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JAN TERJE FAARLUND

THE SYNTAX OF OLD NORSE

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NORROEN  
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# The Syntax of Old Norse

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Published with the support of the Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association (NFF)

*To Marianne*

# The Syntax of Old Norse

With a survey of the inflectional  
morphology and a complete bibliography

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JAN TERJE FAARLUND

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# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	xi
<b>Abbreviations and Sources</b>	xv
<b>1 Introduction</b>	1
1.1 The language	1
1.2 The sources	2
1.3 Descriptive framework	2
1.3.1 X-bar theory	2
1.3.2 Movement	3
1.3.3 Adjunction	5
<b>2 Phonology</b>	7
2.1 Spelling and pronunciation	7
2.2 Vowels	8
2.3 Consonants	9
2.4 Prosody	10
2.4.1 Stress	10
2.4.2 Quantity	10
2.5 Morphophonology	11
2.5.1 Productive phonological rules	11
2.5.2 Non-productive rules	14
<b>3 Inflectional Morphology</b>	16
3.1 The case system	16
3.1.1 Syntax and semantics	17
3.1.2 Grammatical features	20
3.1.3 Structural and lexical case	21
3.2 Nouns	23
3.2.1 Strong nouns	24
3.2.2 Weak nouns	31
3.3 Demonstratives and quantifiers	33
3.4 Pronouns	35
3.5 Adjectival declensions	36
3.5.1 The strong adjectival declension	37
3.5.2 The weak adjectival declension	40

3.6	Verb stems	41
3.6.1	Strong verbs	42
3.6.2	Weak verbs	45
3.6.3	Irregular verbs	47
3.7	Verbal inflection	48
3.7.1	The present stem	49
3.7.2	The preterite stems	51
3.7.3	The perfect stem	53
3.7.4	The reflexive verb form	53
4	<b>The Noun Phrase</b>	55
4.1	The definite article	56
4.1.1	The independent form	56
4.1.2	The cliticized article	57
4.1.3	Use of the definite article	58
4.2	Genitive phrases	59
4.3	Modifiers	67
4.3.1	Adjectives and participles	67
4.3.2	Quantifiers	73
4.3.3	<i>sjalfr</i>	75
4.3.4	Modifying nouns	77
4.3.5	Relative clauses	78
4.4	Complements and adjuncts	78
4.4.1	Prepositional phrases	79
4.4.2	Nominal clauses	79
5	<b>Determiner Phrases</b>	81
5.1	Demonstratives	81
5.1.1	Noun-phrase complements	82
5.1.2	Clausal complements	86
5.2	Personal pronouns	87
5.2.1	Pronouns followed by NP	89
5.2.2	<i>sjalfr</i>	90
5.2.3	Other modifiers	91
5.3	Interrogative pronouns	91
6	<b>The Adjective Phrase</b>	94
6.1	Modifiers	95
6.2	Complements	98
6.2.1	Noun phrases	98

6.2.2	Prepositional phrases	101
6.2.3	Clauses	102
6.3	Comparative constructions	103
<b>7</b>	<b>The Prepositional Phrase</b>	<b>107</b>
7.1	Types of preposition	107
7.1.1	Primary prepositions	107
7.1.2	Secondary prepositions	107
7.1.3	Intransitive prepositions	108
7.1.4	Complex prepositions	109
7.2	Modifiers	109
7.3	Complements	110
7.3.1	Prepositions governing the accusative or the dative	111
7.3.2	Prepositions governing the dative only	115
7.3.3	Prepositions governing the genitive	116
7.3.4	Clausal complements	117
7.3.5	Prepositions governing PPs	117
7.3.6	Deletion of complement	119
<b>8</b>	<b>The Verb Phrase</b>	<b>121</b>
8.1	Finite and non-finite verb forms	121
8.2	The reflexive verb	123
8.2.1	Anaphor	123
8.2.2	Medio-passive	126
8.3	Auxiliary verbs	127
8.3.1	Modal auxiliaries	128
8.3.2	<i>hafa</i>	130
8.3.3	<i>vera</i> and <i>verða</i>	131
8.3.4	<i>heita</i>	138
8.4	Complements of lexical verbs	139
8.4.1	Nominals	139
8.4.2	Prepositional phrases	147
8.4.3	Predicate complements	149
8.4.4	Accusative with infinitive	151
8.4.5	Clauses	156
8.4.6	Head-complement order	160
8.4.7	Deletion of complement	166
8.5	Adjuncts	168
8.5.1	Noun phrases	168
8.5.2	Prepositional phrases	174
8.5.3	Adverbs and adjectives	180



8.5.4	Clauses	184
8.5.5	Predicate adjuncts	185
<b>9</b>	<b>The Finite Sentence</b>	<b>189</b>
9.1	The finite verb	189
9.1.1	Tense and mood	190
9.1.2	Position of the finite verb	191
9.2	Subject properties	194
9.2.1	Position of the subject	195
9.2.2	Semantic and pragmatic properties	198
9.2.3	Subject–verb agreement	200
9.3	Derivation of subjects	203
9.3.1	External argument	204
9.3.2	Raising	204
9.3.3	Internal argument	210
9.3.4	Passive	211
9.3.5	Gerunds	215
9.4	Subjectless sentences	216
9.4.1	No external argument	217
9.4.2	Unexpressed external argument	220
9.5	Clausal subjects	223
9.6	Sentence types	224
9.6.1	Negation	225
9.6.2	Interrogative	226
9.6.3	Imperative	228
9.7	Word order	229
9.7.1	Topicalization	231
9.7.2	Stylistic fronting	236
9.7.3	Left adjunction	238
9.7.4	Right adjunction	239
<b>10</b>	<b>Subordinate Clauses</b>	<b>244</b>
10.1	Finite clauses	244
10.1.1	Tense and mood	244
10.1.2	Word order	250
10.1.3	Nominal clauses	253
10.1.4	Relative clauses	259
10.1.5	Adverbial clauses	269
10.2	Non-finite clauses	271
10.2.1	Structure	271
10.2.2	The complementizer	272

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10.2.3	Preposing	274
10.2.4	Control	275
10.2.5	Agreement	277
10.2.6	Raising	278
<b>11</b>	<b>Reflexive Binding</b>	<b>280</b>
11.1	Bound by subject	280
11.2	Bound by dative phrase	282
11.3	Bound by accusative phrase	283
11.4	Distributives	283
	<b>Bibliography of Old Norse Syntax</b>	<b>285</b>
	<b>Subject Index</b>	<b>295</b>
	<b>Word Index</b>	<b>299</b>

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# Preface

During the last couple of decades we have witnessed a revitalization of the old and time-honoured discipline of historical linguistics. Historical linguists of previous generations have traditionally paid less attention to syntax than to other aspects of grammar; however, this recent revitalization has been combined with a new interest in syntactic change. This new development has of course been inspired by simultaneous advances in the field of theoretical syntax.

The success and satisfactory results of historical linguistics depend not only on a theoretical basis, of course, but also above all on linguistic data material. The amount and quality of preserved texts from earlier ages constitute the limit of our achievement. But not all linguists can be professional philologists, and searching for grammatical patterns in manuscripts and even in published editions is in any case time-consuming. Handbooks of different languages are therefore important tools for linguists. This book is intended as such a handbook.

Old Norse is of particular interest to historical linguists. No other medieval Germanic language is preserved in a greater corpus of original prose fiction. I therefore hope that this description of Old Norse syntax will be of interest to students and scholars working on historical Germanic linguistics, diachronic syntax, or Scandinavian languages, as well as to philologists and others interested in Nordic languages, civilizations, and history. The only comprehensive presentation of Old Norse syntax in existence up until now is Marius Nygaard's *Norrøn syntax*, published in Dano-Norwegian in 1906. For all its merits as a source of data, it is ripe for replacement. Almost one hundred years have passed since its publication, and during that time there has been a tremendous development in theoretical syntax and methods of descriptive grammar. Nygaard's book lacks the grammatical analysis and the systematic presentation which we would expect today. Not only grammatical theory, but also philological and paleographical methodology have made great progress in the twentieth century. The manuscript editions used by Nygaard have since been replaced by more reliable ones. The present book has thus benefited from grammatical theory and from philological methodology which were not available to Nygaard a hundred years ago.

The main body of this book is devoted to the syntax of Old Norse. The approach is descriptive and synchronic, and the underlying framework is that of generative grammar. This theory is used only as a model of description, however. The main objective is to present the syntactic patterns of the language in a systematic way. Therefore, technical details are kept to a minimum, and there is hardly any theoretical argumentation in the book. It is hoped, however, that the amount of data presented, and the way in which it is presented, may form the basis of theoretical argumentation and of hypotheses about syntactic structure and change. All bibliographical references are given in the footnotes. At the end of the book there is a bibliography of Old Norse syntax, which includes other works besides those referred to in the book. It is perhaps inevitable that some items will have escaped my attention, but my ambition has been to make the bibliography as complete as possible.

Old Norse is a highly inflected language, and therefore morphological categories are closely connected with the syntax. For this reason, I have found it necessary to include a chapter presenting the basic inflectional patterns of the language (Chapter 3). But inflectional morphology can only be understood on the basis of morphophonological processes. A basic knowledge of the major phonological elements of the language is also a prerequisite for the correct interpretation of the orthography used in the examples. Therefore, an introduction to the basic principles of the phonology and orthography is also included (Chapter 2).

I could not have accomplished this work without the assistance of colleagues and students. I consider myself fortunate that some of the world's leading experts in the Old Norse language kindly agreed to act as my referees. I would like to thank Michael Barnes (London), Kurt Braunmüller (Hamburg), Marit Christoffersen (Kristiansand), Jan Ragnar Hagland (Trondheim), Odd Einar Haugen (Bergen), Kristian Emil Kristoffersen (Oslo), and Endre Mørck (Tromsø) for the help each of them has given me, in reading one or more chapters of the manuscript and making very valuable comments and suggestions. Many errors and shortcomings have been avoided thanks to their unselfish and painstaking work. (Any remaining ones are of course entirely my own responsibility.) In addition to the members of this group, I want to thank Elly van Gelderen (Arizona) for comments and theoretical input. Thanks are also due to Jess Smith for checking all the English translations of the example sentences, and to the following colleagues in the Scandinavian Department at the University of Oslo for help and assistance in various ways: Hans-Olav Enger, Jon Gunnar Jørgensen, Kjartan Ottosson, and Trygve Skomedal. My student assistants Inger Egebakken and Gro Vittersø have helped with excerpting examples and editing parts of the manuscript, and

Inger Lise Rindal did the ground work on the bibliography at the start of the project back in Trondheim.

A linguist working on historical material depends on good philologists. Odd Einar Haugen, besides serving as a referee, also gave me necessary advice and assistance in establishing my corpus of texts. Working in the immediate vicinity of and in close connection with the Old Norwegian Dictionary project at the University of Oslo proved to be of vital importance when it came to the use of text editions and other source material, and I wish to express my special gratitude to Erik Simensen and Bjørn Eithun for their kind readiness to assist in all kinds of practical and philological matters.

The electronic version of the Icelandic Family Sagas, *Íslendinga sögur. Orðstöðulykill og texti*, published by Mál og Menning, Reykjavík, has been a useful tool in finding text examples. Since the editions on which it is based are not suitable for linguistic research, however, each example has been checked against printed editions.

Many books would probably never have seen the light of day if the author could have known in advance how much effort and patience it would take to produce it. That is certainly the case with the present book. It would not have been possible to complete this work had I not been given time off from teaching and other duties during various periods. An initial grant from the Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association (NFF) in 1996 made it possible to get started. Since then I have benefited from a sabbatical year at the University of Oslo. The completion of the manuscript was made possible by a project grant from the Norwegian Research Council, which allowed me to devote part of the time to the study of Old Norse syntax.

Work of this type cannot be constrained to regular working hours. Inevitably, it tends to invade one's private sphere and those who inhabit it. Therefore I want to extend my final and warmest thanks to my wife, Marianne Gullestad, for her understanding, patience and support.

J.T.F.

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# Abbreviations and Sources

Each example in the text consists of the following parts:

The first line is the Old Norse example. It is printed in standardized Old Norse orthography, regardless of the orthography used in the edition from which it is taken. In some (long) examples, the relevant part may be italicized.

The second line is a morpheme-by-morpheme translation. Grammatical morphemes are generally glossed according to the following conventions:

- When there is agreement within a determiner phrase or noun phrase, only the head is marked for the agreement categories (except when agreement within the phrase is the phenomenon to be illustrated).
- The following categories are morphologically marked in English and are therefore not glossed: plural of nouns and demonstratives, nominative case of pronouns (except 2nd person), preterite tense, infinitive, present participle, past participle, supine, 3rd person singular present. The infinitive is glossed only for modal auxiliaries.
- Some unmarked values are not glossed: singular, present, indicative, 3rd person singular, the neuter gender with the demonstrative *þat* ‘that’ and the interrogative *hvat* ‘what’.
- The dual of the 1st and 2nd person and the plural of the 2nd person of the possessive determiners are added in parentheses to distinguish them from agreement affixes: our(DU), your(P), etc.

The following abbreviations are used for grammatical morphemes:

A	accusative
D	dative
DEF	definite declension (of adjective)
DU	dual
F	feminine
G	genitive
IMP	imperative
INF	infinitive



M	masculine
N	nominative
NEU	neuter
P	plural (or formal, with 2nd person pronoun)
RFL	reflexive (determiner or clitic)
S	singular
SUB	subjunctive

Proper names and patronymics are not translated. They are rendered in an uninflected form and without diacritics. (An exception is made for names with a definite article, which are mostly names of ships and a few place names.)

The third line gives an idiomatic English translation (by this author), followed by the identification of the source of the example (in parenthesis).

The source of each example is identified by an abbreviation of the title of the text edition, followed by volume number (when applicable) in Roman numbers, page number and line number. Below is a list of the text editions which have been used. The abbreviation is followed by indication of country of origin (I for Iceland and N for Norway) and age of the manuscript (approximate year).

Band-I 1330

Magerøy, H. (ed.), *Bandamanna saga* (Copenhagen, 1956–76).

Barl-N 1275

Rindal, M. (ed.), *Barlaams ok Josaphats saga* (Oslo, 1981).

DN-N 1200–1300

*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*: Oldbreve til Kundskab om Norges indre og ydre Forhold, Sprog, Slægter, Sæder, Lovgivning og Rettergang i Middelalderen (Christiania/Oslo, 1847–1995).

Dpl-I 1330

*Droplaugarsona saga*. In J. Jakobsen (ed.), *Austfirðinga sögur* (Copenhagen, 1902–3).

Eg-I 1330

Jónsson, F. (ed.), *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* (Copenhagen, 1886–8).

Finnb-I 1330

Gering, H. (ed.), *Finnboga saga hins ramma* (Halle, 1879).

Fbr-I 1330

Thórólfsson, B. K. (ed.), *Fóstbræðra saga* (Copenhagen, 1925–7).

Gunnl-I 1300

Jónsson, F. (ed.), *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu* (Copenhagen, 1916).

Hallfr-I 1330

Einarsson, B. (ed.), *Hallfræðar saga* (Copenhagen, 1953).

- Hkr-I 1300–1700  
 Jónsson, F. (ed.), *Heimskringla: Noregs konunga sögur af Snorri Sturluson* I–IV (Copenhagen, 1893–1901).
- Hóm-N 1200  
 Indrebø, G. (ed.), *Gamal norsk homiliebok* (Oslo, 1931).
- Kgs-N 1275  
 Holm-Olsen, L. (ed.), *Konungs skuggsiá* (Oslo, 1945).
- Korm-I 1330  
*Kormáks saga*. In E. Ó. Sveinsson (ed.), *Íslenzk Fornrit* 8 (Reykjavík, 1939).
- Laxd-I 1330  
 Kálund, K. (ed.), *Laxdæla saga* (Halle, 1896).
- Ljós-I 1400  
*Ljósvetninga saga*. In B. Sigfússon (ed.), *Íslenzk Fornrit* 10 (Reykjavík, 1940).
- ML-N 1320  
*Magnus lagabøtes landslov*. In R. Keyser and P. A. Munch (eds.), *Norges gamle Love*, 2 (Christiania, 1848).
- Nj-I 1300  
 Jónsson, F. (ed.), *Brennu-Njálssaga (Njála)* (Halle, 1908).
- OH-N 1225  
 Johnsen, O. A. (ed.), *Olafs saga hins helga*. Efter pergamenthaandskrift i Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek. DG 8<sup>II</sup> (Kristiania, 1922).
- Reykd-I 1400  
*Reykdæla saga ok Víga-Skútu*. In B. Sigfússon (ed.), *Íslenzk Fornrit* 10 (Reykjavík, 1940).

In references to *Íslenzk Fornrit* only the page number is given. For the *Diplomatarium Norvegicum* (DN), the second figure refers to document number.

Other abbreviations:

- AP adjective phrase  
 CP complementizer phrase (clause)  
 DP determiner phrase  
 IP inflection phrase  
 NP noun phrase  
 PP prepositional phrase  
 RP reference phrase  
 VP verb phrase

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# Introduction

Describing the syntax of a dead language is rife with theoretical problems and methodological stumbling blocks. A major question is determining what the description should seem to describe. Traditional, philologically oriented grammars of dead languages are descriptions of finite corpora. Modern generative grammar, on the other hand, aims to account for speakers' linguistic competence, their internalized grammar. The grammatical description presented in this book aims to describe the internalized grammar of the once living speakers of Old Norse. In the absence of live speakers and their intuitions, and in the absence of contemporary syntactic descriptions, our sources of knowledge of the internalized grammar of the speakers are limited to extant texts, besides grammatical theory. These two sources are the database of the present description of Old Norse syntax. The statements made about syntactic rules are therefore merely hypotheses about the internalized grammar of the speakers of the time. The strength of the hypotheses, that is the 'correctness' of the description, depends on the closeness of the written sources to the actual spoken language, and on the validity of the grammatical theory underlying the description. It should be noted, incidentally, that any description of speakers' internalized grammar, whether dead or alive, is a hypothesis of this kind, since the actual object of study is never available to direct observation.

## 1.1 The language

Old Norse is a North Germanic language. The medieval stage of the North Germanic languages can be divided into two main branches, East Nordic (Danish and Swedish) and West Nordic (Norwegian and Icelandic). Old Norse is another term for Medieval West Nordic. It is the language spoken in the Western part of Scandinavia during the last part of the Middle Ages. More precisely, it is the language used from the early ninth century till the late fourteenth century in Norway, Iceland, and the Faroes, and in the Norse settlements in the British Isles and Greenland.

Over a period of almost 600 years and in a geographical area stretching from eastern Norway to Greenland, there must of course have been great linguistic variety. Still, the written sources that we have are uniform and stable enough to justify the concept of ‘one language’.

This apparent uniformity is of course a uniformity of the manuscript sources, rather than of the spoken language of the time. The manuscripts are either Icelandic or Norwegian. From the other Norse-speaking areas, we either have none or very few written sources, or only inscriptions (in the runic alphabet) too short to serve as syntactic data. There are a few minor phonological and morphological differences between Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian, but no known syntactic differences.

## 1.2 The sources

The texts used as sources in this book are printed editions of manuscripts written either in Iceland or in Norway before 1400; the oldest ones are from the early thirteenth century. Only prose texts have been used, since they may be assumed to be closest to the spoken language. The texts include fiction (Icelandic family sagas and translated sagas), historical texts (kings’ sagas), laws, official documents and charters (diploma), religious texts (homilies), and learned literature.

The editions which are used are philologically the most reliable ones available. I have used the same editions as those cited in the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, published by the Arnamagnæan Commission in Copenhagen. For details about editions and manuscripts, see the section on abbreviations and sources.

## 1.3 Descriptive framework

The framework used as a basis for the syntactic description in this book is the Principles and Parameters version of Generative Grammar. For those not familiar with this theory, a brief sketch of its main features is given below.

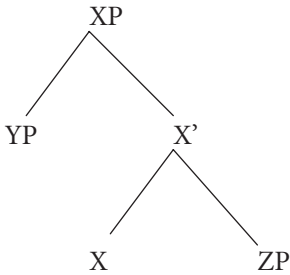
### 1.3.1 *X-bar theory*

Syntactic structure is hierarchical, which means that certain elements belong closer together than certain others, as in (1a), which can be bracketed as in (1b).

- (1) a. studying old languages  
 b. [studying [old languages]]

In the Principles and Parameters theory this fact follows from the X-bar theory, which is a statement about phrase structure in universal grammar. Syntactic structure can be decomposed into hierarchically ordered **phrases**, also called **projections**. Each phrase has a **head**, and (optionally) a **complement** and a **specifier**. The head belongs to a lexical or a functional (grammatical) category, and determines the category of the phrase. The head may have a sister node, a complement, which is also a phrase. The head is said to **govern** its complement. The node dominating the head and its complement may have another phrase as its sister, called a specifier. The specifier is also a phrase. A phrase of the category X can be represented as the tree structure in (2), where X is the head, YP the specifier, and ZP the complement. According to X-bar theory, only binary branching exists in syntax.

(2)



Every phrase has a head. In other words, all phrases are endocentric. Heads may be lexical or functional. Lexical heads are words belonging to one of the categories noun, verb, adjective, or preposition. Functional categories are grammatical words such as determiners or complementizers, or other grammatical elements, such as tense or definiteness.

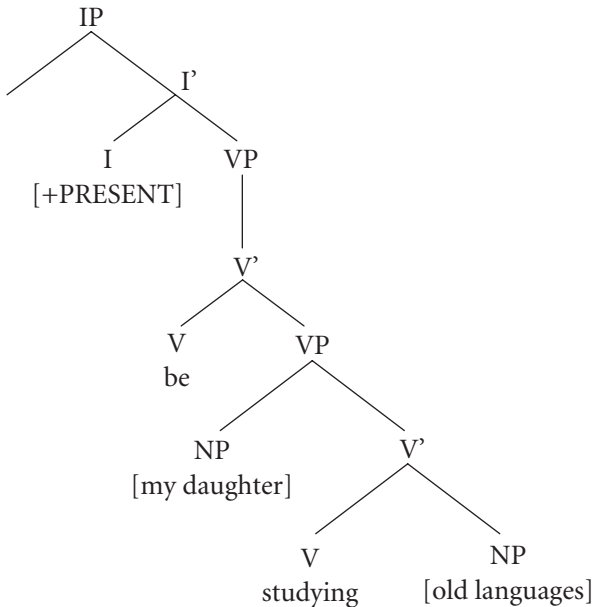
### 1.3.2 *Movement*

The syntactic structure of a sentence is represented at two different levels. The most abstract or remote level is the D-structure (deep structure). This is where grammatical and semantic relations are represented. Elements may move from their D-structure position to another position in the structure. The structure which is the result of syntactic movements is the S-structure (surface structure). A moved element leaves a **trace** in the S-structure. Traces must be

bound by the element that has been moved. Binding presupposes c-command, which is a relation defined in terms of the structural relations of the nodes in a tree structure. An element  $\alpha$  c-commands another element  $\beta$  if and only if the first node above  $\alpha$  also dominates  $\beta$ . In actual practice, this means that a moved element cannot be lower in the structure than its trace. In other words, movement can only occur upwards in the structure.

In principle, a phrase can only move to another phrasal position, that is a specifier or a complement position; and a head can only move to another head position. An important type of movement is that of lexical heads to functional heads. This is how lexical categories may be combined with grammatical categories. As an illustration, consider clauses with auxiliaries in English. The subject is generated as a specifier of the verb from which it gets its semantic role, that is the main verb, not the auxiliary. The sentence *My daughter is studying old languages* has the (simplified) underlying structure in (3), where IP stands for ‘inflection phrase’, a functional category. The verb *be* is an auxiliary verb, and therefore it takes another verb phrase as its complement.

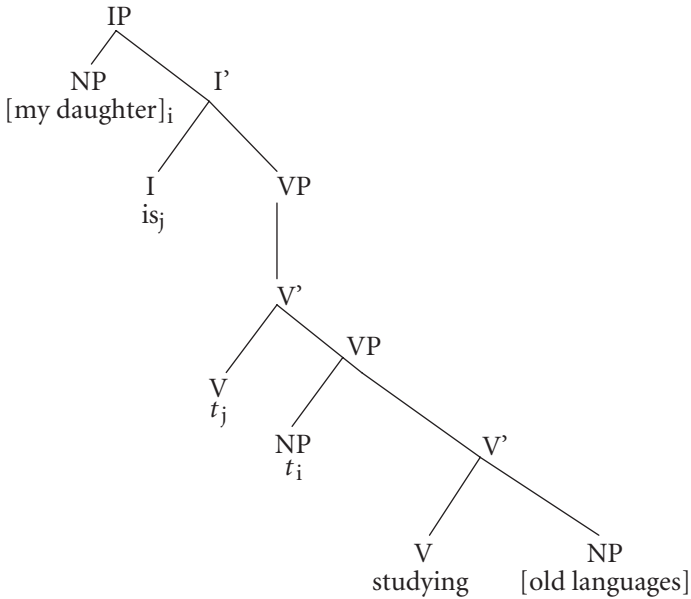
(3)



The verb *be*, which is a single lexeme and thus a head, moves to the head position of IP, where it combines with the tense feature. The subject phrase

*my daughter* moves to the specifier position of IP, another phrasal position, where it receives the grammatical features of subjects, such as nominative (in the case of pronouns), and the ability to govern verb agreement. The result is the structure in (4), where traces are marked as *t*, coindexed with the moved element.

(4)

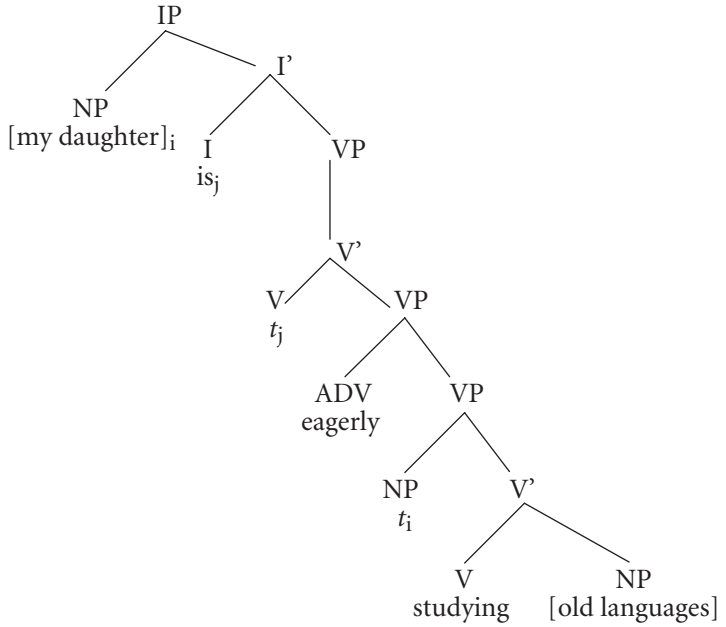


### 1.3.3 Adjunction

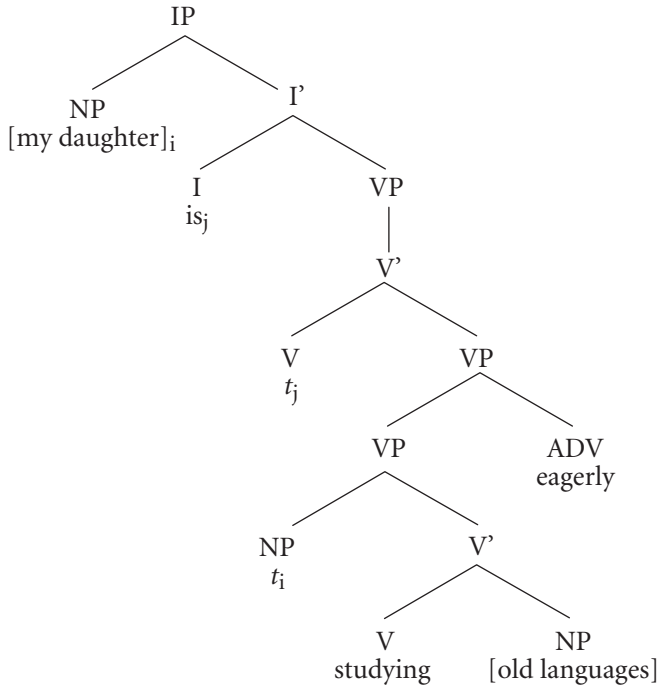
There are also sentence elements which are neither heads, specifiers, nor complements, such as adjectival modifiers and adverbials. Such elements are **adjoined** to the phrase structure. Adjunction is an operation whereby an extra node is created above another node and given the same category label as the original node. From this new node, another branch is constructed. Adjunction may be to the left or to the right. For example, in a sentence structure like (3-4), an adverbial such as *eagerly* may be inserted. This may be left-adjoined to the VP which it modifies, yielding the sentence *My daughter is eagerly studying old languages*, which has the S-structure in (5a). Right-adjunction of the same adverbial results in the sentence *My daughter is studying old languages eagerly*, with the structure in (5b).



(5) a.



b.



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# Phonology

This chapter is not a comprehensive presentation of Old Norse phonology. It is meant primarily as an aid to the understanding of the inflectional patterns which play a role in syntax. The emphasis is therefore on those features of the phonology which are relevant to the subsequent chapters on morphology and syntax.

## 2.1 Spelling and pronunciation

Old Norse is recorded in two different scripts: the runic script (*futhark*), and the Latin alphabet, which came into use with the introduction of Christianity shortly after the turn of the first millennium. With certain additions it was made quite suitable as a means of representing the sounds and phonemes of Old Norse. The ⟨þ⟩ for the dental fricative, and later the ⟨ð⟩ for the voiced counterpart, were borrowed from Old English, and so was the ⟨y⟩ for the front, high labial vowel. Digraphs were used to represent the rich vowel system of Old Scandinavian. In addition, various diacritic marks were occasionally adopted both for vowel quality and quantity.

There was of course no generally standardized orthography for Old Norse as a whole. The practice of writing was first of all performed by specially trained scribes affiliated with monasteries and chancelleries, or a few important private estates. Although each of these scribal centres would maintain a certain orthographic standard there is a great variety in the spelling conventions used in the manuscripts.

During the nineteenth century, a standardized orthography was developed under the influence of more recent Icelandic orthography. This is the orthography used in introductory handbooks, grammars, dictionaries, and in normalized editions of Old Norse texts. All the examples quoted in this book are rendered in this standardized spelling, regardless of the spelling used in the original manuscript or edition.

The standardized orthography was designed to reflect Old Icelandic pronunciation closely. There is thus close to a one-to-one relationship between this spelling and the assumed pronunciation of Old Icelandic.

The following letters are used:

a b d ð e f g h i j k l m n o p r s t þ u v x y z æ ø œ ǫ

Most of these have the standard phonological value that they have in European languages in general and in the International Phonetic Alphabet. The following points should be noted, however:

- ⟨ð⟩ is a voiced dental fricative, as in English *that*.
- ⟨f⟩ is voiceless in word initial position, when doubled, or in unvoiced contexts, otherwise it is voiced [v].
- ⟨g⟩ is a voiced velar stop word initially, when doubled, or after *n*, otherwise it is a voiced velar fricative.
- ⟨j⟩ is a palatal semivowel, as in German.
- ⟨þ⟩ is a voiceless dental fricative [θ], as in English *thing*.
- ⟨v⟩ is a labial semivowel [w].
- ⟨x⟩ is a digraph representing *ks*.
- ⟨y⟩ is a rounded front high vowel, like German ⟨ü⟩.
- ⟨z⟩ is a digraph representing *ts*.
- ⟨æ⟩ is a low, fronted unrounded vowel, similar to the vowel in English *bad*.
- ⟨ø⟩ is a mid, front, rounded vowel, like German ⟨ö⟩.
- ⟨œ⟩ is the long variant of ⟨ø⟩.
- ⟨ǫ⟩ is a low, back rounded vowel [ɔ].

Long vowels are marked by an acute accent: ⟨á é í ó ú ý⟩. The long *á* was rounded early on, and may be pronounced as a long variant of *ǫ*. The letters ⟨æ⟩ and ⟨œ⟩ always represent long vowels, and do not therefore carry an accent mark. The letters ⟨ø⟩ and ⟨ǫ⟩ always represent short vowels. The combination ⟨ey⟩ represents a diphthong which was probably pronounced /øy/.

## 2.2 Vowels

The vowel phonemes of Old Norse can be represented as in the following table.

	i	i:	y	y:	u	u:	e	e:	ø	ø:	o	o:	æ:	a	ɔ	ɔ:
HIGH	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LOW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
BACK	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+
LABIAL	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
LONG	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	+

The main redundancy in the system is that non-low back vowels are always labial. There are seven pairs distinguished by length only. The lack of a short /æ/ is due to an early merger with short /e/. The lack of a long /a:/ is due to a merger with /ɔ:/ early in the thirteenth century. The /i/ and the /u/ can also occur in a nonsyllabic position and function as semivowels, /j/ and /w/ (the latter spelt ⟨v⟩). There are three diphthongs in Old Norse: /ei/, /au/, /øy/.

The inventory of vowels in unstressed syllables is much smaller than that in stressed syllables. Instead of the sixteen phonemes in the table above, there is a contrast of three vowel phonemes only in unstressed syllables. There is no length opposition, /a/ is distinguished from the other two by the feature [+LOW].

	i	u	a
LOW	-	-	+
LABIAL	-	+	-

The relevant feature is LOW rather than HIGH, which is shown by the fact that in many manuscripts, especially early Icelandic ones, the unstressed vowels are spelt ⟨e⟩ and ⟨o⟩ instead of ⟨i⟩ and ⟨u⟩. /u/ is distinguished from the other two by the feature [+LABIAL]. This is shown by the fact that an unstressed /a/ becomes /u/ under u-umlaut (cf. 2.5).

### 2.3 Consonants

The consonant phonemes of Old Norse are represented in the following table.

	p	b	f	t	d	θ	k	g	h	s	m	n	r	l
SONORANT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
CONTINUANT	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	o	+	+	-	-	+	+
LABIAL	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
VELAR	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
STRIDENT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
LATERAL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
VOICED	-	+	o	-	+	o	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+

The [+SONORANT, -CONTINUANT] consonants are the nasals. The non-strident non-sonorants form three groups of three consonants each: the labials, the velars, and the dental/alveolars [-LABIAL, -VELAR]. Each of these has a voiceless stop (/p t k/), a voiced stop (/b d g/), and a fricative (/f θ h/).

In the labials and dentals the feature CONTINUANT takes precedence over VOICE; there is a voice opposition in the stops, and no voice opposition in the fricatives. That means that [f] and [v], and [θ] and [ð] are in complementary distribution. The voiceless fricatives are used word initially, and the voiced ones word medially and finally. The letter ⟨f⟩ is used for both the voiced and the voiceless variant, as in *fara* [fara] ‘go’ and *hafa* [hava] ‘have’, whereas there are separate letters for the two dental allophones, as in *þaðan* ‘thence’. In the velar series, the feature VOICE takes precedence over CONTINUANT; there is a continuant opposition between the two voiceless consonants, /k/ and /h/, while the voiced /g/ may be a stop or a fricative depending on the environment.

In Old Norwegian the /h/ is lost everywhere except word initially before vowels and semivowels. There is thus a difference between Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian in words such as *hlutr* ‘part’, *hringr* ‘ring’, *hníga* ‘sink’, etc. versus *lutr*, *ringr*, *níga*, etc. In the standardized orthography, the Icelandic variants with the *h* are used.

## 2.4 Prosody

### 2.4.1 Stress

There is a distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables in Old Norse. As we have already seen, these two kinds of syllables have a different inventory of distinctive vowel qualities. The stress is normally on the root syllable of a word; in most cases that is the first syllable, as in *fara*, *þaðan* (in this section stressed syllables are indicated by capitalizing the vowel). In compound words, the first element normally has the primary stress, while the other element has a secondary stress: *hÁrfagri* ‘hair-fine’, *útlendr* ‘foreigner’ (secondary stress is indicated by de-italicizing the vowel). Certain prefixes may also have primary stress, in which case the root has secondary stress: *úvinr* ‘enemy’ (lit. ‘un-friend’). The change from primary to secondary stress does not affect the segmental phonology of the syllable; therefore syllables with a secondary stress have the same vowel inventory and the same quantity as the corresponding primary stress syllables.

### 2.4.2 Quantity

Vowels may be short or long, and consonants may be simple or geminated, or occur in clusters. In stressed syllables, a short or a long vowel may be followed by none, one, or two (or more) consonants. A diphthong counts as one long

vowel. Unstressed syllables have only short vowels. Stressed syllables may then be short, long, or ‘overlong’, unstressed syllables short or long. If we consider the last consonant following a vowel to belong to the following syllable or to be extrametrical, we get the following pattern of syllable quantity for Old Norse:

Syllable length	No. of morae	Structure	Examples	
			Stressed syllables	Unstressed syllables
Short	1	V	<i>ve.ra</i> ‘be’	<i>kal.la.ði</i> ‘called’
			<i>bi.t</i> ‘bite’	<i>ges.tu.m</i> ‘guests.D’
Long	2	V:	<i>bú</i> ‘estate’	
			<i>bí.ta</i> ‘bite’	
			<i>sól</i> ‘sun’	
			<i>ey</i> ‘island’	
Overlong	3	VC	<i>ka.ta</i> ‘throw’	<i>gamalli</i> ‘old.F.D’
			<i>hes.t</i> ‘horse.A’	<i>ha.mar.r</i> ‘hammer’
			<i>nát.t</i> ‘night’	
			<i>haus.t</i> ‘autumn’	

## 2.5 Morphophonology

In this section I will first present informally the most important synchronic phonological processes which affect the inflection of more than one category. Then I will describe diachronic processes which are no longer productive in Old Norse, but which play an important role in the morphology of the language.

### 2.5.1 Productive phonological rules

These are rules which apply whenever the specified phonological environment occurs. Thus they may operate when a suffix is added to a stem.

#### (i) U-umlaut

This is a regressive assimilation process whereby the vowel *u* in an unstressed syllable rounds a short *a* in a preceding syllable in the same word. The result is a back labial vowel, written ⟨o⟩ if stressed, and ⟨u⟩ if unstressed.

*arm* + *um* > *qrmum* ‘arms.D’  
*sag* + *ur* > *sogur* ‘stories’  
*kall* + *að* + *u* > *kolluðu* ‘called.3P’

U-umlaut is found mainly in the Western dialects (Icelandic and Western Norwegian), and less so in Eastern Norwegian. It is, however, consistently implemented in the standardized orthography.

(ii) Consonant assimilation and simplification

The suffix *-r*, which occurs in several inflectional categories, both nominal and verbal, regularly assimilates progressively to a preceding *l*, *n* or *s*.

*stól + r > stóll* ‘chair.N’  
*græn + r > grænn* ‘green.M.N’  
*les + r > less* ‘reads’

If the stem ends in a short stressed syllable, *r* does not assimilate to *l* or *n*, only to *s*, as in *less* (in contrast to *dalr* ‘valley.N’, *vinr* ‘friend.N’).

A voiced dental assimilates regressively to a following *-t*, and a resulting geminate may be simplified; see below.

*fædd + t > fætt* ‘born.NEU.N/A’  
*kallað + t > kallat* ‘called.NEU.N/A’  
*hin + t > hitt* ‘the.NEU.N/A’

ð+ð becomes *dd*: *glað + ði > gladdi* ‘made happy’.

A double *n* changes to *ð* before *-r*: *mann + r > maðr* ‘man.N’.

This is not consistent, however: *fjólmenrrar* ‘numerous’ F.G (Hkr II.211.1). The assimilation may be missing, especially in the case of proper names: *Porfínnr* N. The two forms may even be used side by side in the same text: *Fiðr* (Hkr II.149.7), *Fínnr* (Hkr II.149.15).

When a double consonant occurs after another consonant, it is simplified:

*send + di > sendi* ‘sent’  
*skipt + ti > skipti* ‘shifted’  
*akr + r > akr* ‘field.N’  
*nagl + r > nagl + l > nagl* ‘nail.N’

Similarly, three identical consonants resulting from assimilation are reduced to two, as in *menn* ‘men.N/A’ (< *menn + n* < *menn + r*).

In unstressed syllables, the combination dental + *t* is always assimilated and shortened:

*kallað + t > kallat* ‘called’  
*opin + t > opit* ‘open.NEU.N/A’

More generally, groups of three or more consonants may be simplified if they are difficult to pronounce, especially if they contain two or more stops.

*marg + t > mart* ‘many.S.NEU’  
*vatn + s > vats* ‘water.G’  
*brautst + sk > brautsk* ‘broke.2S.RFL’

### (iii) Consonant lengthening

In a suffix starting with *r* or *t*, the consonant is lengthened after a stem ending in a long vowel.

*ný + ra > nýrra* ‘new.P.G’  
*sá + t > sátt* ‘saw.2S’

### (iv) Vowel deletion

A short unstressed vowel is deleted when following a long stressed vowel with the same features. Thus *i* is deleted after a front vowel, *a* after a back, low vowel, and *u* after a back, labial vowel.

*tré + i > tré* ‘tree.D’  
*á + ar > ár* ‘river.G’  
*á + um > ám* ‘rivers.D’  
*trú + um > trúm* ‘faithful.P.D’

Certain derivational suffixes consisting of a vowel + *l* or *n* or the vowel *i* alone drop the vowel when followed by an inflectional suffix starting with a vowel.

*aptan + ar > aptnar* ‘evenings.N’  
*gamal + ir > gamlir* ‘old.P.M.N’  
*drepin + um > drepnum* ‘killed.P.D’  
*hirdi + ar > hirdar* ‘bodyguard.P.N’

Feminine nouns derived by *-an/un* are not subject to this rule: *skipanir + ir > skipanir* ‘arrangements.N’.

### (v) Semivowel deletion

The semivowels can only occur before vowels with ‘opposite’ features. That is, *j* only occurs in front of back vowels, and *v* only in front of non-labial vowels. When because of umlaut or ablaut a semivowel comes to precede a vowel with those features, it is deleted.

*krjúp + \*ir > \*krjýpir > krýpr* ‘crawls’  
*\*vurðu > urðu* ‘became.3P’ (of *verða*)



If the root vowel is *e* preceded by *j* it raises to *i*: *fjarð + i > \*fjerði > firði* ‘fjord.D’.

Many nouns, verbs, and adjectives have a stem that ends in a semivowel, as a remnant of an earlier stem suffix. This semivowel appears only when followed by an inflectional suffix starting with a vowel with the opposite features. It is deleted in front of a consonant or at the end of a word; *j* is furthermore deleted before front vowels, and *v* before labial vowels.

*telj + i > teli* ‘tells.SUB’  
*eyj + Ø > ey* ‘island.N’  
*stefj + s > stefs* ‘refrain.G’  
*høggv + um > hōggum* ‘strike.1P’  
*sōngv + Ø > sōng* ‘song.A’  
*fōlv + r > fōlr* ‘pale.M.N’

(The symbol ‘Ø’ indicates zero ending.) Note that the words with the stem in *v* have a u-umlauted root vowel even when the semivowel does not appear (cf. 2.5.2).

#### (vi) Stress shift

When a root ending in *é* is followed by a suffix starting with a back vowel, the stress and the length are shifted to the vowel of the suffix, and the root vowel becomes a semivowel.

*fé + ar > fjár* ‘money.G’  
*sé + um > sjóm* ‘see.1P’

### 2.5.2 *Non-productive rules*

Some of the morphophonological changes in Old Norse reflect earlier stages of the language, which means that the conditioning factors have been lost.

#### (i) Umlaut

The u-umlaut described in the previous section is conditioned by its phonological environment. There are also umlaut processes that are not part of the synchronic phonology of Old Norse. Besides u-umlaut, there is a non-productive i-umlaut. These are therefore morphologically conditioned umlaut processes.

The non-productive u-umlaut occurs in nouns and adjectives where an original /u/ or /w/ in the suffix has been lost. The umlauted root vowel then is the only marker of a morphological feature.

*land* + \**u* > *lǫnd* 'lands'  
*sak* + \**u* > *sǫk* 'sake, case.N'  
*gamal* + \**u* > *gǫmul* 'old.F.N'  
*sang* + \**wa* > *sǫng* 'song.A'

By i-umlaut a root vowel may be fronted under the influence of a following *i* or *j*.

*a* > *e*  
*á* > *æ*  
*u* > *y*  
*ú* > *ý*  
*o* > *ø*  
*ó* > *œ*  
*au* > *ey*

The conditioning phoneme may be either lost or still visible. But even if there is an extant *i* or *j* in the word, the umlaut is not predictable phonologically. Rather, it has the character of an allomorphic alteration, as we will see in Chapter 3.

*luk* + *il(+r)* > *lykill* 'key' (cf. *lúka* 'close, shut')  
*vall* + *ir* > *vellir* 'fields'  
*mús* + \**ir* > *mýss* 'mice'  
*lát* + \**ir* > *lætr* 'lets'

#### (ii) Final devoicing and assimilation

A nasal preceding a final stop (which is devoiced) is generally assimilated to that stop in the western dialects, but not in the Eastern. Thus the past tense of *binda* 'bind' is *bant* (< *band* through final devoicing) in the East, but *batt* in the West.

#### (iii) Loss of *h*

By the Old Scandinavian period, the /h/ had been lost in all positions except word initially. Thus an /h/ which was the result of final devoicing of a fricative /g/ would also be lost, as in the present tense of the preterite-present verb *mega* 'may, can': \**mag* > \**mah* > *má*.

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## Inflectional Morphology

This chapter gives the main inflectional patterns in standardized Old Norse orthography. The presentation is basically synchronic; a diachronic perspective is included only when it may give a concise generalization or explanation of the synchronic facts. Most geographical, chronological, and textual variation is left out.

The inflectional morphology of Old Norse involves the following parts of speech: nouns, determiners, pronouns, adjectives, and verbs. The adjectival inflection is also used for definite articles, possessive determiners, quantifiers, interrogative pronouns, and participles. Demonstrative determiners and cardinal numbers have inflections different from those of adjectives.

All lexical categories involved are inflected for number. First and second person pronouns have singular, dual and plural; the other categories have singular and plural only. All categories except finite verbs (the nominal categories) are inflected for case: nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive. Nouns have one of three genders: masculine, feminine, or neuter. The nouns are thus not inflected for gender, they have inherent gender; the other nominal categories are inflected for gender in agreement with the noun that they specify, modify, refer to, or are predicated of. Adjectives also distinguish between a definite and an indefinite inflection. Pronouns distinguish three persons, and finite verbs are inflected for three persons besides number. Purely verbal categories are tense and mood. There are two tenses, present and preterite, and three moods, indicative, subjunctive, and imperative.

### 3.1 The case system

Nouns and other nominal categories are inflected for case. In this section I will present some general features of the Old Norse case system. The following discussion will deal not only with morphology, but also with syntax and semantics. But since case is a morphosyntactic category not associated with a specific lexical category, I find it most practical to treat it here.

There are four different cases, **nominative**, **accusative**, **dative**, and **genitive**. The cases of Old Norse can be described both in terms of their syntactic function and in terms of their semantic role. There is, however, quite a bit of overlap between the individual cases in both of these dimensions.

### 3.1.1 *Syntax and semantics*

In this section I will outline some prototypical syntactic and semantic functions of each of the cases. For a more detailed description, see Chapters 6–8.

#### (i) Nominative

The nominative is the case of the subject, and typically it denotes the agent.

- (1) a. þá gekk mæR fyrir konung  
 then went girl.N before king.A  
 ‘Then the girl went up to the king’ (Hóm 107.30)
- b. vér lögðum saman eignir þeira  
 we laid.1P together possessions.A their  
 ‘We put their possessions together’ (DN II.16)

When the predicate verb does not assign an agent role, the nominative subject may carry any other role.

- (2) a. Þjóðólfr inn fróði ór Hvini var skáld Haralds  
 Thjodolf.N the learned from Hvin.D was poet.N Harald.G  
 ins hárfagra  
 the hair-fine.DEF  
 ‘Thjodolf the learned from Hvin was Harald the Fine-haired’s poet’  
 (Hkr I.4.9)
- b. vér munum hafa fé lítit  
 we will.1P have money.A little  
 ‘We will have little money’ (Nj 388.16)

By general rules of agreement, a predicate complement is normally also in the nominative, as in (2a); cf. 8.3.3.

#### (ii) Accusative

The typical function of the accusative is that of a complement of a verb (direct object) or of a preposition. When governed by a verb, the accusative

prototypically carries a patient role, as in (1b) and (2b). When governed by a local preposition, it denotes the direction towards which, as in (1a).

Accusative NPs may also be used as adjuncts to denote various local or temporal relations.

- (3) a. *síðan reri jarl alla fjorðu*  
 since rowed earl.N all fjords.A  
 ‘Then the earl rowed through all the fjords’ (Hkr I.326.8)
- b. *hann sat þá at lǫndum þrjá vetr*  
 he sat then at lands.D three winters.A  
 ‘He remained in the country for three years’ (Hkr I.41.13)

### (iii) Dative

The dative shares its syntactic functions with the accusative: it can serve as a complement of a verb or a preposition, or as an adjunct. In addition, the dative may function as a complement of an adjective, as in (4b). The dative denotes a set of rather well-defined semantic roles: recipient, instrumental, locative, or ablative. In (4a, b) the dative NP has the recipient role. In (4c) there is an example of the instrumental dative, and in (4d) an ablative dative (the literal meaning being ‘hide you from it’, rather than ‘hide it from you’). A purely locative dative is found mainly with prepositions, as in (4e).

- (4) a. *Óláfr konungr þakkaði henni vel orð sín*  
 Olaf.N king thanked her.D well words.A her.RFL  
 ‘King Olaf thanked her very much for her words’ (Hkr II.45.19)
- b. *ertu sjúkr eða reiðr manni nǫkkurum?*  
 are.2s-you.N sick.M.N or angry.M.N man.D some  
 ‘Are you sick or angry with somebody?’ (Hkr II.104.15)
- c. *at aka mátti vǫgnum á víxl*  
 that drive could carriages.D on passing  
 ‘that two drivers could pass one another in carriages’ (Hkr II.16.11)
- d. *en nú skal ekki leyna þik því er mér býr í skapi*  
 mind  
 ‘But now that which I have in mind shall not be hidden from you’  
 (Hkr II.259.10)
- e. *er bjó undir Skagafelli*  
 who lived under Skagafell.D  
 ‘who lived under Skagafell’ (Dpl 159.27)

(iv) Genitive

The genitive case has the same syntactic functions as the dative. It is governed by a verb in (5a), by an adjective in (5b), and by a preposition in (5c).

- (5) a. *heraðsmenn leituðu hennar*  
 district-men.N searched.3P her.G  
 ‘The men from the district searched for her’ (Nj 21.9)
- b. *er konungsgarðr rúmr inngangs en þröngur*  
 is king-palace.N broad.M.N entrance.G and narrow.M.N  
*brottfarar*  
 exit.G  
 ‘A king’s palace has a broad entrance and a narrow exit’ (Eg 249.1)
- c. *Þorsteinn bóndi reið til skips*  
 Thorstein.N farmer rode to ship.G  
 ‘Thorstein the farmer rode to the ship’ (Gunnl 2.13)

One important function of the genitive is to mark a specifier or a complement of a noun (cf. 4.2).

- (6) a. *dóttir Bergþórs*  
 daughter.N Bergthor.G  
 ‘Bergthor’s daughter’ (Hkr I.348.14)
- b. *frá Íslands byggð*  
 of Iceland.G settlement.D  
 ‘of the settlement of Iceland’ (Hkr I.6.10)

Some of the uses of the genitive are clearly partitive in meaning. This is seen most clearly in expressions like the following:

- (7) a. *tvá aura silfrs*  
 two ounces.A silver.G  
 ‘two ounces of silver’ (Hkr II.256.10)
- b. *fjórir hleifar brauðs*  
 four loaves.N bread.G  
 ‘four loaves of bread’ (Hkr II.232.10)

Besides the core partitive meaning, the genitive is extended to denote partial objects, as in ‘provide, use, enjoy’, and by further extension to denote totally unaffected objects, in the sense that the referent of the NP is unaware of its role, as with verbs like ‘desire’, ‘look for’, ‘wait for’, ‘miss’, ‘avenge’, ‘mention’, etc.,

as in (5a) and the following:

- (8) a. ok aflaði sér svá dýrgripa  
 and provided himself.D thus treasures.G  
 ‘and thus acquired treasures’ (Hkr I.151.14)
- b. naut hann þó eigi lengi konungdómsins  
 enjoyed he though not long kingdom.G-the  
 ‘But he did not enjoy his kingdom for long’ (Hkr II.49.20)

Most uses of the genitive therefore seem to derive from a core partitive meaning.

### 3.1.2 *Grammatical features*

So far, each of the four cases in Old Norse has been given a brief syntactic and semantic description. If we look more closely at the grammatical functions of the cases, however, it turns out that each of them has the positive value of a feature where all the others have the negative value. These are features that are not directly related to a semantic role or to a syntactic function.

The nominative is the only case which presupposes a finite verb in the same sentence. It differs from the other cases in being the only one governed by a functional category. The other three cases – the oblique cases – are governed by lexical categories.

Next, consider the partitive meaning of the genitive case. Strictly speaking, partitive is not a semantic role on a par with agent, patient, etc. It is a type of reference. One can imagine a partitive reference combined with any semantic role. The genitive thus has the value ‘plus’ for the feature partitive (at least in its core functions), while the others have the value ‘minus’ for the same feature.

The dative turns out to be the only case which has a primarily semantic function. Historically, it is a merger of four Indo-European cases: the instrumental, the locative, the ablative, and the dative proper. All of these shine through the various semantic functions of the Old Norse dative.

Finally, there seem to be two kinds of accusative in Old Norse. With prepositions and as free adjuncts the accusative is similar to the dative in that its uses can be defined in terms of semantic roles. With verbs, however, the accusative seems to be a default case. It is used for direct objects of verbs with various semantic roles, and it is used instead of the nominative when there is no finite verb, most notably in the accusative with infinitive constructions (cf. 8.4.4).

Compare the accusative in the non-finite complement clause in (9a) with the nominative in the finite sentence (9b).

- (9) a. ætla ek þik fyrir því hafa dregit saman her  
 suppose.1S I you.A for that.D have pulled together army.A  
 manns  
 man.G  
 ‘I suppose that is why you have assembled an army of men’  
 (Hkr II.259.1)
- b. ok hefir hann lið mikit saman dregit  
 and has he troop.A big together pulled  
 ‘and he has assembled large troops’ (Eg 154.8)

We can thus represent the four cases in a feature matrix:

	N	A	D	G
Functional government	+	-	-	-
Semantic role	-	-/+	+	-
Partitive reference	-	-	-	+
Default case	-	+	-	-

### 3.1.3 Structural and lexical case

In many languages with nominal case marking, two types of case assignment can be recognized, **structural** case and **lexical** case. The former is assigned according to the structural position in the sentence, the latter is assigned by specific lexical items. The nominative is therefore clearly a structural case; it is assigned to the subject position, and it presupposes a finite verb in the clause. If there is no finite verb in the clause the nominative is replaced by the accusative, as shown in (9a). If, on the other hand, a NP is moved from a non-subject to a subject position, it acquires the nominative case, as in the passive:

- (10) a. síðan var sett borð ok gefinn þeim mat  
 since was set.NEU.N table.N and given.M.N them.D food.N  
 ‘Then the table was laid and they were given food’ (Eg 132.9)
- b. at gefa honum mat  
 to give him.D food.A  
 ‘to give him food’ (Finnb 12.23)



The nominative subject *matr* of the passive sentence (10a) corresponds to the accusative object *mat* of the active (10b).

The case that interacts with the nominative in these processes is invariably the accusative. What corresponds to the subject of a non-finite verb is in the accusative, as in (9a), and only an accusative object may correspond to the nominative in the passive. While (11b), a partial quotation from (10a), is a possible passive version of (11a), (11c) would be ungrammatical.

