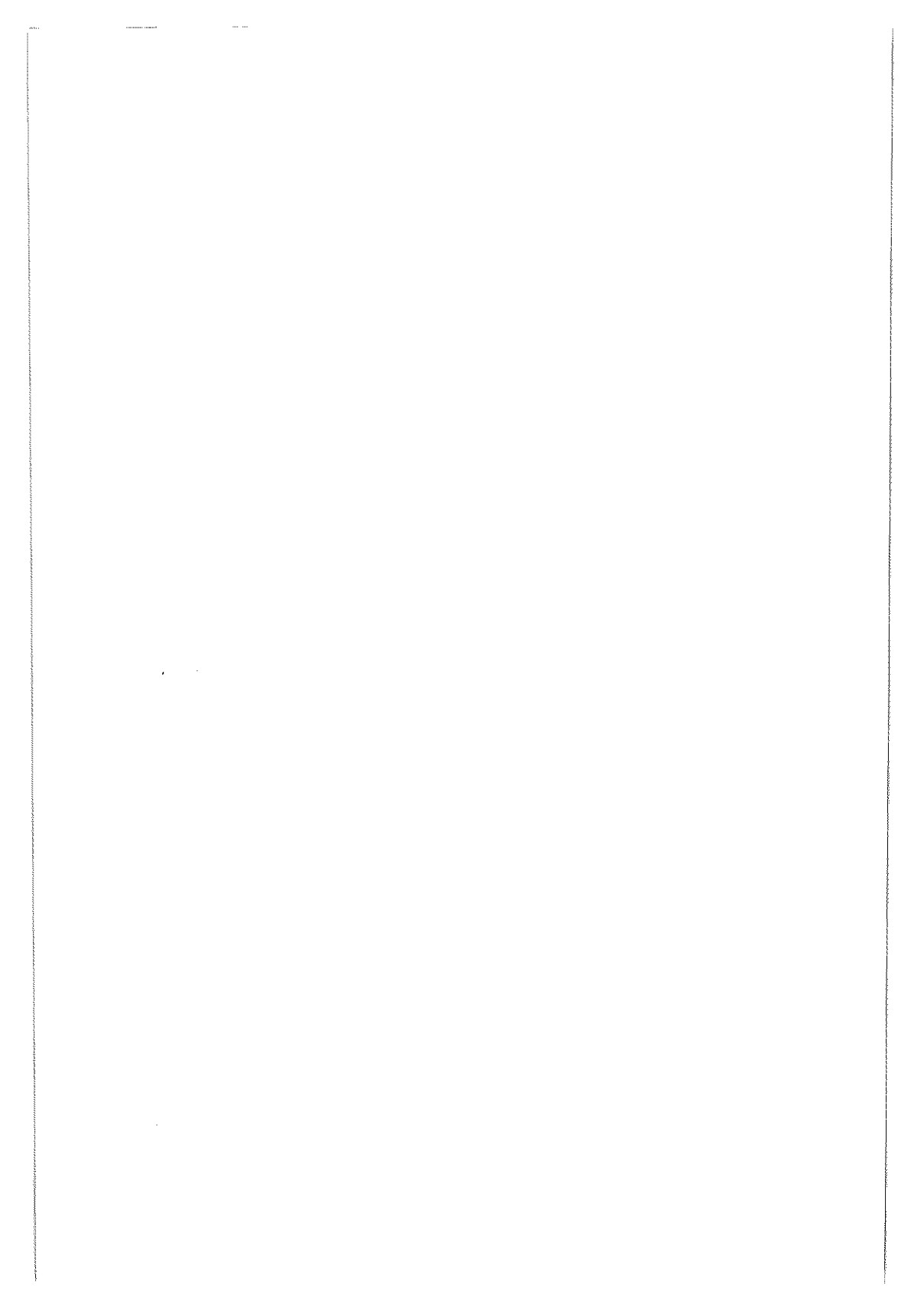*D. Antonio Miranda*

THE $_{(NE)}$VS$_{GE}$ ORDER AND THE SUBSEQUENT REDUCTION OF THE PLURAL INFLECTIONS OF THE VERB IN OE COMMANDS AND PROHIBITIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ANGLO-SAXON, NORTHUMBRIAN AND OLD MERCIAN VERSIONS OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW

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1. Introduction

To any novice of Old English the form of the verb *beon* in the sentence *'Ne beo ge na hogiende ymb þa morgelican neode ...'* may seem to be a grammatical mistake (number concord) as *ge* requires a plural verb and, accordingly, *beon* (if it is considered a present subjunctive) or *beoþ* (if imperative) should have been used instead. However, *beo* is grammatically correct and the loss of the final ending (*-n/-þ*) is due to the type of structure involved, namely VS order or V-1 type. Actually, the plural ending of a verb may be reduced when followed by *we/ge* operating as an overt grammatical subject. This phenomenon is briefly described in some of the OE grammars and primers consulted (Campbell, 1991; Mitchell, 1975 & 95; Brook, 1966; Quirk & Wrenn, 1958; Sweet, 1953 & 1959). Thus, the aim of our research was to study the appearance of exhortative forms without the endings *-n/-þ* and, for this reason, a corpus was collected from OE versions of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. Initially, only the expressions of prohibition that could fit the pattern $_{ne}VS_{ge}$ were the objective of our investigation, but we noticed later that they shared some features with commands, negative statements and negative questions, and that is why we decided to include them along with prohibitions, thus enhancing the scope of the work which can be stated as a threefold task, namely, 1) to analyse and classify the examples in the corpus, 2) to provide a general framework of the structures used in Old English as exponents of the functions 'commanding and forbidding', and 3) to find out if commands and prohibitions share the same features and other related phenomena and, to what extent, negative statements and non-dependent questions also share them.

