A Middle English Syntax

Tauno F. Mustanoja

John Benjamins Publishing Company
A Middle English Syntax
A Middle English Syntax

Parts of speech

Tauno F. Mustanoja

With an introduction by

Elly van Gelderen

Arizona State University

John Benjamins Publishing Company

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# Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Elly van Gelderen</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Middle English Syntax</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts of speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tauno F. Mustanoja</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Elly van Gelderen
University of Arizona

For a good orientation into the history of English grammar, several books are indispensable. Visser’s *An Historical Syntax of the English Language*, Mitchell’s *Old English Syntax*, and Jespersen’s *A Modern English Grammar* are among these and have remained in print and frequently cited. Mustanoja’s *A Middle English Syntax: Part I Parts of Speech* is another invaluable work that provides detailed information on Middle English. Until now, this work had not been readily available, however. The present edition changes that. In this introduction, I will list some of the major works on Middle English grammar and suggest where *A Middle English Syntax* fills a niche. I first provide some background on Tauno Mustanoja.

The author of *A Middle English Syntax*, Tauno Mustanoja, was a professor of English Philology and Literature at the University of Helsinki, Finland, who lived from 1912 to 1996. Kilpiö (1996) and Rissanen (1997) provide data on his influence and his life. Mustanoja studied modern and classical languages and modern literature at the Universities of Helsinki and of Cambridge before serving in the army between 1939 and 1945. After the war, Mustanoja finished his PhD and continued his teaching and research. He was responsible for popularizing the study of English language and literature in Finland, where French and German had been the main foreign languages. He was a Honorary Member of the Modern Language Association of America, Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America, Fellow of the British Academy, to name a few, and the editor of *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*. His publications are not restricted to language, but include (world) literature and art and this is on occasion noticeable in AMES.

Compared to Old English, Middle English has fewer grammars and textbooks devoted to it and is taught less often as an independent course perhaps as a result. Mossé’s 1952 *Handbook of Middle English* provides an (85 page) outline of Middle English grammar with verbal and nominal paradigms, complex sentences, and word order. Burrow & Turville-Petre’s 2004 *A Book of Middle English* contains a basic (35 page) description of the morpho-syntax of Middle English that is a good overview and Fulk’s 2014 *An Introduction to Middle English* a longer (70
The latter contains verbal and nominal paradigms, discussions of case loss, the pronominal system, and word order. Fischer’s 1992 chapter on syntax in the *Cambridge History of English* is most helpful. It provides an in depth analysis of the noun phrase, the verb phrase, tense, aspect, and modality, word order, and complex clauses.

To these works on Middle English, Mustanoja’s *A Middle English Syntax* (hence AMES) provides an interesting supplement by going deeper into certain questions and, especially, into exceptions. The book doesn’t provide the basic paradigms but instead points out differences with Old English and certain peculiarities of the Middle English system. AMES consists of 702 pages, index and bibliography included, and was 25 years in the making. The book was originally written for students of Middle English literature but serves a linguist well in detailed descriptions of the parts of speech, the use of the various cases, gender, and number. Word order, complex sentences, and conjunctions are missing since they were meant to be dealt with in the second volume, which was never published. The non-finite forms of the verb are discussed (pp. 511-66) regarding the use of –*ing*, the use of *for to, at,* and *till* before the infinitive, the split infinitive, and the various functions of non-finite forms.

Each section constitutes an essay in its own right and provides insights into the general changes, dialect differences, and external influences. Several sections could be used in the classroom, e.g. the pronoun (pp. 120-228) or article (pp. 229-74) sections. The section on prepositions is very extensive (pp. 345-427) and more than I have seen anywhere else. Without explicitly mentioning grammaticalization, it explains the connection between prepositions (and prefixes) on the one hand and adverbs, adjectives, and participles on the other, with the latter as sources for prepositions. AMES contains stylistic comments and the discussion is accompanied by often copious examples and references to earlier work.

Some of the topics involve more than parts of speech, e.g. the sections on gender, number, and case go beyond mere categories. It is a pleasure to read a linguistic analysis by an author so familiar with not only the grammar of Middle English but also its culture and stylistic nuances. Mustanoja on occasion puts in ‘psychological’ explanations as, for instance, in the development of analytic comparatives. These are not due to French Influence but “arose from the natural desire for greater emphasis and clarity which seems to lie behind so many other periphrastic constructions of the English language” (pp. 279-80) although he later acknowledges Latin influence.

I’ll end with a non-exhaustive list of claims – some controversial – that have been cited in the literature. Regarding, tense and aspect, AMES argues that the perfect already occurs in Old English (p. 500), that the overextension of ‘be’ may
be responsible for the spread of *have* in the perfect (p. 501), that the development of the progressive is due to Latin influence (p. 589), and that the dominant Old English tenses are the present and past (p. 480). Other discussions involving the verb include the relationship between the passive, middle, and the reflexive (p. 431; 437), and the rise of the historical present in Middle English (pp. 485-7). In the area of the nominal phrase, there is a discussion of the *s*-less genitive (pp. 71-2), the difference between *of*-genitive and inflectional *s*-genitive (pp. 74-6), the continued use of accusative forms in the south (p. 129), and articles that precede third person pronouns (p. 120). Also of interest is the mention that demonstratives can be used as personal pronouns (p. 129), which is (wrongly, I think) “possibly” attributed to Latin influence, the development of interrogatives into relatives (pp. 191-2; 196), and the switch from *I it am* to *It’s me* (p. 133). The section on adjectives is illuminating on the role of native and non-native developments; it discusses the survival of strong and weak declensions and the extensive borrowing of French adjectives, even with their original French endings (p. 277). AMES is also relevant to the debate on existential *there* (“the use of anticipatory and ‘existential’ *there* goes back to” Old English, p. 337), the negative cycle (pp. 339-41), and conversion (pp. 641-55).

**References**


MÉMOIRES DE LA SOCIÉTÉ NÉOPHILOLOGIQUE DE HELSINKI, XXIII

A Middle English Syntax
A MIDDLE ENGLISH SYNTAX

BY

TAUNO F. MUSTANOJA

PART I

PARTS OF SPEECH

HELSINKI 1960

SOCIÉTÉ NÉOPHILOLOGIQUE
The present book grew out of my desire to help the student of English literature to understand the language of writings in Middle English. It deals only with constructions likely to prove difficult to the literary student or of particular interest otherwise. My principle has been to discuss each construction from the angle which seemed most efficient for the elucidation of its character and meaning, using a terminology as simple and as familiar to the non-linguist as possible.

The present volume, the first part of the entire work, deals with the syntax of the parts of speech. In order to avoid extensive repetition the conjunctions will be discussed in Part II, which will deal with word-order and the structure of the complex sentence.

A great deal of attention has been paid to the bibliographies. They are selective, but an effort has been made to render them useful for further study. The general bibliography on pp. 13-40 is supplemented by lists of special studies at the end of each chapter.

The book makes no claim to be a 'definitive' account of Middle English syntax. There are many — all too many — points which I have not been able to explain satisfactorily, mainly because of deficiencies in my knowledge of Middle English syntax and partly because a foreigner's command of English idioms is inevitably limited. Yet even in such cases the placing of the problem against the background of more general usage will, I hope, facilitate the understanding of its character. I should also like to add that in writing this book on early English syntax I have cherished the hope that it will stimulate interest in this much-neglected field of English grammar.

This book has been long in the making. The first plan for
it was made in the winter of 1935-6 when, at the suggestion and under the guidance of Professor Uno Lindelöf, I was making a study of the influence of Latin on early English syntax. The memory of that great teacher and scholar, who died during the war, has been a source of inspiration for me ever since.

The writing of this volume would not have been possible without ample use of earlier work on the subject. The inclusion of a title in any of my bibliographies implies an acknowledgement of my debt to its author. In addition to special studies and standard works on historical syntax I have regularly consulted the New English Dictionary, the parts of the Middle English Dictionary so far published, Bosworth's and Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary and its supplement, and Wright's English Dialect Dictionary.

I am particularly indebted to Professor Francis P. Magoun, Jr, Dr Kenneth Sisam, and Professor Norman Davis for generous advice and encouragement, to Mrs Marie Laurmaa-Kaldjian for assistance in collecting and assorting material during the winter of 1954-5, and to Mr P. J. Frankis, a former colleague at the University of Helsinki, for many illuminating comments. Professor Davis also checked a number of quotations from the Paston Letters. Other persons who kindly helped me in one form or another are Professors Arthur Långfors, O. R. Reuter, Pekka Katara, and Emil Öhmann, and Mr Herbert Lomas. I am under considerable obligation to Misses Anna-Liisa Airisto, Irja Järvi, Anja Kaartinen, and Anna Puupponen for assistance in reading the proofs, and to many members of the University Library staff in Helsinki, who did far more than their duty in helping me to get the books I needed.

I am also grateful to the following former students of mine for allowing me to use examples collected for their B. A. theses: Mrs Marja Christensen, Misses Märtha Fellman, Leila Hallman, Eeva-Liisa Håmesalo, Brita Hanstén, Elli Jantunen, Anja Kaartinen, and Leena Kettunen, Mr Ahti Kurkela, Miss Eila Launne,
Preface

Mr Veikko Lehmonen, Mrs Marita Lukkarinen, Misses Anja Luokkanen and Anja Mantere, Mr Erkki Miettinen, Misses Sinikka Moilanen and Elli Mölläri, Mrs Liisa Oksanen, Miss Elli Pudas, Mrs Riitta-Liisa Saarinen, Miss Heidi Saario, Mr Lauri Susi, Misses Irja Tammisalo and Kaarina Toivonen, Mr Arto Toppola, Mrs Airi Turunen, and Misses Vappu Turunen, Meri Valkama, Ulla Valtonen, Seija Vanhatalo, Ulla Ventola, and Terttu Verkama.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge gratefully the financial aid received from the State Commission for Humanistic Research, the Finnish Cultural Foundation, and the Wainstein Foundation. My thanks are also due to the Modern Language Association for publishing the book in their Mémoires.

My wife neither typed out the manuscript nor read the proofs, but the book's existence owes more to her encouragement and patient support than to anything else.

Helsinki

October 1959
ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

Page 81, line 6. For 'This inflectional genitive of definition survives to early ME (Romess kineriche, Orm. 9446)' read 'A few traces of this inflectional genitive of definition occur in ME poetry (Romess kineriche, Orm. 9446; — Troies cité, Ch. TC i 100).'

Page 111, lines 19-21. There is reason to assume, with Einenkel, Kellner, and Robinson, that mi live represents an adverbial accusative, although the possibility that it is a petrified survival of an OE instrumental is not to be excluded.

Page 136, line 16. Add 'Occasionally the pronoun of the third person singular has rather indefinite force, as in Ch. GT A Kn. 2519 and 2612-19.'

Page 472, line 2 from the bottom. For '1955' read '1887.'

Page 481, line 4 from the bottom. For 'precent' read 'present.'

Page 537, line 6 from the bottom. The 'to' before 'lie to' should be italicised.

Page 550, line 9. For 'MN' read 'NM.'

Page 550. After line 13 insert the following new paragraph 'The use of the past participle in virtually the same sense as the present participle is also exemplified in pe lede lay lurked a fu longe quyle ('lay lurking,' Gaw. & GK 1195).'

Page 551, lines 9-11. The discussion of the past participle wold belongs rather to the chapter on Form (pages 547-8).

Page 557, line 2 from the bottom. After the example from Ch LGW 1834 add '— pe lede lay lurked a fu longe quyle ('lay lurking, Gaw. & GK 1195). In the last quotation lay lurked seems to be comparable to Chaucer's was go walked (see p. 582), in spite of the different tense of the finite verb.'

Page 673, col. 2, line 7 from the bottom. After 'was go walked' omit the reference to page 558.

Page 702, col. 2, line 2. For 'pres.' read 'pers.'
CONTENTS

(Each chapter is preceded by a detailed list of its contents.)

Preface ........ 5
Abbreviations ....... 11
General Bibliography . . . . . 13
Introductory Remarks . . . . . 41
Gender ........ 43
Number ........ 55
Cases ........ 67
  Genitive ........ 70
Dative, Accusative, and Nominative . . . . . 93
Pronouns ........ 120
  Some Peculiarities of Middle English Pronominal Syntax 120
Pronouns ........ 122
  Personal Pronouns ........ 152
Reflexive Pronouns ........ 156
Demonstrative Pronouns ........ 158
Interrogative Pronouns ........ 180
Relative Pronouns ........ 187
Indefinite Pronouns ........ 208
Articles ........ 229
Adjectives ........ 275
Numerals ........ 290
Adverbs ........ 313
Prepositions ........ 345
Verbs ........ 428
  Personal Verbs ........ 429
  Transitive and Intransitive Verbs ........ 429
  Reflexive Verbs ........ 430
Impersonal Verbs ........ 433
Voice ........ 437
Passive ........ 437
Aspect ........ 445
Mood ........ 451
  Subjunctive ........ 451
  Imperative ........ 473
Tense ........ 479
Present Tense ........ 481
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future Tense</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite Tense</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliaries of the Perfect and Pluperfect</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect Tense</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluperfect Tense</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-expression of the Finite Verb</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Non-finite Forms of the Verb</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinitive</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participles</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Noun in -eth</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary Verbs and Verbal Periphrases</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Be</em></td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periphrasis with <em>Be</em> + -ing (-ende)</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Have, Can, and May</em></td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shall</em> and <em>Will</em></td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Do</em></td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gin</em></td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wurthe</em></td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjections</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>before (L ante)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc.</td>
<td>accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.D.</td>
<td>Anno Domini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adv.</td>
<td>adverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am.</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>Anglo-Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an.</td>
<td>in the year (L anno)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>art.</td>
<td>article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>before Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>British Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>about (L circa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>card.</td>
<td>cardinal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cbg.</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCC</td>
<td>Corpus Christi College, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celt.</td>
<td>Celtic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cf.</td>
<td>compare (L confer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conj.</td>
<td>conjunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan.</td>
<td>Danish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dat.</td>
<td>dative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>def.</td>
<td>definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dem.</td>
<td>demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du.</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>English or east</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ed.</td>
<td>edition, edited (by)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f., ff.</td>
<td>and the following (page[s], etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fris.</td>
<td>Frisian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fut.</td>
<td>future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gen.</td>
<td>genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gk</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gmc</td>
<td>Germanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goth.</td>
<td>Gothic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>High German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>Indo-European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imp.</td>
<td>imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ind.</td>
<td>indicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indef.</td>
<td>indefinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inf.</td>
<td>infinitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interj.</td>
<td>interjection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interr.</td>
<td>interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td>Low German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDu.</td>
<td>Middle Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>Middle English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHG</td>
<td>Middle High German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLG</td>
<td>Middle Low German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midl., Mids.</td>
<td>Midland or Midlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod. E</td>
<td>Modern English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>manuscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSc.</td>
<td>Middle Scots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSS</td>
<td>manuscripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>north</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.</td>
<td>note or noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>north-east</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom.</td>
<td>nominative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>num.</td>
<td>numeral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>north-west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OF</td>
<td>Old French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFris.</td>
<td>Old Frisian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHG</td>
<td>Old High German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>Old Norse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ord.</td>
<td>ordinal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS</td>
<td>Old Saxon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perf.</td>
<td>perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pers.</td>
<td>person(al)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl.</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poss. possessive</td>
<td>s. v. under the word (L sub voce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pple. participle</td>
<td>SW south-west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prep. preposition</td>
<td>Sw. Swedish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pres. present</td>
<td>UL University Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pres. E present-day English</td>
<td>vb verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pret. preterite</td>
<td>W west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prim. primitive</td>
<td>WS West-Saxon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron. pronoun</td>
<td>&lt; sign indicating derivation (A &lt; B = A is derived from B; A &gt; B = B is derived from A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q.v. which see (L quod vide)</td>
<td>rel. relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recipr. reciprocal</td>
<td>S south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refl. reflexive</td>
<td>Sc. Scots, Scottish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rel. relative</td>
<td>Scand. Scandinavian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S south</td>
<td>SE south-east</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se. Scots, Scottish</td>
<td>sg. singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scand. Scandinavian</td>
<td>Sp. Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE south-east</td>
<td>subj. subjunctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sg. singular</td>
<td>*(asterisk) indicates that the following word or expression is not attested in any extant writings and is only a reconstructed form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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(Special bibliographies are printed at the end of each chapter.)

Texts Quoted by Abbreviated Titles, p. 13.
Other Abbreviated Titles, p. 28.
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General studies, p. 32. — Studies in rhythm, p. 33. — Studies in
contamination, p. 34. — Studies relating to individual authors
and texts, p. 34.
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Ælfric Hom. = Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I-II, ed. B. Thorpe,
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Alfred Care = King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's
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¹ Abbreviated titles of works marked as being quoted from
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AV = The Authorised Version of the Bible (1611).
Aynb. = The Ayenbite of Inwyte, ed. R. Morris, EETS 23, 1866.
Bede = The OE Version of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History, ed. Th. Miller, EETS 95-6, 1890-1.


Bk Vices & V = The Book of Vices and Virtues, ed. W. N. Francis, EETS 217, 1942.


Body & Soul = Þe Desputisoun bitwen þe Bodi and þe Soule, ed. W. Linow, Erlanger Beiträge zur englischen Philologie 1, Erlangen 1889.


Chambers = Chambers and Marjorie Daunt, Oxford 1931.

General Bibliography


→ AA = Anelida and Arcite.

→ ABC = ABC.

→ Adam Scr. = Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, his Owne Scribeyn.

→ Astr. = Treatise on the Astrolabe.

→ Bal. Complaint = Balade of Complaint.

→ BD = Book of the Duchess.

→ Bo. = Chaucer’s translation of Boethius’s De Consolatione Philosophiae.

→ Bukton = Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton.

→ Compl. d’Amours = Complaint d’Amours.

→ Compl. Pity = Complaint to Pity.

→ Compl. Lady = Complaint to his Lady.

→ Compl. Mars = Complaint of Mars.

→ Compl. Purse = Complaint to his Purse.

→ Compl. Venus = Complaint of Venus.

→ CT = Canterbury Tales.

→ A Prol. = General Prologue.

→ A Kn. = The Knight’s Tale.

→ A Mil. = The Miller’s Prologue and Tale.

→ A Rv. = The Reeve’s Tale.

→ A Co. = The Cook’s Tale.

→ B ML = The Man of Law’s Introduction, Prologue, and Tale.

→ B Sh. = The Shipman’s Tale.

→ B Pri. = The Prioress’s Introduction, Prologue, and Tale.

→ B Th. = The Prologue and Tale of Sir Thopas.

→ B Mel. = Mélisende.

→ B Mk. = The Monk’s Prologue and Tale.

→ B NP = The Nun’s Priest’s Prologue and Tale.

→ C Ph. = The Physician’s Tale.

→ C Pard. = The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale.

→ D WB = The Wife of Bath’s Tale.

→ D Fri. = The Friar’s Tale.

→ D Sum. = The Summoner’s Tale.

→ E Cl. = The Clerk’s Tale.
General Bibliography

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<tr>
<th>Ch.</th>
<th>CT. E Mch. = The Merchant's Prologue and Tale</th>
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<td>LGW = Legend of Good Women.</td>
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<td>Merciless Beauté = Merciless Beauté.</td>
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<td>PF = Parliament of Fowls.</td>
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<td>Rosem. = To Rosemounde.</td>
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<td>Scogan = Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan.</td>
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<td>→→</td>
<td>TC = Troilus and Criseyde.</td>
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<td>→→</td>
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Cov. Plays = Ludus Coventriae, ed. K. S. Block, EETS ES 120, 1922.


Curtasye = The Boke of Curtasye, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS 32, repr. 1931, pp. 177-205.

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Dicts and Sayings = Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers, ed. C. F. Bühler, EETS 211, 1941.


EE Carols = The Early English Carols, ed. R. L. Greene, Oxford 1935.


E Gilds = English Gilds: the Original Ordinances of More Than a Hundred Early English Gilds, ed. L. and Lucy Toulmin Smith, EETS 40, 1870.


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*Lay FPBk = Lay Folks’ Prayer-book; see Prymer.*


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TGlas = Temple of Glas, ed. J. Schick, EETS ES 60, 1891.
MADSone = My Awen Dere Sone, ed. T. F. Mustanoja, NM IL, 1948, 145-93.
ME Sermons = ME Sermons, ed. W. O. Ross, EETS 209, 1940.
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*Mum & S = Mum and the Sothsegger*, ed. Mabel Day and R. Steele, EETS 199, 1936. Fragment \( R \) quoted by passus and line, fragment \( M \) by line.


*NPassion = Northern Passion*, ed. Frances A. Foster, EETS 145, 1912.


\( \rightarrow \) *RP = Hoccleve's Regement of Princes*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS ES 72, 1897.


\( \ll D = \) Dedication.


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→ HS = Robert Mannyng of Brunne, Handlyng Synne, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS 119 and 123, 1901 and 1903.


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Seven Sages = *The Seven Sages of Rome*, ed. K. Brunner, *EETS* 191, 1933.


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Vices & V = Vices and Virtues, ed. F. Holthausen, EETS 89, 1888.


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Wooing of Lord = The Wohunge of Ure Laverd, ed. R. Morris, Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Series I, 2, EETS 34, 1868, repr. 1905, pp. 269-87.


Wyecilf = The Holy Bible . . . by John Wyctiffe and his Followers, ed. J. Forshall and F. Madden, Oxford 1850.

→ E Wks = The English Works of Wyclif, ed. F. D. Matthew, EETS 74, 1880.


OTHER ABBREVIATED TITLES

AASF B = Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Series B, Helsinki.

AF = Anglistische Forschungen, Heidelberg.

Archiv = Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen (und Literaturen), Brunswick and Berlin.

AS = American Speech, New York.


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*EA* = *Études Anglaises*, Paris.


*EETS* = *Early English Text Society*, Original Series, London.

*EETS ES* = *Early English Text Society*, Extra Series, London.

*EGS* = *English and Germanic Studies*, Birmingham.


*ESELL* = *Essays and Studies on English Language and Literature publ. by the English Institute in the University of Upsala*.

*Essays and Studies* = *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, Oxford.

*E Studien* = *Englische Studien*, Heilbronn and Leipzig.

*E Studies* = *English Studies*, Amsterdam.


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Progress = Jespersen, O., Progress in Language, London 1894.


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MLN = Modern Language Notes, Baltimore.

MLQ = Modern Language Quarterly, Seattle.


General Bibliography


*MP* = *Modern Philology*, Chicago.


*NM* = *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, Helsinki.

*N & Q* = *Notes and Queries*, London.


*PMLA* = *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, Baltimore and Menasha, Wisconsin.


*PQ* = *Philological Quarterly*, Iowa City.


*RBMAS* = *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages* (= Rolls Series), London 1858-.


*SEP* = *Studien zur englischen Philologie*, Halle.


*SMS* = *Studier i Modern Språkvetenskap utgiven av Nyfilologiska Sällskapet i Stockholm*, Uppsala.

*SN* = *Studia Neophilologica*, Uppsala.


*SP* = *Studies in Philology*, Chapel Hill, N. Carolina.

*SSE* = *Swiss Studies in English* (*Schweizer anglistische Arbeiten*), Bern.

*SSF-CHL* = *Societas Scientiarum Fennica: Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum*, Helsinki.
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1 The list includes books and articles which deal primarily with the modern period but where ME phenomena have also received attention.

Brunner II (see p. 28).


Curme, *Syntax* (see p. 29).

Deutschbein, *System* (see p. 29).


Einenkel, *Streifzüge* (see p. 29).

→ *Syntax* (see p. 29).


Jespersen, *Mod. E. Gr.* (see p. 30).

Kellner (see p. 30).

Koch II (see p. 30).

Mätzner II-III (see p. 30).

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STUDIES IN CONTAMINATION


STUDIES RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS AND TEXTS


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→ Urk. (records; see p. 30).

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Meer, H. J. van der, Main Facts Concerning the Syntax of 'Mandeville's Travels' (MS Cotton Titus C xvi), Amsterdam diss. 1929.


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Brugmann, K., Die Syntax des einfachen Satzes, Berlin and Leipzig 1925.

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Havers, Syntax (see p. 29).

Hirt, IE Gr. (see p. 29).


Sommer, Vergl. Syntax (see p. 31).

Frequent reference to other Indo-European languages is recommended to anyone engaged in the study of ME syntax. The writer hopes that the few bibliographical suggestions made in the following will be found helpful for this purpose.

A good general bibliography is the *Linguistic Bibliography* (1939-), Utrecht and Brussels 1949-. A number of languages are also dealt with in *The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies* (1929-), Cambridge 1931- (annotated), and the *Jahresbericht über die Erscheinungen auf dem Gebiete der germanischen Philologie* (1879-), Berlin 1880-. The publication of the last-named bibliography has been much retarded by the war.

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**LATIN**

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There are some useful bibliographies on the subject, such as J. Cousin, Bibliographie de la langue latine 1880-1948, Paris 1951, J. van Ooteghem, Bibliotheca Graeca et Latina, The Year's Work in Classical Studies, and J. Marouzeau and Juliette Ernst, L'année philologique (for the last three see p. 36). Medieval Latin studies are dealt with in The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies
and the Jahresbericht (see p. 36), and in K. Strecker, *Introduction to Medieval Latin*, Berlin-Charlottenburg 1957.

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As for Catalan syntax, reference may be made to the brief discussions in F. de B. Moll, *Gramática histórica catalana*, Madrid
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For all Romance languages see the Linguistic Bibliography, The Year’s Work (see p. 36), and the bibliographical supplements to the Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie.

GERMANIC LANGUAGES


Good general bibliographies are the Jahresbericht über die Erscheinungen auf dem Gebiete der germanischen Philologie, The Year’s Work in Modern Language Studies, and the Linguistic Bibliography; for all these see p. 36. (See also addition on p. 656.)


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O. Behaghel’s Die Syntax des Heliand, Prague and Leipzig 1897, may be consulted for Old Saxon. MLG syntax is treated in C. A.
General Bibliography

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For bibliographies see the Jahresbericht and The Year's Work (see p. 36).

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Frisian. — H. Hanschke's Der Gebrauch der Kasus im Allostfriesischen (Nominativ und Akkusativ), Kiel diss. 1929, is practically the only detailed study devoted to Old Frisian syntax so far.

Scandinavian Languages. — ON syntax is discussed in Hj. Falk and A. Torp, Dansk-norskens syntax i historisk fremstilling, Christiania (Oslo) 1900, and M. Nygaard, Norrøn syntax, Christiania 1905, supplemented by the same author's Bemerkningar, rettelser og supplementer til min Norrøn syntax in Skrifter udg. av Viden-skapsselskapet, Hist.-fil. Klasse, 1916, 5, Christiania 1917.


For bibliographical information see The Year's Work and the Jahresbericht (see p. 36). Useful annual bibliographies appear in Acta Philologica Scandinavica (Copenhagen) and Arkiv för nordisk filologi (Lund). For Swedish see also R. Geete, Fornsvensk bibliografi, Stockholm 1903; two supplements have appeared, one by Geete, Stockholm 1919 (covering the years 1901-17), the other by I. Collijn, Stockholm and Uppsala 1948 (for 1918-44).

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H. Pedersen, Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen II, Göttingen 1913, although dealing with semantics, sheds light on a number of details of Celtic syntax.

Scattered bibliographical information on Celtic syntax can be obtained from J. Pokorny's survey Keltologie in Wissenschaftliche Forschungsberichte, Geisteswissenschaftliche Reihe II, Bern 1953.

SLAVONIC LANGUAGES

A. Hille, Bibliographische Einführung in das Studium der slawischen Philologie, Halle 1959, the Linguistic Bibliography, and The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies (for the last two see p. 36) may be consulted for bibliographical information.
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

TEMPORAL LIMITS OF MIDDLE ENGLISH. — In the present book the term 'Middle English' has reference to a period extending from the 12th century to the end of the 15th.


The assessment of dialectal features in ME syntax is made difficult by the lack of special studies. It seems that this important aspect of ME dialectology has received less attention than it deserves. The matter, however, is complicated by the fact that only a relatively small number of extant ME texts are localisable with any amount of certainty and that even when this is feasible the dialectal and chronological distribution of the texts is very uneven.

SYNTAX, STYLE, AND LINGUISTIC PSYCHOLOGY. — A stylistic background is apparent in all the syntactical constructions discussed in this book. There exists in fact an intimate connection between syntax and style, and it is often impossible to make a sharp distinction between the two. And through

1 A discussion of the stylistic trends prevailing in ME literature is out of the question within the framework of the present book, but a few relevant studies may be pointed out, such as R. W. Chambers, On the Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and his School, reprinted from the Introduction to EETS 186 in 1931 and 1950, G. C. Donald, Zur Entwicklung des Prosastils in der Sachsenchronik, Marburg diss. 1914, Margery Morgan, 'A Talking of the Love of God and the Continuity of Stylistic Tradition in ME Prose Meditations,' RES NS III, 1952, 97-116, A. Olmes, Sprache und Stil der englischen Mystik des Mittelalters, SEP LXXVI, Halle 1933, Ch. S. Baldwin, Medieval Rhetoric and
style syntax is closely associated with the field of psychology, which means that some understanding of human psychology is indispensable in the study of syntax as well as of style.²


An essentially psychological phenomenon is syntactical contamination, i.e., the use of hybrid constructions. A number of studies dealing with contamination in ME are listed on p. 34.
GENDER


Disappearance of Grammatical Gender. — OE has grammatical gender, which means that all nouns are either masculine, feminine, or neuter. It is expressed by means of nominal and pronominal inflection, above all by the strong adjective declension, and by the demonstrative pronouns, including the definite article. Grammatical gender ceases to exist in the course of late OE and early ME, as a result of the levelling of the final vowels under uniform -e, which eventually becomes mute. Thus the chronology of the loss of grammatical gender shows a certain correspondence to the decay of the OE nominal and pronominal inflections.

The development sets in first in the North. Fluctuation in the gender of nouns is noticeable in some Northumbrian texts of the second half of the 10th century (cf. U. Lindelöf, Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki I, Helsinki 1893, 219-44 and 298). In the Lindisfarne Gospels, for example, the OE feminine noun *endung* appears as masculine and the OE masculine noun *stan* both as masculine and neuter. The disappearance of grammatical gender in the North is probably completed soon after the 10th century. The development takes place somewhat later in the Midlands, where the levelling of the final vowels under -e is noticeable after the middle of the 11th century. There is some evidence, however, of the survival of a feeling for grammatical gender in SW Midland texts of the early 13th century. In the A-text of Lawman’s *Brut*, for example, OE *mere* retains its masculine gender (*an
lutel wiht mære Monnen to wundre. He is end-longe Feouwer and sixti munden; he is imeten a bræde Fif and twenti joten; Fif joten he is deop, 21991-7), while in the B-text it is neuter (hit is on lengfe Four and twenti mundes . . .).\textsuperscript{1} And inflected forms of the definite article capable of indicating gender are used down to the end of the 13th century: — ŵe Deneis . . . asailede vaste ŵen toun and wonne him (RGlouc. 6050, MS Cotton Calig.).\textsuperscript{2}

In the East Midlands the development is virtually completed by the beginning of the 13th century. The *Ormulum*, for example, shows few traces of grammatical gender. Masculine gender is applied to child (OE cild, neuter) in this work (menn tokenn hire dere child Annd bærenn himm to kirrke, 7576), but wenchel retains its neuter gender (tacc Ysaac ŵin wenchell, annd snift itt, als itt were an shep, 14666). Neuter gender is also applied to sune (OE sunu, masc.) in annd toc hiss sune sone anan Annd band itt fet annd hande (14673).

In the South, excluding Kent, grammatical gender disappears in the course of the late 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries. *Ancrene Riwe* is relatively advanced in this respect. *Deorling* (OE masc.) and *scheld* (OE masc.), for example, are neuter. In the *Poema Morale* grammatical gender is relatively well preserved (wei 349 is masculine as in OE; dom 167 is also masculine and strete 342 feminine). In the conservative dialect of Kent there are signs of fluctuation in gender about 1200; yet towards the middle of the 14th century (*Ayenbite*) grammatical gender is still partly preserved.

Instances where grammatical gender clashes with the sex of the person ('natural gender') occur in OE and early ME: — wæs

\textsuperscript{1} A. McIntosh (*EGS* I, 1947-8, 77-8) calls attention to the fact that the early ME relative pronoun ŵe, generally used after animate antecedents, occurs in the Katherine Group with a number of inanimate singular antecedents, most of which are grammatically masculine or feminine in OE.

\textsuperscript{2} It is doubtful whether late stereotyped forms like atte nende ('at ŵen ende,' Ch. CT D WB 404; OE ende is masc.) and per qwile (Eng. Gilds 72; OE hwil is fem.) reveal any real feeling for gender.
Gender

... swa hire weoruda helm ... beboden hæfde (Elene 223); — þa on þam ehteoðan dæge hig comon þæt cild ymbsniðan, and nemdon hyne hyþ ñæder naman Zachariam (Gospel of St Luke i 59; ed. J. W. Bright); — ne mithte þat maiden His mone iþolien; Anan swa he lai hire mide Hire liþ heo losede sone (Lawman A 25915-18). The definite article, when it accompanies wif, maiden, woman, or child, usually agrees with the grammatical gender of the noun, but the personal pronouns referring to these nouns seldom do so. It is evident that grammatical gender is felt to have little to do with natural gender (i.e., the sex of the person). The loss of grammatical gender, as pointed out above, is associated with formal factors, i.e., the disintegration of the OE inflectional system. It would be somewhat inaccurate, therefore, to say that grammatical gender is replaced by natural gender in ME.

The result of the disappearance of grammatical gender is that inanimate nouns and those animate nouns which are not associated with the male or female sex are generally neuter in ME, i.e., they assume what is often called common gender. But apart from this general state of things some complicated ME developments affecting the natural gender (sex association) of nouns have to be taken into consideration.

FOREIGN INFLUENCES. — The influence of foreign languages, mainly of Latin and French, plays a considerable role in the development of gender in ME. Not only does a large proportion of ME literature consist of direct translations from Latin and French, but the authors of original works and the scribes who copy the manuscripts are usually fully conversant with these languages. Under such conditions it frequently happens that a noun, even when it is not a direct loan, is assigned the gender of the corresponding Latin or French noun. Thus moon (OE masc.) is usually feminine, presumably under the influence of L luna and F lune: — þe mone wîþ hire muchele maht Ne leneþ non such lyht anahþ (Harley Lyr. vii 19). There are instances, however, where moon keeps its old masculine gender: — þe mone
is so cold in ys own keend þat but iff he were letted þer shuld be no þinge uppon erthe (ME Sermons 324). Sun (OE sunne, fem.) is often masculine (cf. L sol and F soleil), as in the yonge sonne . . . Noon hyer was he (Ch. CT F Sq. 387; cf. also p. 49), star (OE steorra, masc.) is often feminine (cf. L stella and OF estoile), as in the sterre, ydymmed, paleth hir white cheeres (Ch. Bo. ii m 3,3), and world (OE woruld, fem.) is normally neuter or masculine (cf. L mundus and OF munt).¹ World is masculine in the world . . . as the blynde Improprelich he demeth fame (Gower CA Prol. 535). Its occurrence in the following passage as both neuter and masculine reflects the variability of ME linguistic usage with regard to gender: — ne tristow to þis world, hit is ful wo, þe rich he maki þ pover, þe pore rich al so; Hit turnep wo to wel and ek wel to wo — Ne trist no man to þis world whil hit turnip so (Rel. Lyr. XIVth Cent. xxviii 19-22).² Ship (OE scip, neuter) becomes feminine in ME on the analogy of OF nef: — as a ship þat is sayllynge In the wawes and floodes of the see, Whos kerfe nat fownden is whan past is shee (Occl. MP xxiii 201). But the noun is also encountered as a masculine, even at the end of the period. Bird (brid), from OE bridd, masc., is either masculine (in which case OF oisel may have had some contributory influence on it) or feminine (cf. L avis): — whan every brid hath chose his make And thenkth his merthes for to make Of love that he hath achieved (Gower CA i 101); — so that a brid hire hyde mai (Gower CA v 5967). But the choice of gender may simply be due to the fact that the writer happens to have the female or the male bird in mind. For the use of gender with animal nouns see p. 52 below.

¹ The fact that even in later ME (14th century) sun is not infrequently feminine and moon and star are occasionally masculine is difficult to account for. It is hard to think of it simply as a survival of grammatical gender. Might it be due to a survival of the OE literary tradition, as has been suggested?

² The feminine gender of world, found in Shakespeare, does not appear until late ME.
In direct loans foreign influence on gender is self-evident: — *be rose rayleth hire rode* (Harley Lyr. xi 13).

The influence of the Latin Vulgate and other Latin religious writings has been particularly great. To mention only one example, *flesh* (OE neuter) is feminine in the *Ormulum*, obviously under the influence of *L caro*: — *þin æþenn fæsh annand hire fulle wile* (6753). For a further discussion of the influence of Latin religious writings see the section on Christian symbolism and allegory, p. 48.

As for the influence of French, a complicating factor seems to be the general confusion between the masculine and feminine forms of the definite article in Picard and Anglo-Norman, two OF dialects which play a principal role in the influence of French upon Middle English. This confusion is believed to have contributed to the remarkable variation in the gender of ME nouns borrowed from French.

Apart from the probable role played by this particular characteristic of the two OF dialects, there are many other factors which seem to have facilitated, strengthened, supplemented, modified, and even counteracted the influence of foreign languages. Thus a noun denoting the whole species may influence a noun denoting an individual member of that particular species. The masculine gender of *envy* (from F *envie*, fem. < L *invidia*), for example, might be due to the analogy of the French masculine noun *vice* (from L *vitium*). *Pride* (late OE *pryt, pryte*, fem.) continues to be feminine, but is often taken to be masculine, possibly owing to its association with *vice* and with F *orgueil*. Likewise *ire* (L *ira*) and *wrath* (OE feminine) are often masculine, possibly also on account of their association with *vice*, or with L *furor*.¹ There may be associations of other kinds at work, too, such as identity in nature. Thus the feminine gender of *Hesperus* (the eve sterre, Hesperus, which that in the first tyme of the nyght bryngeth forth hir colde arysynge, Ch. Bo. i m 5.11) and *Lucifer* (and *Lucyfer*, the dayes messager, Gan for

¹ For the gender of the Seven Deadly Sins see p. 50.
to rise and out hire bemes throwe, Ch. TC iii 1417) is perhaps due to their identity with Venus, the evening star. *Soul* (OE feminine) can be either feminine or masculine. The survival of the feminine gender might be due to *L anima* and the use of the masculine gender to *L animus*, but the sex of the person whose soul is in question may also play a part in the choice of gender. It must be admitted, however, that it is usually very difficult, often downright impossible, to identify with any amount of certainty the mental association responsible for the gender of a ME noun.

Christian Symbolism and Allegory. — The extent of the influence of Christian symbolism and allegory on the gender of English nouns is difficult to assess. In the course of the 12th and 13th centuries symbolism and allegory develop into a complete and intricate system embracing all phenomena of life and nature. The most important and cherished symbols are those formed around the Church and the persons of Christ and His mother. *Church* (OE feminine) retains its gender in many ME cases, in conformity with *L ecclesia* and OF *eglise*, but its gender may also be influenced by the custom of looking upon the Church as the bride of Christ and the Shulamite of the Canticles. Christ himself is *flos campi*, the flower of the field, which may account for the occasional use of *flour* as a masculine noun. Mary is *stella quae solem dedit*, a star giving birth to the sun (i.e., Christ), and she is also *stella maris*, the star of the sea. This may have strengthened the use of *star* as a feminine noun, although this development seems to be primarily due to the analogy of *L stella* and F *estoile*.

Non-Christian Symbolism. — From the point of view of the holly—ivy tradition it seems to be worth noticing that while OE *ifig* is neuter, ME *ivy* is practically always feminine. *Holly* is masculine, as in OE.

Pagan Mythology. — The influence of pagan mythology makes itself felt in the late 14th century, in works inspired by
the early Renaissance. It is manifest in the gender of certain nouns, which are made to agree with the sex of characters in tales of classical antiquity, of ancient gods and goddesses, etc. Swallow (OE swealwe, fem.) retains its gender, evidently because this bird is identified with Procris; cf. Gower CA v 6003-20 and Ch. TC ii 64. Likewise daisy (OE dægse-eage, neuter) is feminine because this flower is identified with Alceste: — the dayesye, or elles the 'ye of day,' *The emperice and flour of flores alle* (Ch. LGW 184). In addition to L sol and F soleil, the sun-god, Phoebus, may play a part in the gender of sun (OE sunne, fem.), and it is just possible that the habit of applying the feminine gender to moon (OE masculine), although it seems to be primarily due to the influence of L luna and F lune, is strengthened by the association of the moon with Diana. Wind is masculine, as in OE, probably under the influence of L ventus and F vent, but perhaps also on account of its association with Æolus, the god of the winds: — th'ilke wynd . . . *Which thurgh the blastes that he bloweth The mannes fame he overthroweth* (Gower CA i 2409). Love (OE feminine) is either feminine or masculine. The retention of the feminine gender may be due to the connection of the noun with Venus, the goddess of love, and the use of the masculine gender to its connection with Cupid, the god of love.¹ Sleep (OE masculine) retains its gender when associated with Somnus, the god of sleep.

**Allegorical Personification.** — The personification found in works like Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, in the *Romaunt of the Rose* and works written under its influence, in *Piers Plowman, Pearl*, allegorical debates, translations of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de l'âme*, morality plays, etc., does not seem to have any noticeable influence on the gender of ME nouns outside the sphere of this type of literature.

¹ This should not be confused with the use of *love* and *true love* in the concrete sense 'the beloved one.' In this case the gender of the noun, of course, agrees with the sex of the person in question.

4 — Mustanoja
In the works where such personifications occur the wonderful elasticity of the medieval system of allegory and symbolism gives the writers a remarkable freedom in the treatment of their allegorical characters, particularly with regard to sex. To one writer an allegorical character may be feminine, to another masculine. Elde 'old age,' for example, is feminine in RRose, in conformity with its French original: — Elde was paynted after this . . . So feble and eke so old was she (349-53; cf. Viellece portraite . . . Tant estoit vielle et radotee). In PPl. it is masculine: — Elde Þe hore he was in Þe vauntwarde (B xx 94-5).

Attention has been called to the great variation in the gender of vices in ME writings (cf. also p. 47 above). While in PPl. they are nearly always and in Gower's CA for the most part masculine, in Occleve and Lydgate, who follow slavishly the grammatical gender of French works, the majority of these nouns are feminine. In Chaucer the masculines and feminines are roughly equal in proportion. In the short poems of C. Brown's anthologies of ME religious verse almost all the vices and virtues are masculine. The Seven Deadly Sins are all masculine.

The masculine gender of death (OE masculine) in ME probably goes back to the Apocalypse of the Vulgate, where mors is personified as a male (L mors is feminine). Feminine gender is not applied to death until the end of the ME period; this seems to take place under the influence of F la mort.

There are, of course, numerous cases of personification where the choice of gender requires no explanation, like Chaucer's that ilke weddyng murie Of hire Philologie and hym Mercurie (CT E Mch. 1734), which goes back to the De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii of Martianus Capella. For the remarkable use of the personal pronoun (hire, hym), which may be partly due to a desire to indicate the sex of the allegorical character in question, cf. pp. 135-6.

Another self-evident case is pearl. It is ordinarily neuter (so watz hit clene and cler and pure, pat precios perle þer hit was
pygyl, Pearl 228), but when used allegorically for a girl, it is feminine like F perle (perle plesaunte to prynces paye... Ne proved I never her precios pere, Pearl 1-4).

Trend towards Masculine Gender. — A feature which seems to be peculiar to the ME development is a tendency of nouns to assume the masculine gender. Not very much is known about this phenomenon, except that it seems to be at work in a large number of ME nouns, native or borrowed from other languages, with concrete or abstract meanings, which tend to assume the masculine gender without any apparent reason and often in contrast to the gender of the corresponding nouns in Latin and French. The fact, for example, that earth (OE feminine) is usually treated as a masculine in ME has been assigned to this peculiar trend towards the masculine gender. This trend has also been thought to account for the occasional use of nature and youth (OE geoguþ, fem.) as masculines. As pointed out above (p. 48), church is often feminine in ME; its occasional use as a masculine noun has also been ascribed to the general tendency of nouns towards the masculine gender. Geographical names are normally neuter, but Robert of Gloucester occasionally treats them as masculines: — Engeland his a wel god lond; ... þe see geþ him al aboute, he stond as in an yle (3); — þe Deneis vor wraþþe þo asailede vaste þen toun and wonne þim (RGlouc. 6050; a number of MSS read þe toun and hit). Examples of this kind could be multiplied many times over. It is possible that in several cases of this kind the masculine gender will be satisfactorily explained in some other way when enough evidence has accumulated to clarify its development; yet even if this should happen it can hardly be denied that a tendency towards the masculine gender exists in ME.

Animal Nouns. — In one special group of nouns, the names of animals, gender seems to deserve particular attention. ME animal names are sometimes neuter, sometimes masculine or feminine. The following list will give some idea of the distribu-
tion of the masculine and feminine gender in a few common
animal nouns. Beast is masculine except in a few translations
from Latin, where it is feminine and agrees with bestia. Bird
(brid) is usually masculine or feminine (see p. 46, above). Fowl
is masculine; the few recorded cases with hire are ambiguous
because in all of them fowl might be interpreted as a collective
singular. Some of the names of birds are normally masculine,
such as ostrich and raven. The following are feminine: — jay,
lark, nightingale, pie, and swallow (see p. 49, above). Eagle, fal-
con, hawk, sparrow, and swan are either masculine or feminine.
Most of the nouns denoting quadrupeds are masculine, like
bear, chameleon, cony, dog, hound, panther, rat(on), sheep, swine,
and toad. Fox, lamb, and lion are normally masculine; hare
is also usually masculine, while ape, cat, mouse, tiger, and
wolf are either masculine or feminine. Fox, normally masculine,
is feminine in translations from Latin (cf. L vulpes). Among
insects, serpents, etc., butterfly and scorpion are masculine,
while adder, bee, serpent, and worm can be either masculine
of feminine. Fly is feminine. Fish and the individual fish-names
are all masculine.

Concluding Remarks. — To sum up: the gender of nouns
in ME texts is influenced by foreign linguistic usages and
particularly by the general human trend to personify inanimate
objects and abstract ideas — a trend further strengthened
by various traditions, religious, literary, etc. It is worth noticing
that even today popular linguistic usage in England shows
a marked tendency to personify inanimate objects, i.e., to
associate them with the male or female sex. Cf. Elizabeth M.
Wright, Rustic Speech and Folk-lore, Oxford 1913, p. 144.
STUDIES RELATING TO GENDER

Ausbüttel, E., *Das persönliche Geschlecht unpersönlicher Substantiva, einschliesslich der Tiernamen im Mittelenglischen seit dem Aussterben des grammatischen Geschlechts*, SEP XIX, Halle 1904; also Göttingen diss. 1904.

Brunner II, pp. 21-4.


Hoffmann, P., *Das grammatische Genus in Lazamons Brut*, SEP XXXVI, Halle 1909.


Karpf, pp. 4-28.


Meissgeier, E., 'Beiträge zum grammatischen Geschlecht im Frühmittelenglischen, besonders bei Lazamon,' *E Studien* LVI, 1922, 337-77.


Moore, S., 'Grammatical and Natural Gender in ME,' *PMLA* XXXVI, 1921, 79-103.

Gender


Royen, G., *De jongere Veranderingen van het indogermaanse nominale drieklassensysteem*, Leyden diss. 1926.


Sweet II, pp. 42-4.
NUMBER


Bibliography, p. 65.

The ME noun has two numbers, singular and plural. The dual, found in OE and early ME, occurs only with personal and possessive pronouns (see pp. 123, 125, and 157).

Singular implying Common Number. — As in present-day English, the singular frequently occurs where the plural might equally well be used. This is the case, for example, in certain adverbial expressions: — ich singe an eve (Owl & N 323); — wan ich flo niżtes after muse (Owl & N 591; niżtes is a genitive singular). The use of the singular in cases of this kind is probably due to the speaker's unwillingness to associate the noun with any particular number, the idea of number being less strongly felt in the singular than in the plural.

This obviously accounts for the occasional use of the singular form in nouns denoting parts of the body of which an individual has more than one (usually two: hands, feet, eyes, etc.): — and hold hire eze noþerward (Owl & N 144; the Jesus Coll. MS has hire eyen); — ful manye such a man mai jinde Whiche evere caste aboute here yhe (Gower CA i 311); — and to here ere obeie (Gower CA i 510); — his owene hand he made laddres thre (Ch. CT A Mil. 3624); — she falleth hym to fote and swouneth ther (Ch. LGW 1314). In poetry metrical factors may play a decisive part; cf. the peples ere Ther cam no word, but that they mordred were (CT E Cl. 727) and to the peples eres, alle and some (CT E Cl. 941).

As in present-day English, the articleless singular form is
commonly used in certain combinations of two nouns usually implying some degree of polarity and in certain enumerations of more than two nouns: — to childe ne to wife (Poema Mor. 24); — þurh walle and þurh diche (Poema Mor. 41); — he gaf gyfts largelyche... To squyer and to knyzt (Launfal 30); — the hihe tree... With lef and fruit so wel besein (Gower CA i 2884); — he was tormented dai and nyht (Gower CA i 2989); — and brennen hous and iwood (Ch. CT H Mcp. 229). A similar case is wintres and sumeres (Lawman A 20988), where the gen. sg. is used adverbially. Cf. niztes above and present-day American English winters, summers, etc. 'in winter, in summer.' Enumerations of several nouns: — eþlete him were wif end child, suster end feder end broþer (Poema Mor. 150); — and haryeth forth by arm, foot, and to (Ch. CT A Kn. 2726). Cf. Mod. E ear, eye, and mind were alike strained by dread (Ch. Brontë, Jane Eyre); cf. also p. 271. The speaker's unwillingness to associate expressions of this kind with any particular number is probably due to a desire to call attention not so much to the physical persons or things as to their inherent qualities, i.e., to the adjectival aspects of these nouns.

'DISTRIBUTIVE' NUMBER. — In OE and early ME texts the singular is often used for nouns denoting things, qualities, and parts of the body only one of which can be associated with one individual, even when the reference is to more than one person: — luwe we God mid ure heorte (Poema Mor. 305); — of here wombe hie makieþ hie Godd (Vices & V 137). Later in ME the plural begins to gain ground: — or elles reve us ure lives And ure children and ure wives (Havelok 2590-91). This development has been ascribed to the influence of Latin and French (Karpf, p. 37). In Chaucer the plural form occurs more frequently than the singular, although in his poems, as in ME poetry in general, the singular and plural are used almost indiscriminately, to meet the exigencies of rhyme and metre. The same can be said of Gower (e.g. here herdes weren hore and whyte, CA i 2045). As a rule, life and death are singular in Chaucer's works. Chaucer's
Translation of Boethius is particularly illuminating with regard to his use of the singular and plural, especially in those instances where he renders the Latin singular with the plural. Examples: — ye thresten adoun youre dignytes bynethen the loweste thynges ('dignitatem vestram,' ii p. 5. 141); — the names of synghuler men ('fama hominum singularum,' ii p. 7.56). As for the later development, it may be mentioned that in Bunyan the ratio between the singular and plural forms of the noun heart is approximately 1:7 when the reference is to several persons.¹

**Unchanged Plural.** — The dialectal distribution of the various plural endings — primarily a matter of inflection — has been discussed by E. Roedler (see bibliography) and E. Classen, *MLR* XIV, 1919, 84-96.

A case apart are certain nouns in which the plural is identical in form with the singular, particularly when they are preceded by an expression of number or quantity. Many plurals of this kind are doubtless survivals of OE unchanged plurals (instances where the plural form is identical with the singular), like year and month, or of OE plurals ending in -u, -e, and -an, like hundred, lode, and tonne, or of OE genitive plurals, like mile, finge, and wintre; or they are survivals of foreign plurals. But there are a good many other instances which cannot be explained in this way. The unchanged plural after an expression of number or quantity is in fact a linguistic phenomenon of universal occurrence.² It has primarily a psychological back-


² Striking examples of this are provided by other Germanic languages (e.g., German zwei Glas Bier) and Finnish, which shows cases like poikia 'boys' (partitive plural) but viisi poikaa 'five boys' (partitive singular). Cf. also French, where practically the only means of indicating the plurality of the noun in speech is the form of the article or a preceding pronoun or numeral: — la femme, les femmes, une femme, trois femmes (pronounced la fam, le: fam, yn fam, and trwa fam, according to the international phonetic transcription).
number; if the idea of plurality is obvious from the attributive numeral or adjective, no plural ending or other sign is needed to indicate the number of the governing noun (cf. Jespersen, *Mod. E Gr.* II, pp. 50-1).

One group of unchanged plurals consists of nouns denoting number, size, length of time, amount of money, and the like: — pair (zuo vele payre of robes, Ayenb. 258); — couple (cc. copull conyngges, Two Cookery-Bks 67); — score (sex scor and seven yeir lived Sarra, Cursor 3209); — hundred (six hundred of his cnihen, Lawman A 613); — thousand (hund þousunt deade, Lawman A 83; — xxiii þusent of dażen, Gen. & Ex. 4078); — year (thisse seven yeer hath seten Palamoun Forpyned, Ch. CT A Kn. 1452); — winter (a thousand wynter, Gower CA i 1153); — month (i þe vormeste tweolf moneþ, Ancr. 97; — a child of twelf month oold, Ch. CT B Pri. 1674); — night (she was seven nyght oold, Ch. CT B NP 2873); — sith (a thousand sithe, Gower CA ii 17); — foot (jif jote hit is deop, Lawman B 21997; jif joten [dat. plur.] he is deop, A); — fathom (fyve fadorne or sixe, RRose 1393); mile (þe der eorrneþþ an hunndredd mile,Orm. 6969; — þat bote þreo mile þanne it nas,SE Leg. xvii 48); — pound, weight (vyftene pond of gold, Ayenb. 190); — pound, money (zaf for me an hundred punde, Owl & N 1101); — stone (xi. stone cere, Exp. Derby 68); — mark (a thousand mark, Capgr. Chron. 241). A similar case is Chaucer’s a thousand last quade yeer ’a thousand cartloads of bad years’ (CT B Pri. 1628). It has to be borne in mind, however, that these nouns also have regular plural forms with plural endings, i-mutations, etc., and that in many cases the unchanged plural is the less common form even after numerals.

Another group of nouns with unchanged plurals consists of words denoting certain animals, fish, fowl, and quadrupeds, particularly wild animals used as food. This group has been studied by E. Ekwall (see bibliography). The earliest signs of the unchanged plural are found in late OE, but the first unambiguous instances belong to ME. Ekwall, like the NED,
traces the unchanged plural back to the singular form (material noun > collective singular > collective plural). It is possible, however, that the use of the unchanged plural in instances of this kind is to some extent promoted by the analogy of the unchanged plurals after numerals, through cases like *four thousand eel*. A few samples from this particular category: — *xxiiii. stocfis* (Roll of R. of Swinfield an. 1289-90, 17); — *ilc kinnes beste . . . and fugel and fis, wilde and tame, þor gaf Adam ilc here is name* (Gen. & Ex. 220); — *foghul and fiche, grett thing and small* (Cursor 9395, Cotton MS; only a few instances of the unchanged plural *fowl* have been found in ME texts); — *þe fischer seide þat þey hadde isolde þe fische þat were itake* (Trev. Higd. III 67); — *þere is grete plente of samon, of lampreys, of eles, and of of ðer see fisch* (Trev. Higd. I 335); — *Walys, full of goote and kene* (Rel. Ant. II 42 [15th cent.]). In the noun *horse* the unchanged plural remains in use down to the 16th and 17th centuries. The form *horses* occurs in Lawman A (*hundes and havekes and durewurðe horses*, 3561), and this plural form begins to gain ground, although roughly a century later Lawman B alters the same passage into *hundes and havekes and hors mid þe beste*. For this development cf. particularly NED *horse* 1 b. The reason for the final establishment of *horses* as the plural form might be the fact that horses, unlike sheep, are kept singly and are therefore looked upon as individuals (cf. L. Morsbach, Hoops Anniversary Volume,¹ p. 60). A *Manière de Parler* of the late 15th or early 16th century (ed. by Ö. Södergård, *NM* LIV, 1953, 201-25) has a passage of four lines which reads — *Ditez, quant chevax avez vous? Saie howe many hors have ye? — Dame, nous avons vi. chevax. Dame, we have vi. horses.*

In comparison with Mod. E, however, the use of the unchanged plural in nouns of this group is rather limited.

In addition to these two groups there is a third, consisting of nouns miscellaneous in character, with which the unchanged plural is used in the same way, like board (ropes, borde, broste anywhere, RMannyng Chron. 2976), brick (a hondred brek, London City Church 69 [1427-8]), candle (for to meynten iii. candelle brennend, Eng. Gilds 103), and nail (in 400 de sponayl, Durham Acc. Roll 511 [c 1310]). In nouns like board and nail the unchanged plural is common in the 14th and 15th centuries, but becomes rarer in the 16th and very nearly disappears after it. Cf. Ekwall (see bibliography), p. 124. The occurrence of the unchanged plural with kin(d) and manner after words expressing plurality is also worth notice: — alle kynd of fischis (Wyclif Matth. xiii 47); — þer beoþ two doleþ to two manere of men (Ancr. 4). Cf. NED, kin sb.¹ 6 b and kind sb. 14.

PECULIARITIES IN THE USE OF THE PLURAL. — For natural reasons certain nouns like eldre 'parents' and scissors occur normally or exclusively in a plural form: — a dede that don hadde his eldren (PPl. A iii 239); — withoute rasour or sisoures (Ch. HF 690).

The use of the plural form innes and wones (wanes) 'dwelling-place' (cf. Pres. E lodgings) is characteristic of the more northern dialects: — þai saz þaim fra, þat innis þare saint Petir lai (Cursor 19829, Edinb. MS); — na ryn at bares in the way, Bot hald þair innys gif þai will play (Thewis 116, MS J); — se schal in þis newe ze byȝe þayn to my woneþ (Gaw. & GK 2400); — bring him, gif thou may, Out of this wanis (Rauf Coil ear 648). For the treatment of such plurals as singulars see pp. 64-5, below.

As the result of a concretisation of meaning many abstract and material nouns occur frequently in the plural. This is the case, for example, in theOrmulum and Ayenbite and in Chaucer's and Caxton's works. In the Ayenbite and in Caxton, particularly, the plural form is often clearly due to French influence. Examples: — þuss hafeþ þe Laferd Crist Uss don godnessess seffne ('good services,' Orm. D 252); — þe guodes of hap byþ heznesses, richesses, delices, and prosperites (Ayenbite
The plural *amours* 'love' is obviously an imitation of the French and Latin iterative plurals *amours* and *amores*; the earliest quotations come from Middle Scots writings: — *than mycht he weill ask ane lady Hir amouris and his drowry* (Barbour viii 498); — *na giftis gif, na drowreis craif, Na billis of amouris to resaif* (Thewis 76). The native plural *loves* occurs, e.g., in *what nedeth feynede loves for to seke* (Ch. TC v 1848) and in the phrase *for alle loves* (e.g. Cursor 20380, Trin. MS). For a general discussion of the phenomenon, chiefly in the light of German usage, cf. E. Öhmann, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* LXV, 1942, 134-52; another useful general discussion is that by E. Mikkola, *Arctos*, New Series I, Helsinki 1954, 108-122.

Several other nouns occur frequently in the plural, usually with an implication of iterative activity, such as *thews* and *manners* (e.g., *sum ill maneris and thewis That folowis ful women and schrewis*, Thewis 5), although *manner* is also found in the singular (and *knew by hyre manere 'behaviour,'* Ch. LGW 1504; — *beaute, fredom, and manere 'polite behaviour,'* Ch. Compl. Mars 294). The plural *tidings* is common in ME: — *I cum to telle tydinges lele* (Cursor 7798, Gött. MS). *News* is recorded in the 15th century (*I bring The newis glad*, Kingis Quair 179), but the plural form does not become common until the 16th century. As has been suggested in the NED, the form *news* is probably a calque on OF *noveles*1 or medieval L *nova*, rather than a survival of the partitive genitive singular seen in phrases like *what news* (e.g., *what nwez so þay nome*, Gaw. & GK 1407). The noun *prayer* is frequently used in the

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1 The French plural noun *noveles* 'news, tidings' occurs in late ME: — *erle Amerye . . . thes novels hurd at that entreval* (Partenay 45).
The plural form: — ēpe whiche kyng his prayers to God ēpat day were moche worthy ('cuius quidem regis oratio multum ea die apud Deum valuit,' Trev. Higd. VI 349).

The plural of proper names. — Proper names are occasionally found in the plural, with a certain generalising shade of meaning approximating the sense 'comparable to the individual in question:' — levere than be lord of Greces twelve (Ch. TC v 924); — it were ful hard to fynde nowadayes In al the toun Grisildis thre or two (Ch. CT E Cl. 1165).

TREATMENT OF COLLECTIVE NOUNS

General trends. — The tendency to look upon collective nouns like folk as plurals can be traced back to OE. A peculiarity of OE usage is the considerable difference between independent and dependent clauses in the treatment of collectives. Plural construction prevails in dependent clauses. In independent clauses singular construction is the rule; plural construction is found only in texts written after c 1000 A.D. Usage varies in ME, but plural construction gains ground both in dependent and independent clauses. At the beginning of the ME period singular construction predominates in independent clauses (e.g., muchel folc ēper wēs iskezen, Lawman A 19459, and and spac wiþ his dūȝeðe ēp deore him wēs an heore, Lawman A 19588); in late ME collective nouns are treated as plurals as a rule (e.g., ther folk been in presence, Ch. CT E Cl. 1207, and ful erly before ēp day ēp folk uprysen, Gaw. & GK 1126). On the whole, nouns used only figuratively for a multitude (country, court, and the like) are less frequently construed as plurals than are collective nouns originally denoting a group or multitude (folk, people, host, etc.)

Yet all through the ME period there is a great deal of uncertainty concerning the treatment of collective nouns. This is obvious from the not infrequent disagreement in number between the subject and the finite verb. Such cases of dis-
agreement as at nyght was come into that hostelrye Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye (Ch. CT A Prol. 23-4; cf. her bæd Burgred Mierena cyning and his witan Æðelwulf cyning . . ., OE Chron. an. 853), where the subject follows the verb, and alle wyves . . . Withyne her brest hath growyng pacience (Lydg. MP II xxi 484-5), where the subject is remote from the verb, might be interpreted as natural anacolutha, but there are others, like and ye shul understonde that orisouns and preyeres is for to seyn a pitous wyl of herle (Ch. CT I Pars. 1039), suggesting that combinations which the English speaker today takes to be plural in character are at least occasionally construed as singulars in ME. In cases like vor harpe and pipe and fugeles songe Mislikeþ zif hit is to long (Owl & N 343), whereof Supplant and Tricherie Engendred is (Gower CA ii 2840-41), and siþen þe sege and þe assaut watz sesed at Troye (Gaw. & GK 1) at least three different explanations seem possible: either the whole group of subject-nouns is looked upon as a collective singular, or each one of the singular nouns stands separate from the others in the speaker’s mind, or the verb agrees in number with the nearest subject-noun. The uncertainty is also reflected in a case like in on grave thei were leyde, That hende knyghtes both two (Amis & Amil. 2505, Douce MS), with a plural verb and a singular demonstrative.

A few instances are discussed a little more in detail in the following paragraphs.

‘Generic’ Singular. — Instead of repeating a plural noun or pronoun a singular pronoun (personal or possessive) is now and then used — a practice recorded from OE down to c 1600: — fele weren on fote and fele on hors, Wiþ meschief and kepten his cors (KAlis. 3771); — for if there come to an abey to pore men or thre And aske of hem helpe par seinte charité, Unnethe wole any don his ernde, other zong or old, But late him coure al day in hunger and in cold (Evil Times Edw. II 130, Auchinleck MS); — many hote and coragious men wolen not take a pore gentil woman to his wif in Goddes lawe, and make here a gentil womman,
ant save here owene soule, but lyven in þe develis servyce al here lif (Wyclif Sel. Wks I 119). For some ME and early Mod. E examples cf. Margaret Schlauch, Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny (Polska Akademia Nauk) V, 1958, 235-9. A comparable case is þo þat comen hereafter to þe bretherhede as brethren oþer sustren, he shal swer on þe papir tofore þe wardeins þerof for to kepe wel and trewely all þe pointz of þis papir atte here power (Bk London E 47 [1389]). Here he ostensibly stands for the older pronoun of the third person plural, but the accompanying verbal form shal is normally used for the singular in this particular document, the plural form being shul (they shul, etc.).

Plurals Treated as Singulærs. — The plural noun organs, used for the musical instrument, is construed as a singular by Richard Rolle (orgyns, þat is made as a toure of sere whistils, Psalter cl 4), although usually construed as a plural. (Latin organa, the plural of organum, is commonly conceived as a feminine singular.) The singular form organ is once construed as a plural by Chaucer (in rhyme): — his voys was murier than the murie orgon on messe-dayes that in the chirche gon (CT B NP 4041). Several plural nouns are treated as singulars in Chaucer’s works: — in a listes (‘lists for tournaments,’ CT A Kn. 1713); — as a justes, or a tourneiynge (‘a jousting-match,’ CT A Kn. 2720); — a kalendes of chaunge (TC v 1634; from L kalendae or F kalendes 1). Amends is construed as a singular: — til that he have maad a ful amendys [F les amendes] on to the partye of the trepas (Ipswich Domesday [2] 99 [MED]). Pecock creates a new double plural by adding another -s: — twey amendisis or twey satisfacciouns (Reule 216). Referring to the cognizance of a knight the plural colours tends to be regarded as a singular: — an arraunte knyght... wyth suche a coloures uppon his shylde (Malory Wks 515).

A few instances of the modern type seen in news, a bellows,

1 A kalendes of chaunge ‘the beginning of a change;’ but this might be a pun of Chaucer’s on kalends of exchange, tentatively explained in the NED as ‘a money-changer’s reckoning.’
a gallows, a works, and the like occur in late ME, where tidings and gallows, for example, are treated as singulars as well as plurals: — *tiþinges þat was talde* (Cursor 15912, Fairfax MS); — *he shold doo make and to be sette up a galhouse* ('gallows,' Caxton Blanch. 187). Innes and wones 'dwelling-place, lodgings' are plural in form, but treated as singulars; for examples see p. 60.

Combinations of a cardinal number and a noun frequently take the indefinite article, which suggests that they are understood as something like collective singulars: — *is docter was an tuo zer old* (RGlouc. 8861); — *wel ny an eighte busshels* (Ch. CT C Pard. 771). For more examples see p. 265. Other similar cases are Chaucer's *a certeyn frankes* ('a certain number of francs,' CT B Sh. 1524) and *a certeyn yeres* ('a certain number of years,' CT B Mk. 3367). Further relevant combinations are *sevennight, fortnight*, and the like: — *swiche a sorwe he suffred a seve-ni  t fulle* (WPal. 766); — *al a fourten ni  t sike he lay* (GWarw. 4236, Auchinleck MS); — *a twelf-monþe was gan* (Cursor 1917).


**The Number of the Indefinite Pronoun 'Man' ('Men').**

— *Man (men, me)*, used for an indefinite person, is construed as a singular or as a plural. For a discussion of this see pp. 219-22.

**Studies Relating to Number**


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Karpf, pp. 29-46.
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Koziol, Stb., pp. 52-65.
Liedtke, E., Die numerale Auffassung der Kollektiva im Verlaufe
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sala and Stockholm 1913, pp. 147-70.
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CASES

One of the important events in the history of the English language is the decay of the OE inflectional system, which results in the levelling under -e and eventual disappearance of the final vowels. In the northern parts of the country this development is in progress even as early as the 10th century. In the Midland dialects this process of levelling takes place between the 11th century and the early part of the 13th. In the South, with the exception of Kent, the development is in progress in the second half of the 11th century and is completed by the middle of the 13th, while in Kent the old inflectional forms are preserved in part as late as the first half of the 14th century.

The breaking up of the OE system of declension is a far more complicated process than might seem at first sight. There must have been many factors at work and there must have been a great deal of interaction between the causes and results of this development. A number of theories have been built up around the subject, and even at the present moment it remains a matter of controversy. It would be impossible to discuss here all the hypotheses that have been put forward so far; for the most important of them reference may be made to the works listed at the end of the present chapter. It may be mentioned, however, that there are scholars who believe that the levelling of the case-endings is due to, or at least promoted by, the increasing fixity of word-order in OE and the appearance of new periphrastic forms of expression, but the opposite view, that the periphrases and word-order gained significance only after the decay of the case-endings had created a need for new means of linguistic expression, has even more adherents. The problem has been discussed repeatedly by W. Horn and other members of his school, who pay particular attention to the interaction
of form and function. Elaborating ideas expressed by H. Sweet (Sweet I, p. 7), Horn finds that the inflectional endings which have real functions develop differently from those which have weakened functions or no function whatever. Endings with important functions show a greater resistance to levelling and dropping than those with weakened functions and those with no function at all. On the other hand, endings not distinctive enough tend to disappear, and this is true also of endings overloaded with functions. According to one view the chief reason for the appearance of new analytical means of expression is that the progress of civilisation as such creates a need for new forms of expression. And there are scholars who believe that when two peoples speaking different languages or dialects are in permanent contact with each other, the grammatical structure of the languages tends to become simplified, and that the existence of large Scandinavian settlements in Anglo-Saxon Britain and the extensive use of French in England after the Norman Conquest must therefore have greatly promoted the simplification of the English inflectional system.

But whatever the causes and mechanism of the decay of the OE inflectional endings may have been, this development brought about a striking change in the structure of the English language. The functions of the old case-endings were largely taken over by prepositions and word-order. The language, so to say, assumed a far more analytical appearance than it had in OE. Another consequence of the simplification of the inflectional system was that it facilitated the introduction of new foreign elements into the language.

With the exception of the earliest part of the period, the ME case-system is essentially the same as that of present-day English, where, except for certain pronouns, the nominative, accusative, and dative are alike in form. This means that with regard to form there are only two separate cases left, the genitive and the so-called common case. As regards function, the ancient distinction is better preserved. In the following account, where
the ME cases are discussed essentially from the functional point of view, the traditional distinction between the three cases, the nominative, accusative, and dative, is observed as far as it is possible.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE GENERAL USE OF THE CASES


—*—* 'Form und Funktion: Aufgabe und Methode der englischen Formengeschichte,' *Die Neuern Sprachen*, Beiheft XXXII, 1939, 1-11.

Hübener, G., 'Das Problem des Flexionsschwundes im Angelsächsischen,' *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* XLV, 1921, 85-102.

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—*—* *Mod. E Gr. VII*, pp. 219-81.

Lehnert, M., 'The Interrelation between Form and Function in the Development of the English Language,' *ZAA* V, 1957, 43-56.

Luick, K., 'Sprachkörper und Sprachfunktion,' *E Studien* LVI, 1922, 185-203.

Marchand, H., 'The Syntactical Change from Inflectional to Word Order System and Some Effects of this Change on the Relation Verb-Object in English,' *Anglia* LXX, 1951, 70-89.

Morsbach, L., *Grammatisches und psychologisches Geschlecht im Englischen*, 2nd ed., Berlin 1926 (deals also with the cases).

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**GENITIVE**

*General considerations*, p. 70.

**FORM**

*Inflectional Genitive.* — Genitive singular, p. 71. — Genitive plural, p. 73. — Accumulation of inflectional genitives, p. 73.  

*Group Genitive*, p. 78.

**USE**

*Genitive with Nouns.* — Partitive genitive, p. 79. — Genitive of description or of quality, p. 80. — Genitive of definition, p. 81. — Genitive of emphatic subjective description, p. 82. — Genitive of place, p. 83. — Appositive expressions of measure and the like, p. 84. — Appositive *kin* and related phrases, p. 85.

*Genitive with Adjectives*, p. 87.

*Genitive with Verbs*, p. 87.

*Adverbial Genitive.* — Adverbial genitive of time, p. 88. — Adverbial local genitive, p. 89. — Other survivals of the OE adverbial genitive, p. 90. — Adverbial genitives first recorded in ME, p. 91.

*Bibliography*, p. 92.

**General Considerations.** — In ME the use of the genitive is more limited than in OE, although all the main types of OE genitival usage — the genitive governed by a noun (attributive or adnominal genitive), by an adjective, or by a verb, and the adverbial genitive — are found in ME, too. On the other hand, some aspects in the ME use of the genitive have no counterpart in OE. The most striking feature of ME usage is a strong tendency to replace the inflectional genitive by periphrastic constructions, above all by a periphrasis with the preposition *of.*
A full discussion of the various endings and endingless forms of the genitive is not possible in a work like the present one where attention can be paid only to such morphological features as have an obvious bearing upon contemporary syntactical usage. The following account of the dialectal distribution of the genitive forms is based primarily on O. Knapp's article (see bibliography).

GENITIVE SINGULAR. — In the North the ending -s is the rule, although some traces of the old vocalic or weak genitive are found in the texts available for study (no northern texts have been preserved from the early part of the ME period). In the East Midlands practically the same stage of development is reached by 1200 (Ormulum), the few s-less genitives occurring in more or less stereotyped combinations, such as helle pitt, kirrke dure, sawle sallfe, and the like. The ending -s is the rule in the London English of Chaucer and in Caxton; the old weak ending is found only in more or less petrified expressions (his lady grace, mi ladi consailer, oure lady evyn, etc.; cf. present-day Lady Chapel, Lady Day, ladybird, etc.). In the NW Midlands -s becomes generalised by the 14th century at the latest; in the SW Midlands this ending is established in all masculines at an early date, but in the feminines the usage remains variable for a long time. In the South (including Kent) the ending -s prevails in the masculines and the s-less form in the feminines. This difference is preserved even in later ME (e.g., in the 14th-century Ayenbite of Inwyf).\(^2\)

In nouns of relationship ending in -r (father, mother, sister,

\(^1\) The genitive boce of the OE athematic feminine noun boc survives in and if you do this buke biddynge, It sall the voyle to thy livynge (MADSone 9).

\(^2\) Cf. J. K. Wallenberg, The Vocabulary of Dan Michel's 'Ayenbite of Inwyf,' Uppsala diss. 1923, p. 120, note 1.
brother) the s-less genitive is used in all dialects, though not invariably: — thi brother wif (Ch. TC i 678).

The use of the s-less genitive in many proper names and other personal nouns is mainly northern: — the king hand, the king hert (Cursor 5410 and 5903); — sent Robert bok (Cursor 9516); — my lord of Gloucester gud grace (York Records 139, quoted by Knapp); — pharao fader (Cursor 5101); — the Byschope man (Paston I 78 [1449?]); — in oure unkill name (Paston I 161 [1450?]); — in this Herry dayes (Capgr. Chron. 134); — on the queen side (Capgr. Chron. 195).

The influence of Latin feminine genitives is obviously responsible for instances like sannte Marze sibb (Orm. 307), for Marie love of hevene (PPl. B ii 2), and Rome king (Orm. 8289). Cf. L sanctae Mariae, Romae.

French influence seems to be behind constructions like the temple Salomon (RGlouc. 8492; of Salomon, MSS UL Cbg. and Mostyn); — the table Moyses (Cursor 10225); — that corpus Madrian (Ch. CT B Mk. 3082); — al the gold Octovien (Gower CA v 4731); — cros Kryst (Gaw. & GK 762). Cf. OF la feste saint Urbain, le fiz Jon, etc. But for he did Harald body do drawe up (RMannyng Langtoft 54), rendering le cors le ray Harald de terre fist lever (Langtoft I 376), cf. sent Robert bok, etc., above.¹

The interesting question whether the first member of combinations like chirche dore, dore bem, helle houndes, and sterre lyht is to be understood simply as an s-less genitive or whether the attributive use of the nominative must also be taken into consideration as a contributory influence has not been elucidated in a fully satisfactory way so far, in spite of the large number of treatises in which it has been discussed. Cf. particularly N. Bergsten (see bibliography), pp. 100-119, E. Ekwall, 'The S-less Genitive in Early Modern English,' Minnesskrift Axel Erdmann, Uppsala and Stockholm 1913, pp. 53-67, and H. Düringer (see

Düringer, echoing earlier opinions, thinks that the first member of the combination, in spite of the absence of the -s ending, was recognised as a 'positional genitive' from the word-order.

**Genitive Plural.** — In the plural ME usage is more variable than in the singular. The ending -s, obviously owing to the analogy of the gen. singular ending in -s, is first generalised in the North and North Midlands, but even in these areas it does not entirely supersede the old s-less ending; in *Ormulum*, for example, -s is still a minority ending. In the South the genitive plural in -s is infrequent in early ME, but becomes gradually commoner, particularly in personal nouns. In Kent the -s ending is practically non-existent all through the period, although it predominates in the adjoining SE Midland area. The ending -en(e), found in the W Midlands and particularly in the South (including Kent), is a survival of the OE weak ending -ena, used even for strong masculines and neuters in Northumbrian and late West Saxon; this is relatively common, e.g., in the Digby and Brussels MSS of Aldhelm glosses (late 11th century); cf. A. Napier, *OE Glosses*, Oxford 1900, pp. 41-2, note on line 1557. This ending remains long in use (e.g., *besten blod* 'blood of beasts,' Purity 1446; — *nakryn noyse* 'the noise of drums,' Gaw. & GK 118 and Purity 1413), usually with a strong adjectival colouring. In *Piers Plowman* and a number of other works it is fairly common for the subjective genitive (e.g., *lollarene lyf*, C vi 31; cf. also Chaucer's *myn eyen sight*, CT D Sum. 2071), but rare for the objective genitive. When it occurs as an objective genitive, it has no pronouncedly adjectival character (e.g., *for no lوردene love*, PPl. C ii 95). Cf. A. Mitchell, *LMS* I, 1937-47, 484; cf. also Simonne d’Ardenne’s edition of *Seinte Juliene*, Liège and Paris 1936, pp. 208-10.

**Accumulation of Inflectional Genitives.** — Accumulations of inflectional genitives are occasionally seen, as in *domess dægess starrke dom* (Orm. 3810) and *my moodres sires soule* (Ch. CT E Mch. 2265).
PERIPHRASIS WITH OF

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT. — In ME, by the side of the old inflectional genitive, genitival relations are in an increasing measure expressed by means of a periphrastic construction with the preposition of (luve of wepmon, etc.). This practice goes back to late OE. Radiating from the original local meaning 'out of' of this preposition, a number of new uses emerge which differ little or not at all from many functions of the inflectional genitive (genitive of origin, genitive of material, partitive and possessive genitive, etc.). The process is comparable to the development of the Latin preposition de into a favourite genitive equivalent; the periphrasis with de is now the normal form of the genitive in the Romance languages.1 Parallel prepositional constructions are found in the Scandinavian languages (av, af) and in German (von). The development of OE of into a genitive equivalent is a gradual process, and although the preposition is not uncommon in genitival function in Ælfric's writings, its regular use for the possessive genitive does not become established until the 12th century.

The earliest part of the ME period is characterised by a fairly abundant use of the inflectional genitive as against the of-periphrasis, even in partitive use (e.g., ælf fiifti wimmen... hefden mid wordes ower an awarpen 'si quinquagenae... feminae verbis unum e vobis evicissent,' Kath. 1277). Later in the ME period the roles of the two types of genitive are reversed. Thus for mines drihtenes luve in Lawman A (19728) becomes for love of mine drihte in Lawman B. This does not, however, prevent the B-version of Lawman’s Brut from using a partitive genitive like one blodes drope 'a drop of blood' (7650) where the A-text has an appositive construction ænne drope blod.

Some idea of the relative frequencies of the two types as attributive genitives can be obtained from the following tables

1 A recent discussion of this development is V. Väänänen, 'La préposition latine de et le génitif: une mise au point,' Revue de Linguistique Romane XX, 1956, 1-20.
drawn up according to L. Stahl (see bibliography), p. 18, and Ch. C. Fries, *Am. E Gr.*, p. 74. (For the occurrence of the two types of genitive in connection with adjectives and verbs see below pp. 87-8.)

**OCCURRENCE OF THE INFLECTIONAL GENITIVE AND THE OF-PERIPHRASIS IN ME**

(Stahl, p. 18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Personal (Animate) Nouns</th>
<th>Inanimate Nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inflectional Genitive</td>
<td>Periphrasis with of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inflectional Genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. &amp; Exodus</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cursor, Cott. MS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gött. MS</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairf. MS</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trin. MS</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Havelok</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ayenbite</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pearl</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
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<td>Chaucer, verse</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>247</td>
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<td>prose</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>412</td>
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</table>

**TABLE 2**

(Fries, p. 74, based on a selection of OE and ME prose texts 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Inflectional Genitive</th>
<th>Periphrasis with of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th cent. (end) — 10th cent. (beg.)</td>
<td>99.5 %</td>
<td>0.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later 10th — beg. of 11th cent.</td>
<td>99 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th cent.</td>
<td>98.8 %</td>
<td>1.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th cent.</td>
<td>93.7 %</td>
<td>6.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th cent. (first half)</td>
<td>68.6 %</td>
<td>31.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th cent.</td>
<td>15.6 %</td>
<td>84.4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Quoted by Fries from an unpublished doctoral dissertation by R. Thomas, University of Michigan 1931.
For the sake of comparison it may be mentioned that in a travel book published in England in 1952 some 95 per cent of the genitives were periphrastic and only some 5 per cent inflectional.

We find that down to the 13th century the use of the periphrastic genitive makes slow progress, but increases rapidly in the course of the 13th and 14th centuries. The development is more dramatic in prose than in poetry, as seen, for example, from Chaucer's works. Usage varies, however; it has been found, for example, that in the *Ormulum* the proportion between the inflectional genitive singular and the periphrastic genitive is roughly 1:1 (M. Lehnert, *Ormulum*, pp. 22 and 26). On the whole, however, it is impossible to say anything very definite about the dialectal distribution of the periphrastic and inflectional genitives because of the uneven distribution of verse and prose texts, a circumstance which makes comparison difficult. It is worth noticing that the *of*-periphrasis is commoner in the plural than in the singular.

**PERSONAL AND NON-PERSONAL NOUENS.** — The Mod. E tendency to restrict the use of the inflectional genitive to personal nouns is a continuation of an old tradition. Originally this is a distinction not in form but in position. In OE the inflectional genitive can be placed not only before but also after the governing noun. For genitives of proper names and other personal nouns the front-position prevails throughout the OE period,¹ and when the postpositive genitive, used mainly of non-personal nouns, is later replaced by the *of*-genitive, the natural result is that the inflectional genitive comes to be preferred in personal nouns and the periphrastic one in non-personal nouns. This is the prevailing principle in *Ancrene Riwle* and the majority of other early ME works, and it becomes even more pronounced towards the end of the period (cf. table 1, p. 75). But there are exceptions to this usage. In *Ormulum*, for

example, there is nothing to suggest that the inflectional genitive is preferred in personal nouns, nor is the distinction very clear in another early E Midland (SE Midl.) text, Genesis and Exodus (see table 1, p. 75). In a third E Midl. text of a somewhat later date, Havelok, the functional differentiation is very clear.

The inflectional postpositive genitive disappears from the living language at the beginning of the ME period, its functions being since carried out by the of-periphrasis. This development and the possible reasons for it will be discussed in Vol. II of the present work.

FOREIGN INFLUENCE. — There is considerable variance of opinion concerning the influence of the French preposition de on the development of the ME genitival periphrasis. There are grammarians who deny French influence altogether. G. O. Curme, for example, ascribes the spread of the construction simply to 'the strong concrete force of of, originally meaning 'from,' which indicated more graphically the ideas of separation, source, and origin than the simple genitive' (Syntax, pp. 74-5).

In stating that it is doubtful whether of might have come independently to be a substitute for the genitive, the editors of the NED probably exaggerate the part played by French de in the development of the English construction. On the other hand, what is known about of in ME does not speak for the view that its extensive use as a genitive equivalent during this period is due exclusively to a spontaneous native development. It is worth noticing, for example, that the genitival of-periphrasis is particularly common in works written under strong French influence. Another striking fact is that with loanwords the genitive is usually periphrastic. It may also be mentioned that H. Price's study of some other prepositions (Foreign Influences on ME, Univ. of Michigan Contributions in Modern Philol. No. 10, Ann Arbor 1947), based on the collections of the MED, led him to the conviction that in the ME use of preposi-
tions foreign influence plays a far more significant part than has been assumed.

SUMMARY. — Summing up it may be said that the preposition of develops into a genitive equivalent at a time when the formal and functional decay of the OE declensional system had created a need for new, clearer, and more forceful means of expression and when prepositional phrases are generally replacing old case endings. It is unnecessary to ascribe the rise of the new periphrastic genitive to the influence of foreign models. As shown by the parallel case of Latin de, certain local prepositions have a natural tendency to develop uses similar to those of the genitive case. In the course of the ME period, however, the use of the genitival of-periphrasis seems to be strengthened by the influence of French de, possibly also by the de of medieval Latin texts, although this is less obvious.

GROUP GENITIVE

Strictly speaking the construction here referred to as the group genitive is one of those which will be discussed in Vol. II of the present work; yet there are reasons for including a brief discussion of it in the present volume, too.

In OE, if the genitive is followed by another noun in apposition, the noun governing the genitive is usually placed between the genitive and the noun in apposition (Ælfredes sweostor cyninges; Malcolmes cynges dohter of Scottande) — a construction appropriately termed 'split genitive' by E. Ekwall. In late OE the noun in apposition occasionally drops its genitive ending (on Æðelhide gewitnysse, hys agen wif), and in ME it usually occurs in the nominative (or 'common') case (Þuruh Julianes heste þe amperur, Ancr. 109). A variant type, with reversed word-order, is the Grekes hors Synon (Ch. CT F Sq. 209).

The split genitive is common all through ME. In Piers Plowman, for example, only this type of group genitive is found. The type kyng Pandiones fayre daughter (Ch. LGW 2247)
is of less frequent occurrence. In ‘double’ personal names (Christian name plus surname) the split genitive is not un­
common between the late 13th and mid-15th centuries.

The present-day English type of expression, the king of France’s mother, is first recorded in Chaucer’s works, where, however, the usual type is the split genitive.

Examples of the split genitive: — Ludes sunen kinges (Law-
man A 7146; Ludes sones þes kinges, B); — thes deovles bridel Belial of helle (Kath. 1905); — John de Inefeld, Mannekynnes man the armurer (Cal. Pat. Rolls an. 1318); — Harald þe kinges sone Knout (RGlouc. 6640); — for Marie love of hevene (PPl. B ii 2; for the form Marie see p. 72); — for Marie sone þat mayde (Ferumbras 753); — Seys body the kying (Ch. BD 142); — the kying Priamus sone of Troye (Ch. TC i 2); — heere endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe (Ch. CT D).

Examples of the modern type: — that was the god of slepes heyr (Ch. BD 168); — the grete god of loves name (Ch. HF 1489); — god of loves servantz (Ch. TC i 15). It is worth notice, however, that all these early instances of the modern construction occur in poetry.

USE

GENITIVE WITH NOUNS

Partitive Genitive. — In addition to some more or less stereotyped phrases, like those with what (e.g., whatt littless, littless whatt, summwhatlittless, Orm. 2504, 6952, 4681, hwat dostu godes among monne, Owl & N 563, and what nowe, Gaw. & GK 1407), the inflectional partitive genitive is found in the early part of the ME period after numerals which govern a partitive genitive in OE: — ȝef fifti wimmen . . . hefden mid wordes ower an awarpen (‘si quinquagenae . . . feminae verbis unum e vobis evicissent,’ Kath. 1277); — fele hundred wintre; a þusend wintre (Poema Mor. 208 and 352). The of-periphrasis is used all through the period: — fij and sixti hundred of heþene monnen (Lawman
80 Cases

A 18257); — of ladies foure and twenty (Ch. CT D WB 992); — of smale whieles twelve (Gower CA i 1134). For the use of apposition in cases of this kind see pp. 84 and 291.

A construction with of often inaccurately referred to as an elliptical partitive genitive occurs in OE (Bede, etc.; Wülfing II, p. 447, quotes instances from Ælfric) and in ME. Singular: — hwa-se ever wule habbe lot wiþ ðe of ði blisse, he mot deale wiþ ðe of ðine pine on eorðe (OE Hom. i 187); — of ðan watere he dronc (Lawman A and B 19796); — he set of one visce (Lawman A 31771); — ure Loverd sulfe . . . ziveð ham of his strengðe (Ancr. 71); — ankeris and heremytes . . . Shuln have of myn almesse (PPl. A vii 134); — ther maystow seen of deynteuous vitaille (Ch. CT E Mch. 265). Plural: — he sende of his mannan to ðisum lande (OE Chron. an. 1087); — and sente out of his men . . . For to seke Gamelyn (Gamelyn 701); — tho saugh I . . . Stonden . . . Of hem that maken blody soun (Ch. HF 1239); — of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde (Ch. CT A Prol. 146). The occurrence of the construction in Chaucer's works has been ascribed to French influence, but it is safer to regard it as a continuation of the earlier English usage. The possibility, however, is not excluded that French influence (cf. OF perdus i avez de voz homes), as in many other instances, has promoted and modified the use of the English partitive construction.

Genitive of Description or of Quality. — The genitive of description (or of quality), inflectional and periphrastic, is used more freely in ME than in Mod. E. Instances of its attributive use: — any lyves creature ('living being,' Ch. CT A Kn. 2395; also Gower CA iv 382); — lyves body (Ch. HF 1063); — shames deeth ('shameful death,' Ch. CT B ML 819 and LGW 2064; also Cursor 1619 and Morte Arth. 3); — my worldes blisse ('bliss in this world,' Gower CA i 1771); — deþes wunde ('deadly wound,' KAlis. 2369; also Gower CA iii 2657); — þe lefdi of chastete (Ancr. 26); — Dyane of chastitee (Ch. CT A Kn. 1912); — lucre of vileynye (Ch. CT B Pri. 1681); — this world of prees (Ch. CT B Mk. 3327). An inflected genitive of quality may also be used
Genitive

predicatively: — schrift  ouh to beon willes ('voluntary,' Ancr. 153); — y nolde þe lete lyves bee (Ferumbras 3685). For the adverbial use of lives and willes see pp. 89 and 90.

Genitive of Definition. — The genitive of definition, indicating virtually a sense-apposition between two nouns, is infrequent in OE (Egypta folc, Rome burh). This inflectional genitive of definition survives to early ME (Romess kineriche, Orm. 9446). The peculiar his-genitive (see p. 159) is found in the B-text of Lawman (Winchestre his town, 19630). The of-periphrasis is first attested in the early 12th-century entries of the OE Chron.: — se burh of Lincolne (an. 1123); — þone eorldom of Flandres (an. 1127); — þone ærcebiscoprice of Besençun (an. 1127). A. T. Bodtker, Crit. Contributions I, p. 26, believes that the use of of in instances of this kind originates in the general tendency of this preposition to supplant the local prepositions on and at; he refers to the OE Chron., which shows numerous instances like to þam abbotrice æt Abbandune (an. 1043) and se burch on Gleaweccastre (an. 1122). It is not impossible that the genitive of definition is due to foreign influence. The type urbs Romae appears in classical Latin at the end of the republican era. The Vulgate contains cases like in Jordanis flumine (Mark i 5), and the type civitas Wintonie is current in the Latin records of medieval England. A promoting factor may have been the influence of the corresponding French usage (cf. mon ostel est en mi la vile de Paris, Harley Lyr. xix 18).

In ME place-names the of-genitive of definition is common: — þe mount of sein Michel (RGlouc. 4161); — þe ryver of Themys (Greg. Chron. 104).

Later in ME the genitive of definition may also occur outside place-names. Chaucer's drynkes of medycines ('haustibus,' Bo. ii p 1, 40), for example, is probably a genitive of definition.

In late ME the genitive of definition is occasionally found even with personal nouns: — þai fonde þer a fre faire to beholde, Evyn of his owne daughter, Exiona was callid ('they found a lady lovely to look at, who in fact was his own daughter,' Destr. 6 — Mustanoja
Troy 1387); — the Grekes by þere gydes of the great traytouris entrid into Yt lon ('with the help of their guides, who were notorious traitors,' Destr. Troy 11957); — tweyn pylgrymys of Duchemen ('two pilgrims, who were Germans,' MKempe 67);
— woman, se thy sone of Seynt John þe Evangelist ('your son, St John,' MKempe 193). It is tempting to see in these cases a reflection of French influence; cf. Froissart’s son signeur de pere and Mod. F il i eut plusiers soldats de blessés. But it is also possible that they have — partly at least — a more native background. They might have their prototypes in early uses like hadden hii anne hevedling of on he ibe ore man (Lawman B 9987; hæfden he to heretoze enne hæh iborene mon, A) and curen heom enne king of ane cnihle þe wes kene (Lawman A 6889).

A further development of the genitive of definition with personal nouns is seen in the genitive of emphatic subjective description, discussed in the following paragraph.

Genitive of Emphatic Subjective Description. — An advanced stage in the development of the genitive of definition with personal nouns — discussed in the preceding paragraph — is seen in cases like here is a faire body of a woman ('a beautiful woman,' La Tour-Landry 38) and he was a ryght good knyght of a yonge man (Malory MD 117). A comparable case is, perhaps, swich fairnesse of a nekke ('such a beautiful neck,' Ch. BD 939).

It is possible, however, that expressions of this kind, only a few of which are recorded in late ME, owe a great deal to the OF type seen in chel diable de bareil, la lasse de povre fame, etc. The OF construction, which is not common, may be a survival of the colloquial Latin type scelus viri, flagitium hominis, and monstrum mulieris, which occurs in the works of Plautus, and quaedam pestes hominum, recorded by Cicero. The construction remains uncommon in early Mod. E. It is difficult to say whether the popular modern genitive of emphatic subjective description represented by expressions like a devil of a man, a rascal of a man, a fine figure of a man, a dragon of a governess, and a hell of a mess is a direct continuation of the
late ME type or not. A few instances of the construction have been recorded in Elizabethan writings,¹ but it does not become finally established until the second half of the 17th century, soon after it becomes fashionable in France (le diable d’homme, sa canaille de mari, etc.). By this time the construction has acquired some new features; it is now used more than before for expressing abstract ideas. The Latin and Romance types have been studied by A. Lombard, SMS XI, 1931, 147-215, and J. Svennung, Anredeformen, Acta Soc. Litt. Hum. Reg. Upsaliensis XLII, Uppsala 1958, pp. 112-125. The English construction has been discussed by Einenkel in the Furnivall Miscellany (see bibliography), pp. 68-75.

Genitive of Place. — The independent use of the inflectional genitive to indicate a place (St Paul’s; at my mother’s) is first attested in names of churches and religious houses. The earliest recorded instances date from the end of the 13th century: — he was at Seint Poules (SE Leg. xxvii 91); — at Sein Swithines he was ibured (RGlouc. 6639); — is moder . . . wonede at Seinte Petres in a nonnerie (RGlouc. 2728); — at Kildar he was aslawe . . . And at þe Frere Prechors ibured at Kilkenni (RGlouc. 10809); — he . . . with Schyr Jhone the Cumyn met In the Freris, at the hye awter (Barbour ii 33); — this nyght at soper I was with my maistresse your wyff at my maistresse Cleres (Paston Suppl. 15 [1448]). The construction is found in many Indo-European languages, such as MDu., OHG (zi selben sancti Gallen, Otfrid 154), ON (at ins fróða Fjalars, Hávamál 14, 3), Latin (ad Dianae ‘at the temple of Diana,’ Terence Adelphi 582), Greek, and even Sanskrit. Cf. A. E. H. Swaen (see bibliography); cf.

¹ No certain instances occur in Shakespeare’s works (the baby of a girl, Macb. III iv 106, is perhaps to be understood as ‘a girl’s doll’). The NED (of 24) quotes an instance from Hakluyt and another from Nashe. There are instances also in Ben Jonson (your parcel of a soldier, Every Man in his Humour III iii, and o thât I were so happy as to light on a nupson, now, of this justice’s novice, ibid. IV iv), kindly communicated to the present writer by Miss Sinikka Mollanen.
Appositional expressions of measure and the like. —
After words expressing measure (distance, length of time, weight, number, etc.) apposition occurs in many cases where one would naturally expect a partitive genitive: — *he . . . lette ænne drope blod* (Lawman A 7650; *one blodes drope*, B); — *of ten quarter oten* (PPl. A iv 45); — *a dozeine chickens* (PPl. B iv 37); — *a peire gloves* (PPl. B v 256); — *many score tymes* (PPl. B iii 122); — *no morsel breed* (Ch. CT B Mk. 3624); — *a thousand last quade yeer* (Ch. CT B Pri. 1628); — *a paire scheres* (Gower CA v 5691).

In instances of this kind apposition instead of the partitive genitive is not uncommon in the 13th and 14th centuries. The competition of the periphrastic genitive with *of*, however, reduces its use drastically towards the end of the period and causes it largely to disappear. In texts where the *of*-periphrasis is much commoner than the inflectional genitive, such as the *Ayenbite* and Chaucer's prose, genitival apposition is not found at all in expressions of measure, and it is very rare in Caxton.

A somewhat similar construction is seen in instances like *with smale foules a gret hep* (Ch. BD 295), *nyghtyngales a ful gret route* (RRose 909), and *beneth them sat clarkes a great rout* (Lydgate MP 104 [Halliwell]).

The appositive type seen in superlative expressions like *pre þe noblest ryveres of al Europe* (Trev. Higd. I 199) is discussed on pp. 299-300. (The corresponding singular type *oon the beste knyght* and the hybrid constructions seen in instances like *oon the greteste auctour that men rede*, Ch. CT B NP 2984, are discussed on pp. 297-9.)

Similar constructions occur with pronouns like *some* and
any: — summe heo sæten stille (Lawman A and B 25121); — so ðat some ðe messagers to kermerdin come (RGlouc. 2718; in this use some has occurred since OE); — affermyng that I ouȝt rather ðenprynte his actes and noble feates than of Godesfroye of Bolyne or ony the other eight (Caxton, Preface to Malory MD 2). Some with a singular noun, in the sense 'a part of,' occurs in OE (Healdene for mid sumum ðæm here on Norþymbre, OE Chron. an. 875; — sumne hire lichaman, St Mary of Egypt, in Ælfric’s Lives of Saints [EETS] xxiii B 793), but has not been recorded in ME. Half has been used appositively since OE (cf. healf his rice and healfne þinne wefels, Apollonius [OE] 51 and 52): — half hundred cnithen (Lawman A 18971); — half mi king-rike (Cursor 13147); — hire hed was worth halve a marke (PPl. B v 31). Apposition is occasionally used also when half stands for one of the two sides: — bi þiss half þlumm Jorrdan (Orm. 10626); — o þys half Humbre (RMannyng Chron. 7664, but a þas halþ þere Humbre, Lawman A 14018).

It is difficult to say, however, how far constructions like summe heo (see above) are really equivalent to a partitive genitive. It is equally difficult to define the exact character of constructions like other her gentyll women and other his prysoners (Caxton Blanch. 76 and 121). It is possible that in cases of this kind the partitive notion is rather weak.

Appositive 'Kin’ and Related Phrases. — The frequent occurrence of the noun kin 'kind' in genitival apposition is discussed in detail by Kellner, pp. 103-8; cf. also NED, kin sb. 6 b. In OE and early ME there are phrases with the genitive singular (anes cynnes wite) and the genitive plural (tweire kunne salve). The indiscriminate early ME use of kinne and kinnen for the gen. plural (tweire kunne salve, feower kunnes wurmes, alle kunnes dweolohpe) seems to have caused some confusion, with the result that by the 14th century the variant with the s-less genitive is obviously taken to be appositive in character (jele kyn fischez, Gaw. & GK 890; — of alkin libbyng laborers, PPl. B Prol. 222; — ðe haweðorn blowet suotes Of everykune tre, Sec.
Lyr. xvi 4). The type seems to become highly stereotyped in character, to judge from the conventional use of combinations like alkin, everykin, and the like. The genitive with -s survives in a number of instances, disguised under forms like alleskynnes condicioouns (Ch. HF 1530), noskynnes labour (Ch. HF 1794), and anyskynne2 countenance (Gaw. & GK 1539). The appositive use of kin disappears about the middle of the 15th century. The later type what (no) kind of tree appears in writing in the 14th century.

There are other similar cases, particularly that of manner. In the 13th and 14th centuries apposition is fairly common in connection with this noun (Þeos Þreo maner men, Ancr. 71; — ten manere zennes, Ayenb. 70; — som manere honest thyng, Ch. CT B Sh. 1239), although in many texts, like the Ayenbite, the of-periphrasis occurs more frequently (oÞre manyeres of zennes, 57). By Caxton’s time the appositive construction with manner is quite rare.

A third case of this kind is that of mister (Anglo-Norman mister, mester, from Latin ministerium) ‘occupation,’ occasionally used for ‘kind:’ — all mister men wirkand wit handes (Cursor 27261); — telleth me what myster men ye been (Ch. CT A Kn. 1710).

A peculiar case is the construction with done, the past participle of do, used in the 14th and 15th centuries as a noun in the same way as kin: — he esste [= asked] wat god [what idone god, Trin. MS; what manere god, MSS Digby and UL Cbg] and wat þing Mercurius was (RGlouc. 2426); — we discorden of dede in many done þingus (Alex. & Dind. 222). The genitive in what dones is obviously due to the analogy of what kinnes: — quat dones man ert þou (WAlex. 2906). The only known instance where the original form of the phrase is preserved occurs in the OE Chron. (hu gedon mann he wes, an. 1086). Hu gedon is perhaps to be associated with OF confait ‘what kind of’.
In ME, even in early texts, the genitive governed by an adjective is a great deal less common than in OE. When it does occur, it is normally represented by the *of*-periphrasis, the inflectional genitive being found only in the early part of the period: — *he wes zeva custi* ('generous,' Lawman A 4075; *of zeftes custi*, B); — *he is æelches godes ful* (Poema Mor. 367); — *henne biþ he gredi þes eses* (Lamb. Hom. 123); — *þu art deaþes sceldih* ('guilty,' Vices & V 51); — *teres wet* (Gen. & Ex. 2288); — *þenþ þat þu art wel wurþe þes eveles* (Vices & V 29); — *he ne es othes worthे that es enes gylty of oth broken* (Bracton, De Leg. Angl. IV i III 184 [a 1259; NED, *worth* adj. 7 b]). For *worth* cf. pp. 103-4 below.

The occurrence of the genitive with *unilike*, *unimake*, and *unimete* (*elches weorkes unniliche*, Lawman A 17276; *elches wurmes unimake*, A 17961;¹ *þere oþere* [gen. plur.] *unimete*, A 17879) is probably due to the analogy of *ilike*, from the OE weak noun *gelica* (*nes þer no king his ilike*, Lawman A and B 25378; *þin ilyche*, Ureisun Ure Lefdi 68); cf. O. Funke, Kasussyntax (see bibliography), p. 52.

In comparison with OE the number of verbs governing the genitive in ME is small. With the exception of a few early ME texts, the genitive is commonly replaced by the accusative. Besides, many verbs which take the genitive in OE are replaced by French loanwords which retain their original constructions. Where the genitive survives beyond early ME it is normally expressed by the *of*-periphrasis;² traces of the inflectional genitive occur only in the more southern texts of early ME. As in OE, the genitive is found above all in connection with verbs

¹ *Eche worme onimake*, B.
² But this does not mean, of course, that the preposition *of* occurring with a verb always goes back to the OE genitive.
denoting deprivation or mental action. The following list is a selection of verbs which may govern the genitive in ME (in early ME at least), although with the majority of these verbs the accusative is normally used: — abide 'to wait for' (þere læi þa verde þeos wederes abiden 'there lay the army waiting for favourable weather,' Lawman A 28238; — þu ne darst domes abide, Owl & N 1695); — aswike 'to cease' (aswike wit unker fihtes, Lawman A 10980); — bedeal, benim, and bereawe 'to rob' (þif þu i þin helde best welþes bidelid, Prov. Alfred 491, Trinity MS; — þe care again þi pinunge þrahen binimeþ þe nhites slepes, Hali Meidh. 51; — lest they beraþe . . . Folk of her catel or of her thing, RRose 6669-70); — can 'to know' (bute þu canst of chateringe, Owl & N 560; this may be a continuation of OE þæt folc ne cuðe ðæra goda); — forget (Catellus of Rome forþet his domes, Lawman A 27059; — thei forþetzen of the Þord 'obliti sunt Dei sui,' Wyclif Judg. iii 7); — help (to help þu wille þe Wolff, of lynne, of lyflode at nede, PPL B i 17); — wene 'to expect, to hope for' (mane man weneþ þat he wene ne þarf Longes lives, Prov. Alfr. 155); — wilnie 'to desire' (he . . . wilnede þeos meidenes, Lawman A 3202; wilnede [þa]l mayde, B); — wonder (þaroþ ich wundri, Owl & N 228).

**Adverbial Genitive**

In OE the genitive is occasionally used adverbially to indicate relations in time and space. This practice continues in ME.

**Adverbial Genitive of Time.** — There are early ME instances like wintres and sumeres (Lawman A 20988) and days and nights (e.g., þat gode wif . . . haweþ daies kare and niþtes wake, Owl & N 591). Nights 'by night' may occur by itself (wan ich flo niþtes after muse, Owl & N 591), while days does not seem to occur alone. There is, however, the phrase forth days 'late in the day' (bi forþ dazes he is aþerd, Prov. Alfred 660; — or it be forth daþes, Malory MD 804; the phrases forth evens 'late in the evening' and forth nights 'late at night' are also attested: — folke was on þaire firste slepe and it was furþ evyns, WAlex.
Genitive

375: — *Þen founde uch a felapchyp at forþ naztes*, Purity 1764). Cf. BTS *forþ* 4. As for the combinations *adays* 'by day' and *nowadays* cf. these entries in the NED; cf. also *MED* under *adai* and *adaiæ*, and also *anightes*. This adverbial use of the genitive seems to be paralleled by present-day American English expressions like *winters*, *summers*, and *nights* 'in winter, in summer, by night'. It is also possible that instances of the type *Þe credo pat ís isonge Þe Sondayes* (Trev. Higd. V 199; *Þe* is omitted before *Sondayes* in two MSS; on *Sondayes*, Caxton) are survivals of the old adverbial use of the genitive singular; cf. American English *the cleaning woman always comes Tuesdays*. It has been assumed that the adverbial genitive survives in cases like *I was warished of al my sorwe Of al day after, til hyt were eve* (Ch. BD 1105) and *and maid asalt... and afrayd his neyghburs of Palmsondai* (an. 1472; NED of 52), but it is possible that instances of this kind are due to the encroachment of *of* upon *on*, often under the influence of French (cf. pp. 350-1). Wyclif's *anoon of the nyght rysynge Abimelech...* (Gen. xx 8) is a literal translation of *de nocte consurgens Abimelech*.

An adverbial use of the genitive is also seen in *lives* and *deaths* (e.g., *lives ne deaþes ne deþ hit god*, Owl & N 1634; also 1632). In many cases it is not quite certain whether *lives* ought to be interpreted as an adverb or as an appositive or predicative adjective (genitive of quality), but in addition to the example above it seems to have rather adverbial force in examples like *nu Þeonne biseche ich Þe... Þet tu livie me... efter Þen ilke deade deaþe, hwon Þu nolde lives* (Ancr. 178).¹

**Adverbial Local Genitive.** — Local relations are expressed in OE by the genitive of *weg* (*Þonne rideþ ælc hys wesges*, Alfr. Oros. 21, and *hi wendon him suþweard oðres wesges*, OE Chron. an. 1016). This usage survives in ME (*þas waþes he wende*, Lawman A 29321; — *to walc hisawaijs forþe*, Cursor 22063, Edinb. MS)

¹ The distinction between the adverbial use and the appositive and predicative uses is often somewhat arbitrary.
and even later (cf. Hamlet: go thy ways). Many phrases consisting of an adjective and the genitive ways come to be regarded as one word as the attribute loses its case ending (cf. NED -ways; e.g., nanes weies, Lawman A 11216; none weies, B). Always, not used in a temporal sense until the 14th century, seems to have arisen from the adverbial accusative alway through the addition of -s rather than from the early (south-western) ME form alles weis, first recorded c 1200 (3e schullen allesweis . . . wele witen þe inre ant to uttre 'in every respect,' Ancr. 2). The comparable genitival formation algates (from alle gate, based on ON gata 'road, way') does not appear until the 14th century (which is unknowe algates unto me, Ch. CT F Sq. 246).

Other Survivals of the OE Adverbial Genitive. — In addition to these several other inflectional genitives are used adverbially in OE and ME. They include thankes 'willingly' and unthankes 'unwillingly' (e.g., sume þances, sume unþances, OE Chron. an. 1066, MS C), usually preceded by a dependent possessive: — hira þonces ('with their approval,' Alfred Care 34); — þe sulve mose Hire þonces wolde þe totose (Owl & N 272); — I wol nat faille yow my thankes (Ch. CT B Sh. 1378); — a thynge that no man wolde his thankes holde (Ch. CT D WB 272); — wyþ hym to fiȝte levere he wyld þan, his unþankes, to þem zelde (RMannyng Chron. 14172).

Another adverbial genitive is willes 'willingly,' often used with a dependent possessive like thankes: — wilt þou silf willes lete þe slen, þy purpos ne preyse y noȝt (Ferumbras 221); — I am a fende of helle and wold not knele on no þyr kne my wyllþes (MirkFestial 174). In northern texts the type if (what, where) þi willes be (were) is used in the sense 'if you please:' — giff that zour willis wer, Ic ask zow respyft for to se This lettir (Barbour i 618).

There are also other genitives used adverbially in OE and ME, like nedes 'needs' (nedes mot that nede schal, Gower CA iii 352), elles 'else' (or elles she Had koud no good, Ch. BD 997), ænes, ones 'once,' ongeanes, againes 'against' (used as a preposition; a parasitic -t in against and other similar instances develops in
the South in the 14th century), and -wards (e.g., upwards, OE uppewarde), which becomes increasingly frequent in the course of ME.

Certain genitive forms and derivatives of all are used adverbially in OE and ME. One of these is allinges, 'entirely,' from the OE adverb eallunga (it es noȝt allinges of þe same savour, Mandev. 94, Egerton MS; MED); another is alles 'altogether, wholly' (þo it alles out brac, RGlouc. 6567), used until the end of the 14th century. For the use of the partitive genitive plural aller (aler, alther), from OE ealra, as a superlative intensifier see p. 286.

Adverbial Genitives First Recorded in ME. — Many adverbial genitives are first recorded in ME texts, including twies 'twice' and thries 'thrice' (e.g., Orm. 11213 and 5945), both formed after the analogy of ones 'once.' Other ME adverbial genitives are whiles (sumewhiles, otherwhiles, therewhiles); also longes whiles ('for a long time,' RMannyaing Chron. 10198); — eftsoons 'again, moreover,' first attested at the beginning of the ME period (þe king... Dide him in prisun and eftsones he let him ut, OE Chron. an. 1140; — so watȝ Adam... byggled... and Samson eftsonez, Gaw. & GK 2417); — eftersoons, occasionally found from c 1300 to 1500 (þar he was eftursons saald til a dughti barn, Cursor 4241, Cotton MS; eftsonis, Gött. MS); — halflings 'in part,' recorded in the NED only from the Ormulum and Scottish texts; — unnethes 'with difficulty, hardly' (he... nimeþ unnefeþ þur, Best. 134); — hennes 'hence,' thennes 'thence,' whennes 'whence,' all three recorded from the 13th century; — amiddes 'in the middle' (cf. OE on middan > ME amidde, and OE tomiddes) appears in later ME (amydde of the temple, Ch. CT A Kn. 2009); — bisides 'in addition,' replacing biside(n), from OE bi sidan (þer weoren bisides fiftene biscopes, Lawman A 24411); — bitimes 'early,' by the side of bitime (al bi

1 For -s and -st in adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, see particularly Jespersen, Mod. E Gr. VI, pp. 302–311. Cf. also H. Koziol (see bibliography), §§ 580 and 602-4.
Cases

times Þou mís t wende, GWarw. 1211, Auch. MS); — togederes (sunne Þei blisse Þ togederes hoveneware and horþeware, Lamb. Hom. 139).

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE GENITIVE

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Dative, Accusative, and Nominative

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**DATIVE, ACCUSATIVE, AND NOMINATIVE**

Assimilation in form, p. 94.

**DATIVE**

Inflectional and periphrastic dative, p. 95. — Functions, p. 97.
Dative with Nouns, p. 102.
Dative with Adjectives, p. 103.


Absolute dative, see p. 114 (absolute nominative).

Accusative

General considerations, p. 108. — Predicate accusative, p. 108. — Accusative replacing the dative and genitive, p. 108.


Accusative with infinitive, see p. 526 (infinitive as a predicate accusative).

Accusative with certain impersonal expressions, see p. 113.

Absolute accusative, see p. 114 (absolute nominative).

Nominative replacing the dative, p. 112. — Nominative with infinitive, p. 113.


Bibliography, p. 117.

Assimilation in Form. — One characteristic feature of ME is the disappearance of the formal differences between the dative, accusative, and nominative.

With the exception of a few stereotyped survivals of the dative like seldom, whilom, alive, to wive, and of dawe (e.g., when þat maide is yslawe and brouȝt of her lyf-dawe, Flor. & Bl. 48), this formal assimilation is completed in early ME.¹ In the North

¹ For a discussion of the formal assimilation of the dative and accusative in late OE ('accusative-dative syncretism') cf. L. Blakeley, EGS I, 194-78, 6-31.

That this assimilation is not exclusively due to the phonological loss of final -e is suggested by the fact that the formal disappearance of the dative singular is attested in ME texts which have preserved final -e. Cf. Blakeley, loc. cit., p. 7.
and the Midlands all differences are levelled by the beginning of the 13th century and in the South (excluding Kent) by the middle of the same. In the conservative dialect of Kent the distinctions are well preserved as late as the 14th century. In the personal pronouns and in who the distinction between the dative-accusative and the nominative is preserved even in present-day English; yet even in this case the dative and accusative become assimilated under the dative form (hine, for example, is replaced by him and hwone by whom). For this development see pp. 129 and 180.

After the dative, accusative, and nominative become assimilated in form, the differences remaining between these cases are purely functional, and even they tend to become blurred. For a reader of the present day it is occasionally difficult and even impossible to say whether the idea of the dative, accusative, or nominative was predominant in the mind of the medieval writer.

**DATIVE**

**Inflectional and Periphrastic Dative.** — Along with the weakening and eventual disappearance of the case-endings come prepositional equivalents of the dative. The disappearance of the ancient instrumental as a separate case leads at a comparatively early date to the extensive use of prepositions like mid, þurh, and on to denote instrumentality. In the course of the ME period mid is replaced by with (see p. 393). The formal disappearance of the dative proper is a much later process than that of the instrumental, and its prepositional equivalents, mainly to and for, accordingly make their appearance later. To is first recorded in this function at the end of the OE period. Its adoption as a dative equivalent is slower than that of of as a genitive equivalent. According to W. Swane (see bibliography), the to-periphrasis (‘periphrastic dative’) is not used for expressing the indirect object in early ME poetry at all. In early ME prose its use for this purpose is also limited, although
the figures given on this point by F. Nagel, pp. 89-91, and H. Dürringer, p. 30 (for both see the bibliography), are somewhat conflicting.

In late ME prose the periphrastic dative seems to be used approximately in the same measure as in present-day English, and the choice of the dative form also seems to depend on much the same rhythmical principles as today. The dative of the personal pronouns is mostly inflectional ('synthetic'), while nouns and noun-groups usually take the preposition to: — *she wol faille thee* (Ch. CT B Mel. 2642); — *which may not fayle to man ne to woman* (Ch. CT I Pars. 80); — *by the grete yeve that I shal yeven hym* (Ch. CT I Pars. 290); — *noon oother name under hevene that is yeve to any man* (Ch. CT I Pars. 287); — *she eet it and yaf to hire housbond* (Ch. CT I Pars. 329); — *I xal answeryn 3ow resonably and forwynth me* (MKempe 113 and 67).

One of the principles of present-day usage is that the inflectional dative is preferred when the indirect (dative) object is placed immediately after the verb, usually because it is short and unemphatic. The *to*-periphrasis is generally used when the indirect object is separated from the verb by the direct (accusative) object or by some other word or words.

This general principle is observed in late ME prose; cf. *God shal yeven hym his regne* (Ch. CT I Pars. 291), but *leveth the vengeance to me* (Ch. CT B Mel. 2650), and *so I have tolde my gostly faderys* (MKempe 116) and it was telde *pe Erchebischop* (MKempe 130), but *pe teld it forth to her felawshep* (MKempe 66). Cf. also *Jesus Crist paiede tribut to emperour, and comaundid men to paihe him tribute* (Wyclif Sel. Wks III 297). But if it alone, being very short and unemphatic, intervenes as a direct object, *to* is usually left out before the following personal pronoun, though not before a noun or noun-group; cf. *God forzeve it 3ow and pe wyl telle it 3ow* (MKempe 67 and 116), but *I wil tellyn it to pes worthy clerkys* (MKempe 116). The *to*-periphrasis seems to be the rule after *to say*: — *sche seyd to hem and pe styward seyd unto hir.* (MKempe 67 and 113). All this, one must bear in mind,
is only a broad principle and not a rule, and it would be a mistake to imagine that it is applicable with rigidity to late ME prose texts. Much depends on the writer's individual style and his ear, and cases like *iche of þese wyves, Rachel and Lya, toke to hem a mayde* (Deonise 12), which do not conform with the principle outlined in the foregoing, are by no means rare. As for verbs borrowed from French there is a tendency to use *to* after the analogy of the original French construction (*à*), as in *why comaunded God to yow ye sholde nat eten* (Ch. CT I Pars. 326).

A peculiarity worth noticing is the use of the non-periphrastic datives *that* and *which* ('to whom'): — *þe quene of hevene blwe þat al þys worlde schal do honour* (Pearl 424); — *unto the deuel, which I hym bitake* (Ch. CT H Mcp. 307); — *that is my nece and called is Cryseyde, Which som men wolden don oppressioun* (Ch. TC ii 1418).

**FUNCTIONS.** — The original function of the dative appears to have been to indicate the person towards or for whom an action is directed or simply the person concerned or involved in an action. In addition to this, the OE dative represents the instrumental case (originally locative in function). The original locative survives in the adverb *home*, OE *ham*. The composite nature of the OE dative is reflected in a number of ME uses, above all in the adverbial dative.

**DATIVE WITH VERBS**

**DATIVE OF INTEREST.** — As stated above, the dative is originally used to indicate a person towards or for whom an action takes place, or simply a person concerned or involved in an activity. The dative used in this original function is generally referred to as the dative of interest. Another convenient term, though applicable only to a limited number of cases, is the *dativus commodi et incommodi* of the Latin grammarians, because the dative of interest often indicates the person to

7 — Mustanoja
whose advantage or disadvantage an action takes place. The dative used as the so-called indirect or dative object and the one used in conjunction with impersonal expressions (see below) are typical datives of interest, to mention only these two common cases.

ME examples of the dative of interest in conjunction with transitive verbs: — *þe eppel Þæt icht loke on is forbode me to etene* (Ancr. 23); — *that is my nece and called is Cryseyde, Which somen wolden don oppressioun* (Ch. TC ii 1418). Intransitive verbs: — *auh me is, þet wute ze, moni crume etfallen* (Ancr. 155); — *a wonder hap which me befell* (Gower CA i 67); — *hem stant no doute To voide with a soubtil hond The beste goodes of the lond* (Gower CA ii 2124).

The *dativus commodi et incommodi* occurs particularly in conjunction with verbs of privation: — *oure Lord hath yeue it me; oure Lord hath biraft it me* (Ch. CT B Mel. 1000); — *'hic am,' ha [Christ] seîþ, 'helere of þe folke; wanne hi to me clepiedh... hic hi sucuri and beneme hem at here evel'* (Kent S 220). It is also common in phrases expressing purpose or consequence: — *ice Patt tiss Ennglissh hafe sett Ennglisshe menn to lare* (Orm. D 322); — *zif þou be ofte drunke, it fallet þe to schame* (Good Wife 55). Instances of this kind are in many respects parallel to those with the so-called sympathetic dative (see below).

**Sympathetic Dative.** — In various Indo-European languages the dative of interest is occasionally used to express a possessive relationship. The construction used for this purpose is usually referred to as the sympathetic dative. It consists of a personal pronoun or, less frequently, a personal noun in the dative and of another noun usually denoting a part of the body or a mental faculty, preceded or not by the definite article. The construction, common in OE (e.g., *feoll him to foton; — seo cwên het þa þæm cyninge þæt heafod of acorfan; — him com to gemynde þæt...*), is comparatively infrequent in ME and loses ground steadily. A few examples: — *him bræcon alle þe limes* (OE Chron. an. 1137); — *spet him amidde þe bearde* (Ancr. 131);
— and sone fel him to þe fet (Havelok 616); — she jalleth him to fote (Ch. LGW 1314; cf. also CT B ML 1104); — it com hire to minde (Ch. TC ii 602). The to-periphrasis occurs in Caxton: — for often commeth in mynde, to theym of good recordaunce (En. 90).

As the dative and accusative become assimilated, the sympathetic dative often changes its character after transitive verbs. Usually the dative becomes a direct accusative object. This is the case in annd toc hiss sune anan Annd band itt fet annd hande (Orm. 14673; on the gender of sune see p. 44), possibly also in anon þe erþe oponet and swolut hym bodé and soule into helle (Mirk Fest. 178, St Winifred, ed. C. Horstmann, Anglia III, 1880, 314-19) and in body and soule he with the devel wente (Ch. CT D Fri. 1640), although it is much more probable that in the last two quotations body and soul is to be interpreted simply as a kind of loose appositional modifier of the object and subject pronoun.

For more detailed discussions of the sympathetic dative cf. W. Havers (see bibliography) and A. Ahlgren (see bibliography), pp. 196-221.

Possessive Dative. — An OE variety of the sympathetic dative is the so-called possessive dative, where the noun in possessive relationship to the noun in the dative is preceded by a dependent possessive pronoun: — her Romane Leone þæm papan his tungan forcurfon (OE Chron. an. 797).

Several explanations seem possible for a late ME construction like the wery huntere slepynge in his bed To wode ayein his mynde goth anon (Ch. PF 99-100). It might be simply an anacoluthon, or the first line might be an absolute participle construction. The possibility that it is an echo of the old possessive dative seems less likely.

For the relationship of this possessive dative to the ME and early Mod. E genitival type kyng Alexandre his lemmman see pp. 159-62.

Ethical Dative. — Another shade in the use of the dative of interest is seen in what is customarily called the ethical
dative. This occurs only in the first and second persons: — *ilc prince me take his wond* (Gen. & Ex. 3821); — *so wiste I me non other red* (Gower CA i 108); — *pay fel on hym alle and woried me pis wyly wyth a wroth noyse* (Gaw. & GK 1905).

**Reflexive Dative.** — Closely related to the ethical dative is another variety of the dative of interest which, with reflexive force, occurs not infrequently with intransitive verbs, especially with verbs expressing motion or fear: — *he comm himm sippen ut* (Orm. 1710); — *Zacarize for himm ham* (Orm. 229); — *pe king him rod an hunting* (Horn 645); — *he wente hym hoom* (Ch. CT A Kn. 2270); — *he goth him forth with hevy chiere* (Gower CA iii 454); — *I drede me* (RRose 4043); — *men feeren hem in al the toun* (Gower CA iii 454). In persones and parish prestes pleaund hem to *pe bischop* (PPl. B Prol. 83) *hem* is probably used in imitation of French usage (cf. OF *soi plaindre*). The reflexive dative is common in OE.\(^1\) Shakespeare makes considerable use of it (*I fear me, come thee*, etc.). As an archaism it is used all through the Mod. E period.

**Dative in Impersonal Expressions.** — In OE and ME the dative of interest occurs in many impersonal expressions (*me thoghte thus*, Ch. BD 291; — *if hem lacketh that thei wolde*, Gower CA i 1366; — *nought nedeth it to yow... To axe me*, Ch. TC iii 1681; — *it sit a prest to be wel thewed*, Gower CA i 273). In the course of ME the dative is replaced by the nominative, being taken as the subject of the verb. The development may have begun in instances where the word in the dative is a noun and not a pronoun, the dative and the nominative having become

\(^1\) The reflexive dative occurs as a conventional element in the opening descriptions of several ME poems (*as I me lay aloone in bedde, as I me lend to a lond, as I me rode pis ender day, as I me ros in on morwenyng, as I me sat myself allon, as I me walked in one morning, as I me went pis ender day*, etc.). Cf. *Index of ME Verse*, Nos 355-65 In some of these instances the reflexive dative may (at least in part) have been imitated from the OF reflexive (cf. *soi lever, soi chevaucher*, etc.)
Dative

alike in form in the nouns \( \text{my fader [dat.]} \text{nedeth} > \text{my fader [nom.]} \text{nedeth} \) The dative has survived in only a few cases, as in \text{it seems to me}. For a discussion of this development, see pp. 434-6). A not uncommon use of the dative of interest in OE and ME is that found in conjunction with \text{to do} (an infinitive of purpose used as a predicate nominative): — \text{him is to seegeanne þæt hie unablinnendlice geþencen} . . . (Alfred Care 261); — \text{hwæt is us to donne?} (Ælfric Hom. I 314); — \text{radden whet him were to donne} (Lawman A 4767); — \text{what thing him were best to do} (Gower CA ii 306). It seems that \text{he wist what he was to do} (Wyclif Sel. Wks I 120) is an advanced case of this category, with the dative having become the nominative. It is possible also that the dative continues to live in the form of a \text{for}-periphrasis (e.g., \text{it is no maystrye for a lord To dampne a man withoute answere of word}, Ch. LGW 386, G-text). For a discussion of this peculiar use of the preposition \text{for}, often referred to as the 'inorganic for,' see p. 383.

**Dative Object.** — The dative is the case of what is customarily called the indirect object, but in OE and to some extent in ME the dative is also used in a function which obviously does not differ much from that of the direct object. In many cases of this kind, however, the dative begins to be superseded by the accusative even in OE, the instances in which the dative survives beyond early ME being comparatively few in number. The use of the \text{to-dative} is not infrequently traceable to the influence of French and Latin, particularly in conjunction with verbs and phrases borrowed from these languages. A selection of verbs with which a dative of this type occurs: — \text{believe (nyl see bileve to eche spirit 'nolite omni spiritui credere,' Wyclif 1 John iv 1; for the simple form leve see below)}; — \text{chide 'to rebuke' (that thou at any time hast chidd Toward thi love, Gower CA iii 475; — and if it scholde so betide That I algates moste chide, It myhte noght be to my love, Gower CA iii 493)}; — \text{cweme, queme 'to please' (every newe love quemeth To him which newefongel is, Gower CA v 4367); — displease (to displesen to wikkide}
men, Ch. Bo. i p. 3. 74); — follow (we fulien þissen raede, Lawman A 16756); — help (þu miht wel helpen iync selven, Lawman A 695; þou solve, B); — hear 'to obey' (he seide þat he him wolden hare and halden hine for herra, Lawman A 4887; he seide a wolde him sarely and habbe for herre, B); — leve 'to believe' (nulle ich him ileven, Lawman A 8501; hine, B; — who leeveth to God, taketh heed to the hestes 'qui credit Deo,' Wyclif Ecclus xxxii 28); — obey (if alle folkus obeien to the kyng Antiochus ... ye and my sonys and my bretheren shuln obeie to the lawe of oure fadris 'regi Antiochus oboediunt ... oboediemus legi patrum nostrorum,' Wyclif 1 Macch. ii 19; — as an harpe obeieth to the hond, Ch. LGW 90; — and preie God save the king ... and alle that him faith berith and obeieth, Ch. Astr. Pref. 64f.; — and he to him mot thanne obeie, Gower CA ii 1631; — with that hire oghne lord cam nyh And is to th'emperour obeied 'did obeisance to the emperor,' Gower CA ii 1529; — oppose 'to put objections, to question' (this king unto this maide opposeth And axeth ferst what was hire name, Gower CA viii 1712); — pray (I pray to God, Ch. CT A Co. 4335; — for I ... Ne dar to love ... preyen for speed, Ch. TC i 16); — queme, see cweme; — sue, siue, seue 'to follow' (an siueþ þare þat no riht [corr. no-wiht] haveþ, Owl & N 1526); — thank (iþonked wurþe him, Lamb. Hom. 153; — to God upon his kne Thonkende he tok his sihte anon, Gower CA ii 772).

**DATIVE WITH NOUNS**

The dative (in later ME usually the periphrastic type with to) is better preserved after nouns than after verbs, doubtless because in conjunction with the former the notion of the dative is not so easily confused with that of the accusative as in conjunction with the latter. After nouns, the dative even encroaches upon the genitive (he was nevoeu to th'emperoure, (Gower CA i 1409). Examples of the dative governed by a noun: — þatt iss himm hellpe (Orm. 7182); — þatt æfre ned uss
iss (Orm. 5358); — Abram worn he breþre sworen (Gen. & Ex. 824); — he mot be servant to pité (Gower CA ii 3300); — hast ben a fo to Cristes lay (Gower CA ii 3354); — The Poleyer to the Donet (title of a treatise by Pecock).

**DATIVE WITH ADJECTIVES**

The following list is a selection of adjectives governing the dative (inflexional or periphrastic) in ME: — buhsum 'obedient' (he was buhsum ane deadliche manne, Josepe þe smiþe and his moder, Vices & V 51); — cweme, queme 'pleasing' (þat la was Gode cweme, Orm. 1952); — far (ase feor he is God, Ancr. 33; normally constructed with a preposition in ME); — hersum 'obedient' (forþi þat ic navre hersum ne habbe ibien ne Gode ne mine gastliche faderes ne min cristendom, Vices & V 7); — imene 'common, current' (a wis word . . . Is fele manne a muþe imene, Owl & N 234); — lef 'dear' (lite lac is Gode leof, Poema Mor. 73; — were hem lieve or were hem lothe, Gower CA ii 3229); — like, unlike (in al this world ne was ther noon hym lik, Ch. CT A Prol. 412; — theyr aperyd afore me the angell of God lyke to the moost feyrest man, Bridget Revel. fol. 102, Rawl. MS; — unlyk is my word to my dede, RRose 6360); — loath 'hateful, hostile' (þu art manne loþ, Owl & N 1641; — þe povere men atte gate ne beo þou noþing loþe, Good Wife 9 [MS T, end of the 15th century, reads þat þey be thee nat lothe]; — al be hym looth or letf, Ch. CT A Kn. 1387); — neh 'near' (sum wrecchede is manne neh, Owl & N 1220, Cotton MS; the Jesus Coll. MS reads sum wrecchede Is cumynde neyh;¹ — andette his sennen him þe ware necst him, Vices & V 123); — queme, see cweme; — unlike, see like; — unworthy, see worth; — wel (wel wurþe þe, Lawman A 13079; — so wel was hym on lyve, Ch. CT D WB 43); — woe (wa wes him on live, Lawman A 317; — himm wass swiþe wa, Orm. 12454); — worth, unworthy (a man of litel reputacioun, Nat worth to Phebus in comparisoun, Ch. CT H Mcp. 200; — hie

¹ For a discussion of the reading of the Jesus Coll. MS, see p. 586.
makeþ him unwurþ alle þo faire þinges þe on þare swikele woreld faire þencheþ, Vices & V 29).

**INSTRUMENTAL (ADVERBIAL) DATIVE**

The dative used for various adverbial purposes goes back to the ancient instrumental. In ME, except for a few early texts, there is no formal distinction between the inflectional adverbial dative and the adverbial accusative. After the disappearance of the formal differences between the two cases the idea of instrumentality is normally expressed by various prepositions (mid, with, through, of, by, etc.).

The old inflectional locative-instrumental survives in a number of adverbs, such as home, seldom, whilom, and forthi 'therefore,' and in a number of phrases, like otherwise, nowise, etc. Most of the cases discussed in the following are taken from early ME texts, where the formal differentiation of the dative and accusative is still possible.

**DATIVE OF MEANS AND MANNER.** — The instrumental dative indicates means or manner: — þa onswerede him Drihten mildere stevne (Lamb. Hom. 45); — þa quaþ Membricius ludere stefne (Lawman A 928; ludere stemne, B); — and seie him þat ich hine gret godere gretinge (Lawman A 3551; Godes gretinge, B); — he greteten worden þæne kæisere igrætte (Lawman A 8884; mid grettere wordes þane kaiser he grette, B); — wulchere wise he mihte wiþ Aþelstane fihte (‘in what way,’ Lawman A 32018).

**INSTRUMENTAL DATIVE WITH THE VERB ‘NEMN.’** — Traces of the OE use of the instrumental in conjunction with verbs meaning ‘to call’ or ‘to name,’ such as ciegan, cweðan, hatan, and nemnan (cf. þeah þu þa ealle gesceafte ane naman genemde, Alfred Boethius 79) occur in ME: — he [Leir] bigan þen toun of Leicestre and nempnede is owe name (RGlouc. 654); — þat

1 As stated earlier in this chapter (p. 95), the expression of instrumentality by means of prepositions is common even in OE. Cf. Eva Knispel (see bibliography).
Dative of Agency. — The expression of the agent of a passive verb by means of a prepositional construction has always been common in English (see pp. 441-2). The inflectional (prepositionless) agent of the older stages of linguistic development — an Indo-European inheritance — is represented by the instrumental dative occasionally found in OE, mainly in poetry (cf. A. Green; see bibliography), but now and then also in prose. Sweet, in his Anglo-Saxon Reader, 14th ed. rev. by C. T. Onions, Oxford 1959, calls attention to its occurrence in Ælfric (and wearþ þa him inweardlice gelufod, p. 58,16 and p. 209); another prose instance with a dative of agency might be ac for þara gebeorge, þe him [Gode] syn gecorene, and þe he habban wile gehalden and geholpen... (Wulfstan Hom. 86 [Napier], quoted by Einenkel, Streifzüge, p. 219; cf. Melode gecorene, Daniel 92, and se wæs Dryhtne gecoren, ibid. 150).

It is just possible that this inflectional agent survives in a few ME instances, such as þe sæ ze... Þe me wes to-niht itald An eorl swiculf and bald þat Cesar wolde nu to-dæi Brutlond biwinnen ('the story that was told to me tonight by a man traitorous and impudent,' Lawman A and B 8022) and a spære(re) swipiþe hende; Hit wes imaked i Kairmeþin A smiþ þe hehte Griffin ('it was made in Carmarthen by a smith named Griffin,' Lawman A and B 23784). Cf. G. Dubislav, Anglia XLVI, 1922, 249-51, who quotes two further ME instances with what he believes are survivals of the dative of agency. One is þe furste day he was iwist, as þe maystres iseye, Tuey clerkes þat were over him... þat wiste his bodi niȝt and day (EE Poems x 39). The other example quoted by Dubislav is clearly not one of the dative of agency.

It is unlikely that the to-dative in Chaucer's to whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene (CT A Kn. 2298) and she that I

1 P. 213 in the early editions.
serve...To whom myn herte enhabit is by right (TC iv 443) has anything to do with the old dative of agency, as suggested by Einenkel, Streifzüge, p. 219. For the former cf. L sibi duas ex lucernae flammulas esse visas (Cicero). The latter corresponds to a cui son dato, e tutto son di lei (Boccaccio’s Filostrato iv 50,8).

‘His Own Hand.’ — The type his own hand ‘with his own hands, himself’ occurs in a number of works written between the late thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries. The plural form hands, which occurs in Gower and Caxton, is obviously a later development, the original number being evidently the singular. Examples: — he zef him armes and made him kniȝt is owe honde (RGlouc. 1382); — þe king Gwider more folc slou is owe honde (RGlouc. 1440; other instances occur at 3635, 3776, and 6519); — ac Alisaunder his owen honde Biheveded þe prince of þe londe (KAlis. 5885); — ys oune hond þe lettre he nom (Elegy Edw. I 43); — his owene hand he made laddres thre (Ch. CT A Mil. 3624); — he hath with a dedly wunde Fethlende his oghne hondes slayn Branchus (Gower CA i 1427); — and wryte ayein hire oghne hond (Gower CA viii 887; other instances occur at iii 2011, iii 2142, v 1883, v 2306, and viii 887); — my brother Reynawd has hanged hym his owene handes (Caxton Aymon 343).

This construction, recorded in the South (including Kent and London) and the SW Midlands, obviously goes back to the OE inflectional instrumental (in instances like his agnum willan). Strikingly enough the only known OE instance of the phrase his own hand shows the accusative case (though with instrumental force): — hine Abraham on his agene hand beacen sette, Swa him bebad Metod (Genesis A 2768).

Gower has an instance of the phrase with mouth (to lete out of mynde Thing which he seide his oghne mouth, CA v 5455) and so has Malory (Accolon confessed to me his owne mouthe that she wolde have distroyed you (Wks 113).

It seems that in all these instances the notion of instrumentality is rather faint and that his own hand, mouth, etc., are used primarily as emphatic equivalents of ‘himself, herself,’ i.e.,
Dative 107
to intensify the subject-noun or pronoun. They are thus comparable to expressions like his own self, his own person, and his own body (see pp. 145-9). Cf. NM LX, 1959, 267–86.

**Instruments**

**Dative of Measure.** — A few traces of the dative of measure are found in the A-text of Lawman: — he [the lake] is endlonge Feouwer and sixti munden; He is imeten a bræde Fif and twenti foten; Fif foten he is deop (A 21994-7; mundes, fote, B). Cf. Wülffing I, pp. 144-5. The dative of measure occurs also in conjunction with the comparative degree: — ßu eært muchele betere cniht (A 4346); — let delven þas dich Seoven voten deopere (A 15895).

**Dative of Time.** — The dative is used to indicate a point of time: — ewilche zere (Lamb. Hom. 87); — æwriche sunen deie and ofre heze dazen (Lamb. Hom. 135); — and þan feorþe daie (Lawman A 19218; in þan feorþe daie, B); — aver alche wintre inne Wales heo wuneden (Lawman A 6034); — he seide heom æelche zere Wæt heom to cumen weore (Lawman A 9100).

In the majority of instances the ME common case ('accusative') used to indicate the time 'when' obviously goes back to the OE and early ME instrumental dative of time: — Octa hine bilæimid hæpene monnen niht and dæi (Lawman A 18344); — ne make werre upon me nyght ne day (Ch. CT A Kn. 1823); — þat oþer zer a faukun brekke (Owl & N 101); — on of hem... Told it Abram þat ilke deai (Gen. & Ex. 862); — he hath a
thousand slain this pestilence (Ch. CT C Pard. 679); — a cardinal was th'ilk tide Which the papat longe hath desired (Gower CA ii 2918); — and the Satyrday he leyde sege unto the towne of Arflewe (Greg. Chron. 109).

ACCUSATIVE

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. — As pointed out above (p. 95), an adequate distinction between the accusative, dative, and nominative is often difficult because of their likeness in form. In the following discussion, therefore, the term 'accusative' is used with reference to function and not to form, except, of course, for some early ME texts.

The accusative is the case of the direct object of a transitive verb. Some verbs which in present-day English are normally used intransitively occasionally take a direct object in ME (cf. pp. 429-30): — oon of the gretteste auctour that men rede (Ch. CT B NP 2984); — looketh the Bible, and ther ye may it leere (Ch. CT C Pard. 578); — I thincke it ever and ai (Cursor 24064, Cotton MS); — thurgh fals ymaginacioun He thoghte supplanta- cioun (Gower CA ii 2846). In a number of instances, particularly with think (e.g., hir freindes . . . Thoght ferli hou sco ðider wan, Cursor 10601, Cotton MS, and when ðe preste hard ðis, onone he thoght shame, Alph. Tales 85), the accusative goes back to the predicate noun in the old impersonal construction (e.g., for mucchel scome heom ðuhte ðat wepmen heom ne rohte, Lawman A 28850). For the development of old impersonal constructions into personal ones see pp. 112-3 and 434-6.

PREDICATE ACCUSATIVE. — Certain verbs, like call, clepe, hold, nemn, and make, are followed by two accusatives, one of which is the object and the other a predicate noun in the accusative: — zhe it clepit Moysen (Gen. & Ex. 2631).

ACCUSATIVE REPLACING THE DATIVE AND GENITIVE. — After
many verbs which in OE govern a dative object the dative is replaced by the accusative in ME; in other words, the intransitive verb becomes transitive (cf. pp. 101-2). Typical verbs of this kind are believe, follow, help, please, displease, and thank.

In some instances the replacement of the OE dative or genitive by the accusative results in the use of two accusatives, of the person and of the thing. OE ascian takes either two accusatives, or an accusative or dative of the person and a genitive of the thing. In Lawman A the verb occurs with a dative of the person and an accusative of the thing (þa com þer an heþene mon . . . and askede tidende Gurmunde þe kinge, A 29230). Elsewhere in ME ask is followed by two accusatives. Lern acquires the meaning 'to teach' in ME and takes two accusatives. Lere 'to teach' governs two accusatives or a dative of the person and an accusative of the thing in OE and two accusatives in ME. Teach takes a dative of the person and an accusative of the thing in OE and two accusatives in ME; the A-text of Lawman's Brut wavers between the dative and accusative of the person. For tell Lawman A has twice a clear double accusative (e.g., þe pellegrim hine talde al þat he wolde, 30736).

In OE bid governs a dative of the person and an accusative of the thing, or an accusative of the person and a genitive of the thing. Lawman A has one or two instances of a dative of the person (þa bed he his bod allen his beornen, 23408). The dative is found later in the form of the to-periphrasis, as in he bad to Bardus hale (Gower CA v 5023). The A-text of Lawman also shows an accusative and genitive construction (he bad heom heore helpes, 30007), but a double accusative is the prevailing type (e.g., he dude al þat ich hine bad, 13229). For forbede, which in OE was followed by a dative of the person and an accusative of the thing, the A-text of Lawman still has the old construction (whaþer he hit wolde iunne oþer him forbeode, 30226).

Bereave governs in OE an accusative of the person and a genitive of the thing, or an accusative of the person and a dative of
The former construction remains current (for examples see p. 88, above); the latter survives in early ME (see p. 107). A new construction, with a dative of the person and an accusative of the thing, makes its appearance at the beginning of the ME period; (e.g., *ther is no wyn bireveth me my myght*, Ch. CT D Sum. 2059); for other examples, see p. 98. This also applies to other verbs of privation (*bidele, bineme*; see pp. 88, 98, and 107).

**ADVERBIAL ACCUSATIVE**

The accusative is often used adverbially. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between an original adverbial accusative and a form which goes back to the old locative-instrumental.

*Accusative with Verbs of Motion.* — In conjunction with certain verbs of motion (*go, wend, ride*, etc.) the accusative is used to indicate the direction of the motion: — *ich wulle faren minne wæi* (Lawman A 16078); — *whott gate summ he ganngeþþ* (Orm. 8216); — *we wil þe wai ga bi þe se* (Cursor 11736); — *hy smeriþ þane way of helle mid honyg... vor þet þe zenesere hine ssoleþ quo þe hardylaker* (Ayenb. 60); — *thei gon the dounes and the dales* (Gower CA iv 1583); — *fro Romelond thei wente here weie* (Gower CA ii 2544); — *with hym ther went Sygrem to be his gide, Costyng the contre many dyvers way, And so came he into Perse the redy waye* (Generydes 5923); — *fliþ þinne wæi* (Lawman A 16078); — *he fliþ his weie* (Owl & N 308). The accusative goes back to OE; cf. *his modor... gegan wolde Sorhjulne siþ* (Beow. 1278; cf. also 1462).\(^1\)

*Accusative of Extent.* — The accusative is frequently employed to indicate extent both in space and in time. Examples of its spatial use: — *þa dich wes idolven seove vet depre* (Lawman A 15901; cf. the use of the dative of measure for the same

\(^1\) This peculiar quasi-transitive use of intransitive verbs of motion is in fact a general linguistic phenomenon, found even in non-Indo-European languages.
NOMINATIVE

The nominative is the case of the grammatical subject and of nouns and pronouns used in direct address (in the vocative). It is also the case of the predicate noun after verbs like be, worth 'become,' become, and hate (intr.) 'to be called' and after the passive forms of verbs like hate (trans.) 'to call,' nemn 'to call or name,' and hold (e.g., hu soð God wass uurþenn mann, Orm. 163).

NOMINATIVE REPLACING THE DATIVE. — After the decay of the old inflectional system and under the influence of the new fixed word-order (subject-verb-object), the nominative encroaches upon the functions of the accusative and dative, but particularly upon those of the dative.

The primary cause of this development is the disappearance of all formal differences between the dative and the accusative and the resulting confusion in the use of these cases. Thus many verbs which in earlier times govern a dative object come to be looked upon as transitive verbs, the dative being taken as an accusative. The accusative, in turn, becomes a nominative in passive statements. A few examples: — þu ært ilete blod (Lawman A 18980); — weoren þa bernes Iscængte mid beore (Lawman A 8124); — eþþær þærþ þarrh oþerr beon Hollpenn (Orm. 6201); — ure loverd beo þonked (Anacr. 3; beo it þonked, MS Cotton Cleop. C vi); — God be yhered and þonked (Ayenb. 196).