- (11) a. *hon gaf þeim mat*  
 she gave them.D food.A  
 ‘She gave them food’
- b. *var gefinn þeim matr*  
 was given.M.N them.D food.N  
 ‘Food was given them’
- c. \**váru þeir gefnir mat*  
 were.3P they.M given.P.M.N food.A  
 ‘They were given food’

The accusative object of an active transitive verb like the one in (10b) thus changes its case when it moves out of its object position in the passive. The accusative is therefore also a structural case, being assigned by default to potential subjects that are not assigned nominative case, and to objects that are not assigned a lexical case.

The other possible cases that can be assigned to complements are the dative and the genitive. Certain verbs, prepositions and adjectives govern the dative or the genitive, as in (4–8) above. These are therefore lexical cases. A lexical case does not change through grammatical processes, such as the passive, as shown by (10–11), and by passive sentences like the following:

- (12) a. *var skotit spjóti úr liði Guðmundar ríka*  
 was shot.NEU.N spear.D from army.D Gudmund.G powerful.DEF  
 ‘A spear was hurled from Gudmund the Powerful’s forces’ (Nj 373.6)
- b. *þess manns mundi hefnt verða*  
 that man.G would avenged.NEU.N become  
 ‘That man would be avenged’ (Eg 74.13)

The picture may not be quite as clear as this, however. Certain verbs, especially those which are traditionally referred to as ‘impersonal’, may take a lexical accusative. There is thus no passive counterpart to (13) with a nominative NP corresponding to the accusative in the active.

- (13) þat dreymdi mik  
 that.N dreamt me.A  
 ‘I dreamt that . . .’ (Gunnl 4.5)

Furthermore, accusative NPs governed by prepositions are never raised to subject in passive constructions, and they have a semantic role different from that of the dative, as can be seen by contrasting (14a) and (14b). The accusative in (14a) should therefore also be considered a lexical case, just like the dative in (14b).

- (14) a. gengu þeir á bæinn Rimul  
 went.3P they.M on farm.A-the Rimul  
 ‘They went to the Rimul farm’ (Hkr I.351.1)  
 b. hann bjó á Býnesi  
 he lived on Bynes.D  
 ‘He lived at Bynes’ (Hkr I.348.13)

On the other hand, the genitive in NPs may also be considered a structural case, since it is assigned automatically to structural positions within the NP regardless of semantic role or function (cf. 4.2).

### 3.2 Nouns

Nouns belong to either a **strong** or a **weak** stem class. Weak nouns are bisyllabic (or trisyllabic) and end in a vowel in all cases in the singular. The number of syllables in a strong noun may vary depending on its case, and some strong nouns may end in a consonant. Both of these major groups contain several declensional classes.

The stem class determines the form of affixes on the noun, but it is not an important category in the synchronic grammar of Old Norse, and it plays no role in the syntax. Gender, however, determines agreement on dependent words. Nouns have inflectional forms showing number and case.

There are three genders, **masculine**, **feminine**, and **neuter**. These are inherent properties of the noun. The gender can be partly, but not entirely, predicted from the meaning of the noun, and from the stem class which it belongs to. As expected, the gender of animate nouns referring to a being of a particular sex, normally has the corresponding gender: thus *maðr* ‘man’, *konungr* ‘king’, *herra* ‘lord, master’, *uxi* ‘ox’ are masculine nouns, while *kona* ‘woman’, *dróttning* ‘queen’, *frú* ‘lady, wife’, *kú* ‘cow’ are feminine nouns. There are a few exceptions, though: *vif* ‘woman, wife’ is neuter, and *kvennmaðr* ‘woman’ is masculine.

Besides the unmarked singular form, most count nouns also have distinct plural forms for each case (for some classes, singular and plural have identical forms for some of the cases), and dependent adjectives and determiners agree with the noun for number as well as gender. Gender, number and case are usually marked jointly by a portmanteau morpheme. The actual form of the affix again depends on the stem class and gender.

Some suffixes are common to all nouns, regardless of gender and declensional class: the dative plural always ends in *-um*, and the genitive plural in *-a*. When the stem contains the vowel *a*, it is rounded by u-umlaut in the dative plural. The result is *ø* in stressed (root) syllables and *u* in unstressed syllables: *føgnuðum* ‘joys’.

### 3.2.1 Strong nouns

There are strong nouns of all three genders, but there is only a partial correspondence between gender and declensional class. Synchronically, the inflectional pattern of a given noun depends on gender rather than on the inherited Germanic stem class.

#### (i) Masculine

There are four different classes of strong masculine nouns, traditionally named after the common Germanic stem-forming suffix, which in Old Norse shows up only in the accusative plural. These suffixes are *a*, *i*, *u*, or *r* (< \**ir*). In all masculine strong declensions, the nominative singular has the suffix *-r*, and the accusative has no ending. The nominative plural ends in an *-r* preceded by a vowel.

The *a*-class:

In the singular, the dative ends in *-i*, and the genitive in *-s*. The nominative plural ends in *-ar*. Below is the complete paradigm for *hest* ‘horse’.

	Singular	Plural
N	hest	hestar
A	hest	hesta
D	hesti	hestum
G	hests	hesta

This is the largest class, including a great number of very common monosyllabic nouns, such as *armr* ‘arm’, *bátr* ‘boat’, *dagr* ‘day’, *fiskr* ‘fish’, *heimr* ‘home’, *ulfr* ‘wolf’ etc., and nouns derived by means of the suffixes *-ing/ung*

and *-leik*: *víkingr* ‘viking’, *konungr* ‘king’, *kærleikr* ‘friendship, intimacy’. It is also the productive masculine class, adopting new nouns, such as *prestr* ‘priest’.

In the word *dagr* ‘day’ the dative singular has i-umlaut: *degi*. The dative singular ending *-i* does not usually cause i-umlaut in a-stems, except in conjunction with an intervening velar consonant.

Certain nouns, especially proper names, may lack the nominative singular ending: *Magnús*, *Halfdan*, *biskup* ‘bishop’. The dative singular *-i* may also occasionally be missing.

Some nouns have a stem ending in the semivowel *-v*: S.N *sqngr* – S.D *sqngvi* ‘song’. Two of these have *-ar* in the genitive singular: *sjóvar* ‘sea’ and *snjóvar* ‘snow’.

Bisyllabic nouns with a stem ending in an unstressed syllable drop the vowel of that syllable before suffixes beginning with a vowel.

S.N *hamarr* – P.D *hqmrum* ‘hammer’

S.N *hirðir* – P.N *hirðar* ‘bodyguard’

The *i*-class:

The nominative plural ends in *-ir*. The dative singular has no ending. Some nouns have the ending *-s* in the genitive, others have *-ar*. Below is the complete paradigm for *gestr* ‘guest’:

	Singular	Plural
N	gestr	gestir
A	gest	gesti
D	gest	gestum
G	gests	gesta

Other common nouns in this subclass include *lýðr* ‘people’, *svanr* ‘swan’, etc. Other *i*-class masculines, including *staðr* ‘place’, *vinr* ‘friend’, *fundr* ‘meeting’, *hugr* ‘mind’, have genitive singular in *-ar*: *staðar* etc.

The *i* of the original stem suffix caused i-umlaut in some roots, but not in all. The general rule is for long stems to have i-umlaut while short stems do not; compare *gestr* and *lýðr* with long stems and front vowels to *staðr* and *hugr* with short stems and back vowels.

Some nouns, and especially those with a root that ends in a velar consonant, have a stem ending in *j*.

S.N *drykkir* – P.D *drykkjum* ‘drink’

S.N *byrr* – S.G *byrjar* ‘sailing wind’

The u-class:

In the singular, the dative ends in *-i* and the genitive in *-ar*. The nominative plural ends in *-ir*. The *i* of both the dative singular and the nominative plural cause i-umlaut of an underlying *a* in the root. In addition, there is u-umlaut caused by a lost *u* in the nominative and accusative singular, and by a still existing *u* in the accusative and dative plural. The underlying *a* turns up only in the genitive singular and plural, where the suffixes are *-ar* and *-a*, respectively. Below is the complete paradigm for *vǫllr* ‘field’:

	Singular	Plural
N	vǫllr	vellir
A	vǫll	vǫllu
D	velli	vǫllum
G	vallar	valla

The u-class includes common nouns such as *bǫllr* ‘ball’, *gǫltr* ‘hog’, *vǫttr* ‘glove’, *ǫrn* ‘eagle’. The underlying root vowel is short *a*. Since a long *á* was eventually rounded throughout (cf. 2.2) it did not change under u-umlaut: *hátttr* ‘way, manner’, *áss* ‘god’. Nouns with other vowels without u-umlaut include *fríðr* ‘peace’, *littr* ‘colour’, *verðr* ‘meal’.

In words with an underlying *ja* in the root, such as *ffjorðr* ‘fjord’, the result of the i-umlaut in the dative singular and the nominative plural is *i* rather than *e*: *fírði* – *fírðir* (cf. 2.5.1).

Nouns derived with the suffix *-nað/nuð* also originally belong to this class, but they have the ending *-i* in the accusative plural, and should therefore systematically be classified with the i-class. They do have u-umlaut, however, and they have *-i* in the dative singular. The i-umlaut differs from the u-umlaut in that it does not affect unstressed syllables, so therefore polysyllabic words do not have i-umlaut. Below is the complete paradigm for *fǫgnaðr* ‘joy’.

	Singular	Plural
N	fǫgnuðr	fagnaðir
A	fǫgnuð	fagnaði
D	fagnaði	fǫgnuðum
G	fagnaðar	fagnaða

The word *sonr* ‘son’ may miss the nominative singular *-r*, and the root vowel may be *u*. The i-umlauted root vowels (dative singular, nominative plural) are

consequently  $\emptyset$  or  $y$ . The accusative plural may end in  $-u$  or  $-i$  (in the latter case with umlaut).

The r-class:

This class includes a small number of very frequent nouns. In the singular they inflect like the a-class or the u-class, which means that they have  $-i$  with or without i-umlaut in the dative, and  $-s$  or  $-ar$  in the genitive. In the plural they have  $-r$  with i-umlaut. Below are the complete paradigms for *maðr* ‘man’ and *fótr* ‘foot’. Note the consonant assimilations of the various forms of *maðr* (for explanations, cf. 2.3).

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N	maðr	menn	fótr	fœtr
A	mann	menn	fót	fœtr
D	manni	mǫnnum	fœti	fótum
G	manns	manna	fótar	fóta

This class also includes the two kinship terms *faðir* ‘father’ and *bróðir* ‘brother’, which have very irregular inflections.

	Singular	Plural
N	faðir	feðr
A	fǫður	feðr
D	feðr	feðrum
G	fǫður	feðra

The dative singular may also be *fǫður*, thus yielding one single oblique form in the singular.

(ii) Feminine

There are three different classes of strong feminine nouns. Based on the suffix in the plural nominative and accusative they can be called the a-class, the i-class and the r-class. Strong feminine nouns have  $-ar$  in the genitive singular. Both the nominative and the accusative plural end in an  $-r$ .

The a-class:

The nominative and accusative plural end in *-ar*. There are two subtypes of this class. The a<sub>1</sub>-class has the suffix *-r* in the nominative singular. The a<sub>2</sub>-class does not. They are identical in the plural.

The a<sub>1</sub>-class has a long root syllable with i-umlaut. In the singular, the accusative and the dative end in *-i*. Below is the complete paradigm for *helgr* ‘holiday’.

	Singular	Plural
N	helgr	helgar
A	helgi	helgar
D	helgi	helgum
G	helgar	helga

A few nouns in this subclass have a stem ending in *j*: S.N *gýgr* – S.G *gýgjar* ‘troll woman’. The noun *mær* ‘girl’ has a stem in *-j*, and is otherwise irregular in the singular: N *mær* – A *mær* – D *mey(ju)* – G *meyjar*.

The a<sub>2</sub>-class has u-umlaut of an underlying *a* in the root, except in the genitive. There are no endings in the nominative, accusative or dative. Below is a complete paradigm for *møn* ‘mane’.

	Singular	Plural
N	møn	manar
A	møn	manar
D	møn	mønnum
G	manar	mana

This subclass also includes feminine nouns derived by the suffixes *-ing/ung*. They have the suffix *-u* in the dative: *dróttningu* ‘queen’.

Some members of this subclass have a stem ending in a semivowel. Some of them have *-u* in the dative.

S.N *ey* – S.D *eyju* ‘island’

S.N *ben* – S.G *benjar* ‘wound’

S.D *øru* – P.N *ørvar* ‘arrow’

The i-class:

There is no ending in the nominative, accusative or dative singular. The nominative and accusative plural end in *-ir*. Below is a complete paradigm for *bæen* ‘prayer’.

	Singular	Plural
N	bæen	bæenir
A	bæen	bæenir
D	bæen	bæenum
G	bæenar	bæena

This class includes many common monosyllabic nouns, such as *ást* ‘love’, *ætt* ‘family’, *sótt* ‘illness’, etc.

Some members of this class may have the suffix *-u* in the dative: *borgu* ‘castle, town’, *jörðu* ‘earth’, etc.

This class includes feminine nouns derived by the suffix *-an*, which changes to *-un* by u-umlaut in all cases in the singular except the genitive, and in the dative plural. The vowel of the suffix is not deleted before inflectional suffixes beginning with a vowel: S.N *skipun* – P.N *skipanir* ‘arrangement’.

The r-class:

The nominative and accusative plural end in *-r*, and there is i-umlaut of the root vowel. From an underlying *a* in the root, there is u-umlaut in all cases in the singular except the genitive, and in the dative plural. Below is the complete paradigm of *strönd* ‘beach’.

	Singular	Plural
N	strönd	strendr
A	strönd	strendr
D	strönd	ströndum
G	strandar	stranda

Some of these nouns may also have *-r* in the genitive singular, usually with i-umlaut: *bókar* or *bækkr* ‘book’. The dative of *hönd* ‘hand’ is *hendí*. A few words have an *-r* and i-umlaut in the nominative singular: *kýr* ‘cow’.



This class includes the three kinship terms *móðir* ‘mother’, *dóttir* ‘daughter’, and *systir* ‘sister’, which have an irregular inflection.

	Singular	Plural
N	móðir	mœðr
A	móður	mœðr
D	mœðr	mœðrum
G	móður	mœðra

The dative singular may also be *móður*, thus yielding one single oblique form in the singular.

### (iii) Neuter

There is only one class of strong neuter nouns. They have no ending in the nominative and accusative, singular and plural. The dative singular ends in *-i* and the genitive singular in *-s*. Those nouns which have the vowel *a* in the root, have u-umlaut in all plural forms except the genitive. Below is the complete paradigm of *land* ‘land, country’.

	Singular	Plural
N	land	lǫnd
A	land	lǫnd
D	landi	lǫndum
G	lands	landa

A great number of very frequent nouns belong to this class, including *barn* ‘child’, *nafn* ‘name’, *fjall* ‘mountain’, *vatn* ‘water’, and with a different root vowel, *dýr* ‘animal’, *hús* ‘house’, *orð* ‘word’, etc. The word *fé* ‘money, cattle’ has genitive singular in *-ar*, combined with stress shift: *fjár* (cf. 2.5.1).

This class also includes nouns derived with suffixes *-al*, *-an*, *-ar*, *-að*, *-uð*: *óðal* ‘inheritance’, *gaman* ‘fun’, *sumar* ‘summer’, *herað* ‘district’, *hǫfuð* ‘head’. The *a* of the derivational suffix then changes to *u* in the plural: *sumur*, *heruð*. When an inflectional suffix starting with a vowel is added, the vowel of *-al*, *-an*, *-ar*, *-uð* is deleted: *sumra*, *hǫfði*, but not the *a* in *-að*: *heraði* ‘district’.

Many neuter nouns have a stem ending in a semivowel.

S/P.N/A *egg* – P.G *eggja* ‘egg’

S.D *kyn* – P.D *kynjum* ‘kin’

S.N/A *ǫl* – S.D *ǫlvi* ‘ale’

Some neuter nouns have a bisyllabic stem ending in *-i*, which is deleted before a suffix starting with a vowel. Those whose roots end in a velar consonant, have a stem ending in *j + i*, but the *j* only appears before back vowels.

S/P.N/A *kvæði* – P.G *kvæða* ‘poem’  
 S/P.N/A *ríki* – P.D *ríkjum* ‘power’

### 3.2.2 Weak nouns

Weak nouns are bisyllabic (a few are trisyllabic) and end in a vowel in all cases in the singular. The vowel is the same for all the oblique cases. In the paradigms which follow, we therefore need only give the nominative and the accusative, since the dative and the genitive singular are like the accusative, and the dative and the genitive plural have the generalized endings *-um* and *-a*, respectively.

#### (i) Masculine

There are two classes of weak masculine nouns, called the a-class and the r-class after the nominative plural ending.

The a-class:

In the singular, the nominative ends in *-i*, and the oblique cases in *-a*. The plural is like the strong masculine a-class. A partial paradigm for *tími* ‘time’ is as follows:

	Singular	Plural
N	tími	tímar
A	tíma	tíma

This class includes common words such as *granni* ‘neighbour’, *bani* ‘death’, *máni* ‘moon’, and words derived by means of the agentive suffix *-ari*, e.g. *dómari* ‘judge’.

Some titles of foreign origin end in *-a* also in the nominative singular: *síra* ‘sir’, *herra* ‘sir, lord’. The word *uxi* ‘ox’ is irregular in the plural: N *yxn* –A *yxn* – G *yxna* –D *yxnum*.

Some nouns have a stem that ends in *j*, especially those that are derived by the suffix *-ingi*.

S.N *vili* – S.A/D/G *vilja* ‘wish’

S.N *hofðingi* – P.N *hofðingjar* ‘chief’

A few words have a stem in *v*: S.N *mōskvi* – P.D *mōskum* ‘mask’.

The r-class:

These are derived like present participles. The singular has the same endings as the weak a-class, while the plural is like that of the strong r-class, with nominative and accusative in *-r*. Since present participles are formed by means of the suffix *-and*, most of the nouns of this class also end in *-and* (while others may be contracted). The *a* of *-and* then gets i-umlaut in the nominative and accusative plural, and u-umlaut in the dative plural. A partial paradigm for *búandi* ‘farmer’ is as below:

	Singular	Plural
N	búandi	búendr
A	búanda	búendr

This word may also have the contracted form *bónði*, plural *bœndr*. Other common words include *frændi* ‘friend, relative’ and *ffjándi* ‘enemy’.

(ii) Feminine

There are two classes of weak feminine nouns, the u-class and the i-class.

The u-class:

In the singular, these nouns end in *-a* in the nominative, and in *-u* in all the oblique cases. In the plural the ending is *-ur* in the nominative and accusative. Words that have *a* in the root in the nominative singular have u-umlaut in all the other forms except the genitive plural. The partial paradigm of *saga* ‘story’ is as below:

	Singular	Plural
N	saga	sǫgur
A	sǫgu	sǫgur

For most nouns in this class, the genitive plural ends in *-na*, instead of just *-a*: *sagna*. A large number of common nouns belong to this class: *stofa* ‘room,

hall', *tunga* 'tongue', *vika* 'week', etc. The word *kona* 'woman' has the genitive plural form *kvenna*.

Some nouns have a stem ending in *j*, which then shows up in all forms except the genitive plural. Some nouns, especially those with a root not ending in a velar consonant, have the *j* instead of the *n* in the genitive plural.

S.N *bylgja* – P.G *bylgna* 'wave'  
 S.N *smiðja* – P.G *smiðja* 'smithy'

The *i*-class:

This class consists of abstract nouns that are not used in the plural. They end in *-i* in all cases in the singular: *gleði* 'happiness'.

(iii) Neuter

There is only one class of weak neuter nouns. They end in *-a* in all cases in the singular, and in *-u* in the nominative and accusative plural. An *a* in the root gets u-umlaut in the plural, except in the genitive, which again ends in *-na*: S *hjarta* – P.N/A *hjørta* – P.G *hjärtna* 'heart'. Very few words belong to this class, among them *auga* 'eye' and *eyra* 'ear'. In Norwegian there is also a plural nominative/accusative form *-un*: *eyrun*.

### 3.3 Demonstratives and quantifiers

Demonstratives are inflected for number, gender, and case, in agreement with the noun that they specify, modify, or refer to. Here, as elsewhere in the nominal inflections, there is no gender difference in the genitive and dative plural. As with nouns, the feminine has the same form in the nominative and accusative plural, and the neuter has the same form in the nominative and accusative of both numbers.

The various forms of the distal demonstrative *sá* 'that' are formed from two different roots, one beginning in *s-* for the nominative masculine and feminine singular, and one in *þ-* for all the other forms.

	Singular			Plural		
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
N	sá	sú	þat	þeir	þær	þau
A	þann	þá	þat	þá	þær	þau
D	þeim	þeiri	því	þeim	þeim	þeim
G	þess	þeirar	þess	þeira	þeira	þeira

The forms *þeira(r)* and *þeiri* also occur with a double *r*: *þeirrar*, *þeirra*, *þeirri*.

The proximal *þessi* ‘this’ has the following forms:

	Singular			Plural		
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
N	þessi	þessi	þetta	þessir	þessar	þessi
A	þenna	þessa	þetta	þessa	þessar	þessi
D	þessum	þessi	þessu	þessum	þessum	þessum
G	þessa	þessar	þessa	þessa	þessa	þessa

This demonstrative also has a variant with a root in *s-*, namely *sjá*, which may be used instead of the nominative masculine and feminine singular *þessi*. Other variants include genitive feminine singular *þessar(r)ar*, dative feminine singular *þessar(r)i*, dative neuter singular *þvísa*, genitive plural *þessar(r)a*, and dative masculine singular and dative plural *þeima*, nominative/accusative neuter plural *þessur*.

The word *báðir* ‘both’ and the cardinal numbers ‘two’, ‘three’, and ‘four’ have inflections similar to those of the demonstratives.

	‘both’			‘two’		
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
N	báðir	báðar	bæði	tveir	tvær	tvau
A	báða	báðar	bæði	tvá	tvær	tvau
D	báðum	báðum	báðum	tveim	tveim	tveim
G	beggja	beggja	beggja	tveggja	tveggja	tveggja

	‘three’			‘four’		
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
N	þrír	þrjár	þrjú	fjórir	fjórar	fjögur
A	þrjá	þrjár	þrjú	fjóra	fjórar	fjögur
D	þrím	þrím	þrím	fjórum	fjórum	fjórum
G	þriggja	þriggja	þriggja	fjögurra	fjögurra	fjögurra

The dative of ‘three’ may also have the form *þrím*.

The numeral *einn* ‘one’ is inflected like an adjective. The numerals 5–20 are uninflected. Higher numbers are syntactic phrases: *tuttugu ok einn* ‘21’, etc. From 30 onwards the ‘tens’ are nouns: *þrír tigr* ‘30’.

- (15) níu tigu manna  
 nine tens.A men.G  
 ‘ninety men’ (Eg 44.10)

The noun *tigr* ‘(unit of) ten’ belongs to the strong masculine u-class.

### 3.4 Pronouns

All pronouns are inflected for case. The pronominal system in Old Norse is composed of three different types of word. The Speech Act Participant pronouns (1st and 2nd person) are inherited Indo-European pronouns with a high degree of suppletivism. They have separate forms for the singular, dual, and plural. There is also an inherited 3rd person reflexive pronoun without number distinction and without a nominative form.

	1st person			2nd person			3rd person reflexive
	Singular	Dual	Plural	Singular	Dual	Plural	
N	ek	vit	vér	þú	it	ér	–
A	mik	okkr	oss	þik	ykk	yðr	sik
D	mér	okkr	oss	þér	ykk	yðr	sér
G	mín	okkar	vár	þín	ykkar	yðar	sín

The nominative singular *ek* and *þú* may be cliticized to a preceding verb. The vowel of *ek* then disappears; the vowel of *þú* is shortened, and the initial dental is assimilated to the preceding verbal ending.

- hafða ek* > *hafðak* ‘had I’  
*em ek* > *emk* ‘am I’  
*munt þú* > *muntu* ‘will you’  
*far þú* > *farðu* ‘go you’

(On the cliticization of *sik*, cf. 8.2.)

The nominative dual and plural of the 2nd person also occur in the forms *þit* ‘you two’ and *þér* ‘you (more than two)’. The initial *þ* comes from the 2nd person plural verbal ending, which was reanalyzed as belonging to the pronoun in those (very frequent) cases where the subject pronoun followed the verb: *hafid it* > *hafit þit* (cf. also 3.7.1).

The genitive plural of the 2nd person also has a variant *yðvar*.

For non-reflexive 3rd person singular masculine and feminine there are specific North Germanic pronouns formed with an initial *h-*.

	Masculine	Feminine
N	<i>hann</i>	<i>hon</i>
A	<i>hann</i>	<i>hana</i>
D	<i>honum</i>	<i>henni</i>
G	<i>hans</i>	<i>hennar</i>

For the 3rd person neuter singular and for the 3rd person plural of all genders, there are no separate pronouns; instead, the distal demonstratives are used: S.NEU *þat*, P.M *þeir*, P.F *þær*, P.NEU *þau*.

The interrogative pronouns *hverr* ‘which’, *hvárr* ‘which (of two)’, inflect like the corresponding quantifiers (cf. 3.5.1); *hvat* ‘what’ inflects like a demonstrative: D *hví* – G *hvess*.

### 3.5 Adjectival declensions

The term ‘adjectival declension’ is used because not only adjectives, but also quantifiers, participles, determiners and certain pronouns are inflected according to these patterns. These words are inflected for number, gender, and case, in agreement with the noun that they modify, specify, or are predicated of.

The inflection is by means of suffixes (including a zero suffix), sometimes accompanied by modifications of the stem. The suffix is cumulative, marking both number and case without necessarily being segmentable. Here, as elsewhere in the nominal inflections, there is no gender difference in the dative and genitive plural: the dative plural always ends in *-um*. When the stem contains the vowel *a*, it is rounded by u-umlaut in the dative masculine and neuter singular and in the dative plural. As with nouns, the feminine has the same form in the nominative and accusative plural, and the neuter has the same form in the nominative and accusative of both numbers.

There are two adjectival declension types, a **strong** and a **weak** declension. The strong adjectival declension is used for the positive and superlative of adjectives, perfect participles, quantifiers, the definite article, and possessive determiners. The weak declension is used for adjectives in the positive, comparative, and superlative, and for present participles. Thus adjectives in the positive or the superlative may be inflected according to the strong or the

weak declension. The two declensions do not represent two classes of adjectives, as is the case with nouns, but two ways of inflecting the same adjective, depending on its syntactic and semantic function. Basically, the weak declension is used in definite NPs, while the strong declension is used in indefinite NPs and to form predicates (for details, cf. 4.1).

### 3.5.1 The strong adjectival declension

The strong adjectival declension consists of forms which are based partly on strong nouns, and partly on demonstratives. The forms based on demonstratives are in the singular: nominative and accusative neuter *-t*, accusative masculine *-(a)n*, accusative feminine *-a*, dative masculine *-um*, feminine *-ri*, neuter *-u*, genitive feminine *-rar*; and in the plural: nominative masculine *-ir* and genitive *-ra*. The other forms come from the masculine a-class, the feminine a2-class, and the neuter class of strong nouns.

There are two variants of the strong adjectival declension, depending on whether the accusative masculine singular has the suffix *-an* or *-n*.

#### (i) The an-type

This is the declension of most adjectives in the positive, the superlative of adjectives, and the perfect participle of weak verbs. The complete paradigm for the strong declension of the adjective *langr* 'long' is given below:

	Singular			Plural		
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
N	langr	lɔŋ	langt	langir	langar	lɔŋ
A	langan	langa	langt	langa	langar	lɔŋ
D	lɔŋum	langri	lɔŋu	lɔŋum	lɔŋum	lɔŋum
G	langs	langrar	langs	langra	langra	langra

This declensional type includes monosyllabic adjectives, such as *blindr* 'blind', *spakr* 'wise', *breiðr* 'broad', *fullr* 'full', *glaðr* 'happy', *sannr* 'true', etc. Besides *sannr* we also find *saðr*; the neuter is *satt*.

The superlative has the same endings, with u-umlaut where applicable: S.M.N *spakastr* – S.F.N *spøkust* 'wisest'. The quantifiers *allr* 'all' and *sumr* 'some' belong to this type.



The perfect participle of weak verbs also has this inflection, with assimilation of the dental suffix to the neuter singular *-t* and subsequent simplification of the consonant: S.M.N *kallaðr* – S.NEU.N/A *kallat* ‘called’.

Bisyllabic adjectives with a stem ending in an unstressed syllable drop the vowel of that syllable before suffixes beginning with a vowel.

S.M.N *auðigr* – S.M.A *auðgan* ‘rich’

S.M.G *gamals* – P.M.A *gamla* ‘old’

The word *heilagr* ‘holy’ has either no contraction, or contraction combined with simplification of the root diphthong: S.M.A *heilagan* or *helgan*.

Some adjectives have a stem ending in a semivowel.

S.M.N *ríkr* – S.M.A *ríkjan* ‘powerful’

S.M.N *gørr* – S.M.A *gørvan* ‘finished, done’

(ii) The *n*-type

This is the declension of bisyllabic adjectives with a stem ending in *-in*, the perfect participle of strong verbs, determiners, and most quantifiers. There is assimilation of the nominative masculine *-r* to the preceding *n*. These adjectives differ from the previous type in three positions in the paradigm: in the accusative masculine singular the suffix is *-n* instead of *-an*, and in the nominative and accusative neuter singular the final *n* of the stem is lost before *-t*.

S.M.N *opinn* – S.M.A *opinn* – S.NEU.N/A *opit* ‘open’

S.M.N/A *bitinn* – S.NEU.N/A *bitit* ‘bitten’

The two adjectives *lítill* ‘small’ and *mikill* ‘big’ also belong to this type, and the *l* of the stem assimilates to the *-n* of the accusative: *lítinn*, *mikinn*.

The inflection of the determiner *hinn* ‘the’ is as follows:

	Singular			Plural		
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
N	<i>hinn</i>	<i>hin</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>hinir</i>	<i>hinar</i>	<i>hin</i>
A	<i>hinn</i>	<i>hina</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>hina</i>	<i>hinar</i>	<i>hin</i>
D	<i>hinum</i>	<i>hinni</i>	<i>hinu</i>	<i>hinum</i>	<i>hinum</i>	<i>hinum</i>
G	<i>hins</i>	<i>hinnar</i>	<i>hins</i>	<i>hinna</i>	<i>hinna</i>	<i>hinna</i>

This determiner has a variant without the initial *h-*, which is also used as a cliticized definite article on nouns (cf. 4.1.2). The cliticization involves the following morphophonological changes:

1. The root *i-* of the article is lost in the following cases:
  - (a) after a suffix ending in a vowel: P.M.A *hesta* + *ina* > *hestana* ‘the horses’; after a root ending in a vowel, *i-* is lost only when the article is bisyllabic: S.F.A *á* + *ina* > *ána* ‘the river’ (but S.F.N *á* + *in* > *áin*)
  - (b) after a plural suffix in *-r*: P.M.N *hestar* + *inir* > *hestarnir* ‘the horses’
  
2. The *-m* of the dative plural of the noun is lost before the article; this rule feeds rule 1a, leading to the loss of the initial *i-* of the article: P.M.D. *hestum* + *inum* > *hestunum*.

The possessive determiners for 1st and 2nd person and the 3rd person reflexive have the strong adjectival inflection. The singular forms *minn*, *þinn*, *sinn* are similar to the definite article, except that the root *i* is lengthened before a single *-n*, and the neuter singular nominative/accusative has a double *t*. In the dual forms *okkarr* and *ykkarr*, the second vowel *a* changes to *u* under u-umlaut in the nominative feminine singular and the nominative/accusative neuter plural. Before a suffix starting with a vowel, the *a* is lost under contraction. The 2nd person plural *yðvarr* undergoes the same morphophonological changes, and in addition the *v* is lost.

	Singular			Plural		
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
N	yðvarr	yður	yðvart	yðrir	yðrar	yður
A	yðvarn	yðra	yðvart	yðra	yðrar	yður
D	yðrum	yðvarri	yðru	yðrum	yðrum	yðrum
G	yðvars	yðvarrar	yðvars	yðvarra	yðvarra	yðvarra

This word also has variants without the *v* in all the forms. The quantifiers *einn* ‘one’, *hverr* ‘each’, *hvárr* ‘each (of two)’, *nókkurr* ‘some’, and *annarr* ‘other’ belong to this type, with certain modifications. In the neuter *eitt*, there is no simplification of *-tt* after assimilation *nt* > *tt*. In the singular neuter forms *nókkut* and *annat* the *r* of the stem is lost before *-t*, and in the accusative

masculine *annan* it is lost before *-n*. In this latter word there is also contraction of the final syllable in the stem before a suffix starting with a vowel, resulting in the assimilation of *nn* > *ð*, and u-umlaut where applicable: S.M.A *annan* – S.M.D *qðrum*. In *hverr* the stem ends in *j*: S.F.A *hverja*.

The quantifier *engi* ‘no, none’ has several deviating forms in the singular. The nominative is *engi* in both the masculine and the feminine, and *ekki* in the neuter (also accusative). The masculine and neuter genitive is *enskis*. The other forms are like regular adjectives. This word also appears with the stem *øngv-*.

### 3.5.2 *The weak adjectival declension*

There are two weak adjectival declensions, one for adjectives in the positive and the superlative (Weak 1), and one for adjectives in the comparative and for present participles (Weak 2).

#### (i) The Weak 1 declension

In the singular, the forms of this declension come from the weak a-class (masculine), u-class (feminine), and neuter class. This means that all the oblique forms are the same. In the plural, the dative ends in *-um* as usual, and all the other cases end in *-u*, even the genitive. If the adjective has an *a* as its root vowel, there is u-umlaut throughout the plural. Below is a partial paradigm for the singular of the weak declension of the adjective *langr* ‘long’.

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
N	langi	langa	langa
Obl	langa	lǫngu	langa

P.N/A/G *lǫngu* – P.D *lǫngum*.

The rules of vowel and semivowel deletion apply, as in the strong declension.

S.M.N *gamli* ‘old’

S.F.N *rikja* ‘powerful’

S.F.N *fǫlva* ‘pale’

#### (ii) The Weak 2 declension

This is like the previous declension, except that it has *-i* in the feminine singular and in the plural of all genders and cases, except the dative, which

still ends in *-um*. Below is a partial paradigm for the comparative *spakari* ‘wiser’.

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
N	spakari	spakari	spakara
Obl	spakara	spakari	spakara

P.N/A/G *spakari* – P.D *spokurum*.

In Norwegian texts, the ending *-a* was replaced early on by *-i*.

### 3.6 Verb stems

Verbs have **finite** and **non-finite** forms. Finite verbs have inflections for tense, mood, person, and number. Tense and mood are semantic categories related to the context and use of the sentence, while person and number are agreement categories depending on the subject of the sentence.

There are two tenses, **present** and **preterite**, which are expressed by means of different stems of the verb. Categories of mood, person, and number are expressed by inflections of the stems. These inflections are described in 3.7.

The non-finite forms are the **infinitive**, **present participle**, **perfect participle**, and **supine**. The present participle may be considered a derived adjective, rather than an inflectional form of the verb. It has its own adjectival inflections (cf. 3.5.2), and in most cases it functions syntactically as an adjective. The perfect participle is similar in this respect, but it is more closely interwoven with the verbal system, both morphologically and syntactically, as we will see.

The various finite and non-finite forms of the verb are based on the following stems:

- The **present** stem is the basis of the infinitive, the present participle, and the present tense.
- The **preterite** stems (some verbs have two stems – see below) are the basis of the preterite tense.
- The **perfect** stem is the basis of the perfect participle and the supine.

Verbs are divided into two major groups depending on how they form their stems: **strong** verbs and **weak** verbs.

3.6.1 *Strong verbs*

The present stem is identical to the root. There are two preterite stems, one for the singular and one for the plural. These are formed by **ablaut** alteration of the root vowel. The perfect stem is also formed by ablaut alteration.

Strong verbs thus exhibit four different ablaut grades. For many verbs two or more of these grades have the same root vowel. On the basis of the ablaut alterations among the four stems, strong verbs are divided into six classes.

Class	Present	Preterite sg.	Preterite pl.	Perfect
1.	í	ei	i	i
2.	jú/jó/ú	au	u	o
3.	e/ja	a	u	o
4.	e/o	a	á	o
5.	e	a	á	e
6.	a	ó	ó	a

In addition there is a seventh class with highly irregular alterations.

Below, each class will be represented by one form from each stem: the present stem will be represented by the infinitive, the preterite singular stem by the 3rd person indicative, the preterite plural stem by the 3rd person indicative, and the perfect stem by the supine.

1st class:

*bíta – beit – bitu – bitit* ‘bite’  
*ríða – reið – riðu – riðit* ‘ride’

Many frequent strong verbs belong to this class, including *drífa* ‘drive’, *grípa* ‘grasp, grab’, *skína* ‘shine’, etc. Preterite singular stems in *-eig* may change to *-é* (cf. 2.5.2).

*stíga – steig/sté* ‘rise’

Some verbs of this class have a present stem ending in *j*: *blíkja* ‘blink’, *svíkja* ‘betray’.

2nd class:

The basic present stem root vowel is *jú*, which underlies the umlauted forms in the present tense. But verbs whose roots end in a dental, have *jó* in the present stem. A small group has *ú*.

*krjúpa – kraup – krupu – kropit* ‘creep, crawl’  
*brjóta – braut – brutu – brotit* ‘break’

*lúka – lauk – luku – lokit* ‘close’

This is also a large class, including verbs such as *rjúka* ‘smoke’, *bjóða* ‘ask, tell’, *kjósa* ‘choose’, *skjóta* ‘shoot’, *súga* ‘suck’, etc. Preterite singular stems in *-aug* may change to *-ó*: *fljúga – flaug/fló* ‘fly’. The verbs *flýja* ‘flee’ and *spýja* ‘vomit’ have a root ending in a *j*, and i-umlaut of the root vowel. The preterite singular stems are *fló* and *spjó*.

3rd class:

The basic present stem root vowel is *e*, but because of umlaut and other phonological changes, several other vowels also occur.

*detta – datt – dattu – dottit* ‘fall’  
*verða – varð – urðu – orðit* ‘become’  
*hjalpa – hjalp – hulpu – holpit* ‘help’

Other verbs of this class include *bresta* ‘break’, *brenna* ‘burn’, *svelga* ‘swallow’, *bjarga* ‘save’, *gjalda* ‘pay’, etc. Note the loss of *v* before a labial root vowel in the preterite plural and perfect stems (cf. 2.5.1).

In some verbs with a root ending in a nasal, the *e* of the present stem and the *o* of the perfect stem have been raised to *i* and *u*, respectively.

*spinna – spann – spunnu – spunnit* ‘spin’  
*vinna – vann – unnu – unnit* ‘win’

The verb *finna* ‘find’ has a *d* in the preterite plural and perfect stems: *fundu – fundit*.

When the root ends in a nasal + stop, and nothing is added, the stop is devoiced, and the preceding nasal is assimilated to the stop, as in the preterite singular forms of the following verbs (cf. 2.5.2):

*binda – batt – bundu – bundit* ‘bind’  
*stinga – stakk – stungu – stungit* ‘sting’

The process can be described as follows: *\*band > \*bant > batt*.

Some of these verbs have stems ending in a *v*, which causes u-umlaut of the stem vowel. The u-umlaut rounds the *e* of the present stem to *ø*, and the *a* of the preterite singular stem to *ɔ*: *søkkva – sɔkk – sukku – sokkit* ‘sink’. If the vowel undergoes raising because of a following nasal (cf. *spinna* above), the u-umlaut rounds the *i* to *y*.

*syngva – sɔng – sungu – sungit* ‘sing’  
*tyggva – tɔgg – tuggu – tuggit* ‘chew’

Words of this latter kind may also have a *j* in the stem, while keeping the same root vowels: *syngja, tyggja*.

4th class:

*bera – bar – báru – borit* ‘carry, bear’  
*stela – stal – stálu – stolit* ‘steal’

Some verbs have *o* in the present stem: *koma* ‘come’, *sofa* ‘sleep’. The root has an underlying *v* before the vowel, which appears in the preterite: *kvámu*, *svaf*, *sváfu*. The preterite singular of *koma* is *kom*, and the preterite plural of both verbs may also be *kómu* and *sófu*, where the vowel has been rounded, and the *v* regularly lost before a labial vowel. The preterite of *vefa* ‘weave’ may be *óf–ófu* besides the regular *vaf–váfu*. The supine of *fela* ‘hide’ is *folgit*.

5th class:

*gefa – gaf – gáfu – gefit* ‘give’  
*vera – var – váru – verit* ‘be’

Other verbs of this class include *drepa* ‘beat, kill’, *eta* ‘eat’, *lesa* ‘read’, etc.

Some verbs have a present stem ending in *j*, which has raised the root vowel to *i*: *biðja* ‘ask’, *sitja* ‘sit’. The verbs *liggja* ‘lie’ and *þiggja* ‘receive, accept’ have a preterite singular stem without the *ggj*, and a long vowel instead: *liggja – lá – lágu – legit*. Two other verbs with irregular stems are:

*fregna – frá – frágu – fregit* ‘ask’  
*sjá – sá – sá – sét* ‘see’

The preterite singular vowel is lengthened when no consonant follows, since a stressed syllable has to have more than one mora. The infinitive *sjá* is the result of stress shift (< \**séa*), cf. 2.5.1.

6th class:

*fara – fór – fóru – farit* ‘go, travel’  
*gala – gól – gólu – galit* ‘sing’

This is the basic pattern, and other verbs include *grafa* ‘dig’, *vaxa* ‘grow’, and *standa*, which has a *n* in the present stem: *standa – stóð – stóðu – staðit* ‘stand’.

Verbs with a root ending in a velar, have *e* in the perfect stem (i-umlaut because of the joint effect of the velar and the *i* of the suffix): *ekit* ‘travelled, ridden’, *tekit* ‘taken’.

Some verbs have a *j* in the present stem, causing i-umlaut of the root vowel.

*hefja – hóf – hófu – hafit* ‘raise, lift’  
*sverja – sór – sóru – svarit* ‘swear’  
*deyja – dó – dó – dáit* ‘die’

A few verbs have a present and a preterite singular stem ending in *á*: *flá – fló – flógu – flegit* ‘flay’. Note also:

*draga – dró – drógu – dregit* ‘pull’  
*hlæja – hló – hlógu – hlegit* ‘laugh’

7th class:

This class consists of verbs from several minor classes diachronically. Some of them were once reduplicating verbs. What they have in common, synchronically, is that they share the pattern of having the same stem vowel in the present and the perfect stems, and a different vowel common to the two preterite stems, as in the 6th class.

*heita – hét – hétu – heitit* ‘call, promise’  
*auka – jók – jóku – aukit* ‘grow, increase’  
*hoggva – hjó – hjoggu – hoggvit* ‘cut, strike’  
*búa – bjó – bjoggu – búit* ‘live, dwell, build’  
*falla – fell – fellu – fallit* ‘fall’  
*fá – fekk – fengu – fengit* ‘get’  
*ganga – gekk – gengu – gengit* ‘go’  
*blása – blés – blésu – blásit* ‘blow’  
*blóta – blét – blétu – blótit* ‘sacrifice’

### 3.6.2 Weak verbs

Weak verbs have only two stems, one for the present and one for the preterite and perfect. The present stem consists of a root plus a stem-forming suffix. There are three different stem-forming suffixes, and therefore three different classes of weak verbs.

- a-stems: *kast + a > kasta-* ‘throw, cast’
- j-stems: *tal + j > telj-* ‘tell’
- i-stems: *dom + i > dæmi-* ‘judge, sentence’

The preterite stem is formed by adding a **dental suffix** to the root or to the present stem. This suffix may take on different forms according to the preceding sound. It is *t* after voiceless consonants and after *n*: *leysti* ‘loosened’, *minnti* ‘reminded’. It is *d* after *m* and *l*: *dæmdi* ‘judged’, *taldi* ‘told’. And it is *ð* after all other voiced consonants and after vowels: *spurði* ‘asked’, *kastaði* ‘threw’. In the older texts, *ð* was also used after nasals and laterals: *dæmði*, *talði*.

Below, the three stem classes will be represented by the infinitive, the 3rd person singular indicative present and preterite.



## (i) a-stems

The *a* of the a-stems is deleted before a suffix which starts with a vowel. It is kept before consonants and before zero.

The preterite stem is formed by adding *-ð* to the present stem.

*kasta – kastar – kastaði* ‘throw’  
*elska – elskar – elskaði* ‘love’

This is the largest class of verbs, including frequent verbs such as *banna* ‘ban’, *kalla* ‘call’, *leita* ‘search’, *líka* ‘like’, *þakka* ‘thank’. Some have a semivowel before the *a*, which is then always retained: *byrja* ‘begin’, *herja* ‘pillage, loot’, *bǫlva* ‘curse’.

A few verbs have a root ending in *á*, then the *a*-suffix disappears: *spá – spár – spáði* ‘prophesy’.

## (ii) j-stems

The stem suffix *j* is a semivowel, which is deleted everywhere, except before a back vowel, according to the general rules of semivowel deletion, described in 2.5.1. It therefore does not appear with the dental suffix of the preterite stem. In the present stem, the *j* has caused i-umlaut throughout, fronting every underlying back vowel. In the preterite indicative of most verbs, there is no umlaut.

*telja – telr – taldi* ‘tell’  
*flytja – flytr – flutti* ‘move’  
*spyrja – spyrr – spurði* ‘ask’

Some verbs have umlaut also in the preterite, however, and some have underlying vowels that are not affected by i-umlaut.

*selja – selr – seldi* ‘give, sell’  
*setja – setr – setti* ‘set’  
*skilja – skilr – skildi* ‘divide, part’

## (iii) i-stems

The stem suffix is the vowel *-i*, which causes i-umlaut throughout in the majority of the verbs in this class. The *i* is deleted in front of any other vowel, but kept before *-r*. The preterite suffix is added directly to the root, so there is no stem suffix in the preterite. The *i* has been there historically, however, so the preterite stem also has i-umlaut.

*dæma – dæmir – dæmdi* ‘judge, sentence’  
*heyra – heyrir – heyrði* ‘hear’  
*leysa – leysir – leysti* ‘loosen’

Other verbs of this class are *brenna* ‘burn’, *færa* ‘lead, transport’, *nefna* ‘mention’, etc. Some of the verbs have a semivowel before the *i* in the present stem. The *j* does not appear before *i*, but it appears when the *i* is lost before a back vowel.

*fylgja* – *fylgir* – *fylgdi* ‘follow’  
*hengja* – *hengir* – *hengdi* ‘hang’  
*stökkva* – *stökkvir* – *stökkti* ‘frighten, chase’

Some verbs may have either a *j* or a *v*: *byggja/byggva* – *byggir/byggvir* – *byggði* ‘settle, build’. A group of verbs belonging to this class do not have i-umlaut.

*horfa* – *horfir* – *horfði* ‘turn’  
*vaka* – *vakir* – *vakti* ‘wake’

Some of these may also have the suffix *-at* in the supine: *dugat*, from *duga* ‘suffice’. A group of rather frequent verbs change the root in irregular ways.

*þykkja* – *þykkir* – *þótti* ‘seem’  
*hafa* – *hefir* – *hafði* ‘have’  
*segja* – *segir* – *sagði* ‘say’  
*kaupa* – *kaupir* – *keypti* ‘buy’

The verb *gera* ‘do’ has the variant stems *gør-* and *gørv-*; the supine may be *gert*, *gørt* or *gørt*.

### 3.6.3 Irregular verbs

Some verbs use different stem formation systems for the different stems, and thus have mixed inflections.

#### (i) Preterite-present verbs

This is a small group of verbs whose present tense derives historically from the Indo-European perfect. The present tense of preterite-present verbs therefore has forms corresponding to the preterite of strong verbs. The past tense corresponds to that of weak verbs. The dental suffix is added directly to the root, and it is subject to various assimilation processes.

Below, the verbs will be presented in the infinitive, the 3rd person singular and 3rd person plural present indicative (the strong preterite stems), and in the 3rd person singular preterite (the weak preterite stem).

*vita* – *veit* – *vitu* – *vissi* ‘know’  
*eiga* – *á* – *eigu* – *átti* ‘own’

*mega* – *má* – *megu* – *mátti* ‘can, may’  
*unna* – *ann* – *unnu* – *unni* ‘love’  
*kunna* – *kann* – *kunnu* – *kunni* ‘know, can’  
*þurfa* – *þarf* – *þurfu* – *þurfti* ‘need’  
*muna* – *man* – *munu* – *mundi* ‘remember’

Note two verbs with the infinitive ending in *-u*: *munu* ‘will, may’ has the same root vowel in all the forms, and *skulu* ‘shall’ has umlaut in the preterite.

*munu* – *mun* – *munu* – *mundi*  
*skulu* – *skal* – *skulu* – *skyldi*

The supine of preterite-present verbs is also formed as in weak verbs. The ending is *-t*: *átt*, *mátt*, *unt*, *þurft*; or *-at*: *vitat*, *megat*, *unnat*, *kunnat*, *munat*.

### (ii) Reduplicating verbs

A small group of verbs form their preterite stem from an original reduplicated stem, with person and number inflection as in weak verbs, while the present and the perfect are as in strong verbs. The infinitive, 3rd person singular present, 3rd person singular preterite, and supine are as follows:

*sá* – *sær* – *seri* – *sáit* ‘sow’  
*róa* – *rær* – *reri* – *róit* ‘row’

The other verbs here are *gróa* ‘grow’, *snúa* ‘turn’, and *gnúa* ‘rub’.

### (iii) Other mixed stems

The strong verbs *frjósa* ‘freeze’ and *kjósa* ‘choose’ may have the stems *frór-* and *kør-* in the preterite, with weak verb inflection.

The verb *heita* ‘be called’ has weak inflectional endings in the present tense, but has a strong preterite stem (7th class).

The verb *valda* ‘cause’ is very exceptional in that the preterite stem is *oll*, which takes the person and number endings of weak verbs: *valda* – *veldr* – *olli* – *valdit*.

## 3.7 Verbal inflection

In this section we will see how the various verbal categories are formed on the basis of the different stems. There are finite and non-finite forms. The non-finite forms are infinitive, present participle, perfect participle, and supine. Among the finite forms, there are three moods: indicative, subjunctive, and imperative, and two numbers: singular and plural. The plural forms of the

verb are also used to agree with dual subject pronouns. Inflection is either by suffixes or by umlaut, or both.

### 3.7.1 *The present stem*

The present stem forms the basis of both non-finite and finite forms.

#### (i) Non-finite forms

The infinitive is formed by adding *-a* to the present stem.

*bíta* ‘bite’, *telja* ‘tell’

If the stem ends in *á*, the infinitive ending does not appear: *fá* ‘get’, *ná* ‘reach’.

The present participle is formed by adding *-andi* to the present stem.

*gangandi* ‘walking’, *krefjandi* ‘demanding’

#### (ii) Indicative

In the indicative singular, the 1st person has no suffix, and just ends with the stem vowel of the present stem. This means that strong verbs have no ending; weak a-stems end in *-a* and i-stems in *-i*; the j-stems drop the semivowel in word final position, and thus end up with no ending in the 1st person. In the 2nd and 3rd person singular the suffix *-r* is added to the stem. In the indicative plural, the endings are *-um*, *-ið*, and *-a*, respectively, for the three persons. The stem vowels *-a* and *-i* are dropped before the plural ending, whereas *-j* is retained before a back vowel. Weak j-stems and i-stems have i-umlaut throughout the present stem. Strong verbs with a back root vowel have i-umlaut in the singular. The present indicative forms of the strong verb *taka* ‘take’, and the weak verbs *telja* ‘tell’, *kasta* ‘throw’, and *dæma* ‘judge’ are as follows:

Number	Person	Strong verb	j-stem	a-stem	i-stem
Singular	1.	tek	tel	kasta	dœmi
	2.	tekr	telr	kastar	dœmir
	3.	tekr	telr	kastar	dœmir
Plural	1.	tøkum	teljum	køstum	dœmum
	2.	takið	telið	kastið	dœmið
	3.	taka	telja	kasta	dœma

In Old Norwegian the 1st person singular eventually adopted the ending *-r* of the 2nd and 3rd persons.

Note the u-umlauted *a* in the 1st person plural. In the 2nd class of strong verbs, the *j* preceding the root vowel is lost, and both *-jó-* and *-jú-* become *-ý-*: *brýtr* ‘breaks’, *krypr* ‘crawls’. The 4th class strong verbs *koma* ‘come’ and *sofa* ‘sleep’ may have *ø* or *e* in the present singular: *kømr/kemr* and *søfr/sefr*. The weak verb *hafa* ‘have’ has i-umlaut in the singular: *hefi* – *hefir* – *hefir*. In older texts it also occurs without a stem vowel: *hef* – *hefr* – *hefr*. The weak j-stem verb *vilja* ‘want’ has the forms *vil* – *vill/vilt* – *vil* for the three persons in the singular.

In the 1st person plural the final consonant of the suffix may be omitted when the verb is immediately followed by the subject pronoun: *tøku vér* ‘we take’. In the 2nd person plural the final *ð* could be reanalysed as part of the following pronoun: *telið it* > *teli þit* ‘you (two) tell’. The verb *þykkja* ‘seem’ often lacks the final *-r* of the 3rd person singular, especially in connection with a 1st or 2nd person dative pronoun: *þykki mér*.

The verb *vera* ‘be’ is irregular in the present indicative.

*em* – *ert* – *er* – *erum* – *eruð* – *eru*

### (iii) Subjunctive

The subjunctive is characterized by the vowel *-i*, which appears in all the forms except the 1st person singular, where the ending is *-a*. The 2nd person singular ends in *-ir*, the 3rd person in *-i*. There is no umlaut in strong verbs. By general rules, the stem vowels *-a* and *-i* are dropped before an affix beginning with a vowel, whereas *-j* is retained before back vowels.

Number	Person	Strong verb	j-stem	a-stem	i-stem
Singular	1.	taka	telja	kasta	dœma
	2.	takir	telir	kastir	dœmir
	3.	taki	teli	kasti	dœmi
Plural	1.	takim	telim	kastim	dœmim
	2.	takið	telið	kastið	dœmið
	3.	taki	teli	kasti	dœmi

Final *-m* and *-ð* in the plural may be omitted as in the indicative.

The subjunctive of *vera* is based on the stem *sé-*, with stress shift in the 1st person singular and loss of *i* after the long root vowel (cf. 2.5.1).

*sjá* – *sér* – *sé* – *sém* – *séð* – *sé*

(iv) Imperative

There are imperative forms for the 2nd person singular and the 1st and 2nd person plural. In the singular, the imperative is like the present stem of the verb, with the loss of the semivowel in j-stems. In the i-stems, the *-i* may also be dropped.

*tak* ‘take’, *tel* ‘tell’, *kasta* ‘throw’, *dæmi/dæm* ‘judge’, *ver* ‘be’

Verbs whose stems end in a nasal plus a stop, undergo final devoicing and assimilation (cf. 2.5.2): \**gang* > \**gank* > *gakk* ‘go’.

In the plural, the imperative is identical to the indicative, except for *vera* ‘be’, where the imperative is regular and based on the present stem: *verum* – *verið*. The plural imperative of this verb therefore is different from the present indicative.

### 3.7.2 The preterite stems

Most classes of strong verbs have two different preterite stems, with different ablaut grades. Weak verbs have one preterite stem, formed with a dental suffix.

(i) Infinitive

Preterite-present verbs do not have a present stem (cf. 3.6.3), but form the infinitive on the basis of the preterite stem.

*vita* ‘know’, *mega* ‘may, can’

Two of these, *munu* ‘may, will’, *skulu* ‘shall’, have the infinitive ending *-u*. These two verbs, plus *vilja* ‘want’, also have a preterite infinitive which is based on the weak preterite stem, and is thus identical to the 3rd person plural indicative.

*munu* – *mundu* ‘may, will’

*skulu* – *skyldu* ‘shall’

*vilja* – *vildu* ‘want’

The preterite infinitive is used only in accusative with infinitive constructions following a matrix verb in a past tense (cf. 8.4.4).