2. Commands

Commands in Modern English can be expressed in a wide variety of ways depending on the attitude of the speaker towards the hearer, although the most common expression of command is usually associated with the 'subjectless imperative structure' (Traugott, 1972:72) or with a sentence 'with no overt grammatical subject, and whose verb is in the imperative mood' (Quirk et al., 1972: 386). So, to distinguish between a command and a statement, the following features can be taken into account: 1) the 'marked' use of the imperative mood as opposed to the 'unmarked' indicative mood, usual in statements, and 2) the omission of the subject, which is generally expressed in statements (Quirk et al.,1972: 72). But, this distinction does

not always prove to be clear-cut, as no one-to-one correlation exists between a linguistic function and the expression used to convey it.

Likewise, different syntactic expressions can be used in Old English for a command, though the imperative construction occurs most frequently. Before the examples illustrated in this paper are analysed, it may be useful to provide the different forms of the imperative. In the strong verbs, the singular (henceforth sing.) coincides with the stem (i.e., *nim-an* 'to take' ® *nim*), as in Modern English *Take!*, whereas in the weak verbs the inflection *-e/-í /-a* is usually added to the stem (i.e. *fremm-an* 'to perform' ® *freme*; *fed-an* 'to feed' ® *fed*; *luf-ian* 'to love' ® *lufa*). The plural (henceforth pl.) is always formed by adding the inflection *-aþ* to the stem of any strong or weak verb. However, these 'regular' forms may suffer some modification especially in anomalous verbs. As the imperative inflections allow us to distinguish between singular and plural, commands expressed by means of an imperative can be classified according to their number category. In the same way, sing. and pl. commands can be re-classified, by taking as a key factor the absence or the presence of the pronominal subject, into two groups: 1) those with an overt grammatical subject (VS) and 2) those with no-overt grammatical subject (V(S)), the latter being of higher frequency than the former.

2.1. Commands expressed by an imperative singular

In MnE commands, 2nd pers. pron. *you* is generally assumed to be the omitted subject of an imperative verb, as both (the pron. and the verb) share the same uninflected form for the sing. and the pl. ($S_{(you)}$V order). In Old English, however, 2nd pers. sing. pron. *þu* is the implied subject in sing. imperative commands ($VS_{(þu)}$), whereas 2nd pers. pl. pron. *ge* is understood to be the subject in the pl. ($VS_{(ge)}$). To illustrate the commands with no overt subject, we have chosen an example [1] containing one strong verb (*cuman* ® *cum*), three weak verbs (*be-cypan* ® *be-cyp*, *syllan* ® *syle* & *folgian* ® *folga*) and an anomalous one (*gan* ® *ga*).

[1]   *ga & be-cyp ... & syle hyt þerfum & cum & folga me*
        uade uende ... et da pauperibus et ueni sequere me (Mt., XIX, 21)

Now, let us examine some other examples, each one containing a strong verb (sv) or a weak verb (wv).

[2]   *Aris* (sv 1)
        surge (Mt., II, 20)

[3]   *aceorf hyne of & awurp fram þe* (sv 3)
        abscide eum et proice abs te (Mt., XVIII, 8)

[4]   *cum* (sv 4)

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ueni (Mt., IX, 18)

[5] *gyf him heora mede* (sv 5)
     et redde illis mercedem (Mt., XX, 17)

[6] *Gyf þu godes sunu sy cweð þ+ þas stanas to hlafe gewurðon* (sv 6)
     si filius dei es dic ut lapides isti panes fiant (Mt., IV, 3)

[7] *gang into þinum héd-clyfan* (sv 7)
     intra in cubiculum tuum (Mt., VI, 6)

[8] **Syle** *me on ánum disce iohannes heafod þæs fulluhteres* (wv I)
     da mihi in disco caput iohannis baptistae (Mt.,XIV, 8)

[9] *sete þine hand uppan hig* (wv II)
     inpone manum super eam (Mt., IX, 18)

Notice that *syle* [8], *sete* [9] (along with other cases, such as *freme, teme, tryme,* etc.) do not have the double medial consonant found in their respective infinitives *(syllan/sellan, settan, fremman, temman, trymman)*. As imperative sing., *syle/sele* is the regular form although *sylle/selle* may sometime occur (Campbell,1991: #326; Bosworth & Toller,1991: 861-2). Actually, no reliable explanation can be supplied for the occurrence of *sylle/ selle* unless we assume that it was written with 'double l' to represent a pronunciation on analogy with the infinitive, or it is simply a case of misspelling.

[10] **wurða** *þinne fæder & modor. &* **lufa** *þinne nehstan swa þe sylfne* (wv II)
     honora patrem et matrem et diliges proximum tuum sicut te-ipsum (Mt.,XIX, 19)

[11] *styr him betwx þe & him sylfum* (wv II)
     corripe eum inter té ipsum (Mt., XVIII, 15)

The regular ending of the imperative sing. *-e* is lost in *styr* [11] (¬ weak verb *styrian*, preterite *sterede/sterode*) whereas it is retained in the following examples taken from other sources:

> **Styre** *mid sticcan* (Lchdn:ii. 76, 25)
> *Ne* **stira** *þu, sunne, of þam stede* (Jos. 10, 12)

Example [11] illustrates a kind of 'fluctuation' in the form of the imperative sing. (Campbell, 1991: #752) and a similar phenomenon occurs in *becyp* [1] (*bechep* in WS2) (¬ class I weak verb *becypan* with 'long y') but this time it is a case of 'high vowel deletion' (Lass, 1994: 177) where the (inflectional) vowel *-e* drops after a heavy syllable. Accordingly, the reduction occurring in the synonym *bebyg* [11] (¬ class I weak verb *bycgan* with 'short y') and in *styr* (¬ class I(I) weak verb *styrian* with 'short y') cannot be considered a case of 'high vowel deletion'. Again, a 'regular' form with *-e* is attested in the following example:

> **Bige** us to þæs cynges þeowette
> eme nos in servitudinem regiam (Gen. 47, 19)

So, the form of the imperative sing. of weak verbs may fluctuate between a 'regular' form (which exhibits the corresponding endings *-e/-í/-a*) and an

'irregular' one (where the corresponding inflection is dropped as in *styr* or an un-necessary analogical inflection is added as in *bige*). Likely as it may be, a rather simplistic justification would be to take it as a 'lapsus calami' performed by a particular scribe but it would be rather likely to justify the variation as 'the prelude to change' (Lass, 1994: 243) as, chronologically, the Gospel was translated into the language of the late period (Late Old English), in which the inflections used to distinguish unambiguously between different forms (i.e., in the case of verbs, sing. vs plural, indicative vs imperative, 1st pers sing. vs 3rd pers sing, etc.) turn out to be unstable markers. Next, an example containing an anomalous verb (av).

