

# A General Survey of Old English Conjunctions\*

Hiroshi Yada

Before making a general survey of Old English conjunctions, the problems involving the definition of the term "conjunction" must first be addressed.

Basing his definition on the etymology of the word, G.O. Curme states, "A conjunction is a word that joins together sentences or parts of a sentence."<sup>1)</sup> Grammarians interpret this vague definition differently when classifying words under the label "conjunction." The most conspicuous discrepancy in this respect among traditional grammarians is seen in their handling some of what are called "conjunctive adverbs,"<sup>2)</sup> "secondary conjunctions,"<sup>3)</sup> and "correlative conjunctions."<sup>4)</sup> E. Kruisinga remarks, "A rigid classification of words as conjunctions, distinct from other parts of speech, is evidently impossible."<sup>5)</sup>

This is especially the case when defining and classifying Old English conjunctions. Indeed in English, it is not an easy task to distinguish words which are to be labelled as "conjunction" from other parts of speech which also work to connect clauses or parts of a sentence semantically. One reason for this difficulty lies in its transitional state of syntactic change in the Old English period; namely, the shift from paratactic construction to hypotactic one as seen in the following description by G.O. Curme.

In Old English, we often find in the subordinate clause instead of *where* the form *there*: 'Wuna *pær* þe leofost ys' (Genesis, XX, 15) = 'Dwell where it is most pleasant to thee,' literally, 'Dwell there: it is most pleasant to thee.' The *there* was originally a determinative, pointing to the following explanatory remark, later gradually becoming closely associated with it, forming with it a subordinate

clause of place and serving as its connective, binding it to the principal proposition and thus becoming a relative conjunction.’<sup>6)</sup>

Syntactic changes like the example above serve to complicate the classification task. Besides this, the correlative use of conjunctions were very common in Old English. These correlative also make the distinction between conjunction and adverb difficult. Moreover, as in Modern English, a good many of the Old English conjunctions are formally identical with adverbs or prepositions, and smaller number of them with nouns or verbs. S.O. Andrew addresses this as follows.

Words like *ða*, *ær*, *nu* are ambiguous in their written form: each one of them is really a homograph and represents two different parts of speech, an adverb and a conjunction which must always have been distinguished in the spoken language as stressed and unstressed.<sup>7)</sup>

Without records of the spoken language, these correlatives continue to fluster the grammarian. Because of these peculiarities pertaining to Old English conjunctions and for practical purposes, words or group of words whose functions are equivalent to the ‘pure’ conjunctions of Old English in the category of ‘conjunction-equivalents’ have been included.

### 1.1. Old English Coordinate Conjunctions

The common coordinate conjunctions in Old English are *ond*, *oppe* and *ac*, but some correlative words and phrases also function coordinately. Many of the words which belong to this group can also be used in some other functions, mostly as adverbs or as prepositions, or as both. As mentioned before, it is not always possible to distinguish between adverb and conjunction, therefore words that have both functions as coordinate conjunctions have been included in this survey. The connective character of these adverbs and prepositions becomes much clearer when an uninflected particle *pe* is added after them. In addition, the similarity bet-

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ween conjunctions and prepositions is notably greater than that between conjunctions and adverbs.

Coordinate conjunctions and their equivalents have been classified into four groups after the traditional manner, citing sentence examples from *Beowulf* wherever possible, and if the right example is not found in *Beowulf* from other Old English prose works or poetry.

1.1.1. Copulative Coordinate Conjunctions

*ond*: Hafa nu *ond* geheald husa selest,<sup>8)</sup>

(658 a-b)

= Hold now *and* guard the best of the houses,<sup>9)</sup>

*ægper...ond*: Me is þæt hearma mæst: he wæs ægðer min mæg  
*ond* min hlaford. (The Battle of Maldon 223b-224a)

= It is the greatest of griefs to me: he was *both* my kinsman  
*and* my lord.

*ægðer ge...ge*: Ægðer ge hades, ge eðels polige,

(Secular Laws of King Cnut L.C.S. 41)

= let him forfeit *both* degree *and* counter,

*ge*: ond nu oþer cwom

mihtig manscaða, wolde hyre mæg wrecan,  
*ge* feor hafað fæhðe gestæled, (1338b-1340b)

= now the other has come, a mighty worker of wrong,  
would avenge her kinsman, *and* has carried far her revenge,

*ge...ge*: Ic þa leode wat

*ge* wið feond *ge* wið freond fæste geworhte,

æghwæs untæle ealde wisan. (1863b-1865b)

= I know your people, blameless in every respect, set firm  
after the old way *both* as to foe *and* to friend.