(ii) Indicative

In the indicative, the preterite singular is different for strong and weak verbs. The strong verbs have no ending in the 1st and 3rd person. The 2nd person ends in *-t*. Weak verbs have the endings *-a*, *-ir*, and *-i*, for the three persons. The endings in the plural are *-um*, *-uð*, and *-u* for both weak and strong verbs in all stem classes. The *u* always causes u-umlaut of a preceding *a* > *q* (*a* > *u*

in unstressed syllables, cf. 2.5.1). There is no i-umlaut in most weak j-stems, but i-umlaut throughout in the i-stems. The preterite indicative forms of the strong verb *renna* ‘run’, the weak verb *kalla* ‘call’, and the present and the preterite of the preterite-present verb *muna* ‘remember’ are as follows:

Number	Person	Strong verb	Weak verb	Preterite-present verb	
				Present	Preterite
Singular	1.	rann	kallaða	man	munda
	2.	rannt	kallaðir	mant	mundir
	3.	rann	kallaði	man	mundi
Plural	1.	runnum	kølluðum	munum	mundum
	2.	runnuð	kølluðuð	munuð	munduð
	3.	runnu	kølluðu	munu	mundu

In the 1st person of weak verbs the *-a* is sometimes replaced by *-i* in younger texts.

The 2nd person singular of strong verbs may undergo various morpho-phonemic changes depending on the final element of the stem:

- If the stem ends in a long vowel, the *-t* is doubled: *sá + t > sátt* ‘saw.2s’ (cf. 2.5.1).
- After a stem final *t* the suffix is *-st*; the cluster is usually spelt *-zt*: *braut + st > brauzt* ‘broke.2s’.
- A stem final *ð* is assimilated to the *-t*: *bað + t > batt* (cf. 2.5.1). This latter rule may feed the former one, resulting in *batst*.

Sometimes the final *-t* of the 2nd person of strong verbs and of preterite-present verbs is omitted when followed immediately by the pronoun *þú*: *gekk þú* ‘you went’.

Final *-m* and *-ð* in the plural may be omitted as in the present.

### (iii) Subjunctive

The preterite subjunctive has the same endings as the present subjunctive. In strong verbs, the plural preterite stem is used both in the singular and the plural. In all stem classes, except the weak a-class and in the present of preterite-present verbs, there is i-umlaut of back root vowels. The preterite subjunctive forms of the strong verb *renna* ‘run’, the weak a-stem *kalla* ‘call’, the weak i-stem *vaka* ‘be awake’, and the present and the preterite of the preterite-present verb

*muna* ‘remember’ are as follows:

Number	Person	Strong verb	Weak verbs		Preterite-present verbs	
			a-stem	i-stem	Present	Preterite
Singular	1.	<i>rynna</i>	<i>kallaða</i>	<i>vekta</i>	<i>muna</i>	<i>mynda</i>
	2.	<i>rynnir</i>	<i>kallaðir</i>	<i>vektir</i>	<i>munir</i>	<i>myndir</i>
	3.	<i>rynni</i>	<i>kallaði</i>	<i>vekti</i>	<i>muni</i>	<i>myndi</i>
Plural	1.	<i>rynnim</i>	<i>kallaðim</i>	<i>vektim</i>	<i>munim</i>	<i>myndim</i>
	2.	<i>rynnið</i>	<i>kallaðið</i>	<i>vektið</i>	<i>munið</i>	<i>myndið</i>
	3.	<i>rynni</i>	<i>kallaði</i>	<i>vekti</i>	<i>muni</i>	<i>myndi</i>

Final *-m* and *-ð* in the plural may be omitted as in the present indicative. We would also expect umlaut in the present of preterite-present verbs, as in the preterite of normal strong verbs. This is not common; it is found in some texts with *munu* ‘may, will’ and *skulu* ‘shall’ only: *myni*, *skylu*, etc.

### 3.7.3 The perfect stem

Two non-finite forms, the perfect participle and the supine, are based on the perfect stem. The perfect stem of weak verbs is identical to the preterite stem. Strong verbs have a separate ablaut grade for the perfect stem (which may have the same root vowel as one of the other stems), and the perfect participle is formed by adding the suffix *-in* to the stem.

Perfect participles have adjectival inflections, and are inflected for number, gender, and case in agreement with the noun that they modify or are predicated of.

S.M.N *kallaðr* – S.NEU.N/A *kallat* ‘called’

S.M.N/A *bitinn* – S.NEU.N/A *bitit* ‘bitten’

Details of the inflectional forms are given in 3.5.

The supine is identical to the nominative/accusative neuter singular of the perfect participle: *kallat*, *bitit*.

### 3.7.4 The reflexive verb form

The reflexive clitic *-sk* may be added to the inflected forms of the verb. This is a reduced form of the reflexive pronoun *sik*. (A younger form of *-sk* is *-st*.)



The suffix *-mk* (<*mik*) was used in the 1st person singular only, where it was later replaced by *-sk*, which had already been generalized to the 2nd person. The suffix *-sk* was also used for the dative, instead of the full form *sér*. The reflexive suffix *-sk* then corresponds to all three persons and numbers and to both accusative and dative.

The 1st person singular *-mk* is suffixed to a form of the verb ending in *-u* (with umlaut). Instead of *\*kalla + mk*, the form is *køllumk* ‘call myself’. In all the other persons singular and plural, the suffix is *-sk*. When this is added to the inflected verb, a final *-r* of the inflection is dropped: *kallar + sk* > *kallask* ‘calls himself’. A final *ð* becomes *t*: *kallið + sk* > *kallizk* (= *kallitsk*) ‘call yourselves’, and the cluster *zt + sk* is reduced to *zk*: *brauzk* ‘broke yourself’.

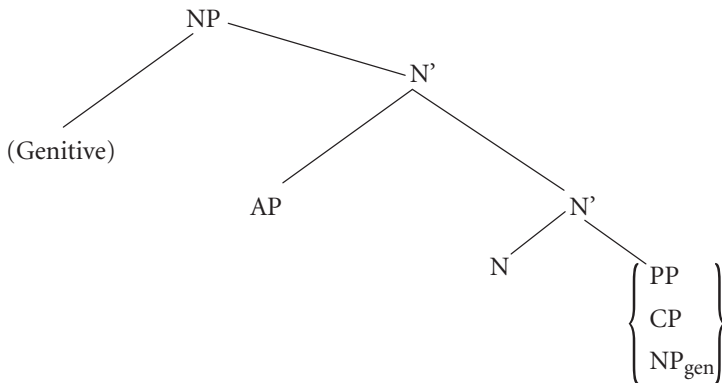
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## The Noun Phrase

The noun phrase (NP) is headed by a noun. Besides the head noun, NPs may contain articles, possessive determiners or genitive phrases, adjectival and other modifiers, and complements of various categories. NPs may also be preceded by demonstrative determiners. Those determiners will be considered heads of higher phrases containing the NP. These phrases will be treated separately in Chapter 5.

The Old Norse noun phrase exhibits a great variety of forms and structures, to the extent that the word order within the NP seems almost totally unconstrained by syntactic rules. On closer inspection, however, certain basic patterns emerge, and the variants turn out to be the result of general movement rules.

In addition to the head noun, the noun phrase may have complements in the form of a prepositional phrase, a clause, or a genitive phrase. There may also be a genitive phrase (possessive determiner, pronoun, or NP in the genitive) in the specifier position preceding the head. A very important part of the NP is the adjective or the adjective phrase (AP), which is a modifier adjoined to N'. The basic pattern of the NP is as follows:



A noun may make up the whole phrase by itself. This noun is typically a proper name – personal name or place name – or an indefinite common name.

- (1) *Kimbi sá at Þormóðr hafði gullhring á hendi*  
 Kimbi.N saw that Thormod.N had gold-ring.A on hand.D  
 ‘Kimbi saw that Thormod had a gold ring on his arm’ (Hkr II.500.16)

Old Norse has no indefinite article corresponding to what we find in most modern Germanic languages.

#### 4.1 The definite article

The definite article has two forms. It is either an independent word, *hinn* or *inn*, or a clitic *-inn*. Both of these are inflected for number, gender, and case, agreeing with the head noun.

##### 4.1.1 *The independent form*

The independent form of the definite article is used in combination with an adjective, and it precedes the adjective and the noun. It may also be used when the noun is modified by a clause, as in (2c).

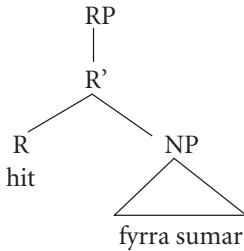
- (2) a. *it fyrra sumar*  
 the.NEU.A former.DEF summer.A  
 ‘last summer/the summer before’ (Hkr II.281.11)
- b. *en þó var hann hit mesta afarmenni*  
 but still was he the.NEU.N greatest.DEF outstanding-man.N  
 ‘But still he was a most outstanding man’ (Gunnl 1.8)
- c. *en ek hefi hina skilning at engi sé þeira maki*  
 but I have.1S the.F.A opinion.A that nobody.M.N be.SUB their  
 equal.N  
 ‘But it is my opinion that nobody is their equal’ (Nj 209.6)

(The word *hinn* is also used in the sense ‘the other’; cf. Chapter 8, (37) and (64b). In such cases it is not a definite article but a demonstrative determiner.)

The definite article is the head of a phrase above the NP in the D-structure. I will call this phrase the Reference Phrase (RP), since it is where the referential

properties of the NP are determined. The D-structure relationship between the definite article and the NP is as in (3).

(3)

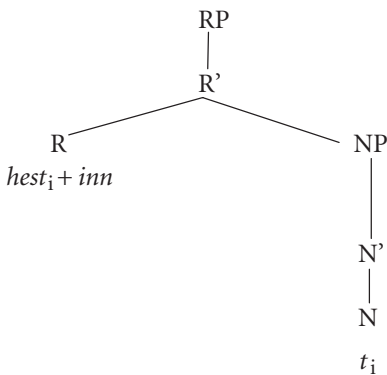


The RP is thus the nominal equivalent of the Inflectional Phrase (IP) in the verbal projection; cf. Chapter 9. (In this chapter, and throughout the book, I will continue to use the term ‘NP’ even for phrases headed by R. The label ‘DP’ – for ‘determiner phrase’ – will be reserved for a still higher projection; cf. Chapter 5, where the difference between RP and DP will also become evident).

#### 4.1.2 The cliticized article

The clitic form of the article, *-inn*, is attached to the end of the noun, after the case/number suffix. The clitic has its own number/gender/case inflection, whose forms are the same as those of the independent word *hinn*. For the cliticization to take place, the noun is moved up and adjoined to the definite article in R. After this movement, the S-structure relationship between the NP and the RP is as in (4).

(4)



Some typical uses of the cliticized article are shown in (5).

- (5) a. stýrimaðr fyrir skipinu  
 helmsman.N for ship.D-the.NEU.D  
 ‘helmsman of the ship’ (Gunnl 2.11)
- b. ok ekki þykkir fjáðanum jamillt  
 and not seems devil.D-the.M.D even-bad.NEU.N  
 ‘and it does not seem equally bad to the devil’ (Hóm 36.7)
- c. þat er eigi at réttu mannsins óðal  
 that.N is not at right.NEU.D man.G-the.M.G legacy.N  
 ‘That is surely not the purpose of mankind’ (Kgs 56.9)

There are also some rare cases of a double article.

- (6) a. ins versta hlutarins  
 the worst.DEF part.G-the  
 ‘of the worst part’ (Band 46.21)
- b. hinir beztu menninir  
 the best.DEF men.N-the  
 ‘the best men’ (Kgs 54.38)

This can either be a case of ‘copying’ or ‘attraction’ of the definite feature onto the noun, which then does not move. Alternatively, it may be seen as a simple case of agreement, where the adjective ‘agrees’ with the noun for definiteness. (This would then be the beginning of a development towards the situation in modern Norwegian, where the structures in (6) are generalized for definite NPs, and where the definite article should be considered an affix rather than a clitic.)

#### 4.1.3 *Use of the definite article*

The function of the definite article is to express unique and specific reference.<sup>1</sup> During the Old Norse period, the use of the definite article was marked. The unmarked form without the article could thus also have unique and specific reference.

- (7) a. sat konungr ok dróttning í háseti  
 sat king.N and queen.N in high-seat.D  
 ‘The king and the queen were sitting in the high seat’ (Hkr I.338.13)

<sup>1</sup> This treatment of definiteness is largely based on Dyvik 1979.

- b. *jarl* var vinsæll við *búendr*  
 earl.N was friendly.M.N with farmers.A  
 ‘The earl was popular among the farmers’ (Hkr I.343.9)

In particular, the definite article is not used with names of tribes or ethnic groups.

- (8) a. ef *Danir* koma eigi [...] ok kómu *Danir* eigi  
 if Danes.N come.3P not and came.3P Danes.N not  
 ‘If the Danes do not come, and the Danes did not come’ (Gunnl 35.23/36.1)
- b. þar með gáfu *Svíar* honum *Onundar* nafn  
 there with gave.3P Swedes.N him.D Onund.G name.A  
 ‘In addition the Swedes gave him the name of Onund’ (Hkr II.194.14)

## 4.2 Genitive phrases

A genitive phrase may precede or follow the head noun. This means that it is in the specifier or the complement positions of the NP. (In some cases it should perhaps rather be analysed as a right-adjoined modifier; see next section.)

The genitive phrase may have the form of a NP or a pronoun in the genitive case, or a possessive determiner. There are possessive determiners for 1st and 2nd person singular (*minn*, *þinn*), dual (*okkarr*, *ykkarr*), and plural (*várr*, *yðvarr*), and for the 3rd person reflexive (*sinn*). These agree with the head noun for number, gender, and case. For the non-reflexive 3rd person, the genitive of the 3rd person pronoun or determiner is used (masculine *hans*, feminine *hennar*, neuter *þess*, plural all genders *þeira*). All these categories will be referred to below as ‘genitives’.

Genitives most often follow the head noun. This order is found even when everything else precedes the noun. Therefore the order cannot be due to movement of the noun (as with adjectives; see next section). This indicates that the genitive is generated as a complement of N, and not in the specifier position, as we would expect.

- (9) a. þingstöð þeira borgfirðinga  
 assembly-place their Borgfirðings.G  
 ‘the assembly-place of the people from Borgfjord’ (Gunnl 3.5)
- b. hinum kærsta syni sínum  
 the dearest.DEF son.D his.RFL  
 ‘to his dearest son’ (Hóm 1.2)

The genitive may also, however, precede the noun. In such cases the genitive moves to the specifier position of the NP:

- (10) a. var þeira dóttir Húngerðr  
 was their daughter.N Hungerd.N  
 ‘Their daughter was Hungerd’ (Gunnl 2.5)  
 b. minn einnhvern sannan fulltrúa ok kunningja  
 my some true trusted-friend.A and acquaintance.A  
 ‘one true and trustworthy friend and acquaintance of mine’ (Barl 12.9)

This order is particularly common if the genitive and the noun make up a conceptual unit:

- (11) a. þar með gáfu Svíar honum Onundar nafn  
 there with gave.3P Swedes.N him.D Onund.G name.A  
 ‘In addition the Swedes gave him the name of Onund’ (Hkr II.194.14)  
 b. þat var á margra manna vitorði  
 that was on many men.G knowledge.D  
 ‘It was known by many men’ (Hkr II.206.14)

The genitive may be fronted to the specifier position of RP, thus preceding the definite article.

- (12) a. þitt hitt milda andlit  
 your the mild.DEF face  
 ‘your mild face’ (Barl 187.13)  
 b. sína ina ágæztu menn  
 their.RFL the most-excellent.DEF men.A  
 ‘their most excellent men’ (Hkr I.12.13)

Generally, a head noun with a genitive complement or specifier has no definite article, but it may occasionally carry the definite article. In these cases the genitive usually follows the noun.

- (13) a. um hefndina Bolla  
 about vengeance.A-the Bolli.G  
 ‘about the vengeance on Bolli’ (Laxd 177.30)  
 b. um tilföngin búsin  
 about supplies.A-the household.G-the  
 ‘about the supplies for the household’ (Hkr II.244.6)

The semantic relationship between the genitive and the head noun may be of various kinds. We can distinguish four general semantic types: possessive, descriptive, partitive, and argumental. The possessive genitive expresses possession in the narrow sense, as well as other abstract relationships, as in (9) and (13b). The descriptive genitive involves qualitative or quantitative expressions as in (11a) and (14).

- (14) a. tveggja daga vist  
two days.G food  
'food for two days' (Hkr III. 449.15)
- b. ek hefi spunnit tólf alna garn  
I have.1S spun twelve yards.G yarn.A  
'I have spun twelve yards of yarn' (Laxd 158.6)

In (14), the quantification is in the genitive. In the so-called partitive genitive, it is the content which is in the genitive.

- (15) a. gaf honum tvá aura silfrs  
gave him.D two ounces.A silver.G  
'gave him two ounces of silver' (Hkr II.256.9)
- b. hinn neyti hlutr trésins  
the lowest.DEF part.N tree.G-the  
'the lowest part of the tree' (Hkr I.93.12)

Note in particular that numerals ending in 'ten', 'hundred', or 'thousand' are nouns, with the counted noun added in the genitive:

- (16) a. höfðu þeir halft annat hundrað skipa  
had.3P they.M half second hundred.A ships.G  
'They had 180<sup>2</sup> ships' (Hkr I.329.4)
- b. níu tigu manna  
nine tens.A men.G  
'ninety men' (Eg 44.10)

Nouns derived from verbs and other nouns with a verbal or predicative content may combine with a genitive phrase expressing an argument of the corresponding predicate. This genitive phrase may correspond to the nominative subject of the corresponding verb (or predicate), or to an object in one of the three oblique cases.

<sup>2</sup> *Hundrað* was a so-called 'greater hundred' = 120.



With nouns derived from intransitive verbs, the genitive expresses the subject role (subjective genitive). The a-sentences below which give examples of a NP with a genitive can be compared with the respective b-sentences where we see an equivalent verb with a subject.

- (17) a. *ferð Óláfs af Vinlandi*  
 journey Olaf.G from Vinland.D  
 ‘Olaf’s journey from Vinland’ (Hkr I.433.1)
- b. *Óláfr fór utan um sumarit*  
 Olaf went from-out in summer.A-the  
 ‘Olaf left (Iceland) in the summer’ (Laxd 81.5)
- (18) a. *var þá í Orkneyjum mikill yfirgangr þeira*  
 was then in Orkneys.D great oppression.N their  
 ‘Their behaviour in the Orkneys was very oppressive’ (Hkr II.198.15)
- b. *Eyjólfr vill nú ganga yfir alla þjóð*  
 Eyjolf.N wants now go over all people.A  
 ‘Eyjolf now wants to dominate all the people’ (Ljós 70)

Even with nouns derived from transitive verbs, the genitive may correspond to the subject. The NP in (19a) corresponds to the sentence (19b).

- (19) a. *sú er fleiri manna sogn*  
 that.F.N is more men.G story.N  
 ‘It is the story of several men’ (Hkr III.349.22)
- b. *svá segja sumir menn*  
 so say.3P some men.N  
 ‘Some people say so’ (Fbr 125.8)

The genitives in (20) also have a subject role, although there is no exact verbal equivalent to the head nouns.

- (20) a. *þat var á margra manna vitorði*  
 that was on many men.G knowledge.D  
 ‘It was known by many men’ (Hkr II.206.14)
- b. *fekk trúnað margra ríkismanna*  
 got confidence.A many powerful-men.G  
 ‘obtained the confidence of many powerful men’ (Hkr II.35.3)

Nouns derived from verbs with the (non-productive) suffix *-ingi* or *-ingr* denote the patient role of the verb. Such nouns may take a genitive phrase

expressing the agent:

- (21) a. at hann mundi vera vilja ræningi þinn  
 that he would be want robbed-one.N your  
 ‘that he would want to be robbed by you’ (Eg 307.14)
- b. ef þér Sigfússynir skuluð ræna þá  
 if you.P.N Sigfus-sons.N should.2P rob them.M.A  
 ‘if you sons of Sigfus are to rob them’ (Nj 107.11)
- (22) a. þá em ek hvers manns níðingr  
 then am I each man.G scoundrel.N  
 ‘then I will be despised by everybody’ (Nj 292.3)
- b. hvat Egill hefir gert [...] nít sjalfan þik  
 what.A Egil.N has done scorned self you.A  
 ‘What Egil has done – even scorned you’ (Eg 219.2)

Compound nouns with *-maðr* ‘man’ as the second element may have a similar meaning and take a genitive with a subjective role:

- (23) við Grím, skógarmann hans  
 with Grim.A forest-man.A his  
 ‘with Grim, who was outlawed by him’ (Laxd 175.3)
- (24) engis manns nauðungarmaðr vil ek vera  
 no man.G constraint-man.N want.1S I be  
 ‘I do not want to be forced by anybody’ (Laxd 124.22)

With nouns derived from transitive verbs, the genitive usually expresses the object role. Again, the noun phrases in the a-sentences below correspond to the verbal constructions in the b-sentences.

- (25) a. frá Íslands byggð  
 from Iceland.G settlement.D  
 ‘about the settlement of Iceland’ (Hkr I.6.10)
- b. fáam vetrum áðr hqfðu þeir Ingólfr ok Hjørleifr  
 few winters.D before had.3P they.M Ingolf.N and Hjørleif.N  
 farit at byggja Ísland  
 gone to settle Iceland.A  
 ‘A few years earlier Ingolf and Hjørleif had gone to settle in Iceland’  
 (Eg 70.2)

- (26) a. Ása in illráða var áðr farin á fund fǫður  
 Asa.N the wicked was before gone.F.N on meeting.A father.G  
 síns  
 her.RFL  
 ‘Asa the wicked had already gone to meet her father’ (Hkr I.72.13)
- b. ek vil ríða til þings ok finna fǫður minn  
 I want.1S ride to assembly.G and meet father.A my  
 ‘I want to go to the assembly and meet my father’ (Nj 17.13)

The verb *dreyma* ‘dream’ takes the person dreaming in the accusative, as in (27b), and, as expected, the corresponding phrase is in the genitive with the noun *draumr*, shown in (27a).

- (27) a. nú hefi ek þýddan draum þinn  
 now have.1S I interpreted.M.A dream.A your  
 ‘Now I have interpreted your dream’ (Gunnl 5.16)
- b. þat dreymdi mik at ...  
 it.N dreamed me.A that  
 ‘I dreamt that ...’ (Gunnl 4.5)

In each noun phrase there is room for only one genitive phrase; this may be either the subject or the object of the deverbal head noun. There is no possibility of two genitives, such as:

- (28) \*Ingólfs byggð Íslands  
 Ingolf.G settlement Iceland.G  
 ‘Ingolf’s settlement of Iceland’

The object may however be expressed as the first element of a compound noun, as in *kristnihald* ‘Christian practice’ (cf. *halda kristni* ‘keep Christianity’), and *sættar-görð* ‘agreement’:

- (29) a. játti hann fyrir því sættar-görð jarls  
 accepted he for that.D agreement-making.A earl.G  
 ‘Therefore he accepted the earl’s peace agreement’ (Hkr I.320.7)
- b. síðan gerði hann sætt við Skota  
 since made he agreement with Scots.A  
 ‘Then he made a deal with the Scots’ (Laxd 7.1)

The objective genitive is also possible with nouns derived from verbs taking a dative as their only object.

- (30) a. Guthormr hertogi hafði *alla stjórns landsins*  
 Guthorm.N duke had all rule.A country.G-the  
 ‘Duke Guthorm ruled the whole country’ (Hkr I.127.15)
- b. *hverr ferðinni skal stjórna*  
 who.M.N journey.D-the shall rule  
 ‘Who shall take charge on the journey’ (Laxd 181.15)
- (31) a. *er vald landsins hafði undan þeim gengit*  
 when power.N country.G-the had away-from them.D gone  
 ‘When they had lost control of the country’ (Hkr I.170.9)
- b. *meðan ek má upp standa ok vápnum valda*  
 while I can.1s up stand and weapons.D wield  
 ‘As long as I can stand up and wield my weapons’ (Laxd 124.23)

In a similar fashion, objective genitives in NPs may correspond to the genitive objects of verbs.

- (32) a. *um hefndina Bolla*  
 about vengeance.A-the Bolli.G  
 ‘about the vengeance on Bolli’ (Laxd 177.30)
- b. *at hefna Bolla*  
 to avenge Bolli.G  
 ‘to avenge Bolli’ (Laxd 184.18)
- (33) a. *hon kvað þess litla þörf*  
 she said it.G little need.A  
 ‘She said there was little need for it’ (Gunnl 6.16)
- b. *hann kvazk eigi hrossa þurfa*  
 he said.RFL not horses.G need  
 ‘He said he did not need horses’ (Gunnl 15.20)

With agent nouns the genitive also expresses the object of the corresponding verb. These may be verbs that take their object in any of the oblique cases.

- (34) a. *hverr valdi er verks þessa*  
 who.M.N perpetrator.N is deed.G this  
 ‘who is guilty of this deed’ (Hkr II.304.15)
- b. *en lézk engrar skyldu lengi vánbiðill vera*  
 but said.RFL nobody.F.G should.INF long wooer.N be  
 ‘but said that he should not be kept waiting long (for a bride)’  
 (Laxd 168.17)

(The word *vánbiðill* in (34b) contains the verb *biðja* ‘ask’.) Nouns may have a predicative content and take an objective genitive although they are not derived from verbs; cf. (35a) and (35b).

- (35) a. ok sverir þess eiða at ...  
and swear.SUB.2S that.G oaths.A that  
‘and (that you) swear an oath that ...’ (Hkr II.40.4)
- b. at maðr sjá hafi lífs grið ok lima  
that man.N that have.SUB life.G safety and limbs.G  
‘that that man shall have safety for life and limbs’ (Hkr II.259.16)

With nouns derived from three-place verbs, the genitive may represent the agent, as in (19a) above, but more commonly it corresponds to the patient. Consider, for example, the verb *bæta* ‘compensate’, derived from the noun *bót* ‘compensation’. This verb takes a dative argument for the means or content of the compensation, and an accusative for the patient (the object compensated for), as in (36b). With the noun *bót*, the genitive has the patient role and corresponds to the accusative, as in (36a).

- (36) a. til bóta þessa  
to compensations.G this.G  
‘in compensation for this’ (Nj 149.16)
- b. hverju viltu bæta mér son minn  
what.D want.2S-you compensate me.D son.A my  
‘What will you give me as compensation for my son?’ (Gunnl 57.17)

With verbs which take two dative objects, such as *heita* ‘promise’ or *svara* ‘answer’, the objective genitive corresponds to the patient object. Constructions where the genitive corresponds to the recipient are excluded.

- (37) a. margir hofðingjar aðrir strengðu heit ymissa hluta  
many chiefs.N other made.3P vows.A various things.G  
‘Many other chiefs made vows about various things’ (Hkr I.322.17)
- b. því hét ek Gunnari  
it.D promised.1S I Gunnar.D  
‘I promised Gunnar it’ (Nj 166.12)
- c. \*þeir strengðu heit konungs  
they.M made.3P vows.A king.G  
‘They made vows to the king’

- (38) a. *Ástríðr á svqr þessa máls*  
 Astrid.N has answers.A this matter.G  
 ‘Astrid has the answers regarding this matter’ (Hkr I.367.9)
- b. *Því mun ek svara þér*  
 it.D will.1s I answer you.D  
 ‘I will give you an answer to it’ (Nj 73.28)
- c. *\*hon á svqr jarls*  
 she has answers.A earl.G  
 ‘She has answers to the earl’<sup>3</sup>

### 4.3 Modifiers

Modifiers are phrases or words adjoined to the left of N’, thus appearing between the article and the noun. Modifiers can be adjectives, participles, quantifiers, the word *sjalfr* ‘self’, or nouns.

#### 4.3.1 Adjectives and participles

Adjectives in the positive and superlative and perfect participles have a strong and a weak declension. The comparative form and the present participle have the weak declension only.

As modifiers of nouns, the participles behave syntactically and morphologically like adjectives. Therefore, no distinction will be made between those two categories in this section. The weak declension, also called **definite**, is used when the adjective is a modifier in a definite NP. A NP is definite if it contains a definite article; with adjectives, this is the article (*h*)*inn* (cf. 4.1.1).

- (39) a. *ok gaf at eta inum sárum mǫnnum*  
 and gave to eat the.P.D wounded.DEF.P.D. men.D  
 ‘and gave (it) to the wounded men to eat’ (Hkr II.503.13)
- b. *fyrir frændum ins vegna*  
 for kinsmen.D the.M.G killed.DEF.M.G  
 ‘for the kinsmen of the one who was killed’ (Nj 163.8)

Sometimes the definite article may be missing, but the NP may still be definite for other reasons, for example if it follows a demonstrative (40a), if there is a genitive in the NP (40b), or if the head noun is a proper name (40c). In such cases the definite form of the adjective is still used.

<sup>3</sup> This construction, (38c), would also be acceptable on a reading where the genitive phrase has a subject role: ‘the answers of the earl’.

- (40) a. til þess helga húss  
to that sacred.DEF.NEU.G house.G  
'to that sacred house' (Hóm 113.23)
- b. at ýzta skipi Óláfs konungs  
at outer.DEF.NEU.D ship.D Olaf.G king  
'against King Olaf's outermost ship' (Hkr I.442.10)
- c. Óláfr digri  
Olaf.N stout.DEF.M.N  
'Olaf the stout' (Hkr II.85.15)

Comparatives and superlatives, and the word *sami* 'same' are used in the definite form and with a definite meaning also in other contexts.

- (41) a. sama haust  
same.DEF.NEU.A autumn.A  
'the same autumn' (Hkr I.86.10)
- b. af fyrri konungi  
of former.DEF.M.D king.D  
'of the former king' (Eg 14.21)
- c. ok kom á næsta bæ Hrútsstöðum  
and came on nearest.DEF.M.A farm.A Hrutsstad.D  
'and came to the farm next to Hrutsstad' (Nj 54.15)

The strong, or **indefinite**, declension is used in all other cases, as in (42)–(46) below.

All modifying adjectives agree with the head noun that they modify for number, gender, and case. The basic position of the adjective is to the left of the noun.

- (42) a. ágætr bæer  
excellent.M.N farm.N  
'an excellent farm' (Hkr II.244.15)
- b. ok sá þar mikinn her  
and saw there big.M.A army.A  
'and saw a big army there' (Hkr II.229.7)

It is more common, however, for adjectives to follow the noun on the surface.

- (43) a. ganga hǫf stór ór útsjánum  
go.3P seas.N big.P.NEU.N from out-seas.D  
'Big seas extend from the oceans' (Hkr I.9.2)

- b. þá sá ek fljúga ofan frá fjöllumum orðn  
 then saw.1S I fly down from mountains.D-the eagle.A  
 mikinn  
 large.M.A  
 ‘Then I saw a large eagle fly down from the mountains’ (Gunnl 4.8)

This order can again be accounted for as movement of the noun to the R-position, which then may take place even when there is no article present. In that case, N-movement is optional, as seen by the examples in (42). The postulation of an R-position (which is motivated by the position of the definite article) then in turn motivates the movement of N to the left, which again supports the postulation of adjective–noun as the basic order.

In particular, the adjective precedes the noun if it is emphasized or focused.

- (44) a. þar váru til svara margir gófgir menn  
 there were.3P to answers.G many noble men.N  
 ‘Many noble men were there for the defence’ (Hkr I.387.3)  
 b. hann átti tvá laungetna sonu  
 he had two illegitimate sons.A  
 ‘He had two illegitimate sons’ (Eg 294.24)

The basic order adjective–noun is the rule when the two words constitute a conceptual unit of some kind.

- (45) a. dýrri en reint korn  
 dearer.P.N than pure corn.N  
 ‘more expensive than pure corn (=barley)’ (Kgs 51.14)  
 b. full af ensku silfri  
 full.F.N of English silver.D  
 ‘full of English silver’ (Eg 318.20)

Adjectives that denote a part of the reference of the noun, such as ‘front, back, middle’, etc., constitute a special use of the above category:

- (46) a. ok biðu til miðs aptans  
 and waited.3P till middle evening.G  
 ‘and waited till the middle of the evening (6 o’clock)’ (Nj 295.4)  
 b. í austanverðri Svíþjóð  
 in eastern Sweden.D  
 ‘in eastern Sweden’ (Hkr I.26.8)



In definite NPs with adjectives, the noun normally remains behind the adjective, while the article appears in its full form; cf. 4.1.1.

- (47) a. inn mesti            vinr        Erlings  
           the greatest.DEF friend.N Erling.G  
           ‘a very good friend of Erling’s’ (Hkr II.403.16)
- b. hinum kærsta        syni    sínnum  
           the     dearest.DEF son.D his.RFL  
           ‘his dearest son’ (Hóm 1.2)

The noun may also move up to precede the independent article and the adjective. This is the rule with proper names, but it also occurs more rarely with common names:

- (48) a. Þjóðólfr    inn fróði            ór Hvini var skáld Haralds ins  
           Thjodolf.N the learned.DEF of Hvin.D was poet.N Harald.G the  
           hárfagra  
           hair-fine.DEF  
           ‘Thjodolf the learned of Hvin was Harald the Fine-haired’s poet’  
           (Hkr I.4.9)
- b. þá fann hann Vinland it góða  
           then found he    Vinland.A the good.DEF  
           ‘Then he found Vinland the good’ (Hkr I.428.3)
- c. engi maðr mátti nefna hann annan veg, en jarl  
           no man.N could mention him.A other way.A than earl.A  
           inn illa  
           the evil.DEF  
           ‘Nobody was allowed to refer to him in any other way than as “the  
           evil earl”’ (Hkr I.355.16)

This is presumably movement to the specifier position of R, which prevents cliticization of the article. Since it is not movement to a head position, an entire phrase may precede the article:

- (49) a. Hákonar jarls ins ríka  
           Hakon.G earl the mighty.DEF  
           ‘of Earl Hakon the mighty’ (Hkr I.4.18)
- b. Ari    prestr inn fróði  
           Ari.N priest the learned.DEF  
           ‘the priest Ari the learned’ (Hkr I.6.8)

- c. ok mintisk á ævi sína ina fyrri  
and remembered.RFL ON time.A his.RFL the former.DEF  
'and remembered his former life' (Hkr II.146.23)

Less commonly, the noun may move to the R-position and combine with the definite article:

- (50) a. á Orminum langa  
on Serpent.D-the long.DEF  
'on board "The Long Serpent"' (Hkr I.414.10)  
b. í eilífri dýrð fǫður ok sonar ok andans helga  
in eternal glory.D father.G and son.G and spirit.G-the holy.DEF  
'in the eternal glory of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit'  
(Hóm 31.23)

A proper name may also precede an indefinite adjective: *Hákon herðibreiðr* (broad-shouldered), *Magnus berfættr* (barefoot), *Hálfðan hvítbeinn* (whiteleg); or it may precede a definite adjective without an article: *Óláfr digri* (stout), cf. (40c).

Adjectives may occur without a head noun. When the deleted noun has a more specific interpretation, the definite article is used.

- (51) a. en þau in stóru skip [...] þat var it fyrri  
but those the big.DEF ships.N that was the former.DEF.NEU.N  
Tranin, en it síðara Ormr inn  
Crane.N-the and the latter.DEF.NEU.N Serpent.N the  
skammi  
short.DEF.M.N  
'But of those big ships, the former was "The Crane" and the latter  
"The Short Serpent"' (Hkr I.437.13)  
b. þú hinn blindi ok hinn skynlausi  
you.N the blind.DEF.M.N and the senseless.DEF.M.N  
'You blind and senseless person' (Barl 160.11)

As we can see from (51b), this form is also used when addressing people.

An adjective followed by a complement of its own always has to follow its head noun.

- (52) a. þar fylgði segl stafat með vendi  
there followed sail.N adorned with stripe.D  
'A striped sail came with it' (Hkr II.244.9)

- b. er þó hofuðvápn bjúgr skjaldjötunn *ryptandi með*  
 is though main-weapon.N bowed shield-giant.N gushing with  
*eldligum loga*  
 fiery flame.D  
 ‘But the main weapon is a cannon which emits fiery flame’ (Kgs 63.37)

In such cases, instead of positing a movement of the noun triggered by the nature of the adjective phrase, it is more likely that the heavy adjective phrase is extraposed to the end of the NP. Another very common type of extraposition is the movement of coordinated adjectives to the end of the NP:

- (53) a. maðr gøfgastr ok ríkistr í Noregi  
 man.N noblest and most-powerful in Norway.D  
 ‘the noblest and most powerful man in Norway’ (Hkr II.407.18)  
 b. alpt eina væna ok fagra  
 swan.A one beautiful and fair  
 ‘a beautiful and fair swan’ (Gunnl 4.7)

As an alternative, the first adjective may remain to the left of the noun, while the other one(s) is (are) extraposed:

- (54) a. vitr maðr ok hógværr  
 wise man.N and gentle  
 ‘a wise and gentle man’ (Gunnl 1.5)  
 b. mikill maðr ok sterkr, fálátr ok fastnæmr ok ríkr  
 big man.N and strong silent and firm and powerful  
 ‘a big, strong, man, reserved, steadfast and powerful’ (Dpl 144.23)

Since this is extraposition, the second conjunct follows other parts of the NP:

- (55) a. af harmi góðs granna síns ok ágæts  
 of grief.D good neighbour.G his.RFL and famous  
 ‘from grief over his good and famous neighbour’ (Kgs 36.16)  
 b. spakastan húsbúanda í bæ ok vinsælastan  
 wisest house-master.A in town.D and most-popular  
 ‘the wisest and most popular landlord in town’ (Kgs 130.29)

Very rarely both adjectives may precede the noun:

- (56) a. margir helgir ok réttvísir menn  
 many holy and righteous men.N  
 ‘many holy and righteous men’ (Barl 20.8)  
 b. einum góðum ok vitrum ungum manni  
 one good and wise young man.D  
 ‘to some good and wise young man’ (Barl 65.2)

Two definite adjectives may modify the same noun. One precedes the noun as usual, while the second is extraposed and added with the conjunction *ok*. The definite article is usually repeated, but not necessarily.

- (57) a. hina beztu menn ok hina vitrustu  
 the best.DEF men.A and the wisest.DEF  
 ‘the best and wisest men’ (Kgs 46.36)  
 b. fyrir þessari hinni fátækri konu ok syndugri  
 for this the poor.DEF woman.D and sinful.DEF  
 ‘for this poor and sinful woman’ (Barl 77.26)

#### 4.3.2 Quantifiers

Quantifiers are generated in the same position as adjectives. They may be divided into three semantic groups, universal (‘all’), existential (‘some’), and negative (‘no’). The universal quantifiers are *allr* ‘all, whole’, *hverr* ‘each’, and *hvárr* ‘each’ (of two). The existential quantifiers may have specific or non-specific reference; *einn* ‘one, a certain’ and *sumr* ‘some’ have specific reference; *nókkurr* ‘some’ and *einnhverr* ‘some’ have non-specific reference; the numerals and *margr* ‘many’ may have either kind of reference. The most important negative quantifier is *engi* ‘no’.

The noun may follow the quantifier, as in (58), or it may move up and precede it, as in (59).

- (58) a. þat var eitt sumar  
 it.N was one summer.N  
 ‘It was one summer’ (Eg 294.8)  
 b. hann var tólf vetra gamall  
 he was twelve winters.G old.M.N  
 ‘He was twelve years old’ (Band 2.10)

- (59) a. spánu nǫkkura  
 chips.A some  
 ‘some chips’ (Hkr II.438.1)
- b. af því lið ǫllu  
 of that army.D all  
 ‘of that whole army’ (Hkr II.230.4)

The numeral *einn* ‘one’ is used with specific reference in the meaning ‘a certain’ or ‘some’:

- (60) a. ok því næst fann hann einn gamlan munk  
 and that.D next met he one old monk.A  
 ‘And next he met some old monk’ (Barl 187.5)
- b. um várit einn dag roeddi Þorsteinn um við  
 in spring.A-the one day.A spoke Thorstein.N with  
 Bergfinn  
 Bergfinn.A  
 ‘One day in the spring Thorstein spoke with Bergfinn’ (Gunnl 3.3)

This use of *einn* preceding the noun was eventually reanalysed as being in the R-position (cf. 4.1.1), and thus reanalysed as an article; this is thus the inception of the indefinite article in Norwegian, which later could also have non-specific reference. To convey non-specific reference in Old Norse, no article is used:

- (61) þú er eigi vilt at syndugr maðr dey  
 you.N who not want.2S that sinful man.N die.SUB  
 ‘you who do not want a sinful man to die’ (Barl 169.20)

In Old Norse, the quantifier *einn* can even be used with definite nouns:

- (62) a. viltu gefa mér einn gráfeldinn?  
 will.2S-you.N give me.D one grey-cloak.A-the  
 ‘Will you give me one of the cloaks?’ (Hkr I.239.15)
- b. haglkornit eitt vá eyri  
 hail-grain.N-the one weighed ounce.A  
 ‘One grain of hail weighed an ounce’ (Hkr I.332.12)

If we assume that definite nouns are in the R-position, *einn* in (62a) must be fronted (see 5.1.1).

Quantifiers may occur with empty head positions, sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase or a genitive phrase.

- (63) a. *sumum* lét hann augun ór hofði stinga  
 some.P.D let he eyes.A-the out-of head.D stab  
 ‘He caused some to have their eyes put out’ (Barl 136.25)
- b. *ein* af unnustum jarls  
 one.F.N of mistresses.D earl.G  
 ‘one of the earl’s mistresses’ (Hkr I.349.5)
- c. þau Þorsteinn áttu *mart* barna  
 they.NEU Thorstein.N had many.S.NEU.A children.G  
 ‘Thorstein and his wife had many children’ (Gunnl 2.7)

The words *hverr* ‘each’ and *hvárr* ‘each (of two)’ (the latter often in the plural) are used together with *annarr* ‘other’ to form reciprocal expressions.

- (64) a. *síðan* eggjaði *hverr* *annan*  
 since urged each.M.N other.M.A  
 ‘Then they urged each other on’ (Nj 141.11)
- b. *hverr* hefir eptir *annan* tekít várna frænda  
 each.M.N has after other.M.A taken our kinsmen.G  
 ‘Each of us kinsmen has taken over one after the other’ (Hkr II.118.1)
- c. sagði *hvárr* *qðrum* frá ferðum sínum  
 told each.M.N other.M.D from journeys.D his.RFL  
 ‘They told each other about their journeys’ (Gunnl 31.2)
- d. vissu þá *hvarir* til *annara*  
 knew.3P then each.P.M.N to other.P.G  
 ‘Then each knew about the other’ (Hkr II.67.3)

#### 4.3.3 *sjalfr*

The word *sjalfr* ‘self’ has the strong adjective inflection. It is used to reinforce the reference of the noun, which may be definite or indefinite.

- (65) a. af sjölfum páfanum  
 from self pope.D-the  
 ‘from the Pope himself’ (Nj 420.11)
- b. sem í sjölfu helvíti  
 as in self hell.D  
 ‘like in hell itself’ (Kgs 23.19)

It is more common for the noun to precede *sjalfr*, whether it is indefinite or definite:

- (66) a. þá verðr dæmdr úhœverskr konungr *sjalfr*  
 then becomes judged.M.N indecent.M.N king.N self  
 ‘Then the king himself is judged indecent’ (Kgs 44.26)
- b. þetta var jóladaginn *sjalfan*  
 this.N was Yule-day.A-the self  
 ‘This was on Christmas day itself’ (Nj 404.10)

When *sjalfr* determines a possessive genitive, it corresponds more or less to ‘own’:

- (67) a. þér eruð dótrar *sjalfrs*  
 you.P.N are.2P daughters.N judge.G-the self  
 ‘You are the judge’s own daughters/the daughters of the judge himself’ (Kgs 75.34)
- b. er vili er *sjalfrs mannsins*  
 which will.N is self man.G-the  
 ‘which is what the man himself wants’ (Barl 62.21)

In such cases it may also be separated from its own head noun by the head of the NP containing the genitive:

- (68) at spyrja af guðs munni *sjalfrs*  
 to ask of God.G mouth.D self.M.G  
 ‘to ask from God’s own mouth’ (Kgs 92.4)

The word *sjalfr* may even reinforce a clause, with a meaning corresponding to ‘even’:

- (69) ok var við *sjalft*, at þeir mundu upp ganga á  
 and was with self.NEU.A that they.M would.3P up go on  
 skipit  
 ship.A-the  
 ‘and it was even close to the point where they could board the ship’  
 (Hkr II.72.17)

(For *sjalfr* with pronouns and determiners, see 5.2.2.)

4.3.4 *Modifying nouns*

A noun may be used to modify another noun. In such cases, one of the nouns must be a proper name. When a proper name follows a common noun in the definite form, as in (70), the proper name must be considered a (restrictive) modifier which specifies the referent of the common noun. The common noun is the head which moves to the R-position where it receives a definite article, while the modifying name remains in place.

- (70) a. þá fann hann brátt skáldin Gizur ok Óttar  
 then met he immediately poets.A-the Gizur and Ottar  
 ‘Then he immediately met the poets Gizur and Ottar’ (Hkr II.111.21)
- b. sveinninn Grímr skyldi fara í skóginn  
 boy.N-the Grim should go in forest.A-the  
 ‘The boy Grim should go into the forest’ (Eg 312.6)

In a reverse fashion, a common noun in the indefinite form may follow a proper name to further characterize or identify it; cf. (49a, b). Here the proper name is the head that moves to the definite position, while the common noun remains in place.

- (71) a. Óláfr konungr  
 Olaf.N king  
 ‘King Olaf’ (Hkr II.8.12)
- b. Sigríðr kona hans  
 Sigrid.N wife his  
 ‘Sigrid his wife’ (Hkr II.425.4)
- c. Ari prestur  
 Ari.N priest  
 ‘Ari the priest’ (Hkr I.277.12)

Names with patronymics also belong to this category: *Óláfr Tryggvason*; *Jófríðr Gunnarsdóttir*.

A third type to be included here consists of a proper name preceded by a title, usually belonging to the nobility or clergy: *herra Hákon*; *síra Ivent*; *jungfrú Úlfhildr*. It is difficult to determine on a formal or semantic basis which is the head and which is the modifier in this kind of construction.



4.3.5 *Relative clauses*

Relative clauses, like adjectives, further restrict or characterize the referent of the head noun. (The internal structure of relative clauses will be treated in 10.1.4.)

- (72) a. var þeira dóttir Húngerðr, er þar fæddisk  
 was their daughter.N Hungerd.N who there reared.RFL  
*upp*  
 up  
 ‘Their daughter was Hungerd, who was brought up there’ (Gunnl 2.5)
- b. í annarri nökkurri freistni sem hann má annat  
 in other some temptation.D which he may other.NEU.A  
*tveggja yfirstíga með lofi eða undirliggja með brigsli*  
 two.G overcome with praise.D or underlie with blame.D  
 ‘in another temptation which he may either resist with praise or yield  
 to with blame’ (Hóm 18.10)

A NP with a relative clause may be headless:

- (73) þess á milli er hon fór at sofa á kveldit  
 that.G in between when she went to sleep on evening.A-the  
*ok hins er hon var klædd*  
 and the.G when she was dressed.F.N  
 ‘from the time she went to bed in the evening until she was dressed’  
 (Laxd 12.11)

It is very common for NPs containing a relative clause also to have a demonstrative determiner. These constructions will be treated in 5.1.2.

4.4 *Complements and adjuncts*

The head noun of the NP may be followed by a prepositional phrase, an infinitival clause, or a finite clause. When the head noun is derived from a verb, or otherwise has a predicate content, the following phrase may have a semantic role assigned by the head noun, and can therefore be considered a complement. In other cases, the phrase is an adjunct. The linear position relative to the head noun is the same in either case.

4.4.1 *Prepositional phrases*

Some nouns with a verbal content may take their ‘object’ in the form of a prepositional phrase instead of the more common genitive (cf. 4.2).

- (74) a. stýrimaðr fyrir skipinu  
 helmsman.N for ship.D-the  
 ‘helmsman of the ship’ (Gunnl 2.11)  
 b. til fundar við Mord  
 to meeting.G with Mord.A  
 ‘to meet Mord’ (Nj 6.18) (cf. (40b))

Prepositional phrases may also replace other types of genitive:

- (75) a. full af ensku silfri  
 full.F.N of English silver.D  
 ‘full of English silver’ (Eg 318.20)  
 b. Óðinn var gófgastr af þllum  
 Odin.N was noblest.M.N of all.P.D  
 ‘Odin was noblest of all’ (Hkr I.17.3) (cf. (74a))

A NP may be followed by a prepositional phrase referring to a place of origin or adherence:

- (76) a. Þjóðólfr inn fróði ór Hvin  
 Thjodolf.N the learned.DEF of Hvin.D  
 ‘Thjodolf the learned of Hvin’ (Hkr I.4.9)  
 b. spakastan húsbúanda í bæ  
 wisest house-master.A in town.D  
 ‘the wisest landlord in town’ (Kgs 130.29)

It is not, however, common for a locative PP to be governed by a geographical noun to refer to the wider location, as in ‘Oslo in Norway’; cf. 8.5.2.

4.4.2 *Nominal clauses*

Nouns which are derived from verbs that take clausal objects, or otherwise related to that kind of verb, may also take a clause as their complement. These may be infinitival clauses as in (77), or finite clauses, such as in (78).

- (77) a. viljann at halda vini þína  
 will.A-the to keep friends.A your  
 ‘the will to keep your friends’ (Hkr III.388.21)
- b. þeir órskurðir at taka Magnús frá ríki  
 those decisions.N to take Magnus.A from power.D  
 ‘the decision to remove Magnus from power’ (Hkr III.327.14)
- (78) a. hina skilning, at engi sé þeira maki  
 the opinion.A that nobody.N be.SUB their equal.N  
 ‘the opinion that nobody is their equal’ (Nj 209.6)
- b. þat ráð at þú munt halda særi þín  
 that advice.A that you will.2P keep oaths.A your  
 ‘the advice that you should keep your oath’ (Band 47.11)

A clause may also be an adjunct, further specifying the content of the head noun:

- (79) a. hafa þeir [...] þann sigr unnit at stíga yfir hqfuð  
 have.3P they.M that victory.A won to rise over head.A  
 þvílíkum hqfðingja  
 such chief.D  
 ‘They have won the victory of rising above such a chief’  
 (Hkr III.450.13)
- b. hinna hqfðingja dæmi [...] at berjask um ljósa daga  
 those chiefs.G example.A to fight.RFL at light days.A  
 ‘the example of those chiefs to fight in broad daylight’ (Hkr III.450.19)

The head may be empty, with only a definite article preceding the clause:

- (80) en *hinu* skal játa, at þat er nú, sem lengi hefir  
 but the.NEU.D shall.1S consent that it.N is now as long has  
 verit  
 been  
 ‘But I agree that it still is as it has been for a long time’ (Hkr II.241.5)

This use of *hinu* followed by a clause is similar to the use of the demonstrative *sá* to be described in 5.1.2.

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## Determiner Phrases

The term ‘determiner phrase’ is used here about nominal phrases consisting of a demonstrative determiner or a pronoun, or about phrases headed by either of those categories. This implies an analysis whereby a demonstrative is the head of its phrase, even if it contains a noun (the ‘DP analysis’).<sup>1</sup>

### 5.1 Demonstratives

There are two demonstratives, the distal or neutral *sá* ‘that’, and the proximal *þessi* ‘this’, with the variant *sjá*. (For a complete overview of the various forms, consult section 3.3.) The demonstrative may make up a whole phrase by itself. When forms of *sá* refer to a persons, they correspond to personal pronouns in English (cf. 5.2).

- (1) a. *þat* er svá: til komi ríki þitt  
 that.N is so to come.SUB kingdom.N your  
 ‘That means: Thy kingdom come’ (Hóm 154.23)
- b. at eigi fari hann með þeim, ne þær með honum  
 that not go.SUB he with them.D nor they.F with him.D  
 ‘That he should not go with them, nor they with him’ (DN VII.30)
- c. *þetta* mælti hann eigi at eins um saurlifi  
 this.NEU.A said he not only about dirt-life.A  
 portkvenna  
 gate-women.G  
 ‘This he said not only about the lechery of prostitutes’ (Hóm 17.23)
- d. þá er þessi þín dóttir en eigi mín  
 then is this.F.N your daughter.N and not mine.F.N  
 ‘Then this is your daughter and not mine’ (Gunnl 8.9)

<sup>1</sup> For convenience and in accordance with common practice, the term ‘noun phrase’ or ‘NP’ will be used to refer to a NP, RP, or DP alike whenever the distinction is not relevant.

The demonstrative agrees in number and gender with whatever noun it refers to in its context. But the neuter may also be used as a general demonstrative with reference to non-neuter nouns.

- (2) *þat* er þeim eimuni, *sú* *yfirfor*, er  
 it.NEU.N is them.D ever-memory.N that.F.N passing.F.N which  
*Óláfr* hafði þar farit fyrra sinni  
 Olaf.N had there gone last time.A  
 ‘They will always remember the last time that Olaf passed through  
 there’ (Hkr II.237.4)

Demonstratives may also have noun phrases or clauses as complements.

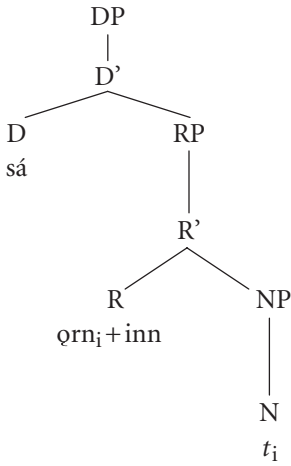
### 5.1.1 *Noun-phrase complements*

The demonstrative is often followed by a NP (or RP), which is the complement of the determiner. The determiner then agrees with the head noun of the following NP.

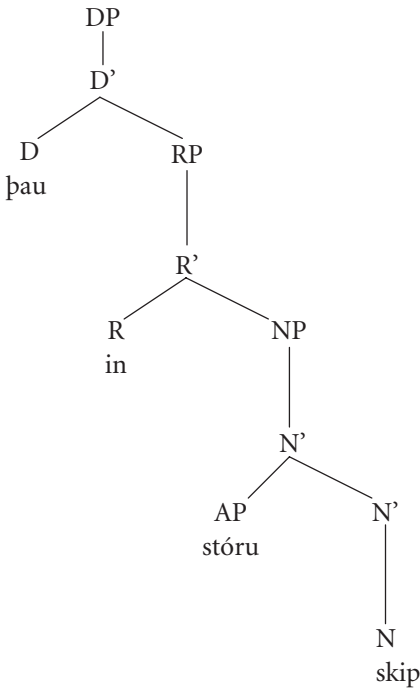
- (3) a. ok var *þann* *vetr* með frændum sínum  
 and was that.M.A winter.A with relatives.D his.RFL  
 ‘and spent that winter with his relatives’ (Fbr 78.11)
- b. ok *sá* *þann* *sinn* *kost* helzt at halda í  
 and saw.3P that.M.A their.RFL solution.A better to keep  
 brot  
 away  
 ‘and realized that the best solution would be to get away’  
 (Hkr II.35.16)
- c. *sá* *qrninn*  
 that.M.N eagle.N-the  
 ‘that eagle’ (Gunnl 4.16)
- d. *þau* in stóru skip  
 those.NEU.N the big.DEF ships.N  
 ‘those big ships’ (Hkr I.437.13)

The phrase *sá qrninn* in (3c) shows that the demonstrative *sá* ‘that’ occurs before the R-position, where the noun *qrn* has moved to in order to acquire the definite article *-inn*. In (3d) the neuter plural of the same demonstrative occurs before the independent definite article, which again means that it is in a position above R. The structures of (3c, d) are as in (4a) and (4b), respectively.

(4) a.



b.



The specifier position of the DP, that is the first position in the phrase, is a landing site for fronting, where elements from further down in the NP can be moved to and thus precede the demonstrative.

- (5) a. fé þat allt  
 money.A that all  
 ‘all that money’ (Eg 232.9)
- b. er nǫkkurr sá maðr á þingi, er þat kunni  
 is some that man.N on assembly.D who that.A can.SUB  
 at segja  
 to tell  
 ‘Is there any man at the assembly who can tell (us) that’  
 (Hkr II.304.14)
- c. alla þá er fremstir váru  
 all.P.M.A those who most-forward.P.M.N were.3P  
 ‘all those who were in front’ (Nj 139.22)

The structure of (5a) is as in (6).

