primus, ll. 14–15, pg. 46)

Tracking or anaphoric use: when the definite NP is used to retrieve/track a referent introduced in the previous cotext. The tracking is activated by copying the same definite NP introduced in the preceding cotext or by using a synonymic expression.

(7) *Ðissum tidum, […], se eadiga papa Gregorius, […], to þam ecan setle þæs heofonlican rices læded wæs […]. **Þæs hean biscopes** leoma on þysse byrigenne syndon betyned.*
'At this time […], the blessed pope Gregorius was led to the everlasting seat in the kingdom of heaven […]. The limbs of this exalted bishop are enclosed in this tomb'.   (OEHE, L. Secundus, l. 17, pg. 94)

Recognitional or cataphoric use: when the definite NP introduces for the first time a referent which is, nevertheless, considered identifiable by virtue of its link to another expression, i.e. a relative clause, a Gen NPs or a nominal apposition.

(8) *Ða wæs gestrangod Agustinus mid trymnysse þæs eadigan fæder Gregorius **mid ðam Cristes þeowum**, ða þe mid him wæron.*
'Then Augustine was strengthened by the exhortations of the blessed father Gregory along with those servants of Christ who accompanied him'.
(OEHE, L. Primus, l. 23, pg. 56)

- *Semantic definiteness* which is associated with the following uses:

Retrievable referent use: when the definite NP introduces a referent whose retrievability depends on the background knowledge shared by the interlocutors. In other words, there is a situation in which the referent introduced by the determiner is not structurally linked to the textual component. Thus, as claimed by Trovesi (2004: 92), the determiner elicits a component of presupposition in the speakers' mind, i.e. by using the determiner, the speaker presupposes that the recipient will

be able to univocally identify the referent by virtue of a frame of shared knowledge. Unlike the following uses, though, the retrievable referent is still dependent on the immediate situation of speaking because its identifiability and uniqueness are linked to the topic the speaker is referring to at the moment of speaking.

(9)   *[...] þa becom þæt **to earan þæs manfullan ealdormannes**, þæt Albanus hæfde ðone Cristes andettere digollice mid him.*
     '[...] it came to the ears of the evil nobleman that Alban had had this confessor of Christ secretly with him'.   (OEHE, L. Primus, ll. 23–24, pg. 34)

Larger situation use: when the identifiability of the referent introduced by a definite NP depends on its uniqueness, i.e. the fact that in the universe of discourse of a particular speech community there exists only one referent that can be appropriately designated by that NP. This function is thus characterized "by the fact that the intended referent has to be identified via general knowledge" (Himmelmann 2001: 833);

(10) *[...] þonne magon ge eac swylce **þæs halgan hlafes dælneomende** beon.*
     '[...] then you may also be partakers of the holy bread'.
                                                          (OEHE, L. Secundus, l. 14, pg. 112)

Generic reference use: when the definite NP does not refer to a specific referent visible in the extra-linguistic or linguistic context but rather to an entire class of entities (Trovesi 2004: 103).

(11) *Ac forðon seo alefde gemængnis wiifes buton **willan þæs lichoman** ne mæg beon [...].*
     'But as the legitimate union with a woman may not be deprived of the pleasure of the body'.   (OEHE, L. Primus, l. 5, pg. 82)

According to De Mulder-Carlier (2011: 530–532), these uses exemplify the different stages of the process of grammaticalization of definite articles.

   More specifically, they claim that the transition from pragmatic to semantic definiteness may have stemmed from the recognitional use of determiners, in particular from the structure "[Distal Dem + N] + Rel Clause". This transition was made possible because distal demonstratives could and can be used to refer to something that does not necessarily belong to the immediate context of utterance: in other words, they can be used to refer to entities that are distant both in place and time. In this way "the distal demonstrative can be understood as an invitation addressed to the hearer to mobilize previous knowledge in order to retrieve the referent" (De Mulder-Carlier 2011: 530), a knowledge "presumably shared" by both interlocutors that is not mentioned in the immediate speech situation (De Mulder-Carlier 2011: 531).

   A further change ultimately allowed the shift from pragmatic to semantic definiteness. This may have occurred when both "the anchorage in the speech situation [was] lost and the use of article no longer require[d] specific knowledge

shared by speaker and hearer to be activated in order to identify the referent of the noun phrase" (De Mulder-Carlier 2011: 531). As such, "the definite article conveys the instruction that the descriptive content of the NP allows the identification of the referent in a univocal way, by virtue of its structural links with a frame of accessible knowledge" (De Mulder-Carlier 2011: 531). According to the hypothesis being discussed, this stage of the grammaticalization cline corresponds to the "retrievable referent use" of the determiner, where the retrievability of the referent introduced by the definite NP depends on the background knowledge, a knowledge that has to be accessible in some way, i.e. present in the interlocutor's background awareness (Lambrecht 1994: 93–94).

Finally, when the shift is fully accomplished, "the definite article extends its use to contexts in which a demonstrative would be inappropriate" (De Mulder-Carlier 2011: 531), i.e. the larger situation use and generic reference use illustrated in this study.

3. Determiners in GN phrases

GN phrases are the most common genitive structures observed in the first two chapters of the OEHE.

There is no general consensus on whether pre-posed genitives correspond to the oldest, unmarked structures in OE or why post-posed genitives disappeared altogether by the end of the 13th century (see Mitchell 1985: 548–550, § 1305–1309).

Mitchell (1985: 550–552, § 1310; § 1313; § 1314) observes:

> "When the phrase consists of two nouns only or two nouns and a preposition, the genitive is regularly in pre-position" [...].
> "When the governing noun is qualified, an unqualified genitive may precede both the governing noun and its qualifiers, follow them, or come between them [...]".
> "When both nouns are individually qualified, we find the same three possibilities".

All this corresponds to what has been observed in the text. However, when the genitive group is in post-position, Mitchell (1985: 552–553, § 1315) claims that the choice might have depended not only on stylistic and rhetorical considerations, but also on morpho-syntactic weight ("As a general rule, [...], it may be said that the more qualifiers there are, the more frequent is post-position"). This observation is consistent with the present results, with the further preliminary assumption that even the (in)animacy of the referent encoded by the genitive might have played a fundamental role in this sense, as discussed in paragraph 4.4.

As noted earlier, what is remarkable in the OEHE is that while the great majority of GN phrases show an absence of any determination, thus confirming the general assumption that a synthetic language conveys definiteness through its case-system (Mitchell 1985: 65, § 137; 611, § 1463), a statistical minority of GN phrases do show the presence of determiners of some sort.

