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# The Syntax of Early English

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## An outline of Middle English syntax

### 3.1 Introductory remarks

This chapter presents a broad outline of the syntax of Middle English, i.e. English in the period 1100–1500. Many of the syntactic phenomena found in Old English, as described in chapter 2, continue in this period, but there is also a great deal of change. In fact, it has often been said that, while Old English is to all intents and purposes a foreign language to present-day speakers of English, (late) Middle English writings, such as those of Chaucer, Gower and Malory, do not confront modern readers with any major syntactic obstacles to comprehension. As the editors of a widely used anthology of Middle English literature put it: 'There are many subtle differences in syntax between Middle English and Modern English, but few will present any difficulty to the reader' (Dunn and Byrnes 1973: 13). The main reason for this difference is no doubt the occurrence of change in many areas of grammar between the Old and Middle English periods.

In chapters 4 to 9, we shall trace some of the individual changes in detail. It is with the aim of providing a framework against which to interpret these changes that this chapter sketches the basics of Middle English syntax, corresponding to the sketch of Old English in chapter 2. In section 3.2 we consider inflections in Middle English, and look at two constructions (impersonals and passives) characterized by special inflectional marking of grammatical roles. Section 3.3 deals with word order, both within the NP and within the clause. Interrogative and negative clauses form the topic of section 3.4, and section 3.5 deals with various aspects of subordinate clauses, i.e. relative clauses, complement clauses and adverbial clauses.

As the descriptions in the following sections and chapters will make clear, Middle English syntax is characterized by greater variability than Old English syntax. This is due not only to the diachronic developments referred to above, but also to the lesser degree of standardization of written language in Middle English, and to the sheer bulk of the material that has survived, which exhibits more regional, stylistic and/or social variation than is found in the surviving Old English texts. However, partly due to difficulties in locating the manu-

scripts of the canonical Middle English texts socially and stylistically, the methods employed to study such variation have so far not been very sophisticated: they have mostly taken the form of a comparison between the language of prose and that of poetry. Overall, the situation seems to be that poetry makes use of a wider range of grammatical options, including more informal ones, than prose, but a great deal of more fine-grained work remains to be done in this area. A beginning has also been made on the study of regional syntactic variation, but – at least with respect to the type of phenomena focussed on in this book – this type of study is still in its infancy. Nevertheless, whenever specific information is available, we will remark on differences of this type in this and the following chapters.

### 3.2 Morphology and case assignment

While (classical) Old English had a rather elaborate inflectional system for both verbs and nouns, much of this had withered away by early Middle English, and further reductions took place in the course of the Middle English period. In this section we will discuss the main lines of this morphological development, in as far as it affects the syntax of the language, which is principally in matters having to do with case assignment.

#### 3.2.1 Middle English verbal and nominal inflections

The categories expressed inflectionally on the verb in Old English were person (first, second, third), number (singular, plural), tense (present, past) and mood (indicative, subjunctive, and imperative). As we saw in chapter 2, even in Old English there was a great deal of syncretism, so that a form such as *lufode* (from *lufian* 'to love'), for example, could be any of the following: past tense singular indicative first person or third person, past tense singular subjunctive first, second or third person, and in some texts even an inflected participle. Tense distinctions continued to be formally marked on all verbs during the Middle English period, but the marking of other categories underwent further reductions, due to phonological erosion which resulted in the survival of just a handful of surface inflections by the end of the period: *-(e)st*, *-(e)th*, *-s* and *-(e)n*.

The ending *-(e)st* consistently and unambiguously marked second person singular indicative (as in Chaucer's *Thow comest hoom as dronken as a mous* (Chaucer *Wife of Bath* 246); it survived into the sixteenth century and beyond (as in Shakespeare's *Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules; 1HIV II.iv.266*). The ending *-(e)th* marked the third person singular indicative

present tense of all main verbs (as in Chaucer's *This Frere bosteth that he knoweth helle*; Chaucer *Summoner* 1672); in southern dialects, this ending was also used for the plural indicative present. Later, *-(e)th* was replaced by the modern ending *-(e)s*, originally only found in northern dialects (where it marked both third person singular and all persons plural). The ending *-(e)n* was used for the plural (as in *The grettest clerkes been noght wisest men*; Chaucer *Reeve* 4054) and also for the infinitive (as in *now, lat hem goon hir weye!*; Chaucer *Reeve* 4097); but in many texts this ending alternated with *-e* and zero, and it was on its way out for infinitive marking by 1480 and somewhat later for plural marking (see the figures given by Lass 1992: 97 f.).

As pointed out in 2.2.1, modern theoretical work has posited a relation between the richness of surface verbal morphology and the syntactic phenomenon of *pro*-drop (see Jaeggli and Safir 1989 for various views on this relation). We give another (Spanish) example in (1).

- (1) La compré ayer  
it buy-PAST-1sg yesterday  
'I bought it yesterday'

Since Spanish has rich agreement morphology, a subject pronoun such as *yo* 'I' in (1) can be (and usually is) omitted. In late Middle English, verbs generally showed overt agreement with the subject only in the indicative in the second person singular and in the third person singular present tense, and it is therefore not surprising to find that late Middle English usually featured an overt pronoun in examples comparable to (1). Nevertheless, like other languages without rich verbal agreement, late Middle English sometimes allowed a subject pronoun to remain unexpressed. This is found in coordinate *and*-clauses even when the subjects are not identical, as in (2), and it also occurred in clauses with a marked topic in initial position, as in (3), and some other cases (see Burrow and Turville-Petre 1992: 41).

- (2) That made his face often reed and hoot/  
that made his face often red and hot  
For verray shame, and blamed hymself for he/  
for very shame and he-blamed himself for he  
Had toold to me so greet a pryvetee  
had told to me so great a private-matter  
'That often made his face turn hot and red with shame, and he blamed himself for having told me such a private matter.'  
(Chaucer *Wife of Bath* 540)
- (3) as for Thomas Myller wyll do nothyng in thys mater  
as for Thomas Miller he-will do nothing in this matter  
'As for Thomas Miller, he will do nothing in this matter'  
(*Cely Letters* 8.6)

Elliott (1974: 186) characterizes example (2) as a 'sudden conversational transition from one subject to another', i.e. from *that* in the first clause to the unexpressed *he* in the second clause. It indeed appears that subject omission was associated with informal styles, as it still is in present-day English (consider for example: *Sorry, (I) can't help it*).

Early Middle English and Old English did not have very rich agreement either, since no person distinctions were visible on any plural or subjunctive verb, and presumably for this reason sentences with *pro*-drop were the exception rather than the rule in those periods too. However, there is one construction-type that commonly featured a null subject in Middle English (as it did in Old English; see 2.2.1). It consisted of sentences with a null expletive subject, as in example (4) and the first clause of example (5).

- (4) to us surgiens aperteneth that we do to every wight the beste that  
to us surgeons befits that we do to every person the best that  
we kan  
we can  
'it is our duty as surgeons to treat every person as well as we can'  
(Chaucer *Melibee* 1011)
- (5) hard is to knowe in al poyntis to holde the meene, lyght is hit to  
hard is to know in all points to hold the society easy is it to  
faillie  
fail  
'it is hard to know exactly how to rule society; it is easy to fail'  
(*SSecr* 130/26)

In Modern English, this type of sentence has obligatory use of so-called dummy or expletive *it*, but in Old and Middle English it was also possible to leave the subject position empty. In the course of the fifteenth century, this option is used less and less frequently and by 1500 the use of expletive *it* has become the rule.

The Middle English reduction in verbal morphology is paralleled in nominal morphology. Theoretically, Old English nouns still showed a four-way distinction involving nominative, accusative, genitive and dative. However, as pointed out in chapter 2, in many nouns the opposition between nominative and accusative was not formally marked in the singular, and it was not marked in the plural of any noun. In late Old English and early Middle English it was levelled in all singular nouns as well, as a result of phonological attrition of word endings. It was retained in the personal pronouns, most of which indeed had a much more pronounced surface differentiation to begin with (compare Old English nominative *guma* 'man' and *he* 'he' with accusative *guman* and *hine*). The Old English demonstrative/definite article also had clear surface differentiation (compare masculine singular nominative *se* with accusative *þone*); this case difference continued into the fourteenth century in some southern dialects,

but was eventually levelled out, with the case-invariant forms *the* (definite article) and *that* (demonstrative) being adopted throughout.<sup>1</sup>

The Old English dative endings also underwent attrition and levelling, coalescing with the already merged nominative/accusative form in all nouns and the definite article, and with the accusative forms in the pronouns (except for *hit*, which already had the same form), compare Old English dative *þam hlaforde* 'the lord' and *him* 'him' with Middle English nominative/accusative/dative *the lauerd/lord* and dative/accusative *him*). The genitive, however, proved to be more resistant, and survived as an inflectional category throughout the Middle English period. Its formal marking showed quite some variety in Old English, depending on inflectional class; this variety survived for a while, but by the end of the Middle English period the present-day marker 's (in various spellings) had become the norm for nouns.

If these developments are considered in more detail for the various inflectional classes, they can be seen to consist of an intricate interplay between phonological weakening and analogical levelling, which proceeded along a number of intermediate (and dialect-specific) stages that we shall not consider here. The overall result was a morphological system in which singular nouns had two forms, one for genitive functions and one for all other functions. The terms genitive case and common case have been used to describe these forms. Pronouns, however, retained three forms, for which we can use the terms nominative case (*I, he*, etc.), genitive case (*my, his*, etc.) and objective case (*me, him*, etc.). These terms can also be used for nouns, as long as it is kept in mind that all nouns have syncretism of the nominative and the objective. By the fifteenth century, plural nouns regularly took the ending *-s*, a result of whole-sale simplification of the original Old English system, which had a wide variety of plural markers.