- (6) DP[fé<sub>i</sub> D[þat] NP[allt t<sub>i</sub>]]

There is a strong tendency for quantifiers, especially *allr* ‘all’, to be fronted, as in (5b, c). Fronting may take place also when there is no element in D. Then the quantifier may precede a genitive, as in (7).

- (7) a. alla sína nágranna  
 all his.RFL neighbours.A  
 ‘all his neighbours’ (Band 12.1)
- b. flestir hans menn  
 most his men.N  
 ‘most of his men’ (Hkr II.68.14)

In the following example, a N consisting of a noun plus its genitive complement is fronted.

- (8) ambátt sinni þeirri þröensku  
 concubine.D his.RFL that Throndish.DEF  
 ‘his concubine from Thronðheim’ (Hóm 115.12)

NPs containing a relative clause are almost always complements of a demonstrative:

- (9) a. við Skúf bjó sá maðr, er Bjarni hét  
 with Skuf.A lived that man.N who Bjarni.N was-called  
 ‘with Skuf lived a man called Bjarni’ (Fbr 147.1)

- b. er *sú kona* illa gift, er þú átt  
 is that woman.N badly married.F.N who you own.2S  
 ‘The woman who is your wife made a bad marriage’ (Nj 29.3)

In such constructions the nominal head may be omitted:

- (10) a. þeir er hann vá þar  
 those.M.N whom he killed there  
 ‘those whom he killed there’ (Fbr 122.19)  
 b. engi kirkja var nærr Ólafsdal en *sú er á*  
 no church.N was nearer Olafsdal.D than that.F.N which on  
*Hólum var*  
 Holar.D was  
 ‘No church was closer to Olafsdal than the one at Holar’ (Fbr 133.17)

More often than not, the head noun is fronted, with the consequence that the demonstrative immediately precedes the relative clause.

- (11) a. spákerling *sú er* fyrr var getið  
 prophetess.N that who before was mentioned.F.N  
 ‘the prophetess who was mentioned before’ (Fbr 133.14)  
 b. konungr *sá er* Jón heitir  
 king.N that who Jon is-called  
 ‘a king called Jon’ (Finnb 38.5)

In a similar fashion, a DP may consist of a demonstrative plus a prepositional phrase:

- (12) við þá uppi við fjöllin  
 with those.M.A up with mountains.A-the  
 ‘with those up in the mountains’ (Gunnl 17.13)

Demonstratives do not necessarily give the NP a unique or specific reference. Therefore they may co-occur with the definite article, as in (3d) above. Where demonstratives are ambiguous and could imply either a specific or a non-specific reference, the quantifier *einnhverr* may be used to indicate non-specific reference.<sup>2</sup>

- (13) vilda ek heldr þann einnhvern útveg finna  
 wanted.1S I rather that some solution.A find  
 ‘I would rather find a solution of that kind’ (Barl 40.32)

<sup>2</sup> Example from Dyvik 1979.



A noun modified by a relative clause may have an indefinite reading even if it is combined with a demonstrative.

- (14) a. *í borginni var hofðingi sá, er Óðinn var kallaðr*  
 in castle.D-the was chieftain.N that who Odin.N was called.M.N  
 ‘In the castle there was a chieftain called Odin’ (Hkr I.11.1)
- b. *ok hafði í hendi spjót þat, er alnar var löng*  
 and had in hand.D spear.A that which ell.G was long.F.N  
*fjōðrin*  
 blade.N-the  
 ‘and held in his hand a spear whose blade was an ell long’  
 (Laxd 170.22)
- c. *er nokkurr sá maðr á þingi, er þat kunni*  
 is some that man.N on assembly.D who that.A can.SUB  
*at segja*  
 to tell  
 ‘Is there any man at the assembly who can tell (us) that’  
 (Hkr II.304.14)

The indefinite form of the adjective is occasionally found with demonstratives:

- (15) a. *þeir sá þann helgan mann*  
 they.M saw.3P that holy man.A  
 ‘They saw that holy man’ (Hóm 114.23)

### 5.1.2 *Clausal complements*

The demonstrative may take a clause as its complement. Clauses are often headed by a demonstrative in the neuter, whether they have a nominal function (subject, object, complement of preposition) or an adverbial function (cf. Chapter 8). The clause may be an infinitival clause, (16); a finite clause introduced by the complementizer *at* ‘that’, (17); or a finite interrogative clause, (18). The clause is regularly extraposed to the end of the sentence and thus often separated from the demonstrative.

- (16) a. *hefir hon þat í hug sér at gera þá hluti*  
 has she that.A in mind herself.D to do those things.A  
*nokkura er honum þætti eigi betr*  
 some which him.D seemed.SUB.3P not better  
 ‘She intends to do something which he would not like any better’  
 (Laxd 50.24)

- b. hann hafði þeim því heitit, at fylgja þeim á  
 he had them.D that.D promised to follow them on  
*fund Svía-konungs*  
 meeting Swede-king.G  
 ‘He had promised them to go with them to meet the king of the Swedes’ (Hkr II.139.20)
- (17) a. *þat* var einn dag, at Hjalti sat fyrir konunginum  
 that.N was one day.A that Hjalti sat before king.D-the  
 ‘One day Hjalti was sitting with the king’ (Hkr II.116.21)
- b. ok beiddi Þorfinn þess ins sama, at hann skyldi  
 and asked Thorfinn.A that.G the same, that he should  
 játa konungi þeim hluta landa, er hann átti áður  
 grant king.D that part.D lands.G which he owned before  
 ‘and asked the same of Thorfinn, that he should grant the king that part of the lands which he had owned before’ (Hkr II.209.11)
- (18) a. *þat* veit ek eigi, hvern hann á  
 that.A know.IS I not who.M.N him.A owns  
 ‘I do not know who owns it’ (Fbr 47.1)
- b. hann hirði *þat* aldri, at hverjum hann keypti korn  
 he cared that.A never at whom.D he bought corn.A  
 ‘He never cared whom he bought corn from’ (Hkr II.247.12)

## 5.2 Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns usually occur alone in the same function as DPs or NPs. A pronoun can therefore be considered the head of a DP.

- (19) a. *vér* viljum at *þú* vitir at *vér* höfum gefit  
 we want.1P that you.N know.SUB.2S that we have.1P given  
*korsbrœðrum í Stafangri tupt*  
 choir-brethren.D in Stavanger building-place.A  
 ‘We want you to know that we have given the canons of Stavanger a building-site’ (DN III.41)
- b. *þat* dreymdi *mik*, at *ek* þóttumk heima vera  
 that.N dreamed me.A that I seemed.IS.RFL home be  
 ‘I dreamed that I was at home’ (Gunnl 4.5)
- c. *hon* þóttisk [...] taka þorn einn ór serk *sér*  
 she seemed.RFL take thorn.A one from skirt.D herself.D  
 ‘She thought she was taking a thorn out of her skirt’ (Hkr I.93.5)

Third person pronouns are used to refer to non-human referents of masculine or feminine gender:

- (20) þá sá ek fljúga ofan frá fjöllumum *ǫrn*  
 then saw.1S I fly down from mountains.D-the eagle.A  
*mikinn, hann* flaug hingat ok settisk hjá *ǫlptinni* ok  
 large he flew hither and sat.RFL with swan.D-the and  
 klakaði við *hana* blíðliga  
 chattered with her.A kindly  
 ‘Then I saw a large eagle fly down from the mountains, he flew  
 here and settled beside the swan and chattered kindly with her’  
 (Gunnl 4.8)

Subject pronouns may be cliticized to a preceding verb ending in a stressed syllable. This is especially common with the 2nd person singular nominative.

- (21) a. ef þú kemr til Íslands, skaltu fœra þetta  
 if you.N come.2S to Iceland.G shall.2S-you.N bring this  
 fé fǫður þínum  
 money.A father.D your  
 ‘If you come to Iceland, you shall bring this money to your father’  
 (Eg 177.12)
- b. en áðr vartu  
 than before were.2S-you.N  
 ‘than you were before’ (Hkr II.212.26)

(On the cliticization of *sik*, see 8.2.)

For the 3rd person singular neuter and the 3rd person plural of all genders, there is no separate pronoun. Instead, the corresponding forms of the demonstrative *sá* are used.

- (22) a. þat er svá: til komi ríki þitt  
 that.N is so to come.SUB kingdom.N your  
 ‘That means: Thy kingdom come’ (Hóm 154.23)
- b. at eigi fari hann með þeim, ne þær með honum  
 that not go.SUB he with them.D nor they.F with him.D  
 ‘That he should not go with them, nor they with him’ (DN VII.30)
- c. hann settisk hjá ǫlptinni ok lét blítt við  
 he sat.RFL with swan.D-the and sounded kind.NEU.A with

hana ok síðan flugu þau í brott bæði  
 her.A and since flew.3P they.NEU in away both.NEU.N  
 ‘He perched next to the swan and treated her gently, and then they  
 both flew away’ (Gunnl 4.23)

As can be seen from (22c), the neuter plural form is used to refer to two nouns of different genders.

### 5.2.1 Pronouns followed by NP

A pronoun may be followed by a NP with the same reference, very often a proper name.

- (23) a. hvernug varð hann Ásbjörn  
 how became he.N Ásbjorn.N  
 ‘How did Ásbjörn react’ (Hkr II.252.1)  
 b. hvenær fannstu hann Ólaf konung?  
 when met.2S-you.N him.A Olaf.A king  
 ‘When did you meet King Ólaf?’ (Fbr 199.8)

This is rather unusual in the singular, and is mostly confined to a colloquial style. It is much more common, however, for a plural pronoun (that is, a demonstrative; cf. above) to be followed by two or more names or by a plural noun. If the two names refer to persons of different genders, the plural demonstrative is in the neuter:

- (24) a. með hverjum skildaga þeir Einar ok Brúsi  
 with what agreement.D they.M Einar.N and Brusi.N  
 bræðr hófðu félag sitt gort  
 brothers.N had.3P partnership.A their.RFL made  
 ‘with what agreement the brothers Einar and Brusi had formed  
 a partnership’ (Hkr II.206.15)  
 b. jafnan skemmtu þau Helga sér at tafli ok  
 often amused.3P they.NEU Helga.N themselves.D at chess and  
 Gunnlaug  
 Gunnlaug.N  
 ‘Helga and Gunnlaug often had fun playing chess together’  
 (Gunnl 11.2)

In these constructions, the pronoun/demonstrative does not seem to specify the following NP in any way. The NP should probably therefore be analysed

as an apposition rather than as a complement. The construction may be abbreviated in that only one name is mentioned after the demonstrative, as in the following examples:

- (25) a. *þeir Ásbjörn lendu útan at eyjunn*  
 they.M Asbjorn.N landed.3P from-out at island.D-the  
 ‘Asbjorn and his men landed on the outside of the island’  
 (Hkr II.250.18)
- b. *hvat þau dróttning tala jafnan*  
 what they.NEU queen.N talk.3P constantly  
 ‘what he and the queen are always talking about’ (Hkr I.293.5)
- c. *vit Arnviðr munum fara*  
 we.DU Arnvid.N will.1P go  
 ‘Arnvid and I will go’ (Hkr II.192.4)

### 5.2.2 *sjalfr*

As with nouns, the word *sjalfr* is also used to reinforce pronouns.

- (26) a. *sumir hofðu sik sjalfa deydda*  
 some.P.M.N had.3P themselves.M.A selves.M.A killed.P.M.A  
 ‘Some had killed themselves’ (Barl 16.33)
- b. *af oss sjalfum*  
 of us.D selves.D  
 ‘of ourselves’ (Kgs 2.3)

In most cases *sjalfr* precedes the pronoun.

- (27) a. *helldr en sjølf hon*  
 rather than self.F.N she  
 ‘rather than herself’ (Kgs 143.19)
- b. *ek á fyrir sjalfan mik at svara*  
 I have.1S for self.M.A me.A to answer  
 ‘I have to answer for myself’ (Nj 311.7)

The word *sjalfr* may also be used in the genitive with a possessive determiner. More often than not, the possessive determiner then also has the genitive form, agreeing with *sjalfs* rather than with the head noun.

- (28) a. *lát taka lúðra mína sjalfs*  
 let take trumpets.A my.P.M.A self.M.G  
 ‘Let me take my own trumpets’ (Kgs 118.10)

- b. þá skal ek [...] með sjalfs míns hǫndum slíta  
 then shall.1S I with self.M.G my.M.G hands.F.D tear  
 tunguna ór hǫfði þér  
 tongue.A-the out-of head.D you.D  
 ‘Then I shall tear the tongue out of your head with my own hands’  
 (Barl 119.7)
- c. á sjalfs þíns handa verk  
 on self.M.G your.M.G hands.G work.D  
 ‘by the work of your own hands’ (Barl 157.4)

In (28a) the possessive *mína* is in the accusative plural, agreeing with its head noun *lúðra*, as expected. But in the other examples this is different; *míns* in (28b) is in the masculine genitive, agreeing with *sjalfs*, which in turn agrees in gender and number with the speaker, *ek*, but logically, *míns* modifies *hǫndum*, which would have given the form *mínum*. Similarly in (28c) we find *þíns*, instead of the expected *þinna* in agreement with *handa*.

### 5.2.3 Other modifiers

Pronouns may occasionally be modified by adjectives or quantifiers.

- (29) a. flýr þú nú fyrir mér blindum?  
 flee.2S you.N now for me.D blind  
 ‘Are you now fleeing from me, a blind man?’ (Hkr II.155.13)
- b. at nú í kveld myni konungrinn hafa mǫrgum oss  
 that now in evening.A may.SUB king.N-the have many us.D  
 fengit karfafótinn  
 got unsteady-leg.A-the  
 ‘that the king may have made many of us unsteady on our feet  
 tonight’ (Hkr II.151.14)

## 5.3 Interrogative pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are *hvat* ‘what’, *hverr* ‘who, which’, and *hvárr* ‘which (of two)’. The neuter *hvat* is used mostly in the nominative and accusative, while the dative form *hví* is used in the sense of ‘why’. The neuter *hvat* may even take a genitive complement, as in (30d).

- (30) a. hvat er nú, Sveinn?  
 what.N is now Svein.N  
 ‘What is it now, Svein?’ (Hkr II.148.3)

- b. hvat segir karl?  
 what.A says man.N  
 ‘What does the man say?’ (Hkr I.328.3)
- c. eða hví ert þú hér komin svá snemma?  
 or what.D are.2S you.N here come.F.N so early  
 ‘Or why have you come here so early?’ (Nj 227.3)
- d. hvat manna ertu, Oddi?  
 what.N men.G are.2S-you.N Oddi  
 ‘What kind of man are you, Oddi?’ (Fbr 169.2)

The pronoun *hverr* may be used by itself, as in (31a, b), or it may be followed by a NP, as in (31c, d).

- (31) a. hverr valdi er verks þessa  
 who.M.N perpetrator.N is deed.G this  
 ‘who is the perpetrator of this deed’ (Hkr II.304.15)
- b. at hverjum hann keypti korn  
 at whom.D he bought corn.A  
 ‘whom he bought corn from’ (Hkr II.247.13)
- c. *hverjar fǫður-bætr* hugðar eru Hákon  
 what father-compensations.N intended.P.F.N are.3P Hakon.D  
 konungi  
 king  
 ‘What compensation for his father is intended for King Hakon’  
 (Hkr III.408.14)
- d. með *hverjum skildaga* þeir Einarr ok Brúsi  
 with what agreement.D they.M Einar.N and Brusi.N  
 bræðr hófðu félag sitt gort  
 brothers.N had.3P partnership.A their.RFL made  
 ‘with what agreement the brothers Einar and Brusi had formed  
 a partnership’ (Hkr II.206.15)

The interrogative *hvárr* is mostly used to introduce disjunctive questions, as in (32) (cf. 9.6.2).

- (32) hvárt vilið þér gefa honum upp, eða skulu vér  
 which.NEU want.2P you.P.N give him.D up or shall.1P we  
 nú fara at honum ok drepa hann?  
 now go at him.D and kill him.A  
 ‘Do you want to forgive him, or shall we go for him and kill him?’  
 (Nj 307.18)

Followed by a clause introduced by the relative particle *sem*, the interrogative pronoun has the meaning ‘whatever’.

- (33) a. hon kvað konung ekki mundu á hlyða, hvat sem hon  
 she said king.A not would.INF on listen what which she  
 mælti  
 said  
 ‘She said the king would not listen (to her), whatever she said’  
 (Hkr II.119.19)
- b. vil ek þat festa yðr, at koma aldri í Orkneyjar,  
 want.1S I that promise you.D to come never in Orkneys.A  
 hvat sem konungr mælir um þat  
 what which king.N says about it.A  
 ‘I will promise you never to go to the Orkneys, whatever the king  
 says about it’ (Hkr II.212.3)

The interrogative has an apposition in expressions such as:

- (34) hvat vildir þú flest eiga?  
 what want.2S you.N most own  
 ‘What do you want to have most of?’ (Hkr II.133.15)



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## The Adjective Phrase

Adjectives commonly occur as a phrase all by themselves in their various syntactic functions.

- (1) a. Úlfr var búsyslumaðr *mikill*  
 Ulf.N was farmer.N great.M.N  
 ‘Ulf was a great farmer’ (Eg 4.8)
- b. hann var snimma *mikill* ok *vænn*  
 he was early big.M.N and handsome.M.N  
 ‘He was big and handsome at an early age’ (Laxd 173.7)

The adjectival head agrees with the NP that it modifies or is predicated of, for gender, number, and case, as in (1). This is the case even when the head noun is not expressed, as in (2a). If there is no noun to agree with, it is in the neuter singular, (2b), or it may be in the plural, as in (2c).

- (2) a. *margr* hefir dauða tekit  
 many.S.M.N has death.A taken  
 ‘Many a person has died’ (Hkr II.155.25)
- b. snústu frá illa ok ger *gott*  
 turn.IMP.RFL-you.N from bad and do.IMP good.NEU.A  
 ‘Turn away from evil and do good’ (Hóm 2.7)
- c. Þórarinn svarar *fá* um þetta mál fyrst  
 Thorarin.N answers few.P.NEU.A about this matter.A first  
 ‘Thorarin says little in reply about this matter at first’ (Hkr II.158.14)

An adjective in the neuter is particularly common in fixed expressions involving a preposition.

- (3) a. þeir hǫrmuðu *at sǫnnu*  
 they bewailed at true.NEU.D  
 ‘They were truly grief-stricken’ (Hóm 121.19)
- b. ekki kemr mér *á úvart*  
 not comes me.D on unaware.NEU.A  
 ‘It will not come as a surprise to me’ (Laxd 175.14)

If an adjective or a participle agrees with two nouns of different genders, it takes the neuter plural; thus in (4) the participle *farin* has the neuter plural form, agreeing with both the feminine proper name *Gunnhildr* and the masculine *synir* ‘sons’.

- (4) Gunnhildr ok synir þeira váru farin til  
 Gunnhild.N and sons.N their were.3P gone.P.NEU.N to  
 Danmerkr suðr  
 Denmark.G south  
 ‘Gunnhild and their sons had gone south to Denmark’ (Eg 246.6)

The adjective has two distinct declensions, called the strong and the weak form. The choice of form depends on the definiteness of the NP that the adjective is a part of; the forms are therefore also referred to as definite and indefinite. The use of these forms is discussed in 4.3.1.

The adjective may also be the head of a phrase and take a modifier or a complement. What is said in the following sections about modification and complementation may also apply to adverbs derived from adjectives, as is apparent in some of the examples.

## 6.1 Modifiers

Modifiers are generally adjoined to the left of the adjective. Different adverbs may serve as modifiers to adjectives and quantifiers.

- (5) a. eitt berg *harðla hátt* ok bratt  
 one mountain.A very high.NEU.A and steep.NEU.A  
 ‘one very high and steep mountain’ (Barl 47.36)
- b. kallaði hann þá sjau féлага sína *enn verri* ok  
 called he then seven partners.A his.RFL even worse.P.A and  
 illskufullari  
 more-wicked.P.A  
 ‘Then he called upon his seven partners who were even worse and more wicked’ (Barl 34.31)
- c. nálíga alt fólk  
 nearly all people.N  
 ‘nearly all the people’ (Hkr II.222.21)

In a less common construction, the modifier may also follow the adjective:

- (6) a. hann var [...] *hærðr vel*  
 he was haired.M.N well  
 ‘He had fine hair’ (Nj 61.8)

- b. hon var ekkja ok auðig mjök  
 she was widow.N and rich.F.N very  
 ‘She was a widow and very rich’ (Nj 61.20)
- c. sú var mikil harðla  
 that.F.N was big.F.N very  
 ‘She was very big’ (Laxd 201.13)

This does not seem to occur when the adjective also has a complement.

An adverb modifying an adjective may itself be modified by another adverb:

- (7) sverð harðla vel búit  
 sword.A very well made.NEU.A  
 ‘a very well made sword’ (Finnb 58.9)

The neuter form *nøkkut* ‘somewhat’ is used in a similar manner to modify adjectives and adverbs:

- (8) hann var [...] munnljótr nøkkut  
 he was mouth-ugly.M.N some.NEU.A  
 ‘He had a somewhat ugly mouth’ (Nj 61.5)

To ask the degree of the content of the adjective, the question words *hversu* or *hvé* ‘how’ are used.

- (9) a. hversu mikinn hug er hann lagði á  
 how big mind.A which he put on  
 ‘how much he set his mind on it’ (Barl 92.8)
- b. hvé mikit þú skyldir gera eða hvé lítit  
 how much.NEU.A you.N should.2S do or how little.NEU.A  
 ‘how much you should do or how little’ (Band 48.19)

The words *meir* ‘more’ and *mest* ‘most’, or *betr* ‘better’ and *best* ‘best’ may be used as modifiers, especially with participles. Similarly, *minnr* ‘less’ and *minst* ‘least’, or *verr* ‘worse’ and *verst* ‘worst’ may be used for negative degrees.

- (10) a. er best eru lærðir  
 who best are.3P learned.P.M.N  
 ‘who are the most learned’ (Kgs 5.2)
- b. hann var [...] mest verður  
 he was most worthy.M.N  
 ‘He was the most respected’ (Nj 308.8)

- c. var Þórðr eigi at verr mentr  
 was Thord.N not at worse accomplished.M.N  
 ‘Thord was no less accomplished’ (Laxd 38.20)

With the comparative of adjectives, the dative is used to express a difference of degree:

- (11) a. fámm dögum síðarr  
 few days.D later  
 ‘a few days later’ (Hkr II.105.10)
- b. þeir staðir, er enn eru miklu heitari en  
 those places.N which still are.3P big.NEU.D hotter.P.N than  
 hvárgi þessi  
 either this.M.N  
 ‘those places which still are much hotter than either of these two’  
 (Kgs 11.36)

The dative may also be used with the superlative:

- (12) a. var hann miklu yngstr  
 was he big.NEU.D youngest.M.N  
 ‘He was by far the youngest’ (Hkr III.255.16)
- b. er honum þótti nokkuru vildastr  
 which him.D seemed some.NEU.D most-agreeable.M.N  
 ‘which seemed somehow best to him’ (Hkr I.391.14)

A genitive NP expressing a quantity may serve as a modifier:

- (13) a. Óláfr Haraldsson var þá tolf vetra gamall  
 Olaf Haraldsson was then twelve winters.G old.M.N  
 ‘Olaf Haraldsson was then twelve years old’ (Hkr II.5.9)
- b. ker mikit, margra alna hátt  
 vat.N big many ells.G tall.NEU.N  
 ‘a large vat, many ells tall’ (Hkr I.25.4)

A partitive genitive is used with superlatives, often to express a generally high degree:

- (14) a. hon var kvenna vænst  
 she was women.G most-beautiful.F.N  
 ‘She was the most beautiful of women’ (Laxd 90.6)
- b. hann var manna vitrastr  
 he was men.G wisest.M.N  
 ‘He was the wisest of men’ (Nj 242.2)

This use of the genitive is the origin of certain fixed expressions with the genitive form of determiners, adjectives or quantifiers:

- (15) faðir hans hataði kristna menn, ok allra hellzt  
 father.N his hated Christian men.A and all.P.G most  
 munka oc hreinlifismenn  
 monks.A and pure-life-men.A  
 ‘His father hated Christians, and most of all monks and people living  
 in chastity’ (Barl 6.18)

The notion of ‘too (much)’ is expressed as *til* or *of*. These words may be preceded by a quantifier, a quantifying expression, or a determiner in the genitive or dative.

- (16) a. hann var nokkurs til þungr  
 he was some.NEU.G too heavy.M.N  
 ‘He was somewhat too heavy’ (Laxd 94.4)  
 b. nú gekk ek þremr fótum til skamt  
 now went.1S I three feet.D too short  
 ‘Now I have come three feet too short’ (Eg 64.18)

The notion of ‘very’ can be expressed with the genitive of certain nouns:

- (17) a. furðu mikit torrek  
 omen.G big loss  
 ‘a terribly great loss’ (Hkr I.96.6)  
 b. tók konungr við honum forkunnar vel  
 took king.N with him.D desire.G well  
 ‘The king received him exceedingly well’ (Eg 150.11)

## 6.2 Complements

Adjectives may take complements in the form of a noun phrase, a prepositional phrase, or a clause. The complement follows the adjectival head according to the basic order.

### 6.2.1 *Noun phrases*

A NP complement is either in the dative or in the genitive, depending on the adjective. These are lexical cases.

- (18) a. þat er líkt feðr ykrum  
 that.N is like.NEU.N father.D your(DU)  
 ‘That is like your father’ (Hkr II.133.14)
- b. ker fullt mjaðar  
 cup.A full mead.G  
 ‘a cup full of mead’ (Hkr I.133.13)

A NP complement usually follows the adjectival head, as in (18), but it may also precede it, especially if the complement is a pronoun:

- (19) a. konungrinn mun verða þér reiðr, ef hann verður  
 king.N-the will become you.D angry if he becomes  
 þessa viss  
 this.NEU.G aware  
 ‘The king will be angry with you if he gets to know about this’  
 (Hkr II.122.5)
- b. þessi maðr var ekki qðrum líkr  
 this man.N was not others.D like.M.N  
 ‘This man was not like others’ (Hkr II.472.6)

(i) Dative

Adjectives taking dative complements are first of all those that denote a state of mind or an attitude towards the referent of the complement, as *reiðr* in (19a). This is the benefactive or recipient role, which is the basic meaning of the dative case (cf. 3.1.1). Further examples follow:

- (20) a. þú ert hollari Agli en Eiríki konungi  
 you.N are.2S more-loyal.M.N Egil.D than Eirik.D king  
 ‘You are more loyal to Egil than to King Eirik’ (Eg 223.8)
- b. ef ukunn eru þér kaup í bæ  
 if unknown.P.NEU.N are.3P you.D trades.N in town.D  
 ‘if you are not familiar with the trade in town’ (Kgs 4.24)

The dative is also used with the adjective *líkr* ‘alike’ and other adjectives with similar meanings; cf. (18a). Further examples may be cited:

- (21) a. at gera eitt mikit skip, er líkt væri qrk eða  
 to make one big ship.A which like.NEU.N were.SUB ark.D or  
 húsi  
 house.D  
 ‘to make a big ship which was like an ark or a house’ (Barl 15.30)

- b. *eigi þykkir þú hlutgengr eða jafn hinum*  
 not seem.2S you.N capable.M.N or equal.M.N the  
*fremstum í öllum mannaunum*  
 foremost.P.D in all man-trials.D  
 ‘You will not seem fit for it or as good as the best in all trials’ (Eg 17.10)

The dative is used with adjectives to express the cause of a sentiment, but when used with adjectives denoting appearance it expresses the notion ‘with respect to’:

- (22) a. *byskop var því mjök feginn*  
 bishop.N was it.D very happy.M.N  
 ‘The bishop was very happy about it’ (Barl 58.7)
- b. *öll váru börn Óláfs konungs fríð*  
 all.P.NEU.N were.3P children.N Olaf.G king beautiful.P.NEU.N  
*sýnum*  
 looks.D  
 ‘All King Olaf’s children were good looking’ (Hkr II.162.22)

(ii) Genitive

The genitive may also be used with certain adjectives with the meaning ‘with respect to’. This is, however, much less common than the dative.

- (23) a. *er konungsgarðr rúmr inngangs ok þröngr*  
 is king-palace.N broad.M.N entrance.G and narrow.M.N  
*brottfarar*  
 exit.G  
 ‘A king’s palace has a broad entrance and a narrow exit’ (Eg 349.1)
- b. *váru menn þess verks fljótir*  
 were.3P men.N that work.G quick.M.N  
 ‘The men were quick doing that work’ (Hkr II.465.11)

The genitive is used with certain adjectives with a patient role:

- (24) a. *ek skal verða viss ins sanna*  
 I shall.1S become sure.M.N the true.DEF.NEU.G  
 ‘I will find out the truth’ (Band 21.1)
- b. *er fúsir váru fararinnar*  
 who eager.P.M.N were.3P journey.G-the  
 ‘who were eager to leave’ (Hkr II.308.9)

Typical genitive complements of adjectives have a partitive meaning. Therefore adjectives meaning ‘full’, ‘empty’, ‘lacking’, ‘needing’, etc., take a genitive complement.

- (25) a. ker fullt mjaðar  
cup.A full mead.G  
‘a cup full of mead’ (Hkr I.133.13)
- b. þar er honum þótti ábóta vant  
there where him.D seemed improvements.G needing.NEU.N  
‘where he thought improvements were needed’ (Hkr II.279.15)

A partitive genitive is used with the neuter singular of adjectives, quantifiers, and adverbs.

- (26) a. var þar fátt manna við statt  
was there few.NEU.N men.G by stood.NEU.N  
‘There were few people present’ (Hkr II.266.8)
- b. ok dvaldist þar lengi sumars  
and stayed.RFL there long summer.G  
‘and stayed there for a long time in the summer’ (Hkr I.163.13)

### 6.2.2 Prepositional phrases

Adjectives may take prepositional phrases as their complement. These are usually alternatives to nominals in the dative or genitive. The use of prepositions presumably represents a younger stage of the language, since this is the predominant construction type in modern Norwegian. Instead of the benefactive or recipient dative, the preposition *við* is used with the accusative, or *til* with the genitive. Compare (27) here with (20) above.

- (27) a. þat gerir mann vinsælan við alla góða menn  
it.N makes man.A popular.M.N with all good men.A  
‘That makes a man popular among all good men’ (Kgs 4.20)
- b. ert þú til þess skyldr  
are.2S you.N to it.NEU.G obliged  
‘It is your duty to do it’ (Hkr II.222.11)

The notion ‘with respect to’ may be expressed with a prepositional phrase instead of a NP alone. Compare (28) here with (22b) and (23) above.



- (28) a. heill at hǫndum, en hrumr at fótum  
 sound.M.N at hands.D but ill.M.N at feet.D  
 ‘with good hands but bad feet’ (Hkr III.241.10)
- b. ef þú vilt verða fullkominn í fróðleik  
 if you.N want.2s become perfect.M.N in wisdom.D  
 ‘if you want to become perfect in wisdom’ (Kgs 5.7)

Instead of a NP with a patient role we may find the preposition *til* plus genitive, and a partitive genitive can be replaced by *af* plus dative. Compare (29a) here with (24) above, and (29b) with (25a).

- (29) a. nú em ek búinn til ferðar  
 now am I prepared.M.N to journey.G  
 ‘Now I am ready to go’ (Laxd 131.20)
- b. Óðinn var gøfgastr af ǥllum  
 Odin.N was noblest.M.N of all.P.D  
 ‘Odin was the noblest of all’ (Hkr I.17.3)

### 6.2.3 *Clauses*

Adjectives that may take nominal or prepositional complements, may also take clauses with similar roles.

- (30) a. em ek þó fúss at svara  
 am I though eager.M.N to answer  
 ‘I am eager to answer, though’ (Kgs 3.18)
- b. ek em nú allbúinn at ganga til fundar við  
 I am now all-prepared.M.N to go to meeting.G with  
 Sigurð  
 Sigurd.A  
 ‘I am now fully prepared to meet Sigurd’ (Hkr III.388.21)

An infinitival clause may also express ‘with respect to’ and similar notions.

- (31) svá mjúkr ok létt var honum þegar fóttrinn  
 so soft.M.N and light.M.N was him.D immediately foot.N-the  
 bæði at ríða ok renna  
 both to ride and run  
 ‘At once his foot was so soft and light both for riding and running’  
 (Hóm 129.16)

The infinitive may be a transitive verb with an empty object position, where the missing object is coreferential with the matrix subject. These are then object-raising constructions; cf. 9.3.5.

- (32) a. *fögr* var sú *kveðandi* at *heyra*  
 beautiful.F.N was that singing.N to hear  
 ‘It was beautiful to hear that singing’ (Laxd 111.18)  
 b. var *áin* *allill* at *sækja*  
 was river.N-the all-bad.F.N to seek  
 ‘The river was very difficult to cross’ (Laxd 34.28)

Note a special expression which uses the infinitive *at kalla* ‘to call’:

- (33) [*þeir*] *váru* *sáttir* at *kalla*  
 they.M were.3P reconciled.P.M.N to call  
 ‘They were, so to speak, reconciled’ (Hkr II.89.15)

### 6.3 Comparative constructions

When two entities are said to be equal with regard to the value of the reference of an adjective, the adjective is preceded by *svá* ‘so, as’ and followed by a clause or phrase introduced by *sem* ‘as’.

- (34) a. *svá* *þröttlaust* *fólk* *sem* *þetta* *er*  
 so powerless people.N as this.NEU.N is  
 ‘powerless as this people is’ (Fbr 213.17)  
 b. *svá* *margin* *af* *Síðumönnum* *sem* *hann* *vildi*  
 so many.P.M.N of Sida-men.D as he wanted  
 ‘as many of the men from Sida as he wanted’ (Nj 394.8)

The adverb *svá* may also be used alone without an adjective, followed by a *sem*-clause.

- (35) a. *svá* *fór*, *sem* *hon* *vænti*  
 so went as she expected  
 ‘It went as she expected’ (Hkr II.121.2)  
 b. *gjörðu* *skipverjar* *hans* *svá* *sem* *hann* *hafði* *fyrir* *mælt*  
 did.3P ship-crew.P.N his so as he had before said  
 ‘His crew did as he had told them before’ (Eg 88.5)

Compound adjectives with *jafn-* ‘even’ as the first element are used without a preceding *svá*.

- (36) þykkir engum jafnmikit sem Njáli fóstura hans  
 seems none.D even-big.NEU.N as Njal.D fosterfather his  
 ‘Nobody feels this as much as Njal, his foster father’ (Nj 262.21)

Instead of *sem*, *ok* is sometimes used:

- (37) þat var kallað jafnt ok stakkr tōðu  
 it.N was called.NEU.N even.NEU.N and stack.N hay.G  
 ‘it was considered equivalent to a stack of hay’ (Eg 295.23)

The adjective may also be followed by a clause indicating the consequence of what the adjective denotes.

- (38) a. varð konungr svá óðr, at honum mátti engu orði  
 became king.N so mad that him.D could no word.D  
 svara  
 answer  
 ‘The king became so mad that (she) could not answer him with a single word’ (Hkr II.120.20)
- b. gerðisk Grímr þá svá sterkr at hann greip  
 made.RFL Grim.N then so strong.M.N that he grabbed  
 Þórð upp, ok keyrði niðr svá hart at hann  
 Thord.A up and threw down so hard.NEU.A that he  
 lamdisk allr  
 injured.RFL all.M.N  
 ‘Grim became so strong that he pulled Thord up and threw him down so hard that he was severely injured’ (Eg 125.3)

When two entities are different with respect to whatever is denoted by the adjective, it is followed by a phrase or clause introduced by *en* ‘than’, sometimes reinforced by *heldr* ‘rather’:

- (39) a. skal vax vera eigi minna en halft pund  
 shall wax.N be not less.NEU.N than half pound.N  
 ‘The wax shall not be less than half a pound’ (DN I.8)
- b. at engi jarl væri meiri ok frægri  
 that no earl.N were.SUB greater.M.N and more-famous.M.N  
 en Sigurðr  
 than Sigurd.N  
 ‘that no earl was greater and more famous than Sigurd’ (Gunnl 29.1)

- c. er engi várr verr ættborinn heldr en Óláfr  
 is none.M.N us.G worse family-born.M.N rather than Olaf.N  
 ‘none of us is of lower birth than Olaf’ (Hkr II.126.11)

As an alternative to the construction in (39), the standard of comparison may be expressed by a NP in the dative. This is an older type of construction, which is mainly found in poetry in the Old Norse period. It is, however, also used in prose, but mostly when the standard contains a quantifier or when it is a pronoun.

- (40) a. skiðfœrr var hann hverjum manni betr  
 ski-able.M.N was he every man.D better  
 ‘He was a better skier than every other man’ (Hkr II.28.7)
- b. þú munt þeim öllum drjúgari verða  
 you.N will.2S them.D all stronger.M.N become  
 ‘You will be stronger than them all’ (Nj 256.13)
- c. við þér meiri menn  
 with you.D bigger men.A  
 ‘with men bigger than you’ (Eg 17.12)

The dative or genitive neuter singular (*því*, *þess*) of the demonstrative *sá* ‘that’ is used before comparatives followed by a relative clause, to express a corresponding or relative degree (much like English *the* with comparatives); see 10.1.4, and the following examples.

- (41) a. þín pinsl ok hefnd er æ því meiri er  
 your torment.N and punishment.N is ever that.D bigger.F.N as  
 þú drepr fleiri kristna menn  
 you.N kill.2S more Christian men.A  
 ‘Your torment and punishment will be all the harder the more  
 Christian men you kill’ (Barl 5.6)
- b. Ormínn skal því lengra fram leggja, sem hann er  
 Serpent.A-the shall that.D longer forward lay as he is  
 lengri enn önnur skip  
 longer.M.N than other ships.N  
 ‘The Serpent shall be placed as much further forward as it is longer  
 than other ships’ (Hkr I.440.10)

- c. þess fleira er þú hafðir, þess fleira  
 that.G more.NEU.A which you.N had.2S that.G more.NEU.A  
 girndisk þú  
 desired.2S.RFL you.N  
 ‘The more you had, the more you wanted’ (Hóm 148.31)

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## The Prepositional Phrase

Prepositions are uninflected words heading phrases which may be complements or adjuncts of all major lexical categories (nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions). Prepositions express various semantic relations, such as local, directional, temporal, causal, and a variety of other more or less abstract relations.

### 7.1 Types of preposition

Old Norse prepositions belong to various morphological and derivational categories.

#### 7.1.1 *Primary prepositions*

There is a small, closed class of simple prepositions inherited from Proto-Germanic: *á* ‘on’, *af* ‘off, from’, *án* ‘without’, *at* ‘at, to’, *frá* ‘from’, *í* ‘in’, *með* ‘with’, *ór* ‘out of’, *um* ‘about, in’, *við* ‘with’. Other prepositions, derived from simple, mostly obsolete forms (*aft*, *fyr*, *und* and *of*), exist in Old Norse and can also be considered primary prepositions synchronically: *eptir* ‘after’, *fyrir* ‘before’, *undan* ‘away from, from under’, *undir* ‘under’ and *yfir* ‘over’.

#### 7.1.2 *Secondary prepositions*

These are originally nouns which have been grammaticalized as prepositions: *gegn* ‘towards’, *gegn* ‘against, opposite’, *gegnum* ‘through’, *hjá* ‘at, by, with’, *miðil* ‘between’, *til* ‘to’. The first three are related to the noun *gagn* ‘advantage’, *hjá* is derived from Germanic \**hîwa* ‘household, family’, *miðil* is the word ‘middle’, and *til* comes from Germanic \**tila* ‘goal’ (cf. German *Ziel*).

7.1.3 *Intransitive prepositions*

This is a group of words (traditionally labelled ‘adverbs’) which denote a direction or a location. They do not take nominal complements but they may take prepositional phrases as complements, and since they fulfil the same syntactic functions as prepositional phrases, they may be considered intransitive prepositions. They may take a derivational suffix *-an* denoting movement away from (ablative), and some of them also have a derivative in *-i* denoting location at. This category may be divided into three subgroups.

(i) General direction: *inn* ‘in’, *út* ‘out’, *upp* ‘up’, *niðr* ‘down’, *fram* ‘forward’, *aptr* ‘back, again’ (also locative). Locative: *inni* ‘in(side)’, *úti* ‘out(side)’, *uppi* ‘up, above’, *niðri* ‘down, below’, *frammi* ‘in front, out’. Ablative: *innan* ‘from inside, out’, *útan* ‘from outside, in’, *ofan* ‘from above, down(wards)’, *neðan* ‘from below, up(wards)’, *framan* ‘from the front’, *aptan* ‘from behind’.

(ii) The word *heim* ‘home’ with the derivatives *heima* ‘at home’ and *heiman* ‘from home’.

(iii) The pro-forms *hér* ‘here’ and *þar* ‘there’ with their ablative derivatives *héðan* ‘hence’ and *þaðan* ‘thence’, and *hingat* ‘hither’, *þingat/þangat* ‘thither’.

(iv) Terms for the cardinal points: *austr* ‘east’, *vestr* ‘west’, *norðr* ‘north’, *suðr* ‘south’, which may have either a directional or a locative meaning, and their ablative derivatives *austan*, *vestan*, *norðan*, *sunnan* ‘from the east’, etc.

Summary of intransitive prepositions:

Direction ‘to’	Location ‘at’	Movement ‘from’
<i>inn</i>	<i>inni</i>	<i>innan</i>
<i>út</i>	<i>úti</i>	<i>útan</i>
<i>upp</i>	<i>uppi</i>	<i>ofan</i>
<i>niðr</i>	<i>niðri</i>	<i>neðan</i>
<i>fram</i>	<i>frammi</i>	<i>framan</i>
<i>aptr</i>	<i>aptr</i>	<i>aptan</i>
<i>heim</i>	<i>heima</i>	<i>heiman</i>
<i>hingat</i>	<i>hér</i>	<i>héðan</i>
<i>þingat/þangat</i>	<i>þar</i>	<i>þaðan</i>
<i>austr</i>	<i>austr</i>	<i>austan</i>
<i>vestr</i>	<i>vestr</i>	<i>vestan</i>
<i>norðr</i>	<i>norðr</i>	<i>norðan</i>
<i>suðr</i>	<i>suðr</i>	<i>sunnan</i>

### 7.1.4 Complex prepositions

We can distinguish three types of complex preposition.

#### (i) Double prepositions

A secondary preposition may be preceded by a primary preposition, usually *á* or *í*, without changing its meaning: *á miðli*, *í miðli* ‘between’, *í gegn*, ‘towards, against’, *í gegnum* ‘through’, *í hjá* ‘at, by, with’.

#### (ii) Preposition plus noun

This type is similar to the previous one, except that the second element is still a noun when used by itself. But the prepositional phrase is grammaticalized and used in a metaphorical sense. Such expressions include *á bak* ‘on back > behind, after’, *á/í mót(i)* ‘in meeting > towards’ *á hqnd/hendr* ‘on hand(s) > towards, against’. The (secondary) preposition *til* is also used in such expressions: *til móts* ‘towards’, *til handa* ‘to hand > to, for’.

The notion of a complex preposition implies a bracketing of a phrase like (1a) as in (1b). There are two arguments in favour of (1b) over the one in (1c), where a simple primary preposition is followed by a noun phrase.

- (1) a. *á mót honum*  
       on meeting him.D  
       ‘towards him’ (Eg 19.2)  
    b. PP[P[á mót] NP[honum]]  
    c. \*PP[P[á] NP[mót honum]]

Firstly, the NP complement is regularly in the dative, whereas nouns otherwise assign only genitive to their complements. Secondly, the ‘head noun’ (*mót*) is semantically bleached; instead of the specific meaning of ‘meeting’, the meaning is the much more general ‘towards’.

#### (iii) The preposition *fyrir*

This preposition may precede the form in *-an* of one of the intransitive prepositions, denoting a location relative to another: *fyrir framan* ‘in front of’, *fyrir ofan* ‘above’, *fyrir vestan* ‘to the west of’, etc.

## 7.2 Modifiers

Prepositions may be preceded by modifiers. These may be quantifiers or adjectives in the neuter accusative or dative.



- (2) a. allt til dags  
all.NEU.A to day.G  
'until day-break' (Nj 407.12)
- b. skamt frá bœ sínum  
short.NEU.A from farm.D his.RFL  
'not far from his farm' (Eg 245.12)
- c. nokkuru fyrir vestan vötnin  
some.NEU.D before from-west lakes.A-the  
'a little to the west of the lakes' (Nj 294.24)

The modifier may also be a NP in the dative referring to a quantity.

- (3) *einum vetri eptir fall Óláfs konungs ins helga*  
one winter.D after fall Olaf.G king the holy.DEF  
'one year after the holy King Olaf's death' (Hkr I.8.9)

### 7.3 Complements

Most typically, prepositions take a complement, but they may also occur without one. This is obviously true of intransitive prepositions, such as in (4), but other prepositions as well may occur without a complement, as in (5).

- (4) a. gakk þú út  
go.IMP you.N out  
'Go out' (Kgs 4.24)
- b. hann fór nú svá buit heim  
he went now thus prepared home  
'Then he went home' (Barl 8.26)
- (5) a. ok leggja eigi hug á síðan  
and lay.3P not mind on later  
'and (they) pay no attention to it later' (Hóm 70.8)
- b. gjörðu skipverjar hans svá sem hann hafði fyrir mælt  
did.3P ship-crew.P.N his so as he had before said  
'His crew did as he had told them before' (Eg 88.5)

Prepositions may take complements in the form of a nominal in one of the oblique cases, a clause, or another prepositional phrase (PP). There are few, if any, prepositions which always govern the accusative, but there is an important group which may take either the accusative or the dative, mostly depending on the meaning. Then there are a few prepositions which always

take the dative, and a smaller group which always takes the genitive. Cases governed by prepositions are always lexical cases.

In prose simple prepositions precede their complement, and are thus true *prepositions*. The pro-forms *þar* and *hér* are exceptions to this since they regularly precede simple prepositions which govern them; cf. (6a). Complex prepositions may also occasionally follow their complement, as in (6b).

- (6) a. ok horfði þar á lǫngum  
and contemplated there on long  
'and looked at it for a long time' (Gunnl 59.3)
- b. rœða nú sín á miðli  
talk.3s now themselves.G. between  
'They now talk between themselves' (OH 40.3)

In an expression such as *oss til handa* 'for us', the dative pronoun *oss* can be analysed either as a preposed complement, or as a possessive dative of the noun *handa*. (The possessive dative does not make up a phrase together with the possessed noun; cf. 8.5.1.)

### 7.3.1 *Prepositions governing the accusative or the dative*

Many prepositions may take a NP complement in the accusative or dative, depending on the semantic role of the complement. These roles may be locative, directional, temporal, instrumental, or comitative.

The prepositions *á* 'on', *í* 'in', *yfir* 'over', *undir* 'under', and *fyrir* 'before' take the accusative when they express a movement towards, as in (7), and the dative when they express location; cf. (8).

- (7) a. er fallit hefir á hjarta mitt  
which fallen has on heart.A my  
'which has fallen on my heart' (Barl 6.34)
- b. Óláfr konungr kom í Þrándheim  
Olaf.N king came in Thrandheim.A  
'King Olaf came to Thrandheim' (Hkr II.78.5)
- c. at fara yfir ás nǫkkurn  
to go over ridge.A some  
'to cross a ridge' (Eg 271.15)
- d. hann hǫrfar þá undan um vǫllinn  
he turns then away at field.A-the  
'He then retreats from the field' (Fbr 80.24)

- e. ok lagði *undir sik* feld sinn  
and laid under himself.A cloak.A his  
'and put his cloak under him' (Dpl 160.10)
- f. gengu þeir þá fyrir Guðmund  
went.3P they.M then before Gudmund.A  
'Then they went up to Gudmund' (Nj 343.21)
- (8) a. af kirkiunnar halfu á Hófi  
of church.G-the half.D on Hof.D  
'of half of the church at Hof' (DN I.90)
- b. í Svíþjóð eru stórheruð mörq  
in Sweden.D are.3P big-districts.N many  
'In Sweden there are many large districts' (Hkr I.10.2)
- c. þeir sátu yfir dagverði  
they.M sat.3P over day-meal.D  
'They were having breakfast' (Eg 272.1)
- d. hann sat þá um borðum  
he sat then at tables.D  
'He was then sitting at the table' (Hkr II.84.16)
- e. er bjó *undir Skagafelli*  
who lived under Skagafell.D  
'who lived under Skagafell' (Dpl 159.27)
- f. Hann sagði fyrir öllum heimamönnum sínum hvað  
he said before all home-men.D his.RFL what.A  
hvergi skyldi starfa  
each.M.N. should.SUB do  
'He told all members of his household what each was to do'  
(Nj 294.15)

When *fyrir* combines with a word in *-an* to make up a complex preposition (cf. 7.1.4) the complement is in the accusative, as in (2c) and the following examples:

- (9) a. hann hafði staðit fyrir framan dyngjuna  
he had stood for front-of room.A-the  
'He had been standing outside the room' (Nj 100.1)
- b. skaut Kjartan spjótinu, ok kom í skjöld Þorólfs fyrir  
shot Kjartan.N spear.D-the and came in shield Thorolf.G for  
ofan mundriðann  
above handle.A-the

‘Kjartan threw his spear, and it hit Thorolf’s shield above the handle’ (Laxd 156.15)

The same prepositions usually take the accusative when used in temporal expressions:

- (10) a. *á hvern helgan dag*  
on each holy day.A  
‘on each holiday’ (DN II.95)
- b. *í þenna tíma* váru engvar kirkjur í nánd  
in this time.A were.3P no churches.N in nearness  
*höfninni*  
harbour.D  
‘At this time there were no churches near the harbour’ (Fbr 127.14)
- c. *fyrir burð Krist*  
before birth.A Christ  
‘before the birth of Christ’ (Hóm 48.21)

Other prepositions also take the accusative in temporal expressions:

- (11) a. *Valgarðr fór útan um sumarit*  
Valgard.N travelled from-out in summer.A-the  
‘Valgard went abroad in the summer’ (Nj 145.17)
- b. *eptir þat* tóku þeir hesta sína  
after that.A took.3P they.M horses.A their.RFL  
‘After that they took their horses’ (Nj 384.9)

When referring to a specific period or point in time, the dative is used:

- (12) a. *þat var á dögum Haralds hins hárfagra Noregs*  
that was on days.D Harald.G the hair-fine.DEF Norway.G  
*konungs*  
king.G  
‘That was in the days of Harald the Fine-haired, king of Norway’  
(Eg 155.14)
- b. *í því bili* heyrir hann at drepit er á dyrr  
in that moment.D hears he that knocked.NEU.N is on doors  
‘At that moment he hears that somebody is knocking on the door’  
(Fbr 33.14)

Other prepositions, including *við* ‘with’, *með* ‘with’, *eptir* ‘after’, *um* ‘about, in’, may govern the accusative or the dative. Compare the a-examples with the b-examples below.

- (13) a. þegar hann kemr við mik  
 when he comes with me.A  
 ‘when he approaches me’ (Nj 19.25)
- b. hann tók við henni allvel  
 he took with her.D very-well  
 ‘He welcomed her warmly’ (Nj 19.7)
- (14) a. en er vár kom eptir vetr þann  
 but when spring.N came after winter.A that  
 ‘But when spring followed that winter’ (Eg 153.17)
- b. ok reið eptir þeim Skallagrimi  
 and rode after them.D Skallagrim.D  
 ‘and rode after Skallagrim and his men’ (Eg 100.14)

Observe the two different cases with *með* in the following two consecutive sentences:

- (15) a. hann hqrfar þá undan um vqllinn til lambhússins  
 he turns then away across field.A-the to lamb-house.G-the  
 ok verst með spjótinu  
 and defends.RFL with spear.D-the  
 ‘He then retreats from the field (and runs) to the lamb shed and defends himself with his spear’ (Fbr 80.24)
- b. tveir húskarlar Snorra sáu at hann hljóp út  
 two house-men.N Snorri.G saw.3P that he ran out  
 reiðr með spjót sitt  
 angry.M.N with spear.A his.RFL  
 ‘Two of Snorri’s servants saw him run out in a rage with his spear’  
 (Fbr 81.11)

In the first instance the dative expresses an instrument role. In the second the semantic function is rather that of comitative or possessive, and the accusative is used.

The prepositions *á* and *at* may be used in an abstract sense in the accusative or dative.

- (16) a. ok trúir þú nú þegar á órar þær  
 and believe.2S you.N now immediately on nonsense.P.A those  
 ‘and you immediately believe in that nonsense’ (Hkr II.230.9)
- b. ok elskaði at jarli  
 and loved to earl.D  
 ‘and was friendly to the earl’ (Hkr II.202.1)

7.3.2 *Prepositions governing the dative only*

These are primarily prepositions expressing a movement away from (ablative), but also a few with a locative, directional or temporal meaning.

The two prepositions *af* ‘off, from’ and *ór* ‘out of’ have an ablative meaning, corresponding to the directional/locative *á* and *í*, respectively. This means that where *á* is used for direction/location, the ablative is expressed by *af*, and where *í* is used for direction/location, the ablative is expressed by *ór*.

- (17) a. er Þorsteinn kom heim *af þingi*  
 when Thorstein.N came home from assembly.D  
 ‘when Thorstein came home from the assembly’ (Gunnl 7.8)
- b. at fara *ór þínu ríki*  
 to go out-of your kingdom.D  
 ‘to leave your kingdom’ (Barl 4.21)

We can present the system of spatial prepositions thus:

	Direction ‘to’	Location ‘at’	Movement ‘from’
Surface	á + A	á + D	af + D
Inside	í + A	í + D	ór + D

Other prepositions with an ablative meaning are *frá* ‘from, of’ and *undan* ‘away from’:

- (18) a. gengu menn síðan *frá Lögbergi*  
 went.3P men.N since from law-rock.D  
 ‘Then the people left the law-rock’ (Nj 126.11)
- b. at nokkurr hlutr drægisk *undan kirkiunni*  
 that some part.N pulled.SUB.RFL away-from church.D-the  
 ‘that anything should be taken away from the church’ (DN II.96)

The prepositions *at* ‘at, to’, *hjá* ‘with, at the place of’, *gegn* ‘against, opposite’, and *án* ‘without’ also govern the dative.

- (19) a. þótt þeir sæti eigi *at lǫndum*  
 though they.M sat.SUB.3P not at lands.D  
 ‘although they had no land’ (Hkr II.5.17)
- b. um haustit var hann á gistingu *hjá Þóri í*  
 in autumn.A-the was he on visit.D with Thor.D in  
 Mýnesi  
 Mynes.D  
 ‘In the autumn he was visiting Thor in Mynes’ (Dpl 147.2)

Most complex prepositions containing a noun govern the dative; cf. (1a) and the following examples:

- (20) a. þá gekk Hogni á mót honum  
 then went Hogni on meeting him.D  
 ‘Then Hogni went towards him’ (Eg 19.2)
- b. svá sem lqgbok vátar á hendr þeim sem annan  
 such as law-book affirms on hands that.M.D who other.A  
 rennr  
 obstructs  
 ‘as the law prescribes against the one who obstructs another’  
 (DN I.84)

### 7.3.3 *Prepositions governing the genitive*

The most common preposition governing the genitive is *til* ‘to’. Other prepositions governing the genitive are *innan* ‘within, inside’, *útan* ‘outside’, and *miðil* ‘between’. The prepositions *innan* and *útan* governing the genitive are different both syntactically and semantically from the intransitive ones meaning ‘from inside/outside’, listed in 7.1.3.