*samod...ond*: Niht *samod ond* dæg

(Bosworth-Toller)<sup>10)</sup>

= *both* night *and* day

*ne...ne*: ne leof ne lað (511a)

= friend *nor* enemy

*ne...ne...ne*: Ic hit þe gehate: ne he on helm losap



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(Bosworth-Toller)

=whether he would be guided into torture *or* into glory,

### 1.1.3. Adversative Coordinate Conjunctions

*ac*: ne gefeah he þære fæhðe, *ac* he hine feor forwræc,  
Metod for þy mane mancynne fram.  
(109a-110b)

=(Cain) has no pleasure in that feud, *but* He banished him far from mankind, the Ruler, for that misdeed,

*Ac* nearly always follows a negative clause, the adversative function appears with varying degrees of logical strictness; occasionally it shades off into the connective-adversative type (almost=*and*) as seen in the following example.<sup>11)</sup>

þæt him hildegrap hrepre ne mihte,  
eorres inwifeng aldre gesceþðan,  
*ac* se hwita helm hafelan werede,  
(1446a-1448b)

=so that foe's grip might not harm his heart, or grasp of angry enemy his life, *but* (=and) the bright helmet guarded his head,

Adversative Coordinate Conjunction-Equivalents:

*for þum* (also, even) *huru* (however, indeed), *hwæpere* (however, yet),  
*swa peah* (however, yet), *peah* (however, yet), *peah hwæpere* (however, yet).

### 1.1.4. Causal Coordinate Conjunctions

An Old English preposition *for* governs the dative or instrumental dative case and *for* is quite often used with an oblique case of *þæt*. Then this combination of words serves a conjunctive force functioning as a prepositional conjunction. There are several variations of this type: *for þam*, *for þan*, *for þæm*, *for þon*, *for þy*, *for þi*, etc.

These groups of words are sometimes written together like *forþon*. According to Bruce Mitchell, "these conjunctions probably grew out of an originally adverbial use of a prepositional phrase such as occurs in 'ond *for þon* ic ðe bebiode ðæt ðu...' (=and for that I command you that you...)

and in 'for *pan* wearð her on felda folc totwæmed...' (=because of that the army here in the field was divided...)<sup>12)</sup>

When an indeclinable particle *pe* is added to one of these phrases, it clearly displays the conjunctive character. If it is translated into *because*, it is classified as a causal subordinate conjunction and treated later.

<i>forþon pe:</i>	wæs him Beowulfes sið,
modges merefaren,	micel æfþunca,
<i>forþon pe</i> he ne uþe,	þæt ænig oðer man
æfre mærdða þon ma	middangeardes
gehede under heofenum	þonne he sylfa—:
	(501b-505b)

=to him was Beowulf's undertaking, the brave seafarer, a great vexation, *for* he would not allow that any other man of middle-earth should ever achieve more glory under the heavens than himself.

Causal Coordinate Conjunction-Equivalents: *huru* (however, yet), *hwæpere* (however), *swa þeah*, *swa þeah hwæpere*, *þeah*, *þeah hwæpere*, *þonne* (however).

## 1.2. Old English Subordinate Conjunctions

In order to express the logical relationship between clauses clearly, various subordinate conjunctions are employed in Old English as they are in Modern English. One of the remarkable features of Old English subordinate conjunctions lies in the frequent use of correlatives such as *ær...ær*, *nu... nu*, *siþpan...siþpan*, *swa...swa*, *þanon...þanon*, *þæs...þæs*, *þæt...þæt*, *þær...þær*, *þeah... þeah*, *þider... þider*, *þonne...þonne*, *þy...þy*, and so on.

These correlative conjunctions show the early stage of hypotactic construction. In other words, the state of parataxis is marked in Old English by the correlative use of the same particles. Originally most of the elements of these correlative subordinate conjunctions were demonstrative pronouns or adverbs; and such being the case, two clauses could be taken as parataxis. Even the most frequent and versatile subordinate conjunction *that* in Modern English has its origin in paratactic construction

in Old English as seen in the following example.

and eac we magon oncnawan *ðæt*, *ðæt* ða earman and ða untruman sint to retanne, (Pastoral Care 180-19)

=and we can also understand *that* the poor and weak are to be cheered,<sup>13)</sup>

In Old English the 'pure' subordinate conjunctions which are use only as conjunctions are very few what are called primary conjunctions such as *gif* and *peah*. In what follows, conjunctions and their equivalents are classified in two groups: (1) subordinate conjunctions introducing noun clauses and (2) subordinate conjunctions introducing adverb clauses.