Moreover, there seems to be a correlation between the presence of determiners and phrasal word-order, as only 130 out of 1118 GN phrases are modified by determiners, as opposed to 241 out of 398 NG phrases modified by determiners.

All 130 phrases under analysis share some particular features. First, as mentioned in section 1, the surface structure of most GN phrases modified by determiners is Det+N_1+N_2: this means that determiners seldom break the unity of GN phrases[5], as opposed to what generally happens in NG phrases, where determiners may intervene between the phrasal head noun and the genitive noun. Secondly, the determiner may agree either with the head-noun or with the genitive modifier-noun: more specifically, 39 out of 130 GN phrases modified by determiners have a head-agreeing determiner, as we can see in (12), whereas the remaining 91 GN phrases have a modifier-agreeing determiner, as we can see in (13):

(12) *Ða wæs gestrangod Augustinus mid trymnysse þæs eadigan fæder Gregorius **mid ðam Cristes þeowum**, ða þe mid him wæron.*
'Then Augustinus was strengthened by the exhortation of the blessed father Gregorius along with the/those servants of Christ who were with him'.
(OEHE, L. Primus, l. 23, pg. 56)

(13) *Wæs seo stow hwæthwugu on healfre mile **fram þære ceastre** wealle.*
'The place was some half mile from the wall of the/that town'.
(OEHE, L. Primus, l. 3, pg. 40)

Two issues arise in relation to the above-quoted tendencies in GN phrases:
– Why do GN phrases always show the same surface structure?
– What is the function of the 130 determiners modifying GN phrases?

As for the first issue, it might be the case that GN phrases were the unmarked genitive structures in 9th and 10th-century OE. Consequently, whenever OE speakers had to use determiners in a deictic or anaphoric function, they would prepose them to the tight GN unity, even when the determiner agreed with the phrasal head-noun, as example (12) demonstrates.

With regard to the second issue, further complexities arise. The analysis based on the criteria presented in section 2 has shown that most determiners, i.e. 107 out of 130, encode pragmatic definiteness, each of which have been associated with the following pragmatic uses:[6]
- immediate situation or deictic use: 20 out of 107 determiners;
- tracking or anaphoric use: 55 out of 107 determiners;
- recognitional or cataphoric use: 32 out of 107 determiners.

As for the remaining 23 determiners (out of 130), the hypothesis is that they encode a "semantic definiteness", i.e. when the referent is identifiable, despite being introduced for the first time in the discourse" (Lambrecht 1994: 88).

These 23 have been associated with the following semantic uses:
- retrievable referent use: 6 out of 23 determiners;

- larger situation use: 8 out of 23 determiners;
- generic reference use: 9 out of 23 determiners.

3.1 Immediate situation or deictic use

20 out of 107 determiners convey a deictic function, since they encode the proximity of the referent with respect to an *origo*. As such, we can associate them to Himmelmann's "immediate situation use", as the following examples demonstrate:

(14) *Þa wæs he se dema yrre geworden; cwæð him to: Gif ðu wille __þysses lifes gesælig-__*
__*nysse*__ *mid us brucan, ne yld þu þæt þu þam myclan godum mid us onsecge.*
'Then the judge grew angry and said to him: «If you wish to enjoy the happiness
of this life with us, do not hesitate to join us in worshipping the great gods»'.
(OEHE, L. Primus, l. 23, pg. 36)

(15) *Oþer cyninges wita 7 ealdormann [...] þus cwæð: Þyslic me is gesewen, þu cyning, þis*
andwearde lif manna on eorðan [...] swylc swa þu æt swæsendum sitte mid þinum
ealdormann 7 þegnum on wintertide [...]; cume an spearwa 7 hrædlice þæt hus þur-
hfleo, cume þurh oþre duru in, þurh oþre ut gewite. Hwæt he on þa tid, þe he inne
bið, ne bið hrinen mid þy storme þæs wintres; ac þæt bið an eagan bryhtm [...], ac
he sona of wintra on þone winter eft cymeð. Swa þonne __*þis monna*__ __*lif*__ *to medmiclum*
fæce ætyweð; hwæt þær foregange, oððe hwæt þær æfterfylige, we ne cunnun.
'Another of the king's counsellors and nobleman [...] thus spoke: «It is clear
to me, O King, that this present life of men on Earth [...] is as if you were
sitting at a banquet with your noblemen and followers/thanes in winter-time
[...]; and there came a sparrow, swiftly flying through that house, entering one
door, leaving through another. As long as he is inside, he is not touched by
the winter-storm; but that is the twinkling of an eye [...], and he soon comes
back again from winter to winter. In the same way, this life of men reveals
for a little time; what goes before, or what comes after, we cannot see»'.
(OEHE, L. Secundus, l. 5, pg. 136)

In both (14) and (15) we have two direct discourses in which two different speakers intervene in the narration: thus, a change of *origo* occurs because the point of view shifts from the narrator to the actual speaker. In both cases, the determiners *þisse* and *þis* encode the proximity of the governed entities - the genitive noun *lifes* in (14) and the head-noun *lif* in (15) - to the new speakers, respectively *se dema* 'the judge' in (14), *oþer cyninges wita 7 ealdormann* 'another of the king's counsellors and nobleman' in (15). In both cases the particular life described by the new speakers refers to the specific time-frames in which both speakers happen to be living, which is different from the narrator's time-frame.

3.2 Tracking or anaphoric use

As highlighted above, 55 out of 107 determiners refer to an entity that has been introduced before, thus emphasizing the referents' identifiable status, as well as their retrievability in the text. As such, we can associate them to Himmelmann's "tracking or anaphoric use". In (16) and (17) we can see two examples of this particular use:

(16) *Đa æteawde him sona se eadgesta aldor þara apostola Sce Petrus [...]. Þa wæs he se Cristes þeow Laurentius mid **þæs apostoles swingum 7 trymnessum** swiðe gebylded.*
  'Then the most blessed chief of the apostles, Saint Peter, presently appeared to him [...]. So Lawrence, the disciple of Christ, was much encouraged by the apostle's chastisements and exhortations'.
  (OEHE, L. Secundus, l. 27, pg. 114)

(17) *Þa þæt þa Lilla geseah, se cyninges þegn him se holdesta [...] sette þa his lichoman betweoh beforan þam stynge. 7 þurhstong **þone cyninges þegn** 7 þone cyning gewundade.*
  'When Lilla, who was the most faithful among the king's servants, saw that [...], he interposed his body to block/shield the thrust. And [he] thrust through the/that king's servant and wounded the king'.
  (OEHE, L. Secundus, l. 22, pg. 122)

In (16), the antecedent of the Gen NP *þæs apostoles* can be traced back to the previous co-text, where it is firstly introduced and identified as *Sce Petrus*. Consequently, in this particular case, we are able to relate the two NPs to each other by means of the encyclopedic knowledge (cfr. Trovesi 2004: 76–106; 123–142; 149–163).