Through much the same kind of development the dative becomes a nominative in impersonal expressions like me liketh and me dreameth (> I like, I dream). The expressions thus lose their impersonal character and become personal. The development is strikingly illustrated by cases like hwo-se ne con nout þeos fij ureisuns, sigge ever enne, and hwo-se þuncheþ to longe, lete þe psalmes (Anacr. 16). Here the second who-se has the nominative form instead of the dative hwom-se, partly because, preceding the verb, it occupies the position normally held by the subject
Accusative

purpose, p. 107); — *ðe der eorrneþþ an hundreðd mile* (Orm. 6969); — *in strange londes many a mile to ryde* (Gower CA iv 1707); — *these trees were set, that I deyse, Oon from another, in assyse, Fyve fadome or sixe* (RRose 1393). The OE phrase *eadne weg* is current in ME in various abstract meanings, but the original local meaning is still seen in *þei went fast on here way . . . but alwei as þei went, wasted þei it founde* (WPal. 2620). In the temporal meaning 'all the while, always' *alway (alneway)* is not used until the 14th century (*þe zonne . . . alneway yernþ and ne is nevre wery*, Ayenb. 84). (The genitival *always* seems to have arisen from the accusative through the later addition of -s and not from the early ME genitive *alles weis.*) Other examples of the temporal use of the accusative of extent: — *þrilli dawes and þrilli niht Heo ferden efer forþ riht* (Lawman A 1275); — Crist heold hiss fassste . . . fowwertiz dazhess (Orm. 12331); — *ful sevene niȝt he þer abiden* (Gen. & Ex. 2483); — *a sump wind . . . blew þat day and al þat niȝt* (Gen. & Ex. 3085); — *ich singe mid heom one þroze* (Owl & N 1455); — *þah heo ȝum hwile pleie* (Owl & N 1425); — *for saug I never nan suilk mi live* (Cursor 12246, Cotton MS); — *the frendlieste man . . . that evere I saug my lyve* (Ch. TC ii 205); — *and ther he lyveth in joye and in honour Terme of his lyf* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1029; *term of his life* is a common phrase in late ME and early Mod. E); — *fro many a worthi knyght Hath his lady gon a fourtenyght* (Ch. TC v 334); — *the gates that Neptunus made A thousand wynter ther tofore* (Gower CA i 1153).

A kind of accusative of extent occurs in figurative negations of the type *he wald nocht priss his liff a stra* (Barbour vi 505; cf. J. Hein, Anglia XV, 1893, 41-186 and 396-472).

'Accusative' of Time 'When.' — In the majority of cases the ME common case ('accusative') used to indicate the time 'when' obviously goes back to the OE and early ME instrumental dative of time. For examples see pp. 107-8, under 'Dative of Time.'
Nominative

(nominaive), partly through attraction to the first hwo-se, an original nominative. The development is discussed on pp. 434-6.

The present-day English type *I was given a book* is recorded as early as the 15th century. A few more or less ambiguous instances occur from about 1300 on, like *þe Duke Myloun was geven hys lyff* (Rich. CL 1315), where *þe Duke Myloun* can be interpreted as a dative or a nominative. Chaucer, for example, has the old construction (*me was toold*, CT D WB 9). The type *he is laughed at*, on the other hand, seems to be due to a process beginning in late OE, the immediate result of which is that particularly in relative *þe- and *þæt*-clauses the preposition is regularly placed after the verb; the verb and the postposition ('postponed preposition') eventually come to be regarded as a syntactical unit. This construction, *he is laughed at*, though it makes its appearance around 1300, remains rare until the end of the 14th century. After this time it gradually begins to gain ground, eventually becoming a popular syntactical type. Cf. also pp. 440-1.

The general tendency to use the nominative at the beginning of a clause is reflected in anacoluthic constructions like *o yonge Hugh of Lyncoln... Preye eek for us, we synful folk unstable* (Ch. CT B Pri. 1877).

**Nominative with Infinitive.** — A noun in the nominative is used as the subject of an infinitive in certain impersonal expressions: — *is hit nu wisdom mon to don so wo him sulven?* (Ancr. 165); — *now were it tyme a lady to gon henne* (Ch. TC iii 630); — *a kynges sone to ben in swich prysoun... thoughte hem gret pité* (Ch. LGW 1975); — *no wonder is a lewed man to ruste* (Ch. CT A Prol. 502); — *lo, swich it is a millere to be fals* (Ch. CT A Rv. 4318).

In some cases of this kind it is not quite certain whether the subject of the infinitive is to be taken as a nominative or accusative. This happens when there is reason to suspect that the construction imitates a Latin accusative accompanying

8 — Mustanoja
an impersonal or quasi-impersonal verb, as in Wyclif’s *it is not good man to be alone*, which goes back to *non est bonum hominem esse solum* (Gen. ii 18). Wyclif’s inconsistency in this respect is seen in his treatment of personal pronouns. He translates *amarum est te reliquise* (Jer. ii 19) by *bittir it is thee to han forsaken* and *notum sit isse nos* (Ezra v 8) by *be it known wee to han go.*

**ABSOLUTE NOMINATIVE (DATIVE, ACCUSATIVE)**

A noun or pronoun in the nominative figures in certain Mod. E absolute constructions. Two types of such absolute nominative constructions are often distinguished. One of them consists of a noun and a participle (or an adjective) and is customarily called the absolute participle. The other type has neither a participle nor an adjective, their place being taken by a prepositional phrase (*he stood there, hat in hand*). The absolute construction may be introduced by the preposition *with.*

**THE PARTICIPIAL-ADJECTIVAL TYPE.** — In OE the construction known as the absolute participle is occasionally found in translations and paraphrases of Latin works, as an imitation of the Latin ablative absolute (*forþgangenre tide, þridde cynn Scotta Bretene onfeng* ‘procedente autem tempore Britannia . . . tertiam Scottorum nationem . . . recepit’; — *lichama . . . openre þære byrigenne wæs forþ on leoht gelæded* ‘corpus . . . aperto sepulchro esset prolatum in lucem’). In original native works it is practically unknown, but it does occur in the later parts of the *OE Chronicle* (*þissum þus gedone, se cyng Willelm cearde ongean to Normandige*, an. 1086). The noun in the absolute construction (the subject of the participle) is usually in the dative (instrumental) case. In Anglian texts it is not infrequently in the nominative or accusative, apparently in imitation of the late Latin nominative and accusative absolute, although the possibility of a native origin may not be excluded. Cf. Else von Schaubert (see bibliography).
The absolute participle is very rare in early ME. The Ancrene Riwle, for example, contains only a couple of instances with this construction (þe sorie sunfule þus biset, hwu schal him þeonne stonden? 138; — ich wot swulne þet bereþ boþe togedere, hevi brunie and here, ibunden mid iren þe middel þauh, 174). It becomes more frequent in the second half of the 14th century under the influence of French and Latin and, in Chaucer’s works, also of Italian. The Wyclifite Bible tends to render literally all the ablative absolutes of the Latin original, while in Wyclif’s original works the absolute participle is seldom used. The construction is not infrequent in Chaucer’s poems, but he clearly avoids it in his prose; this is obvious, for example, from his translation of Boethius’ De Consolatione Philosophiae, where there are eight absolute participles as against the thirty-six of the original Latin work. Gower and Occleve favour the absolute participle in some measure, and Lydgate is rather fond of it. Pecock, on the other hand, is moderate in his use of the construction, and the same can be said of Mandeville’s Travels. The absolute participle occurs a little more frequently in Caxton; in the Paston Letters its use is abundant, though not so profuse as in works written in the 16th century under the influence of the humanists.

In early ME the noun in the absolute construction is in the oblique case. Towards the end of the 13th century, however, the oblique case begins to be supplanted by the nominative, which becomes finally established as the case of the noun by the second quarter of the 15th century. The possibility that the oblique case in the ME absolute construction represents not the dative but the accusative, under the influence of the OF (Latin) absolute accusative, as has been suggested by Einenkel (Streifzüge, p. 69, and Syntax, p. 59) and Else von Schaubert (see bibliography), pp. 187-8, is not to be excluded.

Examples: — hym willynge þat alle men wende he were þat he is nouzte (PPl. B xiii 280); — him spekinge thes thingis, many men bileveden into him (Wyclif John viii 30); — the cause yknowe
and of his harm the roote, Anon he yaf the sike man his boote (Ch. CT A Prol. 423); — smokyng the temple . . . This Emelye . . . Hir body wessh (Ch. CT A Kn. 2281); — what koude a sturdy housbonde moore devyse To preeve hir wyfhood and hir stedefastness, And he continuynge evere in sturdinesse? (Ch. CT E Cl. 700); — she this in blak likynge to Troilus Over alle thing, he stood for to beholde (Ch. TC i 309; cf. piacendo questa sotto il nero manto Oltra ad ogn'altra a Troilo . . . il suo alto desire Mirava di lontano, Filostrato i 30, 1); — the conseil in this wise take, The prestes fro this lady gon (Gower CA i 888); — also that the maystres . . . goon and asseyen weyghtys, powdres . . . they takyng in every schope that they fyndyn defectye . . . (Bk London E 198 [1418]).

The possibility that broken here membres in blynde and bedered and broken here membres . . . Han as pleyne pardoun as þe plowman hymself (PPI. B vii 101) is an absolute participle is perhaps not entirely out of the question, but is less likely.

The Prepositional Type. — The development of the current Mod. E type he stood at the door, hat in hand, where the noun (hat) is followed not by a participle or adjective but by a prepositional phrase (in hand), has not been satisfactorily explained so far. It is common in many languages, Indo-European and non-Indo-European (such as Finnish), and may be due — in part at any rate — to native developments (cf. E. Linkomies-Flinck, NM XXV, 1924, 214-21). The construction does not seem to occur in OE, but is common in ME: — upon an amblere esily she sat, Ywympled wel, and on hir heed an hat As brood as is a bokeler or a targe, A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe (Ch. CT A Prol. 470-3); — he ne lefte nat . . . to visite The ferreste in his parisshe, much and lite, Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf (Ch. CT A Prol. 495); — he . . . Halled out at þe hal dor, his hed in his hande (Gaw. & GK 458).

Absolute Construction Introduced by 'With.' — Even as early as OE, an absolute construction is not infrequently
introduced by the preposition *mid (with)*, and in ME this is fairly common. This is natural considering the marked associative or comitative element inherent in the construction. The majority of the OE instances seem to be merely attempts to render this aspect in the Latin ablative absolute (*mid gebegdum heafde gesælde þone gast ‘inclinato capite tradit spiritum,’* Lindisfarne Gospels, John xix 30). The preposition occurs mainly with the past participle, but there are instances also with the present participle, and with non-participial clauses the introductory preposition is quite common: — *ha ... feng þus to þonken Godd wiþ honden upahevene* (Jul. 58 [EETS]); — *thai saw in ballale cum aragit The vaward with baner displayit* (Barbour viii 48); — *upon hir humble face he gan bihilde, With fadres pitee stikynge thurgh his herte* (Ch. CT C Ph. 211); — *the quike body with the hede With leve take forth thei lede* (Gower CA ii 2780); — *fayne she wold be redde of it with hyr onowr sawyd* (Paston III 295 [c 1482]); — *and therwithal Dyane gan appeere, with bowe in honde* (Ch. CT A Kn. 2347); — *I stod ful stylle and dorste not calle, Wyth yzen open and mouth ful clos* (Pearl 183).

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE DATIVE, ACCUSATIVE, AND NOMINATIVE


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PRONOUNS

SOME PECULIARITIES OF ME PRONOMINAL SYNTAX

Pronominal combinations, p. 120. — Pleonastic use and non-expression, p. 121.

PRONOMINAL COMBINATIONS. — In early English (OE and ME) there seems to be a tendency to use a pronoun in combination with a noun or another pronoun in a way which to the modern reader seems pleonastic. A rather common phenomenon in OE is the use of the personal pronoun in combination with the relative þe: — þe he (equivalent to L qui), þe his (cuius), þe him (cui), þe hine (quem), etc. In ME the construction is represented by cases like þerynne wonyeþ a wyzt þat wrong is his name (PPl. C ii 59) and oon That with a spere was thirled his brest boon (Ch. CT A Kn. 2710). For a discussion of these see p. 202. A comparable OE type, a combination of the personal pronoun with a noun, is seen in cases like hie Maroara habbaþ bewestan him Þyringas, paralleled by ME instances like up roos he Julius, þe conquerour (Ch. CT B Mk. 3863). See pp. 135-6. A combination of a noun and pronoun is also seen in the peculiar ME his-genitive (e.g., kyng Alexandre his lemmman, Trev. Higd. I 155) discussed on pp. 159-62. Another ME pronominal combination is personal pronoun + this (e.g., quen þat sco þis can Jesus se, Cursor 11351, Cotton MS); see p. 137.

Such pronominal combinations are no doubt used for emphasis and clarity. With the indeclinable relatives þe and þat the main function of the personal (possessive) pronoun is probably to indicate the inflectional case of the relative and the sex of the person. He this is obviously used to bring out at once the demonstrative element and the sex of the person in question, probably in imitation of L iste. Chaucer translates the Italian feminine demonstrative questa by she this.
Peculiarities of Pronominal Syntax

It is difficult to say how far pronominal combinations of this kind can be regarded as native colloquialisms and how far they are typical of literary usage, possibly ascribable to foreign influence. It seems, however, that the combinations with indeclinable relatives at any rate are due to the same popular tendency towards clarity as are several other ME constructions (multiple negation, multiple comparison, etc.).

**Pleonastic Use and Non-expression.** — Apart from the combinations discussed in the preceding paragraph there are instances where the use of a pronoun, judging by the standards of received present-day usage, is even more obviously pleonastic, like *alle þis route of ratones to þis reson þei assented* (PPl. B Prol. 175), a type discussed on pp. 137-8. Constructions of this kind, clearly exaggerated attempts to avoid ambiguity, are typical of popular, uneducated speech even today.

An opposite phenomenon, non-expression of the subject or object pronoun, is common from OE down to late ME (e.g., *with hym ther was a Plowman was his brother*, Ch. CT A Prol. 529, and *þis Knout ... bed Edmond ... a word hure ðæter tuo; King Edmond him graunteðe*, RGlouc. 6298). It is discussed on pp. 138-44 and 144-5.

Non-expression of a pronoun is a natural phenomenon, in keeping with an economy of speech, and normally produces no ambiguity as long as the conjugational forms of the verb remain intact. Ambiguity sets in along with the loss of the conjugational endings, and a pronoun is felt to be necessary to indicate the person of the subject.

Many — possibly most — ME instances which the modern reader is inclined to interpret as non-expressions of the relative subject pronoun are obviously cases of non-expressed personal pronouns.
PERSONAL PRONOUNS


Pleonastic Use of the Personal Pronoun, p. 137.


Reinforcing of Personal Pronouns and Nouns by Means of 'Self,' 'Body,' 'One,' etc. — Self, p. 145. — Body, person, and the like, p. 148. — One, p. 150.

Bibliography, p. 150.

Number. — The personal pronoun has three numbers in OE: the singular, the dual, and the plural. The dual, used only of the first and second persons, is found in early ME in addition to the singular and plural.

FIRST PERSON

Singular. — The occurrence of the oblique case me instead of the nominative I is recorded at the end of the 15th century: — be it known to al men by theis presentis me, T. H. of Oxenford, glovard, ordeyne ... (Arnolde Chron. 108; NED
me 6). The phrase *it is me* does not appear until early Mod. E (cf. p. 133).

**Dual.** — The dual forms *wit* 'we two' and *unker, unk* survive down to the 13th century: — *and siþþen shule witt anan Off hunnger dezen baþe* (Orm. 8943); — *for þar is unker dom al ȝare* (Owl & N 1780).

**Editorial 'We.'** — The habit of using the pronoun of the first person plural when referring to oneself has given rise to a construction known as 'editorial *we* or *pluralis auctoris,* as Latin grammarians call it. This peculiar usage seems to have originated in Latin. It represents a special development of the sociative plural (*pluralis societatis*), a psychological and stylistic phenomenon which also provides a starting-point for the plural of majesty (see below) and, indirectly, for the plural of polite address (see p. 126). Some Latin grammarians prefer the term *pluralis modestiae* to *pluralis auctoris,* but this seems somewhat inaccurate. Although this use of the plural doubtless arises from a desire to avoid obtrusive self-emphasis, the ultimate motive is often not mere modesty but rather an unwillingness to assume responsibility, as pointed out by F. Slotty, *IF* XLIV, 1927, 155-90 and 264-305. In English editorial *we* has been employed from OE to the present day. Its sociative character is often clearly distinguishable, although in part its popularity is no doubt ascribable to conventional literary usage. ME examples: — *now let we Blanche-flour be And speke of Florys in his contree* (Flor. & Bl. 203-4); — *now o his proloug wit we bliþ* (Cursor 265); — *he wes nocht sa fayr that we Suld spek gretly off his beauté* (Barbour i 381). Editorial *we* is also used by Chaucer, in spite of a contrary statement by Karpf (p. 36): — *now lat us stynte of Custance but a throwe And speke we of the Romayn Emperour* (CT B ML 953).

**Plural of Majesty.** — Another variety of the sociative
Plural (pluralis societatis) exists as the plural of majesty (pluralis majestatis),¹ likewise characterised by the use of the pronoun of the first person plural for the first person singular. The plural of majesty originates in a living sovereign's habit of thinking of himself as an embodiment of the whole community. As the use of the plural becomes a mere convention, the original significance of this plurality tends to disappear. The plural of majesty is found in the imperial decrees of the later Roman Empire and in the letters of the early Roman bishops, but it can be traced to even earlier times, to Greek syntactical usage (cf. H. Zilliacus, Selbstgefühl und Servilität: Studien zum unregelmässigen Numerusgebrauch im Griechischen, SSF-CHL XVIII, 3, Helsinki 1953). The plural of majesty is extensively used in medieval Latin. In OE it does not seem to be attested. OE royal charters, for example, have the singular (ic Offa þurh Cristes gyfe Myrcena kining; ic Æfelbold cing, etc.). The plural of majesty begins to be used in ME. A typical ME example is the following quotation from the English proclamation of Henry III (18 Oct., 1258), a characteristic beginning of a royal charter: — Henri, thurþ Godes fultume king of Engleneeloande, Lhoaverd on Yrloande, Duk on Normandi, on Aquitaine, and Eorl on Anjow, send igretinge to alle hise holde, ilærde and ileawede, on Hunлен­doneschire: þæt witen ze alle þæt we willen and unnen þæt . . .

SECOND PERSON

Singular. — The occurs as an unstressed form of thou in a number of ME texts. It is found in the B-text of Lawman (þe were iclemde to hege, 21432). In the Ayenbite it is relatively common, especially in connection with auxiliary verbs (e.g., of

¹ The term 'plural of majesty' (pluralis majestatis) should be kept distinct from the pluralis majesticus, by which some grammarians mean the use of the plural for words normally occurring only in the singular (the waters, the airs, etc.). The pluralis majesticus is found in lofty, 'majestic' style, mainly in poetry.

**DUAL.** — The dual (zit 'ye two,' inker, inc) disappears in the course of the 13th century. Examples: — ne beon zit bute tweien, mine sunen zit beoþ beien (Lawman A 5019-20; ne be ze bote tweie, mine sones zeo beoþ heye, B); — and näpelas zit műzen habben pæs (Vices & V 97); — þat þís hall temple be arard on þinc, þat Godd, inker Sceppend, mihte þarinne wunien (Vices & V 97). The last instance of the dual recorded in the *NED* occurs in *Havelok* 1882: — Roberd! William! hware ar ye? Gripeth eyþer unker (corr. inker) a god tre.

**PLURAL.** — The occurrence of the oblique form you for the nominative ye has been recorded since the 14th century. As might be expected, you occurs for ye in ME texts mostly after the verb, e.g., in questions and in imperatives like wete you well (Malory Wks 293). Examples: — ye show your lady lytille love That you so hertily preyse (Ipom. A 1807); — unto my blis haf zue na right (Cursor 23160, Gött. MS); — to morowe schall you weddyd bee (GWarw. 4192, Cbg. MS). Until the middle of the 16th century, however, ye remains the prevailing form in the nominative.

In Chaucer’s *Troilus*, ye is used as an unstressed form of you: — er that I parte fro ye (i 5). The same reason may account for the use of the oblique form ze in y preie ze, seie ze to me (Pecock Repr. 86).

1 That the unstressed ye for you, though probably not uncommon in spoken everyday speech, is rare in literary usage in Chaucer’s time is suggested by the rather muddled state of the existing MS readings for this line. Three MSS consulted by R. K. Root in his edition of *Troilus and Criseyde* (Princeton 1945) read parte you froye and two MSS and the 1517 ed. fro the, while one MS reads fro you.
The use of the pronoun of the second person plural for the second person singular is characteristic of respectful and polite address. The origin of this custom is to be found in the plural of majesty. Since the sovereign speaks of himself in the plural, those who speak to him address him in turn in the plural as a sign of respect. The earliest instances of the plural of respect have been recorded in a number of Latin texts of the 4th century A.D.¹ This essentially stylistic feature is richly attested in the writings of medieval Latinity, and it occurs early in Romance and German vernacular literatures. By the time of the composition of the Chanson de Roland its use is firmly established in French, and in Chrétien de Troyes it is not only quite common but shows an advanced stage of development: it is no longer used exclusively by inferiors as a sign of respect in addressing their superiors, but also between equals, as a polite gesture. But within these broad limits the usage remains very inconsistent in medieval Latin and the Romance languages; in numerous cases the choice between tu and vos seems to be quite arbitrary. This interchangeability of the singular and plural in the pronoun of address is particularly striking in Anglo-Norman texts. On the confusion between the singular and plural pronouns of address cf. especially the article of E. B. Place (see bibliography).

In English the use of the second person plural for the second person singular begins under the influence of French. Exactly when this usage becomes established in England it is impossible to say, but instances have been recorded from the second half of the 13th century: — 'Sire emperour,' quaþ þe eorl þo, 'ne be þe no so bolde' (RGlouc. 1341); — and seyden, 'Levedi, Kristes ore And youres! . . . For Engelond auhte for to ben Youres, and we youre men' (Havelok 2797-801); — 'Laverd,' sco said, 'God it wischild þat þou britten sua mi child.¹

¹ In classical Latin, too, vos and vester are occasionally employed with reference to one person.
Yee give him all til hir allan' (Cursor 8721, Cotton MS). The use of the plural in addressing one person remains sporadic, however, until the 14th century, when this habit begins to gain ground; yet even at this time people of all ranks naturally employ the singular when addressing one person. Among equals þou and þi are the normal pronouns of address when one person is spoken to. As a sign of respect, i.e., when inferiors address their superiors, the plural occurs somewhat more frequently; on the other hand, the superiors naturally address their inferiors in the singular. In Gower's Confessio Amantis, for example, the lover addresses his confessor regularly in the second person plural (ye, youw; mi fader), while the confessor addresses the lover in the singular and with the words mi sone. In Chaucer's works, as a rule, thou is used in speaking to an inferior or to an equal and in emotionally-coloured addresses (expressing or implying companionship, love, defiance, scorn, etc.), while the more formal ye is used in addressing superiors or in compliments; yet there are notable exceptions to these general principles. It has been suggested (H. Koziol, E Studien LXXV, 1942, 170-4) that in a number of cases, especially when he seemingly addresses his reader, Chaucer employs thou for an indefinite person. Thus, for instance, in thou myghtest wene that this Palamon In his fightyng were a wood leon (CT A Kn. 1655), thou seems to stand rather for an indefinite person and can hardly be interpreted as a real pronoun of address. (For the use of thou for the indefinite person see p. 224.)

On the whole the use of the plural in addressing one person is largely confined to the upper classes of society; in addition, the usage is often far from consistent. In Ywain and Gawain (85-90), for example, Sir Kay says to the Queen, 'Madame,' he said, 'by Goddes dome, We ne wist nothing of þi come; And if we did noght curtaysly, Takes to no velany, Bot pray ze now þis gentil man To tel þe tale þat he bygan.' It is very doubtful whether the indiscriminate use of thou and ye in this passage is a stylistic device, allegedly favoured by some writers,
to illustrate the confused state of mind of the character speaking when addressed unexpectedly by his superior. H. Koziol (*Stb.*, pp. 54-65) assumes that the choice of the pronoun of address depends chiefly on the subject-matter and the writer’s own educational background. The following quotation from Osbern Bokenham’s life of St Elizabeth (lines 891-8) shows how a writer of the mid-15th century saw the custom of addressing one person in the plural —

And so wele she groundyd was in loulynesse
That she nolde suffryn in no maner wyse
Hyr maydyns hyr clepyn lady nere maystresse
Nere, whan she cam, ageyn hyr for to ryse,
As among jentelys yt ys þe guyse,
Nere in þe plurere nounbyr speken hyr to,
But oonly in þe syngulere, she hem dede devyse,
As sovereyns to subjectys be won to do.¹

In standard speech *thou* survives down to the 18th century. For the development of the pronoun of address in modern English cf. particularly Franz, *Sh. Gr.*, pp. 258-66, and Jesp., *Mod. E Gr.* II, pp. 44-6.²

¹ Quoted by R. O. Stidston (see bibliography), p. 20.

THIRD PERSON

TRANSITIONAL PHENOMENA. — The transition from OE to ME is characterised by two noteworthy developments.

(1) The dative forms of the masc. *(him)* and fem. *(hire)* singular and of the plural *(hem)* come to be used for the accusative *(hine, hie* in the singular, *hie* in the plural). The earliest recorded instances of this date from the beginning of the 10th century *(gif hiere ænig mon ceapode, Alfred Oros. 228)*. By the 12th century the dative supplants the accusative in the North and the Midlands. The earliest London texts have only the dative. The accusative survives in 13th-century southern texts, such as the *Fox and the Wolf* (c 1275: *þe vox hine ikneu wel for his kun*, 123), and in 14th-century Kentish texts, such as William of Shoreham’s poems and the *Ayenbite*. The old accusative *hine* has been preserved in the popular spoken language of the South down to our day *(un, en)*.

(2) Forms of the demonstrative are used for the personal pronoun, first in northern texts of the 10th century, possibly under the influence of Latin. In early ME texts they occur sporadically all over the country: — mesire, *þeo deþ* also *þeo* is betere *þen ich am* (Anacr. 22); — *þa sinndenn wiss biforenn Godd* (Orm. 405); — and *þe is god wiþ eche manne* (Owl & N 800); — *þa beoþ nu mid him an helle* (Poema Mor. 270).

OBLIQUE CASE FOR THE NOMINATIVE. — There are a few remarkably early instances — from the early 13th century on — of *him* used for the nominative: — *þe is ilevet todei* . . . *For a mon of lam Him þat is Laverd of lij* ('he who is the Lord of life is granted you today instead of a man of clay,’ Kath. 2151, MS Cotton Titus); — *I him am* (SPassion 1998); — *art thou hym that* . . . *slew Gollerothirame?* (Perc. Galles 2041); — *hym that she cheest, he shal hire han as swithe* (Ch. PF 623). The plurals *hem* and *them* occur in 15th-century texts: — *a man schal be lete blood for to kepe himsilf, and principali hem þat etiþ good fleisch and drinkiþ good wijn* (Lanfrank 298); — *all*
Pronouns

the foure brethern, and all theym of theyr companye arayed themselfe (Caxton Aymon 78). It is possible that in many instances of this kind the oblique form occurs primarily for emphasis; in many cases it may be due simply to the word-order. In the quotation from Ch. PF 623 (hym that) the oblique case form hym might be due to attraction or to a desire to indicate the syntactical relationship of the indeclinable relative pronoun. Cf. the use of you for ye (p. 125). The phrase it is me, it is him does not appear until early Mod. E (cf. p. 133).

Feminine Singular. — For a brief survey of the main theories concerning the origin of she (northern sho) see Cecily Clark's edition of The Peterborough Chronicle 1070-1154, Oxford 1958, pp. lxii-lxiii; to her bibliographical references may be added J. Vachek, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Univ. of Brno, III, 3, Brno 1954, 67-78. The dialectal distribution of the forms round about 1350 is roughly the following: — scho, North; sche E Mids, including London; heo, he, south and west of the line drawn along the Thames from its mouth to Oxford and from there to Stratford, Coventry, Derby, the Peak, and Lancaster (Moore et al., ME Dial. Char. p. 19).

For the peculiar accusative form his (hes, is, es, as) see p. 135 below.

Neuter Singular. — The nominative and accusative form of the neuter pronoun is it. The dative form is him: — vor never nis wit so kene So wane red him is awene (Owl & N 682); — it takes to him .xl. oþer ryvers (Mandev. i [Roxb.; NED]). The form it is uncommon for the dative: — in this world is noon it lyche (RRose 1073); — therfore it is gode resoun, as thei seyn, to don it [the Sun] worschipe and reverence (Mandev. 165 [Halliwell]).

This form occurs with prepositions: — þe rotes þat of it springes (Pr. Consc. 674); — kepe to hit (Purity 264). But instead of

1 In annd toc hiss sune sone anan Annd band itt fet annd hande (Orm. 14673) the pronoun itt, though taking the place of an original sympathetic dative (see pp. 98-9), is obviously an accusative (a direct object of the verb).
using a preposition with it ME texts commonly have pre-
positional adverbs (thereat, thereby, therein, thereof, therewith, etc.): — he hade A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys (Ch.
CT A Prol. 555); — a baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
And therewithal he broghte us out of towne (Ch. CT A Prol. 566).
For prepositional adverbs of this kind see pp. 424-5. For the
use of the form it as a possessive see p. 157.

'It' AS A FORMAL (ANTICIPATORY) SUBJECT. — As the subject
of a statement (and occasionally as the object) it may have
a distinctly formal character. Such a formal subject (cf. German
es and French il) is a comparatively late linguistic phenomenon.
A formal subject does not occur in Sanskrit, and even in the
later stages of linguistic development it is often missing in
instances where a modern reader would expect to find it
(e.g., norðan sniwde, Seafarer 31; — bifil that . . . At nyght was
come into that hostelrye Wel nyne and twenty . . . Of sondry
folk, Ch. CT A Prol. 19). For a brief discussion of the non-
expression of the formal subject in cases of this kind see p. 143.
An attempt is made in the following to analyse the most
important instances where it occurs as a more or less formal
subject in ME.

Since OE it has occurred as the subject of an impersonal
statement (cf. p. 433): — he badd o Drihtinn Godd þatt itt
ta sholdde reȝnne (Orm. 8694); — it happede me for to beholde
Upon a bok (Ch. PF 18); — til it was nyȝt (Brut 87); — as it
were in þe Popes presence (Brut 163). More often, however,
it is not used (see p. 143).

As in OE, impersonal constructions are occasionally employed
to indicate an indefinite agency: — þa set hit alle stille in
Arnures halle (Lawman A and B 28154); — itt seȝþ þatt
(Orm. 2685); — herkne wu it telleþ her (Best. 506). Cf. OE swa
hit her beforan saȝþ (Alfred Oros. 128).

It gives emphasis to the adverbial element in impersonal
periphrases of the type it was then that . . .: — in þe tyme
bitwene Abraham and Moyses it was þat men come to Engolond
132
Pronouns

(RGlouc. 204, MS B); — it is nauz by þe bischop þat þe boy precheth (PPl. B Prol. 80).

It occurs as a formal, anticipatory subject, usually to give emphasis to the logical subject, not only when the logical subject is an infinitive phrase (hit is grat wyt to loki mesure ine mete and ine drinke, Ayenb. 53; cf. p. 523) or a clause introduced by that, expressed or understood (soþ hit is ich singe and grede, Owl & N 1337), but also when the logical subject of the sentence is a noun or pronoun: — bot now it es þis appell etten (Cursor 873, Cotton MS); — to Lot it spak þis angels than (Cursor 2805, Cotton and Gött. MSS); — it shal be wel dere abouz þe De tol þat was in Grece souzþ (KAlis. 4147); — when hit knowen was the case with comyns of Troy (Destr. Troy 12411).

In many instances it occurs in a pleonastic function carried out by there in Pres. E: 1 — of hise mouth it stod a stem, Als it were a sunnebem (Havelok 591); — of þe erth it groues tres and gress (Cursor 545, Cotton MS); — it es na land þat man kan neven ... þat he ne sal do þam to be soght (Cursor 22169, Cotton MS); — bot it were a fre wymmon þat muche of love had fonde (Harley Lyr. xxxii 3); — hit Arn aboute on þis bench bot berdles chylder (Gaw. & GK 280); — bot hit ar ladyes innoge (Gaw. & GK 1251).

Another aspect in the ME use of the formal it is seen in the following cases where it is virtually equivalent to 'they:' — holi men hit were bëiene (Lawman B 14811; cf. hali men heo weoren bëien, A); — it ben aires of hevene alle þat ben crowned (PPl. C vi 59); — thoo atte last aspyed y That pursevantes and heraudes ... Hyt weren alle (Ch. HF 1323). — to þe gentyl Lomb hit arn anioynt (Pearl 895); — hit arn fettle in on forme, þe forme and þe laste ... And als ... hit arn of on kynde (Patience 38-40); — þei ... cownseld hyr to folwyn hyr mevynnggys and hyr steringgys and trustly belevyn it weren of þe Holy Gost and of

1 Notice that in these and the following quotations the verb agrees with the logical subject in number and person.
noon evyl spyryt (MKempe 3). This use goes back to OE. Cf. also German es sind . . . and French ce sont . . .

The phrase it is me, it is him, with the predicate pronoun in the oblique case, is modern English. The only OE and early ME type, down to the late 13th century, is ic hit eom þu hit art, he hit is, the verb agreeing with the person in question. In the latter half of the 14th century the first-person type is found in the form it am I (‘it am I,’ Quod she, Ch. CT B Sh. 1404), but the older type also remains in use (our Lord answeryd ’I it am,’ MKempe 189). A number of other variants have been attested in ME texts: — I him am (SPassion 1998); — for ich am he of at the ferd (Havelok 2602); — art thou hym? (Perc. Galles 2041). The Mod. E. type it is I, it is he is first attested for the third person (when he sawz it was not sheer, Into þe lepe azen sterst he, Flor. & Bl. 757), somewhat later for the first person (was it ouȝte I? NPassion 258 and 268). It is possible that the third-person form of the verb in it is I is due to the analogy of it is he (cf. Anna G. Hatcher, PMLA LXIII, 1948, 1099). This type prevails until early Mod. E, when the variant it is me, it is him begins to appear. The change is due to the effect of word-order: since I and he occupy the position usually held by the object of the verb, they tend to assume the case-form of the object, i.e., the oblique case (me, him; cf. C. A. Smith, Studies in English Syntax, Boston 1906, chapter III, 'The Position of Words as a Factor in Syntax,' pp. 77-86). Thus there is no need to assume, as L. Foulet does (Romania LXII, 1936, 43-51), that the type it is me arose under the influence of French c'est moi; cf. F. Holthausen, Archiv CLXXIX, 1941, 27-8, and Miss Hatcher, loc. cit., 1095-1100). An example of the plural form: — it ar ze that stonden bifer (Pol. Poems & Songs II 57 [1401]).

It may be replaced by a more emphatic pronominal form, like that ilk: — that ilk is she that pryvely Ne spareth never a wikked dede (RRose 416).

‘It’ as a Formal (Anticipatory) Object. — It is also
found as a formal (anticipatory) object: — *zif we hit *geornep to wonien her* (Lawman A 961); — *ic hit wat wel *þat Godd ne mai bien wunizende on none saule *þat unfríp is of sennes* (Vices & V 97); — *lutel wot hit any mon hou derne love may stonde* (Harley Lyr. xxxii. 1); — *and straunge he made it of her mariarge* (Ch. CT A Rv. 3980); — *thou canst maken it so queinte Thi slyhe wordes for to peinte Towards me* (Gower CA v 4623).

**Plural.** — The native *hie, hi, heo, he (here, hem)* is superseded by the originally Scandinavian pronoun *they (their, them)* in ME. The new pronoun appears first in the North and the NE Midlands. In *Ormulum* the only form for the nominative is *þe* (*te*); the majority form for the possessive is *þe re* and the minority form for the accusative and dative *þe m.* The nominative *they* spreads gradually to the W Mids and the South. It is not uncommon in Lawman B, where it occurs even for the accusative (*þaie he habbe wolde, 28516*). *They* reaches London in the 14th century. Chaucer uses only the form *they*, but a few instances with the older pronoun occur in the *Book of London English.* The *Ayenbite* shows only *hi.* The possessive form *their* gains ground somewhat more slowly. Chaucer has only *here*, while London documents of the 14th and 15th centuries show both *here* and *their.* Lydgate and Occleve employ *here.* In later 15th-century London records *here* becomes comparatively rare, and Caxton has only *their.* The spreading of the dative-accusative form *them* to the South is even slower. Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Occleve have only *hem.* Caxton uses *hem* more frequently than *them.*

1 That the use of *he* for the plural is no longer current in London at this time is suggested by the fact that it tends to become confused with the singular *he:* — *po *pat comen . . . to *he bretherhede . . . *he shal swer . . . for to kepe wel and trewely all *he point5 . . . ate here power* (Bk London E 47 [1389]). Since in this document *shal* is normally used for the singular, the regular plural form being *shal (pei shal),* the form *he* might equally well be interpreted as a 'generic singular;' cf. p. 63.
**Personal Pronouns**

Nutbrowne Maid and Skelton have only the *th*-form. For the development cf. particularly Wyld, *Short Hist.*, §§ 307 and 312; for the distribution of the nominative forms cf. also Moore et al., *ME Dial. Char.*, pp. 18-19.

In a number of ME works written in the South (including Kent) and the South Midlands a pronominal form spelled as *his(e)*, *hes*, *is*, *es*, or *as* is occasionally used for the accusative of the pronoun of the 3rd person (recorded only for the plural and for the fem. singular). It is often enclitically attached to the preceding verb. Examples for the fem. singular: — *he*... *mid mek herte pitosticche is kinges croune nom* And *sette is upe þe rode heved* ('put it on top of the cross,' RGlouc. 6596; *hure*, MS α; *it*, MS β); — *ase deþ þe cat mid þe moue þanne he his heþ ynome;* and *huanne he heþ mid hire yplayd, þanne he his eth* (Ayenb. 179). Examples for the plural: — *opre ydeles ... Diep he is dalf under an ooc* ('buried them deep,' Gen. & Ex. 1873); — *he bad þis child brennen to colen, And he toe is* (Gen. & Ex. 2654); — *he ys hire yaf, and she as tok* ('he gave them to her, and she took them,' Havelok 1174); — *and bouhte him cloþes ... hosen and shon, And sone dide him dones ['don es'] on* (Havelok 970); — *þe bones hii bere ... to þe abbeye of Redinge And bured is þere* (RGlouc. 9165). The examples quoted in *MED* under also 1 d (c) belong here.

**Demonstrative Use of the Pronoun of the Third Person.**

— In OE and ME the pronoun of the third person, with marked demonstrative force, is occasionally used before personal names and other personal nouns (nationalities, personifications, etc.). In OE both the singular and plural pronoun are found in this function before foreign names: — *he Ninus Soroastrem Bactriana cyning se cuðe manna ærest dry-craeftas he hine ofer-wann and ofsloh* ('[Ninus] Zoroastrem Bactrianorum regem ... pugna oppressum interfecit,' Alfred Oros. 30); — *hie Maroara habþep bewestan him Æpringas* (ibid. 16). Only the singular pronoun seems to occur in ME. There are several instances of a similar use in Chaucer's works: — *bitwixen Theseus*
and *hym* Arcite (CT A Kn. 1210; cf. also Kn. 1333); — *who yaf* Judith corage or hardynesse To sleen *hym* Olofernus in his *tente* (CT B ML 940); — *up roos* he Julius, *pe* conquerour (CT P Mk. 3863); — *certes, he* Jakke Straw and his meynee (CT B NP 4584); — *that ilke weddyng murie Of hire* Philologie and *hym* Mercurie (CT E Mch. 1734). In all these cases the personal pronoun is obviously not appositive, although the construction may have arisen from the appositive use.¹ The idiom is also recorded in Old Norse and Middle Welsh. Cf. H. R. Patch, *E Studien* LXV, 1930-1, 354-5, and H. B. Hinckley, *MP* XVI, 1918-19, 43.

The personal pronoun has demonstrative force also in phrases like *he* and/or *he, she* and/or *she* ‘the one . . . the other:’ — *for ne* and *he* had samen ben, *forwit* selcuth wrath (Cursor 16161, Cotton MS); — *and demen* whether *he* do bet or *he* (Ch. PF 166); — *for she* and *she* Spak swych a word (Ch. TC ii 1747).

**DETERMINATIVE USE OF THE PRONOUN OF THE THIRD PERSON.** — The personal pronoun is employed determinatively as an antecedent of a relative clause or a prepositional phrase, in cases where present-day English usually prefers antecedents like *the man, the woman, the person,* and *those:* — *he* sit on *heh* *þat* is ow on helpe (Sawles Warde 259); — *þine breþere* and *ic* and *she* *þat* *pe* bar (Gen. & Ex. 1925); — *if* *þou* be *he* I *luve sa* wele (Cursor 3693, Cotton MS); — *heo* of *Rome* (Lawman A and B 5890); — *hii of Denemarch* (RGloc. 7756); — *she* passed *hem* of *Ypres* and of *Gaunt* (Ch. CT A Prol. 448); — *they of Mecene* (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1379); — *thei of the toun* (Gower CA i 1149); — *mi* brother *hath* *ous* alle sold *To hem of Rome* (Gower CA ii 1663); — *þei of Troy* (Brut I 6). For *hym*

¹ The cases discussed here and elsewhere in this section suggest a fairly close relationship between the personal and demonstrative pronouns. It is well to bear in mind that the OE pronoun of the third person is originally a demonstrative.

For a brief summarising discussion of early English constructions of this kind see p. 120.
that she cheest, he shal hire han as swithe (Ch. PF 623) cf. p. 130.

The Pronoun of the Third Person Combined with 'This.'
— The habit of using the pronoun of the third person singular in combination with this seems to be ME only. Considering the fact that this use of this occurs mainly in religious treatises it is possible that it arose from a desire to render into English the markedly demonstrative colouring of Latin hic and iste while indicating the sex of the person in question: — þu wes henged bituhhe tua þeose, as hwa-se seie, 'he þis is mare þen þeоф' (OE Homilies I, quoted by Einenkel, Syntax, p. 137). — Quen þat sco þis can Jesus se (Cursor 11351, Cotton MS); — more þan Jonas is he þis (Wyclif Sel. Wks II 52). For Chaucer’s she this in blak likynge to Troilus Over alle thing, he stood for to biholde (TC i 309) cf. piacendo questa sotto il nero manto Oltre ad ogn’altra a Troilo . . . il suo alto desire Mirava di lontano (Boccaccio Filostrato i 30,1). Chaucer has to use two words for the adequate rendering of questa, the feminine form of the Italian demonstrative.

PLEONASTIC USE OF THE PERSONAL PRONOUN

A pleonastic use of the personal pronoun is not rare during the earlier periods of linguistic history. The apparent reason is usually a desire to avoid ambiguity, often also a desire to give prominence to the noun. In poetry the occurrence of a pleonastic personal pronoun is often due to rhythmical considerations. There are two principal types: (1) where the pronoun precedes and (2) where it follows the noun to which it is attached.

(1) The pronoun precedes the noun. The noun may be the subject of the finite verb: — thanne lauzte þei leve þis lordes at Mede (PPl. B iii 25); — it shal bisitten us ful soure þe silver þat we kepen (PPl. B x 361); — þenne þay bozed to a borde, þise burnes togeder (Gaw. & GK 481). The noun may also be
138 Pronouns

the object of the finite verb: — calle hem alle to my cort þo calde clerkkes (Purity 1562).

(2) The pronoun follows the noun. The noun may be the subject of the finite verb: — alle þis route of ratones to þis reson þei assented (PPl. B Prol. 175); — þise aldermen, quen he aproched, Grovelyng to his fete þay felle (Pearl 1120); — the pilgrimys þei wer glad (MKempe 114). The pleonastic pronoun may also occur after a relative clause: — þes messager þet ich telle ou of, hwat telleþ he ou? (Ancr. 84); — þe þe Godes wille deþ, eiper he mei him finde (Poema Mor. 88); — and þam þat lastes in þaire devocioun he rayses þam into contemplatif lyf (RRolle EWks 4); — hym that she cheest, he shal hire han as swithe (Ch. PF 623; for the antecedent hym cf. p. 130).

For the seemingly pleonastic use of the personal pronoun in relative clauses see pp. 202-3, below.

NON-EXPRESSION OF THE PERSONAL PRONOUN

NON-EXPRESSION OF THE SUBJECT-PRONOUN. — Non-expression of the subject-pronoun of the third person, singular and plural, is quite frequent in OE and ME. In the first person and the second (except in the imperative) it is uncommon.¹ Practically all the OE types of non-expression of the subject-pronoun are found in ME. The phenomenon occurs in all types of literary works, although its frequency varies a great deal from writer to writer. It is rare in Ormulum and in Chaucer’s prose, comparatively rare in the Proverbs of Alfred, Handlyng Synne, and Pearl, and comparatively frequent, e.g., in the Trinity College Homilies, Ancrene Riuile, Havelok, Cursor

¹ Statistics concerning the use of the subject-pronoun in late Northumbrian and Mercian interlinear glosses are given in Rolf Berndt, Form und Funktion des Verbums im nördlichen Spätaltenglischen, Halle/Saale 1956, pp. 65-7 and 78-81. In the first and second persons, singular and plural, the finite verb is almost regularly preceded by a subject-pronoun, but this is much more seldom the case in the third person.
Personal Pronouns

Mundi, Piers Plowman, Chaucer's poetry, and Gower's Confessio Amantis.

Einenkel's assumption (Neuphilol. Centralblatt III, 1889, 5) that the non-expression of the subject-pronoun is due to French influence lacks sufficient documentary support.

Non-expression of the subject-pronoun is a universal phenomenon. The fact that in English, for example, it is common only in the third person is perhaps (partly at least) to be connected with the differences in the subject-verb relations. In the first and second persons the subject is always the same word (i.e., we, þu, or ze), but in the third person it may be any noun or pronoun. This suggests that the connection between the subject and the verb is somehow less close in the third person than in the first or second.

On the whole non-expression of the subject-pronoun becomes less and less frequent towards the end of the ME period; yet even as late as the beginning of the 15th century all the main varieties of this phenomenon are found that existed at the beginning of the period.

The following analysis of the principal ME types of non-expression of the personal subject-pronoun is based mainly on

1. Non-expression of the subject-pronoun is still a common feature in a number of European languages, such as Italian and Finnish. In Finnish it seems to be disappearing, particularly in colloquial speech, presumably under the influence of the neighbouring Germanic languages.

2. In spite of the comparative rarity of the non-expression of the subject-pronoun in the first and second persons in OE and ME, the remarkable vitality of the ending of the second person singular accounts for the extensive non-expression of the subject-pronoun in questions like what seyst now Jhesus? why answerist not? in early Mod. E literature (cf. H. Spies, p. 45; see bibliography) and even much later. Dr Johnson asked his young protégé Francis Barber, 'What is the matter, child? Art sick?'

ME texts do contain occasional instances like sire, no darst nouȝt carie (KAlis. 2002, MS L; sir, þee þar nouȝt carye, MS B 2010) and knowest hym ought? (RRose 4659).

(1) Non-expression of the pronoun in the second of two co-ordinate clauses with the same subject, when the clauses are separated by a third clause or several clauses inserted between them, and in other similar cases: — þær he [se kyng Heanri] lét sweren ercebiscopes . . . and ealle þa þeines þa þær wæron his dohter Æþelic Englaland and Normandi to hande æfter his dæi, þe ær wes þes Caseres wif of Sexlande, and sende hire siþþen to Normandi. And mid hire ferde hire brøþer Robert eorl of Gleucestre and Brian þes eorles sunu Alín Fergan. And [he, i.e., the king] leot hire beweddan þes eorles sunu of Angeow (OE Chron. an. 1127); — he toke wiþ him his moder Elyn, for þe michel wisedome þat she couþe, and þre oþere grete lordes þat he moste lovede: þat one me callede Hoel, anoþere me callede Laberne, and þe þridd e Morthyn; and toke al his lande to kepe unto þe Eorl of Cornwaile (Brut 40); — þe kyng of Engeland was wonder wroþ and in hast went over þe see into Normandy wiþ a grete power for to defende þat londe; and þe werre bituene ham laste .ii. ere, til at þe laste þai .ii. fou togeder, and þe kyng of France was descomfittide and unnæfe scapede away wiþ miche peyn; and þe most part of his men were taken; and ded wiþ ham what him liked (Brut 142).

(2) The pronoun is not expressed after the omission of the conjunction between two co-ordinate clauses with the same subject, including the case when the pronoun is not expressed in the second of two separate sentences with the same subject: — and ha wiste wel þet hi ne hadde nocht gode beleve ine him; þo seide to hem, 'What drew yw, folk of litle beleve?' (Kent. S 219); — for evere as þei dropped adown þe devel was redy, And gadred hem alle togideres bothe grete and smale, Adam and Abraham and Ysay þe prophete, Sampson and Samuel and seynt Johan þe Baptiste; Bar hem forth boldly (PPl. B xvi 83); — proude prestes come with hym moo þan a thousand, In paltokes and pyked shoes and pisseres longe knyves, Comen æsein Conscience (PPl. B xx 219).
(3) The pronoun is not expressed in the main or subordinate clause of a complex sentence when both clauses have the same subject: — and for þei suffren and se so many nedy folkes, and love hem nouȝt as owre Lorde byt, lesen her soules (PPL B xii 56); — for he hadde power of confessioun, As seyde hym-self, moore than a curat (Ch. CT A Prol. 219).

(4) Non-expression of the pronoun may occur when it has been expressed in a previous oblique case: — fil me a cuppe of ful god ale, And wile drinken er y spelle (Havelok 15); — his lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye, His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye Was hoolly in this Reves governyng. And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age (Ch. CT A Prol. 600); — it is nat likly al thy lyf To stonden in hir grace (Ch. CT A Kn. 1173); — hir liste nat appalled for to be, Ne on the morwe unfeestlich for to se, And slepte hire firste sleep, and thanne awook (Ch. CT F Sq. 367); — him thoughte he herde a vois on hih Criende, and seide aboven alle, 'Hew doun this tree' (Gower CA i 2833); — I rede a tale, and telleth this (Gower CA iii 1331); — and þerefore þe beste knytes of al maner landes comen to him for to duelle, and ham rescypvede wip gode wille and reverence (Brut 78). A comparable case is the non-expression of the subject-pronoun in the following accusative-with-infinitive construction: — he herde A littel dyn at his dor, and derfly upon = 'open,' Gaw. & GK 1183).

(5) The pronoun is not expressed when understood from a previous word or words of different number or person, or both. There are three main varieties of this type of non-expression —

(a) The subject is understood from a previous collective or generic noun or indefinite pronoun: — annd latt ne wisste nohht hiss kinn, Acc wennde þatt he come, Annd ȝedenn heore weȝze forþ (Orm. 8917); — 'forþi,' quod þis vicori, 'be verrey God I wolde that no cardynal come amonge þe comune peple, But in her holynes holden hem stille at Avynoun, Amonge þe Juwes or in Rome' (PPL B xix 419); — bot ay wolde man of happe more hente þen mozten by ryȝt upon hem clyven (Pearl 1196); — every kyng nome his wyf and lad hem into here owne cuntre
and there maad hem quene (Brut 2); — he come to Irland, and conquered þat lande, þat ofte-lymes werrede uppon Britaigne, and Britons uppon ham; and ofte wonnen, and ofte losten, and seven hostages to Britons (Brut 93).

(b) The subject is understood from a previous word or words of different number: — in al the court ne was ther wyf, ne mayde, Ne wydwe, that contraried that he sayde, But seyden he was worthy han his lyf (Ch. CT D WB 1045); — and a kynge þat me callede Oswyn, þat was Peandaez cosyn, werrede oppon Kyng Oswy; and togedre fougten (Brut 102). In the following examples the non-expressed singular subject is understood from part of the preceding compound subject: — þe ne ende article and þe þri laste belonge þ to þe holi gost, and [hit, i.e., þe ne ende article] is þellic (Ayenb. 13); — so at last þei of Troy and Brut spoken togedre of kynrede and of lynage and of aquayntaunce; and þer pleyed hem unto Brut of her sorowe and her bondeage (Brut 6). A variant of this kind of non-expression is seen in and þenne þe þyrst bygonne to pleny, And sayden þat þay hade travayled sore (Pearl 550).

(c) The subject is understood from a previous word or words of different person and, occasionally, of different number. This type, which is comparatively rare, occurs when the words spoken by a person are reproduced. The least uncommon variety of this type of non-expression, found especially in Chaucer, is the non-expression of the third singular subject, understood from a previous first singular subject and also from a more distant third singular subject of the verb introducing the words spoken: — 'this is ynogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he, 'be namoore agast ne ywete apayed. I have thy feith and thy beryngnytee, As wel as evere womman was, assayed In greet estaat and povreliche arrayed. Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnes.' And hire in armes took and gan hire kesse (Ch. CT E Cl. 1057); — 'faire frendes,' þo saide þe pilgrime, 'when þat ze come into zour contré aseyne, Y praye zow þat ze wolde gone unto kyng Edward, and ofte-lymes him grete in my name, and
ofte-tymes þank him of his grete curtesye þat he to me haþ done, and nameliche for þe ryng þat he ȝaf me when he hade herde masse at Westmynstre, for seynt Johnes love Evangelist.' And toke þo þe ryng to þe pilgrimes and saide . . . (Brut 132). The third plural subject is sometimes also understood from the preceding first and second singular pronouns or from several singular nouns and pronouns of different persons, as in hise wif dede Ubbe sone in fete, And til hire seyde, al on gamen, 'Dame, þou and Havelok shulen ete samen, And Goldeboru shal ete with me . . .' Þanne were set, and bord leyd, And þe beneysun was seyd, Biforn hem com þe beste mete (Havelok 1722).

(6) The pronoun of the indefinite person is not expressed when understood from a previous, different, expression of indefinite agency: — the noise up ros . . . and generaly was spoken That Calkas traitour fled was and allied With hem of Grece, and casten to be wroken On hym that falsly hadde his feith so broken (Ch. TC i 88).

(7) Non-expression of it in conjunction with impersonal verbs or statements is very common, one might say the rule, in ME: — heom ne scamet ne gramet (Poema Mor. 165); — Crist tolde hem of sounere perils þat was betere hem to knowe (Wyclif Sel. Wks I 235); — me thoghte thus: that it was May (Ch. BD 291); — and happed so, they coomen in a toun (Ch. CT B NP 4177); — and fell ther was a kniht . . . which . . . (Gower CA ii 2994). Towards the end of the period the use of it increases, above all in instances where the impersonal verb does not take an indirect (dative) object (hit befel that; it happeðe that; it seemþ so, etc.). In Brut, for example, the use of it is the rule in instances of this kind.

(8) The instances where the subject-pronoun is not expressed in connection with the imperative (e.g., handel þy sinne yn þy þougþ, RMannyaing HS 99) are much more numerous than those where it is expressed (abide ze no longer here, Brut 64). Cf. pp. 475-6 and K. Suter (see bibliography).

It must be borne in mind that in many ME cases which
from the present-day point of view would be typical examples of non-expression of the relative pronoun the subject, if it had been expressed, would probably have been not a relative but a personal pronoun. In other words the two clauses are co-ordinate and in fact represent a type of construction known as apo koinou (to be discussed in Vol. II). Typical cases of this kind are *Mercy is a maydene þere hath myȝte over hem alle* (PPL. B v 644) and *with hym ther was a Plowman was his brother* (Ch. CT A Prol. 529). Cf. also the discussion of non-introduced relative clauses, on pp. 203-6.

**Non-expression of the object-pronoun.** — Both the direct (accusative) object and the indirect (dative) object may be left unexpressed. The following classification is based mainly on U. Ohlander's article in *SN* XVI, 1943-4, 105-27.

(1) The object is understood from a specific word or group of words in a co-ordinate clause. The direct object, being the same in both members, is expressed only in the second: — and þerto wile iche þat þu spuse And fayre bring hire until huse (Havelok 2913). The direct object, which is the same in both members, is expressed only in the first of them: — þis Knout . . . bed Edmond . . . a word hure offer tuo; King Edmond him graunteðe (RGlouc. 6298). The direct object in the second member is understood from the indirect object in the first: — but þey myȝt nat do hym no dere, Noþer to Satanas lede ne bere (RMannyng HS 7868). The indirect object in the second member is understood from the direct object in the first: — he wolden him slo, Or elles binde him and do wo (Havelok 2167). The direct object in the second member is understood from a prepositional phrase in the first: — þe lady þenn spek of leve, He granted hir ful sone (Gaw. & GK 1289). The direct object in the first member corresponds to a prepositional phrase in the second: — to visite and speke wiþ þe King of Engelond (Brut 315).

A comparable case is the occasional non-expression of the pronoun after a preposition: — also here is but litle spech of
the erle of Warwyk now, but after Christenmas, they say ther wyl be more spech of (Plumpton Corr. xv [1486]).

(2) The object is not understood from any specific word in a co-ordinate clause: — certes, were it gold, or in a poke nobles alle untold, Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe Smyth (Ch. CT A Mil. 3781).

(3) Non-expression of an indefinite object is common: — over-yulle makieþ wlatie (Owl & N 354); — virtue makieþ wynne hevene (Ayneb. 84); — wyn, wo, or chaungynge of complexioun Causethe ful ofte to doon amys or spoken (Ch. CT F Fkl. 783); — ofte at feestes have I wel herd seye That tregetours, withinne an halle large, Have maad come in a water and a barge, And in the halle rowen up and doun (Ch. F Fkl. 1142); — the kyng herd tell of þis tythand (OT Paraphrase 6075); — he made to sarce hym and to stoppe his bledynge woundes (Malory MD 351); — I shal make stryke of thy heed (Malory MD 840).

REINFORCING OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND NOUNS BY MEANS OF SELF, BODY, ONE, ETC.

'SELF.' — Intensification of nouns and pronouns by appending the adjective self to them has occurred since OE: — Romane selfe sædon (Alfred Oros. 220); — ic sylf hit eom (Luke xxiv 39). This use of self, although losing ground with nouns and being infrequent with personal pronouns after the beginning of ME, survives down to early Mod. E. ME examples: — as dude ure Loverd sulf (Ancr. 82); — hine solf he biswikeþ (Poema Mor. 14). — þou wat child have I self nan (Cursor 2559, Cotton MS); — in mining sal ye hald þis dai, Yee self and your oxspring ai (Cursor 6096, Cotton MS).

A peculiar feature of OE usage is the frequent occurrence of a seemingly pleonastic dative of the personal pronoun between the intensifying self and the governing noun or pronoun (e.g., he het . . . onbernan Romeburg . . . and gestod him self on þæm hiehstan torre, Alfred Oros. 260). The occurrence of
this 'pleonastic' dative pronoun has been explained in various ways.\(^1\) According to the most widely accepted interpretation it is originally a reflexive dative whose true character has become obscured. In the course of time the pronoun in the dative and the following \textit{self} come to be looked upon as belonging together. This combination begins to supersede the use of \textit{self} alone, and at the beginning of the ME period it is more or less the prevailing form of this particular nominal intensifier. In Lawman \textit{A}, however, the forms \textit{þu  seolf} and \textit{he  seolf} are usual as nominatives.

In early ME the case-form of the personal pronoun accompanying \textit{self} undergoes a change. In the first and second persons singular the dative form of the pronoun (\textit{me  self}, \textit{me  selven}, and \textit{þe  self}, \textit{þe  selven}) is gradually superseded by the possessive. The new forms are rare in \textit{Ormulum}, but are occasionally found in Lawman \textit{A} (e.g., \textit{mi  seolf  ich  habbe  inowe}, 17054, and \textit{þat  weore  þu  Ûper  þi  seolf}, 17963) and in \textit{Ancrene Riwle} (e.g., \textit{þi  sulven}, 52). The transition from \textit{me} and \textit{þe} to \textit{mi} and \textit{þi} is in fact a phonological process through which \textit{e} becomes \textit{i} (cf. the development of \textit{be} into \textit{bi} in words like \textit{biforen}, \textit{bitwene}, etc.). From the end of the 13th century on the usual forms of the first and second persons are \textit{mi  self} and \textit{thi  self}, although the type \textit{me  self} occurs not very infrequently even in 15th and 16th century texts. A natural result of this development is that the dative forms \textit{mi} and \textit{þi} come to be regarded as possessives and \textit{self} (\textit{selven}) accordingly as a noun.\(^2\) When this stage is reached, the plural forms \textit{us  selve(n)} and \textit{you  selve(n)} give way to \textit{our  selve(n)} and \textit{your  selve(n)}. These forms have been recorded since the beginning of the 14th century: — \textit{if  we  cuth  ozt  ur  selven  knau} (Cursor 21878, Cotton MS); — \textit{ze  yourself  be  talentlyf} (Gaw.

\(^{1}\) W. Preusler, \textit{IF} LVI, 1938, 187, for example, ascribes it to Celtic influence.

\(^{2}\) That \textit{self} even in OE tends to become a noun is suggested by cases like \textit{he  hine  forlet  to  his  agnes  sylfes  dome} (BTS \textit{self}).
Personal Pronouns

& GK 350). About the same time there begin to appear instances like *a tregetur I hope he be, or elles Godds self es he* ('God himself,' Cursor 12248, Cotton MS), *þe most kyd knyzte3 under Krystes selven* ('Christ himself,' Gaw. & GK 51), and *þe bores hed wat3 borne before þe burnes selven* ('the knight himself,' Gaw. & GK 1616). Another consequence of the development of *self* into a noun is the occurrence, now and then, of *the self for itself* from the 14th century down to the early 17th: — *þei love not holynes for þe self* (Qui Habitat 19, MS H).

*Itself* dates from OE. While *meself* and *þeself, himself* remains the form of the masculine third person singular. In the North *hemselfe(n)* 'themselves' is superseded by *thaimselve(n)*. In later ME the possessive begins to encroach upon the dative form of the pronoun; — *Noe ... wrozt his self in þat labour* (Cursor 1726, Fairfax MS; *he self*, Cotton MS; *himself*, Göt. MS); — *to ches þam ware þairself will neven* (Cursor 5378, Cotton MS). The possessive form of the third person singular and plural goes out of use round about the end of the 15th century.

The -s of the plural (*ourselves, yourselves, themselves*) does not emerge until the end of the 15th century: — *we shall endevor ourselfs* (Plumpton Corr. lxxxix [1495-6]).

When *self* becomes associated with the preceding dative of the personal pronoun, it is often found in the inflected form *selven* (*sulven*) In early ME forms like *him selven, þe selven*, etc., are used side by side with *him self, þe self*, etc., without any functional difference. In *Ancrene Riwle*, for example, *him sulfin* and *him sulven* are used without distinction for the nominative and the oblique case. This indiscriminate use continues in later ME, the forms -*selve* and -*selven* being quite common for the nominative and oblique case, singular and plural alike, down to the end of the 15th century: — *myselven can not telle why* (Ch. BD 34); — *as thou saist thiselven here* (Gower CA ii 555); — *himselven grieveth alther worst* (Gower CA i 326). Forms in -*selve* and -*selven* occur in all dialects.
Plain *myself, thyself, himself*, etc., are also used for *I myself, thou thyself, he himself*, etc.: — and *him seolf wule liþen* (Lawman A 5966); — *series myselve schal him never telle* (WPal. 543); — *myself have been the whippe* (Ch. CT D WB 175, Ellesmere MS; numerous MSS read *hath for have*); — *he toke myself to hys maryage* (Pearl 414); — *þi doghter am I, Als þiself mat witerli* (Cursor 9568, Cotton MS); — *therwhile himself stant out of herre* (Gower CA Prol. 962); — *by asent of yoursilf* (Alex. & Dind. 1095).

In the large majority of instances the original reflexive meaning of *self* is felt in one way or another. But there are cases also where *self* is used purely for emphasis, with no trace of reflexivity: — *bishop Bawdewyn abof bigine þe table, And Ywan, Uryn son, ette with hymselven* ('with him,' i.e., Bishop Bawdewyn, Gaw. & GK 113).

For additional emphasis, *own* not infrequently occurs attributively before *self*: — *I hope þat þi hert ar þe wyth þyn awen selven* (Gaw. & GK 2301). Expressions like *þan seyd þe jayler hys owyn selfe to þe Meyr ...* (MKempe 112) and *I xal comyn for zow myn owyn self* (MKempe 188) become current in the 15th and particularly in the 16th century.

In the course of ME the combination of the personal (possessive) pronoun and *self* loses a great deal of its intensifying force. In poetry it is not infrequently used merely to fill up the line.

'BODY,' 'PERSON,' AND THE LIKE. — Closely connected with the intensifying uses of *self*, particularly with the late type *his own self*, the phrase *his own body* is attested from the late thirteenth to the late fifteenth century as an emphatic equivalent of 'himself:' — *he þohte do is owe body wat he mihte dure* (RGlouc. 3812); — *he grauntedee is owe bodi þe batayle to do anon* (RGlouc. 6269); — *his houen bodi he hem slough* (Degaré 897); — where he his oghne body lay (Gower CA v 2115); — *sche hath hir oghne bodi feigned ... as though sche wolde flee Out of hir lond* (Gower CA vii 3468); — *the storie witnesseth that he his
Occasionally his own body stands for he himself, as in his own body ich wil assaile (KAlis. 2018), and Chaucer uses my joly body for 'I myself' in my joly body schal a tale telle (CT B ML 1185). All these cases are connected with the use of body and corse for 'person,' under the influence of OF cors 'body,' also used in this sense; e.g., mony was þe gode body þat he slou in þe place (RGlouc. 5559) and þat I ne dyscovered to his corse my consayl ('to him,' Purity 683). The intensifying phrase his own body seems to be an imitation of similar OF uses of ses cors (quens Aymeris ses cors les chadela, La Mort Aymeri de Narbonne 782; — a Mirabiel . . . U la roîne estoit ses cors, Chron. of Philippe Mouskes 20601; — il meîsmes ses cors a le feu alumé, Vie du pape Grég. p. 34; — mes cors meîsmes en la bataille ira, Enfances Ogier 4296). Cf. Godefroy, Dict. II, p. 314c, A. Tobler, Vermischte Beiträge zur franz. Grammatik I, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1902, pp. 30-6, and Anna G. Hatcher, Corona: Studies in Celebration of the 80th Birthday of Samuel Singer (Durham, N. Carolina, 1941), pp. 63-88.

The use of person for 'self' in late ME (e.g., love he hath to thi persone 'to you', Gower CA i 840) leads to an intensifying use of this noun in the phrase his own (proper) person: — whan ðe jayler knew þerof, he cam hys propyr persone and browt hir before þe stywarde (MKempe 112); — my Lady hir owen persone was wel plesyd (MKempe 133); — the kyng his owne persone brought and ladde this worthy lady to the bisshops place of Wynchestre (Caxton Chron. Engl. ccxliii 289 [ed. of 1482]; NED).

In roughly the same sense the expressions his own hand and his own mouth are found in later ME as emphatic equivalents of 'himself' (e.g., he ȝef him armes and made him kniȝt his owne honde, RGlouc. 1382, and to lete out of mynde Thing which he seide his oghne mouth, Gower CA v 5455). They are discussed on pp. 106-7. For all these constructions cf. also NM LX, 1959, 267-86.

1 Cf. Shakespeare’s as thy sweet selfe grow’st (Sonnet cxxvi 4).
'One.' — The use of the personal pronoun in conjunction with intensifying (mainly exclusive) one in the sense 'by oneself' provides in many respects a striking parallel to the type myself, himself. It is possible that the occurrence of the dative form in me ane and him ane is due to the analogy of the type me self (him self). BTS (s.v. ān) quotes an instance of this construction from B. Assmann's collection of OE homilies (eat þis ic me ane wat), and Kellner (p. 164) two instances from Morris's OE Homilies (bi his eadi beoden in hulles him one, 207; — þu þe ane, 271). The type is not uncommon in early ME texts (heo was inne in onliche stude al hire one, Ancr. 71; — non nis him one, Ancr. 113; — all himm ane, Orm. 1025). There are even instances like him sulf one (Ancr. 71) and himm self himm ane (Orm. 1079). Later the personal pronoun occasionally gives way to the possessive (of þat rib he mad woman Til Adam þat was first his an, Cursor 630, Cotton MS; — as I wente be a wode walkyng myne one, PPl. A ix 54; — þou art oddely þyn one out of þis fylþe, Purity 923; — now þe ar here, iwysse, and we bot oure ane, Gaw. & GK 1230). One is often reinforced by all (all him alane the way he tais, Barbour ii 146). Lone, itself an aphetic form of alone (< al one), goes through the same development. Northern writers use it with the possessive pronoun: — þe crystine ... Lowand God al his lone (Sc. Leg. Saints xxii 521). For modern Scots examples see p. 294, n.1. For a discussion of exclusive one see pp. 293-4.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE PERSONAL PRONOUNS

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REFLEXIVE AND RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS


*Bibliography*, p. 155.

Reflexivity. — In OE the only trace of the original reflexive pronoun corresponding to German *sich* and Latin *se* is *sin*, the possessive of the third person, found mainly in
Reflexive and Reciprocal Pronouns

poetry (see p. 156). Otherwise reflexive relations are expressed by means of the simple personal pronoun. This usage continues in ME and survives even in present-day E: — *hie hie þa up ahoton* (Alfred Oros. 94); — *I shal strengþen me þerto* (Sirith 170); — *the Scottis men in that fechting Swa aperly and weillte thame bar* (Barbour xiv 77); — *zelde zou, traitoures, zelde zou!* (Brut 220). The dual: — *swa þatt gitt baþe ledenn zunnnc clennlike zunnnc bitwenenn* (Orm. 6206).

But even in OE the reflexively-used personal pronoun begins to be reinforced by the adjective *self (he hyne sylfne aheng)*. The simple personal pronoun continues to predominate, however, down to the late 15th century.

The development of the reflexive pronoun reinforced by *self* is on the whole similar to that of the intensifying combination with *self* (see pp. 145-8 above). The late OE and early ME dative-accusative syncretism promotes the use of the dative form *himself, himselfe(n), herself, herselfe(n)* for the accusative as well as for the dative, and in the first and second persons the dative develops into a possessive (*myself, thyself, ourselves, yourselves*).

**Reflexive Accusative and Dative.** — Owing largely to the falling together of the dative and accusative, the practical difference between the reflexive accusative (occurring in conjunction with transitive verbs) and the reflexive dative (occurring in conjunction with intransitive verbs) must have been slight in many ME cases. Einenkel (*Syntax*, p. 138) refers to the occurrence side by side of instances like *liþ him adun to slepen* (121) and *lei þ him to slepen* (121) in *Ancrene Riwle*.

**Reciprocity.** — An active verb form may occur alone in reciprocal function: — *and after that they longe ypleyned hadde, And ofte ykist and streite in armes folde* (Ch. TC iv 1689). Usually, however, reciprocity is expressed by *each . . . other, every . . . other, one . . . other, either . . . other*, and their variants. *Each . . . other* (e.g., *in armes lovely eche lauzt ofer*, WPal. 2237) has been recorded since OE, *each one . . . other* since early ME (*Paælcan*
to oþer, Lawman A 13145; ech to oþer, B; — echon with other
pleide and lowh, Gower CA i 1854). Either ... other (e.g., the
prest and Perkyn aposide either other, PPL. A viii 122) dates
from OE, while one ... other and its variants date from ME
(þe on ber ase þauh hit were a letuarie, þe oþer ber enne sticke
of gode golde, Ancr. 168; — bot if that on that other waste, Gower
CA Prol. 649). Every ... other (e.g., rouned everych in others ere,
Ch. HF 2044) is attested from the very beginning of the
ME period. The reciprocal use of plain other, which in later
times is recorded only in Scottish texts, is obviously due to
some kind of contamination: — alle dedes and werkes of þe
Trinité mai not be departid from oþir (Wyclif Sel. Wks III 340).

Reciprocity may also be expressed by means of the adverb
together: — þan eiþer hent oþer hastely in armes, And wiþ kene
kosses kulþed hem togidere (WPal. 1011).

PASSIVE EXPRESSING REFLEXIVITY AND RECIPROCITY. —
Later ME cases like the following are generally interpreted
as passive constructions expressing reflexivity and reciprocity:
— duc Theseus was at a wyndow set (Ch. CT A Kn. 2528); —
the king in jugement Was set (Gower CA ii 2685); — they ben
met (Ch. TC iii 1681); — echon is with other met (Gower CA
iv 2094); — I trow an hundred tymes been they kist (Ch. CT B
ML 1074); — when I was leyd, and had myn eye hed, I fel on
slepe (Ch. LGW 208); — but slepe myght he nought when that
he was led (Partenay 2889).

Einenkel, Syntax, p. 137, traces this usage back to OF models
(li Sarrazin qui estoient mis entre le maistre des arbalestriers et
l'ost; — li empereres n'ree mie esloigniez). Yet while admitting
that it is due essentially to French influence, the background
of the usage is perhaps somewhat more complicated than
might seem at first sight. It is difficult to say, for example,
exacty how far the past participle in all cases of this kind
is felt to be really passive in sense. Particularly the case of
set, often used in the intransitive sense 'sit,' does not seem to
be quite clear. Confusion between set and sit is attested even
Reflexive and Reciprocal Pronouns

in OE, as pointed out by A. T. Bødtker (see bibliography), p. 7. Referring to Sievers-Brunner, § 406, n. 1, Bødtker believes that in *be set* the old participles *setēd* and *seten* have become amalgamated and compares *he weren alle dune set* (Havelok 2291) to *þa comon forðy on weg þe þara oderra scipu asæton, þa wurdon eac swīde uneðelice aseten. Dreo asæton on þa healfe þæs deopes þe þa Deniscan scipu aseten wœron* (OE Chron. A. D. 897) and *þa weoren alle iseten* (Lawman A 18532). But that even in this case the passive construction is to be considered at least as an important contributory influence can hardly be denied.

Chaucer’s *thise riotoures three . . . Were set hem in a taverne* (CT C Pard. 663) is identified by G. E. Penning (see bibliography), p. 64, and later by Einenkel (loc. cit.) with French *ils s’étaient assis.*

Thus, while it seems that the cases discussed are primarily passive constructions used to express reflexivity and reciprocity and that this usage is due essentially to French influence (cf. also p. 550), the background seems to be somewhat mixed, and native factors may have a share in it.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE REFLEXIVE AND RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS


Kellner, p. 189.


Paschke, Elisabeth, *Der Gebrauch des bestimmten Artikels in der*
POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

OE background, p. 156.


Bibliography, p. 167.

OE Background. — In OE the genitive case of the personal pronoun is used as the possessive. The only exception is sin, the possessive of the third person. It goes back to a lost reflexive and is used for any gender and number, generally with reflexive force (like Latin suus, as against illius and istius, and Swedish sin, as against hans or hennes): — to hofe sinum (Beow. 1236). Sin occurs mostly in poetry, rarely in prose, and it does not survive in ME. The prevailing OE possessive of the third
Possessive Pronouns

person is the genitive form of the personal pronoun (*his, hire, hiera*), which appears early in this function and is practically the only form of the third-person possessive used in OE prose.

**DEPENDENT POSSESSIVE**

**Differentiation in Form.** — In OE and early ME the dependent and independent possessives are alike in form. In the first and second persons singular the independent possessive (*min* and *thin*), being emphatic, retains the final -n, but the dependent possessive loses it, except when the following word begins with a vowel or h. In the northern areas the final -n disappears towards the end of the 13th century and in the other areas in the course of the 14th and 15th centuries.

**Traces of Inflection.** — Traces of OE inflection occur in the southern and S Midland dialects of early ME: — for mines drihtenes luwe (Lawman A 19729); — mines lives leome (Ureisun Ure Lefdi 2); — mid þire stevene (Owl & N 915). A few traces of the inflectional forms are encountered even later in the south-eastern area (Kent). In the North and N Mids the inflectional forms are lost at an early stage. *Ormulum*, for example, shows only the uninflected form for the possessive. A peculiarity of this work is the double genitive form *theirs* at line 2506 (till e þerr þe ress  herrte) for the usual periphrastic type till e þerr off þe  herrte.

**Dual.** — The dual forms (*ar we to unker dome fare*, Owl & N 552; — to zunnkerr bäre gode, Orm. 6183) disappear in the course of the 13th century. Cf. pp. 123 and 125.

**Neuter Possessive.** — *His* is used both for the masculine and neuter possessive until the end of the 16th century, when the neuter form *its* begins to appear. From the 14th century on *it* is occasionally employed for the possessive: — and kepe to hit and alle hit cors clanly fulfylle (Purity 264). Some instances of the possessive *it* occur also in two other poems of
Pronouns

MS Cotton Nero A x, Pearl and Patience; e.g., for hit dissert (Patience 12); — þrwe in at hit þrote withouten þret more (Patience 267); — dere watþ hit adubbement (Pearl 108); — er mynde most malte in hit mesure (Pearl 224). M. Lehnert (see bibliography) believes that the use of it in the meaning 'its' arises in locutions of the type it lifted up it head, analogues for which can be found in early Mod. E dialects (she is out of she way; we lost we book, etc.).

**Intensification of the Possessive.** — The possessive is frequently reinforced by own, as in myne awen dere sone (MADSone 1).

**Periphrasis with 'Of.'** — Of with the personal pronoun is occasionally used for the dependent possessive, apparently for reasons of rhythm or emphasis: — ich chulle for þe luve of þe nimen þis fiht upon me (Ancr. 177); — the love of hire ne lesteþ nowyht longe (Harley Lyr. xxxii 5); — þe swetnes of hym (RRolle EWr. 105); — the hem of the clothing of him (Wyclif Matth. xiv 36); — the trespas of hem bothe (Ch. CT A Kn. 1764); — I hate of thee thy nyce fare (Ch. TC i 1025; note the occurrence of both constructions side by side); — bi wytte of yorselven (Gaw. & GK 1394). The construction is used for the subjective and objective genitive.

'My' with the Vocative and Titles. — A more or less conventional use of the possessive my in addressing people — a habit which probably arose from a desire to achieve a tone of familiarity — has been attested since OE and is perhaps native in origin, although it has obviously been promoted by Latin and French influence: (— mine broðor, mine þa leofan, Bede 348; the whole phrase, mine ... leofan, renders the single word filiolii in the Latin original); — mine leove sustren (Ancr. 6); — benedicite, Mi sone (Gower CA i 206).

Prefixed to nouns like lord, lady, and mistress the possessive my has been employed since the beginning of the 14th century in reverent address and in polite reference to the person con-
cerned: — *mi laverd, que has it don?* (Cursor 11966); — 'mi lord þe douke,' he seyd anon, 'For schame lete þo levedis gon' (Amis & Amil. 1228); — *who was so welcome as my lord Daun John* (Ch. CT B Sh. 1258); — *my lord youre fader* (Ch. CT B NP 4495); — *to my lady Canacee* (Ch. CT F Sq. 144); — *I was with my maistresse your wyff at my maistresse Cleres* (Paston Suppl. 15 [1448]). The ME usage owes no doubt much to Old French, but it is not quite impossible that it goes back to an older native custom of respectful address. Kellner, p. 192, quotes two relevant instances from OE Bede, e.g., *hwæt woldest þu, min domne bispoc, þæt cynelice hors þæm þearfan syllan?* ('quid voluisti, domine antistes, equum regium ... pauperi dare,' 196). For a general survey of this phenomenon in the Indo-European languages cf. J. Svennung, *Anredeformen*, Acta Soc. Litt. Hum. Reg. Upsaliensis XLII, Uppsala 1958, pp. 412-19.

**DOMESTIC 'OUR.'** — A stereotyped and weakened use of the possessive of the first person plural occurs in several Chaucer passages, like *my lord Daun John, Oure deere cosyn* (CT B Sh. 1259), *how mekely looketh Wilkyn, oure sheep* (CT D WB 432), and *Jankyn, oure clerk, was oon of tho* (CT D WB 595). This is called by J. S. P. Tatlock (SP XVIII, 1921, 425-8) 'the domestic our.' Tatlock writes, 'This medieval colloquialism is evidently an extension of an ordinary possessive to cases where it involves taking the point of view of the person addressed, and finally becomes stereotyped.' Cf. also Robinson, p. 733, note on Shipman's *Tale* 69.

**'His' AND 'HER' INSTEAD OF THE GENITIVE.** — In OE there occur two peculiar constructions, both indicating a possessive relationship. One of these is the so-called possessive dative, a

1 Occasionally, under the strong impact of French, the French possessive is found in this function: — *ma dame, I am a man of thyne* (Gower CA i 168). A remarkably early instance of the use of such polite French formulas in English is *mestre, þeo dep also þeo is betere þen ich am* ('sir,' Ancr. 22).
special variety of the sympathetic dative (see p. 98) and, fundamentally, of the dative of interest. The characteristic feature of this construction is that the noun in a possessive relationship to another noun in the dative is preceded by a dependent possessive pronoun: — *her Romane Leone þæm papan his tungan forcurfon* (OE Chron. an. 797). The expression of the possessive relationship is even more prominent in an instance quoted in the *NED* (s.v. *his*) from c 1000 (*þa Gode his naman neode cigdan*, Ps. xcviii 6).

In the other OE type, recorded in Alfred and Ælfric, the noun (a foreign name) is not in the dative but in the nominative: — *þær Asia and Europe hiera land-gemircu togædre liegaf* (Alfred Oros. 8); — *Affrica and Asia hiera land-gemircu onginaf of Alexandria* (Alfred Oros. 8); — *Nilus seo ea hire æwielme is neh þæm clife þære Readan Sæs* (Alfred Oros. 12); — *we gesawon Enac his cynren* (’stirpem Enac vidimus ibi,’ Ælfric Num. xiii 29). The primary reason for the use of the possessive pronoun in these cases may be a desire to indicate the inflectional case (genitive) in conjunction with a more or less undeclinable foreign proper name. The construction seems in some measure comparable to cases like *he Ninus, hie Maroara, he Julius, hym Olofernus*, etc., attested in OE and Chaucer (see p. 135), and those like *he this, she this*, etc., attested in ME (see p. 137).

As an equivalent of the genitive case the construction noun + dependent third-person possessive is also recorded in ME: — *þe cnapechild hiss shapp* (Orm. 4220); — *Hengest his sone* (Lawman B 16772; *þat wes Hengest sune*, A); — *Loth his eldeste sone* (Lawman B 23248); — *ine Winchestre his toun* (Lawman B 19630; *Winchastre tun*, A); — *Felyce hir fayrnesse* (PPl. B xii 47); — *sche hadde be kyng Alexandre his lemmam* (Trev. Higd. I 155); — *þe whiche kyng his prayers to God þat day were moche worthy* (’cuius quidem regis oratio multum ea die apud Deum valuit,’ Trev. Higd. VI 349). Instances with *her* are much rarer than those with *his*, while the plural does not
Possessive Pronouns

161

seem to occur in ME. In Lawman B the possessive his is found even after a feminine personal noun (Gwenayfer his love, 22247); it is worth noticing that the genitive sg. of feminines seldom takes the s-ending in this text (for the retention of the s-less genitive in feminine nouns see p. 71). Another peculiarity of Lawman B is the occurrence of his after inanimate nouns even when the noun is feminine: — at þare ditch his grunde (1589).

Until the 15th century this equivalent of the genitive is very rare in the North and infrequent in the whole country. Only in two south-western texts, Lawman B and Trevisa’s translation of Higden’s Polychronicon (St John’s Coll. MS), is it common. The construction gains ground considerably in the 15th century and remains a popular means of expression right down to the 17th.

The assumption that a title like Heere bigynneth the Chanouns Yeman his tale is to be understood as ‘here the Canon’s Yeoman begins his tale’ seems to be contradicted by cases like Here endith the Man of Lawe his tale, and next folwith the Shipman his prolog, where the Shipman his can only be understood as the kind of genitive equivalent discussed in this section.

Considering the occurrence of the possessive dative in OE and other Germanic languages (cf. German er hat meinem Vater seinen Hut genommen) it might seem that the use of a noun + his (her) for the genitive in ME and early Mod. E simply goes back to the OE possessive dative. But there are features suggesting that the development has been a more complicated process. The fact that his (frequently spelt is) phonetically coincides with the genitive ending -es, -is (cf. Abrahamis wij and Abraham is wij) has obviously strengthened the position of the combination noun + his as a genitive equivalent. The occasional use of his after feminine nouns in Lawman B (see above) also speaks for this assumption. There are scholars who believe that his in cases of this kind is simply a detached ending of the genitive (F. J. Furnivall, Trans. Philol. Soc. 1865, 75-94),
but this is perhaps exaggerated. One factor which also has to be taken into consideration is the tendency, seen occasionally in OE and ME, to indicate certain syntactical relationships by analytical forms of expression, no doubt for emphasis and clarity; cf. Nilus seo ea hire awielme and Enac his cynren (see above), he Ninus, hym Olofernus (see p. 135), she this (see p. 137), and OE þe he, þe his, þe him, ME that he, that his, etc. (see p. 202). That this tendency may have played a role in the development of this peculiar genitive equivalent is further suggested by the fact that his and the less common her are found particularly after proper names (often foreign). It is probable that the three factors — the possessive dative, the genitive ending -es (-is), and the peculiar trend towards analytical expression — are all jointly responsible for the type Abraham his wif. The possibility that the position of the construction has been strengthened by French influence is perhaps not excluded (cf. les cinc lor lampes erent plainnes, Les cinc lor lampes erent vainnes, Barlaam et Josaphat 55; — pour escaper de Deu sen ire, Gilles de Muisis i 20), but is unlikely because the number of the recorded OF cases is not large and because several of them are not fully comparable to the English locution. For OF cf. A. Tobler, Vermischte Beiträge zur französischen Grammatik II (2nd ed., Leipzig 1906), pp. 88-90.

Non-expression of the possessive. — In many phrases, Middle and Modern English, the dependent possessive is not expressed before nouns denoting parts of the human body, mental faculties, and certain other personal properties: — mid up ahevinde eien ant honden toward heovene (Ancr. 6); — nevere more he him [misseyde], Ne hond on him with yvele leyde (Havel. 994); — of schup hi gunne funde And setten fownt to grunde (Horn 134); — on þe faultest freke þat ever on fote zede (Gaw. & GK 2363); — mery in mynde (Gaw. & GK 497); — and first I shrew me myself, bothe blood and bones (Ch. CT B NP 4617); — I stod ful stylle and dorste not calle, Wyth y3en open and mouth ful clos (Pearl 183). These are all set phrases, often
alliterative, survivals of earlier usage; cf. \textit{breost innan weoll} \textit{þeostrum geþoncum} (Beow. 2331) and such OE phrases as \textit{mid handum, on fotum, æt heortan, on mode}, and \textit{in zemynde}.

From OE on the definite article occurs in many cases where modern linguistic usage would prefer a possessive: (— \textit{se wyrm... stihþ mid þam tægle to deaþe}, Ælfric Homilies I 252, ed. Thorpe); — \textit{mit þe þreo vingres} (Ancre. 8); — and jouhten, so \textit{þei worn wode, þat þe swot ran fór þe crune} (Havelok 2661); — \textit{wel hath this millere vernysshed his heed}; \textit{Ful pale he was for dronken, and nat reed, He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose} (Ch. CT A Rv. 4151); — \textit{hire chyn acordeth to the face} (Gower CA vii 775); — \textit{thys sayde Jamys ... fought manly with the helys} (Greg. Chron. 198). But occasionally the two constructions are used rather indiscriminately side by side, as in \textit{his hed with al the necke also Thei were of fin gold bothe tuo; His brest, his schuldres, and his armes Were al of selver, bot the tharmes, The wombe, and al doun to the kne, Of bras thei were upon to se; The legges were al mad of stiel, So were his feete also somdiel} (Gower CA Prol. 605-12). Another illustrative text is \textit{Gaw. \& GK}, with passages like \textit{þenn e gerde he to Gryngolet with þe gilt helez} (777) and \textit{his schalk ... Gorde to Gryngolet with his gilt helez} (2063).

Perhaps the commonest variety of the type with the article is that where a prepositional phrase with the definite article refers to the object of a transitive verb: — \textit{hiene siþþan mid rapum be þæm sweoran up aheng} (Alfred Oros. 294); — \textit{her Robert feht wiþ his fæder and hine on þa hand gewundade} (OE Chron. an. 1079, MS D); — \textit{tak your lady by the hond} (Ch. CT A Kn. 3093); — \textit{he ... caughte hym by the nekke} (Ch. CT A Rv. 4261); — \textit{she heng hirself ryght be the hals} (Ch. HF 394); — \textit{I xal ... smytyn þe nayl on þe hed} (MKempe 152). When cases of this kind occur in connection with a personal dative we have a construction usually referred to as the sympathetic dative: — \textit{þus seide Grim and sore gret, And sone fel him to þe fær} (Havelok 615). See p. 98.
The own for its own has been attested from the 14th century
down to the 17th: — als it may be with þe awen body (Pr.
Consc. 3133). Cf. the self for itself, p. 147.

INDEPENDENT POSSESSIVE

Form. — As mentioned earlier in the present discussion
(p. 157), the dependent and independent possessives are alike
in OE and early ME. In the first and second persons singular
(min and thin) the dependent possessive loses the final -n in
the course of ME, but the independent possessive, being em­
phatic, retains it: — Robert renne-aboutel shall nowȝte have of
mine (PPl. B vi 150). In the South and the Midlands, -n begins
to be attached to other independent possessives as well (hisen,
hiren, ouren, youren, heren) after the analogy of min and thin
about the middle of the 14th century: — restore thou to hir alle
thingis þat ben her (Purvey 2 Kings viii 6). In the third
person singular and in the plural, forms with -s (hires, oures,
youres, heres, theirs) emerge towards the end of the 13th century,
first in the North and then in the Midlands: — and youres
(Havelok 2798); — þai lete þair s was þe land (Cursor 2507,
Cotton MS); — my gold is youres (Ch. CT B Sh. 1474); — it
schal ben hires (Gower CA v 4770). In the southern dialects
forms without -s prevail all through the ME period: — your
fader dyde assaulte our by treyson (Caxton Aymon 545).

The old dative ending is preserved in 'payre zone,' 'he sayþ,
'do good of þinen' (Ayenb. 194).

IMITATIONS OF FRENCH USAGE. — The use of the definite
article before an independent possessive, recorded in Caxton,
is obviously an imitation of French le nostre, la sienne: — to
approve better the his than that other (En. 23); — that your worshyp
and the oures be kepte (Aymon 72).1

1 Einenkel (Syntax, p. 142) erroneously interprets þe hes (Ayenb.
55, line 2) as an independent possessive preceded by the definite
Possessive Pronouns

The occurrence of the independent possessive pronoun (and the rare occurrence of a noun in the genitive) after the quasi-preposition *maugré* 'in spite of' is a direct imitation of OF *malgré* *mien* (*tien, sien, etc./): — and *God* *wot* *that* is *malgré* *myn* (*Gower CA iv 59); — *maugré* *his, he* *dos* *him* *lute* (*Cursor 4305, Cotton MS*). Cf. NED *maugre*, and R. L. G. Ritchie, *Studies Presented to Mildred K. Pope*, Manchester 1939, p. 317.

'OF' FOLLOWED BY THE INDEPENDENT POSSESSIVE. — The origin of the current English type *a friend of mine* has been explained in various ways. The most widely accepted interpretation is that it is essentially a partitive construction. Einenkel (see bibliography), referring to OF instances like *un chevalier des siens* and *deux esquiers de leurs*, believes that the English type is an imitation of the French one. His explanation has not been generally accepted, although it is not entirely impossible that the French construction has strengthened the position of the English idiom. Miss Anna G. Hatcher (*Word VI*, 1950, 1-25) thinks that the roots of the type *a friend of mine* are to be found in the absolute (independent) use of the neuter possessive in OE expressions like *ne þearf ic yrfestol eaforan byllian ænegum minre* ('I need not build an hereditary seat for any descendant of mine, 'Genesis 2178) and *Wlwine habbe þat lond þe he mines hafde* (*Thorpe Dipl. Angl. 580; BT *mín*). The OE translation of Luke xxiv 22, *mulieres quaedam ex nostris*, by *sume wif of urum* seems to belong to this category, too. A similar explanation is suggested by J. Nosek (see bibliography), who does not believe, however, that the type *a friend of mine* existed before c 1200. Like some earlier authorities, he refers to a couple of examples, found in early ME texts, of the type *gif þu mare spenest of þine* (*Lamb. Hom. 79*) and *gif þu him lanst ani þing of þinen* (*Vices and V 77*). This type,

probably the prototype of the *a friend of mine* construction, occurs also later in the period: — *feole thow hast yslawe of his* (KAlis. 4152); — *þou ne owyst nat of hys to have* (RMannyng HS 2423); — *Robert renne-about shal nouȝte have of myne* (PPl. B vi 150). Cf. p. 80 (partitive genitive).

Whatever the ultimate origin of the type *a friend of mine*, it seems to have arisen to meet a real need. By the side of the construction *one of my friends* (e.g., *mid one of his cnihte*, Lawman A 30709), where attention is focussed on an individual as a representative of a definite group, the medieval speaker may have felt that he needed a construction where the idea of the group was less definite and, so to say, more in the background. OE possesses appositive constructions like *one my friend* and *his one man* (e.g., *he wæs on anum þæs cyninges tune 'erat in villa regia,' Bede 202, MSS O and Ca; — þær æfte r... wearþ se cyng Willelm on huntnoþe fram his anan men ... ofsecoten, OE Chron. an. 1100; — he nome ane cape of his ane cnihte, Lawman A 13098*). These constructions, which, one may assume, convey an idea roughly similar to that behind *a friend of mine*, are already disappearing at the beginning of the ME period.

A steadily increasing number of instances of the type *a friend of mine* and *a friend of the king's* have been attested since the end of the 13th century: — *þore he fyled with men of mine* (NE Leg. 18. 135); — *and I, als a servand of his* (NE Leg. i. 383); — *childrene of is owene* (SE Leg. xxvii 24); — *a qweynlyse off þe kynges owen* (Rich. CL 5699); — *the purse of his* (Aynb. 54) — *þe wille of yours* (Ipom. A 2130); — *an old jelaue of youres*; (Ch. CT C Pard. 672); — *ma dame, I am a man of thyne* (Gower CA i 168); — *a castell in Provence of his* (Gower CA ii 3004); — *a banner of the giauntz* (Ipom. C 357).

Constructions parallel to *a friend of mine* occur in several other languages, Germanic and Romance.
Possessive Pronouns

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS


Furnivall, F. J., *'Some Fresh Evidence from the Second Text of Layamon on the Possessives in es and his,'* Transactions of the Philological Society 1865, 75-94.


Kellner, pp. 138 and 190-7.

Koch II, pp. 245-54.


Mätzner III, pp. 228-41.


Poutsma II, 1, pp. 782-829.


Wülfing I, pp. 360-8.
DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS


*This.* — Forms, p. 173. — Anticipatory *this*, p. 173. — *This* approaching the meaning of the definite article, p. 174. — 'The latter,' p. 175. — *This* bearer, p. 175. — Intensification of *this*, p. 175. — *This* as a demonstrative adverb, p. 175. — *This* in combination with a personal pronoun, see p. 137.


The use of the demonstrative for the personal pronoun, see p. 129. — The demonstrative use of the personal pronoun, see p. 135.

*Bibliography,* p. 179.

The principal demonstrative pronouns are *that* and *this*, used in much the same independent and dependent functions as today. *That*, commoner in ME than in Mod. E, refers to something more distant, while *this* has reference to something present or near in space or time.

**THAT**

Forms. — The OE ancestor of *that* is *se, seo, þæt*. In late Northumbrian the initial *s* of the masculine and feminine nominative is superseded by *þ*. In the southern ME dialects forms with *s* alternate with *þ*-forms down to the middle of the 13th century, when they disappear, except in Kentish, where *s*-forms are found as late as the middle of the 14th century. The various inflectional *þ*-forms become levelled under uniform *þat* in early ME, except for *þan(e)*, occasionally attested for the dative and accusative sg. in 14th-century Kentish
Demonstrative Pronouns

texts, and some stereotyped adverbial formations. The OE instrumental $þy$ and $þon$ and the dative $þæm$ survive in adverbial combinations with the preposition for (forthi, forthon, forthan 'therefore'): — forþi love we as leve bretheren shal, and uche man laughe up other (PPl. B xi 203); — for $þon$ zif hit eow bilove$þ$ . . . fare we from $þisse$ londe (Lawman A 989); — for al $þan$ . . . Hii brogte oure loverd $þhesu$ Crist to deþe (RGlouc. 1418). The dative form $þæm$ (than) also survives after other prepositions (after than, by than, etc.): — Charlys aftyr $þan$ all hys fomen overcam (Otuel & R 33); — be $þan$ burdes were bred in $þe$ brade halle (Destr. Troy 383). For the possibility that late ME than in the cases where it may be assumed to stand for 'so' goes back to OE $þon$ or $þæm$ see below under the section 'That as a Demonstrative Adverb.' For a discussion of the adverbial the (OE $þy$, $þe$) in connection with the comparative of adjectives and adverbs see p. 282. The genitive singular $þæs$ of the OE neuter demonstrative survives to late ME as the adverb $þas$, $þes$, with varying meanings (e.g., Olyver wax hol sone $þas$, Ferumbras 1387). See NED $þes$.

The weakened form the, usually occurring as the definite article, occasionally retains its demonstrative force. On the other hand, the form that frequently occurs for the definite article before one and other, both beginning with a vowel: — and took him by $þat$ oon arm (Gamelyn 305); — bot if that on that other waste (Gower CA Prol. 649).

The early ME plural is $þa$ in the North and $þo$ south of the Humber. Northern $þa$ begins to be superseded by $þas$ in the course of the 13th century. It is generally assumed that the latter form is morphologically identical with OE $þas$ 'these'. Since, however, OE $þas$ disappears in the North before 1200, T. Heltveit (see bibliography), pp. 106-13, believes that the northern $þas$ emerging in the 13th century is a new formation

where the plural ending -s has been added to þa after the analogy of the plural of nouns. In the more southern areas þo remains long as the dominant form. In the 15th century, however, the form þos (those) appears in London English. The only form used by Chaucer is þo (tho), while Caxton uses both forms. After the end of the 15th century those becomes the regular plural form for that, tho surviving, mainly in religious language, to the mid-16th century. The assumption that Southumbrian those goes back to early ME þos 'these' (which corresponds to northern þas) is rendered doubtful by the fact that OE þas is supplanted by thise by the end of the 13th century in all dialects except Kentish, where þas survives down to the 14th century. Neither does there seem to be sufficient evidence for the assumption that the form those is due to northern influence. The most likely explanation seems to be that the form those — like Northumbrian þas — arises under the influence of the plural -s of nouns, and possibly after the analogy of thise (these). In the 13th century the OE and early ME feminine singular þeo occurs as a plural form in the SW Midlands, possibly after the analogy of the plural form heo of the personal pronoun in this dialectal area.

**Defining and Demonstrative Uses.** — On the whole, the OE use of independent se, seo, þæt coincides with ME and Mod. E usage, but the dependent use of this pronoun is defining rather than demonstrative in character and corresponds roughly to that of the definite article. This usage survives in some ME expressions, especially before proper names: — *that Diane his dowhter* (Gower CA v 1249); — *the aungeles songen that joyful songe 'Gloria in Excelsis'* (Love, Bonavent. Mirr. 50; NED). About the beginning of the 13th century there are

1 But 'it is a remarkable fact that *those* is not used in genuine dialect speech in any of the modern dialects' (Wright, *ME Gr.*, p. 169).
2 Cf. the use of *tha (tho)* as the plural form of the definite article (p. 233).
signs of *that* assuming a more definitely demonstrative character and being implicitly or even explicitly opposed to *this*: — *þe Laferrd haffde litell rum Inn all þatt miccle riche* (Orm. 2490); — *ich wille telle þat cas* (RGlouc. 205); — *þat tre was ded, þis sal be liff* (Cursor 8502, Cotton MS).\(^1\)

In some cases the dependent *that* assumes a deprecatory shade of meaning (e.g., *that cursed Mahomet*, Capgr. Chron. 94), which seems to anticipate the modern deprecatory use of this pronoun with proper names (cf., for example, M. B. Charnley, *AS* XXVII, 1952, 113-17).

**Emphatic Vicarious Use.** — *That* has been used emphatically, instead of repeating a previous word, word-group, or clause, since OE (e.g., *geseah he treow ligende and þæt lytel*; cf. BT and BTS *se* II). The construction is well attested in ME, too: — *quen þai herde atte [conj.] he sulde dey, And þat þorou þaire tresoun* (Cursor 15348, Fairfax MS). Chaucer makes abundant use of this device: — *a theef he was for sothe of corn and mele, And that a sly* (CT A Rv. 3940); — *I have been syk, and that ful many a day* (CT D Fri. 1592). This *that* should not be confused with the *that* which occurs with *and* in a number of late ME instances, such as *I am Goddus modur and þat I pray my sone þat he þef his soule a place in heven* (Mirk Festial 297), where the combination *and that* is probably due to the analogy of *if that, when that, which that*, etc.

'The Former.' — In late ME *that* occasionally stands for 'the former,' perhaps under the influence of Latin: — *for sunne and wynde hem make a tegument, lest they in this be shake, in that to-brent* (Pall. Husb. iv 21).

'That' with 'Be' Referring to Persons. — In reference to persons the independent *that* is used practically in the same

\(^1\) Sporadic instances of the dependent *that* with a clearly demonstrative meaning opposed to 'this' occur even in late OE texts: — *þis leoth we habbap wip nytenu gemene, ac þæt leoth we sceolan secan þæt we moten habban mid englum gemene* (Blickling Hom. 21). Cf. O. Johnsen, *E Studien* XLVI, 1912-13, 6-7.
way as the formal and anticipatory it (p. 132): — *zif þer is eny mon so wis þat beste red conne rede, Merlin þat is* (RGlouc. 3044); — *þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian lady* (Gaw. & GK 2463). Cf. OE *þæt wæs god cyning* (Beow. 11). Cf. also the similar use of *this* (p. 173).

**Determinative Use.** — As in Mod. E, *that* may occur in a determinative function, either as an antecedent to a relative clause (the earliest unambiguous example in the *NED* is from *Pearl*: — *wyrke and dotz þat at ze moun*, 536) or governing an of-periphrasis: — *þe æercbiscop of Lundene . . . þe of Everwike* (Lawman A 24462; *þe ilke, B); — *that of Paris and that of Constantynoble* (Mandev. 13 [Halliwell]); — *þei [dyamaundes] ben als harde as þo of Ynde* (Mandev. 105, Cotton MS). This use goes back to OE: — *swa þet lond an Horsalege, swe þet an Leangafelda* (OE Texts 452); — *þa feng Eadsige bispoc to þam ærcbiscoprice and Gryncytel to þam on Suff Sexum* (OE Chron. an. 1038). Cf. A. T. Bødtker (see bibliography), pp. 8-9. The construction is found in other languages as well (German and French, for example).

**Intensification of 'That.'** — Since the 15th century, *that* has occasionally been reinforced by appending *there* to it. Another means of intensification is *ilk* (see below): — *that ilk weddyng murye* (Ch. CT E Mch. 1733).

'That' as a Demonstrative Adverb. — As a demonstrative adverb, in the sense 'so,' *that* is occasionally used from late ME on, possibly after the analogy of *this* (see below): — *his sekenes þat encrest, He gert beere him . . . Aboute þe cuntre on a bere* (St Cuthbert 6279, Surtees Soc.; NED). It is tempting to imagine that the late ME cases where *than* apparently stands for 'so' are survivals of OE *Þon or Þam*, but no such use is recorded in the extant OE texts. There are cases like the *lyoun com . . . and be the chyld sche ley thon chaste as sche were tame* (Octavian 603; NED); — * foure lampis full light . . . filld up with þyre þat þynet not to bren, þat no watur þen wete in world
might hom let, Ne the light make lesse ne the low fade (þen 'ever so,' Destr. Troy 8811).

**THIS**

**FORMS.** — The demonstrative pronoun *this* goes back to OE *þes, þeos (þios), þis*. The OE inflectional forms of the pronoun are preserved, roughly, to the end of the 12th century, after which uniform *þis* is established in the North and *þes* in the South. The OE plural *þas* disappears in the course of the 13th century from all dialects except Kentish, where it survives down to the 14th century. In the South and the Midlands *þas* is superseded by *þes*, assumed to go back to the masc. nom. singular, and in some texts, like the *Ormulum*, *Havelok*, and the *Bestiary*, by *þis*, assumed to go back to the OE neuter singular. From the 12th century on there seems to be a tendency to differentiate the plural from the singular by adding -e (*thise, these*). *These* becomes established in the London area before 1200, and by the middle of the 15th century it is the regular spelling in all texts executed south of the Humber. In W Midl. and SW writings the plural form *þeos* is preferred to *þes* and *þis*. The northern counterpart of the plural pronoun is *þir* (*þire, þeir, þere, þare*), of obscure origin (for etymological suggestions cf. NED *þir* and E. J. Dobson, *EGS* I, 1947-8, 59-60), which makes its appearance in literature round about 1300 (*Cursor Mundi*).

It is not impossible that the use of the singular form *this* in present-day expressions like *this last six months* goes back to ME, but the ME evidence is rendered more or less doubtful by the fact that *this* is a common plural form of the pronoun throughout the period. There are numerous instances where *this* occurs in expressions of this kind (e.g., *þis þreo cnihthes*, Lawman A 26320; *þeos*, B). For examples from the 15th and 16th centuries cf. H. Spies (see bibliography), pp. 193-6.

**ANTICIPATORY 'THIS.'** — In early ME, as in OE, the singular
form *this* occurs as an anticipatory subject of the verb *to be*, even when the reference is to a plural predicate complement: — *ðís weoren *þa sixe* (Lawman A 25387). Cf. the parallel uses of *it* (p. 132) and *that* (p. 171).

'This' approaching the meaning of the definite article.

— In OE texts *þes* (*þeos, þís*) is not infrequently used in a sense approximating that of the definite article: — *nu sceapþ þes mona* (Finnsburg 7); — *þætte usse dáede and usse gepohtas nales on þiosne wind in idelnesse toflowenne* (*in ventum,* Bede 440). Cf. Fr. Klaeber, *Anglia* XXVII, 1904, 276, and *Archiv* CXV, 1905, 181-2. This use of *this* is current in ME, too, particularly with personal nouns and names: — *al þís moncun þat of him iherden tellen* (Lawman A 7009); — *lo, þís clerkes, what lif hi wolle þ .drye!* (SPassion 1968); — *and þíse maidens, wiþ rody faas, Passen sone als floure in gras* (KAles. 7827); — *as doon thise loveres in hir queynte geres* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1531); — *and as thise clerkes maken mencioun* (Ch. CT B Mk. 3311); — *this Somonour . . . Upon this Frere his herte was so wod* (Ch. CT D Sum. 1665-6); — *these auctours writen* (Ch. Astr. ii 26); — *vor to sle þís Godwine* (RGlouc. 6541); — *this Absolon doun sette hym on his knees* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3723); — *þís Bailoiles men* (Brut 279). This usage, mainly a feature of vivid, colloquial, and often chatty style, is particularly common in Chaucer’s and Gower’s works. It is current even today in lively but less educated speech. L. Spitzer (*NM* LVII, 1956, 296, note) quotes a passage from a modern American novel where a speaker uses *this* with reference to things unknown to his audience but vivid in his own imagination (‘... this teacher that taught biology, Mr Zambesi, stuck his head out of this window in the academic building . . .’).

In a function similar to that of the definite article *this* also occurs in retrospective phrases like *this other day, this ender day,* and *this other night* (e.g., *þís ofer day,* Cursor 5672; — *this endris night I saw a sight,* EE Lyr. lxiv 1; — *this twenty
wynter, Ch. PF 473), and also with reference to time ahead (þis nexte gære, RGlouc. 4005).

'The Latter.' — In late ME, under Latin influence, this is occasionally found with the meaning 'the latter:' — for sunne and wynde hem make a tegument, lest they in this be shake, in that to-brent (Pall. Husb. iv 21). Cf. that in the sense 'the former' (p. 171).

'This Bearer.' — Constructions of the type this bearer 'the bearer of this' are attested from the end of the 15th century until the 17th: — I pray you that I may be answered by my servant, this bearer (Plumpton Corr. lxvi [1493]).

Intensification of 'This.' — This is occasionally reinforced by appending here to it: — God forbede that ony Cristene man understonde þat þis here syngynge and criynge . . . be þe beste servyce of a prest (Wyclif Sel. Wks iii 203). Another current means of intensification is this ilk 'this same:' — þes ilke king Bladud (Lawman A and B 2844).

'This' as a Demonstrative Adverb. — In late ME this is occasionally used as an adverb in the sense 'so' or 'thus.' The NED tentatively suggests two explanations: that this adverb is a survival of the OE instrumental case þys, þis of demonstrative pronoun and that in some instances it may be only a variant of thus. In the sense 'thus' it occurs, e.g., in and þis he ȝalde þe spryt (Sc. Leg. Saints i 729), in the sense 'so,' qualifying adjectives and adverbs, it occurs, e.g., in to clense þe soull wyche is þis fowll (Wisdom 936). Cf. the use of that in a similar function, p. 172.

Other Demonstratives

'Ilk.' — Ilke (OE ilca) 'same,' preceded by that, this, or the definite article, is current down to the end of the 15th century, when it is superseded by same. The combination often
Pronouns

serves simply as an emphatic equivalent of this, that, or it:
— þes ilke king Bladud (Lawman A and B 2844);— thou poete Marcian That writest us that ilke weddyng murye Of hire Philosophe and hym Mercurie (Ch. CT E Mch. 1733);— that ilk is she that pryvely Ne spareth never a wikked dede ('it is she that . . .') 'RRose 416). The peculiar Scottish use of that ilk has been attested since the second half of the 15th century:
— David Guthere of that Ilk knycht (Acc. Ld. High Treasurer Scotl. I 86; NED). The form þilke, attested since the 13th century, is in the majority of cases obviously due to the elision of the vowel of the definite article before ilke, but the existence of early southern þülke and Kentish pelke suggests some early confusion with OE þyllic, late OE þylc (see below).

'SAME.' — The demonstrative same, also preceded by the definite article or this or that, occurs all through the period. As a mere equivalent of the personal pronoun it is particularly favoured in the 15th and 16th centuries:— they ought to preyse and love the chirche and the commaundements of the same (Caxton Æsop iii 7). In the 15th century (and in early Mod. E) same is occasionally reinforced by prefixing self to it:— let noon housbonde thynke it shame . . . Thogh his wyf do to him þat selve same (Occleve MP xxi 731). Occasionally, self alone is used in the meaning 'same:'— he is not mighty that may do any thing that another may doon him the selve (Usk TL 73);— þat syre þat on þat self ny t Of a burde watʒ borne (Gaw. & GK 751). For the OE use of þæt sylfe in the meaning 'the same' cf. Wülfing I, p. 314.

'SAID,' 'FORESAID,' ETC. — The past participles said, foresaid, aforesaid, and the like, preceded by the definite article, are popular equivalents of the demonstrative pronoun in a sense approximating that of the emphatic dependent this. They are particularly common in late ME official records and other texts imitating the formal diction of legal documents, but the earliest recorded instances date from late OE:— Josue cyweþ þa si þan to þam foresædan ærendrocum (Ælfric Josh. vi 22;
the word has no counterpart in the Vulgate); — Moyses . . . smat it wit þis foresaid wand (Cursor 6392, Cotton MS); —son þar went disciplis tua Unto þe said castel (Cursor 14978, Cotton MS; þis said, Gött. MS). The usage is due to the influence of French (le dit . . .) and Latin (cf. veneruntque ad praedictum collem, 1 Kings x 10). On the common use of the participles dictus, praedictus, and the like as dependent demonstratives in medieval Latin cf. D. Norberg, Beiträge zur spätleinischen Syntax, Uppsala 1944, ch. vii.

The plural forms saidis and foresaidis occur frequently in Middle Scots texts.

'SUCH.' — OE swilc, ME swilc, swich, such, inflected forms of which survive in 14th-century Kentish texts, occurs in ME in a large variety of uses.

The meaning of such is usually defined by an accompanying relative or consecutive clause. A relative clause following such is usually introduced by as, as that, swa (so, se), that, and which, and also by relative adverbs like there and wherof: — a hundreth of seche As I am (Gaw. & GK 1543); — swich thyng as that I knowe (Ch. CT G CY 719); — nis na hlavord swilc se is Crist (Poema Mor. 80); — he missetþ bi swuche þet is cwic in God (Ancr. 36); — þe sauter seyth þe same bi suche þat don ille (PPL B x 26); — there ben many such which nevertheless abide in greet worship (Caxton Prol. Epil. 63). In early ME, as in OE, the correlative is occasionally left unexpressed: — nis na hlavord swilc se is Crist, na king swilch ure Drihte (Poema Mor. 80); — her com a selcou þockne soch nevere ne com (Lawman B 3892).

The expression such as it is has been used since the 13th century, chiefly in an apologetic or disparaging sense: — if there be eny, Swich as it is, yet shal ye have youre part (Ch. CT A Rv. 4121).

When followed by a clause of result, such tends to assume a pregnant, intensive character ('so great,' etc.). The clause of result is usually introduced by that: — zuych may by þe
onbozsamnesse þet hit is dyadlich zenne (Ayenb. 8). Plain so occurs in Chaucer: — such fantasies ben in my hede, So I not what is best to doo (BD 29). Such has a similar emphatic, pregnant meaning when isolated by a from the governing noun or noun-group: — upon such a dere day (Gaw. & GK 92).

The OE construction swylc ... swylec may be reflected in the proverb to zuiche thorde zuich mainé (Ayenb. 235), although the proverb as such is a calque on the Old French a tel seignor tele mesnie.

The combination such one, where one originally may have had intensifying force (cf. p. 296, note 1), dates from OE: — swelce an fyren (Alfr. Oros. 234); — suilk an (Cursor 85); — swich oon (Ch. TC i 521). See pp. 295-7 and 301-5.

The independent such may also occur in the meaning 'such a thing:' — zif a best bad a man do siche (Wyclif Sel. Wks iii 436); — lo, swich it is to be rechelees (Ch. CT B NP 4626).

'Thellic.' — ME þelllic, þulllic (OE þyslic, þyllic) 'such' occurs in the South. The last occurrence of this pronoun in writing is in the Ayenbite (þe þridde heste is þellic, 7). There seems to be some early confusion with ilk (þilke, þulke, þelke), probably caused by the late OE form þylc for þyllic. Cf. p. 176.

'Yon.' — Yon 'that ... over there,' from the rare OE demonstrative adjective þeon, is current in northern ME texts from the beginning of the 14th century on: — yon es mi laverd Ysaac, Yon es þi keiser sal be þin (Cursor 3358, Cotton MS). Towards the end of the ME period yon is found in all dialects.

'Yond.' — The adverb yond is used as a dependent and independent demonstrative pronoun, in the same sense as yon (see above), from the 13th century on: — iwis it was ure ȝe broþer þe zond þat haveþ þat grete heved (Owl & N 119; in early use the pronoun is preceded by the definite article); — to yond wijf (Cursor 8743, Cotton MS).

'Yonder.' — Synonymous with yon (see above), yonder has been used as a dependent and independent demonstrative since
Demonstrative Pronouns

the 14th century: — zonder ar theves we let men wende (Cursor 4891, Fairfax MS); — we hade herely no hope . . . Yonder toun for to take (Destr. Troy 8837).

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

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INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS


Which. — Forms, p. 185. — Uses, p. 185. — Exclamatory which, p. 186. — Which as a relative pronoun, see pp. 192 and 195.


Bibliography, p. 187.

WHO

ACCUSATIVE AND DATIVE FORM. — Who goes back to OE hwa, the accusative of which is hwone and the dative hwæm, hwam. The accusative form disappears in early ME, and the dative form comes to be used for the dative and accusative alike. Survivals of the accusative form at the end of the 13th century: — for no cniht nuste Wam he solde smite Ne wan he solde sparie (Lawman B 27487); — wan Edmond made is eir of is lond (RGlouc. 6417).1

PRINCIPAL USES. — Who (northern quha) has been used independently since OE. It may refer to one or several persons. The combination who that is occasionally used: — that ladyes . . . might se Who that beste were of dede (Le Morte Arth. 47). For combinations of this type see p. 192.

1 In line 1509 of the Cotton MS of Owl & N the form hwan for the dative (bi hwan he lat) is perhaps only a scribal error, ascribable to the effects of the accusative-dative syncretism, but it may also be due to a confusion with the instrumental dative form hwan (wan) of hwat (to wan, for wan; see below, under what). The Jesus Coll. MS reads bi wham he lay.
In ME, as in OE, *who* may have reference to one of a definite number of persons, even of a group of two, where present-day English can only have *which*: — *who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1348). The not infrequent use of *who of* in the Wyclifite Bible and Purvey's revision (e.g., *who of hem*, Luke ix 46) is probably a reflection of Latin usage (Vulgate: *quis eorum*).

'WHO' AS A PREDICATE PRONOUN. — Apart from a few sporadic OE instances, there do not seem to be unambiguous cases of *who* as a predicate pronoun until about 1300: — 'þwost þou evere,' he seide, 'ho ich am?' (SE Leg. xv. 326); — *his fader asked him, *qua art þou?* (Cursor 3785, Fairf. MS). Until this time *what* occurs for *who* in this position, and it continues to serve as an equivalent of predicative *who* down to the end of the 17th century: — *telle what he is* (Ch. CT G CY 616). Cf. p. 182 below. It has been suggested, by G. Karlberg (see bibliography), p. 98, that French influence may have played a part in the appearance of the predicative *who*.

'WHO' FOR 'WHOM.' — Before the finite verb the form *who* is occasionally used for *whom*. The earliest known instances are those of the generalising relative *who* (*hwo se þunche þ to longe lete þe psaumes*, Ancr. 16; — *qua þat Godd helpis widall Traistli may he wend overall*, Cursor 4007, Gött. MS), while the interrogative *who* for *whom* is not attested until late ME: — *I rehersyd no name, but me thowt be hem that thai wost ho I merit* (Paston I 112 [1449]).

PHRASES. — The emphatic phrase *who (the) devil*, so popular even today, has been recorded from the end of the ME period: — *quha dewill thaim maid so galy for to ryd?* (Henry, Wallace v 743). Cf. *what the devil*, p. 183.

The phrase *who is who* emerges in later ME: — *til no man

1 Predicative *hwa* occurs in the Lindisfarne Gospels and once in the WS Gospels, but whether these instances are connected with the ME predicative use of *who* it is impossible to say.
wiste who was who (Gower CA vii 2001). Cf. what is what and which is which, pp. 184 and 186.

Rhetorical Questions. — Since OE, who has often been used in rhetorical questions: — qua herd ever a warr auntur (Cursor 454, Cotton MS).

What

Forms. — What (northern quhat), from OE hwæt, is occasionally found in the old instrumental form, in phrases like for whon, to whon, etc. (OE for hwon, etc.), down to the 13th century: — wostu to wan man was ibore? to ðare blisse of hovene riche (Owl & N 716). For why, another instrumental form of OE hwæt, used as an adverb down to the present day, see NED.

Independent and Dependent Uses. — Like OE hwa, the neuter interrogative pronoun hwæt is originally found only in independent use. In predicate position independent what is used for who from OE down to the end of the 17th century: — what is þis woman? (PPl. B ii 19); — telle what he is (Ch. CT G CY 616). The interrogative who does not occur as a predicate pronoun until c 1300, and all through the ME period it remains less common than what; the only notable exceptions seem to be the Wyclifite Bible and the Purvey revision. In the 16th century what is still quite common for the predicative who.

The rare occurrence of what for who as the subject of the verb in Lawman A (hwat iherden avere suggen, 6661; wo ihorde evere segge, B) may be a reflection of the predicative use of what for who (cf. what beoþ þeos utlazen, A 27372). Lawman also uses the generalising relative what-so for who-so. See p. 193.

What in present-day English would be expressed by dependent what + noun (what thing) is expressed by hwæt + partitive genitive in OE (hwæt godes, hwæt þinga). This OE partitive genitive survives in ME in a number of more or less stereotyped expressions, like whatt littless (Orm. 2504) and what nez (Gaw. & GK 1407).
The dependent use of *what* (e.g., *quat bote*, Cursor 29034, Cotton MS) is first attested in 10th-century Northumbrian and East Mercian texts (Lindisfarne Gospels and Rushworthi). In early ME it is found in the *Ormulum*, for example (*whattn name, 722*). The fact that this use is first recorded in an area where Scandinavian influence is strong has given rise to the assumption that it may owe something to Scandinavian influence. It has also been suggested that the rise of dependent *what* is somehow connected with the sense-development of dependent *which* (cf. G. Karlberg, p. 204). A contributory factor which must, of course, be taken into consideration is the effect of the weakening and disappearance of the genitive ending (e.g., *hwæt þinga > hwat þinge > what þing*). The dependent *what* is occasionally found also in more southern early ME texts: — *wite he wolde . . . wat þing hit were* (Lawman A 273); — *he eschte [‘asked’] at men wat lond it were* (RGlouc. 1043).

For instances of the type *what kin(s), what maner, what mister, and what done(s) (*hwat kynnes thyng is kynde, PPl. B ix 25; — *quat kin man yur fader be, Cursor 4844, Cotton MS; — *quat kin a child es þis?* Cursor 12041, Cotton MS; — *what manere wyndes, Ch. TC ii 1104; — telleth me what mister men ye been, Ch. CT A Kn. 1710; — *what done man ertow, Beves A 3731; — what done man was Jhesus, PPl. B xviii 298*), which compete with qualitative *which* (see below), see p. 85.

In OE *hwæt* governs a genitive also when it refers to a quantity or number (‘how much’ or ‘how many’). The ME dependent *what* is used in this function: — ‘*quhat folk ar thai?’* ‘Schir, mony men’ (Barbour xix 293). It is just possible that *what* has the meaning ‘how much’ in *hwat neod is ham to zelpen?* (Ancr. 149). Cf. p. 184 (adverbial independent *what*).

**Phrases.** — The popular present-day English expression *what the devil* appears in later ME, probably under French influence. There is no article: — *what dewel have I with the knyf to do?* (Ch. LGW 2694). Cf. Charlotte D’Evelyn, *PMLA* LXXI, 1956, 275-9.
The phrase *what is what* is recorded in later ME: — *I wist noght what was what* (Yw. & Gaw. 432). Cf. *who is who* and *which is which*, pp. 181-2 and 186.

**Rhetorical Questions.** — Rhetorical questions with *what* have always been current in English: — *what dide this Eolus, but he Tok out hys Blake trumpe of bras* (Ch. HF 1636).

**Exclamatory Uses.** — Since about 1300 the dependent *what* has often been used to indicate the striking and surprising nature of a thing or person: — *lo, þis clerkes, what lyf hi wolle þ drye!* (SPassion 1968); — *o wyth what reverence, wyth what drede, wyth what inwarde devocyon . . . oghte we to have us in every place* (Myroure Oure Ladye 119).

*What* is exclamatory in character also in many cases where it is used adverbially with the meaning 'how' or 'how much' (OE to Mod. E): — *ei ei, what þis nicht is long!* (E Lyr. XIIIth Cent. vii 5); — *allas, allas, what me is [w]o!* (KAlis. 7857); — *a, quhat thai dempt thai m felonly!* (Barbour i 215); — *o worthy God, what wele is me!* (Le Morte Arth. 530).

'*WHAT' AS AN INTERJECTION.** — It is not always easy to distinguish between the *what* occurring elliptically in the general sense 'what will you say?' (*what if fyve faylen of fyfty þe noumbe? Purity 737*) and the *what* serving merely to call attention to a statement or question (cf. *Hwæt, we Gar-Dena . . . Beo w. 1*); — *he seyde, 'Syn I shal bigynne the game, What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!'* (Ch. CT A Prol. 854); — *'wat,' heo seide, 'hule, artu wod?'* (Owl & N 1298); — *what, is þis Ar þure hous?* (Gaw. & GK 309); — *what, whilk way is he geen?* (Ch. CT A Rv. 4078). As an interjection *what* is fairly common in Chaucer, who occasionally uses it in combination with *ho* (*how*). Further examples from Chaucer: — *what, Alison! herestow nat Absolon* (CT A Mil. 3366); — *what, Nicholay! what how! what, looke adoun!* (CT A Mil. 3477). Cf. also p. 631.

'*WHAT' AS AN ADVERB.** — The independent *what* used in the sense 'why' is recorded from OE down to the 17th century
— *what shulde* I glose? (RRose 5097). In the meanings 'how' and 'how much' *what* has likewise been used since OE: — *what* ['how much'] *were they bothe amendyd that day?* (Lydg. AGo ds 1664). Cf. 'Exclamatory Uses,' above.

### WHICH

**Forms.** — In the more southern parts of the country *which* (northern *quhilk*, OE *hwelc*, *hwilc*, *hwylc*) retains long its inflectional forms, particularly the plural -e (*whiche*). In early ME there are inflectional forms like *whulche* (dat. sg. masc.), *wulchere* (dat. sg. fem.), and *whulcne* (acc. sg. masc.). The *Ayenbite* shows the form *huichen* for the dat. sg. and pl. in independent use. The *Ormulum* has the form *whillkess* for the gen. sg. In Scotland the plural is *quhilk* or *quhilkis*.

**Uses.** — The pronoun *which*, used as an independent and dependent interrogative since OE, is not very common in ME. In the Wyclifite Bible it is rare and in some texts it is missing altogether. The dependent *which* is occasionally followed by *an* and on rare occasions preceded by the definite article (*fyl wel I wat þe quilk o yow þe tresun has purvaid*, Cursor 15275, Cotton MS); but this may be only a reflection of the use of the definite article before relative *which* (cf. p. 198), first recorded in *Cursor Mundi*.

In its original qualitative meaning 'of what kind, of what character' *which* occurs in OE and ME: — *þor he stunden for to sen Quilc pharaon wiþ hem sal ben* (Gen. & Ex. 3212); — *who coude wryte which a dedly cheere Hath Thisbe now* (Ch. LGW 869); — *and if love is, what thing and which is he?* (Ch. TC i 401; cf. *che cosa e quale*, Petrarch’s Sonnet 88,2); — *and which they weren and of what degree* (Ch. CT A Prol. 40); — *to aske his nome, and qweche he be* (Curtsasye 301).

Down to the 17th century *which* occasionally stands for *what* as a general interrogative: — *afftur þis schaltou witen þen*
Wzuche ben þe comaundemens ten (Vernon MP xxxii 738). But even in OE the use of which tends to become restricted so as to refer to a selection from a definite number, often to one of two. This development continues in ME: — ful wel I wat þe quilk o yow þe tresun has purvaid (Cursor 15275, Cotton MS); — gude it is for many thynges For to here þe dedis of kynges, Whilk were foles and whilk were wyse, And whilk of þam couthe most quantyse, And whilk did wrong and whilk ryght, And whilk mayntend pes and fyght (RMannyng Chron. 17-20); — whiche trowestou of þo two . . . is in moste drede (PPl. B xii 165); — what, whilk way is he geen? (Ch. CT A Rv. 4078).

The phrase which is which (cf. who is who and what is what, pp. 181-2 and 184) has been known since c 1300: — wel sal he cun knau quilk es quilk (Cursor 9290, Cotton MS).

EXCLAMATORY 'WHICH.' — The original meaning of the pronoun, 'of what kind,' is also reflected in its dependent exclamatory use found in OE and ME (it is often separated from the governing noun by a): — ah loke wulcile wæstres . . . Whulche wurßliche wude, Whulche wilde deores (Lawman A 11770-73); — whiche lordes beth þis shrewes! (PPl. B x 27); — lo which a wyf was Alceste (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1442); — and whiche eyen my lady hadde! (Ch. BD 859); — he seide, 'O whiche sorwes glade, O which wofull prosperite Belongeth to the proprete Of lope!' (Gower CA iv 1212-13). In late ME which is superseded in this function by what.

OTHER INTERROGATIVES

'WHETHER.' — Whether (reduced form wher) 'which of the two' is used as an interrogative, independent and dependent, from OE to Mod. E. It is comparatively rare in ME; many writers seem to prefer which to it. In the 16th century it is not uncommon, but disappears from normal written usage in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries. ME examples:
— hweþeres fere wult tu beon? Mid hweþer wult tu þolien? (Aner.
187

128); — sone it schal be sene . . . wheþer of us be wiȝttere (WPal. 3576); — and sith to whether side it drowh (Gower CA ii 1725).

'How.' — In the meaning 'what . . . like' how is occasionally found in OE and ME: — wheþer a god be or no, and if he be, what and how he is in hymself (Pecock Reule 14).

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

Brunner II, pp. 143-8.
Einenkel, Syntax, pp. 124-8.
Kellner, pp. 201-4.
Koch II, pp. 267-73.
Koziol, Stb., pp. 74-7.
Mätzner II, pp. 258-61.
Poutsma II, 1, pp. 944-56.
Wülfing I, pp. 424-32.

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

The, That, At. — The and that in early ME, p. 188. — That, p. 190. — At, p. 191.


The English relative pronouns originate in certain uses of the demonstrative and interrogative pronouns.

'THE', 'THAT', 'AT'

'THE' AND 'THAT' IN EARLY ME. — The early ME relative pronouns are þe (þa) and þat (þet): — heo beo þ mode þe bute nest goþ to brode (Owl & N 1386; þat bute nest, Jesus Coll. MS). The pronoun þe goes back to the OE indeclinable þe₁ and þat to the OE declinable þæt, originally the neuter demonstrative pronoun, but not infrequently replacing the masculine and feminine forms (e.g., þone Nazareniscan Hælend þæt wæs afonden wer betwæx eow, Alfred Care 443).

In many early ME texts þe and þat occur in practically the same function, but in some dialectal areas, mainly in the Midlands, a functional distinction is noticeable between the two pronouns. As a general principle it may be said that þe is used with animate (in the plural also with inanimate) antecedents (þat deſte meiden, Marie bi name, þe him bar to manne frame, Best. 24; — ant te opre ricemen þe þer wæron, OE Chron. an. 1132; — þe landes þe lien to þe circewican, OE Chron.

¹ The OE combination of the demonstrative and þe (se þe, þone þe, etc.) survives down to the early 13th century as þe þe, þan þe, etc.: — ase þe þe seip to þe knihte (Ancr. 37; the first þe is interlined in the MS); — þe þe mare hefp and þe þe lesse (Poema Mor. 66); — hwæ se þi his halil wastme of þan þe heng on þese lives trewe notep (Vices & V 53). For the survival of the OE combination of the relative and the personal pronoun (þe he, þe him, þe his, etc.), see p. 202.
Relative Pronouns

189

an. 1137, with an inanimate plural antecedent) and *pat* with
inanimate antecedents (*þe corn þat ze to cave bereth*, Best. 211).
In some texts several further shades are distinguishable in the
use of these relatives; some idea of these will be obtained from
the following summary of the usage in the Katherine Group,
by A. McIntosh, *EGS* I, 1947-8, 83-4 —

(1) The use of the relative *þe* is confined, except in the
plural, to animate antecedents and to certain others which,
though not animate, are still charged in some degree with their
grammatical masculine or feminine gender.

(2) *Þat* (*pet*) is used mainly after inanimate antecedents. It
is also used after animate antecedents, though not regularly,
in the following situations: (a) after some antecedent nouns
which are neuter in OE and, rarely, even after nouns which
are not originally neuter; (b) after indefinite pronouns (de­
pendent and independent), such as *all*; (c) when the antecedent
is a personal name; (d) when the antecedent is a personal
pronoun.

This functional distinction between *þe* and *þat* in the Midland
dialects agrees, in the main, with the distinction made in OE
(Alfredian) prose between *þe* and *se*, *seo*, *þæt*: while *þe*
tends to occur after markedly demonstrative antecedents (*seo ea *þe* we
ymbe spræcon*), *se* has a tendency to occur with antecedents of
a more indefinite character (*and genamon eal þæt þær binnan
wæs*).

One feature characteristic of both *þe* and *þat* is that pre­
positions governing these relatives are placed immediately
before the verb or at the end of the clause: — *þet ilke unisele
þet ich of seide* (Ancr. 30); — *the place that I of spake* (Ch. PF
296); — [*þe neddre* sekeþ a ston þat a þir l is on* (Best. 112).
For a more detailed discussion of the place of the preposition
see Vol. II. Cf. also p. 197, note 1.

Some early ME texts, such as the *Peterborough Chronicle*,
Lawman A, and *Poema Morale*, show the form *þa* (*þo*), which,
although probably not a mere spelling variant of *þe*, occurs
in practically the same functions (i.e., with singular and plural animate antecedents and also with plural inanimate antecedents): — *se man þa heafde tua hundred of þre hundred swin* (OE Chron. an. 1131; after this entry *þa* is replaced by *þe*): — *þa muchel juliep his wil, hine solf he biswikep* (Poema Mor. 14, Lambeth MS).

*The* disappears in the course of the 13th century. While common in Lawman A, it is rare in B.

'THAT.' — After the disappearance of *the*, *that* becomes the ME relative *par excellence*.

It is used with animate and inanimate antecedents alike (for the early Midland restrictions concerning its use see above), and also, though seldom, with reference to whole clauses and sentences. *That* occurs in both defining (restrictive) and non-defining (non-restrictive) clauses. The tendency to confine *that* to defining (restrictive) clauses does not emerge until the rivalry between *that* and *which* begins (see p. 196).

The antecedent of *that* is not always expressed. Non-expression of the antecedent occurs particularly in the case of inanimate objects (*he ete and dranc þat was his will*, Cursor 3711, Cotton MS), but is also found when the relative has reference to persons: — *herkeneþ þat loveþ honour* (Arthur 1).

After *same*, the relative *that* has been used since early ME: — *he mihhte makenn cwike menn Þær off þa same staness Þat t stodenn Þær bi Sannt Johan* (Orm. 9914).

In exclamations, reinforcing the quality expressed by the

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1 The formal identity of the demonstrative and relative pronouns and the conjunction *that* occasionally leads to ambiguity. One such case is Ch. HF 1918-23, *tho saugh y stonde in a valeye Under the castel, faste by, An hous, that Domus Dedaly, That Laboryntus cleped ys, Nas mad so wonderlych, ywis, Ne half so queyntelych ywrought.* (The punctuation is that of Skeat and Robinson.) Cf. Robinson, p. 787, note 1920, and F. P. Magoun Jr, *Mediaeval Studies* XVI, 1954, 153.
Relative Pronouns

antecedent, that is first attested in Chaucer's Troilus: — Crisayde answerde, 'Nevere the best for yow, Fox that ye ben!' (iii 1565); — o sterne, o cruel fader that I was! (iv 94).

In local and temporal expressions that occasionally has a markedly adverbial character, being roughly equivalent to 'where' and 'when,' a usage which has its roots in OE: — vor þo scele wolde he . . . wende into helle . . . ine þo half þet were þe halzen, nazt ine þo half þet were þe vorlorene (Ayenb. 13); — he sayde þat an angyl lad hym unto a place þat on þe toon syde was suche a colde that no tong myght tell þe payne þerof (Mirk Fest. 5); — þat com þe ilke dæi . . . þat þe king dæd læi (Lawman A 10247); — fro þe Fryday þat he deyde To tyme þat he ros (RMannyng HS 862). It may also occur in the sense 'until the time when:' — þis lond he hire lende þat come hir lives ende (Lawman A 229).

'At.' — At occurs by the side of that in the North, where it is common in the 14th and 15th centuries. It becomes rare after 1500, being supplanted by quhilk: — al atte camels ten muzt bere (Cursor 3248, Fairfax MS); — flam nocht the flouris at wyll faid (Thewis 87; þat, MS J). At also occurs in the Paston and Plumpton letters.

INTERROGATIVES AS RELATIVES

With the exception of the combination all what, recorded in OE, and of some more or less ambiguous cases, interrogative pronouns do not occur in strictly relative use until the 12th century. As generalising relatives they do occur even in late OE, particularly in conjunction with swa (swa hwæt swa, etc.).

The development of the interrogatives into relatives seems to begin in certain types of indirect questions where the interrogative character of the pronoun has become weakened, its meaning approaching that of a generalising relative (e.g., hi
sceolon geseon et þam miclan dome hwæne hi gewundredon, Ælfric Hom. II 282, ed. Thorpe). The next stage is reached when the pronoun loses its interrogative character altogether and becomes a generalising relative. The final stage of this development is seen when the pronoun has a clearly definable antecedent and thus occurs in a strictly relative function.

The use of interrogative pronouns as relatives may have been promoted by Latin influence. There are early instances like he... wite... hwæt he dyde ('novit quod egit,' Greg. Dial. 337, ed. Hecht) and þu findst wiþ hwone þu meaht flitan ('contra quos valeatis vos extendere, semper invenitis,' Alfred Care 331), where the OE pronoun seems to be half interrogative and half relative in character.

The possibility is not excluded that in ME the position of the wh-relatives is to some extent strengthened by French influence, too, but exactly how far this influence affects the English development it is impossible to say.

For discussions of some details see pp. 194, 195, 196, 197 (note 2), 198, and 199.

**GENERALISING RELATIVES**

Simple interrogative pronouns begin to occur as generalising relatives in late OE and early ME, with the meanings 'whatever,' 'whichever,' and 'whoever:' — se Cristendom wæs swile on his diege þæt ælc man, hwæt his hade tobelumpe, folgade se þe wolde (OE Chron. an. 1086); — the weie he secheth hier and there, Him recheth noght upon what syde (Gower CA vi 1247); — bo wuch ho bo (Owl & N 1378); — hwam mai he luwe trewe-liche hwa ne luves his broþer (Wooing of Lord 275); — she had the herte, And who hath that, may not asterte (Ch. BD 1154). From the 13th century to the 15th these relatives often occur in combination with that (for a list of ME pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions used with that cf. H. Eitle, *Die Satzverknüpfung bei Chaucer*, AF XLIV, Heidelberg 1914, pp. 4-6);
Relative Pronouns

193

e.g., what man þat þe wedde schal ... Loke þou him bowe and love (Good Wife 23).¹

These relative pronouns are usually reinforced by so, soever, ever, some, and somever, which give them a strong generalising force. The type what so occurs as early as OE (swa hwæt swa, swa hwæt, swa hwylc swa, swa hwylc, swa hwa swa, swa hwa). ME instances: — whatt-se we don to Gode (Orm. 426); — hwuch-se wule beon of þe lut of his leoveste freond (Hali Meidh. 26); — et uhtsonge schal siggen hwo-se con (Ancr. 20). The further intensified forms whatsoever and whosoever appear in early ME (quatsoever on hevene or her is wrozt, Gen. & Ex. 270; — hwo-soever on himself nimeþ ouþer of þeo s two, Ancr. 128), but whichever is not attested until the 15th century (whomsoever or whichsoever he wolde yeve, Godstow Reg. 538; NED). Whoever is recorded in early and whatever and whichever in late ME: — hwa efre þenn e ilokie wel þen e sunne dei (Lamb. Hom; 47); — whatever men sai (Vernon MP xlix 344); — alle thingis whichever he schal do schulen have prosperite (Purvey Ps. i 3; whatevere, Wyclif). Whoso and waso are occasionally found in the form whosome and whatsome (-some from ON som, sum: — wha summ itt iss, Orm. 5564; — quatsum first þar was  gain saw, Al for noght þai ette it bath, Cursor 792, Cotton MS), and even the forms whomsomever and whatsomever occur: — quasimever þou be (Cato in Cursor App. iv 91); — quatsumever þou se or here (Cursor 10508, Cotton MS).

Predicative whatso(ever) is used for whoso(ever): — ancre, hwat se heo beo ... holde hire stille (Ancr. 28); — what so he were (Ch. CT A Prol. 522). An early ME occurrence of predicative who-so is, however, recorded in the NED. As a subject what-so for who-so is recorded only in Lawman: —what se hæfde riche dom

¹ Cf. also A. T. Bødtker, Critical Contributions to Early English Syntax I, Christiania 1908, p. 45.

As might be expected, combinations with that are more common in poetry than in prose, obviously for metrical reasons.

13 — Mustanoja
Pronouns

(A 6555; wo se hadde richedom, B). Cf. the use of interrogative what for who, discussed on p. 182.

In addition to these, whether occurs as a generalising relative in the sense 'whichever of the two.' In this sense it has been attested since early ME: — hii acordede ... þat weþer of hom tueye lengore alive were, þat he ssolde be ðopes eir (RGlouc. 7967). It may occur in combination with that (see p. 192 above): — now chese yourselven whethere that yow liketh (Ch. CT D WB 1227). The relative whether disappears from normal written language in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries.

For the combinations look who, look what, and wait what 'whoever, whatever,' used as equivalents of generalising relatives, see pp. 476-7.

WHAT

In strictly relative use what has been attested since the 11th century, but it is not very common in ME and occurs mainly after antecedents of less definite character, like all and nothing: — hwæt ic selle Drihtne for eallum hwæt he sealde me (Glossed Psalter, p. 115 [11th century]);¹ — ic wile shæwenn zyuw All þatt hwæt ic sealde me (Orm. 1115); — but God and Pandare wist al hwæt it mente (Ch. TC ii 1561). The antecedent may be a whole statement: — he wiþ þone cyng geworhte, for hwæt ic se cyng ealles benæmnde (OE Chron. an. 1104); — oxo gap o clofenn fot Annd shæd þe hwæt he tacneþþ skill annd shæd annd witt i gode þæwes s (Orm. 1226). Other antecedents are less common (tyl he have caught that what him lest, Ch. HF 282). Frequently the antecedent is not expressed (I se what þou menest, PPl. B xiii 211). The strictly relative use of what is rare in many writers (Chaucer, Capgrave, etc.), but less rare in the Paston Letters and quite common in Pecock, in whose writings, to some extent at least, it reflects

Relativ Pronouns

Relative Pronouns 195

Latin influence (e.g., after *it* what is write (*id quod,* Repr. 2). The combination *what that* (*what al*) is also current: — *and al is payed what that he hath spent* (Ch. LGW 1125); — *he told *paim all what at he saw* (Alph. Tales 86). Cf. p. 192.

**WHICH**

*Which* (Northern *quilk, quhilk*) has occurred as a relative since earliest ME: — *twa stanene tables breode on hwulche Almihti heofde iuwrten þa ten taze* (Lamb. Hom. 11); — *sech alle þe bowes þerof ase heo beoþ þeruppe iuwrten hwuc falle to þe* (Anacr. 152); — *he hafde many wimmen ... bi whoche he hadde ... twenti sones bliþe* (Lawman B 2686). *Which* is used with an­imate (personal) and inanimate antecedents, singular and plural. *Which* may also have reference to whole clauses and sentences.

In Scotland the form *quhilkis* occurs in the plural by the side of *quhilk*.

*Which* is used dependently and independently. The dependent *which* occurs all through the period: — *bi hulche monna seip Drihten in his spelle ða he þus cweþ* (Lamb. Hom. 27); — *but what shal I seye of delyces of body, of which delices the desirynge ben ful of anguyssh* (Ch. Bo. iii p. 7. 2). In later ME the de­pendent use of *which* becomes increasingly popular and develops into a mannerism at the hands of many 15th-century writers. This development has been ascribed to foreign (particularly Latin) influence, but it may be that the ultimate reason for the use of the dependent *which* is simply a desire for greater clarity. It is worth noticing that although dependent *which* is common in the Wyclif and Purvey Bibles, the translators almost invariably use it in a way which differs from the reading of the Vulgate: — *a womman ... which wommanis douztir hadde an unclene spirit, eartide* (*mulier ... eius filia habebat spiritum immundum ...* Wyclif Mk. vii 25).
The uses of the independent *which* coincide largely with those of *that*, which it gradually begins to supplant in later ME. In ME alliterative poetry *which* is very rare, and in many alliterative poems it does not occur at all; only in a few of them (like *Piers Plowman*) does it occur more than once. In Chaucer the proportion between *that* and *which* is approximately 8:2.¹ Most instances of *which* in Chaucer are to be found in his prose; in his poetry the occurrence of this relative is negligible. All this seems to speak for the assumption that the use of *which* as a relative is due to Latin influence. In the 15th century independent *which* gains ground rapidly. It is Pecock's favourite relative. In Capgrave, however, *that* is still predominant. In the first seventy-five of the Paston Letters (down to 1450) the ratio between *that* and *which* is 115:72; in letters written between 1485 and 1509 it is 88:90. In the four Gospels of the Wyclifite Bible relative *that* occurs 801 times and *which* only 171 times; in Tindale's translation the corresponding figures are 503 for *that* and 562 for *which*. In Caxton *that* and *which* are equally common.