### 1.2.1. Subordinate Conjunctions Introducing Noun Clauses

Kinds: *pæt*, *pætte* (= *pæt pe*), *gif*

*pæt*: (As Subject)

	Him on mod bearn,
<i>pæt</i> healreced	hatan wolde,
medoærn micel	men gewyrcean
pon[n]e ylde bearn	æfre gefrunon,
	(67b-70b)

=It came to his mind *that* he would command men to construct a hall, a mead-building larger than the children of men had ever heard of,

(As Direct Object)

Swa sceal (geong g) uma	gode gewyrcean,
fromum feohgiftum	on fæder (bea)rme,
<i>pæt</i> hine on ylde	eft gewunigen
wilgesipas,	(20a-23a)

=In this way a young man ought by his good deeds, by giving splendid gifts while still in his father's house, to make sure *that* later in life beloved companions will stand by him,

In the example above there is no introductory word in the main clause but one sometimes appears in the main clause as follows:

Ic <i>pæt</i> gehyre,	<i>pæt</i> pis is hold weorod
frea Scyldinga,	(290a-291a)

=I understand this; that here is a troop friendly to the Scylding's king.

In the next example an indirect object is in the main clause and a direct object clause is introduced by *þæt*.

*Eow* het secgan sigedrihten min,  
aldor East-Dena, *þæt* he eower æpelu can,  
(391a-392b)

=The lord of the East-Danes, my victorious prince, has bidden (me) say to you that he knows your noble ancestry,  
(As Subject Complement)

*þæt* hie oft wæron Wæs þeaw hyra,  
an wig gearwe,  
(1246b-1247b)

\*\*It was their custom that they were always ready for war,  
*þætte*: As is known, *þætte* was formed by *þæt* plus *þe* by assimilating the *p* in *þe* into *t* of *þæt*. Below are some sentence examples in which *þætte* is used as a subordinate conjunction introducing a noun clause.

(As Subject)

ylda bearnum forðam [secgum] wearð,  
gyddum geomore, *þætte* Grendel wan  
hwile wið Hroþgar, (149b-151a)

\*\*it became well-known to [the men] and to the children of men, through mournful lays, that Grendel had fought a long time with Hrothgar, ic wene ðætte noht monige begiondan Humbre næren

(Bruce Mitchell, p.68)

=I believe that there were not many beyond the Humber

(As Appositive)

idese to efnanne, Ne bið swylc cwenlic þeaw  
*þætte* freoðuwebbe þeah ðe hio ænlicu sy,  
æfter ligetorne feores onsæce  
leofne mannan  
(1940b-1943b)

=Such is no queenly custom for a woman to practice,



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though she is peerless— *that* one who weaves peace should take away the life of a beloved man after pretended injury.

Examples of subject complement and adjectival complement were not found in this survey of limited Old English materials.

*gif*: (= *gief*, *gyf*, *gef*)

This subordinate conjunction introduces only object clauses.

(As Direct Object)

,frægen *gif* him wære  
æfter neodlaðu[m] niht getæse.

(1319b-1320b)

=asked *if* the night had been pleasant according to his desires.

### 1.2.2. Subordinate Conjunctions Introducing Adverb Clauses

Following convention, subordinate conjunctions introducing adverb clauses have been divided into seven groups: (1) place (2) time (3) purpose or result (4) cause or reason (5) comparison (6) concession (7) condition.

#### (1) Place

Kinds: *þær*, *þider*, *þanon*, *swa hwær swa*, *swa hwider swa*, *swa wide swa*, etc.

The most typical conjunction introducing an adverb clause is *þær*, which was used for *there* or *where* in Old English. *þær* was employed originally as demonstrative adverb to indicate the explanatory sentence which followed it. Then this *þær* came to be considered a part of the latter of two sentences placed in parallel. So the sentence structure with *þær* between two sentences shows parataxis as seen above.

*þær*: This conjunction can be used alone, doubled, or even correlatively, and it has demonstrative and relative force as Modern English *where* or *whither*.

,ga þær he wille!

(139b)

=go where he will!

God gefilde mid flæsce *þær þær* ðæt ribb wæs.