In (17), the NP *þone þegn* refers back to the same referent introduced in the immediate preceding co-text, i.e. *se cyninges þegn se holdesta*, but unlike (16), in (17) we have a word-by-word tracking use/reference (cfr. Trovesi 2004: 76–106; 123–142; 149–163). At the same time, the determiner *þone* suggests that the referent is identifiable and known.

3.3 Recognitional or cataphoric use

Finally, 32 out of 107 determiners refer to an entity that is specified in the immediate following co-text: as such, they have a cataphoric value, also referred to as recognitional use, as we can see in (18) and (19):

(18) *Þa hæfde he gesprec 7 geþeaht mid his witum 7 syndriglice wæs fram him eallum frignende, hwylc him þuhte 7 gesawen wære þeos niwe lar 7 **þære godcundnesse bigong**, þe þær læred wæs.*
  'Then he had a speech and a consultation with his counsellors and one by one he asked them what they thought about and [how they] looked at that new doctrine and worship of the Deity that was being taught there'.
  (OEHE, L. Secundus, l. 9, pg. 134)

(19) *Þa **se Godes <u>wer</u> Scs Augustinus** is sægd þæt he beotigende forecwæde, [...], þæt heo wæren unsibbe 7 gefeoht from heora feondum onfonde.*
'Then, the man of God, Saint Augustine, is said that he threateningly fore-told [...] that they would find hostility and war from their enemies'.

(OEHE, L. Secundus, l. 20, pg. 102).

In (18), the referent of the Gᴇɴ NP *þære godcundnesse* is further specified by means of the following relative sentence, even though the correct identifiability of the Deity also depends on the recipient's background knowledge – the Deity in question being the Christian God. Therefore, as claimed by De Mulder-Carlier (2011), the 'recognitional' determiner when used in such structures as "[Det + N] + Rel Clause" does not solely refer to the immediate speech situation, but also to the general knowledge shared by both interlocutors: this, according to De Mulder-Carlier, would such represent the transitional point from pragmatic to semantic definiteness.

In examples like (19), the identifiability of the referent *se wer* still depends on its links with the immediate context of utterance, as both the governed Gᴇɴ NP *Godes* and the following apposition, i.e. the proper name *Scs Augustinus*, helps us to correctly identify the referent[7].

Of particular interest is the fact that determiners with cataphoric value seem to be mostly associated with the head-noun of a Gᴇɴ NP: in this corpus only four examples show a determiner modifying the genitive noun, one of them being example (18) illustrated above.

3.4 Retrievable referent use

As for the semantic functions, 6 out of 23 determiners encode what has been labelled as "retrievable referent use", i.e. cases in which the determiner is used "[...] to refer to a referent retrievable by its structural links with the immediate situation" (De Mulder-Carlier 2011: 529, 531). These can be seen in the following two examples:[8]

(20) *Þes tun wæs forlætne **in <u>þara æfterfylgendra cyninga</u> tidum**, 7 oðer wæs fore þæm getimbred in þære stowe þe Mælmen hatte.*
'This residence was forsaken at the time of the following kings and another – for this reason – was built at the place that is called Melfeld'.
(OEHE, L. Secundus, ll. 15-16, pg. 140)

(21) *Þa se dema þæt ða oncneow 7 þa ongæt, þæt he hine mid tintregum 7 mid swing-lan oferswiðan ne mihte, ne from þam bigonge ðære cristenan æfestnysse acyrran, þa het he hine heafde beceorfan. Mid ðy he þa to deaðe gelæded wæs, þa com he to swiðstremre ea, seo floweþ **neah <u>ðære ceastre</u> wealle**. 7 he geseah ðær micle menigo monna æghwæðeres hades; 7 wæron missenlicræ yldo 7 getincge men.*
'When the judge learnt about that and perceived that he could not over-power him with tortures or scourging, nor turn [him] from the way of the Christian firmness / devotion, then he ordered him to be beheaded. As he

was then led to death, he came to a river with a strong stream that flowed near the town wall. And he saw there a great crowd of persons of either sex and [they] were of different ages and conditions'.

(OEHE, L. Primus, l. 3, pg. 40)

In example (20), the referent *æfterfylgendra cyninga* is introduced in the immediate co-text for the first time: we do not have any previous reference to the successors of the king described in the immediate situation of utterance. In spite of this, the reader can easily identify who the writer is talking about, i.e. the successors of king Eadwine, as they are accessible and semi-active in "a person's peripheral consciousness" (Lambrecht 1994: 94). In other words, by using a determiner, the writer presupposes that the recipient will be able to univocally identify the referent by virtue of their shared background knowledge that is activated at the moment of speaking.

In example (21), we have a similar situation: the PP *neah ðære ceastre wealle* 'near the city wall' refers to the walls of some specific city that is never mentioned either in the previous or subsequent co-text[9]. The writer is thus assuming that the recipient should know what city he is referring to, i.e. the city where Saint Alban was martyred, i.e. Verulamium, modern St Albans. The implication is that both writer and recipient share some common knowledge that allows them to univocally identify the discourse referent.

In both cases, the determiner conveys the semantic traits of definiteness [+specific] [-known] to its referent.

According to the hypothesis being discussed, this particular use of the determiner may be considered a "bridging point" between pragmatic and semantic definiteness: although its referential potential is still linked to the context of utterance – i.e. the referent is not unique *per se* – the determiner acquires an inferential potential, as it can elicit a frame of accessible knowledge that, in turn, allows the recipient to uniquely identify the referent.