- (21) a. Óláfr gekk til geita-húss  
 Olaf.N went to goat-house.G  
 ‘Olaf went to the goat shed’ (Hkr II.3.14)
- b. ok kvað sér mundu þykkja í því lítit meínlaeti  
 and said himself.D would.INF seem in that.D little sacrifice.A  
 at koma eigi útan borgar þegar hann skyldi með  
 to come not outside city.G when he should with  
 frjalsi ok konungs vináttu lifa innan borgar  
 freedom.A and king.G friendship.A live within city.G  
 ‘He said he would think that there was little sacrifice in not leaving  
 the city, as long as he could live inside the city with freedom and  
 with the king’s friendship’ (Kgs 117.16)
- c. miðil borðs ok þín  
 between table.G and you.G  
 ‘between the table and you’ (Kgs 46.22)

Other prepositions, especially *at* ‘at’ and *frá* ‘from’ may govern the genitive in the sense ‘at/from someone’s home’, where a noun meaning ‘house’ or ‘home’ may be understood.

- (22) a. Óláfr konungr tók veizlu í Þjóttu at Háreks  
 Olaf.N king took reception in Thjotta at Harek.G  
 ‘King Olaf went to stay at Harek’s at Thjotta’ (Hkr I.395.14)
- b. hann hafði langskip af Gelmini frá Gunnars  
 he had long-ship.A of Gelmin.D from Gunnar.G  
 ‘He had a long-ship from Gunnar’s place at Gelmin’ (Hkr II.58.18)

#### 7.3.4 Clausal complements

Prepositions may govern both infinitival clauses, which are illustrated in (23), and finite clauses, given in (24).

- (23) a. en allir aðrir váru fýsir til at herja  
 but all others.M.N were.3P eager.M.N to pillage  
 ‘But all the others were eager to pillage’ (Hkr III.472.4)
- b. gerðist Óláfi forvitni á at reyna spádóm manns þess  
 made.RFL Olaf.D curiosity.N on to test prophecy man.G that  
 ‘Olaf was curious to test that man’s prophecy’ (Hkr I.309.3)
- (24) a. nú skulum vér varask við at eigi taki oss  
 now shall.1P we beware.RFL with that not take.SUB.3P us.A  
 þau dæmi  
 those incidents.N  
 ‘Now we should take care that such incidents do not befall us’  
 (Hóm 72.35)
- b. skal ek nauðga þeim til at þeir segi mér it  
 shall.1S I force them.D to that they.M tell.SUB.3P me.D the  
 sanna  
 true.DEF.NEU.A  
 ‘I will force them to tell me the truth’ (Nj 197.4)

#### 7.3.5 Prepositions governing PPs

The intransitive prepositions listed in 7.1.3 are frequently followed by another preposition. This will be analysed as a preposition governing a prepositional phrase.

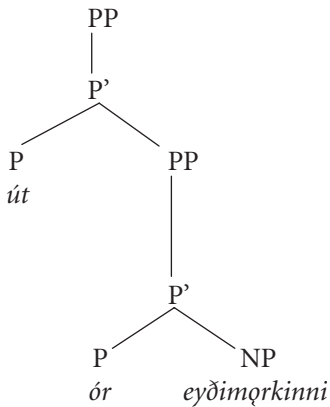
- (25) a. gekk út ór eyðimörkinni  
 went out of desert.D-the  
 ‘came out from the desert’ (Barl 9.23)



- b. er þú kemr *aptr til herbergis þíns*  
 when you come.2s back to lodging.G your  
 ‘when you return to your lodgings’ (Kgs 129.12)
- c. maðrinn hleypr *ofan ór hlíðinni*  
 man.N-the runs down out-of slope.D-the  
 ‘the man runs down from the mountain side’ (Laxd 169.7)
- d. austan ór Vík ok norðan ór landi  
 from-east from Vík and from-north from land.D  
 ‘from Vík in the east and from the north of the country’  
 (Hkr II.150.7)

The structure of the PP in (25a) is depicted in (26), where *út* is a preposition taking a PP as its complement.

(26)



The PP complement may precede the governing preposition:

- (27) a. ok settu alt á útborða í sjá ofan  
 and set.3P all.NEU.A on outboard.A in sea.A down  
 ‘and set it all right down into the sea on the outboard’ (Hkr II.60.1)
- b. nú flýðu sumir menn jarls á land upp  
 now fled some men.N earl.G on land up  
 ‘Some of the earl’s men now fled up on land’ (Hkr II.74.22)

Other prepositions may also take a PP as their complement. This complement often consists of a simple *þar* ‘there’, and precedes its governing

preposition:

- (28) a. ok horfði þar á löngum  
and contemplated there on long  
'and looked at it for a long time' (Gunnl 59.3)
- b. þar til er hann færi í brott  
there to that he went.SUB away  
'until he left' (Dpl 155.26)

Some of the intransitive prepositions have comparative forms that may take a PP as a complement:

- (29) Høskuldr sat á miðjan bekk en synir hans innar  
Hoskuld.N sat on middle bench.A and sons.N his inner  
*frá honum*  
from him.D  
'Hoskuld was sitting in the middle of the bench and his sons (sat)  
on the inside away from him' (Nj 76.10)

In a fashion analogous to intransitive prepositions, a temporal adverb may also take a complement in the form of a PP.

- (30) *síðan um haustit* fór Þorgeirr til Noregs  
since in autumn.A-the went Thorgeir.N to Norway.G  
'Later in the autumn Thorgeir went to Norway' (Fbr 98.12)

### 7.3.6 Deletion of complement

The complement of a preposition may be deleted if it is coreferential with a NP in the previous context, or otherwise inferrable from the context, thus leaving the preposition to stand alone. This is particularly common in coordination, but also under other structural conditions; for example, where the prepositional phrase occurs in a subordinate clause, and the complement is identical to a NP in the matrix clause. As can be seen from the final example below, the coreference may even cross sentence boundaries.

- (31) a. þar lá tréstobbi mikill ok í skýlihoggg mikil  
there lay tree-stump.N big and in \_ axe-cuts.N big  
'There was a big stump of a tree with big cuts from an axe in it'  
(Hkr II.152.3)
- b. ætla ek, at þú nýtir eigi boga minn  
believe.1S I that you.N use.2S not bow.A mine

þóttu                    spyrnir   fótum   í  
 although-you.N   push.2s   feet.D   in \_

'I believe you cannot use my bow even if you push with your feet in it' (Hkr III.292.7)

- c. hann kvað þat                    vera herskip   sín.   Þá hló  
 he   said   that.NEU.A   be   warships.A   his.RFL   then   laughed  
 konungr at ok mælti ...  
 king.N   at \_   and   said

'He said those were his warships. Then the king laughed at him and said ...' (Hkr II.132.22)

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## The Verb Phrase

Verb phrases are headed by verbs, which may be finite or non-finite, and auxiliaries or main verbs. Verb phrases take all kinds of phrasal categories as their complements. The specifier of the verb phrase is the semantic subject, meaning the agent, or the NP which holds the highest semantic role on the role hierarchy for the verb in question. The subject will be treated in Chapter 9.

### 8.1 Finite and non-finite verb forms

The forms of the Old Norse verb are **finite** and **non-finite** (cf. 3.6 and 3.7). Finite forms may occur as the only verb in main sentences, the rule being that every main sentence requires a finite verb; cf. Chapter 9. Non-finite verb forms can occur alone only in (non-finite) subordinate clauses, or in combination with a finite verb.

- (1) a. ok *riðu* þeir heiman of daginn  
 and rode.3P they.M from-home in day.A-the  
 ‘And they set out from home that day’ (Gunnl 3.7)
- b. þá sá ek *fljúga* ofan frá fjöllumum orn  
 then saw.1S I fly down from mountains.D-the eagle.A  
 mikinn  
 large  
 ‘Then I saw a large eagle fly down from the mountains’ (Gunnl 4.8)
- c. nú hefi ek *þýddan* draum þinn  
 now have.1S I interpreted.M.A dream.A your  
 ‘Now I have interpreted your dream’ (Gunnl 5.16)

Thus in (1a) there is only one verb, *riðu*, which is a finite verb in the preterite. In (1b) the dependent clause *fljúga ofan frá fjöllumum orn mikinn* is an accusative with infinitive construction (cf. 8.4.4) with the only verb in a non-finite form, namely the infinitive. In (1c) the participle *þýddan* is dependent on the auxiliary *hefi*.

There are four non-finite categories: the **infinitive**, (2a, b), the **present participle**, (2c), the **perfect participle**, (2d), and the **supine**, (2e). The infinitive may be preceded by the infinitive marker *at* 'to', as in (2a), cf. 10.2.2. The non-finite forms take complements and serve as heads of verb phrases just as the corresponding finite forms of the verbs do.

- (2) a. þá áttu enga ætt til at vera konungr  
 then have.2S-you.N no family.A to to be king.N  
 'Then you have no dynastic right to be king' (Hkr III. 346.15)
- b. mun hon fæða meybarn fritt ok fagrt  
 will she give-birth girl-child.A beautiful and fair  
 'She will give birth to a beautiful and fair baby girl' (Gunnl 5.10)
- c. úvitandi lög guðs  
 unknowing laws.A god.G  
 'ignorant of God's laws' (Hóm 4.22)
- d. nú er hér kominn Egill  
 now is here come.M.N Egil.N  
 'Now Egil has come here' (Eg 222.9)
- e. Óláfr Nóregs-konungr hafði menn þangat sent  
 Olaf.N Norway-king had men.A thither sent  
 'Olaf King of Norway had sent men there' (Hkr II.142.5)

Infinitival phrases without *at* tend to be employed when main verbs follow auxiliaries, or in accusative with infinitive constructions (cf. 8.4.4). When the infinitive is preceded by *at*, the clause usually has a nominal function:

- (3) a. hǫrmuligt er slíkt at vita  
 sad.NEU.N is such.NEU.A to know  
 'It is sad to know such a thing' (Hkr III.512.10)
- b. ok ætluðu at hengja hann  
 and intended.3P to hang him.A  
 'and intended to hang him' (Hkr III.307.3)

In most instances, participles or phrases headed by a participle have the syntactic function of adjectives or APs:

- (4) a. farandi konur kómu til Hlíðarenda frá  
 travelling women.N came.3P to Hlidarendi.G from  
 Bergþórshváli  
 Bergthorshval.D  
 'Some travelling women came to Hlidarendi from Bergthorshval'  
 (Nj 98.18)

- b. þar fylgði segl stafat með vendi  
 there followed sail.N adorned.NEU.N with stripe.D  
 ‘A striped sail came with it’ (Hkr II.244.9)
- c. er ekki gott gera ok alldrigi urðu gerandi  
 who not good.NEU.A do.3P and never became.3P doing.P.N  
 ‘who never do any good and never would’ (Barl 96.33)
- d. Þorsteini var sagt at fallnir væri  
 Thorstein.D was told.NEU.N that fallen.P.M.N were.SUB.3P  
 búðarveggir hans  
 booth-walls.N his  
 ‘Thorstein was told that the walls of his booth might have fallen  
 down’ (Gunnl 3.6)

The infinitive is uninflected, except that *munu* ‘will, may’, *skulu* ‘shall’, and *vilja* ‘want’ have a preterite infinitive used exclusively in accusative with infinitive constructions (cf. 3.7.2 and 8.4.4). The participles have agreement inflections like adjectives, as exemplified in (1c) and (4). (The present participle may, however, sometimes have an uninflected form.)

## 8.2 The reflexive verb

Verbs may have the suffix *-sk* following all other suffixes (cf. 3.7.4). Although the origin is a reflexive pronoun, the verb form in *-sk* (hence called **reflexive form**) may have several different semantic and syntactic functions synchronically in Old Norse. First, a distinction must be made between lexicalized and productive forms. The lexicalized forms are either forms that do not have a corresponding verb without *-sk*, such as *grænask* ‘become green’ (*grænn* ‘green’), or forms that have no synchronic semantic connection with the non-reflexive counterpart, such as *andask* ‘die’ (*anda* ‘breathe’). There are many such verbs in Old Norse, but they have a purely lexical or morphological interest, and will not be treated further here.

The productive reflexive forms, however, enter the syntax of the language in two different ways. On the one hand the suffix *-sk* may be an anaphor, a part of the argument structure of the verb; on the other hand it may function as a marker of the medio-passive.

### 8.2.1 *Anaphor*

The suffix may be an anaphor, referring to the subject of the clause. In other words, the verb assigns (at least) two different semantic roles, one to the subject

and one to the reflexive suffix. There are two kinds of anaphors represented by the suffix *-sk*, reflexive (‘-self’) and reciprocal (‘each other’).

The suffix serves as a reflexive anaphor in the examples in (5). In (5a) the verb *búa* ‘prepare’ (preterite *bjó*) is a transitive verb that takes its object in the accusative, as in *búa skip í för* ‘prepare a ship for voyage’. The reflexive suffix on the verb represents the accusative object. This is very common in accusative with infinitive constructions (cf. 8.4.4) when the subject of the embedded infinitive is coreferential with the subject of the matrix verb, as in (5b). The suffix *-sk* is also used when the verb in question takes its object in the dative, as, for example, the verb *hlífa* ‘spare, protect’ (5c). As a consequence, the suffix may be used as an indirect object; cf. (5d). Finally, the reflexive suffix on the verb may even correspond to the complement of a preposition, as in (5e).<sup>1</sup>

- (5) a. *bjósk hann þá til hólmgöngu*  
 prepared.RFL he then to duel.G  
 ‘He then got ready for the duel’ (Eg 235.21)
- b. *austmaðrinn kvezk þat víst vilja*  
 east-man.N-the said.RFL it.A surely want  
 ‘The man from the East said that he would indeed like to’  
 (Gunnl 3.7)
- c. *hann hlífðisk þá við engan mann*  
 he protected.RFL then with no man.A  
 ‘He did not spare any man’ (Nj 41.6)
- d. *Sveinn [...] beiddisk ríkis af Haraldi konungi*  
 Svein.N asked.RFL kingdom.G of Harald.D king  
 ‘Svein asked King Harald for a kingdom for himself’ (Hkr I,318.10)
- e. *sjásk heldr fyrir*  
 see.IMP.RFL rather before  
 ‘Watch out for yourself’ (Eg 272.4)

The full form of the pronoun is also used instead of the suffix. The sentences in (5) can be compared with those in (6).

- (6) a. *Flosi bjó sik austan*  
 Flosi.N prepared himself.A from-east  
 ‘Flosi prepared himself to go west’ (Nj 294.10)
- b. *Svasi [...] kvað sik vera þann Finninn*  
 Svasi.N said himself.A be that Finn.A-the  
 ‘Svasi said that he himself was that Finn’ (Hkr I,133.6)

<sup>1</sup> In the examples, *-sk* is glossed as RFL regardless of semantic or syntactic function. (Lexicalized forms are not glossed.)

- c. menn Hákonar hlífðu sér lítt  
 men.N Hakon.G protected.3P themselves.D little.NEU.A  
 ‘Hakon’s men did not protect themselves much’ (Hkr III.444.24)
- d. þá beiddi Þorgeirr sér hljóðs  
 then asked Thorgeir.N himself.D attention.G  
 ‘Then Thorgeir asked for attention’ (Nj 246.10)
- e. þeir sjá nú skipin fyrir sér  
 they.M see.3P now ships.A-the before themselves.D  
 ‘They now see the ships in front of them’ (Nj 66.6)

The relative frequency and presumed stylistic markedness of the two alternative forms – suffix or independent pronoun – seem to differ among the various construction types. The type in (5a) with a reflexive form of the verb, and the construction in (6a) which has an independent pronoun, both seem to be quite common. The independent dative pronouns in (6c) and (6d) are more common than the reflexive suffixes; in fact, the suffix representing the indirect object, as in (5d), seems to be limited to a small set of verbs. Likewise, complements of prepositions represented by *-sk*, as in (5e), seem to be limited to certain fixed expressions. The independent form as in (6e) is much more common. On the other hand, in accusative with infinitive constructions, the suffix, as in (5b), is far more common than the independent pronoun. The use of the independent pronoun in (6b) is probably due to emphasis.

The reflexive suffix is also used with the verb *þykkja* ‘seem’, which takes the experiencer in the dative. With this verb the subject of the embedded clause is raised into the subject position of the matrix verb (cf. 9.3.2), as in (7a). If this subject is coreferential with the dative experiencer, the latter is represented as the reflexive suffix, as in (7b).

- (7) a. þótti honum hon vel hafa gert  
 seemed him.D she well have done  
 ‘She seemed to him to have done well’ (Hkr III.391.18)
- b. hann þóttisk þar sjá sæti öll górr af gulli  
 he seemed.RFL there see seats.A all made.P.NEU.A of gold.D  
 ‘He thought he saw seats there all made from gold’ (Barl 151.8)

In such cases, the suffixed form seems to be obligatory; no alternative with an independent *sér* coreferent with the nominative subject has been found.

The suffix *-sk* may also have a reciprocal meaning, with the same functions and cases as the reflexive variant. Thus in (8a) the suffix corresponds to the accusative object of *sjá* ‘see’, in (8b) to the dative object of *mæta* ‘meet’, in (8c) to the dative (indirect object) of *selja* ‘give’, and in (8d) the suffix corresponds to the dative complement of the preposition *hjá* ‘at, by’.



- (8) a. sásk þeir þá ávalt Gautar ok Norðmenn  
saw.3P.RFL they.M then always Gauts.N and Norwegians.N  
'Gauts and Norwegians then saw each other continuously'  
(Hkr III.253.18)
- b. en er þeir möettusk  
but when they.M met.3P.RFL  
'but when they met' (Hkr III.334.3)
- c. síðan seldusk konungarnir gíslar  
since gave.3P.RFL kings.N-the hostages.A  
'Afterwards the kings exchanged hostages' (Hkr III.178.4)
- d. þá rendusk hjá skipin (N156d) 270.3  
then ran.3P.RFL at ships.N-the  
'Then the ships came close to each other' (Hkr II.270.3)

The independent pronoun is not used in a reciprocal sense, except in a few prepositional phrases.

- (9) þeir rœddu með sér  
they.M spoke.3P with themselves.D  
'They talked among themselves' (Hkr III.181.2)

The common way of expressing reciprocal reference is by means of the combination of *hvárr* 'each' and *annarr* 'other', cf. 4.3.2.

### 8.2.2 *Medio-passive*

Since the subject and the *-sk* suffix have the same referent, one of the two semantic roles could eventually be suppressed, with the result that the reflexive verb form would have one semantic role less than the corresponding verb without the suffix. If the suppressed role is the agent, the subject expresses the same role as the object. The result is the passive voice. This development started to take place in Old Norse. However, it is not always quite clear whether a sentence with a reflexive verb form really is agentless; the passive use of the reflexive verb is in any case very limited compared to the much more common periphrastic passive (see 9.3.4). For these reasons, the term medio-passive may be more adequate, even though in some cases the sentences may be rendered as passive sentences in modern Norwegian or English.

- (10) a. Óláfr [...] fœddisk upp með Sigurði sýr  
Olaf.N reared.RFL up with Sigurd.D sýr  
'Olaf was brought up with Sigurd Syr' (Hkr II.3.2)
- b. hann lét leita, ef lyngormr nōkkurr fyinnisk í  
he let search if heather-snake.N some found.SUB.RFL in

eyjunni; en er hann fannsk, þá fœrðu þeir  
 island.D and when he found.RFL then brought.3P they.M  
 konungi  
 king.D

‘He made them search for a snake in the heather on the island, and  
 when one was found, they brought it to the king’ (Hkr III.154.2)

The reflexive form of *gera* ‘do, make’ is generally used to render the notion of ‘become’, as in (11a), or ‘happen’, as in (11b). In either case it may be interpreted as a reflexive or as a medio-passive use.

- (11) a. gerðisk hann svá harðr ok frekr  
 made.RFL he so hard.M.N and strict.M.N  
 ‘He became so hard and strict’ (Hkr II.52.10)
- b. þat, er gørzk hafði  
 that.A which done.RFL had  
 ‘what had happened’ (Hkr II.86.23)

With experiencer verbs, the experiencer may be added in the dative:

- (12) eigi mun þér skilizk hafa  
 not may you.D understood.RFL have  
 ‘You may have misunderstood’ (Laxd 203.1)

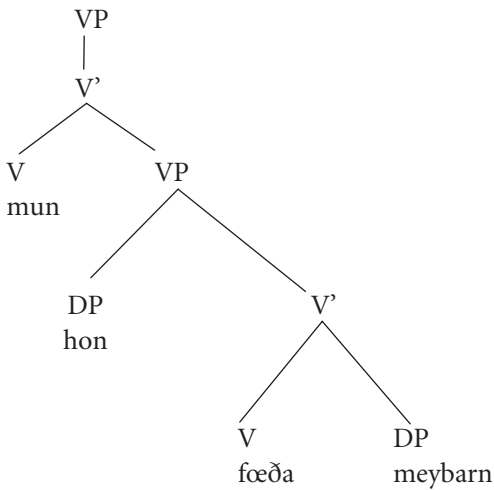
### 8.3 Auxiliary verbs

Auxiliary verbs are verbs which do not assign semantic roles to arguments, and which have no lexical meaning. Instead, they have various kinds of grammatical meaning. Auxiliary verbs can therefore not form predicates of sentences by themselves. The predicate is expressed by a phrase in the complement position of the auxiliary. This complement may belong to any phrasal category. If it is a verb phrase, the function of the auxiliary is to express verbal grammatical categories, such as tense, aspect, or modality. The content of the predicate may, however, be expressed by a non-verbal phrase. In those cases the function of the auxiliary is to head a necessary VP, besides carrying grammatical categories.

Structurally, the auxiliary verb is considered the head of a VP, with another phrase as its complement. Instead of receiving a semantic role from the verb, this complement itself expresses the predicate of the sentence. The structure of the following example, (13a), is depicted in (13b).

- (13) a. mun hon fœða meybarn  
 will she give-birth girl-child.A  
 ‘She will give birth to a baby girl’ (Gunnl 5.10)

b.



The structure in (13b) shows that the subject of the sentence is generated in the specifier position of the lower VP. The subject will be treated in more detail in Chapter 9.

Auxiliary verbs have no morphological features in common which set them off from other verbs as a morphological class. They may exhibit all the morphological categories of verbs in general, and since auxiliary verbs also have non-finite forms, an auxiliary verb may take another auxiliary verb as the head of its complement.

- (14) ok þeim mun hon gipt vera  
 and that.M.D will she married.F.N be  
 ‘And she will be married to him’ (Gunnl 5.16)

We will distinguish between the following classes of auxiliary verbs: (1) modal auxiliaries, (2) the verb *hafa* ‘have’ (and other verbs with a similar function), (3) the verbs *vera* ‘be’ and *verða* ‘become’, and (4) the verb *heita* ‘be called’.

### 8.3.1 *Modal auxiliaries*

The verbs *munu* ‘will, may’, *skulu* ‘shall’, *mega* ‘can, may’, and *kunna* ‘can’ are modal auxiliaries. They are followed by an infinitive without the infinitive marker *at* ‘to’.

The auxiliary *munu* has epistemic meaning. It expresses intention or possibility:

- (15) a. hví Bolli mun sér hafa þar svá staðar leitat  
 what.D Bolli.N may himself.D have there such place.G found  
 ‘why Bolli may have found such a place for himself’ (Laxd 156.6)
- b. fuglar þeir munu vera manna fylgjur  
 birds.N those may.3P be men.G spirits.N  
 ‘Those birds may be the spirits of humans’ (Gunnl 5.8)

As an extension of this, it is also used to express the future tense in a rather neutral or non-modal fashion:

- (16) mun hon fœða meybarn frítt ok fagrt ok mun  
 will she give-birth girl-child.A beautiful and fair and will.2S  
 þú unna því mikit  
 you.N love it.D big.NEU.A  
 ‘She will give birth to a beautiful and fair baby girl, and you will love her very much’ (Gunnl 5.10)

The auxiliary *skulu* ‘shall’ has deontic meaning:

- (17) a. skal þat barn út bera  
 shall that child.A out carry  
 ‘That child shall be exposed’ (Gunnl 6.4)
- b. ef ek segi þér drauminn, þa skaltu ráða  
 if I tell.1S you.D dream.A-the then shall.2S-you.N interpret  
 hann  
 him.A  
 ‘If I tell you the dream, then you must interpret it’ (Gunnl 4.2)

The verb *kunna* is still a lexical verb in Old Norse with the meaning ‘know, be able to’, and as such it takes an infinitival clause with *at* ‘to’, (18a), but it may also function as an epistemic modal auxiliary, (18b).

- (18) a. um þá hluti er ek kann gørr at sjá en  
 about those things.A which I can better to see than  
 þér  
 you.P.N  
 ‘about those things that I understand better than you’ (Laxd 134.22)
- b. svá kann vera  
 so may be  
 ‘That may be so’ (Band 31.1)

The infinitive of *vera* ‘be’ may be omitted after modal auxiliaries.

- (19) a. konungrinn spurði hann hvat þat skyldi  
king.N-the asked him.A what.N that.N should  
‘The king asked him what that was supposed to be’ (Hkr II.132.21)
- b. hefnisamr muntu síðarr  
revengeful will.2s-you.N later  
‘You will be revengeful later on’ (Hkr II.132.13)

### 8.3.2 *hafa*

The verb *hafa* ‘have’ is used as an auxiliary with the supine to form the perfect.

- (20) a. Óláfr Nóregs-konungr hafði menn þangat sent  
Olaf.N Norway-king had men.A thither sent  
‘Olaf King of Norway had sent men there’ (Hkr II.142.5)
- b. ok spurði ef Hrappr hefði komit þar  
and asked if Hrapp.N had.SUB come there  
‘and asked if Hrapp had come there’ (Nj 195.31)
- c. hon hefir mint mik þeira hluta  
she has reminded me.A those things.G  
‘She has reminded me of those things’ (Hkr I.102.17)

When there is a direct object in the clause, an inflected perfect participle agreeing with the object may be used instead of the uninflected supine. This is, however, rather uncommon in classical prose texts.

- (21) a. Óláfr Nóregs konungr hafði þangat *senda* menn  
Olaf.N Norway.G king.N had thither sent.P.M.A men.A  
‘Olaf King of Norway had sent men there’ (Hkr II.139.19)
- b. nú hefi ek þýddan draum þinn  
now have.1s I interpreted.M.A dream.A your  
‘Now I have interpreted your dream’ (Gunnl 5.16)
- c. at sómamanni hefi ek þik *reyndan*  
at honour-man.D have.1s I you.A experienced.M.A  
‘I have found you an honourable man’ (Laxd 26.14)

Notice the contrast between (20a) and (21a), which are from the same text, just a couple of pages apart. The inflected participles, in the examples in (21), really function as predicate complements (cf. 8.4.3).

Other verbs, too, may occasionally be followed by the supine or the participle. These verbs include *eiga* ‘have, own’, *fá* ‘get, receive’, *geta* ‘get, achieve’, *ráða* ‘command, decide’, *vinna* ‘gain, win’.

- (22) a. þú átt oss ekki varlaunat  
 you.N have.2S us.D not insufficiently-rewarded  
 ‘You have not paid us insufficiently’ (Nj 272.23)
- b. fengu þeir eigi lengra borit  
 got.3P they.M not further carried  
 ‘They were not able to carry it further’ (Hkr III.354.1)
- c. vér getum þá eigi með vápnum sóttu  
 we get.1P them.M.A not with weapons.D beaten.P.M.A  
 ‘We cannot defeat them with weapons’ (Nj 299.3)

### 8.3.3 vera and verða

The verb *vera* ‘be’ is semantically the most empty verb. It serves the function of providing a verbal head and a verb phrase in syntactic contexts where this is required, and it further serves to carry verbal inflectional categories. The verb *verða* ‘become’ has the same syntactic properties, but it differs semantically from *vera* by having an inchoative or dynamic meaning.

The complement of *vera* or *verða* may be a phrase headed by a participle or an adjective agreeing with the subject of the sentence in case, number, and gender, or a NP agreeing in case and possibly number. The complement may also be a NP or another phrase type without agreement.

#### (i) Agreeing complements

The auxiliaries *vera* and *verða* take adjective phrases as predicate complements. The adjective then modifies and characterizes the referent of the subject.

- (23) a. Óláfr Haraldsson var þá tolf vetra gamall  
 Olaf.N Haraldsson was then twelve winters.G old.M.N  
 ‘Olaf Haraldsson was then twelve years old’ (Hkr II. 5.9)
- b. margar ár eru breiðari  
 many rivers.F.N are.3P wider.P.F.N  
 ‘Many rivers are wider’ (Hkr II.9.10)
- c. börn Ingibjargar ok Illuga váru mörg  
 children.NEU.N Ingibjörg.G and Illugi.G were.3P many.P.NEU.N  
 ‘Ingibjörg and Illugi had many children’ (Gunnl 9.9)
- d. því öllu verður meiri gleði þín  
 that.D all becomes greater.F.N joy.F.N your  
 ‘Because of all that your joy will become greater’ (Barl 188.32)

The verb *vera* with the perfect participle of an intransitive verb is used to form the perfect. It is used only with verbs of transition or motion, and

is an alternative to *hafa* with the supine. Thus besides (20b) above, we also find (24a).

- (24) a. nú er hér kominn Egil  
 now is here come.M.N Egil.N  
 ‘Now Egil has come here’ (Eg 222.9)
- b. Þorsteini var sagt at fallnir væri  
 Thorstein.D was told.NEU.N that fallen.P.M.N were.SUB.3P  
 búðarveggir hans  
 booth-walls.M.N his  
 ‘Thorstein was told that the walls of his booth might have fallen  
 down’ (Gunnl 3.6)

There may be a nuance of meaning between the perfect with *hafa* (as in 8.3.2) and with *vera*. With *hafa* the action or movement itself is highlighted, while with *vera* it is rather the result of the action which is highlighted.

With the perfect participle, *vera* and *verða* are used to form the passive. The participle agrees with the subject. If the active verb has no accusative object, the passive counterpart also lacks a nominative subject, and the participle is in the neuter singular nominative, as in (25c).

- (25) a. át hann, ok var á braut rekinn  
 ate he and was away driven.M.N  
 ‘He ate and was driven out’ (Hóm 15.1)
- b. þeir er getnir verða í útlegð  
 those.M.N who begotten.P.M.N become.3P in exile.D  
 ‘those who will be begotten in exile’ (Kgs 77.27)
- c. var farit eftir Þórði presti  
 was gone.NEU.N after Thord.D priest  
 ‘Thord the priest was sent for’ (Band 71.26)

The main verb in (25c) is one that also may take *vera* as an auxiliary in the perfect; cf. (24) above. The sentence is thus ambiguous, open to both a passive and an active perfect interpretation with omitted subject (‘Someone had gone for Thord the priest’). (For a more comprehensive treatment of the passive, see section 9.3.4.)

The auxiliaries *vera* and *verða* may also be followed by the present participle. When the subject of the sentence is the logical subject (external argument) of the participle it is said to have an ‘active meaning’. A possible nominal complement of the present participle often appears in the genitive; cf. (26c). With *vera*, the present participle expresses durative aspect.

- (26) a. með því at faðir minn var lifandi  
with that.D that father.N my was living.M.N  
'since my father was (still) living' (Kgs 1.16)
- b. at augu þín sé upp lokin ok eyru  
that eyes.N your be.SUB.3P up closed.P.NEU.N and ears.N  
þín heyrandi  
your hearing.P.N  
'that your eyes be opened and your ears hearing' (Hóm 95.12)
- c. ert þú nökkurs ráðandi hér?  
are.2S you.N something.G ruling.F.N here  
'Do you have any say here?' (Nj 83.6)

The auxiliary *verða* is used with the present participle to express the future:

- (27) a. sem þeir eiga eða eigandi verða  
which they.M own or owning.P.N become  
'which they own or will come to own' (DN I.80)
- b. Magnús varð henni ekki unnandi  
Magnus.N became her.D not loving.M.N  
'Magnus did not come to love her' (Hkr III.316.21)

The present participle is also used with *vera* in a gerundive sense. This construction expresses what can, should, or needs be done. The subject of the sentence then has an object role with respect to the participle, which then has a 'passive meaning'.

- (28) a. hverir hlutir elskandi eru fyrir sœmdar sakar ok  
which parts.N loving.P.N are.3P for decency.G sakes.A and  
góðrar meðferðar eða hverir hlutir hatandi eru fyrir  
good conduct.G or which parts.N hating.P.N are.3P for  
úsœmdar sakar  
indecent.G sakes.A  
'which things should be loved because of their decency and good  
conduct or which things should be hated because of indecency'  
(Kgs 43.38)
- b. er yðr þá eigi segjandi saga til  
is you.P.D then not telling.F.N story.N to  
'Then it will not be necessary to tell you the story' (Hkr II.459.14)

This construction was used to translate the Latin gerundive, and eventually it changed into a subjectless construction where the complement of the participle remains a complement, even in the accusative. In addition, the agent



can be expressed in the dative. The participle is in the neuter nominative (ending in *-a*), but sometimes it also ends in *-i*, which should be considered an uninflected form.

- (29) a. þess er fyrst leitanda hvaðan skurðarskírinn  
that.G is first searching.NEU.N wherefrom circumcision.N  
hófsk  
raised.RFL  
'First we must examine where circumcision came from'  
(Hóm 53.20)
- b. í þeirri er skiljandi hvat manni sé geranda  
in it.F.D is understanding what man.D be.SUB doing.NEU.A  
'In it one can understand what man is to do' (Hóm 30.2)
- c. eigi er virðandi ásjónir manna í dómum,  
not is considering countenances.A men.G in judgments.D  
heldr sǫkina  
rather case.A-the  
'One should not consider people's looks when judging them, but  
rather the case' (Hóm 20.25)

Except for certain uses of the present participle, as shown, the adjective or participle agrees with the subject of *vera/verða* in gender, number, and case. If the subject is a coordination of nouns of different genders, the predicate complement is in the neuter plural.

- (30) a. Gunnhildr ok synir þeira váru farin til  
Gunnhild.F.N and sons.M.N their were.3P gone.P.NEU.N to  
Danmerkr suðr  
Denmark.G south  
'Gunnhild and their sons had gone south to Denmark' (Eg 246.7)
- b. at honum myndi fengin til varðveizlu  
that him.D would.SUB.3P got.P.NEU.N to custody.G  
stórfé ok dýrgripir  
wealth.NEU.N and treasures.M.N  
'that valuables and treasures would have been entrusted to him'  
(Hkr III.328.10)

If the subject is a coordination of two or more NPs in the singular, the adjective or the participle is regularly in the plural, but it may also agree with the closest one of the coordinated NPs, and thus be in the singular (as is also the verb in such cases).

- (31) hvártveggi svírinn ok allr stafninn var með  
each neck.N-the and all stem.N-the was.3S with

gulli *lagðr*  
 gold.D covered.M.S.N  
 'Both necks and the whole stem (of the ship) were covered with  
 gold' (Hkr I.401.14)

When there is no subject, or when the subject is a clause, the adjective or the participle is in the neuter singular nominative.

- (32) a. *skammt* var til meginlands  
 short.NEU.N was to mainland.G  
 'There was a short distance to the mainland' (Fbr 197.7)
- b. Þorsteini var *sagt* at fallnir væri  
 Thorstein.D was told.NEU.N that fallen.P.M.N were.SUB.3P  
 búðarveggir hans  
 booth-walls.N his  
 'Thorstein was told that the walls of his booth might have fallen  
 down' (Gunnl 3.6)

Since the adjective or the participle agrees with the subject, it is in the nominative in finite sentences, as in the examples above. When *vera* or *verða* is in the infinitive, the adjective or participle agrees with the overt representation of the subject. Therefore it is in the nominative in subject raising constructions, such as (33a), (cf. 9.3.2), and in the accusative in accusative with infinitive constructions, such as (33b), (cf. 8.4.4). In control infinitives, the complement may even be in the dative, as in (33c); cf. 10.2.5.

- (33) a. *torsótttr* þóttu *ek* yðr næstum *vera*  
 difficult.M.N seemed.1S I you.U.P.D last be  
 'You thought I was difficult last time' (Nj 340.29)
- b. *ætla* *ek* *hann* munu *vera* oss *allúþarfan*  
 think.1S I him.A may.INF be us.D all-harmful.M.A  
 'I think he will be very harmful to us' (Hkr II.326.4)
- c. *betra* er þér at *vera* *góðum*  
 better.NEU.N is you.D to be good.M.D  
 'It is better for you to be good' (Hóm 23.20)

The predicate complement of *vera* and *verða* may be a noun phrase, which agrees with the case of the subject, in accordance with the same rules that apply to adjectives.

- (34) a. ok var þat *mikill fjöldi* orðinn  
 and was it.N great multitude.N become.M.N  
 'And it had grown into a great number' (Laxd 70.4)

- b. þá áttu engi ætt til at vera *konungr*  
 then have.2S-you.N no family.A to be king.N  
 ‘Then you have no dynastic right to be king’ (Hkr III. 346.15)
- c. margir ætluðu hann *sjalfan Krist* vera  
 many.P.M.N thought.3P him.A self.M.A Christ.A be  
 ‘Many people thought that he was Christ himself’ (Hóm 144.34)

Very often a compound noun with *-maðr* ‘man’ as the last element is used instead of an adjective corresponding to the first element. Such nominal predicates are often coordinated with an adjective. Compounds with *-maðr* may even be used with a feminine subject, as in (35c).

- (35) a. Illugi svartir var *stóreignamaðr* ok harðlyndr  
 Illugi.N black was great-owning-man.N and hard-tempered.N  
 mjök  
 very  
 ‘Illugi the Black was a great landowner and very strong-willed’  
 (Gunnl 9.5)
- b. engi var hann *skarts-maðr* ok heldr fámálugr  
 no.M.N was he vanity-man.N and rather quiet.M.N  
 ‘He was neither vain nor talkative’ (Hkr II.44.2)
- c. *hon* var *aftaka-maðr* mikill um þetta mál  
 she was determined-man.N great.M.N in this matter.A  
 ‘She was very determined in this matter’ (Hkr II.101.3)

(ii) Non-agreeing complements

The complement may be of a more adverbial character. Thus it may consist of a prepositional phrase denoting location, time, or other more or less abstract notions.

- (36) a. í Svíþjóð eru stórheruð mörq  
 in Sweden.D are.3P big-districts.N many  
 ‘In Sweden there are many large districts’ (Hkr I.10.2)
- b. þat var á *dögum Haralds hins hárfagra Noregs*  
 that was on days.D Harald.G the hair-fine Norway.G  
*konungs*  
 king.G  
 ‘That was in the days of Harald the Fine-haired, king of Norway’  
 (Eg 155.14)
- c. ok skyldi þessi hringr eigi verða þér at *hofuðbana*  
 and should.SUB this ring.N not become you.D to death  
 ‘And may this ring not cause your death’ (Nj 339.11)

Likewise, adverbs may serve as complements:

- (37) má þetta verða vel, þó at hitt  
 may this.NEU.N become well, although the-other.NEU.N  
 yrði illa  
 became.SUB badly  
 ‘This one may turn out well although the other one turned out  
 badly’ (Nj 36.14)

Noun phrases in oblique cases may be used as complements, such as a partitive genitive or an adverbial accusative.

- (38) a. váru þeir allir eins liðs  
 were.3P they.M all.P.M.N one party.G  
 ‘They all belonged to one party’ (Eg 188.2)
- b. en er Þórir heyrði þetta sagt, þá var  
 but when Thori.N heard this.NEU.N said.NEU.N then was  
 mjök annan veg en hann hugði  
 very other way.A than he thought  
 ‘But when Thori heard this news, it was very different from what  
 he (had) thought’ (Hkr I.348.2)

(iii) Infinitive

The infinitive (with or without the infinitive marker *at* ‘to’) may be used with *vera* and *verða* with functions similar to those of the present participle.

The verb *vera* followed by the preposition *at* and an infinitival phrase with the infinitive marker *at* is used to express progressive aspect.

- (39) a. hann var at at hlaða skútuna  
 he was at to load skiff.A-the  
 ‘He was loading the skiff’ (Nj 28.20)
- b. Þeir höfðu verið at þrjú sumur at gera haug  
 they.M had.3P been at three summers.A to make mound.A  
 einn  
 one  
 ‘They had been working three summers to make a mound’  
 (Hkr I.106.5)

One of the occurrences of *at* may be omitted:

- (40) hann var at byrgja kviadyrnar  
 he was at/to close fold-gates.A  
 ‘He was about to close the gate of the fold’ (Fbr 47.17)

The verb *verða* with the infinitive (with or without *at*) expresses future obligation in examples such as the following.

- (41) a. ek *verð* *hefja* þessa teiti  
 I become.1S raise this fun.A  
 'I will have to start the fun' (Hkr III.291.16)
- b. nú *verðr* *at segja* frá því  
 now becomes to tell from it.D  
 'Now it must be said' (Nj 378.24)
- c. þá *verðr* þú með miklu starfi ok erfiðis sveita  
 then become.2S you.N with much work.D and toil.G sweat.D  
 þetta óðlask  
 this.NEU.A win  
 'Then you will have to win this with much toiling and sweat'  
 (Barl 151.35)

The verb *vera* may furthermore be used with the infinitive in gerundial constructions. An accusative object of the infinitive, being a structural case (cf. 3.1.3), is raised into the subject position of *vera*, as in (42a). Lexical cases (dative or genitive) do not change, but remain as objects of the infinitive; cf. (42b). An accusative object may also remain in the position after the infinitive, as in (42c).

- (42) a. eru *slíkar* *mínar* *at segja* frá honum  
 are such.P.F.N. mine.P.F.N. to tell from him.D  
 'This is all I have to say about him' (Gunnl 37.16)
- b. hvar *beina* *okkarra* er *at leita*  
 where bones.G our(DU) is to search  
 'where to look for our bones' (Nj 301.29)
- c. nú er *at verja* *sík*  
 now is to defend oneself.A  
 'Get ready to defend yourselves' (Nj 121.23)

In constructions such as (42b, c) the infinitival clause may also be analysed as the subject of *vera*.

#### 8.3.4 *heita*

The verb *heita* 'be called' takes a predicate complement agreeing with the nominative subject, usually a proper name. With place names, the name is usually preceded by a preposition.

- (43) a. *Þorsteinn hét maðr*  
 Thorstein.N was-called man.N  
 ‘There was a man called Thorstein’ (Gunnl 1.1)
- b. *þá muntu heita dróttinsviki*  
 then will.2S-you.N be-called traitor.N  
 ‘Then you will be called traitor’ (Hkr III.141.1)
- c. *þat hét at Borgarfirði, en bær sá, er þar*  
 it.N was-called at Borgarfjord.D and farm.N that which there  
*var, hét at Borg*  
 was was-called at Borg.D  
 ‘It was called Borgarfjord, and the farm which was there was called Borg’ (Eg 107.10)

## 8.4 Complements of lexical verbs

Lexical verbs may take complements in the form of a NP, a prepositional phrase, or a clause. These complements receive a semantic role from the verb. The subject, generated in the specifier position of the VP, also receives a semantic role from the verb. The subject is treated in Chapter 9.

### 8.4.1 *Nominals*

This term applies to all categories with case inflection, including noun phrases, determiner phrases, and also adjectives and participles used without a nominal head. All three oblique cases are used as complements. Most accusative complements are of the structural type, but the lexical accusative also occurs (see the distinction made in 3.1.3). The dative and the genitive are by definition lexical.

#### (i) Structural accusative

The accusative is assigned to the object position of most transitive verbs (unless another case marking is specified by the lexical entry of the particular verb; cf. 3.1.3). These NPs are regular direct objects, and with most verbs they carry the patient role.

- (44) a. *Jófríðr fœddi meðan meybarn ákafa fagrt*  
 Jofrid.N gave-birth meanwhile girl-child.A extremely beautiful  
 ‘In the meanwhile Jofrid gave birth to an extremely beautiful baby girl’ (Gunnl 6.14)

- b. konur vildu þat bera at henni  
 women.N wanted.3P it.A carry to her.D  
 ‘The women wanted to bring it to her’ (Gunnl 6.15)
- c. hræzla guðs hon rekr á braut hræzlu helvitis  
 fear.N god.G she drives away fear.A hell.G  
 ‘The fear of God drives away the fear of Hell’ (Hóm 14.23)

Since they carry a structural case, accusative NPs become nominative subjects in corresponding passive sentences; compare (44a–c) with (45a–c).

- (45) a. í Noregi var hann föeddr  
 in Norway.D was he born.M.N  
 ‘He was born in Norway’ (Hóm 109.1)
- b. barnit er út borit  
 child.N-the is out carried.NEU.N  
 ‘The child has been exposed’ (Gunnl 7.9)
- c. þá var hann braut rekinn  
 then was he away driven.M.N  
 ‘Then he was driven away’ (Hóm 74.13)

Intransitive verbs, and verbs which do not normally take an accusative object, may still take a cognate object, or an object with a meaning related to the verb.

- (46) a. ek vil ráða þér annat ráð  
 I want.1S advise you.D other advice.A  
 ‘I will advise you differently’ (Hkr II.85.23)
- b. bað hann fara kaupferð til Dyflinnar  
 asked him.A go trading-journey.A to Dublin.G  
 ‘asked him to go on a trading journey to Dublin’ (Hkr I.344.14)
- c. síðan svarði jarl konungi eiða  
 since swore earl.N king.D oaths.A  
 ‘Afterwards the earl swore oaths to the king’ (Hkr I.347.5)
- d. þeir töludu lengi einmæli  
 they.M spoke.3P long one-talk.A  
 ‘They spoke together alone for a long time’ (Hkr II.97.7)

Some objects may have a ‘looser’ relationship to the verb in the sense that they are not semantically required by the regular meaning of the verb, which may often be intransitive.

- (47) a. drukku menn þann dag erfit  
 drank.3P men.N that day.A funeral-feast.A  
 ‘That day the men held their funeral feast’ (Hkr I.322.18)

- b. *skaða mikinn hqfum vér farit um guð vart*  
 damage.A great have.1P we gone in god.A our  
 ‘We have suffered great damage to our god’ (Hkr II.236.4)

## (ii) Lexical accusative

The lexical accusative is used first and foremost as an adjunct (cf. 8.5.1). As a complement, the lexical accusative occurs in a few double object constructions together with a structural accusative. There is room for only one structural accusative in each clause; therefore, the second accusative must be lexical.<sup>2</sup> This is what we find when a (usually animate) recipient is combined with a cognate or an effected object.

- (48) a. *þá brá konungr sverði ok hjó hann banahogg*  
 then drew king.N sword.D and struck him.A deathblow.A  
 ‘Then the king drew his sword and gave him his death-blow’  
 (Hkr I.118.21)
- b. *ok lýstr hana kinnhest*  
 and slaps her.A cheek-horse.A  
 ‘and gives her a box on the ear’ (Nj 109.10)
- c. *ok keyrði hann niðr fall mikit*  
 and drove him.A down fall.A great  
 ‘and flung him down hard’ (Eg 123.6)

The animate (recipient) NPs in these sentences (*hann, hana*) are the structural accusative objects, while the effected objects (*banahogg, kinnhest, fall mikit*) are lexical accusatives. This can be seen from a passive sentence, such as (49), where the person object with a recipient role has become subject in the passive.<sup>3</sup>

- (49) *þá var hverr þeira sleginn líma-hogg*  
 then was each.N them.G beaten broom-blows.A  
 ‘Then each of them was beaten with a broom’ (Hkr III.252.14)

Double accusatives are also found with verbs that do not take a nominative agent:

- (50) a. *mik skortir eigi hug*  
 me.A lacks not wish.A  
 ‘I am not unwilling’ (Eg 299.16)

<sup>2</sup> An apparent exception to this rule is the case where one of the accusative NPs is a predicate complement. In such instances, there is only one referring NP, and thus only one argument NP, and there is agreement between the two; cf. 8.3.3.

<sup>3</sup> There is a potential paradox here, since a cognate object occurring by itself without a recipient, seems to be structural, as indicated by a sentence like

*var blásinn herblástr*  
 was blown army-blast.N  
 ‘A blast of trumpets was blown’ (Hkr III.442.13)



- b. at *mik* hendi *enga þá hluti*  
 that me.A happen.SUB no those things.A  
 ‘that no such things happen to me’ (Hkr I.406.2)

Sentences of this type do not seem to have passive counterparts. Therefore it is difficult to determine on a formal basis which (if any) of the accusative NPs are structural and which are lexical. One indication that the person recipient is a lexical accusative might be that this phrase usually occurs in a typical subject position (cf. 9.2.1). A NP receiving structural case in that position would be nominative rather than accusative.

There are also verbs that take only one accusative and no nominative:

- (51) a. *svá* syfjar *mik* hér at ek má víst eigi  
 so makes-sleepy me.A here that I can.IS certain.NEU.A not  
 upp standa  
 up stand  
 ‘I get so sleepy here that I can barely stand up’ (Finnb 81.8)
- b. minnir *mik* hinnar konunnar  
 remembers me.A that woman.G  
 ‘I remember that woman’ (Hkr III.501.14)

It may be argued that these accusatives are lexical, since they remain accusative even in subject position.

### (iii) Dative

Dative objects are used with a variety of semantic functions. This is partly due to the fact that historically the Old Norse dative is a syncretism of four Indo-European cases: dative, instrumental, locative, and ablative. As an object, the dative therefore has a recipient or an instrumental role, as exemplified in (52) and (53), respectively.

- (52) a. ok bera ǫl *vikingum*  
 and carry ale.A vikings.D  
 ‘and bring ale to the vikings’ (Hkr I.68.3)
- b. Óláfr konungr þakkaði *henni* vel orð sín  
 Olaf.N king thanked her.D well words.A her.RFL  
 ‘King Olaf thanked her very much for her words’ (Hkr II.45.19)
- (53) a. einn maðr ríðr *rauðum hesti*  
 one man.N rides red horse.D  
 ‘one man is riding on a red horse’ (Fbr 45.13)

- b. at aka mátti *vögnum* á víxl  
 that drive could carriages.D on passing  
 ‘that two drivers could pass one another in carriages’ (Hkr II.16.11)

The dative is also used with other verbs where no such role can be specified. This may be due to analogical extension or attraction.

- (54) a. hann ók *heyjum sínum* á *øxnum*  
 he transported hay.D his.RFL on oxen.D  
 ‘He transported his hay on oxen’ (Fbr 85.16)
- b. þá hratt hann frá sér *spjótinu*  
 then pushed he from himself.D spear.D-the  
 ‘Then he pushed the spear away from him’ (Dpl 163.26)
- c. Egill fylgdi *þeim* út  
 Egil.N followed them.D out  
 ‘Egil followed them out’ (Band 41.1)

Typically, verbs which are inherently causative take a dative object, as the sentences in (54a, b) show.

Some verbs may appear with the object either in the dative or in the accusative. In such cases the dative has a more instrument-like meaning, while the accusative denotes a more typical patient. Compare the a- and b-sentences in (55–56).

- (55) a. Þangbrandr skaut *spjóti* í gegnum Þorvald  
 Thangbrand.N shot spear.D through Thorvald.A  
 ‘Thangbrand thrust his spear through Thorvald’ (Nj 239.9)
- b. ek skaut *alla þá* er fremstir *váru*  
 I shot.1S all those.M.A who foremost.P.M.N were.3P  
 ‘I shot all those who were in the lead’ (Nj 139.22)
- (56) a. þar skalt þú vera um nátt ok sitja útarliga ok  
 there shall.2S you.N be in night.A and sit far-out and  
 drepa niðr *høfði*  
 put down head.D  
 ‘There you shall stay one night and sit near the exit and keep your head low’ (Nj 51.17)
- b. eigi drap ek *bróður þinn*  
 not killed.1S I brother.A your  
 ‘I did not kill your brother’ (Nj 44.17)

In other instances a case variation seems to represent other differences of meaning, or no difference at all:

- (57) a. ryð ek *handseldu máli* Flosa Þórðarsonar  
 clear.1S I assigned case.D Flosi.G Thordarson  
 ‘I clear (you from) the case of Flosi Thordarson’ (Nj 353.19)
- b. en fengu menn til at ryðja *skip*  
 but got.3P men.A to to clear ship.A  
 ‘but had some men unload the ship’ (Nj 244.10)
- (58) a. Illugi lýkr þá upp *kistunni*  
 Illugi.N opens then up chest.D-the  
 ‘Illugi then opens the chest’ (Fbr 93.19)
- b. síðan lauk Hǫskuldr upp *kistu eina*  
 since opened Hoskuld.N up chest.A one  
 ‘Afterwards Hoskuld opened a chest’ (Laxd 25.17)
- (59) a. at sá sér *korni*  
 to sow themselves.D corn.D  
 ‘to sow corn for themselves’ (Hkr II.31.6)
- b. sá þú þat er þú skerir  
 sow.IMP.2S you.N that.A which you.N cut.2S  
 ‘Sow that which you harvest’ (Hóm 16.6)

The dative commonly occurs in combination with a structural accusative to denote the recipient (indirect object):

- (60) a. ok bera *ǫl víkingum*  
 and carry ale.A vikings.D  
 ‘and bring ale to the vikings’ (Hkr I.68.3)
- b. ok veitt Óláfi *konungi lið*  
 and given Olaf.D king help.A  
 ‘and (had) given King Olaf help’ (Hkr II.95.11)

The dative is used for the recipient of the impression or opinion with *þykkja* ‘seem’ and similar verbs:

- (61) a. mér þykkir þú fól  
 me.D seem.2S you.N fool.N  
 ‘I think you are a fool’ (Hkr III.304.7)
- b. leizk *honum mærin fǫgr*  
 seemed.3S him.D girl.N-the beautiful.F.N  
 ‘He found the girl beautiful’ (Eg 18.17)

Some verbs may take two dative arguments:

- (62) a. Bróðir hét honum gríðum  
 Brodir.N promised him.D truces.D  
 ‘Brodir promised him a truce’ (Nj 408.2)
- b. konungr játti henni þessu  
 king.N granted her.D this.D  
 ‘The king granted her this’ (Hkr I.266.14)

The dative may be the sole NP complement of the verb, as in (53–59). It may also appear with verbs that are normally intransitive, such as *koma* ‘come’.

- (63) Skarpheðinn kom fótum undir sik  
 Skarphedin.N came feet.D under himself.A  
 ‘Skarphedin got to his feet’ (Nj 303.20)

The dative is frequently used with verbs that take no nominative argument:

- (64) a. honum byrjaði ekki skjótt  
 him.D gave-fair-wind not quick.NEU.A  
 ‘He did not get a fair wind very quickly’ (Hkr II.159.15)
- b. þá fór þeim sem hínú  
 then went them.D as the-others.D  
 ‘Then the same happened to them as to the others’ (Hkr I.444.12)

The dative, being a lexical case, remains in the passive.

- (65) a. er lokit var drápunni  
 when closed.NEU.N was poem.D-the  
 ‘when the poem was finished’ (Gunnl 31.22)
- b. varð svá borgit hínú mesta hlut borgarinnar  
 became thus saved.NEU.N the largest part.D city.G-the  
 ‘Thus most of the city was saved’ (Hóm 124.26)

#### (iv) Genitive

Quite a few verbs take their complement in the genitive. Most genitive complements express either a partitive or a non-affected relation. It should be kept in mind, however, that the genitive case depends lexically on the verb, not on the type of reference of the NP complement in each particular instance. Verbs taking a partitive genitive are typically those meaning ‘acquire, use, enjoy’, etc. Verbs taking a non-affected complement are typically those meaning ‘wait for, expect, want, seek, hope for, observe, avenge, regret’, etc.

- (66) a. ok aflaði sér svá dyrgripa eða annarra fanga  
and provided himself.D thus treasures.G or other means.G  
'and thus acquired treasures and other means' (Hkr I.151.14)
- b. naut hann þó eigi lengi konungdómsins  
enjoyed he though not long kingdom.G-the  
'But he did not enjoy his kingdom for long' (Hkr II.49.20)
- c. heraðsmenn leituðu hennar  
district-men.N searched.3P her.G  
'The men from the district searched for her' (Nj 21.9)
- d. engrar vínáttu vænta af Onundi konungi  
no friendship.G expect of Onund.D king  
'to expect no friendship from King Onund' (Hkr II.290.2)

Verbs meaning 'ask, encourage, remind', etc., may take a genitive complement together with an accusative complement referring to a person, typically with a recipient role.

- (67) a. hvers vilið þér mik beiða  
what.G want.2P you.P.N me.A ask  
'What do you want from me?' (Hkr I.367.2)
- b. spurði konungs-dóttir Hjalta margra tíðenda  
asked king.G-daughter.N Hjalti.A many news.G  
'The king's daughter asked Hjalti for news' (Hkr II.116.11)

Verbs meaning 'provide, allow, lend, grant, deny, envy', etc., may take a dative referring to a person recipient besides the genitive. In (68c) all three cases occur.

