

**CWEDAN, SECGAN AND CYÐAN:
ON MOOD SELECTION IN OLD ENGLISH DEPENDENT
STATEMENTS**

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Mood selection in Old English dependent statements has been and still is a much debated issue. Explanations of the indicative vs. subjunctive selection range from accounts which view the subjunctive as a mere structural marker of indirect speech, to mechanistic accounts, which claim that the mood in the complement clause is automatically triggered by the matrix predicate and semantic accounts, which maintain that choice of mood is related to the speaker's/reporter's commitment or lack of commitment to the truth of the embedded proposition. This paper will analyse mood selection in complements to CWEDAN, SECGAN and CYÐAN, the three most common predicates of reporting in Old English. The research is based on a corpus of Old English prose comprising ca. 100,000 words from King Alfred's *Cura Pastoralis* and Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*.*

1. Introduction

Mood selection, indicative vs. subjunctive, in Old English (henceforth OE) complements has been and still is a much debated issue. As regards dependent statements, the prevailing view is that the subjunctive originally denoted hear-say, that is, it was used when "the reporter wished to avoid commitment to the truth of what was reported or wished to cast doubt on it" (Traugott 1992, 240). However, most scholars seem to agree that the subjunctive soon became conventionalised as a mere structural

* The research which is here reported on has been funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education through its Dirección General de Investigación Científica y Técnica, grant number PB94-0619. This grant is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

marker of reported speech, and, as such, devoid of meaning, not only in OE, but in the early Germanic languages in general (see Mitchell 1985, #2016, who reports the opinions of Hotz 1882; Gorrell 1895; Behre 1934 and Traugott 1972).

As a marker of indirect speech, the subjunctive would be the expected mood in complements to all predicates of reporting. This, however, is not true in all cases, since some verbs of saying favour the indicative. This behaviour has led some scholars to suggest that the nature of the governing predicate is a determining factor in the choice of mood in dependent statements. Thus, a given predicate would subcategorise for an indicative or a subjunctive complement. Considered in this way, subjunctive forms would again be practically devoid of meaning, as they would appear “purely on the basis of a co-occurrence relationship” (Terrell & Hooper 1974, 484). Such a view, however, is nowadays regarded as simplistic by most scholars.¹ It seems, rather, that the factors favouring the selection of one mood over the other are various and manifold.

In this paper I shall be concerned with mood selection in complements to the three most common utterance predicates² in OE, *CWEDAN*, *SECGAN* and *CYÐAN*, in order to check whether the traditional assertion holds true, namely, that “among verbs of speaking *CWEDAN* seems to prefer the subjunctive, *CYÐAN* the indicative and *SECGAN* to occupy an intermediate position” (see Mitchell 1985, #2019).³ As we shall see, when studying choice of mood in dependent statements, cases indeed can be found in which the subjunctive is a mere structural marker of indirect speech. However, in order to account for the totality of cases, other factors such as the attitude of the speaker and/or the reporter towards the content of the embedded proposition, the tense of the matrix verb, the time reference of the complement and contextual factors should also be taken into consideration (see Mitchell 1985, #2024-34).

¹ See Mitchell (1985, #2020-2) for a summary of the weak points of this approach.

² Utterance predicates are those “describing a simple transfer of information. The complement represents the transferred information, and the CTP [complement-taking predicate *BMN*] describes the manner of transfer” (Noonan 1985, 110).

³ This statement rests heavily on Gorrell’s data (see Gorrell 1895, 353-363). However, as Mitchell suggests (1985, # 2018), Gorrell’s account is flawed in that he has not considered ambiguous forms as a separate category in his statistics. Therefore, his data are only approximations.

To date, the only thorough study on mood selection in complements to verbs of saying is Ogura (1991), which focuses on the choice of mood in complements to OE CWEDAN.⁴

The present research is based on a corpus of OE prose comprising ca. 100,000 words taken from Alfred's *Cura Pastoralis* (henceforth *CP*) and Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* (henceforth *ÆLS*).⁵ The two selected authors can be considered examples of early and late OE respectively. The comparison of both subcorpora may thus enable us to detect any ongoing change.