3.5 Larger situation use

The analysis of the text has also shown that 8 out of 23 determiners encode what has been called "larger situation use": in this case, the determiner is used to introduce a referent that is considered "to be unique and hence generally identifiable in a given speech community" (Himmelmann 2001: 833). In other words, the identifiability of the referent is made possible *a priori*, regardless of any eventual links with the immediate situation of utterance/cotext (i.e. what has been labelled as "pragmatic functions" encoded by the determiner) or any other links with the extra-linguistic context, or the background knowledge shared by both interlocutors (i.e. what has been labelled as the first semantic use, the "retrievable referent use" encoded by the determiner). Below are two examples:[10]

(22) *Forðon he gelomlice mid wedenheortnesse modes 7 __þæs unclænan gastes__ inswogennisse þrycced wæs.*

'For he was often afflicted with insanity of the soul and with the attack of the unclean spirit'.   (OEHE, L. Secundus, l. 33, pg. 110)

(23) *Ond þurh heo sende gemænelice þa þing all, þa ðe to cirican bigonge 7 þegnunge nedþearflecu wæron, huslfatu 7 wigbedhrægl 7 cirican frætwednes 7 biscopgegyrlan 7 diacongegyrlan, swylce eac **þara apostola 7 haligra martira** reliquias 7 monige bec.*
'And through them he sent all those things in general that were necessary for church worship and service, sacramental vessels and an altar cover and a church ornament and episcopal robes and deacons' robes as well as relics of the apostles and holy martyrs and many books'.
(OEHE, L. Primus, l. 3, pag. 90)

In both instances, the determiners modify two genitive nouns whose referents are neither present in the immediate situation of utterance (i.e. any kind of pragmatic definiteness) nor are they active in the background knowledge of both speaker and hearer (i.e. retrievable referent use). Indeed, the determiners refer to referents that can be interpreted as being both [+unique] and [+known]: indeed both 'unclean spirit' (*unclænan gastes*) and 'the apostles' (*apostola*) have acquired a unique status, i.e. only the devil can be identified as the unclean spirit, in the same way as only a category of people can be identified as the apostles. As such, they are also *a priori* 'known' elements. According to De Mulder-Carlier (2011: 532-533), this particular context of use of determiners represents the second stage on their grammaticalization cline of articles.

3.6 Generic reference use

Finally, 9 out of 23 determiners have been interpreted as encoding the most semantic – and thus more grammaticalized – kind of definiteness, i.e. the 'generic use', a function defined by Trovesi (2004: 103) as follows:

"il nome non indica un referente preciso, esistente nel contesto extralinguistico oppure rintracciabile a livello dell'universo del discorso attivato, ma rinvia piuttosto all'insieme dei referenti a cui è applicabile l'estensione del nome stesso".
["A noun that does not refer to a precise referent existing in the extra-linguistic context or visible in the immediate speech setting, but to the whole group of referents that are denoted by that particular noun"] (translated by the author).

Below are two examples:

(24) *Ic þec halsio, hwylc wiite sceal þrowian, swa hwylc swa hwæthugu of cirican þurh stale ut abrygdeð? Dis mæg geþencan þin broðorlicnes **of þæs þeofes** hade, hu he geriht beon mægge.*

'I beseech you, what punishment shall a man suffer, who steals something out of the church? Your brotherhood may consider – according to the condition of the thief – how he may be reformed'.   (OEHE, L. Primus, l. 1, pg. 68)

(25) *Forþon se willa þæs lichoman bið in synne, nales þæt saar þære cennisse:* **in þæs lichoman gemengednesse** *bið willa, þonne in þæs tudre forðlædnisse bið gooung 7 sar.*
     'For the will of the body is sinful, not the pain of childbirth: in the union of the body is desire, while in the delivery of offspring is groaning and pain'.
     (OEHE, L. Primus, l. 34, pg. 76)

Both determiners in the examples above introduce two genitive nouns – *þeofes* 'of the thief' and *lichoman* 'of the body' – that refer to a category, rather than a specific specimen or item belonging to that category. In other words, determiners conveying a generic function do not refer to a specific, concrete object but to an extra-linguistic concept, i.e. the mental representation of the object itself (Trovesi 2004: 103). Accordingly, we can conclude that 'generic' determiners introduce referents that are [-specific] and [-known] to both interlocutors.

3.7 Preliminary conclusions

The examples shown in the previous paragraphs demonstrate that in the 9th and 10th centuries the determiners *sē, sēo, þæt* modifying GN phrases were mainly used in their original pragmatic function which means that they were interpreted as demonstratives introducing elements whose identification was still dependent on their links to the immediate situation of utterance (both endophoric and exophoric). Yet, some changes are discernible, as in particular contexts the same determiners acquire a new semantic function: in those few cases, determiners are clearly in a more advanced stage of grammaticalization, given that, as De Mulder-Carlier (2011: 531) note, "the referent of the definite expression is identified independently of the specific context of utterance", especially in the two uses labelled as 'larger situation use' and 'generic reference use'.

In this sense, it is possible to conclude that determiners in GN structures were well on their way to becoming fully fledged articles and, conversely, that the process of grammaticalization concerning determiners was already in progress as of the 10th and 11th centuries.

4. Determiners in NG phrases

As illustrated in the introduction, the OEHE includes another type of Gᴇɴ NPs, whose internal word order is inverted with respect to GN structures: these are the so-called "Head + Modifier structures" or NG phrases, which represent the least frequent structures.

The analysis of the first two chapters of the OEHE has led to the identification of 98 NG phrases (as opposed to 1118 GN phrases). Among these 398 NG phrases, as many as 241 phrases appear to be modified by determiners.[11]

This data in itself is meaningful, as clearly there is a correlation between NG phrases and the presence of a modifying determiner: indeed, while only 130 out of 1118 GN phrases are modified by a determiner – with a frequency of 11% - most NG phrases appear to be associated with a determiner – showing a frequency of 61%.

Each NG phrase is characterized by the presence of determiners that either modify the head noun, or the genitive noun or even both, i.e. two determiners modifying both phrasal elements. As such, NG structures can be split into three categories:

- (Det+N)+N = 58 phrases.
- (Det+N)+(Det+N) = 95 phrases.
- N+(Det+N) = 88 phrases.

An example for each category follows:

- (Det+N)+N

(26) *Mid* <u>*þa*</u> *neownysse* **swa monigra heofonlicra**
     'With the novelty of so many heavenly wonders'.
                                          (OEHE, L. Primus, l. 17, pg. 40)

- (Det+N)+(Det+N)

(27) <u>*Þæt*</u> *fyr* <u>**þære**</u> **unrehtan willunge**.
     'The fire of that evil will'.   (OEHE, L. Primus, ll. 30–31, pg. 80)

- N+(Det+N)

(28) *Be forðfore* <u>**þæs**</u> **eadigan papan Gregorius**.
     'About the departure of the blessed Pope Gregorius'.
                                          (OEHE, Incip II, l. 26, pg. 10)

As far as NG structures are concerned, the focus is on explaining why determiners systematically appear to modify them according to the three different patterns illustrated above. In order to do that, a diachronic approach has been adopted, whose results are illustrated in section 4.1.

Subsequently, in sections 4.2. and 4.3, a brief analysis on the functions conveyed by each determiner in NG structures has also been carried out.

Finally, in section 4.4. another important factor for preferring the NG structure has been taken into account: the relation between the morpho-syntax of the genitive phrase and the animacy of the entity denoted by the genitive phrase.

4.1 The origin of the distribution of determiners in NG structures: a hypothesis

NG structures have been investigated from a diachronic perspective in order to understand why the determiners in the aforesaid structures are six times more

frequent than determiners modifying GN structures.