One of the syntactic effects of these changes was the breakdown of the system based on selection of dative versus accusative. This selection played a role in complementation patterns of Old English monotransitive verbs (with most verbs selecting an accusative internal argument, some verbs selecting a dative or genitive, and other verbs showing variation, apparently depending to some extent on the meaning intended), in complementation of ditransitives (most of which selected both a dative and an accusative, though the genitive was also found), in prepositional complementation (with variability similar to that for monotransitive verbs) and in voice alternations (only accusative

<sup>1</sup> The form *the* was also number-invariant, but singular *that* came to be paired with plural *those* (from the original plural form *þo*, through addition of the plural marker *-s*; the Old English plural demonstrative *þas* 'these' may also have played a role here).

objects of active clauses being eligible for promotion to subject in the passive). Not surprisingly in view of the development of formal identity across the board of (earlier) datives and accusatives, all these areas underwent change in Middle English.

In the case of monotransitive complementation, the development was simple: all internal arguments came to be marked by the objective case form, and any semantic distinctions that existed earlier were lost or relocated to different lexical items. In the case of the verbs *see* and *help*, for example, the internal arguments were marked accusative and dative respectively in Old English, as in (6a–b), but in Middle English both verbs took an objective internal argument, as in (7a–b).

- (6) a. Sona swa hio geseah þone fordrifenan cyning . . .  
as-soon as she saw the-ACC driven-off-ACC king-ACC  
'As soon as she saw the king, who had been driven out of course . . .'  
(*Bo* 38.116.6)
- b. for ðan ðe he wolde gehelpan . . . þearfum and  
because he would help poor-people-DAT and  
wannhalum  
sick-people-DAT  
'because he wanted to help the poor and the sick.' (*ÆLS*(Oswald) 272)
- (7) a. Allas . . . / þat ich here þis sorwe see!  
alas that I here this sorrow-OBJ see  
'Alas, that I should see this sorrow here.'  
(*Havelok* 1878)
- b. Loke nou, hu God helpen kan/  
look now how God help can  
O mani wise wif and man  
in many ways woman-OBJ and man-OBJ  
'Now look how God can help men and women in many ways.'  
(*Havelok* 1712)

As explained in 2.2.1, there were verbs in Old English that could take either a dative or an accusative object, with in some cases a possible difference in meaning (see Plank 1983). The difference involved the degree of affectedness of the object, the dative signalling a lesser degree of affectedness than the accusative. In Middle English, the distinction between dative and accusative was lost, and with it the possibility of signalling a difference in meaning in this way. In some cases, part of the semantic difference may have come to be expressed by other lexical items (including verb + preposition combinations) that were pressed into service for this.

In the case of ditransitive verbs, the two internal arguments, usually marked accusative and dative in Old English as in (8), both received objective marking in Middle English, as in (9).

- (8) *A*fter *ð*isum sealde se ealdorman hine sumum frysan  
 after this sold the aldorman him-ACC some-DAT Frisian-DAT  
 of lundene  
 of London  
 'Afterwards the aldorman sold him to a Frisian of London'  
 (*ÆCHom* II, 24.204.167)
- (9) Wolle we sullen Iosep pis chapmen pat here come?  
 will we sell Joseph-OBJ these merchants-OBJ that here came  
 'Shall we sell Joseph to these merchants that have come here?'  
 (*Jacob&J.* 118)

In addition, the recipient argument could be marked by means of the preposition *to*, as in (10). In Old English, this pattern is found with only a few verbs, but it becomes a very productive one in Middle English.

- (10) Betir is that Y 3yue hir to thee than to another man  
 better is that I give her to you than to another man  
 'It is better if I give her to you than to another man'  
 (*WBible* Gen 29.19; Denison 1993: 107)

As far as prepositions are concerned, the situation in Old English was that individual prepositions selected either the dative or accusative (and some the genitive). The underlying basis for selection, including the variability shown by some prepositions, is not entirely clear. In Middle English, the system was much simplified, since all prepositions were now followed by the objective case form.

The changes in marking of internal arguments in ditransitive constructions and in prepositional phrases were accompanied by changes in the possibilities for passivization, which we shall discuss in section 3.2.3. But first we present in section 3.2.2 a description of what happened to the Old English impersonal verbs. We saw in section 2.2.2 that these verbs showed rather special case marking in Old English. The overall simplification of the case system led to simplification of impersonal constructions as well, but we shall see that they nevertheless retained some of their special properties.

### 3.2.2 Impersonal verbs

It was shown in section 2.2.2 that Old English impersonal verbs with two NP arguments occurred in three distinct configurations, repeated here in (11).

- (11) a. EXPERIENCER – dative      THEME – nominative  
 b. EXPERIENCER – nominative      THEME – genitive  
 c. EXPERIENCER – dative      THEME – genitive

The THEME could also have the form of a clause; for some verbs, this was in fact the most frequent pattern.

In present-day English, only the following two patterns are found:

- (12) a. EXPERIENCER – objective      THEME – nominative  
 (they surprised me)  
 b. EXPERIENCER – nominative      THEME – objective  
 (I don't like them)

If the THEME is a clause in present-day English, it can function as the subject, with or without dummy *it* (*that you should say so surprises me; it surprises me that you should say so*).

Early in the Middle English period, the option of marking the THEME as genitive, as in (11b) and (11c), disappeared. Instead, the THEME argument came to be expressed by the objective form, as in (13a), or by a prepositional phrase, as in (13b), a possibility that in fact occurred (alongside the genitive) in Old English as well.

- (13) a. Ic hit 3ierne  
 I it-OBJ yearn  
 'I yearn for it' (*Vices&V* 59.27; Allen 1995: 128)
- b. ... yonge men ... yurnes to gaumes  
 young men yearn to games  
 '... young men like games' (*Destr. Troy* 2937)

This change can be seen as part of a larger development, whereby the genitive ceased to be used to mark verbal arguments, also of non-impersonal verbs. This development is somewhat unexpected, since we have seen that the genitive survived as a formal category. However, after the Old English period, the status of this formal category changed: it became restricted to functions within a NP (most typically, possessive function).

Another early Middle English change is the general syncretism of dative and accusative, which coalesced into one objective case. The effect for impersonal verbs is that the Old English marking of EXPERIENCER as dative, as in (11a) and (11c), changed into marking as objective, as in (14).

- (14) sche him pleseth/ of suche wordes as sche spekth  
 she him-OBJ pleases by such words as she speaks  
 'she pleases him by the words that she speaks'  
 (*Gower Confessio Amantis* 1.1698; Denison 1993: 72)

The two changes affecting genitive and dative resulted in the Old English patterns (11a, b) being converted into the present-day (12a, b). Pattern (11c), which is often called a 'true' impersonal construction since it has no nominative (and therefore, under some interpretations, no subject), remained a true impersonal, as shown in (15) and (16).

- (15) swetest him ðuncheð ham  
 sweetest him-OBJ seems them-OBJ  
 'they seem sweetest to him' (Ancr 52a.15; Denison 1993: 70)
- (16) ne of al þet eauer wa is ne schal ham neauer wontin  
 nor of all that ever woe is not will them-OBJ never lack  
 'nor will they ever be lacking in anything that is miserable'  
 (Sward 152; Denison 1993: 70)

This configuration with two objective NPs or one objective NP and a PP survived until 1500, but then disappeared, like all other constructions with a null expletive subject (see 3.2.1 above).

Impersonals were also used until the end of the Middle English period in the pattern with an objective EXPERIENCER and a clausal THEME, as in (17).

- (17) me marvaylyyth mychil why God ȝeuyth wykyd men swych  
 me-OBJ marvels much why God gives wicked men such  
 power  
 power  
 'I wonder a lot why God gives wicked people such power'  
 (Dives&Pauper I.1.336.2)

Here the distinction between (12a) and (15–16) is in a way neutralized, since the clause can be seen as parallel to either a nominative or an objective NP. In either case, the sentence would lack a preverbal nominative subject. In example (18), the same verb occurs with a nominative EXPERIENCER subject.

- (18) I merveyll that I here no tidyngges from yow  
 I-NOM marvel that I hear no news from you  
 'I wonder why I don't hear any news from you' (Paston Letters 76.38)

The specific verb used in (17) and (18), *marvel*, is a loan from French that is first attested in English in the fourteenth century (see *OED*, s.v. *marvel*, vb.). Its use in (17) and (18) clearly shows that impersonals formed a productive category also in Middle English. Another sign of this is the fact that some native verbs that did not show impersonal syntax in Old English began to do so in Middle English. The verb *must*, for example, is often found in true impersonal constructions such as (19).

- (19) us must worschepyn hym  
 us-OBJ must worship him  
 'we must worship him' (Dives&Pauper I.1.206.34)

The very brief presentation of the impersonal facts given in 2.2.2 and in this section hides various controversial issues, brought out well in Denison (1990). For one thing, we have not said anything about impersonal verbs with one argument (such as *rain* and *happen*); their behaviour is of course different, but also

needs to be taken into account in a full history of the impersonals. Secondly, among the category of two-place impersonal verbs that we have described, there appears to be lexical variation (synchronic as well as diachronic) as to which verbs occur in which configurations; since the available data are incomplete and only give us a partial view, scholars inevitably disagree about what the complete view would be like. Thirdly, cross-linguistically the relevant verbs (sometimes called psych verbs, since they tend to indicate various psychological states) also often show rather special patterns of case marking and grammatical relations, and so far there has been little consensus on their proper analysis. Some theories, for example, entertain the possibility that a fronted dative EXPERIENCER argument in some cases can function as subject of the clause; this of course will have consequences for the kind of empirical distinctions we will want to make (e.g. between fronted and non-fronted EXPERIENCERS) and for the way the diachronic development of these constructions is viewed (see Allen 1995 for a detailed analysis of Old and Middle English impersonals along these lines, with full references to earlier work).