**Differences in the Use of 'That' and 'Which.'** — Although *that* and *which* are rivals in the same field of relative function, it seems possible to distinguish a few diverging trends in their uses. *That* seems to occur somewhat more frequently for persons than *which*, although there are exceptions, such as Pecock, whose predilection for *which* has been pointed out above. In addition, *that* appears to be preferred with superlative expressions (e.g., *the faireste and the beste That evere I say*, Ch. TC iii 1281; but cf. *the ferste Which tok the name of Emperour*, Gower CA Prol. 726). *That* seems also to be favoured when the antecedent is a pronoun (*she that hadde hire herte on Troilus So faste*, Ch. TC v 953; — *and taketh kep of that that I shal seyn*, Ch. CT C Ph. 90). *Which*, on the other

¹ According to Gerda Winkler (see bibliography).
Relative Pronouns

hand, is preferred in connection with prepositions\(^1\) *(this folk of which I telle you soo, RRose 743)*,\(^2\) and also when the antecedent is a clause or a whole sentence. The beginnings of the Mod. E practice to limit the use of *that* to defining (restrictive) relative clauses make themselves felt to some extent in later ME, although no definite rule concerning this point can be said to exist.

'Which That.' — The combination *which that* is found all through the ME period *(al Albanakes fole folden iscohten, buten while þat þer atwond þurh wode burʒe, Lawman A 2167)*. It is common in Chaucer *(I, wrecche, which that wepe and wayle, CT A Kn. 931)*, but becomes rare by the end of the 15th century *(Caxton)*. Cf. p. 192, above.

'Which As.' — The independent *which* is occasionally followed

\(^1\) Evidently because of the somewhat clumsy arrangement of the preposition in *that*-clauses. Prepositions occurring in connection with *that* are placed immediately before the verb *(þet ilke uniseli gile þet ich of seide, Ancr. 30; the place that I of spake, Ch. PF 296)*, particularly in early ME. Less frequently in early ME, but commonly in late ME, the preposition is placed at the end of the clause *(precious stanes þat he mygh t by a kingdom with, R Rolle EWr. 112)*. It is seldom that the preposition is placed before *that* *(for thou shalt trumpe alle the contrayre Of that they han don wel or fayre, Ch. HF 1630; — sylver vessel and godys, save that is profitable, Fifty Wills 118 [1439]; but here that stands for 'that which'."

\(^2\) It is possible, though not certain, that Chaucer's *swich licour Of which vertu* *(CT A Prol. 4)* is an imitation of the Old French type *de cui haleine 'de l'haleine de qui.' Cf. also suche a worme . . . þorw whiche wyles and wordes pei wenten to helle *(PPl. B x 107)* and *in honerable Ylion . . . Of whiche fairehed and fourme the fynest clerke Dares Tellys in his trety* *(Destr. Troy 8382)*. In all these passages *which* has the meaning 'whose.' Cf. Foulet, *Petite Syntaxe*, pp. 179-80. But the possibility that the construction is native in origin, perhaps due to contamination, is not to be excluded. *Which* might also represent an old inflected genitive, being comparable to the non-periphrastic dative *which* (instead of *to which 'to whom'): *— unto the devel, which I hym bitake* *(Ch. CT H Mcp. 307); — that is my nece and called is Cryseyde, Which som men wolden don oppressioun* *(Ch. TC ii 1418)*.
Pronouns

by as: — hir tretys, which as ye shal after heere (Ch. CT E Cl. 331); — if so be tho wordes helpe Whiche as the womman hath him tawht (Gower CA i 1653).

'THE WHICH.' — The combination the which appears first in the North. The earliest text where it is recorded is Cursor Mundi, which contains some seventy instances (e.g., to serve him in fat hali ture fat suld be of a numbre Hale, And mani thusand have in tale; The quilk tale nangat suld be mare And nede behoved it fulfild ware, Cursor 421, Cotton MS). The combination is common in the writings of Richard Rolle. In the course of the 14th century the which also emerges in more southern texts; in Piers Plowman, for example, it is not uncommon (Crystes tresore, þe which is mannes soule to save, B x 474). The origin of the which remains somewhat puzzling in spite of numerous attempts to shed light on it. Since in translations from OF the which often stands for liquels, it has been assumed by a number of scholars that the combination originated as an imitation of French usage. Some authorities, among them Curme, deny this and believe that the which, first emerging in the North, is a native development. Curme derives the combination from the OE type seþe swa hwelc, which occurs in the Lindisfarne Gospels, while L. R. Wilson, p. 25, Elisabeth Paschke, p. 219, and O. R. Reuter, NM XXXVIII, 1937, 146-88, and XL, 1939, 75-82, associate it with the OE and early ME use of the relative þe in combination with the demonstrative (se þe, þe þe), the relative þe having been replaced by which. Miss Paschke and Reuter, although they believe that the which is native in origin, do not exclude the possibility that the parallelism in use between the which and liquels strengthened the position of the English combination.¹

¹ There are many other cases in ME where an obvious parallelism between English and French usage seems to have strengthened the position of a native English construction. Examples in point are the occurrence of the preposition of as a genitive equivalent and the periphrastic comparison of adjectives and adverbs by means of more and most.
Relative Pronouns

It is worth noticing that *the which* is not particularly common in Chaucer, who mainly uses it dependently: — *ther been thynges thre*, *The whiche thynges troublen at this erthe* (CT D WB 363). The proportion between *which* and *the which* in Chaucer's works is approximately 9:1. In Gower, however, *the which* is very common. In 15th-century prose, as a rule, *the which* is far more frequent than plain *which*, although there are exceptions, such as Capgrave, Pecock, and Fortescue, from whose writings *the which* is almost completely absent. In *The Book of Margery Kempe* and *St Bridget's Revelations* (Rawlinson MS) the ratio between *which* and *the which* is approximately 3:2. *The which* is particularly common in the Paston Letters.

*The which that* is occasionally used by Chaucer: — *a parissh clerk, The which that was ycleped Absolon* (CT A Mil. 3313).

A Special Use of 'That' and 'Which.' — *As he that* and *as he which*, both calques on OF *com cil qui* (cf. A. A. Prins, *French Influence in English Phrasing*, Leyden 1952, p. 59), are common in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: — *the worthi sone of th'emperour, Which wolde ben a werreiour, As he that was chivalerous Of worldes fame and desirous* (ii 2517); — *he mithte him for the werre serve, As he which wolde his thonk deserve* (ii 2562). The combination, found also in Chaucer (e.g., *TC* i 96), usually has a causal colour (*as he that* = 'for he'). Cf. *comme cil q'est tout puissant* (Gower *Mirour de l'Omme* 27942).

**WHO**

'WHO.' — In reference to persons *that* or *which* is used instead of the nominative *who* throughout the ME period. Only a few sporadic occurrences of strictly relative *who* are recorded before the 15th century: — *he nadde bote an dożter wo mizte is eir be* (RGlouc. 1977); — *bliþe was eche a barn ho best mizt him plese* (WPal. 188; but it is just possible that this *who* has generalising force). In the first half of the 15th century the strictly relative *who* occurs, by the side of *which*, in the more or less stereo-
typed closing phrases of some Paston letters (*by the grace of God, who have you ever in his keping*). In letters written later in the 15th century, *who* is occasionally found outside the closing formula: — *that the fryer shuld be aposed howo was prewy with hym* (Paston III 345 [c 1488-90]). In the Plumpton letters of the latter half of the 15th century *who* likewise alternates with *which* in the closing formula. The nominative *who* is hardly found in 15th-century literary texts, and even in Caxton it is very rare.  

'WHOSE.' — The genitive form *whose* has been used as a relative since earliest ME: — *þe laverd .N. hwas dei hit is to dei* (Lamb. Hom. 151); — *Crist whas moderr þho wass wurrþenn* (Orm. 3425); — *for þi leofmon ant ti laverd, for hwas deorewurþe nome þu undernome þis striþ* (Kath. 680). *Whose* occurs with reference to persons and things, though its use for inanimate objects is infrequent and first recorded in the latter half of the 14th century: — *the loond of oyle and of hony ... whos stones ben yren* (Wyclif Deut. viii 9). *Whose* is occasionally employed as an objective genitive: — *he ... that shal touche ... eny unclene, whos touchynge is hoory* (Wyclif Lev. xxii 5). *Whose* occurs not only in dependent, but also in independent use: — *right fresshe flour, whos ben I have and shal* (Ch. TC v

1 In a few 15th-century Paston letters *whom* occurs for the nominative (*by the grace of God, Whom have yow in Hys kepyng, III 238 [1478]).  

2 A passage occasionally misinterpreted is *men seyn over the walle stonde Grete engynes, who were rygh honde* (RRose 4194), assumed to be an early instance of the relative *who* with inanimate antecedents — a use recorded since early Mod. E (for Elizabethan instances cf. Franz, *Sh. Gr.*, § 335, and Partridge, *Jonson Syntax*, pp. 57-9). Skeat emends *who* to *whiche.* The passage is a clumsy translation of the original, but the French passage (ed. E. Langlois, lines 3853-61) suggests that *who* is a generalising relative and that *who were rygh honde* is to be understood as 'whoever might be near [enough]' — an interpretation which is much the same as that tentatively suggested by Robinson on p. 878 of his edition.
The rather uncommon whose that (cf. p. 192, above) occurs in *syk lay the goode man whos that the place is* (Ch. CT D Sum. 1768); — and *th'office Of prest, whose ordre that I bere* (Gower CA i 243). *The whose* is also relatively uncommon: — *I hadde a lord, to whom I wedded was, The whos myn herte al was* (Ch. TC v 976); — *the whos welfare* (Ch. TC v 1359); — *the ferste of hem, so as I rede, Was Morpheus, the whos nature Is forto take the figure Of what persone that him liketh* (Gower CA iv 3039); — *hise apostles alle The whos pouer as nou is jalle On ous that ben of holi chirche* (Gower CA v 1798); — *other noble men ... the whos famous actes ... only hustorye hath preservyd* (Caxton Prol. Epil. 66). It may be mentioned that Gower's *Confessio* contains some dozen instances of *the whose*.

'WHOM.' — *Whom* has also been used as a relative since the earliest part of the ME period: — *for Adames gulte, to hwam ure Drihten seid e ...* (Trin. Hom. 181); — *taer wass hemm bitwenenn an swillc whamm ðeȝȝ ne cennenn nohht* (Orm. 10370); — *spaken of þessere hali mithte, wiþuten hwam non ne mai bien wiþhealden to none freme ne to none gode* (Vices & V 47); — *Þe wy to wham her wylle ho wayne ...* (Pearl 131). *Of whom* is occasionally seen for *whose*: — *of quam in ðe abite and ðe armes he was all clethid* (WAlex. 1624). The antecedent is omitted in *she hireself shal han hire eleccioun Of whom hire lest* (Ch. PF 622). The combination *whom that* (cf. p. 192, above) is fairly common in Chaucer: — *and thow that flour of virgines art alle, Of whom that Bernard list so wel to write* (Ch. CT G SN 30). *The whom* seems to be rare: — *the whom no reson mihte areste* (Gower CA ii 162). It is probable that Chaucer's *thee whom God ches to mooder for humblesse* (ABC 108) ought to be read as *the whom* . . .

**FUNCTIONAL TRENDS.** — There seems to be some tendency to use *who* (*whose, whom*) in non-defining (non-restrictive) rather than defining (restrictive) relative clauses.
OTHER RELATIVES AND RELATIVE ADVERBS

'As.' — As is common after such, but outside this particular combination it seldom occurs as a relative, and only from the 14th century on (arsmetrike is a lore pat of figours al is And of drawëtes as me drawëp in poudre, EE Poems xvii 225; — in maner and formes as in this codicille followeth, Linc. Dioc. Documents 76 [EETS 149]). Constructions like such that and such which are not uncommon for such as.

Relative Adverbs. — A relative clause is often more or less adverbial in character. It is not, therefore, surprising to find there, where, whereby, wherein, whereof often used for in which, by which, etc. For the plain relative adverbs there and where see p. 337; for the prepositional adverbs (whereby, etc.) see p. 424.

PERSONAL AND POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS IN RELATIVE CLAUSES

'That'-Clauses. — A not infrequent construction in ME texts is that followed by a personal pronoun or a possessive. It is perhaps a survival of the not uncommon OE idiom þe plus personal pronoun (þe he, þe him, þe his, etc.).1 The personal pronoun and the possessive seem to be used partly for emphasis, partly to indicate the case of the indeclinable relative pronoun: — went nevere wy in þis worlde þorw þat wildernesse þat he ne was robbed ('who was not robbed,' PP1. B xvii 98); — therynne woneþ a wyþ1 þat wrong is his name ('whose name

1 There is a certain resemblance between these cases and those discussed on pp. 159-62 (þe whiche kyng his prayers, etc.). The cases here discussed may in some respects be comparable also to instances like he Julius (see p. 135) and she this (p. 137). Cf. also p. 120.

It is unlikely that the corresponding OF construction, relatively few instances of which are known (e.g. veez ci mon seignor le duc qui sa fille g'ai a feme, Roman de Marques de Rome 69 a 3), has had any influence on the ME development.
Relative Pronouns

is...,' PPl. C ii 59); — a Knyght ther was... That fro the tyme that he first bigan To riden out, he loved chivalrie (Ch. CT A Prol. 44-5); — ther nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne, That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne (Ch. CT A Prol. 604); — there nys planete in firmament, Ne in ayr ne in erthe noon element, That they ne give me a gifte echone (Ch. BD 695); — she Shal han right hym on whom hire herte is set, And he hire that his herte hath on hire knet (Ch. PF 628); — in his presense... þat alle prys and prowes and purred þewes Apendes to hys persoun (Gaw. & GK 913).

'Which'-Clauses. — The same desire for clarity of expression seems to account for the use of the personal or possessive pronoun in which-clauses: — lo, this is he Which that myn uncle swerith he moo t be deed (Ch. TC ii 654); — the kynges deere sone... Which alwey for to don wel is his won (Ch. TC ii 318); — kynge Mynos hadde a doughter that was called Adryane, whiche, whan she sawe Theseus... she hadde pyté of hym (Caxton En. 118); — her sleve, the whiche in presence of her fader she had taken it from her ryght arme (Caxton Blanch. 84). Constructions of this type, with which and who, are common in early Mod. E, especially in Spenser's works.

NON-INTRODUCED RELATIVE CLAUSES

General Considerations. — Problems connected with the nature and origin of what is often called (inaccurately, it seems) ellipsis of the relative pronoun have attracted the attention of many grammarians, and the number of treatises published on this point is quite considerable. It has been pointed out that in OE, in particular, there is really no ellipsis at all (i.e., nothing has been omitted that belongs to the organic structure of the statement), and that instances often interpreted...
as pronominal 'ellipses' are usually those of non-expression of the personal pronoun, not of the relative. There are few cases in OE where a non-introduced clause is really subordinate to another, and even when this is the case the exact degree of subordination can only be guessed at. Wülfing (I, pp. 419-20) quotes only three instances of possible non-expression of the relative pronoun from Alfredian writings. In early ME texts non-introduced relative clauses do not seem to occur at all. They make their appearance in the second half of the 14th century, but it is by no means certain that their use is due to the influence of French, as suggested by A. Schrader, Einenkel (see bibliography), and P. F. van Draat (*Anglia* XXXVI, 1912, 505), or to Scandinavian (Danish) influence, as suggested by Jespersen (*Growth*, § 80).

There are instances where *that* may be interpreted as belonging both to the principal and the relative clause, such as *he bad thai suld him say Quhat toune wes that he in lay* (Barbour iv 202). Here it seems possible to take *that* as a demonstrative pronoun belonging to the indirect question and at the same time as a relative pronoun introducing the relative clause. On the basis of instances like this, G. Dubislav (*Anglia* XL, 1916, 315-16) brings non-expression of the relative pronoun into connection with the construction known as *apo koinou*. That this is not really the case has been pointed out by H. D. Meritt (see bibliography). In true *apo koinou* the two clauses are co-ordinate. Meritt's study of several Germanic languages supplies good evidence that the two constructions have always been distinct from one another.

A number of studies dealing with non-introduced relative clauses are listed in the bibliography below; in addition to these reference may be made to the lists printed in Wülfing I, pp. 420-1, and in *Anglia Beiblatt* XVI, 1905, 136-8 (W. Horn's review of Franz's *Sh. Gr.*).

**NON-EXPRESSION OF THE SUBJECT-PRONOUN.** — This phenomenon is first seen in texts of the latter half of the 14th century.
The large majority of the instances occur in poetry, the prose instances being few in number. Many of the cases usually interpreted as non-expressions of the relative pronoun might equally well be taken as non-expressions of the personal pronoun, as in *I fonde þere freris, alle þe foure ordres, Preched þe pepele* (PPl. B Prol. 59). In *he sente after a cherle was in the town* (Ch. CT C Ph. 140), however, *was in the town* is more likely to be a non-introduced relative clause than a co-ordinate clause. Other instances of non-expression of the relative pronoun: — *and byde þe payne þerto is bent* (Pearl 664); — *to bye hym a perle wat þe mascelle* (Pearl 732). The fact that non-introduced relative clauses of this kind are much rarer in Chaucer’s prose than in his poetry suggests that he uses them largely for metrical purposes (P. F. van Draat, loc. cit.). Non-introduced relative clauses do not occur in Pecock, are rare in Capgrave, and extremely rare in Caxton. It is not until the end of the 16th century that they become more common in literary prose.

**Non-expression of the Object-pronoun.** — Non-expression of the object-pronoun in a relative clause has not been attested in OE. In ME it appears towards the end of the 14th century, but is much rarer than non-expression of the subject-pronoun. Towards the end of the period, however, it begins to gain ground. Like non-expression of the relative subject-pronoun, it occurs more frequently in poetry than in prose. Examples: — *the sorowe I suffred* (Ch. BD 1245); — *þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere in my nek* (Gaw. & GK 2506). The object-pronoun may also be left unexpressed in connection with prepositions: — *al the good the sonne aboute gooth* (Ch. TC iii 1108); — *of al the lond the sonne on shyneth sheene* (Ch. TC iv 1239).

According to Miss Winkler (see bibliography), p. 79, the relative subject-pronoun is more frequently left unexpressed in Chaucer than the object-pronoun, but the ratio is reversed in Caxton. Some idea of the frequency of non-expression of the
relative object-pronoun in the prose of the 15th and 16th centuries can be obtained from the following figures supplied by J. Steinki (see bibliography), p. 87, concerning the ratio between the number of cases of non-expression and the total number of relative object-pronouns: — Pecock, 1:950; — Capgrave, 53:1250; — Cely Papers, 4:172; — Caxton, 8:2800; — Fortescue, 1:245; — Latimer, 19:3100; — Bacon, 15:490; — Sidney, 331:2180.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Brunner II, pp. 133-43.
—— 'Die dänischen Elemente in der Syntax der englischen Sprache,' *Anglia* XXIX, 1906, 120-8 (non-introduced relative clauses).
Flebbe, 'Der elliptische Relativsatz im Englischen unter Berücksichtigung der übrigen germanischen Sprachen,' *Archiv LX*, 1878, 85-100.
Relative Pronouns

Horn, W., 'Neue Beobachtungen über Sprachkörper und Sprachfunktion im Englischen,' Giessener Beiträge I, 1923, 137-8.
Jespersen, Mod. E Gr. III, pp. 52-203.
—– Growth, § 80.
Kellner, pp. 203-8.
Koch II, pp. 273-94.
Koziol, Stb., pp. 77-89.
Neckel, G., Über die altgermanischen Relativsätze, Palaestra V, Berlin 1900.
Pogatscher, A., 'Unausgedrücktes Subjekt im Altenenglischen,' Anglia XXIII, 1901, 261-301.
Poutsma II,1, pp. 957-1010.
—– 'Instances of the Which in the Glossed Prose Psalter and their Relation to the French Original,' NM XL, 1939, 75-82.
INDEFINITE PRONOUNS


*Bibliography*, p. 227.
Indefinite Pronouns

'ONE.' — A special development of the numeral one results in its use as an independent indefinite pronoun equivalent to 'some one' or 'a person' from early ME on, often as an antecedent of a defining (restrictive) relative clause: — seofþen com an þe leovede wel (Lawman A 7043); — of on þat is so fayr and bríst velud maris stella (Eng. Lyr. XIIIth Cent. xvii 1); — as me him drinke tok, on was prest þyou and þoru is wombe smot a knif (RGlouc. 5864); — and smot anne upe þe helm (RGlouc. 8266). Instead of being repeated, one is replaced by a personal pronoun: — and herde oon crien 'water' as he were wod (Ch. CT A Mil. 3817). For the use of one for the indefinite person see pp. 223-4 below.

One preceded by the definite article occurs in instances like þe one þet was best iltered of Jesu Cristes deciples (Anocr. 168). For the character of one in some on, such one, that one, this one, which one, and other similar combinations (e.g., swich oon, Ch. TC i 521, 619, et passim), and also in I was a lusty oon (Ch. CT D WB 605), a sory woman was she oon (Ipom. A 872), etc., see the discussion of the 'propword' one (pp. 301-5).

The dependent use of one in the sense 'a certain' has been attested in conjunction with personal names since the late 13th century: — þe castel of Caryl held on Willam Louel (RGlouc. 9197).

'NONE.' — The ME use of none, the negative form of one (OE nan from ne an), calls for no particular comment because it does not differ in any essential respect from present-day usage. Certain uses of none first recorded in the NED from ME have been shown by Einenkel (Anglia XXVI, 1903) to go back to OE, like the phrase non other (cf. Einenkel, pp. 515 and 529-30) and the use of none as an adverb with comparatives (nan oftar, etc.; cf. Einenkel, p. 520).

In dependent use the form no has prevailed since later ME, the form none occurring practically only before words beginning with a vowel or h (none evyll).

'NOTHING' AND 'NOBODY.' — Nothing, from OE nan þing,
is common all through ME: — no þing þet heo deþ (Ancre. 53). With adverbial force, it is often used as an emphatic negative: — þe povere men atte gate ne beo þou noþing loþe (Good Wife 9). Cf. p. 103. Nobody has been attested since the first half of the 14th century: — no body bot he alone unto þe Cristen cam (RMannyng Chron. 183).

'ANY.' — The NED suggests that -iq in OE ænig is originally a diminutive ending, this word being comparable to Latin ulla, from uululus. W. Horn (Archiv CXLII, 1921, 128-9) accepts this explanation and suggests that ænig comes from æning, a diminutive, just as cynig comes from cyning. According to the NED, ænig is first used in interrogative, hypothetical, and conditional expressions. Horn, without saying it explicitly, seems to think that the pronoun is originally used in emphatic negative statements; this, he believes, is natural considering the well-known intensifying force of diminutives in many instances. Thus I haven't got any apple means, he says, 'I have no apple, not even a tiny one.'

On the whole any is used in ME in the same way as today. Independent any, in the sense of 'anybody,' seems to be used more freely than now. In the sense 'one of two, either,' any occurs in writings of later ME and early Mod. E: — and if that any of us have moore than oother (Ch. CT D Fri. 1533). For any used instead of the indefinite article see p. 263. Anything has been attested since OE, any one and anybody since ME. Anywhat seems to belong to the North: — if he any what myȝte gete (Cursor 3629, Trin. MS). For anywhere (late ME), anywise (early and late ME), etc., see MED and NED. For appositive constructions like affermyng that I ouȝt t'enprynte his actes and noble feates than of Godefroye of Boloyn or ony the other eight (Caxton, Preface to MD 2) see pp. 84-5.

'NANY.' — OE nænig, the negative counterpart of ænig, does not survive beyond early ME. Its last known occurrence is recorded in Ormulum: — ne mihhte nanie mann . . . Utbresstenn
off *pe deofles band* (59). In later times its function is carried out by *none* and *no*.

'Some.' — In OE and early ME the dependent use of *sum* is often practically the same as that of the indefinite article; for a discussion of this use see pp. 259-62. The ME uses of *some* (dependent and independent) do not differ essentially from those of Mod. E. Certain syntactical constructions with *some* appear for the first time in ME writings, such as *some little, some small,* etc.: — *sum litill tyme* (Wyclif Acts xv 33).

The appositive use of *some* in a singular meaning, attested in OE (e.g., *Healdene for mid sumum þæm here on Norþhymbre* 'went with a part of the host into Northumbria,' OE Chron. an. 875; — *sumne hire lichaman* 'part of her body,' Ælfric's Lives of Saints, ed. Skeat, No. 23 B [St Mary of Egypt], line 793), does not seem to occur in ME, but in a plural sense *some* does occur in apposition to a personal pronoun or noun: — *sumne heo sæten stille Mucle ane stunde* (Lawman A and B 25121); — *so ðat some þe messagers to kermerdin come* (RGlouc. 2718). An appositive construction of this type seems to be exemplified in *some your lyvys ze schold forlete* (Gaw. & CC 209), where *some* is probably to be connected with *ze* ('some of you must lose your lives'). For other similar constructions see pp. 84-5.

THE TYPES 'TEN SOME' AND 'HIS TENTH SOME.' — A peculiar use of *some* is seen in constructions where this word is preceded by a cardinal or ordinal number. Preceded by the partitive genitive of a plural cardinal number *some* is not uncommon in OE (*feowera sum, syxa sum, twelfa sum,* etc.). The same construction is found in Old Saxon and Old Frisian. In expressions of this type, *sum* seems to have two separate meanings depending on the context, viz. (1) 'one of a company containing the number' and (2) 'one with a company containing the number.' Thus, depending on the context, *feowera sum* might be understood as 'as one of four' or 'with four others.' Occasionally the numeral is preceded by a dependent possessive,
Pronouns

as in ēa... com Eanfrîð butan geþeahhte his weolena twelfa sum to him ('cum duodecim lectis militibus,' Bede 154).

This construction survives all through the ME period, above all in the North: — and sa gud payment thaim ma, That fijf sum in the furd he slew ('five in all,' Barbour vi 149); — Noe ðat ofte nevened þe name of our Lorde, Hym aþhtsum in ðat ark as ægel God lyked ('as one of eight,' Purity 411). For a discussion cf. J. E. Wülfing, E Studien XVII, 1892, 285-91, and XXIV, 1898, 463; cf. also Einenkel, Anglia XXVI, 1903, 536-8, and NED, s.v. twosome, threesome, foursome, etc.

A variant with an ordinal number and mostly with a possessive occurs in ME: — ant te sea sencte him on his þrítuþe sum ant þerto ȝet fowre ('with thirty others, and four besides,' Jul. [EETS] 79); — Tristrem dede as he hiȝt. He busked and made him ȝare; His fiftend som of kniȝt Wiþ him ȝede, na mare (Tristrem 815); — finde me min askeing, Mine fiftend som of kniȝt (Tristrem 1374); — him self was boute þe ferȝe some Toward þat ferd (Beves 203, MS A); — Troilus... Com rydyng with his tenthe som yfere (Ch. TC ii 1249). Einenkel (loc.cit.) suggests that the construction may have been influenced by OF lui cinquieime, but this is by no means certain.

'OTHER SOME.' — The ME and Mod. E expression other some 'some other' is in all probability a survival of OE ȝer sum (e.g., Titus Cuintius þe ȝeðre sume geþiæmde, sume ofslog, Alfred Oros. 104): — after þis cam swilc ȝer sum (Gen. & Ex. 686); — þaa fraaward folk... Said þat Moyses was slain... And ȝer sum said þat he Was livand (Cursor 6491, Cotton MS).

'ALL AND SOME.' — For this phrase see all, below.

'OUGHT.' — Ought (aught) 'anything' (if we moght find her oght to sell, Cursor 4836, Cotton MS) has been current since OE (awhþ, owiht). Inought that 'in so far as' occurs in Ch. TC iii 1241 (in ought that he may gesse). In adverbial use ought 'per-chance' is relatively common in ME: — I gan... to loke wher I myght ought Have more knowynge of hys thought (Ch. BD 537);
— can he ought telle a myrie tale or tweye? (Ch. CT G CY 597). Cf. also H. Kökeritz, *MLN* LXIV, 1949, 89-90.

'Nought.' — *Nought* 'nothing,' the negative form of *ought* (see above; e.g., turned into *nought*, Gower CA Prol. 624) has been used since OE (*nawiht, nowiht*). As an emphatic negative it occurs even more frequently than the synonymous *nothing* and eventually develops into the common negative particle *not* (see pp. 339-40).

'All.' — Inflected forms of *all* occur above all in the more southern parts of the country; in Kent they are used as late as the 14th century: — *alle he heþ imad communliche, alle yboȝt communliche, to allen porveȝp communliche* (Ayenb. 145). The distinction between singular *all* and plural *alle* is discernible in the Midlands even at the end of the 14th century (Chaucer). The genitive singular *alles*, with adverbial force ('altogether, wholly'), occurs down to the 14th century (e.g., *þo it alles out brac*, RGlouc. 6567). The inflectional genitive plural *aller* (*alder, alther, al there*) in a partitive sense 'of all' is current in all dialects: — *alre gold smeatest* ('purest of all golds,' Marg. 26). After a possessive it is particularly common: — *Eve ure alre moder* (Anocr. 22); — *this manciple sette hir aller cappe* (Ch. CT A Prol. 586); — *at oure aller cost* (Ch. CT A Prol. 799); — *our alder pris* (Ch. LGW 298). In Middle Scots texts *aller* is found in the corrupted form *alleris*: — *I sall revenge and end our alliris offens* (Douglas En. XII i 40). For the use of the partitive genitive *aller* (*alder, etc.*) to intensify the superlative degree of adjectives and adverbs see p. 286.

*All* often occurs in cases where modern usage would prefer *everything*: — *all was of armes and of love* (Gower CA i 2528). In the meaning 'whole' *all* is found throughout the period: — *wel þu myhtes faren all a ðæis fare* (OE Chron. an. 1137); — *she wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two* (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1348).

*All* followed by a personal pronoun occurs from OE down to earlier Mod. E.: — *ealle hi sculen þuder cume* (Poema Mor. 174).
The expression *all and some* is found with a singular and plural sense: — *Þe tale ys wrytyn al and sum* In a boke of Vitas Patrum (RMannyng HS 169); — *thisse lorde alle and some* Been on the Sunday to the citee come (Ch. CT A Kn. 2187).

For combinations like *althing, alwhat,* and the like, see *MED.‘Both’ (*Bo’). — *Bo* (OE *begen, ba*) and *both* (OE *ba þa*), when they occur after a personal or possessive pronoun, are often, though by no means always, in the inflected form: — *Þor weren he bōpen feren pliȝt þat here neiþer sal don oþer unriȝt* (Gen. & Ex. 1276); — *kene were þay boþen both* (Parl. 3 Ages 13); — *heore beire nome* (Lawman A 5283); — *our bather slogh* (Cursor 1254, Cotton MS); — *Cryst toke þe bataille Àȝeine þat ðe devel: destroyed her boþeres myȝþes* (PPL A xvi 165); — *for youre boþes peynes I yow preye* (Ch. ABC 83-4).

The ME uses of *both* (bo) coincide largely with those of Pres. E. The rather frequent occurrence of *both* and *bo* in more or less pleonastic combinations like *both two* is worth noticing: — *deade heo weoren bo two* (Lawman A 2605); — *bynde byhynde, at his bak, boþe two his hande þ* (Purity 155).1

In the meaning ‘each of two’ *both* is occasionally found in later ME texts: — *me ssolde pulte out boþe is eye* (RGlouc. 7713); — *on boþe side* (Cursor 12881, Trin. MS; *aiþer, Cotton MS)*; — *upon boþe halve* (Gaw. & GK 2070 and 2165).

‘Each.’ — *Each* (OE *ælc*), northern and E Midland *ilk,* has been used dependently and independently (*ta alchere gode saule, Vices & V 131; — benigne he was to ech in general, Ch. TC iii 1802) since late OE. The difference between *each* and *every* is discussed below, under *every.* The combination *each one* appears in OE (cf. Wülfing I, p. 436).

‘Every.’ — Originally *every* (OE *æfre ælc*) is an emphatic form of *each.* The functional difference of the two pronouns

1 The combination *ba two,* frequently in the form *butu,* is not infrequent in OE (West Saxon): — *wæter and eorþe . . . sint on geceynde cealda ba two* (Alfred Boethius 179).
is thus defined in the *NED*: "Originally the sense expressed collectively by *all* was expressed [distributively] by *each*, from which *every* differed only in emphasizing the element of universality in the signification. Thus Wyclif writes, 'every langour and *ech* sekenesse,' it being unnecessary to repeat the emphasis. When *every* had ceased to be recognizable as a compound of *each*, the two words were at first often used somewhat indiscriminately, but their functions were gradually differentiated. In modern usage, *every* directs attention chiefly to the totality, *each* chiefly to the individuals composing it."

In ME *every* is used both dependently and independently: — *ever selche londe* (Lawman A 25345); — *vor evrich schat holden þe uttre* (Anacr. 2); — *she was so diligent... To serve and plesse everich in that place* (Ch. CT B ML 531). The legal phrase *all and every* 'all (of you) jointly and each (of you) individually' occurs in 15th-century texts: — *as to yow al and every of yow apperteyneth* (Rymer’s Foedera 655a; MED).

The combination *every one* (*everichon*) has been employed since early ME: — *everichon sigge þet hire best bereþ on heorte* (Anacr. 19); — *þis foules everichon Joye hem wit songe* (E Lyr. XIIith Cent. liv 3). For other combinations, like *everydeal*, cf. *MED* and *NED*.

'Outher' and 'Nouther.' — *Outher* (OE *ahwæðer*) 'one of the two, either' occurs in OE and ME: — *ouþer of þaim* (Cursor 21949, Gött. MS). The negative form is *nouther* (OE *nahwæðer*): — *auh toten ut wiþuten uvel ne mei nouþer of ou* (Anacr. 22). *Outher* and *nouther* are later replaced by *either* and *neither*.

'Either' and 'Neither.' — *Either* (OE *æghwæþer*) has retained its original meaning 'each of two, both:' — *þai sal eþer for þair foly Bren in þe fier of purgatorï* (Cursor 29164, Cotton MS). From earliest ME on *either* is also used in the disjunctive sense 'one or the other of two:' — *with luytel aise he miȝte sitte... And onaisitliche ligge also opon eþur side* (SE Leg. xxvii 2212). The negative form *neither* appears in writing
about the beginning of ME: — þor ben he boþen feren pliȝt þat here neiþer sal don oþer unriȝt (Gen. & Ex. 1276).

'OTHER.' — In the sense 'another person' other has been used since OE: — thoru warnissing of oþere wrake (Cursor 21927); — he seyde to me he wolde be trewe, And change me for non oþur newe (Sec. Lyr. xxiii 6). The same applies to other in the sense 'something else, anything else:' — quen Ruben saȝh þaþair was nan oþer Bot ... (Cursor 4147, Cotton MS). For the use of the definite article with other (singular and plural) see p. 259.

In OE and ME other occurs in combinations like other all, other many, and other mo ('all others,' 'many others,' 'others besides'): — þou art me levest of oþer alle (GWarw. 1149); — bi þe be warned oþer mo (GWarw. 408). Until the 16th century only the form other, without -s, is used for the plural.

The phrase this (the) other day has occurred (a) in the meaning 'the following day' since the beginning of the ME period (Havelok ... and his wif ... wel do wayten al the niht Til þe oþer day, Havelok 1755), (b) in the meaning 'the preceding day' since the beginning of the 14th century (wil þu me sla as þu did an þis oder day, Cursor 5672, Gött. MS), and (c) in the meaning 'recently' since the later part of the period (this othar day a lamentacion Of a woful man in a boke I sye, Occleve MP xx 309). In this meaning the current ME phrase (from early ME to the end of the period even and beyond it) is this ender(s) day or this ender(s) night, found particularly as a conventional opening of a story: — þis enderdai com a clar c to me (Sirith 366); — this ender day, as I gan fare To hunte unto the grete hert (Gower CA v 7400).

Other ... other 'the one ... the other' (cf. L alter ... alter) occurs in OE and ME: — Hubba was þþoþer ihole and þþoþer het Hyngar (EE Poems xviii 9). For one ... other and related phrases see pp. 153-4. For other some see p. 212 above.

A typical ME combination is otherwhat: — vor he ... spekeþ þeonne of oþer what (Ancr. 42).

'ANOTHER.' — In the sense 'one more,' another has been used
Indefinite Pronouns

since later ME: — thouȝ we culled þe catte, ȝut sholde þer come another (PPl. B Prol. 185); — and saw another lady, proud and newe (Ch. AA 144). In the sense 'another person' another has also been attested since the 14th century: — huanne ȝi eft yzyȝþ anoþrene þet ine anoþre stat deþ manie guodes (Ayenb. 155). Such another appears about 1300: — for nakins chaunce Sal I ta suilk an-oþer wengance (Cursor 1942; Cotton MS).

INTERROGATIVES AS INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

OLD ENGLISH BACKGROUND. — The use of the interrogative pronouns as indefinites dates from OE (gyf hwa eow ænig þing tocwþ 'si quis vobis aliquid dixerit;' — seþ leo bring þ his hungregum hwelpum hwæt to etanne; — gif hi hwylcne drycræft hæfdon). Whether this use originated under Latin influence or not is difficult to say.

'WHO.' — The indefinite use of who in the sense 'any one' has been recorded in OE (wiþ manna hwone, Beow. 155), ME (suilk ribaudis þei led, þei gaf no tale of wham, RMannyng Langtoft 220), and early Mod. E. In a few cases who occurs in the more definite sense 'a person:' — þan preyde þe ryche man Abraham þat he wulde sende Lazare or sum oþer wham (RMannyng HS 6694): — to every wham þat ys ażens þe crystendam (RMannyng HS 10011); — but ofte is sen that moche slowthe . . . Doth mochel harm, whan fyr is uppe, Bot if som who the flamme stanche (Gower CA Prol. 345).

As who (end of the 13th century to early Mod. E), which usually occurs in the phrase as who seith, as who should say, and the like, is probably a translation-loan from French (cf. comme qui diroit): — Severne and Temese; Homber is þet þridde; and þanne is, as zwo seiþ, þat pur lond amidde (RGlouc. 24); — ho turned hir over . . . As qua sulde sai, I knaw na harme

¹ For the use of interrogatives as generalising (indefinite) relatives see pp. 192-4.
'What.' — A transitional stage in the development of interrogative what into an indefinite pronoun seems to be reflected in phrases like wost thou what (e.g., ye be lyke the sweynte cat That wolde have fissh; but wostow what? He wolde nothing wete his clowes, Ch. HF 1784). The OE indefinite use of what continues in ME in the somewhat more definite sense 'thing:' — as þey spak of many what, Come Pers (RMannyng HS 5589); — zif þou receyvedyst any what (RMannyng 5965); — the lothlieste what That evere man caste on his yhe (Gower CA i 1676); — as he which cowthe mochel what (Gower CA iii 1217). Some what and other what have been attested since the beginning of ME: — so dop ever sum what þet God muwe þerof awakenen (Ancr. 19); — vor he . . . spekeþ þeonne of oþer what (Ancr. 42). Cf. other who and some who in the examples quoted under who above. Elles what is occasionally used from OE to early Mod. E: — queþir þat here or els-quat, it hurtis ag þe saule (WAlex. 4557).

OE lytles hwæt, with a partitive genitive, survives in ME as (sum)what liltles, lites what, and (a) litel what: — for þatt tu muȝhe winnenn þer Wiþþ sinne summwhat littless (Orm. 4681); — þorþi þatt þeȝ . . . yet unnderslodenn liltles whatt Of þall rihte trowynþe (Orm. 6952); — so þat ech on mûȝte take a litil what of breed (Wyclif Sel. Wks I 62); — and thus ful ofte is love boght For litel what (Gower CA v 4429). The adverbial use of a litel what, which occurs in later ME (and thanne sche, a litel what smglinge, seide, Ch. Bo. iv p. 6.9) is perhaps due to the analogy of some what, which occurs in an adverbial sense from early ME down to the present day (þerþurrh wass sene þatt he þa Summwhatt bigunnenn haffde To lefenn o þe Lafered Crist, Orm. 16882).

The plain indefinite what with adverbial force occurs in phrases like what with . . . what with 'partly on account of . . .
and partly on account of,' or plain what with (what with his sours and with my drede, Ch. HF 551; — what with Venus and other oppressioun, Ch. LGW 2592) and what ... what 'partly ... partly' (and sileth from us, what pryvely slepyng And what thurgh negligence in oure wakyng, Ch. CT B ML 21-2). There are similar combinations (with roughly the same meaning) with other prepositions: — what for fere of Þis ferly and of þe fals juwes, I drowe me ... (PPl. B xviii 110); — his men ... ware stourbed, Quat of doloure and dyn (WAlex. 935, Ashm. MS); — quat of ane, quat of oþere, oft his oste pleynes (WAlex. 1147).

EXPRESSION OF THE INDEFINITE PERSON

'MAN.' — In OE the indefinite person is normally expressed by man. It has been assumed that this function of man in the Germanic languages is due to the influence of Latin homo, the ancestor of French on, used in the Vulgate and a number of other later Latin texts to indicate an indefinite person. B. H. J. Weerenbeck (Le prono 'on' en français et en provençal, Amsterdam 1943), however, does not accept this view. Weerenbeck believes that L homo and F on are not responsible for the use of man for the indefinite person in the Germanic languages, any more than man is responsible for this particular use of on in French. That the use of man for the indefinite person in OE is native in origin is strongly suggested by J. Fröhlich's study of the subject (see bibliography). In direct translations of Latin passive constructions the OE Gospels, for example, show a larger proportion of passive expressions than of the active construction with man (the ratio being 5:3), while in free adaptations only active man-constructions are found.

In ME, too, man (men, me) is the usual pronoun of the indefinite person, occurring mainly as the subject or object of the verb, but occasionally also as an attributive genitive (e.g., al þet god þet ze ever dop be idon ase bi nihte ... ut of monnes eien and ut of monnes earen, Ancr. 67). In cases of this kind,
Pronouns

and particularly in those late ME instances where it is preceded by an article or other defining word, *man* retains a pronouncedly substantival character: — *ful manye suche a man mai finde Whiche evere caste aboute here yhe* (Gower CA i 311); — *who that usith a mannes tale to breke Lateth uncurteysly the audyence* (Caxton Bk Curtesye 283). In early ME the form *man* (without an article) enjoys the greatest popularity, but does not survive far beyond the end of the 14th century: — *yef man dede Þat kuead toyeans wylle, hit nere non zenne* (Ayenb. 86); — *wyn maketh man to lesen wrecchedly His mynde* (Ch. CT D Sum. 2054; *man* used as an object). Comparatively few instances have been recorded at the end of the period: — *that man had sene you in the court of kynege Arthur* (Malory MD 83). The form *men*, though somewhat less common than *man* in this function in early ME, occurs much more frequently than any other *man*-variant towards the end of the period: — *Þis beot Þe twa sunne Þe men fulie Þ alra swiþest* (Lamb. Hom. 33; *men* as an object); — *thair mycht men heir the speris brast* (Barbour xv 479); — *men moote yeve silver to the powre freres* (Ch. CT A Prol. 232); — *alday men mey see, The tre crokthe son Þat good cambrel wyl be* (Good Wife Pilgr. 71). *Men* is the dominant form in the North, while *me* occurs mainly in the South and SW Midlands: — *hit is riht Þet me hem spille* (Lamb. Hom. 17); — *Þus ofte, ase me seiþ, of lutel wacseþ muchel* (Ancr. 23); — *me hi halt lodlich and fule* (Owl & N 32); — *Brutons me clupede alle men Þat were in Engelonde* (RGlouc. 505); — *men bindis oft folk agane than will* (Thewis 199). In earlier ME the form *me* is even more popular than *men*, but disappears in the course of the 15th century (the last known instance occurs in Caxton). *Men*, although it begins to lose ground rapidly at the beginning of the 16th century, is still occasionally found in the Elizabethan period.

Repetition is avoided by using personal and possessive pronouns; e.g., *but goode folk . . . She loved as man may do hys brother* (Ch. BD 891).
Indefinite Pronouns

All through the ME period *man* is associated with the singular and plural meanings: — *but goode folk* . . . *She loved as man may do hys brother* (Ch. BD 891); — *þai* [i.e., *Þe psalmes*] *drop swetnes in mans saule and helles delites in þeire thoghtes and kyndelis þaire willes with þe fire of luf* (RRolle EWr. 4); — *bot ay wolde man of happe more hente þen mo 10 ten by ryzt upon hem clyven* (Pearl 1195-6). As for the form *men*, it is worth notice that in early ME it is conceived mainly as a singular and in late ME mainly as a plural: — *sone anon blod men at it fond* (Gen. & Ex. 2944; cf. *men funden blod*, 2948); — *þerafter bere þe þat men sein þe no schame* (Good Wife 31). But this distinction, it must be emphasized, exists only as a general trend, not as a strict rule. In Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, for example, there are several instances where *men* occurs with a singular verb (cf. Macaulay’s note on vi 321). The same applies to Chaucer’s writings. The treatment of the noun *men* in *CT A Mil. 3228* strikingly illustrates the rather unsettled state of the usage in late ME. Manly and Rickert read the line as *that bad men sholde wedde his similitude* on the authority of several manuscripts, interpreting the form *men* as a weakened singular with an indefinite meaning (Vol. III, p. 440). Fifteen MSS read *men* . . . *her similitude*, taking *men* to be a plural form. Six MSS read *man* and seven *a man*. The noun *men* is also conceived as a singular in *there is somme men þat calles hym [= himself] frende* (MADSone 183). There seems to have been a great deal of uncertainty in the 15th century regarding the number of *man* and *men*, and it also seems that in certain uses the distinction between the noun *man* and the indefinite pronoun *man* (*men*) is rather hazy.

Throughout the ME period a steady decrease in the use of *man* (*men*) for the indefinite person is noticeable. The following figures, taken from the dissertation of Mrs Jud-Schmid (see bibliography), pp. 109 and 110, illustrate the relative frequencies of the individual *man*-variants in ME before and after 1350 —
The causes of the disappearance of *man* (*men*) in the expression of the indefinite person have been the subject of some discussion. The majority of scholars ascribe it to intensification in the meaning 'a male person' or 'a human being' of the noun *man*. H. Marchand (see bibliography), for example, believes that this development is due to the influence of religious and didactic literature, where man is commonly presented as an opponent of God. H. H. Meier, on the other hand, ascribes the development partly to an intensification of the meaning 'a male person' as contrasted with 'a woman.' This, Meier believes, is due to an increasing appreciation of the woman in the Middle Ages. Other scholars have not accepted this view. G. L. Trager (see bibliography) thinks that the indefinite *man* fell out of use simply because it had become incomprehensible. However this may be, it is strongly suggested by the examples quoted from Chaucer and *MAD Sone* in the foregoing discussion that the noun *man* and the indefinite pronoun *man* (*men*) often become confused in the 15th century.

As indefinite *man* (*men*) goes out of use, other means of expressing the indefinite person gain importance. H. Spies (see bibliography), pp. 228-31, finds that in the 15th and 16th centuries *man* (*men*) is usually replaced by *they* or *one.*

'Folk.' — The indefinite person is expressed by means of collective *folk* all through the period. Rare in early ME, this noun becomes popular in this function in late ME, serving as the indefinite subject and object alike: — *as folke bereth witnes* (PPl. B v 145); — *folk may in southeid tist a child* (Thewis 211, MS C; MS J, line 251, reads *thow may...*); — *to mak folk at hir invyous* (Thewis 32, MS J). The word is usually associated
with a plural sense (e.g., *thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages*, Ch. CT A Prol. 12), but is occasionally also conceived as a singular: — so if folk be defowled by unfre chaunce, *pat he be sulped in sawle, seche to schryfte*, And he may polyce hym at þe preste, *by penaunce taken* (Purity 1129). The plural form *folks* makes its appearance at the end of the 14th century.

'People.' — According to the *NED* and Mrs Jud-Schmid (see bibliography) *people* without an article is not used for the indefinite person in ME, but the following 15th-century quotation suggests that this use was not unknown in late ME: — *for hunger pepyle yetyn houndys, catlys, and horse* (Greg. Chron. 75). Ever since the second half of the 13th century *people* preceded by the definite article has occurred in an indefinite sense: — and thus malice *Under the colour of justice Is hid; and as the people telleth, These ordres witen where he duelleth* (Gower CA i 607).

'One.' — The origin of the *one* used for the indefinite person has been the subject of some scholarly dispute. Some grammarians believe that it developed from the indefinite *one* (originally a numeral; cf. pp. 209 and 293) meaning 'a person,' just as *man* expressing the indefinite person developed from *man* meaning 'a human being.' It has also been suggested that the *one* used for the indefinite person is in reality French *on* (from Latin *homo*), though influenced by the native indefinite *one*. This view, first expressed by R. G. Latham (*The English Language*, Vol. II, London 1855), has been more recently advocated by G. L. Trager and H. Marchand (see bibliography). The case of those who maintain that *one* is a direct loan from French is, however, somewhat weakened by the fact that in the two earliest known instances of this use *one* occurs as an object of the verb and as an attributive genitive ('possessive dative'); one of these is *doo thus fro be to be; thus wol thai lede oon to thaire dwellyng place* (Pall. Husb. v 181). The earliest examples of *one* as an indefinite subject are recorded in works of the late
15th century: — he herde a man say that one was surer in keping his tunge than in moche speking, for in moche langage one may lightly erre (Earl Rivers Dicts 57); — every chambre was walled and closed rounde aboute, and yet myghte one goo from one to another (Caxton En. 117). It is not until the second half of the 16th century that the use of one in this sense becomes common.

From all we know about the first appearance and the subsequent development of one expressing the indefinite person it seems that this use arose as a synthesis of native one and French on. This view is further supported by the fact that in Anglo-Norman the spelling un is used not only for the numeral un but also for the indefinite person, as in the proverb un vout pendre par compaignie.¹

PrONOUN OF THE FIRST PERSON PlURAL. — The use of the pronoun of the first person plural in general statements where the speaker or writer wishes to include those whom he addresses and his fellows is universal. In English it occurs from OE down to the present day. A couple of ME examples: — we wilneþ efter woruld wele (Poema Mor. 135); — selding find we barnis wyss (Thewis 210).

PrONOUN OF THE Second Person. — Both the singular and plural are used for the indefinite person, as if addressing an imaginary person or audience. In early ME the plural pronoun ye is much less frequently used for this purpose than the singular thou. Although the plural form gains ground as the pronoun of respectful and polite address (see pp. 126-8), thou remains commoner in the expression of the indefinite person down to the end of the period.

Singular. Early instances of the singular pronoun in this function are: — wel þu myhtes faren all a daís fare, sculdest thu nevre vinden man in tune sittende, ne land tiled (OE Chron.

¹ That un here stands for on is shown by the variant par compaignie se fait l'en pendre. The Anglo-Norman proverb occurs in a 14th-century collection printed in Arctos, New Series I (Edwin Linkomies Anniversary Volume), Helsinki 1954, 123-31.
Indefinite Pronouns

This use of *thou* is fairly common in early ME. H. Koziol (*E Studien* LXXV, 1943, 170-4) believes that in ME proverbs and rules of conduct *thou* frequently stands for an indefinite subject (this is common usage also in medical recipes), and that this is also the case in Chaucer's *thou myghtest wene that this Palamon In his fighyng were a wood leon* (CT A Kn. 1655). Koziol's view is supported by *Thewis* 251, MS *J*, *thow may in southede tyss a cheld*, for which MS *C* (line 211) reads *folk may* . . .

**Plural.** According to the NED the use of the plural pronoun of the second person for the indefinite person dates from the second half of the 16th century. This usage is, in fact, attested in ME writings since the early part of the period: — *henne ze mawen sculen and repen þat ho er sowen* (Poema Mor. 20, Lambeth MS; cf. *hanne hi moue ripe þet hi er þan siewe*, Digby MS, and *þan alle men sulle ripen þat hier ar sewen*, Trin. MS); — *and how ze shal save zouself þe Sauter bereth witnesse* (PPl. B ii 38); — *ze may weile se, thouch nane zow tell, How hard a thing that threldome is; For men may weile se, that ar wys*, *That wedding is the hardest band* (Barbour i 264).

But as in present-day English it is often difficult to say whether in using *thou* and *ye* the writer really thinks of an indefinite person.

**Pronoun of the Third Person Plural.** — The use of the pronoun of the third person plural for the indefinite person is very rare in OE and evidently confined to slavish translations from Latin. J. Fröhlich (see bibliography) quotes only the following instance: — *sylʌþ, and eow byþ gesæld; god gemet and full and geheapod and oferflowende hig sylʌþ on eowerne bearm* ('date, et dabitur vobis: mensuram bonam, confertam . . . dabunt in sinum vestrum,' Luke vi 38 in *OE Gospels*, ed. Bosworth and Waring). Occasional instances with the pronoun of the third person plural have been recorded throughout the
ME period: — hi seden openlice þæt Crist step and his halechen (OE Chron. an. 1137); — he bad thai suld him say Quhat toune wes that he in lay. 'Shir,' thai said, 'Bourch-in-the-Sand Men callis this toune into this land,' 'Call thei it burch? allace,' said he, 'My hope is now fordone to me' (Barbour iv 205); — a man . . . þay calle Skranby toke me a lettre (Sir T. Grey in the 42nd Report of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records 583 [1415; NED]). At the end of the ME period and in early Mod. E the use of they for the indefinite person gains ground rapidly. H. Spies (see bibliography), p. 228, finds that in the 15th and 16th centuries indefinite man, as a rule, is replaced by they or one.

Other Pronouns. — The use of who to express the indefinite person (some who, other who, as who saith, etc.) is discussed on pp. 217-18.

Passive. — Passive constructions have been used since OE as equivalents of active ones with man, one, they, etc., to express indefinite agency, as in the noise up ros . . . and generally was spoken That . . . (Ch. TC i 86). As stated on p. 437, the passive must have always been commoner in the written language than in informal everyday speech. It is in agreement with this observation that the passive expressing indefinite agency occurs in OE only in close translations from Latin; otherwise the active man-construction is used. In early ME, also, the active men-construction prevails (the active-passive ratio being approximately 3:1) For some reason or other the parts are reversed in late ME, where the passive of indefinite agency is a great deal commoner than the active indefinite construction with man (men). Strikingly enough even in translations (like the Romaunt of the Rose) the English text shows a larger number of passive constructions than the original. An example: — for thorough hir smokke, wrought with silk, The flesh was seen as whit as mylk ('que parmi outre la chemise Li blanchoit sa char alise,' RRose 1196). The following figures from Mrs Jud-Schmid's dissertation, p. 95, will give some idea of the pro-
portion between passive and active expressions for the indefinite person in Chaucer and Caxton.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Caxton Eneydos</th>
<th>Ch. CT Prol., Kn.T, Mil.T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative verb</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjunctive verb</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 16th century the situation develops even more in favour of the passive.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

Eilenkel, E., 'Das englische Indefinitum,' Anglia XXVI, 1903, 461-572, and XXVII, 1904, 1-204.
— 'Nachträge zum englischen Indefinitum,' Anglia XXIX, 1906, 542-4; XXX, 1907, 135-6; XXXI, 1908, 545-8; XXXIII, 1910, 530-1; XXXIV, 1911, 270-1; XXXV, 1912, 424-5 and 539-40; XXXVI, 1912, 139-40.
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Fröhlich, J., Der indefinite Agens im Altenglischen, SSE XXV, Bern 1951; also Zürich diss. 1951.
Gray, L. H., 'Man in Anglo-Saxon and Old High German Bible Texts,' Word I, 1945, 19-32.
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Koch II, pp. 295-309.


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——— I, pp. 432-70.
ARTICLES

General Considerations. — Function, p. 230. — Rhythm, etc., p. 231.

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

Theories concerning the origin of the article, p. 232. — Form of the article, p. 233. — Individualising and generalising (generic) uses of the article, p. 233.


THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE


REPETITION AND NON-EXPRESSION OF THE ARTICLE

Repetition of the Article, p. 265.


Bibliography, p. 273.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Function. — The words customarily referred to as the definite and indefinite articles are originally used for individualisation, i.e., to single out a particular individual among others of the same kind, often to focus attention to his individual qualities. When the singling out of an individual is not aimed at, the article is not used. This is the case in OE (e.g., hie wunodon butan cilde; — ne seowe þu god sæd on þinum æcere? — þæt dyde unhold man). The principle is to some extent valid even today; cf. p. 266, below. The original function of the definite article is to single out a particular individual or several individuals known to the person addressed, while the indefinite article calls attention to an individual not yet known to the hearer. At this stage the original demonstrative character of the definite article and the original numeral character of the indefinite article are strongly felt. The second stage in the development of the articles is reached when attention is focussed on the generic qualities of the individual or individuals. At the third stage of the development the article serves for generalisation by
Articles

reducing the individual into a mere type representing a whole class or species, attention being called to the generic qualities of the class or species rather than to those of the individual. This 'generic' use of the article is seen in cases like the lion's share and fighting like a lion.¹

RHYTHM, ETC. — The use of the articles is conditioned by the requirements of speech rhythm. Rhythmical considerations play a particularly important role in poetry, but even in prose they may be of great significance, depending on the writer's personal style and his subject-matter. And there are several other factors to be considered, such as chronological and dialectal differences, the syntactical position of the noun in the sentence, and the influence of foreign languages, particularly of French.

It is in the light of these reservations that the statements made in the following discussion should be assessed. It is also well to remember that the unsettled state of the use of the articles in ME makes it impossible to give a fully satisfactory account of the matter in the limited space available for the purpose. In the following discussion, therefore, only such details are touched upon as seem to illustrate the prevailing trends of grammatical usage or may otherwise be of interest to students of some of the most important literary texts.

¹ There has been some variance of opinion among grammarians concerning the stage of development at which these words can be called true articles. Some authorities incline to take a word as an article even when it is used only for purposes of individualisation, but there are others who do not consider it as a true article until it has become an obligatory satellite of the noun in all its functions. For the purposes of the present discussion it has been found most convenient to treat the words in question as articles even at the stage when they are used merely to single out an individual or several individuals, provided that they do not retain their full demonstrative or numeral force.
Theories Concerning the Origin of the Article. — Various theories have been put forward concerning the rise of the definite article. It is known to have developed from the demonstrative pronoun, but the question when and why the need arose to attach a demonstrative to another word (a need which gradually led to the use of this demonstrative as a more or less unstressed satellite of the noun) has not received a fully satisfactory answer so far.

One theory which used to have many supporters is that the decay of OE inflections made it necessary to find new means of expression to indicate various relations of the noun in the sentence and that a dependent demonstrative pronoun was found to be convenient for certain purposes of this kind. The theory, however, has been severely criticised. Another theory, which has met with a more general approval among present-day grammarians, brings the rise of the definite article into connection with the weak form of the adjective. It is assumed that the Germanic weak adjective, like similar formations in other Indo-European languages, was formed by adding a demonstrative pronoun (*en/on) to the stem as a sign of definiteness and substantivation. In other words, this demonstrative suffix served as a kind of definite article. In the course of time, however, the demonstrative force of the suffix must have undergone considerable weakening, and speakers began to feel that the suffix did not indicate clearly enough the definite character of the substantivised adjective. There arose a need to reinforce the deictic element, and this was done by placing another demonstrative pronoun before the adjective. In East and West Germanic the pronoun used for this purpose was sa, so, þat (OE se, seo, þæt). H. M. Heinrichs (see bibliography) assumes that this development took place at the beginning of the Christian era. The use of the definite article (demonstrative) was then extended from the substantivised adjective to the noun.
In OE and early ME, although the definite article is commonly associated with the weak adjective, the weak adjective often takes no article. In some texts written in the transitional period between OE and ME, such as the later parts of the OE Chronicle and Lawman A, the definite article occurs not infrequently with the strong adjective (e.g., þes ilces zeares, OE Chron. A. D. 1131 and passim; — ihere he þene muchelne dream, Lawman A 8642; — in þere wildere se, Lawman A 12008; — þes hæges kinges; þes æpelicæ kinges, Lawman A 44 and 2699).

FORM OF THE ARTICLE. — The definite article goes back to the OE demonstrative pronoun se, seo, þæt. The s-forms disappear by the early 13th century, except in Kent, where they are found even later. By the side of the usual the, the form that occurs all through ME before one and other: — Demetrius the þerste brother Was hote, and Perseus that other (Gower CA ii 1620); — the tone (OE þæt an) of seynte Katryne and the tother (OE þæt oðer) of seynt George (Fifty Wills 117). With a few exceptions the inflected forms (e.g., ðas monnes earen, Owl & N 338; — al so hit is bi þan ungode, Owl & N 129; — þe Deneis vor wrappe þo asailede waste þen toun and wonne him, RGlouc. 6050) do not survive beyond the 13th century; in Kent, however, they occur down to the 14th. Stereotyped survivals of the inflected forms are seen, e.g., in grete þeestes atte nale ('at þen ale,' Ch. CT D Fri. 1349), atte nende I hadde the bet in ech degree ('at þen ende,' Ch. CT D WB 404), my tale is at an ende ('at þan ende,' Ch. CT B Mil. 1159), a Cook they hadde with hem for the nones 'for then ones,' Ch. CT A Prol. 379), and þer quyle (OE þære hwile, Eng. Gilds 72). As the plural form of the article tha (tho) is not infrequently used in ME instead of the: — amang þa trees all through the period by the side of the: — amang þa trees (Cursor 861, Cotton and Gött. MSS); — bitwene tho two Noes children (Usk TL 52); — that tho clerkis schulden helpe tho lay personnes (Pecock Repr. 46). Cf. p. 170 (defining use of that).

INDIVIDUALISING AND GENERALISING (GENERIC) USES OF THE ARTICLE. — As mentioned in the section 'General Consider-
ations,' the definite article has been used since OE for purposes of individualisation (the erle seyde . . .; toward the mille . . .) and of generalisation (þe lilie is lossom to seo). It usually occurs with nouns, but often also with other parts of speech.

The arrangement of the following discussion of the definite article agrees largely with that used by Elisabeth Paschke (see bibliography).

**UNIQUES: PROPER NAMES**

**Personal Names without Attribute.** — Since a personal name, like other proper names, naturally implies uniqueness and thus fully defines the individual in question, the definite article is unnecessary. A case apart is the traditional name of Mary of Magdala, which often takes the article (the Magdalen), obviously under the influence of French, where the definite article is used with Madeleine down to the 17th century. In English the use of the article appears at the end of the 13th century: — heo was icleoped in propre name þe Maudeleyne (SE Leg. lxvi 18). But the full name, with 'Mary,' takes no article: — of Marie Mawdeleyn (Trev. Higd. I 115).

In vivid narrative the writer, implying that a character is well known to his readers and, as it were, in their midst, may place this before his name. In such cases the function of this does not seem to differ radically from that of the definite article: — þis Godewine (RGlouc. 6541); — this Nicholas gan mercy for to crye (Ch. CT A Mil. 3288); — and knew the estres bet than dide this John (Ch. CT A Rv. 4295); — this Gedeon awaiteth wel (Gower CA vii 3679). Cf. p. 174. That is used in the same way: — on hire that Diane his dowhter he begat (Gower CA v 1249). Cf. p. 174.

The French preposition de before surnames is occasionally rendered by the: — Sir Roger þe Mortimer (RGlouc. 11134); — Sir Philip þe Valayse (Minot iv 31); — Robert the Bruys, Erle of Carryk (Barbour i 67). There are even cases like two lordes þe
Definite Article 235


When a personal name is used in the plural with reference to the members of a whole family, it is looked upon as something like a common noun and consequently takes the definite article: — *one of the Staffordys* (Greg. Chron. 207).

**Personal Name Preceded by an Adjective.** — In OE, when an attributive adjective occurs before a personal name, it is preceded by the definite article. The ME usage is highly variable. In *Ormulum*, for example, the article is seldom omitted (*Þe gode Job*, 4756), except before *saint* (*sannt Johann*, 255) and *sooth* (*soþ Crist*, 7238); it is once omitted before *old* (*ald Helyas*, 8627). In ME romances and Chaucer's works the article is usually omitted: — *be douzly Artours dawes*, Launfal 1; — *and after that cam woeful Emelye* (Ch. CT A Kn. 2910); — *after gentil Palamon* (Ch. CT A Kn. 2976). There are, however, instances like *the olde Creon* (Ch. CT A Kn. 938). In Gower and late ME prose the definite article is usual in cases of this kind: — *the grete Antiochus* (Gower CA viii 274); — *Þe false Baldok* (Brut 240); — *to Þe blisful Mary, moder of Jhesu* (Fifty Wills 73). But there are also cases without an article, like *the olde Creon* (Ch. CT A Kn. 938). Certain common adjectives, like *saint*, *young*, *old*, *little*, *long*, *fair*, *bel*, *red*, and *black*, are seldom accompanied by the article in connection with a personal name: — *seinte Loy* (Ch. CT A Prol. 120); — *zonge Gamelyn* (Gamelyn 167); — *yong Henry* (Brut 545); — *olde Egeus* (Ch. CT A Kn. 2905; but cf. *the olde Creon*, above); — *to litel Perrot* (Fifty Wills 6); — *my name is Longe Wille* (PPl. B xv 148); — *faire Elyne* (Brut 84); — *bele Isawde* (Ch. HF 1796); — *blacke Jakys* (Greg. Chron. 225). As mentioned above, Orm does not use the article before *sannt* and once omits it before *old*. Examples of the occasional use of the article before *young*, *old*, etc., in later ME: — *he slowʒ Þe zong Antiochus* (Trev. Higd. IV 133); — *wel knew he the olde Esclapitus, And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus, Old Ypocras . . .* (Ch. CT A Prol. 429-31).
If the attribute is a comparative or superlative, or an ordinal number, the article is used: — _pe less Jam and sant Thomas_ (Cursor 13299, Cotton MS); — _pe more Hercules_ (Trev. Higd. I 157); — _fro the first to the last Alisaundre_ (Capgr. Chron. 24); — _pe nynfe Gregory_ (Trev. Higd. VIII 43). Cf., however, p. 258.

The article is also used with attributes which in themselves are deictic in character, like _said, foresaid, same, _ etc.: — _pe seyd Thomas Marchale_ (MKempe 108); — _the said Ranulph_ (Caxton Prol. Epil. 67); — _pe forsaide Mortymer_ (Brut 250); — _the same Nynus_ (Capgr. Chron. 25).

**Personal Name Followed by an Adjective.** — In OE, when an adjective follows a personal name, it usually takes the definite article. In ME the definite article is also the rule: — _Senke ñe wise; Salomon ñe wise_ (Ancr. 31 and 32); — _Olibrius ñe luþere_ (Marg. 16); — _Gamelyn ñe zonge; Gamelyn ñe bolde_ (Gamelyn 46 and 290); — _Blauncheflour ñe white_ (Flor. & Bl. 766); — _Gaweyn the worthy_ (RRose 2209); — _Emelye the shene._ (Ch. CT A Kn. 1068); — _I am trewe Tristrem the secounde_ (Ch. Rosem. 20). Articleless cases occur relatively seldom: — _of faire, yonge, fresshe Venus free_ (Ch. CT A Kn. 2386); — _Mary mild_ (EE Lyr. lvii 8).

**Personal Name Preceded by a Common Noun.** — A noun placed before a personal name is accompanied by the definite article in OE. Occasional instances without the article are known from early ME (Lawman, Orm): — _hehenngell Gabriel_ (Orm. 2403). It is difficult to give any definite rules for later ME usage. Some romances, for example, omit the article in the majority of cases. In Gower and late ME prose common nouns (excluding those indicating a title or rank) when placed before personal names normally take the definite article; in Chaucer this is not infrequently the case: — _the goddesse Clemence_ (Ch. CT A Kn. 928); — _the clerk Ovide_ (Gower CA i 2274); — _the Egipcien Marie_ (Ch. CT B ML 500); — _the aungel Lucifer_ (Pecock Repr. 327); — _pe geaunt Nemprot_ (Trev. Higd. I 95).

The use of the article with common nouns denoting a title,
rank, and the like varies a great deal. In the case of king and queen the usage is very irregular all through the period, although there is a tendency to drop the article: — in th'olde dages of the kynge Arthour (Ch. CT D WB 857); — the king Allee (Gower CA ii 1479); — þe queen Alianore (Trev. Higd. VIII 105); — wyf to kynge Cappaneus (Ch. CT A Kn. 932); — queen Ysabelle (Capgr. Chron. 278). Both constructions may occur in one sentence: — þe storie of Alexander selþ þat whan þe kynge Alexandre asked of hem [i.e. the Amazons] tribute, þe queine of Amazones wroth to kynge Alexandre in þis maner (Trev. Higd. I 155). When kynge + a personal name are followed by a genitival of-periphrasis, there is also a strong tendency to drop the article (to kynge Petir of Spayn, Capgr. Chron. 253; but the kynge Pandras of Greek, Brut 6).

In the case of other titles denoting rank, such as prince, duke, earl, knight, pope, bishop, abbot, and parson, ME usage also varies a great deal; in late ME, however, a trend towards the use prevailing in present-day English is clearly felt. A similar case is apostle. Lord and lady usually take the definite article.

Foreign titles indicating rank are regularly accompanied by the definite article: — th'emerour Tiberius (Gower CA i 762). Cf. Pres. E the Emperor Claudius; the Pharaoh Akhneton; the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid; the Archduke Ferdinand.

There seems to be no sufficient reason to believe that the absence of the article before titles is due to French influence, as has been suggested.

Common nouns used in polite address without any particular reference to the person's rank, such as master, sir, daun, frere, mistress, dame, and maid, have always been without an article: — to maister Thomas (Fifty Wills 88); — thenne said sire Launcelot . . . (Malory MD 329); — daun Arcite (Ch. CT A Kn. 1379); — dawn Thomas Hevyngham (MKempe 139); — dame Custance (Ch. CT B ML 151); — which maide Rosemounde hihte (Gower CA i 2481; cf. maid Mary; Maid Marian).

Personal Name Followed by a Common Noun. — In OE,
when a common noun follows a personal name in apposition, it usually takes no article (Ælfred cyning). The ME usage is highly variable: — Peronelle proude-herte (PPl. B v 63); — Calkas traitour (Ch. TC i 87); — Jakke fool (Ch. CT A Mil. 3708); — Perkyn reuelour (Ch. CT A 4371); — this Alla king (Ch. CT B ML 1016); — Allee the king (Gower CA ii 1557); — for seynt Johnes love evangelist (Brut 132); — Richard Hampol hermyte (MKempe 154); — kyng William þe conquerour (Trev. Higd. II 89); — Hely the preest (Capgr. Chron. 25); — seynt Katerine the virgine (Eng. Gilds 67); — Pieres þe pardonere, ... Bette þe bedel, ... . Rainalde þe reve, ... Munde þe mellere (PPl. B ii 111).


The article is often, though not consistently, dropped if the noun in apposition governs a prepositional phrase indicating a position, rank, or the like, which can only be held by one person at a time (cf. present-day English Elizabeth, Queen of England; Professor D., Vice-Chancellor of the University, etc.); — Thales-tris, þe queene of Amazones (Trev. Higd. I 153; Thalestris, queene of Amazones, MS Harl. 2261); — Randolf, erle of Chestre (PPl. B v 402); — Venus, goddesse of love (Ch. CT A Kn. 1904; but Venus, the goddesse of love, 2440); — dame Isabell, countesse of Warrewyk (Fifty Wills 116); — Davyd Brus, kyng of Scholtys (Greg. Chron. 78); — that same Petir, kyng of Spayne (Capgr. Chron. 253). Cf. p. 267, below. When the prepositional phrase with of indicates relationship, there is usually an article: — Aloth, the sone of Elyne (Brut 68), but Venus, ... spouse of
Definite Article

Vulcanus (Ch. CT A Kn. 2222). If the preposition in the appositive phrase is to, there is no article: — Venus, Doughter to Jove (Ch. CT A Kn. 2222).

Personal Name Followed by a Prepositional Phrase. When a personal name is qualified by a prepositional phrase, it usually takes no article: — Colgre Vance of mekyl mayn (Yw. & Gaw. 58); — Artoor of þe rounde table (Launfal 11); — Wylliam with the londe berde (Greg. Chron. 58); — Rayno lde at the condyte (Greg. Chron. 75). Instances with the definite article are rare: — bi þe Marie of hevene (PPl. B iv 179).

Personalifications. — Personalizations are in effect personal names and consequently take no article: — Holicherche I am, quod she (PPl. B i 75); — thanked be Fortune and hire false wheel (Ch. CT A Kn. 925); — he hath witholde Malebouche (Gower CA ii 389); — what is his name? It is Daunger, Which is mi ladi consailer (Gower CA iii 1537).

Geographical Names: Continents, Countries, Towns, etc. — The names of continents, countries, provinces, counties, towns, and villages do not take an article (the queene of Scithia; to Tuskan; at Trumpyngton, nat fer fro Cantebrigge). Occasionally even the attributive use of such a geographical name is a sufficient reason for dropping the article: — her schip was drevyn into Norwey coost (MKempe 230). When a geographical name of this kind is preceded by an attributive adjective, there is usually no article: — of West Lombardye (Ch. CT E Cl. 46); — litel Britaigne (Brut 42). The article is occasionally used when a difference or contrast is emphasized, e.g., with the comparative degree: — to þe lasse Brutaine (RGlouc. 2120); — into þe Norþe Wale (Gaw. & GK 697). A similar psychological background seems to account for instances like which men the noble Rome calle (Gower CA ii 2502) and þe gret Troye (Brut 11).

Many place-names consist of a common noun preceded by an attributive adjective; the occasional use of the definite article
before such names suggests that the original appellative character of the combination is still felt: — *at be Holy Hede* (Gaw. & GK 700); — *at be Newe Castell oppon Tyne* (Brut 280). In the names of many minor localities in Britain, too, the article is preserved before the simple name as a reminiscence of its appellative origin: — *they dystryde the Rye* (Greg. Chron. 86). The appellative origin of the name also accounts for the wavering seen in examples like *they conquered manye regnes grete In the Orient* (Ch. CT B Mk. 3504) and *oute of Oryent* (Pearl 3).

In accordance with French usage the names of French provinces and other localities are occasionally accompanied by the definite article: — *Þone eorl Elias of þære Manige adraf* ('le Maine,' OE Chron. an. 1099); — *Þene Mans* ('Le Mans,' Lawman A 31091); — *þe eorles dowȝter of þe Province* (Trev. Higd. VIII 209); — *at the Rochele* (Ch. CT C Pard. 571).


**Town Quarters, Streets, Gates, Bridges.** — There is no article as a rule: — *he rod to Charynge Cros And entryd into Flete Strete* (Athelston 335-6); — *in Fysshstrete or in Chepe* (Ch. CT C Pard. 564); — *to Newegate* (Ch. CT A Co. 4402): — *the hous at the corner of Irmongerlane in Chepe* (Bk. London E 133 [1423]); — *on Loundone Brygge* (Athelston 340); — *there was an erytyke . . . brent at Toure Hylle* (Greg. Chron. 171). E. Ekwall, *Street-names in the City of London*, Oxford 1954, finds (pp. 25-7) that the definite article, which in the early Latin records nearly always occurs in the French form *le, la*, is rare in names ending in *street*, somewhat less rare in those ending in *lane*, and commoner in those ending in *alley*. The only name ending in *street* that frequently takes the article is *the Tower Street*. Chaucer,

1 The name of this market-town in Sussex goes back to the OE phrase *set þære iège 'at the island,' later atter ie and etterie, which became *ate Rie* by wrong division (E. Ekwall, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*, Oxford 1936, p. 379).
Definite Article

Piers Plowman, the London records, and Gregory's Chronicle write Chepe without the article, while Lydgate favours the form the Chepe.

Buildings. — The names of churches and religious houses consisting of an inflectional genitive (cf. p. 83) in the singular occur without the article: — at Sein Swithines he was ibured (RGlouc. 6639); — at Saint Poules yn London (Fifty Wills 104); — þe vykary of Seynt Stefenys (MKempe 38). Genitival names in the plural take the article in accordance with their appellative origins: — at þe Frere Prechors ibured (RGlouc. 10809); — at the White Fryers in Flete Strete (Greg. Chron. 229). Occasionally, however, the article is omitted: — at Whythe Freers in Flete Strete (Greg. Chron. 171).

Names of country seats with a place-name as the first element and with hall as the second take no article as a rule: — to Cotton Halle (Paston II 55 [1461]). In other instances usage varies; the definite article is used in a greet collegge Men clepen the Soler Halle at Cantebregge (CT A Rv. 3990) and also in þe Gildehalle (Bk London E 151 [1423]). The definite article occurs in the names of inns and public houses: — at the Tabard as I lay (Ch. CT A Prol. 20); — taste by the Belle (Ch. CT A Prol. 719); — the Mermaid in Bred Strete (Fifty Wills 65). The Tower always takes the definite article in accordance with its appellative origin: — at the Towre of London (Greg. Chron. 66).

Islands. — The definite article does not occur with the (simple) names of islands: — in Rodes (Gower CA iv 1630); — Cyclades beeþ many ilondes (Trev. Higd. I 307).

Mountains and Mountain Ranges. — The names of mountains take no article: — Ethna which brenneth yer be yere (Gower CA ii 20); — ʒiþ þou be in þe ground of mercy þou art in Olyvete (Jacob's Well 252). In OE, if the name of a mountain is preceded by mount, the article may be present or absent. ME usage also varies a great deal. Chaucer, for example, has no article in cases of this type, while late ME prose seems to favour

16 — Mustanoja
Examples without the definite article: — to mount Synai (Gen. & Ex. 2853); — of mount Vesulus (Ch. CT E Cl. 47). Examples with the article: — in the mount Michael (Pecock Repr. 155); — Þe mount Syon (MKempe 72); — Þe mount Syon (Trev. Higd. I 109, but Þe top of mont Syon, 111); — Þe mount Caucasus (Trev. Higd. I 141; but on the same page we read Þe hille Þat hatte mount Taurus, so Þat mont Taurus and Caucasus is iconteyned al oon hille). The native hill is used like mount: — in hil Pernaso (Ch. TC iii 1810); — Þe hil mons Olympus (Trev. Higd. I 185). A similar case is Malverne hulles (PPI. B Prol. 5). If mount is linked to the proper name by means of of, it regularly takes the definite article: — Þe  mount of sein Michel (RGlouc. 4161); — on Þe  mownt of Olybet (RRolle EWr. 29); — the mount of Kaukasous (Ch. CT D WB 1140); — in Þe mownt of Olyvete (MKempe 189).

RIVERS. — Only one occurrence of the definite article with a river name is known from OE: — Weonodland wæs us ealne weg on steorbord of Weslemudan. Seo Wisle is swyðe mycel ea (Alfred Oros. 20). The obvious reason for the use of the article with this foreign river name is that the name is resumed from the preceding sentence. There are some early ME instances where the definite article is used before Thames, Humber, etc. (e.g., a þas hælf þere Humbre heo weoren icume, Lawman A 14018); otherwise the article is seldom used in ME: — þatt þurh Jordan iss tacennd (Orm. 10793); — in Humber Grim bigan to lende (Havelok 733); — on Hummyr (Barbour xvi 538); — Þe watyr at Humbyr (MKempe 129); — to destruye þe weres yn Tempse (Bk London E 151 [1423]); — Tempse on the north side (Capgr. Chron. 100); — from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1222). In Chaucer’s works the definite article is rare with river names (the Poo, CT E Cl. 48), and in Gower it

1 W. Preusler, Anglia LXVI, 1942, 124-6, referring to Welsh place-names like Cader Idris and Aberystwyth, believes that the non-expression of the article before mount + proper name is a reflection of Celtic usage.
Definite Article

does not occur at all. In late ME prose the article occurs mostly with names of foreign rivers: — *wiþ þe Reyne [= Rhine] in þe norþ side, wiþ þe Rone [= Rhone] in þe est* (Trev. Higd. I 271).

In early Mod. E the article continues to be rare before river names. It has been assumed by some scholars that the final establishment of the article in English river names is due to French and German influence.

Place-names of the type *Stratford-on-Avon*, where the name of the river does not take the article, go back to Anglo-Saxon times. Cf. *in loco qui appellatus est Aelsture* (i.e., æt Sture), in E. Ekwall, *English River-Names* (Oxford 1928), p. lxxxiv, a quotation dating from 814 A.D.

When the appellative *river* stands before the river-name, it is usually preceded by the definite article: — *þe ryver Tigris* (Trev. Higd. I 93). *Flum*, which often occurs before *Jordan*, seldom takes the article: — *bi þiss halff flumm Jorrdan* (Orm. 10626). The stereotyped character of the combination *flum Jordan* accounts for constructions like *þe ryver flom Jordan* (Trev. Higd. II 339).

A survival of the OE construction *Wantsumo stream*, on *Trenton streame*, etc., is the articleless use of a river-name with *stream, river*, etc.: — *þa al wes Avene stram mid stele ibrugged* (Lawman A 21275); — *ne mei hit cwenche salt weter, n’Avene striem ne Sture* (Poema Mor. 248); — *at Rodomus ryver* (Lydgate MP 26 [Halliwell]). The postponed *river* is separated from the river-name by the definite article in *of Lethes the rivere* (Gower CA iv 3011).

The type where the appellative noun *river* (*flood, etc.*) is linked to the river-name through the intermediary of *of is*, however, more common throughout the ME period: — *þe flood of Jurdan* (MKempe 74); — *in þe ryver of Themys* (Greg. Chron. 104).

**Seas and Lakes.** — The names of seas and lakes consisting of single nouns have no article: — *fast by Pontus* (Trev. Higd. I 143). In compound names (with an attributive adjective preceding the noun *sea*) the appellative origin is so strongly felt that
Articles

it necessitate the use of the definite article: — to Þe North se Hombur geth . . . And Temese into Þe Est se (SE Leg. xlix 17-18); — Þe Rede See (Trev. Higd. I 61). When sea occurs before a proper name, there is an article: — into the see Alexandrine (Gower CA vii 563); — in Þe see Gaditan (Trev. Higd. I 45). The same applies to lake: — at Þe lake Tritonides (Trev. Higd. II 297). The linking of sea and lake to the proper name by means of of is also used: — over Þen lac of Silvius and over Þen lac of Philisteus (Lawman A 1279-80).

Ocean is commonly treated as a proper name and consequently has no article when used without an attributive adjective: — out of ocecean (Trev. Higd. I 55). The article is used when there is an attribute: — be Þe est ocecean (Cursor 11395, Cotton MS); — the gret oceane (Gower CA vii 592).

SHIPS. — With names of ships the use of the definite article has been recorded since later ME: — his barge ycleped was the Maudelayne (Ch. CT A Prol. 410); — Þe Grace de Dieu (Brut 529). The use of the definite article with ship-names becomes regular in the 15th century, although the usage varies when the name is a predicative noun following the verb to call and its synonyms: — a shippe icallyd Mewys Colman (Greg. Chron. 92); — a schippe ynamyde Grace de Dyeu (Greg. Chron. 185); — Þat was clepit Þe Gracedieu (Brut 552).

STARS AND CONSTELLATIONS. — The names of stars which are originally (Latin) personal names do not take the definite article: — the eve sterre, Hesperus (Ch. Bo. i M 5.12); — Lucyfer, the dayes messager (Ch. TC iii 1416). Neither do the names of constellations take the article when they retain their Latin forms: — Capricornus, Þe goot, makeþ somer (Trev. Higd. II 207). When they appear in an anglicised form, they take the definite article: — til that they sey the Scorpioun (Ch. HF 948). Native appellative nouns used as names of constellations natur-

1 This case is ambiguous because the personal name Magdalen usually takes the definite article. Cf. p. 234.
ally take the article: — þese beþ þe names of þe signes: þe Wether, þe Boole, þe Twynnes, þe Crabbe, þe Leon, þe Mayde, þe Balaunce, þe Scorpion, þe Archer, þe Goot, þe Sceen, þe Fisshe (Trev. Higd. II 207); — the yonge sonne Hath in the Ram his halve cours yronne (Ch. CT A Prol. 8). Galaxy is preceded by the definite article: — and schewedede hym the Galaxye (Ch. PF 56).

**UNIQUES: COMMON (OR APPELLATIVE) Nouns**

**Deity.** — The noun god, when it refers to the deity of the Christians, normally takes no article: — þe verste heste þet God made (Ayenb. 5). In some texts, however, like Gower's Confessio Amantis, God is occasionally found with the definite article, presumably for metrical reasons: — the which no man in his personne Mai knowe, bot the God alone (CA Prol. 72). Almighty and its synonyms, standing epithets to God, do not necessitate the use of the article, no matter whether they are used pre- or post-positively: — allmahhti3 and allwældennd Godd (Orm. 5876); — the grace of God almihte (Gower CA ii 906); — forr Godd allwældennd hafeþþ herrer (Orm. 513); — as helpe me verray God omnipotent (Ch. CT D WB 423). The usage varies with other adjectives preceding God: — to the hye God moore acceptable (Ch. CT D WB 1913); — but hye God somtyme senden kan (Ch. CT E Cl. 206); — to the sothfast God (Usk TL 144).

When god has reference to pagan deities, it takes the definite article: — the god Priapus (Ch. PF 253). Goddess, of course, is a similar case: — the goddesse Clemence (Ch. CT A Kn. 928). For instances like Bachus, god of wyn (Ch. PF 275), Venus, goddesse of love (Ch. CT A Kn. 1904), and Venus, queene of loves cure (Gower CA i 132) cf. p. 238, above.

Lord normally takes the definite article (except in the vocative): — þat graunte us þe Lord (Gesta Rom. 37).

Christ as the title of the second person of the Trinity is not preceded by the article: — whan Crist himself hath bode pes (Gower CA Prol. 244).
The OE formula *fæder and sunu and halig gast* survives in *Lord þat is of mystys most, Fadyr and Sone and Holy Gost* (Athelston 2). In the majority of earlier ME cases *Holy Ghost* occurs without the article (*Þatt Halig Gast wass wurðenn mann*, Orm. 3020; — *wit Haligast he has us sent*, Cursor 19349, Cotton MS), but the article is not very uncommon either (*to þe luve of þe Holi Gost, Ancr. 11*). In the course of ME the definite article becomes commoner and occurs fairly regularly in late ME prose: — *it is þe Holy Gost werkyng* (MKempe 41).

*Trinity* usually takes the definite article: — *þe haly Trinité* (Cursor 129, Gött. MS); — *tautle hem bi þe Trinitèe* (PPl. B i 109); — *of the Trynlyté* (Greg. Chron. 175). The article is occasionally omitted, as in *þer treuthe is in Trinitee* (PPl B i 131) and *þe secunde persone in Trinity* (MKempe 39).

**Devil.** — In OE *deofol* occurs both with and without the definite article. The usage varies also in early ME. In *Ormulum* the article is found before *devil* in some sixty per cent of the instances: — *þe deofell oferswiþenn* (Orm. 1847); — *acc deofell iss . . . Off grimme annnd niþfull herrte* (Orm. 671). The article is quite frequent in Chaucer. In late ME prose it is seldom omitted. Margery Kempe, for example, has not a single articleless instance. In *Ormulum* and late ME prose *Satan* is without the article, and usually also in Chaucer: — *þatt Satanas þe laþe gasta Iss þurrh Saul bitacnedd* (Ormulum 14936); — *Sathan, that ewere us waiteth to bigile* (Ch. CT B ML 582); — *in Sathanas of helle* (Chev. Assigne 11); — *the sinagog of Sathanas* (Capgr. Chron. 280). The same applies to *Lucifer*: — *Lucifer wiþ legiounes* (PPl. B i 112).

**Bible.** — The noun *Bible* takes the definite article: — *as þe bibul sais* (Cursor 1900). *Book*, when it stands for the Bible, also usually takes the article (*as þe boke teleth*, PPl. B xix 67), although there are a number of instances where the article is missing: — *boc se þatt* (Orm. 11343); — *he loke on bok* (Pearl 710). *Scripture* occurs with and without the definite article: —
queþer þat he be Crist or nai, þat þai of here þe scriptur sai (Cursor 22168, Cotton MS); — forþi es Godd, als sais scripture (Cursor 327, Cotton MS); — and undirstondith there the scripture . . . to scripture . . . bi the scripture . . . in scripture aloone . . . the scripture (Pecock Repr. 122). Margery Kempe regularly leaves out the article before scripture. When preceded by the adjective holy, the nouns denoting the Bible normally have no article: — ase holi writ seiþ (Ancr. 42); — as holy wryt telles (Patience 60); in hooly writ (Ch. CT A Prol. 739); — and this ageyns holy scripture (RRose 6452).

CHURCH. — When church is used with reference to the Christian community, it mostly takes the definite article: — Crist is heed of the chirche (Wyclif Eph. v 23). Holy Church takes no article: — ine holi cherche (Ayenb. 7).

DIVINE SERVICE. — When mass has reference to the sacrament of the Eucharist, it takes the definite article: — þou levest not in þe Mes, þat ever God þerin is (Vernon MP xlvi 69). When it refers to the celebration of the Eucharist, the usage varies. The article is frequently used, but when the noun is preceded by prepositions like at, after, before, etc., the article is normally absent. It is also usually left out in connection with certain verbs, such as do, say, sing, and hear. Examples: — i þe messe (Aocr. 13); — thai herd the mess full reverently (Barbour xi 376); — when he hade herde masse at Westmynstre (Brut 132); — mylde as maydene3 seme at mas (Pearl 1115); — and so he knelyd styyle tyle mas was idoo (Greg. Chron. 167); — schal don seyn . . . dirige and masse (Eng. Gilds 44); — þe erchebisshop anone went for to synge þe masse (Brut 165).

Compline, evensong, and the like are normally without the article: — bivore cumplie ofer after uhtsong siggeþ dirige (Aocr. 9); — fra þe middai to complin (Cursor 16861, Cotton MS; a variant reads the complene); — if evensong and morwesong acorde (Ch. CT A Prol. 830).

Dirige is used mostly without an article, although in late ME,
when it ceases to be treated as a Latin word, the article becomes commoner: — *siggeþ dirige* (Ancr. 9); — *at the derge of þe body* (Eng. Gilds 35).

**Heaven, Paradise, Purgatory, Hell.** — When it stands for the firmament, the noun *heaven* usually takes no article, although a few writers, including Gower, clearly prefer to use the definite article with it: — *al that es under hevin* (Cursor 22694, Cotton MS); — *heven with skyes that foule cloudes makes* (Usk TL 81); — *the hevens eye, whiche I clepe the sonne* (Usk TL 119).

When *heaven* is used for the habitation of God, the majority of writers leave out the article; Gower is one of those who occasionally employ it: — *for Marie love of hevene* (PPl. B ii 2); — *the hevene wot what is to done* (Gower CA Prol. 141). In the phrase *heaven and earth*, as in other polar expressions of this type, the article is always left out: — *in firme bigining, of noz þe hevene and erþe samen wroþe* (Gen. & Ex. 40).

*Paradise* takes no article when it stands for the Garden of Eden or for Heaven: — *ase he dede to Even and to Adam in paradys terestre* (Ayenb. 50); — *þet li þyt wyþoute ende, þet is þe blisse of paradis* (Ayenb. 14); — *which ferst began in paradis* (Gower CA Prol. 1005). When the word is used metaphorically for a place comparable to Paradise, the article is also frequently omitted: — *ful blisfully in prison maistow dure. In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1237).

*Purgatory* takes no article: — *in purcatory* (PPl. A xi 248); — *his herte was in purgatoire* (Gower CA i 1776).

*Hell*, usually preceded by a preposition, is normally without the definite article: — *ase to þe fure of helle* (Ancr. 66); — *hi byeþ more feller þanne helle* (Ayenb. 61); — *noght in purgatorie, but in helle* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1226). In *the helle That suffreth fair Anelida* (Ch. AA 166) the noun, used metaphorically for unbearable torment, is followed by a relative clause and therefore naturally requires the definite article.

**Earth, Middle-erd, World.** — *Earth*, particularly when it is contrasted with heaven above and hell below, is very often
without an article: — and all forrwerpreppe eorfe (Orm. 6055); — Godard was . . . ðe moste swike ðat evre in eorfe shaped was (Havelok 424). The noun often occurs with heaven in a construction implying polarity; in this case it naturally takes no article: — Godd . . . wroght bath erth and heaven (Cursor 336, Cotton MS). The use of the article varies a great deal, however, particularly when the physical earth is referred to without being contrasted with heaven. For PPl. A i 113-14, the Trin.Coll. Cbg. MS R 3.14 reads out of hevene into helle hobelide thei ðaste, Summe in eir, summe in erthe, summe in helle depe, while the Vernon MS reads . . . summe in ðe eir and summe in ðe eorthe and summe in helle deope. Ch. PF has thanne shewede he hym the lytel erthe that there is (55) and a little later than bad he hym, syn erthe was so lyte And ðat of torment (64). Here, obviously, the difference in use is primarily due to the different requirements of the metre. Other examples with the definite article: — ðe steven mozt stryke ður ðe urfe to helle (Pearl 1125); — ðe lengfe of ðe erfe ðat men wonê ynne . . . from Ynde to Hercules is pilers (Trev. Higd. I 45).

With middle-erd (midden-erd, middle-earth, from OE mid-dangeard 'world' by association with OE eard 'dwelling-place' and OE eorfe, ME erth 'earth') the usage also varies: — let himm soon ðe middelærđ (Orm. 11381); — me nuste woman so vair non in ðe middel erde (RGlouc. 9052); — bituix ðe midel erth and ðe lif (Cursor 8003, Cotton MS); — middelerd for mon wes mad (Harley Lyr. ii 1); — in mideleþe (Gower CA i 3305). World normally takes the definite article: — while the world schal laste (Fifty Wills 6). Cf., however, wiste no man of werlde ðo (Gen. & Ex. 901).

The Four Cardinal Points. — The article is usually present when the name of the cardinal point is regarded as a noun: — the wyndes of the south (Gower CA vi 862). In some prepositional phrases, particularly those with by, the article is absent: — king he was bi weste (Horn 5). In polar expressions of the type east and west there is no article: — Engelond his a wel
The names referring to time are comparable to proper names and do not, therefore, usually take an article. But a name used in reference to a recurring period or event tends to assume the character of a common noun, and it is no doubt this tendency that accounts for the considerable variance in the use of the article before names of this type.

Seasons of the Year. — The names of the seasons take no article as a rule: — *o summer annd onn herraftsid, O winnterr annd o lenntenn* (Orm. 11254-5); — *Capricornus þe goot makeþ somer to þe Antipodes, and þe Crabbe makeþ to hem wynter* (Trev. Higd. II 207). But the usage varies to some extent; instances with the definite article are occasionally found in Chaucer and in alliterative poetry, and in Gower the use of the article is a dominant feature: — *the somer passeth* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1337); — *þe wynter* (Gaw. & GK 522); — *in the wynter* (Gower CA i 2355). When the name of a season is preceded by an attributive adjective, the definite article is used as a rule; — *the hoote somer hadde maad his hewe al broun* (Ch. CT A Prol. 394).

Months. — The names of the months take no article: — *annd Marrchess nahhtess wannsenn aþ Annd Marrchess dazhess waxenn* (Orm. 1901-2); — *aboute myd May* (Capgr. Chron. 238).

Days of the Week. — There is no article before the name of a day of the week except when it is used in a generalising sense (*more zeneþþ þe ilke þet dispendeþ þane Zonday*, Ayenb. 7; — *lo, your Sunday ginneth at the first hour after noon on the Saturday*, Usk TL 82; — *zow must fastyn þe Fryday*, MKempe 21) or when it has reference to a day of a particular week (*þe þorsdai þe Witesone wouke to Londone Lowis com*, RGlouc.)
Definite Article

10542; — sir Simon þe olde com þe Monendai iwis To a toun biseide Wircetre þat Kemeseie thote is; þe Tiwesdai to Evesham he wende þe morweninge, RGlouc. 11676; — þei come hom on þe Saturday, MKempe 225; — and the Saturday he leyde sege unto the towne of Arflewe, Greg. Chron. 109). When preceded by an attributive adjective, the name takes the definite article as a rule: — the ferst Wednesday of Marche (Brut 190); — uppon þe holy Soneday (Alexius 338, Laud MS 108). Cf., however, of al þe festys þat yn holy chyrche are, Holy Sunday men oght to spare (RMannyng HS 806). When the name is followed by an adjective, the name takes the definite article as a rule: — the sunnen dæi beforen midwinter dæi (OE Chron. an. 1154).

Annual Feasts. — The names of annual feasts usually take no article: — er Cristemasse be went (Ch. CT B Pri. 1730); — on Crystenmes dey (Cleges 255); — hit is ZoI and Nwe Žer (Gaw. & GK 284); — þatt da35 iss New zeress da35 (Orm. 4230); — to Midewinter at Gloucestre, To Witesonetid at Westmunstre, to Ester at Wincestre (RGlouc. 7722-3); — the childer Israel ... kepede Ester in that oþer day (Trev. Higd. VI 189, MS Harley 2261); — on Lang Fridæi (OE Chron. an. 1137); — in Good Friday, (Pecock Repr. 207); — on Mydsomyr Evyn (MKempe 23); — in Whitson weke (MKempe 106). Examples with the article: — att te Passkemesseda35 (Orm. 8893); — opon þe Witsononday (Yw. & Gaw. 16); — on þe .xii. Day (MKempe 19); — in þe Whitsunwoke (MKempe 92); — oneoure Lady evyn, the Assumpcyon (Greg. Chron. 115).

In the names of festival seasons the definite article is usually left out: — as freres doon in Lente (Ch. CT E Cl. 12); — ech Friday in the Lente (Pecock Repr. 558).

Parts of the Day. — Usage varies a great deal. In prepositional phrases the article is usually absent (to morwe, to day,
Amis & Amil. 962 and 1231; — bi pryme, Horn 966; — at none, Orfeo 370; — abouten undren, Ch. CT E Cl. 981). The article is also missing in expressions with implied polarity, like night and day. But even in other, 'uncomplicated,' cases there is considerable wavering. *Ormulum*, for example, leaves out the article altogether (annd nähht bitaccneþþ all þatt wa, 3862); in Chaucer it is also frequently left out (amorwe, whan that day bigan to sprynge, CT A Prol. 822; til it was passed undren of the day, CT B NP 4412), but Gower makes an extensive use of it (now be the daies, now the nyhtes, CA Prol. 939; — upon the morwe, CA i 2850). Great variance of usage is found in the romances and many other works: — hot is þe day (Orfeo 56); — and rade unto þe midday (Yw. & Gaw. 350); — hit was neþ eve (Horn 464; also in MKempe 240: whan it was ny evyn); — sche ... lay be him al nyle (Capgr. Chron. 52).

**Hours.** — The (late) ME equivalents of 'o'clock' are used with and without the definite article: — foure of the clokke it was tho (Ch. CT I Pars. 5); — onto .ix. of clock in the morow (Capgr. Chron. 276); — to .iii. on þe clok (Brut 599); — fro one of the clocke tyle .v. aftyr non, and the chasse lastyd unto .vij. at the belle in the mornynge (Greg. Chron. 204).

**Meals.** — Usage varies, but the articleless form prevails, particularly when the name of the meal is preceded by a preposition. Examples: — to mete into the kinges halle Thei come (Gower CA i 2519); — sitte at þe mete (Trev. Higd. I 81; in Caxton’s edition the article is left out); — she com to dyner (Ch. TC ii 1560); — he asked why sche came not to soper (Capgr. Chron. 62); — and to the soper sette he us anon (Ch. CT A Prol. 748). The article is used when a particular meal is referred to: — whos wiff that obeieithe worst, lete her husbonde paiue for the dener (La Tour-Landry 26).

1 The article is left out above all in those instances where the presence or absence of daylight is implied by the nouns day and night.
COMMON (APPELLATIVE) NOUNS

**Individualising Use.** — When a common noun stands for a particular individual or individuals known to the person addressed, it takes the definite article: — *when that the Knight had thus his tale ytoold* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3109); — *the folk of Troie* (Ch. TC i 160).

In the North the expressions *the day, the morn*, and the like are occasionally used in the sense of 'today' and 'tomorrow:' — *þe sun was þat time* . . . *Seven sith brighter þen þe dai* (Cursor 702, Cotton MS); — *thai thynk, the morn, quhen it is day, To seik sow* (Barbour xiv 478).

**Generalising (Generic) Use.** — When a common singular noun is used generically, i.e., to denote a whole class or species, three constructions are possible in ME: either there is no article at all, or the noun is preceded by the indefinite or definite article. (For the first two of these constructions see pp. 230 and 261-3.) Examples of the use of the definite article: — *he was brixt so þe glas, He was wit so þe flur* (Horn 14-15); — *the king is more than his people* (Usk TL 79); — *the hinde in pes with the leoun, The wolf in pes with the moltoun, The hare in pes stod with the hound* (Gower CA Prol. 1059-61).

In the majority of OE instances the generic plural occurs with the definite article (*þa wæs he swa feor norþ swa þa hwæl-huntan firrest faraþ, Alfred Oros. 17*). In ME the articleless use gains ground steadily; *Ormulum*, for example, has the two constructions side by side (*þa kingess well itt sæ ienn, 6451; — þatt preostess unnderrfannenn, 360*). Although Gower uses the article in the majority of his cases, it is comparatively rare in late ME prose, the situation approaching that seen in present-day English: — *who hath worthyed kinges in the felde? who hath honoured ladies in boure?* (Usk TL 12); — *whech sche lernyd in sernownys* (MKempe 29); — *tyl sterrys apperyd in þe fyrmament* (MKempe 37); — *which prechouris and prelatis schulde take* (Pecock Repr. 388). Cf., however, *the philosophers*
... to memory written (Usk TL 3). It is possible that French has had some influence on Caxton’s use of the article in cases like whiles that the sterres ben in theyr courses well yoked, whan alle the feldes ben in silence, the byrdes and bestes brute ... (En. 89).

'MAN' AND 'WOMAN.' — In OE the noun mann, when used in a generic sense for the whole sex and also for mankind in general, occurs with and without the article. In ME, even in the early part of the period, the article is left out when man is used in this way: — mannes sawle dezech þær (Orm. 9672); — that man shal yelde to his wyf hire dette (Ch. CT D WB 130). (For the use of articleless generic man to express an indefinite person see pp. 219-22.) The definite article does occur before generic man in vor þe mon myd his crafte overcume þ al eorþlice shafte (Owl & N 787, both MSS), but the possibility is not altogether excluded that vor þe stands for for þi 'therefore.' The use of the article with man in A yenbute is an imitation of French usage (l'ome); this is probably the case also in Gower (e.g., of that the regnes be muable The man himself hath be coupable, CA Prol. 582). Woman is not preceded by the definite article when used generically for the female sex: — þa mihhte wimmann berenn child (Orm. 2031); — if wymmon þenche þ luvye derne (Owl & N 1357). Mankind has never taken the article: — for to bring mankind o wa (Cursor 9372, Cotton MS).

NATIONALITIES, RELIGIOUS SECTS, ETC. — In OE the article is more often than not left out before the names of nationalities which are in the plural and have not been mentioned before (answeredon Scottas him). In ME the use of the definite article increases steadily. In Ormulum the usage still varies: — þa Kaldewisshe menn (6942); — Ennglisshe menn (D 322). In the earlier ME romances, and also in Chaucer and Gower the article occurs as a rule, although there are also cases like whan this Calkas knew ... That Grekes sholden swich a peple bringe (Ch. TC i 73). In late ME prose the presence of the definite article is
fairly regular, as in Mod. E: — *and the Shottys gaffe hym batayle* (Greg. Chron. 74); — *þer was opyn werr betwix the Englisch and þo cuntreys* (MKempe 233). Trevisa shows some wavering, however (*Saxons and Anglis come out of Germania . . . Danne after þat þe Danes pursued the lond*, Higd. II 153). After the prepositions of and to the article is usually omitted: — *he made hymselfe Kynge of Schottys* (Greg. Chron. 73; cf. *Mary Queen of Scots*); — *at þat bataile was quellede an Erl of Danois þat me callede Gydrak* (Brut 107); — *to Saxoynes* (Brut 93).

If a definite group of people of the nationality in question is referred to, the definite article is of course used: — *a grete batayle betuene þe Flemyngez and þe Englisch men* (Brut 338). It is sometimes difficult to say, however, whether the noun has reference to a group or to the nation as a whole.

What has been said above about plural names of nationalities applies, in the main, to names of religious sects and the like: — *þe grete batail . . . bituene þe Cristen men and þe Sarasynes* (Brut 150).

If a singular noun is used in a generic sense for the whole nationality, it is naturally preceded by the definite article: — *to mayntayny hys warrys agayne the Turke* (Greg. Chron. 197).

**DISTRIBUTIVE USE OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE.** — Instances have been recorded since early ME where the definite article is used distributively with units of measurement: — *þær shollde cumenn o þe er Ann sþie* ('yearly,' Orm. 1024); — *four sþen i þe ere* (Ancr. 192); — *a serteyn ['a certain sum'] by þe weke* (Fifty Wills 3); — *to have iij d. of the pound* (Capgr. Chron. 261).

**COLLECTIVE NOUNS**

The use of the definite article before collective nouns varies a great deal, depending not only on the character of the noun but also on the writer. Gower’s *Confessio*, for example, shows an extensive use of the definite article with collectives.
People as the plural of man appears in later ME. There is considerable wavering in the use of the definite article down to the end of the period. The presence of the article seems to be, however, more or less the rule: — the people in this worlde (Usk TL 25); — as the people telleth (Gower CA i 607); — for hunger pepyle yetyn houndys, cattys, and horse (Greg. Chron. 75). The collective folk, when used in this sense, normally takes no article: — thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages (Ch. CT A Prol. 12).

MATERIAL NOUNS AND THE LIKE

As in OE, material nouns do not usually take the definite article in ME. It has been assumed, by Einenkel and others, that its use in the works of a number of ME writers, like Gower, is due to French influence. This possibility is not to be excluded. It seems, on the other hand, that metrical reasons also play a part in this peculiar use of the article. Examples: — he was brixt so þe glas (Horn 14); — as bare as þou com from þe harde ston (Good Wife 159, MS H); — the gold is titled to the sonne, The mone of selver hath his part, And iren that stant upon Mart, The led after Satorne groweth, And Jupiter the bras bestoweth, The coper set is to Venus, And to his part Mercurius Hath the quik-selver (Gower CA iv 2468-75). Yet even in Gower the article is normally absent after prepositions, particularly after of: — his hed with al the necke also Thei were of fin gold bothe tuo; His brest, his schuldres, and his armes Were al of selver, bot the tharmes, The wombe, and al doun to the kne, Of bras thei were upon to se; The legges were al mad of stiel (Gower CA Prol. 605-11).

ABSTRACT NOUNS

The absence of the article before nouns denoting abstract ideas has always been normal usage in English. But the distinction between abstract and concrete nouns is not always quite clear, and there are many borderline cases where the
Definite Article

article is sometimes used and sometimes dropped, such as truth — the truth, law — the law, doom — the doom, war — the war, peace — the peace, life — the life. Death is rather a special case. In OE and ME the use of the definite article before this noun is rather unsettled. *Ormulum* has no article as a rule (*to þolenn deþ o rodetre*, D 201). In some later texts, down to the end of the period, the article occurs quite frequently, supposedly under French influence: — *þat havede þoled* (MS haue; þarned) *for hire þe ded* (Havelok 1687); — *til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1134). Margery Kempe has no article before death, except in the phrase *to the death* (condemnyd to þe deþ, 71) and when the noun is qualified by a relative clause, an of-genitive, a superlative adjective, or the like: — *þe dolful deth þat* ... (148); — *þe deth of a synful man* (159); — *þe most soft deth* (30); — *þe same deth* (30).

In a number of instances, like *ther was the revel and the melodye* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3652), it is difficult to explain the presence of the definite article before an abstract noun. It is tempting to imagine that the occurrence of the article in instances of this kind is somehow connected with the rather marked ME tendency to individualise abstract nouns, manifest in the not infrequent use of the indefinite article before them (see p. 264). There is, of course, also the possibility that the use of the definite article is due to the exigencies of the metre or to French influence — or to both —, as seems to be the case in *þo was the vertu sett above And vice was put under fote* ('la vertu,' Gower CA Prol. 116) and in *the charite goth al unknowe* (Gower CA Prol. 319).

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE WITH PARTS OF SPEECH OTHER THAN NOUNS

ADJECTIVES. — The use of the definite article with adjectives partially converted into nouns is discussed on pp. 664-7. Before a comparative the definite article is common when the com-
parison is carried out between two individuals: — *I noot which was the fyner of hem two* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1039); — *Demetrius the betre knyht was of the tuo* (Gower CA ii 1622). In the so-called proportional comparative (see p. 282) the represents the OE instrumental case of the demonstrative pronoun (*þy, þe*): — *so that the lasse I am to wyte* (Gower CA i 263).

The definite article occurs normally with the superlative, except when the superlative adjective is used predicatively: — *which of ȝow is trewest and lelest to leve on* (PPL. B xvii 23); — *þis hille Caucasus is lengest of alle þe est hilles* (Trev. Higd. I 141); — *sche is worthyest in þi sowle* (MKempe 210). But the article is occasionally left out in the attributive position, too: — *þis was forcouþest man þat hadde kinedom* (Lawman B 6551;¹ *þis wes þe forcuþþeste mon, A*). Most of, in the sense 'the majority of,' which first appears at the end of the ME period, takes no article: — *moost of your wele willers* (Paston Suppl. 64 [1460]).

**Numerals.** — As in Mod. E the definite article is used with cardinal numbers to point out a number of individuals known to the person addressed: — *on of the tuo* (Gower CA ii 3430). The ordinals naturally require the definite article (*the first, the second,* etc.), but it may be left out before predicate numerals: — *his .xii. apostoles, of which Peter was first* (Capgr. Chron. 60).

**Pronouns.** — The occasional use of the definite article before an independent possessive found in Caxton is an imitation of the corresponding French construction: — *to approve better the his than that other* (En. 23; the original has *le sien*). Cf. p. 164.

For the *own* instead of *its* (*his*) *own* see p. 164; for the *self* instead of *himself* and *itself,* see p. 147; for the use of *the* instead of the dependent possessive in general see p. 163; for the use of the definite article before *same* and *ilk* see pp. 175-6; for inter-

¹ It is possible that in this particular case the absence of the article is due to the predicative use of the whole noun-adjective group.
Indefinite Article

roguative *the which* see p. 185; for relative *the which, the whose,* and *the whom* see pp. 198-9 and 201.

In the singular, independent *other* is mostly preceded by the definite article (*be oþer wiþseyde him*), while the article is usually left out in the plural: — *zeveþ to oþere* (Trev. Higd. I 13); — *to mak uþhir at hire inwyous* (Thewis 32, MS C); — *sche was not purveyd as oþer weryn* (MKempe 231).

The occurrence of the definite article with *all, both, half,* etc., will be discussed in Vol. II.

**ADVERBS AND CONJUNCTIONS.** — The use of the definite article with adverbial and conjunctional *while* goes back to OE (*þa hwile*): — *what shulde we wommen werche the while?* (PPL A vii 8); — *þe while þou sittest in þe chirche, þine beddes þou schalt bidde* (Good Wife 13). The form *the whiles* appears about 1300; an example: — *þe whyles Ruben waxeþ, Symeon is borne* (Deonise 18, MS Ar.).

**THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE**

**OLD ENGLISH**

*’An’ and ‘Sum’.* — A brief account of the indefinite article in OE is necessary for the understanding of the ME development.

In OE *an* and *sum* are used in functions either identical with or approaching those of the modern indefinite article. The starting-point for this particular use of *an* is the occurrence of the numeral *an* in an individualising function. In the prose of Alfred’s time *an* and *sum* are regularly used for purposes of individualisation, to single out an individual among several of the same kind. But there are also instances in Alfredian prose where *an* and *sum* occur in a generalising (generic) sense, to call attention not to one but to any member of a species or class, which shows that even the other uses of the indefinite article are developing. On the other hand, *an* and *sum* are still very rare before a predicate noun, although there are a few instances
where they are used even in this position. Normally there is no article: — *ic eom cnīht* (Alfred Care 48). *An* and *sum* are also rare with nouns denoting the result of an action ('objects of result') expressed by a transitive verb: — *sete iserne weall betweox þe and þa burh* (Alfred Care 164).

In Ælfric's writings the use of the indefinite article is a little commoner than in Alfredian prose. In generalising (generic) function the ratio between the instances with an article and those without it is approximately one to one. As in Alfred's time, predicate nouns take no article as a rule, nor do second members of comparisons (*ic dyde na swa swa dry*, Ælfric Hom. I 430)

**Differences in the Use of 'An' and 'Sum.'** — In OE poetry and in the prose of Alfred's time a natural distinction is made between *an* and *sum*: *an* focusses attention emphatically on the individual, *sum* rather on the species or class. Another distinction seems also to have been made between the two articles. From the beginning, *an* seems to be preferred in the spoken language and colloquial style, while *sum*, particularly towards the end of the period, tends to assume a more literary character. In late OE *an* begins to supplant *sum*. In Ælfric's writings, where *an* and *sum* are equally common, the instances of their individualising use amount to 398 and 326 and those of their generalising (generic) use to 33 and 54, according to a count carried out by P. Süsskand (see bibliography).

At the end of the OE period *an* and *sum* are thus used primarily for purposes of individualisation. In cases of this kind the indefinite article is a regular feature. The article, *an* or *sum*, can also be used in a generalising (generic) sense, although no hard and fast rules can be given. The article is always left out when the statement has reference to the species or class conceived as a whole and not merely to an individual typical of the species (e.g., *hund is sawulleas*). Before a predicate noun, the second member of a comparison, and a noun in apposition the use of the indefinite article remains sporadic.
Indefinite Article

MIDDLE ENGLISH

The Form of 'An.' — In the texts of the 11th and 12th centuries there is little evidence of progress in the use of the indefinite article, but a number of spellings have been preserved from the second half of the 11th century suggesting that an is losing its inflection and becoming reduced to a short, unstressed an (Þet se cyng heafde gifen Þet abbotrice an Fræcisce abbot Turolde wæs gehaten, OE Chron. an. 1070). In the 12th century the inflectional forms of an reveal a state of confusion, although in southern and SW Midland texts they are used extensively down to the first half of the 13th century. The spellings an(e) and on(e) (e.g., iherde ich holde grete tale An hule and one niztingale, Owl & N 4; — and zaf him ane wounde, RGlouc. 373) occur sporadically even down to the 15th century. In Scotland the indefinite article a, an, ane becomes uniform ane at the beginning of the 16th century. It is difficult to say whether this development is due to French influence (cf. un roi — ane kyng), as has been suggested.

Disappearance of 'Sum.' — Another thing revealed by the 12th-century texts is that sum is rapidly disappearing as an indefinite article. Comparison (by P. Süsskand) between some of the Lambeth Homilies shows among other things that the copyist came across two instances of sum in his original and replaced both by an. He also found five instances of an and retained them all; and he added an in three of the eighteen articleless cases of the original (all three being cases where Mod. E requires the indefinite article). In the course of the 13th century sum ceases to be used as an indefinite article; yet many later texts, among them Chaucer's works, show a use of the dependent indefinite pronoun sum which comes very near that of the indefinite article (e.g., tharbi groves sum apell tre, Cursor 2877, Cotton MS; an apell tre, Fairfax MS; — with som frendly lok gladeth me, Ch. TC i 538).

Early ME Development. — The Ormulum shows evidence
of a remarkable increase (by some 135 per cent) in the use of the indefinite article as compared with late OE usage. The ratio between an and sum is 10:1. In individualising function an is used practically in the same measure as in present-day English, and in generalising (generic) function it is quite as common as sum; in this (generalising) function the indefinite article is used in approximately 50 per cent of the cases where it would be used in present-day English. That the article is spreading to new functions is shown by the fact that it is no longer rare before predicate nouns (fiss iss an swiþe mikell mahht, Orm. 4708), although the articleless cases are still in the majority.¹ An is also used before other; there are numerous instances of this in the Ormulum (e.g., wiþþ himm wass an ofêrr mann, 5198). But that there is still great wavering in the general use of the indefinite article is suggested by the fact that in Vices and Virtues the majority of instances where an individual is referred to as a representative of the whole class (generalising or generic use) the indefinite article is not used (e.g., munec mai utfaren ... into hermitorie, 73).

While in the Ormulum the two indefinite articles, an and sum, are equally common in generalising use, in Lawman A an is four times as common as sum. The article is not uncommon before a predicate noun: there are some 80 cases with and some 130 without the article. In generalising function the indefinite article occurs even more frequently in Ancrener Riwle and the Owl (a mon vor uwel þet he haveþ he ne let him nout blod o þe sike halve, Ancr. 49; — þarbi men segget a vorbisne, Owl & N 98), although the articleless use is also quite common (speruwe haveþ þet one kunde þet is swuþe biheve to ancre, Ancr. 77). The majority of predicate nouns are preceded by the article (pellican is a leane fuwel, Ancr. 51; — þu nart bute a wreche wizt, Owl & N 1622), but instances without an article are by no means

¹ W. Preusler, Anglia LXVI, 1942, 126-7, argues, not very convincingly, that the use of the indefinite article before predicate nouns (e.g., he is a soldier) is due to Celtic influence.
uncommon (*seinte Marie þet ouk to alle wummen beon vorbisne, Ancr. 33*).

**SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT.** — This is the stage of development reached in early ME. While the indefinite article becomes a regular feature in individualising function at an early date, its generalising (generic) use is by no means firmly established. In later ME the use of the indefinite article for purposes of generalisation shows a steady increase; yet some amount of wavering continues down to the end of the period. It is not until early Mod. E that the principles now governing the use of the indefinite article are more consistently observed. In the following discussion attention is called to a number of peculiar features in the ME use of the indefinite article. The non-expression of the article is dealt with in a separate chapter (pp. 266-72).

'ANY.' — The indefinite pronoun *any* is occasionally used in a function similar to that of the indefinite article: — *ase veor he [ure muþ] is God hwon we spekeþ touward him and bit him eni bone* (Aancr. 33). In second members of comparisons, particularly in comparisons expressing equality, *any* is not uncommon: — *isliket and imaket as eni gles smeþest* (Kath. 1661); — *tristi-loker þan any stel* (RMannyng Chron. 4864); — *his berd as any sowe or fox was reed* (Ch. CT A Prol. 552); — *as blak he lay as any cole or crowe* (Ch. CT A Kn. 2692); — *fair was this younge wyf, and therwihal As any wezele hir body gent and smal* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3234); — *his steede . . . Stant . . . as stille as any stoon* (Ch. CT F Sq. 171); — *þay maden as mery as any men mosten* (Gaw. & GK 1953; *any* with a plural noun); — *also red and so ripe . . . As any dom my¿t device of dayntyez oute* (Purity 1046). The usage goes back to OE: — *scearpre þonne ænig sweord* (Paris Psalter xliv 4). It is recorded in Shakespeare.¹

¹ In second members of comparisons the indefinite article *an* may be present or absent: — *while he sleep as a swyn* (Ch. CT B ML 745); — *as hende as hounde is in kychyne* (PPl. B v 261.)
Proper Names. — A proper name is occasionally used as a common noun with the generalising meaning 'comparable to the individual in question.' In such a case it takes the indefinite article: — Mærlin ... bodede ... Dat an Arþur sculde gete cum Anglen to fulste (Lawman A 28650; an omitted in B); — every man semeth a Salomon (Ch. CT G CY 961).

Individualisation of Abstract Nouns. — In ME there is a tendency to place the indefinite article before abstract nouns and those denoting various natural phenomena, such as wind, rain, and storm, for purposes of individualisation, i.e., to make them less abstract. This is in fact quite common, particularly in later ME. Examples: — agains him he tok a pride (Cursor 448, Cotton MS); — this tre was of a mikele heght (Cursor 1339, Cotton MS); — thys munke of relygyoun Had a grete temptacyoun (RMannyng HS 174); — and hadde a gret opiinioun (Ch. CT A Kn. 1269); — ther ros a contek and a gret enuye (Ch. TC v 1479); — shal falle a reyn (Ch. CT A Mil. 3517).

Numerical Meaning. — The original numerical meaning of the indefinite article is preserved in many cases: — so faire two weren nevere maked In a bed to lyen samen (Havelok 2134); — berd and hefd of a heu ware (Cursor 18845, Cotton MS); — two chylderen here before, were borne at a byrthe (Chev. Assigne 23). Cf. present-day the shoes are of a size, they are of an age, etc.

The Indefinite Article with Numerals. — In OE 'hundred' and 'thousand' are expressed by the neuter nouns hund(red) and þusend, followed by a partitive genitive plural (an hund monna, an þusen d wintra). The numeral an preceding these nouns comes to be regarded as the indefinite article, and when the inflectional endings disappear the type a hundred (thousand) years becomes dominant (an þusennde shep, Orm 1316; — an hundred knyghtes, Ch. CT A Kn. 1851). This is comparable to several other instances with an appositive construction, such as a peire gloves (PPl. B v 256) and a dozeine chickenes (PPl. B iv 37).
COLLECTIVE USE OF NUMERALS. — As a sign of collectivity OE an is occasionally used before cardinals (for anum xii nihtum). Later, from the end of the 13th century until the 16th, an is common in this function. It is frequently preceded by an adverb, such as about, wel, and nigh, and there is usually an implication of an approximate estimation: — is dožter was an tuo zer old (RGlouc. 8861); — an vif zer after þis (RGlouc. 9734); — an six þousend of Brutons (RGlouc. 4292); — aboute a four þousend and fij hundred (RGlouc. 11394); — up they rysen, wel a ten or twelve (Ch. CT F Sq. 383); — of a twenty yer and thre (Ch. LGW 2075); — wel ny an eights busshels (Ch. CT C Pard. 771). The construction is particularly favoured by Robert of Gloucester. For more examples cf. A. Dekker, E Studien LXXV, 1942-3, 80-1.

It is probable that a similar approximation is implied in cases like al a fourten niʒt sike he lay (GWarw. 4236); — swiche a sorwe he suffred a seve-niʒt fulle (WPal. 766); — a tuelfmo[n]th was gan (Cursor 1917, Cotton MS). For the use of a fortnight to express merely a long time see pp. 306-7.

DISTRIBUTIVE USE. — Through expressions like seofen siðum on dæg the OE preposition on, when weakened to a, comes to be identified with the indefinite article and used in distributive expressions: — of alle swuche þinges schrive hire enes a wike ette leste ('per week,' Ancr. 155); — fasted iii tymes a woke (La-Tour Landry 12). Cf. the distributive use of the definite article, p. 255.

REPETITION OF THE ARTICLE

When two common nouns are linked by the conjunction and, the article which occurs before the first of them is frequently repeated before the second: — þes cos . . . is a swetnesse ant a delit of heorte (Anocr. 45); — the bestes and the briddes (Gower CA i 2886); — þe schamys and þe spytys of þe world (MKempe 11); — the sone and the eyre of the Duke of Northefolke (Greg. Chron.
When the preposition is repeated, the article is often repeated, too: — and deþ hit tauh mid one deade and mid one hevie heorte (Anec. 89); — of the noise and of the soun (Gower CA iii 453). Towards the end of the ME period the repetition of the article becomes somewhat less frequent. In ME the article is often missing before the second of two attributes preceding the noun: — an unnorne annd wrecche mann (Orm. 4884). When the adjective is placed after the noun, the following type is particularly favoured by Chaucer: — a knyght, a worthy and an able (Ch. CT A Kn. 1241).

NON-EXPRESSION OF THE ARTICLE

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. — Even today the primary function of the definite and indefinite articles, to single out an individual, is clearly felt. This is true not only of the individualising but also of the generalising (generic) use. When we say 'a cat loves comfort' or 'the cat loves comfort,' we think of one cat as a typical representative of the whole species. If we do not wish to bring out the individual cat into relief, we use the indefinite plural and say 'cats love comfort.' The need for individualisation or the absence of any such need decides in many other instances whether or not an article is to be used.

In this connection it is well to remember that the distinction between nouns and adjectives has never been very sharp. The same word may often be defined as a noun or as an adjective depending on whether we look upon it as a unit or pay attention only to the quality it represents. A few illustrations will be sufficient: — there was a drop of dog in Baloo because twenty generations ago his forefather had been a dog; yet in the eyes of the pack he was wolf — all wolf; — Gauguin was more artist than businessman; — Mr Boyd is Irishman first, critic next; — he turned traitor; — she has more sense than Mary, child though she is. In all these cases the attention of the audience is called to
the quality expressed by the word in question, i.e., to its 
adjectival aspect, and individualisation is therefore not 
needed.

The distinction can be illustrated by further examples, such 
as Sir Winston Churchill, formerly Prime Minister of Great 
Britain; General E. was elected President of the United States; as 
chairman of the society, he was responsible for many things. In all 
these examples the post in question can be held by only one 
person at a time; accordingly no individualisation is necessary. 
The thing that matters is the quality of the post, i.e., the 
adjectival aspect of the noun.

The following brief analysis of some typical instances where 
the article is not used is intended merely to supplement a 
number of remarks made in the foregoing discussion of the 
definite and indefinite articles. For practical reasons the non-
expression of the article is discussed in the light of the 
syntactical positions in which the nouns occur.

VOCATIVE. — Nouns used in direct address are exclamatory 
in character and thus comparable to (secondary) interjections 
(see pp. 620-31). This is obviously the reason why a noun 
in the vocative does not normally take an article: — and seide, 
'damesel, so mote I then' (Sultan Bab. 1593); — 'now, goode men,' 
quod oure Hoste, 'herkeneth me' (Ch. CT B ML 1174); — lyston-
nyth, lordyngus, a lyttyll stonde (Gaw. & CC 1). But the use of 
the definite article is not entirely unknown in OE and ME, 
especially before a noun in apposition to the one in the vocative 
(hayl be þou Arthur þe king, Lawman B 22645; — socoure us, 
Darrie þe kyng! KAlis. 2380).

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES. — A prepositional phrase often 
takes a more or less stereotyped character, and this obviously 
accounts for the fact that the noun retains its ancient article-
less form: — king he was bi weste (Horn 5); — blame þou nóþing 
þat þou sest with eye (Good Wife 78); — to scole (Brut 496); — 
when sche cam to chirche (MKempe 216); — put hem ... in preson
M(Kempe 113); — at inne (MKempe 65); — he went to boorde (MKempe 102); — a good man in town (MKempe 109); — went to bed (Capgr. Chron. 52). Many of these and of other similar phrases (e.g., at eye, at home, on hande, by syght) have survived to the present day. For the of-periphrasis see below, under the section 'Of-periphrasis.'

'Of'-Periphrasis. — In certain non-possessive of-periphrases the article is usually left out before the noun: — onont purté of heorte (Ancr. 2); — to the liknesse of serpent Thei were bore (Gower CA i 396); — ayenst reson of soule (Usk TL 140); — in good heele of body (MKempe 10); — bi siʒt of iʒe (Pecock Repr. 213). In all these quotations the of-periphrasis is markedly adjectival in character; good heele of body, for example, is equivalent to 'good bodily health.' The type survives in present-day E (e.g., purity of heart and strength of mind).

The use of the article before a noun qualified by the of-periphrasis is a somewhat complicated matter. A noun which normally takes no article is often preceded by the definite article if an of-periphrasis follows: — to the peyne of helle (Ch. CT I Pars. 171); — þe mount of sein Michel (RGlouc. 4161; for cases of this type see p. 242 above); — he ... deferryd þe wrytyng of þis boke (MKempe 4; for the use of the article before the verbal noun in -ing see pp. 575-6). But the article is not infrequently left out in cases of this kind, for some reason or other: — þou ne ssalt nevere, iwis, Part abbe of mi kinedom (RGlouc. 723); — dooth digne fruyt of Penitence ('facite ... fructum dignum poenitentiae,' Ch. CT I Pars. 115); — and ther he lypeth in joye and in honour Terme of his lyf (Ch. CT A Kn. 1029); — the ferste of alle Which bar corone of Lombardie (Gower CA i 2461). The rather unsettled state of ME usage is reflected in the following

1 This phrase is to be connected with the OF expression mettre en prisun, but some connection with OE constructions like on cweartern gesettan must also be taken into consideration. Cf. A. A. Prins, French Influence in English Phrasing, Leyden 1952, pp. 246-7.
Non-expression of the Article

example, where the article is both used and left out: — therof seith Seint Augustyn that penitence of goode and humble folk is the penitence of every day (Ch. CT I Pars. 101). The non-expression of the article is particularly common when the noun qualified by an of-periphrasis is preceded by a preposition: — for sorwe of hire (Ch. CT F Sq. 422); — be heryng of þe wordys (MKempe 121); — in maner of, in proces of tyme, in signefyeng of, in direct of, in stide of (Equatorie 18, 18, 22, 24, 32). A large number of phrases of this type, such as because (< by cause) of, by way of, in spite of, and instead of, have survived to the present day owing to their highly stereotyped character.

Predicative Position. — Before a predicative noun the article is frequently left out even later in the ME period: — king he was bi weste (Horn 5); — I... Was whilom wyf to kyng Cappaneus (Ch. CT A Kn. 932); — he was cousin nyh To him that Thebes ferst on hyh Up sette (Gower CA i 337); — sche which was godesse (Gower CA i 369); — which to the capitain Was sone and heir (Gower CA i 1429); — which had ben... aldyrman also many zerys (MKempe 111); — the schipmen supposed verily he was emperoure (Capgr. Chron. 119). For the non-expression of the article before superlative adjectives and ordinal numbers see p. 258, above. Non-expression of the article occurs frequently after verbs like make, choose, call, and clepe: — he let him crowni king (RGlouc. 7855); — þu madist me... stiward of þin howshole and executor of alle (MKempe 157); — Tiberius was mad emperoure (Capgr. Chron. 60); — [that] wolde have chose John Norhampton to be Mair (Bk London E 27 [1384]); — callyng hir loller and heretyke (MKempe 124). This ancient usage survives in present-day English where the article is left out in certain cases before predicative nouns (cf. the section 'General Considerations,' pp. 266-7, above; the principles discussed in that section apply equally well to certain appositive constructions, particularly to the type Petir, kyng of Spayne; for examples of this type see pp. 238-9). The absence of the article is the more natural because in the predicative, appositive, and attributive
(stone wall, etc.) positions the noun tends to focus attention primarily on the qualities of the person or thing concerned.

Negations, 'Never' and 'Ever.' — After a negative element (negative particle and the like) the article is commonly left out:

— ne scal þe [= thee] king woh don (Lawman A 22456); — þere ne was ratoun in alle þe route . . . þat dorst have ybounden þe belle (PPl. B Prol. 177). This is particularly the case after the adverb never: — heo nalden swiken heore king for nævere quicne mon (Lawman A 10614); — nis he never god feolawe (Ancr. 163); — þer was never zit pure creature in þis lijf (Cloud 47); — ther newere tre shal fruyt ne leves bere (Ch. PF 137); — was never trompe of half so greet a soun (Ch. CT A Prol. 674); — thogh I be nevere man so povere (Gower CA v 6580). It has been assumed that this use is due to French influence (cf. OF ne onques gens ne furent en si grant peril, Mod. F jamais homme n’a eu plus de succès), but the case needs further elucidation. After ever the non-expression of the article is a good deal less common:

— ever out cometh evel sponne web (Prov. Hendyng 33); — but I to yow be also good and trewe As evere was wyff (Ch. CT D WB 1244); — was evyr hors . . . that dide sich a dede? (Lydgate MP xxiii 251). There are many instances where the article is used: — evere the body must be lad Aftir the herte (RRo se 1794); — to Januarie he goth as lowe As evere dine a dogge for the bowe (Ch. CT E Mch. 2014).

Two Nouns Linked Together. — Two singular nouns are often linked together in a combination usually implying some degree of polarity. In instances of this kind the article is regularly left out: — to childe ne to wife (Poema Mor. 24); — berd and hefd of a heu ware (Cursor 18845); — he gaf gyfts largelyche . . . To s quyer and to kny3t (Launfal 30); — the hihe tree . . . With lef and fruit so wel besein (Gow. CA i 2989); — wow to wow and wall to wall (Gower CA iii 1341); — on nyght as on day (MKempe 201). An obvious reason for the non-expression of the article is the fact that attention is called rather to the
qualities expressed by the two nouns, i.e., to their adjectival aspects, which makes individualisation unnecessary. The type is common in present-day English (e.g., from east to west; a cure for soul and body; a point where land and sea were engaged in perpetual fight).

**Enumerations of Several Nouns.** — This type is parallel to that discussed in the preceding paragraph; the attention of the audience is directed primarily to the respective qualities of the persons or things enumerated, and this makes individualisation unnecessary: — eþlete him were wif end child, suster end feder end broþer (Poema Mor. 150); — and haryeth forth by arm, foot, and to (Ch. CT A Kn. 2726). The construction is found in Mod. E (e.g., ear, eye, and mind were alike strained by dread, Brontë, Jane Eyre).

**Verb and Object Phrases.** — There are numerous phrases consisting of a transitive verb and its object where the noun takes no article (e.g., this duc, of whom I make mencioun, Ch. CT A Kn. 893). Many of these may be native in origin, but many are direct or indirect loans from French. Examples are cited, for example, by G. Peters (see bibliography), pp. 22-6, Elisabeth Paschke, pp. 253-5, Karpf, pp. 70-9, and A. A. Prins, *French Influence in English Phrasing*, Leyden 1952. There are phrases like to ask leave (or mercy); bear witness (worship); bring word; cry mercy; do charity (favour, harm, homage, mischief, offence, pleasance, reverence, vengeance, voyage, villainy); give answer (audience, battle, example, comfort, counsel, leave, reckoning, rest, space); have compassion (end, envy, good day, good night, great ferly, great joy, great marvel, great wonder, leisure, opportunity, pardon, pity, possession, remembrance, repentance, suffisance); lay (set) eyes on; lay hand(s) on; make cheer (entry, feast, frith, joy, love, mention, mirth, moan, noise, peace, report, sacrifice, semblant, sojourn); set foot on (to); take or nime example (heed, herberge, land, leave, measure, rest, vengeance). A few examples: — off all Þiss Godd us s bringeþþ word (Orm. D 177);
Articles

— that hath doon mescheef (Ch. CT A Kn. 1326); — wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive (Ch. CT A Prol. 505); — nevere more he him misdede, Ne hand on him with yvele leyde (Havel. 993); — makien him glede chere (Ancr. 84); — this duc, of whom I make menciouyn (Ch. CT A Kn. 893); — and setten foul to grunde (Horn 133); — took venjauns of his enmies (Capgr. Chron. 119).

In many of these instances the absence of the article agrees with the French original (e.g., avoir compassion, envie, merci, pitié de qlqn; avoir raison, etc.). In a number of cases the articleless use goes back to OE (e.g. bear witness). A factor which must have greatly contributed to the preservation of the articleless form is the highly stereotyped character of these phrases. A large number of these phrases are current in present-day English, e.g., to change colour, have reason, make peace (war, mention of), take care (leave, part, pleasure, vengeance).

Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases. — Like the phrases discussed in the preceding paragraph, many proverbial locutions and other idioms of the English language have been handed down from generation to generation in a petrified form. This accounts for the non-expression of the article in many instances of this kind, as in the following proverbs from the Good Wife: betere were child unborne þan techingeles forlore (161), borewed þing wole hom (149), evil lat, evil name (44), and lef child lore bihovet (155), and the following proverbial locutions from the Good Wife Pilgr.: be wyne hope men mey se wher þe tavern ys (181) and when dede ys donn hit ys to latt be war of ‘had-I-wyst’ (60).
STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE ARTICLES


Biard, A., *L'Article 'the'*, Paris diss. 1908 (not seen by the present writer).

Brunner II, pp. 80-5 and 122-8.


Karpf, pp. 47-79.

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Koziol, *Sb.*, pp. 3-12.


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Poutsma II, 1, pp. 513-699.
Schmidt, F., 'The Indefinite Article before Plural Combinations in English,' *Minnesskrift tillägnad Axel Erdmann*, pp. 147-70, Uppsala and Stockholm 1913.
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Woledge, B., See McClean, R. J.
Wülfing I, pp. 277-91.
Zachrisson, R. E., 'The French Definite Article in English Place-names,' *Anglia* XXXIV, 1911, 308-53.
ADJECTIVES

Adjectives governing the genitive, see p. 87. — Adjectives governing the dative, see p. 103. — Adjectives with the infinitive, see p. 538.

COMPARISON

Equality (Equative), p. 278.

Inferiority, p. 288.

Bibliography, p. 288.

Traces of Inflection. — In the North and N Midlands, owing to the dropping of final -e, adjectives reach early a relatively flexionless stage. _Ormulum_, for example, reveals virtually the same stage of development as Chaucer (see below), with the exception that in the vocative, when not preceded by a pronoun, the attributive adjective has the strong form (*lef sune*, 8941).

In the South and S Midlands traces of OE adjectival inflection are occasionally seen, especially in the early texts (*he hoe æþele n Alienor, þe wes Henries queen þes hez es kinges* ’he gave it to the noble Eleanor, who was the great King Henry’s queen,’ Lawman A 42-4;¹ — _te godre heale_, Ancr. 85; — _mid ealmihtiges Godes luve_, Poema Mor. 333; — _have wel godne day_, Horn 727), and even in texts from later in the period. The

¹ For the use of the strong form of the adjective after the definite article see pp. 233 and 277.
Adjectives

Ayenbite has to þe guoden (dative plural, 72), and there are several more or less stereotyped expressions showing traces of inflection (halvendel, etc.).

Generally speaking, however, the only trace of OE adjectival inflection that survives the beginning of the 13th century occurs in monosyllabic adjectives ending in a consonant. In these adjectives the strong singular form has no final -e (god), while the weak singular and the strong and weak plural forms end in -e (gode). In addition to native monosyllabics (god, gret, blak, smal, ilk, yong, etc.), including past participles (born, sworn, etc.), monosyllabic loanwords from French usually show the same distinction (bref-breve). The strong form is usual, the weak form occurring in adjectives used attributively after possessives, demonstratives, and the definite article, and also in the vocative: — my deere herte (Ch. TC iii 843); — this ilke worthy knyght (Ch. CT A Prol. 64); — the grete world (Gower CA i 876); — o stronge god (Ch. CT A Kn. 233); — o derke ypocrisie (Gower CA i 956). The weak form occurs frequently before proper names and other words used as proper names: — stronge Sampson (Gower CA vi 94); — the beautee Of yonge fresshe Venus free (Ch. CT A Kn. 2386); — and goode faire White she het (Ch. BD 948). Predicatively-used plural adjectives frequently end in -e (his nosethirles blake were and wyde, Ch. CT A Prol. 557), but adjectives without -e are also found (of which thise ladys were nat right glad, Ch. CT E Cl. 375; — hire chekes ben with teres wet, Gower CA i 1680; — as frekeþ þat semed fayn, Gaw. & GK 840). These distinctions in the inflection of monosyllabic adjectives are fairly well preserved in the works of careful 14th-century writers like Chaucer and Gower, who use them in accordance with the requirements of the metre. For details of Chaucer's use, cf. ten Brink, §§ 229-39.

One must remember, however, that even in the earliest ME texts the strong and weak declensions frequently become confused and that there is a strong tendency towards the uninflected form.
Inflectional Forms

In some texts written in earliest ME the use of a strong adjective after the definite article is not uncommon. The following examples are from Lawman A: — iherde he þene muchelne drem (8641); — i þere wildere sæ (12008); — þes aþeles kinges (2700). Cf. p. 233.

In Middle Scots adjectives may take a plural form, not only when used attributively, to agree with the governing plural noun (þe saidis lordis, etc.), but also when used independently (thai luflýis and thay myghtýis, Golagros 1003 and 1012). Cf. quhilkis, pp. 185 and 195.

French Inflection. — In works written under strong French influence adjectives borrowed from that language (occasionally even native adjectives) may take -s in the plural. In the majority of these cases the adjective is used attributively and placed after the noun. The plurals of this type are, of course, direct imitations of French usage. Examples: — he ous tekþ to knawe þe greate þinges vram þe little, þe preciouses vram þe viles (Ayenb. 76); — foles sages (PPl. B xiii 423); — in othere places delitables (Ch. CT F Fkl. 899). Adjectives with French plurals occur more frequently in Chaucer’s prose than in his poetry. Occasionally final -s is added to an adjective placed before the noun: — sufficiauntz borwes (E Gilds 92 [Bishop’s Lynn]). It is seldom that -s occurs in predicate adjectives: — romances that been roiales (Ch. CT B Thopas 2038); — [the Romeins] Til thei become so vileins (Gower CA Prol. 738). The French type places delitables is common in scientific, ecclesiastical, and legal phrases (e.g., bestes crepands, medicyns mollificatyves, clergys seculars, mynystris provyncials, and heires males). Adjectives with French plurals, favoured by some 14th-century writers, become relatively common in the 15th century and also occur in the 16th.
In OE, equality and similarity are expressed by *swa . . . swa* (*swa beorht swa gold*). The first *swa* is occasionally reinforced by *eall* (*seo beorhtnis is ealsa eald swa þæt fyr*). These two types are current in ME, too, although the type *so . . . so* disappears in later ME (the last instance quoted in the NED is *ich see noone so ofte sorfeten, Soþliche so mankynde, PPl. C xiv 188*). *Ealsa-*swa survives in ME as *also . . . so* and later as *as . . . as* (*þou þei weren also treue so er was tre or ston, Good Wife 74, MS E [c 1350]; the other MSS [15th century] read *also . . . as or as . . . as*). The reverse order, *so . . . as*, occurs quite early, too: — *nis nout . . . God so grim ase ze him vore makieþ* (Ancr. 151).

*Ealsa* (alswa) gradually loses its emphasis and becomes a mere equivalent of *swa*. *Alswa . . . alswa . . . alswa (> also . . . ase > als . . . as > as . . . as) appears about 1200 and is soon generalised (e.g., *alse muchel ase heo ever con, Ancr. 28*).

The antecedent *so* or *as* is frequently not expressed: — *fai se flour on hill* (Sec. Lyr. clxxii 30); — *a wayle whyt ase whalles bon* (Harley Lyr. ix 1). For expressions of the type *ten so wod 'ten times as mad’* see p. 308.

**SUPERIORITY**

**INFLECTIONAL AND PERIPHERASTIC COMPARISON.** — By the side of the inflectional comparison inherited from OE, where the comparative and superlative are formed by means of the endings *-er* (OE *-ra*) and *-est* (OE *-ost*) (e.g., *fai – fairer – fairest*), a new periphrastic system of comparison by means of the adverbs *more* and *most* emerges in ME.

The OE use of *ma, bet, betst, swiþor, and swiþost*, particularly

1 For practical reasons the adverbs are included in this discussion. The rather few peculiarities of adverbial comparison not found in adjectival comparison are discussed on pp. 341-2.
in conjunction with participles (ma gyldende, ma gelæred, bet or betst gelæred, etc.), seems to have prepared the ground for the new system. Periphrastic comparison is recorded in early ME (e.g., bet is þe meste dredful secnesse of alle secnesses, Ancr. 78), but its occurrence remains sporadic until the 14th century, when it is found in all dialects. In contrast to present-day usage periphrastic comparison seems to be preferred in words of one or two syllables (both native and French) and is relatively rare in words of three syllables or more. Among the numerous adjectives for whose comparison more and most are used are bitter, bright, certain, clear, digne, fair, hard, hardy, holy, noble, privy, ready, rich, sad, sweet, strong, wide, and wise (e.g., more hard, Gower CA Prol. 640, and more swete, Ch. TC iii 1219). The use of periphrastic comparison increases in the 15th century, although inflectional comparison prevails throughout the ME period. It should be borne in mind that all the adjectives with which periphrastic comparison is employed are also compared inflectionally. The use of the two systems seems to have been rather indiscriminate. Later in the 15th century comparison by -er and -est occurs less frequently in longer words.

The use of the periphrastic system of comparison has frequently been ascribed to French influence (cf. plus beau and le plus beau), but there are scholars who refuse to admit that French has exercised any influence on English in this respect. It has been pointed out that the English and French periphrastic systems are structurally different and also that in English the periphrastic comparison is applied to French and native adjectives alike. Considering the greater structural proximity of the English construction to the corresponding Latin periphrasis (magis dignus and maxime dignus), it has also been suggested that the periphrastic comparison of English adjectives and adverbs has arisen under Latin influence.

The available early evidence seems to suggest that the use of more and most to express the comparative and superlative degrees is native in origin and arose from the natural desire for
greater emphasis and clarity which seems to lie behind so many other periphrastic constructions of the English language (genitive with of, verbal tense-forms like I have written and I am writing, nominal constructions like with patience instead of impatiently, etc.). It is difficult to say whether such OE superlatives as lætemest, innemest, and norþmest have in any way promoted the use of more and most in the comparison of adjectives and adverbs, but it is worth noticing that the superlative ending of these words comes to be confused with the superlative form mæst, to judge from later spellings with -mæst and -most (inmost, etc.) and from ME forms like norþur-ma (Lawman A 2674; norþer, B) and innore-mo (RGlouc. 5200). Rhythmical considerations must have played a contributory part in the introduction of the new system of comparison, above all in poetry, but obviously also in prose. A factor which no doubt supplied favourable ground for the use of the periphrastic system of comparison was the increasingly analytical structure of ME as compared with OE.