(Genesis 2-21)

=God took (it) through the flesh *where* the rib was.

*pær* pin goldhold is, *pær* is pin heorte.

(Matthew vi-21)

= *where* your treasure is, *there* will your heart be.

*pider*: *pider* was also originally an adverb. It is sometimes followed by *pe* in order to make the conjunctive force clearer.

Far þu *pider pe* wille (Bruce Mitchell, p. 92)

= Go *wherever* you wish

*swa hwider swa*:

Far þu nu *swa hwider swa* þu wille (Bruce Mitchell, p. 92)

= Go now *wherever* you wish

*swa hwær swa*:

*Swa hwær swa* he on wic oððe on tunas eode,

(Bosworth-Toller)

= *Wherever* he went in the village or in the towns,

In Old English *hwær* in addition to *pær* was already used as a relative conjunction which introduces an indirect interrogative statement.

*hwær*: Ða frægn wuldres aldor Cain *hwær* Abel eorþan wære,

(Genesis 1003)

= the Prince of glory asked Cain *where* on earth Abel was,

Equivalentents: *panon*, *swa*, *wide swa*, and some other place-adverbs can also used conjunctively.

## (2) Time

Kinds: *pa*, *ponne*, *mid þam(þe)*, *pa hwille (þe)*, *þenden*, *si þpan*, *þæs (þe)*, *ær*, *oð*, *oð þe*, *oð þæt*, *hwonne*, *swa lange swa*, etc.

*pa*: Guðbyrne scan

heard hondlocen hringiren scir

song in searwum, *pa* hie to sele furðum

in hyra gryregeatum gangan cwomon.

(321b-324b)

= War-corslet shone, hard and hand-wrought, bright iron rings sang on their armour *when* they first came walking to the hall in their grim gear.

*pa* often appears with another *pa* correlatively as in the following example, showing a paratactic construction.

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*pa* se cyng pæt hierde, *pa* wende he hine west.

(Bruce Mitchell, p.60)

= *When* the king heard that, then he turned west.

Sometimes *pa* form is doubled.

Ða *pa* scipu gearwe wæron (R. Quirk and C.L. Wrenn, p99)<sup>14)</sup>

= *when* the ships were ready

When one of two correlative *pa* clauses has the word-order V.S., it must be the principal clause and *pa* must mean *then*. Mitchell says that "the temporal clause introduced by *pa* may have the order S...V."<sup>15)</sup>

*ponne*:

Wyrd oft nereð

unfægne eorl,

*ponne* his ellen deah

(572b-573b)

= Fate often saves an undoomed man *when* his courage is good.

*ponne...ponne*:

*ponne* wæs þeos medoheal on morgentid,

drihtsele dreorfah, *ponne* dæg lixte,

(484a-485b)

= *Then* in the morning this meadhall was a hall shining with blood, *when* the day lightened,

Mitchell gives us a very clear explanation as to the difference of the uses between *pa* and *ponne* as follows.

"*pa* is used only of a single completed act in the past and *ponne* is frequentative *wherever*."<sup>16)</sup>

*mid þam þe*:

*Mid* ðam ðe he hig geseah ða efste he,

(Bosworth-Toller)

= *When* he saw them, he then hurried.

*pa...ærest*:

*pa* pæt Offan mæg *ærest* onfunde,

pæt se eorl nolde yrhðo gepolian,

he let him *pa* of handum leofne fleogan

hafoc wiþ þæs holtas, (*The Battle of Maldon*, 5-8a)

= *As soon as* the kinsman of Offa discovered this, that the

earl would not tolerate slackness, he let his beloved falcon fly from his hands toward the wood,

*penden*:

hu him æt æte speow,  
wæl reafode.  
(3026b-3027b)

*penden* he wið wulf

=how he fared at the feast *when* with the wolf he spoiled the slain bodies.

*siððan*:

Hoces dohtor  
*syððan* morgen com,  
(1076a-1077b)

Nalles holinga  
meotodsceaft bemearn,

=Not without cause did Hoc's daughter lament the decree of destiny *when* morning came,

*pæs(pe)*:

þæt wæs ymb twelf monaþ pæs ðe hie ær hider  
comon,  
(Bosworth-Toller)

*pæs* wæs ymb twelf monaþ pæs ðe hie ær hider

=It was about twelve months *since* they had come here first,

*ær*:

gebada wintra worn,  
(264a-b)

*ær* he on weg hwurfe,

=(he) lived many winters *before* he went on his way,

Besides *ær*, its prepositional phrase *ær þam þe* was sometimes used as a conjunction meaning *before* or *until*.