### 3.2.3 Passives

In section 2.2.1, we saw that the prototypical Old English passive had a nominative subject corresponding to an accusative object in the active sentence, as in the passive (20) corresponding to the active in (6a).

- (20) þonne he bið west gesewen, þonne tacnað he æfen  
 when it-NOM is westward seen then signifies it evening  
 'when it [the evening star] is seen in the west, it signifies evening'  
 (Bo 39.135.32)

Passives of this type continue throughout the Middle English period (though, to be precise, the changes in the case system meant that the active sentence would no longer have an object marked accusative, since the accusative and dative had coalesced in the new category of objective case). The Middle English pair in (21)–(22) illustrates the simple active–passive alternation.

- (21) Sei þou ever þemperour?  
 saw you ever the-emperor-OBJ  
 'Did you ever see the emperor?' (WPal. 276)
- (22) Nass he næfre seȝhenn her þurh erþliȝ flæshess eȝhe  
 not-was he-NOM never seen here through earthly flesh-GEN eye  
 'He was never seen here by the eyes of mortals' (Orm. 19425)

But in addition to this simple type, two new types of passives began to appear in the Middle English period: the prepositional passive and the recipient

passive, as illustrated in (23) and (24) respectively (see 3.5.2 and chapter 8 for a third new type, the passive infinitive preceded by *to*).

- (23) þis maiden . . . feled also bi her þi/ þat sche was yleyen bi  
 this maiden felt also by her thigh that she was lain by  
 'this girl felt by her thigh that she had been lain with.'  
 (*Arth. & M.* 849; Denison 1993: 125)
- (24) whan he was gyvyn the gre be my lorde kyng Arthure  
 when he was given the prize by my lord king Arthur  
 'when he was given the prize by my lord King Arthur'  
 (*Malory Works* 699.19; Denison 1993: 111)

In (23), the subject corresponds to the object of a preposition in the active sentence (*lie by someone*), while in (24) the subject corresponds to the indirect object of an active sentence (*give someone the prize*). In the surviving Old English material, such passives do not occur.

Nor were these passives frequent in early Middle English. Denison (1985) examines all presumed early examples of the prepositional passive and observes that its spread appears to have followed a pattern of lexical diffusion, with a few sporadic examples dating from the thirteenth century but a greater number (of tokens and of verb–preposition types) appearing only after 1300. Moreover, the early examples tend to be of combinations of verb and preposition that semantically form a close unit, such as *lie by* 'sleep with' and *set of/fell of* 'regard'. In such cases, it could be said that the following NP is in a way the direct object of the unit verb + preposition, and hence eligible for passivization, very much as in the pair in (21)–(22).

The rise of the prepositional passive is therefore not to be regarded as an automatic structural consequence of the changes in the case system, which resulted in prepositions always being followed by objective case, instead of either dative or accusative as in Old English. The development of objective case seems to have been a necessary condition for prepositional passives to develop, but not a sufficient one (compare also Modern Dutch, which has a case system like that of Middle English, but no prepositional passive).

The recipient passive, as in (24), appears on the scene somewhat later than the prepositional passive. Although there are some examples from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that could be interpreted as recipient passives, the first unambiguous examples are from about 1375, and they are not frequent even in the fifteenth century. This means that the disappearance of case distinctions cannot have been the direct cause of the rise of the recipient passive either, since there is a time lag of some 200 years. In a comprehensive study of this topic, Allen (1995) suggests that the recipient passive became

structurally available around 1375 as a result of the fixing of word order in active ditransitives. Before that time, both [V–THEME–RECIPIENT], as in (9), and [V–RECIPIENT–THEME], as in (25), had been possible.

- (25) There the kyng graunted syr Ector grete rewardys  
 there the king granted sir Hector-OBJ great rewards-OBJ  
 'There the king granted Hector great rewards' (*Malory Works* 11.9)

When only the order of (25) remained, Allen suggests, the immediately post-verbal RECIPIENT NP came to be analysed as the direct object, and could therefore become the nominative subject of a corresponding passive. Another possibility might be that this change is related to the loss of Verb-Second as discussed in chapter 4. With the loss of this operation, a fronted dative could be reinterpreted as nominative, since the default first constituent position now became the nominative subject position, as suggested by van Kemenade (1998).

In addition to its prototypical passive, Old English also had a passive construction in which there was no nominative subject, since the corresponding active sentence lacked an accusative object. Examples were given in section 2.2.1; we repeat one of them in (26).

- (26) Ac ðæm mæg beon suiðe hraðe geholpen from his lareowe  
 but him-DAT can be very quickly helped by his teacher  
 'But he can be helped very quickly by his teacher'  
 (*CP* 33.225.22; Denison 1993: 104)

As shown in example (6b), the verb *helpan* took a dative object in Old English, and this dative was retained under passivization. However, as shown in (7b), the object came to be marked with objective case in Middle English, and could therefore participate in the prototypical passive, as it does in (27).

- (27) Ne hadde he ben holpen by the steede of bras  
 not had he been helped by the horse of brass  
 'If he had not been helped by the brass horse'  
 (*Chaucer Squire* 666; Denison 1993: 105)

### 3.3 Word order

#### 3.3.1 Word order within the NP

The order of elements within the NP in Middle English does not differ greatly from that of Old English, nor indeed from that of present-day English. With regard to the determiner system, there are only some minor differences in terms of combinability, in the sense that some forms could

precede the determiner that could not do so in Old English (e.g. *many* in (28)), or cannot do so any more in present-day English (e.g. *each* in (29)).

- (28) Ich aue hy go mani amyle  
I have gone many a-mile  
'I have travelled many a mile' (King Horn (Ld) 66.1215)

- (29) þurh out vch a toune  
throughout each a town  
'throughout every town' (King Horn (Hrl) 12.218)

These small differences have not so far inspired any interesting theoretical work, perhaps because of their smallness, but perhaps also because there has long been no theoretical framework making very precise claims about NP-internal positions. It is possible that the so-called 'DP-hypothesis', which takes the determiner to be the head of what we are calling NP, will lead to fruitful work in this area.

Attributive adjectives in Middle English were usually in prenominal position, though – as in present-day English (see Ferris (1993)) – they sometimes followed the noun. The latter option was not unusual (especially in poetry) with single adjectives borrowed from French, as in (30), and with adjectives forming a longer phrase, for example when there were two coordinated adjectives, as in (31).

- (30) schame eternal schulde be my mede  
shame eternal should be my reward  
'eternal shame would be my reward' (Lydgate Troy Book 1.2476)

- (31) þise byep̄ gaueleres kueade and uoule  
these are usurers evil and foul  
'These are foul and evil usurers' (Ayenb. 35.14)

It was also possible for one adjective to precede and one to follow the head noun, as in (32).

- (32) King Pandyones fayre daughter dere  
king Pandion's fair daughter dear  
'King Pandion's beautiful beloved daughter' (Chaucer Legend 2247)

From the thirteenth century on, the second adjective was sometimes preceded by *and*. It could then be preceded by a determiner, as in example (33).

- (33) A trewe swynkere and a good was he  
a true labourer and a good was he  
'He was a good and faithful labourer' (Chaucer Gen. Prol. 531)

In present-day English, the prop-word *one* would be needed in this construction, since only generic and/or abstract adjectives like *the poor* and *the oriental*

can now occur without a nominal head. In early Middle English, there was still more freedom in this respect, but towards the end of the period such 'nominalizations' became lexically and syntactically restricted.

NPs containing a title of the form *X (of) Y* in the genitive often showed splitting, with *X*'s preceding the head noun and *(of) Y* following it, as in (34) and (35).

- (34) þuruh Iulianes heste ðe amperur  
through Julian's command the emperor  
'by the command of Julian the Emperor' (Ancre. (Nero) 109.11)

- (35) Philippes sone of Macidoyne he was  
Philip's son of Macedon he was  
'He was Philip of Macedon's son' (Chaucer Monk 2656)

The disappearance of this splitting option is probably due to the development of the group genitive (*Julian the emperor's*, *Philip of Macedon's*), which is first attested in the late fourteenth century. (36) is an example from Chaucer.

- (36) The grete god of Loves name  
'The great god of love's name' (Chaucer House of Fame 1489)

Another Middle English genitive construction, first attested in the thirteenth century, has not the affix *-s* but the form *(h)is* written as a separate word. An example is (37).

- (37) Of seth, ðe was adam is sune  
'Of Seth, who was Adam's son' (Gen&Ex 493)

Allen (1997) provides data and discussion of these two innovations. She links the origin of the group genitive with the generalization of the genitive *-s* ending to all nouns (see 3.2.1 above), and presents several arguments for interpreting the construction in (37) as a merely orthographical variant of the ordinary genitive.

### 3.3.2 Within the clause

Unlike the order of NP constituents, the order of clausal constituents has undergone major changes in the history of English, and their effects are particularly noticeable in the Middle English period. Since several of the changes are discussed in detail in later chapters, we present only a brief outline of this important topic here.

One aspect of word order that changed in Middle English was the relative positioning of direct object and verb. Whereas in Old English, the order object-verb was very frequent, in particular in subordinate clauses and when



the object was a pronoun (see section 2.3.2), in Middle English this order became gradually less common, and ceased to show a correlation with clause type. In Chaucer's language, it was still reasonably well represented, but by 1450, object-verb order was found in no more than 1 per cent (in prose) to 6 per cent (in verse) of all possible cases. (38) contains an instance of object-verb order from a prose text written around 1430.