The hypothesis is that NG structures followed the same evolutionary path as the old Proto-Germanic appositive structures "Head-Noun+[DET+Adj/N$_2$]", as per the hypothesis developed by Ramat (1986, 1987).

Ramat (1987: 126), in particular, claims that such structures might have given rise to both postnominal relative clauses and a grammaticalized form of the determiner labelled as "article" by Ramat and corresponding to what has been here referred to as determiner encoding a semantic definiteness. More specifically he argues that appositional structures of the type

(29) *magas wæron... **on sele þām heam*** (Beowulf, 1015 f.)
      lit. 'Relatives were... in the hall, the high'   (Beowulf, 1015 f.)

which were common in all Germanic languages, were used either to provide new information or to further specify an element "which has been introduced previously into the discourse and therefore considered to be already known to the listener, i.e. on the 'topic' or 'theme' of the sentence" (Ramat 1987: 126). In the previous example, *on sele* would therefore represent the topic and *þām heam* the attributive apposition that provides for some new information about the topic thus functioning as a comment, with the determiner *þām* marking co-referentiality with the topic.

According to Ramat, the sentence in (29) could have been interpreted by OE speakers both as an "afterthought" apposition ('[the] relatives were... in the hall, the high [one]') or as a postnominal relative clause like '[the] relatives were... in the hall that was high'. The assumption is here that the afterthought-like structures did not include a copula, as was the case in IE (Ramat 1987: 122), and that at some point this same copula became overtly expressed.

At this point, the premises were all set for both the postnominal relative clause and the article to develop, by means of processes of grammaticalization. In fact "when the DET[erminer] which is typically linked to discourse strategies becomes compulsory, the DEF[inite] ART[icle] is born" (Ramat 1987: 128), by extending its use to all types of semantic contexts, i.e. with nouns encoding different degrees of semantic traits [+/-specific] [+/-unique] [+/-known].

The present hypothesis stems directly from the one by Ramat. More specifically, a three-stage evolutionary path has been conceived concerning NG structures with N+(Det+N) or (Det+N)+(Det+N) syntax - including a covert intermediate stage, i.e. not appearing in the language.

Stage I. Considering the following NG phrase found in the text, *[...] God þa mood þara ungeleafsumra ablænde* 'God blinded the souls of the heathen' (OEHE, L. Secundus, r. 6, pag. 122), the first stage may be represented by a structure as in (30), i.e. composed of a topicalized head phrase followed by an attributive apposition or comment:

(30) *Pa mood,*   *þa*   *ungeleafsuman.*
      TOPIC   ANAPHORIC DET.   NEW ATTRIBUTIVE INFO / COMMENT
      The souls   the   heathen

In (30), the determiner relates the two pieces of co-referential information encoded by the head phrase *Þa mood* on the one hand and the attributive apposition *ungeleafsuman* on the other. As such, the function of the determiner is to anaphorically reiterate the referent conveyed by the head-noun/phrase, while at the same time introducing the new attributive information, thus pragmatically functioning as a comment.

Stage II. According to the hypothesis under discussion, the second stage would be a covert transitional stage between the first one, i.e. the starting point, and the third one, i.e. the outcome. During this stage, the attributive apposition - now interpreted as a noun - becomes the nominal modifier of the head-noun/phrase, thus assuming a new syntactic function within the phrase, namely an associative function[12]. This covert stage would be represented as follows:

(31) *Þa mood,*   *[þa]*   *þara*   *ungeleafsumra.*
      Topic   anaphoric det. Functional det.   Nominalized adj.
      'The souls, [those/those that are/the ones] of the heathen'.

In (31), the presence of two determiners may be hypothesized: *þa,* i.e. the co-referential determiner whose function is to reiterate the referent previously introduced; *þara* that emphasizes the new syntactic function acquired by the noun modifier *ungeleafsumra* 'the heathen', i.e. the associative or "genitive" function.

As in the hypothesis developed by Ramat (1987), a phrase structured like (31) can also be interpreted as a relative clause, assuming the presence of an unexpressed copula[13]. As such, while in (30) the relative clause denotes a purely attributive association, i.e. the same expression can be turned into an attributive phrase, in the case of (31) the relative clause encodes a possessive association, i.e. the possession of an intrinsic or inalienable quality.

Stage III. The third and final stage - an overt one - would see the anaphoric/co-referential determiner *þa* drop, and the 'functional' determiner *þara* incorporate the anaphoric value, a structure corresponding to the actual instances found in the text, such as:

(32) *Þa mood*   *þara*   *ungeleafsumra*
      Head NP   Anaphoric + functional det.   Genitive modifier
      'The souls of the heathen'.

In conclusion, it is possible to assume that the OE speakers of the 9th-10th centuries – notably a period of great change in the language – probably used a "topic + apposition" structure which would later generate two different outcomes: post-nominal relative clauses on the one hand and Gen NPs with NG word-order on the other.

Here follows another example with a N+(Det+N) structure:

(33) Stage I: *Nænig lustfulnis,* *seo*   *synnige.*
               Topic   Anaphoric det   New attributive info + comment
               'No pleasure, the wicked/sinful one'

Stage II: *Nænig lustfulnis, (seo)*   *þære*   *synne.*
        Topic   Anaphoric det Functional det. Nominalized adj
        'No pleasure, [that/the one/that is] of the sin'.
Stage III: *Nænig lustfulnis þære*   *synne.*
        Head NP   Anaphoric + functional det. Genitive modifier
        'No pleasure of the sin'.

4.2 Functions of the determiners in N+(Det+N) structures

As for the functions conveyed by NG phrases, the main point of analysis has been to find out whether each syntactic structure is related to one or more particular function(s).

NG structures with a "N+(Det+N)" syntax do not seem to be associated with a particular function. Indeed, we have the following distribution:

Table 1. Determiner by function distribution in N+(Det+N) structures.

Functions	Number of phrases
Immediate	7
Tracking	22
Recognitional	20
Total pragmatic	**49**
Retrievable	9
Larger	24
Generic	4
Total semantic	**37**

The determiners in N+(Det+N) structures still seem to be predominantly encoding the pragmatic functions, as we can clearly see from Table 1. This is mainly due to the fact that a large number of genitive phrases are used in an appositive capacity or in an anticipatory one, so that the determiners introducing such phrases convey either a tracking/anaphoric function or a recognitional/cataphoric one, as the following examples demonstrate:

(34) *Be deaðe* **Oswies 7 Ecbyrhtes þara cyninga**.
     'On the death of Oswio and Ecgberht, the kings'.
                             (OEHE, Incip IV, l. 10, pg. 18).