*ær þam þe*:

Ic wæs ær þam þe Abraham wæs.  
(West-Saxon Gospel According To St. John 8:58)

Ic wæs ær þam þe Abraham wæs.

=I existed *before* Abraham was born.

*oð*:

[Gif] ic wylle þæt he wunige ðus oð ic cumme, hwæt to þe?  
(West-Saxon Gospel According To St. John 21:22)

[Gif] ic wylle þæt he wunige ðus *oð* ic cumme, hwæt to þe?

=If it should be my will that he wait *until* I come, what is it to you?

*oð þæt*:

dreamum lifdon,  
oð ðæt an ongan

Swa ða drihtguman  
eadiglice

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fyrene fre(m) man feond on helle;  
(99a-101b)

= Thus these warriors lived in joy, blessed, *until* one began to do evil deeds, a hellish enemy;

*hwonne*: (*hwanne, hwænne, hwanon*)  
Hit earfope is ænegum menn to witanne *hwonne* he geclænsod,  
(Bosworth-Toller)

= It is difficult for any man to know *when* he is cleansed,

*pe*: hrof ana genæs  
ealles ansund, *pe* se aglæca  
fyrendædum fag on fleam gewand  
(999b-1001b)

= the roof alone came through unharmed *when* the monster, outlawed for his crimes, tuned in fight,

Various time-adverbs are intervened between *swa* and *swa* and they are used as adverbial conjunctions to introduce clauses of time.

Equivalents: *swa lange swa* (as long as)

*swa hraþe swa* (as quickly as)

*swa oft swa* (as often as)

*sona swa* (as soon as)

### (3) Purpose and Result

As Mitchell states,<sup>17</sup> "a result is often a fulfilled purpose and a purpose is a yet-to-be-completed result; these two have much in common." For this reason, this category include both conjunctions introducing purpose clauses and result clauses.

Kinds:	(Purpose)	(Result)
	<i>pæt</i>	<i>pæt</i>
	<i>pætte</i>	<i>pætte</i>
	<i>swa pæt</i>	<i>swa pæt</i>
	<i>swa...pæt</i>	<i>swa...pæt</i>
	<i>py læs (pe)</i>	<i>pæs...pæt</i>
		<i>to pæs...pæt</i>

*pæt*:(purpose)

Ic sceal forð spreca

gen ymbe Grendel,                    *pæt* ðu geara cunne,

(2069b-2070b)

= I shall speak still more of Grendel, *that* you may readily know,

It is generally agreed that purpose clauses take the subjunctive.<sup>18)</sup> On the other hand, as seen in the next example, result clauses take the indicative.

*pæt*: (result)

Ða wæs Hroðgare                    heresped gyfen,  
wiges weorðmynd,                 *pæt* him his winemagas  
georne hyrdon,                         (64a-66a)

= Then Hrothgar was given success in warfare, glory in battle, *so that* his retainers gladly obeyed him.

*pætte*: (purpose)

Beforan ðæm temple stod æren ceac, *pætte* menn  
meahten hira honda ðwean,                 (Bosworth-Toller)

= Before the shrine stood the basin, *so that* men could cleanse their hands,

*pætte*: (result)

Woldon hie feorhlean facne gyldan *pætte* he  
dægweorc dreore gepohte,                 (Bosworth-Toller)

= They wanted to gild revenge for bloodshed by deceit, *so that* he should pay for that deed with blood,

*swa*:

Swa manlice                                 mære þeoden,  
hordweard hælepa                         heaporæsas geald  
mearum ond madmum, *swa* hy næfre man lyhð,  
se þe secgan wile soð æfter rihte.

(1046a-1049b)

= So generously the famous prince, guardian of the hoard, repaid the warrior's battle-deeds with horses and treasure *that* no man will ever find fault with them— not he that will speak truth according to what is right.

