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SUBJECT CLAUSES IN OLD ENGLISH:

DO THEY REALLY EXIST?*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In recent accounts of Old and Middle English syntax (e.g. Traugott 1992: 234; Fischer 1992: 312-3), the existence of complement clauses in subject function has been denied, basically on the grounds that, in these early periods, complement clauses failed to occur in sentence-initial position.[1] Accordingly, clauses which could on the basis of their Present-day English (PDE) counterparts be regarded as subjects have been provided with alternative analyses. In this paper, I will first raise my objections to the alternative analyses put forward in the literature. Secondly, I will show that there are indeed certain complement types in Old English (OE) which are best analysed as subjects. And, finally, I will argue that position is not a valid criterion for subjecthood in this early period. The examples which will be presented in the course of this discussion have been primarily drawn from a corpus of OE prose comprising ca. 100,000 words from King Alfred's *Cura Pastoralis* (*CP*) and Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* (*ÆLS*) (Méndez Naya 1995).[2] The *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts. Diachronic and Dialectal* (Rissanen *et al.* 1991) has also been used as a source for additional material.

Let us start by considering one example in which the subordinate clause could be analysed as a subject:

(1) Me þincþ þæt þu bæde   þinum bearnum fyrstes. to þi þæt
    to-me seems that you ask(ptsb) for your children time   so that

    þu gelyfdest. heora leasum gedwyldum.   (ÆLS V, 163)
    you believe   their   false   heresies

    "It seems to me that you have asked a respite for your children so that you
    may believe their lying heresies"[3]

When it comes to deciding the function of clauses such as the one in bold type in (1), which depends on a so-called impersonal verb, the position of the subordinate clause within the larger construction has been taken to be a crucial piece of evidence against its subject status. As Fischer and van der Leek put it (1983: 349), in the "assumption that the þæt-clause functions as subject, there is not a readily available explanation why such clauses never occur in initial (=canonical subject) position" [emphasis added]. There is also, in their opinion, a strong "theoretical reason for analysing [the þæt-clause] as object and not as subject," namely that SOV languages like OE, generally place clausal objects in the rightmost position. Similar statements are frequently found in the literature. Thus, for instance, Visser states that the probability of clauses depending on impersonal verbs "not being a causative complement is slight, *since [they are] never placed before the verb*" [emphasis added] (1963-73: §32).

Furthermore, the issue, that clauses could not be subjects in OE, is not restricted to clauses depending on impersonal verbs. Traugott (1992: 234ff), in her discussion of finite complements in OE, also denies subject status to clauses such as that in (2), which shows a NP in connection with the verb BEON, and (3), her example (165), which involves an AdjP + BEON.

(2) Forðon   hit is   ungecyndelicu ofermodgung ðæt se mon wilnige
    therefore it is   unnatural   presumption that the man want(sb)

    ðæt hiene his gelica   ondræde,   (CP 108/11)
    that him   his equal   fear (sb)

    "Therefore it is unnatural presumption for a man to wish to be feared by
    his equals"

(3) dyslic bið þæt hwa   woruldlice speda forhogie for manna
    ·foolish is that someone worldly   goods despise for of-men

    herunge
    praise   (ÆCHom I, 4·60.32)

"It is foolish to despise worldly goods in order to win the praise of men"

Again, the only explicit argument against a subject analysis for such sequences is that "unlike in PDE, noun clauses cannot occur in sentence-initial position" (Traugott 1992: 234). Alternatively, she claims that the clause in (2) may be regarded as a complement of a NP, while that in (3) "could be an oblique NP functioning as a stimulus" (Traugott 1992: 235; see also Hopper and Traugott 1993: 189).

Let us now focus our attention on the alternative analyses posited for (1)-(3), that is, clauses as objects of impersonal verbs, clauses as complements to nominal predicates and clauses as complements to adjectival predicates.