2. Indicative, subjunctive and neutralised forms

The OE verb distinguished three different moods by means of inflection, namely, indicative, subjunctive and imperative. Of these, the latter is of no concern to us here, since it fails to occur in embedded clauses. As to the indicative and the subjunctive, the distinction between these two moods was still relatively sharp, as illustrated in Table 1 below, which is based on Mitchell & Robinson (1986, #111 and 116). However, the indicative/subjunctive opposition was neutralised in a number of cases (in bold in the table), notably, the 1st p. sg. present of strong and weak verbs; the 2nd p. sg. preterite of strong verbs; and the 1st and 3rd p. sg. preterite of weak verbs.⁶

The inventory of neutralised forms, however, increases in the course of the OE period mainly due to the extension of the ending *-on* into the subjunctive (see Hogg 1992, 150). This extension resulted in the loss of the indicative vs. subjunctive contrast in the preterite

⁴ Ogura's research is based on the material of the Toronto Dictionary of Old English. For her purposes she investigated all the citation slips of CWEDAN and GECWEDAN.

⁵ The editions used in this research are, for *CP*, Sweet's (EETS Original Series No 45) and for *ÆLS*, Skeat's (EETS Original Series Nos 76 & 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 (*Pre*) and the following *Lives*: *St. Alban (Alb)*, *St. Apollinaris (Apo)*, *Ash-Wednesday (Ash)*, *St. Æthelthryth (Æth)*, *On Auguries (Aug)*, *St. Basilus (Bas)*, *St. Eugenia (Eu)*, *St. Julian and his wife Basilissa (Jul)*, *From the Book of Kings (Kin)*, *St. Maur (Mau)*, *Memory of the Saints (Mem)*, *Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ (Nat)*, *The Forty Soldiers (Sol)* and *St. Swithun (Swi)*. Citation is by *Life* and line.

⁶ The distinction between indicative and subjunctive was also blurred in the case of present indicative plural forms like *binde we*, *binde ge* (see Campbell 1959, #730).

plural.⁷ In my Alfredian corpus the subjunctive plural generally retains its original ending *-en*. Occasionally, however, the two MSS in which *CP* has been preserved show variations in the same form (see, e.g. *CP* 248/25, with the form *sceoldon* in the Cotton MS, as against *scolden* in the Hatton MS).⁸ In my Ælfrician selection, by contrast, I have found no *-en* forms. This suggests that, by the late OE period, *-on* had fully replaced *-en*.⁹ Given the regularity of the corpus under study, I consider that it is fully justified to regard preterite forms in *-on* as neutralised and *-en* forms as subjunctives.

(a) STRONG VERBS: PRESENT			(b) WEAK VERBS: PRESENT		
	IND	SUBJ		IND	SUBJ
1	beode	beode	1	fremme	fremme
2	bietst	beode	2	fremest	fremme
3	biett	beode	3	fremeð	fremme
PL.	beodað	beoden	PL.	fremmað	fremmen
PRETERITE			PRETERITE		
	IND	SUBJ		IND	SUBJ
1	bead	bude	1	fremede	fremede
2	bude	bude	2	fremedest	fremede
3	bead	bude	3	fremede	fremede
PL.	budon	buden	PL.	fremedon	fremeden

Table 1

⁷ On the coalescence of indicative and subjunctive under the indicative, see Visser (1963-73, #836) and Traugott (1972, 98). The latter emphasises that the direction of this neutralisation is not a language-specific property of English but rather a universal tendency. The extension of indicative forms into the subjunctive affected not only the preterite plural endings; some scholars argue that the second person ending *-est* was also extended into the subjunctive of weak verbs in the late West Saxon period (see Campbell 1959, #752; Mitchell 1985, #22). Accordingly, Ogawa (1989, 149 fn 1) includes the 2nd p. sg. pret. of weak verbs among ambiguous forms. Mustanoja (1960, 452), by contrast, says that the difference between *-est* for the indicative and *-e* for the subjunctive was maintained as long as the two forms remained in use.

⁸ In this respect, see also Sweet's introduction to his edition of *Cura Pastoralis* (I, xxxv).

⁹ Ogawa (1991, 83 fn 7) reports the dominance of *-en* forms in dependent desires in Alfred's translation of *Orosius*, as opposed to the clear prevalence of *-on* (occasionally *-an*) endings in the same contexts in later prose. In the whole of *ÆLS*, only one *-en* form in dependent desires was recorded by Ogawa.