*swa pæt*:(result)

*Swa pæt* he hreas...on eorðan,

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(Quirk and Wrenn p.100)

*so that* he fell to the ground,

*swa...þæt*: (result)

ic wille þæt hi hit hældan *swa* kynelice...*þæt* þær ne be numen  
of na gelt, (Quirk and Wrenn p.100)

=I want (this) that they may possess it *so* royally that there  
be no payment taken from it,

*pæs...þæt*: (purpose)

Gewunige he fæstende, *þæt* he wite *þæt* seo mæsse  
sy gesungen, (Bosworth-Toller)

=let him continue his fast *so that* he may know the mass  
has been sung,

*to pæs...þæt*: (result)

Forþon nis pæs modwlonc mon ofer eorþan,  
ne his gifena pæs god, ne in geogupe *to pæs* hwæt,  
ne in his dædum *to pæs* deor, ne him his dryhten *to pæs* hold,  
*þæt* he a his sæfore sorge næbbe,  
to hwon hine Dryhten gedon wille. (*The Seafarer* 39a-43b)

=Truly there is no man on earth so proud of heart, no so  
generous of his gifts, nor so vigorous in youth, nor *so* brave  
in his deeds, nor with a lord *so* gracious to him, *that* he has  
not always anxiety on his seafaring.

*þy læs (þe)*: (purpose)

sælde to sande	sidfæpme scip
oncerbendum fæst,	<i>þy læs</i> hym yþa ðrym
wudu wynsuman	forwrecan meahste.
	(1917a-1919b)

=(Beowulf) moored the deep ship in the sand, fast by its  
anchor ropes, *lest* the force of the waves should drive away  
the fair wooden vessel.

*þa*: (result)

	cwæð, he guðcýning
ofer swanrade	secean wolde,
mærne peoden,	<i>þa</i> him wæs manna pearf.

(199b-201b)

=said he would seek the war-king over the swan's road,  
famous prince, *since* he had need of men.

(4) Cause

Causal clauses are introduced mainly by *nu*, *pæs* (*pe*), and various word groups headed by *for*, but sometimes introduced by *pe*, *py* *pe*, *swelc*, etc.

Kinds: *nu*, *pæs* (*pe*), *pe*, *py* *pe*, *py*, *swelc* (*swilce*, *swylce*)

*nu*:

	<i>nu</i> ic þus feorran com,
þæt ic mote ana	[ond] minra eorla gedryht,
þes hearda heap,	Heorot fælsian.
	(430b-432b)

=*now that* I have come so far, that alone with my company  
of earls, this band of hardy men, I may cleanse Heorot.

*pæs* (*pe*):

	— þone cwealm gewræc
ece Drihten,	<i>pæs</i> <i>pe</i> he Abel slog;
	(107b-108b)

\*\*The eternal Lord avenged the murderer *because* he slew  
Abel,

*forðam*: (*forðan*, *forðon*)

	-leah ðe hlaford us
þis ellenweorc	ana aðohte
to gefremmanne,	folces hyrde,
<i>forðam</i> he manna mæst	mærða gefremede,
dæda dollicra.	(2642b-2646a)

=though our lord intended to do this work of courage alone,  
as keeper of the folk, *because* among men he had performed  
the greatest deeds of glory, daring actions.

*forpon* *pe*:

	wæs him Beowulfes sið,
modges merefaren,	micel æfþunca,
<i>forpon</i> <i>pe</i> he ne upe,	þæt ænig oðer man
æfre mærða þon ma	middangeardes



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gehede under heofenum    þonne he sylfa-;  
(501b-505b)

=to him was Beowulf's undertaking, the brave seafarer, a great vexation, *for* he would not allow that any other man of middle-earth should ever achieve more glory under the heavens than himself;

*þe:*

deorre duguðe,    ahte ic holdra þy læs,  
  þe þa deað fornam.  
(487b-488b)

=I had fewer faithful men, beloved retainers, *for* death had destroyed them.

#### (5) Comparison or Manner

Clauses of comparison in Old English are classified into four different types by Mitchell.<sup>19)</sup>

1. Comparisons involving 'than' are expressed by *þonne* or *þon ma þe*.
2. Comparisons involving 'as' may be expressed by *swa, swa,...swa, swa +superative, swylce, swylce... swa, þæs (þe)*.
3. Comparisons involving 'the...the' are expressed by *þy...þy*.
4. Comparisons involving 'hypothesis' are expressed by *swa* or *swilce*.