2. CLAUSES AS OBJECTS OF IMPERSONAL VERBS

In order to deny subjecthood to clauses depending on the so-called impersonal verbs, a further argument to that of position has been adduced, that is, that a construction such as that in (1) above already has a subject or, at least, a "pseudo-subject," the experiencer NP, *me*. In the opinion of some scholars (e.g., Elmer 1981: 8, 48; Allen 1986, 1995), oblique experiencers[4]of impersonal verbs are endowed with some subject properties, despite their accusative or dative marking.[5] They behave like subjects under certain syntactic processes (e.g., coordinate subject deletion or deletion of subjects of dependent infinitives, cf. Elmer 1981: 63; Allen 1986: 393) and they share at least one of the semantic properties of prototypical subjects in that they denote animate beings.[6] Moreover, they only fail to show one of the three main coding properties of subjects, namely nominative marking,[7] while they show already initial position in OE and can also trigger verb agreement in late Middle English (ME) and early Modern English, (see Butler 1977). Thus, if the experiencer is in fact the subject of the construction, the subordinate clause must serve, therefore, a different function, which is generally agreed to be that of object (see Visser 1963-73: §32; Fischer and van der Leek 1983: 348-9).[8] So far the argumentation is rather convincing. Nevertheless, it comes into conflict with the linguistic facts, since not all

structures showing an impersonal verb in construction with a clause have
experiencer NPs. Some of them lack this element. Alternatively, they may
show the pronoun *hit*, as in example (4) below (from Traugott 1992: 236,
her example [166]):

(4) **Hit** gedafenað þæt alleluia   sy gesungen   (*ÆCHom* II, 9.74.78)
    it   is-fitting   that Alleluiah   be sung

"It is fitting that Alleluiah should be sung"

However, such instances posit no problems, since *hit* can be seen as a
dummy subject with no cataphoric reference to the complement, whose only
function seems to be to keep the verb in the second position.[9] However,
problems do arise when, as in (5) below, an experiencer NP (*nanum ricum
cynincge*) and *hit* co-occur in the same clause. In such cases subject-assign-
ment is not straightforward. Which of the two elements is to be analysed as
the subject? Both of them?

(5) Nu cweðe we þæt **hit** ne gerist **nanum ricum**   cynincge þæt hi   ealle
    now say we   that it   not befits no   powerful king   that they all

    beon þeowe menn ðe him þenian sceolon.   (*ÆLS* XVII, 260)
    be   slave men REL him serve   must

    "then say we, that it becometh not any rich king, that they all should be
    slaves who serve him"

For these structures Elmer proposes the subject analysis for the pronoun *hit*,
while the "experiencer" NP is seen as the indirect object, something which is
not very consistent with his analysis of (4) and similar examples (1981:
51).[10] Allen (1995: 140 fn 49) states that, in a case such as (5), *hit* and the
clausal argument share the subject function, and thus explicitly admits that
"the propositional Theme can be assigned to the subject role" (1995: 140).
    Along with the different structures we have just seen, there are also cases
in which a so-called impersonal verb takes a clause as sole argument, thus
lacking both experiencer and *hit*. On such occasions, could we put forward
that the construction is subjectless? Or is the clause to be analysed as sub-
ject? The latter opinion is held by Molencki, who claims that the existence
of examples such as (6) "provides even stronger evidence for treating the ex-
traposed clause as the subject of the whole sentence" (1991b: 59).

(6) Betwux ðysum   gelamp   þæt of   life gewat   þære wudewan sunu.
    in the meantime happened that from life departed of-the widow   son
                                                       (*ÆLS* XVIII, 69)

"In the meantime it befell that the widow's son departed from life"

In addition to position, a further argument against subject analysis for
clauses depending on so-called impersonal verbs is found in Fischer and van
der Leek (1983). These authors show that there is evidence that, in some
cases at least, the clauses under study cannot be subjects, since they correlate
with pronouns in the oblique case. (7) below, from Fischer and van der Leek
(1983: 348, their [8]), illustrates one such example:[11]

(7) hwæt, we genog georne witan ðæt nanne mon(ACC) þæs(GEN) ne tweoþ
    well we enough readily know that to no man   of this   not doubt is

    þæt se sie strong on his mægene þe   mon gesihð   þæt
    that he is strong   in his strength whom one sees   that

    stronglic weorc wyrcð.   (*Bo*; Sedgefield 1899: 38)
    strongly   works perform

"Well, we know readily enough that for no one there is doubt about this,
that he is strong who can be seen to perform powerful works"