- (38) & many tymes of þe mete sche seyde many good wordys as God  
and many times of the food she said many good words as God  
wold hem puttyn in hir mende  
would them put in her mind  
'and many times she said many good words about the food, as God would  
put them in her mind' (MKempe 26.1)

There is a voluminous literature on the shift from object-verb to verb-object in English, which has focussed in particular on the causes of this development. However, some of this literature is based on the assumption that the shift was completed by 1200. The data show that the change was more gradual and took the whole of the Middle English period to come to completion; in chapter 5, we examine the change in detail.

Another, probably related, Middle English change affected the position of particles relative to the verb. We saw in section 2.3.2 that such elements were also often preverbal in Old English. In the course of the Middle English period they gradually came to be restricted to postverbal position, as in (39). In this case too, however, the older order continued to be used every now and then until the end of the Middle English period, as shown by (40). The development of phrasal verbs is considered in detail in chapter 6.

- (39) Trystrames sterte up, and kyld that mon  
Tristram started up and killed that man  
'Tristram suddenly came up and killed that man' (Malory Works 413.2)
- (40) sir Raynold gan up sterte with his hede all bloody  
Sir Raynold began up start with his head all bloody  
'With his head all bloody, Sir Raynold suddenly moved up'  
(Malory Works 276.25)

A further Middle English change involving verb position is the decline of the so-called 'Verb-Second' rule. As discussed in section 2.3.2, many Old English main clauses had the finite verb in second position, following a first element which could have a variety of functions (subject, direct object, adverbial adjunct, etc.). In this respect, Old English shows similarities with most of the modern Germanic languages. However, in those languages, the Verb-Second rule applies virtually without exception in every main clause. The discussion

in chapter 2 shows that the situation in Old English was rather more complex. This will be treated in detail in chapter 4.

Verb-Second rapidly declined in the course of the last part of the fourteenth and in the fifteenth century, and saw a revival in the literary language in the sixteenth century. An example from Caxton's writings is given in (41).

- (41) Thenne sayd they to the x men of armes  
then said they to the ten men of arms  
'Then they said to the ten men of arms' (Caxton *Paris&Vienne* 5.1)

It is worth emphasizing that the phenomenon of Verb-Second is in principle independent of the order of object and verb. This can be seen very clearly by comparing Modern Dutch with Modern Swedish. Both languages regularly have Verb-Second in main clauses, but Modern Dutch has object-verb order, while Modern Swedish has verb-object order. Therefore, a Dutch object will precede any verb which is not in second position, while a Swedish object follows it; examples are given in (42) and (43).

- (42) Vanavond wil ik kreeft eten. (Dutch)  
tonight will I lobster eat  
'Tonight I want to eat lobster.'
- (43) I kväll vill jag äta hummer. (Swedish)  
tonight will I eat lobster

In English, object-verb order declined earlier than Verb-Second: in late Middle English, examples like (38) are much rarer than (41).

Each of the changes in word order briefly described here is dealt with in greater detail in a later chapter. The development of Verb-Second is the topic of chapter 4, the changes in the order of object and verb are discussed in chapter 5, and particle position is dealt with in chapter 6.

### 3.4 Clause types

#### 3.4.1 Question formation

This section can be brief because not much changed in this area compared with the Old English period. Concerning the two main types of question (yes-no questions and wh-questions), inversion of subject and finite verb was still the rule in main clauses in both, as shown in (44) and (45).

- (44) Woot ye nat where ther stant a litel toun...?  
know you not where there stands a little town  
'Don't you know where this little town is...?' (Chaucer *Manciple* 1)

- (45) Why make ye youreself for to be lyk a fool?  
 why make you yourself for to be like a fool  
 'Why do you allow yourself to behave like a fool?' (Chaucer *Melibee* 980)

As in present-day English, inversion was absent if the *wh*-word was itself the subject. Although *do* is found (albeit rarely) in questions in Middle English, such constructions should probably not be interpreted as containing the empty operator *do* (cf. Ellegård 1953: 161–2, who shows that interrogative *do* did not occur before 1400); rather, they were the questioned counterpart of a clause already containing *do*. The first attested example is from Chaucer:

- (46) Fader, why do ye wepe?  
 'Father, why do you weep?' (Chaucer *Monk* 2432)

Only in the early Modern English period was there a sharp rise in the occurrence of *do* in interrogative (and negative) sentences.

In Old English, as we have seen, *hwæper* could be used in simple interrogative clauses followed by normal, i.e. non-inverted, word order. Examples of this seem to be extremely rare in Middle English; one instance is (47), found in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* in a highly rhetorical passage. The verb was usually in the subjunctive, as in Old English, because the construction was mostly used as an expression of doubt.

- (47) 'O Troilus, what dostow now?' she seyde./ 'Lord! wheyther thou yet  
 o Troilus what do you now she said lord whether you yet  
 thenke [subjunct.] upon Criseyde?  
 think on Criseyde?  
 "'O Troilus, what will you do now?" she said. "Will you still be thinking of  
 Criseyde?"' (Chaucer *Troilus* V 734–35)

Far more frequent was a construction with *whether* followed by inverted word order and the indicative mood in so-called alternative questions like (48).

- (48) Whether seistow this in earnest or in pley?  
 whether say you this in earnest or in play  
 'Are you saying this in earnest or in jest?' (Chaucer *Knight* 1125)

In Old English, when a prepositional object was *wh*-moved, it was the rule for the preposition to move along with the object (so-called 'pied-piping'). This began to change in early Middle English. In the thirteenth century *Brut*, we see the first sporadic instances of preposition stranding in *wh*-questions:

- (49) nuste nan kempe, whæm he sculde slæn on  
 not-knew no soldier whom he should hit on  
 'No soldier knew whom he should strike at' (Layamon *Brut*(Clg) 13718–19)

Around the same time, preposition stranding also began to occur in *wh*-relatives, topicalized constructions and passives (see section 3.2.3). It is quite

possible that preposition stranding in questions spread via the new relative constructions with *wh*-forms (see below), which most likely developed from Old English free relatives (OE (*swa*)*hwa*(*swa*)), used in the sense of 'whoever', 'he who', as in *Who once steals is always a thief*. Preposition stranding with free relatives was already possible in Old English under certain conditions. Note that the subordinate clause in (49) could still, at a pinch, be interpreted as a free relative.

Subordinate interrogative clauses are found in the same functions that complement clauses can occur in, i.e. as a complement to a noun phrase, as object of a verbal or adjectival predicate and as subject. The usual subordinator in yes–no and alternative questions is *wh(e)th(er)*, as in (50), but (*ȝ*)*if* is also found, as in (51).

- (50) I noot wher she be womman or goddesse  
 I not-know whether she be woman or goddess  
 'I am not sure whether she is a woman or a goddess' (Chaucer *Knight* 1101)
- (51) She frayneth and she preyeth pitously . . . / To telle hir if hir child  
 she asks and she prays pitifully to tell her if her child  
 wente oght forby.  
 went ought past  
 'She was asking and beseeching pitifully . . . to tell her whether her child  
 possibly passed by.' (Chaucer *Prioress* 600)

As a rule the subjunctive – or an appropriate auxiliary – is employed in such clauses when there is an element of doubt or uncertainty.

Dependent *wh*-questions were introduced by a *wh*-element just as in simple clauses; this element could be an adverb (*where*, *how*, *why*, etc.) or an interrogative pronoun (independent or used attributively), as in (52).

- (52) But sikerly she nyste who was who  
 but certainly she not-knew who was who  
 'But indeed she didn't know who was who' (Chaucer *Reeve* 4300)

The mood in these clauses was as a rule the indicative.

### 3.4.2 Negation

Between the Old and the Middle English periods some important changes took place in the system of sentence negation. In Old English the negative adverb was *ne*, which could be combined, as we have seen, with other negative elements such as *nan*, *naping*, *næfre* 'none', 'nothing', 'never'. It was possible to combine *ne* with *na* 'never' or *naht* (from *nawiht* 'nothing'). The combination with *naht* often had the effect of an emphatic negation ('by no means, not at all'). *Na* and *naht* could immediately precede *ne* in clauses in

which the verb was not fronted (mostly subordinate) or the combination *ne* + verb could be fronted to the left of *na*, *naht*.

In early Middle English the emphatic negative *ne . . . naht* (*na* disappeared here quite quickly) began to be used more and more frequently and can no longer be considered to be truly emphatic. Jack (1978a: 300) shows that in the earliest preserved Middle English text, the *Peterborough Chronicle*, the percentage of *ne . . . naht* is still small (about seventeen per cent) but that in the *Ancrene Wisse* the number has risen steeply to about forty per cent. In early Middle English *naht* had also acquired a fixed position; it now, practically without exception, followed *ne* and was placed after the finite verb. In the course of the Middle English period, *ne . . . naht* (also . . . *nat*, *nought*, *not*, etc.) became the regular negator. When *ne* was not supported by *naht*, it was usually supported by another negative element such as *noon* or *never*. In other words, unsupported *ne* became the exception rather than the rule. Because *ne* was now normally supported by another negative, it could be dropped (cf. the similar dropping of *ne* in the combination *ne . . . pas* in present-day colloquial French). This indeed was the situation in late Middle English: *natnot* had become the common negator (placed after the finite verb, unlike *ne*), while *ne* and *ne . . . not* had become infrequent (cf. Jack 1978b).

However, there are some texts of the South-Eastern region (notably Chaucer's prose and contemporary London documents; cf. Jack 1978b) where *ne . . . not* and unsupported *ne* were still regularly used. At first sight it looks as if *ne* and *ne . . . not* were on the whole simply alternatives except that *ne . . . not* was more frequently found when *ne* could be cliticized to an auxiliary, especially *is*, in cases like (53), while *not* alone was used after the conjunction *ne* 'nor', presumably in order to avoid the rather awkward *ne ne*.