(35) *Be life 7 forðfore* **þæs arwurðan biscopes Wilfriðes**.
     'On the life and departure of the honorable bishop, Wilfrid'.
                           (OEHE, Incip V, ll. 13-14, pg. 24).

In (34), the genitive phrase is introduced by two proper nouns that are further specified by means of an appositive NP likewise inflected in the genitive case. As already illustrated in section 4.1., the determiner here incorporates both the co-referential function, i.e. the pragmatic or anaphoric function showing that both GEN NPs – *Oswies 7 Ecbyrhtes* and *cyninga* – share the same referent, and a more syntactic one, i.e. the associative or genitive function showing that the NP *Oswies 7 Ecbyrhtes þara cyninga* is subordinated to the head NP *Be deaðe* and entertains with the head NP a particular semantic relation, in this case a verbal one[14].

In (35), the determiner has been attributed the recognitional or cataphoric function because it is used to introduce some attributes of the referent in question – in this case a quality, *arwurðan*, and a role, *biscopes* – functioning as an "anticipating" strategy to the proper noun *Wilfriðes*. As in the previous case, the determiner *þæs* encodes both a pragmatic – here cataphoric – and an associative function.

Interestingly enough, quite a few of these "anticipatory" and "appositive" determiners appear in the *Incipiunt Capitula* section of the edition consulted, that is the introductory section where each chapter is briefly described by means of a short caption.

Another noteworthy outcome illustrated in table 1 is represented by the increasing number of determiners encoding what has been labelled as "larger situation use", a change that also characterizes (Det+N)+(Det+N) phrases. This plainly points to the hypothesis being discussed according to which at this stage the status of the determiner was not yet well-defined, or, in other words, it was in a "bridging context". This means that while still being linked to its old pragmatic functions, the determiner was also being subjected to a process of reanalysis as a purely semantic element, i.e. denoting a referent as being [+/-specific] [+/-unique] [+/-known], and as such applied to new contexts. An example:

(36) *Wæs **æfter synne þæs ærestan monnes**, forðon hyngran, þyrstan, hatian, calan, wærigian, - al þæt is of untrymnesse þæs gecyndes.*
   'It was after the sin of the first man for hunger, thirst, heat, chillness, weariness – all that is from the weakness of nature'.
<div align="right">(OEHE, L. Primus, ll. 1-2, pg. 62)</div>

Clearly, the unicity of the referent *þæs ærestan monnes* 'the first man' is here brought about by the interrelation between adjective and noun, as is the case in a few other examples found in the text.

4.3 Functions of the determiners in (Det+N)+(Det+N) and N+(Det+N) structures

Like NG structures with a "N+(Det+N)" syntax, those with a "(Det+N)+(Det+N)" syntax do not seem to be associated with a particular function. Indeed, we have the following distribution:

Table 2. Determiner by function distribution in (Det+N)+(Det+N) structures.

	First det.	*Second det.*	*Total*
Immediate	1	4	
Tracking	6	31	
Recognitional	70	4	
Total Pragmatic	**77**	**39**	**116**
Retrievable	11	7	
Larger	5	38	
Generic	0	10	
Total Semantic	**16**	**55**	**71**

The results from table 2 clearly show that determiners are evenly distributed across functions. If anything, the pragmatic function seems to be the most frequent still, as the total numbers demonstrate. However, these figures yielded some other interesting results that are worth mentioning.

Recognitional or cataphoric use. As expected, in most cases the first determiner, i.e. the determiner modifying the head phrase in (Det+N)+(Det+N) structures, encodes the recognitional function, as it refers to an entity that is more thoroughly specified in the following co-text: when employed in this way, the recognitional use can be referred to as the unmarked one. However, there are a few cases where the first determiners seem to encode functions other than the unmarked one, in particular the function labelled as "retrievable referent use" that in the present hypothesis represents a sort of bridging point between pragmatic and semantic uses. Here is one example:

(37) *[...] se eadiga papa Gregorius, æfter þon þe he þæt setl þære Romaniscan cyricean 7 þære apostolican þreottyne gear 7 syx monað 7 tyn dagas wuderlice heold 7 rehte, þa wæs forðfered 7* **to þam ecan setle þæs heofonlican rices** *læded wæs.*
'The blessed pope Gregory, after he had gloriously preserved and ruled the see of the Roman and apostolic church for thirteen years, six months and ten days, departed this life and was led to the eternal seat of the heavenly kingdom" (OEHE, L. Secundus, l. 5, pg. 94)

In instances like (37), the retrievable function seems to "outclass" the unmarked one, i.e. the "recognitional use". In fact, even if the head-phrase were not followed by the genitive phrase, we would be able to correctly identify the referent of the head-phrase by virtue of its structural links with the immediate situation. Furthermore, in (37), as in few other cases with retrievable referents, the combination "adjective+noun" helps the interlocutor to correctly identify the referents in question: here the adjective *ecan* 'eternal' related to the noun *setle* 'seat' allows us to understand what the translator is referring to.

Larger situation use. Even though most determiners still convey a pragmatic function, in particular in the recognitional and tracking uses, the data in table 2 show that the second determiner in (Det+N)+(Det+N) structures, i.e. the determiner modifying the genitive phrase, mostly encodes the semantic function that has been labelled as "larger situation use", referring to elements that are univocally identifiable, in spite of not being mentioned in any previous co-text or context.

(38) *Ðæt se ylca wer Cuðbyrhtus on ancerlife geseted an easpring of drigre eorðan gebid-dende up gelædde, 7 ænne æcer of ðam gewinne his agenre handa **ofer þa tid <u>ðæs sæwetes</u>** onfeng.*
'In which that same man Cuthbert, while living as a hermit, brought up a waterspring out of dry ground through his prayers, and obtained a crop by working with his own hands, though it was past the [right] sowing time'.
(OEHE, Incip IV, l. 30, pg. 20)

Example (38) is part of the brief introductory passages that acquaint the readers with the contents of each chapter. Clearly, the genitive phrase *ðæs sæwetes* 'the sowing time' is introduced for the first time in the context, and yet it is perfectly identifiable and known to the recipient, as it has acquired a unique status in the collective consciousness of the speaker community.

Generic use. Another interesting point is the presence of a relatively high number of generic determiners[15]. In (39), there is an example where the genitive phrase *þæs flæsces* is used to generically refer to human flesh and the pleasure deriving from sexual intercourse.