According to Fischer and van der Leek, (7) would be a genuine case of imper-
sonal or subjectless construction (type [i] in their terminology), with an
"experiencer" NP marked for the accusative case (*nanne mon*), a verb in the
3rd person singular (*tweoþ*) and a "cause" surfacing as a clause parallel to the
genitive pronoun *þæs*. The pattern of type (i) constructions is summarised in
(8) below:

(8) **Type (i) true impersonal or subjectless construction** (cf.
    Fischer and van der Leek 1983: 355)

"experiencer"	V	"cause"
dat/acc NP		gen/acc NP/PP
		clause

I do agree with Fischer and van der Leek in that in (7) the clause is indeed an
oblique object and not the subject, but what about (1) and similar examples,
which lack the oblique pronoun correferential with the clause? Or those ex-

amples which show a provisional *hit* or *þæt*, marked for the nominative, apparently in apposition with the clausal "cause," as in (4) and (5)?

It seems to me that to argue for the objecthood of all clauses depending on impersonal verbs on the evidence of (7) is not a convenient solution, particularly as it relies on the evidence of a most uncommon pattern in OE. Yet, the object analysis would be possible if the occurrence of impersonal verbs were restricted to structures of type (i). However, this is not the case. Along with type (i), another syntactic pattern is available in which the "cause" shows nominative marking. This is what Fischer and van der Leek term type (ii) or the "cause-subject" construction, which is illustrated in (9):[12]

(9) **Type (ii) "cause- subject" construction** (cf. Fischer and van der Leek 1983: 355)

"experiencer"	V	"cause"
dat/acc NP		nom NP
		clause

From the comparison of (8) and (9), it should become apparent that when the "cause" is conveyed by a clause, the construction is indeterminate between type (i) and type (ii). As Anderson puts it (1986: 175), "the distinction [between the two types BMN] is obliterated." This leads Denison (1990) to posit the existence of what he calls type (i/ii), which includes, not only cases such as that in (1), but also constructions in which the argument "cause" is conveyed by a morphologically ambiguous NP. This indeterminate construction is so frequent in the OE material that Denison claims that it "should be given due recognition in [its] own right" (1990: 119).

From what we have seen so far, it seems that we cannot determine the status of clauses depending on impersonal verbs in most cases, with the exception of patterns such as that in (7), unless we are willing to accept that the only reason for their not being subjects is that they fail to occur sentence-initially.

3. CLAUSES AS COMPLEMENTS TO NOMINAL PREDICATES

Let us now turn to the consideration of examples involving an NP and the verb BEON, as illustrated in (2), which is repeated here for convenience:

(2) Forðon hit is ungecyndelicu ofermodgung ðæt se mon wilnige ðæt
     therefore it is unnatural   presumption that the man want(sb) that

   hiene his gelica ondræde,   (*CP* 108/11)
   him   his equal fear (sb)

Traugott suggests that in such a construction the clause might be a complement of the noun "in the absence of evidence that the complement must be a subject" (1992: 235) (one would imagine that the evidence she is referring to is the fact that it fails to occur preverbally).

Let us now consider (10) below, which is a clear instance of noun complementation:

(10) [...] and forcearf his   mentles ænne læppan to tacne ðæt he his
          and cut   of-his coat   one lappet as sign that he of-him

    geweald ahte.
    power   had   (*CP* 196/21)

   "...and cut off a corner of his coat, as a sign of having had him in his power"

Although there is an obvious similarity between (2) and (10), namely both of them involve an NP and a clause, the construction in (10) differs from that in (2) in several respects. Firstly, the type of NP involved is not necessarily the same. Predicates taking nominal complementation (henceforth NomCOMP) are typically associated, both from a derivational and a semantic point of view, with transitive verbs with clausal complements. The noun TACN "sign, symbol, indication" is thus related to the verb TACNIAN "show, indicate." However, such a relationship does not necessarily hold in the case of nouns occurring in connection with the verb BEON (henceforth NP+ BEON) in examples such as (2). The noun OFERMODGUNG "pride, presumption" in (2) is indeed related to a verb, OFERMODGIAN "to be proud, arrogant." This verb, however, is intransitive.[13] Secondly, the crucial difference between (2) and (10) is that the *þæt*-clauses involved are complements at different levels. Whereas the subordinate clause in (2) is a complement at clause level, its predicate being NP (*ungecyndelicu ofermodgung*) + BEON, the embedded clause in (10) cannot be said to be part of the argument structure of the verb *forcearf*. It clearly functions as a complement within NP structure. The existence of examples similar to (10) in which the clausal complement of the noun TACN is parallel to a genitive

pronoun *Þæs*, as in (11) below, testifies to the status of the *Þæt*-clause as a complement to a noun:

(11) **Þæs**   is to tacne, Þæt he mid þone biscop in þæt foresprecenan wicum
of-that is as sign   that he by   the bishop in the aforesaid   office

for his wyrðnesse & for his geornfullnesse betweoh þa broðor wæs
for his integrity   & for his diligence   among the brothers was

hæfd.
had

                             (850-950. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 264)

"It is a sign of this, that he was well considered by the bishop among the brothers in the aforesaid office for his integrity and for his diligence"

This difference as regards levels of complementation becomes evident in cases of double embedding, such as the one reproduced in (12):

(12) Ðæt is to tacne þæt mon endebyrdlice ðone biscepdom   halde, **þæt he**
that is as sign that one orderly   the bishop's office hold   that he
, **hiene on godum weorcum geendige**.   (*CP* 52/22)
it   in good   works   end

"It is a proof of a bishop's holding his office well for him to end it with good works"

Here we cannot argue that the *Þæt*-clause in bold type is the complement of the noun TACN, since this predicate already has a complement, namely the clause *Þæt mon endebyrdlice ðone biscepdom halde*. It seems, rather, that it is an argument of the predicate *to tacne*...BEON, i.e. the subject. It is also worthy of note that in (12) the pronoun correlating with the clause (*Þæt*) is not marked for the genitive, as in (11) above, but shows nominative marking. This constitutes a further argument for the subject status of the clause.[14] Moreover, to analyse the first *Þæt*-clause as a complement to TACN and the second *Þæt*-clause as the subject of the construction also explains why they cannot be interchanged without variation in meaning.

4. CLAUSES AS COMPLEMENTS TO ADJECTIVAL PREDICATES

A structure similar to the one just discussed is illustrated in (3), repeated here for ease of reference, which shows an AdjP in connection with the verb BEON (henceforth AdjP+BEON):

(3) dyslic bið **þæt hwa**   **woruldlice speda**   **forhogie**   **for**
foolish is that   someone worldly   goods   despise   for

manna herunge.   (*ÆCHom* I, 4 60.32)
of-men praise.

For such cases, Traugott claims that "the clause could be an oblique NP functioning as a stimulus" (1992: 235). However, here the case for recognising two different structures (clauses as complements to adjectival predicates (henceforth AdjCOMP) and clauses as subjects of the predicate AdjP+BEON) is stronger than in the case of NP+BEON. Alongside the syntactic difference as regards levels of complementation, there is a remarkable semantic difference between the adjectives entering the two constructions. Thus, while adjectives in AdjCOMP normally refer to an animate—usually human—being and generally denote a mental activity or attitude on his/her part, those in the construction AdjP+BEON have the whole proposition in their scope and frequently involve an evaluation (see Elsness 1981: 292, 294; Quirk *et al.* 1985: §16.73). These two types of adjectives are labelled by Bolinger (1961: 377) "personal" and "impersonal" respectively. An "impersonal" adjective, DYSLIC "foolish" can be seen in example (3) above. In (13) we find a specimen of AdjCOMP. As can be seen, the adjective WYRÐE refers to *ic*, and not to the whole of the proposition. It is, then, a "personal" adjective if we use Bolinger's terms.