[12]   *Dó þin swurd on hys scæpe* (av)
        conuerte gladium tuum in locum suum (Mt, XXVI, 52)

As mentioned above, commands in Old English can be expressed, though less frequently, by means of sing. imperative constructions where the overt subject *þu* always follows the verb ($VS_{þu}$ order). This type of command, in S_{you} V order or V-2, still survives in Modern English, as in *You be quiet!*, which can be directed to a sing./pl. subject. The OE unnecessary double-marked concord (pers. and number categories) resulting from the inclusion of the subject may result in a more 'emphatic' command, usually admonitory and appropriate to express irritation, as can be observed in the next examples.

[13]   *gang þu sceocca on-bæc* (WS1) (sv 7)
        ga on bæclinc þu wiþerwearde (M)
        uade satanas (Mt., IV, 10)

The placement of *on bæclinc* in M must not be taken as an order change.

[14]   *Beo þu onbugende þinum wiðerwinnan hraðe ...* (av)
        Esto consentiens auersario tuo cito (Mt., V, 25)

Upto this point, we have illustrated commands in the imperative with or without an overt subject. As a result of the experience gained from usage, sometimes enriched by grammatical learning, we tend to associate 'command' with 'imperative' because the latter is the most commonly used expression of the former. Furthermore, we have to unavoidedly associate 'imperative' with '2nd pers.' for just a one-to-one relation is implied. But, when a command is directed to a subject other than '2nd pers.', the imperative construction is not possible and the subjunctive must be employed as in [15]. Cf., also, the use of the subjunctive in the Latin version as well as in the Spanish text.

[15]   *he sylle hyre. hyra híwgedales bóc* (WS1) (wv I)
        sylle he hire. hyra hiwgeðales boc (WS2)
        selle hir boc freodomes (N)
        selle him boec þare áweorpnisse (M)

det illi libellum repudii (Mt., V, 31)

Despite the non-existence of contrast between '2nd pers./3rd pers.' in the imperative mood, it might be argued that [15] is a case of imperative with a 3rd pers. sing. as a subject on the grounds of the order appearing in WS2, and on the grounds of the omission of subject in the N & M versions. This hypothesis, however, must be rejected on the grounds of the verb form, namely *sylle, selle* (notice the double 'l'), which resembles a subjunctive form (see [23]) rather than an imperative (see [8]). Moreover, commands expressed by means of an imperative do not occur in SV order.

2.2. Commands expressed by an imperative plural

As with the singular, $VS_{(ge)}$ is a common order in Old English, whenever the 2nd pers. pl. is the subject. implied. From the occurrences found, the subjectless model also turns out to be the most frequent expression, and thus will be dealt with first.

[16]   *Cumað æfter me* (sv 4)
       uenite post me (Mt., IV, 19)
[17]   *Farað* (sv 6)
       ite (Mt., II, 8)
[18]   *gehyrað hyne* (WS) (wv I)
       ipsum audite (Mt., XVII, 5)
[19]   *& axiað geornlice be þam cilde* (wv II)
       et interrogate diligenter de puero (Mt., II, 8)
[20]   *Eornustlice beoð fulfremede* (WS1) (av)
       estote ergo uos perfecti (Mt., V, 48)
[21]   *Doþ dæd-bote* (av)
       paenitentiam agite (Mt., III, 2)

Next, we will deal with the overt-subject pl. imperative constructions (VS_{ge} order).

[22]   *Ge-hyre ge soþlice þæs sawendan bigspell* (WS1)
       gie forðon gehera/lysnas bisena ðæs sauende/sedere (N)
       ge forðon geherað gelicnisse þæs sawendes (M)
       Uos ergo audite parabolam seminantis (Mt., XIII, 18)

The reduction of the pl. ending of the verb (*-aþ* ® *-e*) may be attested, or just the dropping of the final consonant in case of monosyllabic forms, when a pron. of the 1st or 2nd pers. pl. follows the verb (Campbell, 1991: 296-7). In a broad sense, the same phenomenon may take place in the present indicative (*-aþ* ® *-e*) and in the present subjunctive (*-en* ® *-e*) under the same circumstances. This simplification can be explained by adducing the tendency of natural languages to elliminate unnecessary double markers (here, plurality is twice indicated: 1) by the inflection of the verb and 2) by the 'marked' pl. pron. *ge*). Accordingly, WS1 *Ge-hyre ge* has been analysed

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as an imperative pl. because it is expected to derive from *Ge-hyraþ ge* (see [18]), although it might also be analysed as a reduced subjunctive pl., deriving from *Ge-hyren ge*. We have opted for the first analysis, by relying on the non-reduced imperative forms used in the other versions (cf. the use of the ending *-as* in N), even when SV is employed. The evidence found in examples [27, 28], where the same verb occurs in the reduced and non-reduced forms can be used as a proof.

[23]   *selle ge him etan* (WS1) (wv1)
       seallas him ge/iuh eatta (N)
       sellaþ heom ge etan (M)
       date illis uos manducare (Mt., XIV, 16)

The subject of *seallas* (N)/*sellað* (M) follows its object (which also operates as the subject of the infinitive) in what may be interpreted as an interlinear translation from Latin. Before proceeding with the analysis, it must be remarked that no strong verb has been found to occur in VS_{ge} in the corpus and therefore no evidence of reduction has been found (Campbell, 1991: #730). However, anomalous verbs do appear in VS_{ge}.