- (53) Ther nys nat oon kan war by other be.  
there not-is not one can aware by other be  
'There is not a single person who learns from the mistakes of others.'  
(Chaucer *Troilus* I 203)

The distribution of both *ne* and *ne . . . not*, however, is significant and usage of *ne* correlated with its use in early Middle English. *Ne* was the rule with other negatives such as *non* and *never* (we could call this 'supported *ne*' or negative concord). Unsupported *ne* is found with the (negative) adverb *but* and in complement clauses following a negative or interrogative clause, as in (54).

- (54) For ther nys no creature so good that hym ne wanteth somewhat  
for there not-is no creature so good that him not lacks somewhat  
of the perfeccioun of God.  
of the perfection of God  
'No one is so good that he doesn't lack something compared to the  
perfection of God'  
(Chaucer *Melibee* 1080)

The use of unsupported *ne* here could be seen as a case of negative concord due to the negative character of the main clause.

Other types of clauses in which unsupported *ne* occurred are rather similar: it was found in inherently negative situations, i.e. contexts which are semantically negative and therefore may dispense with an explicit negator (for a list of these see Klima 1964). Examples are comparative clauses as in (55), conditional clauses as in (56), after verbs like *douten*, *denyen*, *forsaken*, etc., and after *lest*, as in (57).

- (55) And thanne al the derknesse of his mysknowynge shall [schewen]  
and then all the darkness of his mis-knowing shall show  
more evydently to the sighte of his undirstondynge then the sonne  
more evidently to the sight of his understanding than the sun  
*ne* semeth to the sighte withoute-forth.  
not seems to the sight on-the-outside  
'And then all the darkness of his wrong thoughts shall show up more  
clearly to his mental sight than the clarity of the sun does to his outward  
sight.'  
(Chaucer *Boece* III m.11, 24)
- (56) If God *ne* kepe the citee, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth  
if God not keep the city, in idelness watches he that it keeps  
'If God may not guard the city, he who does guard it, keeps watch in vain'  
(Chaucer *Melibee* 1304)
- (57) . . . ther bihoveth greet corage agains Accidie, lest that it *ne*  
there behoves great courage against Sloth lest that it not  
swolwe the soule by the synne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope.  
swallow the soul by the sin of sorrow or destroy it by despair  
'great strength is needed against Sloth lest it swallows up the soul through  
the sin of sorrow or destroys it through despair.'  
(Chaucer *Parson* 731)

In all these instances, then, the presence of unsupported *ne* can be explained as a case of negative concord, i.e. *ne* is induced by the (implicit) negative already present. The situation was thus similar to the use of supported *ne* in Old English and in Middle English in combination with another negative element in the clause.

The disappearance of *ne* precipitates the erosion of multiple negation. The next step in this process was not taken until the Modern English period, i.e. it was still normal in Middle English, when two or more indefinite pronouns or adverbs were present, for all of these to be negative rather than for the negative element to be attached only to the first indefinite in the clause (or expressed by *not* when present). Thus, Chaucer still wrote,

- (58) But *nevere* gronte he at no strook but oon  
'But never groaned he at no blow but one'  
(Chaucer *Monk* 2709)

where present-day English would prefer 'but he *never* groaned at *any* of the blows except one'. In Middle English the use of *any*, etc. was still confined to

implicit negative contexts (as defined above); it did not as a rule occur in explicit negative clauses. Therefore, where present-day English has *not . . . anything, not . . . ever*, etc., Middle English normally (and this usage persisted into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) had *nothing, never*, etc., as in (59).

- (59) He was despeyred; no thyng dorste he seye  
'He was in despair; nothing dared he say' (Chaucer *Franklin* 943)

### 3.5 Subordinate clauses

Traditionally a distinction is made between main and subordinate clauses. As shown in chapter 2, Old English had several elements (e.g. *þa, þonne, swa*) that could function either as an adverb or as a subordinating conjunction, so that often it was only the word order (but sometimes also the use of the unambiguously subordinating particle *þe*) that would signal whether a specific clause was main or subordinate. In early Middle English some of the Old English correlative constructions like *þa . . . þa, þonne . . . þonne*, 'then . . . when' and *swa . . . swa*, 'so . . . so' survived, but this was rapidly replaced by a system in which conjunctions were formally distinct from adverbs and word order no longer played an important role in signalling whether a clause was main or subordinate. Thus in early texts, we can still come across examples like (60) and (61).

- (60) & Ðat oþer dei þa he lai an slep in scip, þa þestrede þe  
and the other day when he lay in sleep in ship then darkened the  
dai ouer al landes  
day over all lands  
'and the next day, when he lay asleep in the boat, (then) it became dark  
everywhere in the country' (ChronE(Plummer) 1135.2)
- (61) þanne he com þenne he were bliþe  
when he came then they were glad  
'When he came, they were glad' (Havelok 778)

In (60), word order still plays a role, since there is inversion of subject and verb in the main clause but not in the subordinate clause. In (61), there is no such difference, although the conjunction and correlative adverb have the same form. In later texts, however, the correlative adverb was often dropped or one of the two conjunctives was replaced by one different in form. In Chaucer, for example, *tho* (from Old English *þa*) no longer functioned as a conjunction, but only as an adverb; the same is true, with one exception, for *þonne/þenne*. Normally, Chaucer used *whan* (*that*) (from Old English *hwanne*, an interrogative adverb) as the conjunction, with or without a correlative in the main clause. (62) exemplifies the former possibility.

- (62) Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf  
then care I not when I have lost my life  
'Then I don't mind if I lose my life' (Chaucer *Knight* 2257)

Likewise, *though/þeih/þah* could still function as either an adverb or a conjunction in early texts. An example of the former is given in (63).

- (63) Ich wat þah to soþe þ[et] ich schal bituhen ham neomen  
I know though to truth that I shall between them take  
deaðes wunde.  
death's wound  
'Yet I know for certain that amongst them I shall receive death's wound.'  
(Ancre(Corp-C) 105b.11)

But in Chaucer *though* had become almost exclusively a conjunction.

The development concerning the marking of subordinate clauses seems fairly clear then: in Old English subordination was strongly syntactically marked (by differences in word order and also by the use of the subjunctive), whereas their marking in Middle English, where the word order of all types of clauses developed towards strict SVO order and the subjunctive form fell out of use, is mainly lexical. The conjunctive phrases used in Old English (*for þam þe, after þam þe, ær þam þe*, etc.) became fossilized, their form was often reduced and their applicability was narrowed down (*for (that), after (that), ere (that)*) (see further also section 3.5.3).

As was said above, formally it is usually not difficult in Middle English to distinguish main from subordinate clauses. We also find coordinate clauses in Middle English which are conceptually subordinate, where modern English could only use the subordinate clause form. This also applies to Old English. In the medieval period, the written language often presented ideas paratactically where written present-day English would use subordination (hypotaxis). In Old and Middle English the written language appears to have been closer to the spoken language, which has always made heavier use of parataxis than of hypotaxis (cf. Phillipps 1966; Leith 1983: 112). It is only at the end of the Middle English period, with the development of a written standard, that the written language began to make more extensive use of complex structures, under the influence of both French and Latin prose styles (cf. Fisher 1977). Here follow some instances of such paratactic structures, where today we would prefer hypotactic ones:

- (64) and ek wondit so, And in his syd ware brokyne Ribys two.  
and also wounded so and in his side were broken ribs two  
'and also so wounded that two ribs were broken in his side.'  
(Lanc. of the Laik 2729)

- (65) Now, or I fynde a man thus trewe and stable,  
 And wol for love now before I find a man thus true and stable and will for love his deth so frely take,  
 I preye God let oure hedes nevere ake!  
 his death so freely take I pray God let our heads never ache  
 'Now, before I find a man so true and loyal, who will so nobly accept death out of love!'  
 (Chaucer *Legend* 703)

Another consequence of the proximity of written and spoken language was the high frequency of so-called anacolutha, i.e. sentences like (66) which are 'illogically' constructed from a purely formal point of view.

- (66) The reule of Seint Maure or of Seint Bencit – / By cause that it was the rule of St Maurus or of St Benedict because it was old and somdel streit / This ilke Monk leet olde thynges pace . . . old and somewhat strict this same monk let old things pass  
 (Chaucer *Gen. Prol.* 173)

In this example the first line seems intended to function as the syntactic object of *leet pace*, but it has been left dangling since a new object, *olde thynges*, is introduced later.

Likewise, we often come across constructions that contain elements which look pleonastic in modern written English, such as (67).

- (67) Thanne dame Prudence, whan that she saugh how that hir then Lady Prudence when that she saw how that her housbonde shoop hym for to wreken hym on his foes and to husband prepared himself for to avenge himself on his foes and to bigynne werre, she in ful humble wise, whan she saugh hir tyme, begin war she in ful humbe manner when she saw her time seide . . .  
 said  
 'Then lady Prudence, when she saw how her husband prepared himself to take revenge on his foes and to start a fight, (she) very humbly, when she saw an opportunity, said . . .'  
 (Chaucer *Melibee* 1050)

We have referred several times now to the use of the subordinator *pe* in Old English, which was a marker of relative clauses and of adverbial clauses (the latter usually in combinations like *for þam pe* 'because' and *mid þy pe* 'when'). In Middle English, *pe* came to be replaced by *þat*, which was already in use to mark complement clauses in Old English. It is not entirely clear how this development took place. Any explanation depends heavily on the syntactic status one assigns to *pe* in Old English. According to some linguists (e.g. Geoghegan 1975), *pe* must be interpreted as a marker of subordination, and not as a relative particle, as for instance Allen (1977) has suggested, following most traditional accounts (for a more detailed consideration of the various arguments involved see Fischer 1992a: 293 ff.). The possible development may

have been as follows: (i) due to the loss of case forms and grammatical gender, the neuter relative pronoun *þat* came to be the most frequently used form;<sup>2</sup> (ii) *þat* came to be used as an invariant form, replacing all other case forms, i.e. like the particle *þe* in Old English; (iii) *þat* replaced *þe* because (a) *þe* was phonologically rather weak, (b) *þe* also functioned as the new generalized definite article, (c) *þat* was already used as a complementizer in other subordinate clauses. The replacement of *þe* by *þat* may also explain why preposition stranding, which in Old English was only usual with *þe* relatives, spread to *þat* relatives in Middle English. Let us now turn to the relative clauses themselves and the changes that have occurred in them.