- (68) a. hann skyldi ljá honum fresta til annars sumars  
he should lend him.D respites.G till other summer.G  
'He should give him time till next summer' (Hkr II.209.32)
- b. vildi hann eigi unna Þorfinni skiptis  
wanted he not grant Thorfinn.D share.G  
'He did not want to share with Thorfinn' (Hkr II.200.9)
- c. ok krafði bændr sér viðrtöku  
and demanded farmers.A himself.D reception.G  
'and demanded that the farmers take him (as King)' (Hkr II.56.8)

A verb in the present participle may take a genitive complement although it would take a different case in other forms. Compare (69a, b).

- (69) a. þeir Þorfinnr réðu þessu, at [...]   
they.M Thorfinn.N decided this.D that  
'Thorfinn and his men decided to ...' (Eg 268.18)

- b. ert þú nökkurs ráðandi hér?  
 are.2S you.N something.G deciding.F.N here  
 ‘Do you have any say here?’ (Nj 83.6)

#### 8.4.2 Prepositional phrases

The complement of a verb may have the form of a prepositional phrase. This is particularly common with intransitive verbs of motion.

- (70) a. Ólafur gekk til geita-húss  
 Olaf.N went to goat-house.G  
 ‘Olaf went to the goat shed’ (Hkr II.3.14)
- b. gengu menn síðan frá Lögbergi  
 went.3P men.N since from law-rock.D  
 ‘Then the people left the law-rock’ (Nj 126.11)
- c. þá gekk Hogni á mót honum  
 then went Hogni on meeting him.D  
 ‘Then Hogni went to meet him’ (Eg 19.2)
- d. at fara ór þínu ríki  
 to go out-of your kingdom.D  
 ‘to leave your kingdom’ (Barl 4.21)

With transitive verbs of motion, the PP is predicated of the object, so that the object and the PP make up a semantic unit (a secondary predication).

- (71) a. ok lagði spjóti á honum miðjum  
 and laid spear.D on him.D middle  
 ‘and thrust the spear through his middle’ (Fbr 13.17)
- b. ok lagði undir sik feld sinn  
 and laid under himself.A cloak.A his  
 ‘and put his cloak under him’ (Dpl 160.10)

Stative verbs may also take prepositional complements:

- (72) a. þeir sátu yfir dagverði  
 they.M sat.3P over day-meal.D  
 ‘They were having breakfast’ (Eg 272.1)
- b. er bjó undir Skagafelli  
 who lived under Skagafell.D  
 ‘who lived under Skagafell’ (Dpl 159.27)

Intransitive prepositions and other prepositions used without a complement often form a close unit with a verb, and are therefore traditionally called

‘particles’; some examples follow:

- (73) a. Kolr féll þá dauðr niðr  
 Kol.N fell then dead.M.N down  
 ‘Kol then fell down dead’ (Nj 142.8)
- b. gefsk þú upp  
 give.IMP.2S.RFL you.N up  
 ‘Give yourself up!’ (Nj 95.24)
- c. þá tak þú af tvá hluti  
 then take.IMP.2S you.N off two parts.A  
 ‘Then withdraw two parts’ (Kgs 7.1)

The verb *fá* ‘get’ (preterite *fekk*) is used with an accusative complement and the preposition *til* plus an infinitival clause to form causative constructions:

- (74) a. ok fekk þar menn til at húsa  
 and got there men.A to to build  
 ‘and made people build houses there’ (Hkr II.94.16)
- b. en fekk menn til at ryðja skipit  
 but got men.A to to clear ship.A-the  
 ‘but had some men unload the ship’ (Nj 71.8)

Prepositional phrases are sometimes used as alternatives to NPs:

- (75) a. eptir þat heilsaði hann á konung  
 after that.A greeted he on king.A  
 ‘Afterwards he greeted the king’ (Hkr II.187.6)
- b. ok elskaði at jarli  
 and loved to earl.D  
 ‘and was friendly to the earl’ (Hkr II.202.1)
- c. þá mun ek eptir leita þeim eignum ok  
 then will.1S I after seek those properties.D and  
*óðulum, er [...]*  
 inheritances.D which  
 ‘Then I will seek the property and inheritance which . . .’  
 (Hkr II.208.4)

The verb *heilsa* also takes a dative object, *elska* an accusative object (with a slightly different meaning), and *leita* usually takes a genitive. The fact that the complement NP in (75c) is in the dative, shows that it is governed by the preposition *eptir*, and not by the verb *leita*. This is therefore also an example of a discontinuous prepositional phrase, by no means unusual in Old Norse (cf. 8.4.6).

8.4.3 *Predicate complements*

A direct object may be combined with a **predicate complement**. This is an adjective phrase, a noun phrase, or a prepositional phrase which is predicated of the object. The object and the predicate complement can therefore be paraphrased as a sentence with an auxiliary verb. Underlying (76) is thus a sentence meaning ‘He is holy’.

- (76) kalla enskir menn hann helgan  
 call English men.N him.A holy.M.A  
 ‘The English call him holy’ (Hkr III.187.11)

Predicate complements are used with verbs meaning ‘call, consider, make (cause), appear’ and the like.

As shown in (76), adjectives as predicate complements agree with the object in gender, number, and case. Further examples are:

- (77) a. ætlar þú þann þér þá tryggvan  
 consider.2S you.N that.M.A you.D then faithful.M.A  
 ‘Do you then consider him faithful to you?’ (Hkr I.275.10)
- b. konungr lagði Ólvi úgildan  
 king.N laid Ólvi.A unatoned.M.A  
 ‘The King declared that no compensation should be paid for Ólvi’  
 (Hkr II.224.12)
- c. þá sýndi hann sik glaðan ok kátan  
 then showed he himself.A happy.M.A and merry.M.A  
 ‘Then he appeared happy and merry’ (Barl 8.36)

Nominal predicates take the case of the object, and are thus in the accusative:

- (78) a. hon held engi hans jafningja innan hirðar  
 she held nobody.P.NEU.A his equal.P.A within guard.G  
 ‘She held nobody to be his equal among the king’s men’ (Laxd 45.3)
- b. jarl hafði hann lítinn mann gort  
 earl.N had him.A little man.A made  
 ‘The earl had made him into an unimportant man’ (Hkr I.233.5)
- c. hann nefndi sik Óla  
 he named himself.A Óli.A  
 ‘He called himself Óli’ (Hkr I.312.18)

When the object has the form of a cliticized reflexive, the predicate agrees with the nominative subject. Compare (79) with (78c).



- (79) nefndisk hann Tófi  
 named.RFL he Tofi.N  
 ‘He called himself Tofi’ (Nj 192.4)

When the verb governing the predicate complement is in the passive, the accusative object becomes a nominative subject, and the complement then also takes the nominative, in agreement with the subject. For example:

- (80) maðr er nefndr *Þorvaldr*  
 man.N is named.M.N Thorvald.N  
 ‘There is a man called Thorvald’ (Nj 24.12)

Present participles usually do not agree; they may end in *-i* even if *-a* would be expected by general rules of agreement, as the following example shows.

- (81) ek gerða þik gangfœran, *mælandi ok heyrandi ok*  
 I made.1S you.A walk-able.M.A speaking and hearing and  
*sofandi*  
 sleeping  
 ‘I made you able to walk, speak, hear, and sleep’ (Hóm 150.12)

When the present participle follows a sensory verb and its object, the meaning may be very close to that of an accusative with infinitive (cf. 8.4.4).

- (82) nú þegar sem faðir hans leit *hann mjök fjarri komandi*  
 now then as father.N his saw him.A very far coming  
 ‘now as soon as his father saw him coming at a distance’  
 (Barl 38.30)

A predicate complement may also have the form of a prepositional phrase, especially when the predication has a causal or intentional meaning.

- (83) a. enda skal ek ekki gera *at úbótamönnum* heimamenn  
 yet shall.1S I not make at criminals.D servants.A  
 Njáls  
 Njal.G  
 ‘Yet I shall not make criminals out of Njal’s servants’ (Nj 90.4)
- b. en þó hafði Samuel smurðan hann áðr *til konungs*  
 but still had Samuel anointed.M.A him.A before to king.G  
 leyniliga  
 secretly  
 ‘Samuel however had already anointed him king in secret’  
 (Kgs 111.11)

Verbs meaning ‘consider’, etc., may also take a PP as a predicate complement. The sentences in (84) can be compared with (78a, b).

- (84) a. ok halda þeir hann þar fyrir konung  
and hold.3P they.M him.A there for king.A  
‘and there they consider him king’ (Hkr I.344.1)  
b. at sómamanni hefi ek þik reyndan  
at honour-man.D have.1S I you.A experienced.M.A  
‘I have found you an honourable man’ (Laxd 26.14)

Just as the auxiliary *heita* ‘be called’ can be followed by a preposition governing a place name (cf. 8.3.4), the transitive *kalla* ‘call’ can have a similar complement; cf. (43c) and (85).

- (85) ok setti þar bæ, ok kallaði at Borg  
and set there farm.A and called at Borg  
‘and set up a farm there and called it Borg’ (Eg 90.14)

#### 8.4.4 Accusative with infinitive

This construction consists of an accusative phrase in construction with an infinitive without *at*. The accusative NP is syntactically a complement of the verb in the matrix sentence, while at the same time it has the role of the subject of the infinitive. It is therefore a structural accusative. Depending on the matrix verb, the accusative NP may or may not at the same time have the role of an object of the matrix verb. The accusative with infinitive construction is used after the following semantic categories of matrix verbs.

(i) With object role from the matrix verb

(1) Sensory verbs

- (86) a. opt hefi ek heyrt yðr þat mæla  
often have.1S I heard you.P.A that.A say  
‘I have often heard you say that’ (Hkr III.424.17)  
b. þá sá ek fljúga ofan frá fjöllum orrn mikinn  
then saw.1S I fly down from mountains.D-the eagle.A large  
‘Then I saw a large eagle fly down from the mountains’ (Gunnl 4.8)

(2) The verb *biðja* ‘ask’

- (87) a. bað konung minnask á langt vinfengi þeira  
asked king.A remind.RFL on long friendship.A their  
‘asked the king to remember their long friendship’ (Hkr III.504.23)

- b. hann bað þá sendimenn eigi inn láta  
 he asked them.M.A messengers.A not in let  
 ‘He asked them not to let the messengers in’ (Hkr II.86.9)

(ii) Without object role from the matrix verb

(1) Verbs meaning ‘say’, ‘believe’, ‘know’, and the like

- (88) a. ok sagði Sigmund vera úbættan  
 and said Sigmund.A be unatoned.M.A  
 ‘and said that Sigmund had not been atoned for’ (Nj 103.31)
- b. þit félagar kallið guð yðarn svá margar jarntegnir  
 you.DU.N fellows say.2P god.A your so many miracles.A  
 gera  
 do  
 ‘You and your fellows say that your god can perform so many miracles’ (Hkr II.232.21)
- c. nemi maðr boðorð guðs (...) ok kenni  
 learn.SUB man.N commandments.A God.G and know.SUB  
 sik svá hafa ást guðs  
 himself.A so have love.A god.G  
 ‘Man should learn God’s commandments and know that he thus has the love of God’ (Hóm 3.18)

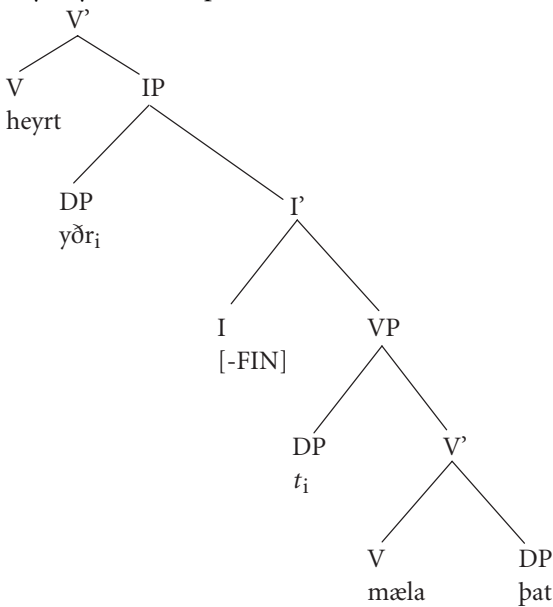
(2) The verb *láta* ‘let’. This is frequently used without the matrix object (logical subject of the infinitive), as in (89b).

- (89) a. því lét ek þik skjótast inn ganga  
 that.D let.1S I you.A quickest in go  
 ‘Therefore I will let you go in quickly’ (Barl 12.9)
- b. þá lét hann brenna þá báða  
 then let he burn them.M.A both  
 ‘Then he had them both burned’ (Barl 5.8)

The accusative with infinitive construction can be analysed as an IP, functioning as a complement of the matrix verb. The logical ‘subject’ is moved to the Spec-IP position in the same way that subjects move there in finite sentences (cf. 9.2.1). Since there is no finite feature in I, it does not get nominative case; instead it gets accusative case from the matrix verb. The structure of the relevant (slightly modified) part of (86a), repeated as in (90a), is (90b).

(90) a. heyrtr yðr mæla þat

b.



A sentence adverbial is left-adjoined to VP, therefore it precedes the infinitive, as in (88c).

The verbs governing accusative with infinitive constructions are naturally verbs that govern the accusative case, which accounts for the accusative of the logical 'subject' of the infinitive. There are, however, a few puzzling instances of an accusative with infinitive following the verb *geta* 'guess', which otherwise takes the genitive; compare the genitive *þess* in (91a) with the accusative *Gunnar* in (91b).

(91) a. *geta sumir menn þess at Egill muni þar*  
 guess.3P some men.N that.G that Egil.N may.SUB there  
*féit hafa fólgt*  
 money.A-the have hidden  
 'Some people guess that Egil might have hidden the money there'  
 (Eg 319.20)

b. *ek get verit munu hafa Gunnar frá Hlíðarenda*  
 I guess.1S been may.INF have Gunnar.A from Hlidarendi.D  
 'I guess it may have been Gunnar of Hlidarendi' (Nj 56.1)

If the accusative NP is coreferent with the subject of the matrix verb, it is usually added to the verb as a reflexive suffix.

- (92) a. austmaðrinn kvezk þat víst vilja  
 east-man.N-the said.RFL it.A surely want  
 ‘The man from the East said that he would indeed like to’  
 (Gunnl 3.7)
- b. Finnbogi kvazk eigi mega við bindask  
 Finnbogi.N said.RFL not can.INF with bind.RFL  
 ‘Finnbogi said that he could not help doing it’ (Finnb 78.17)

More rarely, it may occur in its full pronominal form, especially if it is emphasized, as it probably is in (93b).

- (93) a. ok kenni sik svá hafa ást guðs  
 and know.SUB himself.A so have love.A god.G  
 ‘and know that he thus has the love of God’ (Hóm 3.19)
- b. Svasi [. . .] kvað sik vera þann Finninn  
 Svasi.N said himself.A be that Finn.A-the  
 ‘Svasi said that he himself was that Finn’ (Hkr I.133.6)

Phrases that do not correspond to a subject of a finite sentence are not cliticized, although a ‘subject-like’ oblique phrase may be cliticized, as in (94d).

- (94) a. Eiríkr jarl lét sér ekki líka, at [. . .]  
 Eirik.N earl let himself.D not like that  
 ‘Earl Eirik did not like that . . .’ (Hkr II.28.16)
- b. Gunnarr sagði sér þat vera nær skapi  
 Gunnar.N said himself.D it.A be near mind.D  
 ‘Gunnar said that this was what was on his mind’ (Nj 70.16)
- c. at eigi segði hann sik þyrsta  
 that not said.SUB he himself.A be-thirsty  
 ‘that he did not say that he was thirsty’ (Eg 134.13)
- d. Óláfr [. . .] kvazk þykkja mikit undir, at hann  
 Olaf.N said.RFL seem much.NEU.A under that he  
 fengi gott viðaval  
 got.SUB good wood-selection.A  
 ‘Olaf said it was important to him to get a good selection of wood’  
 (Laxd 81.17)

A predicate complement in an accusative with infinitive construction agrees with the accusative, as in (88a) and (93b) above and in (95a). However, when the accusative is cliticized to the verb the complement agrees with the nominative subject of the matrix sentence; cf. (95b).

- (95) a. Njáll sagði hann vera hinn mesta afreksmann  
 Njal.N said him.A be the greatest achievement-man.A  
 ‘Njal said that he was an outstanding man’ (Nj 71.16)
- b. hann kvazk Finnbofi heita ok vera Ásbjarnarson  
 he said.RFL Finnbofi.N be-called and be Asbjarnar-son.N  
 ok íslenskr maðr  
 and Icelandic man.N  
 ‘He said his name was Finnbofi Asbjarnarson and that he was  
 Icelandic’ (Finnb 22.9)

The infinitive *vera* ‘be’ is often omitted, leaving the accusative ‘subject’ and the predicate complement:

- (96) a. ok sǫgðu sínar farar eigi sléttar  
 and said.3P their.RFL journeys.A not smooth.P.F.A  
 ‘and said that their journey had not been easy’ (Eg 53.9)
- b. veit ek margra manna vilja til þess  
 know.1S I many men.G desire.A to it.G  
 ‘I know that it is many people’s desire’ (Hkr II.91.9)

A few modal auxiliary verbs have a preterite infinitive (cf. 3.7.2), which is used only in accusative with infinitive constructions following a matrix verb in a past tense (including the historical present).

- (97) a. ok kvað sér mundu þykkja í því lítit  
 and said himself.D would.INF seem in it.NEU.D little  
 meinlæti  
 sacrifice.A  
 ‘He said he would think that there was little sacrifice in it’  
 (Kgs 117.16)
- b. hann lét engum manni hlýða skyldu at ganga með  
 he said no man.D do should.INF to go with  
 þessum máli  
 this cause.D  
 ‘He said it would not do any good for anybody to promote this  
 cause’ (Hkr II.139.23)
- c. ok kvezk ekki mundu mikla tillögu veita honum  
 and says.RFL not would.INF big help.A give him.D  
 ‘and says that he will not help him much’ (Band 3.17)

8.4.5 *Clauses*

Certain verbs may take a clause as their argument instead of a NP. Such clauses may be either finite or non-finite. In the latter case the verb appears in the infinitive.

- (98) a. af því skulum vér trúa at dróttinn sjalfr Jesus  
 from that.D shall.1P we believe that lord.N self Jesus  
 Kristr fór í gegn ǫnd móður sinnar  
 Christ went against spirit.D mother.G his.RFL  
 ‘From that we might think that Lord Jesus Christ himself went  
 against the spirit of his mother’ (Hóm 133.31)
- b. ok ætluðu at hengja hann  
 and intended.3P to hang him.A  
 ‘and intended to hang him’ (Hkr III. 307.3)

The treatment of the various clause types in this section will be based on the finiteness of their head verb and the type of word used to introduce the clause. The internal structure of subordinate clauses will be treated in more detail in Chapter 10.

It is very common for a clause to appear as a complement of the neuter determiner *þat* ‘that’, often separated from it by extraposition.

- (99) a. ok geyma þess at engi komisk í braut  
 and heed that.G that nobody.N come.SUB.RFL away  
 ‘and make sure that nobody escapes’ (Nj 298.18)
- b. böendr hafa mér þat veitt, at auka  
 farmers.N have.3P me.D that.A granted to raise  
 aura-lag um sakeyri minn  
 money-standard.A of fine.A my  
 ‘The farmers have allowed me to raise the value of my fine’  
 (Hkr III.461.16)

These constructions are considered determiner phrases, and are treated in 5.1.2. A finite clause may be adjoined to the adverb *svá* ‘thus’ instead of *þat*:

- (100) hygg nú svá fyrir hag þínum at þar  
 think.IMP.2S now thus for condition.D your that there  
 liggur við líf þitt  
 lies by life.N your  
 ‘Now remember for your own sake that your life depends on it’  
 (Nj 160.8)

Finite declarative clauses are introduced by the complementizer *at* ‘that’:

- (101) a. gætt þú at honum verði eigi þat  
 watch.IMP.2S you.N that him.D become.SUB not that.N  
 sem Atla  
 as Atli.D  
 ‘Take care that the same does not happen to him as to Atli’  
 (Nj 91.2)
- b. af því skulum vér trúa at dróttinn sjalfr Jesus  
 from that.D shall.1P we believe that lord.N self Jesus  
 Kristr fór í gegn ǫnd móður sinnar  
 Christ went against spirit.D mother.G his.RFL  
 ‘From that we might think that Lord Jesus Christ himself went  
 against the spirit of his mother’ (Hóm 133.31)

Dependent sentence questions are introduced by the complementizer *ef* ‘if’, or *hvárt* ‘whether’:

- (102) a. þá skal ek freista ef ek mega þik drepa  
 then shall.1S I try if I can.SUB.1S you.A kill  
 ‘Then I shall try and see if I can kill you’ (Hkr III.213.2)
- b. Njáll spurði Gunnar hvárt hann myndi til  
 Njal.N asked Gunnar.A whether he would.SUB to  
 þings ríða  
 assembly.G ride  
 ‘Njal asked Gunnar whether he was going to ride to the assembly’  
 (Nj 71.26)

Dependent phrasal questions are introduced by a question word (or a phrase containing a question word):

- (103) a. ek veit eigi hvern hann er  
 I know.1S not who.M.N he is  
 ‘I don’t know who he is’ (Fbr 15.7)
- b. konunggrinn spurði hann hvat þat skyldi  
 king.N-the asked him.A what.N that.N should  
 ‘The king asked him what that was supposed to be’ (Hkr II.132.21)

A clause may co-occur with another argument of the verb. This NP may be in the accusative, as is shown in (104a), or in the dative, as in (104b).

- (104) a. margir menn eggjuðu konung [...] at nauðga þeim  
 many men.N urged.3P king.A to force them.D



Kjartani til trúarinnar  
 Kjartan.D to faith.D-the  
 ‘Many people urged the king to force Kjartan and the others to receive the faith’ (Laxd 126.21)

- b. ok bauð þeim síðan at þeir skyldu telja rétta  
 and told them.D since that they.M should.3P tell correct  
 trú fyrir mönnum  
 creed.A before men.D  
 ‘and then told them to preach the correct creed to the people’  
 (Hóm 90.13)

Non-finite clauses are introduced by *at* and have the verb in the infinitive. They may function as complements of many verbs.

- (105) a. Kjartan kaus heldr at vera með konungi en fara til  
 Kjartan.N chose rather to be with king.D than go to  
 Íslands  
 Iceland.G  
 ‘Kjartan chose to stay with the king rather than go to Iceland’  
 (Laxd 129.17)
- b. konungr bað hann blíðum orðum at taka við  
 king.N asked him.A kind words.D to take with  
 kristni  
 Christianity.D  
 ‘The king asked him in kind words to convert to Christianity’  
 (Hkr I.394.8)

The verbs *kunna* ‘be able’, *vilja* ‘want’, and *þora* ‘dare’ may have a lexical function in Old Norse, taking an infinitival clause with *at*:

- (106) a. ok vel kunni hann at þjóna sínum yfirmanni  
 and well could he to serve his.RFL master.D  
 ‘and he knew how to serve his master well’ (Laxd 21.25)
- b. ek vil engan hlut at eiga  
 I want.1S no part.A to own  
 ‘I will have no part’ (Laxd 133.26)
- c. ek þorða þat eigi at gera  
 I dared.1S it.A not to do  
 ‘I dared not to do it’ (Nj 103.18)

These verbs do have a modal-like meaning, however, and they are at the verge of becoming auxiliaries already in the Old Norse period. Therefore the marker *at* may be missing, as the following examples show:

- (107) a. en hér kann ek engu svara  
 but here can.1S I nothing.NEU.D answer  
 ‘But here I have no answer’ (Eg 241.18)
- b. en þó vil ek finna konung  
 but still want.1S I meet king.A  
 ‘But still I want to meet the king’ (Laxd 129.3)
- c. engi myndi þora þat af honum taka  
 nobody.M.N would dare it.A from him.D take  
 ‘Nobody would dare take it from him’ (Barl 52.18)

The verb *taka* ‘take’ (preterite *tók*) plus the infinitive forms an aspectual construction with ingressive meaning:

- (108) a. Óláfr konungr tók þá at fylkja liði sínu  
 Olaf.N king took then to arrange host.D his.RFL  
 ‘King Olaf then started to draw up his troops’ (Eg 171.13)
- b. tók þá at flýja allr herrinn  
 took then to flee all army.N-the  
 ‘Then the whole army took flight’ (Hkr III.413.17)

The infinitive of verbs of motion may be omitted after matrix verbs of desire or intention, provided that there is a prepositional phrase indicating the goal of the movement.

- (109) a. ek vil heim fyrir páskana  
 I want.1S home before Easter.P.A-the  
 ‘I want to go home before Easter’ (Laxd 225.2)
- b. hon ætlar til Íslands  
 she intends to Iceland.G  
 ‘She is planning to go to Iceland’ (Laxd 8.8)

An infinitival clause may co-occur with another complement in the accusative, as in (110), or in the dative, as in (111).

- (110) a. konungr bað hann blíðum orðum at taka við  
 king.N asked him.A kind words.D to take with

*kristni*

Christianity. D

'The king asked him in kind words to convert to Christianity'

(Hkr I.394.8)

- b. *hverr eggjaði þik at mæla slíkum beryrðum*  
 who.M.N encouraged you.A to speak such straight-words.D  
*við mik?*  
 with me.A  
 'Who encouraged you to speak so frankly to me?'  
 (Hkr III.512.28)

- (111) a. *hann bauð langfedrum at halda með réttlæti*  
 he bade ancestors.D to keep with justice  
 'He bade (our) ancestors to uphold justice' (Hóm 33.27)
- b. *ok bannaði þeim braut at halda*  
 and forbade them.D away to keep  
 'and forbade them to go away' (Hkr I.403.21)

As we see from (110a), *biðja* 'ask' can take both a clause and an accusative with infinitive construction (cf. (87) above).

#### 8.4.6 *Head–complement order*

When the main verb is non-finite it usually stays within the VP. The order of verb and complement(s) within the VP is very variable. The most common order, which should also be taken as basic, is head–complement (VO).

- (112) a. *ok bera ǫl víkingum*  
 and carry ale.A vikings.D  
 'and bring ale to the vikings' (Hkr I.68.3)
- b. *hon hefir mint mik þeira hluta*  
 she has reminded me.A those things.G  
 'She has reminded me of those things' (Hkr I.102.17)
- c. *at fara ór þínu ríki*  
 to go out-of your kingdom.D  
 'to leave your kingdom' (Barl 4.21)

This order is also the most common one when the head of the VP is a non-finite auxiliary (cf. 8.3):

- (113) a. *sárit mundi hafa grandat honum*  
 wound.N-the might have harmed him.D  
 'The wound might have harmed him' (Band 74.6)

- b. fuglar þeir munu vera manna fylgjur  
 birds.N those may.3P be men.G spirits.N  
 ‘Those birds may be the spirits of humans’ (Gunnl 5.8)

An alternative order is complement before head (OV). This is an older pattern, common in Proto-Germanic and Indo-European, which still exists in Old Norse. Since the basic order in Old Norse appears to be VO, the OV order at that stage must be derived by movement of the complement and left-adjunction to V. A clausal argument is never left-adjoined.

- (114) a. hefir þú nokkura menn hitt í borginni?  
 have.2S you.N some men.A found in town.D-the  
 ‘Did you meet anybody in the town?’ (Eg 216.25)
- b. kvazk til Noregs fara vilja  
 said.RFL to Norway.G go want  
 ‘(He) said he wanted to go to Norway’ (Laxd 60.31)

While one complement moves, another one may remain in its original postverbal position:

- (115) a. muntu henni gefa motrinn at bekkjargjöf  
 may.2S-you.N her.D give headdress.A-the at bench-gift.D  
 ‘You may give her the headdress as a wedding present’ (Laxd 136.7)
- b. ok kvezk ekki mundu mikla tilloðu veita honum  
 and says.RFL not would.INF big help.A give him.D  
 ‘and says that he will not help him much’ (Band 3.17)
- c. þá vil ek þat frelsi gefa þér  
 then want.1S I that freedom.A give you.D  
 ‘Then I will give you your freedom’ (Fbr 62.12)

The complement may also precede other sentence elements, such as an adverbial:

- (116) a. hann mundi þat eigi gera  
 he would that not do  
 ‘that he would not do it’ (Finnb 4.11)
- b. at hann skyldi honum vel fagna  
 that he should him.D well receive  
 ‘that he should receive him well’ (Hkr II.112.3)

A complement of a noun may move out of the NP where it belongs and move up in front of the verb.

- (117) styrks eiga ván af Skota-konungi  
 support.G have hope.A of Scots-king.D  
 ‘have hope of support from the king of the Scots’ (Hkr II.210.20)

If there are two non-finite verbs in the sentence (a non-finite auxiliary and a main verb), the complement may remain within the lower VP, or it may move to the higher VP. Thus, in (118a) the PP *af þér* is moved to the left of the main verb *taka*; in (118b) *féit* precedes the non-finite auxiliary; and in (118c) the pronoun *sér* has been moved to the higher VP, while *svá staðar* is left-adjoined to the lower V’.

- (118) a. en hann man eigi vilja af þér taka  
 but he may not want of you.D take  
 ‘But he may not want to take it from you’ (OH 3.20)
- b. at Egill muni þar féit hafa fólgt  
 that Egil.N may.SUB there money.A-the have hidden  
 ‘that Egil might have hidden the money there’ (Eg 319.20)
- c. hví Bolli mun sér hafa þar svá staðar leitat  
 what.D Bolli.N may himself.D have there such place.G found  
 ‘why Bolli may have found such a place for himself there’  
 (Laxd 156.6)

When there are two non-finite verbs in the sentence the normal order is auxiliary verb–main verb in accordance with the VO pattern; cf. the examples in (118). It is not uncommon, however, for the non-finite auxiliary to follow the main verb, as in (119). This is the result of movement of the VP complement out of the VP headed by the auxiliary; in other words an instance of a more general leftward movement of complements, as in other OV structures.

- (119) a. er þér skylduð gert hafa  
 which you.P.N should.2P done have  
 ‘which you should have done’ (Fbr 29.12)
- b. því er þú vilt spurt hafa  
 that.D which you.N want.2S asked have  
 ‘that which you want to ask about’ (Kgs 3.6)

If the main verb in such a construction has a complement, this complement may precede its head, yielding a consistent OV order:

- (120) a. mant þú ekki *drauma ráða kunna*  
 may.2S you.N not dreams.A interpret know  
 ‘You may not know how to interpret dreams’ (Gunnl 5.19)
- b. þú vilt *honum þjónat hafa*  
 you.N want.2S him.D served have  
 ‘You will have served him’ (Kgs 56.19)

The complement may also follow the auxiliary, but it never follows the main verb directly.<sup>4</sup>

- (121) a. hann mun *ráða vilja ferðum sínum*  
 he will determine want journeys.D his.RFL  
 ‘He will want to determine his own journeys’ (Finnb 20.24)
- b. \*hann mun *ráða ferðum sínum vilja*  
 he will determine journeys.D his.RFL want

The order in (121b) would be in accordance with an OV pattern in the auxiliary phrase and a VO pattern in the main verb phrase. The reason this is disallowed may be that the main verb plus the auxiliary was reanalysed as one verbal head after the OV order was no longer productive. The main-auxiliary collocation consequently behaves as one syntactic word, which allows nothing to intervene. The structure of (121a) would then be as shown in (122).

- (122)  $v^*[v\text{ráða-vilja}]_{DP}[\text{ferðum sínum}]$

As already shown above, prepositional phrases may also occur to the left of the main verb; cf. (114b) and (118a). This is particularly common when intransitive prepositions, which are also called particles in this function, occur with a non-finite verb, (123a, b). Note, however, that they usually follow the supine in the perfect; cf. (123c).

- (123) a. barnit er út *borit*  
 child.N-the is out carried.NEU.N  
 ‘The child has been exposed’ (Gunnl 7.9)
- b. hvé nær skaltu *upp taka slíkan ágætisgrip?*  
 when shall.2S-you.N up take such glory-thing.A  
 ‘When are you going to wear such a splendid piece?’ (Laxd 146.8)

<sup>4</sup> As has been demonstrated by Rögnvaldsson (1996a) and Hróarsdóttir (2000: 94).

- c. ok hafði *tekit upp* mikit fjölmenni  
 and had taken up big crowd.A  
 ‘and had gathered a big crowd’ (Laxd. 160.14)

The preverbal particle precedes the verb immediately. No other element ever seems to intervene between the particle and the non-finite verb.

- (124) a. ek skyldi eigi fleiri börn upp ala  
 I should.1S not more children.A up raise  
 ‘I should not bring up more children’ (Finnb 4.16)  
 b. \*ek skyldi eigi upp fleiri börn ala  
 I should not up more children.A raise

A preposition in this preverbal position may have a complement left behind in its ‘proper’ postverbal position, as in (125a, b). In (125c) there is no non-finite verb, but the preposition occupies the position where we would expect to find a non-finite verb, while the complement of the preposition stays behind further to the right; the preposition may even move further to the left, and end up in the topic position, as in (125d).

- (125) a. ok þat hefir mik *til* rekit *svá langrar ferðar*  
 and that.N has me.A to driven so long journey.G  
 ‘And that has driven me to (undertake) such a long journey’  
 (Laxd 58.26)  
 b. er eigi vildi *af* láta *heiðninni*  
 who not wanted.SUB.3P off let paganism.D-the  
 ‘who did not want to give up paganism’ (Hkr II.123.13)  
 c. hogg þú *af* tvær alnar *hverju stórtre*  
 cut.IMP.2S you.N off two ells.A each big-tree.D  
 ‘Cut two ells off every main beam’ (Laxd 220.4)  
 d. ok *af* hefir þú mik ráðit *brekvisi við þik*  
 and off have.2S you.N me.A advised importunity.D with you.A  
 ‘And you have taught me not to be importunate with you’  
 (Laxd 98.14)

Sometimes the preposition may be repeated before its complement, as in (126a), or it may be replaced by the ‘default’ preposition *um*; cf. (126b, c).

- (126) a. ok urðu þeir á sáttir á *allan kaupmála*  
 and became.3P they.M on agreed.P.M.N on all trading-terms.A  
 ‘And they agreed on all the terms of the contract’ (Nj 25.16)  
 b. at ek mun framarla á horfa *um kvánfangit*  
 that I will highly on look about marriage.A-the  
 ‘that I will look for a prestigious match’ (Laxd 63.25)

- c. at *um þetta ráð* spyrim vér ekki Svía-konung  
 that about this matter.A ask.SUB.1P we not Swede-king.A  
*eptir*  
 after  
 ‘that we should not ask the king of the Swedes about this matter’  
 (Hkr II.177.7)

The proforms *þar*, etc., are often separated from the preposition governing them:

- (127) ok aldriǵi sezk *þar* fugl *á*  
 and never set.RFL there bird.N on  
 ‘And a bird never sits there’ (Kgs 23.4)

The relative order of two or more complements in the same VP is also variable, mostly depending on information structure and syntactic complexity. Thus a pronoun tends to precede a full NP, regardless of case or semantic role.

- (128) a. þá brá konungr sverði ok hjó *hann banahögg*  
 then drew king.N sword.D and struck him.A death-blow.A  
 ‘Then the king drew his sword and gave him his death-blow’  
 (Hkr I.118.21)
- b. Bróðir hét *honum gríðum*  
 Brodir.N promised him.D truces.D  
 ‘Brodir promised him a truce’ (Nj 408.2)
- c. hví Bolli mun sér hafa þar *svá staðar* leitast  
 what.D Bolli.N may himself.D have there such place.G found  
 ‘why Bolli may have found such a place for himself there’  
 (Laxd 156.6)

When there are two full NP complements, a dative and an accusative may occur in either order relative to each other. Thus a dative recipient may precede or follow an accusative patient:

- (129) a. ok veitt Óláfi konungi lið  
 and given Olaf.D king support.A  
 ‘and given King Olaf support’ (Hkr II.95.11)
- b. ok bera *öl víkingum*  
 and carry ale.A vikings.D  
 ‘and bring ale to the vikings’ (Hkr I.68.3)

A genitive tends to come last among the NP complements:

- (130) a. spurði konungs-dóttir *Hjalta margra tíðenda*  
 asked king.G-daughter.N Hjalti.A many news.G  
 ‘The king’s daughter asked Hjalti for news’ (Hkr II.116.11)



- b. hann skyldi ljá honum fresta til annars sumars  
 he should lend him.D respites.G till other summer.G  
 ‘He should give him time till next summer’ (Hkr II.209.32)

A prepositional phrase may follow or precede a NP complement. Note in particular the two almost identical sentences from the same passage in (131c, d).

- (131) a. ok lagði spjóti á honum miðjum  
 and laid spear.D on him.D middle  
 ‘and thrust the spear through his middle’ (Fbr 13.17)
- b. þá hratt hann frá sér spjótinu  
 then pushed he from himself.D spear.D-the  
 ‘Then he pushed the spear away from him’ (Dpl 163.26)
- c. hann hafði lengi haft af hqfðingjum metnað mikinn  
 he had long had of chiefs.D esteem.A great  
 ‘He had long been highly esteemed by the chiefs’ (Hkr II.215.16)
- d. af þeim sökum hafði Hárekr haft mikil metorð af  
 of those causes.D had Harek.N had great esteem.A of  
*landhqfðingjum*  
 land-chiefs.D  
 ‘For those reasons Harek had been held in high esteem by the  
 chiefs of the land’ (Hkr II.215.18)

Clausal complements naturally come last.

- (132) a. þá bað Þórir konung at hann skyldi eigi  
 then asked Thori.N king.A that he should not  
 fyrirkunna hann þess  
 blame him.A it.G  
 ‘Then Thori asked the king not to blame him for it’ (Eg 150.13)
- b. hann bauð langfeðrum at halda með réttlæti  
 he bade ancestors.D to keep with justice  
 ‘He bade the ancestors to uphold justice’ (Hóm 33.27)

For more examples, see (104), (110), and (111).

#### 8.4.7 *Deletion of complement*

The complement of a verb may be deleted if it is coreferential with a NP in the previous context. This is particularly common in coordination, where an object may be deleted under coreference with any relational category in the preceding conjunct.

- (133) a. *síðan fluttu þeir Þorgils líkit upp með*  
 later moved.3P they.M Þorgils.N corpse.A-the up by  
*ánni ok grófu þar niðr*  
 river.D-the and buried.3P \_ there down  
 ‘Later Þorgils and his men moved the corpse up along the river and buried it there’ (Hkr II.511.14)
- b. *Einnar Þambarskelfir fór með líki Magnús*  
 Einar.N Þambarskelfi travelled with corpse.D Magnus.G  
*konungs ok með honum allr Þröenda-herr ok*  
 king and with him.D all Threends.G-army.N and  
*fluttu til Niðaróss*  
 moved.3P \_ to Nidaros.G  
 ‘Einar Þambarskelfi and the whole army of Threends took King Magnus’s corpse with them and conveyed it to Nidaros’  
 (Hkr III.118.5)
- c. *var sá vatni ausinn, ok nafn gefit,*  
 was that.M.N water.D poured.M.N and \_ name.N given.NEU.N  
*ok kallaðr Egill*  
 and \_ called.M.N Egil.M.N  
 ‘He was baptized and given a name and called Egil’ (Eg 99.9)

In (133c) there are three conjuncts. The subject *sá* in the first triggers deletion of the indirect object in the second and the subject in the third.

A complement may be deleted under other structural conditions as well; for example, in a subordinate clause under coreference with a NP in the matrix clause, as in (134a). In (134c) the reference of the deleted object is only implied. (In addition, the complement of the preposition is deleted because of relativization.)

- (134) a. *þá myndi ek eigi kunna óeskja minn mann á*  
 then would.SUB.1S I not can.INF wish my man.A on  
*annan veg, ef eigi er þat, at þér mynið heldr*  
 other way.A if not is that.N that you.P.N will.SUB.2P rather  
*hóli gilt hafa í marga staði*  
 praise.D \_ gilded have in many places.A  
 ‘Then I could not have wished my husband to be any other way, if it is not the case that you have praised him too much at many points’ (Hkr II.121.19)
- b. *þeir, er til eykja hjlópu, þá fundu eigi*  
 those.M.N who to horses.G ran then found.3P \_ not  
 ‘Those who ran to their horses did not find them’ (Hkr II.235.11)

- c. þar hafði komit hvalr, er hann átti í  
 there had come whale.N which he owned \_ in  
 ‘A whale had come (ashore) there, in which he owned a share’  
 (Laxd 222.5)

## 8.5 Adjuncts

Adjuncts are phrases which are not semantically dependent on the head of the phrase. They are not complements of the verb, but adjoined to the right or to the left of VP. Adjuncts are either free adverbials, which modify the process or state described by the verb, or predicate adjuncts, which modify or describe one of the arguments of the verb. Adverbials express various temporal, local, causal, conditional, and other circumstances. They may have the form of noun phrases, prepositional phrases, adverbs, or clauses.

### 8.5.1 *Noun phrases*

#### (i) Accusative

Accusative NPs are used as adjuncts to express various semantic relations. NPs with *vegr* ‘way’ or other nouns denoting roads, trails, waterways or the like are used to express path or direction.

- (135) a. fór síðan landveg um Helsingjaland ok  
 travelled since landroad.A about Helsingjaland.A and  
 Jamtaland  
 Jamtaland.A  
 ‘Then (he) took the road overland through Helsingland and  
 Jamtland’ (Hkr I.247.10)
- b. síðan reri jarl alla fjörðu  
 since rowed earl.N all fjords.A  
 ‘Then the earl rowed through all the fjords’ (Hkr I.326.8)
- c. ok snúa vindum hverja leið er hann vildi  
 and turn winds.D every direction.A which he wanted  
 ‘and turn the winds any way he wanted’ (Hkr I.18.9)

Accusative NPs also express measurement or quantity, such as distance, duration, size, weight or price:

- (136) a. hann hljóp meir en hæð sína  
 he jumped more than height.A his  
 ‘He could jump more than his own height’ (Nj 46.10)

- b. hann sat þá at lǫndum þrjá vetr  
 he sat then at lands.D three winters.A  
 'He stayed in the country for three years' (Hkr I.41.13)
- c. haglekornit eitt vá eyri  
 hail-grain.N-the one weighed ounce.A  
 'One grain of hail weighed an ounce' (Hkr I.332.12)
- d. þá galt hvert pund korns þrjá laupa smœrs  
 then cost each pound corn.G three baskets.A butter.G  
 'Then each pound of corn cost three baskets of butter' (DN II.107)

A determiner in the accusative neuter may be used to indicate the degree or extent of the content of the predicate:

- (137) a. ek mun gjarna hjálpa þér alt þat er ek má  
 I will.1s willingly help you.D all that.A which I can.1s  
 'I will be glad to help you all I can' (Hkr I.351.7)
- b. hefi ek nú nokkut roðit tǫnn á þeim  
 have.1s I now some.NEU.A reddened teeth.A on them.D  
 'I have to some degree now shown them my teeth' (Hkr II.48.5)
- c. þar er menn störfuðu eitthvat  
 there where men.N worked.3P somewhat.A  
 'where men were working' (Hkr II.3.10)

The accusative is used for points in time, circumstance, or manner:

- (138) a. hit fyrsta haust blótuðu þeir yxnum  
 the first autumn.A sacrificed.3P they.M oxen.D  
 'The first autumn they sacrificed oxen' (Hkr I.30.10)
- b. sunnudags-morgininn [. . .] stóð Ólafur konungur upp  
 Sunday.G-morning.A-the stood Olaf.N king up  
 'On Sunday morning King Olaf got up' (Hkr II.67.10)
- c. þeir sigla norðr um Sognsæ byr goðan ok bjart  
 they.M sail north of Sognsæ.A wind.A good and clear  
 veðr  
 weather.A  
 'They sail north of Sognsæ with a good wind and in clear weather'  
 (Eg 83.11)
- d. þá var mjök annan veg enn hann hugði  
 then was very other way.A than he thought  
 'Then it was very different from what he had thought' (Hkr I.348.3)

The accusative used in adjuncts is always the lexical accusative. This means that it never changes to the nominative in the passive. The passive sentence (139b), which may be compared with the active counterpart (139a), still has an accusative phrase *annan veg*.

- (139) a. *fór annan veg*  
 went other way.A  
 ‘went another way’ (Eg 221.14)
- b. *nú er annan veg til farit*  
 now is other way.A to gone.NEU.N  
 ‘It is a different matter now’ (Nj 341.1)

(ii) Dative

A dative NP may express various semantic notions. Some of them are similar to those expressed by dative complements, and the line between the two categories is not always very sharp. Thus besides instrumental objects, there are freer adjuncts expressing instrument or means, as in (140), although this function is commonly expressed by means of the preposition *með* ‘with’ (cf. 8.5.2).

- (140) a. *Óðinn tók hqfuðit ok smurði urtum*  
 Odin.N took head.A-the and smeared herbs.D  
 ‘Odin took the head and smeared it with herbs’ (Hkr I.13.11)
- b. *en þeir hafa yðr þó engu launat*  
 but they.M have you.P.D though nothing.NEU.D rewarded  
*nema illu*  
 unless bad.NEU.D  
 ‘But they have rewarded you with nothing but bad things’  
 (Hkr I.272.1)

A benefactive is close to a recipient (indirect) object. Such dative phrases may also be combined with *vera* ‘be’ (or *verða* ‘become’) and a predicate complement, as in (141b).

- (141) a. *en fǫður sínum gerði hann aldri hagræði*  
 but father.D his.RFL did he never favour.A  
 ‘But he never did any favours for his father’ (Band 6.2)
- b. *aðra ráðagørð, þá er Gunnari væri til meins*  
 other plan.A that.F.A which Gunnar.D were.SUB to harm.G  
 ‘another plan, which would be of harm to Gunnar’ (Nj 156.24)

The possessive dative is semantically related to the benefactive, and it is used to denote inalienable possession. The possessed body part or garment is expressed as a PP in the following examples.

- (142) a. ok fell fyrir föetr *Porkatli*  
and fell before feet.A Thorkel.D  
'and fell before Thorkel's feet' (Hkr I.335.13)
- b. konungr steig á bak *hesti sínum*  
king.N mounted on back.A horse.D his.RFL  
'The king got on the back of his horse' (Hkr I.118.8)
- c. hon þóttisk [...] taka þorn einn ór serk *sér*  
she seemed.RFL take thorn.A one from skirt herself.D  
'She thought she was taking a thorn out of her skirt' (Hkr I.93.5)

The ablative dative appears in constructions such as the following.

- (143) a. eigi munuð þit vilja ræna mik *lögum*  
not will.2P you.P.N want rob me.A laws.D  
'You will not deny me my legal right' (Laxd 75.14)
- b. en nú skal ekki leynd þik, því er mér býr í  
but now shall not hide you.A that.D which me.D lives in  
skapi  
mind  
'But now what I have in mind shall not be hidden from you'  
(Hkr II.259.10)

Dative adjuncts may express time, mostly with NPs headed by nouns with a specific temporal meaning, such as *stund* 'while' or *sinn* 'time'.

- (144) a. Þorsteinn bað hann þar vera þeim *stundum*, sem hann  
Thorstein.N asked him.A there be that while.D as he  
vildi  
wanted  
'Thorstein asked him to stay as long as he wanted' (Gunnl 10.20)
- b. gakk til borða með konungi *hverju sinni* er þú  
go.IMP.2S to tables.G with king.D every time.D when you.N  
ert innan hirðar staddr  
are.2S within guard.G placed.M.N  
'Go and dine with the king whenever you are present at court' (Kgs 57.34)
- c. gekk *öllum vetrum* sjálfala í skógum  
went all winters.D self-feeding in woods.D  
'found its own food in the woods during the winters' (Eg 93.3)

An adjective in the dative plural may also be used by itself:

- (145) a. ok var *lönghum* í víkingu  
and was long.P.D in viking.D  
'and spent a long time in viking raids' (Hkr I.80.7)

- b. ok vildi konungr skǫmmum samfast mæla við hann  
 and wanted king.N short.P.D joint.NEU.A speak with him.A  
 ‘And the king only wanted to talk with him for a short time’  
 (Hkr II.149.18)

The dative is used to express various other circumstantials, such as manner, cause, value, etc. The cause is generally expressed by means of a nominal clause which is a complement of the dative *því* (from *þat* ‘that’), as in (146c).

- (146) a. konungr bað hann blíðum orðum at taka við  
 king.N asked him.A kind words.D to take with  
 kristni  
 Christianity.D  
 ‘The king asked him in kind words to convert to Christianity’  
 (Hkr I.394.8)
- b. ek mun kaupa þvílíku verði  
 I will buy such price.D  
 ‘I will buy it at the same price’ (Laxd 150.11)
- c. eigi vil ek út ganga, því at ek em maðr gamall  
 not want.1S I out go that.D that I am man.N old  
 ‘I do not want to go out because I am an old man’ (Nj 301.9)

The dative may be used with the passive to express the agent, as in (147), or the instrument or means, as in (148).

- (147) a. varð þeim ok mart talat  
 became them.D also much.NEU.N spoken.NEU.N  
 ‘They also talked about many things’ (Laxd 203.13)
- b. honum myndi helst misgort í vera at fara at mér  
 him.D would mostly mis-done.NEU.N in be to go at me.D  
 ‘Attacking me would be the worst thing for him to do’ (Nj 292.11)
- (148) a. silkihúfu hløðum búna  
 silk-hat.A lace-works.D prepared.F.A  
 ‘a silk hat trimmed with lace’ (Hkr III.365.11)
- b. hann var gyrðr sverði  
 he was girded.M.N sword.D  
 ‘He was girded with a sword’ (Hkr II.233.6)

With present participles the dative may also express an agent:

- (149) a. at þú sé þat vel geranda  
 that you.P.D be.SUB it.N well doing.NEU.N  
 ‘that you may well do it’ (Hkr II.253.9)

- b. ekki er kristnum manni meir flýjanda en  
 nothing.N is Christian man.D more fleeing.NEU.N than  
 ofmetnaðr  
 pride.N  
 ‘A Christian should avoid pride more than anything else’  
 (Hóm 22.26)

A more common way of expressing the agent in the passive is by means of the preposition *af*; cf. 8.5.2.

An ‘absolute dative’ may be found in a formal register.

- (150) var þetta bref gørt [...] ok innsiglat oss sjalfum  
 was this letter.N done.NEU.N and sealed.NEU.N us.D selves  
*hjáverandum*  
 by-being.P.D  
 ‘This letter was composed and sealed in our own presence’  
 (DN II.447)

(iii) Genitive

In normal prose, NPs in the genitive are used as adjuncts mainly in fixed expressions of time, place, or value. Time adverbials in the genitive are limited to a few more or less set phrases with *dagr* ‘day’ as their head; place adverbials have heads meaning ‘place, world, path, direction’, etc.

- (151) a. þótti mér fyrra dags ekki mjúkt orð milli  
 seemed me.D last day.G not mild word.A between  
 ykkar konungs  
 you.DU.G king.G  
 ‘It seemed to me the other day that you and the king did not  
 exchange pleasantries’ (Hkr II.312.14)
- b. mun hann oss eigi láta brenna bæði þessa heims ok  
 will he us.A not let burn both this world.G and  
*annars*  
 other.G  
 ‘He will not let us burn both in this world and in the next’  
 (Nj 300.5)
- c. Ormr lét fara heror fjögurra vegna um  
 Orm.N let go war-arrow.A four directions.G about  
 bygðina  
 district.A-the  
 ‘Orm sent out a war message in all directions around the district’  
 (Hkr I.349.8)



- d. konungr virði hann mikils  
 king.N valued him.A great.NEU.G  
 ‘The king valued him greatly’ (Hkr I.131.2)

### 8.5.2 *Prepositional phrases*

Prepositional phrases are used as adjuncts to express relations such as place, direction, time, benefactive/malefactive, instrument, comitative, source, etc.

#### (i) Spatial relations

Locative prepositions express movement to or from, or location at (cf. 7.3.1). Since directional PPs are usually subcategorized by a motion verb, and are therefore complements, most adjuncts express location.

- (152) a. ok þá munuð þér finna hvíld á solum yðrum  
 and then will.2P you.P.N find rest on halls.D your(P)  
 ‘And then you will find rest in your halls’ (Hóm 8.16)
- b. enn mælti hann sjálf í qðrum stað  
 yet said he himself.N in other place.D  
 ‘Yet he himself said in another place . . .’ (Hóm 3.8)
- c. um haustit var hann á gistingu hjá Þóri  
 in autumn.A-the was he on visit.D with Thori.D  
 í Mýnesi  
 in Mynes.D  
 ‘In the autumn he was staying with Thori in Mynes’ (Dpl 147.2)

Two PPs may combine in such a way that the first denotes a larger area and the second a more limited area within it. The second phrase may also refer to a person’s home. (In such cases, the person takes the genitive; cf. 7.3.3.)

- (153) a. Hákon jarl var á veizlu í Gaulardal at Meðalhúsum  
 Hakon.N earl was on feast.D in Gaulardal.D at Medalhus.D  
 ‘Earl Hakon was at a feast at Medalhus in Gaulardal’ (Hkr I.348.11)
- b. hann hafði langskip af Gelmini frá Gunnars  
 he had long-ship.A of Gelmin.D from Gunnar.G  
 ‘He had a long-ship from Gunnar at Gelmin’ (Hkr II.58.18)

This kind of ‘zooming’<sup>5</sup> construction, where the last PP is a separate phrase from the preceding one, is commonly used instead of a construction where the more general PP is a complement of the more specific noun, as in modern

<sup>5</sup> I have borrowed this expression from Arne Torp.

Scandinavian and in English: 'at Medalhus in Gaulardal'. Geographical nouns do not seem to take locative PPs as complements in Old Norse (cf. 4.4.1).

(ii) Time

The prepositions that are used to express temporal relations are mainly the same as those used for local relations. More specifically, *á* is used about a point in time; cf. (154a). It is also used about duration with the meaning 'in', in (154b), and with reference to repeated events in (154c). It generally governs the dative in this function.

- (154) a. ok takim miskunn af guði *á* degi ambanar  
and take.SUB.1P mercy of God.D on day.D reward.G  
'and that we should receive mercy from God on the day of reward'  
(Hóm 5.27)
- b. *á sjau náttum* fór herboðit frá inum  
on seven nights.D went war-summons.N-the from the  
synsta vita í ina nørstu þinghá  
southernmost beacon.D in the northernmost district.A  
'In seven days the summons for war went from the southernmost  
beacon to the northernmost district' (Hkr I.199.1)
- c. váru í Orkneyjum eða Suðreyjum *á* vetrum, en *á*  
were.3P in Orkneys.D or Hebrides.D on winters.D but on  
*sumrum* herjuðu þeir í Noreg  
summers.D pillaged.3P they.M in Norway.A  
'In the winters they were in the Orkneys or the Hebrides, but in the  
summers they pillaged in Norway' (Hkr I.125.17)

The use of *um* (with the accusative) largely overlaps with that of *á* in temporal expressions.

- (155) a. var þá góð árferð ok friðr *um* hans daga  
was then good season.N and peace.N in his days.A  
'There were good seasons and peace in his days' (Hkr I.31.9)
- b. Gyða húspreyja gekk *um kveldit* til tals við Egil  
Gyda.N housewife went in evening.A-the to talk.G with Egil.A  
'Gyda, the mistress of the house, went to talk to Egil in the evening'  
(Eg 233.1)
- c. hafði hann þá *um haustit* vina-boð mikit, ok  
had he then in autumn.A-the friend-feast.A great and  
enn jóla-boð *um vetrinn*  
furthermore Yule-feast in winter.A-the

‘He had a great feast for friends in the autumn and furthermore a Yule-feast in the winter’ (Hkr II.242.20)

When referring to a point in time, *í* is also used. The difference between *um* and *í* is that the former is used with an anaphoric reference relative to a point in the past, while the latter has more of a deictic reference relative to the present time of the utterance. Compare (155b) and (156a). This deictic use is not the only one that is found with temporal *í*, however, since it is also used in expressions like the one in (156b).