It is not easy to assess the influence of Latin and French on the development of English comparison. It is perhaps not altogether impossible that Latin influence has played a part in this process, particularly in the earlier stages. And considering the fact that periphrastic comparison begins to gain ground in English at a time when French influence is particularly strong, it seems reasonable to assume that the influence of this language has considerably strengthened the position of more and most in the English system of comparison. Another point which seems to speak for foreign influence is that the periphrastic mode of comparison does not seem to be favoured by living popular speech. 'The comparison of adjectives is formed in the [modern English] dialects by adding the comparative suffix -er and the superlative -est to practically all adjectives, polysyllabic as well as monosyllabic. More and most are as a rule only used to supplement or intensify the regular comparison, as more beautifuller, most worst' (Elizabeth M. Wright, Rustic Speech and Folk-lore, London 1913, p. 145).
Comparisons

Comparison with 'Better' and 'Best.' — The comparative and superlative adverbs better and best are occasionally used for periphrastic comparison: — yt were better worthy (Ch. LGW 317); — a mayde oon of this world the beste ypreysed (Ch. TC v 1473). Cf. OF mielz gentils and L melius sanus (Plautus). The usage is not unknown in OE; cf. pp. 278-9.

Multiple Comparison. — The term 'multiple comparison' normally means the use of more and most with the inflectional comparative and superlative. This is generally considered to be characteristic of spoken popular speech. It occurs sporadically in OE (ma wyrse) and in early ME (mare hardere, Lawman A 4349). Along with the increasing use of the periphrastic system of comparison it becomes fairly common in the 14th century, both in prose and poetry, above all in the comparative (more larger, PPl. B xi 155; — moste elennest flesch, PPl. B xiv 43). In Ayenbite of Inwyt it occurs more frequently than in any other work of the 14th century (more vouler, 237; — more worse, 64; etc.). Multiple comparison continues to be common all through the 15th and 16th centuries, occurring mostly with adjectives of one or two syllables.

Multiple comparison of another kind is seen in adjectives like lesser and worser, which emerge in literature in the second half of the 15th century and have survived to the present day. (As adverbs they do not occur until the early Mod. E period.) An example: — more thrumbles egges be like to heys egges, but they be lesse and more unsavery and worser of smelling and white and more harder to be defyed (Trev. Barth. XIX cvi 916).

Upperest, a superlative formed on the comparative upper, from up, has been recorded since later ME in the sense 'uppermost' and 'outermost:' — þeose Seresys . . . Uppurest folk buþ of Ynde (KAlis. 5790, MS L). The NED calls attention to the occurrence of the same superlative in other Germanic languages (e.g. MDu. upperst).

Gradational Comparative. — The gradational comparative is a construction used to indicate that the quality in question
Adjectives

increases or decreases at a fairly even rate. In ME, according to Karpf, pp. 98-9, a comparative of this kind is expressed in three different ways, viz. (a) by means of ever + comparative and other similar constructions, as in evere wors bigon Fro day to day am I (Ch. TC v 1328) and thi wo wax alwey moore (Ch. TC iii 242), (b) by means of more and more and other similar constructions (due perhaps to French influence), as in ævre it was werser and werser (OE Chron. an. 1137) and ye sen that every day ek, more and more, Men trete of Pees (Ch. TC iv 1345), and (c) by means of a mixture of a and b, as in and hope is lasse and lasse alwey, Pandare (Ch. TC iv 578).

PROPORTIONAL COMPARATIVE. — The adverbs so and the (so ... so and the ... the) are frequently used with the comparative to indicate or imply that the degree of comparison is dependent upon the context. The goes back to the OE instrumental case of the demonstrative pronoun (þy, þe). Two principal types of construction can be distinguished —

(a) The demonstrative type with a single the. This construction, although it often implies some degree of dependence upon the context, seems frequently to be used merely for emphasis:1 — alle he don þe betere þat þe aboute stonden; þe werk is þe sonere idon þat hat many honden (Good Wife 129-30); — þe contre is þe curseder þat cardynales come inne (PPL B xix 415). The proportionality is often emphasized by ever: — æfr e leong þe bet (OE Chron. an. 1123); — ever lenger the moore (Ch. CT F Sq. 404).

(b) The correlative type (so ... so or the ... the). The former (swa ... swa, so ... so) prevails in OE and early ME: — so þe sicnesse is more, se þe goldsmiþ is bisegure (Ancr. 81); — ever so ze more dop, so God ou echþ furþre his deorwurþe grace

1 There are many cases where the before a comparative seems to be used merely for rhythm: — hweper of hem bope þe lenger alive were (RGlouc. 7967, MS Digby 205; the other MSS read lengore or lenger, without þe); — þe merci of God is much þe more (Pearl 576).
(Ancre. 19). The last quotation in the NED (so 18 c) is from the Vernon MS.

The ... the emerges in OE and gains ground in ME: — the more I muse þere-inne, þe mistier it semeth, and þe depper I devyne, þe derker me it þinketh (PPl. B x 181-2). The first the is frequently reinforced by means of an adverb (ay, ever): — ay the forther that she was in age, The moore trewe ... She was to hym in love (Ch. CT E Cl. 712); — leve chylde behoveth lore, and eyr þe levyr the more (Good Wife 188, MS T).1

Comparative Particles. — In addition to the particles used for expressing equality, for the comparative of gradation, and for the proportional comparative (see p. 278 and the preceding paragraphs), the following are particularly to be taken into consideration.

Than (then), used as a comparative particle since OE (e.g., ich æm elder þen ich wes, Poema Mor. 1), is originally a temporal adverb (OE þonne, þanne, Mod. E. then) used as a connective with a relative meaning ('when'). The starting-point of the development must have been a construction of the type this mountain is higher þen ('when') that is high. Cf. NED than.2

There are other particles for expressing a comparative relationship. The occurs in OE and early ME: — na mo þe deþ a wrecche wranne (Owl & N 564). From early ME down to Mod. Scots as (like German als) has occurred in conjunction with the comparative: — swetter smalte as þen was hem among (GWarw. 10419). In the North and the Midlands or is used after a comparative: — and haven mete þan, at is mel, More

1 The only trace of the OE construction þon (þy, þe) + a comparative þe in ME is the negative conjunction lest (from OE þy læs þe), used to introduce a clause expressing something to be prevented or guarded against.

2 Than is normally used with the comparative, but in later ME it is occasionally found also in conjunction with the superlative: — the ox is þe moste holy best þat is in erthe and most pacyent and most profitable þan any other (Mandev. 110). Cf. p. 285 (erst than).
or þe þungere twinne del (Gen. & Ex. 1510); — to yow ðat... weldeþ more styl Of ðat art... or a hundreth of seche (Gaw. & GK 1543). After the ME period this use of or seems to occur only in Scottish texts.

In the North, na and nor are current after a comparative from the 14th century on: \(^2\) — thaim thoht that thai had leitir ta The dede na lat the toun be tane (Barbour iii 229); — Pirrus was of that thing richt wo And mor of his grantschire in deid Nor of hime self (Sc. Troy-bk ii 2402); — I neid nane airar myne erand nor none of the day (Rauf Coilȝear 546). Cf. F. Holthausen, IF XXXII, 1913, 339-40.

The preposition to is occasionally found after a comparative: — nys none of wymman beter ibore To seint Johan þe baptyste (Shoreham i 590); — another Decius, yonger to hym (MS Harl. 2261, fol. 225).\(^1\) Fro(m) occurs as a Latinism in the Wyclifite Bible: — thou hast maad him litil, a litil lesse fro aungelis ('minuisi eum paulominus ab angelis,' Heb. ii 7).

It is in accordance with the adversative character of the comparative that but is used in negative comparisons (e.g., I se namoore but that I am fordo, Ch. CT F Fkl. 1562). The usage can be traced back to OE. The type no sooner but, common in earlier Mod. E, is first attested in 15th-century texts. After other and else, (elles), but has been used since OE.

Absolute Comparative. — The absolute use of the comparative, which Louise Pound (see bibliography), p. 57, takes to be a Latinism (cf. senectus est loquacior), has never been popular.

\(^1\) The peculiar OE use of to with the superlative to which K. Sisam calls attention in his Studies in the History of OE Literature, Oxford 1953, p. 76 (mæst to Babilonia burh 'biggest next to the town of Babylon,' Wonders of the East § 2; hesthne to him on heofena rice 'highest next to Himself in heaven,' Genesis B 254; cf. BT, to I 5 e), does not seem to survive in ME.

\(^2\) 'Nor (nar, ner) seems to be dialectal everywhere from Shetland to Hampshire and Cornwall, as well as in Ireland and America, but seems never to have been literary except in Scotland, where also na was formerly used' (NED than conj. 1, referring to EDD).
Comparison

in English. In OE it was probably unknown, for it is doubtful whether such forms as *inner* 'inner' and *yterra* 'outer' were felt to be comparatives at all. ME instances like *þe larke, þat is lasse foule* (PPl. B xii 262) and *fode more symple* (Gaw. & GK 503) are perhaps to be interpreted as absolute comparatives. It is worth noticing that Chaucer renders the Latin absolute comparative by the superlative: — *moost plentevous* ('feracior,' Bo. iii m 8.12); — *the fyr that is purest* ('purior ignis,' Bo. iii m 9. 22); — *the moste ardaunt love* ('flagrantior fervor,' Bo. iii m 12. 13).

**Superlative in Comparisons between Two.** — In ME literary usage the superlative is rare in comparisons between two; Chaucer, for example, has mostly the comparative: — *I noot which was the fyner of hem two* (CT A Kn. 1039); — *a ful curious pyn: A love-knolle in the gretter ende ther was* (CT A Prol. 197). The superlative, although it is rare, occurs all through the period: — *þe aldeste broþer* (Lawman A 13842; *þe elder broþer, B*); — *which trowestow of þo two . . . is in moste drede?* (PPl. B xii 165); — *which of zow is trewest and lelest to leve on* (PPl. B xvii 23); — *this noble kyng . . . Hadde two sones . . . Of whiche the eldeste highe Algarsyf* (Ch. CT F Sq. 30). It has been assumed (Karpf, p. 45) that the use of the comparative in cases of this kind has been strengthened by the influence of Latin usage.

A parallel case is the occasional use of the superlative adverb *erest* in conjunction with *than*, in the meaning 'earlier, rather:' — *shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1566).

**Various Ways of Expressing the Superlative.** — In addition to the inflectional and periphrastic superlatives discussed in this chapter (*the best; the most beautiful*), there are other ways of indicating the superlative degree. The superlative can be expressed figuratively by means of nouns denoting something unique and superlative in themselves, such as *bloom* and *flower*; cf. *he was Engelondes blome* (Havelok 63), of *cristen folk the flour* (Ch. CT B ML 1090; cf. OF *flors de l'umain*
286 Adjectives

linage), and the paradoxical flour of il endyng (Ch. CT A Rv. 4174).

The well-known type of superlative expression seen in the king of kings, current from OE down to the present day, is a borrowing from biblical Latin (rex regum, saecula saeculorum) and can be traced back ultimately to Hebrew. ME examples: — alte kinge king (Lamb. Hom. 33); — the hihe king of kinges (Gower CA i 2803); — on worelde woreld (Vices & V 63); — of alle flores flour (Ch. LGW 53).

Another Hebrew construction used for expressing the comparative (or, rather, the superlative), has been borrowed from Latin (cf. praeter alias mulieres impudica) into English through ecclesiastical writings (cf. OE an steorre ofer oþre beorht): — þu ert briht and blisful over alle wummen (Ureisun Ure Lefdi 19); — that it be right digne of reverence aboven alle thynges (Ch. Bo. iii p. 9.37). By the side of the positive the superlative form is also used: — the thing that is grettest over alle thinges (Ch. Bo. iii p. 12.187).

Superlative Intensifiers. — Aller (alder, alther), from the OE partitive genitive plural ealra, is employed as a superlative intensifier all through the ME period: — alre worste (Owl & N 10); — that althertrewest man ybore (Gower CA ii 499). Cf. MED alder-. The construction, common in the Germanic languages, becomes rare in English in the 16th century. The periphrastic genitive of all is also current in this function: — a worde... þat worst is of alle (Gaw. & GK 1792). The idea of the superlative is implicit in cases like he wes mete-custi of alle quikemonnen (Lawman A and B 19266) and riht he lovede of alle þinge (Havelok 71). Through contamination with the phrase than other(s), which follows the comparative, there are phrases like of all (the) other and of other associated with the superlative at a remarkably early date: — feirest of alle þan ofren (Lawman A and B 2715); — a wreche moste foule of alle ofer (Cloud 46); — lengest lyf in hem lent of lede of alle other (Purity 256); — a maner myriest of ofer (Purity 701). This
construction is rare in Chaucer but common in the 15th and 16th centuries.

The same process of contamination, advancing further, results in such peculiar constructions as *þe kyng without comparrison of kyngis all othire* (WAlex. 1721), *that precious prynce of all othre* (Morte Arth. 3806), and *to þe kiddest kyng to acount of kyngis all othire* (WAlex. 1934). Instances of this kind suggest further contamination with the type *the king of kings* (see p. 286).

For the intensifying phrase of *ane* (e.g., *the starkest man of ane*, Barbour iv 74), see p. 300.

For the emphatic superlative type *one the best man* see pp. 297-9.

**Absolute Superlative.** — The absolute superlative indicates an especially high degree of a given quality, without any definite comparison with other persons or things. It is usually expressed by the *most-*periphrasis. This begins to appear about the same time as the relative periphrastic superlative (see pp. 278-80). It has been assumed, although possibly without sufficient grounds, that the absolute superlative is originally a Latinism in English.

The absolute use of the inflectional superlative (-est) is stated by Louise Pound, p. 59, to have made its appearance in the 16th century, but earlier instances have been quoted by Koziol (*Stb.*, p. 47), such as *Mary þat is myldest moder so dere* (Gaw. & GK 754), *hit watz þe lady, loftyest to beholde* (Gaw. & GK 1187), and *muryest may* (Pearl 435), where the superlative seems to have absolute rather than relative force. Cf. p. 285, top (Chaucer).

Another way of expressing a high degree of a quality is the use of an intensifying adverb before the positive, such as *full, right, or swithe:* — *Havelok was a ful gode gome* (Havelok 7); — *riȝte ryche* (PPl. B xi 260); — *a mayden swiȝe fayr* (Havelok 111). For adverbs of this kind see the discussion of the adverbs of degree, pp. 316-30. A high degree of a quality is occasionally expressed by prefixing *for(e)* to the positive: — *and chaste thaim quhen thai do mys, Fore-wantone, thowlless, rakless is* (Thewis 224).
The expressions *with (mid) the first, with (mid) the best, of the finest, etc.*, are also current as equivalents of the absolute superlative: — *cnihl mid þan bezste* (Lawman A and B 19934); — *'kyng,' he sede, 'þu leste A tale mid þe beste* (Horn 474); — *Engelond is ryght a merye lond of alle oþere, on with þe beste* (RGlouc. 1, Mostyn MS; for the phrase *of alle oþere* see p. 286); — *for blankmanger, that made he with the beste* (Ch. CT A Prol. 387); — *she nas nat with the lest of hire stature* (Ch. TC i 281); — *furres of the fynest* (Sec. Lyr. xxvi 19).

**INFERIORITY**

Comparison can also be carried out on a descending scale, though only periphrastically, by means of *less, least, etc.* The practice, not very common, can be traced back to OE (cf. *nohte þy Iæs unarefnentlic*, Bede 424, MS Ca); whether it is a native phenomenon or whether it arose under Latin influence it is difficult to say. ME examples: — *and therto I saugh never yet a lesse Harmful than she was in doynge* (Ch. BD 994-5); — *þe werst loved of alle þis lande* (Cursor 4386, Fairfax MS); — *þe worst favoured man or woman* (Cloud 100).

**STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE AND COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES**

—— *Syntax*, pp. 151-2.  
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Sweet I, pp. 325-31.
NUMERALS

Systems of counting, p. 290.


One. — Main uses, p. 292. — Strictly numeral use, p. 292. — One as an indefinite pronoun, p. 293. — One as the indefinite article, p. 293. — One ... other, p. 293. — Exclusive use, p. 293. — Intensifying use, p. 295. — The type one the best (good) man, p. 297. — The plural type, p. 299. — Of ane, p. 300. — Propword one, p. 301. — One used for the indefinite person, see p. 223.

Numerals from twenty-one to ninety-nine, p. 305.


Half, p. 307.

Fractions, p. 307.

Indefinite Use of Numerals. — Round numbers, p. 307. — Other numbers, p. 308.

Collective (proximative) use of numerals, see p. 265.

Conventional and symbolical use of numerals, p. 308.

Multiplicative use of numerals, p. 309.

Distributive use of numerals, p. 310.

Once, twice, thrice, see pp. 90 and 91.

Bibliography, p. 310.

SYSTEMS OF COUNTING. — The ancient decimal system of the Indo-European peoples, i.e., counting by tens, hundreds, and thousands, is based on the habit of counting with the fingers of both hands. Counting with the fingers and toes together lies behind what is known as the vigesimal system, i.e., counting by twenties. The basis of the duodecimal system (counting by dozens) seems to be 10 + 2 (understood as two in excess of ten). There are other systems too, like the sexagesimal, or counting by sixties, probably not to be identified with the duodecimal system. For a brief survey of the various systems of counting cf. R.J. McClean (see bibliography).
Cardinals

CARDINALS

Traces of OE Inflection. — All through the southern dialectal area traces of OE inflection are found down to the 13th century, in Kent even later: — for are misdede (Poema Mor. 205, Lambeth MS); — in ore waste fieke hegge (Owl & N 17); — ase moch is worþ o peny to onen þet þa yetþ ase to anoþren an hondred pond (Ayenb. 91); — huanne he werreþ wiþ enne (Ayenb. 102); — weþer is beter of lwere twom (‘which of the two is better,’ Owl & N 991; both MSS have this puzzling combination of the genitive and dative forms).

Use. — The cardinal numbers are used dependently (four men) and independently (so faire two weren nevere maked In a bed to lyen samen, Havelok 2134). The definite article is a common feature with numerals (a question between the tuo, Gower CA vii 4148), but the indefinite article, although very rare, has also been attested: — for thei be manye, and he [i.e., the king] is on; And rathere schal an one man With fals conseil, for oght he can, From his wisdom be maad to falle (Gower CA vii 4161). Cf. also p. 265 (collective numerals).

OE cardinals when they occur independently govern a partitive genitive (syx wintra). The cardinals up to 19 are mostly used dependently, the decades from 20 to 90 and 110 and 120 independently. With hundred and thousand, both original nouns, independent use with a partitive genitive is the rule (hund monna, twa þusend monna). As the inflectional endings disappear, the appositional type becomes dominant (an þusennde shep, Orm. 1316; — an hundred knyghtes, Ch. CT A Kn. 1851), but the genitival type fele hundred wintre (Poema Mor. 208) and jif and sixty hundred of heþene monnen (Lawman A 18256) is found with all cardinal numbers even later in the period in the form of the of-periphrasis: — of ladies foure and twenty (Ch. CT D WB 992); — of smale whieles twelve (Gower CA i 1134). Cf. pp. 79-80.
Main Uses. — The main uses of the OE numeral *an* might be grouped under four headings: (1) the strictly numeral use, (2) the individualising use, (3) the exclusive use, and (4) the intensifying use, which seems to be based essentially on uses 2 and 3. This classification is purely practical.

The strictly numeral use calls for no comment. The individualising use means singling out an individual among others of the same kind, without particularly emphasizing the qualities possessed by this individual as against those of the others. It is this function of the numeral that serves as the starting-point for the use of *one* as an indefinite pronoun and as the indefinite article. In exclusive use the purpose is to call attention to the distinctive, exclusive qualities of an individual as against those of all others. In cases of this kind *one* is in fact equivalent to words like 'alone,' 'only,' 'single,' and 'unique.' There are several comparative philologists who believe that the original function of the Indo-European numeral denoting unity was to express exclusiveness. Between the individualising and exclusive uses of the numeral there are many degrees of emphasis and many shades of function, often difficult to define adequately. The intensifying use of the numeral 'one' seems to be based essentially on the individualising and exclusive functions, involving several aspects of 'oneness.'

It is essentially in the light of this classification that the ME uses of the numeral *one* are discussed in the following account.

Strictly Numeral Use. — A strictly numeral use of *one* is seen in cases like *se þre o beoþ o God ant o mihte, o wisdom ant o luve* (Ancr. 11) and *noght o word spak he moore than was neede* (Ch. CT A Prol. 304). As in present-day English, *one* with a distinctly numeral meaning is occasionally found in an unstressed form, having undergone the same process of weakening as the indefinite article: — *so faire two were nevere maked In a bed to lyen samen* (Havelok 2134; cf. present-day English *these shoes are all of a size*). The expression *I for one* is recorded in
Cardinals 293

Caxton: — I know myself for one (Reyn. xxx 79). Jespersen (Mod. E Gr. VII, p. 584) suggests that I for one originated as a mnemonic phrase relating to Roman figures, among which I stands for 'one,' but the phrase occurs even as early as OE (e.g., him for an þuhte þæt . . . ; cf. BTS án).

'One' as an Indefinite Pronoun. — As an indefinite pronoun ME one has reference to persons. Independent one, equivalent to 'someone' or 'person,' has occurred since early ME, often as an antecedent of a relative clause: — seóþþen com an þe leovede wel (Lawman A 7043). For further examples see p. 209. For the character of one in combinations like some one, such one, this one, a lusti oon, a sory woman was she on, etc., see the discussion of the 'propword' one, below.

'One' as the Indefinite Article. — OE dependent individualising an when placed before the governing noun gradually loses its stress and becomes what is customarily referred to as the indefinite article. The development is described on pp. 259-65.

'One . . . Other.' — The occurrence of one and other in the same statement, with implied polarity, is quite common: — þe on ber ase þau h hit were a letuarie, þe oþer ber enne sticke of gode golde (Ancr. 168); — bot if that on that other waste (Gower CA Prol. 649). Cf. pp. 153-4.

Exclusive Use. — The OE exclusive an, calling attention to an individual as distinct from all others, in the sense 'alone, only, unique,' occurs mostly after the governing noun or pronoun (se ana, þa anan, God ana), but anteposition is not uncommon either (an sunu, seo an sawul, to þæm anum tacne). It has been suggested by L. Bloomfield (see bibliography) that anteposition of the exclusive an is due to the influence of the conventional phraseology of religious Latin writings (unus Deus, solus Deus, etc.). After the governing word the exclusive one is used all through the ME period: — he is one god over alle godnesse; He is one gleaw over alle glednesse; He is one blisse over alle
blissen; He is one monne mildest mayster; He is one folkes fader and frower; He is one rihtwis ('he alone is good . . .' Prov. Alfred 45-55, MS J); — ze . . . ne schulen habben no best bute kat one (Anacr. 190); — let þe gome one (Gaw. & GK 2118). Reinforced by all, exclusive one develops into alone in earliest ME (cf. German allein and Swedish allena), and this combination, after losing its emphatic character, is in turn occasionally strengthened by all: — and al alone his wyeg than hath he nome (Ch. LGW 1777).

One is frequently appended to the dative of a personal pronoun for emphasis, evidently by analogy with the intensifying self (himself, etc.): — heo was inne in onliche stude al hire one (Anacr. 71); — non nis him one (Anacr. 71). It is also appended to the intensifying himself for additional emphasis: — and he cunne lettres lokie himself one (Prov. Alfred 86). It is difficult to say, however, whether one in this case is purely exclusive in character or whether it approaches the intensifying one discussed in the following section. Cf. also himm self himm ane (Orm. 1079). In the North (Scotland) the dative of the personal pronoun is also used before the form alane: — hym allane (Barbour vi 178); — fowre dayes er in May Þat gers men syng of 'walaway' . . . In Juin is noght bot ane, Þat is þe seuend, hym alayn (Sec. Lyr. lxxiii 38); — hir allone (Quare of Jelusy 111).

Just as the dative of the personal pronoun used with self is supplanted by the possessive (myself, ourselves, etc.; see pp. 145-8), so me one, him one, etc., become my one, his one, etc., in later ME. While the Cotton MS of Cursor reads his heven he sal have allan (809) and the Fairfax MS have him ane, the Göttingen and Trinity Coll. MSS read have his on. Further examples: — as I wente be a wode walkynge myn one (PPl. A ix 54); — wisshinge and wepinge al myn one (Gower CA i 115). In the North (Scotland) the possessive is also used before the aphetic form lane (lone, from alane, alone): — lowand God of al his lane (Sc. Leg. Saints xxii 521).1 Cf. p. 150.

1 The construction survives in modern Scots; e.g. its lane, oor lanes, and my leeful lane (cf. present-day E your good self and
INTENSIFYING USE. — As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the numeral one develops an intensive function, primarily to emphasize the quality expressed by the governing noun, pronoun, or noun-adjective group. This use seems to have arisen through an emphatic dependent use of one where several aspects of 'oneness,' such as individuality and exclusiveness ('one among others,' 'one as distinct from all others,' etc.) are included. The phenomenon seems to be a common Germanic feature, perhaps even Indo-European, to judge from its occurrence in Latin (cf. Mustanoja, pp. 22-3; see bibliography). There are instances in OE where an, placed after the governing word or word-group, seems to intensify the quality expressed by the governing word(s): — þa geseah he swa þeostre dene ane under him in niðernesse gesette ('vidit quasi vallem tenebrosam subitus se in imo positam,' Bede 212); — her is fæmne, freolecu ðæg ides Ægyptisc an on gewealde (Genesis 2229). The intensifying character of one is more obvious in the early ME instances: — a swiþe ladlic king an (Lawman A 27575); — þho wass ædiʒ wimmann an All wimmannkinn bitwenenn (Orm. 2333); — meiden eadi an, Margaret, art tu (Marg. 30); — meiden an þet ich am (Marg. 42). As this use becomes stereotyped, the character of the postpositive an becomes somewhat vague in the minds of medieval speakers and writers, with the result they tend to regard it as a kind of intensifying adverb, as shown by numerous examples in Lawman’s Brut:¹ — ane wilde bule þe

Chaucer's my joly body, for which see p. 149). There are even such advanced types as her lanesome and yours itlane (< it lane). In all these cases the meaning is 'by oneself, alone.' The datival type is also found in modern Scots; e.g. him lane and them lanes. Cf. also yours itlane, above. See W. Grant and J. M. Dixon, Manual of Modern Scots, Cambridge 1921, p. 100.

¹ This adverbial use of the postpositive ane is known only from Lawman. An, which often follows the adverb wunder, has been claimed to be 'a survival of the detached inflection,' i.e. the ending -um of OE adverbial dative plurals like wundrum which has become detached from the noun and is used as an independent
Numerals

wes wunder ane strong (A 14210); — he wes wunder ane long (A 14222); — heo scullen vinden ænne stan wunder ane veire (A 15897; þou salt finde ðare anon Ane swiðe brede ston, B); — Cadwallan . . . iwarþ him abolze bitter ane swiðe (A 30302; biterliche swiðe, B). The emphatic postpositive one is used all through the ME period, particularly to intensify superlatives: — he was þe wisiste mon þad was in Engelonde on (Prov. Alfred 24, MS T); — the falseste traytoure was he one ðat ever with ðode was fedde (Sege Melayne 173); — Troilus, the worthieste knyght Oon of this world (Ch. TC iii 781); — a mayde oon of this world the beste ypreysed (Ch. TC v 1473). There are many other instances where postpositive one, partly at least, seems to be a more or less petrified survival of the intensifying one: — witie þer was an (Lawman A and B 15520); — a wonder maister he was on (RGlouc. 405); — þat sua mightful ane (Cursor 17994, Göttingen MS); — a sorì woman was she on (Ipom. A 872); — a chapelet; so semly oon (RRose 563); — an holy doctor he was one (Stacions Rome 480).1 The early ME type þe cuddeste an of ham alle (Kath. 821-2) lives on in Chaucer’s I have the mooste stedefast wyf And eek the mekest oon that bereth lyf (CT E Mch. 1552). For a further discussion of these cases see pp. 301-5.

In a number of early ME instances (þus ha wes ant wiste, postpositive adverb. Cf. E. K. Putnam, Transactions of the Amer. Philol. Association XXXIII, 1902, xcv-xcvi, and N. Bøgholm, The Layamon Texts, Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhagen III, Copenhagen 1944, p. 55. The theory is not convincing. Neither is it at all likely that the adverbial ane is a survival of the genitive plural of OE an (e.g., anra gehwylc), as suggested by M. Macmillan, MLR XIII, 1918, 480.

1 There is reason to assume, although it has not been proved, that the combinations such one, many one, and the like, originated in the intensifying use of postpositive one.

The intensifying use of one seems to have a rough parallel in the use of prepositive one in such present-day expressions (mainly American) as this is one day when I feel really happy; — it’s one grand and glorious feeling; — I’ve had one hell of a good time in Hollywood. Cf. R. W. Zandvoort, E Studies XXII, 1940, 199-200.
meokest an meiden, Marg. 5; — meiden an eadiest, Marg. 30; — cum nu, min iweddet, leovest an wummon, Kath. 2420) an, occurring between the noun and the attributive superlative, gives additional prominence to the latter by isolating it from the noun.

For a discussion of the intensifying *one* in the type *one the best man* see the section below.

**The Type 'One the Best Man.'** — The intensifying *one* discussed in the section above constitutes a central feature in an expression which is characterised by the occurrence of *one* before a noun-adjective group defined by the definite article (*one the good man, one the best man*). The adjective usually occurs in the superlative form, the positive being recorded only in one early instance: — *þat is þat bithotene lond, þar is on þe wunsume bureh and on þe hevenliche wunienge þar alle englen inne wunien* (Trin. Hom. 185; the passage paraphrases the Latin words *scilicet terra promissionis, civilas habitacionis, conversacio celestis*). The type with a superlative adjective is attested from the 11th century on: — *þis folc ... hsef þ geworht ane þa msestan synne and Gode þa lapustan* (Exodus xxxii 21, ed. Crawford, EETS 160); — *on þe fairest toun þat was in his pousté* (RMannyng Chron. 272); — *oon the grettest remedye with others for to ayeinstonde many of thilke diseses* (Bk. London E 37 [1386]); — *ye be oon the worthisest on lyve And I the most unlykly for to thrype* (Ch. Compl. Lady 88); — *I am a sed-foul, oon the unworthisest* (Ch. PF 512); — *he becom the frendlieste wight, The gentilest, and ek the moste fre, The thrihtiest and oon the beste knyght That in his tyme was or myghte be* (Ch. TC i 1081); — *I am oon the faireste, out of drede, And goodlieste* (Ch. TC ii 746); — *of hire delit, or joies oon the leeste, Were impossible to my wit to seye* (Ch. TC iii 1310); — *I have falsed oon the gentileste That evere was, and oon the worthieste* (Ch. TC v 1056-7); — *thanne was she oon the faireste under sonne* (Ch. CT E Cl. 212; also CT F Fkl. 734); — *Hermes was oon the ferste of alle* (Gower CA iv 2606); — *on þe feirest freke for soþe þat I have seie* (WPal. 264); — *on þe sellokest
swyn swenged out þere (Gaw. & GK 1439); — of on þe uglekest unhap þat ever on erd suffred (Purity 892). The construction becomes uncommon in the 16th century; Spenser and Shakespeare are among the last to use it. It seems to die out with the Elizabethan era.

In all these instances one is emphatic and has intensifying force. The fact that it is isolated from the governing word-group by the intervening definite article makes it particularly emphatic. The meaning of on þe wunsume bureh . . . seems to be 'the (or that) very winsome city and the (that) truly heavenly abode where all angels live.' The meaning of one the best man is 'the very best man.'

This syntactical construction has also been recorded in a number of other Germanic languages, such as Middle and early Modern High German, Middle Low German, Middle Dutch, and Old Norse. It is still occasionally used in Swedish. The Greek and Latin uses of μόνος and unus as superlative intensifiers provide striking parallels to the Germanic use of the numeral 'one' with a superlative; yet contrary to what has been assumed by a number of scholars, the possibility that the Germanic type arose as an imitation of Latin usage seems excluded because the phenomenon does not occur in medieval Latin. Neither can one the best man be explained as a Germanic application of the French type une dame la plus belle. A possibility which can be neither proved nor disproved is that the construction was borrowed from one Germanic language into the others. It might also be assumed that the type one the best man is a common Germanic inheritance; yet even this theory, although it seems to offer a simple solution of the problem, has obscure points which must be clarified before it can be accepted.

There is every reason to look upon the types one the good man and one the best man as natural outgrowths of the organic structural pattern of native linguistic usage. They offer striking parallels to the common OE type min se leofa (leofesta) freond. The characteristic feature in constructions of this kind is the isolation
of an attribute or other defining word from the noun or noun-group by means of an intervening element (called a Gelenkspartikel and particule d’articulation by German and French Romance scholars). This isolation has the effect of bringing out into relief the idea expressed by the attribute, i.e., of making this word and the whole group more emphatic. This peculiar rhythmic arrangement, which probably has counterparts in most languages of the world, is responsible for such common types as all the world, both the(se) boys, half a bottle, too long a story, what a night, etc. A fuller account of this phenomenon will be given in Vol. II of the present work; meanwhile reference may be made to Mustanoja (see bibliography), particularly to pp. 28-33.

The type soon becomes stereotyped and begins to deteriorate before the end of the ME period. It becomes contaminated with current partitive expressions of the type one of the best men — possibly because one naturally tends to be associated with a partitive notion. A number of hybrid constructions have been preserved from late ME: — ye knowen wel that oon of the gretteste and moost sovereyn thyng that is in this world is unytee and pees (Ch. CT B Mel. 2868); — oon of the gretteste auctour that men rede (Ch. CT B NP 2984); — oon of the best farynge man on lyve (Ch. CT F Fkl. 932); — oon of the beste entecched creature (Ch. TC v 832); — ane of þe curtast kyng (WAlex. 2388); — of all France I am one of the best and truest knyght that be in it (Caxton Aymon 272).

For the corresponding plural type two the best men see the following section.

The Plural Type. — The plural type corresponding to one the best man has been attested since the 10th century: — þær wæron þreo þa betstan ele (Blickl. Horn. 73); — ic eac in mid mec geleædde mine þrie þa getreowestan frynd (‘tres fidelissimos mecum induxeram amicos,’ Alexander’s Letter 45, ed. Rypins, EETS 161); — þre þe beste yles þese beþ and mest couþe (RGlouc. 34); — and treuíl astit after him tuo hundered and seven þe realest
rinkes of þe reaume dede riȝt þat ilke (WPal. 3944); — of two the firste Mathew speketh in his gospel (Wyclif EWks 2); — oute of ðilke hilles springeth þe noblest ryveres of al Europe (Trev. Higd. I 199); — to two þe derrest of hys dukes (WAlex. 1909); — I devise to Johane my daughter . . . .iii. the best pilwes after choyes of the forseyde Thomas my sone (Fifty Wills 5). The type is occasionally found in Elizabethan writings, and sporadic instances occur even later. There are parallel cases with few and some: — mid feawum þam getrywestum mannum (Apollonius [OE] 6); — some þe messagers (RGlouc. 2718); — some the greatest States-men o' the kingdom (Ben Jonson's Magnetick Lady I i 2.) Cf. pp. 84-6.

This plural type, which also occurs in MHG, calls for little comment. It is difficult to say, however, whether a partitive meaning can be associated with it. Most of the instances — perhaps all — can be explained without presuming an implication of partitivity. Two the first strokes, for example, might be taken simply as an early variant of the first two strokes (the type prevailing today), with emphasis rather on two. But that the case is not quite so clear is suggested by the fact that a parallel OE instance, sume þa boceras (Matth. xii 38), is a translation of the Latin partitive expression quidam de scribis. For some þe messagers in the most ancient MS (c 1325) of RGlouc., line 2718, three 15th-century copies read so(m)me of . . . For two þe derrest of hys dukes (WAlex. 1909) one MS reads tua of þe derrest. This suggests that the plural type tends to be associated with a partitive notion.

'OF ANE.' — The phrase of ane, recorded in northern and Scottish texts from c 13001 to the 16th century, is perhaps an imitation of the Old Norse type eĩnna mestr 'of ones,' i.e., 'of all,' as suggested in the NED. It is used mainly as a superlative intensifier (the starkest man of ane, Barbour iv 74), but in Henryson's Bludy Serk, written at the end of the ME period,

1 According to Smith, Specimens p. xliii, the phrase best of an is found in Cursor Mundi.
it is also found in connection with the positive degree: — a fould gyane of ane (18).

**PROPWORD 'ONE.' —** An adjective followed by what Sweet (I, p. 67) calls the 'propword' one (a good one, etc.) has become a popular equivalent of a substantivised adjective in Mod. E. The origin of this construction was the subject of a long controversy between Einenkel (Anglia XXVI, XXXVI, XXXVIII) and K. Luick (Anglia XXIX, XXXVII). Some authorities trace the usage back to OE, some to ME. G. Langenfelt thinks that the use of one as a true propword does not go back farther than the 15th century.

In order to give an idea of the complexity of the problems connected with the rise of the type a good one a brief survey of opinions expressed by Luick, Einenkel, E. Gerber, Jespersen, and Langenfelt seems appropriate.

Luick (Anglia XXIX, XXXVII): — The construction goes back to OE expressions like man an, gast an, dene ane (postposition of an in an indefinite function resembling that of the indefinite article), a type common in ME, especially since 1300 (a sory woman was she on, Ipom. A 872). The use of one after adjectives probably makes its first appearance in cases where the adjective is preceded by so or other adverbs of the same type (cf., fat so myzty oon, Cursor 17994, Cotton MS), a construction which, L. believes, goes back to the 11th century or to even earlier times. It is possible that OE combinations of the type æghwilc an, swelc an have contributed to the development, but they are not responsible for it. The ME expression the beste oon may also have had a contributory influence.

Einenkel (particularly Anglia XXXVIII and Syntax, p. 68): — In earliest OE, postpositive sum (e.g., munuc sum), like other postpositive pronouns, is used to give emphasis to the governing word. The postposition of an sets in at a time when postpositive sum is losing its emphasizing power, the emphasizing function of sum being thus transferred to postpositive an. It is possible, according to E., that this use of an has been streng-
thened by the influence of the corresponding Danish construction since the end of the OE period. It is also possible that the habit of placing the numeral *an* after certain indefinite pronouns (*æghwilc an*) has played some role as a contributory influence.

Gerber (see bibliography), p. 13: — The type *a lusty oon* develops from constructions like *the beste oon*. Echoing Einenkel G. believes that this type occurred by the side of *oon the best* (for which see pp. 297-9) and *he was a maister oon*.

Jespersen (see bibliography): — Gerber’s theory is not convincing; Luick is on safer ground in referring to OE examples where the numeral *an* is placed after an adjective. J. thinks, however, against Luick, that the postposition of *one* when the adjective is preceded by *so* is due to the same psychological factors as lie behind the type *so great a man* and is therefore not a good example to illustrate the development of the prop word *one*. J. accepts Einenkel’s explanation according to which combinations like *œghwilc an* and *swelc an* are emphatic, but does not fully share the latter’s view that the expression *one the best* plays a part in the rise of the prop word. He believes that *a good one* is in some respects comparable to *it is* and *there is*. In other words, J. thinks that *one* becomes necessary because speakers are accustomed to the rhythm of *a good man*, *a great house*, and the like, and feel that expressions like *a good* and *a great* are rather bald. In order to restore the rhythmic balance they say *a good one, a great one*. Thus in *a yong wyf and a fair* the balance is restored by adding *one: a yong wyf and a fair oon*.

Langenfelt (see bibliography): — In ME the combination of an adjective and *one* practically always has reference to persons, very rarely to things. In many expressions of this kind *one* is used as an equivalent to 'a person.' L. believes that this meaning is to be assigned to *one* in many early cases, such as *ich of alle synfulle am on mest ifuled of sunne* (Lofsong 1240), *Þe cuddeste an of ham alle* (Kath. 821-2), *a jolif on wyþoute lak* (Ferumbras 251), and *I was a lusty oon* (Ch. CT D WB 605). In instances of
this kind one cannot be a true propword because it has an independent meaning, 'a person.'

Langenfelt believes that the roots of the propword one are to be found in everyday colloquial speech. The use of postpositive one in poetry does not shed much light on the early history of the propword because it is conditioned by the requirements of metre and rhyme. A typical instance of this kind is a wonder maister he was one (RGlouc. 405). L. also emphatically refuses to believe that the type oon the best faringe man plays any part in the development of the propword. Neither does he share Jespersen's view that the ME speaker felt that something was lacking in constructions like the good, and a fair. His view of the rise of the propword one is as follows —

The ME speaker was not influenced by expressions used in poetry (a sory woman was she on, etc.), but he was accustomed to combinations like each one, every one, such (a) one, and many (a) one, where he still felt the original numeral character of one, and to those like some one and any one, where one was originally equivalent to 'a person.' In addition to these, the use of one 'a person' in phrases like a lusty oon also contributed to the development of one into a propword. A need to avoid ambiguity may also have promoted the use of one, particularly with adjectives referring to things, ideas, etc., and to persons. A good, for example, might have stood for 'a good man,' 'something good,' 'a good deed,' 'kindness,' and the good for 'all good men,' 'the good man,' or 'goodness.' From combinations with adjectives of this kind the use of one spread to all adjectives, even to those with which the danger of ambiguity was not so great (blind, strong, broad, etc.). As the earliest instance of a true propword L. quotes RMannyaeg HS 3268 (a moche felde; so grete one never he behelde). In Chaucer's I have the mooste stedefast wyf, And eek the mekest oon that bereth lyf (CT E Mch. 1552) one has reached a stage where it wavers between an independent meaning ('a person') and the function of a propword.

These are the principal theories concerning the origin of the
Propword *one* put forward so far. Each of them has shed light on some essential aspect of the problem. Perhaps the most satisfying explanation is that proposed by Langenfelt, with some minor reservations. It would seem, for example, that one source of the modern propword is the intensifying use of postpositive *one* in OE and early ME (see pp. 295-7). It would be a little difficult to believe that cases like *pat so myzly oon* (Cursor 17994, Cotton MS), *so grete one never he behelde* (RMan-nyng HS 3268), a chapelet; *so seemly oon* (RRose 563), *I have the mooste stedefast wyf* And eek the mekest oon that bereth lyf (Ch. CT E Mch. 1552), and the like are not really petrified survivals of earlier constructions with intensifying *one*. There is also some reason to assume, although it has not been proved, that combinations like *each one, such one, many one*, etc., go back to the old intensifying use of postpositive *one*. A detailed discussion of these constructions will be included in Vol. II.

In the course of early ME the intensifying use of *one* becomes stereotyped and conventional, and its original character tends to be obscured. In some cases, as shown on pp. 295-6, it comes to be regarded as an intensifying adverbial element, and between a noun and its attribute it tends to lose its stress and come to be regarded as the indefinite article; *leovest an wummon*, Kath. 2420, for example, becomes *leovest a wummon* in the least ancient of the three 13th-century MSS of this text. When a noun does not follow, *one* retains its stress (*so grete on, the mekest on*, etc.), but obviously comes under the influence of certain other uses of *one*, above all of its use for 'a person.' It would seem, then, that the modern propword *one* is essentially an amalgamation of the intensifying postpositive *one* and the independently used indefinite *one*.

That *one* in these combinations may be the petrified intensifying *one* is suggested, for example, by the fact that even in later ME poetry the form *moni on* commonly follows a plural noun (e.g., *barons and kniztes and heiemen moni on*, RGlouc. 6031).
Langenfelt is obviously right in emphasizing the popular origin of the propword *one* and the part played by such current phrases as *some one*, *such one*, and the like. Another relevant observation is that in the large majority of ME cases the reference is to persons, the earliest known instances where inanimate objects are referred to dating from the 14th century (*so grete on* and *so seemly oon*). E. Kruisinga (*RES* X, 1934, 331-7) calls attention to a passage in *Ancrane Riwle* where, he believes, the propword *one* is used with reference to an inanimate thing: — *sutele prooffunge is þet heo (= Ure Lefði) was muchel þe þe heold so silence. Hwat seche we oþre? O god one were inouh vorbisne to alle* (71). It is more likely, however, that the *one* following *god* is to be interpreted as 'alone.'

Constructions of the type *a young wife and a fair*, without *one*, become rare after the middle of the 16th century and are supplanted by the type *a young wife and a fair one*. The popularity of the propword increases rapidly at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries (cf. Franz, *Sh. Gr.*, § 363). It is not until the early part of the Mod. E period, however, that the propword is used more frequently with reference to inanimate objects. The use of the plural form *ones* is likewise Modern English.

**NUMERALS FROM TWENTY-ONE TO NINETY-NINE**

In OE and ME composite numerals from twenty-one to ninety-nine the units come before the tens: — *wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye* (Ch. CT A Prol. 24). The same applies to the ordinals: — *in þe sixe and þrittiþ e er* (RGlouc. 9129). A somewhat different type is seen in *thritty dayes and two* (Ch. CT B NP 4380) and *twenty degrees and oon* (Ch. CT B NP 4385). The modern type *twenty-one* does not appear until the end of the ME period: — *the twenty-five day of September* (Plumpton Corr. 27 [1471-6]).

The formation of composite numerals by multiplication has
always been popular, especially among poets: — als so þis boke is distynged in thris fyfty psalmes (RRolle EWr. 6); — I have herd seyd ek tymes twyes twelve (Ch. TC v 97); — of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten (Ch. CT A Prol. 576).

ORDINALS

For the formation of composite ordinals from the twenty-first to the ninety-ninth see p. 305.

'Other — Second.' — The ordinal expressing that which follows the first is other, used especially in the earlier part of the period: — þe verste boe of prede is ontreuþe, þe oþer onworþhede, þe þridd e overweninge (Ayenb. 17). Second (from F second, L secundus) appears towards the end of the 13th century: — in þe secunde zere þat he verst bissop was (RGlouc. 5724).

'The Second (Third) Best.' — The idiom the second (third) best has been attested since earliest ME: — swa al swa sugge þ writen Þ æ witezen idihen þat wes þat þridde mæste vild þe averse wes here idih (Lawman A and B 27482); — to Watkyn Asshwell my secunde best furre and gowne (Fifty Wills 114).

'Second to None.' — The phrase second to none has been recorded since later ME: — Troilus was nevere unto no wight ... in no degree secounde (Ch. TC v 836).

Cardinals for Ordinals. — In ME, cardinal numbers are not infrequently used for ordinals, particularly with reference to years, days of the month, and the like, and in the numbering of chapters in a book: — in the elleventhe zeer, in the thriddle moneth, in oon of the moneth ('anno undecimo, tertio mense, una mensis,' Wyclif Ezek. xxxi 1; the firste dai of the moneth, Purvey); — þe fiftene chapitre (Cloud 5); — here biginiþ þe fiv and fifty chapitre (Cloud 102); — the twenty-five day of September (Plumpton Corr. 27 [1471-6]).
HALF

The OE and ME practice of connecting half with an ordinal number to express a half-unit less than the corresponding cardinal number is an ancient inheritance. Other half, for example, stands for 'one and a half,' thridde half or half thrid for 'two and a half.' The construction becomes rarer in later ME. Examples: — half ferþe zer (Orm. 13777); — half feirth of eln was þe length, And oþer half þe brede (Cursor 16600, Cotton MS); — take oþer half pound of flower or rys (Two Cookery-Bks 25).

The petrified accusative halvendel (OE þone healfan dæl) occurs now and then for half: — and he nat yet made halvendel the fare (Ch. TC v 335).

FRACTIONS

The fractions are formed by adding deal or part to an ordinal number; the ordinal alone may be elliptically used for this purpose. The phrase two part(s) or two deal occurs for 'two thirds,' chiefly in Scotland: — mair than twa part of his rout (Barbour v 47).

INDEFINITE USE OF NUMERALS

ROUND NUMBERS. — Round numbers (tens, hundreds, and thousands) occur not infrequently in an indefinite sense. Chaucer, for example, favours twenty in this function: — he that hath ben languysshyng This twenty wynter (PF 473); — twenty tyme yswouned hath he thanne (LGW 1342); — and forth he goth, a twenty devel way (CT A Rv. 4257; for the phrase a twenty devil way cf. NED devil 19; cf. also MED a devel-wei); — twenty thousand men han lost hir lypes For stryvyng with hir lemmans and hir wyves (CT D WB 1997). Forty, popular with Shakespeare and other Elizabethan writers (cf. K. Elze, Shakespeare Jahrbuch XI, 1876, 288-94), is quite frequent also in ME: —
ñe feste . . . Lastede with gret joying Fourti dawes and sumdel mo (Havelok 2950); — he shall Where that he cometh, overall, In fourty places . . . Sege thyng that nevere was don ne wrought (RRose 3261). Fifty is also found as an indefinite number: — in a wyndou þer we stod we custe us fyfty syþe (Harley Lyr. xxiv 23). But the most popular among the tens for expressing an indefinitely large number is sixty: — mo þan sixti þeve s (Havelok 1956); — damisels sexti and mo (Orfeo 88, Auchinleck MS; damsellis fyfty and mony mo, Harley MS 3810). Seventy, eighty, and ninety are exceedingly rare in this function, while hundred and thousand are quite common: — I preche so as ye han herd bifoore And telle an hundred false japes moore (Ch. CT C Pard. 394); — Ich þonke [30w] a þowsen d sythes (PPl. G xix 17); — though I yow tolde Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo Of kynges, princes, dukes, erles bolde (Ch. CT B Mk. 3838).

OTHER NUMBERS. — It is not only round numbers that are used for expressing an indefinite number. Phrases like fourteen (fifteen) days and a fortnight are occasionally employed in ME texts to indicate a long time: — fro many a worthi knyght Hath his lady gon a fourtenyght (Ch. TC v 334); — a ryche feste . . . That lastyd holy a fortenyght (Gaw. & CC 641); — þer þe fest watþ ildæhe ful fiften dayes (Gaw. & GK 44). The occurrence of seven to express any indefinitely large number is perhaps due to the influence of the Bible: — I have sewide the this seven yer (PPl. A ix 66). Score is also used for this purpose: — and drun mani hundreth score (Cursor 6278, Cotton MS).

CONVENTIONAL AND SYMBOLICAL USE OF NUMERALS

A phenomenon in some respects comparable to the indefinite use of numerals is their conventional and symbolical use, characteristic above all of religious writings and popular beliefs. The numerals most frequently found in this use are three, five,
seven, nine, twelve, and fifteen (three things which make a man leave his home, the five joys of the Virgin, the nine orders of angels, the fifteen signs before doomsday, etc.). For this phenomenon cf. W. F. Hopper and G. Graband (see bibliography).

The symbolical northern and Midland phrase to set on seven, used in reference to persons doing wonders, using all their might, etc. (e.g., thus he settez on seven with his sekyre knyghttez, Morte Arthure 2131), is originally said of God, who created the world in seven days (þou maker of middelert þat most art of miht, Boþe þe sonne and þe see þou sette uppon sevene, Pistill Susan 264).

MULTIPLICATIVE USE OF NUMERALS

In addition to the common multiplicatives (ones, twies, thries, two times, four sith, threefold, etc.; e.g., of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten, Ch. CT A Prol. 576; cf. p. 306, above), there are means of multiplication which do not exist in present-day English. One of these is the type by the tenth part (deal) 'tenfold,' by a thousand part (deal) 'a thousandfold:' — he drank ful muchel moore, An honred part, than he hadde don bifoore (Ch. CT D Sum. 2062); — in this world is noon it lyche, Ne by a thousand deel so riche (RRose 1074).

As in OE, cardinals followed by so are used as multiplicatives:
— the hethene wer twoo so fele ('twice as many,' Rich. CL 3150); — and yit of beaute was she two so ryche (Ch. LGW 2291); — forbede a love, and it is ten so wod (Ch. LGW 736). Another multiplicative type is such three 'three times as many or much:' — þou shalt take with þe suche twoo (Flor. & Bl. 686); — hii hadde suche þritti men as were on hor side (RGlouc. 439; as were on þe oþer side, several MSS); — þai say þat þis es worth swilk thre (Yw. & Gaw. 1264); — swyche fyve (Ch. TC ii 126); — to have moo floures suche seven (Ch. BD 408). This type goes back to OE, too; cf. ... fræt ... fyftyne men, ond oþer swylc ut offerede ('and carried away as many more,' Beow. 1583). Cf. also Fr. Klaeber, MLN XVII, 1902, 323-4.
The preposition *by* is the usual means of expressing the distributive idea: — *feondliche heo feothen, bi þeosende heo felle* (Lawman A 4740); — *they than thanken hym ... by two, by three* (Ch. CT F Sq. 354). This use of *by* goes back to OE. The type occurs in French, too (*par centaines*, etc.). Cf. p. 373.

**STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF NUMERALS**

(The numeral *one* is also discussed in studies dealing with the indefinite article; for these see pp. 273-4.)

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ADVERBS


ADVERBS OF DEGREE


Relative incidence of some common adverbs of degree, p. 330.

OTHER ADVERBS

'As.' — As with nouns and adjectives, p. 331. — As who, p. 332. As with adverbs and prepositions, p. 332. — As with infinitives, p. 333. — As in exhortations and asseverations, p. 334. — As in comparisons of equality and similarity, see p. 278. — As as an adverb of degree, see p. 317.

'So.' — So in exhortations and asseverations, p. 335. — Other uses, p. 336. — So in comparisons of equality and similarity, see p. 278. — So in the proportional comparative, see p. 282. — So as an adverb of degree, see p. 324.

'There' and 'Where.' — Anticipatory and existential there, p. 337. — There in blessings and curses, p. 337. — There and where as relative adverbs, p. 337.

Yet, p. 338.

That and this as demonstrative adverbs, see pp. 172 and 175.
Adverbs of negation, p. 339.
Prepositional adverbs, see p. 424.

COMPARISON
Bibliography, p. 343.

FORM

FORMATION OF ADVERBS FROM ADJECTIVES. — In OE, adverbs are derived from adjectives by adding *-e* (*heard > hearde*, etc.). If the adjective stem ends in *-e*, there is no formal distinction between the adjective and the adverb.

Since this procedure is commonly used to form adverbs from adjectives in *-lic* (*freondlic, freondlice*, etc.), the ending *-lice* comes to be looked upon as an adverbial suffix and to be used to form adverbs even from adjectives which do not end in *-lic* (cf. *eornoste*, adj. and adv. — *eornostlice*, adv.).

Final *-e* ceases to be pronounced in late northern OE and in ME, with the result that the formal difference between the adjective and the adverb derived from it by means of the suffix *-e* disappears. The resulting confusion provides favourable ground for the use of adjectives as adverbs and vice versa (see pp. 315 and 648-50). The need for avoiding ambiguity leads to a great increase in the use of the adverbial suffix *-lice*, later succeeded by the form *-li* (*-ly*). This suffix is normally added to the positive form, but occasionally also to the comparative (*murierly*; cf. p. 341).

In addition to the use of the suffixes *-e* and *-lice*, there are other, though less common, ways of forming adverbs from adjectives in OE. One of these is the use of the accusative case of certain adjectives in adverbial function (*full, lytel*, etc.).

1 Cf. particularly K. Uhler, *Die Bedeutungsgleichheit der altenglischen Adjektiva und Adverbia mit und ohne *'-lic(e)'*,* AF LXII, Heidelberg 1926.

2 For the appearance of the form *-ly* in ME cf. NED *-ly*, suffix. 

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2 For the appearance of the form *-ly* in ME cf. NED *-ly*, suffix.
FORMATION OF ADVERBS FROM NOUNS. — Certain case-forms of nouns are used in adverbial function. For the adverbial genitive see p. 88, for the adverbial dative (instrumental) p. 104, and for the adverbial accusative p. 110.

USE

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. — The adverbs are normally used to modify verbs, adjectives, and adverbs; they may also modify whole sentences (e.g., *and heryest false goddes cursedly*, Ch. CT B Mk. 3419; *who wolde thanne resonably wenen that blisfulnesse were in swichehonours as ben zyen by vycious schrewes?* Ch. Bo. iii m 4. 11). According to the nature of this modifying function the adverbs are usually classified as follows —

1. Adverbs of degree and quantity
2. Adverbs of manner (modal adverbs)
3. Adverbs of time (temporal adverbs)
4. Adverbs of place (local adverbs)
5. Adverbs of negation (negative adverbs)

From the point of view of the present discussion the most important groups are the adverbs of degree and those of negation.

ADJECTIVE OR ADVERB? — Owing largely to the loss of final -e and the resulting assimilation in form (see p. 314), adjectives are often used in adverbial function. The matter is further complicated by the existence of certain functional areas where the choice between an adjective and an adverb is a matter of subtle and elusive differences in mental attitude. Thus a modal adverb may be found in an expression where modern usage would prefer an appositive or predicate adjective: — *he nas nat right fat, I undertake, But looked holwe, and therto sobrely* (Ch. 2).

There are even cases (though they are rare) where the adverb *well* modifies itself: — *Alisaunder wel wele seeþ þat his kniȝtes dismaited beþ* (KAlis. 1747).
Adverbs

CT A Prol. 289); — the ship . . . In which Custance sit ful pitously (Ch. CT B ML 970). For a more detailed discussion of the functional relationships between adjectives and adverbs see pp. 648-50.

**FUNCTIONAL WEAKENING.** — The gradual functional weakening through frequent use which plays such an important part in general linguistic development is clearly noticeable in the use of English adverbs, particularly in the adverbs of negation (see pp. 339-40), in numerous adverbs of degree, and in temporal adverbs like soon and presently, originally meaning 'immediately,' but now used in the sense 'before very long.'

**ADVERBS OF DEGREE**

The adverbs of degree are so called because they modify the degree of a quality or the intensity of an action. They may have an intensifying or weakening effect on the meaning of the governing word. Intensifying adverbs are far more numerous than those with a weakening effect.

A brief discussion of the most common adverbs of degree is given in the following.

**INTENSIFYING ADVERBS**

'All.' — OE eall is uncommon as an intensifying adverb, but in ME it is frequently used to modify adjectives and adverbs (e.g., with that word sche wax al milde, Gower CA vi 1918, and thus was it spoken to and fro . . . Al prively behinde his bak, Gower CA i 2069). After the end of the ME period it becomes uncommon in this function, although a number of stereotyped phrases have survived down to the present day, such as all right. ME all is also used to intensify verbs (that she ne myght al abate his pris, RRose 286), particularly the participles (wenest þu hi bringe so liȝtliche To Godes riche al singinge? Owl & N 855; — al wæs þe king abolzen swa bíþ þe
Adverbs of Degree

wilde bar, Lawman A 21261; — he was al a-wondred, WPal. 872). Intensifying all is often found in combination with holly 'wholly,' one, utterly (outrely), suddenly, only, ready, to, and most; some of these combinations have survived to the present day (alone, already, and almost). Alone (from all one) has been recorded since earliest ME (all one... zede he till Goess allterr, Orm. 137). In the course of time the all-element in alone becomes weakened, and the word has to be reinforced by another all (in a temple he fond hym al allone, Ch. TC iv 947). Cf. p. 294. Since OE and early ME all has occurred with prepositions, conjunctions, and various particles, a use which survives in words like although, also, and as (for also and as cf. below). Albeit, the earliest known instances of which occur in Chaucer's and Gower's writings (e.g., al be it that I shal ben nevere the better, Ch. LGW 1364), is perhaps a calque on OF tout soit il. For the use of all and its combinations in concessive clauses see p. 468. For the intensifying use of all cf. also MED al adv.

Alles, the adverbial genitive of all, is used as an intensifier (þo it alles out brac, RGlouc. 6567) down to the end of the 14th century. The partitive genitive plural aller (alder, alther), a rather common superlative intensifier in ME, is discussed on p. 286. The OE adverb eallunga 'entirely' survives in ME as allinge (þo nolde Cassibel þat hii ssolde allinge faile, RGlouc, 1103) and allinges (it is not allynges of suche savour. Mandev. 189). Al out 'utterly' is first attested about 1300 (he was riche himsulf, and þat lond povere al out, RGlouc. 7728; — his hart begane to faile all out, Barbour iii 312). It seems to be losing ground in Caxton's time, to judge from the fact that he alters Trevisa's all out into utterly. Altogether (altogederes) has occurred in intensifying function since early ME. For also (als, as), from OE eall swa, see below.

'Also (Als, As).' — Also (als, as), from OE eall swa, occurs frequently in ME in an intensifying function, though only with adverbs expressing or implying velocity or immediateness of action (blive, fast, quick, soon, swithe, tile, and the like): —
Aþelbrus also swiþe Wente to halle blive ('at once,' Horn 471; variant reading wel swiþe); — he shulde take the acquittance as quik and to the qued scheue it ('as quickly as possible,' PPl. B xiv 189); — she gan in hire hed to pulle, and that as faste (Ch. TC ii 657). For a discussion of other uses of as see p. 331 below.

'CLEAN (CLEANLY).’ — The adverbs clean and cleanly 'completely, quite' have occurred as intensifiers of verbs and prepositional phrases since OE: — cristendom was al clene vorlore (RGlouc. 4725; clanliche, Trin.MS; clentliche, Digby MS); — al was clene out of memoire (Gower CA iv 659).

'DOWNRIGHT.’ — The intensifying adverb downright 'out and out' has been attested since ME: — Adam and Eve . . . Shulde deye doune riȝte (PPl. B xviii 191).

'ENOUGH.’ — Used in the sense 'very' since OE, enough usually stands after the adjective or adverb it modifies: — þo wond he þere damaiseles gent and vair ino3 (RGlouc. 562).

'ENTIRELY.’ — In ME and early Mod. E, in conjunction with verbs like love, pray, sorwe, and trust, this adverb has the meaning 'with all one's heart' (love þyn enemy entyerly, Godes heste to fulfille, PPl. C xviii 142), by the side of the now usual sense 'completely' (Jesu Crist is entierly al good, Ch. CT I Pars. 1007). Both meanings are first recorded at the end of the 14th century.

'FAIR(E, FAIRLY).’ — As an intensifying adverb, fair(e) 'fully' has been attested since about 1300: — þo havede Havelok fayre geten (Havelok 930). The variant form fairly is first recorded in the Ayenbite: — of þan þet . . . al þet ofre doþ and ziggeþ altogidere vayrtiche blamyep (59).

'FAST(E).’ — The original meaning of this adverb is 'immovably, firmly.' In many cases its original modal function passes into an intensifying use, as in fast asleep and fast by (e.g., the Tabard faste by the Belle, Ch. CT A Prol. 719), and in conjunction with verbs (she faste Ay biddyng in hire orisons ful faste, Ch. CT G SN 140).
'FELE.' — This adverb is used in intensifying function in later ME: — he bounden him so fele sore ('very,' Havelok 2442); — thoru wimmen ðat he luved sa fele He fell fra live and saul hele (Cursor 8991, Cotton MS). It is never very common, and goes out of use at the end of the 16th century.

'FERLY.' — This adverb occurs from OE down to the 16th century; it becomes rare in later ME. It stands for 'very, extremely, terribly' (he felt him hevy and ferly seke, RMannyng Langtoft 18; — ðis foules singeð ferly fele, Harley Lyr. xi 10).

'FIN(E, FINELY).'</p>— These adverbs, used since the 14th century, also occur as intensifiers with the meanings 'completely, quite, very:' — the husbonde knew the estris wel and fyn (Ch. LGW 1715); — [he] held him finliche i-fed (WPal. 768); — I wowche hit saf fynly (Gawain & GK 109).

'FULL (FULLY).'</p>— In the meanings 'completely, fully, very' full is popular even in OE. It is used to intensify numerals, adjectives, and adverbs, being second only to swiðe in popularity. This is the case also in early ME, down to c 1250, after which swiðe begins to lose ground. From 1250 on full is the prevailing intensifier of adjectives and adverbs in the North and the N Midlands, and a century later all over the country. In the second half of the 14th century it is found with the comparative forms of adjectives and adverbs (in Loreyn her notes bee Full swetter than in this contre, RRose 768; — these walles of berile That shoone ful lyghter than a glas, Ch. HF 1289), although less frequently than well and much. It is occasionally found with verbs, mostly with past participles. In biblical translations full is often used to render the intensive element of Latin verbal prefixes, like ex-, per-, and con:- — for what my trespas . . . hast thou thus fulbrent ('exarsisti,' Wyclif Gen. xxxi 36); — as gret thunder in reyn thei shul sowne ful ('personabunt,' Purvey Ecclus xl 13). Its use in phrases like ful iwis 'most certainly' is rather common (e.g., ich am witi ful iwis, Owl & N 1189). In later ME the usual meaning of full is 'very' (e.g., ful selde, ful harde, PPI. B Prol. 20, 21; — ful symple and coy; ful faire and
Jetisly, Ch. CT A ProL. 119, 124). In the far less common meaning 'completely' *full* is found particularly with numerals (*siþ þis world bigon to be Is foure þousonde six hundride fol*, Cursor 9227, Trin. MS) and participles (*ful unawysed of his woo comynge*, Ch. TC i 378).

In the 15th century intensifying *full* continues to be popular, although the competition of *right* somewhat diminishes its use. *Full* is still quite common in the 16th century, although in the second half of it *very* occurs much more frequently. Shakespeare makes considerable use of *full*, but in the 17th century it is regarded as an archaism.

*Fully* occurs as a verbal intensifier from OE on (*nadde þis kniȝt folliche is reson ysed*, RGlouc. 6262); as an adjectival intensifier it has been attested since early ME (*nat fully quyk, ne fully dede they were*, Ch. CT A Kn. 1015).

'Great(e, Greatly).' — In the meanings 'very' and 'much' *great(e)* and *greatly* have occurred as adverbs of degree since ME. The form *great(e)* is only occasionally used; there are two (somewhat ambiguous) cases in the Cloud: — *Moyses . . . wiþ grete longe travayle he clombe up* (126); — *wiþoutyn grete longe travayle* (127). The form *greatly* is common in ME, especially as a verbal intensifier (*Þan William was gretliche glad*, WPal. 975).

'Hard(e).' — As a verbal intensifier, in the sense 'greatly, extremely,' this adverb occurs from OE on (cf. *him hearde þyrste*, Ælfric Hom. II 256): — *we maþen beon eþe of-dredde and herde us adrede* (Poema Mor. 157). *Hardly* does not occur as an adverb of degree until the 16th century.

'Hol (Hoolly);' see *whole, wholly*.

'Huge (Hugely).' — *Hugely* 'very greatly, immensely' is rather frequent from the second half of the 14th century on, especially in connection with verbs (*Þat ymage was hugeliche iworschipped of his servauntes*, Trev. Higd. II 279). *Huge*, which occurs only with adjectives, also appears in late ME.
Adverbs of Degree

(after Messane, an huge gret cité, Lydg. Troy Bk ii 7200; a somewhat doubtful example); — yone house is sa huge hie (Golagros 498).

'INLY.' — Through the meanings 'heartily' and 'thoroughly' this adverb becomes an adverb of degree meaning 'fully, extremely' in ME: — the sonne . . . Saw nevere yet . . . So inly fair and goodly as is she (Ch. TC iii 1606).

'MUCH.' — Much (muchel, mikel) goes back to OE micle, micles, and miclum. The first two of these are used for strengthening the comparative, and miclum is used as a verbal intensifier. In ME, much is the commonest intensifier of the comparative degree. In early ME it also begins to occur with adjectives in the positive, in the sense 'very:' — forþi wass itt mikell rihht þatt he Johan wass nemmnedd (Orm. 763); — þe whiche kyng his prayers to God þat day were moche worthy (Trev. Higd. VI 349). In this use, however, much has never been very popular (except in a limited number of works, such as the Ayenbite and Pecock's and Caxton's writings). The combination too much, in the sense of simple too, occurs in some works: — þe materie þet is to moche abomynable (Ayenb. 49). As a verbal intensifier much is not common in early ME, but begins to gain ground along with the retreat of swiþe. From the beginning of the 14th century on it is one of the most popular adverbs of degree with verbs, except in the North: — how moche lovist þou me? (Gesta Rom. 49).

The use of the comparative more and the superlative most in the periphrastic comparison of adjectives and adverbs is discussed on pp. 278-80.

'NEVER SO.' — Never so, indicating an unlimited degree or amount, has been used in concessive clauses since the end of the OE period. It is not uncommon in ME texts: — were he never kniht so strong (Havelok 80); — be he never so vicious withinne (Ch. CT D WB 943). Parallel expressions have been recorded in some other Germanic languages, particularly in

'Out.' — Out and out and out 'completely, quite' have been attested since the end of the 13th century: — here names for here schrewede: ne beoth nozt forzute ut (Beket 1956; Percy Soc. [NED]); — for out and out he is the worthieste (Ch. TC ii 739).

'Outrely;' see utterly.

'Over.' — In the sense 'too, exceedingly, very' this adverb has been used to modify adjectives, adverbs, and verbs since OE. For particulars, see NED over- 27-30. ME examples: — over-swiþe þu hi herest (Owl & N 1518); — over-muchel suffraunce is nat good (Ch. CT B Mel. 2657).

'Perfect(ly).' — Parfitliche in the sense 'wholly, completely, fully' occurs in ME texts since the 14th century. It is common with adjectives and verbs: — parfitly hir children loved she (Ch. CT E Cl. 690). The form parfit is rare and is not found with verbs: — Samuel, the perfite hooly man (Lydg. MP xxxiv 113).

'Passing(e, Passingly).' — As intensifying adverbs of degree passing(e) and passingly 'in a surpassing degree, exceedingly' have occurred since the 14th century: — som men hadde in to alle þe body senewes . . . passynge wonderful in strengþe (Trev. Higd. ii 191); — oon preysed hym in metre passingliche in þis manere (Trev. Higd. vii 483). In the 15th century, outside Scotland, they are among the most popular adverbs qualifying adjectives and adverbs, less frequently verbs.

'Pure (Purely).' — Pure, which survives in words like
Adverbs of Degree

purblind, has been used in the sense 'completely, quite' to intensify adjectives and adverbs since the end of the 13th century: — he bicom sone þerafter pur gidy and wod (RGlouc. 1542); — wo-so bi king Willames daye stou hert oþer hind, Me ssolde pulle out boþe is eye and makye him pur blind (RGlouc. 7713). Pure is also found in the somewhat weakened sense 'very:' — whan deth awaketh hem of here wele that were here so ryche, Than aren hit pure poure thyngis in purgatorie other in helle (PPl. C xvi 309); — so pure suffraunt was hir wyt (Ch. BD 1010).

For expressions like for pure ashamed and for pure abaissht, see pp. 381-2.

Purely, in the same sense as pure, also makes its appearance at the end of the 13th century: — þe king lovede  is wif anon so purliche and so vaste þat al is herte onliche on hire on he caste (RGlouc. 1512).

'QUITE (QUITELY).'</br>Quite 'completely' has been attested since the 14th century: — Lyndeseie he destroied quite alle bidene (RManynge, Langtoft 45; the French original [Langtoft I 360] reads et Lyndeseye aprés trestut destruayt). Quitely is occasionally found with the same meaning, but only in ME: — þe find wend... þat al mankind quili war his (Cursor 1582, Cotton MS).

'RIGHT.' — Even in early ME right is found in its three principal functions, viz. (1) intensifying a negation (þohh þatt he se þe laþe gast, Niss he rihht nohht forrfærredd, Orm. 680; — right no thyng wol I axe, Ch. CT C Ph. 24), (2) in the sense 'exactly, precisely' before various particles, prepositional phrases, and the like (eþer r heore ede swa Rihht affterr Godess lare, Orm. 414; — I wol myselven goodly with yow ryde Right at myn owene cost, Ch. CT A Prol. 804), and (3) in the sense 'very' with adjectives and adverbs (þuss miht þu leddenn her þatt lif Rihht wel, wiþþ Godess hellpe, Orm. 6281; — he was nat right fat, Ch. CT A Prol. 288). In early ME right is not much used as an intensifying
Adverbs

adverb by writers other than Orm, but becomes more and more common as an adjectival intensifier, and in the 15th century it is second only to *full* in popularity. In some texts, like the *Gesta Romanorum*, the Paston Letters, and Caxton's writings, it occurs even more frequently than *full*. In the 16th century it has to give way to *very*.

'So.' — In certain cases *so* may lose its comparative force and become a mere intensifier in the sense 'very, much.' This use of *so* goes back to OE. In ME *so* occurs in this function with adjectives, adverbs, and verbs: — *Goldeboru, fat was so fair, was of Engeland riht eyr* (Havelok 2768); — *but gone visyte without delay, That myn herte desireth so* (RRose 2433).

'SORE.' — *Sore* has been used as an adverb of degree since OE. Its original meaning is 'so as to cause pain, violently, severely.' Occurring frequently with verbs related to it in sense it comes to be used roughly in the meaning 'much, greatly, exceedingly.' It is the most popular intensifier with certain ME verbs of emotion, like *greme, dread, long, mourn*, and *weep* (*but soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed*, Ch. CT A Prol. 148), particularly with past participles with *of-* and *for-* (see pp. 549-50). In many texts it is the commonest verbal intensifier (e.g., *Poema Morale, Ormulum, RGlouc., Havelok, Cursor, Piers Plowman, Capgrave*). Since the 14th century it has occurred even with other verbs, such as *desire, hate, love, and sleep* (*Arcite that loveth me so sore*, Ch. CT A Kn. 2315; — *Cupide . . . Syh Phebus hasten him so sore*, Gower CA iii 1697). From the end of the 13th century on, *sore* is found with adjectives (*pe King lay þo sore syk*, RGlouc. 3385). As a pure adverb of degree, *sorely* is not recorded in ME.

'STARK.' — *Stark* (cf. present-day English *stark blind, stark dead, stark mad, stark naked*, etc.) is attested in ME only in combination with the adjectives *dead* and *blind* (NED): — *strok him stark dead* (Jos. Arim. 567); — *and lad hym in Babilon stark blynde* (Trev. Higd. I 97, MS β and Caxton; *start blynde, MSS a and γ; streigt blynde, St John's Coll. MS*). This use of
Adverbs of Degree

stark seems to have originated in the combination stark dead, where stark goes back to the OE adjective stearc 'stiff, rigid.' Stark blind is a continuation of OE stærblind which has become associated with stark dead. The Mod. E stark naked goes back to ME start (stert) naked, where start is OE steort 'tail' (heo haveþ bipiled mine figer ... despoiled hire stertnaked 'nudans spoliavit eam,' Ancr. 66); the form stark naked is due to a confusion between start and stark. The start blind variant (see above) of stark blind is due to the influence of start naked.

'SWITHE (SWITHELY).’ — From OE swiþ 'strong.' In the meaning 'extremely, very much, very' this adverb is the most popular intensifier of adjectives, adverbs, and verbs in OE and early ME. The form swithely is rare. About 1250, however, swiþe begins to give way to other intensifying adverbs, notably full, well, and right, in connection with adjectives and adverbs, and to much and greatly in connection with verbs. In the second half of the 14th century swithe is only occasionally found, and after 1450 it is no longer recorded as an intensifying adverb. Caxton, who printed Trevisa’s translation of Higden’s Polychronicon in 1482, substituted right for swithe. The disappearance of swithe is faster before verbs than before adjectives and adverbs, partly because in conjunction with verbs it is used more and more frequently in the modal sense 'quickly,' as it is occasionally used even in OE. This may also have contributed to the decrease in the use of swithe with adjectives and adverbs. ME examples of swithe(ly) in the intensifying function: — þe king him answerede swiþeliche faire (Lawman A 4421); — a mayden swiþe fayr (Havelok 111); — þe king ... avisede him swiþe wel wat man it were (RGlouc. 5616); — he wepe swithe sore (PPl. B v 470); — I wil not greve þe to swiþe (Trev. Higd. III 479); — þay loved hym swyþe (Purity 987); — he þonkke d hir oft ful swyþe (Gaw. & GK 1866).

'THROUGHOUT (THWERTOUT).’ — The adverb throughout is used as an intensifier in ME in the sense 'completely' (zif þu
Adverbs

wilt... bien þurhut god mann, Vices & V 73). Another adverb used with this meaning in early ME is thwerten (a combination of ON þvert and ut), found almost exclusively in Orm: — forr þatt all iss þwerrt-ut soþ, annd all þwerrt-ut to trowenn (Orm. 313).

'Utterly (Outrely).' — In the sense 'truly, plainly' the adverb utterly is used from early ME to early Mod. E. As a purely intensifying adverb meaning 'completely, exceedingly' it has been recorded since the 14th century, obviously used under a strong influence of OF outre(e)m:nt: — þan tell y þe outrely schent (RMannyaing Chron. 11520); — Crist is in tliche mannes soule þat loveþ hym outerliche (Wyclif Sel. Wks III 437); — to sleen me outrely Love hath his firy dart so brennyngly Ystiked thurgh my... herte (Ch. CT A Kn. 1563). Chaucer's al outrely (e.g., she sayde 'nay' Al outrely, BD 1244) is a calque on OF tot outreem:nt (e.g., un compaignon cui je deïsse Mon conseil tot outreem:nt, Roman de la Rose 3105). Cf. J. Orr, The Impact of French upon English, Oxford 1948, pp. 8-10.

'Very.' — Very, from the OF adjective verrai, has been used in English as an adjective since the 13th century. It is rare at first, but becomes commoner in the writings of Wyclif and Chaucer. Chaucer often uses it before nouns, either in the original sense 'true, real' (this is a verray sooth withouten glose, CT F Sq. 166) or in a weakened sense to give emphasis to the noun (for verray feere so wolde hir herte quake, CT. F FkI. 860).

At the end of the 14th century verray is also used before an attributive adjective related to it in sense: — that is a verrai gentil man (Gower CA iv 2275); — he was a verray parfit gentil knyght (Ch. CT A Prol. 72); — this benigne verray faithful mayde (Ch. CT E Cl. 343). In these examples verray is obviously an adjective, co-ordinate with the following attributive adjective, but frequent occurrence in this syntactical position (there are many cases of this kind in Chaucer's writings alone) seems to have provided a starting-point for the development of this
adjective into an adverb. Chaucer has instances where *verray* precedes a predicative adjective as well (he *shal be verray penitent*, CT I Pars. 87; — *the herte of hym that is verray repentaunt*, ibid. 113; — *a man schal be verray repentaunt*, ibid. 292). Instances of this kind, where the adjective has a certain substantival colouring,¹ seem to mark a further stage in the development of *verray* into an adverb of degree; the final stage is reached in instances like *he was sike ... and was verray contrite and sorwful in his herte* (Trev. Higd. VI 93) and *as for the thryd, thou mayst be verrey sure* (Lydg. A Gods 1776).

In the 15th century *very* is not uncommon as an intensifying adverb of degree. In the earlier part of the 16th century it is common, and in the second half it eclipses the other popular adjective and adverb intensifiers (*full*, *right*, and *much*).

'WELL.' — *Well* has occurred as an intensifying adverb of degree since OE. In ME it is remarkably popular as an adjective and adverb intensifier. In the South and S Midlands it becomes the most common intensifying adverb after *swithe* begins to lose ground (after the middle of the 13th century), but has to give way to *full* and *right* in the second half of the 14th century. In the 15th century it is seldom used outside combinations like *wel worth, wel war, wel content,* and *well nigh.* ME examples: — *for þine wle  lete Wel oft ich mine  song forlete* (Owl & N 36). *Well* is also used to reinforce comparatives (*get tu shalll wel mare sen*, Orm. 12818; — *a wele fouler þing*, Orfeo 462). With numerals it denotes fulness of the number: — *he tok sone knihtes ten, And wel sixti oþer men* (Havelok 1747); — *at nyght were come into that hostelrye Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye* (Ch. CT A Prol. 24); — *and up they rysen, wel a ten or twelve* (Ch. CT F Sq. 383). In conjunction with verbs *well* has never lost its original modal character. For *wel wele* see p. 315, note.

¹ *Cf. he is a japere and a gabbere, and no verray repentant* (Ch. CT I Pars. 89). The same passage contains examples like *penitence ... is verray repentance* (86), *til he have repentance verray* (98), and *he shal be verray penitent* (87).
'Whole (Wholly).' — Whole is properly speaking an adjective meaning 'sound, uninjured.' Since the 14th century, whole (hol) and the more common wholly (hooly) occur adverbially or quasi-adverbially in the sense 'completely:' — *at the world in Orient Was hol at his comandement* (Gower CA i 2790); — *I [was] hooly hires* (Ch. BD 1041).

'Wonder (Wonderly).' — Wonder (OE wundrum, dative plural of wundor) and wonderly (OE wundorlice) have been used as intensifying adverbs of degree since OE. Wonder, favoured by many writers, among them Chaucer and Lydgate, is only found with adjectives and adverbs, while wonderly also occurs with verbs: — *wunnderr mikell shame wass till Issraele fede* (Orm. 7284); — *wonder lowde Me thoght I herde an hunte blowe* (Ch. BD 344); — *enne dic . . . þe wes wnderliche deop* (Lawman A 647). For the peculiar emphatic wunder ane, which only seems to occur in the A-text of Lawman, see pp. 295-6.

WEAKENING ADVERBS

'Almost (Most).’ — *Most and almost* (intensifying all + most) go back to OE mæst (the superlative of micel), occasionally used in the sense 'nearly.' In this sense *most* is common in early ME, but begins to give way to *almost* after the middle of the 13th century: — *mest al þat ic habbe ydon* (Poema Mor. 7); — *he was almost naked* (Havelok 962); — *al mast bigan he to dei* (Cursor 12532, Cotton MS).

'Little.' — Little, when used to qualify adjectives ('not very'), seems to be a Latinism or Gallicism, and has never been common (NED). Examples of this particular use of little have been recorded since late OE. Before a verb *little* becomes a common emphatic negative. In this function it occurs mainly with *know, think, care,* and their synonyms. The first instance quoted in the *NED* comes from the Poema Morale (*lutel wat he hwet is pine end litel he icnawep*, 137). Other ME examples: — *lutel wot*
Adverbs of Degree

hit any mon Hou love hym haveþ ybounde; lutel wot hit any mon Hou derne love may stonde (Harley Lyr. xxxi 1 and xxxii 1); — thing which schal him litel grieve (Gower CA vii 4074). Little with the indefinite article has occurred in adverbia! function since early ME: — ze iherden a lutel er . . . þet þe hali gost com (Lamb, Hom. 93); — thou hast maad him litil, a litil lesse fro aungelis ('minuisti eum paulomninus ab angelis,' Wyclif Heb. ii 7).

For the use of the comparative less and the superlative least for the comparison of inferiority see p. 288.

'Most;' see almost.

'Nigh (Near).’ — Nigh is used in OE and ME in the sense of Pres. E nearly: — his moder wurþ nez dead for frizt (Gen. & Ex. 1234); — this ymage is nyh overthowe (Gower CA Prol. 884). It often occurs in combinations like well nigh and full nigh: — all mannkinn well neh wass all Bididdredd (Orn. 18871); — for sorwe ful nygh wood she was (Ch. BD 104). In ME nigh is used more frequently than any other adverb of degree to express a proximation.

Although not very common elsewhere, near (the comparative of nigh) occurs frequently in Scottish texts instead of nigh: — thai war weill neir twenty thousand (Barbour xiv 51); — for wrethe he wex ner wod (Amis & Amil. 386).

'Noght, nothing;' see pp. 339-40.

'Scarce (Scarcely).’ — Scarcely (OF eschars + -ly) is occasionally used in ME to modify numerals and whole sentences: — it is scarseliche an honderd and sixty myle in lengþe (Trev. Higd. I 105); — he shal crie to Jhesu Crist at his taste day and scarsly wol he herkne hym (Ch. CT I Pars. 1002). The simple form scarce appears as an adverb of degree at the end of the ME period: — skars a mannes lengthe (Caxton Pilgr. Sowle IV xvi 71; NED).

'Somedeal (Somewhat).’ — Somedeal 'to some extent' and the synonymous somewhat are frequently used as adverbs of
degree in ME: — *zif hit is halidei buwef sumdel duneward* (Ancr. 8); — *she was somdel deaf* (Ch. CT A Prol. 446); — *Richard, hys son, came somewhat behynd* (Paston I 74 [1448]). *Sumdel* is more popular than *somewhat* in early ME, but the parts are reversed after the 14th century.

**RELATIVE INCIDENCE OF SOME COMMON ADVERBS OF DEGREE WITH ADJECTIVES, ADVERBS, AND VERBS**

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1 According to A. Fettig (see bibliography).
OTHER ADVERBS

As

In ME — particularly in the later part of the period — the adverb *as* (< *also* < *all* so < OE *eall swa*) occurs in a number of peculiar uses, often seemingly redundant.

'As' with Nouns and Adjectives. — The use of *as* with nouns to indicate equality and similarity by way of comparison, often corresponding to present-day 'like' (e.g., *a wayle whyt ase whalles bon*, Harley Lyr. ix 1), is discussed on p. 278.

In addition, the adverb occurs before appositive and predicative nouns and adjectives without any clearly discernible implication of comparison, to express identity or substitution rather than similarity ('in the quality of' and other related senses): — he seide 'sicio' ant mende him ase ofþurst o þe rode (Ancr. 49; for a comment on this quotation see pp. 332-3 below); — he . . . chirchen let up arere ðat were arst as vorlore (RGlouc. 6509); — he preyd ham, as his frende, To duelle wiþ him in pes (Tristrem 60); — graþed y wil he be, And seþþen schewe him as kniȝt (Tristrem 671); — as hire man I wol ay lyve and sterve (Ch. TC iv 447). This use of *as* begins in OE, possibly under Latin influence, as a special development of *swa* (*swa . . . swa*) expressing similarity and equality. The reinforced form *eall swa* appears at the end of the OE period: — man hine lædde to Elig byrig swa [eal swa, MS D] gebundenne. Sona swa he lende on scype man hine blende and hine swa blindne brohte to þam munecon (OE Chron. an. 1036, MS C). Corresponding uses are known from other Germanic languages (cf. G *als*) and from Latin and the Romance languages (for these cf. V. Väänänen, *'Il est venu comme ambassadeur,'* 'il agit en soldat,' AASF, B 73,1, Helsinki 1951).

Frequently, however, *as* is not used: — thus sche deiede a wofull maide (Gower CA iv 1593); — he presentit hym self a surgeon and a visicion to disseive the peopl (Bk London E 124 [1422]); — þei heldyn him an holy man and hir a fals feynyd ypocrite (MKempe 156).
'As Who.' — The later ME phrases as who says, as who should say, and other similar expressions are probably imitations of the French type seen in cases like on surnomme celle deesse Epitragia, comme qui diroit, la deesse du bouc. These phrases are not uncommon from the end of the 13th century on:— þanne is, as þwo seîp, þat pur lond amidde (RGlouc. 24); — ho turned hit over... As qua sulde sai, I know na harme (Cursor 8612, Fairfax MS); — þei sellen Gods worde, as who schulde selle an oxe (Wyclif Sel. Wks III 123); — sche hath, as who seith, al hire wille (Gower CA i 1611). Cf. A. A. Prins, French Influence in English Phrasing, Leyden 1952, pp. 59-60.

'As' with Adverbs and Prepositions. — As is used with adverbs, adverbial phrases, and prepositions, particularly in temporal expressions, in the sense 'having regard to the particular time or other circumstance mentioned;' this use survives in the present-day expression as yet. Examples of as in various non-temporal contexts: — Constantin and Maxence weren on one time, as in keiseres stude, hehest in Rome (Kath. 3, Cotton MS); — Engelond... Iset in þe on ende of þe worlde, as al in þe west (RGlouc. 2); — I scal yow sceu al how it was Als enentes Moyses (Cursor 6880); — as anemste oure evyn-Cristen, us auȝt to hate synne in hem (Deonise 34); — we crystene creatures... Aren ferme as in þe faith, Goddes forbode elles! (PPl. B xv 570); — he hadde... born hym wel as of so litel space (Ch. CT A Prol. 87); — ye most been ful deerne as in this caas (Ch. CT A Mil. 3297); — coroned was she as after hir degree (Ch. CT B Mk. 3555); — and bad me that I scholde schrive As touchende of my wîtes fyve (Gower CA i 296); — ryht upon such a maner lucre Stant Florence as in this diete (Gower CA i 1707). A few more or less doubtful cases of this use of as have been recorded from early ME, such as þeo þat haveþ ever hire deaþ as bivoren hire eien (Ancr. 51), where ase may stand for 'as if,' and he seide 'sicio'

1 Elinenkel (Syntax p. 137) quotes an instance with as who-so from OE Homilies I: — þu wes henged bituhhe twa þeoses, as huwase seie, 'he þis is mare þen þeof.'
ant mende him ase of þurst o þe rode (Anocr. 49), where of þurst is probably not a preposition + noun, as interpreted by Einenkel (Syntax, p. 72) and N. Bøgholm (Anglia XXXVIII, 1914, 505), but a past participle with the prefix of-. In Mabel Day’s diplomatic edition it is printed ofþurst.

Examples of as in temporal expressions: — þo is lif was nei ido As in þe er of is kinedom twenty and tuo, Of þe croune of Engelond he nuste wat best do (RGloc. 7105); — now als þis time sex zere ('six years ago,' Yw. & Gaw. 153); — no man no mizt for stink com þer Tristrem ware Als þan (Tristrem 1120); — but therof nedeth not to speke as nowthe (Ch. CT A Prol. 462); — I shal fynde a meene, That she naught wite as yet shal what l mene (Ch. TC v 3688); — for of moralitee he was the flour, As in his tyme (Ch. CT B Mk. 3688); — they mosten of necessitee, As fore that nyght, departen compaignye (Ch. CT B NP 4183).

It is possible that this ME use of as owes something to the influence of French. Cf. he hadde ... born hym weel as of so litel space and OF et povre sont si garniment Come de si gentil baron; for as for cf. OF’ore en pensez, senz nul respit, Come por vostre grant profit. Cf. Einenkel, Syntax, p. 72, J. Orr, The Impact of French upon English, Oxford 1948, pp. 24-5, and A. A. Prins, op. cit., pp. 57-8. But whatever the role of foreign influence in the occurrence of as in these and other expressions discussed in the present chapter, there is some reason to assume that as was not uncommon in ME colloquial speech.¹

¹ It occurs in 16th-century colloquial English. Margaret Schlauch (Phitologia Progensia I, 1958, 97-104), calling attention to colloquial features in a collection of tales entitled The Deceyt of Women (extant in a print of 1560, based on an earlier one by the press of Robert Copland), quotes a passage from a conversation between a husband and wife. The wife says, 'Alas, good husbande, be ye here yet? now of a trouth I knew it not... One of my chamberlyns... sayd that ye wold not com home as this night, and when I herde that, I went to bed and slepte, for I wet that it had bene so.'
with those preceded by to, but also with the plain infinitive: — 'but as to spoke of love, ywis,' she seyde, 'I hadde a lord, to whom I wedded was' ('speaking of love,' Ch. TC v 974); — yet nolde I . . . Take upon me moore than ynogh, As demen of myself that I were oon (Ch. CT A Mil. 3161); — as for to feigne such sicknesse It nedeth noght (Gower CA i 713). While it may not be entirely impossible that the OF construction of the type le hardie et haute emprise que li sires de B. faisoit, que de aler conquerr e et entrer un royaume par force has provided a basis for the ME construction, as suggested by Einenkel (Syntax, p. 72), the occurrence of as with the infinitive seems to parallel its use with adverbs and adverbial phrases (see above).

'As' IN EXHORTATIONS AND ASSERATIONS. — As is occasionally used to introduce an exhortation or entreaty. The majority of the recorded instances occur in Chaucer's works: — whom so ye hate, as beth nat wroth with me (Ch. TC v 145); — freend so deere, That hoote kultour in the chymenee heere As lene it me (Ch. CT A Mil. 3777); — for Goddes sake, as beth of bettre cheere (Ch. CT E Cl. 7); — as to my fadyr lete us now tee (Cov. Plays 29.14); — Mary! . . . as make Mankynde trewe and sad, In grace for to gon (Castle Persev. 2591); — now God that dyed on rode . . . Os lette me never come in ther syght (Amadace 389, MS Nat. Libr. Scotland). This peculiar use of as has been explained in various ways. It has been assumed that it arose as an imitation of si in OF constructions like droiz emperere, faites pais, si m'oiez and se tu as office en Cour, si t'appareille a y combatre (cf., for example, Einenkel, Syntax, p. 72, and A. A. Prins, French Influence in English Phrasing, Leyden 1952, p. 57). Robinson, p. 679 (in a note on CT A Kn. 2302; cf.also Einenkel, loc. cit.) thinks that 'the construction apparently developed out of the strictly logical use of as in asseverations like as help me god' (see below). There are also grammarians who believe that as is used in exhortations and entreaties simply because it makes them more emphatic. A. T. Bødtker, Critical Contributions I, Oslo 1908, p. 44, believes that this use of as,
like that of *so* (see below), is a further development of the OE correlative *swa* . . . *swa*. A circumstance which does not seem to have attracted enough attention is that *as*, while giving an exhortation or entreaty additional emphasis, also somehow softens its tone and makes it more persuasive.

In asseverations *as* is common in later ME: — *and say þe soþ and no lees, as help me þy God Almiȝte* (Ferumbras 407); — *I wil fȝȝe wyþ þat heþene kyng, as Crist me helpe and rede* (Ferumbras 218); — *as Mahoun me avaunce, Hit beþ kniȝtes ysent to me* (Ferumbras 1980); — *I wolde amenden it . . . As wisly help me grete God of kynde* (Ch. CT F Sq. 469); — *'nay, as help me,' quoþ þe haþel, 'he þat on hyȝe syttes'* (Gaw. & GK 256). Cf. *so* (see below).

While *as* occurs with infinitives and hortative forms of the finite verb, it is not found with non-hortative finite verbs.  

For the use of *as* in comparisons of equality see p. 278, in the sense 'than', p. 283, and as an adverb of degree, p. 317.

*So* and *as*, originally one and the same word (OE *swa* and the reinforced *eall swa*), retain a number of parallel uses in ME.

'So' IN EXHORTATIONS AND ASSEVERATIONS. — The use of *so* in exhortations and asseverations provides a close parallel to that of *as*. It occurs in exhortations like *for Goddes love, so beth me naught unkynde* (Ch. TC iv 1652). A. T. Bødtker, *Critical Contributions* I, Oslo 1908, p. 44, is not convinced that this use of *so* and *as* is modelled on French and believes that *so* and *as* represent a further development of the OE correlative *swa* . . . *swa*. He refers to cases like *al þat we more swerigeþ, swo it is evel and senne* (Vices & V 9).

1 In all the instances enumerated in the *MED* under *also* 1 d (c), like *he ys hire yaf, and she as lok* (Havelok 1174), *as* is obviously only a phonetic variant or misspelling of *ys*, es 'them.' See p. 135.
So is fairly common in asseverations: — 'sais þou soth?' 'yaa, sa mot I the' (Cursor 5150); — 'so Crist,' quaþ þay, 'scheid ous frome care, þat batayl mot be do' (Ferumbras 320); — now lady seinte Marie So wisly help me out of care and synne, This wyde world though that I sholde wynne, Ne have I nat twelf pens (Ch. CT D Fri. 1605). The usage goes back to OE (cf. ic þæt þohn e forhicge, swa me Higelac sie ... modes bliþe, Beow. 435). So is occasionally reinforced by ever (I wil kepe þe dore, so ever here I masse, Gamelyn 515), and in late ME it is now and then found in combination with as (for that schal I alway beseche Unto the mihti Cupido That he so mochel wolde do, So as he is of love a godd, To smyte hem, Gower CA iii 909).

Other Uses. — This occurrence of so in asseverations represents one special shade in the original use of swa to denote sameness and similarity, i.e., to imply comparison. There are several other shades of use where this original function of so is more or less clearly discernible. Most of these uses are traceable back to OE; cf. E. Ericson (see bibliography). The predicative vicarious so denoting equivalence occurs in to some it thoghte for the beste, to some it thoghte nothing so (Gower CA ii 2511). So is also found in instances where present-day E would prefer 'as' or 'like' (Gweakes fleþ forþ so wynd and rayn, Ferumbras 5383); it is also found with the meanings 'as if' (also liht was it þerinne So þer brenden cerges inne, Havelok 594) and 'although' (þat hire haved in sorwe brouht So as sho ne misdede nouht, Havelok 337). So may introduce a clause of result (thanne seide I to myself so Pacience it herde, PPl. B xiii 64) or indicate a mere sequence (and, shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, so hadde I spoken with hem everichon, Ch. CT A Prol. 31). It may also occur in the sense 'yes' (somme seide nay and somme so, Cursor 13560, Trin. MS).

For the use of so for the comparison of equality see p. 278 and for expressing a proportional comparative p. 282. For the use of so as an adverb of degree see p. 324. For never so see p. 321.
There and Where

ANTICIPATORY AND EXISTENTIAL 'THERE.' — The use of anticipatory and 'existential' there goes back to OE (for OE cf. R. Quirk, LMS II, 1951, 32). In this function there occurs mainly in conjunction with intransitive verbs: — an cnihth þer com ride (Lawman A 26187); — now knowe I that ther reson in the failleth (Ch. TC i 764); — whilom ther was dwellynge in Lumbardie A worthy knyght (Ch. CT E 1245); — him thenkth ther is no deth comende (Gower CA i 2714); — and some þer were . . . That pleined sore (Lydgate TGlAs 179). There is occasionally found also with transitive verbs, usually before an auxiliary of tense or mood: — whan it was ones itend . . . þere couþe no man it aquenche wiþ no craft (Trev. Higd. I 223). Cf. the use of it and this as anticipatory subjects.

It is unnecessary to explain this use of there as a reflection of Celtic influence on English, as has been done by W. Preusler, IF LVI, 1938, 189. The construction occurs in other Germanic languages too (e.g. Sw. där ligger en bok på bordet).

'THERE' IN BLESSINGS AND CURSES. — Robinson (p. 682, note on CT A Kn. 2815) calls attention to Chaucer's peculiar use of there as an expletive in blessing (well-wishing) or cursing. The primary sense may have been 'in that (or which) case:' — ther Jhesu Crist yow blesse (CT D Fri. 1561); — ther good thrift on that wise gentil herte! (TC iii 947). The use is recorded in other texts too: — there dere Driglyne this day dele us of thi blysse (Parl. 3 Ages 664).

'THERE' AND 'WHERE' AS RELATIVE ADVERBS. — There occurs as a relative adverb in the sense 'where' from OE to early Mod. E: — hir owene dirke regioun Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth inne (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1075); — I cam in þere and in othere places þere I wolde (Mandev. 53). There serving as both antecedent and relative is common in expressions of motion and rest: — Arþur him lokede on þer he lai on folden (Lawman A 28596); — þere þe catte is kitoun þe courte is ful
Adverbs

elyng (PPl. B Prol. 190); — til sche cam ther the launde was Thurgh which ther ran a rivere (Gower CA iv 1290). Cf. Fr. Klaeber and F. Karpf (see bibliography); the latter quotes parallels from many Indo-European languages.

From late OE on where competes with there as a relative adverb and finally supersedes it. The last instances of there in this function recorded in the NED date from the 16th century. The earliest known instances with where occur in the Lindisfarne Gospels (þer vel huer forþon is strion þin, þer is & hearta þin, 'ubi enim est thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum,' Matt. vi 21; also John xi 32). ME writers do not seem to make any sharp distinction between relative there and where; cf. he . . . comth where as thei bothe stode (Gower CA ii 2180) and this kniht . . . goth there as the cofres stonde (Gower CA v 2364).

The rivalry between there and where is paralleled by that between the relative pronouns with th- and wh- (that, what, which, who).

In a number of instances the concrete local meaning of relative where has become more or less obscured: — ich herde whar he sede ('I heard the conversation in which he said,' Horn 691); — he brought to him a good saufcondyt, where the prov-oste right moche thanked hym ('for which,' Caxton Blanch. 90); — I hir saw in so noble ray As kinges doughter where fresh is and gay (Partenay 847).

Yet

Yet is frequently used for emphasis, particularly after negatives (neþer am I Crist, ne yeitt Heli, Cursor 12811, Cotton MS; — ne yet the folye of kyng Salomon, Ch. CT A Kn. 1942), but also in many other cases: — and þat mai be nan ofer wis Bot yeit for-þi seven wintur servis (Cursor 3888, Cotton and Gött. MSS); — to Alison now wol I tellen al My love-longynte, for yet I shal nat mysse That at the leeste wey I shal hire kisse (Ch. CT A Mil. 3679).
ADVERBS OF NEGATION

The weakening of meaning, a general linguistic phenomenon, is perhaps nowhere better seen than in the development of adverbs expressing negation. This is true not only of English, but of most other languages. 'The original negative adverb is first weakened, then found insufficient and therefore strengthened, generally through some additional word, and this in its turn may be felt as the negative proper and may then in the course of time be subject to the same development as the original word' (O. Jespersen, *Negation in English and Other Languages*, p. 4).

The standard OE negative adverb is *ne*, preceding the verb (*ic ne secge*). This construction remains current all through the ME period (*west þu þat ich ne singe?* Owl & N 47; — *þere ne was ratoune... þat dorst have ybounden þe belle*, PPl. B Prol. 177). *Ne* is often proclitically attached to the following verb, when this is of frequent occurrence (*nam = ne am, nas = ne has or ne was, nere = ne were, nil = ne wil*, etc.), and sometimes enclitically to the preceding word (*no more In [= I ne] can*, Sec. Lyr. ix 16). Such contracted forms are typical of the South and the W Midlands, while uncontracted forms (*ne wil*, etc.) are typical of the North and predominate in the E Midlands (except in a few texts, like *Ormulum* and *Vices and Virtues*). In late ME the use of contracted negative forms is more restricted than earlier in the period. Cf. G. Forsström, *The Verb 'to Be' in ME*, Lund Studies in English XV, Lund 1948 (also Lund diss. 1948), p. 228, and S.R. Levin, *JEGP* LVII, 1958, 492-501.

Often, however, — even in OE — the negation is intensified by placing another negative, such as *noht* (*< nawiht, nowiht*), after the verb (multiple negation). This, like multiple comparison, arises from a desire to make the negation emphatic and thus clear enough, and is obviously characteristic of popular speech. The construction *ne ... noht* (*noht > not*) occurs down to the end of the ME period (*I ne seye noght*). The unstressed,
weakened *ne* begins to be dropped in early ME. One of the two early 13th-century MSS of *Seinte Marherete* reads *me ne schendedest tu nawt*, the other *me schendest tu nawt* (17 and 16). Later, especially after the middle of the 14th century, the dropping of *ne* becomes common, and this remains the normal construction until the present type of negation, *I do not say*, which begins to appear in late ME, is finally established (see p. 607).

Occasionally there is an accumulation of negatives, as in *þu nart noþt to non oþer þinge* (Owl & N 559) and *he nevere yet no vileynge ne sayde In al his lyf unto no maner wight* (Ch. CT A Prol. 70-1). Such an exaggerated use of negatives is common in present-day dialects; cf. *he nivver said nowt neeaways ti neean on em*, quoted in Elizabeth M. Wright's *Rustic Speech and Folklore*, London 1914, p. 157.

As the pronoun *nawht* (> *noht* > *not*) comes to be commonly used as a negative, its substantival function is transferred to the pronoun *nan þing* > *nothing*. This, in its turn, comes to be used as an emphatic negative. As an adjective and adverb modifier it has been attested since late OE: — *wyrc þin wore*, and *ne beo þu nan þing sari* (Wærf. Greg. 114); — *ne beo þou noþing loþe* (Good Wife 9). As a verbal modifier *nothing* has been recorded since late OE: — *þa munecas... beaden heom griþ, ac hi na rohte na þing* (OE Chron. an. 1070, Laud MS); — *na thinc can I him discreue, For sagh I never nan suilk mi live* (Cursor 12245 Cotton MS).

*Never*, a negative temporal adverb, occurs as an emphatic negative from early ME on: — *ne cweþ he never a word* (Ancr. 55); — *thane gan I mete a merveillous sweene, That I was in a wildernesse, wiste I nevere where* (PPl. A Prol. 12). Cf. present-day E *never mind* and other similar expressions; cf. also *never so*, p. 321.

For the use of *little* as an emphatic negative see p. 328.

A popular way of expressing emphatic negation has always been the use of a figurative periphrasis. ME examples of this type of negation have been collected by J. Hein in *Anglia* XV,
Words used for this purpose are nouns denoting a large variety of things and beings, such as animals (particularly insects), organs of the body, plants, fruit, garments and related things, household utensils, foodstuffs, money, weights, and measures of distance. Examples: — I nolde fange a ferthynge for seynt Thomas shryne (PPL. B v 566); — a foolis word is nought to trowe, Ne worth an appel for to lowe (RRose 4532); — swich talkyng is nat worth a boterflye (Ch. CT B NP 3980); — I sette nat a straw by thy dremynges (Ch. CT B NP 4280). Negations of this kind are usually concerned with the worth of the thing under consideration. It is possible that the use of this essentially stylistic feature in English is largely due to French influence.

The comparison of adverbs is, in the main, similar to that of adjectives (see pp. 278-88 above). In the 14th century the inflectional system of comparison is still predominant. The endings -er and -est are added to adverbs almost regardless of their length (depper, keher, nerre, wislier, easilier, gladliker, liht­loker, stedfastliker, reverentloker, ryghtfullokest, etc.). A peculiar formation is otherliker 'otherwise,' recorded from OE until late ME: — al he wolde oþerluker don and oþerluker þenche (Poema Mor. 150b, MS E); — to zuiche lyve me comþ oþer be grace oþer be virtue and naȝt oþerlaker (Ayenb. 94).

There are a few instances where the adverbial ending -ly is added to the comparative or superlative form (cf. present-day formerly, nearly, lastly, and mostly): — therfore he song the murierly and loude (Ch. CT A Prol. 714); — of his ryall estate and of his myght I schall speke more plenerly when I schall speke of the lond and of the contree of Ynde (Mandev. 26).

1 Cf. also J. E. Wülfing, Anglia XXVII, 1904, 555-80, and XXVIII, 1905, 29-80.
Adverbs

For the use of *erest than* for 'earlier or rather than' see p. 285.

The use of the periphrastic comparison with *more* and *most* in connection with adverbs begins roughly at the same time as in connection with adjectives. The periphrastic system of comparison occurs only sporadically before the 14th century and remains rare in the first half of it, but is used more frequently by writers of the end of this century. The periphrastic comparison is adopted somewhat later and used more sparingly in the North than in the South and the Midlands. Another thing worth noticing is that the periphrastic system of comparison occurs first with adverbs ending in *-ly* (*more bitterly, more plentifulsliche*, etc.). Later ME writers frequently use *the* before *more*, often for emphasis, but in poetry often for metrical reasons: — *þe more hardyliche* (Ayenb. 60). Cf. p. 282.

*Nigh* and *Near.* — *Nigh* (*neh*) 'near, almost' is common in ME. Since the 13th century the comparative degree *near* has been used in the same (positive) sense, presumably under the influence of ON *nær*: — *Laban cam to þat melle ner* (Gen. & Ex. 1395); — *Egipte wimmen comen ner* (Gen. & Ex. 1395). The form *nearly* is Mod. E. For the use of *nigh* and *near* as adverbs of degree see p. 329.

A SPECIAL USE OF 'BEST.' — A peculiar pregnant use of *best* is seen in *þa heo scolden bezst fehten, þa flugen al þe Pohles* (Lawman A and B 10648).¹ This use of *best* in the meaning 'just as' is probably connected with the type *as best he can* (e.g., *the whiche vice he bidde as he best myghte*, Ch. CT D WB 955; cf. also *swa we hit swiþest mazen don*, Lawman A 25794; *so swiþe so we maue do*, B), a type also found in MLG and the Scandinavian languages.

¹ N. Bøgholm, *The Layamon Texts*, Copenhagen 1944, p. 56, calls attention to the occurrence of the idiom in Danish (*som jeg bestad sad der kom han*). Cf. also Sw. *bäst som han giek, mötte han vargen.*
Adverbs

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Adverbs

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PREPOSITIONS


Prepositions


The suffix -ward(s) with prepositions, p. 423.
Prepositions combined with that, p. 423.
Prepositional adverbs, p. 424.
Bibliography, p. 425.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Development. — Prepositions are words expressing various syntactical relations and normally placed before the governing noun or pronoun. The majority of prepositions are originally adverbs, but part of them go back to adjectives (like, near), participles (during, except), and other sources.

The connection between adverbs and prepositions has always been intimate, and it is quite common even today to find the same word used as an adverb and a preposition; cf. they went up and they went up the hill. In the former of these statements up is an adverb, in the latter a preposition. The quotations suggest the way in which prepositions develop from post-verbal adverbs. In statements like they went up / the hill and we walked through / the town the words up and through are original adverbs directly associated with the preceding verb.

But adverbs of this kind tend to become associated with the following noun rather than the verb and consequently come to be regarded as prepositions: they went / up the hill and we walked / through the town.

Structural Characteristics. — Considering the fact that prepositions are usually unstressed it is not surprising that the most common of them are simple monosyllabic words (at, by, for, in, mid, of, on, till, to, and with). There are many prepositions, however, — common and less common — which are of composite origin. Many of them are originally combinations of a preposition and an adverb (before, etc.) — even
combinations of the type preposition + adverb + preposition occur (afore-zen, afrom-on) occur — or combinations of an adverb and a preposition (out of, etc.). The type preposition + preposition is not uncommon (at-after, at-føre, at-over, into, inwith, of beside, on-under, within, etc.). A combination which is quite common is preposition + -ward (see p. 423), particularly to + -ward. Prepositions combined with that are not uncommon as conjunctions (after that, by that, etc.), but are rare as prepositions.

Whole phrases may acquire prepositional force (e.g., because of, by means of, by reason of, in spite of, instead of, in order to, in addition to).

The participles used as prepositions are mostly stereotyped absolute participles. They are discussed on pp. 559-60.

Repetition of a Preposition. — It is possible that the repetition of a preposition after a conjunction and the like is somewhat more common in ME than it is in the present-day, but the matter is complicated by the fact that even in prose repetition of this kind seems to be largely dependent on the writer’s personal style. In poetry, of course, repetition and non-repetition are primarily matters of metre. In ME prose instances of the following kind are common: — bathe be nihtes and be dæies (OE Chron. an. 1137); — al þet god þet ze ever dop be idon ase bi nihte and bi þeosternesse, ut of monnes eien and ut of monnes earen (Ancr. 67); — how we schul hate synne in oure-self and in oure breþren (Deonis 35). Repetition and non-repetition often occur in the same sentence: — to distroye synne in hymself and in oþer by parfite hateredyn of þe synne and alle þe kynde of synne (Deonis 35-6). Non-repetition is quite common: — bifore þe kynq and alle þe rewme (Deonis 37); — sceher efled wyth gret plente of teerys and many holy thowlys (MKempe 79).

Pleonastic repetition of a preposition after the governing noun is not uncommon in later ME: — in uncuth land to won ai in (Cursor 1170, Cotton MS); — and eek in what array that
they were inne (Ch. CT A Prol. 41; cf. Troilus . . . thoughte anon what folie he was inne, Ch. TC i 821); — of mony aunters I here of telle (Cursor 12, Fairfax MS); — and of þys blod . . . com þe blod of Hayles þeroof (Mirk Festial 146); — and on this good wyf he leith on soore (Ch. CT A Rv. 4229); — to þe whech blysse . . . God bryng us to (Mirk Festial 15). In the majority of instances the second 'preposition' is more likely to be an adverb, although this does not make it less pleonastic. Cf. G. Dubislav, Anglia XL, 1916, 315, and T. Nakayama, Studies in English Literature, Tokio Imperial University, XVIII, 1938, 579.

**Relative Frequency of ME Prepositions.** — A count based on a number of 14th- and 15th-century texts¹ showed that the commonest prepositions are of and in. The approximate relative frequencies of nine commonest prepositions were: of 9, in 7, with 4, to (excluding to with the infinitive) 4, for 3, on 2, by 2, at 2, and from 1. As seen from this list, in is more than three times as common as on.

**Prepositions as Equivalents of Case-endings.** — Owing largely to the general decay of the OE inflectional system the use of the prepositions is greatly expanded and enriched in late OE and in ME. The syntactical relationships formerly expressed by means of the case-endings now come to be expressed mainly by means of word-order and prepositions. Of, for example, becomes a favourite equivalent of the genitive (see pp. 74-8); to and for are widely used for the original dative (for to expressing the dative see pp. 95-7), and mid, with, through, by, and of for the instrumental. For the prepositional equivalents of the OE instrumental cf. particularly Eva Knispel (see bibliography).

**Foreign Influence.** — The large majority of English prepositions are native in origin. Very little has been obtained directly from Latin. Except is the Latin ablative absolute excepto, but per is possibly only a latinised form of French par.

¹ Carried out by some of the present writer's students.
There are a number of other prepositions — not many — taken as such from French (contre, maugré, sans, and save); some of these are absolute participles (e.g., touchant). In addition to these there are some which are disguised under a partially anglicised form (according to, considering, during, excepting, saving, and touching). A few native formations are calques on OF prepositions: lasting (cf. OF durant), notwithstanding (cf. OF non obstant), and outtaken (cf. OF excepté and L excepto).

Apart from these direct and indirect loans, foreign influence has affected several native prepositions by enriching or otherwise modifying their uses. Thus — to mention only some of the most common English prepositions — at seems to have acquired some new meanings and greatly increased its phrasal power under the influence of OF a, L ad, and obviously also of ON al. The use of by seems to have been influenced by F par. There do not seem to be sufficient reasons to deny the influence of French (probably also Latin) de on the use of the preposition of, particularly as a genitive equivalent (see pp. 77-8). It is also highly probable that F en and L in have influenced E in and strengthened its position, with the result that this preposition has encroached upon the domain formerly held by on (cf. in a book, OF en un livre, and L in libro, while OE [West Saxon] has on bee).

Old Norse has also played a part in the development of English prepositions. It has obviously strengthened and enriched the use of certain prepositions, like at and with, and a few prepositions, such as fro, are Scandinavian loans.¹

¹ Foreign influence on English prepositions, particularly that of French, has been dealt with in a number of books and articles mentioned in the bibliography at the end of this chapter (H. T. Price, A. A. Prins, E. Einenkel, G. F. H. Sykes, J. A. Derocquigny, and W. O. Sypherd). Although these scholars are undoubtedly right in emphasizing the importance of foreign influence on English prepositions, particularly in the field of phraseology, some of the treatments seem to suffer from a certain amount of superficiality, and a number of conclusions reached can therefore be
INTERCHANGEABILITY OF PREPOSITIONS. — The interchangeability of of, on, and at is not uncommon in ME and is also found in later OE (cf. A. T. Bødtker, Critical Contributions I, particularly pp. 15-16 and 22-6). Towards the end of the ME period it becomes quite common. It is usually of that encroaches upon the other two. There are OE instances like þa burg æt Tofeceastre (OE Chron. an. 921), se burch on Gleaweceastre (an. 1122), and se burh of Lincolne (an. 1123). This use of of may account for — or at least may have promoted — the use of the of-periphrasis for the genitive of definition with place-names (see p. 81). There are other instances suggesting that of tends to encroach upon on: — þas cyþnesse Drihten nam of þisse wisan (Blickl. Hom. 31); — brohten hine of fleme (Lawman A 23515; brohten hine on fleome, B); — als sco wex on hir licame (Cursor 10613, Cotton MS; as scho of body wex, other MSS); — þis is not groundid of Crist (Wyclif Sel. Wks III 357); — Assyria hathe on the este parte of hit ['ab ortu'] Ynde, of the sowthe ['ab austro'] Media, of the weste parte the floode of Tigris (Trev. Higd. I 93); — þe grehound wolde nought sessed be, Til þat adder ware toren of þre (Seven Sages 768, Auchinleck MS); — and mony mo worthi men, on whose soule God have mercy (Brut 364, Rawl. MS; MS BM Addit. 24859 reads of for on); — I xall sey to man and page Þat I have bene of pylgrymage (Sec. Lyr. xxiv 14). It is also possible that the interchangeability of of and on (in) accounts for cases like I was warished of al my sorwe Of al day after, til hyt were eve (Ch. BD 1105), of al my lyf, syn that day I was born, So gentil ple . . . Ne herde nevere no man me beforne (Ch. PF 484), and and maid asalt . . . and afrayd his neyghburs of Palmsondai (NED of 52; an. 1472); cf. p. 89. In many instances of this kind, however, the use of of seems to have been promoted by French influence; cf. Mod.

accepted only with some reservations. For a criticism of the views emphasizing the importance of foreign influence see particularly A. T. Bødtker, Critical Contributions I (see bibliography).
The interchangeability of the prepositions of and on is also reflected in the occurrence of both with the verb think. On occurs with þencan from later OE on (god ys on Dryhten georne to þenceanne); of, which is recorded in early ME (ac þu ... noldest þencen of þine for[þ]siþe, Vices & V 17), may or may not go back to the genitive governed by OE þencan (he þencþ was timan hwonne he hit wyrs geleanian mæge, Alfred Care 227). Both prepositions occur side by side in to think of þe kyndenes or þe wordines of God ne on oure Lady ne on þe seintes ... in heven, ne zit on þe joies in heven (Cloud 25).

A similar case is the occurrence of both of and on with can 'to know of, to be skilled in:' — bute þu canst of chateringe (Owl & N 560); — he coude of harpe mekil bi rote (Cursor 7408, Gött. MS); — þat mast kan bath on crok and craft (Cursor 740, Cotton MS); — joly cheperte of Aschell downe Can more on love than at this towne (Sec. Lyr. p. xI; MS Bodley 692, mid-15th cent.). For the use of OE cunnan with the genitive and the preposition on cf. BTS s.v. cunnan. Cf. also present-day dialectal expressions like neean on em 'none of them.'

For the use of on where present-day English would have of see pp. 400-1.

An interesting instance of the interchangeability of the prepositions of, on, and at is seen in the late ME expressions for 'o'clock:' — foure of the clokke it was tho (Ch. CT I Pars. 5); — at .ix. of the clocke (Greg. Chron. 113); — onto .ix. of clok (Capgr. Chron. 276); — be with me at Topliffe uppon Munday by .viii. a clocke (Plumpton Corr. 40 [1480]); — fro þe oure of none to .iii. on þe clok (Brut 599); — tylle .xi. att the clocke (Greg. Chron. 76); — at .ix. at clok (Paston I 320). An example of of and at in the same sentence: — fro one of the clocke tylle .v. aftyr non, and the chasse lastyd unto .vii. at the belle in the mornynge (Greg. Chron. 204).
Many other prepositions are interchangeable to some extent, such as *in* and *on*, *in* and *into*, *into* and *to*, *to* and *at*, etc. Brief discussions of these cases are to be found under the relevant prepositions later in this chapter.

In instances of this kind the choice of the preposition may depend on subtle differences in the writer's point of view, but there may be other factors at work, too. The interchangeability of *of* and *on*, for example, may have been furthered by the rather common and early reduction of both prepositions to *o* (*a*). For *on* cf. *alle þeo þe lefden o þen liviende Godd*, Marg. 7; cf. also pres. *E alive* from *on live*, *asleep* from *on slepe*. For *of* cf. *man yhernes rimes for to here . . . O Ioneck and of Ysumbras, O Ydoine and of Amadace* (Cursor 19-20, Cotton MS) and *quat kin a child es þis* (Cursor 12041, Cotton MS). An example from Lawman: — *cuþen a speche* (A 1411; *cuþe of speche*, B).

**Prepositions and Prefixes.** — There exists an intimate relationship not only between adverbs and prepositions but also between prepositions and prefixes; compare *of* with *of-*, *on* with *on-*, *for* with *for-*, etc. Most of the OE verbal prefixes lose their functional significance and become mere grammatical words by early ME, and because ME scribes commonly write them as separate words, confusion between them and prepositions takes easily place. Confusion between verbal prefixes and prepositions accounts for the uncertainty regarding the interpretation of cases like *of wandred* (*for wandred*); see pp. 381-2 and 560-3. For OE prefixes cf. particularly T. P. Harrison, *The Separable Prefixes in Anglo-Saxon*, Johns Hopkins Univ. diss. 1892, and J. R. Hendrickson (see bibliography).

**Individual Prepositions**

On the following pages, brief discussions of the principal uses of the most important ME prepositions are given. The prepositions are arranged alphabetically.
Prepositions

A FROM OLD FRENCH A

In many works translated from French or written under strong French influence, mainly in the later part of the period, OF phrases with à have been taken over without translating this preposition. It is possible that the practice is in some measure promoted by the analogy of ME a < on. Examples: — his fader he sett a raysoun (engaged in talk,’ KAlis. 1137); — of þe addres and scorpiouns Hii slowen a grete fysouns (KAlis. 5288); — for this I wot riht wel a fin (‘finally,’ Gower CA iv 60). For the possible occurrence of this preposition in battle-cries like a Warrewyk see pp. 633-4.

A; SEE OF AND ON

ABOUT(EN, -S)

About (abouten) goes back to OE onbutan (abutan), a combination of the preposition on and the adverb butan (from be + utan). The original meaning of about is thus 'on the outside of, around.' The genitival form abouts is occasionally used in the 15th and 16th centuries (aboutes him he loked pure faste, Lovelich’s Grail 27,77; MED). The principal abstract uses of about in Mod. E go back to ME.

The original meaning 'on the outside of, around' is well preserved all through the ME period: — he lette makien êne dic . . . abouten his ferde (Lawman A 648); — his sseld . . . was þonne yhonge vaste Aboute his ssoldren (RGlouc. 3613); — þenne watz þe sege sette þe ceté aboute (Purity 1185). In this sense the preposition is often used with reference to persons around, in the company of, or belonging to the retinue, of the person in question: — I have stonden . . . Abouten lordes in ful greet estat (Ch. CT E Mch. 1495). The pregnant sense 'all around, in all directions from (oneself)' is seen in þe kyng gan waxe wroþ and aboute him gan beholde (Ferumbras 126). In the less definite meaning 'in the vicinity of' the preposition is found
in go loke what þi mene dot; aboute hem þou wende (Good Wife 133) and þis creatur toke a candel in hir hand and sowt al abowtyn hir bed (MKempe 79). The use of the preposition is also extended to cover the meaning 'here and there in (a place), all over (the place):' — so schal þi name springe . . . And þi fairnesse Abute Westernesse (Horn 214; variant reading þoru-out); — hungir . . . buffetide the Bretoner aboute the chekis (PPl. A vii 161); — right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterle (Ch. TC iv 242).

A step towards abstract meaning is seen in the application of the sense 'around' to indicate a temporal relation: — abute middei (Ancr. 15); — he broȝte hire . . . to Engelond aboute Mielmesse (RGlouc. 9065); — aboute corfew lyme (Ch. CT A Mil. 3645). The preposition may also occur with an infinitive: — I was aboute to wedde a wyf, alis! (Ch. CT D WB 166). The use of the phrase to be about to to indicate that the action is to take place in the immediate future (in the instance quoted the reference is to the future-in-the-past) has been compared to the 'going to future'; yet, as J. F. Royster and J. M. Steadman (The Manly Anniversary Studies in Language and Literature, Chicago 1923, pp. 394-403) point out, the two constructions are not identical in function. While about to expresses incipient action in a colourless way, going to is pregnant with varying shades of meaning, usually with the idea of intention. For the phrase to be going to see p. 592.

The abstract meaning 'concerning, in regard to' has been recorded since early ME: — uss birþ beon full hoȝefull Abutenn ure sawless (Orm. 8062); — hu hire stont abuten vleschliche tentaciuns (Ancr. 156). Whether Latin circa has had any contributory influence in the development of about into this abstract meaning it is difficult to say. It is probable that the starting-point for this development has been the occurrence of about in phrases like to be about 'to be near enough to meddle with,' hence 'to be busy with, concerned with,' and to go about 'to go round, to go so near as to come in touch with,' hence 'to go to attend to, to get,' etc., uses recorded since
Prepositions

early ME. A couple of examples from Chaucer: — this thinge the whiche ye ben aboute (LGW 1610); — and bothe we goon abouten oure purchas (CT D Fri. 1530).

Above (aboven) comes from OE bufan, from he + ufan. The form a-bufen (with a- from the preposition on) does not appear until the 12th century. It seems to have arisen in the North. It gradually supplants bove, which becomes obsolete in late ME (for bove see p. 370).

Above means 'directly over,' with an implication of not touching upon (Cesar swam . . . wip oon hond and hilde þe chartres above þe water in his oþer hond, Trev. Higd. IV 197) or 'on top of,' with an implication of touching or resting upon (þatt oferrwercc þatt wass Abuðenn þarrke timmbredd, Orm. 1059; — above þe grave hyt lay, RMannyng HS 9128). The preposition is occasionally used in the sense 'covering:' — a chemeyr, for till heill his veid, Above his armyngh had he then (Barbour xvi 581). The figurative use of the preposition is recorded from early ME: — forr he þatt fra bibufen comm Iss ane abufen unn alle (Orm. 17970). The meaning 'beyond the reach of' has been recorded in writing since the middle of the 14th century: — it lyftes abown lyery lustes . . . and abown all affeccyouns and thoghtes (RRolle EWr. 58). The meaning 'in addition to' has likewise been known since the mid-14th century: — above þe catel nimeþ þe heþþes oþer ine pans oþer ine hors oþer ine corn (Ayenb. 35).

Accordant (according) to

Accordant to (OF accordant a) and according to appear as prepositions in late ME: — acordaunt to þy travayl, Lord, graunte me þy coroune (Shoreham 85); — he accordant to nature . . . Transformeth Iþe into a man (Gower CA iv 498); — as thou schalt hiere Accordende unto this matiere (Gower CA iv 498);
— accordant unto lawes kinde (Gower CA viii 2371); — after and accordyng to the tenure, forme, and effecte of every of the seid letters patentes (Parl. Roll 6. 87b [1473]; MED).

ADOWN

Adown (from OE of dune) has been in current use as an adverb since OE, but the first known instance of its rare use as a preposition occurs in early ME (he þrew him adoun þe brugge, Horn 1076, Harley MS). Another ME instance occurs in Chaucer (adown the steyre anonright tho she wente, TC ii 813).

AFORE(N)

Afore (aforn), which has occurred as an adverb and a preposition since late ME (as a preposition it dies out in the 16th century), has been explained as a continuation of OE on foran. It has also been assumed that afore represents in part at-fore (see below, p. 367), which dies out about 1300, but this is a pure hypothesis.

In ME it does not appear until the middle of the 14th century, except in the combinations afor-zen and aforn-on (see below). In local meaning afore (aforn) stands for 'ahead of,' 'in front of,' and 'opposite:' — with a crosse afor þe kynge [resoun] comsep þus to techen (PPl. B v 12); — th'egipciennes syhe The fieldes fulle afore here ghe (Gower CA v 822). In temporal use the preposition stands for 'before:' — if he wer now lyves man, afore þis had he come (Ferumbras 2483). In the following example afore has the meaning 'above in importance:' — loke that first afore all thingis ye love, drede, and obeye our Lord (Earl Rivers Dicts 20).

AFORE(N)-ZENS

Aforn-zen (aforn-zens, aforn-zeines), from aforn + zein, zeines, meaning 'opposite,' 'in contrast with,' and 'with respect to,'
Prepositions 357

occurs all through the ME period, while the variant *afore-zen(s)* is found only in the 14th and 15th centuries: — *þar sat Uther þe king in his heze setle, aforzegn him Gorlois* (Lawman B 18529); — *the yonder hous, that slant aforseyyn us* (Ch. TC ii 1188); — *þe schelle wiþoute . . . is little wortþ as aforzeþ þe zelke þat is wiþynne so swete* (Bk Vices & V 97); — *þe kendelich quodes þyep þo þet me clepeþ by kende . . . avorye þet bodi, ase helþe, vayrhede . . . avorye þe zaule, ase clier wyt* (Ayenb. 24).

**AFORN-ON**

The combination *aforn-on* (*aforen + on*) 'in front of, face to face with' has been recorded from Lawman's *Brut* only: — *Fulgenes him wes aforon on* (A 10413; afornon, B); — *Moddred him wes avornon* (A 28313).

**AFTER**

*After* (from OE æfter, efter) 'in the rear of, behind' has been used with verbs of motion since OE: — *sunne wule voluwen efter þe* (Anocr. 170). In ME it comes to be used of position as well: — *aþþ affterr þe godspell stannt þatt þatt te godspell meneþþ* (Orm. D 33). Another common ME meaning of *after* is 'along, following the course of:' — *al þat verden æfter wæi* (Lawman A 13777); — *þer is wanunge end wop efter ech strete* (Poema Mor. 231); — *a lace lapped aboute . . . and so after þe halme halched ful ofte* (Gaw. & GK 218).

The meaning 'in the rear of,' 'following,' 'pursuing' often implies purpose (cf. Mod. E *to run after, to ask after, etc.*); this is usually the case in conjunction with verbs like abide, ask, call, clepe, come, hunger, long, look, reach, seek, send, yearn, etc., after nouns like desire, and after adjectives like covetous, greedy, etc.: — *þe king . . . bad æverælcne mon axien after Mærlin* (Lawman A 17010); — *the king . . . callide after Mede* (PPl. A iii 88); — *tho behynde begunne up lepe, . . . And troden fast on others heles, And stampen, as men doon aftir eles* (Ch. HF
2154); — we seken fast after felicitee (Ch. CT A Kn. 1266); — seint Edwardes moder . . . he after sende (RGlouc. 6478, Mostyn MS); — covelose after gode (RRolle EWwr. 75).

The use of after in the meaning 'following' develops into a figurative use in the sense 'according to:' — E ṣ 35 berr here 3ede swa Rihht affterr Godess lare (Orm. 119); — this ilke monk . . . heeld after the newe world the space (Ch. CT A Prol. 176); — his breed, his ale, was always after oon (Ch. CT A Prol. 341); — better it ware the plugh lye styll þan after honger for to tyll (MADSone 792). In my dere sone so þre, Do a lytull aftur me (Emáré 845) the preposition has a rather pregnant meaning, '(according) as I tell you.' A similar pregnant meaning ('according to the will of') is seen in I praye Jhesu shorte hir lyves That wol nat be governed after hir wyves (Ch. CT D WB 1262, according to the reading of several MSS; the Ellesmere MS and several others have by hir wyves).

In a temporal sense after has been used since OE: — after evensong (Ancr: 9). This readily develops into the meaning 'next to:' — after thiself, next heried be she (Ch. TC iii 1256). The expression after noon is probably a calque on Latin post meridiem: — 'go nu,' quaþ þeo, 'sone, And send him after none,' (Horn 358).

The following constructions are imitations of Latin and Old French types like post urbem conditam and après tout vaincu: — þis neue pursuyng of prelatis is don . . . after more benefice resceyved (Wyclif EWks 87); — after þe seid . . . chapitris leernyd . . . for to lepe into þe bigynnynge of þe x \textsuperscript{e} chapitre (Pecock Fol. Donet 12); — our lorde Jhesu Crist that ordeynid for a lawe that aftir a dome yevin shulde be no mercye or grace (Gesta Rom. 242).

For at after see p. 366.

AGAIN(ST)

Again (OE ongean, ongegn), adverb and preposition, has occurred only in the adverbial function since the 16th century,
except in the North, where it continues to occur in both functions. The genitival form *aezines*, which appears at the end of the OE period, is used almost exclusively as a preposition. In the 14th century a parasitic -t comes to be attached to it in the South (*aezinst*).

The preposition is used to indicate position, motion, opposition, exchange, time, etc.

It has been used to indicate position in the sense 'opposite' since OE: — *evene est aien France stont þe contrei of Cicester, Norwich aien Denemarch, Chestre azen Irlonde, Duram azen Norþwey* (RGlouc. 148-50); — *he was come agayns thilke pyrie* (Ch. CT E Mch. 2325). Hence the preposition comes to mean 'before, in the presence of:' — *he stired the coles til relente gan The wex agayn the fir* (Ch. CT G CY 1279); — *aezynes þe sonne shynyng* (KAlis. 5666). The preposition expresses motion in the sense 'towards' or 'against:' — *and preyde hire for to ryde agayn the queene* (Ch. CT B ML 391); — *if he may with ten thousynde go azens hym that cometh azens hym with twenti thousynde* (Wyclif Luke xiv 31). *Again(st)* also develops the abstract meaning 'with regard to, concerning:' — *Vortiger ... þat azen us is so hende* (RGlouc. 2364); — *he schulde ... be merciable azenst pore men* (Trev. Higd. VI 375).

All through the ME period *again(s)* is used in a temporal sense, to express anticipation or the approach of a particular point of time: — *þat arche was a feteles good, Set and limed aegen þe flood* (Gen. & Ex. 562); — *the white swan Ayens his deth begynnyth for to synge* (Ch. LGW 1356).

**Along(st)**

*Along* (OE *andlang, andlong, onlong, from and 'against' + lang 'long') is originally an adjective, then used independently with a genitive ('the whole length of'), and finally as a preposition. The genitival form *alonges*, from OE *alanges*, is rare, as is *alongst*, with a parasitic -l, which appears at the
end of the ME period. The ME use of *along* has obviously been influenced by the parallel OF use *au long de*.

In ME *along(es)* occurs in the sense 'through the length of, parallel to:' — *muche lond he him zef ... an long þare sea* (Lawman A 138); — *þar isete in langes [on longen, A] þane strete* (Lawman B 19677).


**AMID(ST, IMID, IMIDS, IN MIDDE)**

*Amid* goes back to OE *on middan*, where *middan* is originally an inflected adjective. ME variants are *in midde(s)*, *emidde(s)*, and *amiddes of*.

In ME the preposition occurs in the sense 'in or near the middle of, surrounded by:' — *þet trau of lyve þet is amydde paradis* (Ayenb. 97). It is used in a figurative sense in *yet was he caught amyddes al his pryde* (Ch. CT B Mk. 3919). It is placed after the noun in *I was the wode amiddes* (Gower CA i 112).

**AMONG(ST)**

*Among* is to be traced back to OE *on + gemang* 'assemblage, crowd.' *Amonges*, the genitival form, is found since early ME, *amongst* since late ME. The ME variants include *in mong* and *imong* (*ymong*).

In addition to the common meaning 'amid, in the company of,' *among(st)* may be used in a temporal sense, 'during:' — *wæs se eorl Karle of Flandres ofslagen on ane circe ... amang þane messe* (OE Chron. an. 1127); — *to sle this boor was al the contre raysed, Amonges which ther com, this boor to se, A mayde* ('during which events,' Ch. TC v 1471).

**ANEMPST; SEE ANENT(ES)**

**ANENT(ES, ANEMPST, INENTES, ONONT)**

*Anent* is a survival of OE *on efen* 'on a level with, beside' and occurs all through the ME period. ME variants are *on-*
event, anempt(es), anempst, onentes, onont, anen, inent(es), and inence. The -s (anentes, etc.) is the adverbial genitive ending, while the -t of anent, onont, etc., comes from the following article.

One ME meaning of anent(es) is 'in the company of:' — bot al þat he wit luve þam soght, Enentis þe Iuus al was for noght (Cursor 14459). The figurative meaning 'with' is seen in anentis men it is impossible, but not anemptis God; for all thingis ben possible anemptis God (Wyclif Mark x 27) and the meaning 'in the sight of' in worldes wysdome ... Onence God es bot folly (Pr. Consc. 1353). In the temporal meaning 'toward' the preposition is rare: — þus wende ... Katerine ... to Criste ... Fridai, onont te Under (Kath. 2531, MS Cotton Titus).

Anent is also used to denote the purpose of an action: — alle muwen and owen holden one riwle onont purte of heorte (ad puritatem cordis,' Ancr. 2); — schrift haveþ monie mihtes ... þreo azean þe deovel and þreo onont us sulven (Ancr. 134).

In the sense 'with regard to, concerning' the preposition occurs in þat never kane halde þe ordyre of lufe ynence þaire frendys (Rolle EWr. 55) and God forbeode þat y anentes þilke neode Any þyng sayde agayne (Ferumbras 5877). As anentes is found in Cursor: — I sal yow sceu al how it was, Als enentes Moyses (6880). Anent is still current in Scottish legal phraseology.

AROUND

Around, from on round (round from F ronde) has been recorded as a preposition since late ME: — rewlers of rewmes around all þe erthe (Mum & S iii 264).
AT

At (OE æt) occurs in ME in a variety of uses, corresponding to (and obviously strongly influenced by) OF a, L ad and apud, and ON at. For the foreign influence see particularly H. T. Price (see bibliography), pp. 11-33; see also p. 349 above. For the interchangeability of at with of and on see pp. 350-1.

Since OE at has been used to indicate local relations in its original sense, answering to the question 'where?:' — huære he wass att hame (Orm. 12985); — at cherche kan God his virtues sseawy (Ayemb. 56); — he . . . with Schyr Jhone the Cumyn met In the freris, at the hye awter (Barbour ii 33). At is used extensively with proper names (at Kildar he was aslawe . . . And at þe frere prechors ibured at Kilkenni, RGlouc. 10809; — at the cite of Verone, when the king, gredy of comune slaughtre, caste hym . . . 'Veronae, cum rex avidus exitii communis . . .' Ch. Bo. i p 4.213), even when modern usage would prefer in or on: — þe tol þat was at Grece sou th (KAlis. 4416); — in þese dayes a famous clerk . . . was at Ireland (Trev. Higd. VII 183); — at þe mownt Calvarye (RRolle EWwr. 24).

In ME at may also be found in connection with personal nouns in the sense 'together with, in the house of, in the presence of:' — we weoren at Arþure þan kinge (Lawman A 25290); — se ze that he be without drede at zou ('videte ut sine timore sit apud vos,' Wyclif 1 Cor. xvi 10; Purvey has with); — were I at yow byzonde þise wawe5, I were a joyful jueler (Pearl 287).

Passing into a more abstract meaning, at comes to indicate condition, mutual relations, and the like: — rath and soone þey were at oon (Flor. & Bl. 193); — the barownys war at discord (Barbour i 69).

The original local meaning of at is also seen in its use in connection with various activities: — hit is vileynye To be of bold word atte mete (RGlouc. 5804); — at wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram (Ch. CT A Prol. 548). The idiom to play at, not found in OE, is probably due to the influence of OF jouer a,
medieval L ludere ad, or ON leika at: — and wyl byd ðe pley at ðe chekere (Flor. & Bl. 670; the OF version has juër a l’eschequier, 1958).

Because it is used to indicate the starting-point of an action (cf. ME at a knyght than wol I firste bigynne, Ch. CT A Prol. 42, and present-day E we shall begin our walk at Trafalgar Square), at comes to indicate separation ('from,' etc.). This is well attested in OE (þa his gesihþe æt his seolþes muðe gehyrde 'illasque visiones ex ipsius ore audierit,' Bede 216; — eowerne gefean eow nan mon æt ne genimþ 'gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis,' Alfred Care 186; — Joseph ahredde Egypta fac æt þæm miclan hungre, Alfred Oros. 1). ME examples: — biræved at live (Lawman A 27907; of, B); — inviteþ et ower meiden huþ hit beo ðet is icumen (Ancr. 28); — thai ask mercy, but nocht at ou (Barbour xii 484). It may be that the idiom to take leave at somebody owes its later existence to French influence (cf. F prendre congé à qlqn), but it is attested at a remarkably early date in ME: — at hire heo nomen læve (Lawman A 1271; of, B); — mai he no leve at hire taken (Gen. & Ex. 2697); — at þe amyral þei toke leve (Flor. & Bl. 1080). Cf. A. A. Prins (see bibliography), pp. 270-71.

An opposite use, where at indicates destination and the like, is recorded in OE and ME. While Lawman A reads brohten hine to Romerel (28309), Lawman B has at Romerel. Other ME examples: — thei carie til thei come at Kaire (Gower CA ii 2648); — so wisly God my soule brynge at reste (Ch. CT E Mch. 1489); — and leyd it [the letter] at his herte (Ch. CT E Mch. 1884); — þe knyȝt . . . Liȝteȝ doun luftlyly and at a lynde tacheȝ þe rayne (Gaw. & GK 2176); — to hunten at the leoun or the deer (Ch. CT A Kn. 2150). Cf. OE se æþeling bebead sumum his folce þet hie gebrohten Romana consulas . . . æt heora agnum londe (Alfred Oros. 122). The influence of L ad and OF a may play a part in this use.

At may also denote the point at which anything enters or goes out, thus assuming the semi-instrumental meaning
'through' or 'by:' — and at a wyndow lep he fro the lofte (Ch. LGW 2709); — sche went out at þe chirche dor (MKempe 129).

Cases of this kind illustrate the development of the original local use of at into an instrumental function. An illuminating example is the idiom (to see) at eye, although it may have arisen under the influence of OF a l'ueil: — the thing so open is at ye That every man it mai beholde (Gower CA Prol. 34). Other instances where at expresses instrumentality, manner, cause, measure, and the like: — to winnenn unnderr Crisstenn-dom Alt Godd soþ sawle berrhless (Orm. D 138); — Crist ta wolde fullhtnedd beon Alt Sannt Johaness hannde (Orm. 10655); — I spak to hym at wurdes fewe (Rich. CL 573; cf. OE æt feawum wordum); — at myn hous ye ben at my warnynge (Ch. TC iii 195); — at his owene gyse (Ch. CT A Kn. 1789).

In the sense 'according to' at occurs in cases like þat þe pape cursd has at his witand (Cursor 29262, Cotton MS) and that hast so falsly put aweie ... The treweste at my knowlechinge (Gower CA ii 1282). This meaning has not been recorded in OE; cf. OF a mon escient and ON at landslogum 'by the law of the land.' In this meaning ('according to') at is widely used in ME counterparts of modern o'clock: — ten at the clocke (Ch. CT B ML 14; for the rather indiscriminate use of at, on, and of in this phrase see p. 351).

At often indicates time, especially a part of the day: — at mornе, when it was dag lyʒt (Flor. & Bl. 426; the OF version reads au matinet, quant le jor vit, 1272); — neither at eve ne at mornе (RRose 3028); — þis winter schal biginnen et te holirode dei (Ancr. 9; the French version reads cest yver deit commencer a la feste la seinte croiz).

Phrases. — At occurs in a large number of adverbial phrases. Many of these are obviously calques on corresponding Latin, Old French, and Old Norse expressions, although the parallelism in form and meaning need not in every case imply that the English phrase arose as a direct imitation of foreign usage. A few instances where foreign influence is apparent: —
At (one) accord; cf. OF a une acorde: — we ne bo at one acorde (Owl & N 181). Abay, at bay; cf. OF a l’abai: — he sterryd as bere at baye (Ipom. A 5845). At all; cf. medieval L ad omne ‘omnino’ and ON at òllu: — ful wel can ich hele . . . and help zow hasteli at al zoure hele to gete (WPal. 597). At a time; cf. OF a une fois: — Samasons strenèpè þet slough a þusund of his fon al et one time (Anocr. 182). At (one’s) bandon, at abandon; cf. OF a (son) bandon: — Leyr was al at þer baundoun (RMannyng Chron. 2385). At aventure; cf. OF a l’aventure, a aventure: — cowpen at awntere be kraftes of armes (Morte Arth. 2543). At the last cast ’at the last shift, near to death or ruin;’ cf. ON at seinustum kòstum ’at the last moment:’ — into tyme he be at his last caste (Pecock Repr. 338). At one’s commandment; cf. OF a votre commandement: — his officers . . . ryde anon at his comandement (Ch. CT A Kn. 2869). At (one’s) cost; cf. OF a son coust, a sa depense: — þat non myght þat scepal at no cost (RMannyng Chron. 1054). (All) at (one’s) device; cf. OF (tot) a devis(e), a mon devis: — for certes, as at my devys, Ther is no place in paradys So good inne for to dwelle or be (RRose 651). At (one’s) ease; cf. OF a (son) aise: — þanne was Engelond at ayse (Havelok 59). At hand; cf. L ad manum, ON at hendi: — for þe kyng hadde nouȝt elles at honde to þewe hem, he toke þe mes þat was isette tofore hym (Trev. Higd. V 459). At hof ’with moderation;’ cf. ON at hófi: — forr þi bî birrþ þe ben swinncfull Inn alle gode dedess A 53 att rhîht time, and a 53 att hof (Orm. 4742). At the instance of; cf. OF a l’instance de and medieval L ad instantiam: — at þe prayere and instance of oþer (RRolle Engl. Prose Treatises 26; NED). At large; cf. OF au large: — while ech of hem is at his large (Ch. HF 745). At leisure; cf. OF a loisir: — we shall speke more at leyser (Merlin 7). At long; cf. OF a long, au long: — bot lat us leve him at longue and lende to oure hames (WAlex. 3498). At part; cf. OF a part. At peace; cf. OF a pais: — þei obliged þam to gyve Fourti þousand pound at his pes to lyve (RMannyng Chron. 88). At one’s peril; cf. OF au peril de. At pleasure: cf. OF a vostre plaisir and L
ad libitum: — *I drynke and ete at my playsyr* (Caxton Æsop ii 17). *At point* 'aptly, fitly;' cf. OF a point: — *for wynd at poynt blawand thai had* (Barbour iii 702). *At all points;* cf. OF de tous pointz. *At point device* 'to the point of perfection;' cf. OF a point devise: — *daun Scipio That saw in drem, at poynt devys, Helle and erthe and paradys* (Ch. HF 917). *At preve;* cf. OF a preuve: — *that shall be founde at preve* (Ch. TC iii 1002).