(13) Heo cwæð ic wat   geare þæt ic wel wyrðe eom. þæt min swura beo
she said I know verily that I well worthy be   that my neck be

geswenct mid swylcere untrumnysse.   (*ÆLS* XX, 54)
afflicted with such   malady

"She said, I know verily that I am well deserving that my neck should be afflicted with so great a malady"

Furthermore, as was the case with NomCOMP, where an instance of AdjCOMP shows a pronoun correlating with the clausal complement, this is inflected for the genitive case (see [14] below). By contrast, in the construction AdjP+BEON the pronoun is invariably nominative *hit* or *þæt*, as in (15):

(14) hwonne he ðæs   wyrðe sie   ðæt he hiene beswican mote.
     when   he of-that worthy be(sb) that he him   deceive may
                                                         (*CP* 226/11)

     "when he is fit to be deceived"

(15) **Hit** is swutol *þæt* heo wæs ungewemmed mæden   (*ÆLS* XX, 107)
     it   is evident that she was unspotted   virgin

     "It is evident that she was an unspotted virgin"

Given the abovementioned differences, I hope to have shown the convenience of positing the existence of two distinct structures, AdjCOMP on the one hand, and one involving AdjP+BEON, on the other, in which the clause is the subject of the whole construction.

5. CLAUSES DEPENDING ON PASSIVE MATRICES

In her discussion of finite complements in OE, Traugott does not mention one particular construction in which, from my point of view, the clause can be analysed as subject. Here I am referring to clauses depending on passive matrices, as illustrated in (16) below:

(16) Hit is awriten on Paules bocum ðæt **sio Godes lufu sie   geðyld**.
     it is written in Paul's books that the God's love be(sb) patience
     (*CP* 214/21)

     "It is written in Paul's books that the love of God is patience"

(16) can be viewed as the passive counterpart of (16a), an invented example:[15]

(16a) Paulus awrat ðæt sio Godes lufu sie geðyld.

Taking equivalence to NPs as a criterion for function, we should conclude that the subordinate clause in this invented example is the object of

AWRITAN, since it is equivalent to an accusative NP object, as becomes clear if we compare it to (17) below, in which AWRITAN takes an NP complement:

(17) Petrvs se apostol awrat **twegen pistolas**(ACC)
     Peter the apostle wrote two   apostolic letters
                                   (950-1050. Aelfric, *Letter to Sigeweard*, p. 56)

As is well known, in OE only accusative objects could be promoted to the subject function under passivisation (see Mitchell 1985: §748). Thus the passive counterpart of (17) would be (17a), in which the NP *twegen pistolas* becomes the subject.

(17a) Twegen pistolas wurdon/sindon awriten...

If the *þæt*-clause in (16a) is seen as equivalent to an accusative NP, I cannot think of any other plausible analysis for the embedded clause in (16) than that of subject.

6. PREVERBAL POSITION. A CRITERION FOR SUBJECT-HOOD IN OLD ENGLISH?

It seems then that the only reason why the clauses under discussion should not be regarded as subjects is that they fail to occur sentence-initially. In Hopper and Traugott's words, "the crucial evidence for the emergence of subject complements is the presence of complements in subject [i.e. initial $_{BMN}$] position" (1993: 189). In other words, clausal complements in final position cannot be regarded as subjects because they do not have preverbal counterparts.

We should now consider whether initial position is such a strong piece of evidence for subjecthood in OE. Is it evidence enough to deny subject status to sequences that never occur preverbally? It seems convenient to turn now to NP subjects and see whether they were typically preverbal in the period under study. Some statistics may be of use here. Bean (1983) reports that, in her material,[16] the percentage of preverbal subjects in main clauses amounts to 57.1% as opposed to 42.9% of post-verbal subjects, a figure, however, far from negligible (1983: 67, Table 4.2). Moreover, her two major patterns in main clauses, X'VS (in which X' is an adverbial) and SVX are found in almost the same proportion (30.4% vs. 31.8% respectively) (see Bean 1983: 67). In the light of this evidence, it seems, firstly, that we

cannot posit the existence of a canonical position for subjects in OE and, secondly, that initial position cannot even be considered the statistical prototype.

Example (18) is an illustration of pattern X'VS, with a postverbal subject.