3. Choice of mood in complements to CWEDAN, SECGAN and CYÐAN

3.1 CWEDAN

It is traditionally acknowledged that CWEDAN triggers the subjunctive in the complement clause. As Gorrell puts it, "CWEDAN is the most generally used of verbs of direct utterance and the most consistent in calling for the subjunctive" (1895, 353). In fact, Ogura's figures (1991, 394, table 2) support this statement. In her data the proportion of the subjunctive mood in indirect speech after CWEDAN amounts to 45,7% in the prose and 50% in the poetry, while the indicative is only found in 11.4% in the prose and 3.4% in the poetry. However, both Gorrell and Ogura note that the use of the indicative in complements to this predicate increases in the course of time (see Gorrell 1895, 355; Ogura 1991, 397). This tendency is also apparent in my selection of texts. Table 2 below summarises mood selection in complements to CWEDAN.¹⁰

MOOD	CP	ÆLS	Total
indicative	-	13 (14%)	13 (8.6%)
subjunctive	32 (56.2%)	24 (25.8%)	56 (37.4%)
neutralised	25 (43.8%)	56 (60.2%)	81 (54%)
TOTAL	57	93	150

Table 2

No examples of indicative complements were recorded in CP; therefore, it seems that the 25 instances of neutralised forms in the Alfredian

¹⁰ My percentages are similar to those given by Ogura in her table 5 (1991, 398). Ogura's figures are the following: CP: indicative forms 3.3%; subjunctive forms 63.3%; neutralised forms 33.3%. ÆLS: indicative forms 6.2%; subjunctive forms 35.6%; neutralised forms 58.1%. The slight dissimilarity between my data and Ogura's should be put down precisely to the analysis of *-on* forms. As Ogura notes (1991, 398 fn 6), "the plural indicative ending *-on*, the plural subjunctive ending *-en* and the original infinitive ending *-an* can be alternative to each other, especially in glosses and IOE. Figures [...] are changeable according to the principle each person follows. I classify *-en* and *-an* as subjunctive, but *-on* as ambiguous, except when it seems undoubtedly indicative from the context." I have regarded preterite forms in *-on* as neutralised on all occasions and the odd forms in *-an* I have also counted as ambiguous.

selection could reasonably be interpreted as subjunctive.¹¹ The proportion of subjunctive complements in *ÆLS* decreases, although this mood still prevails over the indicative.

A close scrutiny of the corpus examples shows that in both subcorpora the subjunctive after *CWEDAN* is regularly used to mark a statement as reported. The subjunctive occurs even when the speaker is God or a saint, as illustrated in (1) and (2) respectively. It seems, then, clear that by using the subjunctive the reporter is casting no doubt on the truth of the statement.

- (1) *ÆLS* (Kin 28) *be þysum dauide cwæð se ælmihtiga wealdend. þæt he*
about this David said the Almighty Ruler that he
hine gecure þus cweðende.
him choosePTSB thus saying

- (2) *CP* 156/7 *Eac wæs gesewen on ðæm wage atifred ealla ða heargas*
also was seen on the wall painted all the idols
Israhela folces & eac sio gidsung þe sanctus Paulus
of-Israelis of-people also the cupidity REL Saint Paul
cwæð ðæt wære hearga & idelnesse gefera.
said that wasSB of-idols & vanity companion

In *Ælfric*, the subjunctive gives way to the indicative in 13 cases. 10 out of these 13 examples convey a ‘universal truth’, that is, a proposition with universal validity (see Traugott 1992, 241). In the corpus under study, these universal truths are generally statements about christian beliefs, and the authorities are the Gospels, the Holy Scriptures, or even God himself. These statements are, therefore, beyond doubt, and the reporter is fully committed to their truth. This type is illustrated in (3) below:

¹¹ According to Gorrell (1895, 354), the only clear example of an indicative after *CWEDAN* in *CP* is to be found in 106/8 *Ic cwæð ðæt æghwælc mon wære oðrum gelic accened, ac sio ungelicnes hiera earnunga hie tihð sume behindan sume & hiera scylda hie ðær gehabbað.* “I said that all men were born alike, but some are kept behind others by the difference in their merits, and their sins keep them there.” In my opinion, it is not clear whether the *ac*-clause is coordinated to the *ðæt*-clause or to the matrix; note also the difference in tense marking. Gorrell attributes the use of the indicative in this example “to the fact that the clause in which it is contained is separated from the governing verb by a preceding clause; hence the subordinating force of the main verb has been much weakened and the construction approaches direct narration” (1895, 354).