### 3.5.1 Relative clauses

In Middle English, the Old English relative system collapsed, due to the gradual loss of the particle *þe* and the replacement of the paradigm *se, seo, þæt* by indeclinable *that* (in the earliest period in the South, also by *þe*). In some early Middle English texts, remnants of the *se, seo, þæt* system are still found, often with analogical *þ-* rather than *s-*, but these are regular only in rewritings of Old English texts (cf. Allen 1977: 197 ff.), and are mainly Southern. In the Northern *Ormulum*, for instance, *þat* was the usual form. From the North, *þat* rapidly spread to the other dialects, and in the thirteenth century *þat* (also *þet*) was the rule everywhere. The only exceptions were South-Western and especially West Midlands texts, where Old English forms were preserved much longer due to the fact that the influence of the West Saxon 'Schriftsprache' was still strong in some of the scriptoria.

All this means that in the thirteenth century *that* stood practically alone as a relativizer. It was used in restrictive as well as non-restrictive clauses, with animate as well as inanimate antecedents. *That* was also used in Old English and early Middle English when the antecedent was a clause (cf. Mustanoja 1960: 190; this usage can still be found in early Modern English) but in this usage it was gradually replaced in early Middle English by *what* and in late Middle English by *which*. This was presumably part of the development in which *that* became confined to restrictive clauses. The beginnings of this latter development can be seen in Middle English, but it took place mainly in later periods (cf. Mustanoja 1960: 196–7).

<sup>2</sup> There are probably various reasons why the neuter *þæt* form became used most frequently. All non-human antecedents could take *þæt*, whereas human antecedents still had a choice between the masculine and feminine forms. Also *þæt* was phonologically more distinctive than the masculine and feminine forms and the alternative *þe* (see iii).

The use of *wh*-relatives (*whom*, *whose*, *what*, (*the*) *which* (*that*)) dates, it is true, from the beginning of the Middle English period, but they were very rare everywhere in the twelfth century, and rare enough in the thirteenth. *Which* was at first highly infrequent; *whom* and *whose* less so. They were more often found in non-restrictive clauses. *Whom* and *which* were generally preceded by a preposition (for this restriction in their use see also below). *Which* was found with both animate and inanimate antecedents, *whom* and *whose* mainly with animate ones. *Which* began to supplant *that* only in the fifteenth century. In the fourteenth century *that* remained the usual relative, especially in poetry; in the more formal prose *which* was somewhat more current. Chaucer, for instance, still used *that* in seventy-five per cent of all cases; in Caxton the use of *that* had been reduced to fifty per cent (see Mustanoja 1960: 197 ff.).

In Old English the *wh*-pronouns (*hwa* (neuter *hwæt*), *hwilc*) were not used as relative pronouns. The development of an interrogative pronoun into a relative pronoun is not an unusual process; it is well attested in a number of other Germanic and Romance languages. A point of contact is the use of interrogative pronouns in indirect questions such as *She asked who had kissed him*. Here the nature of *who* is still clearly interrogative because of the verb *ask*. But in sentences such as *He knew who did it* or *He wanted to know who did it*, the function of *who* comes very close to a so-called free relative (also called independent or headless relative), meaning 'the one who', or to a generalizing relative, meaning 'whoever'. In Old English the interrogative pronouns *hwa*, *hwæt* and *hwilc* – often accompanied by *swa*, which was lost in Middle English – were indeed used as free relatives next to the more usual *se þe*.

Another pattern which may have influenced the eventual development of *wh*-pronouns into relatives is the one in which the interrogative pronoun occurs in a reduced clause. (68) shows an example in Old English.

- (68) Ne meahte hire Iudas . . . / sweotole gecypan be ðam  
 nor could her Judas clearly make-known about the  
 sigebeame, / on hwylcne se hælend ahafen wære  
 victory-tree on which the saviour up-raised were  
 'Nor could Judas tell her clearly about the victorious tree, [tell her] on  
 which [tree] the Saviour was raised up' (El 859)

Here the clause starting with *on hwylcne* appears to be the complement of the verb *gecypan*, but this verb is not repeated. This makes another interpretation possible: the preceding NP, *sigebeame*, could be interpreted as an antecedent of *hwylcne*.

For the *wh*-word to develop from an independent or generalizing relative into a strict relative also requires the presence of an antecedent. The following example from Middle English shows how this could have come about:

- (69) hwam mai he luue teweliche hwa ne luues his broðer.  
 'whom can he love truly, who(ever) does not love his brother.'  
 (Wooing Lord 275.18)

Here *he* can be interpreted as the antecedent of *who*, since it precedes this generalising or free relative.

The *wh*-form did not become frequent until the fourteenth century. The earliest instances are found mainly in non-restrictive clauses (which may point to the important influence of ambiguities such as presented in (68)–(69) above, which all concern non-restrictive cases), and preceded by a preposition. It seems clear that the inability of the relative particle *that* to take a preposition in front of it (just like its sister-particle *þe* in Old English) contributed to the rise of the new *wh*-pronoun, which did allow a preposition. This may be one of the reasons why the non-prepositional, nominative form *who* lagged behind in its development into a strict relative pronoun. Another possible reason may be the fact that the generalizing relative was used far more often in subject position than in any other function, so that *who* was still too strongly generalizing in sense to become a mere relativizer. For more information on this lag of *who*, see Meier (1967) and Rydén (1983).

Changes also occurred in the two minor types of relative clauses discussed in section 2.5.1. As in Old English, the adverbial relative *ther(e)* (from *þær*) was used after an antecedent with locative meaning:

- (70) But I cam in þere & in othere places þere I wolde . . .  
 but I came in there and in other places there I would  
 'But I came in there and in other places where I wanted . . .'  
 (Mandev. 53.28)

But with the replacement of the demonstrative relative pronoun by the interrogative one, *there* was gradually also ousted by *where*. *There* was still the common form in early Middle English, while in late Middle English both *there* and *where* were common. The last instances of *there* date from the sixteenth century.

Zero relatives, as in (71) and (72), were most common in subject position in Middle English, as was the case in Old English.

- (71) Adam ben king and eue quen/ Of alle ðe ðinge [Ø] in werlde ben.  
 Adam are king and Eve queen of all the things in world are  
 'Adam and Eve are king and queen of all the things that are in the world.'  
 (Gen. & Ex. 296–7)
- (72) . . . I know no knyght in this contrey [Ø] is able to macche hym.  
 ' . . . I know no knight in this country [who] is able to match him.'  
 (Malory Works 377.35–6)

As in Old English, omission is heavily constrained. The finite verb of the relative clause is almost always a stative verb, usually the verb *to be* or a verb expressing existence in time or place. These zero-subject relative constructions therefore closely resemble the zero-type still acceptable in colloquial present-day English, which is introduced by *there is* or *it is*, as in *There is a woman wants to see you*.

In addition to zero-subject relative constructions we also begin to find in Middle English constructions in which the object relative pronoun has been left out, but these were not at all as frequent as in present-day English. The Middle English instances are interesting in that they were basically of two types. They often involved the verbs *clepen* 'call' or *callen* (cf. the use of *hatan/haten* in the zero-subject relative in Old English), as in (73).

- (73) Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,/ Beside a toun [θ] men clepen Baldeswelle.  
'From Norfolk was this Reeve I am telling you about, close to a town people call Baldeswelle' (Chaucer *Gen. Prolog.* 619)

Other examples usually contained possessive *have* or an equivalent verb, often in the idiom *by the faith I owe to God*, and were rather similar to zero-subject relatives with stative verbs; (74) is an example.

- (74) Sir, be þe faith [θ] i haue to yow . . . (Cursor Mundi 5145)

So it looks as if the earliest zero-object constructions were an extension of the (older) zero-subject constructions. It is only after the Middle English period that the object construction gained ground and began to appear with all kinds of verbs in the subordinate clause. It is possible that the rise of the zero-object relative is connected with the word order change, as e.g. Phillipps (1965) has suggested; perceptual mechanisms (cf. Bever and Langendoen 1972) may also have played a role.

A construction new in Middle English is the infinitival relative clause with a *wh*-form, as in (75).

- (75) She has no wight to whom to make hir mone.  
she has no creature to whom to make her moan  
'She has no one to whom she can complain.' (Chaucer *Man of Law* 656)

It appeared late in the period; no examples have been attested before the fourteenth century. In Old English a relative pronoun was not possible here: the *to*-infinitive by itself was used. The new construction presumably developed out of questioned infinitives, which also first appeared in Middle English but quite a bit earlier. Examples with bare infinitives, such as (76), are found in early Middle English.

- (76) ant nuste hwet seggen.  
and not-knew what say  
'and did not know what to say.' (St. Kath. (1) (Bod) 563)

Again we see here how a construction with a relative *wh*-pronoun could develop out of a similar use of *wh*-forms in indirect questions.

### 3.5.2 Complement clauses

Complement clauses are nominal in function. They occur as complements to a noun, an adjective or a verb, and can be both finite and non-finite. Their functions are the same as those of the NP in the higher clause, i.e. object of a verbal or adjectival predicate, in apposition to another NP, as in (77), and as a subject complement, (78).