(18) Her cuomon **twegen aldormen**(NOM) on Bretene. Cerdic & Cynric
     here came   two   noblemen   to Britain Cerdic & Cynric

     his sunu, mid v scipum.   (850-950. *Ango-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 10)
     his son   with 5 ships

     "In this year two noblemen came to Britain, Cerdic and Cynric, his son, with five ships"

Examples such as (18) can easily be accounted for by the so-called "verb second" order typical in main clauses. In OE subject-verb inversion is very common when a constituent, typically an adverbial, occurs in initial position. But what makes this postverbal NP a subject, if not its position in the clause? In this connection, the following quotation from Traugott is particularly enlightening:

> Subjectivalization in OE is a grammatical process by which one NP is assigned nominative case; it then determines the number in the verb. [...] In NE [New English] subjectivalization is a grammatical process by which one NP is assigned a particular position (usually the left-most NP slot in the sentence) and then determines the number in the verb. *The difference in the two characterizations is the result of changes in the case system and in word order that have occurred between OE and NE.* [emphasis added] (1972: 81)

In other words, subjects in OE are not assigned a specific position in the clause, as opposed to PDE. In OE, a NP can be considered the subject of its clause provided that it is marked for the nominative and triggers verb concord.[17] Now, if, as seen, preverbal position is not a necessary condition for NP subjects in OE, why should it be given such an emphasis when the candidate for subjecthood is a clause instead of a NP?

Some studies on OE word-order, such as Koopman (1996) show that inversion after an initial constituent is almost the rule with nominal subjects, while pronominal subjects do not necessarily undergo inversion.[18] The weight of the constituent in subject function may play a role in such a ten-

dency, since in OE heavy material tends to be shifted to the end of the sentence by the so-called principle of end-weight (see Stockwell 1977: 305ff.; Traugott 1992: 276). If the principle of end-weight has such an effect on NPs, its effect on subordinate clauses, which are, by definition, heavy material, should be more even powerful. It will be so strong as to obligatorily place clausal subjects in sentence-final position. In fact, the force of the principle of end-weight in OE is such that it even applies in one of the constructions for which extraposition is absolutely precluded in later periods, namely in the case of double embedding, of which (12) above is an illustration.

ME instances of subject clauses in initial position are also very rare (see Dekeyser 1984: 193; Fischer 1992: 313), though some examples have been found (see Warner 1982: 107-8). It is worth noting that some of these early examples, as (19) and (20), entail double embedding,[19] which seems to suggest that the tendency towards end-weight was not as strong in ME as it had been in the OE period. Particularly telling is example (19), since it shows exactly the same syntactic structure as (12), with one clause in subject function and another clause as complement of a nominal predicate, BITACNUNG "sign, symbol," the only difference with (12) being the position of the subject clause.

(19) Þet þis scheld naveð siden, is for bitacnunge þet his deciples, þe schulden stonden bi him and habben ibeon his siden, fluhen alle from him ant leafden him as fremede. (*Ancrene Wisse*, 513).

(20) And þat Crist touchide þis leprouse techiþ us now þat þe manhede of Crist was instrument to his godhede. (*Wycl.Ser.* i.90.3; from Warner 1982: 108).

In laying so much emphasis on preverbal position, scholars have applied a criterion which is valid only for PDE to earlier stages of English, disregarding "changes in the case system and in word order that have occurred between OE and NE," to use Traugott's expression.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the foregoing discussion I have dealt with the alternative analyses posited in the literature for clauses which could be considered subjects on the basis of their PDE counterparts. I have shown that there exist some clauses which are best analysed as subjects, namely those depending on passive matrices of verbs taking accusative objects. I have also shown that, pace Traugott, not

all clauses found in connection with nouns or adjectives should be analysed as instances of NomCOMP or AdjCOMP. In some cases the subject analysis seems preferable, given the type of noun or adjective involved and the difference in levels of complementation (clausal vs. phrasal). With clauses depending on "impersonal" verbs the analysis is, in most cases, problematic. Only a few of them can positively be shown not to be subjects (those with an oblique pronoun correlating with the clause). These are best analysed as objects. In most cases, however, conclusive evidence against their subject status is lacking. Finally, I have argued that preverbal position is not a valid criterion for subjecthood in OE, and therefore, the fact that clausal complements fail to occur pre-verbally cannot be taken as a key argument to deny their subject status. Thus, paraphrasing Traugott, we can conclude by saying that the clauses under discussion can be analysed as subjects "in the absence of evidence" that they could be something else. ✂℃

NOTES

1. It must be pointed out, however, that this is not a generalised opinion. In early studies on impersonals, such as van der Gaaf (1904) or Wahlén (1925), clauses depending on the so-called impersonal verbs are regarded as subjects. Such an analysis, also applied to structures containing AdjP BEON or NP BEON, is found in recent historical accounts on complementation, such as Warner (1982) or Molencki (1991a).