[24]   *doþ ge him þ+ sylfe* (WS1) (av)
       gee doeð/wyrcas him ðius (N)
       ge doaþ heom þis (M)
       uos facite eis haec (Mt., VII, 12)
[25]   *beo gé gearwe* (WS1) (av)
       gé wosas gearua (N)
       ge ek beoþ gearwe(M)
       estote parati (Mt., XXIV, 44)
[26]   *ga gé on minne wíngeard* (WS1) (av)
       gaað & gie in win-geard (N)
       gæþ ge ek in win-geard (M)
       ite et uos in uineam (Mt., XIX, 4)
       Finally, preterite-present verb *witan* also occurs in Vs_{ge} ordering.
[27]   *Gewitað fram me ge þe worhton unrihtwysnesse* (WS1) (ppv)
       discedite a me qui operamini iniquitatem (Mt., VII, 23)
[28]   *Wite ge þ+ ...* (WS1) (ppv)
       ge wutan þ+ ... (N)
       wutas gie ... (M)
       scitis quia ... (Mt., XXVI, 2)

The subject of *gewitað* is the relative clause introduced by *ge þe* and perhaps no reduction is produced due to the insertion of *fram me*. In [25, 26] the loss or reduction of the pl. endings occurs in WS; otherwise, no loss or reduction takes place even though the subject follows the verb (cf. the Latin model, especially in [26] *'& gie'*, *'ge ek'* = 'et uos' = 'etiam uos' and in [28] with the use of the present indicative *'ge wutan'* = *'wutas gie'* = 'scitis').

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From the analysis and classification of the examples in the corpus, the structures used for commanding have been summarized in the following table.

COMMANDS		
LATIN	OLD ENGLISH (ANGLOSAXON GOSPELS)	
SINGULAR		
Uade ↘Subjectless Imperative à→ ↗ ↗	Subjectless Imperative	*Ga* [1]
Uade	Overt-Subject Imperative	*Gang þu* [13]
Det Subjectless Subjunctive	Overt-Subject Subjunctive	*He sylle* [15]
PLURAL		
Ite ↘ Subjectless Imperative → *Date* ↗	Subjectless Imperative ↗ Overt-Subject Imper./Subjunct. ↘	*Faraþ* [17] *Selle ge* [23]
Uos ergo audite . Overt-Subject Imperative →	Overt-Subject Imperative	*Ge-hyre ge* [22]

3. Prohibitions

In Modern English, prohibitions or negative commands can be expressed in a range of constructions depending upon the attitude of the speaker to the hearer(s), the most common being the resulting from the addition of an initial *do not (don't)* to the main verb as in *Don't smoke here!*. As with commands, the insertion of *you* (sometimes, *anybody* [Quirk et al., 1972: 405]) after the initial *don't* as in *Don't you do that!, Don't you dare touch that!, Don't anyone smoke here!* will add more emphasis to the prohibition.

Likewise, from the analysis of the examples in the corpus, prohibition can be expressed in Old English by means of different structures, which sometimes denote dialectal variations, such as follows: 1) negative sing. imperative constructions with an overt subject, 2) negative sing. subjunctive constructions with an overt subject, 3) negative pl. imperative constructions with no overt subject, 4) contracted/non-contracted negative plural imperative/subjunctive constructions with an overt subject. This variety of

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constructions, however, is not observed in Latin where prohibition is expressed by means of '*non* + simple future indicative', '*ne(que)/non* + (present) subjunctive', '*noli(te)* + infinitive', '*ne vellitis* + infinitive'. Notice that '*noli(te)* + infinitive' is the only negative imperative in Latin. W i t h respect to the form of the subjunctive in Old English, notice that the inflection -*e* (sing.)/-*en* (pl.) is added to the stem (cf. the imperative is described in 2) and with respect to order, SV is sometimes possible but the most frequently attested ordering is VS, which may cause the reduction or the loss of the pl. ending in the same way as described above.

3.1. Prohibitions expressed by a negative imperative singular and an overt subject

Prohibitions can be expressed by an imperative sing. preceded by *ne* and followed necessarily by 2nd pers. sing. pron. *þu* as an overt subject ($_{ne}$VS$_{þu}$ order). Notice that subjectless negative sing. imperative constructions $_{ne}$VS$_{(þu)}$. have not been found.

[29]   *ne do þu mann-slyht. ne do þu unriht-hæmed. ne stel þu. ne sege þu lese gewittnysse* (WS1)
       non homicidium facies non adulterabis non facies furtum non falsum testimonium dices (Mt., IX, 18)

The previous example (containing strong, weak and anomalous verbs) and those given below demonstrate that there is no restriction as to the kind of verb employed.

[30]   *ne ofsleh þu* (sv 6)
       non occides (Mt., V, 21)
[31]   *Ne únrihthæme ðu* (WS1) (wv I)
       non moechaberis (Mt., V, 27)
[32]   *& þam ðe [wylle] æt þé borgian ne wyrn þu him* (WS1) (wv I)
       et uolenti mutuari a té né auertaris (Mt., V, 42)
[33]   *& ne gelæd þu us on costnunge* (WS1) (wv I)
       & ne inlæd usih in costunge (N)
       & ne gelaet us gelaede in costungae (M) (gelætan = allow)
       et ne inducas nos in temtationem (Mt., VI, 13)

Notice the loss of the sing. ending -*e* in *wyrn* [32] (¬ class I weak verb *wyrn-an/wirn-an*) in the same way as in *styr* [11]. A different case is observed in [33] where the 'long æ' of the weak verb (*gelæd-an* ® *gelæd; inlæd-an* ® *inlæd; gelæt-an* ® *gelæt*) causes the dropping of the ending (cf. 'high vowel deletion').

[34]   *ne costna þu drihten þinne god* (wv II)
       non temtabis dominum deum tuum (Mt., IV, 7)
[35]   *Ne gæst þu* (WS1) (av)

ne of-gæstu (N)
ne gæs þu (M)
non exies (Mt., V, 26)

$_{ne}VS_{þu}$ is a common feature in [35] (cf. *of-gæstu* ® *of-gæst þu*) where the present indicative is used to describe a future action/prohibition.