- (3) *ÆLS* (Aug 185) He *cwæð* on his godspelle. þæt buton godes dihte.
he said in his gospel that without God's command
furðon an fugel ne befylð on deaðe.
not even a bird not fallsIND in death

It is rather striking, however, that in the Alfredian selection comparable statements about religious doctrine —with St. Paul, King Solomon, the Holy Scriptures or *sio godunde stefn* "the divine voice" as authorities— are coded by means of the subjunctive, as seen in (2) above, which seems to suggest that in the Alfredian corpus the subjunctive mood after CWĒÐAN is lexically selected.¹² In the three remaining examples, the selection of the indicative can be accounted for by appealing to one of the following factors:

(i) the indicative is associated with an event which has effectively taken place, and, therefore, upon whose truth there cannot be the least doubt, as in (4) below:

- (4) *ÆLS* (Kin 356) Ða cyddon ða cnihtas þam cynincge þæt. and he
then told the servants to-the king that and he
cwæð to andsware. þæt hit wæs ær swa gewitegod.
said as answer that it wasIND before so prophesied.

(ii) the indicative is associated with direct report, that is, with those cases in which there is identity between the speaker and the reporter (see Molencki 1991, 81; Traugott 1992, 241). In (5) below and *ÆLS* (Aug 260), the speaker is the homilist and the content of the embedded proposition is related to christian doctrine. These instances, then, bear a similarity to 'universal truths'. Moreover, the presence of the expression *to soðum* "in truth, as a truth" shows the speaker's commitment to the truth of the complement. In other words, the speaker's attitude towards the truth of the proposition may itself have played some role in the selection of the indicative.

¹² Gorrell accounts for the few instances of indicative complements after CWĒÐAN as follows: "Two reasons may be given for the use of this mood; the reference is to well-known biblical facts [i.e., statements which, in Anglo-Saxon times, would have been regarded as 'universal truths' ^{BMN}], and the time of writing is the late Anglo-Saxon period when there was a decided tendency to pass over to the indicative. *We should undoubtedly have found the subjunctive in Cura Past.*" (1895, 354) [emphasis added].

- (5) *ÆLS* (Kin 476) ac we *cwædað* to soðum se þe synnum gehyrsumað. and
but we say as truth he REL sins obeys and
godes beboda forsyhð nu on þæs godspelles timan.
God's commands despises now in the Gospel's time
 þæt he *bið* ðam cynincgum gelic ðe gecuron deofolgild.
that he isIND to-the kings like REL chose idolatry

It has been suggested that, when dealing with mood selection in dependent statements, the tense of the matrix verb may have some bearing on the choice of mood in the complement. As Frank puts it (1908, 78), “it is a well known fact that the optative is more frequent after a leading verb in the past tense than after the present.” This opinion is shared by Ogura, who finds that the “frequent use of *cwæðan* in the preterit, especially in the form *cwæð*, was an essential factor of the use of the subjunctive mood in the following indirect speech”, while “the present form of *cwæðan* does effect the indicative mood in indirect speech, though there is always an exception” (1991, 399).¹³ Let us now consider the correlation of tense and choice of mood in the corpus. My data are summarised in Table 3. In this and following tables the figures corresponding to the total number of examples are followed by the number of preterite matrices.

MOOD	CP	ÆLS
indicative	—	13/10
subjunctive	32/17	24/23
neutralised	25/19	56/55
TOTAL	57/36	93/88

Table 3

As can be seen, in the Alfredian corpus the subjunctive is the favoured mood with *CWEDAN* even when the report is not in the preterite, as in (6) below, where the matrix is the present form *cwið*.

¹³ Ogura quotes *Nic(C)* 336 as an exceptional example of the use of the indicative in complements to the form *cwæð*. It should be noted that in this particular example the speaker is God, which may account for the selection of this mood.

- (6) CP 328/9 Ne scirð he no hwæðer hie reafoden, oððe hwelc oðer yfel
not says he not whether they robbed or any other evil
 fremeded, & swæðeah cwið ðæt hie scylen bion gehæfte
did and yet says that they mustSB be held
 on ecium fyre.
in eternal fire

As regards *ÆLS*, the correlation of preterite matrices with subjunctive and neutralised complements is almost complete. However, it is worth noting that indicative complements can indeed be found after preterite matrices. In fact, 10 out of the abovementioned 13 instances of indicative VPs depend on preterite forms of *CWEDAN*, as in (3) and (4) above. In my corpus, then, and contrary to the statements found in the relevant literature, the tense of the matrix is hardly a relevant factor as regards choice of mood in complements to *CWEDAN*.