(39) *Forðon gedafenað, þætte seo ælice gegadrung lichoman seo for intingan tudres, nales þæs willan, 7 **seo gemengnes <u>þæs flæsces</u>** seo for intingan bearna to cennenne, nales cwemnis uncysta.*
'For it is fit then that the lawful gathering of bodies should be for the sake of offspring, not of pleasure, and the union of flesh should be for the sake of giving birth to children, not the satisfaction of vice'.
(OEHE, L Primus, l. 18, pg. 82).

4.4 Functions of the determiners in (Det+N)+N structures

As for the functions conveyed by (Det+N)+N phrases, most of those structures (49 out of 57) obviously convey a recognitional or cataphoric function, as the correct identification of the referent they introduce depends on the structural links with the immediate co-text, represented in this case by the genitive nouns governed by them. In other words, most (Det+N)+N structures are organized in such a way that it would be almost impossible for the reader to correctly identify the referent of the determined head-noun, were there not any genitives. As such they might be interpreted as closely-knit units, whose determiner has the function to "anticipate" the further specification conveyed by the genitive noun. We can see two examples in (40) and (41):

(40) *Wæs Rædwald his fæder geo geara in Cent gelæred **in þa gerynu Cristes geleafan**, ac holing.*
'Redwald, his father, had been formerly instructed in the mystery of Christ's faith in Kent, but to no purpose'. (L. Secundus, l. 31, pg. 140)

(41) *Ond he sona se arfæsta bigenga þæs gastlican londes micelne wæstm gemette **in þære þeode geleafsumra folca**.*
'And soon this honorable cultivator of the spiritual soil found much fruit in that nation of faithful people'. (L. Secundus, ll. 24-25, pg. 142)

In these examples, the determiner has the double function of introducing the recipient to the referent of the head-noun, while at the same time indicating that the recipient will be able to identify such referent noun due to it being both [+specific] and [+known] to them. The postponed GN phrase - *Cristes geleafan* – has the function of further specifying the meaning of the head-noun, thus allowing its complete identification. Accordingly, we can see how the textual element is still critical for identifying a referent correctly.

Another peculiar aspect of (Det+N)+N phrases is that their surface structure is apparently identical to the surface structure in GN phrases, i.e. Det+N_1+N_2. A question naturally arises: why did the writer decide to use NG structures, rather than GN ones? GN structures are indeed statistically more frequent than NG ones so that at this stage one would naturally expect GN structures to be far more familiar to the translator.

Then, how can the presence of no less than 53 NG phrases with the same surface structure as GN phrases be explained? The hypothesis being discussed is that one main factor prevented the translator from arranging these 53 NG phrases as GN ones and that is animacy. A previous study already showed that when combining animacy and the morpho-syntactic weight of the genitive modifier as factors determining phrasal word order of GEN NPs, animacy is the discerning factor, whereas morpho-syntactic weight appears to be subordinated to and dependent on animacy: that means that if a referent features the trait [+animate], then it is more likely to be found in a left-end position, i.e. in GN structures, on the basis of Silverstein's animacy hierarchy (see Silverstein 1976)[16]. Accordingly, when a genitive modifier features the trait [-animate], there is a tendency for it to appear in the rightmost phrasal slot, i.e. NG structures.

On the basis of these previous observations, a decision has been taken to combine the two traits [+/-animacy] [+determiner] - with the trait "presence of a determiner" being kept constant - to verify whether some possible correlation exists between the trait animacy of the referent encoded by the genitive modifier and the use of a (Det+N)+N structure. It should be noted that, to obtain comparable results, only GN phrases with a determiner agreeing with the head-noun have been taken into account.

As we can see, the preliminary results seem to confirm what was previously observed.

Table 3. GN phrases with a determiner agreeing with the head-noun.

	Number of phrases	Percentage Frequency
[+animate] [+determiner]	36/38	95 %
[- animate] [+determiner]	2/38	5 %

Table 4. NG phrases with (Det+N)+N structure.

	Number of phrases	Percentage Frequency
[+animate] [+determiner]	19/57	30 %
[- animate] [+determiner]	38/57	70 %

As the data from table 3 and 4 clearly illustrate, animacy is still a decisive factor, as regards the internal word-order of GEN NPs: indeed, GN phrases featuring the traits [+determiner] [+animate genitive] are far more frequent than those with the combination [+determiner] [-animate genitive], with a relative frequency of 95%. Conversely, NG phrases featuring the traits [+determiner] [+animate genitive] are less frequent than those with the combination [+determiner] [-animate genitive], with a relative frequency of 30%. However, the percentages of table 3 and 4 also show that the trait [+/-animacy] is more critical in GN phrases: indeed, whereas only a small number of GN phrases feature a [-animate] genitive, as much as 30% of NG phrases show a [+animate] genitive.

On the basis of all these observations, we can preliminarily conclude that one possible factor determining the choice between GN or NG phrases might have been (in)animacy of the referent encoded by the genitive, with the Old English translator opting for NG structures whenever a genitive would encode an inanimate entity.

However, we should also point out that inanimacy might not be the sole factor affecting the genitive phrasal structure: indeed a general tendency has been noticed for either or both elements in NG phrases to appear further modified by attributes, quantifiers or a second GEN NP depending on the main genitive:

(42) *7 þa of þære tide hwilum Brettas, hwilum eft Seaxan sige geslogon* **oð þæt ger ymbsetes þære Beadonescan dune.**
'And then from that time on, sometimes the Britons, sometimes the Saxons slaughtered through victory till the year of the siege of Mount Badon'.
(OEHE, L. Primus, l. 18, pg. 54)

(43) *Ond he sona se arfæsta bigenga þæs gastlican londes micelne wæstm gemette* **in þære þeode geleafsumra folca.**
'And soon this honorable cultivator of the spiritual soil found much fruit in that nation of faithful people'. (OEHE, L. Secundus, ll. 24–25, pg. 142)

As we can see in example (42), even with an animate genitive the translator is more likely to choose an NG structure, when the aforesaid genitive phrase is further de-

termined. In this sense, weight - as a morpho-syntactic factor determining variation – might well have played an important role in the structure of genitive phrases.

Of course, these are only preliminary conclusions that need to be further investigated by means of the analysis of more sources.

4. Conclusions

The aim of this paper is to investigate the distribution and functions of the Old English determiners *sē, sēo, þæt* in Gᴇɴ NPs. For this purpose, several Gᴇɴ NPs have been collected from the first two chapters of the Old English version of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum.*

First of all, the functional analysis allowed to conclude that the determiners appearing in Gᴇɴ NPs of all kinds conveyed no specific function, fluctuating between pragmatic and semantic definiteness. This means that OE speakers used the same linguistic elements to refer to external entities proximal to or distant from the immediate situation of utterance and the speaker - i.e. pragmatic function or the function covered by modern demonstrative pronouns - and to describe the intrinsic semantic properties of the adjacent noun - i.e. [+/-specific] [+/-unique] [+/-known]) - irrespective of the context of utterance. This process is typical of the evolutionary path of articles in IE languages, thus indicating that OE in the 9th and 10th centuries had been undergoing the same grammaticalization process that resulted in plain articles in many European languages.