3.2. Prohibitions expressed by a negative subjunctive singular and an overt subject

A sort of 'mild' prohibition can be expressed by means of a negative sing. subjunctive construction where *ne* is placed to the left of the verb and where the overt subject is not restricted to the 2nd pers. sing. nor is it either restricted to a personal pronoun ($_{ne}VS_{þu, he, man}$), as it is in the imperative.

[36] *ne forswere þú* (sv 6)
non periurabis (Mt., V, 33)

[37] *Ne ðu ne swere þurh þin heafod* (WS1) (sv 6)
ne ðerh heafod ðin suere ðu (N)
neque per caput tuum iuraueris (Mt., V, 36)

Forswere, swere are in the subjunctive mood (cf. the inflection used, viz. *-e*). $S_{þu\,ne}V$ order in (37, WS) can be explained by saying that it is the rule in a negative coordinate clause. Within the scope of negative commands, in [38, 39, 40, 41], 3rd pers. sing. subjunctive constructions may be used to express what may be termed as 'negative recommendation', a mixture of prohibition and advice. The overt grammatical subject is, obviously, a 3rd pers. sing. pron. *he* or a noun (phrase) *man(n)/mon(n)*. Some of the verb forms used in N & M, namely, *cerraþ, eft-gecerras, stigaþ, ofstiges* seem to lead us into a mis-concorded imperative form (sing. subject and pl. verb) when actually they are alternative forms of the 3rd pers. sing. present indicative (cf. the northern endings *-aþ, -as, -es* as opposed to the southern *-(e)þ*).

[38] *ne cyrre he þ+ ...* (wv I)
ne cerraþ he eft to nimene ... (N)
ne eft-gecerras to niomanne (M)
non reuertatur tollere ... (Mt., XXIV, 18)

[39] *ne gá he nyþyr þ+* (WS1) (av)
ne stigað he niðer to genimanne ... (N)
ne ofstiges genioma (M)
non descendat tollere (Mt., XXIV, 17)

[40] *ne blawe man byman* (WS1) (sv 7)
noli tuba canere (Mt., VI, 2)

[41] *ne ge-twæme nán man. þá ðe god gesomnode* (WS1) (wv I)
quod ergo deus coniunxit homo non separet (Mt., XIX., 6)

3.3. Prohibitions expressed by a negative imperative plural and no overt subject

Prohibitions can be expressed by means of a negative plural imperative ($_{ne}$VS$_{(ge)}$ order).

[42]   *Arísað & ne ondrædaþ eow* (WS1) (sv 1 & 7)
        surgite et nolite timere (Mt., XVII, 7)
[43]   *& ne cwepað betwx eow* (WS1) (sv 5)
        et ne uellitis dicere intra uos (Mt., III, 9)

3.4. Prohibitions expressed by an imperative/subjunctive plural and an overt subject

Prohibitions can be expressed by a negative pl. imperative or by a negative pl. subjunctive form and an overt subject, which always follows the verb. The imperative and subjunctive constructions have been grouped together because the verb form does not always allow us to distinguish reliably between them, especially when the plural inflection has been reduced or modified. Although no strong verb has been found in VS$_{ge}$ order, it seems that the same restriction does not exist when $_{ne}$VS$_{ge}$ order is involved [44, 48, 49, 50].

Along with the negative constructions where *ne* is placed to the left of the verb, in other cases an abbreviated *ne* (*n-*) may be incorporated to the beginning of such verbs as *habban, witan, willan, agan, beon/wesan* (Brook, 1966: 84, 95): *ne wille(n) ® nylle(n), nelle(n), ne wite® nite* (cf. Latin *non volo ® nolo* and MnE pronominals and adverbs *nobody, neither, nothing, none, never, nor,* etc.). The same verb may be found to occur in both equivalent expressions [44, 45, 46, 47]: 1) *ne* constructions (normal or un-contracted) and 2) expressions initiated by contracted form *nelle(n)*.

[44]   *& ne ondræde ge þa ðe eowyrne lichaman of-sleaþ* (WS1) (sv 7)
        et nolite timere eos qui occidunt corpus animam autem non possunt occidere (Mt., X, 28)
[45]   *nellen ge eow ondrædan* (WS1) (av)
        nolite timere (Mt., XIV, 27)
[46]   *Ne wene ge þ+ ic come sybbe on eorþan to sendanne* ...(WS1) (wv I)
        Nolite arbitrari quia uenerim mittere pacem in terram (Mt., X , 34)
[47]   *Nelle ge wénan þ+ ic come towurpan þa .æ.* (WS1) (av)
        Nolite putare quoniam ueni soluere legem (Mt., V, 17)

Most Latin prohibitions are expressed by means of the pl. imperative '*nolite*+ infinitive', translated into Old English by using different expressions derived from {contracted/non-contracted *ne*, reduced/non-reduced

subjunctive/imperative form + *ge*} where $_{ne}VS_{ge}$ is a common factor. The following examples are classified into two sub-groups depending upon whether a negative contraction is employed or not.

3.4.1. Non-contracted *ne* constructions

Taking into consideration the number of examples collected, this type of construction can be estimated to occur as frequently as the contracted construction.

[48] *ne **be-faraþ** ge israhela burga ærþan þe mannes sunu cumen* (WS1) (sv 6)
  *ne **be-fare** ge israele burgan ær þan þe mannes sunu cume* (WS2)
  *ne **cerras** ge burgas israhel wið he cyme sunu monnes* (N)
  *ne**ge-endigae/ ge-endigaþ** ge cæstre israheles ærþon cume sunu monnæs* (M)
  non con[sum]abitis ciuitates israhel donec ueniat filius hominis(Mt., X, 23)

As can be observed in (48, WS1), *be-faraþ* is a 'non-ambiguous' pl. imperative (or, is it a pl. present indicative denoting a future action?), whereas *be-fare* (SW2) may be a reduced pl. imperative, (¬ *be-faraþ*), a reduced pl. subjunctive form (¬ *be-faren*) or, at least hypothetically, a reduced pl. present indicative form, *be-faraþ* (= *be-faras, be-faran, be-faron* in N & M versions). The ambiguity produced by the occurrence of reduced forms made us classify the examples under the heading 'imperative/subjunctive constructions'.