Summarising, in my material indirect speech after *CWEDAN* is regularly coded by means of the subjunctive. Departures from this trend are rare. They are confined to the *Ælfrician* corpus and generally associated either with general truths or with facts that have actually taken place.

3.2 SECGAN

SECGAN has been traditionally assumed to occupy an intermediate position between *CWEDAN* and *CYÐAN* as regards its use with a subjunctive in the complement clause (see, e.g. Mitchell 1985, #2019; Molencki 1991, 81-2). In Gorrell's words, "like *CWEDAN* it is followed by the genuine indirect construction, but the moment of subjectivity is by no means as strong with the latter verb and hence there is more extensive use of the indicative" (1895, 360 ff.). Table 4 shows the proportion of indicative and subjunctive forms in complements to *SECGAN*. The figures on the right of the slash correspond to the number of preterite matrices.

MOOD	CP	<i>ÆLS</i>	Total
indicative	5/- (25%)	18/ 5 (33.3%)	23/ 5 (31.1%)
subjunctive	12/7 (60%)	12/ 3 (22.2%)	24/10 (32.4%)
neutralised	3/2 (15%)	24/16 (44.4%)	27/18 (36.5%)
TOTAL	20/9	54/24	74/33

Table 4

At first sight, the data drawn from my corpus seem to corroborate the traditional view mentioned above. The percentage of indicative VPs in complements to *SECGAN* is considerably higher than in complements to its near synonym *CWEDAN*. However, the subjunctive is still the prevalent mood after *SECGAN* in the Alfredian corpus. Neither in *CP* nor in *ÆLS* is there any correlation between the presence of a preterite matrix and the occurrence of the subjunctive mood in the complement. As was the case in complements of *CWEDAN*, the tense of the matrix does not seem to be a relevant factor for mood selection in my corpus.

In what follows we shall first turn to the account of the 24 examples in which the verb *SECGAN* takes a subjunctive complement. A close scrutiny of the corpus enabled me to classify these subjunctive examples into four groups:

(i) In 11 cases (5 *CP*; 6 *ÆLS*) the subjunctive is used as a mere marker of indirect speech, with no implication that the reporter is casting any doubt on the truth of the proposition. Example (7), where the authority is King Solomon, serves as an illustration:

- (7) *CP* 278/14 Ac se wisa Salomon sæde ðætte swiðe deop pol wære
and the wise Solomon said that very deep pool bePTSB
 gewered on ðæs wisan monnes mode.
weired in of-the wise man mind

(ii) In two instances, *ÆLS* (Ash 249) and (8) below, the selection of the subjunctive responds to the reporter's attitude towards the content of the embedded clause. In (8), the subjunctive suggests the falsehood of the proposition:

- (8) *ÆLS* (Eu 221) Ða sædon þa hyred-men þæt hit soð wære and ealle
then said the servants that it true bePTSB and all
 mid aðe eugenian forluga.
with oath Eugenia belied

(iii) In one example, (9) below, the use of the subjunctive can be accounted for by contextual factors. In this case, *SECGAN* itself is in the subjunctive and lends its subjunctive force over to the verb in the embedded proposition (see Mitchell 1985, #2027, 2030; Molencki 1991, 89). This is generally known as 'mood-copying'.¹⁴

¹⁴ References to mood copying in later periods can be found in Abbott (1869, 267); Jespersen (1909-49, IV, 157-8; VII, 643), Warner (1982, 189) and Fanego (1990, II, 141).