As far as the GN phrases or "modifier + head" structures are concerned, determiners do not appear to be as frequently used as in phrases with the reversed order, i.e. NG phrases. A possible explanation is that GN phrases represented the oldest and thus unmarked structures to convey possession, specification and all the other associative meaning related to Gᴇɴ NPs. As such, OE speakers might have been less prone to associating relatively new elements, such as quasi-grammaticalized determiners, with more recent, less fixed structures like the NG ones. This is only a preliminary explanation that has yet to be confirmed: further studies should be undertaken to explore this area of research.

As for NG phrases, or "head+ modifier" structures, not only is there a certain regularity in the presence of determiners in any such structures, but it has also been observed that their position with respect to the head-noun / noun phrase differs, hence resulting in three different structures: N+(Det+N), (Det+N)+ (Det+N), (Det+N)+N. The first two structures proved to be particularly interesting with respect to their origin: the hypothesis being discussed is that they underwent a similar development as the old Proto-Germanic appositive structures "Head-Noun+[DET+Adj/N_2]", starting off as topicalizing structures providing appositive and co-referential new information about the head-noun or topic (Stage I), and ending up with determiners encoding every kind of associative or "genitive" relation, while at the same time conveying pragmatic or semantic definiteness (Stage III).

This investigation into OE Gᴇɴ NPs in the OEHE is just a glimpse into the distribution and function of determiners in such phrases. Some further research

is recommended so that the hypotheses discussed here can be verified both synchronically and diachronically, by collecting more data on the OEHE as well as by drawing on some other texts of the same period or even on texts of a later date.

Notes

1. The hypotheses dealt with in this work stem from the analysis of Miller's 1890-98 edition of *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, which is based on the following manuscripts (Miller 1890-98: xiii-xxii): Tanner 10 (Ms. T.) preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; Cotton Otho B XI (Ms. C.) preserved in the British Museum, London; Ms. 041 (Ms. B.) preserved in the Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; Ms 279 B (Ms. O.) preserved in Corpus Christi College, Oxford; Ms. Kk. 3.18 (Ms. Ca.) preserved in the Cambridge University Library, Cambridge. According to Miller (1890-98: xiii-xxii), as well as most scholars, these manuscripts can be dated back to the 9th – 10th centuries. See also Gneuss-Lapidge (2014: 36 § 22; 254 § 330; 280 § 357; 48/40 § 39; 509 § 668; 513 § 673).

2. All OE examples are marked in italics, GN and NG structures are marked in bold italics, determiners and the phrasal elements modified by a determiner [...] are marked in bold italics and underlined. The references of each example – chapter, line, page – refers to the consulted edition.

3. The status of determiners in OE has been the subject of many debates. See Allen (2006: 149–170), De Mulder/ Carlier (2011: 522–534), Ramat (1987: 113–133), among others.

4. Even though this classification is largely based on the contexts of use identified by Himmelmann (2001), a classification of contexts of use *ad hoc* has been developed, by drawing on similar classifications provided by the other authors considered, i.e. Trovesi (2004) and De Mulder-Carlier (2011). Thus, a few differences can be detected with respect to Himmelmann's definitions. They mostly involve formal changes, i.e. new labels for the same context of use (i.e. Himmelmann's *tracking use* is defined as *tracking or anaphoric use*).
    However, some more functional changes have also been provided. In particular: the *immediate situation use* and the *deictic use* have been merged, as determiners in these contexts have been interpreted as conveying a very similar function (the opposition is actually between exophoric deixis and discourse deixis, which are not addressed in this study). The *recognitional or cataphoric use* has been applied to contexts that are not directly mentioned by Himmelmann, as determiners in these contexts allow the identification of a referent by virtue of its links to another subsequent endophoric element. Two contexts of uses have been added with respect to the classification provided by Himmelmann (2001): the *retrievable referent use* whose conceptualization is largely based on Trovesi (2004) – though including some of the traits attributed to Himmelmann's *associative-anaphoric use* – and the *generic reference use* drawn on De Mulder-Carlier (2011: 529).

5. There are actually 17 GN phrases where determiners are placed between the genitive modifier and the head-noun: in these structures, G always corresponds to a possessive pronoun. This topic is not addressed in the present paper and will be reserved for future investigation.

6. For each pragmatic use, two examples have been supplied, one with the determiner agreeing with the genitive, the other with the determiner agreeing with the head-noun.

7. Most examples conveying a recognitional function include a head- or a genitive noun whose links to other elements in the sentence – mostly genitives or adjectives – allow the correct identification of the referent.

8   Interestingly, no determiners agreeing with the head-noun and conveying retrievability of the referent have been found.

9   It should be noted that the OE corpus shows the existence of a corresponding compound, *ceasterweall* (Bosworth, Joseph (1898) ceaster-weall. In: Toller, Thomas, Christ, Sean and Ondřej Tichy (eds.) *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*. Prague: Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014. https://bosworthtoller.com/41503, accessed on June 21, 2022). While the present investigation has not focused on the distribution of compounds as potential alternatives to syntactic groups conveying an "associative function", it may represent an interesting starting point for a future analysis.

10   Remarkably, there are no examples of GN phrases with the determiner encoding a larger situation function that agrees with the head-noun.

11   Gen NPs whose elements are introduced by a possessive have been excluded from the total, as the status of the possessive in OE, as an adjective or a determiner, has not been fully defined yet. This may represent the starting point for a future analysis.

12   "Associative function" is a cover term used by some scholars to refer to all the semantic functions conveyed by the genitive case, indicating the fact that the genitive relation is an association of two nouns that gives rise to different meanings. See also Rhee (2004: 411–412) and Aikhenvald-Dixon (2013: 4–6).

13   As Gil (2013) claims, there is a cross-linguistic correlation between attribution, possession and post-nominal relative clauses: in fact some languages even use the same morpho-syntactic devices to convey two or even all three functions. This is due to the fact that adjectives, genitives and relative clauses all encode an attributive association between two entities.

14   For more details on verbal relations in Gen NPs and the argumentative structure deriving from it, see Giofré (2019).

15   Remarkably, there were only 5 determiners encoding a generic function in GN structures and 0 in NG structures with a [Det+N]+N syntax.

16   See Giofré (2019: 62–84), for more details and figures on the role of animacy and morpho-syntactic weight on determining Gen NPs phrasal word-order.

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