2. The editions used in this article are, for *CP*, Sweet's (EETS Original Series No. 45) and for *ÆLS*, Skeat's (EETS Original Series Nos. 76 and 82, reprinted in one volume in 1966). The Alfredian selection includes the whole of Cotton MS; citation will be made by page and line. As for *Lives of Saints*, my selection comprises the preface to the whole collection and the following *Lives: St. Alban, St. Apollinaris, Ash-Wednesday, St. Æthelthryth, On Auguries, St Basilius, St. Eugenia, St. Julian and his wife Bassilissa, From the Book of Kings, St. Maur, Memory of the Saints, Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, The Forty Soldiers,* and *St. Swithun.* Citation is by number of *Life* in Skeat's edition and line.

3. Translations of *CP* and *ÆLS* are Sweet's or Skeat's respectively. The remaining translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

4. As a general rule, experiencers are coded in the dative case. Occasionally, they may be marked for the accusative. E.g., *hine hyngreþ* 'he is hungry'.

5. In considering the experiencer NP as a pseudo-subject Elmer and Allen follow a line of thought which emerged with Keenan (1976), according to whom the function "subject" is conceived as a prototypical category defined by a series of properties (coding, behavioural and semantic), such that if one NP in a clause has a clear preponderance of subject properties, then it will be considered the subject of that clause.

6. In her 1995 monograph on so-called subjectless constructions, Allen further elaborates her claim about the subjecthood of some experiencer NPs. Evidence from coordinate subject deletion shows that the only experiencers which can always be regarded as subjects are those of verbs which only occur in genuine impersonal constructions of the type *oððæt him* (dat) *wlatode þære gewilnunge* (gen) "until there was nausea in him for the desire" (*ÆHom* 21 89, quoted from Allen 1995: 70) and those in construction with a clause, as in *þonne ðam menn* (dat) *ne lyst on his life nan god don* (inf. clause) "when the man does not wish to do any good in his life" (*ÆLS* XVI, 297, quoted from Allen 1995: 86) (see Allen 1995: 112-3). Experiencers of verbs such as LICIAN, which also take a nominative NP, as in *ðam wife þa word wel licodon* "those words pleased the woman well" (950-1050. *Beowulf,* p. 21), allow, in Allen's view, a double analysis as objects or as subjects (see Allen 1995: 114-5). .

7. Non-nominative subjects have been proved to exist in a number of languages. See Shibatani (1977) for Japanese and Korean; Klaiman (1980) for Bengali; Shridhar (1977) for Kannada; Andrews (1976), Thráinson (1980) and Maling (1980) for Icelandic.

8. Elmer, however, does not make it clear what the function of the clausal complement is. Apparently, he does not regard the clause as an object —he speaks of "sentential complements" in "intransitive constructions" (1981: 9).

9. Elmer views *it* as a "purely formal syntactic element," which is "semantically empty" (1981: 52-3). Traugott speaks of "an empty element without any anaphoric or cataphoric properties," although she also recognises that "when a sentential complement is involved, the syntactic analysis is not always so clear" (1992: 217). In my opinion, *hit* can be regarded as an anticipatory or provisional subject, with cataphoric reference to the postposed clause, which is the genuine subject of the construction.

10. In order to make amends for this inconsistency, Elmer proposes to analyse the experiencer as "a 'squishy subject', allowing it to take several values on a scale between pure subject and object status, without necessarily reducing it to either" (Elmer 1981: 51).