- (77) And aske hym counseill how thou may/ Do ony thyng that may hir  
and ask him advice how you may do any thing that may her  
plese  
please  
'And ask him advice how you may do one thing that may please her'  
(RRose 2868)
- (78) In Cipre is the manere of lordes & all opere men all to eten on  
in Cyprus is the manner of lords and all other men all to eat on  
the erthe, for þei make dyches in the erthe . . . And the skyll  
the ground for they make ditches in the earth and the reason  
is for þei may be the more fressch for þat lond is meche more  
is for they may be the more fresh for that country is much more  
hottere þan it is here.  
hotter than it is here  
'In Cyprus it is usual for the lords and all other men to eat everything on  
the ground, for they make ditches in the earth . . . And the reason is that  
they [the food] may be the more fresh for [in] that country [it] is much  
hotter than it is here.'  
(Mandev. 17.29)

In present-day English a clause can appear as subject NP. There were some constructions in Middle English that could also be interpreted as having subject clauses, but their occurrence was rather restricted. The relevant cases feature impersonal verbs, as in (17), or comparable adjectival expressions, as in (79).

- (79) But bet is that a wyghtes tonge reste  
'But better is that a creature's tongue rests/remains silent'  
(Chaucer *Parliament* 514)

Moreover, such 'subject-clauses' in Middle English only rarely occurred in initial position and it may therefore be preferable to interpret them as complements to an adjective, as in (79), or to a noun or verb, as in (17).

A complement clause was normally introduced by *that* if it was a statement, but, as in present-day English, it was possible for *that* to be omitted. This phenomenon, however, seems to have been somewhat restricted in Middle English (but cf. Warner 1982: 169–70), as it also was in Old English. It is mainly found after *seyn*, *thinken*, *witen* and verbs with similar meanings, and performative verbs like *sweren*, etc., when the clause reports more or less directly the actual words spoken or thought.

The most frequent type of non-finite complement in Middle English was the infinitival construction. There had been many new developments within this group since the Old English period. First, there was a difference in infinitive marker: this could be zero (bare infinitive) or *to*, as in Old English, but the innovative form *for to* also appeared, and the use of *to* increased vastly. Other Middle English innovations concern the much wider use of the passive infinitive (also preceded by *to*, which is never found in Old English), the extension of constructions with a lexical subject, the introduction of the perfect infinitive, and the so-called split infinitive.

In Old English the bare infinitive was by far the most frequent of the infinitives. This situation was completely reversed in Middle English, where the *to*-infinitive became the most common form and the bare infinitive came to be restricted to an increasingly smaller number of verbs. There are several causes for this development. One may be the progressive phonological weakening of the infinitive marker *to*, which made it less meaningful, i.e. it started to grammaticalize to a 'mere' infinitive marker.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, it is very likely that *to* increased its territory because it became a useful sign of the infinitive form, to distinguish it from other forms of the verb. Due to the reduction and loss of inflections, the infinitival endings *-(i)an* and *-enne* for the bare and inflected infinitive respectively) could no longer serve that purpose. The main reason, however, why the *to*-infinitive increased so drastically is that infinitival constructions began to replace finite *that*-clauses (see Manabe 1989 and especially Los

<sup>3</sup> The exact status of *to* before the infinitive in Old English is not quite clear. Although the origin of *to* is probably that of a preposition, the *to*-infinitive in Old English clearly has verbal properties (cf. e.g. Fischer 1996b, Los 1999). It seems likely that in early Middle English *to* first weakened (grammaticalized) in its purpose meaning, which among other things occasioned the rise of *for to*. On the other hand there is evidence that full grammaticalization did not take place (as it did in Dutch and German), and that *to* as it were became semantically replenished. Evidence for this can be found in the fact that *for to* disappeared again at the end of our period, that split infinitives developed from early Middle English onward, and that *to* begins to function as a marker of indirectness in the new lexical subject constructions (more about this below). For a comparison of the development of *to* in English with that of *te* and *zu* in Dutch and German respectively, see Fischer (1997a).

1998). *To*-infinitives have more in common with *that*-clauses than bare infinitives because they share with *that*-clauses a time reference independent of that of the matrix verb predicate (see also below). In other words, *to*-infinitives did not *replace* bare infinitives; rather, they became more frequent proportionally. On the whole, the bare infinitive kept the position it had in Old English, except that in cases where verbs could select both bare and *to*-infinitives, the bare infinitives were often replaced by *-ing* forms (e.g. *to begin eat* becomes *to begin eating*), while the *to*-infinitive simply remained (*to begin to eat*).

The use of *to* and zero infinitive markers in verbal complementation was syntactically not entirely free in the Middle English period, though some linguists (e.g. Ohlander 1941, Kaartinen and Mustanoja 1958) have suggested so. For the form of the infinitive, a number of parameters are of importance. First, a general one. The presence or absence of an infinitive marker depended on the grammatical function the infinitive had within the clause, as has often been pointed out (cf. Kaartinen and Mustanoja 1958, Quirk and Svartvik 1970). Thus, variation might occur when the infinitive functioned as subject or object complement, but the (*for to*) infinitive was the rule after nouns and adjectives (as in Old English) and in adverbial function. When there was variation, which was especially the case in the complementation of monotransitive verbs, further factors played a role, such as the '(in)directness' of the relation between matrix verb and infinitival predicates (cf. Fischer 1995, 1996b). Thus, when the matrix verb and the infinitive shared the same tense domain (i.e. the activities expressed by the two predicates took place at the same time), the bare infinitive was the rule. This is especially clear after modals and verbs of direct perception; (80) is an example.

- (80) Ther saugh I pleye jugelours  
 there saw I play jugglers  
 'There I saw jugglers performing' (Chaucer *House of Fame* 1259)

When the relation is 'indirect', i.e. when the infinitival predicate has independent time reference, the *to*-infinitive occurs. In an example like (81), the *to*-infinitive clearly refers to some possible future event which is not part of the tense domain of the matrix verb (in present-day English this difference is more commonly expressed by the *-ing* form versus the *to*-infinitive).

- (81) How that the pope... / Bad hym to wedde another if hym leste  
 how that the pope asked him to marry another if him pleased  
 'How the Pope asked him to marry someone else if he wanted to'  
 (Chaucer *Clerk* 741)

Other differences that may be signalled by the use of the *to*-infinitive vs. the bare infinitive are indirect vs. direct perception, indirect vs. direct causation



and factuality vs. non-factuality (for more details and examples see Fischer 1995, 1996b, 1997b).

Finally, the physical distance between a matrix verb and its infinitive may also function as a factor in the choice between bare and *to*-infinitive; that is, infinitive marking by *to* seems to be preferred when the infinitive is separated from the matrix verb. This is particularly noticeable with infinitives used in coordination. In that case even modals may be followed by a second, coordinated *to*-infinitive, as shown in (82).

- (82) Graitli taght he him þe gin/ How he suld at þe wif  
promptly taught he him the scheme how he should with the woman  
bê-gin./ And thorw þe wijf to wyn þe man  
begin and through the woman to win the husband  
'Promptly he [the devil] taught him [the adder] the scheme, how he should  
begin with the woman and through the woman [to] win over the husband'  
(*Cursor Mundi*(Vsp) 741)

It is likely, however, (cf. Fischer 1992a: 323 f.) that even here the use of *to* is functional and meaningful. Finally, Warner (1982: 131–3) suggests that the fronting of some element within the infinitival construction may lead to increased infinitive marking (i.e. the use of *to*) for perceptual reasons.

A most interesting development in Middle English is the extension of infinitival constructions with a lexical subject (the so-called AcI, accusative with infinitive constructions), rather than the more usual PRO subject. We will look at this in more detail in chapter 7; at this point we will only give a brief sketch of the situation. In Old English, the only verbs that could take an infinitive with a lexically filled subject were causatives and verbs of physical perception. In Middle English, we see this possibility widening to certain object-control verbs (like *command*, *require*, *warn*, as shown in (83)) and later also to the so-called *verba declarandi et cogitandi* (e.g. *expect*, *believe*, etc.), as in (84)). Thus the following clause types were new in Middle English:

- (83) And whan he had used hit he ded of hys crowne and commaunded the  
crowne to be sett on the awter  
'And when he had used it he took off his crown and commanded the crown  
to be placed upon the altar' (Malory Works 908.11)
- (84) ... that namyth hym-self Paston and affermith hym vntrewely to be my  
cousyn  
'... who names himself Paston and affirms himself wrongfully to be my  
cousin' (Paston Letters 3.4)

Another new development is the reanalysis of a benefactive dative as an infinitival subject (later followed by the reanalysis of a benefactive *for* NP, whereby the preposition *for* became a complementizer), as in (85).

- (85) for hyt ys the custom of my contrey a knyght allweyes to kepe hys  
for it is the custom of my country a knight always to keep his  
wepyn with hym  
weapon with him  
'for it is the custom in my country that a knight always keeps his weapon  
with him' (Malory Works 83.25)

In (85) the NP *a knyght* functions more as the subject of the infinitive than as an NP dependent on *custom*. It is likely that the developments shown in (83)–(85) were connected, and that the spread of the passive infinitive also played a role here, in that it enabled the AcI to spread from direct perception verbs and causatives, to 'persuade' type verbs, as in (83), and later also to 'expect' verbs, as in (84). For more details we refer the reader to chapter 7.

The spread of the passive infinitive may, in turn, be related to the change in word order whereby objects ceased to occur in preverbal position. It is noteworthy, for instance, that a common Old English construction, the type *hit is to donne*, as in (86),

- (86) Eac is ðeos bisen to geðencenne  
also is this example to be-think  
'Also this example can/may/must be thought of' (Bo 23.52.2)

began to be replaced by a passive infinitive in Middle English, so that we get *it is to be done*, as in (87).