- (9) CP 208/16 ...đæt we him đonne *secgen* đæt hie *hæbben* wyrst gedon...
that we them then saySB that they haveSB worst done

(iv) Finally, in the remaining 10 instances (3 CP; 7 ÆLS) the complement conveys an admonition or a command. These 10 examples fall into two subgroups:

(a) the complement clause depends on the formula *is to secganne* introducing an admonition (the construction BEON+inflected infinitive generally expresses necessity or obligation; see Mitchell 1985, #934). This type is found in 4 examples of the Alfredian corpus, as in (10) below:

- (10) CP 214/6 Đæm ungeđyldegum *is to sæcgeanne* đætte hie ne
to-the impatient is to tell that they not
agimeleasien đæt hie hiera mod gebridligen.
neglectSB that they their mind bridling

(b) the matrix verb is in the imperative mood or contains the verb *SCULAN denoting obligation, as in (11) and (12) below:

- (11) ÆLS (Swi 49) *Sege* him eac siđđan. þæt he sylf *geriht-læce* his
tell him also afterwards that he self amendsSB his
dæda and þeawas to his drihtnes willan. and efste
deeds and conduct to his lord's will and hastenSB
anmodlice to þam ecan life.
with-single-mind to the eternal life

- (12) CP 238/3 Ongean đæt mon *sceal monian* ða lytegan,
on the other hand that one must admonish the cunning
 & him *sæggean* đæt hie *ongieten* hu hefig đæt
 & them tell that they perceiveSB how heavy the
twyfealde geswinc biđ đæt hie him selfe đurh hiera
twofold toil is that they themselves through their
agene scylde hiera agnes gewealdes him on getiođ.
own sins their own power them in impose

It could be argued that in examples (10)-(12) the use of the subjunctive is contextually motivated, triggered by an expression of command in the matrix. However, this does not seem to be the case, given the occurrence of the indicative in examples containing the expression *is to secganne* and imperative forms of SECĠAN, as in (13) and (14) below:

- (13) *CP* 214/12 Forðæm him *is to sæcgeanne* ðæt hie *weorðað oft*
therefore them is to say that they are^{IND} *often*
 ascrencte on ðæm scyfe ðære styringe hiera modes...
deceived in the impulse of-the agitation of-their mind
- (14) *ÆLS* (Swi 240) Gang nu to ealdan mynstre. and þam munecum *sege*
go now to old minster and to-the monks say
 þæt gode swyðe oflicað heora ceorung.
that to-God much displeases^{IND} their murmuring
 and slæwð.
and sloth

The difference between (10)-(12), on the one hand, and (13) and (14), on the other, lies on the time reference of the complement. In (10)-(12), the complement is future in relation to the time reference of the predicate, in other words, the complement has determined time reference (DTR) (see Noonan 1985, 92 ff.). In languages showing an indicative vs. subjunctive contrast, DTR is generally coded by the subjunctive. This type of dependency is generally associated with “predicates that represent commands, requests, intention, desires and expressions of necessity, ability, or obligation” (Noonan 1985, 92). It is plausible, then, that DTR may cause predicates containing no element of volition to be interpreted as commands.¹⁵

In (13) and (14), by contrast, the complements have independent time reference (ITR), that is, their time reference “is in no way logically bound by the time reference of the complement-taking predicate” (Noonan 1985, 92).¹⁶ In such cases the complement cannot be interpreted as a command or an admonition, but rather as a report which is taken to be true. We could conclude that, in cases such as these, the ITR/DTR distinction is expressed in OE by means of the indicative vs. subjunctive opposition.

Up to now I have been analysing those instances in which *SECGAN* takes a subjunctive complement. I shall now turn to indicative complements, which amount to 23 (5 *CP*; 18 *ÆLS*). The selection of the indicative mood in all 23 examples can be accounted for by one of the following factors:

¹⁵ This may be what some scholars seem to imply when they state that the selection of the subjunctive causes a verb such as *SECGAN* to be interpreted as a command or as a desire (see Gorrell 1895, 360; Visser 1963-73, #869; or Mitchell 1985, #2004).

¹⁶ Predicates with ITR complements include “those that assert, report, comment on as background or make truth-value judgements about their complements” (Noonan 1985, 93).

(i) The complement conveys a ‘universal truth’. Six examples, all of them belonging to the Ælfrician corpus, conform to this. (15) below will suffice as an illustration:

- (15) *ÆLS* (Nat 1) Men ða leofestan hwilon ær we sædon eow hu ure
men the most loved sometimes we told you how our
 hælend crist on þisum dæge on soðre menniscnysse
lord Christ in this day in true human-nature
 accened was of þæm halgan mædene marian.
born wasIND from the holy Virgin Mary

(ii) The complement conveys a prediction or a prophesy (8 examples: 2 *CP*; 6 *ÆLS*). (16) illustrates this point:

- (16) *ÆLS* (Apo 237) He cwæð ic secge eow þæt swara ehtnysse
he said I tell you that grievous persecution
 becumað ofer þa cristenan for cristes naman.
comeIND over the Christians for Christ's name

It should be noted that in this particular example the report is direct, i.e., the speech is not filtered by the reporter, and the matrix verb is in the present tense, which may have also favoured the selection of the indicative (see Traugott 1992, 241).