*At the point of day;* cf. OF au point de jour: — *be redy at the poynte of day for to ride* (Merlin 585). *At the prayer of, at the request of;* cf. OF a la priere de, a la requeste de, and medieval L ad preces alicuius: — *þise kynges stille þei left at the papes request* (RMannyng Chron. 266).

*At random* (OF a randon) occurs in the 15th century in the sense 'at great speed' (*ryderr at randoun*, PPl. A 323, MS Douce; cf. the discussion in NM LV, 1954, 56-8); in the current present-day meaning 'in a haphazard manner' the phrase does not occur until the 16th century. *At regard;* cf. OF au regart de: — *for that is dere boght honour At regard of oure grete ese* (Ch. HF 1753). *At unskill* 'wrongfully;' cf. ON at óskilum: — *þif y ha lore hit at unskyle, I schal hit wynne eft when God wyle* (RMannyng Chron. 12643). *At one voice;* cf. OF tout a une voix: — *bes boþe at a voice, in one zoure wille be mynde, To help þe Cristen men . . . Ageyn þe oste paen* (RMannyng Langtoft 144).

For other phrases with *at* cf. MED under *at*.

**AT AFTER**

*At after,* still used in the North, is frequently found in ME texts, especially with nouns denoting meals. The character of *at after* has been the subject of some controversy; cf. particularly O. F. Emerson, *MLR* XI, 1916, 460-2, H. Bradley, *MLR* XII, 1917, 74-6, and H. T. Price (see bibliography), pp. 29-33. It seems that *at after* is to be taken as a compound preposition in instances like *I trust to see you all after Estur* (MS Rawlinson C 258; NED at 40), but the case is more complicated
in *at after dinner*, *at after supper*, *at after mete*, and *at after noon*, where *after* might be taken to belong to the noun (*after-dinner*, *after-supper*, *after-mete*, *after-noon*). It seems that the character of the construction varies according to the speaker, which makes it impossible to say, for example, whether *at after noon* is to be understood as *at-after noon* 'after noon' or *at after-noon*. Examples: — *sche schop hir forto riden oute at after mete al openly* (Gower CA vi 1831); — *at after dyner daun John sobrely This chapman took apart* (Ch. CT B Sh. 1445); — *sche myght speke wyth hym .. . tweyn owyrs at aftyr none when he had etyn* (MKempe 38). Cf. *atfore* and *atour* below.

**ATFORE**

*At-fore* (OE *æt foran*), synonymous with *afore*, survives to c 1300: — *an croiz in stede of is baner is men at vor e him bere* (RGlouc. 1904; *bi fore*, MS B; *to fore*, MSS abγ; *afore*, MS δ). Cf. *afore*, p. 356.

**ATOUR**

*At-our*, from the phrase *at over*, occurs in late ME, being characteristic of the North. It is used in the meaning 'over, above,' both of position (*thaire hudis all .. . atoure thair eyen hang*, Kingis Quair 81, 4) and of degree or quantity (*atour all thing Kepys zow fra disparyng*, Barbour iii 199). Cf. *out-over* (*out-our*), p. 404. *At-our* survives in modern Scots.

**BEFORE(N)**

*Before(n)* (OE *beforan*, from *be foran*), originally an adverb, has been used as a preposition since OE in a primarily local ('in advance of, in front of, in presence of') and temporal ('preceding in order of time') sense: — *this lettir sall I entyr heyr, Befor all zour consaill planer* (Barbour i 624); — *the fairest .. . floure That evir I sawe, me thogth, before that houre* (Kingis Quair 40, 4).
As a preposition referring to a past space of time before is no longer used (it was before many a day Comandid in the ald lay, Cursor 10675, Gött. MS); this construction has been replaced by the type many days before.

In ME before comes to be used of rank, denoting superiority (se schene biforen alle oþre, Hali Meidh. 19) and preference (þow schalt not have bifore me alyen Goddis, Wyclif Sel.Wks III 83).

**BEHIND(EN)**

**BEHIND,** from the OE adverb *behindan* (< *be* hindan), has occurred as a preposition since the 13th century (he wass þa bihinnandenn hemm bilefedd att te temmple, Orm. 8915; — Arthur... storte bihinde an treo, Lawman B 26057). In the sense 'after the departure of or in the absence of a person' *behind* has also been recorded since early ME, though it is now obsolete (þa þatt .. . A33 follžhen rihtwisnesse Biforenn menn, bihinn-denn menn, Orm. 401). From the meaning 'following, after' (rycht til the bra syd he zeed And stert behynd hym on his sted, Barbour iii 128) the preposition comes to be used in the (rare) meaning 'in imitation of:' — my wordes ofte I haunte Behynden hem, so as I dar (Gower CA ii 483).

**BENEATH(EN)**

**Beneath,** from the OE adverb *biniþan, beneoþan* (< *be* neoþan), originally had the meaning 'lower than, below,' which it also has in ME: — to lye be þat burde þozte he .. . þe cloþes þat wern on hure bed ilaid .. . Alle haþ he wiþ is hondes braid doun benyþe hure breste (Ferumbras 2428).

In the course of time the preposition comes to be used instead of *under,* both in the literal and figurative sense: — *ane brig beneth thaim was* (Barbour x 86); — *he brozte al bineþe hom þat were is fon* (RGlouc. 10084).

To denote inferiority in rank, excellence, etc., *beneath* has been used since OE (sche was so hertly set for to love hym þat no þing bineþe hym mist counforte hir, Cloud 55).
Prepositions

**BESIDE(S)**

As a preposition *beside* (from OE *be sidan*) has been attested since c 1200, as has the form *besides*, with the genitival ending -s. The original local meaning of *beside(s)* is 'by the side of' (*þær fæht Baldulf bisiden his broþer*, Lawman A 21408; — *on angel . . . stod bisides hem*, Trin. Hom. 31), which easily passes into the meaning 'near or close to, in the vicinity of' (*to a toun biside Wirctre þat Kemesie ihote is*, RGlouc. 11675; — *a good wyf was ther of biside Bathe*, Ch. CT A Prol. 445).¹ The use of the preposition in the derived meaning 'in addition to, as well as' appears in the 13th century (*fier is on hem bisiden lizl*, Gen. & Ex. 3651).

**BETWEEN(EN); BETWEIEN (BETWEIES); BETWIX(EN), BETWIXT, BETWUX; BETUH**

*Between(en)*, from OE *betweonum*, and *betwix(en, betwixt, betwux, betwixen)*, from OE *betweox* (-ix, -ux), are both found throughout the ME period, as is *betweien (betweies)*, which results from a contamination of *between* with the numeral *tweed*.* Betuh*, a continuation of OE *betweoh* (-uh, -ih), survives only in earliest ME. The -en forms occur mainly in the more southern parts of the country. There do not seem to be any noticeable differences in meaning between these words.

All the ME functions of these prepositions survive in present-day uses of *between*. In the sense 'among' *between* and *betwix* seem to occur somewhat more frequently in ME than today: — *þatt time þatt he come himm selff Bitwenenn hemm to spellenn* (Orm. 9422); — *the pitous joye . . . Bitwix hem thre* (Ch. CT B ML 1115).

**BETUH; SEE BETWEEN(EN)**

**BETWEIEN (BETWEIES); SEE BETWEEN(EN)**

**BETWIX(T); SEE BETWEEN(EN)**

¹ Cf. p. 399.

24 — Mustanoja
BEYOND(EN)

_Beyond(en)_ , from OE _beȝeondan_ (< _beȝeondan_) has been used since OE as a preposition to express position in the sense 'on the farther side of' ( _Beþania þatt wass Bizonndenn flumm_ , Orm. 10602). In early ME it comes to indicate motion and direction as well, in the sense 'to the farther side of, past, farther than' (_sum ḯelh bizonnden sæ_, Lawman A 29149; _ihc habbe go mani mile Wel feor bizonde weste To seche my beste_, Horn 1177). In later ME the preposition acquires the derived meanings 'out of reach of' (_thingis that ben bysondes zow 'ultra,' Wyclif 2, Cor. x 16) and 'in addition to' (_over and bizonde which we mowe no þing desire ne love_, Pecock Reule 108).

BOUT(EN) (1)

_Bout(en)_ , an aphetic form of _about(en)_ , is occasionally found in the meaning 'concerning:' _— strijj was bute þe preisthede_ (Cursor 21695, Cotton MS; _aboute_ , Fairfax MS; _abute_ , Gött. MS).

BOVE(N)

_Bove(n)_ (OE _bufan_ , from _be + ufan_) is superseded in ME by the synonymous _above_ (see p. 355): _— Loverd . . . þat ous is boven_ (Sirith 89).

BUT, BOUTE(N) (2)

_But_ (_bute, buten, boute, bouten, bot_), OE _butan_ , from _be utan_ , originally an adverb, is used in OE as a local preposition in the senses 'outside,' 'without,' and 'except.'

In its local sense 'outside' the preposition does not survive in ME. The last example cited in the NED dates from c 1160. In the privative sense 'without, except' _but_ is current in ME, particularly in the earlier part of the period: _— butenn rihte rewusunne_ (Orm. 9882); _— till the toun soyn cumin ar thai Sa prevely, bot noys making_ (Barbour v 91); _— Brut wiþ is poer slou þis geans atte laste, Alle bote Gogmagog_ (RGlouc. 514).
In later ME but begins to give way to without and except in this function.

**BY**

By (OE be, bi), originally a local preposition, is used in OE for other purposes as well, to express instrumentality, time, etc. In ME the functional range of by is considerably widened, partly under French influence.

Used in a local sense, by frequently denotes proximity ('close to'): — Brutus hine...biburisede bi ane stan walle (Lawman A 1729); — riht bi þere Humber (Lawman A 6822); — by Loudoun hill mete hym sall I (Barbour viii 150); — the Tabard faste by the Belle (Ch. CT A Prol. 719). With personal nouns by has the meaning 'in the company of, beside:' — hir liketh noght abide bi me (Gower CA iv 1182); — busked hem even to his bed and bi him gunne sitte (WPal. 1530).

By also indicates position 'in the region or general direction of:' — Arþur wes bi norþe (Lawman A 21043); — king he was bi weste (Horn 5; cf. þonne heold man fyrd be westan, OE Chron. an. 1010); — a shipman was ther, wonynge fer by weste (Ch. CT A Prol. 388). In an even more indefinite sense by occurs in expressions of the type bi water and bi londe, used to express figuratively the idea of 'everywhere:' — wexinge evere beþ ure jour bi water and bi londe (RGlouc. 3259); — up roos he Julius, the conquerour, That wan al th'occident by land and see (Ch. CT B Mk. 3863).

The meaning 'in the presence of' seems to account for the occurrence of by in oaths: — hir gresteste oath was but by seinte Loy (Ch. CT A Prol. 120); — the dewke sware, 'be hevyn kynge' (GWarw. 5951, Chg. MS). The original local meaning of by has become obscured by other notions, however, and the influence of F par (cf. OF pardee) is obvious.

It is possible that the idiom by oneself has been influenced by OF par soi (meïsme), but contrary to what has been assumed it cannot have originated under French influence because it
occurs in OE (ne mæg nan ðær gesceafet be him selfum bion, Alfred Boethius 258, 33). The original meaning of the phrase may have been 'in one's own company or presence,' which then develops into 'apart from others, alone.' ME examples: — þet wuneþ bi him one, (Aancr. 55); — þer heo weren one bi ham sulven, (Aancr. 126); — a young clerk romynge by hymself they mette (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1173). The meaning of the phrase often has a tinge of causality: — zif they abyden to dyen be hem self, as nature wolde (Mandev. 194).

By is now obsolete in comparisons ('placed by the side of . . . for comparison, in comparison with'), but is found in this function in ME: — a kynes herte semeth by hyrs a wrecche (Ch. TC i 889). The expressions to let by, to set by 'to esteem' appear in ME: — litel is he lovid or lete bi (PPL A xi 29); — I sette nat a straw by thy dreymynge (Ch. CT B NP 4280). The expression set by is frequently found in figurative negations; cf. J. Hein, Anglia XV, 1893, 41-186 and 396-472.

In a local meaning by is used with reference to motion, the character of the motion being usually implied by the verb. Thus by occurs with verbs of motion in the senses 'along' (þe heisugge þat fliþþ bi grunde among þe stubbe, Owl & N 506), 'through' (and to an elf-queene I me take By dale and eek by downe, Ch. CT B Th. 1985; cf. OF par montaignes et par valees), and 'so as to pass' (an angill come and hem forbad To wend by hym [Herod], Cursor 11529, Fairfax MS). The idea of motion may also be implicit in the governing noun (greete ze no man by the weze, Wyclif Mark xiii 8). In the sense 'to' by is used of persons, mainly in connection with the verb to come: — as I wente, ther cam by mee A whelp (Ch. BD 388); — for deth cam so in haste bi me (Gower CA iv 1423). By is also used to express, as a result of comparison, the amount of excess or increase, inferiority or diminution, in length, duration, weight, or quantity: — yet hath this brid, by twenty thousand foold, Levere in a forest . . . Gon ete wormes (Ch. CT H Mcp. 169). In cases of this kind there is no longer any real local notion
left. The same may be said of the essentially distributive use of *by* before a repeated noun to express succession (*ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon*, Ch. CT F Fkl. 993), a use which goes back to OE. In many instances the distributive use (*feondliche heo feothen, bi þeosende heo fellen*, Lawman A 4740, — *by ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde*, Ch. CT A Prol. 677; — *they than thanken hym . . . by two, by three*, Ch. CT F Sq. 354), though it can be traced back to OE, may have been promoted by the influence of *F par* (cf. *F par jour, par centaines*).

The local notion *in the vicinity of, along* provides a basis for the figurative use of *by* to denote certain mental proximity. The development is seen in instances like *any man or woman þat al other may noght take ensawmpel by* (RRolle EWwr. 114). In various contexts *by* has the meaning *in accordance with, according to:* — *non ancre bi mine rede ne schal makien profession* (Anacr. 3); — *she wolde ben ded bi hire wille* (Havelok 1130); — *and after that he heng hem by the lawe* (Ch. CT B Pri. 1824).

After certain verbs *by* occurs in the sense *about, concerning:* — *ase Godes spuse singeþ bi hire sulven, 'nigra sum, sed formosa* (Anacr. 5); — *wel hast þou idon bi me* (SE Leg. x 365); — *this ensampill I may weill say By zon folk and us that ar heir* (Barbour xix 684); — *ful often thei have mad me schent And hindered me ful ofte time, Whan thei no cause wisten bi me* (Gower CA iii 892).

Used with reference to a circumstance (name, age, trade, birth, blood, and the like) *by* often has an instrumental colour: — *a knygt of Fraunce, Be name ne know y nozt wat he was* (Ferumbras 1131). Although the use can be traced back to OE, it is possible that OF has had some influence on the ME usage (cf. *OF par nom*).

The instrumental use of *by* is much less common in OE than in ME. It seems reasonable to assume that the marked increase in the instrumental use of *by* in ME is — partly at any rate — due to the influence of *OF par*. Many phrases seem to be direct imitations of French models (e.g., *by aventure*,}
by chance, by force, by heart, by right, by virtue of). Examples of the instrumental use of by in ME: — leovere heom his to libben bi Þan wode-roten (Lawman A 467); — help me to knižte Bi al Þine mihte (Horn 436); — to reule þe reume bi her thre wittes (PPl. B viii 105); — þe cowherde . . . drow him toward þe den bi his dogges noyce (WPal. 42); — bi schipe he mot travaile (Gower CA iv 1627); — the craft that . . . hath the myght To don by force a wyght to don folye (Ch. PF 221); — but he be al fully wood by this [distresse] (Ch. TC iii 793); — justice he was ful often in assise By patente and by pleyen commissioun (Ch. CT A Prol. 315). The instrumental use of by is an extension of the use of this preposition in the sense 'along, through,' to denote the channel or route and then the intermediary through which an action takes place. This primarily local meaning is clearly discernible in cases like may I nat axe a libel . . . And answere there by my procuratour (Ch. CT D Fri. 1596), and it is also felt — though less palpably — in the more abstract uses of by with the meaning 'by means of.'

An advanced stage of the use of by to indicate the person through whom an action takes place (e.g., he . . . sente gow this lettre here by me, Cf. TC ii 1123) is seen in the occurrence of this preposition to indicate the agent of a passive expression. Wülfing II, p. 338, quotes a doubtful OE instance of be denoting agency with a passive verb, and R. Gottweiss (Anglia XXVIII, 1905, 353-4) calls attention to what he calls 'signs of the use of be with the passive' in Ælfric's homilies. BTS, be 20, quotes an example from the OE Gospel of St Luke (Þa þing þe be him wærun gewordene 'quae fiebant ab eo,' ix 7). Cf. active cases like þat was agan þære bi Þan kaisere (Lawman A 27982). Unambiguous ME instances where by indicates the agent of a passive verb occur from the end of the 14th century on (I praye Jhesu shorte hir lyves That wol nat be governed by hir wyves, Ch. CT D WB 1262; — ne hadde he ben holpen by the steede of brass, Ch. CT F Sq. 666). This use becomes increasingly common in the 15th and 16th centuries. In the Cloud (MSS of the early
15th—early 16th century) of is a little more frequently used to denote agency than by. It may be assumed that the use of by to indicate the agent of a passive expression is promoted by the influence of French par.

The use of by to indicate temporal relations goes back to OE. By may indicate the time in the course of which an action or event takes place, a usage which in present-day E survives only in phrases like by day and by night: — David by hus daies dobbede knyßtes (PPl. C ii 102); — wel lovede he by the morwe a sope in wyn (Ch. CT A Prol. 334). By may also occur in the meaning 'for the duration of, for:' — þu schalt wasse more Bi fulle seve zere (Horn 96); — for to not suffre by myche tyme (Wyclif 2 Macc. vi 13).

The use of by to mark the completion of the time required or assigned for an action, in the sense 'not later than,' has survived to the present day: — þe weorþ hit eall of . . . preostes wifes, þat hi scolden hi forlæten be Sanctus Andreas messe (OE Chron. an. 1129); — the wode is both braid and vyde, And he is weill fer be this tyde (Barbour vii 48). The phrase by that (by than, by this) in the sense 'by that (this) time' is not uncommon: — bi þan sal Sarra selþe timen (Gen. & Ex. 1023); — by þat it was undern hyze (Flor. & Bl. 511); — bi þis come Sarra to þe tide O birth sco moght not overbide (Cursor 3007). By can even occur alone: — be hii arise and abbeþ iturnd . . . Wolves dede hii nimeþ vorþ (RGlouc. 7608).

CONSIDERING

The absolute present participle considering has been used as a preposition since the 14th century: — considerynge thy yowthe So feelyngly thou spekest (Ch. CT F Sq. 675).

COUNTRE

The OF preposition countre (contre, cuntre) 'against' occurs in some texts of the late ME period: — for cuntre(y) þat conceipt I can make a reason (Mum & S 1548).
Prepositions

**DURING (DURAND)**

The absolute present participle *during* comes to be used as a preposition in the 14th century, presumably as a calque on OF *durant*: — *I have the power durynge al my lyf* (Ch. CT D WB 158). Cf. *lasting*.

*EMFORTH; SEE EVENFORTH*

**ENDELONG(ES)**

Like *along(es)*; see p. 359), *endlong(es)* goes back to OE *andlang(es)*, used both as an adverb and as a preposition. The form *end-* is probably due to popular etymology. The word may also owe something to the influence of ON *endilangr*, particularly in the North and the Midlands. *Endlong(es)* is used to express position or motion in the sense 'from end to end, along, alongside:' — *and droh þa endelong hire, and þwortover þrester, þe deorewurþe taken of þe deore rode* (Marg. 24); — *endelonges is side þat blod him ran* (Ferumbras 498).

**ER(E)**

*Er* (*ere, ar, or*) has been used as a preposition since OE (*ær*). It occurs in the sense 'before a point or period of time' (*jowerti þer or domesdai, Gen. & Ex. 645), 'before the expiration of an interval of time' (*gawe us grace, Or nyghtes ten, to meten in this place, Ch. TC iv 1685*), and 'before a person or thing in order of time,' occasionally in phrases like *first er, er then* (*a synful Marie þe seighe ar seynte Marie þi dame, PPl. B v 505*; — *hir yen . . . That laugheden ay in hir semblaunt First or the mouth, by covenaunt, RRose 864*), and, rarely, in the sense 'in preference to' (*þe red noble is reverenced or þe rode, PPl. B xv 502*).
Prepositions

**EVENFORTH (EMFORTH)**

*Evenforth* and its variant form *emforth* occur as prepositions in later ME in the sense 'according to, in proportion to' and 'equally with:' — *he dede equité to alle evene forth his powere* (PPl. B xix 305); — *emforth my myght, thy trewe servant be* (Ch. CT A Kn. 2235).

**EVENLONG(ES)**

*Even-long(es)* is occasionally found in ME texts in the sense 'lengthwise of, along:' — *Beryn ... cast about his eye Up and down, evenlong the strete* (Beryn 2007).

**EXCEPT**

The absolute past participle *except*, from L *excepto*, develops into a preposition in later ME: — *alle shal deye ... Excepte oneliche of eche kynde a couple* (PPl. ix 140); — *excepte Ector, þer was nat swiche anoþer* (Lydgate Troy Bk ii 4895). Cf. *out-taken*, p. 404, and *excepting*, below.

**EXCEPTING**

After the past participle *except* (see above) had come to be regarded as an infinitive (see pp. 653-4 below), the participles began to be formed by adding the native endings -ing and -ed (*excepting, exepted*) to it. *Excepting* is occasionally found as a preposition in latest ME: — *this article is agreed, excepting suche persones as ...* (Paston I 34 [1432]).

**FOR AND FORE**

The prepositions *for* and *fore* are closely related. *For* (OE *for*, OFris. and OS *for*, OHG *for*, *far*, and Goth. *faur*) is assumed to represent an apocopated form of prim. Gmc *fora*, which seems to be the source of English *fore* (OE *fore*, OFris. *fara*, OS and OHG *fora*, and Goth. *faura*). The English pair *for* and *fore* is paralleled by Gk *πορέ* and *πορέ*, L *pro* and *prae,*
and German *vor, für, and ver-* (prefix), all representing the same root.

The original local meaning 'before' provides a starting-point not only for the temporal use, but for many other derived functions, the development of which may be imagined to have taken place along the following lines: 'standing before a person' > 'standing in front of a person as his champion, representative, or substitute' > 'standing or acting for the benefit or on behalf or instead of a person.'

In OE, *for* and *fore* seem to be used indiscriminately for all these purposes (cf. Wülfing II, p. 339). The same indiscriminate uses continue in ME, although there are some vague signs of an incipient differentiation resulting in the use of *fore* mainly in the sense 'before' and of *for* in the other senses. It is difficult, however, to say anything definite upon this point, and in the following account no distinction is made between the two forms.¹

The local sense 'before, in the presence or sight of' is recorded all through the ME period (*sco sagh ðat angel for hir stand*, Cursor 10497, Cotton MS), as are the temporal sense 'prior to' (*paa cruel dais and paa kene fore domesdai*, Cursor 22429) and the comparative sense 'in preference to' (*I schal me make þin owe To holden and to knowe For everech ðepere wiste*, Horn 671; — thanne wolde I that thise foules were aweye Ech with his make for taryinge lenger here, Ch. PF 658).

As mentioned above, the idea of standing in front of a person or thing leads to the ideas of representation 'as a representative of' (*I carpe not of knightz ðat cometh for þe shires*, Mum & S 1460), substitution 'instead of' (*ure ealre Hlaverd for his þreles ipined wes a-rode*, Poema Mor. 187), and exchange 'in

¹ An interesting parallel to the use of *for* and *fore* as prepositions is their use as prefixes. Cf. particularly O. Siemerling, *Das Präfix 'for(e)' in der altenglischen Verbal- und Nominalkomposition*, Kiel diss. 1909, and W. Schrader, *'For-' und 'fore-' Verbalkomposita im Verlaufe der englischen Sprachgeschichte*, Greifswald diss. 1914.
exchange for, in requital of’ (and some heo heom sealden for seoluer and for gold, Lawman A 12108; — me sullep hit for a windes puf, Ancr. 65; — and page for alle þe costes at every pleynæ is ende, Mum & S 1614), and to other comparable notions.

The idea of acting in support or for the benefit of a person (‘for the sake of’) comes very near — and is in fact often implied in — that of substitution and representation (him suf þe polede dieþ for heom; wel deore he us bohte, Poema Mor. 184; — a miȝti miracle for me hastow wrouȝt, WPal. 1005; — and bisily gan for the soules preye, Ch. CT A Prol. 301). Instead of simple for, the phrase for ... sake, with a genitive or a possessive, has occurred since early ME (vor hire sake, Ancr. 2; — al for hire loverdes sake haveþ daies kare and niȝtes wake, Owl & N 1589). The phrase may have arisen after the analogy of OE for ... þingum, which survives down to ME (and mine gode song for hire þinge ich turne sumdel to murninge, Owl & N 1597).

It is obviously the meaning ‘for the sake of’ which has provided a starting-point for the occurrence of for in oaths and other corroborative phrases of the type for Goddes love (Flor. & Bl. 144), although it is possible that in oaths like for Gode (Ch. CT D WB 1129) a shade of the old meaning ‘before, in the presence of’ is preserved. On the other hand, corroborative expressions like þere ne was ratoun in alle þe route for alle þe rewme of Fraunce (PPl. B Prol. 177), for the town of Tewnes I nolde but I had herd hem synge (Ch. BD 310), and she swoor him, nay, for al this world to wynne She nolde do that vileynge or synne (Ch. CT D WB 961) obviously go back to the meaning ‘in exchange for.’ Cf. G. Langenfelt, NM LII, 1951, 218-47. Cf. pp. 382-3. For a general discussion of corroborative phrases of this type see pp. 634-8.

For expressing equivalence (he had the name For the best knyght of all that lande, Barbour xviii 433) is often found in conjunction with verbs like have, hold, and the like, cor-
responding roughly to 'as:' — ze sculden of me halden and habban me for harre (Lawman A 5415); — zif he wolde bicumen mi mon and for laverd me icnawen (Lawman A 26402); — ðis word was for dom yholde (RGlouc. 2991); — he is i preyed for a parfite techere (Trev. Higd. III 219); — I knowe yow for a trewe wyf (Ch. CT D WB 320); — Dido . . . tok hym for husbonde and becom his wyf (Ch. LGW 1238). It is also used in instances like to some it thoghte for the beste, To some it thoghte nothing so (‘it seemed to be the best,’ Gower CA ii 2510). The same notion of equivalence may lie behind a number of phrases, like for sooth and for certain (e.g., for certein, Phebus and Neptunus . . . wol brynge it to confusion, Ch. TC iv 120).

The notion of equivalence seems to account also for distributive phrases like word for word and the like (word for word ðus hij spake, KAlis. 2917; — of Grisildes wordes and hir cheere He tolde hym poynf for poynf, Ch. CT E Cl. 577).

The use of for for expressing purpose and destination is found even in OE, although it is less common than in ME, where it may have been promoted by the influence of F pour (Havelok was war ðat Grim swank sore For his mete, Havelok 788; — we stryve as dide the houndes for the boon, Ch. CT A Kn. 1177). The causal use of for is responsible, for example, for the phrase for the nones (< for then ones), found in Chaucer’s a cook they hadde with hem for the nones To boille the chiknes (CT A Prol. 379; cf. R. M. Lumiansky, Neophilologus XXXV, 1951, 29-36).

One of the most common purposes for which for is used is to express cause or reason (miȝte non Egipcien Abuten him for mirknesse sen, Gen. & Ex. 3104; — for joie I scholde deie, Horn 1346; — for curteisie, he seyde, he wolde noon, Ch. CT A Mil. 3351). Causal for is occasionally found in combination with indefinite adverbial what ’somewhat’ (cf. pp. 218-9) in phrases like what for . . . what for ’partly on account of . . . partly of’ (wat for honger, wat for wo, men deide in ech side, RGlouc. 7767).
'FOR BLACK,' 'FOR PURE ASHAMED.' — The occurrence of causal *for* in conjunction with certain semi-substantivised adjectives in a number of 14th- and 15th-century texts has been the subject of some controversy. There are cases like: — he hadde a beres skyn, col-blak for old ... As any ravenes fethere it shoon for blak (Ch. CT A Kn. 2142-4); — amydde a tree, for drye as whit as chalk (Ch. CT F Sq. 409); — her heed for hor was whyt as flour (RRose 356); — she is in so gret turment ... That nygh she meltith for pure wood (RRose 276); — he that was nyh wod for wroth (Gower CA vi 1696); — for very glad he wist not what to saye (Generydes 1255). The type is not uncommon in late ME; in addition to the above-mentioned instances there are others, like *for* bright, *for* payne, *for* feynt, *for* feble, *for* hot, *for* lene, *for* slepeles, *for* ugly and *for* felle *for* wery of my labour, *for* wo and *for* wery of that compaignie, *for* very wery, *for* very glad, and *for* na drie ne *for* na wate.

In a number of these cases *for* is probably the intensifying prefix *for*- seen in cases like chaste theim quhen thai do mys, Fore-wantone, thowless, rakless is (Thewis 224; cf. MED and NED *for*-, prefix), but in some cases it is clearly a causal preposition preceding a semi-substantivised adjective. Striking parallels to the latter type have been recorded in the Romance languages; compare ME *for* pure ashamed (Ch. TC ii 656), *for* pure abaissht (Gower CA iv 1330), and *for* pure wood (RRose 276) with Spanish se estaba boca arriba sin poderse meneear de puro molido y emplastado and de puro bueno y confiado no quiso ni pudo creer.

The most probable explanation is that *for*, originally an intensifying prefix, is in later ME frequently mistaken for a causal preposition combined with a semi-substantivised adjective. This is one of the consequences of the general decay of the old prefixes, even of *for*-, although it retains its vitality longer than most of the others. Once *for* is taken as a preposition, the type becomes exposed to the influence of parallel foreign uses.
Prepositions


The type *for black* has a parallel in the use of *for* and *of* with certain past participles (e.g., *wery for (of) wandred* or *wery for-wandred (of-wandred)*, PPl. B Prol. 7), which originally seems to combine two constructions, (1) the adjective *weary* governing an *of*-phrase and (2) a past participle with the prefix *of-* (later generally supplanted by *for-*). In the course of time, as the result of some further confusion between these prefixes and the causal prepositions *of* and *for*, the two prefixes obviously come to be looked upon as prepositions in a number of cases, such as *of fered* and *for fered*. Instances like *the Millere that for dronken was al pale* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3120) seem to allow the interpretation of *for* both as a preposition and as a prefix, but in *he was yslayn tonyght, For-dronke as he sat on his bench upright* (Ch. CT C Pard. 674) the only possibility seems to be to construe *for* as a prefix. For a more detailed discussion of constructions of this type see pp. 560-3.

Other Uses. — The use of *for* in the adversative sense 'in spite of' probably has the same fundamental background as its use to indicate substitution and exchange, although some other notions have evidently become absorbed in it as well (*Þe steorc vor his muchele flesche makeþ a semblaunt vor te vleon*, Ancr. 58; — *I wyl to þe chapel, for chaunce þat may falle*, Gaw. & GK 2132; — *for heigh and lough, withouten any drede, I wol alwey thyn hestes alle kepe*, Ch. TC iii 418). The sense 'in spite of' is seen in some uses of the phrase *for aught* ('now sire,' quod she, 'for aught that may bityde, I moste han of the peres that I see,' Ch. CT E Mch. 2330), and it seems to be occasionally implied also in corroborative phrases like *for all the world*

1 But this is by no means always the case, as shown by cases like *for aught I woot, he was of Derlemouthe*, (Ch. CT A Prol. 388).
(e.g., for al þis world a mon schulde not synne, Wyclif Sel. Wks III 120); cf. p. 379 above.

The temporal use of *for(e)* in the sense 'before' is mentioned on p. 378. In the course of ME *for* develops another temporal meaning, that of duration. All the quotations given in the MED, *for* 15 (a), date from late ME, except one, taken from a 12th-century homily (*for þisse sceorte life*). Like so many other cases, this use may be fundamentally a native development promoted by the influence of the parallel OF use of *pour*, but the possibility is not excluded that it is entirely due to French influence. Examples: — *I am undo for ever* (WPal. 2078); — *toune and castell war Weill stuffit for ane zeir and mair* (Barbour xvii 232); — *and there abyde for a throwe* (Gower CA ii 2532).

For the use of *for* with the infinitive see pp. 514-5 and 534 (infinitive with *to*) and 515 and 540 (plain infinitive).

**INORGANIC 'FOR.'** — A peculiar use of *for*, often referred to (more or less inappropriately, it seems) as 'inorganic' *for*, has occurred since the 14th century in conjunction with an infinitive clause following an impersonal expression: — *wher it be leeful for a man to leve his wijf* ('si licet homini dimittere uxorem suam,' Wyclif Matt. xix 3); — *it is no maystrye for a lord To dampne a man withoute answere of word* (Ch. LGW 386, G-text). The opinions of grammarians concerning the origin of this construction vary considerably (cf. C. Stoffel, *Archiv* LXII, 1879, 209-16, and *Studies in English Written and Spoken*, Zutphen 1894, pp. 49-76, J. Zeitlin, *The Accusative with Infinitive and Some Kindred Constructions in English*, New York 1908, pp. 137-40, and E. Einenkel, *Anglia* XXXVIII, 1914, 40-46). It is possible, as J. Zeitlin believes, that this *for* is an equivalent of the old dative of person in impersonal expressions (see pp. 433-6). But it may also be that the construction owes something to Celtic influence; G. J. Visser, *Neophilologus* XXXIX, 1955, 276-93, quotes numerous parallels from modern Welsh. R. W. Zandvoort, *E Studies* XXX, 1949, 265-9, thinks
that certain peculiarities of English word-order play a part in this use of *for*. Evidently the development of 'inorganic' *for* has been no less complex than that of innumerable other syntactical phenomena, and it is quite possible that all or most of the factors to which attention has been called have had their share in this process.

**FORBY**

*Forby* (*for + by*), recorded since the 13th century, has parallels in other Germanic languages (Du. *voorbij*, G *vorbei*, Dan. *forbi*, Sw. *förbi*); its occurrence in English may owe something to foreign (ON?) influence. The primary meaning is 'past, close by,' with reference to motion: — *quils þat he him forbi glad* (Cursor 20884); — *he rood forby places of the town In which he whilom hadde al his plesaunce* (Ch. TC v 563). In the figurative use it may mean 'beyond' (*far forþ,* *quaþ þe angel, 'oc loc þe wel, Forbi min red, quaþ þu non del,*' Gen. & Ex. 3988) or 'in comparison with' (*hu soft [it es] her for to mend forbi þat pine wituten end,* Cursor 27365). Cf. *forthby*.

**FOROUT(EN)**

*Forout(en)* 'without, besides' is used from OE (*forutan*, from *for + utan*) until early Mod. E: — *fifty thousand of archerys He had, forouten the hoblerys* (Barbour xi 110).

**FORTH**

The adverb *forth* is used by Pecock as a preposition in the sense 'before:' — *if the processis forth and afore tho textis ligging be weel and diligentli considerid* (Repr. 52). Cf. *evenforth*.

**FORTHBY**

The only work in which the preposition *forthby* 'beyond, in addition to' is known to occur is *Ormulum*: — *he þe53m forrbæd*
to takenh ohht Forþbi þatt tatt hemm birrde, Forþbi þe kingess rihtte þe (10154-5). Cf. forby.

FORTHWITH

The adverb forthwith occurs as a preposition in the sense 'together with' all through the ME period (do mercy forthwith rihtwisnesse, Gower CA i 2936) and in late ME in the sense 'in front of, in the presence of' (þe ende of alle kynez flesch... Is fallen forþwyþ my face, Purity 304). Cf. forwith.

FORWITH

Forwith occurs as a preposition in later ME in the sense 'in front of, in the presence of' (Adam fell dun forwit his þele, Cursor 18307; bifor, Gött. MS), 'before, prior to' (forwit domes day, Cursor 215; bifor, Gött. MS; tofore, Trin. MS), and 'ahead of' (mikel wa... þer es him forwit laid, Cursor 15714; bifore him, Trin. MS). Cf. forthwith.

FRO (FRA); SEE FROM

FROM AND FRO

From goes back to OE from. Fro (fra), from ON fra, is used mainly — but by no means exclusively — in those parts of the country where Scandinavian influence is strong.

In addition to the common uses of from today, its occurrence in a few special functions in ME seems worth mentioning. In the sense 'away from' it is found in what is Criseyde worth, from Troilus? (Ch. TC iv 766). It indicates difference or distinction in cases like clotheden hem in copis to ben knownen fram othere (PPl. B Prol. 56). In temporal use fro(m) may refer to a whole clause (from she was twelve yeer of age, She of hir love graunt him made 'from the time when,' RRose 850).

From its function to indicate a person as a source of an action, first as a giver or sender, from develops into a preposition of agency in OE. In this function it occurs down to
the 14th century: — he was gehalgod to bispoc fram þone ærce-bispoc Willelm of Cantwarabyri (OE Chron. an. 1129); — I ... am sett king fro hym upon Sion (Wyclif Ps. ii 6; am maad of hym a kyng, Purvey).

**FROMWARD**

Fromward (froward, fromward), from OE fromweard (from ON frá), occurs throughout the ME period in the sense 'away from' (at even cam a fugel-fligt, froward Arabie to hem rit, Gen. & Ex. 3322); — ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawe Fro Burdeux ward, whil that the chapman sleep (Ch. CT A Prol. 397). Cf. p. 423 below.

**GAIN(E)S**

Gain(e)s, zeines, perhaps an aphetic form of againes (see p. 358), is occasionally found in ME in the sense 'against:' — 'fader,' he said, 'forgive þou þat þai do gains me' (Cursor 16696, Cotton MS).

**ZEIN(E)S; SEE GAIN(E)S**

**ZEOND; SEE YOND**

**IMID(S, IN MIDDE, IN MIDDLES); SEE AMID**

**IN**

The ME preposition in, which in many texts occurs in the denasalised form i, goes back to OE in. In the meaning which this preposition has today, OE in seems to be characteristic of the Anglian dialects. In the South, particularly in the West Saxon area, the meaning 'in' is expressed mainly by on, emphatic 'in' by innan. On is, however, often found in the Anglian area, too.

In early ME the situation changes. Under the influence of F en and L in, and obviously also owing to native factors, in supplants on in the meaning 'in' even in the southern parts
of the country. The development is strikingly illustrated by Lawman’s *Brut*; the A-text of this work prefers *on* and the B-text *in* (cf. *on kinges lond*, A 3143; *in*, B). *Ancrene Riwle*, written under considerable French influence, has *i Þe boc* for the normal southern OE *on beoc* (*mi leoþmon Þet seif to me i Þe luue beoc*, 45; the French translation reads *m’amie qe dit a moi en cele livre d’amours*), but *Floris and Blancheflour*, translated from French about 1250, uses *on* in *so doþ Floriz on his contre* (496, MS C, 13th century; the 15th-century MS T reads *forsake Florys in his contraye*, 792). Chaucer still writes *on bokes rede I ofte* (PF 16). Yet after earliest ME the use of *on* tends to be restricted to the expression of present-day ‘*on*’ and continues to express the idea of present-day ‘*in*’ only in more or less stereotyped constructions.

Another point of difference is that while in OE *in* seldom occurs outside the local use, in ME its functional sphere is greatly widened. This seems to be due largely to French and Latin influence.

The functional borderline between the prepositions *in* and *on* remains somewhat indistinct because *in* not infrequently carries out the functions of present-day ‘*on*.’ Being locally used to indicate position within certain limits, *in* is found, for example, in conjunction with names of hills and mountains (*by Elicone in hil Pernaso*, Ch. TC iii 1810), with plural nouns and collectives in the sense ‘among’ (*freris wold not here þis publischt in þe pepul*, Wyclif Sel. Wks III 445), and in various other contexts where *on* would be used today (*in the floor I lay as I were deed*, Ch. CT D WB 796; — *write sum . . . carect with cole . . . in the wal*, Pecock Repr. 166).

*Instead of*, first recorded in *Ancrene Riwle*, is probably a translation-loan from French: — *siggeþ a last ine stude of Benedicamus ’Requiescat in pace’* (9; cf. OF *en lieu de*).

*In* defines the part of a person or thing in which this person or thing is affected (*a lutel ihurt i þen eie derveþ more þen deþ a muchel i þe hele*, Ancr. 49); it also occurs in the phrase
'clothed in' (he was clad in cote and hood of grene, Ch. CT A Prol. 103).

Since OE, *in* has been used to denote position even in a more abstract sense (hem wolde he sleen in torment and in payne, Ch. CT B Mk. 3779). *In* occurs in numerous descriptions of situation, condition, occupation or action, manner, form, etc.: — þer he heom funde i fīhte (Lawman A 27767); — þer he him restēþ, þer he is in pais (Ayenb. 250); — of which to telle in short is myn entente (Ch. TC ii 1219; cf. F en bref); — whil sche was in þe schrywyng (MKempe 58). For *in building* see p. 578.

*In* may imply means or instrumentality: — tu havest, Loverd, bihoten þin icorene i þin eadi nome (Ancr. 12); — shal I come to you in a zerd or in charitē (‘quid vultis? in virga veniam ad vos an in charitate,’ Wyclif 1 Cor. iv 21). The preposition may also indicate a degree, extent, and measure (cosyngis in neir degré, Barbour xi 324), aim or purpose (Brut . . . let vair tabernacle in honur of him rere, RGlouc. 466; cf. OE he het . . . cirican getimbran in are þare eadigan fæmnan Sca. Marian, Bede), and, with verbs of emotion, a kind of causality (I sall be fayn and I sall glade in þe ‘laetabor et exultabo in te,’ RRolle Psalter ix 2).

With reflexive pronouns *in* may occur in the sense ‘in his own person or nature’ (Jesu Crist Iss . . . soþ Godd inn himm selffenn, Orm. 3041) and in late ME and early Mod. E also in the sense ‘in the control or power of,’ which survives in present-day legal phraseology (in yow lith al to do me lyve or deye, Ch. CT F Fkl. 1337).

In connection with verbs of motion, *in* is used in OE with the accusative in the sense of present-day ‘into’ (see p. 390). In ME this usage survives even after the levelling of the case-endings, although *into* is used increasingly in this function. It is not until the 17th century, however, that *in* is decisively supplanted by *into*. Examples: — secheþ vor to vallen i þisse putte (Ancr. 25); — do hine i þine neste, þet is i þine heorte (Ancr. 59; the phrase *don in* ‘to put in or into’ occurs in OE); — a cause
he fond in towne for to go (Ch. TC v 527); — and Ingliss men with gret mastriss Com with thar host in Lowdiane (Barbour xviii 509); — and casten Þaym in a coffre (Mum & S 1701). A number of phrases of this type survive in present-day English.

The temporal use of in in the sense 'within the limits of a space of time' (in þe nyzt, KAlis. 85; — in one daye ibore we were, Flor. & Bl. 85, Cotton MS; OF jà jumes nous né en un jor) dates from OE. In ME the preposition is also used of actions and events which take up the whole of a given time (in sixe daies God made hevene and erthe, Wyclif Exodus xxxi 17). In occurs from OE on in many cases where present-day usage would prefer other prepositions, such as at (in the dawenyng He made efte his charmyng, KAlis. 403, MS L) and on (in a þoresdai it was, RGlouc. 8668; — in a morwe of May, Ch. CT A Kn. 1034).

There are numerous abstract uses of in not enumerated here; for these reference may be made to the NED, s.v. in. In a large number of them the use of in seems to be due to French and Latin influence. Foreign influence is obvious or probable in cases like in aid (cf. OE en aide), in authority (cf. OF en autorité), in one’s bandon 'under one’s control, at one’s disposal, will, or pleasure’ (cf. OF en son bandon), in brief, in short (cf. OF en brief), in common (cf. OF en commun, L in commune), in conclusion (cf. OF en conclusion), in counsel (cf. OF en conseil), to be in default (cf. OFestre en defaute), in (de)spite of (cf. OF en despit de), in distress (cf. OF en destrece), in earth (cf. L in terra), in exchange (cf. OF en eschange), in (good) faith (cf. OF en bonne foi), in general (cf. OF en general), in haste (cf. OF en haste), in lieu of (cf. OF en lieu de), in (the) meantime (cf. OF en moien temps, L medio tempore), in point (cf. OF en point), in good point (cf. OF en bon point), in (the) sight of (cf. OE on ealles þæs folces gesihpe, L in conspectu, OF en [la] veue de), and in vain (cf. L in vanum, OF en vain).
Prepositions

INENT(ES, INENCE); SEE ANENT(ES)

INNE

Inne 'in, within' goes back to OE emphatic innan and inne. The inne used before the noun (early ME only) goes back to OE innan. The inne used at the end of a relative clause or immediately before the verb — occurring throughout the ME period and being frequent in the southern parts of the country from the 12th to the 14th century — apparently goes back to OE inne, used in the same syntactical positions (cf. Wülfing II, pp. 389-90). Examples: — þat Dardanisc kun . . . woneþ in þisse londe . . . inne þeowedome (Lawman A 454); — it is as lewid as a laumpe that no lighte is inne (PPl. A ii 163).

INTILL; SEE INTO

INTO AND INTILL

Into (in to) expresses motion in the sense 'to a point within the limits of, to the interior of.' The preposition is found in OE mainly in translational prose, where it renders L in followed by an accusative (into ecum eardungstowum 'in aeterna tabernacula,' Luke xvi 9). The construction in + accusative is also used in OE for this purpose (seo Wisle liþ ut of Weonodlande and liþ in Estmere, Alfred Oros. 20), but becomes ambiguous when the formal difference between the accusative and dative is levelled. Consequently the use of into is greatly increased in ME, although it does not decisively displace in in this function until the 17th century (cf. pp. 388-9). For the use of into to denote position in the sense of present-day 'in' and for the typically northern variant intill see below.

Apart from its common local use in the sense 'to the interior of' and figurative local uses like she chaunged my sone In to a wilde werwolf (WPal. 4105), and amende þat were amysse into more ease (Mum & S 138), he sodeynly mot falle into woodnesse (Ch. TC iii 794), and his mantell . . . He kut it into pieces
twelve (Gower CA vii 4525), into is found in many expressions of motion or direction where present-day usage would use other prepositions, notably to or onto. This, of course, is only a reflection of the interchangeability of in and on (see pp. 386-7 and 399-400). Thus into stands for present-day 'to' in cases like youre soule in his pytt of corrupte watyr nedyth to cry into God (Jacob’s Well 2), 'towards' in cases like the one way was towarde Fraunce, the other in to Spayne, the other in to Galyce, and the fourth in to Gascoyn (Caxton Aymon ix 227), and 'until' in cases like fro that day in to this myn herte haf he yraft (Ferumbras 1420).

Since later OE, into has also been used to denote position in the sense of present-day 'in:' — Sigeferþ and Morcær, þa yldestan þægenas in to Seofon burgum (OE Chron. an. 1015); — worre was in to al þis lond, þat longe worþ in mone (RGlouc. 10540). Cf. also to þan kinge com þat word into Winchester (Lawman A 17605) and þet he hine hadian sceolde to bishop into Lundene (OE Chron. an. 1048). This use is found particularly in Scotland, and after the 14th century it is regarded as being typically Scottish: — Bowrch-in-the-Sand Men callis this toune into this land (Barbour iv 204); — gret myst into the mornyng fell (Barbour ix 577). The use survives in present-day Scots. Into for present-day 'in' is also found in him spekinge thes thingis, many men bileveden into him ('multi crediderunt in eum,' Wyclif John viii 30).

Intill is a northern and north-eastern variant of into (icc hafe wennd inntill Ennglissh Godspelless hallzhe lare, Orm. D 13; — take my hert intill þi hand, RRolle EWr. 41). It may stand for to (at the comynge of Criste intill hym, RRolle EWr. 58). In Scottish texts intill is also used for in (bath castell and toune War intill his possessioune, Barbour i 186); the usage survives in present-day Scots.

INWARD

Inward is rarely used as a preposition. In the sense 'within' it is recorded in the 15th century: — right on the bryge, the
Prepositions

Romans says, They met Beves inwarde the paleys (Beves 1208, MS M). Cf. p. 423.

INWITH

As a preposition inwith (in + with) 'within' occurs from the 13th century down to the 16th. It is used of place and condition (inwith youre chambre, Ch. CT E Cl. 870; — for alle þe londe inwyth Logres, Gaw. & GK 1055; — inwit mi soru al o mi liij I sal fast wit miselven strijj, Cursor 26604, Cotton MS; wiþin, Fairfax MS), and also of time (I fel on slepe inwith an houre or two, Ch. LGW 209, B-text, MS Fairfax 16).

LASTING

Lasting is used as an absolute participle, which in later ME is occasionally found as a preposition, obviously in imitation of during and, ultimately, of OF durant: — lastyng the sege (Lydgate Troy Bk ii 5063).

MAUGRE

The preposition maugré, from OF malgré, maugré, has been recorded since the 13th century in the meaning 'in spite of, notwithstanding' (e.g., a kniȝt . . . hade him out of þe ost mawgrey hem alle, WPal. 3745). The occurrence of the independent possessive pronoun (and the rare occurrence of a noun in the genitive) after maugré is a calque on OF malgré mien (tien, sien, etc.): — and God wot that is malgré myn (Gower CA iv 59); — maugré his, he dos him lute (Cursor 4305, Cotton MS). Cf. R. L. G. Ritchie, Studies Presented to M. K. Pope, Manchester 1939, p. 317.

MID

The OE preposition mid, denoting association, connection, accompaniment, etc., is used in practically all the senses of present-day 'with', except that of opposition, which is ex-
pressed by *wiþ*. Thus in OE *mid streame* = 'with the stream' and *wiþ streame* = 'against the stream.' In a number of cases both prepositions can be used for expressing the same idea, as in *feohtan wiþ* and *feohtan mid*. *Mid* becomes obsolete by the end of the 14th century, *with* taking over its functions. The rivalry of the two prepositions becomes apparent about the beginning of the 13th century. It is in the north-eastern area that *mid* first begins to lose ground. According to H. Baumann (see bibliography) Orm uses *mid* only once. In the more southern texts, like Lawman A and *Ancrene Riwle*, *mid* is normally or chiefly used to express instrumentality, *with* being infrequent except in the sense of opposition. From the North-East *with* spreads to the West and South, and for a hundred years or so (from c 1250 until c 1350) both prepositions occur side by side. The last example of *mid* given in the *NED* dates from c 1400 (in rhyme): — *ther him hid With twenti armed knyztes mid That were hardy and wondir strong* (Laud Troy Bk 15314).

In the local use 'together with, in the company of' *mid* is found mainly with personal nouns and other words denoting persons (*ryz t zaþp, 'doþ out þane verst þessager; hyt ne is nazt ryz t þet he bleve ine þe house myd þe ryz twolle,' Ayenb. 269). This use provides the basis for the occurrence of *mid* (since OE) in adverbial phrases like *mid alle* 'altogether, entirely' (*þis is a cruel word, and a grim word mid alle, Ancr. 43*), *mid alle* 'at the same time' (and * tuo faire wymmen mid alle seint Cristofre he brozte*, St Christopher 172; *NED*), and *mid the beste*, etc., used as an equivalent of the absolute superlative (*cniht mid*

1 For *mid* as a substitute of the OE instrumental cf. particularly Eva Knispel, *Der altenglische Instrumental bei Verben und Adjektiven und sein Ersatz im Verlaufe der englischen Sprachgeschichte*, Breslau diss. 1932.

2 An interesting illustration of the rivalry between *mid* and *with* occurs in *PPl. A* ii 37, which in Knott’s and Fowler’s edition reads *and jeffe Mede therwith, in marrige for evere.* The alliterative structure of the poem requires *mid* for *with*, and the manuscripts which read *mide* have accordingly preserved the original reading.
pan bezte, Lawman A and B 19934; — a tale mid þe beste, Horn 474); cf. p. 288.

In other respects the use of mid in ME texts follows roughly the lines along which with is used in present-day English. It may be mentioned, however, that instrumental mid is occasionally used to express agency in early ME: — a lefði was þet was mid hire voan biset al abuten (Ancr. 177).

NEAR; SEE NIGH
NEXT; SEE NIGH
NIGH (NEAR, NEXT)

The adverb nigh (OE neah, neh, neih) has been used as a preposition in the present-day sense 'near' since OE: — holde we him neih us (Ancr. 141).

The comparative near has occurred since OE in the meaning 'nearer' (þæne kæisere he eode neor, Lawman A 8884). Passing into positive use, it has been used as a preposition in the sense 'nigh, near' since later ME (sco . . . rade til þai come ner þe stedd, Cursor 3348). The superlative next has occurred as a preposition with the meaning 'nearest' since OE (innocence is nexte God, PPl. B xvii 286).

After the analogy of phrases like nigh at hand (near at hand; e.g., he es cummand negh at hand, Cursor 15709, Cotton MS; nere atte hande, Fairfax MS) the types nigh hand and nere hand (e.g., sant Jhon neghand him stode, Cursor 12863, Cotton MS; nerehand, Fairfax MS; notice the prepositional use of the phrase) are found in ME. Later ME texts use nigh hand (near hand) as an adverb with the meaning 'almost' (he ferd as a mased man and marred neiʒ honde, WPal. 884).

NOTWITHSTANDING

The absolute present participle notwithstanding, a calque on OF non obstant, has occurred as a preposition since the 14th
Prepositions

century: — notwithstandyng al his suffisaunce (Ch. Compl. Venus 17).

O; SEE OF AND ON

OF

Of (o, a) is originally the same word as L and G ab. It goes back to OE of (af) 'out of, from.' The original meaning of the preposition survives in the more stressed form off (e.g., off the English coast). The spelling off is occasionally found from c 1400 on, but the forms of and off do not become fully differentiated until after 1600. The spellings o and a are weakened forms due to the unstressed position of the preposition: — man yhernes rimes for to here ... O Ioneck and of Ysymbras, O Ydoine and of Amadace (Cursor 19-20, Cotton MS); — quat kin a child es þis (Cursor 12041, Cotton MS).

The influence of French and Latin de on the use of of as a genitive equivalent has been discussed on pp. 77-8. It is obvious, however, that many other functions of of have been influenced by corresponding French and Latin uses.

The interchangeability of of with some other local prepositions, chiefly on and at, noticeable since OE, is discussed on pp. 350-2.

The original local use of of in the sense 'from, out of,' although overshadowed by the numerous derived senses, like those of cause, agency, quality, partitivity, and possession, still occurs in ME: — paraventure ther may fallen oon or two Doun of his hors (Ch. CT C Pard. 936). Starting from this primary meaning, the preposition easily comes to express less concrete relations: — Crist ... ras ... off dæþe (Orm. D 216); — off swounynge when he myght Awake (Morte Arthure 2006); — þeo cudde Kinbeline þat his fader wes of live ('dead,' Lawman A 9057); — when þat maide is yslawe And brouȝt of her lyf-dawe (Flor. & Bl. 48); — for if ye wiste how soore it doth me smerte, Ye wolde cesse of this (Ch. TC iv 1618).
Since OE, *of* has occurred after verbs of liberation and privation, such as *deliver, heal, wake, wash, deprive, and spoil*:

- *heo haveþ bipiled mine ðiger, irend of al þe rinde* (Ancre. 66);
- *he þe mine blodi soule of alle þe winden* (Ancre. 11);
- *clense mine soule of flesliche sunnen* (Ancre. 16);
- *I relece þe of þe remnaunt of ryȝtes alle ðeper* (Gaw. & GK 2342);
- *I halde þe polysed of þat ply þat and pured as clene* (Gaw. & GK 2393);
- *and nouȝt men of hir gode robbe or bereve* (Occleve RP 4026).

The preposition is also used in conjunction with privative adjectives and nouns:

- *elles be I bare of blisse; she voyde and empty is of cruelte; all naked art of eloquence* (Occleve RP 2028, 5053, 5443);
- *now thei han excusacioun of her synne* (Wyclif John xv 22).

The original local sense 'from, out of' easily develops into one of origin or source. Origin: — *a Clerk ther was of Oxenford also* (Ch. CT A Prol. 285). Source: — *Wawen and þe wale burde Such comfort of her companye caȝten togeder* (Gaw. & GK 1011).

A comparable use is *þat syre þat on þat self ny þat Of a burde wælz born* (Gaw. & GK 752).

The use of *of* to denote the source of an action, emotion, and the like serves as the starting-point of its use to denote cause or motive: — *ne durste he wunien among men, þauh hit were of nowiht elles bute of speche one* (Ancre. 130);

- *fur of cherite þet leiteþ al of ire Loverdes luve* (Ancre. 54);
- *of þy þaders reed and myne þis grave let we make* (Flor. & Bl. 314);
- *glad was Florys of þat tydying* (Flor. & Bl. 439; OF Floires est lié de la novelle, 1253);
- *the king wes of his spek angry* (Barbour v 61);
- *from his love . . . A man mote twynnen of necessite* (Ch. TC v 339);
- *whom shulde I thanken but yow, god of Love, Of al this blisse* (Ch. TC ii 848).

A lorde sone Which of his pride a nyce wyce Hath cawht (Gower CA i 2278); — *þank him of his grete curtesye þat he to me haþ done, and nameliche for þe ryng þat he zaf me* (Brut 132; note the use of both *of* and *for* with *thank*). The influence of *OF de* is probable.

The use of causal *of* seen in *whi sholde thanne of fered thyn*
herte quake? (Ch. TC iv 607) is obviously to be traced back to past participles with the prefix of- (e.g., makien ou so of-fered, Ancr. 3). In ME instances of this kind the prefix is often written as a separate word. There is often a strong implication of causality in these participles, especially in connection with the adjective wery (e.g., wery of-wandrit, PPl. A Prol. 7), and there is reason to assume that even early ME writers and scribes are uncertain whether the of is a prefix or a causal preposition. For a discussion of this see pp. 560-3.

The use of causal of, as suggested by cases like which caused was of pure drede (Gower CA i 1987), easily leads to the use of this preposition to express agency and instrumentality. To express agency of is used less frequently than from in OE, but it begins to gain ground towards the end of this period and becomes the most popular preposition expressing agency in connection with a passive verb down to c 1600. It is possible that this use of of has been promoted by the influence of OF de. Examples: — ich wolde þet heo weren of alle als heo beoþ of ou iholden (Ancr. 21); — is alle biset of helle muchares (Ancr. 67); — if he wolde be slayn of Symkyn (Ch. CT A Rv. 3959); — enformed whan the kyng was of that knyght (Ch. CT F Sq. 335).

The use of the preposition of to indicate a means or instrument goes likewise back to OE: — this gentil May . . . Right of hire hand a lettre made she (Ch. CT E Mch. 1996); — aboute Thebes wher he lay Whan it of siege was belein (Gower CA i 1993). In this use, too, the possibility of a contributory influence of OF de must be taken into consideration.

A special development of the sense 'from, out of' is seen in the use of the preposition of to denote material, colour, quantity, and the like: — þeos riwle is imaket nout of monnes fundleas, auh is of Godes hestes (Ancr. 2); — John hadde cloth of the heiris of cameglis and a girdil of skyn (Wyclif Matt. iii 4); — he was clad in a cote and hood of grene (Ch. CT A Prol. 103); — and clene spures under Of bryʒl golde (Gaw. & GK 159).
The ME use of the preposition *of* in the sense 'with regard to, considering' seems to be partly due to the general tendency of *of* to encroach upon the domain of *on*, partly also to French influence: — *al þet me eaver deþ of þe oþer wiþuten* (Ancr. 2); — *zung of zerese ase he was, fœiþ awei into þer wildernesse* (Ancr. 70); — *and was of yeres riþe ynowh* (Gower CA ii 2579); — *of bak and of brest al were his bodi sturne* (Gaw. & GK 143); — *fre of hys speche* (Gaw. & GK 847). The preposition is often found in conjunction with verbs like *speak, say, ask, write, teach, think, and remember:* — *hiderþ is iseid of ouwer silence* (Anacr. 35); — *at every tyme þat me remembreth of þe day of doom I quake* (Ch. CT I Pars. 159; cf. p. 436); — *þen þenkke Gawan ful sone Of his anious vyage* (Gaw. & GK 535); — *I moyn of þhour stoutness And on the mony gret prowess That þe have done so worthely* (Barbour xii 291; note the use of both *of* and *on* with the same verb).

In some temporal uses, like *of old*, the original local meaning 'from' is still clearly reflected ('pay me,' quod he . . . 'for dette thou owest me of old,' Ch. CT D Fri. 1613), while the use of the preposition in the sense 'during,' in cases like *of all the nyght he slepyd noþinge* (Ipom. A 1058) and *of all my lyf . . . So gentil ple in love . . . Ne herde nevere no man beforne* (Ch. PF 484), is probably a reflection of French usage (cf. *de ma vie, de la journée*, etc.; cf. pp. 350-1).

In the course of the ME period a number of phrases are taken over from OF: — *of accord;* cf. OF *d’acort:* — *he wol stonde of thin acord* (Gower CA i 849). *Of one accord;* cf. OF *d’un acort:* — *for som of hem song lowe, Som hye, and al of oon acorde* (Ch. BD 305). *Of age;* cf. OF *d’age:* — *of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse* (Ch. CT A Prol. 82); but cf. *till þatt he waxenn wass annd neh off þrittig winnterr elde* (Orm. 3206). *Of one’s counsel;* cf. OF *de son conseil:* — *I prey yow . . . that . . . ye wille . . . defenden the seyd sutes . . . and to be of owr counseill in these matieres* (Paston I 21-2 [1425]). *Of grace;* cf. OF *de grace:* — *clennesse . . . beoþ zeoven of grace* (Anocr. 167). *Of one’s hand;*
Prepositions

cf. OF de sa main: — this schir Eduard... Wes of his handis a nobill knycht (Barbour ix 481). Of high parage; cf. OF de haut parage: — and if that she be riche, of heigh parage (Ch. CT D WB 250). Of... price; cf. OF de grant prix; — riche maiden of michel pris (Gen. & Ex. 2690). Of yesterday; cf. OF d’hier: — and that is nought of yisterday That riche folk have ful gret might (RRose 1040).

For the use of the preposition of as an equivalent of the genitive case see pp. 74-8.

For the construction a friend of mine see pp. 165-6.

OF BESIDE

The combination of + beside occurs in the well-known line a good Wif was ther of biside Bathe (Ch. CT A Prol. 445).

OFFE

This is an emphatic variant of of, formed on the analogy of inne and recorded only in early ME. It is used after a relative pronoun: — þiss gode prest þatt we nu mælenn offe (Orm. 462); — þat we beoþ ove icomen (Lawman B 451; of, A). Cf. inne and on(n)e.

ON

The preposition on goes back to OE on (an). The weakened, denasalised form o (a) is not uncommon before a consonant (o live, a live; a domesdei, Ancr. 25; a Goddes name, Ch. CT C Ph. 250). Before a vowel or h the preposition occasionally assumes the form an (an-ende, an-high).

For dialectal features in the OE and early ME use of on see the discussion at the beginning of the chapter dealing with in (pp. 386-7).

In OE on is used with the dative case in the senses of present-day E 'in' and 'on,' with the accusative in the sense of 'onto.' These uses continue in ME, when no distinction is made
between the accusative and dative. In the course of time on becomes more and more restricted to indicating contact with the upper surface, a meaning conveyed by upon, the two prepositions becoming practically synonymous.

Apart from the cases where on has the same common local and temporal meanings as present-day 'on' (e.g., thair schipples that war on the se, Barbour xviii 264; — in that seson on a day In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay, Ch. CT A Prol. 19), there are many where it has the meaning of present-day 'in:' — heo sat on þe sunne (Horn 37); — on bokes rede I ofte (Ch. PF 16); — I . . . fil on slepe wonder sone (Ch. HF 114; cf. pres. E asleep).

On is occasionally found in the sense of present-day 'into:' — mani a spere spacli on peces were tobroke (WPal. 3410).

The preposition on is regularly governed by many verbs, nouns, and adjectives: — but ever he þouȝt on Blanchefloure (Flor. & Bl. 104; cf. p. 351); — Petre bithouȝte on the word of Jesu (Wyclif Matt. xxvi 75); — this squier, which that highte Aurelius, On Dorigen that was so amorus (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1499).

In conjunction with intransitive verbs of motion the preposition on is commonly used to indicate purpose, often in the reduced form a: — a day as seint Edward an hunted wende (RGlouc. 5840, MS C); — on huntyng be they riden roially (Ch. CT A Kn. 1687); — the good wyf wold a pylgremage unto þe holly londe (Good Wife Pilgr. 1). For the type a-hunting see p. 577.

On is used to express a hostile attitude in the sense 'against:' — in the holy land On saracenys warrayand (Barbour i 140).

Since OE, on has been used to express the reason behind an action or opinion or the like: — ah late we hine welden His folc on his willen (Lawman A 3336). On indicates penalty in Arcite That fro thy lond is banysshed on his heed (Ch. CT A Kn. 1724) and on peyne of dedly synne (Occleve RP 1584).

On is used in the sense 'with regard to, concerning:' — þet te ontfule ne muwen lien on heom (Ancr. 29); — elles it wol do you harm on youre hors (Paston III 211 [1471]).

On is not infrequently used in cases where a modern reader
would expect to find some other preposition, like *of* (denoting separation, partitivity, etc.): — *Magnus ... chased away Suane, and Danmark on him wan* (RMannyng Langtoft 57); — *wele recoverd on hys wounde* (Eglam. 953). The use of *on* to denote partitivity is attested in many OE texts (e.g., *micelne ad gesomnade on beamum and on reflrum and on wagum and on watelum and on þeacan*, Bede 202; — *unrim getæl on horsum*, Alexander’s Letter to Aristotle 13; ed. Rypins, EETS 161). Traces of this use are found in ME writings: — *fiȝte ȝousandes on laden* (*'of men,* KAlis. 1189; a corrector has altered *on* into *of*).\(^1\) Cf. present-day dialectal expressions like *nee on em* 'none of them.' A. T. Bødtker (*Crit. Contributions* I, pp. 22-6) believes that the use of the *of*-periphrasis for the genitive of definition with place-names is due to the encroachment of *of* upon *on* (cf. *se burch on Gleawecastre*, OE Chron. an. 1122, and *se burh of Lincolne*, OE Chron. an. 1123); for a discussion of this see p. 81. The old construction, with *on*, occurs in the opening formula of the Proclamation of Henry III: — *Henri, þur Godes fultume King on Engleneloande, Lhoaverd on Yrloande, Duk on Normandi, on Aquitaine, and Eorl on Anjow*. The preposition *on* corresponds to present-day *at* in cases like *he wol not selle hym ... under that mony that he sette hym on* (Paston III 203 [1477]). For the phrase *on the clock*, and for a more general discussion of the indiscriminate use of certain ME prepositions see pp. 350-2.

**ON(N)E**

This is a variant of *on*, formed on the analogy of *inne* and used particularly after a relative pronoun. It is attested from c 1200 until late ME: — *Cloten havede Cornwale, þat he heold wel one griþe* (Lawman A 4069); — *bi þe Lord and þe lawe þat we onne leewe* (Pistill Susan 164). Cf. *inne* and *offe*.

\(^1\) It is not absolutely sure, however, that the letter corrected was *n*.

26 — Mustanoja
ONONT (ONENTES, ETC.); SEE ANENT(ES)

ONOVEN-ON (ANOVEN-ON)

On-oven-on (an-oven-on), from on-oven (OE on + ufan) + on, occurs as a preposition in the sense 'down upon' from late OE to the 14th century: — Tholome smot Hardapilon Helm and basnet onovenon (KAlis. 2218, MS L).

ONOVEWARD (ANOVEWARD)

On-oweward (an-oweward), a combination of on and OE ufeweard, used in the sense 'upon,' occurs only in ME: — Corneus nom is bowe of him and ȝaf him ane wounde Anowarde is scolle mid his owre bowe anon (RGlouc. 374; aboven on þe scolle, Harl. MS). Cf. p. 423.

ONUNDER (ANUNDER)

On-under (an-under) 'beneath, underneath' occurs as a preposition in ME down to the end of the 14th century: — an-under mone so great merwayle No fleschly hert ne myȝt endeure (Pearl 1081).

ONUPPE(N, ANUPPEN)

As a continuation of OE on-uppan, the preposition on-uppe(n), an-uppe(n) occurs down to the 13th century, in the sense 'on, above:' — þat no man werpe þe gilt of his sinne anuppen God (Trin. Hom. 107).

ONWARD

In the sense 'towards the settlement of' onward occurs as a preposition in Ancrene Ritwle: — ichulle nimen hit onward þe dette þet tu owest me (55). The NED enters onward(s) as a preposition from the 16th and 17th centuries. Cf. p. 423.
The adverb *out* (OE *ut*) is occasionally used as a preposition in the sense of 'out of:' — *mornyng out mesure to Melior he wendes* ('beyond measure,' WPal. 1640).

**OUT OF**

Originally a combination of the adverb *out* and the preposition *of* (cf. *to sowke oute þe swettenes of þe somer floures*, Mum & S 1020), *out of* comes to be used as a preposition in the same local sense as OE *of*. It expresses the idea of motion from within more forcefully than the less emphatic simple *of*, which is used in an increasing measure to indicate syntactical relationships more or less remote from its original local meaning.

To indicate motion from within, *out of* has been used since OE. A ME example: — *out of olde feldes, as men seyth, Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere, And out of olde bokes, in good feth, Cometh al this newe science that menlere* (Ch. PF 22-4). This develops into a figurative use indicating transition from a condition or state into another: — *and bringe hem out of bondage þat þey were brouzth inne* (Mum & S iii 85).

Since early ME *out of* has indicated position outside, in a concrete and abstract sense: — *al þet god þet ze ever doþ beo idon ase bi nihte and bi þeosternesse, ut of monnes eien and ut of monnes earen* (Ancr. 67); — *when I am out of court an oþer day* (Occeleve RP 842). It is common in the sense 'without:' — *þat... makeþ þane man al oute of wytte* (Ayenb. 150); — *to yow broghte I noght elses, out of drede, but feith and nakednesse and maydenhede* (Ch. CT E Cl. 865); — *when it charged is out of mesure* (Occeleve RP 3867).

**OUT OF... WARD**

The combination *out of... ward* occurs in *sche went out of Inglond ward* (MKempe 102). Cf. p. 423 below.
Out-over (out-our), from *out* + *over*, occurs in northern and Scottish texts. It survives in present-day Scots. Originally it has the force of both its constituents combined. It is used with verbs of motion (*outour thair hedis flew the stane*, Barbour x 626) and of rest (*ute over þat hus þan stode þe stern*, Cursor 11489, Cotton MS). In figurative use it indicates degree 'above, more than, beyond:' — *Ynglis men That travalit men outour mesur* (Barbour x 156). Cf. *at-our*.

**Outtaken**

The preposition *out-taken*, originally a translation-loan modelled on the Latin and French absolute participles *excepto* and *excepté*, is used before or after the governing noun. It is favoured, for example, by Barbour and Gower: — *thai that in the castell were Yschit out . . . Outane a cuke and a portere* (Barbour v 340); — *for more, outake vanité, Ther hath no lord in his degré* (Gower CA v 215); — *outake Noé and his blod* (Gower CA vii 542). Cf. *except* and *excepting*.

**Over**

*Over* has been used since OE in the sense 'above, on top of:' — *over þe hous stood þe stern* (Cursor 11489, Trin. MS); — *a much berd as a busk over his berd henges* (Gaw. & GK 182). This leads to various figurative uses, e.g., to the expression of superiority (*to holde his opinion over alle þing5*, Mum & S 1167) or, with verbs of emotion and the like, to the expression of concern (*our hym thai sorowit swa*, Barbour xx 484).

In the sense 'across, beyond' *over* has occurred since OE: — *fer over þe French flod* (Gaw. & GK 13). Figurative application of this use results in the occurrence of *over* to indicate excess (*and þe overplus over þat for ornementz for þe churche*, Mum & S 659) and transgression (*þei bynden hom ouer þo commaundementis of God*, Wyclif Sel. Wks III 392), and also in the temporal use
of over in the sense 'during, on, the preceding evening or night,' as in some had ysoupid with Symond overe even (Mum & S iv 55).

**OVERTHWART (OURTHWORT)**

In the sense 'across,' over-thwart (our-thwort) occurs as a preposition from later ME on: — ys body was tornd over-thwart þe way (Ferumbras 3721).

**PAR; SEE PER**

**PAST**

Past (passed) is originally a past participle forming part of the perfect tense of the verb to pass, which takes the auxiliary to be. It is difficult to say exactly when passed ceases to be regarded as part of the finite verb and begins to be taken as a preposition, but there are some local and temporal uses in the 14th century where passed seems to be equivalent to the preposition beyond: — the day is short, and it is passed pryme (Ch. CT D Fri. 1471). Later it is also found in a figurative sense: — I have sent to Hary Halman . . . and he canne not gette passyd v ore viij at the most (Paston II 385 [1469]).

**PER (PAR)**

Latin per and French par occur in a number of phrases taken over from these languages: — peradventure (cf. OF par aventure): — thou schalt noght be so gracious As thou peraunter scholdest elles (Gower CA ii 563); — percas, par cas (cf. OF par cas): — it happede par cas, As Theseus compleynede hym by nyghte (Ch. LGW 1967); — perchance (cf. OF par chance): — for our gude dedys er ofte done wrang . . . Or perchaunce done oute of charite (Pr. Consc. 2489); — per (par) charité (cf. OF par charité): — thei comen to the kyng and bede Som of his good par charité (Gower CA i 2049); — per (par) seinte charité (cf. OF par sainte
charité): — I nam noȝt wurþi to be þi sone, ac par seinte charité . . . God adde vorzif it me (RGlouc. 6972); — per force, par force (cf. OF par force): — ar he hem have par force ywonne (KAlis. 4568). Perhaps is a hybrid imitating OF par chance; no certain cases of it have been recorded before the early 16th century.

Per (par) also occurs in some common oaths and asseverations adopted as such from French: — par Dieu (ȝhe aucht to shame, perde! Barbour vii 436; — he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee, Ch. CT A Prol. 563); — parfey 'by my faith' (‘perfay,’ quod ane than of the thre, 'Sall no man say we drede the swa,' Barbour vii 443).

In all instances of this kind per is obviously only a latinised form of par.

SANS

The French preposition sans (OF sen, sens, san, sans) 'without' occurs not infrequently in later ME before nouns of French origin: — þan hadde I nat, sanz fayle, Ben in þis wreched plyt (Occleve RP 1361). It may also occur before a native noun: — go in, sans bydyng (Rich. CL 681).

SAVE

Save, itself of Romance origin, is used as a preposition in imitation of OF sauf (from Latin salvo), which occurs in absolute constructions as an equivalent of except (excepté). Save appears in later ME in the sense 'except:' — þai þam draf ute o þair ward Sauve þe apostels þat þam ledd (Cursor 19485, Cotton MS); — an hundred lordes hadde he with hym there, At armed, sauve hir heddes, in al hir gere (Ch. CT A Kn. 2179; also F Sq. 90).

Save your grace (cf. OF sauf vostre grace) and save your reverence make their appearance in ME in the sense 'may it not displease you' (certes, sir, sauf your grace, I love your honour, Ch. CT B Mel. 2875).
The present participle *saving* occurs as a preposition in the sense 'except' from late ME on: — *but in this place, Saving a pilwe, I finde naught t'enbrace* (Ch. TG v 224, MS Rawl. Poet. 163; the other MSS have *save*); — *no man myghte gladen Theseus, Savynge his olde fader Egeus* (Ch. CT A Kn. 2838).

**SITH(EN)**

*Sith*, from OE *siþ*, and *sithen*, from OE *sipþan* (< *siþ þan, *siþ þon*), are used as prepositions in the sense of Mod. E since (both temporal and causal): — *parsonis and parissh prestis pleynide hem to here bisshop þat here parissh were pore sipþe þe pestilence tyme* (PPl. A Prol. 81); — *sifþen quen was þu ur domesman?* (Cursor 5670, Gött. MS). The form *sithens* turns up in prepositional use in the 15th century: — *sethens Michilmesse last past* (Ellis Letters III i 102 [1483]).

**THURGH (THOROUGH, THROUGH)**

The prepositions *thurgh* and *thorough* go back to OE *þurh* and *þuruh*, the latter form being no doubt due to greater emphasis. The metathetic form *through* (*þruh*) is originally northern, but spreads over the whole country in the course of later ME, to become the standard form since the end of the period.

In its original local sense 'passing from one end to the other' the preposition is common in OE and ME: — *now rideþ þis renk þurz þe ryalme of Logres* (Gaw. & GK 691). It denotes passage through an aperture in *it is liȝter a cameel for to passe thorwȝ a nedelis eige* (Wyclif Matt. xix 24). The emphatic phrase *through and through* is used not only in the sense 'repeatedly through' but also in the sense 'entirely through:' — *a squorde sulde stike overthwerti þorou and þorou þine awen hert* (Cursor 2381, Fairfax MS). For the emphatic form *throughout* see below under that word. The original local use of the preposition develops into a number of abstract uses, such as *þis noble duc*
The occurrence of *through* to denote the route or channel through which an action takes place may also result in the use of this preposition to express a means or agency; this usage dates from OE: — *þurh my t* of *Morgne la Faye* (Gaw. & GK 2446); — *the dede slep Fil on hir... Throgh Juno, that had herd hir bone* (Ch. BD 129). Indicating the agent of a passive verb *through* is not particularly common in OE, and in ME it loses ground steadily: — *þuruh me ne schulde hit never more been iupped* (Aner. 38); — *in Rome throu an þat hight Neron... Naíld on þe rod he [Peter] was* (Cursor 20909, Cotton MS); — *alle cristen folk been fled fro that contree Thurgh payens* (Ch. CT B ML 542; it is impossible to say for certain whether *been fled* is an active or passive form).

Instrumental *through* readily assumes an implication of causality: — *thurgh ignorance or freettle* (Rolle EWr. 90). The OE use of the preposition in oaths and adjurations survives down to c 1300: — *þurf oure Loverdes passioun tel nou,* he seide (SE Leg. lxiii 307).

In a temporal sense *through* has occurred since OE: — *and ich so do þurz nizl and dai* (Owl & N 447).

**THROUGHOUT**

*Throughout, thurghout* (OE *þurh + ut*) is used as an emphatic form of *through* (*thurgh*): — *þoru out al þat lond it [the wind] dude sorwe inou* (RGlouc. 8589); — *that kepte peple Ebrayk from hir drenchynge, With drye feet thurghout the see passyng* (Ch. CT B ML 289).

**TILL**

*Till* (ON and Northumbrian *til*) is a typically northern preposition in all its functions down to c 1300, since which time it has occurred in all dialectal areas in the temporal sense *‘until.’* In local and final use, although occasionally found in
the Midlands and the South, it remains predominantly northern even in later times and can be said to serve as a northern equivalent of to.

The local use of till is fully comparable to that of to: — til þe Juge sal I come (RRolle EWr. 41); — and til Athenes . . . Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knyghtes (Ch. CT A Kn. 2098). The same can be said of the various less concrete uses of till: — with care and wyth kyssynge he carppe hem tille (Gaw. & GK 1979); — til þe I write (RRolle EWr. 62); — þay are lyke till a fowle (RRolle EWr. 56).

The temporal use of till, side by side with the synonymous until, has been general English since c 1300: — til þe day of dome (Mum & S 1721).

In the northern area till is used instead of to also before infinitives (with and without an implication of purpose): — he praid þe gode men þat þar wer To lith a quil his word til her. (Cursor 5330, Cotton MS); — if þai any tym begun til erre (RRolle EWr. 90).

Wyclif uses till in combination with to and into to render Latin usque ad: — thou Cafarnaum ert enhaunsid til to hevene, thou schalt be drenchid til into helle (’usque ad caelum, usque ad infernum,’ Luke x 15); — the devyl wente away for him til to a tyme (’usque ad tempus,’ Luke iv 13; for a tyme, Purvey).

to

The preposition to (OE to), not infrequently reduced to te or (proclitically) to t, as in t’ever y wight, is originally used to indicate direction in statements expressing or implying motion. This function is common in ME, both in literal and figurative uses: — to Scotland went he (Barbour i 138); — how he came to his coroune I shal you kenne sone (Mum & S 1416).

To may also indicate position in the sense ’at, in:’ — þus dop to everich Pater Noster þet falleþ to þe ures and to þe collecte of everich tide and to þe letanie and to laste vers of everich imne (Ancr. 8); — þou art ytauþ to a tiþer scole (GWarw. 384, A-text).
The use of *to* with the verb *(be)long* to indicate possession, adherence, pertinence, and the like (e.g., *worde þat ever longed to luf*, Gaw. & GK 1524; — *alle þe scribes and clerç þat to þe court longen*, Mum & S 15) is extended to cover other verbs, too: — *th’empire of Rome hath ben and is To th’Alemans* (Gower CA Prol. 821); — *al þat lay to þe vij art* (Mum & S 361).

The preposition has been used to express temporal relations since OE. It is occasionally found in the sense ‘until:’ — *to time he think to fight* (Minot iv 6); — *than ne schal be greet tribulacioun what maner was not fro the bigynnynge of the world to now* (Wyclif Matt. xiii 20). It is also occasionally used in the sense ‘at a time, on a day:’ — *þat to hir comen y schold To on day þat was ysett* (GWarw. 4595, A-text); — *to daie a seoven niede* (Lawman A 5442); — *born to night your savageur es* (Cursor 11246, Cotton MS); — *to morowe fil þer swich a chaunce* (Occleve RP 2768); — *swych an eschange get I non to yeere* (Occleve RP 1893). Cf. OE *todæg(e)* and *tomorgen* and present-day E *today* and *tomorrow.*

Since OE *to* has been used in a final sense. In some instances, however, the final colour is very faint, and *to* is virtually equivalent to ‘as:’ — *and take Rymenhild to wyve* (Horn 694); — *þat faire mayde have to queene* (Flor. & Bl. 198); — *þai nolden hym more to lorde* (KAlis. 1170); — *I have an aunte to nonne* (PPl. B v 153); — *he was wel blissyd þat had zow to hys frend* (MKempe 169); — *ich habbe þee ysent A top and scourge to present* (KAlis. 1726).

Used to express purpose and result, *to* occurs not infrequently in a construction comparable to the sympathetic dative (see p. 98): — *icc þatt tiss Ennglissh hafe sett Ennglisshe menn to lare* (Orm. D 322); — *þatt erfe þatt ðær was Drihtin to laker zarkedd* (Orm. 1069); — *itt hemm com to blisse* (Orm. 8210); — *þurh his mannisnesse . . . þe he mid hire sceaweade all mannyn te forbisne* (Vices & V 49); — *þif fou be ofte drunke, it fallet þe to schame* (Good Wife 55). For OE examples of this type (Gode to þancunga, monnum to bisene. etc.) cf. Wülfing I, p. 137.
The use of this construction in a pejorative sense (cf. OE þæt he doþ to bismore þinum feondum) provides a starting-point for the type to laugh a person to scorn (to bismer, to hething, to hoker, etc.), where the dative of the person (dative of interest) comes later to be taken as an accusative: — he lauhweþ hire to bisemare (An cr. 58); — lau þou nogt to scorn neiþer olde ne zunge (Good Wife 15). For a more detailed discussion cf. W. van der Gaaf, E Studies XIV, 1932, 20-21.

The preposition is relatively often found in the sense 'in accordance with:' — and to þi wil þu schalt habbe grace (Flor. & Bl. 7, MS C); — whi heo ne come To his heste suthe sone (Flor. & Bl. 610, MS C); — he devysed his dremes to þe dere trawþe (Purity 1604). Hence its use to denote accompaniment: — with deynles ydoublid and daunsinge to pipis (Mum & S iii 275).

To occurs in certain phrases with varying meanings ('with,' 'in respect to,' etc.): — þei ... do me faste Frydayes to bred and to water (PPl. B v 173); — ich wil þee serve to honde and to fote (KAlis. 6716); — felyse of a þayr forme, to fote and to honde (Purity 174); — þat is þe castel of care; who so cometh þerinne May banne þat he borne was to body or to soule (PPl. B i 62).

In the sense 'in respect to' to is used in many other constructions: — þe proporcioun of þe roundenesse aboute of a cercle is to þe brede as is þe proporcioun of two and twenty to sevene (Trev. Higd. I 45); — þre hundred of cupydez þou holde to þe lenþe (Purity 315); — he hade so huge an insyzt to his aune dedes (Purity 1659). Closely connected with this use is the occurrence of to in the sense 'equal or comparable to:' — was þere non to his prowesse (KAlis. 2398); — þere nys to hym tygre ne lyoun Ne no beeste so feloun (KAlis. 6538). This provides a basis for the use of to with the comparative degree, in the sense 'than:' — nys none of wymman beter ibore To seint Johan þe baptyste (Shoreham i 590); — another Decius, yonger to hym

Other prepositions are also used in this locution (to laugh a person a scorn or at scorn).

The type is found in OE (him to bismere hloh).
Prepositions

(MS Harl. 2261, fol. 225). Cf. present-day *inferior to, superior to.*

For the use of *to* as an equivalent of the dative case see pp. 95-7.

For the use of *to* before an infinitive see pp. 514-15.

**TOFORE(N)**

*Tofore(n)* (OE *to* + *foran*) has been used in the sense 'before' since OE: — *tofore God* (PPl. B v 457).

**TOGAINS(T, TOŽEINES)**

*Togains(t)* occurs in OE (*togeanes*) and ME in the same senses as *against:* — a child bigon vor to pleien tožeines ham (Ancr. 33); — *þe* king hadde al to fewe Toženes so fele schreve (Horn 56); — *mid* Charlemaines spere *þat* toženste *þe* saracins *he* was ywoned to bere (RGlouc. App. EE 20).

**TOUCHING (TOUCHANT)**

A calque on OF *touchant* 'concerning,' *touching* (*touching unto, of,* etc.) has occurred as a preposition since later ME: — touchynge swich thynge lo what the wise seith (Ch. CT D Sum. 1988); — *whos* prest *I* am touchende of love (Gower CA i 236). It is not infrequently preceded by *as* (see p. 332): — *al* his werk as *touching* *this* matere (Ch. TC i 265). The preposition is occasionally found in its French form: — *touchant* dedeli synne say we (Cursor 26439, Fairfax MS).

**TOWARD(S)**

*Toward* goes back to OE *to-weard* 'in the direction of.' In this sense it is also used in ME: — *all* him alane the way he taìs Towart the towne off Louchmabane (Barbour ii 147). In ME it also comes to be used of position: — *quhill* thai . . . toward Dunfermyne Tuk land (Barbour xvi 550).

From the local sense of the preposition various figurative uses arise in ME. It may be used to express aim: — *arrayed*
was toward hir mariage This fresshe mayde (Ch. CT E Cl. 778). It is not uncommon in the sense 'concerning, with regard to:' — ze beoþ blake and unwurþe touwarde þe worlde (Anocr. 21); — forr zho was... milde annd meoc annd bliþe, 3a toward Godd, 3a towardd mann (Orm. 2601); — I mai wel... Excuse me of negligence Towards love in alle wise (Gower CA iv 919); — wel me quemeth That thou thiself hast thus aquit Toward this vice, in which no wit Abide mai (Gower CA iv 968).

Since OE the elements of the preposition (to and ward) have not infrequently been separated by a noun (he tempreth þe tonge to treuthe ward, PPl. B xiv 308; — to Caunterbury ward, Ch. CT A Prol. 793), in ME even by a pronoun (to him ward, Owl & N 375; ... to hir ward, MKempe 26). The pleonastic construction to... toward is also used: — þin neyboures þat comen to þe towarde (Good Wife 175, MS H). Cf. p. 423.

UMBE

The preposition umbe (OE ymbe, ON umb; cf. G um) occurs in OE and ME in the local sense 'around, about:' — gurde wyth a bront ful sure With silk sayn umbe his syde (Gaw. & GK 589). In OE and early ME it occurs in the sense 'concerning, about:' — Elysabæþ þatt we nu mælenn ummbe (Orm. 304). Down to early ME it is also used temporally, in the sense 'after:' — hit wes umbe fif winter, soþþe he heonne ferde (Lawman A 6617). It has this meaning in OE and early ME in the phrase umbe while ('after a while'), but in ME this phrase is also found in the sense 'at times' ([they] setyn til evesang range and songe umbywhile, PPl. C vii 396, MS Laud 656).

UNDER

The preposition under is used to denote local and temporal relations in OE and ME. It indicates position beneath or below something, or motion into such a position: — I am not worthi that thou entre undir my roof (Wyclif Matt. viii 8); — but for to
spoke of hir vertuous beautye, Thanne was she oon the faireste under sonne (Ch. CT E Cl. 211). The preposition may denote position at the foot of a mountain: — he suld . . . Cum undir Lowdoun hill away (Barbour viii 133). It may pass into the sense 'within,' with reference to something which covers, conceals, etc.: — myn heed, undir myn hood (Occeleve RP 1236). A figurative use of under in this sense is seen, e.g., in undir an old habyt regneth oft Grete vertu (Occeleve RP 141).

Figuratively under is also used to indicate subjection or subordination: — I am a man ordeyned under power, havynge undir me kniçtes (Wyclif Matt. viii 9). Under may occur in the sense 'in the time or period of,' mainly with names of rulers: — ðe verþe article belongeth to his passion, ðet is to zigge, ðet he þolede dyap under Pouns Pilate (Ayenb. 12). It often implies something oppressive: — who evere ben of the workis of lawe, ben undir curs (Wyclif Gal. iii 10).

In the sense 'among' under is found in early ME: — wet speke þe kempen under eou alle? (Lawman A 915). The phrase under all 'in all' occurs, e.g., in þe king . . . zef al so Tœie gode maners sein Swthin þer to, þat wolde be tuenty under al (RGlouc. 6998) and þat was, under al, sixty þousande and seven hundre (KAlis. 1401).

In temporal (and other related) uses under occurs in the sense 'during, in the time of': — under þissen vare-coste he summene ferde of alle þane monne þat he bi-zeten mihte ('in these circumstances,' Lawman A 32028). Temporal under is occasionally combined with demonstratives, in the sense 'during this or that time, meanwhile:' — under þat þer com word to þe king Arþure (RGlouc. 4157).

UNTIL

The preposition until, from ON und and ON and Northumbrian til, occurs first in the northern area, later also in other parts of the country. Its functions coincide largely with those of ME till and to.
Originally it is found in the local sense 'to, unto;' in this use it has been recorded since early ME: — *fyr whatt tez selle onge* sone dun *Off heoffne unntill helle* (Orm. 1399); — *a softe paas he wente over the strete Until a smyth men cleped daun Gerveys* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3761). It may also occur in the sense 'into:' — *ledis hym owte of the haulle Untille a pavleone of palle* (Awntyrs Arthure 441, Thornton MS; *into a pavilone of palle*, Douce MS). Local *until* is also used figuratively, as in *þogh now we sawe alle þy gode untilyl pore mannnes fode* (RMannyng HS 6484).

It is only in the temporal use that *until* survives in standard English today. In this use it has been recorded, by the side of the synonymous *till*, since later ME: — *until tommorwe* (Ch. CT B ML 1070); — *untille his lypes ende* (Awntyrs Arthure 702, Thornton MS).

**UNTO**

Formed after the analogy of *until*, the preposition *unto* is common from later ME down to the 17th century. Locally (including the derived senses) it is used as an equivalent of *to*, temporally as an equivalent of *until*.

*Unto* in local use (literal and figurative): — *þe lefädy zede unto þe drake* (KAlis. 555); — *unto a citee dressed he in hye* (Occeleve RP 23301); — *castynge stones unto hym alway* (Occeleve RP 3484); — *alle alouten hire unto* (KAlis. 188); — *unto him which the heved is The membres buxom scholden bowe* (Gower CA Prol. 152); — *speke unto hire I ne myhte* (Gower CA iv 684).

Expressions of extension, in the sense 'as far as:' — *and comes right fro þe kingis courte ... Fro prelatʒ unto peris* (Mum & S 1399). Expressions of extent, amount, and the like, where *unto* indicates the upper limit: — *amounting unto xx* (Occeleve RP 425); — *schippez and barges were take, unto the noumbre of cc and xxx* (Brut 295).

With the verb *long* the preposition indicates adherence: — *which longeth unto his office* (Gower CA Prol. 80).

In course of time local *unto* comes to express aim, purpose,
result, and the like, often in a rather weakened sense: — _bren was unto ashen drye_ (Occleve RP 287); — _this lord a worthi ladi hadde Unto his wif_ (‘as,’ Gower CA i 2162; cf. _to_, p. 410). _Unto_ is also used in expressions of comparison and relation to a standard: — _and shame is contrarie unto worthynesse_ (Occleve RP 4087); — _and likned is unto hem þat ben free_ (Occleve RP 4657).

Like _to_, _unto_ is used as an equivalent of the dative case: — _yeve unto your men hir pars_ (Occleve RP 480).

The temporal use of _unto_ in the sense ‘until, till as late as’ has been recorded since later ME: — _all mi live unto min end_ (Cursor 24739, Cotton MS); — _vorte it were togadere_ (RGlouc. 291; MSS Digby and UL Cbg. read _unto_ for _vorte_); — _unto þe day he glad were in his grave_ (Occleve RP 309). It is also found in negative statements: — _the clergye . . . wolde not graunte hit unto Ester next comyng_ (Brut 322).

**UNTOWARD**

_Untoward_ is occasionally used for _toward_ in late ME: — _whanne I am mi ladi fro And thenke untoward hire drawe_ (Gower CA iv 559); — _min herte untoward hire stod_ (Gower CA v 2622).

_used_ _unto the gardyn ward_ (Ch. CT A Mil. 3572). Cf. p. 423.

**UP**

The ME preposition _up_ goes back to OE _uppe_ (_uppan, uppon_). As in OE, it expresses both motion and location, and is also used with reference to time. In indicating motion it is usually equivalent to _to_ or _against_; in indicating location it is usually equivalent to _on_ or _upon._

Used of motion, _up_ may express the point reached by ascension ( _þo he com upe þe hul an hey_, RGlouc. 4179) or arrival ( _heo dro3en heore scipen uppe þe lond_, Lawman A 13970; — _such folc was arived, as me sede, up his londe_, RGlouc. 362). The preposition is used in a figurative sense: — _alle 3e Adames_
Prepositions 417

children þe bieþ lustfull uppe neue wastmes (Vices & V 51); — and wende eft some up hor þon (RGlouc. 2167); — up man for hus mysdedes þe mercement he taxeþ (PPl. C ii 159).

Up often denotes rest or location in various uses where present-day E would have on or upon: — þeos þreo maner men habbeþ ine heovene crune uppe crune (Ancr. 71); — up þe plein of Salesbury þat oþer wonder is þat Stonheng is icluped (RGlouc. 155); — al þe men . . . Boþe up lond and in cité (‘in the country,’ Arth. & Merlin 698). Figurative uses: — ac uppe Godes wille it is wannne it ssal be (‘depends upon,’ RGlouc. 5137); — þe stronge cité of Damiet uppe Saracens he wan (RGlouc. 10941); — the king comandeth his constable anon, Up peyne of hangyng, and on heigh juyse That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse (Ch. CT B ML 795); — up þese wordis þou t sein Bernard which he seide, ‘Lord give me alwei tribulacion’ (Chastising GC 200); — up trust that the same John Paston shuld þounde there a college (Paston II 114 [1462]). Up has the meaning ‘according to’ in up zour feith be it don to ou (‘secundum fidem vestram fiat vobis,’ Wyclif Matt. ix 29). In certain phrases up is equivalent to ‘by,’ as in up happe ‘by chance’ and up gesse ‘by guess’ (so brod was þe see þat sayle hem bihoved holliche al a niʒt and up happe wel more, WPal. 2722).

In the sense ‘more than’ up occurs in þer byeþ zuo vele oþre maneres . . . þet long þing hit were to zigge, ac zome byeþ ycontined, ope þan þet byeþ yzed (Ayenb. 39).

The temporal use of up in the sense ‘after’ is recorded in OE and early ME: — þene moruwe ope seint Lucus day (SE Leg. xxvii 1123). In ME it is also used in the sense ‘at, on:’ — ope þe heze ezlynde day He onderzede þe gywen lay (Shoreham v 151).

UPON

Upon is a combination of the adverb up and the preposition on. Although it originally indicates an elevated position on something, it soon becomes a mere variant of on; in this
Prepositions

function it has been current since early ME (e.g., as a man upon molde mighte perceyve, Mum & S 363). The choice between the two prepositions seems often to be due merely to rhythm or to individual speech habits.

Some of the figurative senses do not seem to have equivalents in the use of on: — opon al oþer y love þe ('above,' GWarw. A 359); — þi powere es grete apon þi subgete ('over,' Mandev. iii 10 [Egerton], Roxb. Club; NED).

The temporal use of the preposition in the sense 'following upon' dates from late ME (whan that he this tale herde, Hou upon that the king ansuerde, Gower CA iv 2080). In the same sense, but with the implication 'as soon as' it is found in I woll, uppon as I heer from yow, come to yow in alle hast possible (Paston III 128 [1475]). Upon new 'anew' occurs in every dai it chaungeth uppon newe (Gower PP 315).

**UPWARD**

The rare use of upward as a preposition has been recorded since late ME: — I se hym now com upward the hill (Digby Myst. v 388; NED). Cf. p. 423.

**WHILE(S)**

While(s) 'up to the time of,' from the OE noun hwil, appears as a preposition in later ME, chiefly in the North (Scotland): — meteles whiles þe morwen to middai and mare (Pistill Susan 177, Vernon MS; while, MS A; tul on, MS P; fro, MSS IC).

**WITH**

The proper function of the OE preposition wiþ is to express both opposition ('against') and proximity ('towards'), literally and figuratively. In OE the idea of association, connection, accompaniment, and the like is normally expressed by mid. About the beginning of the 13th century with begins to compete with mid in all the senses of present-day with and supplants
it in late ME. For the development see p. 393, under *mid*. The use of *with* to express association, instrumentality, etc. has obviously been promoted by the influence of ON *viþ* and probably also of Latin *cum*.

In the original sense 'against, to' *with* occurs in earlier ME:
— *hu se schulen witen ou wiþ þes deoftes wieles* (Ancr. 100);
— *breoste wiþ breoste banes þer crakeden* (Lawman A 1874);
— *þair joi, þair gladdscip, qua can tell . . . face wit face þat godd to se* (Cursor 23607, Cotton MS). With verbs denoting conflict, competition, and the like, *with* has been used in its original sense down to the present day: — *wroþe wynde of þe welkyn wrastelez with þe sunne* (Gaw. & GK 525).

From OE down to early Mod. E *with* occurs in combination with the demonstrative pronoun *that* (with *that*, with *than*, with *thi*, etc.) in the senses 'on condition that' (I shal maken þe fre . . . With-þan þu wilt þis childe take, Havelok 532) and 'in order that' (þe litlade of a meiden þat is of Latin iturnd to Englische leode, wiþ-þon þat teos hali leafdwi in heovene luwie us þe mare, Jul. 3 [EETS]).

The use of *with* to express association, accompaniment, union, comparison, etc., dates from OE.

*With* may denote conduct or feeling towards a person or thing: — *Godrich, wat is þe þat þou fare þus with me?* (Havelok 2705); — *þan men haveden holpen him doun With þe birþene of his croun* (Havelok 901); — *yit was I wrothe eeke With Mum* (Mum & S 620). The use of *with* in conjunction with the verb *to part* is comparable to these examples: — *I rede þat þou parte with hym* (RRolle EWr. 77).

Since early ME *with* has been used in the sense 'for,' as opposite to 'against:' — *he that is nat with me is azeinus me* ('qui non est mecum contra me est,' Wyclif Matt. xii 30).

In the sense 'like' *with* occurs in cases like *he is fals with the fend* (PPl. A viii 70). For the use of *with* in the absolute superlative (*with the first, with the least*) see p. 288.
The use of *with* in nominal constructions with adverbial force has been recorded since ME: — *forr hire þohht annnd hire word Annd hire weorrc wass clene, Annd all wiþþ witt annnd all wiþþ skill Annd all wiþþ metfassstnesse* (Orm. 2579); — and *Tours, þe gode kniȝt, þat so muche folc er slow, Brut let bringe an erf þe wiþ honur inou* (RGlouc. 465).

*With* is occasionally found in personal epithets: — *Blaunche-flor with þe white syde* (Flor. & Bl. 362).

The preposition occurs in connection with corroborative phrases and imprecations: — *pees! with myschance and with mysaventure!* (Ch. CT D Fri. 1334); — and *þif ich Gij mete may, Wiþ meschaunce y schal him gret* (GWarw. 2533).

*With* has been used to express instrumentality since early ME: — *þe bodi forr to pinenn Wiþþ swinnc* (Orm. 5524); — *o five thossand men þat he Fedd wyt þe five laves and fisses thre* (Cursor 182); — *but stiren hit with a sticke* (Mum & S 430). In the *Cloud of Unknowing* (MSS of the early 15th — early 16th century) the ratio *with : by* in the expression of instrumentality is approximately 6 : 5. The use of instrumental *with* is occasionally extended to cases where the notion of instrumentality is mixed with other connotations, as in *sith þou begunne With clercȝ of Cambrigge* (Mum & S 782). Often there is an implication of causality: — *þurte on þe hert with a high pride* (Mum & S 1535); — *hire chekes ben with teres wet* (Gower CA i 1680).

*With* begins to occur as a preposition of agency in the 13th century: — *heder was þat mayde brouȝt With marchaundes þat hur had bouȝt* (Flor. & Bl. 408); — *he was with þe prestes shrive* (Havelok 2489); — *and with twenty knyghtes take, O persone allone, withouten mo* (Ch. CT A Kn. 2724).

For the use of *with* in absolute constructions (e.g., *therwithal Dyane gan appeere, with bowe in honde*, Ch. CT A Kn. 2347) see pp. 116-7.

For the use of *with* in refrains like *with an O and an I* see p. 626.
As a substitute of *with* after the governing noun, *withal* (from *with all*) has occurred since later ME: — *bot tel yew of his suync I sall, He drou þat fraward folk wit-all* (Cursor 6374).

**WITHIN(NEN)**

*Within(nen)* (late OE *wiðinnan*, from *wiþ + innan*) expresses both local and temporal relations.

Used locally of position, *within* serves as an emphatic, graphic equivalent of *in* (the *ryot þat ben within þis londe*, Occkelev RP 5216) or as an equivalent of *inside* (*whyle þe hende knyzt at home holsumly slepeþ Withinne þe comly cortyne*, Gaw. & GK 1732), usually as a more or less explicit opposite of *without* (cf. *every thing which was honeste Withinnen house and ek withoute*, Gower CA viii 959). It also denotes motion or direction (*ho comeþ withinne þe chambre dore and closes hit*, Gaw. & GK 1742).

In a less concrete local sense *within* occurs for 'among' (*werre within ourself is most harmful*, Occkelev RP 5230). The phrase *within oneself* is used in the sense 'by himself, by his own resources' (*that conquerid many a cuntre as king withynne hymself*, Mum & S 1415) or 'without outward expression' (*she saide withynne hir self, 'ziþ I touche onply the clothis of hym, I shal be saaf' 'dicebat enim intra se,' Wyclif Matt. ix 21).

Since early ME *within* has occurred in a temporal sense, to indicate that something takes place during a limited period of time: — *within a litel space After they were agone, shop this myschance* (Occkelev RP 1277); — *lest feerelees falle withynne fewe yeres* (Mum & S 222).

**WITHOUT(EN)**

The earliest meaning of *without(en)* (late OE *wiþutan*, from *wiþ + utan*) is 'outside of,' as opposite to *within*, both expressing position and direction: — *ne seche þu me nout wiþ-
uten þine heorte (Ancre. 39); — sum lugit without the townys In tentis (Barbour xi 138); — and castiden out him withoute the citee ('et ejecerunt illum extra civitatem,' Wyclif Luke iv 29).

In a privative sense, as an opposite of with, the preposition is common (power withouten mercy, Occeleve RP 3410). This develops into the sense 'in addition to:' — we habbeþ seove þusund of gode cnihen, wiþouten wiþmen (Lawman A 366); — seven horses and sevyn men, And þre knaves without hem (Flor. & Bl. 350); — housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve, Withouten oother compaignye in youthe (Ch. CT A Prol. 461).

Followed by a verbal noun in -ing privative without implies negation: — Tristrem is went oway Wiþouten coming ozain (Tristrem 2620). The preposition is occasionally found before an infinitive: — that we maye retourne agen hole and sounde . . . wythoute to be dyshonoured (Caxton Aymon 470).

**WITHWARD**

This rare combination, which obviously goes back to OE instances like he wiþ Rome-weard farende wes, is recorded in early ME: — þis pinful egin wes o swuch wise iginet þet te twa turnden eiþer wiþward oþer (‘against,’ Kath. 1958). Cf. p. 423.

**YEYNES; SEE GAIN(ES)**

**YMONG; SEE AMONG**

**YOND(S, ZEND, ZENDIS)**

The OE preposition zeond 'through, throughout, across' continues to be used in ME, but disappears later in the period: — he þolede sundri pine and deisede zeond at his bodi, ase he ear zeond at his bodi deaþes swot swette (Ancre. 48); — schalt tu o þisse wise voluwen geat zeont te veld (Ancre. 45); — ʒif a wod liun urne zeont þe strete (Ancre. 72). Wyclif uses it to render Latin trans: — thou schalt not have possesionioun bizende (variant reading ʒendis) the flood ('trans fluvium,' Ezra iv 16).
THE SUFFIX -WARD(S) WITH PREPOSITIONS

The suffix *ward* 'having a specified direction' has occurred in combinations with *to* and certain other prepositions (like *from, in, on, out of, unto, up, and with*) since OE and ME. For examples see *fro(m)ward, inward, onward, out of ... ward, to­ward, untoward, upward, and withward*. The presence of the suffix renders the idea of direction particularly vivid and emphatic.

Two constructions are used —

(1) The preposition and *ward* form one word which stands before the governing noun or pronoun: — *froward Arabie* (Gen. & Ex. 3322); — *thou thiself hast thus aquit Toward this vice* (Gower CA iv 968); — *whanne I am mi ladi fro And thenke untoward hire drawe* (Gower CA iv 559).

(2) The governing noun or pronoun is placed between the preposition and *ward*: — *fro Burdeux ward* (Ch. CT A Prol. 397); — *þe ded ... Salle ay þan fle fra þam ward* (Pr. Consc. 7281); — *to his contré ward* (Ch. LGW 2176); — *to hir ward* (MKempe 26); — *unto the gardyn ward* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3572).

The choice of the construction seems to depend mainly on the requirements of the rhythm of speech and in poetry on the requirements of the metre.

The pleonastic construction *to ... toward* occurs in *þin neyboures þat comen to þe towarde* (Good Wife 175, MS H).

The genitive *wards* is also occasionally used: — *negligence towards love in alle wise* (Gower CA iv 919); — *to Troie wardes* (Ch. TC i 59).

PREPOSITIONS COMBINED WITH *THAT*

Prepositions combined with *that* (after *that, by that, for that,* etc.) are not uncommon as conjunctions in ME. The combination *forto that*, recorded as a conjunction in several ME texts (e.g., *Mauric verde vorþ riht ... forte þat he come to Maximian*
to Rome, Lawman B 11518), occurs in Ancrene Riwle as a preposition, in the sense 'until:' — *zet nabbe ze nout wiþstonden vorte þet þe schedunge of ower blode* (‘noncum enim usque ad sanguinem restitisti,’ 117); — *ze schulen eten vrom Ester vort þet þe Holi Rode dei* (188). G. Dubislav, Anglia XLV, 1921, 73, believes that Chaucer employs *ere that* in the same way (‘before’): — and *ere that half a furlong wey of space* (CT D Sum. 1692); — *ere that half an hour After his deeth* (CT D Sum. 1856).

### PREPOSITIONAL ADVERBS

Adverbs consisting of *here* and *there* have occurred in English since OE (*her-after, her-beforan, her-of, her-on, her-wif, þær-abutan, þær-æt, þær-bie, þær-of, þær-on, þær-to, þær-wif, etc.*)

In ME the use of these adverbs is considerably widened. New combinations of *here* and *there* are introduced (e.g., *here-against, hereby, herefore, herethrough, hereto, heretofore, hereunder, thereabove, thereagain, therefore, therefrom, theretofore, etc.*), and in early ME prepositional adverbs with *where* begin to turn up. There are numerous combinations of this new type, such as *whereabout(s), wherafter, wherat, whereby, wherefore, wherein, whereof, whereon, whereto, wherewith, etc.*

The combinations with *here* become popular equivalents of preposition + *this*, those with *there* of preposition + *it* (cf. p. 131), and those with *where* of preposition + interrogative or relative pronoun (cf. p. 202).

A few examples with *here*: — *scheawe þ ofte ine scrifte ower ʒemeleaste her-abuten* (Ancr. 20); — *hereafter to yow wil I þerof speke* (Occleve RP 1232); — *let se tile Dar any herinne oʒt say* (Gaw. & GK 300).

Examples of combinations with *there*: — *Horn noʒt þerof ne herde* (Horn 937); — *a baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne, And therwithal he broghte us out of towne* (Ch. CT A Prol. 566).

Examples of the combination with *where* used with inter-
rogative force: — Seth þen sette him spell on-end And tald him warfor þat he was send (Cursor 1296); — he sahh þatt þo wiþ childe wass, Annd nisste he nohht whæreoff (Orm. 2931). Examples of the combination with where used with relative force: — wherof he toke gret hevynesse and greef (Occleve RP 3742); — veire weies mani on ... zwar þorþ me mai wende (RGlouc. 170).

Combinations like theretoward (rare) and hereafterward(s) are also found: — Eve ... turnde hire lust þer-touwar d and nom and et þero f (Ancr. 23); — thou shalt hereafterward ... Come there thee nedeth nat of me to leere (Ch. CT D Fri. 1515).

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF PREPOSITIONS

(Considering the relatively small number of special studies published on ME prepositions, those dealing with OE have been included. For studies concerning the use of of as a genitive equivalent and of to as a dative equivalent see pp. 92-3 and 117-9.)

Bradley, H., *'At-after,' MLR XII, 1917, 74-6.
Prepositions

Draat, P. F. van, 'After,' *E Studien* XXXVI, 1906, 100-10.

Dusenschön, F., *Die Präpositionen 'æfter,' 'æt' und 'be' in der alt-englischen Poesie*, Kiel diss. 1907.


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Hupe, H., 'Die Präposition for,' *Anglia* XII, 1889, 388-95.


Kellner, pp. 268-78.


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Krohmer, W., *Altenglisch 'in' und 'on'*, Berlin diss. 1904.


Poutsma II, 2, pp. 707-811.

Preusler, W., Syntax im Poema Morale, Breslau diss. 1914, pp. 71-81.


Steininger, M., Der Gebrauch der Präpositionen bei Spenser, Halle diss. 1890.

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Stuhr, G., Der syntaktische Gebrauch der Präposition 'for' im Frühmittelenglischen, Kiel diss. 1914.

Sykes, G. F. H., French Elements in Middle English, Oxford 1899.


Wende, F., Über die nachgestellten Präpositionen im Angelsächsischen, Palaestra LXX, Berlin 1915.

Wülfing II, pp. 300-683.

Wullen, F., Der syntaktische Gebrauch der Präpositionen 'fram,' 'under,' 'ofer,' 'þurh' in der angelsächsischen Poesie. Part I (fram, under), Kiel diss. 1908; Part II (ofer, þurh), Anglia XXXIV, 1911, 421-97.

VERBS

GENERAL STUDIES RELATING TO THE SYNTAX OF THE MIDDLE ENGLISH VERB

(Verbal syntax is also discussed in the more general studies in the syntax of individual ME works listed on pp. 34-5.)

Blain, H. M., *The Syntax of the Verb in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Univ. of Virginia Monographs, School of Teutonic Languages, No. 11, New York 1901 (not seen by the present writer).


PERSONAL VERBS

TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS

Verbs with double function, p. 429.

Bibliography, p. 430.

A transitive verb governs a direct (accusative) object, an intransitive verb does not. In other words, with transitive verbs attention is divided between the subject and the object, while with intransitive verbs the activity is centred entirely round the subject.

Verbs with Double Function. — Throughout its history, though particularly in the Mod. E period, the English language has shown a remarkable tendency to develop intransitive functions for transitive verbs. The development has been accelerated by the morphological simplification completed within the ME period, which, for example, led to the disappearance of the formal distinction between the transitive ja-class and intransitive õ-class of weak verbs — a distinction which even in OE is no longer strictly observed. Another accelerating factor may have been the influence of French. A few verbs for which intransitive function has first been recorded in ME: — cleave: — Corineus . . . hine fosde mid mæine . . . þat his ban to-cluwen (Lawman A 1920); — show ‘to be or become visible, to seem:’ þis was þe first time þat Jesus . . . Schewed til any man after his up-risyng (Cursor 17288 + 254, Cotton MS); — ðet þing þet þe ssel weze sseweþ more hevy (Aynb. 44). Romance loans: — close: thanne closeth it [i.e. the flower] and draweth it to reste (Ch. LGW Prol. 52, G-text); — edify: hi ssolden betere lovie þe velazrede of poure men ðet byeþ poure vor God, þet hise moȝe wel edefie be vorbisnes and be wordes (Aynb. 197).

An important factor contributing towards the increasing use
of intransitive verbs is the inherent aversion of English speakers to the reflexive form (cf. p. 431).

Many intransitive verbs develop transitive uses (e.g., *so throughe one of theyr bodyes hys sworde* [he] *dyd runne*, Rob. Devil 463, and *he sat al his folk in a bushment within a grete wode*, Caxton Aymon 136). For the transitive use of some other verbs (*hear, look, read, think*, etc.) see p. 108. For the development of impersonal verbs into transitive ones see pp. 434-6.

It may be mentioned in passing that in OE certain verbal prefixes, like *be-* and *ge-*, are used for making a verb transitive (e.g., *wepan* 'to cry' — *bewepan* 'to bewail' and *gan* 'to go' — *gegan* 'to overrun, take [a country, etc.]').

**STUDIES RELATING TO TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS**


Kellner, pp. 210-18.


Poutsma II, 2, pp. 43-90.


Trnka, pp. 57-9.

**REFLEXIVE VERBS**


In OE the reflexive relation is expressed by means of the simple personal pronoun (*hi hie þa up ahofon*, Alfred Oros. 94), occasionally strengthened by *seolf* (*he þa hiene selfne forbærnde*, Alfred Oros. 52). See pp. 152-3. There are two kinds of verbal reflexivity. There are verbs which, for practical purposes, might
Reflexive Verbs

be called true reflexive verbs. These are transitive verbs with a accusative pronoun as object (hi hie up ahofon; — I shal strengthen me þerto, Sirith 170). But there are also verbs accompanied by what is usually called a reflexive dative. These are mostly intransitive verbs expressing motion or fear (OE ic for me þa to Egipta lande; ic ondræde me God; — ME he goth him forth; men þeeren hem). See p. 100.

Decreasing Use of the Reflexive Form. — Since OE there has been a steady drift from the reflexive towards the intransitive form (this applies equally to verbs with a reflexive accusative and those with a reflexive dative). It is doubtful whether this development is due simply to a tendency to drop the obtrusive reflexive pronoun, as some grammarians believe.

There are several common verbs in ME with which both the reflexive and intransitive form of expression can be used (e.g., make we us merie, for mete have we at wille, WPal. 1880, and þay maden as mery as any men moȝten (Gaw. & GK 1953).

Reflexive and Passive Forms. — The close relationship between the reflexive and passive modes of expression has led to the use of the reflexive form for the passive in several, particularly Romance, languages. In French, for example, reflexive expressions have occurred for the passive since the 15th and 16th centuries (originally imitated from Italian and also from Spanish). In German, too, there are constructions of the es /fragt sich type. In Swedish the final -s of the passive (talas, skrives, etc.) is a remnant of an original reflexive pronoun. In English, possibly on account of the characteristic aversion to the reflexive form (see above), reflexive verbs do not occur in a passive sense.

For a discussion of the ME use of the passive for expressing reflexive action (e.g., duc Theseus was at a wyndow set, Ch. CT A Kn. 2528) see pp. 154-5.
STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF REFLEXIVE VERBS

Beckmann, E., 'Über das reflexive Verb im Englischen,' Archiv LIX, 1878, 205-38.
Buch, Tamara, see Hermodsson, L.
Kellner, pp. 210-8.
Poutsma II, 2, pp. 141-59.
Sunden, K. F., The Predicational Categories in English; a Category of Predicational Change in English, Uppsala Univ. Årsskrift 1918, 1.
Voges, F., 'Der reflexive Dativ im Englischen,' Anglia VI, 1883, 317-74.
IMPERSONAL VERBS


Bibliography, p. 436.

IMPERSONALS PROPER. — The verbs customarily called impersonal have no subject at all or have only a formal subject, *it*. The term 'impersonal' can be appropriately applied only to certain verbs expressing natural phenomena (e.g., *til it dawed to day*, WPal. 1791; — *he badd o Drihtin Godd þatt itt ta shollde re32nenn*, Orm. 8694; — *an his hou never ne vorlost Wan hit sniuw ne wan hit frost*, Owl & N 620), although it is often used of personal verbs, too, when they occur in impersonal or quasi-impersonal expressions (see below).

FORMAL SUBJECT. — The formal subject (*E it, G es, F il*, etc.) is a comparatively late feature in the Indo-European languages. It does not occur in Sanskrit, and it is missing at many later stages of linguistic development; cf. Goth. *rigneip*, ON *rignir*, L *pluit*, and Sp. *llueve*. Cf. K. Brugmann, *Der Ursprung des Scheinsubjekts 'es,*, Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Klasse LXIX, 5, Leipzig 1917. For the use of *it* as a formal subject in ME see pp. 131-3. For the common non-expression of the formal subject in OE and ME impersonal expressions see p. 143.

IMPERSONAL USE OF PERSONAL VERBS. — As mentioned above, personal verbs are often found in impersonal expressions. The verb *to be* is particularly common in such use (e.g., *til it was nyzt*, Brut 87), but many other verbs are also used in this way (e.g., and *fell ther was a kniht which . . .*, Gower CA ii 2994).

28 — Mustanoja
As in OE, personal verbs are occasionally found in impersonal statements to express indefinite agency: — *þa sæt hit alle stille in Arþures halle* (Lawman A and B 28154); — *herkne wu it telleþ her* (Bestiary 506); — *'wel fést þat wel specþ' seiþ in þe songe* (Owl & N 1072). Cf. OE *her segþ hu se æþela læro wæs sprecende* (Blickl. Hom. 55).

**Transition from Impersonal to Personal Expression.**

— A special development is seen in a number of cases where a verb governing a dative or accusative occurs in an impersonal expression, such as OE *him (hine) hyngreþ, him (hine) þyrsteþ, him (hine) (ge)licapþ, him (hine) (ge)lystefþ, him (hine) (ge)mæteþ, him (ge)þynceþ*, etc. This usage continues in ME, although the number of verbs occurring in constructions of this kind is much smaller than in OE. There are, however, a number of ME constructions of this type which cannot be traced back to OE. Examples of verbs used impersonally in OE and ME: — *ail (hie ne eileden never þiête ne Gode ne manne, Vices & V 133); — bire 'to behove' (night and dai ... birt þe thince apon mi pine, Cursor 17164, Cotton MS); — like 'to please' (if thee like to be myn, Gower CA i 950); — list 'to please' (and what hire liste Sche drank, Gower CA i 2553); — long 'to cause to desire' (hire longuède with hire broþer to speke, SE Leg. xxxiv 14); — mete 'to make dream' (me mette thus, Ch. BD 293); — rew 'to affect with sorrow or pity' (me riweth, Marie, þi faire rode, E Lyr. X11th Cent. i 2); — think 'to seem' (me thoghte thus, Ch. BD 291).

Verbs (including loans from OF and ON) whose impersonal use is first recorded in ME texts: — *dream (him drempte þorquile þe slep, Gen. & Ex. 1941); — a selkuth drem me dremed nou, Havelok 1284); — forthink 'to cause sorrow' (þat I man makide, now it me forthinketh, PPl. A x 158); — gain 'to avail' (nu ne geþsneþþ itt hemm nohht To winnenn ecche blisse, þohh þatt teþþ stanndenn daþþ and nihht To þeowewtenn Godd, Orm. 970); — hap 'happen' (yit happeth me ful ofte in booke reede Of his myrakles, Ch. PF 10); — need 'to be necessary' (me nedes
Impersonal Verbs

noht so fer to frayne, NE Leg. xxxii 122; — non other good of thee me nedeth, Gower CA iii 1311; — please (plesse it, Lorde, to þe þat þou defende me, Prose Psalter xxxix 18); — seem (me semeth that thou tharst noght care, Gower CA iv 1774); — want 'to lack' (hem þorof ne wante now, Gen. & Ex. 2244).

To these may be added the expressions of the type me is good (better, lief, liefer, loth): — hym is right good be war of me (RRose 6316); — hym was levere have ... Twenty bookes (Ch. CT A Prol. 293); — me were looth be likned ... To Muses (Ch. CT B ML 91).

In the course of the ME period these impersonal constructions become personal, i.e., the word in the dative or accusative comes to be taken as the subject of the verb and consequently understood as a nominative. Cf. W. van der Gaaf (see bibliography) and Jespersen, Mod. E Gr. III, pp. 208-12. Very few verbs of this kind are now used impersonally (e.g., it seems to me). Apart from a few earlier cases the change begins to appear in written works in the 14th century. An idea of the chronology of the development will be obtained from the following selection of first appearances taken from van der Gaaf's work, pp. 163-4 (corrected according to the parts of MED issued by 1959): — ail, c 1425; — I bird 'ought to,' c 1200 Orm. 303, etc. [MED]; — I dream, 1303; — I forthink 'repent,' c 1320; — I grieve, c 1380; — I happen (to do), c 1327; — I lack, c 1330; — I like, c 1340; — I list, c 1280-90; — I long, 1300-1350; — I mete 'dream,' 1303; — I need, c 1300; — I want, c 1350; — I am well, c 1340; — I am wo, c 1300. A few examples of the personal construction: — he went to bedde and tooke a slep And dremyd this (Gesta Rom. 295); — and, for he was a straunger, somewhat she Likede hym the bet, Ch. LGW 1075-6; — sche saide it was noght for his sake, And liste noght my songes hier (Gower CA i 2741); — thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages (Ch. CT A Prol. 12); — my fadir is a riche lorde and nedith not of his goode (Gesta Rom. 307).

The construction with to be and a predicative infinitive with
Impersonal Verbs

to, accompanied by a personal dative, not infrequent in OE (e.g., *him is to secgeanne þæt hie unabliinnendlice geþencen* \ldots, Alfred Care 261), undergoes a similar development in ME, the result being a construction of the type *he wist what he was to do* (Wyclif Sel. Wks I 120). Cf. W. van der Gaaf, *E Studies X*, 1928, 112-13; cf. also pp. 525-6, below. It is possible that the old dative survives in the form of the 'inorganic' *for* (see p. 383): — *whe  it  be  leeful for  a  man to  leve  his  wijf* ('si licet homini dimittere uxor em suam,' Wyclif Matt. xix 3).

**TRANSITION FROM PERSONAL TO IMPERSONAL EXPRESSION.**

— Impersonal uses are recorded for some personal verbs in ME, mainly in the 14th and 15th centuries: — *us think him aght wele to forbere To ett with þame þat sinful ere* (NE Leg. xxvii 439); — *at þat heom behoved* (OE Chron. an. 1154); — *him ne deinede nozt to ligge in þe castel bi niȝte* (RGlouc. 11645); — *us moste putte oure good in aventure* (Ch. CT G CY 946); — *thee thar noght drede tant ne quant* (Gower CA ii 2430).

The late ME *me remembreth* 'I remember' (and what his compleynt was remembreth me, Ch. Compl. Mars 150) is a calque on OF (*il* me remembre.

**STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF IMPERSONAL VERBS**

Kellner, pp. 208-10.
Trnka, pp. 54-7.
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. — Primitive Indo-European had two voices, active and middle. The passive is a later development.\(^1\) The middle disappears as the passive gains ground; wherever it survives, it has assumed a totally or partially passive function. The only trace of the middle voice in English is OE *hatan*, ME *hate*, *hote* 'to be called' (cf. NED *hight* v. 1): — *and good faire White she het* (Ch. BD 948).

In a passive expression the subject is represented as acted upon by the verb. In other words, the grammatical subject is in fact the object of the passive verb, while the logical subject is represented by the agent.

In English and in the other languages where it occurs the passive has remained a characteristic of the written language. It is relatively seldom that it gains popularity in colloquial speech, which prefers the type *they took him to prison* to *he was taken to prison*; cf. also *the book sells well* and other ex-

\(^1\) The ultimate origin of the passive voice is obscure. H. Hartmann (see bibliography) believes that the tendency towards passive thinking and the passive mode of expression is traceable to the ancient megalithic civilisation of western Europe, possibly to the megalithic religion.
pressions (cf. p. 441). The obvious explanation for this lies in the nature of the passive voice itself. While an active clause describes an action from the beginning to the end, i.e., from the initiating force (subject) to the goal (object), in a passive clause the action is traced back from the end to the beginning. In addition, an active expression is less abstract than a passive one.

A distinction is usually made between two kinds of passive expression, personal (e.g., the book was written) and impersonal (e.g., it is said that . . .). The impersonal passive is not uncommon in early ME in the expression of indefinite agency (e.g., nu hit schal wrþe wel isene þat þu havest muchel ilowe, Hwenne þi lesing þeop unwrowe, Owl & N 846-8) and is quite common in late ME. See pp. 226-7. Another useful distinction is that made between the actional passive (a passive expressing action, e.g., the door is closed at 8 p.m.) and the statal passive (a passive expressing a state, e.g., we could not go in because the door was closed).

**FORM.** — The English passive is periphrastic, consisting of a past participle and an auxiliary.

The OE auxiliaries of the passive are wesan, beon, and weorðan. Wesan/beon is the usual auxiliary for expressing a state. It is also frequently used for the actional passive, although weorðan becomes more and more popular in this function, especially in poetry.

In ME the auxiliaries are the same as in OE except that the wes- and bheu-roots represented by OE wesan and beon continue to exist under one infinitive form, be. Traces of the old use of the be-forms with future signification are found in early ME and to some extent even later (see p. 583).

The extant ME writings do not offer a very clear picture of the relative frequencies of be and wurthe (OE weorðan) as auxiliaries of the passive except that be is by far the commoner of the two throughout the period. In the majority of texts wurthe is rare after the 11th century. Being relatively common
in the portions of the *Peterborough Chronicle* written towards the end of the 11th century, it is seldom found in those written in the first half of the 12th. It is very rare in *Ancrene Riwle* (*ant com þe veond... ant wearþ ibunden, 109*) and *The Owl and the Nightingale* (*hit schal wrþe wel isene, 846*, and *þat lond-folc wurþ idorve, 1158*); it does not occur at all in the *Poema Morale* nor in the *Bestiary*. The one instance found in the *Cursor Mundi* (*weried worthþ þou, 13811, Cotton MS*) is a common formula of imprecation. Neither does *wurthe* occur as an auxiliary of the passive in *Havelok* except in this kind of formula (*hanged worthe he on a hook, 1102*, and *blissed worthe his soule, 2873*). Only three instances of *wurthe* as an auxiliary of the passive occur in the *Ayenbite*; in one of these *be* and *wurthe* are used side by side (*of virtues þe prest þe: of bestes þou sselt by overcome. Of zuyfthed þe prest þe: of veleyn þe worst overcome, 270*). Chaucer does not use *wurthe* as an auxiliary of the passive at all.

There are some notable exceptions, however. As an auxiliary *wurthe* is comparatively rare in Lawman’s *Brut*, but in some cases of the passive future the *be* of the A-text is replaced by *wurthe* in B: — *he worþ jordon* (B 8232; *he beþ jordon, A*); — *þat he ne worþ biwonne* (B 18640; *þat ne biþ he biwunne, A*). In *Ormulum* the passive periphrasis with *wurthe* is quite common, although not nearly so common as that with *be*. Twenty-two instances of *wurthe* with the passive have been counted in *Genesis and Exodus* and eighteen in Robert of Gloucester’s *Chronicle*. The *South English Legendary* makes considerable use of *wurthe*, as does *Piers Plowman*. Seventeen instances have been counted in *Sir Ferumbras*.

The present-tense form of *wurthe* usually retains a marked implication of futurity. It is not possible to say anything definite about its dialectal distribution as an auxiliary of the passive in ME.

*Wurthe* ceases to be an auxiliary of the passive voice round about the end of the 14th century. Fifteenth-century MSS of
Robert of Gloucester, for example, frequently replace *wurthe* by *schal be, woxe, was,* and *is.* For the disappearance of *wurthe* and the theories concerning it see pp. 616-9.

The past participle accompanying OE *been* (*wesan, weorðan*) is originally a predicate adjective (cf. present-day *I am pleased,* etc.). In the course of time the combination comes to be regarded as an integral verbal unit, and the participle tends to lose its predicative, adjectival character. One result of this is that although the great majority of participles in OE passive periphrases retain their adjectival flectional endings, there are also participles without endings. In ME, along with the breaking up of the OE inflections, all participles lose their flectional endings. They are still seen, for example, in *Poema Morale* (*fewe beoþ icorene,* 104).

**Perfect and Pluperfect.** — A few instances of these compound tenses have been found in 13th-century texts, but their use does not become finally established until the end of the 14th century: — *ich am a wummo[n] þet . . . habbe er ibeon ibernd mid swuche þincege* (Anchr. 143); — *Engelond hap ibe inome and iwerred ilome* (RGlouc. 43); — *how ofte tyme hath it yknowne be, The tresoun that to wommen hath ben do* (Ch. TC ii 792-3); — *with many a tempest hadde his berd been shake* (Ch. CT A Prol. 406).

**The Types 'I Was Told a Story' and 'He Was Laughed At.'** — Passive expressions of this type, characteristically English, are made possible by the disappearance of any formal difference between the dative and accusative, as a result of which many verbs which originally take an indirect, dative, object begin to take a direct, accusative, object (*thank, help, follow,* etc.); see p. 108. The type *I was given a book* becomes a feature of English usage in the 15th century, although a few ambiguous instances occur even earlier (e.g., *þe duke Myloun was geven hys lyff,* Rich. CL 1315). In this quotation *þe duke Myloun* may stand equally well for the nominative as for
the dative, but the construction may be regarded at least as a prototype of the modern type. Chaucer has the old type: — *me was toold* (CT D WB 9). The type *he was laughed at* also begins to appear about 1300, but remains rare until the end of the 14th century. The origin of this construction is to be found in certain peculiarities of early English word-order seen particularly in late OE relative *þe- and *þæt*-clauses, where the preposition, previously placed before the verb (*þe tida þe Romane nu æfter sicaf*), commonly begins to occur after it (*se oþer had is þe se forma spreaf to, Ælfric Grammar*). From the 13th century on this is the prevailing word-order in prose (e.g., *þenc everich of his owune stat þet he is, oþer was, inne, Ancr. 140*). There are early instances — dating from late OE — of passive relative clauses with this word-order (e.g., *eac swilce þa gewæda þe he bewunden wæs mid wæron swa ansunde swylce hi eall niwe wæron, Ælfric Lives of Saints I 438*), but, as mentioned before, the type is not recorded outside relative clauses until c 1300. Examples of passive constructions of these types: — *if it [þo Chirche] were onely payed of þo ordynaunce of hym* (Wyclif Sel. Wks III 418); — *Michael at the Pool . . . was mad erl of Suffolk and graunled of the Kyngis cophir zerly a thousand mark* (Capgr. Chron. 241); — *þou agh it for to yeild again . . . to þaa þe quilk þat aght was nomin fra* (Cursor 27855, Cotton MS); — *þes oþir wordis of þis bischop ou  te to be taken hede to* (Wyclif E Wks 369).

**INTRANSITIVE INSTEAD OF PASSIVE EXPRESSION.** — The use of intransitive verbs instead of reflexive and passive expressions seems to be typical of English (cf. pp. 431 and 437). There are ME instances like *the tresor of the benefice Wherof the povere schulden clothe* [‘be clothed’] *And ete and drinke and house* [‘be housed’] *bothe* (Gower CA Prol. 317-8). Cf. such present-day expressions as *the book sells well; the door doesn’t lock; these shoes are well worn, but they have worn well.*

**AGENT OF THE PERSONAL PASSIVE.** — Although the means
of expressing the agent of the personal passive are discussed elsewhere in this work, a brief collective survey seems indicated.

The expression of the agent by means of prepositions has always been common in English. The inflectional (prepositionless) agent — an Indo-European inheritance — is represented in OE by an instrumental dative found occasionally in poetry, seldom in prose. This inflectional dative of agency has been assumed to survive in a few ME instances where the agent-noun is not preceded by a preposition. See pp. 105-6.

The ME prepositions expressing agency are by, from, mid, of, through, and with. It has been claimed that at and to also occur in this function, but while at occasionally expresses instrumentality (at eye, at wordes fewe, etc.), the MED (at 9) quotes only one ME instance where at might be understood as expressing the agent of a passive verb (he sholde fullhtnedd beon Att himm patt wass hiss shaffte, Orm. 10759); it is more likely, however, that at even here indicates mere instrumentality. For the alleged use of to in a periphrastic dative of agency see pp. 105-6.

Unambiguous cases with by indicating the agent of a passive verb are rare until the end of the 14th century; see p. 374. From is used in this function from OE down to the 14th century (see p. 385). Mid (see p. 394) is occasionally used with the agent in early ME (a lefdi was fet was mid hire voan biset al abuten, Ancr. 177). Of, the most popular preposition of agency in ME, is discussed on p. 397. Through is losing ground in this function in ME; see p. 408. With begins to occur with the agent in the 13th century (see p. 420).

STUDIES RELATING TO THE PASSIVE VOICE

(For works dealing with the disappearance of wurthe [weordan] see p. 619.)

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ASPECT


Bibliography, p. 449.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. — A verb may be studied from many syntactical angles. One may focus one's attention on the distinction between transitive, intransitive, reflexive, and impersonal verbs or to the voice of the verb and distinguish between the active, passive, and, perhaps, the middle. Or one may think of the tenses and the moods. One may also pay attention to what is called the aspect of the verb — or, to put it more accurately, to the aspect of the activity expressed by the verb in question.

There are several kinds of verbal aspects. First of all there is the contrast between the imperfective and perfective aspects of an activity. When we say that an activity is imperfective, we think of the fact that something is (or was or will be) taking place, and not of its completion. The activity is durative in character, i.e., is conceived as a continuous line in time, the beginning and end of which we do not see or think about. A large number of verbs naturally express an imperfective activity (e.g., to gaze, know, live, love, read, remember, sit, sleep, stand, and wait). The perfective aspect calls attention to the completion of the activity, thus implying a change (e.g., to die, glance, kill, murder, open, rescue, shut, sit down, stand up, start, and tie). The difference between the imperfective and perfective aspects is strikingly illustrated by verb-pairs like sit (imperfective) — sit down (perfective) and stand — stand up.¹

¹ One must bear in mind, however, that in the Germanic and Romance languages the term 'aspect' means something entirely
Apart from the notions of imperfectivity and perfectivity, other criteria may be used in the classification of verbal aspects. Distinction may be made, for example, between the ingressive or inchoative aspect (which calls particular attention to the beginning of the activity), the egressive or effective or terminative aspect (calling attention to the moment when the activity reaches its end), the iterative or frequentative aspect (emphasizing the recurrence of the activity), the causative aspect (bringing out the non-spontaneous character of the activity), the intensive aspect (expressing the emphatic, intensive character of the activity), etc.

**Perfective Aspect.** — The perfective aspect, which calls attention to the completion of an activity, is in OE often indicated by means of verbal prefixes ('preverbs'), such as a- (e.g., awacian and arisan), for- (e.g., jordan), and ge- (e.g., geascian 'discover'). Of these three, for- retains its productivity down to the end of the ME period, while a- dies out in early ME. A number of 13th-century survivals of productive a- have been collected by H. W. Häusermann (see bibliography).

The prefix ge- has originally a collective meaning (OE gefera, ME ifere 'companion'). As a verbal prefix it is used, for example, to intensify the verb (e.g., gehatan 'to promise') and to make it perfective. Even in OE there is a tendency to use ge-particularly with the past participle. The prefix remains productive down to the 13th century, after which it is used only for rhythm and other similar reasons or as a sign of the past participle (cf. streit 'straight,' adj., and istreilt 'stretched').

different from what it means in the Slavonic languages, where the contrast between the imperfective and perfective aspects is a feature running through the whole verbal system (cf. A. Mazon, *Emplois des aspects du verbe russe*, Bibliothèque de l'Institut Français de St Petersburg IV, Paris 1914, and H. Ch. Sørensen, *Aspect et temps en slave*, Aarhus 1949). The idea of aspect in the non-Slavonic languages is largely incommensurable with the idea behind the Slavonic term. (For information concerning Slavonic aspect the writer is indebted to Professor V. Kiparsky.)
In OE *ge-* occurs in all dialectal areas, but in ME (in the form *i*) it is preserved only in the southern dialects. At the end of the 13th century it occurs regularly south of the line drawn from Saffron Walden to Brentford, Oxford, and Worcester. In the North it is not found at all; in an early NE Midland text like the *Ormulum* the prefix occurs only with a couple of verbs. The disappearance of the prefix in the northern areas seems to be due to ON influence. By the end of the 14th century *i-* becomes archaic in London English. It occurs in Chaucer’s poetry, but not in his prose, and is missing in the London records. In the South, including Kent, the prefix remains in use down to the 15th century.

Many imperfective verbs have also occurred with perfective meanings since OE. It is possible that this practice becomes somewhat more frequent when perfective verbal prefixes cease to be productive. Among verbs which have perfective uses by the side of their normal imperfective functions are *know, live, sit, sleep,* and *stand* (e.g., *ichave him founde so gode and hende Seþþen þat y first him knew,* Amis & Amil. 374). Certain periphrases with *have* and *be* are apparently used to intensify the perfective aspect: ¹ — *þa Cristnan hæfdon sige* (OE Chron. an. 894); — *þa wes he wræþ* (Lawman A 8268; *þo was he þe wroþere,* B); — *Crist wass dæd o rodetreo Forr all mannkinne deed* (Orm. 1436); — *but soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed* (Ch. CT A Prol. 148); — *I nyl yow disobeye, For to be deed, though me were looth to deye* (‘even if had to die for it,’ Ch. CT E Cl. 364); — *riht als he stoden alle so, And his bac was toward hem wend, So weren he war of a croiz ful gent* (Havelok 2137).

The not uncommon use of *gin* or *begin* to indicate the perfective and ingressive aspects (e.g., *ure schip bigan to swymme To þis londes brymme,* Horn 189; — *Ailbrus gan lere Horn and his yfere,* Horn 241) is discussed on pp. 610-5.

¹ Cf. the use of *have* and *be* as auxiliaries of the perfect and pluperfect.
IMPERFECTIVE (DURATIVE) ASPECT. — This aspect, showing an activity as going on, is usually expressed by the simple present tense in ME (he writeth). The periphrasis consisting of to be and the form in -inde (-ende, later -ing), although used primarily for emphasis and vividness, has a marked durative colour. The simple present tense is discussed on pp. 481-8 and the periphrasis with to be on pp. 584-97. Cf. also pp. 557-8.

INGRESSIVE ASPECT. — The ingressive aspect, which calls attention to the beginning of an activity, is expressed by many verbs of more or less incomplete predication, such as gin, begin, fon (used down to the 13th century; e.g., Eve biheold o þen forbodene appele and iseih hine veir and veng to deliten i þe biholdunge, Ancr. 23), set (e.g., þe king sette to fleonne, Lawman A 1570), and wurthe (OE weorðan). For gin (begin) see pp. 610-15, for wurthe pp. 615-9. See also go, pp. 557-8. For other ME ingressives, become, come, fall, grow, run, turn, wax, etc., reference may be made to the respective entries in the NED and MED.

EGRESSIVE ASPECT. — The egressive aspect, which focusses attention on the moment when an activity comes to an end, is expressed by certain prefixes, like be-, for-, i- (ge-), and to- (only some of them remaining productive in ME) and by certain verbs, such as blin (ne blann itt nohht to re nenn, Orm. 14564) and cease (þei wolen not . . . ceesse to anoye hem silf in bilding of hye housis, Wyclif Sel. Wks I 139).

ITERATIVE ASPECT. — The iterative aspect, indicating recurrent and habitual activity (‘used to,’ etc.), has been expressed by will since OE. Shall is also used in this function. See pp. 599-600. For other constructions see pp. 558 and 595.

CAUSATIVE ASPECT. — The most common verbs used to express the causative aspect, do, gar, let, and make, are discussed on pp. 530-3 and 601-2.

INTENSIVE ASPECT. — In addition to certain prefixes, like
for- and of-, used to express the intensive aspect (e.g., þei made hem þan merye ... and eten at here ese, for þei were for-hungred, WPal. 2515; — zif þu ert ofhungred efter þe swete, Ancr. 171), several periphrastic constructions are used for this purpose, such as be + -ing (see pp. 584-99), do + infinitive ('emphatic do,' pp. 606-7), and gin + infinitive (see pp. 610-15). The reason for this is quite simple: a periphrasis, consisting of two or more words, is longer and therefore weightier than a simple verb form. Cf. the difference between the perfect and pluperfect on the one hand and the simple preterite on the other, and many other similar cases.

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MOOD

A grammatical mood (L modus) is a special verbal form indicating the presence or absence of a certain attitude in the speaker's mind towards the verbal activity. There are three moods in English: the indicative, subjunctive, and imperative. The subjunctive and imperative express certain subjective attitudes of mind, while no such attitude is implied by the indicative. The distinction is strikingly illustrated by Jespersen, who defines the indicative as a fact-mood, the subjunctive as a thought-mood, and the imperative as a will-mood (Philos., p. 313). One might also use the terminology suggested by F. Th. Visser (E Studies XXXVI, 1955, 205-8) and say that while the indicative represents modally non-marked activity, the subjunctive and imperative represent activity which is modally marked.

SUBJUNCTIVE

FORM

Inflectional Subjunctive. — The modally coloured English verbal form traditionally called the subjunctive goes back to the Germanic subjunctive, which in form represents the Indo-European optative mood. In the general decay of the inflectional endings which begins in OE the formal differences between the indicative and subjunctive are gradually lost or reduced to a minimum. This development takes place much earlier in the North than in the more southern parts of the country. In the North the stem vowel of the 1st and 3rd persons singular in the preterite indicative of strong verbs (e.g., band) is extended to the 2nd person singular and the plural (orig. bunde, bundon). This indicative form then supplants the original subjunctive form (bunde, bunden), with the result that the form band comes to stand also for the preterite subjunctive. The development is completed before the beginning of the ME period. In the Midlands the levelling of the stem vowel takes place in the course of the 13th and 14th centuries. In the southern parts of the country the difference is retained down to the 15th century, even in the 2nd person singular. The only differences that persist occur in the 3rd person sg. of the preterite of to be (was-were). In the 2nd person sg. of the present tense the difference between the indicative (-st, -s) and the subjunctive (-e, later mute) is retained as long as the singular remains in use. In the preterite indicative the -st (-s) ending is only found in weak verbs and even this often disappears in the North.

1 The term 'inflectional subjunctive' is here used for the simple verb form (I be, I were), as distinct from the periphrastic form (I may be, he would come).
PERIPHRASTIC SUBJUNCTIVE. — In the course of the OE period the subjunctive mood begins to be indicated periphrastically by means of modal auxiliaries like *sculan, willan, magan, motan, þurfan, uton, hatan,* and *durran.* The last two are seldom found in a modal function. The use of these auxiliaries, originally verbs with full meaning, as subjunctive equivalents becomes increasingly common towards the end of the OE period and in ME, no doubt because periphrastic expressions, being clearer in meaning and more emphatic than the old inflectional forms, provide more effective means for indicating modality. It must be borne in mind, however, that in the majority of cases the original meanings of these modal auxiliaries are more or less clearly felt in ME.

Some of the OE modal auxiliaries cease to be used in ME. On the other hand a considerable number of new verbs come to be used as subjunctive equivalents during this period. H.-O. Wilde (see bibliography) mentions the following new verbs and periphrases used for this function —

Equivalents of the volitional subjunctive in ME: *to be about to, to be holden to, besee, bid, bir, cast, choose, covet, deign, enforce, grant, have to, have desire (liking, need, will), have lever, it is to, keep, let, mon, need, owe, purpose, shape, thole, wilne, yeme.*

Equivalents of the non-volitional subjunctive: *could, deem, hold, seem, think, trow.*

The large majority of these new auxiliaries are native verbs.