[49] *ne **fare** ge út* (WS1) (sv 6)
  *ne **gæþ** ge ut* (N)
  ***nallas** gie geonga* (M)
  nolite exire (Mt., XXVI, 26)
[50] *ne **fare** ge on þeoda weg* (WS1) (sv 6)
  *in uoeg hædna/cynna ne **gaas** ge* (N)
  *in wæg ðeode [n]e **gæþ** ge* (M)
  in uiam gentium ne abieritis (Mt., X, 5)
[51] *& ne **nemne** gé eow fædyr ofer eorþan* (WS1) (wv I)
  et patrem nolite uocare uobis super terram (Mt., XXIII, 9)
[52] *ne **gelyfe** ge him* (WS1) (wv I)
  nolite credere (Mt., XXIV, 23)
[53] *þonne ge eow gebiddon ne **beo** gé swylce liceteras* (WS1) (av)
  et cum oratis non eritis sicut hypocritae (Mt., VI, 5)
[54] *& ne **ga** ge innan smaritana ceastre* (WS1) (av)
  et in ciuitates samaritanorum ne intraueritis (Mt., X, 5)

If the previous examples are compared to those numbered [23-29] no order change is observed in the negative transformation $VS_{ge⊗ne}VS_{ge}$. Notice, however, that examples [48, 49, 50] illustrate the occurrence of strong verbs in $_{ne}VS_{ge}$.

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3.4.2. Contracted *ne* constructions

As explained in 3.4., the contracted negative prohibitions initiated with *nelle(n)* appear to be the exclusive occurrence, excepting [58, 59].

[55]   *Nelle(n) ge eornostlice him ge-efenlæcan* (WS1,2)
       nallas ge ðonne wosa gelic him wat (N)
       ne sculon forþon gelice beon him (M)
       nolite ergo assimilari eis scit (Mt., VI, 8)
[56]   *nellon/nellen ge wesan swylce lease licceteras* (WS1,2)
       nællæ ge wosa sua legeras unrotae (N)
       ne beoþ ge swa swa licetteras unrote(M)
       nolite fieri sicut hypocritae tristes (Mt., VI, 16)
[57]   *nelle ge sprecan fela* (WS1)
       nallas ge feolo/monigfald gespreca (N)
       ne scule ge feola spreocan (M)
       nolite multum loqui (Mt., VI, 7)

Similarly, example [58] illustrates the occurrence of *næbbe* (contracted *ne hæbbe*).

[58]   *næbbe ge gold ne seolfer ne feoh on eowrum bigyrdlum* (WS1) (vw III)
       ne sculon ge agan góld ne sylfur ne feof in gyrdels eowrum (M)
       nolite possidere aurum neque argentum neque pecuniam in zonis uestris (Mt., X, 9)

Example [59] illustrates the use of a noun phrase as a subject of a subjunctive sentence expressing a negative recommendation or desire, where the contracted verb *nyte* (*ne wite*) is used. Notice also that the reduction may take place as in *ne scule ge* [57M] or it may not as in *ne sculon ge* [58M].

[59]   *nyte þín wynstre hwæt dó þin swyþre* (WS1) (ppv)
       nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua (Mt., VI, 3)

As with commands, the structures used for forbidding have been summarized in the following table.

NEGATIVE COMMANDS/PROHIBITIONS		
LATIN: *non, ne*	OLD ENGLISH (ANGLOSAXON GOSPELS):*ne*	
SINGULAR		
non occides ↘	↗Overt-Subject Imperative	Ne ofsleh þu [30]
non periurabis →Subjectless Indicative→	Overt-Subject Subjunctive	Ne forswere þu [36]
non exies ↗	↘Overt-Subject Indicative	Ne gæst þu [35]
ne inducas ↘	↗ Overt-Subject Imperative	Ne gelæd þu [33]
en auertaris →Subjectless Subjunctive→		Ne wyrn þu [32]
neque ... iuraueris ↗	↘ Overt-Subject Subjunctive	Ne þu ne swere [37]
noli tangere →*noli* + infinitive (*)	→Overt-Subject Imper/Subjunct	
homo non separet →Overt-Subject Subjunct.	Overt-Subject Subjunctive →	Ne ge-twæme nan man [4]

PLURAL		
non comsumabitis→Subjectless Indicative ↘		*Ne be-faraþ ge* [48]
	Overt-subject Imper/Subjunct.	
ne abieritis → Subjectless Subjunct. ↗		*Ne fare ge* [50]
ne uellitis dicere → *ne vellitis* + infinitive→Subjectless Imperative		*Ne cweþaþ* [43]
nolite timere ↘	↗ Subjectless Imperative	*Ne ondrædaþ* [42]
nolite exire → *nolite* + infinitive → Overt-subject Imper/Subjunct.		*Ne fare ge* [49]
nolite timere ↗	↘ *Nelle(n) ge*	*Nellen ge... ondrædan* [45]

4. Negative statements

Although in Modern English there is an opposition between the order occurring in (negative) statements and (negative) commands, in Old English the order $_{ne}$VS ordering, which is not necessarily emphatic (Mitchell, 1975:61-2), is shared by both. Like prohibitions, negative statements are made either by placing *ne* to the left of the verb form (present or preterite of indicative) or by a negative incorporation followed in either case by an overt subject. Due to this order, modifications in the pl. endings of the verb are likely to take place, even in strong verbs [64].