11. Fischer and van der Leek also adduce an example of a coordinate construction where an oblique pronoun in one conjunct parallels a clause in the second conjunct as evidence against the subject analysis (1983: 349, their example [9]). Parallel elements generally have the same case form.

and þæs   us ne scamað na,   ac us scamað swyþe þæt we
and of-that us not shames never but us shames very   that we

bote   aginnan swa swa bec   tæcan.
atonement begin   as   books teach
    (*Wulfstan*; Whitelock 1967: 91)

"and to us there is no shame at all in that, but there is shame to us to begin atonement as the books teach us"

12. It should be noted that impersonal verbs can also occur in the so-called "experiencer-subject" construction, in which the experiencer is marked for the nominative

case, as in *gif we ðonne scomiað ðæt we to uncuðum monnum suelc sprecen hu durre we ðonne to Gode suelc sprecan?* "If we are ashamed to speak like that to strangers, how dare we speak like that to God?" (*CP* 63/5). In this construction the clause is unambiguously an object.

13. It should be admitted, however, that in many cases a noun may enter both constructions. Such is the case of ÞEARF "need," which appears in NomCOMP in *Ac ðæs is ðearf ðæt mon ðone frefre þe on ðæm ofne asoden bið his iermða* (*CP* 184/2) "But there is need of this, that he who is melted in the furnace of his miseries be consoled," and in connection with NP+BEON in *Hit is ðearf ðæt sio hond sio ær geclænsod þe wille ðæt fenn of oðerre aðierran* (*CP* 74/22) "It is necessary for the hand to have been cleaned beforehand which is to wipe off the dirt from the other."

14. Provided that we assume that *þæt* could be used as an anticipatory subject. Otherwise, the clause could be seen as an appositive clause.

15. (16a) is a perfectly grammatical example, on the basis of instances such as *Eac se apostol Paulus awrat þæt he wæs gelæd oð þa ðriddan heofenan, & he ðær gehyrde ða digelan word ðe nan man sprecan ne mot.* "The apostle Paul also wrote that he had been taken to the third heaven and that there he heard the secret words that no one is allowed to utter" (Aelfric, *De Temporibus Anni,* p. 2).

16. Bean (1983) studies word order patterns in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.*

17. It must be admitted that such criteria do not apply for clauses, since they are not marked for case and they invariably trigger 3rd person singular concord.

18. Koopman (1996) shows that the order XVS, with the subject in postverbal position was particularly common for nominal subjects. In Koopman's material, which comprises *ÆCHom* I and II, *ÆLS* and *Or,* postverbal nominal subjects occur in 82% of all cases when X is an object, in 78% of cases if X is a PP and in 65% of all cases if X is an adverbial (*þa* excluded). By contrast, inversion with pronominal subjects takes place in 1% of cases if X=O; in 2% if X=PP and 42% of cases if X=adv.

19. Warner reports that instances of subject clauses in initial position are found "as subject of BE (with various predicates), BITOKENE, TECHE, TELLE" (1982; 198). The example he quotes, reproduced here as (20) is one of double embedding.

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"O SOLE MIO!"

THE SUN IN PROUST'S "SÉJOUR À VENISE"·

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Paul de Man (1979: 69) speaks of a "solar myth" in *A la recherche du temps perdu.*[1] Solar images are often involved in rhetorical displacements bearing on some of the novel's central subjects, such as love, desire, memory, and identity. The solar passage from Proust's novel I want to examine here is perhaps the most extraordinary of all, and the most complex. It comes at the end of the "Séjour à Venise."[2] This section is presented as the third stage in Marcel's "nearing total indifference with regard to Albertine" after her death (F4:1108; E3:637; this sentence is relegated to a footnote in the new Pléiade edition). Marcel's account of his visit to Venice has a complex three-dimensional existence. It is complicated both in the sequence of its episodes and in the layers of previous drafts that underlie each episode. It has that three-dimensional depth in space and time that Marcel says, in a passage from "Le temps retrouvé," he wants for the novel he is going to write. That passage (F4:608; E3:1087) uses a figure of planetary revolution to describe the way Marcel is related to his past self and to the various characters who have figured in his life.

The intricate structure of final text, variants, and drafts is also a good example of the usefulness a hypertext version of the *Recherche* would have. Even with its appendices of notes, variants, and drafts, the Pléiade edition preserves the illusion that the ideal for a printed book is a single line of words leading from the first word to the last, to be read in that order. The