(iii) The complement reports an event which has already taken place, and is, therefore, known to be true (4 examples: 2 *CP*; 2 *ÆLS*), as in (17):

- (17) *ÆLS* (Alb 129) and hi sædon þa syllican tacna ðe albanus worhte.
and they told the wonderful signs REL Alban wrought
 and hu se wearð ablend þe hine beheafdode.
and how he wasIND blinded REL him beheaded

The remaining 5 examples (1 *CP*; 4 *ÆLS*) cannot, strictly speaking, be ascribed to any of the groups above, but in all of them the reporter's or the speaker's commitment towards the truth of the embedded proposition seems to be complete, as in (18) and (19) below:

- (18) *ÆLS* (Eu 77) He genam hi þa onsundron. and sæde hyre gewislice.
he took her then asunder and said to-her assuredly
 hwæt heo man ne wæs. and hwylcere mægþe.
how she man not wasIND and of-which kindred

- (19) *ÆLS* (Swi 444) and we *secgað* to soðan þæt se tima wæs gesælig
*and we say as truth that the time was*IND *blessed*
 and wynsum on angel-cyne þaða eadgar cynincg
and winsome in England when Edgar king
 þone cristen.dom ge-fyrðrode.
the christianity furthered

In (18), the speaker is a bishop to whom it has been revealed in a vision that Eugenia was a woman in man's disguise. The selection of the indicative makes it clear that neither the reporter—the homilist—nor the speaker—the bishop—are casting any doubt upon the content of the proposition. Likewise, the speaker's commitment towards the truth of the embedded proposition is made explicit in (19) by means of the expression *to soðan* “as a truth.” It is worth noting that this expression is found in four of the 23 instances of indicative complements after *SECGAN*.

Summarising, the evidence from the corpus seems to indicate that *SECGAN* does not clearly favour either of the two moods in its complements, as opposed to *CWEDAN*, which, as noted in section 2.1, generally selects the subjunctive. Although the subjunctive can be used as an indication of reported speech after *SECGAN*, it is possible to find examples in which its selection is semantically determined, for instance, when the subjunctive is used to denote the falsehood of the proposition, or when the complement has DTR and is to be interpreted as a command.

As regards the choice of the indicative, this is always semantically motivated. As was the case with complements to *CWEDAN*, this mood is generally found in connection with universal truths and with events which have taken place, or, in other words, the indicative is selected in propositions whose truth cannot be questioned.

3.3. *CYÐAN*

According to the relevant literature, *CYÐAN* is one of the very few predicates of reporting which is systematically used with the indicative throughout the OE period (see Gorrell 1895, 357; Mitchell 1985, #2022, among others). The prevalent use of the indicative with this verb, as opposed to the consistent use of the subjunctive with its close synonym *CWEDAN*, has been attributed to an original difference in meaning. Thus,

Mitchell and Robinson (1986) suggest that the meaning of this verb was something like 'I (know, and) make it known.' CYÐAN would therefore express the speaker's complete certainty towards the truth of the proposition. In other words, it would not only imply a mere transfer of information, but also the actuality of such information. CWEDAN, on the other hand, with a meaning such as 'I (think and) give it as my opinion,' would not presuppose the truth of the embedded proposition, but merely assert it (Mitchell & Robinson 1986, 156. In this connection see also Frank 1908; Mitchell 1985, #2022).

Let us now turn to the corpus evidence. Table 5 below shows the frequency of indicative and subjunctive VPs in complements to CYÐAN in the corpus. The number of preterite matrices is given on the right of the slash.