The three modal auxiliaries *par excellence* are *shall, may,* and *will.* A complicating factor in the use of *shall* and *will* as modal auxiliaries is that these verbs also come to be used as temporal auxiliaries, to form the periphrastic future.

How popular a means of expression the modal periphrasis is in ME is shown by the fact that in non-dependent clauses the ratio between the periphrastic and inflectional subjunctive is almost 9 : 1 in the 15th century.
The usual tenses of the subjunctive are the present and the preterite. The difference between these tenses is one in modality, not in chronology, both expressing modal relations within the time-sphere of the present or the future. Originally the preterite subjunctive is used to express modality within the time-sphere of the past, too, but as the compound tenses develop, this function is taken over by the pluperfect subjunctive. A later ME peculiarity is the occasional use (probably under the influence of French) of the pluperfect subjunctive after the preterites of certain verbs expressing assumption, wish, fear, and the like, when the activity assumed, desired, feared, etc., is hypothetical: — he went he had be hys brother (RMannyaing HS 10596). For more examples see p. 508. This use of the pluperfect subjunctive is comparable to that of the hypothetical perfect infinitive (pp. 517-9).

For the short forms of the present subjunctive corresponding to OE helpe we, helpe ge (e.g., speke we of the Romayn Emperour, Ch. CT B ML 954) cf. pp. 474 and 481.

USE

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. — While the form of the Germanic inflectional subjunctive goes back to the Indo-European optative, it functionally represents two different Indo-European moods, the optative and the conjunctive.¹ The subjunctive occurs in non-dependent and dependent clauses. In OE, where the use of this mood is quite extensive, two main categories of the subjunctive, expressing volition and non-volition, can be distinguished. These two categories can be further split up into smaller functional groups —

¹ Many scholars prefer the term 'optative' to 'subjunctive'. The term 'optative' is particularly common in the German-speaking countries.
A. The subjunctive of volition, i.e., of wish and will, can be described more narrowly as —
1) the optative subjunctive, expressing a realisable wish;
2) the hortatory subjunctive, expressing an exhortation and command;
3) the concessive subjunctive, expressing a kind of challenge or defiance.

B. The subjunctive of non-volition, or, better, the conditioned subjunctive, marking an action or state as conditioned with regard to its realisation or reality. This category can be described more narrowly as —
1) the subjunctive of potentiality, suggesting that the realisation (or reality) of the action or state is possible, likely, doubtful, or improbable;
2) the subjunctive of unreality, indicating that the action or state is unreal or unrealisable.

NON-DEPENDENT CLAUSES

OLD ENGLISH. — The indicative, of course, is the prevailing mood of non-dependent clauses. The present subjunctive, which does not occur in the first person singular, expresses volition, while the preterite subjunctive is non-volitional.\(^1\) Periphrastic subjunctive equivalents, with *sclulan*, *magan*, *willan*, and other modal auxiliaries, are fairly common in OE. Each of the three verbs mentioned is approximately as common as the inflectional subjunctive, *sclulan* being the commonest of the three and *willan* the least common.

MIDDLE ENGLISH. — The OE uses of the subjunctive survive in ME. The inflectional present subjunctive is found mainly in the 3rd person; in the 2nd person singular the subjunctive and

\(^1\) The present non-volitional subjunctive is going out of use in OE. F. Behre, *The Subjunctive in OE Poetry*, p. 54, gives only a few examples of this use.
imperative forms are alike and thus not always distinguishable from one another: — Rymenhild sede at forste, 'Herte, nu þu berste, For Horn hastu na more' (Horn 1192). The present subjunctive is volitional, expressing a wish, exhortation, command, and concession. Examples of the subjunctive expressing wish: — God gyve þet ure ende beo god and wit þet he us lenne (Poema Mor. 122); — Cryst it me forbede (PPl. B iii 119); — God wolde the wallfes were falle adoun! (Ch. LGW 1726). Pious wishes of this kind readily develop into exclamations and asseverations. In imprecations the subjunctive is equally common: — evere wurthe him yvel and wo (Havelok 2221); — wo worth that day that thow me bere on lyue (Ch. TC iv 763). A subjunctive of wish is a common feature in prayers: — Vader oure þet art ine hevenes, yhalzed by þi name; cominde þi riche; yworpe þi wit (Matt. vi 9-13, Ayenb. 262). The hortatory subjunctive: — þatt mann þatt wile follzhenn me Annd winnenn eche blisse, He take his rode annn bere itt rihht (Orm. 5608); — send xech sum god biforen him, þe hwile he mei, to hevne (Poema Mor. 27); — als longe as owre lyf lasteth, lyve we toegideres (PPl. B iv 195). The inflectional present subjunctive expressing concession: — þanne gan alle þe comune crye in vers of Latin To þe kynges conseille — construe ho-so wolde — 'Precepta regis . . .' (PPl. B Prol. 144). — ma dame, that can I do wel, Be so my lyf therto wol laste (Gower CA i 187).

The inflectional preterite subjunctive is occasionally used to express volition, i.e., a wish which the speaker regards as unrealisable: — Atlas for wo! why nere I deed! (Ch. TC ii 409) Normally, however, the inflectional preterite subjunctive expresses non-volitional verbal activity the reality or realisability of which is conditioned by a hypothetical dependent clause or is otherwise subject to doubt: — ziff Crist itt nolde þolenn himm, Ne dide he nohht tatt dede (Orm. 11812); — zif we serveden Gode swa we dop erminges, mare we hedden en hevene þenne eorles her end kinges (Poema Mor. 320); — this were a wikked way but who-so hadde a gyde That wolde folwen us eche a fote
Non-dependent Clauses

(PPl. B vi 1); — betere were child unborne þan techingeles forlore (Good Wife 161); — what wold ye with the best? (Malory MD 65).

The preterite subjunctive would is found in hesitating statements in polite, deferential style: — by youre leve I wolde prey yow ... (Ch. CT D Sum. 1814); — 'ma dame, if ye wolde have rowthe,' Quod I, 'than wolde I telle yow' (Gower CA i 183).

'WOULDN'T RATHER,' ETC. — The type would rather, known from late OE (þe wolde hire lif forlætan ær þan heo luge, Ælfric Lives of Saints I 374), is first recorded in ME at the end of the 13th century: — heo seide heo wolde raþer tuyrne azen Into hire owene londe (SE Leg. xxvii 134); — that rather deye I wolde (Ch. TC iii 379). The type I should rather turns up later, in the 15th century: — I suld rather at on callyng renne to my makere (Gesta Rom. 427). I had rather appears also in the 15th century: — yett haid I rether dye For his sake ons agayne (Rel. Ant. I 72). I had lever emerges at the end of the 13th century: — zuyt hadde ich leovere ich were ihuld (SE Leg. lxvi 321). Me were lever dates from OE (him wære leofra þet ic onette wip þæs þet ic þe moste gelœstan). A ME example: — me were levere a thousand fold to dye (Ch. TC iii 574). A mixture of the impersonal and personal construction is so had hym better ... For to have broke þat yche vowe (RMannyng HS 2837). Cf. W. van der Gaaf, C. Stoffel, and F. Hall (see bibliography).

Periphrastic Subjunctive in Middle English. — The modality expressed by the periphrastic subjunctive receives its colour from the original independent meaning of the auxiliary verb. Most of the cases do not essentially differ from the modern uses of the periphrastic subjunctive. The use of the modal periphrases is quite extensive in ME; for this and the auxiliaries used see p. 453, above. A few examples of the present subjunctive: — mare he ane mei forþwen þenne eal folc gulte cunne (Poema Mor. 213); — now þrift and þedom mote þou have, my leve swete barn (Good Wife 164); — shal no
In the first person plural the hortatory subjunctive can be expressed by means of *uton*, *ute* (from *wuton*) in OE and early ME down to the late 13th century: — *uten we heom to liþe* (Lawman A 20635); — *mid ealmihtizes Godes luve ute we us biwerien* (Poema Mor. 333); — *ute we þah to him fare* (Owl & N 1779). In later ME *let* comes to be used for this purpose: — *now lat us stynte of Custance but a throwe And speke we of the Romayn Emperour* (Ch. CT B ML 953).

The periphrastic preterite subjunctive is used along similar lines. A special use of *would* is seen in *the goune nedyth for to be had; and of coloure it wolde be a godely blew, or ellys a bryghte sangueyn* ('ought to be,' Paston I 39 [c 1440]). Non-expression of the infinitive is seen in *hwat schold ich þar mid myne songe, Ne singe ich heom never so longe?* (Owl & N 1025, MS J; *wat sol ich*, MS C). Cf. p. 543.

**DEPENDENT CLAUSES**

**NOUN CLAUSES**

**SUBJECT CLAUSES.** — A subordinate clause introduced by *that* may serve as the logical subject of an impersonal or personal statement. The subjunctive is used if the verbal activity in the *that*-clause has a modal colouring, particularly if the speaker thinks of it not as a fact but as something that is probable, possible, desirable, or proper: — *hit is riht and somlich þet ancren þeos two morhziwen habben bivoren ofre* (Ancr. 41); — *betere is þat bote bale adoun brynge þan bale be ybette and bote nevere þe bettere* (PPl. B iv 92-3); — *that is my conseille... þat uche man forguye other* (PPl. B xix 391); — *now it is resoun and tyme that I shewe yow...* (Ch. CT B Mel. 2413).

A comparable use of the periphrastic subjunctive with *should* in *that*-clauses after expressions of sorrow and displeasure,
joy and pleasure, surprise and wonder, and the like, is seen in modern phrases like *it is surprising that you should have mentioned this* and *that he should have reached the place he did is a proof of his talents*. The type is anticipated in earlier instances where *shall* and *should* are used in expressions of this kind, *should* having reference to past time (*allas þat he shal þerwith fare*, Havelok 1655; — *woleway . . . þat ich ever schuld sen þus miche rewþe on erþe ben*, Arth. & Merlin 6803). After the present tense of verbs expressing regret *should* is recorded in ME from the middle of the 14th century on. Exclamatory cases like *o worthy, gentil Alisandre, alas, That evere sholde fallen swich a cas* (Ch. CT B Mk. 3849), where the action does not refer strictly to the past, seem to form a link between the all-preterite use and the type represented by such instances as *woo is mee That ever I shuld leve after the* (Ipom. A 7300). Cf. F. Behre, *The Origin . . . of Meditative-polemic 'That'* (see bibliography).

**Object Clauses.** — These clauses are also introduced by *that*, although the conjunction is not always expressed. The subjunctive occurs particularly after volitional expressions (wishes, exhortations, and commands): — *ichulle þet e speken selde* (Ancr. 31); — *God gyve þet ure ende beo god* (Poema Mor. 122); — *I wisshe þann e it were myne* (PPl B v 111); — *loke þat þou wite wel who do mikel or litel* (Good Wife 121). The subjunctive is common also after requests and entreaties: — *we preye . . . þat God . . . zoure grayne multiplye* (PPl. B vi 128). The most common auxiliary is *should* (*gladly hym biddes þat his hert and his honde schulde hardi be boþe*, Gawain & GK 371), but *mote* is also found, particularly in earlier ME. *Would* occurs in later ME (and prayed her to han good fame And that she

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1 A number of OE instances with *sceal* and *sceolde* are quoted by E. Standop (see bibliography), p. 117. Standop finds that in OE *willan (wolde)* is also used in expressions of this type.

Standop quotes an OE instance where *sceolde* occurs in a construction of the modern type.
460 Subjunctive

nolde doon hem no shame, Ch. HF 1816). The subjunctive is found after expressions of advice: — I rede thee that thou gett A felowe that can welle concele And kepe thi counsell (RRose 2856); — wit and resoun conseilen ofte That I myn herte scholde softe (Gower CA iii 1164). After verbs expressing mental activity of various kinds (knowing, thinking, believing, showing, etc.): — he wene þat þu segge soþ (Owl & N 844); — Cleophas ne knewe hym nauȝte þat he Cryste were (PPl. B xi 227); — seynt Gregorie . . . had a gode forwit þat no priouresse were prest (PPl. B v 166); — Ysaac wende it were Esau (Gen. & Ex. 1543); — he went he had be hys brother (RMannyaing HS 19596; for the pluperfect cf. p. 454, above); — for wende i nevere . . . That swich a monstre . . . myghte be (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1344). After expressions of fear: — sore hure dradde þat Horn isterve were (Horn 1166).

REPORTED SPEECH AND INDIRECT QUESTIONS. — The subjunctive is occasionally found in reported speech: — and hi hit seggeþ wel ilome þat me ne chide wiþ þe gidie Ne wit þan ofne me ne geonie (Owl & N 290). In indirect questions, revealing the speaker’s unfamiliarity or uncertainty with the subject of the inquiry, the subjunctive is much better preserved than in reported affirmative statements: — þow willest . . . to knowe why somme be alowe and somme alofte (PPl. B xii 221); — þanne is tyme . . . to appose þis doctoure of Dowel and Dobet and if Dobest be any penaunce (PPl. B xiii 96); — askeþ him hwat god þerof muhte lihen (Anacr. 41); — 'king,' he sede, 'cum to bihelde Hu we jizle schulle And logare go wulle (Horn 847-8).

A desire to express subtle shades of thought is perhaps responsible for the interchange of moods occasionally found in indirect questions: — I had wondre what she was and whas wyf she were (PPl. B ii 18).

As in OE the periphrasis with should is used to imply that the speaker does not commit himself to the truth of the alleged fact (in othir bokes . . . is told that Adam schuld a sent Seth onto the gates of Paradyse, Capgr. Chron. 7). From later ME on
Relative Clauses

 should may occur also when there is no such hesitation on the part of the speaker (*fe folk asked quot þai suld be*, Cursor 4931).

Summing up it may be said that the indicative is the prevailing mood in noun clauses and becomes more and more common in the course of the ME period. On the whole the subjunctive is used only when there is a need for indicating the presence of some kind of modal colour. In subject-clauses the modal periphrasis is little used, but in object-clauses its use exceeds by far that of the inflectional subjunctive. The most common modal auxiliary is shall (should); it is frequently found in early ME and becomes increasingly common in the 13th and 14th centuries. It occurs particularly after verbs expressing wish, exhortation, command, request, and entreaty. Mote is found above all in requests and wishes. It becomes uncommon in late ME, about the time when will (would) begins to occur more frequently.

Several uses of the noun clause have a powerful rival in the infinitive. Now and then the two are used side by side, as in and prayed her to han good fame And that she nolde doon hem no shame (Ch. HF 1816).

**RELATIVE CLAUSES**

The use of the subjunctive in relative clauses is not uncommon in OE. In ME, with the possible exception of the very earliest part of the period and certain particularly conservative areas like Kent, relatively little remains of this usage. The retention of the subjunctive is understandable in relative clauses subordinated to a hypothetical clause: — *fele of zow fareth as if I a forest hadde þat were more nedy þan he* (PPl. B xv 326). It is natural in clauses introduced by generalising relative pronouns, which as such contain an element of concessivity: — *soth hit is, whom it disples Ther may no marchaunt lyve at ese* (RRose 5697); — *I recche nat what*
wrong that thou me profre (Ch. CT G SN 489); — quatsuomever þou se or here (Cursor 10508). Cf. p. 468. Otherwise the indicative is almost exclusively used. When occasionally a modal expression is found, it generally refers to an activity which is merely contemplated or in prospect. The statement, for example, has reference to a prospective event in hii acordede . . . þat weþer of hom tueye lengore alive were þat he ssole be oþeres eir (RGlouc. 7967); cf. p. 496. The subjunctive may be used when the principal clause expresses volition (exhortation or command): — rewe on þis robbere þat reddere ne have (PPl. B v 475). In affirmative relative clauses accompanying negative principal clauses the subjunctive may also occur: — ne saþ ihc nevre, so ihc wene, Beggere þat were so kene (Horn 1128); — mannes son hath not where he reste his hed (Wyclif Matt. viii 20; cf. OE mannes sunu næþ hwar he hys heafod ahylde and Vulgate filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet). If both the principal and the relative clause are negative, only the indicative is used. In the following examples the subjunctive occurs in a relative clause which is part of a comparison: — as a freke þat fre were forth gan I walke (PPl. B xiii 2); — Ypocrysie in latyn is lykned to a dongehul þat were bysnewed with snowe . . . or to a wal þat were whitlymed and were foule withinne (PPl. B xv 109).

CLAUSES OF PLACE

Local clauses have normally the indicative, but the subjunctive may occur under special conditions, as in 'Crist,' quaþ he, 'þe wisse And gie þe hevene blisse Of þine husebonde, Wher he beo in londe' (Horn 416) and in wyff, go wher thee liste (Ch. CT D WB 318). The reason for the occurrence of the subjunctive is obviously the concessive colour of wher, used in the generalising meaning 'wherever.' For the same reason the subjunctive is frequently used with wher-so, wher-so-ever, whider-so, and the like: — I wol the serve Right as thi selave, whider so thow wende (Ch. TC iii 391). Cf. p. 468.
CLAUSES OF TIME

The subjunctive, as a rule, is used to imply that an event or state is in prospect or merely conjectural. In accordance with this principle, when the temporal clause is introduced by *till*, the subjunctive is found mostly in statements made in the present tense: — *cesse shal we nevere, Til Mede be þi wedded wyf* (PPI. B ii 152); — *as a spaynel she wol on hym lepe Til that she fynde som man hire to chepe* (Ch. CT D WB 268). In Chaucer's poetry the statements made in the present tense have usually and in his prose regularly the subjunctive. When the statement is made in the preterite, the mood is usually the indicative. One of the rather uncommon instances where the preterite subjunctive occurs is *this joly prentys with his maister bood, Til he were ny out of his prentishood* (Ch. CT A Co. 4400). In clauses introduced by *ere* (ar, or) 'before' the subjunctive is the more or less regular form in statements made in the present tense, both in early and late ME. In statements made in the preterite the early ME usage varies, while in Chaucer the indicative and subjunctive are equally common. An example of the subjunctive: — *so bifel that, longe er it were day, This man mette* (Ch. CT B NP 4191). In temporal clauses introduced by *tho, when*, and *while* the indicative prevails in OE and even more in ME. The subjunctive seems to be favoured when the temporal clause has reference to an event in the future, as in *send him after none . . . Whane þe kyng arise To wude for to pleie* (Horn 360). This may be the reason for the use of the subjunctive also in *I wol goon when yow lest* (Ch. CT E Cl. 847), but the mood may also be due to the concessive colour of *whan* ('whenever'). Cf. p. 468.

Modal auxiliaries, mainly *shall, will, may,* and *mote,* are used in clauses of time, although not very extensively. *Shall* is by far the most common.
CLAUSES OF COMPARISON

INEQUALITY. — These clauses are introduced by than or than that. In early ME a comparative clause of this kind, when accompanying a negative main clause, has its verb in the indicative: — na mo þe deþ a wrecche wranne (Owl & N 564). When the comparative clause follows an affirmative main clause, Midland texts use the indicative (e.g., Adam and Eve wunen samen and hadden childre manige iwis, mo þan of-telle þ þe Genesis (Gen. & Ex. 412), while texts written in the southern parts of the country have mainly the subjunctive, at least with the present tense (more xe stent man of manne þanne hym do of Criste (Poema Mor. 20). This southern feature is well preserved in Kent even as late as the middle of the 14th century (Agenbite). Chaucer has normally the indicative, except in clauses introduced by rather than and the like: — rather than my felawe deye Yet shal I Somwhat more unto hym seye (TC iv 524); — it is ful lasse harm to lete hym pace Than he shende alle the servantz (CT A Co. 4410). In both these cases the subjunctive is used with reference to an action in prospect.

EQUALITY. — Comparative clauses introduced by as, so, and the like, with the meaning 'as,' have their verbs in the indicative when the event or state used for comparison is conceived as something real: — ne mei na murrhe beo swa muchel se is Godes sihte (Poema Mor. 365); — that oure fame such be knewe In alle thing ryght as hit ys (Ch. HF 1837). In early ME the subjunctive occurs in comparisons with so...so when the comparative clause implies the highest possible degree, as in Aþulf sede on hire ire So stille so hit were ('as quietly as might be,' Horn 310). In asseverations introduced by as or so the volitional character of the expression (which is really a wish) requires the subjunctive: — as help me God and þe halydam (Gaw. & GK 2123); — now lady seinte Marie So wisly help me out of care and synne, This wyde world though that I sholde wynne, Ne have I nat twelf pens (Ch. CT D Fri. 1605).
Clauses of Result

'As If.' — After conjunctions used in the sense 'as if,' like so, right so, as (als, also), as if, and as though, the subjunctive, usually the preterite subjunctive, is used: — I shope me in shroudes as I a shepe were (PPl. B Prol. 2); — he cride and knokked as that he were wood (Ch. CT A Mil. 3436).

In all these cases periphrastic equivalents of the subjunctive are also used.

CLAUSES OF RESULT

In early ME both the indicative and subjunctive occur in consecutive clauses (clauses of result). The principle is that the indicative is used when the result is presented as a fact, without any implication of modality, and the subjunctive when some kind of modality is implied. The subjunctive occurs, for example, after a negative main clause if the result is directly associated with the negated idea: — wurþu nevere swo wod Ne so drunken þat evere sai þu þi wif Al þat þi wille be (Prov. Alfred 283). In later ME only the periphrastic subjunctive is used for this purpose: — I wol my wo endure Ne make no contenance of hevynesse, That folk of yow may demen harm or gesse (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1486). Another situation where the subjunctive is used in early ME is when the event or state expressed by the consecutive clause results from a wish or necessity expressed in the main clause: — zollen mote þu so heze þat ut berste bo þin eze (Owl & N 990). In instances of this kind the subjunctive is found even later in ME: — ac do nouȝt out of resoun, That þow worth þe worse whan þow worche schuldest (PPl. B i 26). A third case where the subjunctive occurs in early ME is when the clause of result is subordinated to another dependent clause: — ziff þatt tu mihhest lufenn Godd Swa þatt itt wære himm cweme (Orm. 5160). This use of the subjunctive is still found in Chaucer: — and yif this wey ledeth the ayein so that thou be brought hider, thanne wiltow seye ... (Ch. Bo. iv m 1, 34). The preterite subjunctive is naturally used when the clause of result...
expresses an unrealisable event or state: — thereto desir so brennyngly me assailleth That to ben slayn it were a gretter joie To me than kyng of Grece ben and Troye (Ch. TC i 608). On the whole, however, the subjunctive loses ground considerably to the indicative in the course of the period. The loss of the inflectional subjunctive is counterbalanced by the use of periphrastic subjunctive equivalents, which — particularly in the case of may (might), shall (should), and also will (would) — is quite extensive.

**CLAUSES OF PURPOSE**

Because a final clause (a clause of purpose), introduced by that, so that, for that, for, lest, etc., expresses a prospective event or state, the use of the subjunctive is natural. The indicative, although it does occur, is uncommon. By the side of the inflectional subjunctive, the use of certain modal auxiliaries is quite widespread even in OE. In early ME the inflectional subjunctive and its periphrastic equivalents are equally common. The modal auxiliaries most frequently used in clauses of purpose are shall, may (mowe), and mote; other auxiliaries are rarely found. The inflectional subjunctive prevails in the present tense; it is also in the present that the modal auxiliaries may and mote are most frequently found. The proper area of the periphrastic subjunctive is the preterite, where it prevails over the inflectional form. It is in the preterite that the auxiliary shall (should) is usually seen. The situation remains much the same in late ME. Chaucer, for example, clearly avoids the indicative; his writings contain only a few instances of this mood, all of them occurring in his prose. In Chaucer's works the inflectional subjunctive is hardly less common than the modal periphrasis. As in early ME, the inflectional subjunctive and the periphrasis with may occur most frequently in the present tense, while shall occurs mainly in the preterite (should). Mote has been replaced by will, but
the latter is seldom used and occurs only in the preterite (*would*). In Chaucer the ratio between the present forms *may* and *shall* is 13 : 11 and that between the preterite forms *might*, *should*, and *would* 9 : 20 : 2. In late ME, as in later times, *may* and *shall* are practically the only auxiliaries appearing in clauses of purpose. In the inflectional subjunctive the Chaucerian present-preterite ratio is 38 : 8.

A few examples of the subjunctive in clauses of purpose in Chaucer: — *thanne shallow hange hem in the roof ful hye, That no man of oure purveiaunce spye* (CT A Mil. 3566); — *'have do,' quod she, 'com of and speed thee faste, Lest that oure neighebores thee espie*' (CT A Mil. 3729); — *lat youre man gon For quyksilver, that we it hadde anon* (CT G CY 1103); — *yet wol I it expresse To th'entente that men may be war therby* (CT G GY 1306); — *with hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras, For that Symkyn sholde in his blood allge* (CT A Rv. 3945); — *and, for his tale sholde seme the betre, Accordant to his wordes was his cheere* (CT F Sq. 102).

CLAUSES OF CONCESSION

Concessive clauses, as a rule, are modally coloured, and the use of the subjunctive is therefore quite widespread. The most typical concessive clause is that introduced by *though*. In OE the (inflectional) subjunctive is far more common in *peah*-clauses than the indicative. In early ME the subjunctive is the rule in the present tense: — *þeh ich beo a wintre eald* (Poema Mor. 181). The southern dialects make a general use of the preterite subjunctive, while in the Midlands the preterite subjunctive is used only to express unreality. In later ME (Chaucer) the subjunctive continues to dominate even in clauses where the concession has reference to a fact, although the indicative gains ground steadily, especially in the preterite. The wavering of the usage is reflected in parallel readings like *and thoghs the lyke nat a lover bee* (490, *F*-text) and *and thogh*
the lesteth nat a love be (480, G-text) in the Prologue to Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*. The subjunctive is common in instances like I was aferd of her face, þei she faire were (PPl. B i 10) and and though that he were worthy, he was wys (Ch. CT A Prol. 68). The same can be said of the combination although (used since the 14th century) and the plain all (found in early ME, but becoming more common in the 14th century): — I am a litel wrooth With yow... although it be me looth (Ch. CT B Sh. 1574); — al have he to the capoun skille and ryght, The false fox wol have his part at nyght (Ch. LGW 1392); — al were he ful of treson and falsnesse (Ch. CT F Sq. 506). As indicated by the inverted word-order, the clauses introduced by al are originally non-introduced concessive clauses (see below), al being merely an intensifying adverb. The phrase al be it (al be that), introduced in the 14th century, possibly under the influence of OF tout soit il, is comparable to although: — al be it so the bodi deie (Gower CA iv 2393). The subjunctive seems to hold its position somewhat better after though than after al and although.

Clauses introduced by generalising relative pronouns like what-so, who-so, what-so-ever, what-ever, who-so-ever, who-ever (also plain what or who) or by generalising adverbs like how-so, how-ever, wher, whever-so (cf. p. 462, above), or by generalising conjunctions like when (cf. p. 463, above), when-so, and when-so-ever, often have a marked concessive colour. In early ME, therefore, the subjunctive is the rule, and even in late ME it occurs more frequently than the indicative: — be what thou be (Ch. CT I Pars. 24); — she nys his doghter nat, what so he seye (Ch. CT C Phys. 187).

Non-introduced Clauses of Concession. — In non-introduced concessive clauses the subjunctive form of the verb, in addition to the inverted word-order, is the only means of expressing the concessivity. The mood is therefore regularly the subjunctive: — all tho that bien oute of the clotying and he hold shop, schall paye xii d., com he or com he nought (Bk.
Clauses of Condition

London E 195-6). The Mod. E type willy-nilly, dating from OE (wylle we nelle we), is attested in ME, too: — wolde whoso nolde (Ch. TC i 77). For the concessive imperative see p. 477.

Concessive Periphrases. — Periphrastic equivalents of the subjunctive (e.g., *al be it that I may nat on yow ryde*, Ch CT B NP 4358) are less common in concessive clauses.

Clauses of Condition

A conditional clause is usually introduced by *if*, less frequently by *and* or *and if*, or by *but if* 'unless'. There are also clauses of condition without any introducing conjunction but with inverted word-order (*had y wyst*, etc.). The condition to be expressed may be conceived as a fact, i.e., as something real or realisable. In cases on this kind, when the principal clause has an indicative verb, OE texts usually have the indicative also in the subordinate clause of condition. But when the verb of the principal clause expresses volition (wish, exhortation, command, and the like), the conditional clause usually has the subjunctive. This usage prevails at the beginning of the ME period as well, but in the course of the 13th and 14th centuries the subjunctive becomes increasingly common in conditional clauses accompanying a principal clause in the indicative. This development is conspicuous above all in the more northern dialects, while in the more southern dialects the indicative is well preserved even as late as the 14th century. In the writings of Richard Rolle the subjunctive has almost entirely supplanted the indicative (e.g., *I may not love þe so lyghtly ... bot if þi wil be conformed enterely to Goddes wil*, 102), but in Trevisa's translations and in the *Aynbile* the indicative is still widely used. In *Piers Plowman* and in Chaucer's works the subjunctive occurs much more extensively than the indicative, the subjunctive-indicative ratio in Chaucer being roughly 3:1. The *Romaunt of the Rose* has the subjunctive in cases like *and if such cause thou have that thee Bihoveth to gon out of contree*
Subjunctive

(2711) in contrast to the reading of the original (et se tu as si grant besoigne Que esloigner il te convieigne). Examples of the subjunctive from ME works: — zif þou be ofte drunke, it fallet þe to schame (Good Wife 55); — but soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed (Ch. CT A Prol. 148). Occasionally the subjunctive and the indicative are used side by side without any marked difference in modality: — and if he bereth a spere, hoold thee on the right syde, and if he bere a sword, thanne shu ye kepe yow wisely from all swich peple (Ch. CT B Mel. 2502).

When the conditional clause contains a purely hypothetical, unreal statement, the verb is in the preterite subjunctive: — and I were a pope ... every myghty man Sholde have a wyf (Ch. CT B Mk. 3140).

If a conditional clause is subordinated to another conditional clause, the degree of subordination is occasionally brought out by using different moods: — if any lady bright Hath set hire herte on any maner wight, If he be fals, she shal his tresoun see (Ch. CT F Sq. 138-9). In the following case the subjunctive seems to be due to the requirements of rhyme: — zif tuieie men goþ to wrastinge, An eþer oþer faste þringe ... (Owl & N 796).

Non-introduced Clauses of Condition. — In non-introduced clauses of condition, with inverted word-order, the mood is naturally the subjunctive: — be ye wis as ye be fair to see, Wel in the ryng than is the ruby set (Ch. TC ii 584); — were þere a belle on here beî ... Men myȝte wite where þei went (PPI. B Prol. 165). For the conditional imperative cf. p. 477.

Conditional Periphrases. — In purely modal sense the use of auxiliaries in clauses of condition is less common. One such case is seen in zif ich schulde alwe bringe Wif oþer maide, huanne ich singe, Ich wolde wiþ þe maide holde (Owl & N 1417). Here the auxiliary implies potentiality (hesitation, doubt, etc.), as it does in and þou wile mi conseyl tro, Ful wel shal ich with þe do (Havelok 2862) and ma dame, if ye wolde have rowthe ... than wolde I telle yow (Gower CA i 182). Cf. also pp. 493 (shall) and 494 (will).
Subjunctiv

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Imperative


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**IMPERATIVE**


**General Considerations.** — Although the imperative shows obvious points of contact with the hortatory subjunctive, it is usually not impossible to distinguish between the two. The imperative expresses a request which the speaker expects to be fulfilled. It is used only in direct address, its proper domain being the second person. There is a striking functional resemblance between the imperative and the interjections. Both are functionally self-contained exclamatory expressions, both are little articulate (the singular imperative has no ending or has only -e, and the subject-pronoun is seldom expressed), and both are greatly dependent on intonation. In fact many interjections, primary and secondary, are used to express exhortations and
commands (a-ha, hay, hi, harrow, out, etc.; see pp. 621-7), and many imperatives are used as interjections (abide, come, go bet, help, look; see pp. 630-1; cf. present-day interjections like come on, go away, hear hear, say, say there, etc.)

SECOND PERSON. — As stated above, the imperative singular ends in -e or has no ending at all. The plural ends in -es in the North (e.g. louys the Lord in his halighis 'laudate dominiun in sanctis eius,' RRolle Psalter cl 1) and in -eþ in the South and the Midlands. The OE distinction between the full plural form in -aþ and the short form in -e used when a subject-pronoun follows (helpaþ and helpe ge; cf. Sievers-Brunner; § 360, 2),1 noticeable above all in the South, is observed in ME, where the plural in -eþ is practically never used before a subject-pronoun: — wute þe he is woc (Ancr. 110; cf. þed wute ge, 90); — firste gadir gee togedir darnels or cokkils and bindiþ hem togedir in knylichis (Wyclif Matt. xiii 30).

The singular and plural are now and then used without distinction, particularly in conjunction with the plural of respect: — hwon God beot þe, recem þe mid boþe honden (Ancr. 153); — telle forth youre tale, spareth for no man, And teche us yonge men of youre praktike (Ch. CT D WB 186-7); — lo hier tuo cofres on the bord: Ches which you list of bothe tuo, And witeth wel that on of tho Is with tresor so full begon ... Now ches and tak which you is lever (Gower CA v 2333-8; an exhortation addressed to several persons). In Chaucer and Gower such alternation between the singular and plural is not at all uncommon.

THIRD PERSON. — Requests in the third person are normally expressed by means of the subjunctive, inflectional or periphrastic, but occasionally the second person of the imperative seems to be used in this function: — who that otherwise troweth, Behold the people of Israel (Gower CA Prol. 551); — who that

1 For an attempt to explain the short form on the basis of speech-rhythm cf. K. Luick, E Studien LVI, 1922, 193-7.
happeth hir to finde, For charité tak in his mynde And do so that sche be begrave (Gower CA viii 1128-9).  

First Person Plural. — In OE and early ME, exhortations and commands in the first person plural are expressed by means of the inflectional subjunctive (helpe we) or of a periphrasis with ution (ute); see p. 458. From later ME on they are expressed by means of a periphrasis with let + infinitive: — now lat us stynte of Custance but a throwe And speke we of the Romayn Emperour (Ch. CT B ML 953).

Passive. — The passive imperative has been used since OE (e.g., beo geclsensed): — mid þeos two beþigurde (Ancr. 172).

Perfect Imperative. — The emphatic perfect imperative have done 'leave off' is occasionally found in later ME: — comyþ alle home and havþi don (RMannyng HS 31); — have don, and lat us wende (Ch. PF 492); — 'have do,' quod she, 'com of and speed thee faste, Lest that oure neihebores thee espie' (Ch. CT A Mil. 3728).

Expression of the Subject-Pronoun. — The expression of the subject-pronoun is relatively uncommon, and when it is done, the usual reason is emphasis, particularly when it is desirable to emphasize the person of the subject: — þo seide God to Moysen, 'Go þu und Pharaon azen' (Gen. & Ex. 3002); — and sett noght þy þar lovyng ne þar lackyng, and gyf þou never tale, if þai speke lesse gode of þe þan þai dyd (RRolle EWr. 102); — theigh þei done yvel, late þow God yworþe (PPl. B vi 228). The subject-pronoun is also used for clarity when a change of mood or number might lead to syntactical ambiguity: — I am right siker that the pot was erased. Be as

1 A peculiar case is The Thewis off Gud Women, an instruction written in the third person but obviously based on some earlier parental instruction written in the second person. In this work the imperative and the third person of the subjunctive are confused all through the poem, and both are frequently confused with the plain infinitive following modal auxiliaries.
be may, be ye nothyng amased (Ch. TG G CY 935). In early ME and in later ME poetry the pronoun may also precede the verb: — þou kepe his byddyngs ten (RRolle EWr. 53).

Periphrases. — In connection with another verb go and look tend to lose their full semantic values and to be treated as auxiliaries: — go loke what þi mene dot3 (Good Wife 133); — go bye a courser (RRose 5903); — loke ze breke no bowes þere (PPl. B v 584); — lok thou dele noght withal (Gower CA i 1225). Cf. p. 535. For the use of look in combinations like look who see below. For the use of the auxiliary do with the imperative see p. 607.

In cases like gooth bryngeth forth the vesseles (Ch. CT B Mk. 3384) and gooth walketh forth and brynge us a chalk stoon (Ch. CT G CY 1207) the editors usually take the two -th forms to be co-ordinate and separate them with a comma (gooth, bryngeth). The psychological background of the construction is perhaps somewhat more complicated than that, and there seems to be good reason to suspect that in this case goth has undergone a semantic weakening and that the other verb, carrying the main verbal function, has been given the same form as the auxiliary, obviously for clarity and emphasis. There are many parallel cases in ME (e.g., I was go walked, your ... fader ... Hath doon yow kept, he haven herd told, he sholde not escaped, etc.; cf. pp. 554, 558, 582, and 605-6).

The Type 'Look What.' — In late OE the singular imperative of locian (loc or loca) is prefixed to some pronouns and adverbs to give them generalising (indefinite) force: — loc(a) hwa 'whoever,' loc(a) hwet 'whatever,' loc(a) hwyle 'whichever, whatever,' loc(a) hweder 'whichever,' loc(a) hu 'however,' loc(a) huwer 'wherever,' loc(a) hwanne 'whenever,' etc. There have been several attempts to explain the exact function of the imperative loc(a), which is obviously exclamatory in character. The most satisfying explanation is that suggested by C. M. Lotspeich, JEGP XXXVII, 1938, 1-2, who believes that loc(a)
Imperative

has a selective meaning; he refers to such parallel cases as OE *weald hwa* 'whoever,' L *quivis* and *quilibet* 'whoever,' and later northern E *choose who* 'whoever,' *choose what* 'whatever,' *choose how* 'however,' etc., quoted in the EDD. Further parallels to the OE type *loc(a) hwa* are OHG *sih-wer* 'somebody, anybody,' *sih-welîh* 'somebody, anybody,' *sih-wanne* 'at some (any) time,' etc., attested in Tatian. Cf. Sievers-Brunner, § 345, E. Gutmacher, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* XXXIX, 1914, 17, and W. Horn (see bibliography), p. 65.

The construction seems to occur in some Chaucer passages, such as *looke who that is moost vertuous... Taak hym for the grettest gentil man* ('whoever,' CT D WB 1113) and *looke what day that endelong Britayne Ye remoewe alle the rokkes* ('whatever,' CT F Fkl. 992). The type seems also to be exemplified in *loke what hate oþer any gawle Is tached oþer tyzed þy lymmez bytwyste* (Pearl 463).

A variant construction, with *wait*, also occurs in Chaucer: — *wayte what thynge we may nat lightly have, Therafter wol we crie* (CT D WB 517).

The last known instance of the type occurs in the records of Southampton for 1663 (it is determined by the Cort that look what is due from him...; cf. A. S. Cook, *MLN* XXXI, 1916, 442).

**Concessive and Conditional Imperative.** — The imperative is often used with concessive and conditional force: — *preise him, laste him, do him scheome: al him is iliche* (Ancr. 159); — *swere this, and heere I swere oure alliance* (Ch. CT E CI. 357).

**Studies relating to the use of the Imperative**


Derocquigny, J., 'Wayte What = Whatever,' *MLR* III, 1908, 72.
Imperative

Horn, W., Sprachkörper und Sprachfunktion, Palaestra CXXXV, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1923, pp. 64-5 (the type look what).


Koch II, pp. 46-7.

Lotspeich, C. M., 'The Type OE lōca hwā, ME looke who,' JEGP XXXVII, 1938, 1-2.

Mertens, H., Der Imperativ und die imperativischen Formen: eine prinzipielle Untersuchung auf Grund von französischen Beispielen, Zürich diss. 1949.

Mätzner II, pp. 146-8.


Suter, K., Das Pronomen beim Imperativ im Alt- und Mittelenglischen, Zürich diss. 1955.

Sweet I, pp. 111-12.

Trounce, A. McI., 'Chaucer's Imperative with As,' Medium Ævum II, 1933, 68-70.

Wülfing II, pp. 72-3.
TENSE


Bibliography of general studies relating to the tenses, p. 481.

TENSES OF THE INDICATIVE. — The tenses of the indicative show that the action or state expressed by the verb belongs to the time-sphere of the past, present, or future, or that it is temporally unlimited.

The time-indication may be absolute or relative. It is absolute when the time of action is not presented in relation to the time of some other action (e.g., he went home; I know him). It is relative when the action is presented in relation to the time of some other action (e.g., he had been in Paris two days when Jack arrived; Nancy was writing when I came home).

TENSES OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE. — The usual tenses of the subjunctive are the present and the preterite, but the pluperfect is also used. The difference between the tenses of the subjunctive is one in modality, not in chronology. See p. 454.

SEQUENCE OF TENSES. — The sequence of tenses is mostly observed. This means, for example, that when the principal clause has the preterite tense, in the subordinate clause simultaneous action is expressed by the preterite and anterior action by the pluperfect: the heremyte asked him what he was (Mandev. 30); sche seyde him þat he had asked the de­striuccion of here ordre (Mandev. 98). The historical present is regarded as an equivalent of the preterite: this king unto this maide opposeth And axeth ferst what was hire name (Gower CA viii 1712).

An example where the sequence of tenses does not seem to be observed is sche wepte, and he what cause it is Hire axeth,
and sche him ansuerde That Perse is ded (Gower CA ii 548), but the possibility that is ded is a historical present is not to be excluded. Cf. pp. 485-8 below.

Relative Frequency of the Tenses. — A rough idea of the relative frequencies of the individual tenses will be obtained from the following figures based on unpublished B.A. theses by two of the present writer's students.¹ The figures are based on Mandeville's Travels (ed. Hamelius) and the Tretyse of Love, dating from c 1400 and 1491-4.

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<td><strong>Active</strong></td>
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<td>Present</td>
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The frequency of the tenses depends much on the type of literature studied and the writer's personality. A striking feature in the two works examined is the dominant position of the present and preterite and the rarity of the perfect and pluperfect, especially in the passive.

¹ Misses Seija Vanhatalo and Eila Launne.
STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE TENSES IN GENERAL

(For general studies in ME verbal syntax see p. 428.)

Brunner II, pp. 269-86.
Einenkel, Syntax, pp. 26-34.
Jespersen, Mod. E Gr. IV, pp. 1-339.
Kellner, pp. 228-34.
Mätzner II, pp. 72-116.
Poutsma II, pp. 203-84.
— Mood and Tense of the English Verb, Groningen 1922.
Robertson, W. A., Tempus und Modus in der altenglischen Chronik, Marburg diss. 1906.
Wülfing II, pp. 1-250.

PRESENT TENSE


Form. — The short forms found in the 1st and 2nd persons plural when a subject-pronoun follows the verb (dreze we, have ze, Gen. & Ex. 2208, 2315; cf. OE helpe we, helpe ze) become indistinguishable as the conjugational endings are lost. Cf. p. 474.

In northern ME and Middle Scots the conjugation of the verb in the present indicative depends on the nature and position of the subject. If the subject is a personal pronoun immediately preceding or following the verb, the ending is -is (-s) in the 2nd and 3rd persons singular; in the other persons, singular
and plural, there is no ending. Otherwise (i.e., when the personal subject-pronoun is separated from the verb by an intervening word or several words, or when the subject is some other pronoun or a noun) the verb ends in -is (-s) in all persons, singular and plural. The verb to be, when immediately preceded or followed by a personal subject-pronoun, is conjugated I am, thou ert, he es (is), we, ze, thae er (ar); otherwise it is es (is) in all persons. Examples: — þan wary þai þair frendis all And puttis þame out of Goddis grace (Thewis 304-5, MS J); — metis and drynkis delicious Drawis to lichery, men sayis þus (Thewis 79-80, MS J); — blisful þat wonys in þi hous ('beati qui habitant in domo tua,' R Rolle Psalter lxxxiii 5); — chaste thaim quhen thai do mys, Fore-wantone, thowles, rakles is (Thewis 223-4, MS C); — þair blis þat þar wonand es (Cursor 25545, Cotton MS).

The exceptions to this rule are mostly due to the requirements of the metre or to southern influence.

**Time-sphere.** — As in present-day English, the time-relations indicated by the ME present tense are of two kinds —

(a) The statement is not limited in time.

(b) The statement has reference to a limited time-sphere.

**Unlimited Time.** — The present tense is used in statements which are not limited temporally, such as those of general validity: — for he is wod þat soweþ his sed þar never gras ne springþ ne bled (Owl & N 1041). Hence its popularity in proverbs and proverbial phrases: — 'salt saveþ catel,' seggen þis wyves (PPL B xv 421); — god tif wel winneth (Good Wife 32).

The present tense is used of actions recurring habitually, regularly, or frequently ('consuetudinal present'): — ac þu singest alle longe niȝt From eve fort hit is dai liȝt, And evere seist þin o song (Owl & N 331-3); — þe lorde luftych aloft lepez ful often (Gaw. & GK 981).

**Present Time.** — The present tense is used to describe actions taking place at the moment of speaking: — therof biseche ich you now leve (Havelok 1626); — she seyde 'allas,
FUTURE TIME. — In OE the use of the periphrastic future with *sculan* and *willan* is still rare, and the present tense is normally used to indicate future activity. As the periphrastic future becomes common in the course of ME, the present tense is used less and less with reference to the future, except in certain subordinate clauses (see below).

It remains in use, however, if the futurity is implied by the context, e.g., through the presence of a temporal adverb: — *although it be sore to suffre, þere cometh swete after* (PPl. B xi 250). The present tense may also be used if the futurity is clear from an accompanying subordinate clause: — *she is assoiled as sone as hirself likeþ* (PPl. B iii 143); — *I þe telle trwly, quen I þe tape have . . . smartly I þe teche Of my hous* (Gaw. & GK 407). The present tense is found in threats, promises, and statements where the event in question is regarded as being certain to take or not to take place; — *þe dom sceal sone beon idon, ni lest he nawiht lange* (Poema Mor. 167); — *ne brecþ nevre eft Crist helle dure* (Poema Mor. 180); — 'nay, olde cherl, by God, thou shalt nat so,' Seyde this oother hasardour anon, 'Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint John!' (Ch. CT C Pard. 752); — *ac we preye for gou, Pieres, and for goure plow bothe* (PPl. B vi 127); — *þat is ones in helle, out cometh it nevere* (PPl. B xviii 148). The present tense also occurs in questions whose contents have reference to future time: — *which trowestow of þo two . . . is in moste drede?* (PPl. B xii 165).

The present tense is sometimes used emphatically, to make an imagined future action more vivid: — *eche freke for his fare fals wol me hold, And þe greves for gremþe ginneþ on me werre, And eche weizh schal wite þat þe wrong is myne* (WPal. 2079); — *he telles me those traytours arn schrewes: I com wyth
The present tense, indicative and subjunctive, is often found in subordinate clauses with implied futurity. Clauses of time: — ar we to unker dome Fare, ich wille speke toward þe (Owl & N 522); — he shal rest in my stokkes as longe as he lyveth (PPl. B iv 108); — whiles fortune is þi frende, þeres wil þe lovye (PPl. B xi 54); — as I shal you seye, To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye (Ch. CT A Prol. 780); — and fare wel, dere cosin, til we mete (Ch. CT B Sh. 1554). Clauses of condition: — yef he regne thusgate longe (Havelok 2586). Clauses of purpose: — lest that oure neighebores thee espie (Ch. CT A Mil. 3729). Clauses of result: — he wil greve us alle, Cracche us or clowe us ... that us lotheth þe lyf (PPl. B Prol. 155). Clauses of concession: — þowgh e I deye to-daye, my dettes ar quitte (PPl. B vi 100); — Clauses of manner and indirect questions: — al þis maketh me on þis meteles to þynk e ... how Dowel at þe day of dome is dignelich underfongen And passeth al þe pardoun of seynt Petres cherche (PPl. B vii 171-2); — set mole ze kenne me better by what craft it comseth (PPl. B i 137). Generalising relative clauses: — quat-so þy wylle is, we schal wyt after (Gaw. & GK 255). Clauses introduced by relative adverbs: — if þis kynge come in, mankynde wil he þe þynke and lede it þer hym lyketh (PPl. B xviii 266). In some subordinate clauses this is normal usage even today.

In subordinate clauses the present tense may also be used to indicate past action in the future: — I shal wel bryngen it aboute To come ayeyn, soone after that I go (Ch. TC iv 1276).

The bheu-root of the 'substantive verb' (i.e., to be, OE beon) is originally used to express future activity. Traces of this old future signification are seen in the use of the be-forms of the present tense for the future in early ME and to some extent even later in the period. For examples see p. 583.

Past Time. — The past is included in the use of the present
Present Tense

tense in statements which are not limited temporally, e.g., when a regular or habitual recurrence of some activity is implied (ilome þu dest me grame and seist boþe tone and schame, Owl & N 49-50). The present tense is also used when a past action leads to a lasting result (tho leyde I my reule over this foreseseide day and fond the point of my reule in the bordure upon the first degre of Aries, a litel within the degre; and thus knowe I this conclusioun, Ch. Astr. ii 1, 15).

The present tense is frequently used in introducing quotations from works written in the past. But here, again, the present tense is only seemingly used for the past, because the book remains or is imagined to remain in existence at the time of speaking or writing: — this bok ... Entitled was al thus as I shal telle: 'Tullyus of the Drem of Scipioun' ... Fyrst telleth it ... how that he meteth Massynisse (Ch. PF 36). Quotations from the Bible introduced in the present tense are common: — Cryst conseillett þus and comaundeth bothe (PPl. B xix 109).

The use of the 'historical present' to indicate past action is discussed in the following paragraph.

Historical Present. — In vivid narrative the present tense is extensively used for describing past events. This is a use customarily referred to as the 'historical present.' The historical present usually alternates with the preterite.

The historical present does not seem to occur in OE, nor in earliest ME. The few instances adduced are more or less doubtful. It does occur in Lawman A: — þe king wes on mode þar, þat wes for his monne lure. He tah hine aȝein ane þrowe And þreatþ þene castel And þat folc þerinne. Þenne he hit hefte bi-winnen þat he heom wolde quellen òþer quic al þor-brennen. He lette makien enne dic ... (641; þrettede þan castle, B). But it is possible that þreatþ is only a phonetic variant of þreated(e) through attraction to the following initial þ in þene.¹ No trace of the historical present has been found in the Ormulum, An-

¹ Such variation between d and þ is not uncommon in ME.
crene Riwle, Poema Morale, Bestiary, nor in the Katherine Group. A few instances occur in King Horn and Havelok, and it is not uncommon in Floris and Blancheflour. There is a spectacular increase in the occurrence of the historical present about the middle of the 14th century, but by the side of works which make extensive use of this syntactical and stylistic device there are others in which hardly any instances occur, like Mandeville's Travels. The historical present is very common in Chaucer and Gower. It is common also in ME alliterative poetry.

Since no certain instances of the historical present have been found in OE texts, it has been assumed that its appearance in English is due to the influence of OF literature, where this device is common. Many grammarians, however, point to the fact that the historical present is a feature of popular style in all German languages and believe that it is native in English. H. Roloff (see bibliography), p. 38, ascribes its absence in OE to the fact that the remaining OE texts do not include specimens of popular style. Various other explanations have been suggested. But even admitting that the historical present may be native in origin, it can hardly be denied that French influence (perhaps also Latin, although this is less probable) has played a considerable part in the spread of this linguistic phenomenon in ME literature. It is common in late ME narrative works written under strong French influence, and its use in these works is strikingly similar to OF usage.

The historical present occurs in vivid descriptions of actions and situations and of deep emotions. It is also used for creating suspense in anticipation of an event, such as imminent danger and the arrival of good or bad news. The result is often that the writer finds himself and his readers in the midst of the events he is describing: — off all the nyght he slepyd nopinge, But lay with many a sore sykyng, And mornye the aye more and more (Ipom. A 1060); — þe prees of þe peple was
Present Tense

wonderly strong, þei hurled þe and harayed þe so schamefully, þei spurned þe with here ðeel, os þou hadde been a dogge. I se in my soule how reufully þou gost; þi body is so blody, so rowed and so bledderyd; þi crowne is so kene, þat sytteth on þi hed; þi heere mevyth with þe wynde, clemyd with þe blood; ... þe blood ran þerewith, þat grysyth in my sy (Rolle EWr. 21); — and evere among he gan loute, And preith that sche to him come oute; And otherwhile he goth a ferr, And otherwhile he draweth nerr, And evere he fond hire in o place, He wepth, he crith, he axeth grace There as he mihte gete non; So that ayein a roche of ston, As he that knew non other red, He smot himself til he was ded (Gower CA i 2333-42); — how greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite! The deeth he feeleth thurgh his herte smyte; He wepeth, wayleth, crieth pitously; To sleen hymself he waiteth prively. He seyde, 'Alias that day that I was born!' (Ch. CT A Kn. 1219-22).

Occasionally the present tense is used for the main action as against subordinate and less important actions and other attending circumstances: — and whan she saugh hir fader in the strete, She lighte doun, and falleth hym to feete (Ch. CT B ML 1104); — in such a wise and there he wroghte That holy cherche ayein he broghte Into franchise and doth restore The Popes lost, and yaf him more (Gower CA Prol. 761).

The historical present is frequently used to introduce a series of events, a passage in a story, a tale, and the like, and to describe the situation at the beginning of a new phase in the narrative (thus Walter ... In Goddes pees lyveth ful esily At hoom, and outward grace ynogh had he, Ch. CT E Cl. 423). Chaucer often has only one verb, seldom more, in the historical present, the narrative then proceeding in the preterite (this Aleyn maketh redy al his gere, And on an hors the sak he caste anon, CT A Rv. 4016). When the narrative moves from one person to another, or from a group of persons to one individual, the transitional statement is often made in the historical present.
The present tense may also be used at the end of a series of events and the like. It often summarises or rounds up what is told in the foregoing passage, as in thus Fals and Favel sareth forth togideres (PPl. B ii 183); — but er his heer were clipped or yshave Ther was no boond with which men mygte him bynde; But now he is in prison in a cave (Ch. CT B Mk. 3263).

Verbs of saying (verba dicendi) introducing direct speech are often in the present tense: — the lady lay ever and bihelde, sho says (Yw. & Gaw. 1893). The present tense is common also in indirect speech and in clauses introducing indirect speech: — grete mirthes made þai in þat stede, And al forgetyn es now þe ded of him þat was þaire lord þre; þai say þat þis [i.e., the new lord] es worth swilk thre And þat þai lufed him mekil more þan him þat þai lufed him mekil more þan him þat lord was þar e byfore (Yw. & Gaw. 1264); — sche wepte, and he what cause it is Hire axeth, and sche him ansuere That Perse is ded (Gower CA ii 1783).

H. Roloff, pp. 27ff., and A. Graef, p. 565 (for both see bibliography), call attention to the frequent occurrence of auxiliary verbs, can, may, etc., in the historical present.

For the competition between the historical present and the periphrastic preterite with gan see p. 614.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE PRESENT TENSE

(Studies dealing with ME tenses in general are listed on p. 481.)

Graef, A., 'Die präsentischen Tempora bei Chaucer,' Anglia XII, 1889, 532-77.
Rolloff, H., Das Praesens historicum im Mittelenglischen, Giessen diss. 1921.
Steadman, J. M., 'The Origin of the Historical Present in English,' SP XIV, 1917, 1-46; also Chicago diss. 1917.
FUTURE TENSE


Bibliography, p. 496.

Periphrastic Future. — In OE the idea of futurity is normally conveyed by the present tense. Periphrases with sculan, willan, magan, and motan are also used to express futurity, usually with a strong modal colour. The development of sculan and willan into auxiliaries of the future and the numerous problems connected with this development have occupied the minds of many grammarians. Originally, of course, both verbs have independent meanings, expressing obligation and volition. Used in conjunction with other verbs they are gradually reduced to mere modal auxiliaries. Eventually the idea of futurity latent in the notions of obligation and volition becomes predominant, with the result that sculan and and willan become auxiliaries expressing pure futurity.

Although the ideas of obligation and volition are usually present when OE sculan and willan occur with an infinitive, there are a few cases where these verbs seem to occur as auxiliaries of the pure future. Pure futurity is also strongly implied in the preterites scolde and wolde in reported speech (hie ne wendon þætte æfre menn sceolden swe reccelese weorðan).

The use of the simple present tense for the future continues in ME: — although it be soure to suffre, þere cometh swe te after (PPl. B xi 250). For a discussion of this use see pp. 483-4.

At the beginning of the ME period the use of the periphrastic future with shall and will begins to gain ground, although it is often difficult to say whether these verbs are
to be interpreted as auxiliaries of pure futurity or whether obligation or volition is implied. In the majority of instances a modal implication seems to be present.

In early ME works like Lawman’s Brut, Ormulum, and Genesis and Exodus the periphrasis with shall is the usual means of indicating futurity. In all these works will is also found, but its modal character is rather pronounced, and it occurs mostly in promises, wishes, threats, and resolutions. It is not until later in the ME period that will begins to express a pure future by the side of shall. It is possible that this use begins in the South earlier than in the North. But it is not only the dialect and date that have a bearing on the occurrence of the two auxiliaries of the future in ME writings. Matters of style, individual usage, and — it seems — Latin influence must also be taken into consideration. In the Bible and other religious writings, for example, the use of shall is predominant. This has been ascribed partly to a desire to reserve will for translating Latin velle and partly to the fact that future action is frequently presented in the Bible as depending on divine will and not on the will of the person or thing represented in the subject-noun or pronoun.

The proper region of will seems to be popular style. According to F. Blackburn (see bibliography), pp. 49f., it occurs in 14th-century popular poems almost as frequently as shall, while the latter is roughly four times as common in more formal narrative. Blackburn gives the following figures for the beginning of Chaucer’s CT (Prologue and Knight’s Tale) —

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>shall</th>
<th>will</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second »</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third »</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The modal sense of the auxiliary is clearly discernible in many of these cases. As a general observation it may be said that until the 17th century, when conventional rules are
introduced to govern the use of *shall* and *will*, the choice of the auxiliary depends largely on its modal implication.

The variability of usage is strikingly illustrated by the different ways in which the French future is rendered in three 14th- and 15th-century translations of the OF *Somme des Vices et des Vertues* by Friar Lorens of Orléans. Where the original reads, for example, dormir m'estuet; li moustiers n'est pas lievres, il m'atendra bien, the Ayenbite uses the present tense for atendra (me behove þ to slepe; þe cherche nys non hare, hy abyt me wel), the Book of Vices and Virtues uses will (I mote slepe, for þe chirche is noon hare; he wole abide me wel), and Caxton's *Ryall Book* has shall (the chirche is none hare he wyl not flee awaye... It shal wel abyde and tary for me).\(^1\)

Somewhat more detailed discussions of *shall* and *will* and of other auxiliaries of the future will be given in the following.\(^2\)

'SHALL.' — As mentioned above, OE *sculan* expresses obligation or constraint.\(^3\) This provides a natural starting-point for the development of this verb into an auxiliary of the future tense because it implies that the action is going to take place independently of the will of the subject. As an auxiliary of pure futurity OE *sculan* is recorded in the first person.

*Shall* is often used in ME in all the three persons to indicate that an event is ordained to take place in accordance with divine will or fate: — *rightful folk shul gon, after they dye, To hevene* (Ch. PF 55). This provides a background for its use in

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\(^{1}\) The quotations are from Mossé's *Handbook*, p. 224.

\(^{2}\) In other Germanic languages, too, *shall* (OFris. *skil*, Sw. *skall*, G *sollen*, etc.) and *will* are often used as auxiliaries of the future. Cf. Behaghel, *Syntax* II, pp. 256-60. Jespersen's suggestion (*Growth*, § 80) that this use of *shall* and *will* in English is due to Scandinavian influence is difficult to substantiate; cf. M. S. Kirch, *PMLA* LXXIV, 1959, 503-10 (see p. 657 below).

\(^{3}\) The sense of obligation is preserved down to early Mod. E. Chaucer uses *shall* as an independent transitive verb in the sense 'to owe allegiance, etc.:' — *by the faith I shal Priam of Troie* (TC iii 791); — *I shal to God and yow* (TC iii 1649).
predictions and prophesies ('prophetic shall'): — leveth it wel, 3e bisshopes, þe lordesship of londes for evere shal 3e lese (PPl. B xv 516); — as youre hap is, shul ye wynne or lese (Ch. PF 402). From this use there is only a short way to the expression of pure futurity: — I sal noght dred thousand of folk umgifand me ('non timebo,' RRolle Psalter iii 6).

The original sense of obligation, however, is often prominent: — a wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde But al honour (Ch. CT B Sh. 1357).

Shall may indicate that an action is bound to take place in accordance with an agreement: — the Duk of Suffolk and both the Duchessys schal com to Claxton thys day, as I am informyd, and thys next weke he schal be at Cossey (Paston II 207 [1465]). Shall is common in commands and instructions in the second and third persons: — after hym by ordre shul ye chese (Ch. PF 400); — ech of you . . . In this viage shal telle tales tweye (Ch. CT A Prol. 792). Shall occurs in all persons in questions to which the expected answer is a command or advice: — quat schal I tell yow, less and mare, Bot Jhesu Crist hir barn sco bar (Cursor 11205, Cotton MS).

Shall is often found in promises, also in the first person: — he says þat he lufes þam þat lufes hym and þai þat arely wakes til hym sal fynde hym (RRolle EWr. 76; cf. 'qui mane vigilant ad me invenient me,' Prov. viii 17); — I shal nat faille surely of my day (Ch. CT B Sh. 1465). A kind of promise is also implied in gooth now and beeth as trewe as I shal be (Ch. CT B Sh. 1397).

In statements following conditional clauses (including imperatives serving as equivalents of conditional clauses) and generalising relative clauses shall indicates in all persons that the action will take place on the condition expressed in the subordinate statement: — this shal he have, Yf I wiste where were hys cave, Yf he kan make me slepe sone (Ch. BD 261); — loke a littel on þe launde . . . And þou schal se in þat slade þe self chapel (Gaw. & GK 2146).
By the side of the present tense (see p. 484) shall may express futurity in conditional clauses (žef eni mon schal rem abide, al ich hit wot ar hit itide, Owl & N 1215), in relative clauses (whoso shal telle a tale after a man, He moot reheerce as ny as evere he kan, Ch. CT A Prol. 731), and in temporal clauses, particularly after when and till (and it sal ben þe laste tid Quan al mankinde . . . Sal ben fro dede to live broþf, Gen. & Ex. 263; — til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne, Ch. CT A Kn. 1134). There is usually an implication of modality (potentiality). Cf. p. 470.

In final, consecutive, and relative clauses shall may express the result of an action: — þi song mai bo so longe genge þat þu shalt wippen on a sprenge (Owl & N 1066).

'WILL.' — As pointed out above (p. 490), will occurs as an auxiliary of the future tense above all in popular style, which suggests that this use is popular in origin and possibly to be traced back to everyday colloquial speech. The primary meaning of this verb, of course, is that of volition. The idea of volition is often prominent when will is used as an auxiliary of the future, the implication being that the action is going to take place in accordance with the will or plan of the person in question. It is not surprising, therefore, that shall, indicating an action which is going to take place independently of the will of the person or thing in question, should develop into an auxiliary of pure futurity earlier than will.

In the 2nd and 3rd persons OE willan is occasionally found as an auxiliary of the pure future, but it usually has a strong implication of modality (volition).

In ME will is used in all three persons, but preferably in the first. It becomes more common towards the end of the period, and there is also a marked increase in its use in the second and third persons. For figures illustrating Chaucer's use see p. 490 above. In the majority of cases, will retains its marked volitional colouring.

In accordance with its original independent meaning will is used to express a future action dependent on the will of the
person in question. It is common in promises: — *fir and water y wile yow fete* (Havelok 912); — *I wol nat faille yow my thankes* (Ch. CT B Sh. 1387).

In subordinate clauses — where it is not uncommon even in the second and third persons — *will* occurs especially in conjunction with commands, promises, expressions of hope and expectation, and the like: — *I shal sende zow myselve saynt Michel myn archangel . . . if ze wil þus worche* (PPl. B vii 35); — *what tyme þu will clepe to me þi disese, ich am redy to help þe* (Worc. Sermons 24); — *I wil wage for wronge he wil do so namore* (PPl. B iv 97); — *oure manciple, I hope he wil be deed* (Ch. CT A Rv. 2029); — *ze schul loft up or hetis hollich to God and with a mike spirit prey him . . . þat he wille of his gret grace clepe zow in his calling* (Worc. Sermons 4). Cf. p. 470.

*Will* is also found in principal clauses (apodoses) accompanying conditional clauses: — *3if he isih þ þat þu nart are, He wile of bore worchen bare* (Owl & N 408); — *if we grucche of his gomen, he wil greve us alle* (PPl. B Prol. 153).

In statements implying doubt — usually in conjunction with adverbs like *perhaps* and *peradventure* — *will* is used as an auxiliary of the future: — *bot peraunter þou will say . . .* (RRolle EWr. 80); — *another day he wole, peradventure, Reclayme thee and brynge thee to lure; I meene, he speke wole of smale thynges . . .* (Ch. CT H Mcp. 71-3).

Occasionally *will* is found in expressions of pure futurity, without any modal implication: — *and I, boke, wil be bren, but Jhesus rise to lyve* (PPl. B xviii 252); — *what man that hath freendes thurgh Fortune, Mishap wol maken hem enemys, I gesse* (Ch. CT B Mk. 3435). According to G. Fridén (see bibliography on p. 481), p. 189, *will*, when indicating pure futurity, is less common and appears later in the second person than in the third. The earliest instances quoted by Fridén for the second person date from the time of Shakespeare.

'MAY,' 'MUN (MON)' AND 'MOTE.' — Occasionally *may, mun (mon)*, and *mote* are used as auxiliaries of the future tense.
May and mote do not occur without modal colour (e.g., whoso shal telle a tale after a man, He moot rehearse as ny as evere he kan, Ch. CT A Prol. 731), while in mun (mon; ON munu) which occurs in the North and the Midlands, modality may be weak or altogether absent: — þu wast wel þatt ne mune itt nohht Ben made þurhh þatt kinde þatt ice her i þiss middellærd Toc i þin hallȝhe wambe (Orm. 14356); — I wene that we deye mone For hunger (Havelok 840); — if þou be in prayers and meditacions al þe day, I wate wele þat þou mon wax gretelie in the lufe of Jhesu (RRolle EWr. 104).

‘Wurthe.’ — Wurthe (OE weorðan) often conveys a strong implication of futurity: — ich wot tonizt ich worþe ded (Fox & Wolf 191); — and worstow dryven oute as dew and þe dore closed (PPl. B v 622). In ar þis day þre dayes . . . he worth fettred, þat jeloune, Þast with cheynes, and nevre eft greve grome (PPl. B xvii 109) wurthe is treated as an equivalent of a future auxiliary, left unexpressed before greve. For discussions of wurthe as an auxiliary of the passive voice and in other functions, and its disappearance, see pp. 438-40 and 615-9.

Near Future. — The use of the construction to be going to, which turns up in late ME, for an action which will take place in the near future is discussed on p. 592. A number of other constructions are also used to express near futurity in ME texts, such as þe Brutons were upe þe pointe to fle (RGlouc. 1457), Jacob and his sonis ware wid hunger in point to forfare (Cursor 4760, Gött. MS), and myn herte which that is o poyn to breste (Ch. TC iv 1638). As an expression of futurity the phrase to be about is attested in later ME; cf. p. 354. For other expressions of the near future cf. F. Mossé, Histoire II (see bibliography), pp. 161-3.

Future Perfect. — Shall and will are occasionally used to form the future perfect, which expresses the completion of an action before a certain point of time in the future, but the usual tense form occurring in this function is the perfect (e.g., hwane þu havest a niht igrad, Men beoþ of þe sore ojdrad, Owl & N 1149).
Future in the Past. — Should and would, usually with a modal implication, are used for the future within the time-sphere of the past: — Merlin ... bode ... Dat an Arþur sculde zete cum Anglen to fulste (Lawman A 28650); — a god schup he hurede, þat him scholde londe In westene londe (Horn 753); — zil hem semede þis was not inow, but tei wente and leit to cros on His bak þat a schulde be henged on (Worc. Sermons 68).

Future of Auxiliaries. — From late OE until early Mod. E may (mowe) may have a periphrastic future: — thou schalt mowe senden hire a lettre (Gower CA iv 38); — that ye counseille me how I shall may avenge me (Caxton Aymon 181).

Studies relating to the use of the future tense

(Studies dealing with ME tenses in general are listed on p. 481. For studies dealing with shall and will and other relevant auxiliaries see also pp. 471-3.)

Aronstein, Ph., 'Shall und will zum Ausdruck der Idealität im Englischen,' Anglia XLI, 1917, 10-93 and 301-92.
Gräf, A., Das Futurum und die Entwicklung von 'shal' und 'wil' zu futurischen Tempusbildnern in Chaucer, Flensburg Programme 1893.
Lerch, E., 'Zum Futurgebrauch im Englischen,' NM XLIII, 1942, 190-1 (a section in an article entitled 'Das Futurum des zu Erwartenden im Französischen und im Deutschen,' pp. 161-91. Comments upon Marchand; see below).
Marchand, H., 'Children Will Play,' NM XXXIX, 1938, 166-85.
Preterite Tense

PRETERITE TENSE


* Bibliography*, p. 509.

Originally the preterite tense is used in describing events which take place at any stage of the past. The range of its occurrence becomes more limited as the new compound tenses, the perfect and pluperfect, gain ground, although the functional distinctions between the three tenses are not so marked in ME as they are today. A frequency count based on two late ME texts (p. 480) suggests that even at the end of the period the preterite remains numerically by far the dominant tense of past time. It has kept this position down to the present day.

**Past Time Unconnected with the Time of Speaking.** — In ME, as in the present-day, the preterite is normally used in describing an action which is completed or a state which ends in the past and has no connection with the moment of speaking:

— *ich was in one sumere dale In one suþe dízele hale, Iherde ich holde grete tale An hule and one niþtingale* (Owl & N 1); — *he [the pilgrim] bare a burdoun ybounde with A brode liste... A bolle and a bagge he bare by his syde; an hundreth of ampulles on his hatt seten* (PPl. B v 524); — *for to spoken of hire conscience, She was so charitable and so pitous, She wolde wepe...* (Ch. CT A Prol. 143). Frequently the time of action is further defined by an adverb or adverbial phrase, like *once, whilom, yesterday, in his time*, etc.: — *a markys whilom lord was of that lond* (Ch. CT E Cl. 64); — *þou hatȝ forseten 3ederly þat 3isterday I tazte* (Gaw. & GK 1485).

The preterite often represents an action as going on at a given moment in the past: — *I seȝ byzonde þat myry mere A crystal cliffe ful relusaunt...* At the fote þerof þer sete a faunt (Pearl 32 — Mustanoja
Tense

161). It is also used in describing actions recurring habitually, regularly, or frequently in the past: — *oft he herbered in house and ofte alþeroute* (Gaw. & Gk 2481).

In relating a succession of past events, the preterite is often made to alternate with the historical present (see pp. 485-8 above).

**Periphrasis with 'gin.'** — In vivid, forceful description of past events a periphrastic preterite with *gan* (the preterite of *gin*) competes in popularity with the historical present. It is common in ME narrative works: — *Horn . . . ferde to wude for to schele*. A knave he *gan imete* (Horn 940); — he . . . bifor þe rode *gan falle* (Havelok 1357); — his cher *ful oft con chaunge þat chapel er he myȝt sene* (Gaw. & GK 711). For a discussion of this type of periphrastic preterite see pp. 610-15.

**Past Time Connected with the Time of Speaking.** — Side by side with the perfect tense the preterite occurs in statements which have a certain connection with the moment of speaking, the connection being implied by the context, often through an adverb indicating time not yet completed: — *here is wayth fayrest þat I se þis seven þere in sesoun of wynter* (Gaw. & GK 1381). Verbs referring to the creation of the world and other works of God are often in the preterite, although the time-sphere is rather that of the perfect: — *he makede fisces in þe se* (Poema Mor. 83); — *he is fader of feith, fourmed zow alle . . . And zaf zow fyve wittis* (PPl. B i 14-15).

**Unlimited Time.** — The preterite is occasionally found in statements valid for all times, although seemingly representing a past action or state. It occurs in statements expressing a general truth, especially in proverbs: — *it nys but selde yseyn . . . þat God rewarded double reste to any riche wyne* (PPl. B xiv 155).

'Ever' and 'Never.' — The preterite is the prevailing tense of the past used in conjunction with the adverbs *ever* and *never*: — *þi lufe es svettest of al þat ever war* (RRolle EWri. 107); — *went nevere wy in þis worlde þorw þat wilderness þat he ne was*
Auxiliaries of the Perfect and Pluperfect

robbed (PPl. B xvii 98); — better syngeris herde I nevere noone (Spec. Miser. 26). The perfect tense is also used, but less frequently: — that gentil Palamoun, youre owene knyght, That serveth yow with wille, herle, and myght, And ever hath doon syn ye hym knewe (Ch. CT A Kn. 3079).

Preterite Subjunctive. — The preterite subjunctive expresses a modal, not a chronological relation. The various uses of the preterite subjunctive are discussed in the chapter dealing with the subjunctive mood, pp. 451-73.

AUXILIARIES OF THE PERFECT AND PLUPERFECT


'Have' and 'Be.' — In OE, where the preterite tense carries out the functions of the modern preterite, perfect, and pluperfect, past participles frequently occur as predicate adjectives after wesan/beon and habban. In the course of time these predicative uses of the participle develop into new compound tenses indicating past action or state, with a certain bearing on the moment of speaking or on another event or state in the past. This is how the English perfect and pluperfect tenses have come into being.

G. Hoffmann (see bibliography,) pp. 39ff., thinks that it is not until early ME that the participial constructions with be and have can be regarded as true perfects and pluperfects expressing action rather than a state resulting from an action. This view has not been universally accepted, however, and there are many who believe that in numerous OE instances the combinations of be and have with past participles are real perfects and pluperfects.
The distinction made in OE between *wesan/beon* and *habban* is natural. *Wesan/beon* occurs with intransitive verbs. Originally this auxiliary is used only with perfective, 'mutative' in-transitives (e.g., *nu is se día cumen*, Beow. 2646; cf. also *hie beop* *adruncene* and *se halga fæder wæs inn agan*). *Habban* is originally used only with perfective transitive verbs, the object of *habban* being expressed (*hie hæfdon hiera cyning aworpenne; — hine hæfe Offa and Beorhtric afluem*). It then comes to be used with verbs which take a genitival, datival, or prepositional object, and is occasionally found also with true intransitive verbs (*we to symble geseten hæfdon*), which suggests that even in OE it is developing into a kind of general auxiliary of the perfect and pluperfect tenses.

There is another essential difference in use between *wesan/beon* and *habban*. Although the combination of *habban* with a past participle originally expresses a state (e.g., *he hæfde þa stafas mid him awritene*), it soon begins to lose this connotation and comes to indicate the effect or result of an action (*he hæfde hine monegum wundum gewundodne*). *Wesan/beon* with a past participle is originally also used to indicate a state and then comes to indicate the effect or result of an action (i.e., it becomes a true auxiliary of the perfect and pluperfect). Yet unlike *habban* it never loses its capacity to express a state (cf. present-day *we could not go in because the door was closed*).

By early ME practically all transitive verbs use *have* for the formation of their perfect and pluperfect tenses. Strikingly

1 The participle occurring with *wesan/beon* is a predicate nominative.
2 A mutative verb is a verb indicating a transition from one place or condition to another (*to go, come, return, become, grow, fade, disappear*, etc.). The term 'mutative' seems preferable in this connection to 'perfective' because it conveys the idea of transition more graphically.
3 The participle occurring with *habban* is thus a predicate accusative. While the past participles of intransitive verbs are active in meaning, those of transitive verbs are passive.
enough, occasional instances are recorded all through the period where the compound tenses of transitive verbs are formed by means of be: — he was iflowe men; ze beoþ ivlowen þene world (Ancre. 68 and 75; but cf. ze habbeþ þene world ivlowen, Ancre. 74); — for þou art passed thy paynes alle (Tundale 1464). Such instances are best explained as constructions according to sense. The intransitive verbs are also construed with have (longe we habben lein on ure fule synnes, Trin. Hom. 7; — hit is ney vif zere þat we abbeþ ylived in such vice, RGlouc. 4025), except the mutatives, which are construed with be (joueles waren þerinne cumen, Gen. & Ex. 573). To be is also recorded in some ME instances where an otherwise imperfective intransitive verb is used with a perfective (mutative) meaning (þa he weoren alle iseten, Lawman A 18532; — he weren alle dune set, Havelok 2291; — duc Theseus was at a wyndow set, Ch. CT A Kn. 2528); but these instances are not clear because it has been assumed that they are passives due to OF models (see pp. 154-5).

To be has always formed its perfect and pluperfect tenses by means of have: — for sefenn winnterr haffde he been in Egypte (Orm. 8399).

Throughout the ME period a steady increase is noticeable in the use of have as an auxiliary of the perfect and pluperfect tenses. This is illustrated, for example, by the difference between the two MSS of Lawman’s Brut: the auxiliary be of the A-text is frequently represented by have in the B-text. It is perhaps not without significance that while be is becoming an auxiliary par excellence of the passive voice, it is losing ground as an auxiliary of the perfect and pluperfect tenses. Yet the majority of mutative intransitives continue to form these tenses by means of be even in late ME and early Mod. E: — he was comen to bryng hir to heven (RRolle EWr. 91); — at nyght was come into that hostelrye Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye (Ch. CT A Prol. 23); — thys day is the messenger gon to my Lady of Suffolk with my Lord letter (Paston Suppl. 159 [1487-1502]); — thogh it ones be befalle (Gower CA i 962); —
min herte is grown into ston (Gower CA i 553). But if these verbs occur with a durative meaning, have is more common (and while I had a while goon, RRose 135); this is the case also when the verb expresses recurring (repeated) action (þis þretty winter . . . hath he gone and preched, PPl. B xviii 293; — mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft fen in any oþer, Gaw. & GK 23; cf. also PPl. B Prol. 65) and in statements containing adverbs of time, place, manner, etc. (ye han entred into myn hous by violence, Ch. CT B Mel. 3001; — er we hadde ridden fully fyve mile . . . us gan atake A man, Ch. CT G CY 555). If the auxiliary be occurs in statements of this kind, it is usually because a state rather than an action is expressed. Thus al wa es fra me went (RRolle EWr. 72) indicates absence and arlow come hider to han fame? (Ch. HF 1872) presence.

For instances like we been acorded, thei ben assented, he is obedied, he is remembered, etc., see pp. 550-1.

HYPOTHETICAL STATEMENTS. — Unreality seems to provide a favourable ground for the use of have as a temporal auxiliary. In ME, as in the earlier stages of other Germanic languages, have is clearly preferred in hypothetical statements, even with mutative intransitive verbs: — I wolde that day that youre Arveragus Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius, Hadde went ther never I sholde have come agayn (Ch. CT F Fkl. 971). Be is also used, but less frequently: — sore hure dradde þat Horn isterve were (Horn 1166); — God wold I were aryved in the port Of deth (Ch. TC i 526). Have is commoner than be also in perfect infinitives after auxiliary and non-auxiliary verbs: — nevere I sholde have come agayn (Ch. CT F Fkl. 971); — Gamelyn com þerto for to have comen in (Gamelyn 291). Cf. pp. 516-19.

REFLEXIVE VERBS. — In late ME the auxiliary be is occasionally used to form the perfect and pluperfect tenses of reflexive verbs: — sum . . . wer Withdrawin thaim in full gret hy (Barbour xiii 101); — and haid till erd gane fullyly, Ne war he hynt him by his sted (Barbour ii 424). This usage may be due to French influence, as suggested by G. E. Penning,
A History of the Reflective Pronouns in the English Language, Leipzig diss. 1875, p. 64, and later by Einenkel, Syntax, p. 138; cf. wer withdrawin thaim with s'étaient retirés. In instances like and syne is went him to the se (Barbour xvi 688) and thise riotoures thre ... Were set hem in a taverne for to drynke (Ch. CT C Pard. 663) the pronouns him and hem might be interpreted as reflexive datives, but the possibility that the constructions are calques on French expressions of the type ils s'étaient assis is by no means excluded. Cf. pp. 154-5.

Non-expression of the Participle. — The auxiliary have may stand alone, without the participle, when the meaning is clear from the context: — o Love, to whom I have and shal Ben humble subgit (Ch. TC ii 827); — alle the folk that han or ben on lyve Ne konne wel the blisse of love discryve (Ch. TC ii 888). For a parallel phenomenon, non-expression of the infinitive after an auxiliary (e.g., men dreme of thyng that nevere was ne shal, Ch. CT B NP 4284), see p. 543. It is worth noticing that all the instances quoted occur in poetry.

PERFECT TENSE

Main principles of use, p. 503. — Historical perfect, p. 506. — Ever and never, see p. 498. — Passive, see p. 440. — Perfect imperative, see p. 475. — Ing-perfect, see p. 590. — Perfect infinitive, see p. 516.

Bibliography, p. 509.

Main Principles of Use. — The formal and functional development of the perfect and pluperfect is traced briefly in the preceding chapter ('Auxiliaries of the Perfect and Pluperfect').

The proper function of the perfect tense is to bring a past activity into connection with the moment of speaking, by showing that the activity or a part of it was completed before
that moment. As stated in the preceding chapter, the preterite is commonly used for this purpose in OE, although the perfect and pluperfect are beginning to appear in a more or less rudimentary form. In their proper functions the compound tenses become increasingly frequent in the course of the ME period. The development is illustrated, for example, in the manuscript tradition of Lawman's *Brut*. Many of the preterites of the *A*-text have been replaced by perfects in *B*. In later ME the perfect is the usual tense in descriptions of past actions and states connected with the moment of speaking. This connection may be implied by the context (*he haveth me to sorwe brouht*, Havelok 1372) or indicated by adverbs like *now* and *today* (*nou ich am up to that elde cumen*, Havelok 1435) or by an adverbial phrase (*I have been his folwar al þis ffty wynbre*, PPl. B v 549).

Psychologically the use of the perfect for this purpose is natural. This compound tense form is longer and therefore more emphatic than the simple preterite, which consists of only one word. A more emphatic verb form is desirable for indicating the completion of an action which continues up to the moment of speaking than for expressing an action which clearly belongs to the past.

In ME and early Mod. E the functional distinction between the preterite and the compound tenses of the past is not, however, nearly so clear-cut as it is today, and the perfect, for example, may occur in conjunction with adverbs of past time: — *and homward he shal tellen othere two [tales], Of adventures that whilom han bifalle* (Ch. CT A Prol. 795). For its use as a 'historical perfect,' to describe events belonging entirely to the past, see below.

The ME perfect tense is also used in describing repeated actions: — *patriarkes and prophetes han preched herof often* (PPl. B xviii 138).

In indefinite, generalising relative clauses the perfect tense may be used without reference to any particular time-sphere,
its function being merely to indicate that the action is anterior to that of the main clause: — þa þe habbeþ idon . . . to hevenriche schule faren forþ (Poema Mor. 175). In certain subordinate clauses — mainly temporal and conditional — the perfect has always been used of a future action or state which will be past at a certain time in the future: — hwane þu havest a niht igrad, Men beþ of þe sore ofdrad (Owl & N 1149); — ȝef þu isihst [him] er he beo icume, His strengþe is him wel neh binume (Owl & N 1225).

Figures based on two late ME literary texts (see p. 480) suggest that even at the end of the period the general frequency of the perfect is many times smaller than that of the preterite. The notion obtained from these figures is perhaps not quite accurate, for there is reason to assume that the frequency of the perfect is somewhat higher in everyday speech, where the speaker naturally tends to look at events from the angle of the moment of speaking.

However this may be, the perfect has never enjoyed the position in English which it has in some other European languages. The starting point of its use in all these languages is the same, the completion of an action (or part of the action) before the moment of speaking, but while in English this function becomes crystallised as practically the sole domain of the perfect of the finite verb, in French and German, for example, the perfect becomes the general tense of past time, carrying out the functions of both the perfect and the preterite. For general discussions of this development see particularly the two articles by A. J. F. Zieglschmid mentioned on p. 509 and A. Meillet, 'Sur la disparition des formes simples du prétérit,' a chapter in the author's *Linguistique historique et linguistique générale* I, Paris 1921, pp. 149-58.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Meillet ascribes the transition to a linguistic economy: while the simple preterite form varies, a compound tense has the same form of the main verb in all persons. The Indo-European languages, he believes, have an inherent tendency to pass from variable to
HISTORICAL PERFECT. — Like the historical present (see pp. 485-8), the perfect is used in narrative style to give emphasis and additional vividness to certain events or situations, in contexts where one would expect to find the preterite or the pluperfect. In this function the perfect tense, first recorded in ME, is less common than the historical present. Evidence from Chaucer (Graef, p. 381; see bibliography) and Gower suggests that it is a feature of literary rather than popular style, and probably ascribable — in part at least — to French influence.

The cases where the historical perfect occurs are strikingly parallel to those where the historical present is used. The function of the perfect is to mark out an event in a context of objective description: — this roial markys, richely arrayed, Lordes and ladyes in his compaignie . . . Unto the village . . . the righte wey han holde (Ch. CT E Cl. 273). It may be used to introduce and end up a series of events: — the nexte houre of Mars folwynge this, Arcite unto the temple walked is Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrifise (Ch. CT A Kn. 2368). The historical perfect may be used to call attention to the main line of action, while the accompanying circumstances are expressed in the preterite: — what sholde I make a lenger tale of this? Unto his brotheres bed he comen is, And swich confort he yaf hym for to gon To Orliens that he up stirte anon, And on his wey forthward thanne is he fare In hope for to been lissed of his care (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1166-9).

When the writer wishes to awaken in the reader a feeling of concern or strong emotion, the perfect tense is used to emphasize the importance, dreadfulness, pathetic quality, etc., fixed form (passer du mot-forme variable au mot fixé). But there must have been other reasons, too, such as the general tendency towards a more emphatic form of expression. K. B. Lindgren, Über den oberdeutschen Präritumschwund, AASF, B 112,1, Helsinki 1957, ascribes the development in German to the general popular tendency to look at events from the point of view of the moment of speaking.
of the event or situation: — and Custance han they take anon, foot-hoot, And in a ship al steerelees, God woot, They han hir set (Ch. CT B ML 438-40).

The historical perfect occurs mostly in statements containing an adverb of time, manner, etc., connected with the action or situation. It is also found in subordinate clauses of varying types. It is particularly frequent in comparative clauses, in temporal clauses beginning with when and till, and also in consecutive and relative clauses: — and thus when he his God hath served, He tok, as he wel hath deserved, The diademe and was coroned (Gower CA Prol. 763-4); — to knyhtes whiche him hadde served, And after that thei have deserved, Yaf the conquestes that he wan (Gower CA Prol. 708); — for which this Januarie, of whom I tolde, Considered hath, inwith his dayes olde The lusty lif (Ch. CT E Mch. 1394); — ther was whilom a lorde’s sone, Which of his pride a nyce wone Hath caught, that worthi to his liche, To sechen al the worldes riche, Ther was no womman for to love (Gower CA i 2278).

In many cases it is difficult to account for the use of the historical perfect, and there is reason to suspect that the use of the perfect instead of the preterite is often due simply to metrical considerations.

PLUPERFECT TENSE


Indicative. — The pluperfect tense expresses the same relation to a point of time in the past as the perfect does to the present time.

It is used to mark an action (or part of an action) as completed before another past event took place: — he let forbonne þene cniht þat hadde idon so muchel unriht (Owl & N 1093);
— and when he had herd Arcites tale... He stirte hym up (Ch. CT A Knt. 1577); — and þat was the .iii. day after þat þei hadden seyn the sterre whan þei metten (Mandev. 46).

Occasionally, however, the pluperfect may stand in relation to an action in the present tense: — heo deþ þat heo nadde ear ifoht (Owl & N 1560).

SUBJUNCTIVE. — Like the preterite subjunctive, the pluperfect is used in hypothetical statements to indicate that the action or state simultaneous with the main action is imaginary, impossible, or improbable. While the preterite has reference to the present or future time, the pluperfect has reference to the time-sphere of the past. Cf. p. 454. In this function the pluperfect occurs, for example, in comparative clauses (suce a sorge at þat nyzt þay sette on his hede As alle þe clamberande clyffes hade clatered on hepes, Gaw. & GK 1721) and in conditional clauses (haddestow suffred... slepyng þo þow were, þow sholdest have knowen þat..., PPl. B xi 403; — had y wyst! a common ME exclamation of regret).

A peculiarity of later ME is the use of the pluperfect subjunctive to express unrealised or imaginary activity after the preterites of verbs expressing wish, will, purpose (especially after would), expectation, assumption, hope, fear, etc., a function which has a parallel in the use of the perfect infinitive in similar situations (see pp. 517-9): — alias... þat, after my crystendome, I ne hadde ben ded and dölven for Dowelles sake (PPl. B xiv 320); — sche grette and seyde þat sche wolde þat sche hadde ben ded (Mandev. 30); — he went he hed be hys brother (RMannyng HS 10596); — I dede men wrong and greet destresse, I sette bee no man mee by syde, I wende that I hadde been makeles (Spec. Miser. 224); — his drede Was this, that she some wight hadde loved so That nevere of hym she wolde han taken hede (Ch. TC i 500). In whan they sawe Jupiter they had went he had ben half man and half hors (Caxton Recuyell 148) the pluperfect had went is probably due to attraction to had ben.

Einenkel, Syntax, pp. 31-2, assumes that this use of the
pluperfect subjunctive to indicate simultaneous hypothetical action is an imitation of OF constructions like kremi k’il ne just a l’Apostole alez and il avoit le cuer si plain de loiauté Qu’il redoutoit que il n’eüst son veu faussé. This assumption seems justified.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE PRETERITE, PERFECT, AND PLUPERFECT TENSES

(Studies dealing with ME tenses in general are listed on p. 481.)

Caro, G., 'Zur Lehre vom altenglischen Perfectum,' Anglia XVIII, 1896, 386-449.
— 'Das englische Perfectum und Praeteritum in ihrem Verhältnis zu einander historisch untersucht,' Anglia XXI, 1899, 56-88.

Draat, P. F. van, 'The Loss of the Prefix ge- in the Modern English Verb and Some of its Consequences, II: the Conjunction Since,' E Studien XXXII, 1903, 371-88 (deals, like the following two articles, with the use of the preterite and perfect in conjunction with since and the earlier sith[en]).
— 'The Preposition Since,' Anglia XXXV, 1912, 155-64.

Fridén, G., 'On the Use of Auxiliaries to Form the Perfect and the Pluperfect in Late ME and Early Mod. E,' Studia Linguistica XI, 1957, 54-6, and Archiv CXCVI, 1959, 152-3.

Gräf, A., Das Perfectum bei Chaucer, Kiel diss. 1887 (printed 1888).

Hoffmann, G., Die Entwicklung des umschriebenen Perfektums im Altenländischen und Frühmittelenglischen, Breslau diss. 1934.


Wichers, P. Über die Bildung der zusammengesetzten Zeiten der Vergangenheit im Frühmittelenglischen, Kiel diss. 1889.

— 'Concerning the Disappearance of the Simple Past in Various Indo-European Languages,' PQ IX, 1930, 153-7 (a condensation of the preceding article).
NON-EXPRESSION OF THE FINITE VERB

The verb is commonly left unexpressed in exclamations (o beutie pereles! Sec. Lyr. cci 1). Non-expression of the verb is common also in proverbs and other sayings of proverbial character; this applies particularly to the copula to be: — more for wurscihe than for pride (Good Wife 99); — evil lat, evil name (Good Wife 44); — unknowe, unkist (Gower CA ii 467).

As shown on p. 543, the infinitive of a verb of motion is often left unexpressed after an auxiliary when the direction of the motion is clear from the context, particularly through the presence of a local adverb or adverbal phrase. Non-expression of the finite verb may occur under similar conditions: — for Salomon þe wise, hwile he her wunede, bitunde us in ane tunne; ant comen Babilones men ant wenden for to habben gold-hord ijunden, ant breken þat þeat; and we forþ ant fulden, þa, þe widenesse of þe worlde (Marg. 40); — Gamelyn up wip his staf þat he wel knew (Gamelyn 535); — and took hire leve, and hom, and held hir stille (Ch. TC i 126); — so cesseth love, and forth to love an neuw (Ch. TC ii 788); — when this was don, this Pandare up anon, To telle in short, and forth gan for to wende To Troilus (Ch. TC ii 1492); — but Pandare up (Ch. TC iii 548); — and Pandare up as faste (Ch. TC iii 1094); — and thus endureth, til that she was so mat That she ne hath foot on which she may sustene; But forth languisshing evere in this estat (Ch. AA 178). Non-expression of this kind is characteristic of lively, impulsive narration. An opposite stylistic effect is aimed at in descriptions like ne nevere wolde it nyghte, But ay cler day to any manes syghte (Ch. PF 210). Here the absence of the verb adds a fresh impressionistic touch to the static, landscape-like picture drawn by the poet.
THE NON-FINITE FORMS OF THE VERB

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. — There are striking functional points of contact between the three non-finite verbal forms, the infinitive, the verbal noun in -ing, and the participle. The infinitive and the verbal noun, for example, are occasionally used side by side without any functional distinction: — alle kudde and kuþe sunnen, ase of prude, ... of sitten to longe et þurle ... of scheden crumen oþer ale, oþer leten þinges muwlen oþer rusten ... oþer of keorfunge oþer of hurtunge (Ancr. 155); — he nolde, iwys, have bidde hem begging, Ne sellen gospel, ne prechyng (RRose 6667-8). In the following quotation the present participle and the infinitive occur side by side, both preceded by go: — yit may he go his breed begs; Fro dore to dore he may go trace (RRose 6744-5; in the French original this passage reads mete a pain querr e Et d'huis en huis partout tracier). For the substitution of the present participle for the infinitive in instances like I saw him come — I saw him coming and he com ride — he com riding, see pp. 526-7, 552-3, 536-7, and 556-7.

Even in ME the functional distinction between the present participle and the noun in -ing is often by no means easy, as shown by instances like þat was showet aperly by temples and images falling doun in Rome (Stanzaic Life of Christ 910). For a brief discussion of the relations of the present participle and the verbal noun see p. 563.

The overlapping in syntactical functions has obviously been promoted by the confusion produced by certain phonological and morphological developments. The infinitive in -n (-en, -yn, -enne) has variant forms ending in -ende and -ing. The participle and the verbal noun also occur under forms ending in -ende, -inde, -ing, and -en (-in). For a brief discussion of this confusion and its consequences see p. 569-70.
512

Infinitive

INFINITIVE


— Past participle for present and perfect infinitive, see p. 554.


USE

Plain infinitive and infinitive with to, p. 522.

Infinitive as Subject. — Infinitive in personal expressions, p. 522. — Infinitive in impersonal expressions, p. 523.

Predicative Infinitive. — Infinitive with to as a predicate nominative (the type to be to), p. 524. — Plain infinitive as a predicate nominative, p. 526. — Infinitive as a predicate accusative (accusative with infinitive), p. 526. — Non-expression of the subject of the infinitive, p. 527. — Predicative infinitive following a prepositional phrase or an indirect object, p. 528.

Infinitive as Object. — Auxiliary verbs, p. 528. — Verbs of perception, p. 529. — Other verbs, p. 529.


Infinitive with adjectives, p. 538.

Infinitive for Finite Verb. — Historical infinitive, p. 538. — Exclamatory infinitive, p. 539.


Non-expression of the infinitive, p. 543.

Bibliography, p. 544.

FORM

Uninflected and Inflected Infinitive. — The infinitive, originally a noun of action, exists in OE in two forms, uninflected and inflected, also called the first and second infinitive. The uninflected infinitive ends in -an (bindan). The inflected infinitive is a dative ending in -enne (bindenne),

1 Often, however (by analogy with the uninflected infinitive), replaced by the ending -anne (to bindanne).
Infinitive

inflected according to the jo-declension. It is the form used after the preposition to (to bindenne), though now and then in poetry, seldom in prose, to is followed by the uninflected infinitive (to bindan). This OE distinction between the uninflected and inflected infinitive disappears in the course of the ME period (write, to write). The inflectional infinitive is, however, occasionally found even in late ME, in Chaucer, for example (to seyne 'to say').

A peculiarity of early southern and south-western ME is that infinitives ending in -ende occur not infrequently for those in -enne. In the B-text of Lawman's Brut, for example, this is a relatively common feature (to flende, 1570; to fleonne, A).

In some parts of the South and the S Midlands, between the 13th and 15th centuries, the ending -inge is also now and then used for -enne: — ðat him to coming were (Lawman B 30653; ðat him weoren to cumenne, A; but cf. wat to comene were, Lawman B 9101; weet heom to cumen weore, A); — he nadde nevere bote in clannesse to defyng wiþ his wive (RGlouc. 6843); — they were ihtole Amazones, ðat is to menyng, 'withoute brest' (Trev. Higd. I 155). To with an infinitive in -ing is also used to render the Latin future participle, particularly in Wyclif and Trevisa: — he was to passinge thennus ('inde erat transiturus,' Wyclif Luke xix 4); — who it was of hem that was to doynge this thing ('facturus esset,' Wyclif Luke xxii 23; was to do, Purvey); — mysbeleved men in tyme to comynge schulde þorw hem be converted (Trev. Higd. I 267). These peculiar forms of the inflected infinitive (-ende, -inge) are obviously due to the general confusion of verbal forms in -enne, -ende, and -ing in early ME. See pp. 569-70; cf. also G. Ch. van Langenhove, On the Origin of the Gerund in English, pp. 122-7, F. Mossé, Hist. de la forme périphr. II, pp. 87-100, and E. Rooth, SN XIV, 1941-2, 71-85. Mrs Annie S. Irvine, PMLA XLV, 1930, 468-500, assumes that Wyclif's to cominge is the present participle of the verb to-come and that the corresponding forms of the other verbs
are due either to a confusion between the present participle and the inflected infinitive with to or to the analogy of to-cominge.

Plain infinitive and infinitive with 'To.' — The term 'plain infinitive' as used in this book means an infinitive not accompanied by to.

The to accompanying the infinitive loses its prepositional force and becomes a mere sign of the infinitive. This development begins early and is completed in the course of the 13th century. The original function of to, to indicate direction ('towards'), is well preserved even today in the use of the infinitive to express purpose (he is coming to see you), but otherwise the to and the infinitive are looked upon as forming an inseparable unit equivalent to a noun and capable of being used, for example, as the subject and object of a verb.

In late OE and early ME the use of the infinitive with to increases rapidly in comparison with that of the plain infinitive; yet the former never succeeds in wholly supplanting the latter, which in some respects has even a wider range of use today than it had in ME.

'For To.' — For to, used to express purpose since the beginning of the ME period (the earliest known instance occurs in a document dated 1066: Godes gerichtten for to setten . . ., Cod. Dipl. IV 306, 3 [Harold]), becomes weakened into a mere sign of the infinitive, equivalent to to, in the course of the 13th century, when it becomes quite common. In the 14th century it begins to lose ground; in the Book of London English 1384-1425 the proportion between to and for to is roughly 5:1. The decreasing tendency continues in the 15th century, though individual authors and scribes show even considerable variance in this respect. In Caxton's edition of Malory's Morte Darthur, for example, for to is far more frequent than to with the infinitive. The appearance of for to has been ascribed to French and also to Scandinavian (H. G. Shearin, The Expression of Purpose in OE Prose, Yale Studies in English XVIII, p. 18,
and Mätzner III, p. 57) influence, but the matter is by no means clear, and there are points which seem to speak for a native origin. Early examples: — se kyng hit dide for to havene sibbe of se eorl of Angeow and for to helpe to havene togænes his neve Willelm (OE Chron. an. 1127); — ʒif eni mon bit fort iseon ou (Ancr. 41).

'For.' — Occasionally for alone is used before an infinitive without any particular final colour: — naild on þe rod he [Peter] was, Als for be he self it chas (Cursor 20914, Cotton MS; als to be him selven ches, Gött. MS; and þus [so] to be him selven ches, Fairfax and Trin. MSS). For the use of for with a plain infinitive of purpose see p. 540.

'Till.' — Till and for till, which occur in northern texts, are first recorded round about 1300: — he praid þe god men þat þar wer  тож a quit his word til her (Cursor 5330, Cotton MS); — it es lefull till us his likynge till wyrche (Morte Arth. 130); — for tille be myne underloute (Cursor 12989, Fairfax MS).

'At.' — At (cf. ON at), recorded from the 13th century to the 15th, occurs particularly with the infinitive of purpose. Occasionally found in Ormulum, it is obviously due to Scandinavian influence. Examples: — þe hondes gonnen at erne (Horn 906, MS 0); — es noght at hide (Minot i 21); — þou mon be ded, es noght at laine (Yw. & Gaw. 703).

Split Infinitive. — Occasionally an adverb is felt to form so inseparable a unit with an infinitive as to be placed between it and the preceding to. This construction, which can be said to be a peculiarity of English (although it also occurs in Swedish), makes its first appearance in the 14th century. Its occurrence is, however, sporadic right to the end of the period. The only writer who appears to be really fond of it is Pecock. Examples: — he lovied þe lasse aufer to longe lye or to longe sitte (Gaw. & GK 88); — it is good to not ete fleisch and to not drynkke wyn (Purvey, Romans xiv 21); — he takith upon him
for to in neighbourli or brotherli maner correpte his Cristen neighbour or brother (Pecock Repr. 2).

An earlier type of split infinitive, in which the object of the infinitive is placed after to, survives no longer. This is first recorded from about 1300: — heo cleopede him alle his wise for to him reade (Lawman B 11018); — to temple make he sal be best (Cursor 8318, Cotton MS); — he sal þe send Angels for to þe defend (Cursor 12965, Cotton MS); — he ne heþ miȝte to hit endi (Ayenb. 113); — lever is me liken yow and deye Than for to anythyng or thynke or seye That yow myghte offende (Ch. Compl. to Lady 122). The last of these quotations is the only instance of the split infinitive recorded in Chaucer's works.

The split infinitive has been the subject of a large number of studies, the majority of which deal with its occurrence in present-day English. A survey of these has been published by H. Spies in *Anglia* LXV, 1941, 1-50.

**TENSE**

**Future Infinitive.** — There is no future infinitive in OE, the Latin future infinitive being rendered by beon/wesan and the infinitive with to (waeron fram him ece mete to onfonne 'aeterna ab illo praemia essent percepturi,' Bede 552). This use survives down to the present day, particularly in the case of to come (in times to come); cf. he seide heom æelche zere Wæt heom to cumen weore (Lawman A 9101; to comene, B). Later in ME to with an inflected infinitive in -inge is used a great deal by Wyclif and Trevisa to translate the Latin future participle (he was to dyinge 'erat moriturus,' Wyclif Luke i 2); for other examples and further discussion see p. 513.

**Perfect Infinitive.** — In the English of our day, the present infinitive is used to indicate an action which is simultaneous with that expressed by the finite verb (I must read; I want [wanted] to read). This is normal usage in ME, too.
Infinitive

After modal auxiliaries, which in themselves are incapable of indicating distinctions in time, the use of the perfect infinitive to indicate that the action took place in the past is quite common in present-day English (he must have been here). This usage is current in ME, too: — ne muhte he mid lesse gref habben ared us? (An Cr. 178); — and trewely, most dred and soueraign lord, gladder ne moor confortable tithinges might never have come (Bk London E 79); — if I nadde spoken ... Ye wolde han slayn youreself (Ch. TC iv 1234); — thow sulde his ceptre have sesede and sytlyn aboun (Morte Arth. 511). The construction is attested in OE: — mid hu micelan fee woldest þa þa habban geboht? (‘quanti hoc ... emisses?’ Alfred Boethius 48). Cf. with how mochel woldestow han bought the fulle knowynge of thys? (Ch. Bo. ii p 8,43).

An interesting phenomenon is the peculiar ME use of the perfect infinitive to express a hypothetical action simultaneous with that of a non-auxiliary finite verb. This occurs particularly after would, but it also occurs after the preterites of many other verbs expressing purpose, will, intention, expectation, assumption, hope, fear, and the like: — for Salomon þe wise, hwile he her wunede, bitunde us in ane tunne; ant comen Babilones men ant wenden for to habben gold-hord ifunden, and breken þat feat (Marg. 40); — wende to have ifohte (Lawman B 7599); — Gamelyn com þerto for to have come in (Gamelyn 291); — and þanne gan a wastoure to wrath hym and wolde have yfoyte (PPI. B vi 154); — and on hir bare knees adoun they falte And wolde have kist his feet (Ch. CT A Kn. 1759); — he lith ful stille and wolde han caught a sleepe (Ch. CT A Rv. 4227).

The perfect infinitive is common in the London documents of Chaucer’s time, particularly in the letter written by Thomas Usk in 1384: — the ful purpos of the persones toforn nempned was to have had the town in thair governaile and have rulid it be thair avys, and have holden under, or elles devoyded outh of towne, at the persones that had be myghty to have wythseyde hem, and the remenant, that had non such myght, to have holden hem under
for ever (Bk London E 24 [Usk’s letter, an. 1384]); — for it was yn poynl at þis tyme to have falle doun yn defaute of reparacion (Bk London E 162 [1423]). It is common in Malory’s Morte Darthur, too.

Before the 14th century this use of the perfect infinitive is rare. Later it is used by Elizabethan writers, and it survives even in present-day English, in which constructions like I should have liked to have gone are not very uncommon. They are felt to be very clumsy, however, and Curme (Syntax, p. 468) says that ‘this usage seems at present to be less common in good literature than formerly.’

This peculiar use of the perfect infinitive is by no means limited to English. It occurs, for example, in MHG (si wolden Volkeren ze tode erstagen han, Nibelungenlied, St. 1893, 3; — er wolde in han gescheiden ['er wollte ihn trennen'], Kudrun 1438, 4), and also in OF (quide . . . que il le veille avoir conseillié, Marie de France, ed. de Roquefort, II 142; — tout mon roiaume vorroie avoir perdu, Enfances Ogier, ed. Scheler, 4887; — je voudrois avoir donné beaucoup et m’en ressouvenir, Darmesteter and Hatzfeld, Le seizième siècle en France, Paris 1878, p. 61). A similar use occurs in Latin (cf. the ancient prohibitory formula nei quis Bacanal habuise velet, adiese velet; cf. also ne quis Bacchis initiatus esset, coisse aut convenisse causa sacrorum velit, Livius xxix 18,8; — nolito edepol divellisse, Plautus Poen. iv 2,50; — debueram thalamos petiisse, Ovid Metam. vi 700; — vicisse petunt, ibid. xiv 571; — non potes probasse nugas, Plautus Anl. v 1,19). The Latin usage, which seems to have been strengthened by Greek influence, obviously provides a starting-point for this use of the perfect infinitive in the Romance languages. And the possibility is not to be excluded that the English use of the perfect infinitive for unrealised action is due to or at least promoted by the influence of Latin and

1 For OF cf. Th. Engwer, Über die Anwendung der Tempora perfectae statt der Tempora imperfectae Actionis im Altfranzösischen, Berlin diss. 1884.
French. It is worth noticing that this use of the perfect infinitive shows a spectacular increase in the 14th century, when the influence of French is particularly strong.¹

A feature common to all the languages in which this phenomenon occurs is that the finite verb governing the perfect infinitive usually expresses a desire or a wish (E will, L volo, etc.).

Several explanations — all referring to psychological factors — have been suggested in attempts to elucidate the background of this syntactical peculiarity. Kellner (p. 233) ascribes it to the speaker's (writer's) desire to keep such a contemplated but unrealised action out of the sphere of the present and retain it within the limits of the past. There are other authorities who believe that the phenomenon is due primarily to the common tendency of the popular psyche to anticipative thinking, more interested in the outcome than in the course of an action. The fulfilment of the desire is awaited with such eagerness and impatience that the perfect tense is felt to be more appropriate for the infinitive than the present. Likewise one tends to imagine that a feared event has already happened. For explanations proposed on this basis cf. Havers, Syntax, pp. 42-3. Cf. also W. Horn, Archiv CXIV, 1905, 366-70.

This use of the perfect infinitive has obvious points of contact with the peculiar later ME use of the pluperfect subjunctive discussed on pp. 454 and 508-9.

PASSIVE

PRESENT INFINITIVE. — No passive infinitive corresponding to the present-day E periphrastic type to be written existed in primitive Germanic.

In OE there are three possibilities of forming a passive infinitive, viz. (1) wesan/beon + past participle (we magon beon getrymede), (2) weordan + past participle (cwæþ þæt hie woldon weordan forlorene and oferwunnene), and (3) to + inflected

¹ French influence is perhaps also to be assumed in MHG.
520 Infinitive

active infinitive (*sint to manienne; cf. present-day *there are many things to do*). The use of the active infinitive for the passive is obviously due to the fact that the infinitive, like the other non-finite forms of the verb, is by nature indifferent to voice.

All the three forms of the passive infinitive survive in ME:
— *ich nam wurþe for to beon iblesced* (Anocr. 16);
— *heo schal beon ikruned mid te crune of live* (Anocr. 80);
— *þa mihhest tu beon borz2henn* (Orm. 5163);
— *wreche þat sal set wurþen sent* (Gen. & Ex. 641);
— *þat tæleþ þat to lofenn iss* (Orm. D 77);
— *so fair yt was to shewe* (*'to look at,' Ch. HF 1305*).

Only the active form is used for the predicative *to be to infinitive* (e.g., *pine is overal þuruh creoit to understonden*) until the 14th century, when the periphrastic passive infinitive appears in this function: — *þey beþ to be blamed eft þarfore* (RMannyng HS 1546). The periphrastic passive infinitive gains ground in late ME, but its progress is slow, and the active form remains in use even today (*he is not to blame*). The active form dominates in Chaucer’s works: — *the white wyn of Lepe That is to selle in Fysshstrete or in Chepe* (CT C Pard. 564);
— *ther is na more to seye* (TC i 574); — *swich a wight is for to blame* (TC ii 287). The old and new constructions occur side by side in *the manaces of Fortune ne ben nat for to dreden, ne the flaternynges of hir to ben desired* (Ch. Bo. ii p 1, 99-100). For the peculiar infinitive in *-ing* (e.g., *þat is to wetynge*) see p. 513.

In OE the predicative passive infinitive is often accompanied by a personal dative (e.g., *him is to seceanne þæt hie unablin-nendlice geþencen . . . , Alfred Care 261*). This construction survives in ME: — *rihtne read radden whet him weore to donne* (Lawman A 4769); — *what thing him were best to do* (Gower CA ii 306). In the course of ME the dative is replaced by the nominative in most of these cases (see pp. 100-1 and 434-6), and the infinitive assumes an active character: — *he wist what he was to do* (Wyclif Sel. Wks I 120). Cf. pp. 525-6.
After causative verbs (do, gar, let, make, etc.) the usual form of the passive infinitive is the periphrasis with be: — þair silver he took and gave þam corn, And to þair ine did it be born (Cursor 4856, Cotton MS); — peraventure I schal make hym to be moved in the mater here after (Paston II 134 [1463]). After let the infinitive occasionally assumes the form of an active periphrasis with do: — he leet the jeeste of his nativitee Doon cryen thurghout Sarray his citee (Ch. CT F Sq. 46); — and let do wryten othre newe (i.e., lettres, Gower CA ii 958). That do is here periphrastic and not causative is suggested by parallel active constructions like he lete the surgypens doo serche their hurtes (Malory MD 174).

The instances where an adjective is followed by an infinitive active in form but passive in sense, common from OE to the present day (cf. it was beautiful to look at), require no particular comment. With the adjective worth the be-periphrasis has been used since late OE (we þe næron wurþe beon his wealas gecigde, Ælfric’s Homilies II 316). This construction is common throughout the ME period: — he shall onn ennde wurrþi ben þurrh Godd to wurþenn borrzhen (Orm. D 127-8); — ich nam wurþe for to beon iblesced (Ancr. 16); — wel were it worth to ben brent (RRose 7104). The active form of the infinitive is not recorded after worth(y) until the 14th century: — þe quilk es worþie for to neven (Cursor 4056, Cotton MS); — worthy for to leve (Ch. HF 708). Even at the end of the ME period the active form with worth(y) remains uncommon. See further p. 538.

After other adjectives the infinitival periphrasis with be appears comparatively late: — so entrelaced that it is unable to ben unlaced (Ch. Bo. iii p 12, 172); — which processe were overlong to be azen rehercid here (Pecock Repr. 40).

Perfect Infinitive. — The perfect passive infinitive, formed on the analogy of the present passive infinitive with be, is relatively common in later ME: — I nolde . . . to han ben crowned queene (Ch. TC iv 1237). Cf. pp. 516-9.
Plain Infinitive and Infinitive with 'To.' — The Mod. E principles governing the choice between the plain infinitive and the one with to can to a large extent be applied to ME, too. In some respects, however, the differences between the ME and Mod. E usages are quite striking and require some discussion.

As for the ME usage, the general principle is that when the relation between the finite verb and the infinitive is felt to be intimate, as in the case of auxiliaries like can, may, must, shall, and will, the plain infinitive is used. When this relation is less intimate and particularly when the two verbs are separated by a word or a group of words, the infinitive is preceded by to: — he gan prikie and to grede an hei (RGlouc. 11709); — he... deþ him al þenche of God and to lovie and servi (Ayenb. 106); — and he hath levere talken with a page Than to comune with any gentil wight (Ch. CT F Sq. 692-3); — that he shoulde with herte and thought To love and serve, and noon but the (Sultan Bab. 7-8); — hit was ordeyned þat þe Mair and þe Aldremen sholden wer blak and also to riden yn barge to West-mynster (Bk London E 143 [1422]). To occurs also when the infinitive precedes the finite verb: — yow to haten shal I nevere (Ch. TC v 1079).

It should be borne in mind, however, that in poetry the choice between the plain infinitive and the one with to or for to very often depends purely on the requirements of the metre, as shown by the following passage in Chaucer: — til that the belle of laudes gan to rynge And freres in the chauncel gonne synge (CT A Mil. 3655-6).

Infinitive as Subject

Infinitive in Personal Expressions. — The plain infinitive is comparatively rare as the subject of a personal verb; in the Book of London English 1384-1425 it is not found at all.
Examples from ME literature: — don al þet oþer ant leten þis nis bute a trukunge ant a fals gile (Ancr. 5); — as gret a craft is kepe wel as wynne (Ch. TC iii 1634); — it undon on any maner syde That nyl naught ben (Ch. TC iii 1735); — nat repente of alle his othere synnes or elles repenten hym of alle his othere synnes and nat of a syngular synne may nat availle (Ch. CT I Pars. 300). The infinitive with to is more common in this syntactical position: — so þet tet swot þero f is strong passiun vor to þoliien (Ancr. 174); — to given and to zemen, bothe zonge and olde, to helen and to helpen is dobest of alle (PPI. B ix 201); — to be called a kniȝte is faire (PPI. B xix 28); — among the which pointz yspoken was To have with certein contrees alliaunce And have fully of Thebans obeissaucce (Ch. CT A Kn. 2973-4).

**Infinitive in Impersonal Expressions.** — As the subject of impersonal verbs and of personal verbs used impersonally the plain infinitive occurs more frequently than as the subject of verbs used personally. It is less common, however, than the infinitive with to. Examples of the plain infinitive: — þet is to siggen þet ou ne luste nouþer speken ne iheren worldliche speche (Ancre. 35; list is the only verb of this kind that takes a plain infinitive as its subject in this work); — me ne leste betre loute (Gower CA i 720); — þerwhile hym plate liketh (PPI. B Prol. 173; but notice the use of for to in the preceding line: þif him list for to laike); — and if yow liketh known of the fare Of me (Ch. TC v 1366); — yit happeth me ful ofte in bookes reede Of his myrakles (Ch. PF 10); — hem thoughte feelen dethis wownde (Ch. TC iii 1697); — me behovez of fyne force Your servaunt be (Gaw. & GK 1240). The plain infinitive occurs also after phrases like god (bet, better, best) ben, lef (leaver) ben, loth ben, and the like: — hym is right good be war of me (RRose 6316); — bet is ... hye in the roof abyde (Ch. CT D WB 778); — hym was levere have at his beddes heed Twenty bookes (Ch. CT A Prol. 293); — me were looth be likned ... To Muses (Ch. CT B ML 91). For the occurrence of the infinitive with to in these phrases
Examples of the infinitive with to as the logical subject of an impersonal expression: — (mæl is me to feran, Beow. 316); — after schrifte hit falleþ to speken of penitence (Ancr. 157); — if us fel . . . to falle (PPl. B xiv 185); — þanne nedeth nouȝte ȝow to take sylver (PPl. B xi 282); — it bihovede nedes me To don right as myn herte bad (RRose 1793); — it happed hym to ryde (Ch. CT D WB 989); — it likethem to be clene (Ch. CT D WB 97); — of that storie list me nat to write (Ch. CT A Kn. 1201); — so soore longeth me To eten of the smale peres grene (Ch. CT E Mch. 2333); — what nedeth yow diverse freres seche? What nedeth hym that hath a parfit leche To sechen othere leches in the toun? (Ch. D Sum. 1955-7; notice the presence of both infinitives in this passage, due mainly to the exigencies of the metre); — him þouȝte merger to be conversawnt with wymmen þan with clerkis and philosophris (Lavynham Tretys 22); — it sit a prest to be wel thewed (Gower CA i 273); — whan hem were bet to slepe (Ch. CT B Th. 1934); — me were levere a thousand fold to dye (Ch. TC iii 574); — ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes (Ch. CT A Prol. 486); — it is nat likly al thy lyff To stonden in hir grace (Ch. CT A Kn. 1173; notice the non-expression of the [separate] subject of the infinitive).

An impersonal statement occurs frequently with a construction known as the nominative with infinitive (e.g., no wonder is a lewed man to ruste). For a discussion of this see pp. 113-4.

PREDICATIVE INFINITIVE

INFinitive with 'To' as a Predicate Nominative (the Type 'to Be to'). — The construction to be to, implying futurity and often obligation (the infinitive being originally that of purpose), is comparatively infrequent in OE and early ME, but becomes more common in later ME and early Mod. E. It probably arose under Latin influence, the infinitive with
to being used to render the Latin future participle (-urus) or gerundive (-ndus), as in *wæron fram him ece mede to onfonne* ('aeterna ab illo praemia essent percepturi') and *he is to gehyrenne* ('audiendus est'). In OE this infinitive occurs mostly in a passive sense (*he is to gehyrenne*; — *hu fela psalma to singenne synt* ‘quant psalmi dicendi sunt’). This usage continues in ME and even today. ME examples: — *þi luve . . . onfer heo is to ziven allunge onfer heo is for to sullen, onfer heo is for to reaveen ant to nimen mid strenge* (Ancr. 181); — *that ston was gretly for to love* (RRose 1091). The periphrastic passive appears in the 14th century: — *þey beþ to be blamed* (RMannyng HS 1546).

In OE the predicative infinitive of this type is comparatively seldom found with an active meaning (*wæron ece mede to onfonne* 'aeterna praemia . . . essent percepturi'). This use continues to be rare in early ME, but becomes more frequent later in the period. In many instances the implication of futurity is faint or practically non-existent: — *þes fikelares mesier is to wrien ant te helien þet gong þurl* (Ancr. 36); — *al mi rorde is woning ant to ihire grislich þin g* (Owl & N 312); — *myn entencioun Nis nat to yow of reprehensioun To speke as now* (Ch. TC i 685). In many instances, however, the implication of futurity is prominent: — *Crystes tresore, þe which is mannes soule to save, as God seith in þe Gospel* (PPL. B x 474); — *whan the sonne was to reste, so hadde I spoken with hem everichon* (Ch. CT A Prol. 30). There are scholars who believe that this construction is used as a real future equivalent in late ME.

There are also those who believe that the frequent use by Wyclif and Trevisa of the *to be to* construction with an inflected infinitive in -inge to render the Latin future infinitive (e.g., *for he was to passinge thennus* 'quia inde erat transiturus,' Wyclif Luke xix 4) reflects an attempt to create a special future infinitive in ME. Cf. pp. 513-14 and 516.

The construction seen in *he wist what he was to do* (Wyclif Sel. Wks I 120) probably represents a different type, which
goes back to the OE impersonal type *him is to seegeanne þæt hie unablinnendlice geþencen*... (Alfred Care 261) and *hwæt is us to donne* (Ælfric Hom. I 314), also found in ME (*radden whet him were to donne*, Lawman A 4767, and *what thing him were best to do*, Gower CA ii 306).\(^1\) The dative becomes the nominative along with the transition from the impersonal to the personal construction (see pp. 101 and 434-6).

**Plain Infinitive as a Predicate Nominative.** — The plain infinitive does not seem to occur as a predicate nominative in OE and is rare in ME.\(^2\) Examples of its active use: — 
*cleane religiun ant wiputen wem is iseon ant helpen widewen ant federlease children ant from þe worlde witen him cleane ant unwemmed* (Ancr. 4); — *a marchauntes desire is withe gode hert his kyng honour and plesse, And to his myght to refresche and done hym ese* (Ocleeve RP 86). A periphrastic passive infinitive is seen in *what is sothely be said of tho sure brether* (Destr. Troy 3729).

After a passive verb the infinitive with *to* is normally used, but the plain infinitive is recorded after *to bid*: — *and than be the Mair... was every man boden gon hom and come fast ayein strong into Chepe* (Bk London E 28 [1384]).

**Infinitive as a Predicate Accusative (Accusative with Infinitive).** — Even in earliest OE, as in other early Indo-European languages, the infinitive occurs as a kind of predicate accusative in a construction customarily referred to as the accusative with infinitive, equivalent to an object clause. The construction seems to occur first after certain causative verbs,

\(^1\) All the recorded ME instances of this type have the infinitive of *do*, which suggests that the construction had become a set phrase.

\(^2\) In *heo Godd thonkeden Mid þeu-fulle worden þat heo heora wildazes Wælden weoren* (Lawman A 1799), translated by Madden as 'that they were in a position to enjoy their wished-for days,' *wælden* is probably a present participle without -*d* (cf. F. Mossé, *Histoire de la forme périphrastique* II, p. 88).
but its use after verbs of perception is remarkably ancient, too. In conjunction with verbs of saying it is found in OE only in slavish translations from Latin originals.

In early ME there is a remarkable increase in the use of the construction after verbs of causation, and since the beginning of the 14th century the accusative with infinitive has been practically the only construction used with these verbs: — *heo makede him sunegen on hire* (Ancr. 24); — *prey him with us dyne* (Ch. TC ii 1458). It is also quite common after verbs of perception: — *wher as I se my lady stonde* (Gower CA Prol. 23); — *hym thoughte he felle his herte blede* (Ch. TC i 502). It is used in an increasing measure after verbs denoting mental activity of various kinds: — *for whenne þou wenest hit trewest to be* (Cursor 59, Trin. MS); — *mon most I algate mynn hym to bene* (Gaw. & GK 141); — *he knowith me admyte and allowe the writingis of doctouris* (Pecock Repr. 71). From the 14th century onwards the accusative with infinitive is widely used also in conjunction with verbs of saying and believing: — *Salomon ... expressith the gretter perel of synne to come bi begrie than to come bi richessis* (Pecock Repr. 305).

The great increase in the use of the construction between the 14th and 16th centuries seems to be largely due to the influence of Latin. This is especially the case after verbs of saying. Wyclif and Pecock appear to be particularly fond of the accusative with infinitive.\(^1\)

**Non-expression of the Subject of the Infinitive.** — When the subject of the infinitive used as a predicate accusative is the same as that of the finite verb, it is not expressed: — *thogh I wiste for to sterre* ('that I were to die,' Gower CA ii 36).

If the subject of the infinitive is indefinite, it is often left unexpressed: — *wyn, wo, or chaungyne of complexioun Causeth*

\(^1\) For practical reasons the relative frequencies of the plain infinitive and the one with *to* as predicate accusatives are discussed in the section dealing with the use of the infinitive as an object of the finite verb, pp. 528-34.
Infinitive

ful ofte to doon amys or spoken (Ch. CT F Fkl. 783); — the kynge herd tell of þís tythand (OT Paraphrase 6075). For further examples, see p. 145 ('Non-expression of the Object Pronoun').

Predicative Infinitive Following a Prepositional Phrase or an Indirect Object. — A typical case of this kind is hym dremyd of a dragon... Come dryfande over þe depe (Morte Arth. 760-61). A datival construction where the subject of the infinitive is preceded by the preposition to (till), ascribed by J. Zeitlin (see bibliography) to French influence, is occasionally found in late ME, but is later superseded by the non-prepositional construction (with the indirect datival object becoming regarded as the direct accusative object): — for God til ilk man commandes right To helpe his neghebur after his myght (Pr. Consc. 5862); — and thanne he bad to Bardus hale (Gower CA v 5023). A construction with an inflectional dative is seen in ther myghty God yet graunte us see that houre (Ch. TC ii 588).

INFINITIVE AS OBJECT

The use of the infinitive as the object of a finite verb is by far the commonest use of this verbal form. Both the plain infinitive and the infinitive with to are used for this purpose.

Auxiliary Verbs. — In conjunction with the auxiliaries can, may (mow), must, shall, and will, the plain infinitive is the rule: — thou schalt mowe senden hire a lettre (Gower CA iv 38); — men may some swevenes sen (RRose 3); — I wol you seyn (RRose 1000). In accordance with what has been said on p. 522 above, to is used, as a rule, only if the infinitive follows the auxiliary at some distance (e.g., she wold have ranne upon the swerd and to have slayne herself, Malory MD 368) or is placed before it (yow to haten shale I nevere, Ch. TC v 1079; two MSS read to, two ne; — the sothe to tell hym wold he nought, Ipom. A 1222). For other auxiliaries (do, etc.), see below.
Infinitive

VERBS OF PERCEPTION. — The verbs of perception are normally used with the plain infinitive: — what maner man can aspie any maner persoune make, medle, or consent in any wyse (Bk London E 98 [1418-19?]); — hym thoughte he felle his herte blede (Ch. TC i 502); — Kai funde Bedver liggen þer (Lawman A 27562); — ðe kaisere itherde suggen (Lawman 27124); — nabbe ze iherd tellen of þe þre o holi men (Ancr. 168); — wher as I se my lady stonde (Gower CA Prol. 23). The infinitive with to, however, is occasionally found: — we have founde you . . . to do al thing that . . . (Bk London E 73 [1418]). In this quotation the use of to may be due to the fact that the infinitive is separated from the finite verb by several words.

OTHER VERBS. — Though different from the point of view of grammatical theory, the use of the infinitive as the object of the finite verb and its use as a predicate accusative (see above, pp. 526-7) are intimately connected with one another from the practical point of view. The only thing that separates them is the fact that when used as an object the infinitive has the same subject as the finite verb (I want to go), while as a predicate accusative it has a subject of its own (I want him to go). For the choice of the form of the infinitive (plain or the one with to) this theoretical dissimilarity has no significance. Therefore, to avoid repetition and possible confusion, the following alphabetical list of the most usual verbs taking an infinitive object also includes examples where the infinitive occurs as a predicate accusative (‘accusative with infinitive’).

bid: found mostly with the plain infinitive: — to world bit mon ziscen wor[ld]es weole and wunne and wurschipe (Ancr. 87); — sche bad me telle and seie hir trouthe (Gower CA i 181); — how hir gost Bad hym to flee the Grekes host (Ch. HF 186). In the non-literary prose of London at Chaucer’s time (Book of London English) bid is found only with the plain infinitive, even in the passive (see p. 526, above).

A peculiar use of this verb is recorded in a number of ME
texts: — biddi hic singen non other led (Gen. & Ex. 27); — do wey, þou clerc, þou art a þol, Wiþ þe bydde y noht chyde (E Lyr. XIIIth Cent. lxxxv 6); — of þe mete for to telle Ne of þe win, bidde I nout dwelle (Havelok 1733); — I bidde wisse þow no more sorwe (Ch. TC ii 406); — and thanne in step such jote I finde That I ne bede neve re awake (Gower CA iv 2904). In instances of this kind bid seems to mean 'to wish, to intend,' but its meaning is considerably weakened, and it approaches an auxiliary verb, like do, gin, or go (in go look, etc.). The ME type is in all probability an imitation of the similar OF use of rover (L rogare) 'deign, wish to' (e.g., 'ho! feit Gaimar, 'ne rois parler De sa bealté pour demorer,' Gaimar’s Estorie des Engleis 3893). For a discussion of this type see G. V. Smithers, EGS I, 1947-8, 101-113.

dare: infinitive without to: — baldlik þat dar I sai (Cursor 3586); — I dar nouzle for þere of hym þyzt ne chyde (PPl. B iv 52); — darst thow take this viage (Ch. LGW 1450).

do: a distinction should be made between the causative and periphrastic uses (see pp. 601-8). Both the plain infinitive and the one with to occur after causative do: — þe þ33 didenn mikell fallenn dun (Orm. 16838); — he dude writes sende To Yrlonde (Horn 1001); — ase dusie men and adolede dop hire to understonden (Ancr. 100); — to do þair kin al for to sprede (Cursor 1222). In the Book of London English 1384-1425 causative do is invariably followed by an infinitive with to. The periphrastic do is accompanied by the plain infinitive: — his sclavnyn he dude dun legge (Horn 1001); — unto the mayde that hir doth serve (RRose 2697).

gar (see pp. 601-2): like the causative do, this verb occurs with

1 Einenkel’s unique example of dare accompanied by an infinitive with to (Anglia XIII, 1891, 88) is based on misreading a passage in Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde, which in Robinson’s edition runs For I, that God of Loves servantz serve, Ne dar to Love, for myn unliklynesse, Preyen for speed... (i 16).
both types of infinitive: — þei garte bringe þe mere sone (Havelok 2504); — shal . . . gar hire love to ben al thin (Sirith 290).

gin (see pp. 610-15): accompanied by the plain infinitive in the majority of cases: — þa þe . . . gunne heore gultes beten and betere lij læde (Poema Mor. 272); — and þanne gan Glotoun grete and gret doel to make (Ppl. B v 386; the second, more distant infinitive takes to); — as sone as evere the sonne gynneth weste (Ch. LGW 61). In poetry, the choice between the two forms of the infinitive is often purely a matter of metre, as shown by til that the belle of laudes gan to rynge, And freres in the chauncel gonne synge (Ch. CT A Mil. 3655-6). Infinitive with to: — þad him ginne to smerten (Prov. Alfred 588, MS T); — þanne gan a wastoure to wrath hym (Ppl. B vi 154); — unto the wode I gan to fare (Gower CA i 110).

give: the peculiar OE use of the plain infinitive after give, ascribed by M. Callaway Jr (The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon, p. 271) to Latin influence, survives in a few ME cases: — ȝif me ine heovene iseon þi blisfule leor (Ancr. 16); — he hadde yeve his gayler drynke so Of a clarree maad of a certeyn wyn (Ch. CT A 1470). Cf. send, below. The infinitive with to is usual in ME: — glotonye he gaf hem eke and grete othes togydere And alday to drynke at dyverse tavernes (Ppl. B ii 93).

grant: the rare occurrence of the plain infinitive after this verb is perhaps due to the analogy let: — ther myghty God yet graunte us see that houre (Ch. TC ii 588). Cf. p. 528.

have: in the meaning ‘to be obliged’ this verb has been used since OE, though even in Shakespeare’s time it remains infrequent. The infinitive takes to: — lordes þat lawes han to kepe (Ppl. B ii 22). In expressions like have (had) lever (better; cf. p. 457) the plain infinitive prevails, but to is also used: — I have lever here an harlotrie or a somer game of souteres (Ppl. B v 413); — he hath lever talken with a page (Ch. CT F Sq. 692); — yet hath this brid . . . lever . . . Goon ete wormes (Ch. CT H Mcp. 171); — we had leyver evermare to serve in Egipte (Cursor...
Infinitive

6235, Fairf. MS); — yet have I leve to lese My lif (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1360); — better he had to have be away (Torrent 1186). After have (had) as lief the infinitive with to prevails: — an old rebekke That hadde almost as lief to lese hire nekke As for to yeve a peny of hir good (Ch. CT D Fri. 1574). Contamination with the type with be (me is lever; cf. p. 523, above) accounts for constructions like hym hadde levere have ben at home (Rich. CL 3526) and al had hire lever have born a knave child (Ch. CT E Cl. 444).

help: the subject of the infinitive, originally a dative, is no doubt looked upon as an accusative in ME. The infinitive usually takes to, but not invariably: — mine friende þe ic halp to swerizen (Vices & V 9); — alle þat halpe hym to erie, to sette or to sowe (Ppl. B vii 6); — to helpe him to werreye (Ch. CT A Kn. 1484); — Rymenhild help me winne (Horn 991); — somne hulpyn erie his halp acre (Ppl. B vi 118); — I wol thee helpe hem carie (Ch. CT C Pard. 954). Chaucer has four cases of help with the plain infinitive and seventeen with the infinitive with to or for to. The two instances found in the Book of London English (non-literary prose of Chaucer’s time) are followed by an infinitive with to (for to): — þe wheche dede paien diverse sommes of monye for to helpe to destruye þe weres yn Tempse (151); — [dyverse percelles paied] to ij wemen for her travayle yn helpynge to make clene þe halle (174).

know: the plain infinitive is attested, as well as the infinitive with to: — and if he knowe eny man use eny untrouthe of þe forseide, or nat admitted to þe practise of phisyk, withinne þe boundes of London, hym þat he knoweth so to practise in phisyk . . . (Bk London E 114 [1423]); — he knowith me admytte and allowe the writingis of doctouris (Pecock Repr. 71).

let: this verb is usually accompanied by the plain infinitive, but the one with to is also found: — al þus þe holi Host lette writen one boc (Ancr. 24); — ase me dep o þe þeove þet me let forte demen (Ancr. 145); — lating you fully were þat we have writen to al our frendes and allies (Bk London E 82 (1419)); —
Infinitive 533

*pe forsaid mair, aldermen and comuns ... laten al men to wete (Bk London E 98 [1418-19?]).

*make* (see pp. 601-2): both forms of the infinitive occur with this causative verb: — *heo makede him sunegen on hire* (Ancr. 24); — *she maketh men mysdo many score tymes* (PPl. B iii 122); — *þe veond hit makede me to don* (Ancr. 136); — *alwey the nye slye Maketh the ferre leeve to be loothe* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3393). In the *Book of London English* 1384-1425, *make* is accompanied by the plain infinitive in three cases and by the infinitive with *to* in five.

*ought* (owe): accompanied by both kinds of infinitive: — *nie þinges beo þ þet ouhten hien touward schrifte* (Ancr. 147); — *Cursur o werld man aght it call* (Cursor 267); — *þu ahtest wummon þis werc ... over alle þing to schunien* (Hali Meidh. 35); — *wel oughtestow to falle* (Ch. TC v 545). In the case of this verb the ME usage is very unsettled. The infinitive with *to* prevails in early texts, and in *Piers Plowman* and the Wyclifite Bible the plain infinitive is rare. Only the infinitive with *to* is recorded in *The Book of London English*, but Chaucer and Occleve, and above all Pecock favour the plain infinitive.

*pray*: this verb usually requires *to*, but the plain infinitive may also occur: — *prey hym with us dyne* (Ch. TC ii 1458).

*send*: a survival of the OE use of this verb with a plain infinitive, ascribed by M. Callaway Jr (*The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon*, p. 271) to Latin influence, is seen, for example, in Chaucer's story of Samson: — *whan they [Philistiens] were slayn, so thursted hym that he Was wel ny lorn, for which he gan to preye That God wolde on his peyne han some pitee And sende hym drynke* (CT B Mk. 3232). The construction occurs also in the corresponding passage of Ælfric's paraphrase of the Book of Judges (*he wearþ þa swiðe ofþyrst for þæm wundorlican slege and bæd þone heofonlican God þæt he him asende drincan*). Cf. *give*.

*suffer*: this verb requires *to* in the majority of cases, but the plain infinitive is not very infrequent either: — *many a*
Infinitive

seint sytthen has soffred to deye (PPl. B xv 547); — man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute (Ch. CT D WB 653).

teach: both forms of the infinitive occur, but the one with to is by far the more common: — he ... techeþ ham to vihten and weane vor te þolien (Ancr. 98); — he wolde techen him to have noon awe (Ch. CT A Prol. 654); — ich ... teache wif breke spuse (Owl & N 1334). Cf. wisse.

think: both kinds of infinitive occur with this verb, but the one with to prevails: — þing þet ich þench e vor to donne (Ancr. 187); — and thenkth his merthes for to make (Gow. CA i 102); — ant þeonne þouht ich gon awei (Ancr. 106); — punysshen he þinketh and demen hem at domes daye (PPl. B xix 190); — I thenke make A bok for Engelondes sake (Gower CA Prol. 23).

wisse 'to instruct:' this verb requires mostly to, but the plain infinitive is also found: — he wissed hem wynne it a eyne and fecchen it fro fals men (PPl. B xix 240). Cf. teach.

ADVERBIAL INFINITIVE

Infinitive of Purpose. — A natural way to express purpose is to use an infinitive preceded by to or for to: — hwon þu havest longe iwaked ant schuldest gon to slepen (Ancr. 120); — clotheden hem in copis to ben knownen fram othere (PPl. B Prol. 56); — a cook they hadde with hem ... To boille the chiknes (Ch. CT A Prol. 380); — þey eny god man to hom come ... For hom to lere gode þewes, An for to leten hore unþewes (Owl & N 1017-18); — þe provost ... was brout þider ... for þe selcouþe sigþ to se (WPal. 2329). For the use of the predicative infinitive of the type to be to for expressing purpose see pp. 524-6. For the use of for with a plain infinitive to express purpose see p. 540. For the type to lie to sleep see p. 537.

The distinction made by grammarians between predicative and adverbial use is often rather hypothetical.
Infinitive

At (cf. ON at), attested between the 13th and 15th centuries, is also used with an infinitive of purpose: — that he cum with the at ete (GWarw. 88); — es noght at hide (Minot i 21); — þou mon be ded, es noght at laine (Yw. & Gaw. 703).

In OE a plain infinitive of purpose occurs in conjunction with certain verbs of motion, transitive and intransitive, such as beran, sendan, cuman, faran, gan, gecyrran, and gewitan. Only a few instances of this use are attested in ME after a transitive verb (such as þe he sent hem seggen, Vices & V 77). In conjunction with come and go, however, the plain infinitive is relatively common and survives far beyond the end of the ME period: — she moste . . . Come soupen in his hous (Ch. TC iii 560); — thow shalt . . . Come spoken with thi lady (Ch. TC iv 654); — ich chulle gon nu steplen ant arisen nunun and don cwicluker þen nu þet ich shulde don nu (Ancr. 120); — he bad wastour go werche (PPl. A v 24); — go we dyne (Ch. CT B Sh. 1413); — go bye a courser (RRose 5903). It is possible that roule in Chaucer’s man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute (CT D WB 653) also belongs to this category, although J. S. Kenyon assumes that it indicates manner (‘rolling;’ cf. p. 537 below). In many cases of this kind go is probably little more than an ingressive auxiliary like OF aller.1

G. Mann (Archiv CLXXXVII, 1950, 10-24) believes that the use of the plain infinitive after verbs of motion represents the earliest stage in the development of the infinitive of purpose. When this practice became extended, i.e., when the plain infinitive of purpose began to occur in conjunction with verbs of rest as well, it became ambiguous and was eventually replaced by the infinitive with to. The theory, interesting though it is, is not altogether convincing.

1 The possibility is not to be excluded that the French use of aller as an ingressive auxiliary, recorded between the middle of the 14th and the beginning of the 17th centuries, exercised some influence on the later ME usage. Cf. G. Gougenheim, Étude sur les périphrases verbales de la langue française, Paris diss. 1929, pp. 93-6.
INFinitive of Cause. — The infinitive with to is not infrequently used to indicate cause: — now sorwe mot þou have such weddynges to worche to wratthe with treuthe (PPL. B ii 116).

INFinitive of Concession. — A concessive infinitive with to is occasionally found in ME texts: — ther was whilom a lordes sone Which of his pride a nyce wone Hath cawht, that worthi to his liche, To sechen al the worldes riche, Ther was no womman for to love (Gower CA i 2278); — in al this world, to seken up and doun, There nys no man so wys that koude thenche So gay a popelote (Ch. CT A Mil. 3252); — I nyl yow disobeye, For to be deed, though me were looth to dye (Ch. CT E Cl. 364). As suggested by Robinson in his note on CT A Kn. 1133, where he adduces the corresponding expression pur murir from the Chanson de Roland 1048, this use of the infinitive may have arisen under French influence (to be deed 'even if I were to die for it').

INFinitive of Manner with Certain Verbs of Motion and Rest. — In OE poetry — less frequently in OE prose — cuman may be accompanied by the plain infinitive of another verb of motion expressing simultaneous action and indicating the manner in which the action represented by cuman takes place: — ge . . . þe þus brontne ceol ofer lagustræte lædan cwomon (Beow. 239). In rare instances a plain infinitive of manner is found after other verbs of motion or rest, such as fleon 'to fly,' stondan, and licgan.

In early ME a plain infinitive of manner is not uncommon with come. The idiom becomes rarer towards the end of the period and eventually disappears, the place of the infinitive being taken by the present participle, which appears in this function even as early as OE (cf. pp. 556-7). ME examples: — þer comen seilien . . . scipes (Lawman A 25525); — þer com a wolft gon after ðan (Fox & Wolf 108); — in him com ur Lord gon (Judas 25); — hee comme þlie too þeeld (Alis. Macedoine 995); — wiþ þat cam renne sire Bruyllant (Ferumbras 2333); — nece.
Infinitive

ysee who comth here ride (Ch. TC ii 1253); — on his hunting as he cam ride (Gower CA i 350). Whether roule in man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute (Ch. CT WB 653) belongs to this category, as assumed by J. S. Kenyon (see bibliography), it is difficult to say, but considering the fact that this would be the only known ME case where the governing verb is go, it is safer to interpret roule in this case as an infinitive of purpose (see p. 535). For the corresponding German use cf. Behaghel, Syntax II, p. 318.

A number of instances with the plain infinitive of a verb of rest after lie have also been recorded in ME, such as: — feowertene niht fulle þere Iæi  þa verde þeos wederes abiden ('a full fortnight the army lay waiting for [favourable] weather', Lawman A 28238); — ne þurve þa cnihles . . . careles liggen sleepe (Lawman A 18653; likewise B); — hu mynecene slapan liggen (Wint. Ben. Rule 63); — the fraunchise of holî churche hii laten ligge sleepe ful stille (Pol. Songs 325). The type seems to disappear in late ME, its function being carried on by other constructions, such as lie + present participle or lie + another finite verb (e.g., there these goddes lay and slepte, Ch. BD 166), or lie + infinitive with to, all these types occurring from OE to Mod. E. Instances of the last-named type are not uncommon in ME: — þanne he lieþ to sleepe, Sal he nevre luken þe lides of hise ezen (Best. 15); — on a bed of gold she lay to reste Til that the hote sonne gan to weste (Ch. PF 265); — faire in the soond, to bathe hire myrily, Lith Pertelote (Ch. CT B NP 4457); — and in my barm ther lith to wepe Thi child and myn, which sobbeth faste (Gower CA iii 302). It is probable that the infinitive with to in these cases is originally an infinitive of purpose; yet any implication of purpose has become so faint that to lie to sleep is practically identical in function with to lie sleep or to lie sleeping. There are similar constructions with other verbs of rest, particularly stand, e.g., ennzless stanndenn a33 occ a33 To lofenn Godd (Orm. 3894); — he stood for to biholde ('he stood watching,' Ch. TC i 310).
The infinitive with *to*, with adverbial force, expressing purpose, cause, etc., is fairly common after nouns and adjectives: — *his craft to reken wel his tydes* (Ch. CT A Prol. 401); — *they were glade for to fille his purs* (Ch. CT D Fri. 1348); — *that kan I preve Be reson worthy for to leve* (Ch. HF 708). For the form of the passive infinitive see p. 521.

A plain infinitive accompanying an adjective is a rare feature in OE. It is found in conjunction with *gearo, wyrþ*, and the like (*forðon he gearo wære on þæm ylcan gewinne mid him beon*, Bede 486). It is occasionally found in ME, too, mostly in conjunction with *worth (worthy)* and *wont*: — *þou haddest be better worthy be hanged þerfore* (PPl. B v 236); — *but seyden he was worthy han his lyf* (Ch. CT D WB 1045); — *thider was the hert wont have his flight* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1692). It is worth noticing that in Pecock’s writings *worth(y)* is more frequently accompanied by the plain infinitive than by the one with *to*. Other adjectives with a plain infinitive: — *þat lewed men be lother God agulten* (PPl. B xv 385); — *wostow why I am the lasse afered Of this matere with my nece trete* (Ch. TC i 975); — *they weren glad for pees unto hym sende* (Ch. CT B Mk. 3826); — *thou art to nyce Thus openly repreve hym of his vice* (Ch. CT H Mcp. 70). Cf. p. 521.