- (156) a. þá muntu þangat fara í kveld  
 then will.2s-you.N thither go in evening  
 ‘Then you will go there tonight’ (Fbr 207.9)
- b. í þenna tíma váru engvar kirkjur í nánd  
 in this time.A were.3P no churches.N in nearness  
 hqfninni  
 harbour.D  
 ‘At this time there were no churches near the harbour’ (Fbr 127.14)

The preposition *at* may mean ‘towards’ or ‘at’ a certain point in time. In addition, it is also used about repeated events.

- (157) a. Rognvaldr jarl kom einn dag at kveldi til bús  
 Rognvald.N earl came one day.A at evening.D to farm.G  
 Þorgnýs lögmanns  
 Torgny.G law-man  
 ‘One day towards evening Earl Rognvald came to Torgny the lawyer’s farm’ (Hkr II.138.20)
- b. en at morni er konungr vaknaði  
 but at morning.D when king.N awakened  
 ‘but in the morning when the king woke up’ (Hkr II.187.17)
- c. hann var því vanr [...] at hafa þrjú blót  
 he was that.D accustomed.M.N to have three sacrifices.A  
 hvern vetr, eitt at vetrnátum, en annat  
 each winter.A one.NEU.A at winter-nights.D and other.NEU.A  
 at miðjum vetri, þriðja at sumri  
 at middle winter.D third.DEF.NEU.A at summer.D  
 ‘He was accustomed to having three sacrificial feasts each winter, one at the beginning of winter, another at mid-winter, and the third towards summer’ (Hkr II.242.16)

The preposition *til* ‘to’ is used with the neuter genitive demonstrative *þess* plus a clause in the sense of ‘until’.

- (158) a. ok fór til þess er hann kom norðr af  
and travelled to that.G when he came north of  
fjallinu  
mountain.D-the  
'and travelled on until he came north of the mountain' (Hkr II.56.3)
- b. kǫstuðu þá akkerum til þess er veðr lægði  
cast.3P then anchor.D to that.G when weather.A lowered  
'(They) cast anchor until the weather abated' (Eg 88.20)

A preposition with a participial construction as its complement may be used instead of a temporal clause.

- (159) a. þær kómu snemma þessa dags til grafar at  
they.F came.3P early this day.G to grave.G at  
*upp-runninni sólu*  
up-risen sun.D  
'They came to the grave early in the day at sunrise' (Hóm 82.11)
- b. ok spyrr ef þat er satt at hann ætli  
and asks if that.N is true.NEU.N that he intend.SUB to  
kvángask at lifandi dróttningu  
marry.RFL at living queen.D  
'and asks if it is true that he intends to get married while the  
queen is alive' (Hkr III.514.29)

This construction is mainly used in a formal or literary style. A few expressions, such as *við svá búit* and variants of it, were also quite widespread in more popular registers.

- (160) a. ok reið heim við svá búit  
and rode home with thus prepared.NEU.A  
'and then rode home' (Nj 25.18)
- b. játa undan mér ríkit at svá búnu  
give away-from me.D power.A-the at thus prepared.NEU.D  
'to give away my power under such circumstances' (Hkr II.207.11)

### (iii) Benefactive

The benefactive (or malefactive) relation is mostly expressed by means of the dative alone (cf. 8.5.1), but certain prepositional phrases may have a similar function.

- (161) a. hann sagði fyrir öllum heimamönnum sínum hvat  
he said before all home-men.D his.RFL what.A

hvergi skyldi starfa  
 each.M.N. should.SUB do

‘He told all members of his household what to do’ (Nj 294.15)

- b. svá sem lögbok váttaf á hendr þeim sem annan  
 so as law-book affirms on hands that.M.D who other.A  
 rennr  
 obstructs  
 ‘as the law prescribes against the one who obstructs another’  
 (DN I.84)

(iv) Instrument and comitative

The preposition *með* with the dative is used to express the instrument in (162a). With the accusative or the dative it is also used to express a comitative relation, as in (162b, c). Note the case difference between (162a) and (162b).

- (162) a. hann hqrfar þá undan um vqllinn til lambhússins  
 he turns then away in field.A-the to lamb-house-the.G  
 ok verst með spjótinu  
 and defends.RFL with spear.D-the  
 ‘He then retreats from the field (and runs) to the lamb shed and  
 defends himself with his spear’ (Fbr 80.24)
- b. hann hljóp út reiðr með spjót sitt  
 he ran out angry.M.N with spear.A his.RFL  
 ‘He ran out in a rage with his spear’ (Fbr 81.2)
- c. Óláfr [...] fœddisk upp með Sigurði sýr  
 Olaf.N brought.RFL up with Sigurd.D Syr  
 ‘Olaf was brought up with Sigurd Syr’ (Hkr II.3.2)

(v) Source and origin

This may be expressed by means of *af*:

- (163) a. þau eru ort af afli heilagrar  
 they.NEU are.3P composed.P.NEU.N from power.D holy  
 ástar  
 love.G  
 ‘They are composed from the power of holy love’ (Hóm 1.11)
- b. ok takim miskunn af guði  
 and take.SUB.1P mercy.A of God.D  
 ‘and that we should receive mercy from God’ (Hóm 5.27)

In the passive, the agent may occasionally be expressed.<sup>6</sup> The preposition *af* is then used:

- (164) a. svá var Þorkell mikils metinn af konungi þann  
 so was Thorkel.N great.G valued.M.N of king.D that  
 vetr, at [...]  
 winter.A that  
 'Thorkel was so highly valued by the king that winter that ...'  
 (Laxd 219.10)
- b. hann var spurður af einum speking  
 he was asked.M.N of one wise-man.D  
 'He was asked by a wise man' (Hóm 2.31)

The preposition *fyrir* followed by the dative *því* 'that' and a nominal clause introduced by the complementizer *at* is used as a causal clause.

- (165) hér mun ek gefa ráð til, fyrir því at ek fyrirman  
 here will.1S I give advice to, for that.D that I envy.1S  
 Þorgíslu ekki þessar ferðar  
 Thorgisl.D not this journey.G  
 'Here I will give advice, because I do not envy Thorgisl this  
 journey' (Laxd 181.24)

This expression may also be used without the preposition (cf. the previous section):

- (166) eigi vil ek út ganga, því at ek em maður gamall  
 not want.1S I out go that.D that I am man.N old  
 'I do not want to go out because I am an old man' (Nj 301.9)

#### (vi) Purpose and intention

The preposition *til* is used with an infinitival clause to express purpose or intention. The preposition may govern the clause directly, or it may govern a determiner in the genitive, followed by the clause.

- (167) a. þá hefði býjar-folkít komit til at hjálpa þeim  
 then had.SUB towns-people.N-the come to to help them.D  
 'Then the people from the town would have come to help them'  
 (Hkr III.486.16)
- b. kona ein vermdi vatn í katli til þess at þvá  
 woman.N one heated water.A in kettle.D to that.G to wash

<sup>6</sup> According to Halbe (1963: 12), this occurs in only 1% of all passive sentences.

sár            manna  
wounds.A    men.G  
'A woman was heating water in a kettle in order to wash the  
wounds of the men' (Fbr 211.5)

It is more common, however, to use the infinitive alone in this function, without a preceding preposition or determiner (cf. 8.5.4).

### 8.5.3 *Adverbs and adjectives*

Various adverbs serve as adverbials in Old Norse. Temporal adverbs include *þá* 'then', *þegar* 'then', *nú* 'now', *áðr* 'before', *enn* 'again, once more', *síð* 'late', *síðan* 'afterwards, since', *síðarla* 'later, afterwards', *opt* 'often', *optliga* 'often', *ávalt* 'always', *snemma* 'early, soon', *lengi* '(for a) long (time)'.

- (168) a. þá gekk Hogni á mót honum  
then went Hogni.N on meeting him.D  
'Then Hogni met him' (Eg 19.2)
- b. nú verður at segja frá því  
now becomes to tell from it.D  
'Now it must be said' (Nj 378.24)
- c. en þó hafði Samuel smurðan hann áðr til  
but still had Samuel.N anointed.M.A him.A before to  
konungs leyniliga  
king.G secretly  
'Samuel however had already anointed him king in secret'  
(Kgs 111.11)

Other adverbs express degree or are used as intensifiers:

- (169) a. ok þóttu þeir hafa mjök spottat sik  
and seemed.3P they.M have much mocked himself.A  
'and (he) thought that that they had made a fool of him' (Hkr III.355.8)
- b. at ek mun framarla á horfa um kvánfangit  
that I will highly on look about marriage.A-the  
'that I will look for a prestigious match' (Laxd 63.25)

The adverb *þá* is often used to repeat a temporal or a conditional clause introducing a sentence. Occasionally, it may also repeat a relative construction, as in (170d).

- (170) a. hann lét leita, ef lyngormr nökkurr fynnisk í  
he let search if heather-snake.N some found.SUB.RFL in

eyjunni; en er hann fannsk, þá færðu þeir  
 island.D-the and when he found.RFL then brought.3P they.M  
 konungi  
 king.D

‘He made them search for a snake in the heather on the island, and when one was found, they took it to the king’ (Hkr III.154.2)

- b. en þegar er þeir kenndu Egil þá þóttusk  
 but then when they.M knew.3P Egil.A then seemed.3P.RFL  
 þeir vita at hann mundi eigi hafa unnit á  
 they.M know that he would not have won on  
 Þorgrími  
 Thorgrim.D

‘But as soon as they recognized Egil, then it seemed clear to them that he could not have killed Thorgrim’ (Fbr 162.6)

- c. en ef hann var eigi þinn bróðir, þá áttu enga  
 but if he was not your brother.N then have.2S-YOU.N no  
 ætt til at vera konungr  
 family.A to to be king.N

‘But if he was not your brother, then you have no dynastic right to be king’ (Hkr III. 346.14)

- d. þau skip er næst lágu þeim, þá kómu  
 those ships.A which closest lay.3P them.D then came.3P  
 þeir á stafnljám  
 they.M on stem-hooks.D

‘Those ships which were closest they grabbed with hooks’ (Hkr II.7.17)

The neuter accusative of adjectives may also function as adverbials:

- (171) a. hon bjó sik skjótt  
 she prepared herself.A quick.NEU.A  
 ‘She quickly made herself ready’ (Nj 17.22)
- b. munt þú unna því mikit  
 will.2S you.N love it.D big.NEU.A  
 ‘You will love her very much’ (Gunnl 5.10)

The superlative of an adjective in the neuter or of an adverb may be preceded by *sem* ‘as’:

- (172) at hann skyldi koma til hans sem skyndiligast  
 that he should come to him.G as quickest.NEU.A  
 ‘that he should come to him as soon as possible’ (Hkr II.222.4)



Temporal adverbs may be followed by a subordinate clause introduced by the relative complementizer *er*. This is the regular form of temporal clauses in Old Norse.

- (173) a. Þorsteinn, son Egils, þá er hann óx upp, var  
 Thorstein.N son.N Egil.G then when he grew up was  
 allra manna fríðastr sýnum  
 all men.G most-handsome.M.N looks.D  
 ‘When he grew up, Thorstein, Egil’s son, was the most handsome  
 of all men’ (Eg 293.1)
- b. en þegar er þeir kenndu Egil þá þóttusk  
 but then when they.M knew.3P Egil.A then seemed.3P.RFL  
 þeir vita at hann mundi eigi hafa unnit á Þorgrími  
 they.M know that he would not have won on Thorgrim.D  
 ‘But as soon as they recognized Egil, then it seemed clear to them  
 that he could not have killed Thorgrim’ (Fbr 162.6)
- c. síðan er hann lét af konungdómi  
 since when he let off kingdom.D  
 ‘since he left the kingdom’ (Hkr II.160.12)

In a parallel fashion, local clauses may be headed by *þar* ‘there’:

- (174) einhverja nótt, þá er veðr var kyrrt lögðu  
 some night.A then when weather.N was calm.NEU.N laid.3P  
 þeir upp í móðu eina, þar er illt var til  
 they.M up in river.A one there where bad.NEU.N was to  
 hafna  
 harbours.G  
 ‘One night when the weather was calm they landed in a river where  
 harbour conditions were poor’ (Eg 252.19)

The manner adverb *svá* ‘so’ may be followed by clauses introduced by *at* ‘that’ or *sem* ‘as’, to express consequence or comparison, respectively.

- (175) a. gerum svá at guði líki vel  
 do.IMP.1P so that god.D please.SUB well  
 ‘Let us act so as to please God’ (Hóm 35.21)
- b. Sveinn jarl hafði látit taka um haustit hálfá  
 Svein.N earl had let take in autumn.A-the half  
 landaura af Íslands-farinu, svá sem fyrr var  
 land-taxes.A of Iceland.G-ship.D-the so as before was

vant

accustomed.NEU.N

'In the autumn Earl Svein had taken half the landing-tax of ships from Iceland, as was formerly the custom' (Hkr II.63.12)

The concessive adverb *þó* 'though' is followed by clauses introduced by *at*. The combination *þó at* is usually contracted to *þóat* or *þótt*.

- (176) a. *betra er þér at vera góðum þó at hann*  
 better.NEU.N is you.D to be good.M.D though that he  
*sé illr*  
 be.SUB bad.M.N  
 'It is better for you to be good even though he is bad' (Hóm 23.20)
- b. *lítill var gleði í stofunni, þótt*  
 small.F.N was joy.N in room.D-the though-that  
*noðkurir menn drykki*  
 some men.N drank.SUB.3P  
 'There was little joy in the room although some men were drinking' (Eg 264.24)

The adverb is often omitted, so that *er* or *at* stand by themselves introducing adverbial clauses.

- (177) a. *ek var í hjá, er Arnþjorn á Heimnesi gerði*  
 I was.1S in with when Arnþjorn.N on Heimnes.D made  
*efstum dögum sínum testamentum sitt til Svituns*  
 last days.D his.RFL will.A his.RFL to Svitun.G  
*kirkju*  
 church.G  
 'I was present when Arnþjorn at Heimnes in his last days made his will to St Svitun's Church' (DN V.16)
- b. *at vér berim þetta fyrir alþýðu, er ek*  
 that we carry.SUB.1P this.NEU.A before people.D when I  
*sé at noðkur framkvæmð mætti at verða*  
 see.1S that some progress.N might.SUB at become  
 'that we put this before the people when I see that some progress may be made' (Hkr II.49.10)
- c. *þá rannsakaðu varning þinn at eigi verði*  
 then examine.IMP.2S-you.N goods.A your that not become.SUB

síðan fyrir spjöllum

later for damage

‘Then examine your goods, so that they do not later turn out to be damaged’ (Kgs 4.35)

- d. þá sofi þér eigi at minna, at hann ríði  
 then sleep.2P you.P.N not at less.NEU.A that he ride.SUB  
 hér hjá garði við annan mann  
 here by yard.D with other man.A

‘Yet you carry on sleeping, even though he rides past the yard with one other man’ (Laxd 153.27)

#### 8.5.4 Clauses

In the previous section it was shown how clauses expressing time, place, or manner have the form of relative clauses preceded by adverbs. And in sections 8.5.1 and 8.5.2 it was shown how causal clauses are preceded by demonstratives (*því at* or *fyrir því at* ‘because’). There are still, however, certain types of adverbial clauses that are introduced by a complementizer alone. The most common ones are *meðan* ‘while’ and *unz* ‘until’, which introduce temporal clauses, and *ef* ‘if’ and *nema* ‘unless’, which introduce conditional clauses.

- (178) a. vill þú nokkut taka við fjárfari mínu,  
 want.2S you.N some.NEU.A take with money-affair.D my  
*meðan ek em í brautu*  
 while I am away  
 ‘Will you look after my business while I am away’ (Nj 63.23)
- b. *ef reiði stöðvask eigi, þá tekur hon frá manni alla  
 forsjó verks*  
 foresight.A work.G  
 ‘If anger is not checked, it deprives a man of all ability to plan his work’ (Hóm 27.13)
- c. hann sagði, at hann myndi eigi þiggja, *nema annat  
 fé kvæmi í mót*  
 money.N came.SUB in meeting  
 ‘He said he would not accept it unless it was paid for in return’  
 (Nj 195.20)

As can be seen from these and previous examples, a finite subordinate clause either precedes or follows the rest of the sentence.

Infinitival clauses may function as adverbial adjuncts to express purpose or intention (cf. 8.5.2).

- (179) a. *margir menn fóru at finna Gunnar*  
 many men.N went.3P to find Gunnar.A  
 ‘Many men went to see Gunnar’ (Nj 72.15)
- b. *en er jarl fór at sofa*  
 but when earl.N went to sleep  
 ‘but when the earl went to sleep’ (Hkr III.478.6)
- c. *þá sendu þeir menn at leita hans*  
 then sent.3P they.M men.A to search him.G  
 ‘Then they sent out men to look for him’ (Hkr III.359.21)

The infinitival clause may have a more independent relationship to the rest of the sentence, and the understood subject may be the speaker rather than the matrix subject.

- (180) a. *méð órlofi at spyrja, hvat man þessarri sorg*  
 with permission.D to ask, what.N may this grief.D  
 valda?  
 cause  
 ‘If I may ask, what is the cause of this grief?’ (Barl 6.33)
- b. *ætla ek heldr, yðr satt til at segja, at sækja*  
 intend.1S I rather, you.P.D true.NEU.A to to say, to seek  
 oddi ok eggju frændleifð mína  
 point.D and edge.D inheritance.A my  
 ‘I intend instead, to tell you the truth, to obtain my inheritance by  
 spear and sword’ (Hkr II.47.4)

### 8.5.5 Predicate adjuncts

The predicate adjunct (or free predicate complement) is either an adjectival phrase (including participles) or a noun phrase. It expresses a secondary predication of a NP in the sentence. An example of a predicate adjunct is found in (181a). The argument phrase and the predicate can be paraphrased as a sentence with the auxiliary *vera*, as in (181b) (cf. 8.3.3), but the predicate is ‘free’ and therefore an adjunct in the sense that it is not required in order for the sentence to be complete; cf. (181c).

- (181) a. hann hljóp út reiðr með spjót sitt  
 he ran out angry.M.N with spear.A his.RFL  
 'He ran out in a rage with his spear' (Fbr 81.2)
- b. hann var reiðr  
 he was angry.M.N
- c. þá brá hann sverðinu hart ok títt ok  
 then drew he sword.D-the hard.NEU.A and quick.NEU.A and  
 hljóp í stofuna  
 ran into room.A-the  
 'Then he drew his sword hard and fast and ran into the room'  
 (Hkr II.252.5)

The predicate has the same case as the argument that it is predicated of. Adjectives and participles also agree in number and gender. In (181a) the adjective *reiðr* is predicated of the subject, and it is therefore in the masculine nominative singular. Further examples are:

- (182) a. Óláfr var sárr borinn á skip út  
 Olaf.N was wounded.M.N carried.M.N on ship.A out  
 'Olaf was carried out to the ship wounded' (Hkr I.310.15)
- b. þá dó hann standandi við bálkinn  
 then died he standing.M.N by wall.A-the  
 'Then he died standing by the wall' (Fbr 216.5)

The predicate adjunct may also be a noun phrase, agreeing in case and number:

- (183) a. ek kom hér inn ærr maðr  
 I came.1S here in mad man.M.N  
 'I came in here as a mad man' (Hkr III.511.10)
- b. þeir ganga á tal tveir saman  
 they.M go.3P on talk two.M.N together  
 'The two of them go to talk together' (Hkr II.129.3)

Ordinal numbers and adjectives denoting rank are often used as predicate complements of the subject:

- (184) a. hyggsk mér svá at sem þú hafir um þenna  
 seems me.D so that as you.N have.SUB.2S in this  
 hlut fyrstr manna fjándskap sýnt Oddi syni mínum  
 part.A first.M.N men.G hostility.A shown Odd.D son.D my  
 'It seems to me that you may have been in this regard the first of  
 men to show hostility towards my son Odd' (Band 59.2)

- b. vildi engi fremstr standa  
 wanted nobody.M.N foremost.M.N stand  
 ‘Nobody wanted to stand in front’ (Hkr II.262.13)

It is very common for a present participle to be used with a verb of motion:

- (185) hon gekk þegjandi at Flosa  
 she went being-silent.F.N to Flosi.D  
 ‘She went up to Flosi without saying a word’ (Nj 265.6)

There is an unclear line between this use of the present participle, and the syntactically similar one where the participle denotes the manner of movement rather than the condition of the subject moving.

- (186) a. þeir kómu þar farandi  
 they.M came.3P there travelling.P.N  
 ‘They came travelling there’ (Hkr I.96.3)  
 b. þá kom þar sigandi ór lopti ofan eitt akkeri  
 then came there moving from air.D down one anchor.N  
 ‘Then an anchor came lowering down from above’ (Kgs 26.12)

In (186) the participles should probably rather be considered adverbials, which may also explain the ending *-i* of the participle in (186b). Since the word *akkeri* is neuter, we would expect *-a* if there were agreement.

A phrase headed by a perfect participle may be used instead of a finite clause. This feature is often characteristic of literary style:

- (187) þá lágu þar fyrir Danir, komnir ór  
 then lay.3P there before Danes.N come.P.M.N from  
*leiðangri*, ok hǫfðu skip mǫrg  
 conscription.D and had.3P ships.A many  
 ‘Then the Danes, who had come from (their) expedition, lay there,  
 and they had many ships’ (Hkr III.473.1)

Adjuncts predicated of objects are in the respective oblique cases:

- (188) a. en hǫfðu mik nauðgan í her með sér  
 but had.3P me.A unwilling.M.A in army with themselves.D  
 ‘But they forced me to join their army’ (Hkr III.320.5)  
 b. en þó megu englar vitrask mǫnnum sýniliga þá  
 but still may.3P angels.N reveal.RFL men.D visibly then

er þeir vilja vakundum eða sofundum  
 when they.M want.3P waking.P.D or sleeping.P.D  
 ‘Furthermore, angels may reveal themselves to men whenever they  
 want to, whether the men are awake or asleep’ (Hóm 141.25)

A predicate adjunct may also be associated with the complement of a preposition:

- (189) þann tók hann af Ála dauðum  
 that.M.A took he from Ali.D dead.D  
 ‘That he took from Ali when he was dead’ (Hkr I.56.9)

Sometimes a noun phrase may be so loosely connected with the rest of the sentence that it almost has the character of a free topic.

- (190) en lenda menn eða bændr, þá er sannir  
 but landed men.A or farmers.A those.M.A who true.P.M.N  
 váru at þessum svikræðum, rak hann suma ór  
 were.3P at this treachery.D drove he some.P.M.A from  
 landi, sumir váru meiddir, af sumum  
 country.D some.P.M.N were.3P maimed.P.M.N from some.P.D  
 tók hann sættir  
 took he settlements.A  
 ‘But some of the landed men or the farmers, who were guilty of  
 this treachery, were driven out of the country, some were maimed,  
 and from some he accepted a settlement’ (Hkr II.130.10)

Here the noun phrase at the beginning of the sentence is repeated three times by means of the word *sumr* ‘some’, which takes three different cases depending on the role it plays in the three following sentences. The initial NP is in the accusative, agreeing with the first occurrence of *sumr*.

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## The Finite Sentence

The finite sentence contains a verb in one of the finite tenses, present or preterite. This verb may be a lexical verb, as in (1a), or it may be an auxiliary, which may take another verb phrase as its complement, as in (1b). That other verb phrase is then headed by a non-finite verb. The finite sentence may function as a complete, meaningful utterance all by itself.

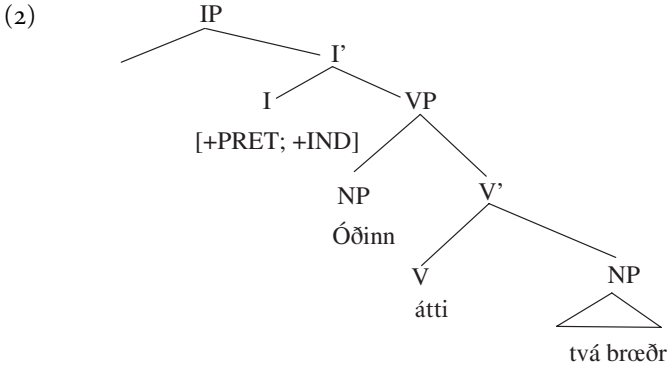
- (1) a. Óðinn átti tvá bræðr  
 Odin.N had two brothers.A  
 ‘Odin had two brothers’ (Hkr I.11.20)
- b. ek em svá kominn til yðars fundar  
 I am thus come.M.N to your(P) meeting.G  
 ‘I have thus come to meet you’ (Kgs 3.1)

The finite verb is the only obligatory element in the sentence. In addition, a finite sentence typically contains a subject. It may also include complements of the verb and adjuncts. Complements and adjuncts of the verb have been examined in Chapter 8. The subject will be treated below in sections 9.2–9.5.

### 9.1 The finite verb

The finite verb contains morphological marking for tense and mood (cf. 3.6 and 3.7). These are categories that have scope over the whole sentence. For this reason, they are generated in a functional projection above the verb phrase. This projection is called the **inflectional phrase** (IP). The IP is a necessary part of any finite sentence. The relevant part of the underlying structure of (1a) is shown in (2).





The verb moves to I to check the tense and mood features.

### 9.1.1 *Tense and mood*

The use of the tenses generally depends on real time reference, and is thus mainly semantically based. The present is the unmarked tense, which may also be used with past tense reference ('historical present'), especially when the time reference has been established by a previous verb in the preterite:

- (3) a. hann *gerði* svá. ok er þeir *koma* til  
 he did so and when they.M come.3P to  
*búðartóptanna*  
 booth-sites.G-the  
 'He did so. And when they came to the place where the booths  
 were ...' (Gunnl 3.13)
- b. Óláfr *svarar* fá ok *hló*  
 Olaf.N answers few.P.NEU.A and laughed  
 'Olaf said little in reply and laughed' (Hkr II.4.10)

The moods have different functions in main and subordinate clauses. The imperative is used only in main sentences, and only in the 2nd person singular, and 1st and 2nd person plural. The subjunctive has a semantically based use in main sentences. The present subjunctive is used in main sentences to express requests, orders, concessions, doubt, deliberation, etc.

- (4) a. guð þakki yðr  
 god.N thank.SUB you.P.D  
 'May God thank you' (Kgs 5.10)

- b. *hverr er eyrun hefir, þá heyri þessur orð*  
 each.N who ears.A has then hear.SUB these words.A  
 ‘Whoever has ears, may hear these words’ (Hóm 70.2)
- c. *hvar mega ek betr mína rœðu hefja*  
 where may.SUB.1S I better my speech.A begin  
 ‘Where else would it be better for me to start my speech?’  
 (Hóm 168.21)

The preterite subjunctive is used in main sentences with a conditional or potential meaning:

- (5) a. *þú ættir at þola þessa pinsl fyrr en ek*  
 you.N had.SUB.2S to endure this torture.A before than I  
 ‘You would have to suffer this torture before me’ (Hóm 151.17)
- b. *eigi kæmi þau tíðendi til eyrna mér, at mér*  
 not came.SUB.3P those news.N to ears.G me.D that me.D  
*þætti verri*  
 seemed worse.P.N  
 ‘I never heard news worse than this’ (Nj 96.22)

In subordinate clauses the use of the subjunctive is largely dependent on the nature of the matrix sentence. This is the topic of section 10.1.1.

### 9.1.2 Position of the finite verb

One fixed position in the sentence is that of the finite verb. This position can be used as a pivot relative to which other sentence elements can be located. The finite verb typically takes up the second position in the sentence:

- (6) a. *hann snerisk síðan til trúar*  
 he turned.RFL since to faith.G  
 ‘He afterwards turned to the (Christian) faith’ (DN II.4)
- b. *í bók þessi lét ek rita fornar frásagnir*  
 in book.D this let.1S I write ancient stories.A  
 ‘In this book I have had ancient stories written down’ (Hkr I.3.1)
- c. *nú gerir maðr langskip í heraði*  
 now makes man.N long-ship.A in district.D  
 ‘Now a man makes a long-ship in the district’ (ML 47.10)

In subordinate clauses, too, the finite verb is usually placed in second position, not counting the complementizer or the interrogative phrase introducing the sentence.

- (7) a. at engi komisk í braut  
that nobody.M.N come.SUB.RFL away  
'that nobody escapes' (Nj 298.18)
- b. [hǫfðingi sá,] er Óðinn var kallaðr  
chieftain.N that who Odin.N was called.M.N  
'a chieftain who was called Odin' (Hkr I.11.1)
- c. [ráða] hversu málin lúkask  
decide how matters.N-the close.3P.RFL  
'decide how matters are to be settled' (Nj 82.12)

The finite verb may also occur in first position, especially in main sentences:

- (8) a. sóru þá fyrir mér með stöfuðum bókkareði  
swore.3P then before me.D with pronounced book-oath.D  
Lafranz Raumdæl ok Groa  
Lafranz.N Raumdæl and Groa.N  
'Then Lafranz Raumdæl and Groa swore an oath on the book  
before me' (DN II.208)
- b. þótti mǫnnum þat líkligt, at [...]  
seemed men.D it.N likely.NEU.N that  
'The men thought it was likely that ...' (Finnb 50.14)

In subordinate clauses the verb may come directly after the complementizer. This most commonly occurs in relative clauses where the subject is relativized, as in (9a), but it may also occur in subordinate clauses where the subject is present, as in (9b).

- (9) a. öllum hǫfðingjum, þeim er váru í ríki hans  
all chieftains.D those who were.3P in kingdom.D his  
'all the chieftains in his kingdom' (Hkr I.321.1)
- b. marka hversu þverr eða ferr úkyrrleikr sjóar  
notice how declines or goes roughness.N sea.G  
'notice how the turbulence of the sea ebbs or swells' (Kgs 5.34)

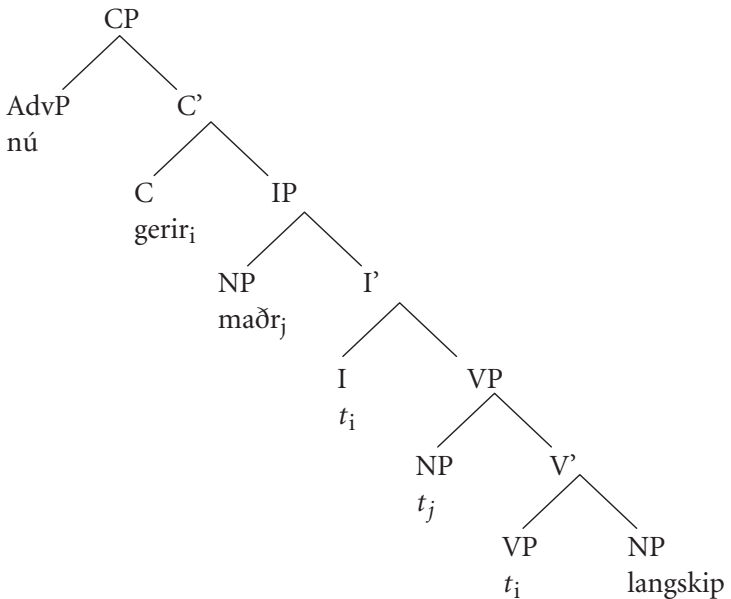
(In subordinate clauses the finite verb may occasionally occur in other positions as well; see section 10.1.2.)

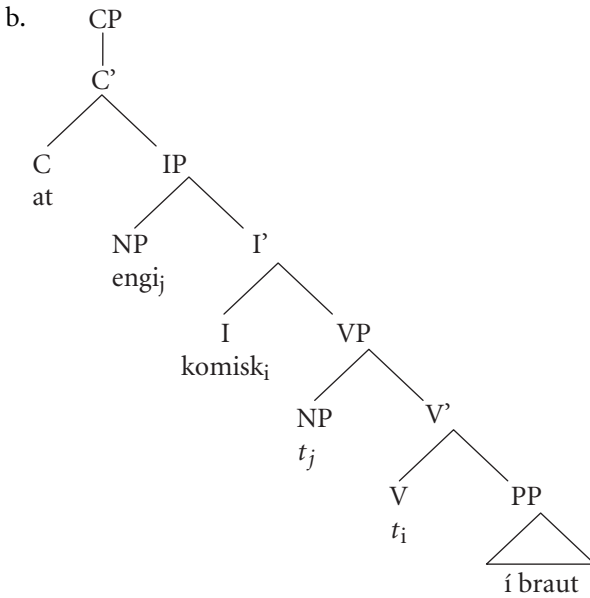
In all other respects, the word order pattern of 'verb-initial' sentences is the same as that of 'verb-second' sentences, the only difference being an empty position before the verb. Rather than considering the sentences in (8) 'verb initial', they may for systematic and descriptive reasons be analysed as having an

empty position before the finite verb. This allows us to describe the finite verb as being in the same position in all main sentences, namely ‘second position’. The sentences starting with the verb thus have an empty topic position (cf. 9.7.1), and Old Norse can be considered a regular verb-second language, on a par with other Germanic languages.

The verb-second effect is, however, due to different structural positions of the finite verb in main and subordinate clauses. The verb is generated as the head of VP. In all finite sentences it moves to the I-position, where it receives features of tense and mood. In main sentences the verb moves further to the C-position. This is a functional projection above IP in the sentence structure. Subordinate clauses have a complementizer in C (hence its label), and the finite verb remains in I, allowing for exactly one phrase between the complementizer and the verb, in the specifier position of IP. The S-structure of part of (6c), the main sentence *nú gerir maðr langskip*, is shown in (10a), and that of the subordinate clause in (7a), *at engi komisk í braut*, is shown in (10b).

(10) a.





## 9.2 Subject properties

In a finite sentence, one of the argument phrases may be in the nominative case. This is the **subject** of the sentence. The subject is an S-structure category. It may have different D-structure origins. It is not always an argument of the finite verb; it may be an argument of a non-finite verb, of an adjective, or of a preposition. The subject is not an obligatory category in Old Norse. Finite sentences may be lacking a subject.

A subject definition based entirely on morphological case may seem rather simplistic, since it does not make reference to any syntactic or semantic properties. The fact is, however, that nominative phrases in Old Norse sentences have little else in common, except presupposing a finite verb. Another important subject property is the ability to govern verb agreement, but even this is not consistently associated with the nominative, since some subjects may fail to trigger agreement (see 9.2.3). The nominative has no fixed position in the sentence, and there is no position which is a unique subject position. Even well-known subject properties such as binding anaphors are not unique properties of nominative subjects (cf. Chapter 11).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This state of affairs may lead to the conclusion that the subject should be defined independently of case. This is done by generative grammarians for modern Icelandic, which is then considered to

9.2.1 *Position of the subject*

In this section, I will treat the subject in main sentences. Word order phenomena that are found specifically in subordinate clauses will be treated in section 10.1.2.

In most cases, the subject moves to the specifier position of IP. If no further movement of the subject takes place, it appears in the position immediately following the finite verb, which may then be considered the unmarked subject position. This is exemplified in (6b, c) above. The structural position is shown in (10a). Additional examples are:

- (11) a. hafið þú verit hér um hrið með mér  
 have.2P you.DU.N been here in while with me.D  
 ‘You have been here with me for a while’ (Eg 67.17)
- b. nemi maðr boðorð guðs  
 learn.SUB man.N commandments.A god.G  
 ‘Man should learn God’s commandments’ (Hóm 3.19)

The subject is very often topicalized, as exemplified in many of the sentences above. A couple of examples are repeated here (cf. 9.7.1):

- (12) a. ek em svá kominn til yðars fundar  
 I am thus come.M.N to your(P) meeting.G  
 ‘I have thus come to meet you’ (Kgs 3.1)
- b. Óðinn vissi um alt jarðfé  
 Odin.N knew about all earth-goods.A  
 ‘Odin knew about all the buried treasure’ (Hkr I.19.10)

The subject may be preceded by adverbials or objects, which shows that the subject may remain in the specifier of the VP:

- (13) a. mundu þat sumir menn mæla í mínu landi  
 would.3P it.A some men.N say in my country.D  
 ‘Some people would say so in my country’ (Finnb 19.5)
- b. fóru síðan hvárir-tveggju leiðar sinnar  
 went.3P since each.P.M.N-two.DEF.G ways.A their.RFL  
 ‘Then both of them went their own way’ (Hkr II.270.9)

have ‘oblique subjects’. It has been claimed that the same applies to Old Norse (Rögnvaldsson 1991, 1995; Haugan 1998a; Barðdal 2000). Due to the much freer word order of Old Norse, and the general lack of syntactic subject properties, it is difficult to find arguments in favour of oblique subjects in Old Norse (Faarlund 2001). One prediction that would follow from the existence of oblique subjects, is that non-subjects (other than predicate complements) may occur in the nominative, even in non-finite clauses. This occurs in modern Icelandic, but is not found in Old Norse. Therefore, the assumption will be that the subject of a finite sentence is always in the nominative.

Heavy or complex subjects, or subjects carrying new information, tend to appear at the end of the sentence. In such cases these subjects can be considered extraposed and right-adjoined to VP.<sup>2</sup>

- (14) a. áðr þrælar hǫfðu matazk, þá váru komnir til  
 before slaves.N had.3P fed.RFL then were.3P come.P.M.N to  
 Orms *margir menn ór bygðinni, er hann hafði*  
 Orm.G many men.N from district.D-the who he had  
*orð sent*  
 word.A sent  
 ‘Before the slaves had eaten, many men from the district whom he  
 had sent for, had come to Orm’ (Hkr I.348.19)
- b. þá váru lokin *sund* *öll*  
 then were.3P closed.P.NEU.N straits.N all  
 ‘Then all the straits were closed’ (Hkr I.350.18)
- c. hana hafði átt fyrir *Þoroddr sonr Tungu-Odds*  
 her.A had owned before Thorodd.N son.N Tungu-Odd.G  
 ‘She had previously been married to Thorodd, Tungu-Odd’s son’  
 (Gunnl 2.4)

The subject may appear in object position, as a complement of V. This is first of all found in passive sentences.

- (15) a. var fluttr *varnaðr þeira* til skips  
 was moved.M.N goods.N their to ship.G  
 ‘Their goods were loaded on to the ship’ (Gunnl 15.9)
- b. váru lagðir út *vorsekkar nokkurir* á hlaðit sex  
 were.3P laid.P.M.N out wool-sacks.N some on yard.A-the six  
 ‘Six sacks of wool had been placed in the yard’ (Gunnl 10.8)

The difference between the sentences in (14) and those in (15), is that the subjects in (15) cannot be considered extraposed or right-adjoined, since there is an adverbial following the subject. Besides, the subject is not particularly heavy or complex, as would be expected from an extraposed element. Instead, the explanation may be that these subjects are objects of the verb in D-structure, and therefore they may remain in their object position even when the verb is in the passive. But the same subject position may also be found in active sentences.

<sup>2</sup> Adjunction to VP seems to be descriptively adequate, although it may be questioned on theoretical grounds. In this book the two terms ‘extraposition’ and ‘right-adjunction (to VP)’ are synonyms.

- (16) a. hefir hér setit *svala* ein við glugginn  
 has here sat swallow.N one by opening.A-the  
 ‘A swallow has been perching here by the window’ (Eg 221.9)
- b. hér er kominn *maðr* til gistingar sá er  
 here is come.M.N man.N to lodging.G that.M.N. who  
 Þórólfr heitir  
 Thorolf.N is-called  
 ‘A man called Thorolf has come to spend the night here’  
 (Laxd 32.12)

The verbs in these sentences are typical ‘unaccusative verbs’, which means that the surface subject, according to certain theories, may be generated in the object position (cf. 9.3.3). So here, too, the explanation may be that the subject has not been moved out of its D-structure object position. But even agentive, transitive verbs may appear with the subject in an object position.

- (17) a. skal við því taka *stýrimaðr* þann tíma er  
 shall with it.D take captain.N that time.A when  
 leiðangr er úti  
 expedition.N is out  
 ‘The captain shall receive it when the expedition is out at sea’  
 (ML 40.16)
- b. dýrgarða ok dýrgrafir skal gera *hverr* er vil  
 beast-yards.D and beast-pits.D shall make each.N who wants  
 í almenningi  
 in public.D  
 ‘Everyone who wants to shall be allowed to make enclosures and  
 pits for beasts on public land’ (ML 146.2)

Since *taka* ‘take’ and *gera* ‘make’ cannot be considered unaccusative verbs by any stretch of the imagination, another explanation must be found for these subject positions. It may be that the immediate postverbal position is available for subjects in general, given the appropriate pragmatic or discourse-functional conditions. Another explanation may be that more than one constituent can be extraposed to the right, so that in (17) both the subject and the following adverbial are extraposed. This may be a plausible explanation in (17b), where the subject contains a clause and is therefore heavy, but it is less likely in (17a), where the subject consists of a single noun.



9.2.2 *Semantic and pragmatic properties*

Depending on the semantic nature of the predicate word, the subject may encode different semantic roles. If the verb assigns the agent role to an argument, that argument is always the subject of a finite sentence, as in many of the examples above, and in the following:

- (18) a. ok riðu þeir heiman of daginn  
and rode.3P they.M from-home in day.A-the  
'And they set out from home that day' (Gunnl 3.7)  
b. Óláfr Nóregs-konungr hafði menn þangat sent  
Olaf.N Norway-king had men.A thither sent  
'Olaf, King of Norway had sent men there' (Hkr II.142.5)

If there is no agent, the subject may have any other role, such as a patient, (19a, b), or an experiencer, (19c, d). With some predicates, especially adjectives and prepositions, the subject has a very neutral and indistinct role, as in (19e, f).

- (19) a. at fallnir væri búðarveggir hans  
that fallen.P.M.N were.SUB.3P booth-walls.N his  
'that the walls of his booth might have fallen down' (Gunnl 3.6)  
b. fjórir hleifar brauðs eru honum færðir hvern  
four loaves.N bread.G are.3P him.D brought.P.M.N each  
dag  
day.A  
'He is brought four loaves of bread every day' (Hkr II.232.10)  
c. ek heyri þat alþýðu vitni  
I hear.1S it.A people.G testimony.A  
'I hear people say so' (Kgs 3.8)  
d. vér sáum ok Grana Gunnarsson  
we saw.1P also Grani.A Gunnarsson  
'We also saw Grani Gunnarsson' (Nj 295.19)  
e. Óláfr Haraldsson var þá tolf vetra gamall  
Olaf.N Haraldsson was then twelve winters.G old.M.N  
'Olaf Haraldsson was then twelve years old' (Hkr II. 5.9)  
f. í Svíþjóð eru stórheruð mörg  
in Sweden.D are.3P big-districts.N many  
'In Sweden there are many large districts' (Hkr I.10.2)

When there is both a recipient or a benefactive, and a patient in the sentence, the subject usually expresses the patient role (or a neutral role), while the recipient or benefactive is in the dative. One example of this is seen in (19b). Further examples may be given:

- (20) a. mér þykkir þú fól  
 me.D seem.2S you.N fool.N  
 ‘I think you are a fool’ (Hkr III.304.7)
- b. þú ert hollari Agli en Eiríki konungi  
 you.N are.2S more-loyal.M.N Egil.D than Eirik.D king  
 ‘You are more loyal to Egil than to King Eirik’ (Eg 223.8)

With verbs of possession, the subject expresses the possessor:

- (21) a. Óðinn átti tvá bræðr  
 Odin.N had two brothers.A  
 ‘Odin had two brothers’ (Hkr I.11.20)
- b. gull hefir þú, eða silfr  
 gold.A have.2S you.N or silver.A  
 ‘You have gold or silver’ (Hóm 18.30)

Since the subject can occur in different parts of the sentence, and since it is closely associated with the agent role, it follows that it cannot at the same time fill specific discourse functions. Old Norse subjects do not necessarily express topics or given information. Subjects may be indefinite or carry new information, as can be seen in many of the previous examples in this section; consider in particular (6a), (13a), (14a), (15b), (16a, b), and (19b, f) which provide examples of indefinite subjects, and (8a) and (14c) where the subjects introduce new elements into the discourse. Even subjects in topic position may be indefinite and carry new information:

- (22) a. maðr hét Þorgils  
 man.N was-called Thorgils.N  
 ‘There was a man called Thorgils’ (Laxd 173.16)
- b. björn er þar ok á því landi  
 bear.N is there also on that land.D  
 ‘There is also a bear in that land’ (Kgs 30.10)
- c. kastali var fyrir vestan sundit  
 castle.N was before west strait.A-the  
 ‘There was a castle to the west of the strait’ (Hkr II.9.3)

9.2.3 *Subject–verb agreement*

The main rule is that the finite verb agrees with the subject for number and person:

- (23) a. ek em svá kominn til yðars fundar  
I am.1S thus come.M.N to your(P) meeting.G  
'I have thus come to meet you' (Kgs 3.1)
- b. munt þú unna því  
will.2S you.N love that.D  
'You will love her' (Gunnl 5.10)
- c. hon var ekkja  
she was.3S widow.N  
'She was a widow' (Nj 61.20)
- d. vér getum þá eigi með vápnum sótta  
we get.1P them.M.A not with weapons.D beaten.P.M.A  
'We cannot defeat them with weapons' (Nj 299.3)
- e. hvers vilið þér mik beiða  
what.G want.2P you.P.N me.A ask  
'What do you want to ask of me?' (Hkr I.367.2)
- f. þau eru ort af afli heilagrar  
they.NEU are.3P composed.P.NEU.N from power.D holy  
ástar  
love.G  
'They are composed from the power of holy love' (Hóm 1.11)

The verb has no distinct dual forms, so dual pronoun subjects have plural verb agreement:

- (24) a. vit höfum þetta átt at tala  
we.DU have.1P this.NEU.A had to speak  
'The two of us have had talks about this (matter)' (Laxd 183.22)
- b. þit munuð fœra mér höfuð hans  
you.DU.N will.2P bring me.D head.A his  
'You (two) will bring me his head' (Eg 61.1)

The 3rd person singular is the default form, which is used when there is no nominative phrase to agree with:

- (25) a. en er haustaði  
but when became-autumn.3S  
'but when the autumn came' (Hkr II.8.16)

- b. skal þat barn út bera  
 shall.3s that child.A out carry  
 ‘That child shall be exposed’ (Gunnl 6.4)
- c. eigi er mér kunnigt hversu víðfleyg vár  
 not is me.D known.NEU.N how wide-flying.F.N our  
 rœða vill gerask  
 conversation.N will make.RFL  
 ‘I do not know how widely known our conversation will be’  
 (Kgs 13.34)
- d. hǫmuligt er slíkt at vita  
 sad is such.NEU.A to know  
 ‘It is sad to know such a thing’ (Hkr III.512.10)

Number agreement is not always obligatory; indeed the verb may be in the singular even though the subject is plural. In most cases where there is lack of agreement, the subject is coordinated and extraposed, as in (26a). But as can be seen in (26b), this is not an absolute requirement. In (26c) the verb is 1st person singular even though the subject is coordinated. As can be seen from (26d), however, number agreement may also apply even with an extraposed subject. Agreement is on the whole more common when the subject refers to human beings. An interesting example is (26e), where the first verb is in the singular because the subject is coordinated and follows the verb, but the second verb is in the plural, since the subject here can be considered an empty pronominal.

- (26) a. þá var borit ofan á þá bæði skot  
 then was.3s brought.NEU.N down on them.M.A both shots.N  
 ok grjót  
 and stones.N  
 ‘Then both shots and stones were hurled down on them’  
 (Hkr II.17.11)
- b. hann segir, at korn ok malt var  
 he says that corn.N and malt.N was.3s  
 ‘He says it was corn and malt’ (Hkr II.248.9)
- c. hefi ek ok mínir menn haft þat einu alla þessa  
 have.1s I and my men.N had that.A one.NEU.D all this  
 stund til framflutningar oss  
 time.A to support.G us.D  
 ‘All this time I and my men have only had that to support us’  
 (Hkr II.46.9)

- d. tóku þá konungdóm synir hans, Eaðmundr ok  
 took.3P then kingdom.A sons.N his Eadmund.N and  
 Eaðvarðr  
 Eadvard.N  
 ‘Then his sons, Eadmund and Eadvard, took over the kingdom’  
 (Hkr II.23.2)
- e. sat konungr ok dróttning í háseti ok drukku  
 sat.3S king.N and queen.N in high-seat.D and drank.3P  
 bæði samt um kveldit  
 both together in evening.A-the  
 ‘The king and the queen were sitting in the high seat, both  
 drinking together in the evening’ (Hkr I.338.13)

The verb *þykkja* ‘seem’ often fails to agree with the raised nominative subject, appearing instead in the 3rd person singular:

- (27) a. þótti honum skógar þar eigi fjarlægir  
 seemed.3S him.D woods.N there not distant.P.M.N  
 ‘It seemed to him that there were woods not far away’ (Eg 97.6)
- b. því þykkir mér likastir menn þeir er  
 that.D seems.3S me.D best.P.M.N men.N those.M.N who  
 elska heim þenna  
 love.3P world.A this  
 ‘Therefore those men who love this world seem best to me’  
 (Barl 49.10)

Instead of the default form *þykkir*, the form *þykki* sometimes appears when the dative experiencer is 1st or 2nd person:

- (28) a. öll þín orðræða þykki mér góð  
 all your talk.N seems me.D good.F.N  
 ‘All your talk seems good to me’ (Barl 33.16)
- b. þá þykki þér annat meira vert en  
 then seems you.D other.NEU.N more worth.NEU.N than  
 hólmangan við Grís  
 duel.N-the with Gris.A  
 ‘Then other things may seem more important to you than the  
 duel with Gris’ (Hallfr 116.6)

It should be noted that the normal agreement pattern is also common with *þykkja*:

- (29) a. þeir er þá þykkja til enskis annars  
 those.M.N which then seem.3P to nothing.G other  
 nýtir vera  
 useful.P.M.N be  
 ‘those which then seem to be of no other use’ (Barl 51.18)
- b. ok þóttu þeir hafa mjök spottat sik  
 and seemed.3P they.M have much mocked himself.A  
 ‘and (he) thought that they had made a fool of him’ (Hkr III.355.8)
- c. torsiótt þótta ek yðr næstum vera  
 difficult.M.N seemed.1S I you.P.D last be  
 ‘You thought I was difficult last time’ (Nj 340.29)

When sentences contain a nominal predicate, the verb agrees with the predicate rather than with the subject.

- (30) a. þetta eru víst ástsemdarráð  
 this.NEU.N are.3P certainly kindness-advice.P.NEU.N  
 ‘This is certainly kind advice’ (Kgs 3.32)
- b. or ein, er fleinn er kallaðr  
 arrow.F.N one which ‘flein’,M.N is called.M.N  
 ‘an arrow which is called a “flein”’ (Hkr I.216.9)
- c. þat váru þar lög  
 that.N were.3P there laws.N  
 ‘Those were the laws there’ (Hkr I.13.19)

### 9.3 Derivation of subjects

As we have seen, the occurrence of a nominative subject in a sentence presupposes a finite verb. The underlying function of the subject relative to the verb may vary, however. In many cases the subject receives a semantic role from the finite verb, which is to say that it is an argument of that verb. In other cases, the subject may receive its semantic role from a non-finite verb, or from another lexical category. In any case, it is usually raised to the specifier position of IP, and thus functions grammatically as the subject of the finite verb, which normally agrees with it.

9.3.1 *External argument*

In most types of simple sentence, the subject is generated in the specifier position of a verb. Arguments in this position are referred to as external arguments, as opposed to internal arguments, which are complements of the verb.

When the finite verb is a lexical verb, the subject is the external argument of that verb. It is often an agent, as in (31a, b) and in many of the examples above, but it may also have other roles, as shown in (31c–e).

- (31) a. drukku menn þann dag erft  
 drank.<sub>3P</sub> men.<sub>N</sub> that day.<sub>A</sub> funeral-feast.<sub>A</sub>  
 ‘That day the men held their funeral feast’ (Hkr I.322.18)
- b. þá brá konungr sverði  
 then drew king.<sub>N</sub> sword.<sub>D</sub>  
 ‘Then the king drew his sword’ (Hkr I.118.21)
- c. Óðinn átti tvá bræðr  
 Odin.<sub>N</sub> had two brothers.<sub>A</sub>  
 ‘Odin had two brothers’ (Hkr I.11.20)
- d. vér sám ok Grana Gunnarsson  
 we saw.<sub>1P</sub> also Grani.<sub>A</sub> Gunnarsson  
 ‘We also saw Grani Gunnarsson’ (Nj 295.19)
- e. annat folk svaf inni  
 other people.<sub>N</sub> slept inside  
 ‘The other people slept inside’ (Fbr 148.13)

9.3.2 *Raising*

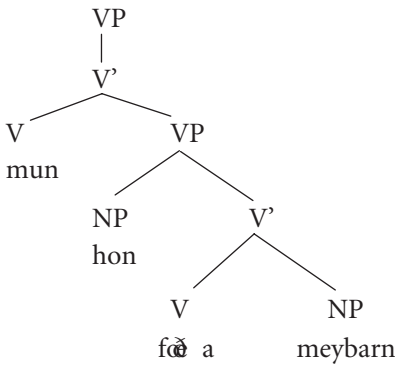
Auxiliary verbs do not assign semantic roles to an external argument. The subject of a finite auxiliary therefore has to come from somewhere else. Auxiliary verbs that take VPs as their complements, get their subject from that VP. This means that the subject of the auxiliary is assigned its semantic role from the main verb:

- (32) a. mun hon fœða meybarn frítt ok fagrt  
 will she give-birth girl-child.<sub>A</sub> beautiful and fair  
 ‘She will give birth to a beautiful and fair baby girl’ (Gunnl 5.10)
- b. ek verð hefja þessa teiti  
 I become.<sub>1S</sub> raise this fun.<sub>A</sub>  
 ‘I will have to start the fun’ (Hkr III.291.16)

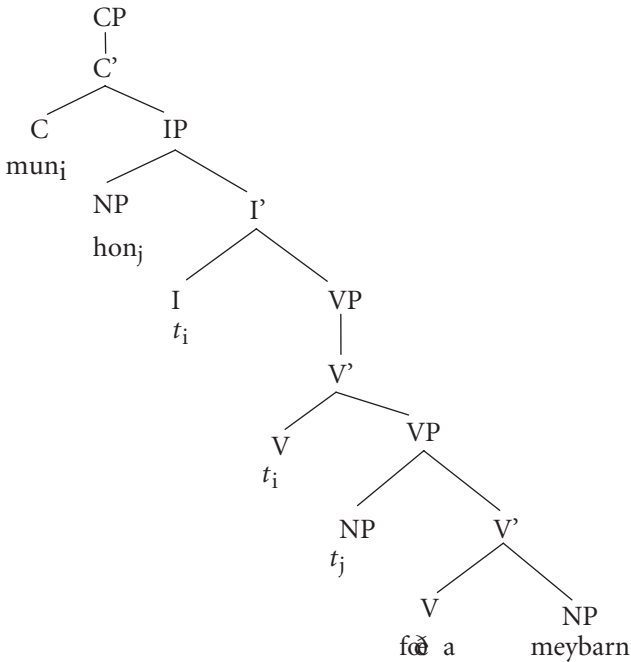
- c. *Ólafur Nóregs-konungr hafði menn þangat sent*  
 Olaf.N Norway-king had men.A thither sent  
 ‘Olaf, King of Norway had sent men there’ (Hkr II.142.5)
- d. *Magnús varð henni ekki unnandi*  
 Magnus.N became her.D not loving.M.N  
 ‘Magnus did not come to love her’ (Hkr III.316.21)

Part of the D-structure of (32a) is shown in (33a), and the S-structure is given in (33b).

(33) a.



b.