MOOD	CP	ÆLS	Total
indicative	6/1 (35.2%)	5/4 (71.4%)	11/5 (45.9%)
subjunctive	10/1 (58.9%)	—	10/1 (41.6%)
neutralised	1/1 (5.9%)	2/2 (28.6%)	3/3 (12.5%)
TOTAL	17/6	7/6	24/9

Table 5

As can be seen in the table, no subjunctive complements have been recorded in the Ælfrician corpus, where the indicative prevails even when the matrix verb is in the preterite. The figures for the Alfredian corpus, however, seem to contravene the traditional view that CYÐAN is consistently found with indicative complements, since the subjunctive mood is found in almost 60% of the cases in CP. Let us now consider these subjunctive examples in detail.

(i) On one occasion the subjunctive is triggered by contextual factors. This is (20) below, which exemplifies 'mood-copying':

- (20) CP 212/19 [...] swelce hit from us asend sie, & ðærom cyðe ðæt
 as if it from us sent beSB thereof saySB that
 se domes dæg neah sie.
 the of-judgement day near beSB

(ii) In the 9 remaining examples, the complement has DTR, which triggers a manipulative interpretation of *CYÐAN*.¹⁷ 8 examples involve the formula *is to cyðanne*. The use of the subjunctive after this expression is also noted by Gorrell, who states that “as the expression of a wish contained in a command or an admonition *CYÐAN* is usually followed by the subjunctive” (1895, 358). Example (21) will serve as an illustration:

- (21) CP 188/1 *Swæðeah is ðæm to cyðanne ðæt hie hie wardenigen ægðer ge yet is them to tell that they them guardSB both wið ða ungemetlican blisse ge wið ða ungemetlican against the immoderate bliss and against the immoderate unrotnesse ... sadness ...*

In one example, reproduced as (22) below, the subjunctive complement depends on an imperative form of *CYÐAN*.

- (22) CP 42/19 *Farað and cyðað minum gebroðrum þæt hie cumen go and tell my brothers that they comeSB to Galileum; ðær hie me gesioð. to Galilee there they me see*

As was the case in complements to *SECGAN*, the subjunctive is the selected mood here because the complements have DTR, not because of the presence of *is to cyðanne* or an imperative. The formula *is to cyðanne* and imperatives or their equivalents may indeed be found with indicative complements, as is the case in (23) and (24) below, provided that the complements have ITR. In these two examples the embedded clause does not express a command, but just a transfer of information, and the selected mood is the indicative.

- (23) CP 280/24 *Ðæm slawan ðonne is to cyðanne ... ðætte hwilum to-the slow then is to make known that sometimes cymð sio tiid ymb lytel fæc... comesIND the time within little space*

¹⁷ Manipulatives typically express orders, permission or causation of any kind (see Noonan 1985, 125-6).

- (24) *CP 2/2 & ðe kyðan hate þæt me com suiðe oft on gemynd,
 you tell order that me cameIND very often in mind
 hwelce wutan gio wæron geond Angelkynn.
 which wise men formerly were throughout England*

4. Conclusion

As regards choice of mood in complementation, a clear difference exists between the behaviour of CWEDAN and CYÐAN, on the one hand, and that of SECGAN, on the other. CWEDAN and CYÐAN clearly favour the subjunctive and the indicative respectively. Mood selection with these two predicates can therefore be said to be to a certain extent lexically determined. Departures from this general trend, however, are generally semantically motivated.

CWEDAN is certainly a verb favouring the subjunctive, but it may take an indicative complement when the embedded clause conveys a universal truth. In this respect there is a remarkable difference between my early and late corpora, since this use is restricted to the Ælfrician material.

As regards CYÐAN, the subjunctive is selected when the complement has DTR. In such cases, the complement does not merely imply a transfer of information, but rather a command.

SECGAN does not seem to clearly favour the selection of one mood over the other, as opposed to its close synonyms CWEDAN and CYÐAN. The subjunctive is the prevalent mood in the early OE corpus. In *ÆLS* it loses ground at the expense of indicative and, above all, neutralised forms. As was the case with CWEDAN, the indicative is generally found in connection with universal truths and events which have effectively taken place. The subjunctive is sometimes used as a mere marker of indirect speech, as was the case with CWEDAN, but on other occasions it is selected to denote the falsehood or the determined time reference of a given proposition.

To conclude, we may say that, generally speaking, among verbs of reporting CWEDAN seems to prefer the subjunctive, CYÐAN the indicative and SECGAN to occupy an intermediate position. The picture beneath this generalisation, however, is far more complex. As shown in this paper, any account of choice of mood in complementation must consider not only a single cause, but rather the operation of several factors.

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