**INFINITIVE FOR FINITE VERB**

**Historical Infinitive.** — In lively, impulsive narration the infinitive is occasionally used instead of the finite form. The phenomenon is a common feature in Latin and is found in many other languages. It has been a subject of some argument whether this is also true of ME. It seems, at any rate, that Chaucer’s *and she to laughe, it thoughte hire herte brest* (TC ii 1108) is most appropriately interpreted as an instance of the historical infinitive, although it has also been assumed that the con-
Infinitive

struction is elliptical and that the finite form began is to be supplied. Another possible explanation, as suggested by J. S. Kenyon (see bibliography), p. 81, and Robinson in his note on the line in TC, is that to laughe is a causal infinitive, though this seems somewhat less probable. There are two passages in Chaucer's Legend of Good Women where the interpretation of the verbal forms as historical infinitives is not out of the question: — up goth the trompe, and for to shoute and shete, And peynen hem to sette on with sunne (635); — and thus the longe day in fyght they spende, Tyl at the laste . . . Antony is schent, and put hym to the flyghte, And at his folk to go, that best go myghte (653). For other suggestions cf. Robinson's note on line 653 and Kenyon, pp. 82-3 (where to go is assumed to stand for to-go, past participle, 'dispersed'). Chaucer does not seem to have other instances in which the presence of the historical infinitive could be presumed.

Examples of probable historical infinitives from other ME writings: — Arþur com sone . . . and Scottes to fleone (Lawman A 21653); — þe frount frounseþ þat was shene, þe nese droppæþ ofte bitwene, Teeþ to rote, breþ to stynke (Cursor 3571); — Esau went hoom his wey, Unto syer þere he coom fro, And Jacob to his fadir to go (Cursor 4020, Trin. MS; other MSS read gan ga); — men sterlen out and weren ware Of this feloun, and he to go, And sche began to crie tho (Gower CA viii 1393).

Exclamatory Infinitive. — The use of the infinitive in exclamations has much the same psychological background as the historical infinitive. Impulsiveness leads one to disregard form: in a state of excitement the speaker has no time or patience to choose the proper tense, mood, person, etc., an expression of the mere verbal idea being sufficient to meet the needs of the moment. Examples: — Horaste! allas, and falsen Troilus! (Ch. TC iii 806); — o rakel hand, to doon so foule amys! (Ch. CT H Mep. 278); — allas, to bidde a woman gon by nyghte In place there as peril falle myghte! (Ch. LGW 838).
OTHER ASPECTS OF USE

PREPOSITIONS WITH THE INFINITIVE. — That the substantival character of the infinitive continues to be more or less clearly felt is apparent from the use of various prepositions with it, particularly in early ME.

*For* is commonly used before the infinitive with *to* all through the ME period (cf. pp. 514-5 and 534); a couple of isolated cases have been recorded even in late OE. But the preposition can also be attached to the plain infinitive: — *þat he were mid heom ilome For teche heom of his wisdome* (Owl & N 1766); — *he þe her deþ eni god for habbe Godes are* (Poema Mor. 53); — *John Pastone . . . dede setlyn . . . diverse litteres . . . for sumounnyyn me to the curt of Rome* (Paston II 20 [1425], ed. of 1904; MED). For the use of *for* before the plain infinitive without any marked implication of finality see p. 515 above.

Einenkel, *Syntax*, p. 16, assumes that the use of *for* with the plain infinitive is due to French influence (cf. *por remembrer et por retrere Les biens c'on puet de famre trere*, Le Vair Palefroi 1).

Other prepositions are also used with the infinitive (plain or the one with *to*) in early ME: — *habbeþ þau h to ower bihove þesne lute laste ende of alle kudde and kuþe sunnen, ase of prude, . . . of setten to longe et þurle, . . . of scheden crumen oþer ale, oþer leten þinges muwlen oþer rusten, . . . oþer of keorfonge oþer of hurtunge oþer of keorfonge oþer of hurtunge* (Ancr. 155); — *þurh fasten, . . . þur h wacchen, . . . þurh herborþin wrecche men and feden* (Vices & V 149); — *wipoute eni cnihte forlede to þan fihte* (Lawman B 23331); — *himm bireþ þeornenn hiss drihtin wel to cwemenn wiþþ to letenn swinþen himm* (Orm. 6362); — *ziff þatt teþ3 nohht blinnenn off To follþhenn Godess wille* (Orm. 10047).

The competition of the verbal noun in *-ing* (see pp. 566-81), whose substantival character is so much more prominent than

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1 *Fasten* and *wacchen* are probably nouns, from OE *fæsten* 'fasting' and *wæcen* 'watching.' Cf. C. T. Onions, *E Studien* XLVII, 1914-15, 171.
Infinitive

that of the infinitive, is no doubt one reason why the use of prepositions with the infinitive never really takes root in ME. On the other hand, the second quotation from Ancrene Riwle, above, is an interesting example of the occurrence of abstract nouns (prude), infinitives, and verbal nouns in -ung side by side.

Prepositions are occasionally found with the infinitive even later in the period. They occur, e.g., in Caxton, presumably under the influence of French usage: — wythoute to be dys-honoured (Aymon 470).

Infinitive after 'Than.' — After than the infinitive seems to be mostly accompanied by to, but the plain infinitive also occurs: — ich þenche of ofþer þinge ðane to pleien ofþer to singe (Owl & N 486); — we had leyver evermare to serve in Egipte... ðen in þe wildernes to dey (Cursor 6235, Fairf. MS); — and deye råpere ðan to do any dedlich synne (PPl. C ii 144); — yet have I lever to lese My lif than of my body to have a shame (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1361); — this companye... That rather wolden at my cause spille Then do me help (Ch. Compl. Pity 47); — hath ther nat many a noble wyf er this And many a mayde yslayn hirself, alias, Rather than with hir body doon trespas? (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1366). That the usage varies considerably is suggested by Cloud 46: — for so miȝt sche sonner have reisid in hirself an abelnes to have eȝte syniid, ðen to have purchasid by þat werke any pleyen forȝevenes of alle hir synnes (MS Harley 674; the variant in the Royal MS reads ðen have. Both MSS date from the early 15th century). And it is difficult to say, after all, how far the choice of the infinitive in these cases has been conditioned by the presence of than and how far it is due to other factors.

Absolute Infinitive. — This term may be conveniently applied to a parenthetical use of the infinitive seen in cases like þer was, to iwitene, mid 300 scipene... (Lawman A 14518); — but, sooth to seyn, I nool how men hym calle (Ch. CT A Prol.
Infinitive

284); — therwith he was, to speke as of lynage, The gentilleste yborn of Lumbardye (Ch. CT E Cl. 71). Chaucer's fondness of this type of construction is well known; it is, in fact, one of the striking features of his chatty narrative style.

The term 'absolute infinitive' has also been applied, more or less appropriately, to a construction with a nominative subject, occasionally used to express futurity, expectation, purpose, or even command: — he het men to gyve hem mede If þei coude hit rizlyy rede, And þei to gyve þe same azyyn (Cursor 7121); — glotonge he gaf hem eke ... And alday to drynke ..., And þei to have and to holde ... A dwellyng with the devel (PPl. B ii 101); — that I frely may ... do yow laughe or smerte, And nevere ye to grucehe it (Ch. CT E Cl. 354); — I dar the bettre aske of yow a space Of audience, to shewen ourere requeste, And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow lest (Ch. CT E Cl. 105). A passive construction of this type occurs in Cursor Mundi: — Oure lord wolde for resoun þilke Be fed of a maydenes mylke, So hir maydenhede to be hid And hir husbonde wide kid (10795).

Occasionally, however, it is difficult to see any implication of purpose or even of futurity: — and heere auzlen proude men of this world, but principalli prelates and presti, be sore ashamed to see her lord and maister, whom they schulden principalli suen, ride in thus pore aray, as I saide bifore, and they to ride so proudeli in gai gult sadeles with gingelinge brídeles (BM Add. MS 41321, fol. 1, quoted from G. R. Owst, The 'Destructorium Viciorum' of Alexander Carpenter, London 1952, p. 11, note 4). The nominative they with the infinitive to ride is obviously due to the looseness in structure of the long subordinate element.

Contamination. — The use of the infinitive as an equivalent of a noun clause is so common that no comment is needed. It is therefore not surprising that the two constructions occasionally become contaminated with one another: — it nere ... to thee no greet honour ... That nevere ... Neither of us in love to hynder oother (Ch. CT A Kn. 1129-35); — allas, the shorte throte and tendre mouth Maketh that est and west
and north and south, In erthe, in eir, in water, men to swynke
To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drynke (Ch. CT C Pard. 517-20); — there was a custom that on Seint Denis day to make
a king (Brut 598); — sche say our Lady han hyr blissyd sone
in hir hand and swathyd hym ful lytely in þe white kerche
(MKempe 209).

NON-EXPRESSION OF THE INFINITIVE

As in OE, the infinitive may be left unexpressed in ME —
this usually occurs after an auxiliary verb — if it can be
supplied from the context: — I can na more ('I can say
nothing more,' Ch. PF 14); — if ye wol aught unto youre sone
the kyng (Ch. CT B ML 738). Occasionally the missing infinitive
is understood from a preceding finite or non-finite form: —
right fresshe flour, whos I ben have and shal (Ch. TC v 1317);
— men dreme of thyng that nevere was ne shal (Ch. CT B NP
4284); — me behove3 of fyne force Your servaunt be, and schale
(Gaw. & GK 1240).

Non-expression of this kind is quite common when the in­
finitive is a verb of motion and the direction of the motion is
obvious from the context (usually there is an adverb or
adverbial phrase indicating the direction). Instances with
auxiliary verbs: — þet God almihti . . . foluwude ham . . . hwuder
so heo ever wolden (Ancr. 34); — borewed þing wole hom (Good
Wife 149); — Beton þe brewestere . . . axed hym . . . whiderward he
wolde (PPl. B v 307); — but forth she wolde . . . To shewe hir skyn
(Ch. CT D WB 353); — and al shutde out of mynde That in
this world is don of al mankynde (Ch. PF 69); — feyntise me
hente, That I ne myȝte fether afoot (PPl. B v 6). Instances with
other verbs: — long silence and wel iwust nedeþ þe þouhte s up
touward þer heovene ('compel the thoughts to climb up towards
heaven,' Ancr. 31); — I frayned hym . . . whider þat he þouȝte
(PPl. B xvi 174); — þat ever dard To hym ('dared to go to
him,' Pearl 609-610; cf. F. Th. Visser, E Studies XXIX,
1958, 20-23). Cf. also p. 510 (non-expression of the finite verb). Expressions of this kind are characteristic of lively, impulsive narration.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE INFINITIVE


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Koch II, pp. 60-70.
Koziol, Stb., pp. 126-35 and 156-8 (non-expression of the verb).
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35 — Mustanoja
Particples


Rooth, E., 'Zur Geschichte der englischen Partizip-Praesens-Form auf -ing,' *SN* XIV, 1941-2, 71-85.


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Wülfling II, pp. 176-225.


PARTICIPLES


*Use.* — Character and principal uses, p. 551. — Present participle as a predicate accusative, p. 552. — Past participle as a predicate accusative, p. 553. — Past participle instead of an infinitive, p. 554. — Appositive participle, p. 554. — Appositive present participle with certain verbs of motion and rest, p. 556. — Periphrastic *go* with a participle and other similar uses,
FORM

Present Participle. — The OE ending of the present participle, -ende, is found in ME in the form -inde (-ende) in the South and the Midlands and in the form -and(e) in the North and the N Midlands. At the end of the 12th century and in the course of the 13th the ending of the participle becomes -ing(e) in the southern and central parts of the country (for the distribution of the endings cf. MED 'Plan and Bibliography,' p. 9, map 4). In Lawman A the ending -ing(e) is not uncommon and is even more frequent in B. The two forms are occasionally found side by side: — ne goinde ne ridingge (Lawman B 1582). The appearance of -ing as the ending of the present participle is a much-discussed subject. It is obviously not merely a morphological but also a phonological and syntactical process. Phonological confusion in the endings of the various non-finite forms of the verb, particularly in the more southern parts of the country, apparently plays an important part in the development (cf. the discussion on the origin of the gerund, pp. 569-70). E. Rooth (see bibliography), accepting the theory that this phonological confusion leads to a functional confusion between the infinitive and the verbal noun, believes that for similar reasons confusion also arises between the inflected infinitive (frequently ending in -inde and -ende) and the present participle. All this, he thinks, is responsible for the development -inde > -inge in the participial ending through 'hypercorrect' pronunciation and spelling.

1 Due, it seems, to the influence of the ON participle ending in -andi.
For other studies on the subject cf. particularly the references given by Rooth and Ingerid Dal, and by F. Mossé, *Wiener Beiträge* (see bibliography).

The French present participle ending -a(u)nt (*acordant*, *obeissant*, etc.) is common in the writings of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, and in many other works written under strong French influence: — *him powyte meryer to be conversawnt with wymmen þan with clerkis and philosophris* (Lavynham Tretys 22). In works written in the more southern parts of England, like those of Gower and Lydgate, the ending -and (*touchand*, etc.) is obviously also due to French influence.

**Compound Participle.** — The compound participle (*having been*, etc.) does not make its appearance until the 16th century, when it is not infrequently found in translations from Latin and original works. Cf. W. Behrens, *Lateinische Satzformen im Englischen: Latinismen in der Syntax der englischen Übersetzungen des Humanismus*, Universitas-Archiv, Angl. Abt. III, Münster 1937, pp. 27-35.

**Comparison.** — Present and past participles with markedly adjectival colouring are compared like ordinary adjectives (see pp. 278-88): — *forþi it es lastandar and sykerar* (RRolle EWr. 117); — *þou art welcomore þen þe king* (Sirith 426).

**VOICE**

Originally the participles are indifferent to voice. This is still reflected in some of their English uses.

**Present Participle.** — The simple present participle form (*spekend*, *writing*) is usually active. Its use for the passive is practically unknown in OE; in ME it is also rare (*no spendyng syluer*, PPl. B xi 278; also Ch. CT G CY 1018; — *wepyng teares*, J. Hardying Chron. CXL x; NED *weeping*, ppl. 3; also Malory Recuell 644), but becomes current in Elizabethan English. Cf. present-day English *spending money*. 
The simple present participle is used in a passive sense also in the well-known type the church is building. According to some grammarians the starting-point for this kind of passive expression is the type is in building or is a-building (see pp. 577-8), the preposition being eventually dropped. This interpretation is hardly acceptable as such, and although it is quite possible that the ambiguity of the ing-form, used without distinction as the verbal noun and the participle, has played a part in the development of the passive type the church is building, there does not seem to be sufficient reason to leave the participial type out of consideration. For a somewhat fuller discussion see p. 592.

The passive present participle of the compound type being written begins to appear in the 15th century: — by meane whereof he being sore febeled and debrused, now jalle to greet age and poverty (Ellis Letters II i 96 [1422]); — the seid Duke of Suffolck being most trostid with you (Paston I 100 [1450]).

Past Participle. — The past participle of a transitive verb is passive in sense, that of an intransitive verb active (he held him betrayde; — I fond hir ded). This principle, it seems, is applicable also to cases like this dronke Millere (Ch. CT A Mil. 3150), where the verb drink in all probability has an intransitive meaning; cf. Mod. E a wide-travelled man, an outspoken person.

An OE and ME peculiarity is the use of the past participles of certain verbs with of- (a-; e.g. OE ofdrædan, ofhyngrian, oflongian, and ofscamian) in an active sense, usually with little difference from that of the present participle: — ic ferde ofdrædd ('timens abii,' OE Matt. xxc 25); — ich am ofdred leste I go drivinde ofherhules to swiþe forþward upe foule þouhtes (Ancre. 156); — we mazen beon eþe ofdredde end herde us adrede (Poema Mor. 157); — so sore it is afered of the nyght (Ch. LGW 53); — hwu shal ich oflonged wiþute þe libben? (Trin. Hom. 183); — weren men suiþe ofwundred and ofdred (OE Chron. an. 1135); — he wearþ þa suide ofþyrst (Ælfric’s paraphrase of the
Participles

Samson story); — *jif þu ert ofhungred efter þe swete* (Anocr. 171); — *huy weren often ofhungrede sore* (SE Leg. xviii 217).\(^1\) Of- is not infrequently confused with on-. For- is also used in ME, and later in the period it becomes more and more common as of- loses ground: — *sore he gunen fordrredd ben* (Gen. & Ex. 3223).\(^2\) As a consequence of the general decay of verbal prefixes, of- and for-, frequently written as separate words, come to be regarded as prepositions (e.g., *whi sholde thanne of fered thyn herte quake?* Ch. TC iv 607; cf. *MN* LVI, 1955, 174-7). For later instances with an- or a- see pp. 581-2. For points of contact with some adjectives see p. 381. For the use of participles with of- and for- in conjunction with the adjective *weary* (*woery ofwandered*, etc.) see pp. 560-3.

Some late ME constructions with the past participle have arisen as imitations of French usage. *Accored* and *assented* (*we been acored to his juggement*, Ch. CT A Prol. 818; — *thei ben assented for to wende*, Gower CA ii 2539) are calques on OF *acordé* and *assenti* 'd’accord' (cf. *jou et li glise sommes en chou acordé et assenti bonement ke... and pais vint; tuit sumes assenti*). *Obeied* (with that hire oghne lord cam nyh *And is to th’emperour obeied* ‘did obeisance to the emperor,’ Gower CA ii 1529) goes back to OF *obeï* (cf. *jou proi amours, a qui sui obeîs and segnor, jo vos comanc, cascuns soit obeîs A dant Pieron*). *Remembered* (*ther is a land I am remembryd wele*, Generydes 619) is imitated from OF *remembré* (si seiez remembrez e sages Des grandi hontes e des grandi laiz Qui a Roem vous furent faiz). Other instances are *perjured* (if he be lecherus or perjured, Trevelyan Papers 25 [1453]; NED *perjured*), imitated from OF *parjuré*, the past participle of the intransitive verb *parjurer* 'to

\(^1\) It is worth noticing that most of these verbs are attested mainly or exclusively as past participles.

\(^2\) According to the *MED* and *NED* verbs with for- also appear first or are found exclusively as past participles (e.g., *forfoughten* c 1300, *forhungered* c 1200, *forirked* c 1250, *forliven*, -lived c 1300, *forwalked* c 1350, *forwardered* c 1350, *forwept* c 1350).
Participles 551

commit perjury,'¹ and resembled (to lowe lybbyng men þe larke is resembled, PPl. B xii 265; — that ilke fyr . . . Which is resembled to envie, Gower CA ii 2839), from OF resemblé 'comparable.' The use of sworn in cases like ich was ysuore to him ar to þe (RGlouc. 5520) and to this point . . . This kniht . . . Is swore (Gower CA ii 2536) is probably due to the analogy of OF juré, perhaps also of L juratus. Gesworn in the same sense si recorded in late MHG and MLG. Cf. perjured above.

The late ME participle wold (if that he hadde wold his time kept, Gower CA iv 248) might be due to the analogy of the French participle voulu.

The past participle of a native transitive verb is also, though rarely, found in an active sense: — azein forbode lawes ('laws that forbid it,' PPl. B ii 151; forbidden lawis, A ii 139; but this may be due to some confusion with the noun forbode; cf. MED); — a monthe which . . . The plowed oxe in wynter stalleth (Gower CA vii 1162). For heo beoÞ swiÞe werie iboren heore wepnen (Lawman A 18406) see pp. 560-2.

USE

CHARACTER AND PRINCIPAL USES. — The participles are verbal adjectives, i.e., adjectives with certain verbal functions. Among other things they are capable of indicating relative distinctions in time and governing a direct (accusative) object. Originally the English participle could not have a direct object. It acquired its accusative-governing power in OE under Latin influence (cf. M. Callaway, PMLA XVI, 1901, 307-14).

The principal dependent uses of the participle (according to Callaway's classification, loc.cit., p. 141) are the following —

¹ The type, however, is attested in late OE pejorative participles like forsworen and forlogen, both meaning 'perjured' (mænige syndan forsworene and swyðe forlogene, Sermo Lupi ad Anglos; — alle he wseron forsworen and here treothes forloren, OE Chron. an. 1137). The same usage is attested in OHG (bitrogan and firlogan).
Participles

(1) **Predicative participle.** This construction is of two kinds —
(a) *predicate nominative*, having reference to the subject of the finite verb;
(b) *predicate accusative*, having reference to the object of the finite verb.

(2) **Attributive participle.**

(3) **Appositive participle,** the participle being so loosely connected with its governing word that the two seem to constitute two separate ideas.

Certain aspects in the use of the participle as a predicate nominative, i.e., when it serves as a structural element in the so-called *ing*-periphrasis (*he is reading*) or in the perfect and pluperfect tenses (*he is gone, he was come*) and the passive (*he was killed*), are discussed elsewhere in this volume. The attributive participle, which shows no essential difference from its present-day counterpart (*a rolling stone*, etc.), is not discussed in the present work at all.

Apart from these dependent uses the participle occurs in a detached clause usually referred to as the **absolute participle.**

**Present Participle as a Predicate Accusative.** — The predicate accusative of the present participle is equivalent to an object clause and comparable to the infinitive used as a predicate accusative ('accusative with infinitive;' cf. pp. 526-7). Its usual region of occurrence is after verbs of perception and, in some measure, after those of mental action, a region where it competes with the accusative with infinitive. In many cases, particularly in poetry, rhythm seems to play a part in the choice between the infinitive and the participle, but there is also a certain functional difference between the two constructions. The participle describes an action in a more vivid, graphic way than does the infinitive. In other words, while the infinitive records the mere fact, the participle brings the dynamic element into the picture.

The substitution of the participle for the infinitive after verbs of perception and mental action begins in OE under
Latin influence (e.g., *ymbe þa endleofnan tid he ut eode and funde oðre standende* 'invenit alios stantes,' Matt. xx 6, ed. Skeat). The use of the participle makes slow progress, and even in ME it is less common than the infinitive. ME examples:

— *eadi is he . . . þet ure Loverd hwon he cumep ivint wakiinde* (Anacr. 63; the Latin translation reads 'beatus quem invenerit vigilantem');
— *ther tiggende He fond his dede wif bledende* (Gower CA ii 839-40);
— *I herde goynge both up and done Men, hors, houndes, and other thynge* (Ch. BD 348);
— *we schulen iseon . . . bineoþen us, zeoniinde wide, þe wide þreote of helle* (Anacr. 137);
— *where as she many a ship and barge seigh Seillynge his cours* (Ch. CT F Fkl. 851);
— *and whan he sith upon the wawe The schip drivende alone so* (Gower CA ii 729);
— *unweily it byrnys þo þinges to fulf何时 it seys and knawes pleasynde to God* (Misyn FL 82). That the choice between the participle and the infinitive is often a matter of personal preference is suggested by the treatment of line 486 of *NPassion* at the hands of 14th-century copyists. The poem was composed in the Midlands. The variants, as quoted by Mossé, *Hist. de la forme périphrastique* II, p. 79, read *left paime slepand* (northern), *lete þame slepene* (northern with Midl. features), *lete hem slepyn* (Norfolk or Suffolk), and *left hem slepynde* (Midland).

**Past Participle as a Predicate Accusative.** — The occurrence of the past participle as a predicate accusative after verbs of perception, mental action, causation, etc., requires little comment, being fully comparable to the use of ordinary predicate adjectives with verbs of this kind. It has been attested since OE. ME examples:

— *I fond hir ded* (Ch. Compl. Pity 14);
— *and held him betrayde clene* (Gaw. & GK 2393);
— *the Grek Synon . . . Made the hors brught into Troye* (Ch. HF 155);
— *forn Godess engnell rofrepþ mann 3iff þatt he seoþ þimm færedd* (Orm. 3829);
— *men se the world on every syde In sondry wyse so diversed That it welnygh stant al reversed* (Gower CA Prol. 28-9).

Participle
Participles

Past Participle instead of an Infinitive. — A peculiar ME and Modern E (especially early Mod. E) construction is the use of the past participle in connection with a finite verb, in cases where one would expect an infinitive: — he haven herd told of ūis mere (Best. 459); — he assigned Harald to Inglond, to had it in fee (RMannyng Langtoft 51, ed. 1810); — Lord, sith Poule presumed not to founded soche sectis, why schulde foles and ydiotes take this upon hom? (Wyclif Sel. Wks III 419); — he ordeyned that there schuld no nunne handeled the corporas, ne cast none encense in the cherch (Capgr. Chron. 67); — if that he hadde wold His time kept (Gower CA iv 248; for wold see p. 551); — he myght rewlyd at Walsynham an he had list (Paston II 29 [1461]); — he sholde not escaped thens (Caxton Reyn. 46).

It has been suggested, among others by G. C. M. Smith, MLR V, 1910, 246-7, Einenkel, Syntax, pp. 4-5, and F.Th. Visser, Neophilologus XXX, 1946, 37-43, that the participle was originally preceded by have, the auxiliary of the perfect tense, which gradually weakened into a and eventually disappeared. That such a development has played a part in the rise of the type he myght rewlyd is highly probable, but the construction, which is also found in the Scandinavian languages and in MDu. and MHG,\(^1\) has evidently a much more complicated background than a mere mechanical elision of the auxiliary have.

Appositive Participle. — The appositive use of the present and past participles (the participium coniunctum of the Latin grammarians) is a well-known feature in many languages. It is common in classical Latin, even more common in the Vulgate, and profuse in medieval Latin.

In OE prose the appositive present participle occurs more

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\(^1\) For the occurrence of the construction in MDu. and MHG cf. Ingerid Dal, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin: Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für deutsche Sprache und Literatur VIII (Festgabe für Th. Frings), Berlin 1956, pp. 130-41.
Participle.

frequently than the past participle, but in poetry the ratio is reversed. Some aspects of this use seem to be native in origin, such as the adjectival use of the past participle (i.e., its use as an equivalent of a relative clause), while the corresponding use of the present participle and the use of the participles as equivalents of various adverb clauses and of co-ordinate clauses are evidently due to Latin influence. Usually, however, Latin appositive participles are rendered into OE by means of co-ordinated finite verbs or somewhat less frequently of subordinated finite verbs. It is also under Latin influence that the participle acquires the power of governing a direct (accusative) object.

In the course of ME the appositive participle becomes quite common, possibly supported by the parallel French and Latin usages, although the role of foreign influences is sometimes exaggerated. Wyclif's language is illuminating in this respect. Under Latin influence the Wyclifite translation of the Bible makes extensive use of the appositive participle. In Wyclif's original English works the influence of Latin is much less noticeable. Nearly half of his appositive participles are past participles used adjectivally, and these, according to Callaway (see bibliography), are native in origin. According to Koziol, Stb., p. 120, the appositive past participle is remarkably common in ME alliterative poetry. Although Koziol's principles of classification differ from those of Callaway, the large majority of his examples are those of the adjectival participle.

Examples of the appositive participle as an equivalent of an adjectival (relative) clause: — swete Jesu, vor mine sunnen anhonged o þe rode (Ancr. 11); — a loveli ladi of lere in lynnen yclothed (PPL B i 3); — a Samaritan sittende on a mule, rydynge ful rapely (PPL. B xvii 47); — thilke fooles sittynge hire aboute (Ch. TC iv 715).

The appositive participle stands for an adverb clause: — (a) temporal: þe holi mon ... seide so inwardliche cussinde hire zeorne, 'Iblesced heo ever þeos hond' (Ancr. 54); — o my Custance,
wel may thy goost have feere And, slepynge, in thy dreem been
in penance (Ch. CT B ML 804); — silence tileþ hire, and heo
itiled bringeþ forþ soule eche vode (Ancr. 34); — thus acorded
forth thei wente (Gower CA i 826). — (b) modal: hwu so hit
ever is idon willes ant wakiinde (Ancr. 91); — oon seyde that
Omer made lyes Feynynge in hys poetries (Ch. HF 1478); —
he syngeth brokynge as a nyghtyngale (Ch. CT A Mil. 3377); —
for he wolde noght be knowe Desguised thanne he goth him oute
(Gower CA viii. 521). — (c) causal: but slep ne may ther in
his herte synke, Thynkyng how she ... A thousand fold was
worth more than he wende (Ch. TC iii 1539); — withinne his herte
affraied ... he wissheth after deth (Gower CA iv 3400). —
(d) final: to Crist I seyde an orison, Thankynge hym of his
revelacion (Ch. CT D Sum. 1868). — (e) conditional: havynge
reward only to my trouthe, My deere herte, have on my wo som
routhe (Ch. PF 426); — þuruh þet is bitocned þet god dede idrawen
forþ nis nout one vorloren þuruh þet uppinge (Ancr. 65); —
þow shalt fynde but fewe fayne for to here of here defautes foule
byfor hem rehersed (PPL B xi 384). — (f) concessive: no síþe
þet ze isecoþ, ne wakiinde, ne slepinde, ne ine swefne (Ancr. 100);
— o bussh unbrent, brennynge in Myles sighte (Ch. CT B Pri.
1658). — (g) consecutive: in his herte he caughte of this greet
routhe, Considerynge the beste on every syde That ... (Ch. CT
F Fkl. 1521); — al my face With elde I myhte se deface, So
riveled and so wo besein (Gower CA viii 2829).

An appositive participle is often used instead of a co-ordinate
clause: — liȝtliche lyer lepe awey þanne Lorkyng þe thorw lanes
(PPL. B ii 216).

**APPOTIVE PRESENT PARTICIPLE WITH CERTAIN VERBS OF
MOTION AND REST.** — A few OE verbs of motion, mainly
cuman, and of rest (licgan, standan) can be accompanied by
the plain infinitive of another verb of motion or rest. The
infinitive, expressing simultaneous action, serves to indicate
the manner in which the activity takes place. In ME, too,
down to the later part of the period, the plain infinitive of
Participle

a verb of motion is not uncommon in conjunction with *come*, and several instances of the plain infinitive of a verb of rest are also recorded in conjunction with *lie* (*nece, ysee who comth here ride*, Ch. TC ii 1253; — *ne hurve þa cnihles . . . careles liggen slæpen*, Lawman A and B 18653). For a discussion of this usage and for further examples see pp. 536-7. Towards the end of the ME period the infinitive disappears in cases of this kind, its place being taken by the present participle, which begins to appear in this function in OE. The principal reason for the change is obviously the greater descriptive force of the participle. ME examples: — *ziþ two men ōþer .iii. coman ridend to an tun* (OE Chron. an. 1137); — *þer com þe prude lechur ridinde* (Ancr. 96); — *this Pandarus com lepyng in at ones* (Ch. TC ii 939); — *þus I went wide-where walkynge myne one* (PPl. B viii 62); — *as he lay upright Slepynge* (Ch. CT B Mk. 3762); — *al quakynge He stood* (Ch. CT E Cl. 317).

When the finite verb is short and has lost its emphasis and colour through frequent use, the participle tends to become the carrier of the main verbal idea. Cases of this kind are discussed in the following.

**Periphrastic 'Go' with a Participle and Other Similar Uses.** — When a participle occurs appositively after short finite verbs which have lost their emphasis and colour through frequent use, such as *come, fall, go, lie, sit, and stand*, the participle tends to become the carrier of the main verbal idea, while the finite verb tends to become reduced into a mere auxiliary: — *þer com þe prude lechur ridinde* (Ancr. 96); — *a wenche . . . cam walkynge in þe wey* (PPl. B xviii 112); — *he com riding to the toun* (Ch. TC iii 1782); — *wynter that comth next suiende and in this wise I lette him fightynge dwelle* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1661); — *he fell swounende* (Gower CA viii 1077); — *lay al this mene while Troilus Recording his lessoun* (Ch. TC iii 51); — *when he wepende alone lay* (Gower CA v iii 1605); — *and she sylte aye wepynge* (Ch. LGW 1834).

The most advanced stage of this development is seen in the
case of *go*, which entirely loses its original concrete sense of 'going.' Examples with the present participle: — *I am ofdred lest I go drivinde operhules to swoþe vorþward upe fule þouhtes* (Anocr. 156); — *þouȝte and I, þis þre days we zeden disputynge uppon Dowel* (PPl. B viii 112); — *and in his herte he wente hire excusynge That Calkas caused al hire tariynge* (Ch. TC v 1574); — *now gooth he ful faste ymaginyng* (Ch. CT E Cl. 598); — *for such a cok I mai go fastinge everemo* (Gower CA vi 717).

The main difference between a periphrastic expression of this kind and the simple verb form is that the periphrasis has greater descriptive force and that it emphasizes the dura-
rative or iterative character of the action. It is probable that French influence has played a part in the development of the periphrasis. The type *aler chantant* (e.g., *li uns d’els plore, l’autres vait sospirant*) is common in OF,¹ and there are good reasons to believe that the use of the construction was also furthered by the example of the parallel type *is goinde, ben ridinge*, just as it may be assumed that the existence of combinations like *com riding, lay sleeping*, and *goth disputing* strengthened the position of the *be + -ing* periphrasis. Cf. p. 593. Examples with the past participle: — *this was hire manere, To gon ytressed with hire heres clere* (Ch. TC v 810); — *the charité goth al unknowe* (Gower CA Prol. 319); — *for it was nevere knowe yit That charité goth unaquit* (Gower CA ii 3332); — *that leta here tungs gon unteid* (Gower CA iii 830); — *they yede crownyd wyth ivy that served in the temple of Liber Pater* (Trev. Barth. xvii 53).

A comparable weakening of *go* seems to account for *I was go walked* (Ch. BD 387); see p. 582.

**Appositive Participle with ‘Begin.’** — The exact character of the *ing-form* which frequently accompanies verbs like *begin*

¹ For the OF construction see G. Gougenheim, *Étude sur les périphrases verbales de la langue française*, Univ. of Paris diss. 1929, pp. 2-36.
Participle

and start in present-day English is not quite easy to define. That it is not simply an *ing*-noun ('gerund') is suggested by ME examples like *this worthi prest... To me spekende thus began, and seide* (Gower CA i 204), where begin is associated with a present participle.

**Appositive Participle Not Referring to the Subject or Object.** — Usually the participle has reference to the subject or object of the finite verb, but this is not always the case. It may, for example, refer to a dependent possessive: — so ofte gan his herte colden, Seing his frend in wo (Ch. TC iv 363); — but stel ne may ther in his herte synke, Thynkyng how she... A thousand fold was worth more than he wende (Ch. TC iii 1539). It may also have reference to a prepositional phrase: — *thei tuo to him slepende appiere* (Gower CA ii 3337).

**Absolute Participle.** — The construction customarily known as the absolute participle is occasionally found in OE as an imitation of the Latin ablative absolute, partly also of the nominative and accusative absolute. It is very rare in early ME, but becomes increasingly common towards the end of the period (e.g., *the cause yknowe and of his harm the roote, Anon he yaf the sike man his boote, and smokyng the temple... This Emelye... Hir body wessh*). The construction is discussed on pp. 114-7.

**Participle as Prepositions.** — A number of absolute and appositive participles develop into prepositions. In the following list only a few more common prepositions of this kind are included.

Present participles: — **according** (accordant) to: *he acordant to nature... Transformeth Iphe into a man* (Gower CA iv 498). — **considering**: considerynge thy yowthe *So feelyngly thou spekest* (Ch. CT F Sq. 675). — **during** (cf. OF *durant*): — duryng *al my lyf* (Ch. CT D WB 158). — **excepting** (cf. *except* and *out-taken*, below): *this article is agreed, excepting suche persones*
as . . . (Paston I 34 [1432]). — lasting (cf. OF durant): lastyng the sege (Lydgate Troy Bk. ii 5063). — notwithstanding (cf. OF non obstant): notwithstandyng al his suffisaunce (Ch. Compl. Venus 17). — saving (cf. save, OF sau): no man myghte gladen Theseus Sawyn his olde fader Egeus (Ch. CT A Kn. 2838). — touching, touching of: towchyng thi lettre, thou art wys ynothug (Ch. TC ii 1023); — al his werk as touching this matere (Ch. TC i 265); — whos prest I am touchende of love (Gower CA i 236; this combination, touchende of, seems to be characteristic of Gower).

Past participles: — except (L excepto): excepte Ector, per was nat swiche anoþer (Lydgate Troy Bk. ii 4895). Cf. excepting, above. — Outtaken (a translation-loan favoured by Gower, from OF excepté): which every kinde made dye . . . Outake Noe and his blod (Gower CA vii 542). The use of the past participle agon, ago 'passed' as a postposition dates from the end of the 14th century; it is possible that the parallel use of the participle passé in OF has played some contributory part in the rise of the English construction: — many a day agon (Ch. CT A Kn. 2784); — a while agon (Gower CA v 2281).

As seen from the list above, the participles used as prepositions are practically all direct loans or imitations from French, occasionally from Latin. For discussions of the individual prepositions see the chapter on the prepositions.

Past Participle with 'Weary.' — A past participle, usually with the prefix of- or for- (see pp. 549-50 above), is occasionally found in juxtaposition with the adjective weary: — heo beop swipe werie iboren heore wepnen (Lawman A and B 18406); — twælf cníhtes . . . ða weoren weri oflæien (Lawman A 19300); — he wes old and weri ofleoved (SE Leg. x 191; also x 168, etc.); — Beves was so weri of-fouȝte (Beves 799, MS A); — I was wery ofwandrit (PPL. A Prol. 7; forwardred B). In the course of the ME period the of-prefix is supplanted by for-. The weri oflæien of Lawman A 19300 has been replaced by weri forleie
Participle

Participles

in *B*, and there are numerous other instances: — *quen he al weri was forgan* (Cursor 3527, Cotton MS); — and she, *forweped and forwaked, was wery* (Ch. BD 126); — *chalaundres fele sawe I there That wery nygh forsongen were* (RRose 664).

In many cases, especially later in the ME period, *of* and *for* tend to be regarded as prepositions and not as prefixes. For line 4243 of RGlouc. there are variant readings like *wery yfouz* (yfaţ), *wery and forfouz*, *wery forfout*, and *wery of fyght*. For the phrase quoted from *PPl. A 7* (*ofwandrit*) some MSS read *of wandryng*, some *for wandryng*. This reading occurs also in *Mum & S 571* (*thenne woxe I . . . wery of wandring aboute Thorough fe wilde weyes*). A comparable case is *whi sholde thanne of fered thyn herte quake?* (Ch. TC iv 607); for *of fered* there are variant readings like *for ferd, of fere, for fere*, and *for drede*. In a number of late ME cases the participle shows a remarkably advanced state of substantivation (cf. for example the entry *ferde* in *MED*). And once this stage is reached, participial phrases of this kind become confused with semi-substantivised adjectival phrases like *for pure wood, for very glad*, etc. (see pp. 381-2), resulting in such constructions as *for pure ashamed* (Ch. TC ii 656), *for pure abaissht* (Gower CA iv 1330), *for astoneid* (Lydgate TGlas 934), and *for unknowe* (Lydgate TGlas 632).

ME scribes commonly write *of-* and *for-* as separate words, which also suggests that there is some tendency to look upon them as prepositions.

The use of a past participle in juxtaposition with *weary* is a peculiarity of ME syntax, not attested in OE. The participle has marked causal force. It is possible, although it cannot be proved, that the early ME phrases are idioms of rather limited dialectal occurrence which soon become highly stereotyped. Not only do later copyists reveal an unfamiliarity with the construction, but there are cases suggesting that even early ME writers and copyists are uncertain as to its real character. This is perhaps how one has to understand the occurrence of a construction like *werie iboren heore wepnen* in Lawman’s *Brut* 36 — Mustanoja
(an active past participle of a transitive verb, with the object expressed), a type extremely rare, one would like to say otherwise unknown, in ME.

The construction *weary + past participle* has been the subject of a number of recent studies (F. Mossé, *EA V*, 1952, 289-308, L. Spitzer, *NM LV*, 1954, 161-77, T. F. Mustanoja, *NM LVI*, 1955, 90-94 and 174-88, and M. L. Samuels, *E Studies XXXVI*, 1955, 310-13). Yet the main problem, that concerning the origin and primary character of the phrase, and a number of other aspects still await their final solution, and they will probably remain unsolved until a greater number of instances, especially from early ME, are available for study. The possibility of foreign influence hinted at in Spitzer’s article (cf. ME *for pure ashamed* and Spanish *de puro molido*) can obviously be taken into consideration only for late ME.

The background of the type *wery ofwandred (of wandred)* is obviously not quite simple. In OE the adjective *werig* governs the genitive or dative or a prepositional phrase with *for*. *Weri* with the preposition *of*, obviously equivalent to the OE genitive, is attested from early ME on (*Þa wes ic al wet and weri of sorgen and seoc, Lawman A 28081*). On the other hand a number of verbs with *of-*, expressing fear, affliction, repentance, mental and physical discomfort, and the like (*ofdrædan, oflongian, ofhyngrian, ofscamian*, etc.), as pointed out on pp. 549-50 above, occur in OE and ME usually or exclusively as past participles.

It would seem that the type under discussion (e.g., *weri oflæien*) combines these two elements, the adjective *weary* governing an *of-*phrase and a past participle with the prefix *of-. If this explanation is correct, then the type *weri oflæien* is essentially a hybrid, and the strong implication of causality in the participle has a natural explanation in the half-prepositional character of *of*. On the other hand, if *of* is taken as a prefix, it is not difficult to account for the prefix *i*- in instances like *werie iboren heore wepnen* (Lawman) and *wery*
Participle

yfaet (RGlouc. 4243). A confusion between various prefixes is a not uncommon feature in early ME, when most prefixes are in a state of decay. The formal difference between of- and a- has always been slight (a- frequently represents a weakened form of of-), and the original functional differences between of- and -on-, for-, and ze-(i-) tend to become obscured, too.

On the whole there exists a close relationship between prepositions and prefixes, and it has been pointed out (by T. P. Harrison, The Separable Prefixes in Anglo-Saxon, Johns Hopkins Univ. diss. 1892, p. 29) that the prepositional sense is strongly developed in the OE prefix of-.

Participle and Verbal Noun. — As pointed out on p. 511 there are striking points of contact between the three non-finite forms of the verb. The points of contact between the present participle and the infinitive have been discussed earlier in this chapter. Those between the participle and the verbal noun in -ing also deserve a brief general discussion in this connection.

Just as in Mod. E there are borderline cases like I am not surprised at young or old falling in love with her (Thackeray), he insisted upon the boy opening the door to him, and do you mind my brother coming with us? where it is difficult or even impossible to distinguish between the gerundial and participial elements, there are cases in ME where the distinction is no less easy to make, such as that was shouet aperitly by temples and images falling down in Rome (Stanzaic Life of Christ 910). On this point reference may be made, for example, to W. van der Gaaf, E Studies X, 1928, 33-41 and 65-72, to the Curme-Gaaf controversy, ibid. XII, 1930, 111 and 180-84, and to J. Ellinger, E Studien XXXVI, 1906, 244-7. Cases of this kind are usually interpreted as having a purely gerundial character. But that they may have been conceived — in part at any

1 The same applies to seemingly pure gerundial cases like I remember his telling me about his parachute jump.
rate — as participial constructions is suggested by the existence of parallel constructions with past participles, such as *alle ich habbe to broken ham ou, mine leove sustren, ase me deþ to children*, *bet muhten wiþuten brokene brede deien of hungre* (Ancr. 155); — ther hath be no defalte, I gesse, of time lost (Gower CA iv 2891); — wher that a jugge his ogone dede Ne wol noght venge of lawe broke (Gower CA vii 2891), and and he may polye hym at þe prest by penaunce taken (Purity 1129). Cf. also OE construction *se þe set habbendre handa gefangen sy* (*is seized with stolen goods upon him,* BTS hand, p. 506, col. b) and other similar cases.

**STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE PARTICIPLES**


—→ 'I Go A-fishing,' SN IX, 1936, 3-14.

Brunner II, pp. 328-44.


—→ 'The Appositive Participle in Anglo-Saxon,' PMLA XVI, 1901, 141-360.


Curme, *Syntax*, pp. 448-54. (For Curme's studies of the gerund, which also have a bearing on the participle, see p. 579.)


Einenkel, *Streifzüge*, pp. 266-77.

—→ *Syntax*, pp. 4-14. (For Einenkel's studies of the gerund, which also have a bearing on the participle, see p. 579.)
Participles

Ellinger, J., 'Das Partizip Präsens in gerundialer Verwendung,' *E Studien* XXXVI, 1906, 244-7.


Gerike, F., *Das Partizipium Präsentis bei Chaucer,* Kiel diss. 1911.


Irvine, Annie S., 'The Participle in Wycliffe, with Especial Reference to his Original Works,' *Univ. of Texas Bulletin: Studies in English* IX, 1929, 5-68.

— 'The To Comynge(e) Construction in Wyclif,' *PMLA* XLV, 1930, 468-500.


Kellner, pp. 256-9.

Koch II, pp. 70-4 and 130-3.


Mätzner III, pp. 68-96.


— 'Réflexions sur la genèse de la forme progressive,' *Wiener Beiträge* LXV (Karl Brunner Anniversary Volume), 1957, 155-74.

Poutsma II,2, pp. 515-63.

— *The Infinitive, the Gerund, and the Participles of the English Verb,* Groningen 1923.

Rooth, E., 'Zur Geschichte der englischen Partizip-Praesens-Form auf -ing,' *SN* XIV, 1941-2, 71-85.
566 Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')


Smith, R., *Participle and Infinitive in '-ing,* Bulletin of the Univ. of South Carolina XXVII, 1911.


Trnka, pp. 87-9 and 94-5.

Visser, F. Th., 'Two Remarkable Constructions in Shakespeare,' *Neophilologus* XXX, 1946, 37-43.

—— Review of J. Delcourt's *Contes de Cantorbéry, E Studies* XXIX, 1948, 49-52 (the type 'you have heard me said').

—— More, pp. 361-443.


VERBAL NOUN IN -ING ('GERUND')

Origin of the gerundial use, p. 567.


Bibliography, p. 578.

Verbal nouns in -ung or -ing, rare in early OE, have been common since the Alfredian period (leornung, ceapung, ceaping, etc.). The -ung variant, which prevails in OE, disappears in early ME. At the beginning of the 13th century it survives only in some parts of the ancient West Saxon area. The -ing form is common in ME and Mod. E.
Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')

ORIGIN OF THE GERUNDIAL USE

In the course of time this noun acquires certain verbal qualities; among other things it begins to govern an accusative object and to be qualified by an adverb. It becomes what many grammarians call a gerund because it is used in the same way as the Latin gerund.¹

When and how the verbal noun in -ing (-ung) begins to be used as a gerund has been a subject of much scholarly dispute. Useful surveys of earlier views are given by G. van Langenhove, M. Callaway Jr in the Klaeber Anniversary Volume, and F. Mossé in Wiener Beiträge (for all these see bibliography).

Sporadic occurrences of a noun in -ing (-ung) with an accusative object, practically all of them being interlinear glosses, are recorded from the 9th until the mid-12th century. This remarkably slender evidence led G. O. Curme (E Studien and Anglia; see bibliography) to assume that the gerund is a purely native phenomenon, originating in the verbal noun in -ing (-ung), with little or no support from other verbal forms or from foreign, above all French, parallel uses.² This view has undergone considerable modification in Curme’s latest treatment of the matter (Syntax, p. 484). He does not touch upon the question of foreign influence at all; he believes that

¹ More recent authorities on English grammar tend to avoid the term ‘gerund’ as inadequate in several respects. The terms now preferred ('ing-form' and the like), being more neutral, are doubtless superior from the Mod. E point of view. In the present discussion, however, the term 'gerund' is used for practical reasons, mainly because it is the term used in the controversy concerning the origin of this peculiar grammatical feature.

² C. T. Onions, E Studien XLVIII, 1914-15, 169-71, corrects a number of Curme’s interpretations.

Curme’s original view that the beginnings of the gerundial use are to be found in OE, in the verbal noun in -ung (-ing), is shared by Ingerid Dal (see bibliography). Miss Dal goes even farther, arguing that the use of an accusative object with the verbal noun existed in colloquial OE. Cf. also p. 588.
the development of the gerund is facilitated by the analogy of the present participle, which in ME has the same form and takes an accusative object,\(^1\) and also by the example of the closely related infinitive, which often has the same form as the gerund. This agrees to a great extent with the view held by J. L. Armstrong (see bibliography), that the gerund goes back to the OE verbal noun in -ung (-\(\text{\textit{ing}}\)), which acquires verbal rection through its formal identity with the present participle, though Armstrong does not believe that the (inflected) infinitive plays any part in the development of the gerund.

As stated above, the few OE instances where a noun in -ung (-\(\text{\textit{ing}}\)) takes an accusative object are practically all interlinear glosses and mere imitations of the Latin gerund: — *in gemetinge folc in annesse* ('in conveniendo populos in unum,' Vesp. Psalter ci 23); — *in haldinge word \(\text{\textit{fin}}\)* ('in custodiendo sermones tuos,' ibid. cxviii 9); — *on gecyrringe mine fiend* ('in convertendo inimicum meum,' Eadwine’s Cant. Psalter ix 4; the same construction occurs in the Lambeth Psalter, ed. Lindelöf: *on gecyrrinege feond mine*). One instance, with the accusative object preceding the verbal noun, occurs in the spurious homily *De Transitu Marie Ægyptiæ*\(^2\) in Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints* (ed. Skeat): — *hi sylfe to clænsunga* ('purificare seipsos,' xxiii B 100).\(^3\) All this and other OE evidence led Callaway to the conclusion that the verbal noun in -\(\text{\textit{ing}}\) (-ung) acquires its accusative-governing capacity through Latin influence. He admits, however, that several other factors, such as the in-

\(^1\) For the development of the accusative-governing power of the present participle see p. 551.


\(^3\) Curme, arguing for the native origin of the gerund, attaches great importance to this particular example, while Einenkel and Callaway find it 'quite barbarous Old English.'
Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')

Influence of the present participle and the French gerundial-participial constructions, contribute to the remarkable extension in the use of the ing-noun with verbal reaction in ME.

The fact that practically all unambiguous OE instances where the verbal noun is accompanied by an accusative object occur in interlinear word-for-word translations of Latin Psalters tends to weaken Callaway's case. The evidence so far collected suggests strongly that the rise of the English gerund takes place essentially within the ME period. It is during this period that the verbal reaction of the noun in -ing is finally established, which means that it can be qualified by an adverbial adjunct and have an accusative object and also a subject which is clearly in the nominative (common) case and not in the genitive. But the development is obviously a complicated process involving a number of factors.

One has to take into consideration not only syntactical factors, but also certain phonological and morphological processes which seem to have brought about a confusion between the verbal noun, the present participle, and the infinitive. As stated above, at the end of the 12th century and in the course of the 13th the ending of the present participle (-inde, -ende, -ande) becomes -ing in the southern and central parts of the country, which makes the participle and the verbal noun alike in form. The confusion between -inde and -ing is reflected in many texts, particularly those written by 13th-century Anglo-Norman scribes: — ne goinde ne ridingge Ne dorhte him no man abide (Lawman B 1582; ne ganninde ne ridinde, A); — an hizende (Lawman A 9749); — guo into helle ine libbende þet þou ne guo in þine stervinge (Ayenb. 73). In some parts of the South and the S Midlands the inflected infinitive in -enne becomes -inge (he nadde nevere . . . to doiinge wiþ his wiwe, RGlouc. 6843); cf. p. 513. In addition, the present participle occasionally ends in -en instead of -end, as in he saþ þe roke And þe brinñires stinken smoke (Gen. & Ex. 1164), probably also in þat heo heora wil-dazes welden weoren (Lawman A 1799), and the inflected
Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')

infinitive may end in -ende, as in to flende (Lawman B, to fleonne, A) and suffraunce may aswagend hem (Patience 3; cf. also Purity 1291). In the North and N Midlands, in the 15th century even in the South, -ng may occur as -n (e.g., drynkyn for drynkynge, Norfolk Gilds). Cf. also unknown for unknowyng (Deonise 5, MS Kk) and, conversely, I am moche beholyng [for beholden] unto hym (Malory MD 86).

While admitting that the examples here given are uneven with regard to their chronology and dialectal distribution, it is difficult to believe that this confusion of forms did not bring the noun in -ing into closer connection with the present participle and the infinitive and thus promote its use as the gerund.

On the basis of such phonological developments G. van Langenhove (see bibliography) contends that the gerund is a direct continuation of the uninflected infinitive. In this he differs from H. Logeman, who (PMLA VII, 1892, 200-11) identifies the gerund with the inflected infinitive. Since the 13th century the inflected infinitive occasionally ends in -inge (to welynge, to doinge). This form, van Langenhove believes, develops from the inflected infinitive in -enne. But, he thinks, the same development takes place in the uninflected infinitive, with -n becoming -ng, although this development remains unnoticed because the uninflected infinitive becomes identical in form with the noun in -ing and is mistaken for it. The only difference between the two is in syntactical function: while the infinitive has verbal, the noun has nominal properties.

F. Mossé (Histoire; see bibliography), II, p. 101, believes that the gerund is due primarily to a confusion between the noun in -ing and the present participle, the latter giving it its verbal properties. Mossé believes that the gerund accompanied by an accusative object makes its first appearance at the end of the 12th century, disguised in the form of the present participle in -nde: — þe þridde is menende his synnes bifore Gode ('the third way is the bewail one's sins before God,' Trin. Hom. 65); — ech man gifeð his almesse eiþer for Godes
Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')

luve and for havende hereword and for to ben wurÞed fer and ner (Trin. Hom. 157). To these early instances may, perhaps, be added biginneþ anon Veni Creator Spiritus mid up ahevinde eien ant honden toward heovene (Ancre. 6, MS Nero; wiþ up ahevene ehnen, MS CCCC). The object often precedes the gerund: — merci criende lutel availde (Body & Soul 375, Laud MS); — ac þer is anoþer lenere cortegs þet leneþ wypoute chapfare makiinde alneway in hezinge oþer ine pans oþer ine hors (‘mais il i a uns autres presteors cortois qui present sanz marchié faisant toutes voies en attendant ou en deniers ou en chevals,’ Ayenb. 35). Notice the parallel use of forms in -inde and -inge (makiinde and heinge) within one sentence. An example of the gerund in -nde accompanied by an adverbial qualifier: — to provy hor bachelerye Some wiþ launce and some wiþ suerd, wiþoute viteynye, Wiþ plynde atte tables oþer atte chekere (RGlouc. 3965; other MSS read pleyynge or pleþinge).

Einenkel (see bibliography) admits that the gerund goes back to native elements, i.e., the noun in -ing and the infinitive. The former, he thinks, gave the gerund its form, the latter its leading principles of function. But the native development lacked force and would not have resulted in the formation of a viable gerund had it not been reinforced by Latin and French influence. The few OE instances of gerundial use of the noun in -ing are imitations of the Latin gerund. French influence sets in at the beginning of the ME period and brings with it the peculiar French use of the gérondif (e.g., par la paiz faisant; — defendi vous sor les membres perdant; — sans marchié faisant; — en menant grant noise), which proves of decisive significance in the final establishment of the gerund in ME.¹ The earliest sign of this influence, Einenkel believes,

¹ W. van der Gaaf (E Studies X, 1928, 39) finds that the Anglo-Norman and ME constructions of the type par deus cens mille mars paiant and purh ibodenes biddunge appear at the same time, second half of the 12th century. This, he believes, makes AN influence on ME doubtful.
Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')

is the striking absence of the article before the verbal noun and the use of the plain infinitive in new functions (e.g. with prepositions), attested round about 1200. Somewhat later, about 1250, the verbal noun begins to occur in a considerable measure with adverbial modifiers and an accusative object. The expression in -ing appears towards the end of the 13th century, along with a steady increase of French influence (in making; cf. p. 578; cf. also OF en venant and ME in his defendaunt, Ch. CT I Pars. 572). All through the 13th century the gerund is gaining ground and appears in new types of construction.


The origin of the gerund is one of the much-debated problems of English syntax, and the foregoing survey is only an extremely condensed account of the most important opinions expressed on it. To sum up, the first sporadic signs of the gerundial function of the noun in -ing appear in late OE. They are slavish imitations of Latin gerunds, but they do suggest that the noun in -ing is at least capable of acquiring verbal properties. The rise of the gerund seems to take place essentially within the ME period. The influence of the OF gérondif seems to play a significant part in the development of the English gerund. It is difficult to say how far Celtic influence has a part in this development, but the possibility may be worth closer investigation. One significant contributory factor is obviously the analogy of the English present participle, and the gerund no doubt receives several of its functions from the infinitive. The influence of the participle and the infinitive is evidently facilitated by the remarkable confusion between forms ending in -n, -nd, and -ng in ME.

In many cases the verbal noun in -ing and the present participle become amalgamated to such an extent that a
Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')

distinction between them is practically impossible. For a brief discussion of this see pp. 563-4. For the intimate contacts between the two and the infinitive see p. 511.

TENSE AND VOICE

Compound Tenses. — The compound tense forms of the gerund (e.g., for having lost his way) do not make their appearance until the 16th century.

Passive. — Special passive forms of the gerund are first recorded at the beginning of the 15th century: — but now your sayd leiges, both their and elsewhere, may suffer their goods and cattels to remayne in the feilds day and night without being stolen (Ellis Letters II i 59 [1417]); — in beyng movid (Pecock Fol. Donet 126).

The non-finite forms of the verb are originally indifferent to voice. And just as the active forms of the infinitive are commonly used for the passive (see pp. 519-21), active ing-forms are also occasionally found in a passive sense: — we have a wyndow a-worczyng (PPl. C iv 51; cf. p. 578); — Poul wrote in bothe Epistles to Corintheis eer he was bounden by prisoning in Rome (Pecock Repr. 57).

Other Structural and Functional Characteristics

Case of the Subject. — From OE down to the present day the subject of the verbal noun in -ing has been in the genitive case (þurh þeora segnunge; — þe dedes commyng; — present-day E do you mind my coming?). The periphrastic subjective genitive with of has also occurred with the ing-noun since the time of its appearance (þe commynge of þe dede).

1 Unless otherwise stated, no special distinction is made in this discussion between the gerundial and non-gerundial uses of the ing-noun.
In the subject of the *-ing* noun the common case has been recorded since the beginning of the 14th century: — *þoru corn wanting* (Cursor 2397, Cotton MS); — *mury hit is in sonne risynge* (KAlis. 2883, MS L; *mery it is in sonnes risynge*, MS B 2897); — *speke we of þe children fijting* (Arth. & Merlin 5132). Several of the early instances are somewhat doubtful, however, for there is reason to suspect that the subject is simply an *s*-less genitive. In many cases the influence of the OF type *ainz le soleil levant, au soleil couchant, par pais faisant*, etc., must be taken into consideration. Some confusion with the appositive present participle may be presumed in cases like *speke we of þe children fijting*. Cf. pp. 563-4.

**Case of the Object.** — Since OE the genitive has been commonly used as the object of the verbal noun in *-ing* (*þes mynstres clænsunge; — in excusinge of me; — in stoppyng of the noyse*).

Since late OE there have been instances with an accusative object. For the OE examples, which are imitations of the Latin gerund, see p. 568 above. The ME instances can be divided into two groups, (1) cases where the object follows the *ing*-noun and (2) those where the object precedes it. Examples of the former type: — *þe þridde is menende his synne bifore Gode* (Trin. Horn. 65); — *confessioun and knowlechyng and cravyng þi mercy schulde amende us* (PPl. B xiv 186); — *in liftyng up his hevy dronken cors* (Ch. CT H Mcp. 67); — *in forering his speche* (Purity 3); — *in smytynge, vexynge or angeringe hym* (Lavynham Tretys 12, MS Ancient). This word-order does not, however, become common until later ME, while the construction where the object precedes the *-ing*-noun is of comparatively frequent occurrence from early ME down to the end of the period and even beyond it: — *merci criende lutel availede* (Body and Soul 375, Laud MS); — *usage . . . of seyntes lyves redynge* (PPl. B vii 87); — *withouten mercy askynge* (PPl. B xix 72); — *withouten wrong or harm doynge* (Ch. CT B Mel. 2772); — *be good examypyl zeyng* (MKempe 121); — *in
Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')

*good wordys spekyng* (MKempe 205); — *in þe word of God heryng* (MKempe 153); — *by pusynnyenge, smylynge, or elles false dome zevyng, as by false appelynge or by false wytnes to questys gyffynge* (Lavynham Tretys 12, MS Ancient). This word-order, it will be noted, is the same as that of the corresponding OF construction *par pais faisant, sor les membres perdant*. Cf. *wyþoute chapfare makiinde 'sanz marchie faisant'* (Ayenb. 35).

**Adverbial Qualifiers.** — Adverbial qualifiers have been used with the noun in *-ing* since early ME: — *þe teares þe man wepeþ for longenge to hevene ben cleped reinium* (Trin. Hom. 151); — *ate verste guoinge out* (Ayenb. 263); — *to fenden us from falling into synne* (PPL B xix 61); — *she koude muche of wandrynge by the weye* (Ch. CT A ProL 467); — *swich cursynge wrongfully retorneth agayn to hym that curseth* (Ch. CT I Pars. 620).

**Use of the Article.** — Usually, but by no means always, the gerundial *ing*-noun occurs without an article: — *wyþ pleynde atte tables* (RGlouc. 3965); — *confessioun and knowlechynge and cravyng þi mercy shulde amende us* (PPl. B xiv 186); — *in liftyng up his heavy dronken cors* (Ch. CT H Mcp. 67). The article is used in many cases, like *þe undernemyng his resonable chatisyng* (Lavynham Tretys 13, MS Laud Misc.).

In non-gerundial use the *ing*-noun is treated as an ordinary abstract noun, and there is no article (*alle sacramentys except only cristenyng and purificacyons*, MKempe 85; cf. p. 256), except when a particular event is referred to or the noun is qualified by a relative clause: — *whil sche was in þe schryvyng* (MKempe 58); — *blissed art þow, dowtyr, in þe wepyng þat þu weypyst for þe peplys synnes* (MKempe 99). But the case becomes rather complicated when the noun is qualified by an *of*-periphrasis, as pointed out on pp. 268-9. The article is frequently used, but is frequently left out too: — *þur Þe eggyng of Eve he ete of an apple* (Purity 241); — *he . . . deferryd þe wrytyng of þis boke* (MKempe 4); — *for drezing of þis duel* (WPal. 919); —
Verbal Noun in -ing ('Gerund')

Verbal Noun and the Infinitive. — As the substantival character of the infinitive grows weaker, it begins to lose ground to the noun in -ing in certain functions. This development is best seen in the use of prepositions with the infinitive. In early ME various prepositions are not infrequently used with the plain infinitive (see p. 540), the disappearance of this usage being no doubt due to the competition of the ing-noun. That the infinitive is no longer used after the adjective worth (cf. p. 538) is probably due to the same reason, and possibly also the disappearance of the plain infinitive as the subject of the finite verb (cf. pp. 522-3).

Verbal Noun in Some Nominal Constructions. — The construction there was . . . -ing is frequently used in ME for the expression of indefinite agency: — þer was sobbing (Havelok 234); — þer was sembling (Havelok 1018); — thar wes oft bikkeryng (Barbour ix 343); — so greet wepyng was ther noon, certayn, Whan Ector was ybroght, al fressh yslayn, To Troye. Allas, the pitee that was ther, Cracchyng the chekes, rentynge eek of heer (Ch. CT A Kn. 2831-4). A similar case is and thus the woful nyhtes sorwe To joie is torned on the morwe; Al was thonkinge, al was blessinge, Which erst was wepinge and cursinge (Gower CA ii 3317-18).

Some Special Uses of the Verbal Noun. — Some peculiarities in Richard Rolle's use of the verbal noun are
worth special attention. Some of these occur in many other writings of the period, but some seem to be characteristic of Rolle’s personal style. He often uses the ing-noun with reference to persons or objects, both in an active and passive sense: — with swyche a processyoun of worldely wondrynge was nevere no thef to þe deth lad (‘worldly wondering ones,’ EWr. 22); — Jhesu, my hele and my hony, my whart and my comfortyng (‘one who comforts me,’ EWr. 71); — I am made as wondirynge til many that lufis this world and wondirs on me that I luf it noght (‘object of wondering,’ Psalter; EWr. p. xlvi; in this meaning the noun occurs even in the late OE Aldhelm glosses; cf. NED wondering 2); — Þow be my hernyng (‘what I yearn for,’ EWr. 44); — my covaylyng (‘what I covet,’ EWr. 44); — Jhesu, all my joyng (‘the object of my joy,’ EWr. 104). Cf. Hope E. Allen’s edition of Rolle’s EWr., note on 22.85, p. 131, and Sisam, note a 5, p. 214. Another peculiarity of Rolle’s style is his frequent use of the verbal noun in -ing instead of an ordinary non-verbal noun: — how was it þat arwenesse of wommankynde or maydenhead schamynge ne hadde þe withdrawyn? (‘maiden modesty,’ EWr. 23); — þe sang of þi lovyn (‘love,’ EWr. 104). Perhaps there is something in the ing-ending which appealed to Rolle’s gentle, dreamy emotionality.

The Type ‘A-Hunting.’ — The verbal noun in -ing (-ung) preceded by the preposition on has been used since OE, where it occurs by the side of the type on + verbal noun in -oð (see p. 581). The OE Martyrology (2nd half of the 9th century) has þa he wæs on sawltunga (‘when he lay dying,’ 124; EETS 116), and Ælfric’s Colloquy contains the following dialogue: — were þu todæg on huntnoþe? Ic næs, forþam sunnan-daeg ys, ac gyrstan-daeg ic wæs on huntunge (‘fuisti hodie in venatione? Non fui quia dominicus est, sed hieri fui in venatione,’ 24). The phrase on -ing becomes increasingly common in ME and finally supersedes the on -eth type: — he wes on huntinge (Lawman A 6630); — on huntinge be they riden rotally (Ch. CT A Kn. 1687). The preposition often occurs in a weakened form (an 37 — Mustanoja
and a): — he wes an slaeting (Lawman A 12304); — þe king him rod an huntinge (Horn 646); — he koude . . . ride an haukyng (Ch. CT B Th. 1927); — þo sede Peter, 'ich wolle now a-fisshyng go anon,' and wende a-fissheþ (SPassion 2176); — thanne may he yit a-begging go (RRose 6726); — rode a-huntyng (Greg. Chron. 219). The phrase is used particularly after verbs of motion, to express the purpose or result of the motion.

The type to be a-doing enjoys its greatest popularity between 1500 and 1700. In a passive sense the type to be a-doing has been current since the 15th century (whiles her sheres be a gryndyng or amendyng, Bk London E 107 [1423]). The type to have a-making appears earlier: — we han a wyndowe a-wirchyng (PPL B iii 48).

Towards the end of the 13th century the preposition on begins to be replaced by in, probably under French influence (cf. pp. 386-7, 568, and 572), in active and passive uses: — þus was þe wrehche in mourninge (Infancy of Christ 749, quoted from Mossé Hist. II, p. 111); — ryght als his giftes were in gyuyng (RMannyng Chron. 11435); — in þe mene whyle þis chirch was in bylding (Mirk Fest. 177); — wyl þe lettyr was in wrytyng (MKempe 111); — whanne ever Biblis weren in writing (Pecock Repr. 251).

For the connection of these constructions with the modern ing-tenses see pp. 587-9 and 592.

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VERBAL NOUN IN -ETH

Verbal nouns in -aþ, -aþ occur not infrequently in OE (e.g., ic wylle gan on fixaþ; he ferde ut on huntaþ). The type survives in ME: — vor to wende an honteþ in þe nywe forest (RGlouc. 8639). In the 14th century -eþ is written -ed: — a day as seint Edward an hunted wende bi cas (RGlouc. 5840, MS C). In this form the noun seems to occur in such later ME instances as: — folk that gon a-begged (PPl. C ix 138); — he wolde ride a­maied (Gower CA i 2030); — this prest... goth a­straied (Gower CA v 145); — hir soules goon a­blakeberied (Ch. CT C Pard. 406); — forth she [the cat] wole . . . To shewe hir skyn and goon a-cater­wawed (Ch. CT D WB 354); — to goon a­begged in my kirtle bare (Ch. CT F Fkl. 1580). The phrases on (a)...-eth and on (a)...-ing, identical in meaning, are used side by side in some texts: — þo seide Peter, 'ich wolle now a­fissheyng go anon;' and wende a­fisheþ (SPassion 2176). From early ME on the type with -eth is obviously looked upon as rather stereotyped and old-fashioned and is finally superseded by the living and much more common type in -ing. For the reading an honteþ (hunted) in the quotation from RGlouc. 5840, two 15th-century MSS read an (on) huntynge.

A number of ME constructions with an . . . -ed have nothing to do with the verbal noun in -eth, being simply past participles with the prefix an- or a- (< of-); cf. pp. 549-50. Thus a hungred or an hungred, found in the 14th century and later, is only an advanced form of the OE past participle ofhyngred.
The phrase, found in the Revised Version of the Bible (e.g., *he was afterward an hungred*, Matthew iv 2), is a heritage from Tyndale through the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1557), and the Authorised Version.

It has been suggested that Chaucer's *I was go walked* (BD 387; also CT D Sum. 1778) is connected with the type *goon a-blakeberyed* (see above), but parallelism with *hes do weltit doun* (see p. 603) seems more likely; i.e., *was go walked* would seem to exemplify a semantic weakening of *go* (cf. pp. 557-8) and to be roughly equivalent to *was walked*. (*Walked* occurs with the auxiliary *be* in Chaucer: *Arcite unto the temple walked is*, CT A Kn. 2368.) Connection with German *er kam gelaufen*, current since MHG, is less likely.

Another construction which has been brought into connection with nouns in *-eth* is *heo goÞ fayteÞ wiÞ  heore  fauntes* ('they go begging,' PPl. A viii 77, Vernon MS; *gon fatten*, MS U and the B-text vii 94; *gooth a-faytyng*, C-text x 170);¹ but this construction may also be primarily due to a semantic weakening of *go* and be therefore comparable to the imperatives *gooth bryngeth* and *gooth walketh* discussed on p. 476.

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**STUDIES RELATING TO THE VERBAL NOUN IN **-eth**


— *Un cas d'ambiguïté syntactique en moyen-anglais: le type* I was wery forwandred,* EA V, 1952, 289-308. (On this article see L. Spitzer, *NM* LV, 1954, 161-77.)

Robinson's and Skeat's notes on Chaucer's CT C Pard. 406.


AUXILIARY VERBS AND VERBAL PERIPHRASES

For bibliographical information see —

Be, pp. 442-4 (passive), p. 509 (perfect and pluperfect tenses),
pp. 597-9 (be + -ing).
Have, p. 509 (perfect and pluperfect tenses).
Modal auxiliaries, pp. 471-3.
Auxiliaries of the future tense, p. 490.
Do, pp. 609-10.
Gin, p. 615.
Wurthe, p. 619.

BE

The bheu-root of the 'substantive verb' (i.e., to be, OE wesan/beon) is originally used to express future activity. This function is well preserved in OE, particularly earlier in the period, where the distinction between wesan and beon is carefully observed in the indicative. While the principal function of wesan is to express a state prevailing generally or at the time of speaking, that of beon is to express future or iterative activity. It is no doubt this use that accounts for the remarkably late appearance of the past participle been (end of the 11th century). For the use of be in OE and earliest ME cf. K. Jost, 'Beon' und 'Wesan:' eine syntaktische Untersuchung, AF XXVI, Heidelberg 1909.

Traces of this old use of the b-forms to express futurity occur in early ME and to some extent even later in the period:
— ne beo ich navere blipe (Lawman A 28218; worpe, B); — ase softe ase he is her, ase herd he biþ per, and ase milde ase he is nu her, ase sturne he biþ per (Ancre. 137). Instances with the second and third persons singular (best, bes, beth) are found even in later ME: — bileve so, or ïow beest nouȝt ysaved (PPl. B v 598).
For the use of *be* as an auxiliary of the passive see pp. 437-41.
For the use of *be* as an auxiliary of the perfect and pluperfect tenses see pp. 499-503.
For the use of *be* in the periphrasis *be* + *-ing* (*-ende*) see below.

PERIPHRASIS WITH *BE* + *-ING* (*-ENDE*)

*Principles of Use.* — Use in general, p. 593. — Periphrastic present and preterite used for the future, p. 597.
*Bibliography,* p. 597.

DEVELOPMENT AND OCCURRENCE

*Old English.* — Periphrastic tense forms consisting of *wesan/beon* and the present participle (e.g., *bið healdende, wæs sprecende*) are not infrequently found in OE prose, but only exceptionally in poetry. As in other Germanic languages, this periphrasis seems to owe its existence to the influence of Latin. It occurs mainly as an imitation of the Latin types *docens erat* (*wæs lærende*) and *locutus est* (*sprecende wæs*). Rare in classical Latin, the type *docens erat* becomes common in the writings of the Church Fathers. The OE periphrasis seems to have a durative meaning in instances like *Æpælwulf cyning... ferde to Rome... and þær wæs twelf monaþ wuniende, and þa him hamweard for* (OE Chron. an. 855). The durative colour is not infrequently emphasized by the addition of an adverb meaning 'always:' — *þæs modes storm, se symle bið cnysende þæt scip þære heortan* (Alfred Care 58). In numerous instances, however,
there is no implication of durativity, the periphrasis, it seems, being preferred to the simple verb form because it has a greater descriptive force, i.e., it makes the narrative more graphic (se mona deþ ægþer, ge wæcþ ge wanaþ: healþum monþe he biþ weaxende, healþum he biþ wanigende, Ælfric Hom. I 154; — his eagan weron fjyrene spearcan sprengende, Ælfric Hom. I 466), or simply because it is more emphatic, as in instances like þu hælend Crist, sy myltsiende mynre sawle and forgifende and adiligende mine synna and mine gillas (MS CCCC 201, fol. 116).

**Middle English.** — In early ME the occurrence of the periphrasis is limited, except, perhaps, in the North, and its dialectal distribution is very uneven. In late 13th-century texts written north of the Humber it is common. In Kent and the West Midlands it is used to some extent in the 13th century, but is almost non-existent in the southern area west of Kent and in the East Midlands, although, strikingly enough, the MED, under *ben* 9, quotes an early instance from the Peterborough Chronicle: — sumne æfen wæs gesæwen swilce se beam ongean-weardes wiþ þes steorran ward ðyrcliende wære (‘one evening it seemed as if the beam [of light] were flashing in the opposite direction towards the star,’ an. 1106). The variability of 13th-century usage is illustrated by scribal variants in MS Jesus Coll. Oxf. 29, executed shortly after 1276 in Worcestershire. The copy of the *Proverbs of Alfred* contained in this MS has two instances of the periphrastic present of *wax* (nys no w[u]rt wexynde a wude ne a welde, 161; — if hit so bityeþ þat þu bern ibidest, þe hwile hit is lutel, ler him mon-þewes, þanne hit is wexynde, hit schal wende þarto, 229). The Maidstone (E Midl.) and Trinity Coll. (probably W Midl., copied from an E Midl. MS) copies read *woxin* (past participle) for *wexynde* on both occasions. The copy of *The Owl and the Nightingale* preserved in the same Jesus Coll. MS has likewise an instance of the periphrastic present (hwanne ic iseo þer sum wrecchede Is cumynde neyh, inoh ic grede, 1220), while the version in
MS Cotton Calig. A ix (written about or before 1250, with a Mercian colouring) reads *wan ich iseo ūat sum wrechede Is manne neh*. These quotations, and the occurrence of the periphrasis in Lawman A (*alle his hird-men fervore murnende weoren*, 18183) and in the Cotton Nero MS of *Ancræne Riwle*, lend support to F. Mossé's statement (*Hist. de la forme périphr. II*, p. 32) that the periphrasis is an established feature in the early ME dialect of Worcesterhire.

In the 14th century the use of the periphrasis increases steadily. In addition to being common in the North, it becomes current in the central parts of the Midlands (Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire) and spreads to the East Midlands and London. It does not seem to make any progress in the West Midlands, but in Kentish it remains firmly established. In the course of the 15th century the periphrasis becomes current in all dialectal areas.

The periphrasis occurs particularly with certain verbs of rest, such as *dwell, last, live* and *wone*, of motion, such as *come* and *go*, and of speaking, although its use is by no means restricted to these verbs: — *wes folc wuniende* (Lawman A 1161; *wonen men libbende*, B); — *the king apon the land Was gangand up and doun* (Barbour iv 633); — *zif ani cumpt . . . and is spekende sot wordes* (Vices & V 101).

In ME poetry the periphrasis is frequently found in rhyme. In Chaucer's earlier poetry the periphrasis occurs in rhyme more frequently than in his later poems.

**Theories Concerning the Development of the Mod. E Periphrasis.** — In the course of the 13th century the ending of the participle, -inde, -ende, becomes -ing in the southern and central parts of the country (for this development see p. 547), with the result that the participial ending becomes identical in form with the ending of the verbal noun. Consequently the nature of the *ing*-form used in conjunction with *be* has been the subject of much scholarly discussion.

Earlier grammarians, among them Sweet (II, p. 96), took for
Periphrasis with *Be* + *-ing* (-ende)  

granted that the Mod. E type *he was writing* is a natural continuation of the OE combination of *been/wesan* with the present participle (*wæs feohhtende*, etc.). This was contested by a number of grammarians, above all by Jespersen in his early writings and H. Poutsma (*Characters of the English Verb*, p. 95), who believed that the Mod. E periphrasis went back essentially to the construction *be* + the preposition *on* + the verbal noun in *-ing*; the preposition became reduced to *a* and was eventually dropped (*he is on hawking* > *he is a-hawking* > *he is hawking*; for a discussion of the type *a-hawking* see p. 577-8). The supporters of this theory, pointing out the low frequency of the periphrasis in the earlier ME period, thought that the Mod. E construction can hardly be a direct continuation of the OE one. They also emphasized the functional dissimilarities between the Mod. E and the OE periphrases. Jespersen’s later views are touched upon later in this discussion.

According to the view prevailing at present the Mod. E periphrasis arose in a fusion of the two types, participial (*is speaking* < *is spekende*) and gerundial (*is a-coming*). Among the supporters of this theory are the editors of the *NED* (s.v. *be*) and Ph. Aronstein (*Anglia* XLII, 1918, 7). These scholars refer to the formal assimilation of the present participle and the verbal noun in the course of the 13th century, which caused the disappearance of many functional differences, and to the dropping of the *a*- before the verbal noun (*a-coming > coming*; see above and pp. 549 and 592). Three more recent authorities (C. R. Goedsche, *JEGP* XXXI, 1932, 476-7, A. Åkerlund, *SN* IX, 1936-7, 13, and F. Mossé, *Hist. de la forme périphr.* II, pp. 127-8) feel that the periphrasis goes back primarily to the OE participial construction, but admit that the verbal noun (*he is a-writing*) has had some contributory influence upon the development of the modern type. Mossé finds that the frequency of the type *to be a-doing* has never been very high as compared with that of the type *to be doing*. At the time when the type *to be a-doing* is most popular (between 1500 and 1700), its average
frequency is only some ten per cent of that of the *to be doing* type. Late forms with the present participle, like those in Gower (e.g., *he geth ... Ayein the Greks that ben comende*, CA ii 1807) and the Paston Letters (e.g., *wemen which were mylkand kye*, I 98 [a 1450]), speak in favour of this view, as does the occurrence of the participial form in early and modern Scots (*was gangand; — they war dansand aa threuw uther, an' syc dansin' aa never saa ajuore*). It may be added that since the first appearance of his *Growth* (1905) Jespersen has somewhat modified his opinion in the matter and accepted the 'blending' theory. He admits that the periphrasis is a continuation of the old combination of *to be* with the participle in *-ende*, but after this participial ending had been changed into *-inge*, he says, an amalgamation took place between this construction and the combination *be on* + the verbal noun, in which *on* had become *a* and was eventually dropped. This amalgamation, Jespersen believes, accounts for the great increase in the use of the periphrasis.

In a recent discussion of the problem, Ingerid Dal (*Norsk Tidskrift for Sprogvidenskap* XVI, 1952, 100) advocates the old theory that the modern type *he is writing* goes back primarily to the gerundial construction. She argues that OE had two parallel periphrases, *he wæs feohtende* (participle) and *he wæs on feohtinge* (verbal noun), the former belonging to literary style, the latter being a feature of popular usage. The later (ME and Mod. E) type *is doing* is essentially a continuation of the OE construction with the verbal noun, although it owes its form partly to the participial type, with which it came to be confused in some measure. Thus the ME and Mod. E types *is doing* and *is a-doing* have the same origin, the popular OE type *he is on feohtinge*, the former having only

undergone some modification through the influence of the literary type *he is feohhtende*, which eventually disappeared from the language. The main weakness of this theory is that there is little documentary evidence to support it, our knowledge of OE popular usage being practically non-existent.

**Foreign Influences.** — As stated at the beginning of this chapter (p. 584), the OE periphrasis seems to have originated under the influence of medieval Latin. This influence makes itself felt also in ME translations from Latin, although it is far less obvious than in OE. In the Wyclifite translation of the Bible, for example, less than one-third of the Latin constructions of the *docens erat* type are rendered by the periphrastic verb form. On the other hand the type *is doing* is occasionally employed in biblical translations to render the simple Latin participle: — *noght sal I drede thousand ofe folke ar me umgyvand* ('*non timebo millia populi circumdantis me*,’ Surtees Psalter iii 6).

Einenkel (*Syntax*, p. 6) believes that the development of the modern type *was fighting* from the OE participial construction (*wæs feohhtende*) would have been out of the question without the supporting influence of the corresponding Old French periphrasis. That OF has had some influence on the periphrasis in ME is very probable. Imitation of the OF type is to be assumed, for example, in many instances where the participle is of the French type (*-ant*): — *the grete tour ... Was evene joynant to the gardyn wol* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1060); — *to be conversawnt with wymmen* (Lavynham Tretys 22). Exactly how far the type *est chantant*, current in French down to the 18th century, has played a part in the development of the Mod. E type it is difficult to say. There are some striking points of contact between the OF and ME usages. Thus in OF the construction *est chantant* often has a durative meaning ('is singing'), but by no means always, and in an instance like *ele estoit son pere cremanz* (Le Vair Palefroi, ed. Långfors, 222) the meaning is simply 'she was afraid of her father,' the expression being
thus of the emphatic, descriptive type current in OE and ME (see below, pp. 593-6). On the other hand the type with estre (est chantant) is less frequent in OF literature than the type with aler (pa chantant; for the corresponding ME construction see p. 558). For the OF construction see G. Gougenheim, *Étude sur les périphrases verbales de la langue française*, Univ. of Paris diss. 1929, pp. 36-49.

It has also been suggested by a number of grammarians (e.g., A. G. Hamel, *E Studien* XLV, 1912, 275, W. Keller, *Palaestra* CXLVII, 1925, 55-66, W. Preusler, *IF* LVI, 1938, 181, and Ingerid Dal, *Norsk Tidskrift for Sprogvidenskap* XVI, 1952, 107-16) that the type is doing is due or at any rate owes much to Celtic influence. It is true that the abundant use of the periphrasis in the modern English dialects of Wales, Ireland, and Scotland suggests considerable Celtic influence on present-day English in these particular areas. Unfortunately the data so far available on OE, ME, and medieval Gaelic and Welsh syntax are too scanty to allow any conclusions on this point. There might be something to say for Keller's (p. 66) and Miss Dal's assertions (pp. 115 and 116) that the ancient Britons were not exterminated but became amalgamated with the Germanic invaders and assumed their language while retaining some syntactical peculiarities of their ancient native tongue, but such statements remain necessarily hypothetical for lack of documentary evidence.

**TENSE, MOOD, ETC.**

**TENSES.** — In OE the periphrasis has two tenses, the present and the preterite (is sprecende, wæs sprecende). Other tenses appear much later. The first unambiguous instances of the perfect are recorded in Chaucer (we han ben waitynge al this fourtenyght, CT A Kn. 929), but it is not until the last decades of the 15th century that the ing-perfect becomes somewhat more frequent. An instance of the pluperfect is found in *Cursor Mundi* (þof he thre daís had fastand bene O mete and drinc,
Periphrasis with Be + -ing (-ende) 591

5254), but apart from this isolated case no instances are attested until the 16th century. The future with shall is current in northern texts at the end of the 13th century: — þas ofer seven nede nett Bitakens seven yer of hunger grett þat alþer nest sal be folwand (Cursor 4597). Outside northern and Scottish writings it remains rare long after the close of the ME period. No instance of shall with the be-periphrasis occurs in Chaucer. In conjunction with will the periphrasis is likewise rare, though attested in as early a text as Vices and Virtues (mann þe wel wile bien riwisinde, ne rewe him nauht ane hise sennes, ac ȝet þat [he] for h[is] zemelaste ne hafþ god gedon, 121). For the future-in-the-past, the use of the periphrastic form with should parallels that with shall, with the exception that it is first found in an early text: — he and his fader hine scolden luvi en and mid him wuniende bien (Vices & V 37). It is well represented in northern and Scottish texts. Would, attested since the 14th century, remains rare: — aȝyn Penda wolde he stande, For hym nold he be fleande (RMannyng Chron. 16120; non-temporal use of would).

The OE and early ME use of the b-forms of be to express futurity (see p. 583) is reflected in instances like ne biest þu naht hier lange wunizende (Vices & V 103).

Imperative. — In OE a periphrastic imperative is occasionally used for emphasis in prayers and the like: — beoþ a symble eow gebiddende (‘sine intermissione orate,’ MS Junius 121, fol. 55b). This usage continues through the ME period: — bi nihte beoþ fleoinde ant sechinde ouwer soule heovenliche vode (Anocr. 67); — bieþ mildeciende (‘estote misericordes,’ Vices & V 75); — bes wakand ai in orisun (Cursor 15665, Cotton MS). The construction goes out of use in the 16th century. The periphrastic imperative with let is first recorded in Chaucer: — lat now no hevy thought Ben hangyng in the herites of yow tweye (TC iii 1140).

Infinitive and Participle. — The (present) infinitive has been recorded since the 13th century: — eihte þinges . . . laþieþ
us to wakien ... and beon wurcynnde (Anctr. 63). The earliest instance of the periphrastic present participle is attested in late ME: — I beinge in my ware housse ... ther being bessy broschynge sowche clothys (Ellis Letters II i 140).

PASSIVE. The modern passive type the church is being built does not make its appearance until the early 19th century.

In OE and ME there are occasional attempts to use the type is building for the passive (the church is building). This becomes a common practice between the 16th and the 19th centuries. According to some grammarians the starting-point for this kind of passive expression is the type is in building or is a-building (see pp. 577-8), but its real background seems to be the natural indifference of the non-finite forms of the verb to voice. The OE examples are rare and somewhat doubtful (e.g., heono dead wes ferende sunu ancende moderis his, 'ecce defunctus efferebatur filius unicus matris suae,' Lindisfarne Gospels 7.12; cf. M. Callaway Jr, Studies in the Syntax of the Lindisfarne Gospels, Baltimore, 1918, p. 185). A few instances are recorded in northern and E Midland texts of the later ME period: — ðere er dedis doand neu ðat ðai agh sare with resun reu (Cursor 26812, Cotton MS); — of Corni and Waille, ðat was wynnyng, Hadde Cornewaille þe name gynnyng (RMannyng Chron. 1877); — my mighte and my mayne es all marrande ('are being destroyed,' York Play in E Mir. Plays [Pollard] 92).

The type, however, does not become current until the 16th century.

'To Be Going To.' — This expression, used extensively in present-day English to indicate that the action is going to take place in the near future as planned by the person or persons in question, emerges in writing at the end of the ME period. The earliest instance quoted in the NED dates from about 1482: — thys onhappy sowle ... was goynq to be broughte into helle for the synne and onlefual lustys of her body (Monk of Evesham 43 [NED go 47 b]). An earlier instance is Philip ... Was going
Periphrasis with Be + -ing (-ende) 593

too þe over Greece (Alis. Macedoine 901), where þe may stand for OE þeon »to prosper in war.« The passage is, however, somewhat obscure, as pointed out by F. P. Magoun Jr, in The Gests of King Alexander of Macedon, Cambridge, Mass., 1929, p. 229. Skeat emends þe into ride.

'To Be Doing Of'. — The earliest recorded instance of this construction, which occurs, e.g., in Shakespeare (I was writing of my epitaph, Timon V i 183), dates from the beginning of the 15th century: — eny . . . offre that were moderinge of your hoole title (Proc. Privy Council II 141; NED). It may go back to the type on + verbal noun (he was on building of a house > he was a-building of a house > he was building of a house). Another possibility is that it is due to a contamination between the types he is building a house and he is in building of a house (I am yn beldyng of a pore hous, Paston I 510 [1462?]).

Parallel Constructions. — The periphrasis is doing has obvious points of contact with ME constructions like goes imagining, goes fasting, comes riding, lies weeping, etc. (discussed on pp. 556-8), where the finite verb has been reduced into a mere auxiliary. These, again, can be brought into connection with the OE use of a plain infinitive of manner with certain verbs, like cuman, fleon, stondan, and liegan (ME cam renne; see pp. 536-7). All these constructions have parallels in other Germanic and Romance languages (he is riding — he goth fasting — he cometh ride — F il est chantant — il va chantant — nous fûmes chasser — G er ist fischen — ich war ihn suchen, etc.).

Principles of Use

Two things are particularly to be taken into consideration in interpreting the ME use of the periphrasis be + -ing (-ende).

(1) An implication of imperfectivity (durativity) 1 is naturally associated with the periphrasis.

1 For the terms 'imperfective' and 'durative' see pp. 445-8.

38 — Mustanoja
The implication of imperfectivity (durativity) does not, however, seem to be the main reason for the use of this construction. In the large majority of instances, if not in all, its use seems to be due primarily to a desire to describe the action in a more graphic and forceful way. The periphrasis, being longer and therefore weightier than the simple tense form, is well suited for this purpose. That this is the primary reason for the use of the construction is suggested by the numerous OE instances where the periphrasis has only a very weak durative force or none at all.

One reason for the use of the periphrastic present is a desire to describe in a vivid and emphatic way events that are happening at the moment of speaking: — Constantes chyltere, þat ar comand, þat sone schul aryven here on land (RMannyng Chron. 8237); — this ground on which we been ridynge (Ch. CT G CY 623); — now is gode Gawyn goande ryȝt here (Gaw. & GK 2214). The preterite and the historical present forms of the periphrasis are used to show that an event was happening at a given moment of past time, or at a time when another event happened: — fraward folk... Said þat Moyses was slain,... And oþer sum said þat he was livand and in live sulde be (Cursor 6491); — thus forth he geth... Ayein the Greks that ben comende (Gower CA ii 1807; hist. present); — he speke with wemen which were mylkand kye (Paston I 98 [a 1450]).

The notion of the permanence of an action or state is brought out in a vivid way by using the periphrasis. The time-sphere of the action is frequently defined by ay, alway(s), ever, or some other adverb or adverbial phrase with a similar meaning: — þis gifte of wonderfulle swetnes, þe whilk waxes not soure thurgh þe corrupciouns of þis werld, bot is ay lastand in þe dignite of it (RRolle EWr. 5); — syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day (Ch. CT A Prol. 91). It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between this periphrasis and the predicative use of a participle of a predominantly adjectival character expressing
Periphrasis with Be + -ing (-ende)

a permanent quality (e.g., of alle men was he mest meke, Lauh-winde ay, and bliþe of speke, Havelok 946).

Closely related to the notion of permanence is that of continual, frequent, or habitual occurrence: — Demetrius, which ofte aboute Ridende was, stod that time oute (Gower CA ii 1646); — him Þow te meryer to be conversawnt with wymmen Þan with clerkis (Lavynham Tretys 22). Occasionally this iterative aspect is emphasized by the presence of will or would: — comunly she wyl never blynne, But ever be brennyng yn here synne (RMannyng HS 1734); — wulde Þei bydde hym sytte or stande, Ever he wolde be bowande (RMannyng HS 5834).

As in OE, there are numerous cases in ME where the implication of durativity or imperfectivity has obviously played no essential part in the choice of the periphrastic form. The periphrasis, for example, is frequently used in geographical descriptions. It is true that in such cases the action described is permanent in character (e.g., the flod is Into the grete See rennende, Gower CA vii 567); yet the real reason for the use of the periphrasis can hardly have been a desire to call attention to the permanence of the action but rather a desire to make the description more graphic.¹ The same applies to cases like wes folc wuniende (Lawman A 1161; weren men libbende, B). In many instances the insignificance of the durative notion is even more apparent: — in his sight sal be falland Alle þat doune stiþhen in land ('in conspectu eius cadent omnes qui descendunt in terram,' Surtees Psalter xxi 30); — na wonder gyf I syghand be (RRolle EWr. 47); — we holden on the Crysten fegth and are byleyng in Jhesu Cryste (Caxton Blanch. 112).

In they fonde three of the kynges of Frysys servantes, to whom they asked to whom belongeth that paleys . . . The sayd thre men answerd them wyth grete fere that the paleyece and the ysle was belongyng unto the Kynge of Fryse (Caxton Blanch. 112) the

¹ One must bear in mind, however, that in poetry the choice of the verbal form may be largely due to metrical reasons.
periphrastic form *was belonging* is roughly comparable to *did belong*. This agrees with the observation of F. Mossé (*Hist. de la forme périph.* II, p. 248) that between 1500 and 1650 the emphatic, descriptive *ing*-periphrasis competes with the auxiliary *do* in affirmative statements.

Even taking into consideration the fact that the interpretation of the aspect of the ME periphrasis with *-ing (-ende)* is often difficult, its use for emphasis and vivid, forceful description of events is obviously much more general than some grammarians are willing to admit. M. Deutschbein (*System*, p. 74), echoing A. Åkerlund (*History*; see bibliography), believes that the use of the periphrasis for emphasis ('intensive use') is very rare in ME, while F. Gerike (see bibliography) finds that Chaucer, for example, uses the periphrasis mainly for emphasis.

The use of the periphrasis for emphasis and vivid description of events continues after the close of the ME period. K. Brunner (*E Studies* XXXVI, 1955, 218-21) finds that Shakespeare does not use the periphrasis primarily for the implication of durativity, but 'as describing action or event and placing it as important in the centre of interest.' Practically the same definition, only in different terms, has been given by C. A. Bodelsen for present-day English (*E Studien* LXXI, 1936-7, 220-38). Bodelsen believes that while the simple tense form is used in statements of fact and in expressing what is habitual or of general validity, the periphrastic tense form is used to describe the actions themselves. That the primary reason for the use of the periphrasis in present-day English remains essentially the same as in ME (emphasis, vividness, etc.) is shown by current expressions like *I am telling you the truth; I am forgetting*, and *I really must be getting home.*

1 The fact that in present-day English, where the periphrasis can be studied in the light of intonation, it has been possible to distinguish a variety of emotional uses does not in any way contradict what has been said in this discussion.
Periphrastic Present and Preterite Used for the Future. — There is an instance in *Piers Plowman* where the periphrastic present has been interpreted as standing for the pure future: — *but holychirche and hij holde better togideres, The most myschief on molde is mountyng wel faste* (Prol. 67). Skeat translates the passage as 'except Holy Church and they [the friars] hold better together, the greatest mischief on earth will be increasing very fast.'

An instance of the use of the periphrastic preterite for the future-in-the-past is *yeit was noght commen þat dai þat he him wald to ded be don, þof it was cummand efter son* (Cursor 14543, Cotton MS).

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF THE PERIPHRASIS

*BE + -ING (-ENDE)*


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HAVE, CAN, AND MAY

'HAVE.' — The use of have to express obligation dates from OE. It is common in ME: — ha we noght þærto do (Cursor 16487, Cotton MS). Cf. also p. 531.

For the use of have as an auxiliary of the perfect and pluperfect tenses see pp. 499-503.

'CAN' AND 'MAY.' — All through ME can is used in the old meaning 'to know, to know how:' — I ne can ne I ne mai tellen alle þe wunder ('I do not know how to, nor am I able,' OE Chron. an. 1137); — she koude muche of wandrynge by the weye (Ch. CT A Prol. 467). In the course of ME it acquires the meaning 'to be able:' — a mayden . . . so yung þat sho ne couþe Gon on fote (Havelok 112). The use of can to express possibility is recorded from early ME on: — ic am sonder man, Egipte folc me knowen can (Gen. & Ex. 2872).

May has been used to express ability and possibility since OE. It has an infinitive and (in the 15th and 16th centuries) a past participle.

For the use of can and may (could and might) as modal auxiliaries see pp. 453-70.

SHALL AND WILL

CONSuetudinal 'WILL' AND 'SHALL.' — Since early OE will and would have been used to express the iterative aspect, i.e., to indicate the recurring or habitual character of an activity.
ME examples: — for as the sonne wole the fyr disteyne, So passeth al my lady sovereyne (Ch. LGW 274); — do alwey so as wommen wol thee rede (Ch. CT E Mch. 1361); — a fyr of sponys and love of gromys ful soun woll be att an ende (Good Wife Pilgr. 42); — gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche (Ch. CT A Prol. 308). The consuetudinal use of shall is somewhat less easy to distinguish from the ordinary use of this verb as a temporal and modal auxiliary. For OE cf. Wülfing II, p. 31. A few ME examples where shall seems to have consuetudinal force: — Ysaac was leid þat auter on, So men sulden holocaust don (Gen. & Ex. 1326); — I am biknowen þere konnyng clerkes shul clokke bihynde (PPl. B iii 34); — thou schalt not fynde expresseli in holt scripture that the Newe Testament schulde be write in Englisch tunge to lay men (Pecock Repr. 119).

For the use of shall and will as auxiliaries of the future tense see pp. 489-96.

For their use as modal auxiliaries see pp. 453-70.

DO


Bibliography, p. 609.

Do occurs both as an independent verb with full meaning and as an auxiliary in various constructions. Similar uses are recorded, e.g., in Old and Middle High German (tuon), Middle Dutch (doen), medieval Latin (facere), and Old French

1 Cf. particularly E. Weiss, 'Tun — machen:' Bezeichnungen für die kausative und die periphrastische Funktion im Deutschen bis um 1400, Stockholmer germanistische Forschungen I, Stockholm 1956.
(faire).\(^1\) In the following account the independent functions of do will receive attention only so far as they throw light on the development of its auxiliary uses.

**Vicarious 'Do.'** — Some earlier authorities, such as Sweet (II, p. 88), believed that the auxiliary do originated in what may be called the vicarious or pro-verbal use of this verb (i.e., in its use as a substitute of another verb), attested from OE on:\(^2\) — he gefor eac on þæm ilcan tune þe his fæder dyde (Alfred Oros. 264); — I have him knawen And sal do ever (Cursor 13950, Fairfax MS); — he sleep nameore than dooth a nyghtyngale (Ch. CT A Prol. 98); — he wex as wroth as wynde; So did alle þat þer were (Gaw. & GK 319).

**Causative 'Do.'** — The rare causative use of do\(^3\) in OE is perhaps due to Latin influence. In ME the causative do seems to be favoured in the eastern parts of the country, while make and let seem to prevail in the West. The causative verb preferred in the more northern areas is ger. The dialectal difference in the use of do and make is discernible in the 13th century, but may have existed even earlier. Examples: — he dide himm etenn þær (Orm. 12330); — do hem fle (Havelok 2600); — þair silver he tok and gave þam corn And to þair ine did it be born (Cursor 4856, Cotton MS); — and al hys halles I wol do peynte with pure gold (Ch. BD 259); — holy cherche ayein he wroghte Into franchise, and doth restore The popes lost (Gower CA Prol. 761); — and doth his ladi t'understonde (Gower CA ii 815); — muchel luvede he us þet lette makien swuche þurles in him (Ancr. 131); — seoruh-

\(^1\) Cf. particularly G. Gougenheim, *Étude sur les périphrases verbales de la langue française*, Univ. of Paris diss. 1929, pp. 330-58.

\(^2\) Sweet, *loc. cit.*, also calls attention to the related anticipatory use of do, in cases like *se mona deþ ægðer, ge wiext ge wanaþ* 'the moon does both: waxes and wanes.'

\(^3\) I.e., the use of do in the same sense as make is used in cases like *they made him go* and *they made us stay.*
For the use of causative do and let with the infinitives of do and another verb (dide doon sleen, let do wryten) see p. 605 below.

It is not impossible that the causative use of OF faire, found in continental and Anglo-Norman texts (besoing fait vielle troter; — les treis chastels fist enforcer), has strengthened the position of do and make as causatives in ME. Cf. p. 604, note 1.

Causative do falls into disuse as the purely periphrastic use of the verb (see below) gains ground. In the East, particularly, where in early ME do is current in causative function, this verb has to give way to causative make and cause in late ME. It is possible, as suggested by A. Ellegård (see bibliography), p. 108, that the disappearance of the causative do is in some measure connected with the increasing occurrence of this verb in periphrastic function.

Periphrastic 'Do.' — 'Periphrastic do' is a term applied to the use of this verb in a relatively colourless and unemphatic periphrasis seemingly equivalent to a simple finite form (he did come — he came). How far such a periphrasis is really equivalent to the simple tense form of the verb it is difficult to say, but there is good reason to assume that the use of the periphrastic do is rather similar to that of gin in the periphrastic preterite (see pp. 610-15); the two periphrases even seem to compete with one another (p. 614). Like gin, the periphrastic do seems to be used in poetry largely to allow the poet to place the infinitive of the main verb at the end of the line: — Fos me clupeþ þilke wei þat bi mani a god toun deþ wende (RGlouc. 179); — whan Phebus doth his bryghte bemes sprede (Ch. TC ii 54); — unto the mayde that hir doth serve (RRose 2697). At the same time, however, it somehow seems to intensify the force of the main verb; this is probably the case in the quotations above, and in many other instances, e.g., þou dost hym bere fals wytnes (RMannyng HS 641), I leve lelly . . . þat
pardoun and pennaunc and preyeres don save soules (PPl. B vii 177), and þey worshipped þe sonne whanne he dede arise ('solem ubi oriebatur adorantes,' Trev. Higd. iv 327). But there are also instances where the intensifying force of the periphrastic do seems to be practically non-existent.

In the perfect the periphrastic do is less common: — þis ge knowe now all and have don here ('have heard,' Cov. Plays 283.339);¹ — the lark hes done þe mirry day proclame (The Thistle and the Rose, in Smith Specimens, p. 28, line 17). According to the NED, do 31, 16th-century Scottish poets favour this particular periphrastic construction, just as they favour present participles of the type doand proclame, periphrastic futures like shall doe execute, etc. A particularly stereotyped use of the weakened do after auxiliary have is seen in this Murranus the renis and the thetis Quharwyth hys stedis zokkit war in thretis, Undyr the quhelis hes do weltit doun (Douglas En. IV 134,1). Cf. I was go walked, p. 582.

Several authorities, among them J. F. Royster, MP XII, 1914-15, 449-56, S. Moore, MLN XXXIII, 1918, 385-94, and R. Hittmair (see bibliography), believe that the periphrastic do appears first in the East Midlands. V. Engblom (see bibliography) suggests the South or South-west and A, Ellegård (see bibliography) the South-west and West. Periphrastic do is well attested in late 13th-century western and south-western poetry, but in eastern verse it does not appear until the 14th century. The construction is by no means common in Chaucer, who seems to prefer periphrastic gin (see pp. 610-15). The earliest prose instances of periphrastic do date from c 1400, but the construction remains uncommon down to the end of the 15th century, being rarer in the East than in the West. The Paston Letters contain few instances of periphrastic do. In Caxton’s early works it is much less frequent than in his later products. It is not found in the prose written in the North during the 15th century, and it remains comparatively rare in the northern

¹ Cf. H. Kökeritz, MLN LXIV, 1949, 89.
prose works of the 16th and 17th centuries. In the more southern areas the popularity of periphrastic do increases rapidly during the first half of the 16th century. After the middle of this century its use becomes somewhat more restricted in affirmative statements, but is still quite frequent about 1600. In statements of this kind the unemphatic periphrastic do goes out of use towards the end of the 17th century, while its emphatic variety (see below) has survived to the present day.

The origin of the periphrastic do has been the subject of a great deal of discussion. Several scholars, among them H. Koziol (see bibliography), are convinced that the periphrastic do is essentially a feature of colloquial usage and goes back primarily to an intensifying use of this verb. This is contested by others, including A. Ellegård, who thinks that the periphrastic do is rather literary in origin and has developed from the weakened causative do.

It has also been suggested that the periphrastic do is an imitation of the corresponding OF use of faire. This suggestion is based mainly on A. Tobler, who in his Vermischte Beiträge zur französischen Grammatik I, 3rd ed., Leipzig 1921, pp. 20-24, finds that OF faire followed by an infinitive often loses its causative meaning and becomes a mere periphrastic auxiliary (e.g., il se repeyre, ne firt plus demorer, Anglo-Norman Boeve de Haumtone 2523, ed. A. Stimming). 1

1 A. Stimming, Der anglonormannische Boeve de Haumtone, Bibl. Normannica VII, Halle 1899, note on line 230, and E. Burghardt, Über den Einfluss des Englischen auf das Anglonormannische, SEP XXIV, Halle 1906, pp. 33-51, believe that the AN periphrastic faire is an imitation of the ME periphrastic do. This view is accepted by G. Gougenheim in his Étude sur les périphrases verbales de la langue française, Univ. of Paris diss. 1929, p. 331, but contested by A. Ellegård (see bibliography), who finds that most examples adduced by Stimming and Burghardt can be interpreted as more or less weakened uses of causative faire. Later, reviewing Ellegård's monograph in Le Français Moderne XXII, 1954, 222-3, Gougenheim modifies his opinion on this point and
W. Preusler, *IF* LVI, 1938, 181-3, and LVII, 1939-40, 140-41, believes that the rise of periphrastic *do* is due to Celtic influence. Preusler supports his argument by referring to the periphrastic use of a verb meaning 'do' in modern Welsh. The possibility might be worth a closer examination, although the evidence so far produced does not make it at all certain that the Celtic construction plays even a contributory role in the development of the English periphrasis.

Before proceeding to discuss the emphatic periphrastic *do*, two special types of construction must be briefly examined.

**Causative 'Do' and 'Let' Followed by 'Do' + Infinitive.**

The causatives *do* and *let* are occasionally followed by two infinitives, of *do* and the principal verb: — *he did Harald body do drawe up also titie And sīfen into Temse his body did he kest* ('le cors le ray Harald de terre fist lever et pust le fist getter Parfound en Tamys,' RMannyng Langtoft 54); — *and thus he dide doon sleen hem alle thre* (Ch. CT D Sum. 2042); — *he leet the feeste of his nativitee Doon cryen thurghout Sarray his citee* (Ch. CT F Sq. 45-6); — *and let do wryten othre newe* (i.e., *lettres*, Gower CA ii 958); — *the vessel . . . With clene water of the welle . . . he let do felle* ('fill,' Gower CA ii 3448); — *and let do crien al aboute* (Gower CA ii 3468).

**'Hath Done' Followed by a Past Participle.**

The ME instances where the perfect tense *hath done* is followed by the past participle of the principal verb are assumed to be characteristic of uneducated usage (A. Ellegård, p. 143), but the construction occurs repeatedly in Chaucer and Gower: — *an oratorie . . . Hath Theseus doon wroght in noble wyse* (Ch. CT A Kn. 1913); — *thise marchantz han doon fraught hir shippes newe* (Ch. CT B ML 171); — *but God . . . And youre benyngne fader . . . Hath doon yow kept* (Ch. CT E Cl. 1098);

agrees with Ellegård that the OF causative *faire*, weakening into a periphrastic auxiliary, may have promoted the development of the auxiliary *do* in ME.
— *he hath do slain* (Gower CA ii 1799). The construction is in certain respects comparable to the type *he haven herd told* (see p. 554). Roughly parallel constructions are common in the language of uneducated American English speakers: — was done told me; they done stripped 'em all of souvenirs; when they done upperrated on you (Norman Mailer *The Naked and the Dead*).

**Emphatic Periphrastic 'Do.'** — It is difficult to assess the degree of emphasis in the ME uses of periphrastic *do*, and it may be assumed that there is a great deal of variation between individual cases. There is nothing to indicate, for example, that the *do*-periphrasis is unemphatic in cases like *þou dost hym bere fals wytnes* (RMannyng HS 641) and *I leve lelly... þat pardoun and penaunce and preyers don save soules* (PPL. B vii 177). Yet unambiguous cases of emphatic periphrastic *do* are not recorded until the 15th century: — *and the mayre, seynge that hys place was occupyd, hylde hym contente and went home agayne without mete or drynke or any thonke, but rewarde hym he dyd as hys dygnyte requyryd of the cytté* (Greg. Chron. 222).

The emphatic *do* becomes common in the 16th century. For the rivalry between it and the emphatic *ing*-periphrasis in the 16th and 17th centuries see p. 596. While the unemphatic or only lightly emphatic periphrastic *do* disappears in affirmative statements towards the end of the 17th century, emphatic *do* is used even today (*she does like you*, etc.).

There is some variance of opinion concerning the origin of the

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1 The type under discussion has also been brought into connection with the alleged use of *did* and *made* with the preterite of the principal verb. Yet the classical example of this type, *Thalestris... did wroot to kyng Alexandre* (Trev. Higd. I 155), when examined by the present writer, turned out to be a misprint in the printed edition, the MS (St John's College, Cbg.) reading simply *Thalestris... wroot to kyng Alexandre*. As for the Grek *Synon... Made the hors broght into Troye* (Ch. HF 155), *broght* is best interpreted as a past participle used as a predicate accusative,
emphatic *do*. It has been assumed, for example, that it originates in the vicarious or pro-verbal use (see above). On the other hand it is natural to assume that the emphatic and the unemphatic (lightly emphatic) uses of periphrastic *do* represent the same original functions of this verb.

The OE and ME emphatic *do* occurs frequently with affirmative imperatives: — *zi† þi luve nis nout for to gíven, auh wult allegate þet þe bugge hire, do sei‡ hwu: o‡er mid o‡er luve, o‡er mid sumhwat elles* (Ancr. 181); — *dos techez me of your wýtle Whil my lorde is fro home* (Gaw. & GK 1533). The use survives in present-day English. For the use of *do* in negative imperatives see below.

'DO' IN NEGATIONS AND QUESTIONS. — From the Mod. E point of view the most important aspect in the use of periphrastic *do* is its occurrence in negative and interrogative sentences, including negative imperatives.

The development of *do* in negations and questions takes place mainly after the ME period, but it begins in late ME. An early case of *do* in a question occurs in Chaucer's poetry: — *his yonge sone . . . Unto hym seyde, 'Fader, why do ye wepe?"* (CT B Mk. 3622). There are prose instances dating from the 15th century: — *and my maister dyd not graunt it* (Paston I 369 [1456]); — *fadir, wherynne þan doo þ a man and his soule passe alle beestis and her soulis?* (Pecock Donet 11).

In spite of numerous attempts to explain why the use of periphrastic *do* comes to be restricted to negative and interrogative sentences, the reasons for this development are far from being fully clarified. It seems, however, that the phenomenon is somehow connected with word-order, possibly with a desire to avoid inversion.

1 This is to be distinguished from the cases where the causative or periphrastic *do* is followed not by the imperative but by the infinitive of the principal verb, such as *to pieces do me drawe and sithen honge* (Ch. TC i 833).

2 A brief review of the theories is given by A. Ellegård, p. 154.
Occurrence of Periphrastic 'Do' 1400-1700. — The diagram below, drawn up according to A. Ellegård, p. 162, will give an idea of the development of the periphrastic do from 1400 to 1700.

**OCCURRENCE OF PERIPHRASTIC DO 1400-1700**

A = affirmative statements  
B = negative statements  
C = negative imperatives  
D = direct affirmative questions  
E = direct negative questions
Studies relating to the use of *do*

Brunner II, pp. 299-306.
Funke, O., 'Die Fügung ginnen mit dem Infinitiv im Mittelenglischen,' *E Studien* LVI, 1922, 1-27.
Kellner, pp. 221-2.
Koch II, pp. 24-6.
Mätzner II, pp. 57-63.
Moore, S., 'Robert Mannyng's Use of *Do* as Auxiliary,' *MLN* XXXIII, 1918, 385-94.
— 'A Note on Lydgate's Use of the *Do* Auxiliary,' *SP* XIII, 1916, 69-71.
Sweet II, pp. 88-92.
Bibliography, p. 615.

**GIN**

Form. — In OE this verb occurs in the form *onginnan*. The forms *aginnan* and *beginnan* appear in late OE. The last recorded occurrence of *aginnen* is in the *Ayenbite* (1340). The simple form *ginnen* is first attested about 1200 (*he gann þenn-kenn off him selff*, Orm. 3274).

*Gin(nen)* is a verb belonging primarily to narrative style, which accounts for its usual occurrence in the preterite (singular *gan*, plural *gunnen*, *gonnen*). The northern (Scottish) and W Midland phonetic variants of *gan* are *can* and *con*: — *fast þai can on him stare* (Cursor 13557, Cotton MS); — *monny a doughty þat day con ryde* (Gaw. & CC 65). This preterite form becomes confused with *can 'am able,* with the result that the form *couth* (*coud, could*) is also occasionally found as an equivalent of the preterite *gan* (*the croune that Jhesu couth ber*, Barbour iii 4603). After the 15th century *can* and *couth* are replaced by *did*. For the use of the plain infinitive and the infinitive with *to* after *gin* see p. 531.

Use in OE. — OE *onginnan*, when accompanied by an infinitive, frequently retains its original full meaning 'to begin' (*ongann sprecan*). In a number of instances, however, this meaning is somewhat weakened, although still clearly discernible, suggesting that the verb is becoming an auxiliary to express the ingressive and perfective aspects of the governing verb.

A further stage in the development of *onginnan* as an auxiliary is reached when this verb loses its original meaning
altogether and becomes a mere intensifier of the main verb, to enable the speaker or writer to describe the dynamic qualities of an action in a more vivid and forceful way than would be possible by using a simple verb form. In other words, onginnan comes to be used in a sense approaching that of the periphrastic do in such expressions as prayeres don save soules: — þa ongann Abimelech Abraham swiðan Woruldestreonun, ond him his wiþ ageaf (Genesis A 2716).

Thus OE onginnan, when it occurs as an auxiliary with an infinitive, can be said to carry out two principal functions: (1) it brings out the ingressive and perfective aspects of the action represented by the infinitive, and (2) it intensifies the descriptive force of the infinitive.

USE IN ME. — In these functions the verb (in the forms aginnen and beginnen, but particularly in the simple form ginnen, which becomes the ME representative par excellence of OE onginnan in its auxiliary functions) develops into a popular feature of ME narrative diction. Through frequent use it loses its ingressive colour more and more and occurs mainly in the intensive-descriptive function: — Horn bygan be sek and deze (Horn 1185, Harley MS; was sik and deide, Cbg. MS); — þe abbed on horse leop And æfter Vortiger rad And some gon ofærne þe eorl Vortigerne (Lawman A 13149); — Horn . . . ferde to wude for to schete; A knave he gan imete (Horn 940); — he . . . bifor þe rode gan falle (Havelok 1357); — for with that oon encresede ay my fere, And with that other gan myn herte bolde; That oon me hette, that other dide me colde (Ch. PF 144); — his cher ful oft con chaunge þat chapel er he myȝt sene (Gaw. & GK 711).

Only the preterite gan is generally found in the intensive-

descriptive use. When the present tense *ginneth* occurs, it usually has a clearly ingressive meaning.

In the passage quoted above from Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* (144) the *gan*-periphrasis occurs side by side with the simple preterite (*encresede — gan bolde*), seemingly with no difference in meaning. The primary reason for using *gan* here seems to be the poet's desire to use an infinitive in rhyme. In fact Chaucer and Gower and the authors of *King Horn*, *Lawman B*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, to mention only these few examples, use *gan* commonly before infinitives in rhyme; in other positions it is less common. A doubtful instance of the use of *gan (con)* in rhyme is *þa cortlaysly se carp con, I am bot mol and marere₃ mysse* (Pearl 381). It is worth noticing, too, that in the majority of non-rhyming alliterative ME poems *gan* is comparatively rare.

But even while using the *gan*-periphrasis mainly for metrical purposes, consciously or unconsciously the poet often achieves a special stylistic effect by means of this construction. In the above quotation from Chaucer, for example, the poet produces a highly effective variation between a substantival and verbal end-element (*fere — bolde*). We have good reason to believe that in addition to metre and rhyme other stylistic considerations play a certain role in a good poet's choice between the simple preterite and the *gan*-periphrasis. This point is emphasized by Elizabeth Homann (see bibliography), who argues that in many cases where *gan* is taken to be redundant this verb in fact has an intensive and descriptive character. She supports her argument by quotations like the following from Chaucer's *House of Fame*: — (1) *tho gan I loken under me And beheld the agerissh bestes* (965); — (2) *this egle . . . I gan behold more and more To se the beauté and the wonder* (532). In the first example the simple *beheld* records the mere fact, while in the second *gan behold* seems to bring out in a vivid way the poet's aesthetic experience.

Miss Homann also suggests that the periphrastic use of *gan*
in ME is promoted by the analogy of certain OF expressions, particularly those consisting of reflexive verbs (OF *m'en alai* appearing as *gan I go* or *gan I walk, s'en rist as gan laugh, se hasta as gan spring*). This suggestion, however, does not agree in all respects with what is known about the ME usage in the light of F. Beschorner’s study of Chaucer’s works (see bibliography). In his earlier poems, written under strong French influence, like *The Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer makes sparing use of periphrastic *gan*. It is not until his first journey to Italy that the periphrasis becomes more common in his works. It occurs frequently in *The House of Fame, The Parliament of Fowls*, and *The Legend of Good Women* and reaches its peak in *Troilus and Criseyde*. In *The Canterbury Tales* the proportion of the *gan*-constructions is considerably smaller.

On the whole Chaucer’s use of *gan* is of considerable interest. This verb occurs particularly with verbs of motion (*go, wend, ride, hie, pass [pace], approach, rise, fall, etc.*), verbs of vision (*behold, espye, see, look, prye*), verbs expressing sound and noise (*erie, call, tell*), verbs expressing desire and entreaty (*desire, pray*), and verbs expressing emotion (*delight, laugh, play, smile, plein 'complain,' sike 'sigh,' weep*). The *gan*-periphrasis is particularly used when the action takes place unexpectedly or in haste (often in conjunction with adverbs like *anon, right anon, anon-right, sodeynly*, etc., as in *anoon-ryght I gan fynde a tale To hym*, BD 536). *Gan* with an ingressive colour is common when the transitions from day to night and from night to day are described (e.g., *til that the hole sonne gan to weste*, PF 266).

In Chaucer’s works *gin* seldom occurs in its original full sense ‘to begin;’ one such case is *til that the belle of laudes gan to rynge And freres in the chauncel gonne synge* (CT A Mil. 3655-6). The cases where the original meaning of the verb seems to be weakened but where the ingressive aspect is clearly felt are more numerous (e.g., *whan the furie and al the rage... somewhat gan aswage*, TC iv 255). The majority of
instances consist of periphrastic preterites where the intensive-descriptive aspect makes itself more or less clearly felt or where, seemingly at any rate, the periphrastic preterite is used simply for metrical reasons (e.g., *how his auncestre, Af-frycan so deere Gan in his slep that nyght to hym apere*, PF 42; — *and after soper gonnen they to rise*, TC iii 610).

The intensive periphrastic preterite, used in vivid descriptions of past events, frequently occurs side by side with the historical present (see pp. 485-8). In fact the two constructions seem to compete with one another. A couple of examples: — *this marchant, whan that ended was the faire, To Seint-Denys he gan for to repaire, And with his wyf he maketh feeste and cheere* (Ch. CT B Sh. 326); — *but Canacee hom bereth hire in hir lappe, And softely in plastres gan hire wrappe* (Ch. CT F Sq. 636). The use of periphrastic *gan* is also in some measure comparable to that of periphrastic *do* (see pp. 602-5). There seems to be some rivalry between these constructions, too. Deutschbein, *System*, p. 80, finds that the *da*-periphrasis of the Cotton MS of *Cursor Mundi* is replaced by the simple preterite or the *gan*-periphrasis in later MSS, but a reverse phenomenon has been reported by O. Zilling, *Das Hilfsverb 'do' im Mittelenglischen*, Halle diss. 1918. Cf. also R. Hittmair, *Das Zeitwort 'do' in Chaucers Prosa*, Wiener Beiträge LI, Vienna and Leipzig 1923, pp. 82-3. Chaucer, who favours the periphrasis with *gin*, makes sparing use of periphrastic *do*.

**DISAPPEARANCE.** — Periphrastic *gin* disappears from living English usage in the early part of the Mod. E period, although instances are recorded in the *NED* even as late as the 19th century. It also survives in some petrified, formulaic expressions of many popular ballads.

The longer and weightier form of the verb, *begin*, retains the original full meaning 'to begin' and survives. The simple form *gin* comes to be used mainly in the periphrastic preterite, which loses its descriptive force and becomes a mere equivalent of the simple preterite, although it obviously retains something
of its emphatic character. Why is the shorter and therefore obviously less emphatic simple tense form retained and not the periphrasis? This is a question to which it is not possible to give a fully satisfactory answer.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF GIN

Beschorner, F., Verbale Reime bei Chaucer, SEP LX, Halle (Saale) 1920.
Einenkel, Streifzüge, pp. 233-4.
Funke, O., 'Die Fügung ginnen mit dem Infinitiv im Mittelenglischen,' E Studien LVI, 1922, 1-27.
Koziol, Stb., pp. 131-4.

WURTHE

Wurthe outside the passive, p. 615. — Wurthe with the passive, p. 616. — Reasons for the disappearance of wurthe, p. 616.

Bibliography, p. 619.

'WURTHE' OUTSIDE THE PASSIVE. — Wurthe (OE weordan; cf. G werden) is originally used in the sense 'to become, to happen' and is thus equivalent to the be referring to future time (see p. 583). These functions provide the basis for the ME uses of the verb: ¹ — þe bowes . . . imurþet hwite rondes (Aner.

¹ One of the functions of wurthe is to express the ingressive aspect. Other common verbs of this kind are become, gin, grow, and wax. For gin see pp. 610-15, for the others see MED and NED. For to go see p. 535.
66); — þeonne is al þet wo iwurþen to wunne (AnCr. 97); — grete wateres worþen zut red of mannes blode (RGlouc. 2800; schal wexe, MS B); — I wrecche, . . . Yworthe worste of alle wyghtes (Ch. BD 579); — he worth upon his steede ('mounted,' Ch. CT B Th. 1941); — his maister iwearþ a slepe ('fell asleep,' AnCr. 106); — yworþe þi wil ('thy will be done,' Ayenb. 262). Wurthe is common in imprecations, particularly in the formula woe worth 'may woe betide,' several late occurrences of which in dialectal speech (18th and 19th centuries), particularly in Scotland, are recorded in EDD, s.v. woe. ME examples: — wo wurþe his cos (AnCr. 86); — evere wurthe him yvel and wo (Havelok 2221); — wo worth that day that thow me bere on lyve (Ch. TC iv 763).

As an equivalent of to be, wurthe is used in the phrase let wurthe: — forþi I conseille alle þe comune to lat þe catte worthe (PPl. B Prol. 187); — but lat him worthen with his fantasie (Ch. TC v 329).

The use of wurthe outside the passive seems to be favoured by writers who make considerable use of it as a passive auxiliary. Chaucer uses wurthe, but he never uses it for the passive. Yet even outside the passive the use of wurthe shows a steady decrease all through the period. The reasons leading to the disappearance of this verb are discussed later in this chapter.

'Wurthe' with the Passive. — As an auxiliary of the passive wurthe is used from OE roughly to the end of the 14th century. For a discussion of this use see pp. 438-40; for the reasons leading to the disappearance of wurthe see below.

Reasons for the Disappearance of 'Wurthe.' — The factors leading to the disappearance of wurthe, which in OE is becoming increasingly popular as an auxiliary of the actional passive, have been a subject of a great deal of dispute among scholars. There are those who believe that the underlying reasons of this development must be sought in the verb itself, its clumsiness as compared with be (Curme, Syntax, p. 446), the levelling of its inflectional forms under uniform wurthe(n) or
Wurthe(n) and the resulting ambiguity (Kurtz, p. 111; see bibliography), etc. P. Fijn van Draat (E Studien XXXI, 1902, 375) thinks that weordan is 'crowded out by beon' because the meaning 'to become, weordan' has always been inherent in the latter verb by the side of the meaning corresponding to L esse. This view is shared by A. J. F. Zieglschmid (PQ IX, 1930, 111-15). According to Y. M. Biese (NM XXXIII, 1932, 221) the fact that wurthe is left alone to express the idea of 'becoming' creates a need for other means of expressing the same idea; as a result of this, verbs like become, come, fall, grow, turn, and wax begin to be used as equivalents of wurthe in the course of the ME period and finally supersede it. In a later article (NM LIII, 1952, 10) Biese modifies his view and admits that the question whether the introduction of new verbs as equivalents of wurthe is due to the decline of the latter or whether the gradual introduction of these verbs makes wurthe superfluous is a complicated problem.

The disappearance of wurthe has also been ascribed, in a greater or less measure, to the influence of foreign languages. Fr. Klaeber (E Studien LVII, 1923, 193, and Anglia Beiblatt XLII, 1931, 351) believes that the almost total absence of weordan in the OE version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History — admittedly a slavish translation of the Latin original — is due to the influence of passives like amatus est, which in late Latin supersede the synthetic form amatur. Klaeber's opinion is shared by Miss Frary (see bibliography), and a similar suggestion with regard to OHG is made by Behaghel, Syntax II, pp. 206 and 208. A. J. F. Zieglschmid (JEGP XXVIII, 1929, 360-65) does not accept this explanation, claiming that the use of wesan in the periphrastic actional passive is a native feature in the Germanic languages. The possibility that the disappearance of wurthe is due to Latin influence is also denied by Curme in his review of Miss Frary's dissertation (JEGP XXIX, 1930, 271-2). Several authorities, such as Mätzner II, p. 63, and J. Klingebiel (see bibliography), pp. 105-8, ascribe the disappear-
ance of \textit{wurthe} in ME to the influence of French, while others, like Miss Frary, pp. 71-2, Klaeber, \textit{Anglia Beiblatt} XLII, 1931, 348-52, Jespersen, \textit{Mod. E Gr.} IV, p. 99-100, and G. Kurtz, pp. 111-14, find Scandinavian influence more likely. Neither of these last-named theories is entirely convincing. Several ME works written under marked French influence contain a number of passives with \textit{wurthe}. It has also been pointed out that a non-colloquial mode of expression like the passive is less likely to have been influenced by Scandinavian models.

The disappearance of \textit{wurthe} is no doubt a complicated process, due in all probability to the convergence of several factors, mainly native, it seems, though foreign models — French in the first place — must also be considered as contributory influences.

It is quite possible that reasons of emphasis play an important part in the disappearance of \textit{wurthe}, particularly as an auxiliary of the passive. The emphatic part of the periphrastic passive is, of course, the past participle, the real carrier of the verbal expression and of the notion of passivity. The auxiliary is the unemphatic part; in prolonged use the auxiliary verb tends to become less and less significant, until it is little more than a mere structural sign of a periphrastic expression. When the development reaches this colourless stage, one auxiliary is enough, two are one too many. So in ME either \textit{be} or \textit{wurthe} had to go. Why was \textit{be} retained? Possibly because it was phonetically lighter and therefore better suited for the rhythm of a passive periphrasis. Perhaps also because it was more neutral in meaning than \textit{wurthe}, which continued to be used in a variety of other functions as well. It is also probable that the natural use of \textit{be} for the statal passive and foreign models (e.g., \textit{amatus est, il est aimé}) provided a favourable ground for this development. On the other hand, the fact that \textit{wurthe} was used as a highly colourless auxiliary in passive periphrases probably weakened its position in the other functions and created a need for new verbs to express the idea of 'becom-
ing' in a more forceful way. This — to continue the same line of reasoning — resulted in the appearance of several verbs (become, grow, wax, etc.) to express the idea of weorðan.

STUDIES RELATING TO THE USE OF WURTHE

(Most of the works and articles listed in the bibliography on the passive, pp. 442-4, deal with wurthe.)


Brunner I, pp. 140-1.

Draat, P. F. van, 'The Loss of the Prefix ge- in the Mod. E Verb and Some of its Consequences,' E Studien XXXI, 1902, 352-84 (on the decay of wurthe see pp. 375-7).

Frary, Louise G., Studies in the Syntax of the OE Passive, with Special Reference to the Use of 'Wesan' and 'Weorðan,' Language Diss. No. 5, 1929, Linguistic Soc. of America.

Klaeber, Fr., 'Eine Randbemerkung zum Schwund von altengl. weorðan,' Anglia Beiblatt XLII, 1931, 348-52.


Kurtz, G., Die Passivumschreibungen im Englischen, Breslau diss. 1931.


INTERJECTIONS

General considerations, p. 620.

PRIMARY INTERJECTIONS

SECONDARY INTERJECTIONS

EXCLAMATORY PHRASES


Bibliography, p. 639.

General Considerations. — The position of interjections in the grammatical system of the parts of speech has been a subject of much discussion.1 In the present account the term 'interjection' is applied to a word habitually used as an ex-

1 Cf., for example, the special studies by Brugmann, Brun-Laloire, Karcevski, Schmidt, Sweet, Tesnière, Schwentner, and Zimmer listed in the bibliography at the end of this chapter and the further references given by these authorities. For some earlier views see, for example, I. Poldauf, On the History of Some Problems of English Grammar before 1800, Prague Studies in English LV, Praha 1948, pp. 159ff.
clamation. A striking characteristic of an interjection is that it has no syntactical relation to the sentence in which it is included. Another characteristic of it is that it is functionally equivalent to a whole sentence, i.e., it expresses an idea which is complete in itself. Certain types of exclamatory phrases and sentences are equivalent to interjections, and are therefore included in the present discussion.

An interjection, then, is a word habitually used as an exclamation. Many interjections belong originally to other categories, such as well, dear me, hear hear, and good heavens. These are often referred to as secondary interjections, to distinguish them from those primary or original, e.g., oh, ah, hi, fie, ha ha, etc.

From the functional point of view interjections can be classified as —

1) imitative (onomatopoeic), i.e., imitating natural sounds,
2) emotional, i.e., expressing emotions, and
3) imperative, expressing an exhortation or command and thus being functionally comparable to the imperative mood of verbs.

There is, however, a great deal of overlapping between these three categories.

Because intonation plays an important part in all exclamations occurring in human speech, a written or printed text is a very inadequate medium for reproducing them. This is perhaps most evident in the case of exclamations which are markedly emotional in character — as indeed the large majority of exclamations are. Thus oh, depending on intonation, is capable of expressing an almost infinite variety of feelings, surprise, admiration, appeal, dislike, regret, disappointment, pain, grief, despair, and what not.

1 Cf. H. Wissemann, who in Untersuchungen zur Onomatopoie I, Bibliothek der allgemeinen Sprachwissenschaft, 2nd Ser., Heidelberg 1954, finds that new onomatopoeic formations enter the language almost exclusively as interjections.
Owing no doubt to the nature and number of surviving texts, far more interjections are known from ME than from OE. A large number of interjections, among them many common ones, like ah, oh, ei, and alas, are ME borrowings from French, and the possibility of some Latin influence must also be taken into consideration.

Many exclamations occur in poems and songs of the later ME period, particularly in their refrains (hey, how, hey-how, how-hey, hey-nony, troty-loly, lullay, etc.; e.g., somme . . . songen . . . and hulpen erie his half acre with 'how trolli-lolli,' PPl. B vi 118). Several are ecclesiastical in origin (kyrieleyson, alleluia, veni coronaberis, etc.).

**PRIMARY INTERJECTIONS**

All primary interjections are onomatopoeic. Depending on the number of elements of which they consist, they may be simple (a, ho, ei, hey, etc.), double (a-ha, ha-ha, a-way, hey-ho, etc.), or multiple (ho-ho-ho, wei-la-wei, etc.). Double and multiple interjections are frequently reduplicative in character (ha-ha, ei-ei, etc.).

The extant ME texts contain a relatively small number of words which serve purely as echoes of natural sounds, without any further implication. There are words like mum, reproducing an inarticulate sound made with closed lips, peep,

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1 Interesting OE interjections turn up in many odd places. Thus in the Cleopatra Aldhelm glosses L puppup is glossed as tæg tæg, and in Æfric’s Colloquy the interjection hig hig renders L o o. Cf. H. D. Meritt, *Fact and Lore in OE Words*, Stanford Univ. Publications, Stanford 1954, p. 188.


3 Margit Sahlin, *Étude sur la carole médiévale*, Uppsala diss. 1940, believes that the exclamation kyrie eleison, on account of its frequent occurrence in the refrains of medieval dance-songs, gradually developed into the noun carole.
imitating the sound made by young birds, and *wehee*, echoing the whinny of a horse (e.g., Ch. CT A Rv. 4066), and a number of others of the same kind. Ælfric informs us that 'ha ha' and 'he he' *getacniaþ hlehter on leden and on englisc* (Grammar xlviii 279). The words properly termed primary interjections, however, even when they reproduce a natural sound, are used to express some emotion or to attract attention, or to incite a person or animal to do something. Thus onomatopoeic *puff*, imitating the act of blowing in puffs, is commonly used to express contempt.

As stated in the foregoing, the meaning of an interjection depends very much on intonation. Difference in intonation appears to be more important than certain differences in sound value. Since the exact intonation of a written word is always a matter of some conjecture, differentiation between many ME interjections (e.g., *a, o, ha, ho, and how*) is inevitably more or less arbitrary. This should be borne in mind in assessing the statements made in the following brief alphabetical discussion of some of the most common primary interjections in ME.

'A.' — From OF and L *a*; capable of expressing a wide range of emotions, such as surprise, admiration, regret, disappointment, dislike, scorn, joy, and grief: — *a! wel bithought!* (Ch. TC ii 225). The interjection often occurs before a noun in the vocative: — *a Eve, wend te awei* (Ancr. 23); — *a swete, if þou iknowe þe gode þewe s of þiss e childe!* (E Lyr. XIIIth Cent. lxxxii 34).

*A* is often found in combination with other interjections, such as *mercy* and *benedicité*: — *a mercy, swete lady dere!* (Ch. BD 108); — *a benedicitee* (Ch. CT D WB 280).

In northern texts *a* (*ay*) often seems to be merely a phonological variant of *o* (see below). Cf. also *a-ha, ha, and ha-ha*, below.

For *a* in battle-cries like *Clarence, a Douglas, and a Warwick* see p. 633.
'A-HA.' — Like *ha-ha* (see below), the double interjection *a-ha* is used to express indignant reproach or abhorrence in the sense 'get out, away with you,' etc. That this is the meaning of *a-ha* in some contexts at least is suggested by its occurrence in connection with *out* and *harrow* in *this seely widewe and hire doughtres two . . . cryden 'out, harrow' and 'weloway, A ha þe fote!'* (Ch. CT B NP 4571, MS Corp.-O; *ha ha*, Ellesmere MS). Cf. *ha-ha*, below. Otherwise *a-ha* seems to serve as an emphatic equivalent of simple *a* (see above), expressing surprise, lively interest, etc., rather in the sense of 'well, now:' — *aha, þat wreche wituten* (Cursor 9651); — *'a ha,' quod Pandare, 'here bygynneth game'* (Ch. TC i 868). Like simple *a*, it may occur before nouns in the vocative: — *a ha, felawes, beth ware of swich a jape!* (Ch. CT B Pri. 1629). 

'A-WAY (A-WEI).’ — A combination of *a* (see above) and *way* (see below), expressing regret and grief, recorded since earliest ME: — *awei þat evere soch man Into helle [solde] gon* (Lawman B 7223); — *a wai þat þu evere to monne ischape were!* (E Lyr. XIIith Cent. xxix B 44); — *a wey, doȝter Cordeille* (RGlouc. 815); — *a way þat ich was ybore!* (Orfeo 544).

'A-WEI;' see *a-way.*

'EI.' — From *Lei*, probably through French,¹ expressive of a large variety of emotions, from anger, disgust, fear, and sorrow to joy and wonder, is first recorded in ME at the end of the 13th century: — *ey, Goddes precious dignitee!* (Ch. CT C Pard. 782); — *ey, uncle myn, welcome iwys* (Ch. TC ii 87). Cf. *ei ei.*

'EI-EI.' — This double interjection, a reduplicative, emphatic variant of *ei*, occurs in *ei ei, what þis nicht is long!* (E Lyr. XIIith Cent. vii 5). Cf. L *ei ei.*

"Fie (Fi, Fy)." — From OF fi, L phy (cf. Amer. E phooey, G pfui, Finnish hyi, etc.), expressing disapproval, indignation, and contempt, has been recorded in English since the end of the 13th century: — 'fi a debles,' quaþ þe King, 'wo sey a so vil dede' (RGlouc. 8015); — fy on þi lawe! (PPl. B ii 123); — fy Upon a lord that wol have no mercy! (Ch. CT A Kn. 1773).

"Ha." — Cf. OF ha. Like a, this interjection expresses emotions of many kinds, ranging from surprise, wonder, and joy to indignation, reproach, and anger: — ha, quat þaa bestes war selcuth kene! (Cursor 4218).

"Ha-ha." — Closely connected with a-ha, this reduplicative form of ha is used before nouns in address (ha ha traiturs, now is wel sene Queþer þat yee be fule or clene, Cursor 4917), occasionally in the sense 'get out, go away:' — and cryden 'out, harrow' and 'weglaway, Ha ha, the fox!' (Ch. CT B NP 4571). A 13th-century Dominican friar, Nicolas de Biard, writes in a Latin sermon, 'Non est lupus adeo incarnatus in ove quin fugiat si pastores continuent clamare ha ha!' (quoted from J. S. P. Tatlock, MLN XXIX, 1914, 143). Cf. a-ha, above. It is possible that ha-ha is used to reproduce laughter in 'ha ha!' quod he, 'for Cristes passion' (Ch. CT A Co. 4327).

"Harrow." — From OF haro, harou, a cry for help: — ne grede 'harou' be ssrifte (Ayenb. 31); — doun he gooth and cride 'harrow, I dye!' (Ch. CT A RV. 4307). It often occurs in combination with out: — up stirte hire Alison and Nicholay, And criden 'out' and 'harrow' in the strete (Ch. CT A Mil. 3825). For a discussion of this interjection and its connection with present-day hallo cf. G. Tilander (see bibliography), pp. 83-103.

"Hay (Hey, Hi)." — This interjection is used to express exultation, incitement, surprise, and the like, and also simply to attract attention: — ande þay halowed hyghe ful hyze and 'hay, hay' cryed (Gaw. & GK 1445). Cf. OF hay and hez. It occurs in hunting-cries: — the herde of hertes founden is anon
With 'hay go bet! pryke thow! lat gon, lat gon!' (Ch. LGW 1213).¹
It is common in the refrains of ME songs (e.g., hey, hey, hey, hey, þe borrys hede is armyd gay, Sec. Lyr. lvi, refr.), often in combination with ho (see hey-ho), occasionally with trolly loly:

'HEY;' see hay.

'HEY-HO (Ho-HEY).’ — In later ME the combinations hey-ho and ho-hey are often used to imitate a sigh and thus to express languor, lowness of spirits, and even resignation (how hey, it is non les, I dar not sey5 quan che sey5t 'pes,' Sec. Lyr. xliii refrain) and often also as refrains of songs and poems, with varying connotations (with hay, with howe, with hay, Sec. Lyr. xlvii 3). Cf. NM LVI, 1955, 161-73; cf. also G. Langenfelt, SMS XIX, 1956, 65-8.

'Ho (How).’ — Cf. ON hó and OF ho, hou, and hu. Some uses of this interjection are obviously connected with those of ME o (see below). Ho (how) occurs in exclamations of triumph, exultation, admiration, surprise, and the like: — 'ho!' all þan cun þai cri, 'qua herd ever sua gret ferli!' (Cursor 12129). It often occurs as an equivalent of 'stop:' — 'hoo,' quod the Knyght, 'good sire, namoore of this!' (Ch. CT B NP 3957); — ðerfore, hende, now hoo! (Gaw. & GK 2330). It is used to attract attention, sometimes in combination with o: — how, Alison! how, John! be myrie (Ch. CT A Mil. 3576); — and cried, 'o-ho, awake anoon!' (Ch. BD 1179). It is used to call hunting-dogs: — thai halowyd here howndys with 'how;' In holtis herde I never soche hew (Audelay in MS Douce 302, fol. 34/1; NED). For a discussion of the corresponding French usage cf. G. Tilander (see bibliography), p. 157-8.

Ho (how) occurs as a refrain-element in many popular songs, often in combination with hey (see hey-ho, above): — with how, butler, how! bevis a tout! (Sec. Lyr. xiv 4).

¹ Cf. OF hez avant, hay avant 'get up' (to a horse). See E. Langlois, 'Hez,' Zeitschrift für rom. Philologie XXXI, 1907, 496-8.
'Ho-hey;' see _hey-ho_.

'Lo (La).'_ — From the OE interjection _la_; but it has been suggested (NED) that ME _lo_ also represents, in part, a shortened imperative form of _look_. Its meaning varies, roughly, between 'oh' and 'behold:' — _lo swuch is Godes dom_ (Ancr. 96); — _wy, taak it al_ _lo_, _have it every deel!_ (Ch. CT D WB 445); — 'lo-lo,' _quod damie Prudence, 'how lightly is every man enclined to his owene desir'_ (Ch. CT B Mel. 2742).

'Lo-lo;' see _lo_.

'Me.' — _Me_ 'why', an interjection of obscure origin, occurs mainly in the Katherine Group: — _'me, heateliche hund,' quod ha _pa_, 'þah al swa do, me schendest to nawt'_ (Marg. 16).

'O (Ow)._ — Cf. OF and _Lo_; expressive of emotions of many kinds, from surprise, admiration, and appeal to disappointment, regret, and dislike, and from joy to pain, grief, and despair: — _o tyme ilost!_ (Ch. TC iii 896). It frequently occurs before a noun in address: — _o night, allas! why nyllow over us hove?_ (Ch. TC iii 1427); — _o bewtie pereles!_ (Sec. Lyr. cci 1). It seems to be closely connected with _a_ in many respects. Cf. also _ho_ (how).

'O-ho;' see _ho_.

'O-we._' — A combination of _o_ and _we_ (see _way_, below), expressing regret and grief: — _'o we,' quæp he, 'allas, allas!'_ (Orfeo 174). Cf. _G o weh, MHG ouwê_. Cf. also _a-way_, above.

'Wa;' see _wo_.

'Wa-le;' see _wei-la_.

'Way (Wey, We)._' — Somehow closely connected with the interjection _wo_ (see below). According to the NED (_woe_), the forms _way, wey_, and _we_ are from ON _vei_, while E. Björkman (_Archiv CXIV, 1905, 164_) suggests that the OE interjection _we3_ is due to a contamination between _wa_ and _e3_ (cf. _ei_, above). Simonne d’Ardenne, in her ed. of _The Liulfade . . . of Seinte_
Interjections

Julienne, Bibl. de la Faculté de Philos. et Lettres de l’Univ. de Liège LXIV, Liège and Paris 1936, pp. 170-1, also doubts the connection of this interjection with ON vei. Way is a common exclamation of grief: — wey þat hire was wo! (E Lyr. XIIth Cent. xxiv 80); — cried he neiþer 'wo' ne 'wai' (R Mannyng Chron. 15879).

For the occurrence of way (wey, we) in combination with a and o see above, a-way and o-we.

'Ve;' see way and wi.

'Wei-la (We-lo, Wa-le).’ — From OE wes-la and wa-la; cf. way, wo, and lo, above; cf. also E. Björkman, Archiv CXIV, 1905, 164, and Simonne d’Ardenne, loc.cit. (see way, above).

An interjection expressing regret: — wa le þat eævere ei sucche mon into æælde sculde gan (Lawman A 7223; the B-text has a-wei for wa le); — o ... wrecches, unweoten bute wit, weila, hwet wene ze! (Marg. 14); — we loo, Hit helppez me not a mote (Gaw. & GK 2208).

'Wei-la-wei;' see wo-la-wo.

'Ve-lo;' see wei-la.

'Wey;' see way.

'Wi (We).’ — An interjection of uncertain origin. That it is somehow connected with way, wey is suggested by the fact that wi-la occurs as a variant of OE wes-la (cf. also Simonne d’Ardenne, loc.cit.; see way, above); but it is used much in the same way as why (see p. 631). Perhaps it is due to a contamination between the two. It is used to demand attention and to introduce a question: — wi, swa fele beoþ icluped, swa fewe beoþ icorene (Poema Mor. 104); — wi, how sal Beniamin come þare? (Cursor 5013);— 'we! Lorde!,’ quoþ þe gentyle knystl, 'Weþer þis be þe grene chapelle?’ (Gaw. & GK 2185).

'Wo (Wa).’ — OE wa, we, a common Indo-European exclamation of grief (cf. L vae, Goth. wai, ON vei, and G weh; cf.
also way, wey, we, above): — cried he neiþer 'wo' ne 'wai' (RMannyang Chron. 15879). See also wei-la and wo-la-wo.