[63]   *ne gá gé on heofonan ríce* (av)
        non intrabitis in regnum caelorum (Mt., V, 20)
[64]   *ne geseoþ ge me heonon-forð* (WS1) (sv 5)
        ne seo ge me heonan-forð (WS2)
        non me uidebitis a modo (Mt., XXIII, 38)
[65]   *Elles næbbe gé méde mid eowrum fæder þe on heofenum ys* (wv III)
        eaðe mæg mearde **nabbas ge** mið fader iurre seðe in heafnas is
        elles/elcur **ge ne habbaþ** lean/mearde mid eower fæder þæne þe in heofunum
        is alio-quin mercedem non habetis apud patrem uestrum qui in caelis est
        (Mt., VI, 1)

The order S$_{ne}$V is, however, preferred in clauses as *Ic ne mæg swa fela gefon awa ic mæg gesyllan* but it is the only ordering in:

        1) reported speech as in *"on cwæþ : 'Hie ne wendon ...'"*
        2) negative coordinated clauses
[66]   *Ne gé in ne gaþ ne ge geþafiað þ+ oðre ingan* (av)
        uos enim non intratis nec intro-euntes sinitis intrare (Mt., XXIII, 13)
        3) subordinated clauses.
[67]   *þ+ ge ne sin ymbhydige eowre sawle hwæt ge eton* (WS1) (av)
        ne solliciti sitis animae uestrae quid manducetis (Mt., VI, 25)

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5. Questions

The $_{(ne)}$VS$_{ge}$ order and the subsequent reduction of the final ending of the verb are also common features in questions (confirmation, information and negative) as can be seen in the examples, which show no restriction as to the type of verb involved. Let us examine them in turn. Firstly, confirmation questions in VS$_{ge}$ order are illustrated below.

[68]   *Geseoþ ge eall þis ...* (sv5)
       Geseo ge eal þis
       uidetis haec omnia (Mt., XXIV, 2)
[69]   ***ongyte ge** ealle þas þing* (sv 5)
       ***ongetaþ ge** þas eall* (M)
       intellixistis haec omnia (Mt., XIII, 51)
[70]   & ***synt ge** gyt butan angyte* (av)
       et uos sine intellectu estis (Mt., XV, 16)

Next, information questions where the *hw-* word comes to the left of $_{(ne)}$VS$_{ge,we}$ order.

[71]   *Hwi **stande ge** her eallne dæg idele* (sv 6)
       quid hic statis tota die otiosi (Mt., XX, 6)
[72]   *hwæt **secge ge** þ+ ic si* (wv3)
       quem me esse dicitis (Mt., XVI, 15)
[73]   *Hwí ne **mihte we** hyne út-drifan* (ppv)
       quare nos non potuimus eiecere illum (Mt., XVII, 19)
       Finally, negative questions are included.
[74]   *ne **ongyte ge** þ+ eall þ+ on þone muþ gæþ* (sv 5)
       non intelligitis quia omne quod in ós intrat ... (Mt., XV, 17)'
[75]   *... ne **rædde gé** ...* (wv I)
       non legistis ... (Mt., XIX, 4)
[76]   *ne **mihton gé** nú wacian áne tid mid me* (ppv)
       non potuitis una hora uigilare mecum (Mt., XXVI, 40)

6. Conclusions

The core of this work has been to attest the cases where the plural inflection of the verb becomes reduced on the grounds of the order employed in exhortative expressions $_{(ne)}$VS$_{ge,we}$. To accomplish this task, the expressions of command and prohibition collected in the corpus have been analysed and classified as to ordering, mood and use of overt grammatical subject. But we had to face some difficulties when analysing the form of the verb, as the inflectional instability observed did not allow us to state whether the reduced verb (i.e., *selle ge*) is derived from an imperative (i.e. *sellaþ ge*) or from a subjunctive (i.e. *sellen ge*). As a result, we have been forced to

classify together the prohibitions that can be expressed in imperative or in subjunctive.

The optional reduction provides us with a clue of a bigger change going on in Late Old English, as the non-reduced forms of the verb also exhibit a great variation, which may be considered as an exponent of the inflectional instability already illustrated in notes [7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19] as well as in examples [11, 32, 36]. These changes, which lead to what Lass (1994: 243) calls 'the dissolution of Old English', constitute the seeds of Middle English, where the early texts are still 'characterized by the very extensive variation they show in their orthography' (Jones, 1989: 94). So, the inflectional reduction of verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc. will produce a simplification of the constructions available to express commands and prohibitions.

In the light of this dissolution process, we must interpret the phenomenon of plural ending reduction and the occurrence of alternative forms. In particular, attention must be payed to the following aspects:

1) $_{(ne)}VS_{ge,we}$ has been found to eventually cause the reduction/dropping of the plural ending of the verb. No restriction has been found in terms of tense or type of verb involved.

2) By analogy, the $_{(ne)}VS_{pt}$ order seems to cause the loss of the imperative singular inflection in some weak verbs [32]. Conversely, the imperative singular inflection used by weak verbs has been added to some strong verbs occurring in the same order [36, 37]. Both phenomena seem to be part of a process of regularization where unstressed vowels tend to become weak.

In addition to this, it seems necessary to comment on the ordering of exhortative expressions, as a prerequisite for the reduction concerned. In a general sense, Modern English is clearly an SVO/V-3 language since no unmarked declarative clause deviates from that order whereas Old English could be labelled SVO/V-2 or SOV/V-F since both orders are possible, the former being predominant in main clause declaratives and the latter in subordinate clauses. In the previous pages commands, prohibitions and questions have been analysed and labelled as constituting VS/V-1 ordering, $_{(ne)}V(S)$ in our notation. As this order deviates from what must be taken as base order, it may be considered to provide some 'markedness' to this construction which seems to have changed little over the centuries (cf., however, the use of the overt subject after the verb in Old English as opposed to MnE order, where the subject comes in front of the verb under the same 'emphatic' conditions).

3) From all this it might be deduced that the *marked* order in which commands, prohibitions and questions usually occur, constitutes independent

domains and thus should be treated separately.

4) Furthermore, the sequence $_{(ne)}$VS$_{(ge)}$ has been attested with all types of verbs but this common order may lead to ambiguity since the same structure can be used to express different linguistic functions as can be seen in the examples and hypothetical constructions below.