- (87) þey bep to be blamed eft þarfore  
'they are to be blamed later for-that' (Manning H5 (Hr 1) 1546)

At the same time, a construction which was not found in native Old English, viz. *he is to come*, began to become current in Middle English. The difference between the two constructions is that the first has a transitive verb (*do*), while the verb in the second, *come*, is intransitive. The first may have been transparent to speakers of Old English, a language with frequent preverbal objects, because the NP preceding the (verbal) infinitive in sentences like (86) functions not only as the subject of the matrix verb but also as the object of the infinitive, from which it also receives its thematic role. In other words, the relation between infinitive and NP is of both a semantic and a syntactic nature, whereas the relation of the NP to the existential verb *is*, is only weakly syntactic. However, this construction may have become opaque to speakers of Middle English: as preverbal objects became increasingly uncommon, speakers may have tended to interpret the NP–infinitive sequence as subject–verb. Passivisation of the infinitive solved this particular problem, since it would turn the original object NP *hit* into a subject NP. The change in object position and the passivization of *hit is to donne* also paved the way for the new *he*

is to come type, because confusion with the superficially similar *hit is to do* construction was now no longer possible (for more details see Klöpzig 1922 and Fischer 1992a: 336 ff.).

Similar (passive) developments took place in the *easy to please* construction. In late Middle English we occasionally come across examples like (88), with a passive infinitive; they become more frequent in early Modern English.

- (88) nothinge is more easye to be founde  
 nothing is more easy to be found  
 'nothing can be found more easily'  
 (Visser §1921; Ralph Robinson *Utopia* 33)

However, in this construction the passive infinitive never became the rule, presumably because, unlike in the construction in (87), the subject NP in (88) has a strong thematic subject-relation with the adjectival predicate.

Finally, a word on the perfect infinitive. Although Mustanoja (1960: 517) gives an example of the perfect infinitive in Old English from Alfred's translation of *Boethius*, the construction was extremely rare then and remained so in early Middle English (cf. Sanders 1915: 4; Miyabe 1956). Only from the fourteenth century onwards do we come across it with any frequency (cf. Mustanoja 1960: 518). In present-day English the perfect infinitive usually refers to an action that has taken place before the moment of speaking or before some other point of reference given in the clause. However, most of the Middle English examples do not concern an action in the past; most often the perfect infinitive expresses the non-realization of an action, i.e. it signals what is often called an 'irrealis'. Examples are (89) and (90).

- (89) Than if I nadde spoken . . . / Ye wolde han slayn youreself  
 then if I not-had spoken you would have slain yourself  
 anon?  
 at-once  
 'Then if I had not spoken, would you have killed yourself at once?'  
 (Chaucer *Troilus* IV 1233)
- (90) The worste kynde of infortune is this, / A man to han ben in  
 the worst kind of misfortune is this a man to have been in  
 prosperitee, / And it remembren whan it passed is.  
 prosperity and it remember when it passed is  
 'The worst kind of misfortune is this, for a man to have prospered and to  
 remember it when the time of prosperity has passed.'  
 (Chaucer *Troilus* III 1626)

This association of unreality and the perfect infinitive led to what Mustanoja (1960: 517) has called the 'peculiar' Middle English use of the perfect infinitive in sentences like (91).

- (91) And on hir bare knees adoun they falle/ And wolde have kist  
 and on their bare knees down they fell and would have kissed  
 his feet . . .  
 his feet  
 'They fell down on their bare knees and wanted to kiss his feet . . .'  
 (Chaucer *Knight* 1758)

Here the action expressed in the infinitive is simultaneous with that of the matrix verb, and present-day English would employ a present infinitive. The perfect infinitive is used in Middle English examples of this type in order to indicate that the action of 'kissing' did in the end not take place, as the further context of (91) indeed makes clear.

### 3.5.3 Adverbial clauses

In this section, we will highlight some new developments taking place in the area of adverbial clauses. A fuller description of the types of adverbial clauses, the various subordinators used, the order of the clauses and the mood typical for each type of subordinate clause can be found in Fischer (1992a: 343–64).

As noted above, the distinction between subordinate and main clauses was not always as clear in Old and Middle English as it is in the present-day language. One reason for this is the fact that the written language was still closer to the spoken language. Subordination or hypotaxis is not a prominent characteristic of spoken language, which is more heavily paratactic. This was still visible in Old English. A good number of the subordinating conjunctions were of the same form as adverbs (so that the clause introduced by them resembled a main clause). Thus we have the typical correlative constructions *þa . . . þa, nu . . . nu*, where the distinction between main and subordinate clause only became clear (and this not always) by differences in word order. The only clearly demarcated subordinate clause types in Old English were relative clauses introduced by *þe*, and conditional clauses introduced by *gif*. Most other subordinate clauses in Old English can actually be analysed as being a type of relative clause, since they are introduced by phrases such as *for þam þe, æfter þam þe*, etc., which consist of a preposition, a demonstrative pronoun and the relative particle.

In Middle English, the language began to develop more specific markers for each type of subordinate clause, and separate lexical items for subordinate and main clauses. Three general developments may be observed:

- (i) The Old English correlative pairs disappear; the conjunctions are distinguished from the adverbs. Thus, *þa . . . þa* becomes *when . . . then*,

and *nu* . . . *nu* becomes *now that* . . . *now*. At the same time inversion begins to disappear as a marker of the relation between main and subordinate clause.

- (ii) The old phrasal conjunctions are replaced by more explicit subordinators. We regularly see a process of grammaticalization here, whereby a preposition and a noun slowly develop into a conjunction. Thus, Old English *þe hwile þe* becomes *whilst* (with *whiles that* as an intermediate stage), and *by the cause that* develops into *because*.
- (iii) *That* begins to be used as a general indicator of subordination, used after original prepositions (*after that, for that, till that*), and adverbs (*so that, now that, sip that*). After nouns it is frequent too, but there it still functions as a relative pronoun (cf. the use of *þe* in Old English): *to the entente that, to that forward that*. *That* even occurs with (3) *if*, a conjunction that was already a distinctive subordinator in Old English.

Even though the subordinators began to be more recognizable, this development was not as far advanced yet in Middle English as it is today. It is not always immediately clear what type of subordinate clause we are dealing with. This is because the general subordinator *that* served as a conjunction in quite a number of clauses where today we would use more precisely delineated ones. Thus, *that* could be used to indicate a temporal or causal connection, as in (92) and (93) respectively, in addition to being used in final and consecutive clauses, as is still the case today.

- (92) þat Troilus [sic] in þe toile þis torfer beheld . . . / He lyght doun  
that Troilus in the battle this harm beheld he alighted doun  
full lyuely leuyt his horse, / And dressit to Dyamede . . .  
very quickly left his horse and set upon Diomedede  
'When Troilus saw this harm afflicted in the battle, . . . he alighted very  
quickly of his horse and set upon Diomedede . . .'  
(*Destr. Troy* 7435)
- (93) But that science is so fer us biforn, / We mowen nat . . . / It overtake,  
but that science is so far us before we can not it overtake  
it slit away so faste.  
it slips away so fast  
'But because science [i.e. alchemy] is so far beyond us, we cannot catch up  
with it, it slips away so fast'  
(Chaucer *Canon's Yeoman* 680)

Similarly, there were quite a few conjunctions that could be used in more than one type of clause, and often indeed they served for two types at the same time. Thus *for* is ambiguous between purpose and cause in (94); *till that* may combine final (or consecutive) and temporal aspects in (95); and *so (that)* can be both conditional and consecutive in (96).

- (94) And for his tale sholde seme the better, / Accordant to his wordes was his  
cheere . . .  
'And for his tale should seem the better, in accordance with his words were  
his manners'  
(Chaucer *Squire* 102)
- (95) And þanne þei schullen dyggen & mynen so strongly, till þat þei fynden the  
gates þat kyng Alisandre leet make . . .  
'And then they must dig and excavate so strongly, till that they find the gates  
that King Alexander had made'  
(*Mandev.* 178.19)
- (96) So he may fynde Goddes foysen there, / Of the remenant nedeth  
so he may find God's plenty there of the rest needs  
nat enquire.  
not enquire  
'So he may find God's plenty there, after the rest [he] need not enquire'  
(Chaucer *Miller* 3165)

A more complicated case is presented by examples such as (97a–c).

- (97) a. þer passes non bi þat place so proude in his armes / þat he  
there passes none by that place so glorious in his arms that he  
ne dynggez hym to depe with dynt of his honde . . .  
not beats him to death with blow of his hand  
'none however glorious in arms will pass by that place without being  
beaten to death by one blow of his hand . . .'  
(*Gawain* 2104)
- b. Was non of hem þat he ne gret . . .  
was none of them that he not wept  
'There was not one of them [such] that he did not weep . . .'  
(*Havelok* 2160)
- c. . . . wente neuere wye in þis world þoruþ þat wildernes / That  
went never man in this world through that wilderness that  
he ne was robbed . . .  
he not was robbed  
'never did any man in this world go through that wilderness without  
being robbed . . .'  
(*Piers Plowman* B.(Trin-C) xvii.101)

These examples seem to waver between a consecutive and a relative clause (a relative with a resumptive pronoun). There are good reasons to assume, however, that these clauses are in fact consecutive (cf. Diekstra 1984). Firstly, there are restrictions on resumptive pronouns in relative clauses which are not obeyed here (cf. Fischer 1992a: 345). Secondly, the main clause is formally distinct in other ways: it is always negative, the predicate is usually an existential verb, and it often contains (explicitly as in (97a), or implicitly as in (97b) and (97c)) a correlative element that strongly links it to the *that* clause.