'WO-LA-WO (WEI-LA-WO, WEI-LA-WEI).' — Wo-la-wo goes back to OE wa-la-wa and wei-la-wei to OE wez-la-wez; cf. way, wo, and lo, above; cf. also E. Björkman, Archiv CXIV, 1905, 164, and Simonne d'Ardenne, loc.cit. (see way, above). The interjection is common in ME as an exclamation of sorrow and lamentation: — wa-la-wa þat hit sculde iuwrþen swa (Lawman A 19632; wo la wo, B); — 'weilawei ' and 'wolawo ' heo seþ (Ancr. 38); — weylawey the while! (Ch. CT B ML 370).

SECONDARY INTERJECTIONS

Secondary interjections are originally other parts of speech used as exclamations, usually nouns, pronouns (interrogative), verbs (imperative), and adverbs. Only a few specimens are given in the following.

'ALAS,' 'ALACK,' AND 'ALARM.' — Alas, originally an OF combination of the interjection à and the adjective las 'wretched.' Recorded in English since the early part of the ME period, it is an exclamation of grief, regret, pity, and the like: — alas, alas þulke stounde (RGlouc. 10008); — alias that harde day! (Ch. CT F Sq. 499); — for I may singe 'alias and weylawey That I was born' (Ch. CT B Sh. 1308); — 'alas,' she seith, 'that evere I was shape' (Ch. CT B Mk. 3099); — alas, alas, and alas, why Hath fortune done so crewelly! (Sec. Lyr. clxvii 1).

Alack, a combination of a and lack, has obviously been modelled on alas. Recorded in late ME: — 'alacke,' said thys ladye, 'shall I lyve alone?' (Rob. Devil 60).

Alarme, from Ital. all' arme 'to arms,' obviously through OF (14th century) alarme, is first recorded in the B-text of Piers Plowman: — 'alarme, alarme!' quod þat lorde (PPl. B xx 91).

RELIGIOUS NAMES. — Many religious names, particularly God, Deus, Christ, Mary, and Peter, are common in ex-
Interjections

clamations: — a God, how hi byeþ joles (Ayneb. 92); — 'Deus!' quoth Ubbe, 'hwat may þis be?' (Havelok 1930); — and whan that Pandare herde hire nam nevene, Lord, he was glad (Ch. TC i 877); — Christ! if my love were in my arms! (EE Lyr. xxxi 3); — Marie! therof I pray yow hertely (Ch. CT G CY 1062); — 'Mary,' quoþ þat oþer mon, 'myn is bihynde' (Gaw. & GK 1942); — 'Peter!' quod þe prest þo, 'I can no pardoun fynde' (PPl. B vii 112).

'Benedicité.' — *Benedicité* (reduced forms *bencité, bendisté*) 'praise, commend,' later 'bless,' the first word of a Latin thanksgiving formula of the Church, based on the Vulgate (cf. *benedicit e omnia opera Domini Domino*, Dan. iii 57). It has been used since early times as a formula of blessing, especially in greeting and at meals, and as a charm against evil spirits. In English it has been used since Anglo-Saxon times. In ME *benedicité* is used as a greeting (*þys ermyte seyd, 'benedicité, Brother,* RMannyng HS 301), to avert some unknown evil ('allas,' quod she, ... 'I hadde almoost goon to the clerkes bed. Ey, benedicité! thanne had I foule ysped,* Ch. CT A Rv. 4220), to express astonishment when something unexpected occurs (what! which wey be ye comen, benedicité? Ch. TC iii 757), or to express exaltation (to *fighte for a lady, benedicitee, It were a lusty sightë*, Ch. CT A Kn. 2115). Cf. E. Flügel (see bibliography).

**Commands, Exhortations, and Entreaties.** — Brief commands, exhortations, and entreaties are comparable to interjections. Thus in certain circumstances the imperative mood of verbs may serve as a kind of interjection: — abyd, Robyn, my leeve brother (Ch. CT A Mil. 3129); — come, þou art mys-bilewyd (Cursor App. ii 823); — go bet, peny, go bet, go! (Sec. Lyr. Ivii refrain); — *quad Moyses, 'loc, her nu [is] bread'* (Gen. & Ex. 3331); — help, hooly crosys of Bromeholm! (Ch. CT A Rv. 4286; in this and many other cases *help* might equally well be interpreted as a noun). Somewhat similar stereotyped uses
of the imperative are *herken* and *listen*, which occur as conventional opening exclamations in numerous ME poems (*her-kneþ, boþe yonge and olde*; — *lystenþ, lordynges*); cf. Index of ME Verse, Nos. 1090-1119 and 1876-1910.

Certain nouns are used as hortatory interjections in much the same way, particularly *mercy* and *peace*: — *he criede 'merci, merci!'* (Havelok 2502); — *she seyde, 'pes! now tak kep every man'* (Ch. PF 563); — *I dar not seyn quan she seyth 'pes!'* (Sec. Lyr. xliii 4). For *help* see above.

**INTERROGATIVES.** — The interrogative *what*, like OE *hwæt*, is used as an interjection to call attention to a question or statement (*'wat,' heo seide, 'hule, artu wod?'* Owl & N 1298; — *what, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name*, Ch. CT A Prol. 856; — *what, lat us heere a messe, and go we dyne*, Ch. CT A Sh. 1413). *What* also occurs in combination with *ho* (how): — *what, Nicholay! what how! what, looke adoun* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3477). Cf. p. 184. *Why* is used to express a considerable variety of emotions and to demand attention: — *'why, lat be,' quod she, 'lat be, Nicholas!'* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3285); — *why, yis, for Gode* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3526); — *wy, taak it all!* (Ch. CT D WB 445). Cf. *wi* (we), p. 628.

**ADVERBS.** — Certain adverbs, especially *out*, are often used in connection with *harrow* and *alas*: — *'why, lat be,' quod she, 'lat be, Nicholas, Or I wol crie 'out, harrow' and 'allas!'* (Ch. CT A Mil. 3286); — *ther was no word bot 'out,allas!'* (Gower CA v 3910).

As an interjection the adverb *now* is used to arrest the attention on or somehow emphasize the word that follows: — *'now, Symond,' seyde John, 'by seint Cutberd'* (Ch. CT A Rv. 4127); — *'now, elles God forbede, sire,' quod she* (Ch. CT B Sh. 1398). *Well* has been used in very much the same way since OE: — *wel, quæ sal thir hornes blaut?* (Early ME Texts xxiii 1); — *'wel,' he seyd, 'þan schal I medyl sow ageyn'* (MKempe 24).
EXCLAMATORY PHRASES

Salutations. — Greetings tend to become stereotyped and to assume the character of exclamations. A once common English greeting is hail — originally an adjective — from ON heill, replacing OE hal (‘hail þu Marie,’ he seide, Vices & V 53). In late ME it is not infrequently preceded by all (‘alheil,’ he seith, ‘what man art thou?’ Gower CA iii 1261). The OE and ME full forms of this type of greeting are wæs hal and was hail ‘be in good health:’ — wæs þu, Hroþgar hal! (Beow. 407); — lauerd king, wæs hail! (Lawman A 14309).

Well wurthe, often used in wishing well to another, is attested all through the ME period: — wel wurfe þe, Vortiger, þat þu ært icumen her (Lawman A 13079); — wel worth þe, wyþe, þat woldeʒ my gode (Gaw. & GK 2127). Cf. woe worth, p. 639.

Other greetings include welcome (OE wilcume [-a] ‘welcome,’ from will n. ‘will, pleasure’ + cuma ‘comer, guest;’ wil is later altered to wel under the influence of ON vel-kominn; cf. also OF bien venuz or bien veigniez. See NED welcome): — welcome, Wilekin, swete þing (Sirith 425). The usual formula when meeting a person is have good day: — habbeþ alle godne dæie (Lawman A 12529); — he seith often ‘have good day’ (Gower CA v 2814); — ha godday, lovely in lyth (Dux Moraud 161). In later times have is dropped (good day). The greeting good morrow is current in late ME: — ‘god moroun, sir Gawayn,’ sayde þat gay ladyy … ‘Good moroun, gay,’ quoþ Gawayn þe blyþe (Gaw. & GK 1208 and 1213). Good even occurs infrequently even in late ME texts. Farewell is current in late ME: — fare wel, my worlych wyf, Fare wel, love in lond, Fare, þou semlyest lyf, Fare, þou happy in lond (Dux Moraud 55-8).

Drinking Formulas. — When the health of a person is drunk, the form of salutation used is wassail (was hail), the reply being drinkheil ‘drink good health or good luck:’ — sitte þou nought to longe on nyghtis by þe cuppe And sey ‘wasseile’ and ‘drynkeheil’ (Good Wife 151, MS H). The earliest reference
Exclamatory Phrases

The custom occurs in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, VI xii (c 1136). For a discussion see NED *wassail* sb. and *drink-hail*.

The Type 'A Douglas.' — This late ME type of exclamation is preserved in cases like: — *sir Cador ... Crye ... a Cornewale* (Morte Arthure 1791); — *and crie somme 'noward, noward,' and anoþere tyme 'a Douglas, a Douglas'* (Brut 251); — *eyr þai cryed 'a Clarans, a Clarans, seint George!'* (Brut 384); — *they blew up trumpetes and sette a cry with asshout and a grete voyce 'a Warrewe, a Warrewyk, a Warrewyk!'* (Paston I 330).

The *a* which occurs in these exclamations has been explained in various ways. A number of grammarians take it to be the indefinite article (e.g., Franz, *Sh. Gr.*, § 278), but this is unlikely.

The *NED* (*a* interj. 3) and W. Bang (*E Studien* XXXI, 1902, 449) interpret it as an interjection (*a* or *ha*). G. Langenfelt, on the other hand, believes (*SMS* XVIII, 1953, 55-64, and XIX 1956, 61-2) that *a* is the French preposition *à*, as claimed by G. Dubislav, *Beiträge zur historischen Syntax des Englischen*, Programm der Oberrealschule II zu Charlottenburg 1909, p. 27, and Einenkel, *Syntax*, p. 166. Langenfelt adduces French exclamatory phrases like *Derbi! Derbi! au conte!* (Froissart), *Nostre Dame au Seigneur de Coucy,* and *a Soustree che vaillant bastart!* His quotations from French are not very numerous, and the connection between them and the English type is disputed by G. W. S. Friedrichsen, who, reviewing Langenfelt's article in *Medium Ævum* XXVI, 1957, 49-51, is convinced that *a* 'is clearly a hortatory interjection, followed by the name of the Commanding Officer as a rallying cry to his men.'

It is difficult to say which of these two interpretations is right. In his *Nouveaux essais* (see bibliography), pp. 26-31, G. Tilander discusses numerous French hunting cries, mainly from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries (*a Myraud, a Briffaud, a Princesse, a Duchesse, a Monfrault*, etc.). In all these instances *a* is the preposition *à*. The huntsman is directing those dogs which have lost the track to join the one (named *Myraud, Briffaud,*
Princesse, etc.) which is on the right scent. Later the à is occasionally mistaken for an interjection and written ha. The common use of the preposition à in these French hunting-cries seems to support Dubislav’s, Einenkels, and Langenfelt’s interpretation of the English exclamations, provided the English battle-cries and the French hunting-cries are really comparable.¹

**CORROBORATIVE PHRASES — OATHS AND IMPRECATIONS**

**GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.** — Oaths and imprecations are also — from the point of view of function — comparable to interjections. In the ME period oaths were extensively used in everyday speech as corroborative elements. Even nuns had to be warned against swearing: — *ʒe ne schulen vor none þinge ne ne warien, ne swerien, bute ʒif ʒe siggen 'witterliche' oþer 'sikerliche,' oþer o summe swuche wise* (Anocr. 30). The habit greatly distressed medieval preachers, who kept on complaining that 'no man now-a-daies unnethis canne speke ony word but if an ooth be at the other eende' and that by swearing by Christ’s eyes, arms, bones, heart, blood, and soul people tore him to pieces limb by limb.² So addicted were medieval people

¹ Cf. *ʒif eny hounde trayle of hym and hathe a name as Richere or Bemounde, ʒe schull seye, 'oyeʒ, a Bemounde, dons, oyeʒ, huy, a luy est, dount a luy est, avaunt, a Bemound, avaunt, ho, syre, ho ho ho!' and draw all ʒoure houndez to hym* (The Craft of Venery 146-9; ed. Tilander, *La Vénérie de Twitti*, Cynegetica II, Uppsala 1956; c 1450).


Robert Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, 689ff, tells the Tale of the Bloody Child: the child Jesus is torn to pieces by those swearing by parts of his body. Chaucer’s Pardoner tells the story of certain young men whose *othes been so grete and so damnable That it is grisly for to heere hem swere. Oure blissed Lordes body they totere; Hem thoughte that Jewes rente hym noght ynough* (CT C Pard. 472-5). Occleve tells his readers how *pe former of every creature Dismembred y with opes grete and rente Lyme for lyme* (RP 628-30).
to swearing by various parts of Christ’s body that Chaucer’s Miller does not consider it necessary to mention the name of Christ at all when he boasts, *by armes, and by blood and bones,* *I kan a noble tale for the nones* (CT A Mil. 3125).

The richest ME source of oaths is Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales.* A large number of oaths occur in the late ME miracle plays, too.

A common type of oath is a prepositional phrase, usually with *by, for* (in more than one sense: ’for the sake of, in exchange for, before,’ etc.), or *on* (*a*). But the corroborative expression often takes the form of a complete clause (*I wil fi te wyþ þat heþene kyng, as Crist me helpe and rede, Ferumbras 218;* — *now lady seinte Marie So wisly help me out of care and synne, This wyde world thogh that I sholde wynne, Ne have I nat twelf pens, Ch. CT D Fri. 1604-7*). Cases of this kind are not included in the present discussion.

**GOD.** — It is God himself who most commonly appears in oaths, although, as seen from examples like *by Goddes digne passioun* (Ch. CT B ML 1175), the noun *God* is often used in reference to the Son. Examples: — *bi God* (Havelok 2339); — *bi hevene king* (Havelok 1937); — *bi owre lorde* (PPl. B vi 68); — *for dere God* (PPl. B xi 399); — *a [= on] Goddes name* (Ch. CT A Prol. 854); — *now fare wel, on Godez halff* (Gaw. & GK 2149). The *NED* quotes a few instances of *goddot* (< *God wol* ’God knows’ from *Havelok* and *Cursor*: — *Goddoth, I shal do slon hem bape* (Havelok 2543); — ’nai, goddut,’ þai said (*Cursor* 11891). *God forbid* (Christ forbid) has been used since early ME: — *ze muhlen sone vallen — þet God forbeode ou — in desperaunce* (Ancr. 3); — *Godd forbedd I suld svike* (Cursor 4372). The peculiar expression *God’s forbode* may be due to contamination between *God forbid* and prepositional phrases like *agains Godes forbode.* The phrase occurs in late ME and in Mod. E (cf. *NED forbode sb.* and *MED forbod n.*): — *we crystene creatures . . . Aren ferme as in þe faith; Goddes forbode elles* (PPl. B xv 570); — *I hadde yeve to thee over me the maistrie,*
Interjections

and Goddes forbode that it so were (Ch. CT B Mel. 2248). In 'God forbot,' he said, 'my thank war sic thing' (Rauf Coilzear 743) the form God presumably stands for Goddis; the s-less genitive is often used with personal nouns in the northern area (cf. p. 72). There is no functional difference between God forbid and God's forbode; while MS T of PPl. A reads Godis forbode he faille (iv 157), several other MSS read God forbede he faille.

For the occurrence of corrupted forms of the name of God in exclamations see below under 'Linguistic Tabu.'

The French phrases pardieu and depardieu (from de part Dieu 'by God,' cf. a Goddes half, Ch. CT D WB 50) are also used: — ȝhe aucth to shame, perde! (Barbour vii 436); — he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee (Ch. CT A Prol. 563); — de-pardeiuex, ich assente (Ch. TC ii 1058).

LINGUISTIC TABU. — Largely in order to avert evil consequences from swearing by the name of God, His name is often used in a disguised form, in accordance with a universal practice known as linguistic tabu. Thus in ME oaths the noun God may occur in the form of cok, gog, and got (e.g., for cokkes bones, Ch. CT H Mep. 9 and I Pars. 29; — bi gog, Gaw. & GK 390), and corpus probably stands for the genitive Goddes in by corpus bones (Ch. CT C Pard. 314; from the syntactical point of view this phrase seems to represent a contamination between Goddes bones and corpus Domini; cf. by corpus Dominus, Ch. CT B Pri. 1625). A large number of corrupted forms of God have been recorded in Elizabethan and later works; cf. NED God 13 and 14 and zounds (for God's wounds); cf. also marry (for Mary). Linguistic tabu is found in all languages of the world; cf. F parbleu for par Dieu. For literature dealing with this phenomenon see particularly W. Havers, Neuere Literatur zur Sprachtabu, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philos.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte CCIII, Vienna 1946.

CHRIST (JESUS). — Oaths are commonly uttered in the name
of Christ (Jesus): — by Cryst (PPl. B ii 192); — for Jesus love (Ch. CT A Mil. 3717); — by him that harwed helle (Ch. CT A Mil. 3512, referring to the Harrowing of Hell).

The Blessed Virgin. — Oaths by Christ’s mother are fairly common: — for Marie love of hevene (PPl. B ii 2); — by seinte Marie (Ch. CT C Pard. 685); — by the hevenes queene (Ch. CT G CY 1089).

Saints. — The strongest oath uttered by Chaucer’s Prioress (CT A Prol. 120) was sworn by the name of ’Seinte Loy’ (St Eligius), a saint known not only for his elegant and courtly behaviour but also for his unwillingness to swear.¹ Oaths by saints’ names are common in the Middle Ages: — lat us in, Or þu art ded, bi Seint Austin (Havelok 1773); — bi Crist and bi Seint Jon (Havelok 177); — for Seynt Thomas love of Caunturberye (GWarw. 5859, Cbg MS); — now by that lord that called is Seint Jame (Ch. CT A Rv. 4264); — by that precious corpus Madrian (Ch. CT B Mk. 3082); — þe lorde sayde, ’bi Saynt Gile’ (Gaw. & GK 1644).

Sacred Objects. — Be the holy croys (GWarw. 9658, MS Cbg. UL); — bi þe rode of Chestre (PPl. B v 467); — by God and by this porthors I yow swere (Ch. CT B Sh. 135).

Heathen Deities and Persons. — There are deities of classical antiquity and some more recent: — by myghty Mars (Ch. CT A Kn. 1708); — by Termagaunt (Ch. CT B Th. 2000). The Prophet of Allah appears in many romances: — as Mahoun me awunce (Ferumbras 1980).

Devil. — Oaths by the devil are popular: — what devel have I with the knyf to do? (Ch. LGW 2694). On this phrase cf. Charlotte D’Evelyn, PMLA LXXI, 1956, 275-9.

Human Beings, Human Relationships, Life, Necessities

Interjections

OF LIFE, ETC. — Human beings, particularly one's relatives, parts of the human body, necessities of life, and the like are common in corroborative expressions: — be my lyfe (GWarw. 10157, Cbg. MS); — by my fader soule that is deed (Ch. CT A Prol. 781); — be myn ye (GWarw. 3252, Cbg. MS); — he was sory, be my hode (GWarw. 2884, Cbg. MS); — 'Bi Criste,' quod Conscience þo, 'bi best cote' (PPl. B xiii 314); — and there he swoor on ale and breed How that the geaunt shal be deed (Ch. CT B Th. 2062); — 'I wolde nouȝt greve God,' quod Piers, 'for al þe good on grounde' (PPl. B vi 231).

ABSTRACTS. — Abstract nouns, such as those expressing human emotions and behaviour, also figure in corroborative phrases: — telle me, y prey þe, pur amowre (GWarw. 9178, Cbg, MS); — for yowre honowre Leve ye no more that losengeowre (GWarw. 8567, Cbg. MS); — do wey youre handes, for your curteisye (Ch. CT A Mil. 3287); — for soth (Havelok 273); — in feith (Ch. CT G CY 1089); — by my fey (Ch. CT A Kn. 1126); — 'syrs,' quod Gye, 'be my lewte' (GWarw. 6115, Cbg. MS). By the side of by my fey the OF form parfey is also used: — 'perfay,' quod ane than of the thre, 'Sall no man say we drede the swa' (Barbour vii 443).

WORLD, NATURAL PHENOMENA, ETC. — This group consists of phrases like: — for al this world, in swych present gladnesse Was Troilus (Ch. TC iii 1244); — þere ne was ratoun in alle þe route for alle þe rewme of Fraunce (PPl. B Prol. 177); — 'I graunte,' quod Tyrrye, 'be þis day' (GWarw. 9121, Cbg. MS); — thanne loughe þere a lorde and 'by þis lizle,' sayde, 'I holde it ryȝte and resoun of my reve to take' (PPl. B xix 456). For the type for all the world cf. G. Langenfelt, NM LII, 1951, 218-47.

IMPRECATIONS. — Imprecations are maledictions or invocations of evil. In the Hundred Years' War the imprecation God damn was so common among the English troops in France that in medieval French the word goddam (goddem, godon) became
a synonym for 'Englishman:' — mais, fussent ils [les Anglais] cent mille Goddem de plus qu'a present, ils n'auront pas ce royaume (Joan of Arc in De Barante, Ducs de Bourgogne vi 116 [an. 1431]; NED damn vb. 5). There are many other curses: — dahet habbe þat ilke best þat fule þ his owe nest (Owl & N 99; dahet, like datheit in the following quotation, comes from OF daheit); — datheit hwo ne smite sore (Havelok 1887); — cursed caytyve! (PPl. B xviii 96); — il-hayl! (Ch. CT A Rv. 4089; cf. hail, p. 632). A common imprecation is woe worth 'may evil befall upon:' — wa wrþe aver þen e smi þ (Lawman A 1562); — wo worthe evere fals envie (Gower CA viii 1334). Cf. well worth, p. 632.

Imprecations occurring in the form of complete sentences (e.g., the foule feend hym feche!) do not belong in the present discussion.

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CONVERSION

General considerations, p. 641.

Nouns Used as Adjectives. — Nouns used as adjectives, p. 642.
— Foreign influence, p. 643.

Adjectives Used as Nouns. — General considerations, p. 643. —
Use in a personal sense, p. 644. — Use in a non-personal (neuter)
sense, p. 646. — The type for black, p. 647. — ‘Propword’ one,
see p. 301.

Verb-adverb groups used as nouns, p. 648
Above used as a noun, p. 648.
Adjectives used as adverbs, p. 648.

Adverbs Used as Adjectives. — Adverbs used as attributive
adjectives, p. 649. — Adverbs used for appositive and predicative
adjectives, p. 649.

Nouns Used as Verbs and Verbs as Nouns. — General consider-
ations, p. 650. — Nouns used as verbs, p. 650. — Verbs used as
nouns, p. 651.

Adjectives, Adverbs, and Interjections Used as Verbs and Vice
Versa. — Adjectives used as verbs, p. 652. — Adverbs and inter-
jections used as verbs, p. 652. — Verbs used as adjectives, p. 653.
— Verbs used as adverbs, p. 653. — Verbs used as interjections,
p. 653.

Latin and French past participles used as infinitives, p. 653.
Bibliography, p. 654.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. — Conversion, a term intro-
duced by Sweet (I, p. 38), means using a word in a function
which originally belongs to another part of speech. The differ-
ence between conversion and derivation is that the former
involves no essential change of form. Conversion is greatly
facilitated by the levelling of forms which results from the
general decay of the OE inflectional system. In a number
of cases the phenomenon seems to have been promoted by
the influence of foreign languages.

41 — Mustanoja
Nouns Used as Adjectives

Nouns Used as Adjectives. — The use of nouns as adjectives, attributive and predicative, is common in ME and even more common in Mod. E. The distinction between nouns and adjectives has never been a very sharp one, and the conversion of nouns into adjectives and vice versa is therefore a natural process.

The conversion of nouns into adjectives is due to various factors. The use of *dainty* as an adjective, for example, is probably due to the resemblance of the final vowel of the OF (AN) noun *dainté* to the ME adjectival suffix -i (-iȝ) in the pronunciation of the medieval English speaker. Another starting-point for the use of nouns as adjectives are compounds of the *stone wall* type. In these the first noun often assumes a markedly adjectival character, as in Chaucer's *I am a burel man* (CT F Fkl. 716) and Lavynham's *a bakbyter hound* (Tretys 15, Trin. Coll. MS). Examples of nouns used as adjectives in ME:

— chief (an chirche he let rere At ðe est ende of Kaunturbury ðat ðe chef chirche were, RGlouc. 4758; — Sir Egbriht, our chefe kyng, RMannyng Langtoft 15); — choice (him a chalis ful chois wiþ good chere bringen, Alex. & Dind. 727); — dainty, from OF (AN) dainté, L dignitatem (ful many a deyntee hors, Ch. CT A Prol. 168); — felon (fra felon dede, Cursor 1160, Cotton MS); — master (and ða welle bi-wisten xii meister deoften swilc ha waren kings, Lamb. Hom. 41; — maister jaiere, Cursor 4434, Cotton MS); — rage 'mad, raging, wanton' (the gode man wende he hadde ben rage, Amis & Amil. 1945); — traitor 'traitorous' (traitour knyght, Malory MD 289). *Thral* is recorded in predicative use from early ME on (Ancr.), but the early instances may equally well be interpreted as articleless uses of the noun. There are unambiguous instances dating from the 14th century (*I am so caytyf and so thral*, Ch. CT A Kn. 1552).

OE *ceap* 'price, purchase, bargain' occurs in present-day E only as an adjective and, in certain phrases, as an adverb.
Adjectives Used as Nouns

(to buy, get, something cheap). These uses of cheap are not recorded until the 16th century. But that they are developing in ME is suggested by the following quotation, where the common later ME phrase good cheap, imitated from OF (a) bon marchié, occurs both with adjectival and adverbial force: — the same malt was so good chepe that the Mair ... and the Aldermen ... seyden that hit was a fals thing to selle her ale so dere, while pei myghten have malt so good chep (Bk London E 141 [1422]).

FOREIGN INFLUENCE. — Considering the rather frequent occurrence of adjectives converted from nouns in OF texts (mult estes hardis et vasals; mult ert prodomme, etc.), the possibility is not excluded that in some cases at least the adjectival use of nouns borrowed from OF is due to the influence of that language. It is, however, difficult to say anything very definite on this point.

Foreign influence seems to be behind Chaucer's shippes hoppesteres (CT A Kn. 2017) 'dancing ships;' hoppestere, which normally stands for 'dancing girl,' is supposed to be based on misreading navi bellatrici or bellatricesque in Boccaccio's Teseida as ballatrici or ballatrices 'dancing girls' (Robinson, p. 677). Foreign influence can be presumed also in Malory's these quenes sorceresses (MD 187).

ADJECTIVES USED AS NOUNS

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. — The use of an adjective as a noun is a universal phenomenon in which two stages can be distinguished, a partial and a total conversion into a noun. The practical significance of total conversion, by which the adjective is turned into a real noun, lies within the field of lexicography rather than of syntax and will therefore not be discussed here. The most comprehensive study of the subject so far published is that by C. Bergener (see bibliography),
which may be consulted for particulars of total conversion. Table 3 at the end of Bergener’s book provides a graphic illustration of the productivity of conversion through ME and Mod. E.

Some characteristic features in the use of partially-converted adjectives in ME are discussed in the following paragraphs. A partially-converted adjective carries out the functions of a noun, but retains certain characteristics of a true adjective, such as adjectival inflection in the earlier periods and adjectival indeclinability in later times.

The remarkably free substantival use of the adjective in OE and early ME in comparison with later times is doubtless largely due to the freedom allowed by the inflectional endings. Later in the ME period, when ambiguity following the loss of the inflections sets in, the semi-converted adjective has to give way to constructions where the adjective is followed by a noun or noun-equivalent. A considerable increase in the number of such constructions is noticeable in 14th-century texts. The alteration of the innocent of the Wyclifite Bible into the innocent man in the revised version is illuminative in this respect. And Chaucer has a knyght ther was, and that a worthy man (CT A Prol. 43) side by side with an housholdere, and that a greet, was he (Prol. 339), although his choice of construction is doubtless dictated by metrical considerations. For the introduction of the construction adjective + 'propword' one see pp. 301-5.

In ME and Mod. E., but apparently not in OE, a partially-converted adjective is occasionally qualified by another, attributive, adjective: — þu uniselie sunfule (Ancr. 140).

A partially-converted adjective may be used in a personal and non-personal sense.

Use in a Personal Sense. — A partially-converted adjective when used personally may have generalising (generic) or individualising force.

In a generalising (generic) singular sense it is not uncommon
Adjectives Used as Nouns in OE and ME: — hwon þe sunfte is iturnd erest to ure Loverd (Anacr. 169); — upon the jol, upon the wise Siknesse and hele entrecomune (Gower CA i 268). The adjective is occasionally preceded by the indefinite article: — I nevere saugh a more bountevous Of hire estat, n’al gladder, ne of speche A frendlyer, n’a more gracious For to do wel (Ch. TC i 883-5); — truly God more displesis a ryghtwys proud þen a synnar meyk (Misyn FL 62). There are also cases without an article: — mody meneþ (Harley Lyr. xi 22).

Later the singular falls into disuse, although it is occasionally found in late ME and even later. The plural adjective is common from OE down to the present day. In OE and ME it is used both with and without the definite article. ME examples: — te ontufe (Anacr. 29); — þe careful, þe croked, and þe pore (PPl. B xi 186); — the gretteste of Barbarie (Gower CA ii 599); — the Romaynes lawe was 'to spare hem that asked grace, and to smyte down the proude,' (Capgr. Chron. 3; 'parcere subjectis et debellare superbos,' Virg. Æn. vi 853); — blynde and bedreden (PPl. B vi 194); — ich rede 5ow rych, have reuthe of þe povre (PPl. C ii 172).

In an individualising sense, referring to a person known to the hearer (reader) from the context, a partially-converted adjective is relatively common in OE and ME. It is particularly common in OE poetry and, as pointed out by Bergener (see bibliography), p. 19, and Oakden II, pp. 394-9, in ME alliterative poetry.¹ Usually the adjective seems to have a certain emotional colour, expressing a quality likely to arouse love,

¹ Oakden, p. 394: — 'The substantival use of the adjective is a marked characteristic of ME alliterative poetry, and many of the examples of this usage in fifteenth and sixteenth century works, especially in early Scottish verse, are undoubtedly due to the popularity of alliterative verse in the fourteenth century.' For a criticism of some opinions expressed by Oakden in this chapter see J. W. Clark, JEGP XLIX, 1950, 60-6.

On this use of the partially-converted adjective in ME alliterative poetry cf. also Koziol, Sib., pp. 35-7.
admiration, pity, and the like. In ME the adjective is mostly preceded by *that* or the definite article, occasionally by *this*. Examples from *Gaw.& GK*: — *þat comly* (674), *þat fre* (1549), *þat jentyle* (542), *þe hende* (827), *þe myriest* (142), *þonder dere* (678). Examples from Chaucer: — *and which a goodly, softe speche Had that swete!* (BD 920); — *tellyng his tale alwey, this olde greye, Humble in his speche* (TC iv 127). In a plural sense the individualising use of the partially-converted adjective is much less common than in a singular sense: — *whan thise wikked went out, wonderwise þei fallen* (PPl. B i 122). In *Golagros* and *Gawain* adjectives of this kind are occasionally used with plural -s, in accordance with Middle Scots usage (cf. p. 277): — *þay myghtyis* (1012, but *þai myghty, 753), *þai lufltis of lyre* (1003), etc.

The independent use of the adjective in addressing persons is worth special mention. The custom of combining the adjective with a personal pronoun or a possessive goes back to OE. In ME the adjective seems to be less frequently preceded by a personal pronoun than in OE. Examples: — *þu veir bimong wummen* (Ancr. 43); — *lere it me, my dere* (PPl. B vi 256); — *to you, my swete, y make my mone* (Sec. Lyr. clxii 17); — *humblest of herte, highest of reverence* (Ch. Compl. Pity 57); — *freshest of colour and moste amyable, Considerþe my Peyne and beoþe merciable* (Sec. Lyr. clxx 1).

**Use in a Non-personal (Neuter) Sense.** — In OE and ME the neuter adjective may stand in a generalising sense for the quality itself or for something possessing that quality. In OE the adjective is often preceded by the definite article and used both in the singular and plural. Its use in the plural is probably due to the influence of Latin, which may have strengthened the singular use too. The usage remains the same in ME except that the distinction between the singular and plural becomes obscured as the inflectional endings are lost, with the result that semi-converted adjectives of this type are interpreted as singulars. ME examples: — *zif þu ert ofhunred
Adjectives Used as Nouns

After þe swete, þu most erest sikerliche bite no þe bittre (Ancr. 171);—
he highte the erthe to helpe yow iche ione Of wollene, of lynene,
to liflode at nede (PPl. A i 18);—
if I the sothe knewe (Gower CA i 1312). Comparative:—
as fortune wolde fulsun hom þe fayrer to have (Gaw. & GK 99).
Superlative:—
in the hoteste of the dai (Gower CA ii 415).1 Without an article:—
that any clerk wol speke good of wyves (Ch. CT D WB 689).
With the indefinite article:—
it is an impossible (Ch. CT D WB 688;
also CT F Fkl. 1009);—
your desyer as for the knyghtes of the Shyer was an impossybyl to be browght abowght (Paston III 53 [1472]).2 When two converted adjectives are linked together,
they are, like nouns, used without an article:—
quer þe es for ill or god (Cursor 27675, Cotton MS).

The common OE construction consisting of a neuter interrogative or indefinite pronoun and of the partitive genitive of
a neuter adjective survives is ME expressions like
what littles (Orm. 2504), what nwez (Gaw. & GK 1407), and þe reade see,
þet nowiht cwikes nis inne (Ancr. 151). In the course of the ME
period these are replaced by the appositional type (nout hwit,
Ancr. 188).

THE TYPE 'FOR BLACK.' —
This type has been the subject
of much discussion. There are many instances of it in late ME:
her heed for hor was whyt as flour (RRose 356);—
for she is in so gret turment . . . That nygh she meltith for pure wood
(RRose 276);—
he hadde a beres skyn, col-blak for old . . . As
any ravenes fethere it shoon for blak (Ch. CT A Kn. 2142-4).

1 It is not entirely impossible, although it is unlikely, that the
hoteste of the dai is an elliptical construction, as has been suggested.
Other similar cases are
biholden ever his blake and nout his hwite,
vorbi þet hwit awtlegeb þe ieten (Ancr. 126), of his sentence I wol yow
seyn the grete (Ch. PF 35), this is the short and playn (Ch. CT A
Kn. 1091), whereof the certain no man knoweth (Gower CA Prol.
140), and into þe þikke of þe forest (Degaré 62).

2 A doubtful case is for the proverbe seith that manye smale maken
a greet (Ch. CT I Pars. 362) because the a preceding greet might
also be taken as a numeral ('one').
These are only a few examples of this rather common type. In a number of instances for may be the intensive prefix for-, but in some cases (like for pure wood) it is clearly a causal preposition preceding a semi-converted adjective. The type is discussed under the preposition for (p. 381).

VERB-ADVERB GROUPS USED AS NOUNS

As shown by U. Lindelöf (see bibliography), the first instances of the now so widespread use of verb-adverb groups as nouns are found in ME: — Robert renne-about shal nowste have of myne (PPl. B vi 150). The use remains sporadic down to the 16th century.

ABOVE USED AS A NOUN

Einenkel, Syntax, p. 73, and H. T. Price, Foreign Influences on ME, Univ. of Michigan Contributions in Modern Philology 10, Ann Arbor 1947, p. 9, call attention to the occurrence of above as a noun: — thou miht noght come at thin above ('achieve mastery or success,' Gower CA iv 914). Einenkel believes that this use, not uncommon in later ME, is a direct imitation of OF venir (estre) au desore (de).

ADJECTIVES USED AS ADVERBS

Owing largely to the loss of final -e and the resulting assimilation in form (see p. 314), adjectives are not infrequently used where one would expect an adverb. The following quasi-adverbial use of the adjective perpetuel in Chaucer's Boece goes back to the appositive use of the adjective perpetua in the Latin original: — the condicioun of mannes goodes . . . ne last nat perpetuel ('numquam perpetua subsistit,' ii p 4,78). Cf. pp. 315-6 and the discussion of adverbs used as adjectives, below.
Adverbs Used as Adjectives

ADVERBS USED AS ADJECTIVES

Adverbs Used as Attributive Adjectives. — The use of adverbs as attributive adjectives, as in Shakespeare’s well-known phrases *our sometime sister* (Hamlet I ii 8) and *of seldom pleasure* (Sonnet lii 4), is a not uncommon feature in English literature. Wülfing II, p. 300, quotes a few examples from OE (Bede). There are a few instances in early ME (*for his wel dede*, Lawman A 146851 *for his god dede*, B); — *be longe þenchinge*, Ancr. 6), but the use remains uncommon until later ME: — *þise Sereses als I fynde, þe uppest folk ben of al Ynde* (KAlis. 7059, MS B; uppurest folk, MS L); — but Crist tolde hem of sourere perils þat was betere hem to knowe (Wyclif Sel. Wks I 235); — *risende up Esdras fro the beforne porche of the temple* (*et exurgens Esdras ab ante atrium templi,* Wyclif 1 Esdras ix 1); — *often when there is a throwout shrewe, he coyneth al the gold . . . to have in his bandon* (Usk TL 64).

The attributive use of the adverb is distinctly literary in character. In the 14th century, particularly, it frequently occurs in translations from Latin and in other works written under Latin influence. In many cases it can be shown to be a direct Latinism. It is worth noticing that even today it does not seem to occur in popular usage.

Adverbs Used for Appositive and Predicative Adjectives. — An appositive and predicative adjective may occur in a function which practically coincides with that of a modal adverb. In the following quotations, for example, the adjective *sauf* and the adverb *saufly* serve practically the same purpose: — *sometyme his good is drowned in the see, And somtyme comth it sauf unto the londe* (Ch. CT G CY 950); — *the book seith that no wight retorneth saufly into the grace of his olde enemy* (Ch. CT B Mel. 2373). This rather indiscriminate use of adjectives and adverbs is doubtless facilitated by the existence

1 The first quotation with attributive *well* in the NED (*well* adj. 5 c) is from the 17th century.
of numerous adverbs, native and foreign loans, representing the OE adverbial type in -e (see p. 314) but ultimately dropping the final -e (e.g., and gnattles hird þor þick e up-wond, Gen. & Ex. 2988; — þe sunne þat schines clere, Cursor 291, Cotton MS; — he mai understand al cler þat þar es, Cursor 9754, Cotton MS; — faire they hem dresse, Ch. CT A Kn. 2594).

These striking points of contact provide favourable ground for the use of adverbs in contexts where a modern reader would expect to find an appositive or predicative adjective. Such a use of adverbs is particularly common in Chaucer’s works: — abouten hir herse there stoden lustely . . . Bounté parfyty . . . And fresshe Beauté, Lust, and Jolyté . . . (Compl. Pity 36); — ful dredfully tho gan she stonden stytle (TC ii 1128); — I sawgh hyr daunce so comtily, Carole and synge so swetely, Laughe and pleye so womanly, And loke so debonairly (Ch. BD 851).

NOUNS USED AS VERBS AND VERBS AS NOUNS

General Considerations. — The conversion of nouns into verbs and verbs into nouns is greatly facilitated by the loss of the inflectional endings. Another factor which no doubt promotes conversion between nouns and verbs is the adoption of numerous noun and verb pairs from foreign languages, above all from OF (e.g., delit — delitier and travail(le) — travaillier; cf. A. C. Thorn, Étude sur les verbes dénominatifs en français, Lund diss. 1907), to some extent also the adoption of such pairs from ON (e.g., English anger).

Nouns Used as Verbs. — OE nouns are turned into verbs by derivation (e.g., lufu — lufian; cf. V. Bladin, Studies on Denominative Verbs in English, Uppsala diss. 1911). Since ME, conversion has been used for this purpose. Occasionally new conversion-verbs compete with older verbal derivatives. Thus snow competes with sniw (snew; from OE sniwan) and finally supplants it in Mod. E. While MS L of KAlis. reads whan hit snywiþ ðer
Conversion gains ground steadily, reaching numerically its peak at the end of the 14th century. It is difficult, however, to say how far the absolute number of attested conversions gives an entirely reliable picture of the situation, considering the uneven chronological distribution of the extant ME texts. A few examples of nouns recorded in verbal function for the first time in ME: — blaze (þe sperke... waxeþ from lesse to more vort al þet hus blasie vorþ er me lest wene, Ancr. 134); — bloom (Godess þeowwess blosmenn aþ In alle gode þæwess, Orm. 3636; — orest it blomede, and sipen bar þe beries ripe, Gen. & Ex. 2061); — fine 'to pay (as) ransom or fine' (wo-so nolde aþen hom at hor wille fine, HII barnde hous and oþer god and defouled loverd and hine, RGlouc. 10520); — flower (mi uleschs is iflured 'refloruit caro mea,' Ancr. 153); — land (a god schup he hurede, Þat him scholde londe In westene londe, Horn 753); — nest (þer nxstieþ ames, Lawman A 21753); — prison (Sir William Crispyn with þe duke was led, Togider prisoned, RMannyng Langtoft 101, ed. of 1810); — rust (oþer leten þinge s muwlen oþer rusten, Ancr. 155); — spur (þe eorles gunnen riden and spureden heore stedan, Lawman A 26480).

Verbs Used as Nouns. — The conversion of verbs into nouns follows roughly the same lines as the conversion of nouns into verbs, but is somewhat less extensive. In ME the phenomenon is found above all in the North and E Midlands. Y. M. Biese (see bibliography), p. 428, believes that ON influence plays a part in this development. A few examples: — ail (þet Blake cloþ... deþ lesse eile to þen eien and is þicur aþein þe wind, Ancr. 22); — attire (mid his fourti cnihles and hire horse and hire atyr, Lawman B 3275); — break (wituten ani brek or brist, Cursor 6344, Cotton MS); — fall (þet fifte þing

1 As in the case of other French loans, it is difficult to say whether the verb to prison goes back to the ME adopted noun prison or to the OF verb. Cf. mes les prisounez pur felounie en nule manere voloms suffrer de nul homme enpleder (Britton; NED).
Conversion

is muche scheome, þet hit is efter val to liggen so longe, Ancr. 147); — increase (it nys but folie and encrees of peyne, Ch. TC iv 1257); — show (lele script agh be thre-fald, Wit reuth of hert, wit seeu to preist, Cursor 28616, Cotton MS); — stink (it was fugel and ful o stinc, Gen. & Ex. 2556).

ADJECTIVES, ADVERBS, AND INTERJECTIONS USED AS VERBS
AND VICE VERSA

ADJECTIVES USED AS VERBS. — A considerable number of adjectives are used as verbs in ME. It is tempting to assume that this was facilitated by the analogy of the considerable number of OF verbs derived from adjectives (blanchir, franchir, orgoilli[e]r, etc.), but it is impossible to say anything definite upon this point. A few examples of adjectives used as verbs in ME: — dark 'to become dark' (fro þenn e hit derked til þe mone Over al þe world wide, Cursor 16749, Trin. MS); — deep 'penetrate' (upon þe hwite hude þer waxe þ wunde and deopeþ into þe soule, Ancr. 130); — feeble 'to grow feeble' (ofdred . . . lest hore licome feblie to swuþe, Ancr. 167); — fine 'to refine' (as deþ þet ver [þet] clenze þ and fine þ þet  gold, Ayenb. 106); — loathly 'to make repulsive' (a lute clut mei lodlichen swuþe a muchel ihol peche, Ancr. 114); — softe, transitive (Laverd, loke to me ant have merci on me, softe me mi sor, Marg. 5).

ADVERBS AND INTERJECTIONS USED AS VERBS. — Adverbs and interjections are also converted into verbs in ME, although the number of such cases is not very large. A few examples of adverbs used as verbs: — asunder (in hertis . . . whom no difference Of doubilnes may . . . assounder nor dissevere, Lydgate Troy Bk iii 3907); — nigh 'to approach' (swa he stanne þatt iwhille mann Wass himm full laþ to nehhzhen, Orm. 8077); — thwart 'to oppose' (oc Abraham it wulde wel Quat-so God bad, þwerten he it never a del, Gen. & Ex. 1324). Examples of interjections used as verbs: — hail 'to greet' (he wolde swa
Adjectives etc. Used as Verbs

Allmahhtiʒ Drihttin heʒlenn, Orm. 2814); — ho 'to shout ho' (but hoen on hym as a hounde and hoten hym go þennes, PPL. B x 61); — ho 'to stop' (til that men come unto the gates Of Paradis, and there ho, Gower CA vii 571).

Verbs Used as Adjectives. — There are a few ME instances where a verb is allegedly used as an adjective, but all of them except flicker are doubtful. There is no valid reason to assume, for example, that spare (Patience 104) does not go back to OE spær, the etymology given by Bateson in his edition, or that repent in line 1694 of The Isle of Ladies (printed by Speght as Chaucer's Dream in 1598) is not the OF adjective repent 'repentant.'

Verbs Used as Adverbs. — No unambiguous instances are known from ME.

Verbs Used as Interjections. — Functionally the imperative mood is closely associated with interjections. As stated on p. 473, both are self-contained exclamatory expressions, little articulate and greatly dependent on intonation. The occurrence of imperative forms as secondary interjections (cf. p. 630) is therefore quite natural. There are cases like abyd, Robyn, my leewe brother (Ch. CT A Mil. 3129), cum, broiþer, here and se (Cursor 2030, Cotton MS), and go bet, peny, go bet, go! (Sec. Lyr. lvii refrain). Help! (e.g., help, hooly crosz of Bromeholm! Ch. CT A Rv. 4286) might equally well be taken as an imperative and as a noun.

Latin and French past participles used as infinitives

The use of Latin and French past participles as infinitives, although it cannot very well be called conversion in the sense defined on p. 641, deserves a brief mention in this chapter.

Latin and French past participles (correct, create, depeint, suspect, translate, etc.) are long used participially in English.
(e.g., *but execut was al bisyde hire leve The goddes wil*, Ch. TC iii 622; — *this lettre . . . was contrefet in such a wise*, Gower CA ii 982). From the 13th century on they are, however, treated more and more often as infinitives; when used as participles they receive the ending -ed (e.g., *circumcised he was*, Gen. & Ex. 1200; — *they weren so supprised*, Ch. CT B Mel. 2924).

**STUDIES RELATING TO CONVERSION**


Brunner II, pp. 71-80.


Deter, H., *Alte Partizipia auf *'-en', '-ed' und '-ate', die im modernen Englisch zu Adjektiven geworden sind*, Berlin diss. 1934.


Jespersen, *Mod. E Gr. II*, pp. 211-81 and 310-30; VI, pp. 84-134.

Kellner, pp. 79-81 and 144-54.


Phoenix, W., *Die Substantivierung des Adjektivs, Partizips und Zahlwortes im Angelsächsischen*, Berlin diss. 1918.


Poutsma II,1, pp. 365-426.


Sweet I, pp. 38-40.


Wülfing I, pp. 291-8, and II, p. 300.

ADDITIONS


Page 32 (General Bibliography, general studies in ME syntax): according to M. S. Kirch, 'Scandinavian Influence on English Syntax,' *PMLA* LXXIV, 1959, 503-10, there is no positive proof that (1) the non-expression of the relative pronoun (see p. 204), (2) the use of *shall* and *will* as auxiliaries of the future (see p. 491, n. 2), or (3) the use of the (inflectional) genitive before the noun which it modifies (see pp. 76-7) is due to Scandinavian influence, as suggested by Jespersen (*Growth*, § 80).


Page 38 (General Bibliography, Italian syntax): a new, greatly enlarged version of Hall's bibliography appeared in Florence (Sansoni) in 1958 under the title *Bibliografia della linguistica italiana* (3 vols).


Page 40 (General Bibliography, Frisian syntax): M. Szadrowsky's recent article 'Stil und Syntax der altfriesischen Rechtssprache' in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* LXXXI, 1959, 131-60, deals only with style.

Pages 76-7 (genitive): see addition to p. 32 (3) above.

Pages 106-7 (his own hand): a 16th-century example of this phrase, *she hong her selfe her own handes* (More, *Dialogue of Comfort* [1534], Everyman's Library, p. 218), has been kindly communicated to the present writer by Professor Norman Davis.

Page 167 (Possessive Pronouns): Lehnert's article 'Die Entstehung des neuenglischen *its* was also published in *Mélanges de
Additions

*Linguistique et de Philologie Fernand Mossé in Memoriam*, Paris (Didier) 1959, pp. 231-7.

Page 204 (non-expression of the relative pronoun): see addition to p. 32 (1) above.

Page 491, note 2 (*shall* and *will* as auxiliaries of the future): see addition to p. 32 (2) above.

Page 546 (infinitive): W. M. Smith's article 'The Split Infinitive,' *Anglia* LXXVII, 1959, 257-78, supplements the list of studies printed in H. Spies's article for the years 1939-50, but the studies listed by Smith deal essentially with present-day usage.
INDEX

The numbers refer to pages. The abbreviations are explained on pp. 11-12. The index contains no references to the general bibliography on pp. 13-40.

a, indef. art., see articles; prep., 353, see also of and on; interj., 623; in battle-cries (a Cornwall, a Warwick, etc.) 633-4
a-, prefix, expressing the perfective aspect 446; representing a weakened of- 563, 581; a weakened on 549, 577-8, 581, 592
a-begged 581
abide, vb, with gen. 88; used as an interj. 630, 653
a-blaked 581
about(en, -s), prep., 353-55; be about expressing immediate future 354
above(n), prep., 355; expressing the comparative degree 286; used as a noun 648
absolute accusative; see absolute constructions
absolute constructions: — absolute accusative, dative, and nominative (the cause yknewe .. he yaf the sike man his boote; his hed in his hande) 114-17; constructions introduced by with 116-17; — absolute infinitive (to wit, sooth to seyn; and ye, my lord, to do right as yow reste) 541-2; — absolute participle 114-16, 559; absolute pple as prepositions 559-60
absolute dative (infinitive, nominative, participle); see absolute constructions
a-building; see verbal noun in -ing
a-caterwawed 581
accordant to, prep., 355-6, 559
accorded, past pple; be accorded 'accord' 550
according to, prep., 355-6, 559
accusative; see case, accusative
adays, adv., 89
adder, n., gender 52
adjectives 275-89; bibliography 288-9.
Traces of inflection 274-6; French inflection 276.
Comparison 278-88; equality 278; superiority 278-88; inflectional and periphrastic comparison with mo(re) and most 278; with better and best 281; multiple comparison 281; gradational comparative 281-2; proportional comparative 282; comparative particles 283-4; absolute comparative 284-5; def. art. with comparative 236, 239, 257-8; superlative rendering Latin absolute comparative 285; superlative in comparisons between two 285; various ways of expressing the superlative
Adjectives governing the genitive 87; the dative 103-4; followed by an inf. 521, 538; close relationship with nouns 266, 642; used as nouns 643-7; as adverbs 648; as verbs 652 a-doing; see verbal noun in -ing adown; see verbal noun in

Form 314-15; formation of adverbs from adjectives 314; from nouns 315; use, general considerations 315; classification 315; adj. or adv. 315-16; adverbs used for appositive or predicate adjectives 315-16; functional weakening 316.

Adverbs of degree 316-30; intensifying 316-28; weakening 328-30; incidence of some adverbs of degree 330. (For the individual adverbs see separate entries.)

As (als, also) 331-5; with nouns and adjectives (as his friend, etc.) 331; non-expression (she died a woeful maid, etc.) 331; with who (as who) 332; with adverbs and prepositions (as nowthe, as in this caas, as touchende of, etc.) 332-3; with infinitives (as to speke of love) 333-4; in exhortations and asseverations (as beth nat wroth with me, as Crist me helpe) 334-5; in comparisons of equality and similarity (as ... as, also ... as, as ... so, also ... so) 278; non-expression 278; as he that (which) 199; as if, mood after, 465; as 'than' 283; as used as an adv. of degree 317-18.

So 335-6; in exhortations and asseverations (so beth me naught unkinde, so mot I the, etc.) 335-6; vicarious so 336; so 'like' 336; so 'as if' 336; so 'so that' 336; so indicating sequence (so hadde I spoken with hem everichon) 336; in comparisons (so ... so, so ... as) 278, 282-3; non-expression in comparisons 278; multiplicative so with numerals (two so fele, ten so wood) 309; so as an adverb of degree 324; never so 321-2.

There and where 337-8; anticipatory and 'existential' there (ther was dwellynge ... a worthy knight) 337; there in blessings and curses (ther Jhesu yow blesse, etc.) 337; there and where as rel. adverbs (there the catte is kitoun the courte is ful elyng; he comth where as thei bothe stode) 337-8; there as, where as 338; special abstract uses of where ('for which,' etc.) 338.

Yet 338.

Adverbs of negation (ne, nought > not, nothing, never, little) 339-40; contractions of ne (nere, nil, etc.) 339; multiple...
negation 339-40; figurative negation 340-1.
Prepositional adverbs (here-by, therefore, whereof, etc.) 424-5.
Generalising relative adverbs, concessive character of, 462, 468.
Comparison 341-2 (see also 278-88); nigh and near 342;
special uses of best (pa heo scolden bezst fehten; as best he can) and swithest (swa we hit switest mazen don) 342.
Adverbs used as adjectives 649-50; as verbs 652; as interjections 631
afere(ned), past pple, 549; followed by a plain inf. 538
a-fishe(n)th 581
afore(n), prep., 356
afore(n)-zens, prep., 356-7
afo(n)-on, prep., 357
a friend of mine and similar expressions 165-6
after, prep., 357-8
again(st), prep., 90-1, 358-9
agent of the personal passive 436, 441-2; inflectional agent (dat. of agency) 105-6; prepositional agent 442; see further under the prepositions by, from, mid, of, through, and with. Alleged use of at to express agency 442; of to 105-6.
Agent representing the dat. (indirect) object of an active construction (I was told a story, etc.) 440-1
again(nen), vb, in ingressive, perceptive, and intensive-descriptive functions 610-11
ago(n), postposition (past pple), 560
a-ha, interj., 624
a-hunted (an hunted) 581
a-hunting; see verbal noun in -ing
a- + -ing (a-building, a-doing, a-hunting, etc.); see verbal noun in -ing
ail, vb, impersonal use 434; personal use 435; used as a noun 651
alack, interj., 629
alarm, interj., 629
 alas, interj., 629, 631
al-be-it (all be that) 317, 468
aller; see all
algates, adv., 90
a little; see little
alive 94
all, indef. pron. 213-14 (see pronouns, indefinite); alles, gen. sg., used as an adv. 91; 213, 317; aller (alre, alder, alther, all there), gen. pl., 213, 286
all, adv., 316-17; in concessive expressions (all, albeit, although, etc.) 317, 468
aller; see all
alles, adv.; see all, indef. pron.
all hail, salutation, 632
allinge(n)s, adv., 91, 317
all out, adv., 'utterly' 317
all there; see all
all what, rel., 191, 194
almost, adv., 317, 328
alone, adj.; him alone, his alone, all alone, all him alone 150, 294, 317
along(st), prep., 359-60
alre; see all
already, adv., 317
also, adv.; see as and adverbs
alther; see all
although, conj., 317
altogether(s), adv., 317
always, adv., 90, 111; in gradational comparison 282
a-maied 581
amends, n., pl., 64
amid(s), adv. and prep., 91, 360; amidst of 91
among(st), prep., 360
amours, n., pl., 61
a(n), indef. art.; see articles
an, postpositive; see one
and (and if), conj., introducing a conditional clause 469
ane, indef. art. in Scots 261; ane used as an intensifying adverb in Lawman A (wunder ane, bitter ane, etc.) 295-6, see one; of ane, superlative intensifier, 300-1
anempst, prep.; see anent(es)
anent(es), prep., 360-1
an hungred 581-2
anights, adv., 89
animal nouns, gender 52
another, indef. pron., 216-17, 262
anoven-on, prep., 402
anoveward, prep., 402
-and in pres. pples 548
anticipatory (formal) it; as a subject 131-3, 433; it am I, etc., 133; non-expression of it 143, 433; it as an object 133-4
anticipatory that 171-2; there 337; this 173-4
anunder, prep., 402
anuppe(n), prep., 402
any, indef. pron.; see pronouns, indefinite
ape, n., gender 52
'apo koinou' construction 144, 204
appositive constructions: a drop blood, a pair gloves, no morsel bread, etc., 84; smale fowles a gret heep, etc. 84; some the messagers, any the other eight, half my king-rike, on this half Humber, other her gentil women, etc., 84-5, 300; one the winsom burgh 297-8; one the best man, one the unworthieste, etc., 297-9, 301-4 (one of the greatest author 299); three the noblest rivers, two the firste, etc., 299-300; appositive participle, see participles
around, prep., 361
article 229-74; bibliography 273-4.
Main principles of use: individualising and generalising (generic) functions 230-1; conditioning factors (rhythm, etc.) 231; repetition 265-6. Non-expression 266-72; general considerations 266-7; vocative 267; prepositional phrases 267-8; of-periphrasis 268; predicative position 269-70; negations, never and ever 270; two nouns linked together (lef and fruit, etc.) 270; enumerations of several nouns (by arm, foot, and toe) 271; verb and object phrases (to bring word, etc.); proverbs and proverbial phrases 272. Article isolating attribute
from noun (*all the world, too long a story*, etc.) 298-9.

Article with the verbal noun in -ing 268, 575-6

article, definite, 232-59, 265-72.

Origin 232; used with weak and strong adjectives 232-3; form 233; individualising and generalising (generic) functions 233-4; *the* rendering *F de* 234-5.

Uniques: proper names 234-45; personal name without an attribute 234-5; plural (*one of the Staffords*) 235; preceded by an adjective 235-6; followed by an adjective 236; preceded by a common noun 236-7; followed by a common noun 237-9; followed by a prepositional phrase (*Arthur of the Round Table*, etc.) 239; personifications 239; geographical names: continents, countries, towns, etc. 239-40; French place-names 240; French art. (*le*) with English place-names 240; town quarters, streets, gates, bridges 240; buildings 241; islands 241; mountains and mountain ranges 241-2; rivers 242-3; seas and lakes 243-4; ships 244; stars and constellations 244-5.

Uniques: common (appellative) nouns 245-50; deity 245-6; devil 246; Bible 246-7; church 247; divine service 247-8; heaven, paradise, purgatory, hell 248; earth, middle-erd, world, 249-50; the four cardinal points 249-50.

Names referring to time 250-50;

seasons of the year 250;

months 250; days of the week 250-1; annual feasts 251; parts of the day 251-2; hours 252; meals 252.

Common (appellative) nouns 253-5; individualising use 253; *the day, the morwe, ‘today, tomorrow’* 253; generalising (generic) use 253-4; man and woman 254; nationalities, religious sects, etc., 254-5; distributive use (*by the week*, etc.) 255.

Collective nouns 255; material nouns and the like 256; abstract nouns 256-7.

Def. art. with parts of speech other than nouns 257-9; adjectives (comparative and superlative) 257-8; substantivised adj. 645-7; numerals 258, 291; pronouns 164, 259-60; adverbs and conjunctions 259.

Def. art. instead of a possessive (*fought with the heels*, etc.) 163-4.

article, indefinite, 259-65, 265-72.

OE 259-60; *an* and *sum* 259-60; differences in the use of *an* and *sum* 260.

ME 261-5; the form of *an* 261; disappearance of *sum* 261-2; early ME development 261-3; subsequent development 263; *any* used in a function similar to that of the indef. art. (*as stille as any
ston, etc.) 263; proper names (an Arthur 'a ruler comparable to Arthur') 264; individualisation of abstract nouns 264; substantivised adj. 647; numerical meaning of a(n) (two children born at a birth, etc.) 264; indef. art. with numerals (an hundred knyghtes, an one man, etc.) 264, 291; collective (proximate) use of numerals with a(n) (a five year after this, wel a ten or twelve) 265; distributive use of the indef. art. (once a week) 265 as, adv.; see adverbs as used as a rel. pron. 202 as 'her, them' 135 as he that (as he which) 199 as if, mood after, 465 ask, vb, with a double acc. 109 aspects, verbal, 445-50; bibliography 449-50.

General considerations 445-6; comparison with the aspect of the Slavonic languages 445 n.l.; perfective aspect 446-7; the prefix i- (OE ge-) 446-7; imperfective verbs in perfective use 447; imperfective (durative) aspect 445, 448; ingressive (inchoative) aspect 446, 448; egressive (effective) aspect 446, 448; iterative (frequentative) aspect 446, 448; causative aspect 446, 448; intensive aspect 446, 448

aspie, vb, form of the accompanying inf. 529

assented, past pple; be assented 'assent' 550

a-strayed 581

asunder, adv., used as a verb 652

aswike, vb, governing the gen. 88

at, rel. pron., 191

at, prep., 362-6; frequency of, 348; interchangeability with of and on 350-1; used with the inf. 515, 535

at after, prep., 366-7

atfore, prep., 367

alour, prep., 367

atte nende 44 n. 2

attire, vb, used as a noun 651 auxiliary verbs and verbal periphrases 583-619; bibliography 583; form of the accompanying inf. 528. For details see be, periphrasis with be and -ing (-ende), can, do, gin, have, may, shall, will, wurthe.

Auxiliaries of the perfect and pluperfect 499-503; in hypothetical statements 502; in perfect infinitives 502; with reflexive verbs 502-3; non-expression of the pple after the auxiliary 503

a-way, a-wei, interj., 624

be, vb, 583-4; used as an auxiliary of the passive 438-41, 616-18; of the perfect and pluperfect 499-503 (refl. verbs 502-3); in the periphrasis be + -ing (-ende) 584-97 (for details see periphrasis with be + -ing or -ende); used periphrastically to intensify the perfective aspect (was dead
Index

'died') 447; b-forms used to express futurity 438, 484, 583; be about to 354, 453; expressing the immediate future 354; be going to expressing the near future 495, 592-3; be to, modal use 453; when the sonne was to reste, he wist what he was to do, he was to passinge thennus, etc. 101, 435-6, 524-6; use in a passive sense (that ston was gretly for to love; they beth to be blamed) 519-20, 524-5; me is (were) good (bet, better, best), lef (lever), loath 101, 103, 435, 457, 523-4, 531-2 (form of the accompanying inf. 523-4)

be-, prefix, expressing the egressive aspect 448

bear, n., gender 52

beast, n., gender 52

become, vb, expressing the ingressive aspect 619

bedeal, vb, case governed by, 88, 107, 110

bee, n., gender 52

before(n), prep., 367-8; adv., used as an adj. 649

begin, vb, in ingressive, perfective, and intensive-descriptive function 448, 610-11; with pres. pple (began spekende) 558-9

behind(en), prep., 368

behold, vb; stood to bitholde 'stood watching' 537

be holden to 453

behave, vb, impersonal use 436; form of the accompanying inf. 523-4

believe, vb, with dat. object 101; with acc. object 109

beneath(en), prep., 368

benedicite, interj., 630

benim, vb, case governed by, 88, 98, 110

bereave, vb, case governed by, 88, 98, 107, 109-10

beseem, vb, 453

beside(s), adv., 91; prep., 369

best, adj. (second, third, best) 306; adv., in periphrastic comparison 278-9, 281; special uses: pa heo scolden best fehten; as best he can 342

betime(s), adv., 91-2

bet(ter), adj. and adv.; me is (were) better (to) be 143, 435, 523-4; I had better (to) be 532; in periphrastic comparison 278, 281

between(en), between, betweies, betwix(en), betwixt, prep., 369

beyond(en), prep., 370

Bible, n., article 246

bid, vb, governing the dat. and acc. 109; acc. and gen. 109; double acc. 109; to-dative 109; form of the accompanying inf. 529 (active), 529-30 (passive: was boden ... gon); in the sense 'wish, intend' (I bidde wisshe you no more sorwe, etc.) 529-30; modal use 453

bird (brid), n., gender 46, 52

bire, vb, impersonal use 434; personal use 435; modal use 453

blaze, n., used as a verb 651

bloom, n., expressing a superlative idea 285; used as a verb 651
Index

bo, indef. pron.; see both
body, n., 'person' 149; reinforcing personal pronouns (his own body 'himself') 148; his own body 'he himself,' my joly body 'I myself' 149
both (bo), indef. pron., 214; bo(th) two 214
bout(en), prep., from about(en) 370
bout(en), prep., variant of but(en), 370-1
break, vb, used as a noun 651
but(en), bout(en), prep., 370-1
but in comparisons (no sooner but, other but, elles but, etc.) 284
but if, conj., 'unless,' introducing a conditional clause 469
butterfly, n., gender 52
buxom (buhsum), adj., governing the dative 103
by, prep., 371-5; frequency of, 348; with numerals in distributive expressions (by two, by three, etc.) 310
call, vb, with two accusasatives 108
can (pret. could), vb, 599; with of 88, 351; with on 351; auxiliary 453, 599
can, couth, coud, could, pret-erites of gin (g.v.)
cardinal numbers 291-306; used for ordinals 306; used as multiplicatives (two so fele, suche two) 309; for further details see numerals
case, general discussion of, 67-70; bibliography 69-70; expressed by means of pre-
positions and word-order 348.
For the individual cases see below
Accusative (direct) object 108; predicate acc. 108, acc. replacing dat. and gen. 108-10; assimilation with dat. and nom. 68, 94-5, 104, 108, 129, 180; acc. with verbs of privation (bereave, etc.) 109-10; acc. with inf. 526-7; acc. with inf. replaced by the pres. pple 552-3.
Adverbial acc. 110-11; of extent (many a mile, all that night, etc.) 110-11; of direction, with verbs of motion (thei wente here weie, etc.) 110; of time 'when' 111; acc. of certain adjectives (full, lytel) used in adverbial sense 314.
Absolute accusative; see absolute constructions
case, common, 68
case, dative, 95-108; bibliography 117-19.
Assimilation with acc. and nom. 68, 94-5, 104, 129, 180; him (hem), and hire for hine, hi(e) 129; whom for hwone 180.
Inflectional and periphrastic dat. 95-7; functions (dat. proper,locative-instrumental) 97.
Dat. with verbs 97-102; dat. of interest 97-8; sympathetic dat. (she falleth him to jote, it com hire to minde) 98-9, 163; possessive dat. 99, 159-
Index

62; ethical dat. (so wiste I me non other red) 99-100; refl. dat. (he went hym hoom, etc.) 100, 153, 431; dat. in impersonal expressions 100-1; in the type be to (what him were best to do) 101, 525-6; possibly surviving in the 'inorganic' for (it is no maistrye for a lord to dampne a man) 101, 383-4; replaced by the nom. 100-1, 112-13, 435-6, 525-6; dat. (indirect) object 101-2; replaced by the acc. 108-9, 112; represented by the nom. in passive sentences 112-13; dat. with verbs of privation (bereave, etc.) 98, 107, 110.

Dat. with nouns 102-3; encroaching upon the gen. 102. Dat. with adjectives 103-4. Instrumental (adverbial) dat. 104-8; survival of the locative-instrumental 104; dat. of means and manner 104; instrumental dat. with nemn 'to name' 104-5; dat. of agency 105-6; his own hand (mouth) 106-7; instrumental dat. with verbs of privation (bereave, etc.) 107; dat. of measure 107; dat. of time 107-8.

absolute dat.; see absolute constructions

case, genitive, 70-93; bibliography 92-3; general considerations 70.

Form 71-9; inflectional gen. 71-3; singular 71-3; plural 73; accumulation of inflectional

genitives 73; periphrasis with of 74-8; foreign influence 77-8; form of the gen. with personal and non-personal nouns 76-7; group gen. 78-9; split gen. (for Marie love of hevene, etc.) 78-9; 'his-genitive' (Loth his eldeste sone, Felyce hir jayrnnesse) 120, 159-62.

Genitive with nouns (attributive or adnominal gen.) 79-86; partitive gen. 79-80; of smale houndes hadde she, etc. 80; gen. of description or of quality (lives body, Dyane of chastitee) 80-1; gen. of definition (the ryver of Themys, thy sone of Seynt John) 82; gen. of emphatic subjective description (a ryght good knyght of a yonge man) 82-3; gen. of place (at Seint Poules) 83-4; appositive expressions of measure, etc., instead of gen. (no morsel breed) 84-5; appositive kin, manner, mister, and done 85-6.

Genitive with adjectives 87.

Genitive with verbs 87-8; verbs of privation (bereave etc.) 88, 109-10; gen. replaced by the acc. 108-10.

Adverbial genitive 88-92; of time (winters and summers, days and nights, etc.) 88-9; local gen. (walk his ways, etc.) 89-90; survivals of the OE adverbial gen. 90-1; instances first recorded in ME 91-2

case, instrumental; see case, dative
case, locative, 96, 104
case, nominative, 112-17; bibliography 117-19.
General principles of use 112; nom. replacing the dat. 112-13, 435; nom. with inf. (no wonder is a lewed man to ruste; swich it is a millere to be fals) 113-14, 524; oblique case for nom. (bittir it is thee to han forsaken) 113-14.
Absolute nominative; see absolute constructions

case, vocative, 112; non-expression of the article 267; form of the adj. in the vocative 275-6; my with the vocative (my son, etc.) 158-9

case-system, simplification of, 67-8, 94-5

cast, vb, modal use 453
cat, n., gender 52
causative aspect 446, 448
causative verbs; see do, gar, let, and make
certain, n.; a certyn frankes 65
chameleon, n., gender 52
cheap (good cheap) 642-3
chide, vb, with dative object 101
chief, n., used as adj. 642
child, n., gender 44-5
choice, n., used as adj. 642
choose, vb, modal use 453
Christ, n., without article 245;
in oaths (by Christ, etc.) 636-7; interj. 629-30
Christmas, n., without article 251
church, n., gender 48, 51; article 247
clean(ly), adv., 318
clepe, vb, with two accusatives 108
cock, n., for God (for cokkes bones) 636
collective singular; see number
colours, n., pl., 64
come, vb, with a plain inf. of purpose (come soupen, etc.) 535; with a plain inf. of manner (come ride, etc.) 536-7; with a pres. pple (come walking, etc.) 556-7; as an interj. 630, 653
common case 68; common gender 45
comparative clauses, mood in, 464
comparative degree; see adjectives, adverbs, and participles
comparison; see comparison, under adjectives, adverbs, and participles
compline, n., without article 274
concessive clauses, mood in, 467-9
concessive imperative 477; infinitive 536; subjunctive 455
conditional clauses, mood in, 469-70
conditional imperative 477
conditioned subjunctive 455
conjunctions, generalising, concessive character of, 463, 468
conjunctive mood (IE) 454
concessive clauses, mood in, 465-6
considering, prep., 375, 559
‘consuetudinal’ present 482; shall and will 599-600
contamination 42, n. 2; between inf. and noun clause 542-3
conventional use of numerals; see numerals
conversion 641-55; bibliography 273-4.
General considerations 641.
Nouns used as adjectives 642-3; foreign influences 643.
Adjectives used as nouns 643-8; general considerations 643-4; adjectives used as nouns in a personal sense 644-6; in a non-personal (neuter) sense 646-7; the type for black 647-8.
Verb-adverb groups used as nouns 648; above used as a noun 648.
Adjectives used as adverbs 648.
Adverbs used as adjectives 649-50; as attributive adjectives 649; as appositive and predicative adjectives 649-50.
Nouns used as verbs and verbs as nouns 650-2; general considerations 650; nouns used as verbs 650-1; verbs used as nouns 651-2.
Adjectives used as verbs 652; adverbs and interjections used as verbs 652-3; verbs used as adjectives 653; verbs used as adverbs 653; verbs used as interjections 653.
Latin and French past piddles used as infinitives 653-4
cony, n., gender 52
corpus, n.; by corpus bones, by corpus Dominus 636
corroborative phrases; see interjections and exclamatory phrases
corse, n., 'body,' used for 'person' 149; his corse 'he, him' 149
could, vb, pret. of can and gin (q.v.)
countre, prep., 375
couth, vb, pret. of gin (q.v.)
covet, vb, modal use 453
custi, adj., 'generous,' with gen. 87
cwene, adv., with dat. 103; vb, 'please,' with dative object 101
dahet (datheit), imprecation, 639
dainty, adj., 642
daisy, n., gender 49
dare (OE durran), vb, modal use 453; form of the accompanying infinitive 530
dark, adj., used as a verb 652
darling, n., gender 44
dative; see case, dative
dativus commodi et incommodi 97-8
day, n., with and without art. 251-2; forth days 88; (have) good day, salutation, 632; day and night, singular implying common number 56; days and nights, adverbal gen. 88
dead, adj.; be dead 'die' 447
deal, n.; two deal 'two thirds' 307; by the tenth deal 'tenfold' 309
death, n., gender 50; article 257; deaths, descriptive and adverbal gen. 80, 89
debonairly, adv., used for a predicative adj. 650
decimal system of counting 209
deem, vb, modal use 453
deep, adj., used as a verb 652
definite article; see article, definite
deign, vb, used impersonally 436; modal use 453
demonstrative pronouns; see pronouns, demonstrative
depardieu, oath, 636
Deus, interj., 629-30
devil, n., article with, 246; in oaths 637
direct (accusative) object; see case, accusative
dir(i)ge, n., article with, 247-8
displease, vb, with dative object 109-2; with acc. object 109
distributive number; see number
distributive use of numerals; see numerals
do, vb, 600-10; bibliography 609-10.
Parallel auxiliary uses in other languages 600-1; vicarious do (he sleep nameore than dooth a nyghtyngale) 601; causative do (use versus other causatives, make, let, and gar) 601-2; form of the inf. after causative do 530; periphrastic do (whan Phebus doth his bryghte bemes sprede) 602-5; form of the inf. after periphr. do 530; causative do and let followed by do + inf. (he dide doon steen hem, he leet ... doon cryen) 605; hath done followed by a past pple (hath doon wroght) 605-6; did wroot 606 n. 1; emphatic periphrastic do 606-7; do in negations and questions 607-8; table illustrating the occurrence of periphr. do 1400-1700, 608.
Do in perf. imperative (have done) 475.
Done, past pple used for 'kind, sort;' see done below
dog, n., gender 52
'domestic' our; see pronouns, possessive
done, past pple; used for 'kind, kinds' (many done things, etc.) 86; dones, gen. (what dones man) 86; have done, imperative, 475
dones, see done
doom, n., gender 44
downright, adv., 318
dreadfully, adv., used for an appositive adj. 650
dream, vb, impersonal use 434; personal use 435
drinkheil, drinking formula, 632-3
drinking formulas 632-3
drunk, past pple (this dronke Millere), voice 549
dual: personal pronouns 123, 125; possessive pronouns 157
duodecimal system of counting 290
durative aspect 445, 448
during, prep., 376, 559
-e, used to form adverbs from adjectives 314
each, indef. pron. 214; each one 214, 304; each (one) ... other 153
earth, n., with and without art. 248-9
Easter, n., without art. 251
-ed for -eth; see verbal noun in -eth
final clauses, mood in, 466-7
find, vb, form of the accompanying inf. 529
fine, n., used as a verb 651
fine, adj., used as a verb 652
fine(ly), adv., 319
fish, n., and fish-names, gender 52
flesh, n., gender 47
flower (flour), n., expressing a superlative idea 285-6; flour of it ending 286; of alle floures flour 286; used as a verb 651
fly, n., gender 52
-fold, multiplicative suffix, 309
folk, n., number 62; without article 256; expressing the indefinite person 222-3
follow, vb, with dative object 102; with acc. object 109
fon, vb, expressing the ingressive aspect 448
for, prep., 377-84; frequency 348; with the plain inf. 515, 540; with to before inf. (for to) 514-15, 534; the type for black, for pure ashamed 381-2, 647-8; for jered 382, 561; weary for wandered 382, 561-3; 'inorganic' for (it is no may-syre for a lord to dampne a man) 101, 383-4, 436
for-, prefix, expressing the egressive aspect 448; the intensive aspect 449; the perfective aspect 446; points of contact with the prep. for 378 n. 1, 381-2, 560-3, 648
forbid (forbade), vb, governing the dat. and acc. 109; God forbid, oath, 635-6; forbode(n), past pple in an active sense 551
forbode, n.; God's forbode, oath, 635-6; God forbote 636
forby, prep., 384
fordred, past pple, 550
fore, prep., 377-84; cf. for, prep.
fore-, prefix, 287, 378 n. 1, 381; cf. for-, prefix
foresaid, past pple, dem. pron. equivalent 176-7; pl. foresaidis 177; def. art. with, 236
forfoughten, past pple, 550 n. 2
forget, vb, governing the gen. 88
forhungered, past pple, 550 n. 2
forirked (-liven), past pple, 550 n. 2
forlived (-liven), past pple, 550 n. 2
forlogan, past pple, 551 n. 1
formal object (it) 133-4
formal subject (it) 131-3, 433; it am I 133; non-expression 143, 433
forout(en), prep., 384
forsworn, past pple, 551 n. 1
forth, adv., forth days (evens, nights) 88-9; forth used as a prep. 384
forthby, prep., 384-5
forthi, adv., 104
forthink, vb, used impersonally 434; personally 435
forthwith, prep., 385
fortnight (fourteen night), n., 65, 308
for to with inf. 514-15, 534
forty expressing indef. number 307-8
forwalked, past pple, 550 n. 2
forwandered, past pple, 550 n. 2
forwept, past pple, 550 n. 2
for whon 182
forwith, prep., 385
fourteen, num., expressing an indef. number 308
fowl, n., gender 52
fox, n., gender 52
fractions; see numerals
frequentative aspect 446, 448
fro (from), prep., 385-6; frequency 348; with comparative degree ('than') 284
fro(m)ward, prep., 386
full, adj., governing the gen. 87
full(y), adv., 287, 319-20
future tense; see tense, future
fy, interj., 625
gain, vb, impersonal use 434
gain(e)s, prep., 386
gallows, n., pl., 65
gan (pl. gunnen, gonnen), vb, pret. of gin (q.v.)
gar (ger), vb, 601-2; form of the accompanying inf. 530-1
ge- (i-), prefix, 446, 448
'Gelenkpartikel' 299
gender 43-54; bibliography 53-4.
Disappearance of grammatical gender 43-5; common gender 45; gender and sex 44-5, 52; natural gender 45-52; foreign influences 45-8; influence of Christian symbolism and allegory 48-9; of non-Christian symbolism 48; of pagan mythology 48-9; of allegorical personification 49-51; trend towards the masculine gender 51; animal nouns 51-2; concluding remarks 52
generalising adverbs, conjunctions, and pronouns; see adverbs, conjunctions, and pronouns, relative
'generic' singular; see number genitive; see case, genitive geographical names, gender 51; article 239-40
ger, vb; see gar
gerund; see verbal noun in -ing
gin (pret. gan, can, couth, could), vb, 610-15; bibliography 615; form 610; form of the accompanying inf. 531. Parallel OE uses (onginnan, aginnan, beginnan) 610-11; uses in ME 611-14; gin 'begin' 613; used to form a periphrastic pret. with ingressive, perfective, or intensive-descriptive force or for metrical reasons 498, 611-14 (for the ingressive and perfective functions cf. also 447, 448); competing with the historical pres. 498, 614; with do 603, 614; disappearance 614-15
give, vb, form of the accompanying inf. 531
glad, adj., accompanied by a plain inf. 538
go, vb, with a plain inf. of purpose, probably with ingressive force (go sleep, go buy) 476, 535; quasi-auxiliary use with pres. and past pple (go disputing, go unknown) 557-8; gooth bryngeth, gooth fayteth, gooth walketh 476, 582; was go walked 558, 582; be going to expressing the fut. 495; go bet, interj., 630, 653
God, n., article 245; as an interj. 629-30; in oaths (goddot, God forbid, God's forbode, God forbot, by God, etc.) 635-6; in
imprecations (God damn) 638-9

God damn, goddot, God forbid, God forbot, God’s forbode; see God gog for God (bi gog) 636
good, adj., in impersonal constructions (me is good, etc.) 435; form of the accompanying inf. 523; Good Friday, article 251; good day (even, morrow), salutations, 632
good day (even, morrow), Good Friday; see good
go walk (gooth walketh, was go walked); see go
grame, vb, impersonal use 143 grammatical gender; see gender
grant, vb, modal use 453; form of the accompanying inf. 531; God graunte us see 528
greate (greatly), adv., 320
greedy, adj., governing the gen. 87
grow, vb, ingressive force 619
guilty, adj., governing the gen. 87

zein(e)s, prep.; see gain(e)s

deme (yeme), vb, modal use 453
deon, demonstrative pron.; see yon(d)
d(e)(o)nd(s), prep.; see yond(s)
dond, demonstrative pron.; see yon(d)

ha (ha-ha), interj., 625; ha-ha
imitating laughter 623, 625
had better (lever, rather); see have
hail, salutation, 632; used as a verb 652-3
half; see numerals
halflings, adv., 91
halvendel, n., 307

hand, n.; his own hand(s) ‘himself’ 106-7, 149
hap(pen), vb, impersonal use 143, 434; form of the accompanying inf. 523-4; personal use 435
hard(e), adv., 320
harrow, interj., 625, 631
harvest-tide, n., article 250
hate (hote), vb, ‘be called,’ representing the IE middle voice 436; modal use 453
have, vb, form of the accompanying inf. 531-2; intensifying the perfective aspect 447; as an auxiliary of the perfect and pluperfect 499-503 (bibliography 509); have done, perf. imperative 475; modal use 453; expressing obligation (have to) 531, 599; have desire, modal use 453; have (had) better (lever, rather) 453, 457, 531-2; have (had) as lief 532; him had better (lever) 457, 532
hawk, n., gender 52
hay, interj., 625-6
he, masc. pers. pron.; see pronouns, personal
he, fem. pers. pron., see he(o)
hear, vb, form of the accompanying inf. 529; in the sense ‘obey’ with dat. object 102
heaven, n., article 248
he-he, interj., imitating laughter 623
hell, n., article 248
help, vb, governing the gen. (of) 88; with dat. object 102; with acc. object 109; form of the accompanying inf. 532; used as an interj. 630, 653
hem, pers.pron., replacing hie, hi (acc. pl.) 129
hence (hennes), adv., 91
he(o), pron. of the third person sg., fem.; dialectal distribution 130; see also pronouns, personal
he(o), hi(e), pron. of the third person pl.; replacement by they 134-5
her(e), hir(e), poss. pron., fem. sg.; see pronouns, possessive
her(e), poss. pron., pl., replaced by their 134-5
hereagainst (-in, -of, etc.), adv., 424-5
herself; see self
hes, pers. pron., acc., 'her, them' 135
Hesperus, n., gender 47
hey (hey-ho), interj., 625-6
hi, interj., 625-6
hi(e), pers. pron.; see he(o)
hig-hig, OE interj., rendering L o-o 622 n. 1
him, pers. pron., replacing hine 95, 129; used for he 129-30
himself, hineself; see self
hire, pers. pron., replacing hie 129
hir(e), poss. pron.; see her(e)
his (hes, is, es, as), pers. pron., acc., 'her, them' 135
his, poss. pron.; see pronouns, possessive
'his-genitive' (Loth his eldeste sone, Mars his venim, etc.) 120, 159-62
historical infinitive, see infinitive; historical perfect, see tense, perfect; historical present, see tense, present
ho (ho-hey), interj. 626; used as a verb 653
hold, vb, with two accusatives 108; modal use 453
hol(ly), adv.; see whole (wholly)
holly, n., gender 48
holy, adj., no art. before nouns preceded by this adj. 246, 247, 251
Holy Ghost, article 246
home, adv., 97
hopster (shippes hoppesteres) 643
horse, n., pl., 59
hortatory subjunctive 455
hote, vb; see hate
hound, n., gender 52
how, interr., 'what ... like' 187;
hu gedon 'what ... like' 86
how, interj., 626
huge(ly), adv., 320-1
hundred, num., expressing indefinite number 308
I, pers. pron.; see pronouns, personal
i- (OE ge-), prefix, 446-8
if, conj., introducing a conditional clause 469; and if, but if 469
I for one 292-3
il-hail, imprecation, 639
illage, n., 87
ilk, dem. pron.; see pronouns, demonstrative
imid(s), prep., 360
imong, prep., 360
imperative; see mood, imperative
imperfective aspect 445, 448
impersonal constructions developing into personal constructions 112-13, 434-4, 526
impersonal passive; see voice, passive
impersonal verbs; see verbs, impersonal
imprecations; see interjections and exclamatory phrases
in, prep., 386-9; frequency 348; interchangeability with into 388-9, 390-1; with on 386-7, 399-400; for in + -ing see verbal noun in -ing
inchoative aspect 446, 448
increase, vb, used as a noun 652
indefinite article; see article, indefinite
indefinite number 307-8
indefinite person (G man, F on); see pronouns, indefinite
indefinite pronouns; see pronouns, indefinite
indicative; see mood, indicative
indirect (dative) object; see case, dative
indirect questions, mood 460-1
inence (inentes), prep., 360-1
infinitive 512-46; bibliography 544-6.
Form 512-16; uninflected and inflected inf. 512-14; inflected inf. in -ende and -inge 511, 513-14, 516, 525, 569-70; plain inf. and inf. with to 514; for to 514-5; for 515; till 515; at 515; split inf. 515-16.
Tense 516-19; fut. inf. 516; perfect inf. 516-19.
Voice, passive, 519-21; pres. inf. 519-21; perf. inf. 521.
Use 522-44; plain inf. and inf. with to 522.
Inf. as subject 522-4; in personal expressions 522-3; in impersonal expressions 523-4.
Predicative infinitive 524-8; inf. with to as a predicate nom. (he is to go, the sonne was to reste, etc.) 524-6; plain inf. as a predicate nom. 526; inf. as a predicate acc. (acc. with inf.) 526-7 (replaced by the pres. pple 552-3); non-expression of the subject of the inf. 527-8; predicate inf. following a prepositional phrase or an indirect object (he bad to Bardus hale; God graunte us see that houre) 528.
Infinitive as object 528-34; after auxiliary verbs 528; after verbs of perception 529; after bid, dare, do, gar, gin, give, grant, have, help, know, let, make, ought, pray, send, suffer, teach, think, wisse 529-34.
Adverbial infinitive 534-7; inf. of purpose 534-6; plain inf. of purpose (come, soupen, go dine) 535; inf. of cause 536; of concession 536; of manner with certain verbs of motion and rest (come ride, lie slepe, lie to slepe, stood to beholde, etc.) 536-7.
Infinitive with adjectives 521, 538; for finite verb 538-9; historical inf. 538-9; exclamatory inf. 539.
Prepositions with the inf. 540-1; inf. after than 541; absolute inf. (to-wit; sooth to seyn; and ye, my lord, to do right as you lest, etc.) 541-2; inf. competing with a noun
indes 677

clause 461; contamination with a noun clause 542-3. Inf. and the verbal noun in -ing 511, 567-73, 576; inf. and the pres. pple 511, 547, 552-3, 556-7. Non-expression of the infinitive (I can no more, borewed thing wole hom, etc.) 543-4 -ing, ending of the pres. pple, see participles; of the verbal noun, see verbal noun in -ing; of the inflected inf., see infinitive; for -en, of the past pple, 570 ingressive aspect 446, 448 inly, adv., 321 in midde, prep., 360 in mong, prep., 360 inn, n.; see innes inne, prep., 390 inner-mo, adv., 280 innes, n., pl., 60, 65 'inorganic' for; see for instrumental; see case, dative intensive aspect 446, 448-9 interjections and exclamatory phrases 620-40; bibliography 639-40. Interjections; general considerations 620-2; functional classification (imitative, emotional, imperative) 621; points of contact with the imperative mood 473-4; importance of intonation 621; foreign influence 622; exclamations in refrains 622; primary interjections 621, 622-9 (for the individual interjections see separate entries); secondary interjec-
tions 621, 629-31; alas, alack, alarm 629; religious names (God, Christ, Mary, Peter, etc.) 629-30; benedicite 630; commands, exhortations, entreaties (abide, come, go bet, look, help, hark, listen, mercy, peace) 630-1; interrogatives (what) 184, 631 (why) 631; adverbs (out, now, well) 631. Exclamatory phrases 632-9; salutations (hail, all hail, was hail, wel wurthe the, welcome, good day, good even, good morrow, farewell) 632; drinking formulas (wassail, drinkheil) 632-3; the type a Douglas 633-4. Corroborative phrases (oaths), 634-8; general considerations (extensive use of oaths, etc.) 634-5; prepositions used in oaths (by, for, on, a, etc.) 635; oaths by God 635-6; by Christ 636-7; by the Blessed Virgin 637; by various saints 637; by various sacred objects 637; by heathen deities and persons 637; by the devil 637; by human beings and relationships, life, necessities of life, etc. 637-8; by abstract ideas (for your honour, for your courtesy, for sooth, by my faith, etc.) 638; by the world, natural phenomena, etc. (for all this world, for alle the rewme of Fraunce, by this day etc.) 638; linguistic tabu in oaths 636. Imprecations (goddam, dahet, woe wurthe) 638-9.
Interjections used as verbs 652-3; verbs (imperatives) used as interjections 630-1, 653
interrogative pronouns; see pronouns, interrogative
intill, prep., 390-1
into, prep., 390-1; interchangeability with in 388-9, 390-1; with on 400
intonation in interjections 621, 623, 653
intransitive verbs; see verbs, transitive and intransitive
inward, prep., 391-2
inwith, prep., 392
ire, n., gender 47
is, pers. pron., acc., ('her, them') 135
it, pers. pron.; see pronouns, personal and possessive
iterative aspect 446, 448
itlane (yours itlane) in Mod. Scots 294 n. 1
itself; see self
ivy, n., gender 48

jay, n., gender 52
Jesus, n., in oaths (for Jesus love, etc.) 636-7
j(o)usts, n., pl., 64
kalends, n., pl., 64
keep, vb, modal use 453
kin, n., appositive use (fele kyn fishes, etc.) 85-6; kin's (alles-kynnes, etc.) 86
king of kings and similar superlative expressions 286
know, vb, form of the accompanying inf. 532
ta, interj., 627
lack, vb, impersonal use 100
tamb, n., gender 52
land, n., used as a verb 651
tark, n., gender 52
lasting, prep., 392, 560
laugh to scorn, etc., 411
le, French def. art., in English place-names (Thornton-le-Beans, etc.) 240
least, adv., in comparisons of inferiority 288
lef (tief, comp. lever), adj., me is (were) lef (lever) 103, 435, 457, 523-4; I have (had) as tief 532; I have (had) lever 457, 531-2; him had lever 457, 532
leni(en), n., article 250
lern, vb, with double acc. 109
less, adv., in comparisons of inferiority 288; less and less in gradational comparative 282; lesser, adj., double comparative 281
lesser, adj.; see less
lest, conj., 283 n. 1
let, vb, modal use 453, 458, 475; causative use 601, 605; form of the accompanying inf. 532-3
leve, vb, 'believe,' with dat. object 102
lever, adj.; see lef -ti; see -ly
lie, vb, accompanied by a plain modal inf. (lie slepe) 536-7; by a modal inf. with to (lie to slepe, to bathe, to wepe) 537; accompanied by a pres. pple (lie sleeping, weeping, etc.) 556-7
lef, adj.; see lef
Index

life, n.; see lives
like, adj., governing the dat. 103
like, vb, impersonal use 434;
form of the accompanying
inf. 523-4; personal use 435
likely, adj.; it is not likely ...
to standen in hir grace 524
linguistic tabu 636
lion, n., gender 52
list, vb, impersonal use 434;
form of the accompanying
inf. 523-4; personal use 435
lists, n., pl., 64
little, adj.; little what, littles what,
what littles 79, 218; little, adv.,
328-9; emphatic negative 328-9;
a little 329
lives, n., gen. of description or
adverbial gen. 80, 89
lo (lo-lo), interj., 627
loath, adj., governing the dat.
103; impersonal constructions
(me is/were loath) 435, 523-4;
form of the accompanying
inf. 523-4, 538
loathly, adj., used as a verb 652
local clauses, mood in, 462
locative 97, 104
lone, lane (his lane, etc.) 150, 294
andn. 1; lonesome (her lonesome
in Mod. Scots) 294 n. 1
long, vb, impersonal use 434;
form of the accompanying
inf. 524; personal use 435
longe, adv., used as an adj. 649
Long Friday, without art. 251
look, vb, in the imperative (lok
thou dele noght withal) 476;
used as an interj. 630; look
what (who, etc.) 'whatever,
whoever' 476-7
Lord, interj., 630
love, n., gender 49; loves, pl., 61
Lucifer, n., gender 47
lustily, adv., used for an appo-
sitive adj. 650
-ly used to form adverbs from
adjectives 314
Madrian, n.; by that precious
corpus Madrian 637
Magdalen, n., article 234
Mahomet (Mahoun), n., in oaths
637
maiden, n., gender 45
make, vb, with two infinitives
108; causative use 601-2;
form of the accompanying
inf. 533
maledictions; see imprecations
under interjections and ex-
clamatory phrases
man, n., article 220, 254; indef.
pron., expressing the indefi-
nite person 219-22
mankind, n., without article 254
manner, n., used appositively
(three maner men, etc.) 86;
inmanners, pl., 61
many one referring to plural
nouns 296 n. 1, 301 and n. 1
marry, interj., 636
Mars, n., oath by, 637
Mary, n., in oaths (by seinte
Marie, etc.) 637; interj., 629-30
mass, n., article 247
master, n., used as an adj. 642
maugre, prep., 165, 392; followed
by an independent possessive
165, 392
may (pret. might), vb, 599; as
a modal auxiliary 453-70; as
an auxiliary of the future
489, 494-5; periphrastic future
(how I shall may avenge me) 496
me for I 127-8
me (men, man), indef. pron., expressing the indef. person 219-22
me, interj., 627
'meditative-polemic' should 458-9
men (me, man), indef. pron., expressing the indef. person 219-22
mercy, n., used as an interj. 631
merc, n., gender 43-4
mete, vb, impersonal use ('make dream') 434; personal use ('dream') 435.
mid, prep., 392-4; used to form equivalents of the absolute superlative (mid the best, etc.) 288, 393-4
Middle English, dialectal areas 41; temporal limits 41
middle-erd (-earth), n., article 249
middle voice; see voice, middle
Midsummer (Eve), n., article 251
Midwinter (Day), n., article 251
might, pret. of may (q.v.)
mine, poss. pron.; see pronouns, possessive
mister, n., appositive use (all mister men, etc.) 86
mo, adv., in periphrastic comparison; see adjectives
mon (mun), vb, modal auxiliary 453; auxiliary of the future 494-5
mood 451-78; general discussion 451; for bibliographies, see mood, imperative, and mood, subjunctive, below
mood, conjunctive (IE), 454
mood, imperative, 473-8; bibliography 477-8.
General considerations (points of contact with the hortatory subjunctive and interjections) 473-4; second person (full and short forms, indiscriminate use of the sg. and pl., etc.) 474; third person (use of the second person for the third) 474-5; first person pl. 475; passive 475; perfect (have done) 475; expression of the subject-pronoun 475-6; non-expression 143, 475-6; periphrases (go buy a courser; loke thou dele not withal) 476; the type gooth bryngeth 476, 582; the auxiliary do with the imperatives 607; the type look what (wait what) 'whatever' 476-7; conditional and concessive imperative 477; imperatives as interjections 474, 630-1, 653
mood, indicative, replacing the subjunctive 452-70
mood, optative (IE), 452, 454
mood, subjunctive, 451-73; bibliography 471-3.
Form 452-3; inflectional subjunctive 452; periphrastic subjunctive 453.
Tense (present, preterite, pluperfect) 454.
Use 454-70; general considerations (IE background, classification: volitional [optative, hortatory, concessive] and non-volitional [expressing potentiality or unreality] subj.) 454-5
Non-dependent clauses 455-8; OE 455; ME 455-7; would rather, etc., 457; periphrastic subj. in ME 457-8.
Dependent clauses 458-70; — noun-clauses 458-61; subject-clauses 458-9; object-clauses 459-60; reported speech and indirect questions 460-1; — relative clauses 461-2; — clauses of place 462; — clauses of time 463; — clauses of comparison 464-5; inequality 464; equality 464; as if 465; — clauses of result 465-6; clauses of purpose 466-7; — clauses of concession 467-9; non-introduced clauses of concession 468-9; concessive periphrases 469; — clauses of condition 469-70; non-introduced clauses of condition 470; conditional periphrases 470

much, adv., 321
multiplicative use of numerals; see numerals
mun, vb; see mon
murierly, adv., comparative, 314, 341
must, vb; see mote
mutative verbs 500 n. 1
my, poss. pron.; see pronouns, possessive
myself; see self

na, adv., with the comparative degree (‘than’) 284
nam for ne am 339
nany, indef. pron., 210-11
nas for ne has 339
natural gender; see gender
nature, n., gender 51
ne, negative adv., 339-40; contractions (nam, nas, nil, I’n, etc.) 339
near, adv., 329, 342; prep., 394; near hand, adverbial and prepositional phrase 394
need, vb, impersonal use (it neded me to go, etc.) 100-1, 434-5, 524; personal use 435; modal use 453
needs, adv., 90
negations; see adverbs and do negative adverbs; see adverbs neither, indef. pron., 215-16
nemn, vb, with two accusatives 108; with instrumental dative (neneus hit his awne nome) 104-5
ner for ne were 339
nest, n., used as a verb 651
never, adv.; emphatic negative (never a word, never mind) 340; never so 321-2; omission

moon, n., gender 45, 46 and n. 1, 49
more, adv., and more and more; see adjectives and gradational comparative
morrow, n.; good morrow, see good
most, adv.; see adjectives, comparison; most of without art. 258; most ‘almost’ 328
mote (pret. moste, must), vb, as a modal auxiliary 453, 457, 459, 463, 466; as an auxiliary of the future 489, 494-5; used impersonally (us moste) 436
mouse, n., gender 52
mouth, n.; his own mouth ‘himself’ 106-7, 149
of the art. in connection with, 270; tense in connection with, 498-9

news, n., pl., 61

New Year, without art. 251

next, prep., 394

nice, adj., followed by a plain inf. 538

nigh, adj. and adv., 103, 329, 342; with dat. 103; used as a verb 652; prep., 394; nigh hand, adverbial and prepositional phrase 394

night, n., article 252; day and night 56, 107, 270; nights, adverbial gen., 55, 88; days and nights 88; forth nights 88-9

nightingale, n., gender 52

nil for ne wil 339

ninety, num., expressing an indefinite number 308

no, indef. pron., 209; 211

nobody, indef. pron., 209-10

nominative; see case, nominative

none, indef. pron., 209, 211

non-expression of the

— personal pronoun 121, 138-45, 204-5; personal subject-pron. 138-44; object-pronoun 144-5, 527-8

— possessive pronoun 162-4

— relative pronoun 121, 203-6

— finite verb, particularly of a verb of motion 510

— infinitive, frequently of a verb of motion 543-4 (non-expression of the subject of an inf. 527)

— past participle after an auxiliary of the perfect and pluperfect 503

non-finite forms of the verb, general discussion (points of contact between the inf., pres. pple, and the verbal noun) 511; for details see infinitive, participles, verbal noun in -ing, and verbal noun in -eth

non-introduced clauses; concessive 468-9; conditional 470; relative 203-6

nor, adv., with the comparative degree ('than') 284

norther-mo, adv., 280

not, negative adverb, from nought 213, 339-41

nothing, indef. pron., 209-10; replacing nought 340; used as a negative adv. 210, 340

notwithstanding, prep., 394-5, 560

nought, indef. pron., 213, 340;

— used as a negative adv. (developing into not) 339-41

nouns, close relationship with adjectives 266, 642; used as adjectives 642-3; as verbs 650-1; as interjections 631

nouther, indef. pron., 215

noveles, n., pl., 61

now, interj., 631

nowadays, adv., 89

nowise, adv., 104

number 55-66; bibliography 65-6.

Distributive number (mid ure heorte; ure lives, etc.) 56-7; influence of concretisation of meaning in abstract and material nouns 60-1; collective nouns 62-5; number of the indefinite man 65, 219-22
Indexes

Singular, collective 59, 62-3; with the indef. art. (an eighte bussheles, etc.) 65, 265; 'generic' sg. 63-4 (men taken a woman to his wife, etc.) 63-4; sg. implying common number, with nouns denoting parts of the body (his owene hand he made ladders thre, etc.) 55, in combinations of two nouns (day and night, etc.) 55-6, in enumerations of several nouns (by arm, foot, and toe, etc.) 56. (For plurals treated as singulars see under plural, below.)

Plural of proper names 62; unchanged pl. 57-60; treatment of collective nouns as plurals 62-3; nouns usually or exclusively in the pl. (eldre, scissors) 60; inns, wones 'lodgings' 60; use of the pl. in abstract and material nouns as a result of concretisation of meaning (goodnesses, richnesses, delices, weepings, shames, snowes) 60-1; 'iterative' pl. (amours, loves, manners, thews, etc.) 61; news, novels, prayers 61-2; plurals treated as singulars (amends, colours, gallows, jousts, kalends, lists, organs, tidings, etc.) 64-5; 'pluralis majestaticus' (the waters, the airs, etc.) 124 n. 1. Number in pronouns (dual, singular, plural); see pronouns, personal, possessive, relative, etc.

Numerals 290-312; bibliography 310-12.

Systems of counting 290.

Cardinals 291-306; traces of OE inflection 291; use, dependent and independent 291; articles, def. and indef., with cardinals 291.

One 292-305; main uses 292; strictly numeral use 292-3; the types one my friend and his one man 166; I for one 292-3; one used as an indefinite pronoun 209, 293; one denoting the indef. person 223-4; one . . . other 153, 293; one as the indef. art. 259-65; exclusive use (in the sense 'alone, unique, only') 293-4; he one (him one, his one, himself one, himself him one, all him one, all his one, his al one, him alone, his lone, etc.) 150, 293-4; intensifying use (meiden eadi an, the falseste traitour he was one, the worthieste knyght oon of this world, wunder are strong, etc.) 295-7; the types one the good man and one the best man 297-9 (hybrid constructions like oon of the gretteste auctour 299); the corresponding plural type (three the best men) 299-300; of one 300-1; the prop-word one (a good one) 301-5.

Numerals from twenty-one to ninety-nine 305-6.

Ordinals 306; other and second 306; the second (third) best 306; article with ordinals 258; cardinals for ordinals 306.

Fractions 307; two part(s) or two deal 'two thirds' 307; half 307; appositive use of half
Index

(numeral and noun: half mi kine-rike, on this half Humber) 85; halvendel 307.
Indefinite use of numerals 307-8; round numbers 307-8; other numbers 308; — conventional and symbolical use of numerals (the five joys of the Virgin, the fifteen signs before doomsday, to set on seven, etc.) 308-9; — multiplicative use of numerals (thrice ten, by the tenth part or deal, two so rich, ten so wood, such three, etc.) 309; — distributive use of numerals (by two, by three, etc.) 310

o, prep.; see of and on
o (ow), interj., 627
oaths; see interjections and exclamatory phrases
obey, vb, with dat. object 102; be obeied 550
object; accusative (direct) object, see case, accusative; dative (indirect) object, see case, dative; formal (it) 133-4
object-pronoun, non-expression 144-5, 205-6
of, prep., 395-9; frequency 348; interchangeability with on and at 350-2, 398, 400-1; used with an inf. 540; as a genitive equivalent 74-8, 78-92 pas-sim; article in connection with the of-periphra-sis 268-9, 575-6; of me, of thee, of him instead of my, thy, his 158; the type a friend of mine 165-6; of all and of ane as superlative intensifiers 286 and 300; of forming equivalents of the absolute superlative (furres of the fynest) 288
of-, prefix, expressing the intensive aspect 449; in participles like ofdred, afered, ofhyngred, oflonged, ofthyrst, ofwundred, etc. 549-50, 562, 581-2
of beside, prep., 399
offe, prep., 399
ofhungred, -longed, -thyrst, -wundred; see of-, prefix
o-ho, interj., 626
omission; see non-expression
on, prep., 399-401; frequency 348; interchangeability with in 399-400, with onto 399-400, with into 400, with of and at 350-2, 398, 400-1; on + -ing (on hunting, etc.), see verbal noun in -ing
once (ones), adv., 90, 309
one, in numeral and derived uses, see numerals; as a 'propword' (a good one, etc.), see numerals; as an indef. pron. and expressing the indef. person see also pronouns, indefinite; (the) one . . . (the) other 153-4, 293
onentes, prep., 360-1
ones; see once
onevent, prep., 360-1
onginnan, OE vb, used with in-gressive, perfective, and intensive-descriptive meanings 610-11
on(n)e, prep., 401
onomatopoetic words 621, 622-3
onont, prep., 360-1
onoven-on, prep., 402
onoveward, prep., 402
onunder, prep., 402
onuppe(n), prep., 402
onward, prep., 402
oppose, vb, 'to question,' with dat. object 102
optative mood (IE) 452, 454; optative subjunctive 455
or, adv., with the comparative degree ('than') 283-4
organ(s), n., number 64
ostrich, n., gender 52
other, indef. pron., see pronouns, indefinite; otherlier adv., 'otherwise' 341; otherwise, adv., 91; otherwise, adv., 104
other, numeral, 'second' 306
ought, indef. pron. and adv., 212-13
ought (pret. of owe), vb, used impersonally 436; modal use 453; form of the accompanying inf. 533
our(s), poss. pron.; see pronouns, possessive
ourselves; see self
outhwort, prep., 405
out, adv.; out and out 322; prep., 403; interj., 631
other, indef. pron., 215
out of, prep., 403; out of . . . ward 403
outour (outover), prep., 404
outrely, adv., 326
outtake(n), prep., 404, 560
over, intensifying adv. (prefix) 322; prep., 404-5; with the positive degree, expressing the comparative 286
overthwart, prep., 405
ow, interj., 627
o-we, interj., 627
own, adj., reinforcing a possessive 158; the own for its own 164
panther, n., gender 52
par, prep., 405-6
paradise, n., article 248
pardieu, oath, 636
parfils(l), adv., 322
part, n.; two part(s) 'two thirds' 307; by the tenth part 'tenfold' 309
participles 546-66; bibliography 564-6.
Form 547-8; pres. pple (-ende > -ing, etc.) 547; compound pple (having been) 548; comparison 548.
Voice 548-51; pres. pple 548-9; active pple in passive sense (spending silver, weeping tears, the church is building) 548-9; periphrastic passive (he being sore febeled) 549; past pple 549-51; ofdred, ofhungred, for­dred, etc. 549-50; imitations of French usage ( accorded, assented, obeied, remembered, resembled, sworn) 550-1; native past pples used in active sense (forbode laws, the plowed ox) 551.
Use 551-64; character and principal uses 551-2; accusative-governing power 551; pres. pple as a predicate acc. (he saw her sitting) 552-3; past pple as a predicate acc. (I found her dead) 553; past pple instead of an inf. (he
havent herd told, he shold not escaped) 554; appositive pple (a Samaritan sittende on a mule) 554-6; appositive pres. pple with certain verbs of motion and rest (Pandarus com lepynghe, he lay slepynghe) 556-7; periphrastic go with a pple and other similar uses (he went hire excusynghe, charite got unaquit) 557-8; appositive pple with begin (began spekende) 558-9; appositive pple not referring to the subject or object (so ofte gan his herte colden, seing his frend in woo, etc.) 559; absolute pple 114-16, 559; pples as prepositions 559-60; past pple with weary (weri oflseien, wery forwandred, etc.) 560-3; pres. pple and the inf. 511, 547, 552-3, 556-7; pple and the verbal noun in -ing 511, 563, 567-73, 586-90; past pple in the passive 438, 440. Past pples, Latin and French, used as infinitives (forfeit, promise, etc.) 653-4 'particule d'articulation' 299 passive; see voice, passive past, prep., 405 peace, n., used as an interj. 631 pearl, n., gender 50-1 people, n., use in a collective sense 62; expressing the indefinite person 223; article 256 per, prep., 405-6 perfect tense; see tense, perfect perfective aspect 445-7 perfect(ly), adv., 322 periphrasis with be + -ing (-ende; he is walking, etc.) 584-99; bibliography 597-9. Development and occurrence 584-90; occurrence in OE 584-5; occurrence in ME 585-6; theories concerning the development of the periphrasis 586-9; foreign influences 589-90; tenses 590-1; inf. and pple 591-2; imperative 591; passive 592; be going to 593-4; be doing of 593; parallel constructions (go imagining, etc.) 593. Principles of use 593-6; periphrastic pres. and pret. used for the future 597 periphrasis with of as an equivalent of the genitive 74-8; with to as an equivalent of the dative 95-7 perjured, past pple, 550-1 person, n., used for 'self' (thi persone 'thou, thee') 149; intensifying phrases (his own person, his proper person 'himself') 149 personal construction; transition to impersonal construction 436 personal pronouns; see pronouns, personal personal verbs 429-32 Peter, n., used as an interj. 629-30 pie, n., 'magpie,' gender 52 place, clauses of, mood in, 462 please, vb, used impersonally 434; with acc. object 109 plenerly, adv., 341 plowed, past pple used in an active sense, 551
pluperfect tense; see tense, plu-
perfect
plural; see number and pro-
nouns, personal, possessive, etc.
plural of majesty and plural of
respectful and polite address
(\textit{ye} for \textit{thou}); see pronouns, personal
pluralis auctoris (editorial \textit{we}),
pluralis majestatis (plural of
majesty), pluralis modestiae
(plural of modesty), and plu-
ralis societatis (sociative plu-
ral); see pronouns, personal
point, n.; be in point to, on point
to, up the point to expressing
near futurity 495
possessive constructions in OE:
possessive dative 99, 159-60;
the type \textit{Africa} and \textit{Asia}
\textit{hiera land-gemircu} 160
possessive pronouns; see pro-
nouns, possessive
potentiality, subjunctive of, 455
\textit{pray}, vb, with dat. object 102;
form of the accompanying
infinitive 533
\textit{prayers}, n., pl. 62
prefixes, close relationship with
prepositions 352, 378, 381-2,
563; for individual prefixes
see separate entries
prepositional adverbs (\textit{hereby},
\textit{therefore}, \textit{whereof}, etc.) 424-5
prepositions 345-427; biblio-
graphy 425-7.
General remarks on the func-
tion, development, and close
relationship with adverbs 346;
structural characteristics 346-
7; repetition 347-8; frequen-
cies of some prepositions 348;
prepositions as equivalents of
case-endings 348; foreign in-
fluence 348-9; interchange-
ability of prepositions (mainly
\textit{of}, \textit{on}, and \textit{at}) 350-2; preposi-
tions (\textit{for}, \textit{of}, \textit{through}, \textit{with},
\textit{without}) with the infinitive
540-1; prepositions and pre-
fixes 352, 378, 381-2, 563.
Place of the preposition in
rel. clauses 189, 197 and n. 1,
441; in passive constructions
(\textit{he was laughed at}) 440-1.
For the individual preposi-
tions see separate entries
present tense; see tense, present
\textit{presently}, adv., functional weak-
ening 316
preterite tense; see tense, pre-

erite
\textit{pride}, n., gender 47
\textit{prison}, n., used as a verb 651
pronouns, general discussion of
some peculiarities (various
pronominal combinations,
pleonastic use and non-ex-
pression) 120-1.
For detailed discussions of
the various kinds of pronouns
see below
pronouns, demonstrative, 168-
79; bibliography 179; demon-
strative for personal pronoun
(\textit{pe}, \textit{pa}) 129; demonstrative
use of the personal pronoun
of the third person (\textit{he Julius},
e tc.) 135-6.
\textit{Iik} 172, 175-6; \textit{that ilk} 172,
175-6; \textit{that ilk} replacing \textit{it} as
an anticipatory subject 133;
\textit{this ilk} 175-6; \textit{thilk} 176.
Said, foresaid, past pple used as dem. pron. equivalents 176-7; same 176; def. art. with, 236; such 177-8; as an antecedent to as, as that, so, that, which, there, and whereof 177, 202; without a correlative (na king witch ure Drehte) 177; in multiplicative expressions (such three 'three times as many') 309; such one 178, 296 n. 1, 301, 304; such as it is 177; such with pregnant, intensive force 177-8; such ... such 178; such used independently (in the sense 'such a thing') 178.

That 168-73; forms 168-70; defining and demonstrative uses 170-1; emphatic vicarious use (a theef he was and that a sly) 171; that 'the former' 171; that approaching the meaning of formal it (that is she that is at home) 171-2; determinative use (that of Paris, etc.) 172; that ilk 172, 175-6; that ilk replacing the formal subject it 133; that there 133; that as a demonstrative adverb ('so') 172-3 (than, then 'so' 172-3).

Thelic 178.

This 173-5; forms 173; anticipatory this (this weoren tha size, etc.) 173-4; this approaching the meaning of the def. art. (as thise clerkes maken mencioune) 174, (this other day) 174-5; this 'the latter' 175; this bearer 'the bearer of this' 175; this following a personal pronoun of the third person (she this, etc.) 120, 137; this ilk 175-6; this here 175; this as a demonstrative adverb ('so, thus') 175.

Yon, yond 178; yonder 178-9

pronouns, indefinite, 208-28; bibliography 227-8.

All 213-14; inflectional forms 213; allies, gen. sg., used adverbially ('altogether') 213; alre (aller, alder, alther, all there, MS. alleris) 'of all' 213; used to reinforce the superlative degree 286-7; all and every 215; all and some 214. Another 216-17, 262; such another 217.

Any 210; used in a sense similar to that of the indef. art. (as stille as any ston) 263; anybody, anyone, anything, anywhere, anywise 210; anywhat 210, 218; appositive use of any (any the other eight, etc.) 84-5.

Bo(th) 214; inflected forms 214; both two 214; both 'each of two' 214.

Each 214; difference between each and every 214-15.

Either 215; either ... other 153-4.

Every 214-15; difference between each and every 214-15; all and every 215; every one 215; every ... other 153-4.

Nany 210-11.

Neither 215-16.

Nobody 209-10.

No(ne) 209; used adverbially with the comparative degree (non ofter, etc.) 209, 211.

Nothing 209-10; replacing
nought 340; used as a negative adv. 210, 340.
Nought 213, 340; used as a negative adverb (developing into not) 339-41.
Nouther 215.
One, used independently in the sense 'some one, a person' 209, 293; preceded by the def. art. 209; used for the indefinite person 223-4; used dependently in the sense 'a certain' 209.
Other, other all, other many, other mo, this other day, other ... other 216; combinations with other expressing reciprocity 153-4; other some 212; use of the def. art. with the independent other 259; use of the indef. art. with other, see another.
Ought 212; adverbial use ('perchance') 212-13.
Outher 215.
Some 211-12; appositive use (some the messagers, etc.) 84-5, 211, 300; the types ten some and his tenth some 211-12; other some 212; all and some 214; somedeal used adverbially 329; somewhat used adverbially 218, 329-30; somewhat littles 79, 218; somewhiles used adverbially 91; some (sum) used as an indef. art. in OE and ME 259-62; intensifying use of postpositive sum in OE (munuc sum) 301.
What (OE) 217; ME (any what, many what, other what, etc.; littles what, a little what, some what, elles what, etc.; what with ... what with, what ... what, etc.; several of these combinations have adverbial force) 218-19.
Who 217-18; as who (as who seith, etc.) 217-18.
Interrogatives as indefinite pronouns 217-19; OE background 217; what and who 217-19.
Expression of the indefinite person 219-27; man (men, me) 219-22; folk 222-3; people 223; one 223-4; we 224; thou 127, 224-5; ye 224-5; pron. of the third pl. 225-6; who (some who, other who, as who) 217-18; passive 226-7; impersonal expression 131, 434; non-expression of an indefinite object 145
pronomens, interrogative, 180-7; bibliography 187; interrogatives as relative pronouns 191-201; as indefinite pronouns 217-19.
How 'what ... like' 187.
What 182-5; inflectional forms 182; with a partitive gen. (what news) 79, 182, 218; independent and dependent uses 182-3; phrases (what devil, what is what) 184; rhetorical questions 184; exclamations (what wele is me!) 184; what as an adverb ('why, how, how much') 184-5; as an interj. (what how, etc.) 184, 631.
Whether (wher) 186-7.
Which (northern quhilk) 185-6; inflectional forms 185; uses ('of what kind, what, which') 185-6; phrases (which is which)
186; exclamations *(whiche even my lady hadde!)* 186.

Who 180-2; dative replacing the acc. form 180; *who for whom* 181; *who that* 180; *who of* 181; principal uses of *who* 180-1; *who 'which of the two'* 181; *who used predicatively* 181; phrases *(who devil, who is who)* 181-2; rhetorical questions 182

pronouns, personal, 122-52; bibliography 150-2.

Number 122; dual 123, 125; for the use of the pl. for sg.; see the individual pronouns, below; pleonastic use of pers. pronouns 137-8; non-expression of the personal subject-pronoun 138-44; of the object-pronoun 144-5; reinforcing of personal pronouns 145-150; by *self* and its combinations *(myself, my own self, etc.; for details see self)* 145-8; by *body, person, etc. (his own body, his own person, his own hand, his own mouth, his corse, etc.)* 148-9; by one *(he one, him one, his one, himself (him) one, all him one, him alone, etc.)* 150, 293-4; pers. pronouns expressing reflexivity 153.

First person 122-4; singular 122-3; *me* for *I* 122-3; *I for one* 292-3; dual 123; plural 123-4; editorial *we* *(pluralis auctoris)* 123; plural of majesty *(pluralis majestatis)* 123-4; sociative plural *(pluralis societatis)* and plural of modesty *(pluralis modestiae)* 123; *we* expressing the indef. person 224.

Second person 124-8; singular 124-5; *thee for thou* 124; *thou* expressing the indef. person 127, 224-5; dual 125; plural 125-8; *ye for you* 125; *you for ye* 125; *ye for thou* *(plural of respectful and polite address)* 126 *(indiscriminate use of ye and thou reflected in the use of the imperative)* 474; *ye* expressing the indef. person 224-5.

Third person 129-37; transitional phenomena *(dative replacing the acc.; dem. for pers. pron.)* 129; oblique case for nom. *(I him am; him that she chest, he shal hire han, etc.)* 129-30; fem. sg. 130, 135; neuter sg. 130-4, *it* and *him* for the dat. 130-1; prep. + *it* replaced by prepositional adverbs *(therein, etc.)* 130-1; *it* as a formal *(anticipatory)* subject 131-3, 433; replaced by *that ilk* 133; non-expression 243, 433; used as a formal *(anticipatory)* object 133-4; plural 134-5; *hie* *(hi, heo, he)* replaced by *they* 134-5; *his* *(hes, is, es. as)* as the acc. form of the fem. sg. and of the pl. 135; the pl. pron. expressing the indef. person 225-6; dem. use of the pron. of the third person *(he Julius, he and he, etc.)* 120, 135-6; determinative use of the pron. of the third person *(they of Troy, etc.)* 136-7;
pron. of the third person followed by this (she this, etc.) 120, 137

pronouns, possessive, 156-67; bibliography 167; OE background 156-7.

Dependent possessives (possessive adjectives) 157-64; differentiation in form between dependent and independent possessives 157; traces of inflection 157; neuter possessive (his, it) 157-8; reinforcement of the possessive through own 158; periphrasis with of instead of the possessive (the love of hire) 158; my with the vocative and titles (my son, my lady, etc.) 158; 'domestic' our (oure deer cosyn, etc.) 159; his and her instead of the genitive (Loth his eldeste sone, kyng Alexandre his leman, Feiye hir faynnesse) 120, 159-62; the types his one man 'a man of his' and one my friend 'a friend of mine' 166; non-expression of the possessive (merly in mynde, hire chyn acordeth to the face, fought with the heels, etc.) 162-4.

Independent possessives 164-6; form 164; imitations of French usage (the his, maugre his) 164-5; of followed by an independent possessive or a noun in the genitive (a friend of mine, a banner of the gentz) 165-6

pronouns, reciprocal; see pronouns, reflexive and reciprocal

pronouns, reflexive and reciprocal, 152-6; bibliography 155-6.

Sin, refl. poss. in OE 152-3; simple personal pronouns expressing reflexivity 153; combinations with self 153 (for details see under self); refl. acc. and dat. 153; various means of expressing reciprocity (active vb-form alone, each one ... other, one ... other, either ... other, every ... other, other alone, together) 153-4; passive expressing reflexivity and reciprocity (an hundred tymes been they kist; duc Theseus was at a wyndow set, etc.) 154-5; thise riotoures three were set hem in a taverne explained as an imitation of F ils s'étaient assis 155

pronouns, relative, 187-208; bibliography 206-8.

Origin 188; personal and possessive pronouns in relative that- and which-clauses (a Knyght ... that ... he loved chivalrie; the kynges sone which to don wel is his wone) 202-3; non-introduced relative clauses 203-6; general considerations 203-4; non-expression of the subject-pronoun 204-5; non-expression of the object-pronoun 205.

The, that, at 188-91; — the and that in early ME 188-90; þe þe (OE se þe) 188 n. 1; survival of OE þe he, þe him,
Index

be his, etc. 120, 188 n. 1, 202-3; — that 190-1; dat. that 'to whom' 97; that without antecedent (herkneth that loveth honour, etc.) 190; after the same (pa same stanes þat) 190; after such 177, 202; in exclamations (o cruel fader that I was, etc.) 190-1; in local and temporal statements in the sense 'where, when, until the time when' 191; functional differences between that and the 188-9; between that and which 196-7; competition between that and which 196; as he that with causal force ('for he') 199; — at, northern relative supplanted by quhilk 191. Interrogatives as rel. pronouns 191-201; general discussion 191-2; — generalising relatives 192-4; simple interrogatives as generalising relatives (what, which, who) 192-, 3; followed by that (what that etc.) 192-3; combinations with so, soever, ever, some, and somever (whatsoe, whichso, who-so, whatsoever, whichever, who-some, whatsomever, etc.) 193-4; whatso(ever) for predicative whoso(ever) 193; whoso and who that for whomso and whom that 181; whatso for subjective whoso 193-4; whether (whether that) 194; look what, look who, wait what as equivalents of generalising relatives 476-7; concessive character of the generalising relatives 461-2, 468; — interrogatives in strictly relative use 194-201; what (what that) 194-5; all what 191, 194; — which (northern quhilk, quhilkis) 195-9; dat. which 'to which, to whom' 97, 197 n. 2; of which vertu 'by the virtue of which' 197 n. 2; which that 197; which as 197-8; the which 198; as he which, with causal force ('for he') 199; which after such 177, 202; which competing with that 196; functional differences between which and that 196-7; — who 199-200; whose 200-1; whose that 201; the whose 201; whom (whom that, the whom) 201; whom for who 200 n. 1, tendency to use who in non-defining rel. clauses 201.

Other relatives 202; as 202. Relative adverbs (there, where, whereby, whereof, etc.) 202, 337-8, 424-5 'propword' one (a good one, etc.) 301-5 psychology, linguistic; its connection with syntax 41-2 puff, interj., 623 pure, adj.; for pure ashamed, etc., 381-2 pure(ly), adv., 322-3 purgatory, n., article 248 purpose, clauses of, mood in, 466-7 purpose, vb, modal use 453 queme, adj., governing the dat. 103 queme, vb, 'to please,' with dat. object 101
Index

quhilk, interr. and rel. pron.,
northern form of which (q.v.);
quhilkis, pl., 185, 195
quite(ly), adv., 323

rage, n., used as an adj. 642
rather, adv.; had rather 457
rat(on), n., gender 52
raven, n., gender 52
reciprocal pronouns and reciprocity; see pronouns, reflexive and reciprocal
reflexive accusative 153, 430-1; dative 100, 153, 431
reflexive pronouns; see pronouns, reflexive and reciprocal
reflexive verbs; see verbs, reflexive
reflexivity, expressed by pers. pronouns 153; refl. pronouns 152-6; refl. verbs 430-2; refl. acc. 153, 430-1; refl. dat. 100, 153, 431; passive 154-5; aversion to the refl. form 429-30, 431
refrains, exclamations (interjections) in, 622
relative adverbs (there, where, whereby, wherein, etc.) 202, 337-8, 424-5
relative clauses, mood in, 461-2
relative pronouns; see pronouns, relative
remember, vb, used impersonally 436; be remembered 'remember' 550
reported speech, mood in, 460-1
resembled, past pple; be resembled 'resemble' 551
result, clauses of, mood in, 465-6
rew, vb, impersonal use 434
right, adv., 287, 323-4
Rolle, Richard, peculiarities in the use of the verbal noun in -ing 576-7
rose, n., gender 47
roule, vb; go roule 535, 537
rust, n., used as a verb 651
-s in independent possessives 164
-s and -st in adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions 91
n. 1
said, past pple, dem. pron. equivalent 176-7; pl. saidis 177, 277; def. art. with, 236
saints' names in oaths (St Austin, St Giles, St James, St John, St Thomas) 637
salutations 632
same, dem. pron., 176; def. art. with, 236
sans, prep., 406
Satan, n., article 246
save, prep., 406
saving, prep., 407, 560
scarce(ly), adv., 329
sceldi, adj., 'guilty,' governing the gen. 87
scissors, n., pl., 60
score, n., used for an indefinite number 308
scorpion, n., gender 52
scripture, n., article 246-7
second, num., 306; second best, second to none 306
see, vb, form of the accompanying inf. 529
seem, vb, used impersonally 435; modal use 453
seldom, adv., 94, 104
self, adj. and noun, used alone or in various combinations to
reinforce a noun or pers. pron. 145-8; used with refl. force 152-3; I, thou, he self 145-6; hine self 145; me, thee, him self 145-8; my self, thy self 146-8; his self, their self 147; it self 147; the (art.) self for itself 147; selve(n) 146-8; selves (our, your, their selves) 147; my own self 148; himself 'he' 148; self 'same' 176; self same 176

send, vb, form of the accompanying inf. 533
sequence of tenses 479-80
serpent, n., gender 52
set, vb, expressing the ingressive aspect 448; set on seven 309; set used in the sense 'sit' 154; confusion between set and sit 154-5
seven, num., expressing an indefinite number 308; seven-night, n., 65; set on seven 309; Seven Deadly Sins, gender 50
seventy, num., used for an indefinite number 308
sex and gender 45
sexagesimal system of counting 290
shall (pret. should), vb; used as a modal auxiliary 453-70; as an auxiliary of the future tense 489-93; 495-6; expressing the iterative aspect ('consuetudinal shall') 448, 599-600
shame, n.; think shame 108; shames, gen. of description 80
shame, vb, impersonal use 143
shape, vb, modal use 453
she, pron. of the third person sg., fem.; dialectal distribution 130; see pronouns, personal
sheep, n., gender 52
shield, n., gender 44
ship, n., gender 46
short form of the verb in the first and second persons pl. (drege we, gadir ze) 454, 474, 481
should, vb, pret. of shall (q.v.)
show, vb, used as a noun 652
sin, OE refl. possessive of the third person, 152
singular; see number and pronouns, personal
sit, vb, used impersonally 100, 524; form of the accompanying inf. 524; with a pres. pple (sit weeping) 557
sith, n., in multiplicative expressions 309
sith(en), prep., 407
stue, vb; see sue
stue, vb; see sue
sixty, num., used for an indefinite number 308
sleep, n., gender 49
snow, n., used as a verb 650-1
so, adv., see adverbs
sociative plural (pluralis societatis) 123, 124
soft, adj., used as a verb 652
some, indef. pron.; see pronouns, indefinite; some, adv., 329-30; somewhat, indef. pron., 79, 218; adv., 218, 329-30; somewhat little 79, 218; somewhiles adv., 91
some (ON som, sum) in generalising combinations like whatsome, whosome, whatsomever, and whosomever 193
son, n., gender 44
soon, adv., functional weakening 316; used as an adj. (sounere perils) 649
sorceress, n., used as an adj. 643
sore, adv., 324
soul, n., gender 48
spar-hawk, n., gender 52
sparrow, n., gender 52
spending silver 548
split genitive (for Marie love of hevene, etc.) 78-9; split infinitive (it is good to not ete flesch, etc.) 515-16
spur, n., used as a verb 651
-st in adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions 91 n. 1
stand, vb, accompanied by a modal inf. with to (he stood to biholde 'he stood watching') 537; with a pres. pple (stood quakynge) 556-7
star, n., gender 46, 48
stark, adv., stark blind (dead) 324-5. Cf. start blind, start (stert) naked
start-blind, start-naked, adj., 324-5
stert-naked, adj., 325
stink, vb, used as a noun 652
stone, n., gender in late OE 43
street, n., gender 44
style 41-2; its connection with syntax 41-2; a selection of studies in the style of ME texts 41 n. 1
subject, formal (it) 131-3, 433; non-expression 143, 433
subject-pronoun, expression in connection with the imperative 475-6; non-expression 138-45, 204-5
subjunctive; see mood, subjunctive
such, dem. pron.; see pronouns, demonstrative
sue (siue, seue, sewe), vb, 'follow,' with dat. obj. 102
suffer, vb; form of the accompanying inf. 533-4
sum, indef. pron.; see some under pronouns, indefinite
summer, n., article 250; summers, adverbial gen. 88
sun, n., gender 46 and n. 1, 49
Sundays, n., adverbial gen.? 89
superlative degree; see comparison, under adjectives and adverbs
swallow, n., gender 49, 52
swan, n., gender 52
swine, n., gender 52
swithe(ly), adv., 287, 325; superlative swithest in swa we hit swipest magen don 342
sworn, past pple; to this point this knight is sworn 551
symbolical use of numerals 308-9
sympathetic dative (it com hire to minde) 98-9, 163
syntax and linguistic psychology 41; syntax and style 41
tabu, linguistic 636
tæg-tæg, OE interj. rendering L pup-pup 622 n. 1
teach, vb, form of the accompanying inf. 534
tell, vb, with a double acc. 109
temporal clauses, mood in, 463
tense, general discussion, 479-81; bibliography of general studies 481; tenses of the in-
dicative 479; of the subjunctive 454, 479; sequence of tenses 479-80; relative frequency of the tenses 480. For discussions of the individual tenses see under tense, future, perfect, pluperfect, present, and preterite, below tense, future, 489-96; bibliography 496.

Future expressed by the pres. tense form 483-4; periphrastic fut., general discussion 489-91; frequency 480; shall 489-93, 495-6; will, 489-91, 493-4, 495-6; may, mun (mon), and mote 489, 494-5; be expressing or implying futurity 438, 484, 583; wurthe expressing or implying futurity 439, 495, 615-16; periphrasis with be + -ing expressing futurity 597; fut. of the periphrasis with be + -ing (shall be following, ne biest þu not hier lange wuniende, etc.) 591; fut. infinitive (to come, to cominge) 513, 516, 525; near fut. (be going to, etc.) 495; fut. perfect 495; fut. in the past 496, 597; fut. of may (mowe) 496 tense, perfect, 503-7; bibliography 509.

Frequency 480; auxiliaries 499-503; main principles of use 503-5; functional distinction between the perf. and pret. 503-5; comparison with French and German 505; historical perf. 506-7; perf. after ever and never 499; passive perf. 440; perf. imperative (have done) 475; ing-perf. (we han ben waitynge) 590; perf. inf. after auxiliary verbs (thou sulde his ceptre have sesede, etc.) 516-17; after non-auxiliary verbs (wolde han caught a slepe, wende to have ifohte, etc.) 517-19.

tense, pluperfect, indicative 507-8; subjunctive 454, 508-9; bibliography 509; frequency 480; auxiliaries 499-503 tense, present, indicative 481-8; subjunctive (form) 452, (use) 454-70 passim; bibliography 488.

Frequency 480; form 481-2; time-sphere 482; pres. time 482-4; fut. time 483-4; past time 484-5; historical pres. 485-8; historical pres. competing with the periphrastic pret. with gin 614 tense, preterite, indicative 497-99; subjunctive (form) 452, (use) 454-70 passim; bibliography 509.

Frequency 480; general remarks 497; past time unconnected with the time of speaking 497-8; periphrasis with gin 498, 610-15; past time connected with the time of speaking 498; unlimited time 498; pret. after ever and never 498-9; pret. alternating with the historical pres. 485-8
term of his life 111, 268 Termagant, n., oaths by, 637 tha (tho), rel. pron., equivalent to rel. the 189-90 than (then), comparative par-
ticle 283; with the superlative
283 n. 2; form of the inf.
following than 541
than (thon, then), adv., 'so, ever
so' 172-3
thank, n.; his thankes, etc. 90
thank, vb, with dat. object 102;
with acc., object 109
thar(f), vb (OE þurfan), used
impersonally 436; modal use
453
that, pron.; see pronouns, de-
monstrative and relative
that, adv., 'so' 172
that, particle often appended to
various pronouns, preposi-
tions, and conjunctions (which
that, when that, etc.) 192-3,
423-4
that-clauses, mood in, 458-61
the, def. art.; see article, definite
the rendering F de 234-5
the, rel. pron., 188-90; the the
(OE se pe) 188 n. 1
the, adv., intensifying the com-
parative and expressing pro-
portional comparison 282
thee for thou 124
their, poss. pron., 134-5
themselves; see self
thellic, dem. pron., 'such' 178
themselves; see self
then, adv., 'so, ever so' 172-3;
comparative particle, 283
thence (thennes), adv., 91
thenk, vb, 'think;' see think
there, adv.; see adverbs
thereafter (-at, -in, -of, etc.),
adv., 130-1, 424-5
therewhile(s), adv., 44 n. 2, 91
the ... the in proportional com-
parison 282-3
theos, n., pl., 61
they (them, their), pers. pron.
(poss.), 134-5; see pronouns,
personal
thilke, dem. pron., 176
thine, poss. pron.; see pronouns,
possessive
think, vb, 'seem,' impersonal use
108, 143, 434; transition from
impersonal to personal use
108, 112-13; form of the
accompanying inf. 523-4; mo-
dal use 453
think (thenk), vb, 'think,' form
of the accompanying inf. 534;
think shame, etc. 108
this, dem. pron.; see pronouns,
demonstrative
this, adv., 'so, thus' 175
tho (tha), rel. pron., equivalent
to rel. the 189-90
thole, vb, modal use 453
thon, adv., 'so' 172
thorough, prep., 407-8
thou, pers. pron.; see pronouns,
personal
thousand, num., used for an in-
definite number 308
thrall, n., used as an adj. 642
three the best isles, two the first,
etc., 299-300
thrice (thries), adv., 91, 309
through, prep., 407-8; with an
inf. 540
throughout, adv., 325-6; used as
an attributive adj. 649; prep.,
408
thurch; see through
thurghout; see throughout
thwart (thwert), adv., used as a
verb 652
thwertout, adv., 325-6
thy, poss. pron.; see pronouns, possessive
thysel; see self
tidings, n., pl., 61, 65
tiger, n., gender 52
till, prep., 408-9; with an inf. 515
time, clauses of, mood in, 463
titles with and without the def. art. 236-9
to, prep., 409-12; frequency 348; used as an equivalent of the dative 95-108; after a comparative as an equivalent of than 284; with the inf., as a conventional sign of the inf. 514-15, 515-43 passim
toad, n., gender 52
tofore(n), prep., 412
together(s), adv., 92, 154
touchant, prep., 412, 560
touching (of), prep., 412, 560
toward(s), prep., 412-13
to whom both hevene and erthe and see is sene 105-6; to whom myn herc enhabit is 105-6
to whom, adverbial phrase, 182
town, n., gender 44, 51
traitor, n., used as an adj. 642
transitive verbs; see verbs, transitive and intransitive
Trinity, n., article 246
trow, vb, modal use 453
Twelfth Day, article 251
twelfthmonth, n., 65
twenty, num., used for an indefinite number 307
twere twom (Owl & N) 291
twice (twies), adv., 91, 309
umbe, prep., 413
unchanged plural 57-60
under, prep., 413-14
unilike, adj., governing the gen. 87
unimake, adj., governing the gen. 87
unimete, adj., governing the gen. 87
uninflected infinitive 512-13
unlike, adj., governing the dat. 103
unlimited time expressed by the pres. tense 482; by the pret. tense 498
unnethes, adv., 91
unreality, subjunctive of, 455
unthankes, n., adverbial gen. (his unthankes, etc.) 90
untill, prep., 414-15
unto, prep., 415-16
unloward, prep., 416
unworth, adj., governing the dat. 103-4
up, adv., used as an adj. (uppest) 649; prep., 416-17
upon, prep., 417-18
upperst, adj., 281
upward, prep., 418
ute(n), vb (OE uton), as an auxiliary of the hortative subjunctive 453, 458, 475; replaced by let 458, 475
utterly, adv., 326
verb-adverb groups used as nouns 648
verbal aspects; see aspects, verbal
verbal noun in -eth (goon on hunteth, goon a-begged, etc.) 581-2; bibliography 582; I was go walked 582; heo goth fayteth with heore fauntes 582
verb noun in -ing or -ende ('gerund: in lifting up his heavy drunken cors, etc.) 566-81; bibliography 578-81.

The endings -ung and -ing in OE 566; origin and development of the gerundial use (various theories, foreign influences, etc.) 567-73; compound tenses 573; passive 573; case of the subject (gen. and common case) 573-4; case of the object (gen. and acc.) 574-5; adverbial qualifiers 575; use of the article before the verbal noun 575-6; verbal noun and infinitive 511, 567-73, 576; verbal noun and participle 511, 563-4, 567-73, 586-90; verbal noun in some nominal constructions (there was weeping, etc.) 577; some special uses (Rolle's peculiarities) 577-8; the type a-hunting (on hunting, in building, etc.) 577-8

verbs 428-619; bibliography of general studies 428; verbs used as adjectives 653; as interjections (imperative) 474, 630-1, 653; as nouns 650-2

verbs, intransitive; see verbs, transitive and intransitive
verbs of perception (feel, find, hear, see, etc.); form of the accompanying inf. 529
verbs of privation (bereave, etc.); see under case, accusative, dative, and genitive
verbs, personal, 429-32
verbs, reflexive, 430-2; bibliography 434; verbs with refl. acc. and dat. 430-1; decreasing use of the refl. form 429-30, 431; refl. and passive forms 154-5, 431; auxiliaries of the perfect and pluperfect 502-3

verbs, transitive and intransitive, 429-30; bibliography 430; verbs with transitive and intransitive functions 429-30; intransitive verbs developing transitive uses 430; intransitive verbs preferred to refl. verbs 429-30, 431; intransitive (active) instead of passive form (clothe 'be clothed,' house 'be housed') 441

very, adj. and adv., 326-7

vices, gender 50

vigesimal system of counting 290

vocative; see case, vocative

voice 437-44; in prim. IE 437

voice, active, 437; active intransitive form preferred to the passive 441; active form preferred to the passive in colloquial speech 437-8

voice, middle, 437; surviving in hate (hote) 'be called' 437

voice, passive, 437-44; bibliography 442-4.
General remarks 437-8; passive not favoured in colloquial speech 437; personal and impersonal passive 438; agent of the personal passive 441-2; actional and statal passive 438; form and auxiliaries (be and wurthe) 438-40; perfect and pluperfect 440; periphrasis with be + -ing 592; imperative 475; infinitive 519-21; participles 548-51; verbal noun in -ing 573; the types I was told a story and he was laughed at 440-1; active intransitive vb instead of the passive form 441; passive expressing reflexivity and reciprocity 154-5; passive expressing the indef. person 226-7
volitional subjunctive 454-5

wa (wo), interj., 628-9
wait what 'whatever' 477
wa-te, interj., 628
walk, vb; gooth walketh forth 476;
I was go walked 558, 582
want, vb, used impersonally 435; used personally 435
-ward(s), suffix, 91, 347, 423
was hail, salutation, 632. Cf.
wassail, below
wassail, drinking formula, from
was hail, 632-3
wax, vb, expressing the ingressive aspect 619
way, n., gender 44; go one’s way 110; go one’s ways (adverbal gen.) 89-90
way, interj., 627-8
we, pers. pron.; see pronouns, personal
we, interj., 627-8, 628
weary, adj., with past pples (weary ofleien, ofleoved, ofwandred, forwandred, forweped, etc.) and prepositional phrases (weary of wandred, for wandred, etc.) 560-3
weeping tears 548
wel-la, interj., 628
wel-la-wei (wei-la-wo), interj., 629
welcome, salutation, 632
well, adj. and adv., used impersonally (me is well) 103; used personally (I am well) 435; adv., 327; intensifying itself (wel wele) 315 n. 1; used as an attributive adj. (for his wel dede) 649; interj., 631;
well wurthe, salutation, 632
we-lo, interj., 628
wenchel, n., gender 44
wene, vb, governing the gen. 88
wery; see weary
wesan and beon, OE vbs, functional distinction between, 583; as auxiliaries of the passive 438-40
wel, adj., governing the gen. 87
wey, interj., 627-8
what, pron.; see pronouns, indefinite, interrogative, and relative; interj., 184, 631
whatever; see whatso whatso (whatsoever, whatsoever, whatsome, whatsomever), generalising rel. pron., 193-4
whence (whennes), adv., 193-4
wher; see whether
where, adv.; see adverbs
whereafter (-by, -in, -of, etc.), adv., 202, 424-5
whether (wher), interr. pron.,
'which of the two' 186-7; generalising rel. pron., 'which-


ever of the two' 194; whether


that 194


which (which that, the which),


pron.; see pronouns, interro-
gative and relative


whichever; see whichever


whichso (whichsoever, whichever,


etc.), generalising rel. pron.,


193-4


while(s), adv.; somewhiles, longes


whiles, etc. 91; the while(s)


259; there while 44 n. 1


while(s), prep., 418


whitom, adv., 94, 104


Whitsunday, Whitsuntide, Whit-


sun week, use of the article


251


who, pron.; see pronouns, in-
definite, interrogative, and


relative; who for whom 181


whoever; see whoso


whole (wholly), adv., 328


whoso (whosoever, whoever, who-


some, whosomever), general-


ising rel. pron., 193


whosome; see whoso


why, adv., 182; interj., 631


wi, interj., 628


wife, n., gender in OE 45


will, n.; willes, gen., 'voluntary'


81; willes, adverbial gen. (my


willes; if thy willes be, etc.)


90


will (pret. would), vb; used as


a modal auxiliary 453-70; would rather 457; would 'ought
to' (it wolde be a godeley


blew) 458; will used as an


auxiliary of the future 489-


91, 493-4, 495-6; expressing


the iterative aspect ('con-


suetudinal will') 448, 599-600;


wo(uld), past pple 551


wil(l)e, vb, governing the gen.


88; modal use 453


wind, n., gender 49


winter, n., article 250; winters


and summers, adverbial gen.,


88


wisse, vb, form of the accom-


panying inf. 534


with, prep., 418-21; frequency


348; in absolute constructions


(with bowe in honde, etc.) 116


-17; in refrains (with an O


and an I, etc.) 626; forming


equivalents of the absolute


superlative (with the best, etc.)


288; with an inf. 540


withal, postposition, 421


within(en), prep., 421


without(en), prep., 421-2; with


an inf. 540


withward, prep., 422


wo, interj., 628-9


woe, adj. and n., used imperson-


ally with the dat. (me is woe)


103; used personally (I am


woe) 435; woe wurthe, impre-


cation, 639


wo-la-wo, interj., 629


wolf, n., gender 52


woman, n., article 254


wonder(ly), adv., 328; wunder


ane, etc., in Lawman A 295-6


and 295 n. 1


wone, n.; wones, pl., 60, 65


world, n., article 249; gender 46;


worldes, gen. of description 80


worm, n., gender 52


worsor, adj., double compara-


tive, 281


worst, adv., in comparisons of


inferiority 288
worth, vb; see wurthe

worth(y), adj., governing the dat. 103; the gen. 87; form of the accompanying (active) inf. 538; form of the accompanying passive inf. 521

wo(u)ld, pret. and past pple of will (q.v.)

wrath, n., gender 47

wurthe (worth), vb, 438-40, 495, 615-19; bibliography 619; used as an auxiliary of the passive 438-40, 616-18; outside the passive 615-16; expressing or implying futurity 439, 495, 615-16; reasons for its disappearance 616-18; well wurthe 632; woe wurthe 616, 639

ye (you), pres. pron.; see pronouns, personal

yeme, vb, modal use 453

yet, adv., 338

ymid(s), prep., 360

ymong, prep., 360

yon(d), izon(d), dem. pron., 178

yonder (zonder), dem. pron., 178-9

yond(s), prep., 422

you, pers. pron.; see pronouns, personal

your(s), poss. pron.; see pronouns, possessive

yourself (-selves); see self

youth, n., gender 51

Yule, n., without article 251

zounds, Mod. E oath, 636
For a good orientation into the history of English grammar, several books are indispensable. One of those is Mustanoja’s *A Middle English Syntax*. However, for a long time this work was not readily available; the present edition changes that. This is a fac simile reprint from the 1960 publication which appeared as volume XXIII in ‘Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki’, with a new Introduction by Elly van Gelderen.

Compared to Old English, Middle English has fewer grammars and textbooks devoted to it. This book provides an interesting supplement by going deeper into certain questions and, especially, into exceptions. The book points out differences with Old English and certain peculiarities of the Middle English system. It was originally written for students of Middle English literature but serves a linguist well in detailed descriptions of the parts of speech, the use of the various cases, gender, and number. Word order, complex sentences, and conjunctions were meant to be dealt with in a second volume, which was never published.