> *geseoþ ge eall þis* (question) [69]
> * *geseoþ ge ...* (command)
> * *hwæt geseoþ ge ...* (information question)
> *ne geseoþ ge me heonon-forþ* (negative statement) [64]
> * *ne geseoþ ge ...* (prohibition)
> * *ne geseoþ ge ...* (negative question)

5) Finally, dialectal variations have been observed in the word order: the sequence VS, which is the base order in WS, rarely occurs in N and M where SV is preferred following the Latin model (cf. overt subject 'uos' in [22, 23, 24]). In general terms, a clear parallelism is observed (cf. summary tables) between the Latin model and the OE version(s). The reason for this can be found in the desire to offer a word-for-word literal version, respecting in any case the original holy gospel. As a result from this, WS versions show a tendency for reduction which is not used in the other versions. Moreover, some constructions seem to be related to a specific version as can be summarised in the case of prohibitions: {contracted/non-contracted *ne*, reduced subjunctive/imperative form + *ge*} is preferred in WS; by way of contrast, in N {contracted/non-contracted *ne*, non-reduced imperative form + *ge*} is used as in *nellas/nælle(s)/nællæs/nallas* (= *nællaþ* = *nellaþ* = *ne willaþ*) whereas in M {non-contracted *ne*, non-reduced imperative form + *ge*} is used as in *ne wellaþ, ne forhtaþ ge, ne sculon, ne gæþ, ne beoþ*.

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NOTES

1. Let the evangelical exhortation be the motto of this paper dedicated to the memory of Prof. Lecocadio Martín, my close friend. May he rest in peace!

2. My personal thanks to Prof. de la Cruz who suggested me to study this grammatical issue, encouraged me to proceed further in the research and who has helped me at all times.

3. To label the word order we adopt Mitchell's terminology for 'word element', which implicitly serves a means of classification and analysis: S.V. [...], S....V., V.S. (Mitchell, 1964:19) or SV, S..V, VS (Mitchell, 1985:#3900). However, this labelling has been personalized in the following way: 1) by writing subindex *ne* to the left of V when a negative command or question is involved, 2) by using '(S)', $S_{(þu)}$, $S_{(ge)}$, etc., when the subject is omitted, and 3) by writing subindex *þu, we, ge, man*, etc. to the right of S as implementation of the overt grammatical subject. For a review of OE

ordering from different approaches see Denison (1993:25-55).

4. The examples constituting the corpus include two versions in West-Saxon (WS), an interlinear goss in Northumbrian (N) and one in Mercian (M), plus the original model in Latin. Most attention, however, has been devoted to the WS and Mercian versions and, as a rule, only the example in WS1 is shown unless a significant difference in the other version(s) are worth including and commenting on the purpose of our research. A close typographical transcription of the text is offered, respecting punctuations and accents which, despite their discretionary use, may sometimes provide an interpretative value. In addition, boldface types are used to mark the subject and the verb, and significant changes in the verb spelling are collected in the notes.

5. *The Gospel according to Saint Mathhew in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian and Old Mercian versions.* Edited for the Syndics of the University Press, by the Rev. Walter W. Skeat. 1887. Cambridge: at the University Press.

6. Cf. Jespersen's classification of what may be comprehensively termed 'requests' (1970: 467).

7. Other 'more tactful forms' for commands expressed in Modern English by using a question or a statement (Quirk et al, 1972: 402) will not be dealt in this paper.

8. Cf. *sel, sele*

9. Cf. *on-sett, gesette*

10. The doubling of originally Germanic single medial consonants was produced in West Germanic when preceded by a short vowel and followed by $< j >$ and, parallel to this process, vowels became fronted. Afterwards in Primitive OE the $< j >$ that had caused this change also disappeared. Hence, Grmc. *satjan* (Goth. *satjan*) ® *sættjan* ® *settan*; Grmc. *saljan* (Goth. *saljan*) ® *sælljan* ® *sellan/syllan*.

11. The Grmc. strong verbs ended in *-jan*, which formed the imperative sing. with the inflection *-i* ® *-e* in Old English, did not cause the doubling of the preceding consonant in West Germanic (Brook, 1966: 61).

12. Cf. *gém, þreata*

13. For the distinction between 'vocative' and 'imperative subject' cf. Jespersen (1970: 47) & Quirk et al. (1972: 403).

14. Cf. *uæs, wæs/beo*

15. Cf. the existence of 'a quite full paradigm' in Gothic imperative (2nd, 3rd sing., 2nd dual, 1-3 pl.) (Lass, 1994: 174).

16. Cf. *cumeð, cumas*

17. Cf. *fareð, gaes, gæþ*

18. Cf. *gehereð, geheras*

19. Cf. *doð, doas, dóeþ*

20. Cf. *sylle*

21. Cf. *Ge-wítoð*

22. Cf. the use of *never* in *Never speak to me like that again!* cf., also, other possible expressions of prohibition such as *You can't smoke here!* (*You are not allowed to smoke here, It is forbidden to smoke here* or if a statement is preferred), *You mustn't smoke here!* and *You won't smoke here!* along with those found in notices such as *No smoking*.

23. Cf. *costne, costa, costa*

24. Cf. *ðerh-suere, swer*

25. Notice that *forswerian* is a strong verb; however, *swerian* may behave as a strong verb (pret. *swor*) or as a weak verb (pret. *swerede*) according to its meaning.

26. Cf. *by*

27. From *Ælfric's Colloquy* (Brook, 1966: 106).

28. From *King Alfred's Preface to Gregory's Pastoral* (Brook, 1966: 98).

29. Mitchell (1964: 118) suggests that OE clauses beginning with *ond, ac* or *ne* should 'be separately classified since although coordinate in nature they have a strong tendency to show the SXV order characteristic of subordinates'.

30. Cf. *syon*

31. The (word) order of a language must be understood as it 'merely follows from the general, typical, *unmarked* order(s) found in the language at a particular time' (Denison, 1993: 27).

32. '... translations, usually from Latin, and it is not always possible to evaluate how much of the language used is a direct word-for-word translation rather than idiomatic English.' (Traugott, 1972: 20). '... much of it was translated from Latin or at least inspired by Latin modes'. (Traugott, 1972: 66).