

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR
FROM: Hugh Taylor, CILIP representative
SUBJECT: **Initial articles in Irish**

Related JSC document

5JSC/Chair/9 RDA Appendices Group: Terms of Reference and Membership

Background

Initial articles in the Irish language are currently included in the list of articles in AACR Appendix E. However, some omissions have been identified. Although the missing articles are not as commonly encountered as those already included, CILIP feels that there is an assumption (albeit unwritten) that all of the articles for those languages which JSC has decided to cover in the list should be included. This proposal aims to rectify that situation.

Irish articles already in AACR Appendix E

an
an t-
na
na h-

Irish articles not listed in AACR Appendix E, with notes

an t

this article is sometimes encountered as an alternative to “an t-“ and is permitted only in certain situations (which would require a detailed explanation of the rules of Irish grammar to be meaningful to non-Irish speakers)

na h

this article is sometimes encountered as an alternative to “na h-“; again its use is restricted to certain specific situations

In effect, it can be said that the presence or absence of the hyphen is more or less random (or relying, at least, on the preference of the author or publisher). We need to remember that Irish was always more of a spoken language than a written one.

Beware!

Just as the French “une” (to take a simple example) is not always an article, and its meaning is dependent on context, so both “an t” and “na h” can be ambiguous to someone who doesn’t know the Irish language. Unfortunately, the explanation is too

complex to be explained in a simple footnote, and given the relative obscurity of these constructions, CILIP recommends that a simple note (akin to the use of the asterisk in AACR2 Appendix E), noting that not all uses of these strings are in fact articles, will suffice. The organisational/presentational issues are probably best left to the Appendices Group, however.

Source

Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla / Niall Ó Dónaill a chuir in eagar ; eagarthóir comhairleach: Tomás de Bhaldraithe. Baile Átha Cliath : Oifig an tSoláthair, 1977. (See the entry for “an” on p. 42; this also covers the plural “na”.)

Examples of usage in titles proper

An tsráid, agus scéalta eile / Gerry Adams ; aistrithe ag Eoghan Mac Cormaic. Baile Átha Cliath : Coiscéim, 1997.

An tAthair Mánus Mac Suibhne, sagart ó Mhaigh Eo in Éirí Amach 1798 / le Pádraig Ó Móráin ; arna chur in eagar agus aistrighthe ag Sheila Mulloy. Westport : Cumann Staire Chathair na Mart, 1999.

Na hAird Ó Thuaidh / Pádraig Ua Maoileoin. Baile Átha Cliath : Sáirséal agus Dill, 1960.

Thanks

CILIP acknowledges the assistance of colleagues from Trinity College Dublin in the preparation of this proposal. *Go raibh maith agat.*