*þonne:*

Him on mod bearn,  
  hatan wolde,  
þæt healreced                               men gewyrcean  
medoærn micel                               æfre gefrunon,  
*þon*[n]e yldo bearn                               (67b-70b)

=It came to his mind that he would command men to construct a hall, a mead-building larger *than* the children of men had ever heard of,

*þon ma þe:*

He nat hwæt him toweard biþ, *þon ma þu* wistest  
(Bosworth-Toller)

=He knows not what will happen to him *any more than* thou knowest

*swa*: Onlegena strengran *swa swa* is arom  
(Bosworth-Toller)

=stronger applications *such as* is copperas

*swa...swa*:

	Wæs se gryre læssa
efne swa micle,	<i>swa</i> bið mægpa cræft,
wiggryre wifes	be wæpnedmen,
ponne heoru bunden,	(1282b-1285a)

=The attack was the less terrible by just *so much as* is the strength of women, the war-terror of a wife, less than an armed man's.

*swa* + *superative*:

*swa* ðu oftost onæge (Mitchell, p83)

=*as often as* you can

*swa* hie selest mihton

=*as well as* they could

*swylce*:

Swurdleoma stod,  
*swylce* eal Finnsburuh fyrenu wære.  
(*The Fight at Finnsburg* 35b-36b)

=There was gleaming of swords *as if* all Finnesburh was in flames.

*pæ* (*pe*):

	Þæra oðer wæs,
<i>pæs pe</i> hie gewislicost	gewitan meahton,
idese onlicnes:	(1349b-1351a)

=One of them, *so far as* they could clearly discern, was the likeness of a woman.

*py...py*:

Hyge sceal <i>py</i> heardra,	heorte <i>py</i> cenre,
mod sceal <i>py</i> mare,	<i>py</i> ure mægen lytlap.

(*The Battle of Maldon* 312a-313b)

=Courage must be *the* stronger, heart *the* bolder, courage must (be) *the* greater, as our strength diminishes.

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## (6) Concession

Most of the concessive clauses were introduced by *peah* (*pe*) in Old English and the prevailing mood was the subjunctive. *Sam...sam* introduced disjunctive concessions.

Kinds: *peah* (*pe*), *peah...eall*, *sam...sam*,

*peah*:

Done siðfæt him	snotere ceorlas
lythwon logon,	<i>peah</i> he him leof wære;
	(202a-203b)

=Very little did wise men blame him for that adventure,  
*though* he was dear to them;

*peah...eall*:

forþan ic hine sweorde	swebban nelle,
aldre beneotan,	<i>peah</i> ic <i>eal</i> mæge: <sup>20)</sup>

=therefore I will not put him to sleep with a sword, so take  
away his life, *though* surely I might.

*sam...sam*: *sam* hit sy sumor sam winter

(Mitchell, p.96)

=*whether* it is summer or winter

Besides these subordinate conjunctions introducing concessive clauses, concession was also expressed by the word-order without any conjunction.<sup>21)</sup>

## (7) Condition

Conditional clauses in Old English were introduced mainly by *gif* or *þær*, both meaning *if*. And negative conditional clauses were introduced by *butan*, or *nymþe*, meaning *unless* or *except that*. Occasionally in Old English prose, conditions as well as concession were expressed by the word-order 'Verb + Subject' without any concession.<sup>22)</sup>

*gif*:

Nu ic suna minum	syllan wolde
gudgewædu,	<i>þær</i> me gifeðe swa
ænig yrfeward	æfter wurde
lice gelenge.	(2729a-2732a)

=Now I would wish to give my son my war-clothing, *if*

any heir after me, part of flesh, were granted.

*butan:*

þæt he for mundgripe	minum scolde
licgean lifbysig,	<i>butan</i> his lic swice:
	(965a-966b)

=so that because of my hard-grip he should lie struggling for life— *unless* his body should escape:

*nymþe:(nemne, nefne)*

þæt hit a mid gemete	manna ænig
betlic ond banfag	tobrecan meahte,
listum tolučan,	<i>nymþe</i> liges fæþm
swulge on swapule.	(779a-782a)

=No wise men of the Scylding ever before thought that any men in any manner might break it down, splendid with bright horns, have skill to destroy it, *unless* flame should embrace it, swallow it in fire.

*swa:*

	Hu seo þrag gewat,
genap under nihthelm,	<i>swa</i> heo no wære!
	( <i>The Wanderer</i> 95b-96b)

=How the time has passed away, has darkened under the shadow of night, *as if* it had never been!

### Notes

This paper is a modified version of the first chapter of my master's thesis submitted to the Graduate School of International Christian University.

- 1) G.O. Curme., *Parts of Speech and Accidence* (D.C. Heath, 1935) p.92.
- 2) Conjunctive adverbs are considered as conjunctive equivalents or even as members of conjunctions by some grammarians. E. Kruisinga says: "It follows from the definition of conjunctions in 1475 that it is not always possible to distinguish between an adverb and a conjunction; for a word may have something of either function. This is often the case with *now*, *only*, *still*, *yet*, *however*, *moreover*, *besides*, *again*, *indeed*; also the anaphoric pronominal adverbs, such as *hence*, *thus*, etc.," E. Kruisinga., *A Handbook of Present-Day English, II English Accidence and Syntax* (Croningen, 1932) p.412.

- Curme classifies adverbs which function as conjunctions into two groups; (1) coordinating conjunctive adverbs, (2) subordinating conjunctive adverbs, and includes them in the category of conjunctions in *Accidence*, p. 74 ff. H. Sweet also considers conjunctive adverbs as conjunctions, though he calls them half-conjunctions. H. Sweet, 1891. p.143.
- 3) As secondary conjunctions, five types are seen in Modern English as follows:
    - (1) from nouns; *while, the first time, the moment, the instance, every time, for fear (that), in case, in order that, etc.*
    - (2) from pronoun; *that*
    - (3) from verbs; *suppose, supposing (that), providing (that), provided (that), granted (that), etc.*
    - (4) from adverbs; *now (that), once, directly, immediately, so, etc.*
    - (5) from prepositions; *after, before, but, except (that), for, save (that) since, till, etc.*
  - 4) The correlative use of conjunctions show the early stage of conjunctions. In Old English there were many correlative conjunctions. B. Mitchell says as follows; "Much of the difficulty with correlative pairs arises from the fact (with a few exceptions such as *gif...þonne* 'if...then') the conjunction and adverb have the same form, e.g. *þa* can mean both 'when' and 'then'. B. Mitchell., *A Guide to Old English*, Oxford (Basil Blackwell, 1964) p.66.
  - 5) Kruisinga, p.416.
  - 6) G.O. Curme., *Syntax* (D.C. Heath, 1931) p. 263. L. Keller offers detailed explanations of the process of the historical development from parataxis to hypotaxis in his book *Historical Outlines of English Syntax*, edited with notes and glossary by Miyabe, K. Kenkyu-sha, Tokyo, 1892, p.45.
  - 7) S.O. Andrew., *Postscript On Beowulf* (Cambridge, 1948) p.3.
  - 8) Quotations and line-references from *Beowulf* are based on Fr. Klaeber's third edition with First and Second Supplement (D.C. Heath And Company, 1950). Quotations and line-references with no title before them show *Beowulf* hereafter.
  - 9) As for the Modern English translations for Old English verses of *Beowulf*, I used mostly E.T. Donaldson's *Translation* (New York, 1966). But where Donaldson's translation does not indicate the syntactical differences between Old English and Modern English, I translated the verses into Modern English in order to show the differences. In such cases, double asterisks (\*\*) appear before the translations.
  - 10) By Bosworth-Toller denotes examples of Old English sentences from *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, edited by J. Bosworth and T. Toller, Oxford, 1898.
  - 11) Klaeber, the glossary of *Beowulf*.
  - 12) Mitchell, p.87.
  - 13) This Old English example was quoted from L. Kellner, 1892, p.49.
  - 14) R. Quirk. and C.L. Wrenn., *An Old English Grammar* (Methuen, 1955)
  - 15) Mitchell, p.66.
  - 16) Mitchell, p. 87.
  - 17) Mitchell, p.93.

- 18) Mitchell, p. 93. However Mitchell adds; "This proposition cannot be proved for it is only by classifying all clauses with the subjunctive as purpose and all clauses with the indicative as result that we can deduce the rule.
- 19) Mitchell, p.95.
- 20) Mitchell pp. 95-96."...Here *eall* is an adverb, perhaps with the sense 'easily.' But this probably represents a stage in the development of 'although':
- 21) Mitchell says; "Concession can sometimes be expressed by putting the verb first without any conjunction. The two most common types are *swelte ic, libbe ic*, 'whether I live or die' and *hycge swa he wille* 'let him think as he will,' 'no matter what he thinks.' The first type often occurs in the form *wylle ic, nylle ic*. 'willy-nilly.' " p.96.
- 22) Mitchell, p.98.  
He cites the following example: *eaðe mihte þes cwyde beon læwedum mannum bedigold, nære seo gastlice getacning,*=this saying could easily be concealed from laymen, were it not (for) its spiritual meaning.