When the auxiliary takes an adjectival phrase as its complement, the subject gets its semantic role from the adjective, and is generated as the specifier of the adjectival phrase:

- (34) a. *Óláfr Haraldsson var þá tolf vetra gamall*  
 Olaf.N Haraldsson was then twelve winters.G old.M.N  
 ‘Olaf Haraldsson was then twelve years old’ (Hkr II. 5.9)
- b. *biskup var því mjök feginn*  
 bishop.N was that.D much happy.M.N  
 ‘The bishop was very happy about that’ (Barl 58.7)

A similar analysis can be made for prepositional phrases following *vera* ‘be’. The prepositional phrase is predicated of the subject, which is generated in the specifier position of the PP:

- (35) a. *í Svíþjóð eru stórheruð mörg*  
 in Sweden.D are.3P big-districts.N many  
 ‘In Sweden there are many large districts’ (Hkr I.10.2)
- b. *Grímr var á lífi*  
 Grim.N was on life.D  
 ‘Grim was alive’ (Dpl 164.31)

Noun phrases functioning as predicate complements do not refer to any entity in the external world. They only denote a property, as adjectives do, and they are not DPs, but NPs in the strict sense. We may therefore assume that the predicate nouns in (36) also have subjects denoting the individual which the property is predicated of.

- (36) a. *Illugi svarti var stóreignamaðr*  
 Illugi.N black.DEF was great-property-man.N  
 ‘Illugi the Black was a great landowner’ (Gunnl 9.5)
- b. *hon var skörungr mikill*  
 she was leading-person.N great  
 ‘She was an outstanding person’ (Nj 216.13)

The situation is different, however, when the predicate nominal expresses the identity of the subject, rather than a property. These nouns are parts of DPs and may have various modifiers or adjuncts. It may be that the verb ‘be’ in such sentences is a lexical verb denoting identification, having its own external argument.

- (37) a. hon var dóttir Álfs ór Dølum  
 she was daughter.N Alf.G from Dales.D  
 ‘She was the daughter of Alf of the Dales’ (Fbr 5.5)
- b. sonr Stórolfs var Ormr inn sterki  
 son.N Storolf.G was Orm.N the strong  
 ‘The son of Storolf was Orm the Strong’ (Nj 46.5)

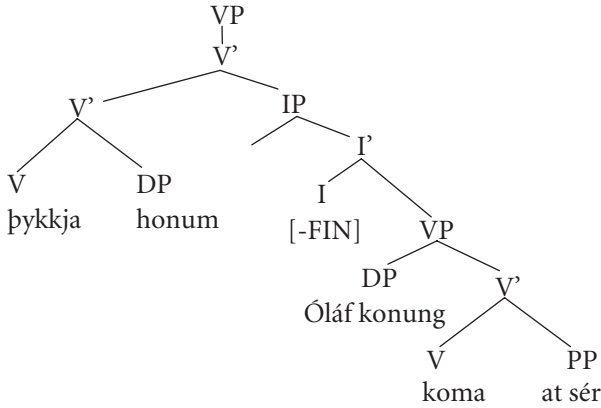
Lexical verbs may also be ‘raising verbs’, having a subject derived from a lower VP. The most common verbs of this kind are *þykkja* ‘seem’, and the lexicalized reflexive verbs *sýnask* and *virðask*, with the same meaning. These verbs take two arguments at D-structure, one clause in the form of a non-finite IP, and one NP in the dative referring typically to the person who holds the opinion or impression.

In the lower clause, a phrase is raised to the specifier position of IP, and then from there it is further raised to the specifier position of IP in the matrix sentence, where it receives nominative case, thus becoming the subject of the higher verb *þykkja*, etc. Some examples are given in 9.2.3. Further examples are listed below:

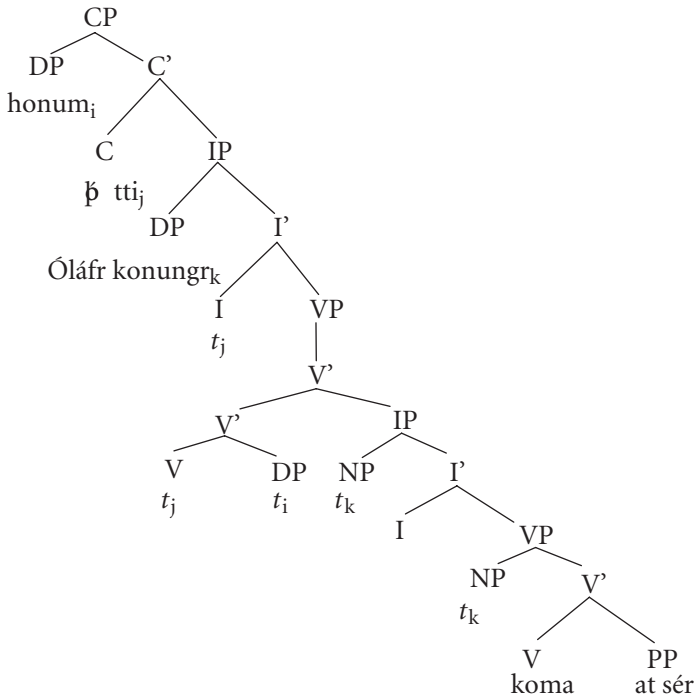
- (38) a. honum þótti Óláfr konungr koma at sér  
 him.D seemed Olaf.N king come to himself.D  
 ‘He thought that King Olaf came to him’ (Hallfr 115.10)
- b. þótti honum hon vel hafa gert  
 seemed him.D she well have done  
 ‘He thought that she had done well’ (Hkr III.391.18)
- c. furðu úspálig sýnisk okkr þú vera  
 very unprophetic.F.N seems us.DU.D you.N be  
 ‘We do not think you are very good at prophesying’ (Fbr 105.20)
- d. Þorleiki virðisk engi jafnvel til fallinn at vera  
 Thorleik.D seemed none.N equal-well to fallen.M.N to be  
 fyrirmaðr  
 foreman.N  
 ‘Thorleik thought nobody was as well suited to be the leader’  
 (Laxd 183.26)

The relevant part of the D-structure of (38a) is shown in (39a), and the S-structure is given in (39b), where the raising operation is indicated by the index *k*.

(39) a.



b.



A predicate complement in the embedded clause agrees with the raised subject, and is thus also in the nominative, as in (38c) and (40).

- (40) a. *torsótttr þótta ek yðr næstum vera*  
 difficult.M.N seemed.1S I you.P.D last be  
 ‘You thought I was difficult last time’ (Nj 340.29)

- b. ok þótti hann vera inn ágæzti maðr  
 and seemed he be the noblest.DEF man.N  
 ‘and he seemed to be the most noble man’ (Finnb 51.5)

Instead of a verb phrase with *vera* ‘be’, it is much more common for an adjective phrase to occur alone, as in (38d) and (41).

- (41) a. þótti honum skógar þar eigi fjarlægir  
 seemed.3s him.D woods.N there not distant.P.M.N  
 ‘It seemed to him that there were woods not far away’ (Eg 97.6)
- b. öll þín orðræða þykki mér góð  
 all your talk.N seems me.D good.F.N  
 ‘All your talk seems good to me’ (Barl 33.16)
- c. mér virðisk Finnur vitr maðr  
 me.D seems Finn.N wise man.N  
 ‘I consider Finn a wise man’ (Finnb 18.18)

If the dative complement of *þykkja* is coreferent with the raised subject, it is replaced by the reflexive suffix on the verb:

- (42) a. nóttina eptir þá þóttisk hann sjá í svefni  
 night.A-the after then seemed.RFL he see in sleep.D  
 mann einn  
 man.A one  
 ‘The night after he thought he saw a man in his sleep’  
 (Hkr III.310.28)
- b. þykkjask þeir þar kenna Lúsa-Odda  
 seem.3P.RFL they.M there know Lusa-Oddi.A  
 ‘They think they recognize Lusa-Oddi there’ (Fbr 171.4)

Note that the reflexive form *þykkjask* is not a lexicalized reflexive; the reflexive suffix represents a dative argument, and therefore *þykkjask* is not accompanied by another dative. With *sýnask* and *virðask*, however, the *-sk* is lexicalized, and therefore a dative NP may appear.

- (43) jafnt er sem þér sýnisk  
 even.NEU.N is as you.D seems  
 ‘It is as you think’ (Nj 142.6)

As is apparent from some of the examples above, a raised subject may pass more than one level on its way to the final subject position. Thus in (38b) the subject comes from a lexical verb, *gera* ‘do’, which is in the complement of the auxiliary *hafa* ‘have’, which again is embedded under *þykkja*. In (44)

the subject *þessi tíðendi* comes from the adjective phrase, and has passed the infinitive *þykkja* in order to become the subject of the auxiliary *skulu* ‘shall’.

- (44) *þessi tíðendi skulu heldr þykkja frásagnarverð*  
 these tidings.N shall.3P rather seem telling-worth.P.NEU.N  
 ‘These events shall seem more worthy of record’ (Eg 223.20)

### 9.3.3 *Internal argument*

The subject of a sentence may also originate as an internal argument; that is, as the complement of a verb. This change from a complement to a subject also involves the change into nominative case of a NP which otherwise would appear as an accusative object of the same lexical verb in other constructions. This follows from the fact that only nominative and accusative are structural cases (cf. 3.1.3).

In some languages, there seems to be a syntactic distinction between two types of monovalent verbs: regular intransitive verbs, whose subject is an external argument, and ‘unaccusative’ verbs, whose sole argument is an internal argument, meaning that the argument is generated as a complement rather than as a specifier in D-structure. Unaccusative verbs in such languages are typically non-agentive verbs, and they exhibit syntactic properties different from regular intransitive verbs. It is not clear whether this distinction is syntactically relevant for Old Norse. There are, however, two sets of facts that might indicate such a difference. One is the use of perfect auxiliaries. In many languages, unaccusative verbs use the auxiliary ‘be’ to form the perfect, while other verbs use ‘have’. As we have seen already (in 8.3.2 and 8.3.3), *hafa* ‘have’ can be used with all verbs in Old Norse, but *vera* ‘be’ can also be used with some, and these are more or less the ones that show unaccusative behaviour in other languages.

- (45) a. *þeim er komit hafa á mínum dögum af Íslandi*  
 those.D who come have.3P on my days.D from Iceland.D  
 ‘those who have come from Iceland in my days’ (Finnb 37.2)  
 b. *nú er hér kominn Egill*  
 now is here come.M.N Egil.N  
 ‘Now Egil has come here’ (Eg 222.9)

The other kind of fact is word order: with the same type of verbs, the nominative subject may occasionally remain in object position; cf. 9.2.1 and the following example.

- (46) hér er kominn maðr til gistingar sá er  
 here is come.M.N man.N to lodging.G that.M.N. who  
 Þórólfr heitir  
 Thorolf.N is-called  
 ‘A man called Thorolf has come to spend the night here’  
 (Laxd 32.12)

The question of a possible distinction between unaccusative and regular intransitive verbs in Old Norse will not be pursued further here.

We will now look at subjects which clearly carry the semantic role of the object of the lexical verbs. All the verbs are non-finite, and the auxiliary *vera* ‘be’ or *verða* ‘become’ is always used. The three non-finite forms of the verb, perfect participle, present participle, and infinitive, occur in these constructions.

- (47) a. en síðan var í þeim sama stað kirkja gqr  
 and since was in that same place.D church.N made.F.N  
 ‘And later a church was built in that same place’ (Hkr I.347.11)  
 b. hverir hlutir elskandi eru  
 which parts.N loving.P.N are.3P  
 ‘which things should be loved’ (Kgs 43.38)  
 c. en yðr er þat sannast at segja  
 but you.P.D is that.N truest.NEU.N to tell  
 ‘But to tell you the absolute truth’ (Eg 34.13)

The type exemplified in (47a) is the regular passive construction. A structural accusative is obligatorily converted into a nominative subject in the passive. The other two constructions, which will both be called ‘gerunds’, have subjectless alternatives with an accusative object; cf. 9.4.1.

#### 9.3.4 *Passive*

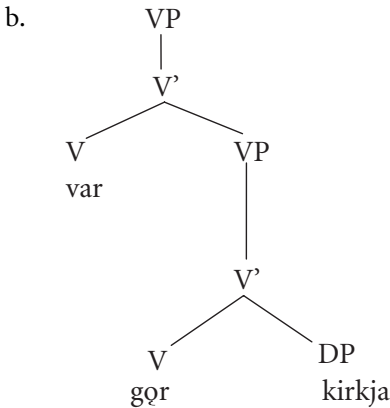
It was shown in 8.2.2 that the reflexive form of the verb may acquire a passive function. In the ‘classical’ Old Norse period this kind of passive construction is still unusual. The regular passive is formed by means of the perfect participle

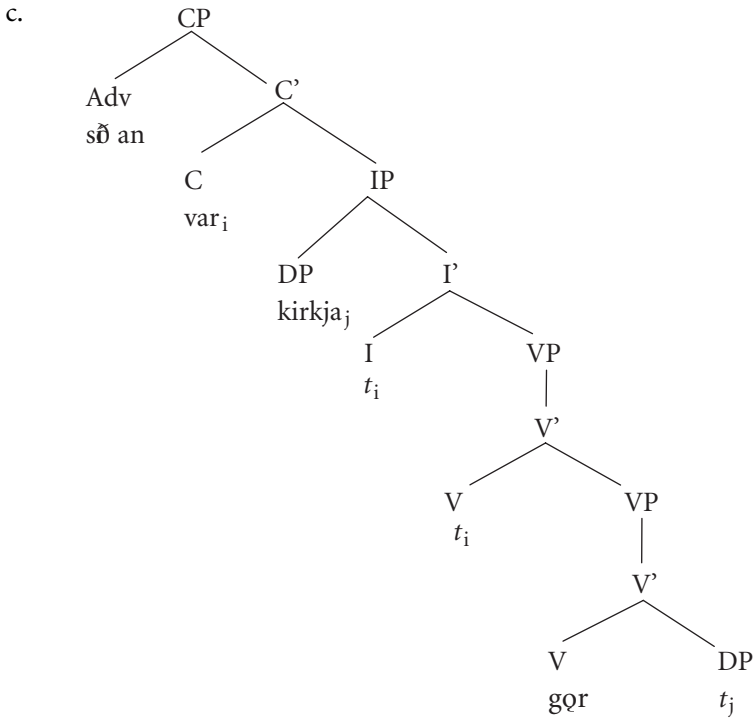
of the main verb and the auxiliary *vera* ‘be’ or *verða* ‘become’ (cf. 8.3.3):

- (48) a. fjórir hleifar brauðs eru honum færðir  
 four loaves.N bread.G are.3P him.D brought.P.M.N  
 hvern dag  
 each day.A  
 ‘He is brought four loaves of bread every day’ (Hkr II.232.10)
- b. þá var hann braut rekinn  
 then was he away driven.M.N  
 ‘Then he was driven away’ (Hóm 74.13)
- c. hefði hann eigi skapaðr verit  
 had.SUB he not created.M.N been  
 ‘had he not been created’ (Kgs 143.20)
- d. af því varð bæn hans heyrd  
 of that.D became prayer.N his heard.F.N  
 ‘Therefore his prayer was heard’ (Hóm 46.1)

Again, the auxiliary does not assign a role to an external argument. Neither does the perfect participle, which is a passive verb. The subject therefore has to come from somewhere else. The subject of a passive sentence is raised from the complement position of the main verb. Part of the D-structure of (49a)—an abbreviated version of (47a)—is depicted in (49b), while the S-structure is given in (49c).

- (49) a. síðan var kirkja gqr





The subject of a passive sentence may also originate ‘deeper down’, as in (50), where it is the D-structure complement of an embedded infinitive.

- (50) líkamr hans var til graptar ætlaðr at flytja  
 body.N his was to grave.G intended.M.N to move  
 ‘His body was going to be moved to a grave’ (Kgs 104.3)

Constructions with *vera* may have either a dynamic or a stative/resultative reading, as in modern English. The dynamic reading can, however, be made explicit through the use of the auxiliary *verða*. This is especially common with perfective verbs, where the use of *vera* might yield a resultative reading; cf. (51).

- (51) a. þeir er getnir verða í útlegð  
 those.M.N who begotten.P.M.N become.3P in exile.D  
 ‘those who will be begotten in exile’ (Kgs 77.27)



- b. ok munu þá Njálssynir af þeim sðkum drepnir  
 and will.3P then Njals-sons.N of those reasons.D killed.P.M.N  
 verða  
 become  
 ‘and then the sons of Njal will be killed for that reason’ (Nj 249.21)

The difference between an active sentence and its passive equivalent lies in the fact that the subject of the active sentence is suppressed in the passive. Occasionally the agent may be expressed as a prepositional phrase in passive sentences (cf. 8.5.2):

- (52) a. svá var Þorkell mikils metinn af konungi þann  
 so was Thorkel.N great.G valued.M.N of king.D that  
 vetr, at [...]  
 winter.A that  
 ‘Thorkel was so highly valued by the king that winter that ...’  
 (Laxd 219.10)
- b. er ek em af øllum gleymdr  
 when I am of all.P.D forgotten.M.N  
 ‘when I am forgotten by everyone’ (Barl 8.31)

This is very rarely found, however. The normal situation is for the agent to be omitted altogether, as in (48) above.

Passive sentences involve a participle, which is morphologically an adjective; the auxiliary is the same as in copular sentences, and the agent is usually suppressed in the passive. Therefore there is a minimal difference between passive sentences and sentences with an adjectival predicate. Since the auxiliary *vera* ‘be’ may also be used in the perfect tense of motion verbs, there is a minimal difference between the passive of motion verbs and the perfect active. Compare the passive sentence (53a), the copular sentence with an adjectival predicate (53b), and the active sentence (53c).

- (53) a. Óláfr var skírðr þar  
 Olaf.N was baptized.M.N there  
 ‘Olaf was baptized there’ (Hkr I.311.10)
- b. Óláfr var allra manna fríðastr  
 Olaf.N was all men.G most-handsome.M.N  
 ‘Olaf was the most handsome of all men’ (Hkr I.266.19)
- c. Óláfr var þar kominn  
 Olaf.N was there come.M.N  
 ‘Olaf had come there’ (Hkr I.312.12)

The main difference between the three sentences in (53) is in the D-structure, where the subject of the passive, (53a), is generated as the complement of the participle, since it has the semantic role of the object of the verb *skíra* ‘baptize’. The subjects of the other two sentences are generated as external arguments of the adjective *fríðastr* ‘handsome’, (53b), and of the verb *koma* ‘come’, (53c), respectively.

The only complement which can become the subject in the passive, is one which corresponds to a structural accusative in the active (cf. 3.1.3). This means that of two objects, only the accusative can become a nominative subject in the passive, and of two accusative objects, only the structural one can become a subject. The lexical cases are unaltered; cf. (48a) and the following:

- (54) a. var þeim gefit *ǫl* at drekka  
 was them.D given.NEU.N ale.N to drink  
 ‘They were given ale to drink’ (Eg 234.8)
- b. þá var *hverr þeira* sleginn líma-högg  
 then was each.N them.G beaten broom-blows.A  
 ‘Then each of them was beaten with a broom’ (Hkr III.252.14)

If the corresponding active sentence does not have an accusative object, the passive sentence is going to lack a subject; cf. 9.4.1.

### 9.3.5 *Gerunds*

The present participle or the infinitive with *at* may be used with *vera* to express obligation or possibility. The S-structure subject of *vera* is the D-structure object of the participle or the infinitive.

- (55) a. *hverir hlutir elskandi* eru fyrir sœmdar sakar ok  
 which parts.N loving.P.N are.3P for decency.G sakes.A and  
*góðrar meðferðar eða hverir hlutir hatandi* eru fyrir  
 good conduct.G or which parts.N hating.P.N are.3P for  
*úsœmdar sakar*  
 indecency.G sakes.A  
 ‘which things should be loved because of their decency and good  
 conduct or which things should be hated because of indecency’  
 (Kgs 43.38)
- b. er yðr þá eigi segjandi saga til  
 is you.P.D then not telling.F.N story.N to  
 ‘It will not be necessary to tell you the story’ (Hkr II.459.14)

- c. eru slíkar mínar at segja frá honum  
 are such.P.F.N mine.P.F.N to tell from him.D  
 ‘This is all I have to say about him’ (Gunnl 37.16)
- d. en yðr er þat sannast at segja  
 but you.P.D is that.N truest.NEU.N to tell  
 ‘But to tell you the absolute truth’ (Eg 34.13)

There is a similar kind of construction in which a predicative adjective is followed by an infinitive (cf. 6.2.3):

- (56) a. fōgr var sú kveðandi at heyra  
 beautiful.F.N was that singing.N to hear  
 ‘It was beautiful to hear that singing’ (Laxd 111.18)
- b. rýtningar eru fyrirboðnir at bera  
 daggers.N are.3P forbidden.P.M.N to carry  
 ‘It is forbidden to carry daggers’ (ML 60.2)

Here the subject, in this case *sú kveðandi* or *rýtningar*, can be analysed as raised from the complement position of the infinitive *heyra* or *bera*. The adjective is then predicated of the whole proposition ‘to hear that singing’ or ‘to carry daggers’. This is the interpretation which is implied in the translations in (56). An alternative analysis is to consider the subject the external argument of the adjective. According to the latter analysis, the object position of the infinitive would be an empty category bound by the subject NP, and the interpretation would instead be ‘that singing is beautiful’ or ‘daggers are forbidden’. It is difficult to decide between the two analyses on a formal basis, and in the absence of native speakers’ intuitions I will leave the question open.

#### 9.4 Subjectless sentences

In accordance with the subject definition given above (9.2), this section will deal with finite sentences without a nominative subject. A typical feature of Old Norse is that many of its sentences types and tokens do not possess a nominative subject. A sentence may lack a nominative subject for two basic reasons. Either the predicate does not assign a role to an external argument, and no other argument is raised to subject position; or the verb does assign a role to an external argument, but this argument is not phonologically expressed. These two cases will be treated separately below.

9.4.1 *No external argument*

Some verbs never assign an agent role or any other role to an external argument. They may or may not assign other roles appearing in oblique cases.

Verbs which denote various kinds of abstract or concrete processes independent of anybody's interference or intention, such as the lapse of time, change of seasons, the weather, natural events, etc., do not assign a role to any argument:

- (57) a. en er haustaði  
but when became-autumn  
'but when the autumn came' (Hkr II.8.16)
- b. fjarar nú undan skipinu  
ebbs now from-under ship.D-the  
'The tide now recedes from under the ship' (Laxd 42.1)
- c. súrnar í augunum  
becomes-sour in eyes.D-the  
'One's eyes are smarting' (Nj 303.28)

Then there are verbs whose sole argument is in an oblique case. This argument may have a patient or a recipient role, and the verb usually denotes a physical state or sensation:

- (58) a. svá *syfjar* mik hér at ek má víst eigi  
so makes-sleepy me.A here that I can.1S certain.NEU.A not  
upp standa  
up stand  
'I get so sleepy here that I can barely stand up' (Finnb 81.8)
- b. mik þyrsti  
me.A was-thirsty  
'I was thirsty' (Hóm 169.7)

Verbs denoting a lack of something, and verbs meaning 'happen, occur' are used with two accusative NPs:

- (59) a. mik skortir eigi hug  
me.A lacks not wish.A  
'I am not unwilling' (Eg 299.16)
- b. at mik hendi enga þá hluti  
that me.A happen.SUB no those things.A  
'that no such things happen to me' (Hkr I.406.2)

Verbs denoting mental processes may also take two oblique arguments:

- (60) a. Ragnhildi<sup>3</sup> dróttning dreyms drauma stóra  
 Ragnhild.A queen dreamt dreams.A great  
 ‘Queen Ragnhild had great dreams’ (Hkr I.93.4)
- b. minnir mik hinnar konunnar  
 remembers me.A that woman.G  
 ‘I remember that woman’ (Hkr III.501.14)

Verbs of this latter type may also have a subject; the object of the dream may be in the nominative, (61a),<sup>4</sup> and the verb *minna* may take an agent, in which case it should be glossed as ‘remind’, (61b).

- (61) a. sá maðr dreymir mik jafnan  
 that man.N dreams me.A constantly  
 ‘I dream of that man constantly’ (Hallfr 70.4)
- b. ek hefi þik á mint stundum  
 I have.1S you.A on reminded times.D  
 ‘I have reminded you of it sometimes’ (Laxd 179.23)

The verb *líka* ‘like, please’ takes the (human) experiencer in the dative, while the source of the favourable sentiment may be expressed as a prepositional phrase, as in (62a). It is perhaps more common, however, for the source to be expressed in the nominative, as in (62b), which cannot then strictly be called a subjectless sentence.

- (62) a. mér líkar til þín nǫkkuru betr  
 me.D likes to you.G some.NEU.D better.NEU  
 ‘I like you somewhat better’ (Laxd 227.11)
- b. hvat honum ok þeim líkar  
 what.N him.D and them.D likes  
 ‘what he and they like’ (DN II.229)

As we have seen in 9.3.4, passive constructions acquire their subject through the raising of a structural accusative into the subject position. When no such accusative NP is present in the active, the passive sentence lacks a nominative subject:

- (63) a. Þorsteini var þar vel fagnat  
 Thorstein.D was there well received.NEU.N  
 ‘Thorstein was well received there’ (Gunnl 7.17)

<sup>3</sup> Erroneously printed as *Ragnhildr* in the edition.

<sup>4</sup> This may indicate that the person appearing in your dream is an agent, intentionally entering the dream (Jon Gunnar Jørgensen, p. c.)

- b. lesit er á bókum guðlega áblásnum  
 read.NEU.N is on books.D godly on-blown  
 ‘The divinely inspired books say’ (Hóm 12.22)
- c. var farit eptir Þórði presti  
 was gone.NEU.N after Thord.D priest  
 ‘Thord the priest was sent for’ (Band 71.26)

In (63c) the main verb is one that may also take *vera* as a perfect auxiliary; cf. (52c). It is thus ambiguous and may be interpreted as a passive or an active perfect construction in which the subject is omitted (‘Someone had gone for Thord the priest’).

Similarly, gerunds may also involve verbs that do not take a structural accusative, and the result is again a subjectless sentence:

- (64) a. þess er fyrst leitanda hvaðan skurðarskírn  
 that.G is first searching.NEU.N whence circumcision.N  
 hófsk  
 raised.RFL  
 ‘First we must examine where circumcision comes from’  
 (Hóm 53.20)
- b. hvar beina okkarra er at leita  
 where bones.G our(DU) is to search  
 ‘where to look for our bones’ (Nj 301.29)

One difference between the passive and the gerund is that in the former, the raising of a structural accusative is obligatory. With present participles and infinitives the accusative object may remain, with the participle in an uninflected form, and the auxiliary in the 3rd person singular:

- (65) a. eigi er virðandi ásjónir manna í dómum,  
 not is considering countenances.A men.G in judgments.D  
 heldr sækina  
 rather case.A-the  
 ‘One should not consider people’s looks when judging them, but  
 rather the case’ (Hóm 20.25)
- b. nú er at verja sík  
 now is to defend oneself.A  
 ‘Now is the time to defend oneself’ (Nj 121.23)

9.4.2 *Unexpressed external argument*

Regular transitive or intransitive verbs may be used in such a way that there is no agent involved and no role assigned to an external argument. The semantic function of these verbs is very similar to the examples given in the previous section, in which the weather, natural events, sensory impressions, etc. are described:

- (66) a. þá gerði myrkt af nátt  
 then made dark.NEU.A at night.D  
 ‘Then it got dark at night’ (Eg 141.14)
- b. mart berr nú fyrir augu mér  
 much.NEU.A carries now before eyes.A me.D  
 ‘Many things are now brought before my eyes’ (Nj 153.12)

Some verbs may be used as regular transitive verbs with an agent and a patient. Alternatively they may be used in an ergative construction with a patient only in an oblique case, and with no agent involved. Compare the transitive (67a) which has an agent, and the ergative (67b) where no agent is expressed. The patient has the same case in both sentences.

- (67) a. Þormóðr hvelfir bátinum undir þeim  
 Thormod.N overturns boat.D-the under them.D  
 ‘Thormod overturns the boat under them’ (Fbr 187.10)
- b. skipinu hvelfir undir Kormáki ok hans mönnum  
 ship.D-the capsizes under Kormak.D and his men.D  
 ‘The ship capsizes under Kormak and his men’ (Korm 294)

Adjectives too may fail to assign an external role:

- (68) a. var þá myrkt af nátt  
 was then dark.NEU.N at night.D  
 ‘Then it was dark at night’ (Finnb 21.16)
- b. feitt er mér enn um hjarta-rottr  
 fat.NEU.N is me.D still about heart-roots.A  
 ‘There is still fat around my heart’s roots’ (Hkr II.504.4)

Even if there is an agent or another subject role involved, it may not be expressed, but may have to be inferred from the context instead. This is common when the subject is unspecified. Thus the Old Norse equivalent to the non-specific ‘one’ (German *man*, French *on*) is an empty subject position. This kind of construction is particularly common when a modal verb is involved:

- (69) a. skal þat barn út bera  
 shall that child.A out carry  
 ‘That child shall be exposed’ (Gunnl 6.4)

- b. má þar ekki stórskipum fara  
 can there not big-ships.D travel  
 ‘One cannot travel there with big ships’ (Hkr II.10.1)
- c. hér segir þat, at [...]   
 here says it.A that  
 ‘Here it says that . . .’ (Hkr II.37.3)

Old Norse is not a regular ‘*pro*-drop’ language. When the subject is omitted, its interpretation is usually as shown above. However, there are certain cases where a specified subject is deleted. In those cases it is usually recoverable from the context. First of all, the subject may be deleted with verbs in the imperative; this will be described in section 9.6.3. The subject may also be omitted under coreference with a NP in a preceding coordinated sentence. This happens regardless of the case or function of the coreferent NP in the preceding conjunct. It may be a subject, as in (70a, b), an accusative object, (70c), or a dative object, (70d). In (70e) the subject has been deleted under coreference with a preceding instrumental adverbial, and in (70f) with a genitive of a NP.

- (70) a. þá brá hann sverðinu hart ok títt ok  
 then drew he sword.D hard.NEU.A and quick.NEU.A and  
 hljóp í stofuna  
 ran into room.A-the  
 ‘Then he drew his sword hard and fast and ran into the room’  
 (Hkr II.252.5)
- b. þetta spurði Óláfr konung, ok líkaði honum  
 this.NEU.A asked Olaf.N king and pleased him.D  
 illa  
 badly  
 ‘King Olaf heard about this and he did not like it’ (Hkr II.96.11)
- c. þá skar Rognvaldr hár hans, en áðr hafði verið  
 then cut Rognvald hair.A his but before had been  
 úskorit ok úkembt tíu vetr  
 uncut.NEU.N and uncombed.NEU.N ten winters.A  
 ‘Then Rognvald cut his hair, but it had not been cut or combed  
 for ten years’ (Hkr I.130.11)
- d. þat líkaði henni allvel, ok þakkaði honum stórmensku  
 it.N pleased her.D all-well and thanked him.D generosity.A  
 sína  
 his.RFL  
 ‘She liked it very much and thanked him for his generosity’  
 (Laxd 9.3)



- e. síðan skaut hann Ásmundr at Ásbirni selsbana spjóti,  
 since shot he Asmund.N at Asbjorn.D Selsbani spear.D  
 ok kom á hann miðjan  
 and came on him.A middle  
 ‘Then Asmund shot at Asbjorn Selsbani with a spear, and it hit  
 him in the middle’ (Hkr II.270.6)
- f. var þat ráð konungs, at rjúfa leiðangrinn, ok gaf  
 was that.N advice.N king.G to break fleet.A-the and gave  
 þá hverjum leyfi heim at fara  
 then each.M.D permission.A home to go  
 ‘The king’s advice was to dismantle the fleet, and he gave every  
 man permission to go home’ (Hkr II.167.18)

A plural subject may be deleted in the second conjunct if one member of the group referred to is mentioned in the singular in the preceding conjunct:

- (71) a. hann þrífir hornin sinni hendi hvárt, ok  
 he grabs horns.A-the his.RFL hand.D each.NEU.A and  
*eigask* við lengi  
 fight.RFL.3P with long  
 ‘He grabs one horn with each hand, and they fight for a long time’  
 (Finnb 14.8)
- b. fekk Ásbjorn byrleiði gott ok lagði at um  
 got Asbjorn.N sailing-wind.A good and laid at in  
 kveldit í Karmtsundi við Ogvaldsnes ok *váru*  
 evening.A-the in Karmtsund.D by Ogvaldsnes.A and were.3P  
 þar um nóttina  
 there in night.A-the  
 ‘Asbjorn had a favourable sailing-wind and docked at Ogvaldsnes  
 in Karmtsund in the evening, and they stayed there during the  
 night’ (Hkr II.247.22)

A subject in a subordinate clause may sometimes, but not regularly, be deleted under coreference with a phrase in the matrix sentence:

- (72) a. þá tóku þeir Skarpheðinn ok Kári ok Grímr  
 then took.3P they.M Skarphedin.N and Kari.N and Grim.N  
 brandana jafnskjótt sem ofan duttu  
 brands.A-the even-quick.NEU.A as down fell.3P  
 ‘Then Skarphedin, Kari, and Grim caught the brands as quickly as  
 they fell down’ (Nj 302.10)

- b. Óðinn vissi um alt jarðfé, hvar folgit  
 Odin.N knew about all earth-goods.A where hidden.NEU.N  
 var  
 was  
 ‘Odin knew where all buried treasures were hidden’ (Hkr I.19.10)

Apart from these types of cases, deletion of a specified subject is rare, but the following examples have been found:

- (73) a. en um sumarit foeddi hon meybarn.  
 and in summer.A-the gave-birth she girl-child.A  
 Glúmr spurði hvat heita skyldi  
 Glum.N asked what.N be-called should  
 ‘And in the summer she gave birth to a baby girl. Glum asked what she would be called’ (Nj 39.11)
- b. en áðr konungr kvæmi af skóginum, lét hann  
 but before king.N came.SUB from forest.D-the lost he  
 marga menn, ok margir urðu sárir;  
 many men.A and many.P.M.N became.3P wounded.P.M.N  
 kom síðan um kveldit til skipa  
 came later in evening.A-the to ships.G  
 ‘But before the king came out of the forest he lost many men, and many were wounded; he reached the ships later in the evening’  
 (Hkr II.12.14)
- c. varð konungr svá óðr, at honum mátti engu orði  
 became king.N so mad that him.D could no word.D  
 svara  
 answer  
 ‘The king became so mad that (she) could not answer him with a single word’ (Hkr II.120.20)

## 9.5 Clausal subjects

The subject role may be filled by a clause. Since I have defined the subject as a phrase in the nominative case, such sentences are technically subjectless, because clauses are not case-marked. But for convenience and in accordance with common practice I will still refer to such clauses as subjects.

- (74) a. Þorsteini var sagt at fallnir væri  
 Thorstein.D was told.NEU.N that fallen.P.M.N were.SUB.3P  
*búðarveggir hans*  
 booth-walls.N his  
 ‘Thorstein was told that the walls of his booth might have fallen down’ (Gunnl 3.6)
- b. eigi er undarligt, at þú sér kallaðr Óláfr  
 not is strange.NEU.N that you.N be.SUB.2S called.M.N Olaf.N  
*digri*  
 stout.DEF  
 ‘It is no wonder that you are called Olaf the stout’ (Hkr II.85.15)
- c. eigi þykki mér skipta, í hvárum flokki ek em  
 not seems me.D concern in which party.D I am  
 ‘I do not care which side I am on’ (Hkr II.454.2)
- d. hǫrmuligt er slíkt at vita  
 sad.NEU.N is such.NEU.A to know  
 ‘It is sad to know such a thing’ (Hkr III.512.10)

It is clear from these examples that finite and non-finite clauses can function as subjects.

It is rather rare for clauses to occur in an argument function in this way. It is much more common for the clause to be a complement of the demonstrative *þat* ‘that’ (cf. 5.1.2 and 8.4.1).

- (75) a. satt er þat, at mjök er niðr fallit  
 true.NEU.N is that.N that much is down fallen.NEU.N  
 ríki Haralds konungs ins hárfagra  
 kingdom.N Harald.G king the hair-fine.DEF  
 ‘It is true that King Harald the Fine-haired’s kingdom has suffered a great decline’ (Hkr II.51.14)
- b. er þat minn vili at svá gerim vér allir  
 is that.N my wish.N that so do.SUB.1P we all  
 ‘It is my wish that we all do so’ (Hkr II.319.18)

Formally, then, the sentences in (75) are not subjectless; the subject is a determiner phrase in the nominative.

## 9.6 Sentence types

In this section we will look at main sentences with special semantic or pragmatic functions, to see how those functions are expressed grammatically.

## 9.6.1 Negation

Sentence negation is expressed by means of a negative sentence adverb.<sup>5</sup> The general negation adverb is *eigi* ‘not’. The negative adverb is usually left-adjoined to VP, which means that it follows the subject and the finite verb, which have been moved to IP or CP. The negation may also be topicalized.

- (76) a. þat mæli ek eigi  
 that.A say.1s I not  
 ‘I am not saying that’ (Nj 219.14)
- b. ef herra Sigvatr er eigi í dalinum  
 if lord Sigvat.N is not in valley.D-the  
 ‘if Lord Sigvat is not in the valley’ (DN II.100)
- c. eigi vil ek þat  
 not want.1s I it.A  
 ‘I do not want it’ (Nj 250.13)

The negative suffix *-gi*, which is found in the word *eigi*, is no longer productive in Old Norse, but it can be recognized as an element in many lexicalized negation words, such as *engi* ‘none’, *hvárgi* ‘neither’, *hvergi* ‘nowhere’, *aldrigi* ‘never’.

- (77) a. engi maðr þorði með kaupferðum at fara  
 no man.N dared with trading-voyages.D to go  
 ‘Nobody dared travel with the trading voyages’ (OH 36.8)
- b. vildi hvárgi flýja  
 wanted neither.M.N flee  
 ‘Neither wanted to flee’ (OH 61.6)
- c. hvergi mun ek fara  
 nowhere will.1s I go  
 ‘I will not go anywhere’ (Nj 165.17)

The negated determiner *engi*, and especially its neuter form *ekki* (< \**eitgi*), may have a function close to that of the sentence negator, as in (78a, b). But *ekki* can also be used with an intransitive verb, as in (78c), and in this situation it functions as a regular sentence negator, equivalent to *eigi*.

- (78) a. engi var hann afreksmaðr  
 no.M.N was he achievement-man.N  
 ‘He was no hero/He was not a great man’ (Gunnl 1.6)
- b. er frá honum ekki sagt annat  
 is from him.D nothing.NEU.N said other.NEU.N

<sup>5</sup> In early texts negation may also be expressed by a clitic *-a* or *-at* on the verb.

‘Nothing else is said about him/Other things are not said about him’ (Hkr I.32.3)

- c. hann vildi ekki vaka eptir henni  
 he wanted not be-awake after her.D  
 ‘He did not want to lie awake for her’ (Hkr I.39.3)

### 9.6.2 *Interrogative*

In this section we will examine independent questions. Dependent questions will be treated in 10.1.3. In some sentence questions the topic position is empty, with the result that they appear to be verb initial, starting with the finite verb:

- (79) a. kantu nōkkut segja oss til Hákonar jarls?  
 can.2S-you.N some.NEU.A tell us.D to Hakon.G earl  
 ‘Can you tell us anything about Earl Hakon?’ (Hkr I.328.4)
- b. ok gekk þú þó ekki haltr?  
 and walked.2S you.N though not lame.M.N  
 ‘But you were not limping?’ (Gunnl 20.2)

Disjunctive questions are introduced by the question-word *hvárt* ‘whether’ in the topic position, and followed by an alternative starting with *eða* ‘or’:

- (80) a. hvárt er, at engi yðvar veit hvern þenna  
 whether is that none.M.N you.P.G knows who.N this  
 búning hefir átt, eða þorið þér eigi at segja mér?  
 dress.A has owned or dare.2P you.P.N not to tell me.D  
 ‘Is it that none of you knows who has owned this dress, or do you not dare to tell me?’ (Nj 286.20)
- b. hvárt vilið þér gefa honum upp, eða skulu vér  
 whether want.2P you.P.N give him.D up or shall.1P we  
 nú fara at honum ok drepa hann?  
 now go to him.D and kill him.A  
 ‘Do you want to forgive him, or shall we go for him and kill him?’  
 (Nj 307.18)

The second part of the disjunctive question may be omitted, while *hvárt* in the first part is kept. This word then comes to function as an introduction to a regular sentence question:

- (81) a. hvárt grætr þú nú, Skarphedinn?  
 whether cry.2S you.N now Skarphedin.N  
 ‘Are you crying now, Skarphedin?’ (Nj 303.27)

- b. hvárt reiðið þér svá slæiga sverðin, er ek  
 whether swing.2P YOU.P.N so slowly swords.A-the as I  
 sé, at ekki bíta yðr?  
 see.1S that not bite.3P YOU.P.D  
 ‘Are you swinging your swords weakly? For I see that they do not  
 bite for you’ (Hkr I.449.8)

Phrasal questions contain a phrase consisting of a question word by itself or in combination with other words. The question word is always topicalized. The subject may be questioned, as may any complement or adjunct within the verb phrase, except sentence adverbials and the finite verb itself. Argument phrases are questioned by means of the interrogative pronouns *hverr* ‘who, which, what’, as in (82), or *hvat* ‘what’; cf. (83):

- (82) a. hverr fell af láginni?  
 who.M.N fell off log.D-the  
 ‘Who fell off the log?’ (Hkr I.336.9)
- b. hvert er þá þitt ráð Hákon?  
 which.NEU.N is then your advice.N Hakon.N  
 ‘What is your advice, then, Hakon?’ (Hkr I.270.10)
- c. hverjum hefir þú manni mest unnt?  
 which.M.D have.2S you.N man.D most loved  
 ‘Which man have you loved the most?’ (Laxd 231.9)
- d. hvern kost vilið þér nú gera Ingjaldi?  
 which deal.A want.2P YOU.P.N now make Ingjald.D  
 ‘What terms do you want to offer Ingjald?’ (Nj 307.17)
- e. frá hverjum er saga sú er hann segir?  
 from whom.M.D is story.N that which he tells  
 ‘Who is it about, the story that he is telling?’ (Fbr 158.7)
- (83) a. hvat er nú, Sveinn?  
 what.N is now Svein.N  
 ‘What now, Svein?’ (Hkr II.148.3)
- b. hvat segir karl?  
 what.A says man.N  
 ‘What does the man say?’ (Hkr I.328.3)

In (82e) the entire prepositional phrase is fronted. Preposition stranding does not seem to occur in interrogative sentences.

The dative of *hvat* ‘what’, *hví*, is used either by itself or governed by the preposition *fyrir* ‘for’ in the sense of ‘why’:

- (84) a. *hví ert þú hér komin svá snemma?*  
 what.D are.2S you.N here come.F.N so early  
 ‘Why have you come here so early?’ (Nj 227.3)
- b. *fyrir hví tóktu hestinn?*  
 for what.D took.2S-you.N horse.A-the  
 ‘Why did you take the horse?’ (Fbr 47.2)

Other adverbial phrases are questioned by means of interrogative adverbs: *hvar* ‘where’, *hvaðan* ‘from where’, *hvé* ‘how’, *hvé nær* ‘when’, *hversu* ‘how’, *hvernig* ‘how’:

- (85) a. *hvar er nu guð þinn, konungr?*  
 where is now god.N your king.N  
 ‘Where is your god now, king?’ (Hkr II.234.4)
- b. *hvé nær mæltuð þér þetta fyrr?*  
 when said.2P you.P.N this.NEU.A before  
 ‘When did you say this before?’ (Nj 210.17)
- c. *hvernig svaraðir þú?*  
 how answered.2S you.N  
 ‘How did you answer?’ (Eg 15.14)

Questioned phrases can also be extracted from subordinate clauses and moved to the topic position of the matrix sentence.

- (86) *hvat er þér best hent at vinna?*  
 what.A is you.D best fit.NEU.N to do  
 ‘What are you best at doing?’ (Finnb 80.14)

### 9.6.3 *Imperative*

In sentences with the verb in the imperative the subject usually follows the verb, and the 2nd person singular pronoun is often cliticized to the verb, as in (87b):

- (87) a. *dvel þú eigi at snúask til dróttins þins*  
 delay.IMP.2S you.N not to turn.RFL to lord.G your  
 ‘Do not hesitate to turn to your lord’ (Hóm 13.14)
- b. *farðu síðan suðr til Dyflinnar*  
 go.IMP.2S-you.N later south to Dublin.G  
 ‘Then go south to Dublin’ (Eg 104.10)

- c. f̄orum vér á brott  
 go.IMP.1P we away  
 ‘Let us go away’ (Eg 191.24)
- d. farið þér til móts við Þórhǫllusonu  
 go.IMP.2P you.P.N to meeting.G with Thorhalla-sons.A  
 ‘Go and meet the sons of Thorhalla’ (Laxd 159.13)

The topic position is usually empty, as in the examples in (87), but it may also be filled by an adverbial:

- (88) a. þá tak þú af tvá hluti  
 then take.IMP.2S you.N off two parts.A  
 ‘Then withdraw two parts’ (Kgs 7.1)
- b. en ef honum þykkja á því úhægendi þá fari  
 but if him.D seem.3P on it.D problems.N then go.IMP.2P  
 þér hingat  
 you.P.N thither  
 ‘But if he finds problems with it, then you go there’ (Dpl 172.16)

The subject may also be deleted:

- (89) a. gakk til borða með konungi  
 go.IMP.2S to tables.G with king.D  
 ‘Go and dine with the king’ (Kgs 57.34)
- b. farið nú þar eptir honum ok drepið hann  
 go.IMP.2P now after him.D and kill.IMP.2P him.A  
 ‘Now go after him and kill him’ (Eg 80.1)

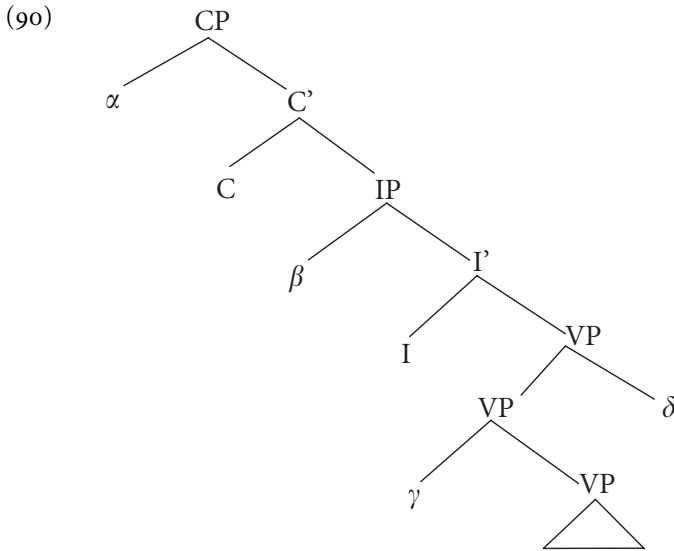
Such omission is, as we have seen in (87) and (88), not obligatory. It is in fact more common to include the pronoun with the imperative than to omit it.

## 9.7 Word order

Old Norse is usually considered a language that permits ‘free’ word order. The impression of free word order is due to several factors. Firstly, the specifier positions in the sentence structure are available to various phrasal categories; and secondly, there are ample possibilities of adjunction both to the left and to the right at various levels in the structure. A further contributing factor is that the language allows the movement of heads leaving their complements behind, and the movement of modifiers.



We have already treated word order within the NP at various points in Chapters 4 and 5, and within the VP in section 8.4.6. In this section we will examine the principles that determine the word order at the level of the finite sentence beyond the NP and above the VP. Patterns that are specific to subordinate clauses will be treated in section 10.1.2. Within the model adopted in this book, the word order patterns at this level are determined by what kinds of elements can move to the specifier positions of CP and IP, and by what kinds of adjunctions are possible. The adjunctions in question can be described as adjunctions to VP (cf. footnote 2). This means that left-adjoined elements follow the subject and the finite verb and precede all remaining parts of the VP; and right-adjoined elements follow all other parts of the sentence. Consider the following phrase-marker with all relevant positions included:



The positions where elements can be moved to are marked with Greek letters. The positions  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are specifier positions,  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$  are adjointed positions. As we have seen already in 9.2.1, the subject of the sentence may occupy any of these positions, with the possible exception of  $\gamma$ . C and I are head positions, one of which is occupied by the finite verb, as described in 9.1.2.

In section 9.7.1 we will look at topicalization, which is movement to the specifier position of CP, the position marked  $\alpha$ . Section 9.7.2 deals with movement to the specifier position of IP, marked  $\beta$ . Sections 9.7.3 and 9.7.4 treat adjunction to the left and right, respectively, positions  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$ .

9.7.1 *Topicalization*

The position preceding the finite verb in main sentences, position  $\alpha$  in (90), is a topic position. In interrogative sentences it is either empty or filled by a question-word or phrase (cf. 9.6.2); in imperative sentences it is also usually empty. In declarative sentences it may be filled by any phrasal category or be left empty. The choice of topic depends on pragmatic or discourse-functional properties, although it is not a clear requirement that the topic carry given information; cf. (22) above.

The topic position may be left empty in declarative sentences, with the consequence that the sentence starts with the finite verb; cf. (8) above. Topicless sentences are particularly common in continuous narratives; consider (91a–e), which are consecutive parts of the same text sequence.

- (91) a. [síðan skaut hann Ásmundr at Ásbirni . . .] fell Ásbjörn  
 since shot he Asmund.N at Asbjorn.D fell Asbjorn.N  
 dauðr frá stýrinu  
 dead.M.N from helm.D-the  
 ‘Then Asmund shot at Asbjorn. Asbjorn fell dead from the helm’  
 (Hkr II.270.6)
- b. fóru síðan hvárir-tveggju leiðar sinnar  
 went.3P since each.P.M.N-two.DEF.G ways.A their.RFL  
 ‘Then both of them went their own way’ (Hkr II.270.9)
- c. fluttu þeir lík Ásbjarnar norðr á Prándarnes  
 carried.3P they.M body.A Asbjorn.G north on Thrandarnes.A  
 ‘They conveyed Asbjorn’s body north to Thrandarnes’  
 (Hkr II.270.9)
- d. lét þá Sigriðr senda eptir Þóri hund til Bjarkeyjar  
 let then Sigrid.N send after Thori.A hound to Bjarkey.G  
 ‘Then Sigrid had Thori hound sent for from Bjarkey’  
 (Hkr II.270.10)
- e. kom hann til  
 came he to  
 ‘He arrived’ (Hkr II.270.11)

When the conjunction *ok* ‘and’ introduces a main sentence, it is usually followed directly by the finite verb:<sup>6</sup>

- (92) a. ok sá allir dyrð guðs koma  
 and saw.3P all.P.M.N glory.A god.G come  
 ‘And they all saw the glory of God coming’ (Hóm 95.17)

<sup>6</sup> The high frequency of sentences introduced by *ok* followed by the finite verb, has led some scholars to analyse *ok* as an adverb occupying the topic position. This might seem appropriate in view of the origin of this word, which is the adverb *auk* ‘also’.

- b. ok var hann til konungs tekinn um alt land, ok  
 and was he to king.G taken.M.N in all land.A and  
 varð alt lands-fólk því fegit  
 became all lands-people.N that.D happy.NEU.N  
 ‘And he was taken as king throughout the whole land, and all the  
 people of the land were very happy about that’ (Hkr III.12.4)

## (1) Topicalization of phrases

The topic position may be filled by a phrase which is moved there from another position in the sentence. The most common topics are subjects and adverbial adjuncts, but other categories are also topicalized.

## (1) Subject:

- (93) a. ek em svá kominn til yðars fundar  
 I am thus come.M.N to your(P) meeting.G  
 ‘I have thus come to meet you’ (Kgs 3.1)  
 b. Óðinn vissi um alt jarðfé  
 Odin.N knew about all earth-goods.A  
 ‘Odin knew about all the buried treasure’ (Hkr I.19.10)

## (2) Adverbial adjunct:

- (94) a. nú hefi ek þýddan draum þinn  
 now have.1s I interpreted.M.A dream.A your  
 ‘Now I have interpreted your dream’ (Gunnl 5.16)  
 b. á sjau náttum fór herboðit frá inum  
 on seven nights.D went war-summons.N-the from the  
 synsta vita í ina nørstu þinghá  
 southernmost beacon.D in the northernmost district.A  
 ‘In seven days the summons for war went from the southernmost  
 beacon to the northernmost district’ (Hkr I.199.1)

## (3) Negation:

- (95) a. eigi drap ek bróður þinn  
 not killed.1s I brother.A your  
 ‘I did not kill your brother’ (Nj 44.17)  
 b. ekki hræðumsk ek þat  
 not fear.1s I that.A  
 ‘I am not afraid of that’ (Nj 87.3)

## (4) Complement of verb:

- (96) a. fjóra menn sendi hon fjögurra vegna í byggðina  
 four men.A sent she four directions.G in district.A-the  
 ‘She sent four men in four different directions in the district’  
 (Hkr II.43.4)

- b. ok þeim mun hon gipt vera  
and that.M.D will she married.F.N be  
'And she will be married to him' (Gunnl 5.16)
- c. í Svíþjóð eru stórheruð mǫrg  
in Sweden.D are.3P big-districts.N many  
'In Sweden there are many large districts' (Hkr I.10.2)
- d. mik skortir eigi hug  
me.A lacks not wish.A  
'I am not unwilling' (Eg 299.16)

## (5) Predicate complement:

- (97) a. Þorsteinn hét maðr  
Thorstein.N was-called man.N  
'There was a man called Thorstein' (Gunnl 1.1)
- b. betra er þér at vera góðum  
better.NEU.N is you.D to be good.M.D  
'It is better for you to be good' (Hóm 23.20)
- c. at sómamanni hefi ek þik reyndan  
at honour-man.D have.1S I you.A experienced.M.A  
'I have found you an honourable man' (Laxd 26.14)

## (6) Complement of preposition:

- (98) þess máttu Gautar illa án vera  
that.G could.3P Gauts.N badly without be  
'It was hard for the Gauts to do without that' (Hkr II.95.2)

This last kind of topicalization, leading to preposition stranding, seems to be very rare in Old Norse.

A phrase can also be extracted from a subordinate clause to become the topic of the matrix sentence. Both finite and non-finite clauses are open to this kind of extraction. For example:

- (99) a. þau orð bað Ásta at vit skyldim bera  
those words.A asked Asta.N that we.DU.N should.SUB.1P bring  
þér  
you.D  
'Asta asked us to bring you these words' (Hkr II.44.8)
- b. eitt sumar er þat sagt at skip kom af  
one summer.A is that.N said.NEU.N that ship.N came from  
hafi í Gufárós  
sea.D in Gufaros.A  
'It is said that one summer a ship came from the sea into Gufaros'  
(Gunnl 2.9)

- c. þenna dag bauð Bonefatius pafi allri kristni  
 this day.A ordered Bonefatius.N pope all Christendom.D  
 at halda hátíðligan  
 to keep festive.M.A  
 ‘Pope Bonefatius ordered the whole of Christendom to celebrate  
 this day’ (Hóm 143.31)

There are also cases where an adverbial is extracted and moved into the matrix sentence without being topicalized:

- (100) þat er sagt eitt vár, at Óláfr lýsti  
 that.N is said.NEU.N one spring.A that Olaf.N announced  
 því fyrir Þorgerði, at hann ætlar útan  
 that.D for Thorgerd.D that he intends from-out  
 ‘It is said that one spring Olaf told Thorgerd that he intended to  
 go abroad’ (Laxd 81.1)

The element in the topic position may be a resumption of an immediately preceding phrase, thus resulting in a ‘double’ topic. There are a few examples of a pronoun repeating a noun phrase, as in (101a, b), but by far the most common resumptive word is the adverb *þá* ‘then’, which is used to repeat not only adverbial phrases and clauses, as in (101c, d), but even argument noun phrases, as in (101e).

- (101) a. hræzla guðs hon rekr á braut hræzlu helvitis  
 fear.N god.G she drives away fear.A hell.G  
 ‘The fear of God drives away the fear of Hell’ (Hóm 14.23)
- b. því at Óttarr skáld, systurson Sigvats, hann hafði  
 that.D that Ottar.N poet sister-son.N Sigvat.G he had  
 þar lengi verit í kærleikum með Óláfi Svía-konungi  
 there long been in friendships.D with Olaf.D Swede-king  
 ‘because Ottar the poet, Sigvat’s nephew, had long been on  
 friendly terms with Olaf, King of the Swedes’ (Hkr II.177.2)
- c. eptir þínsl ok andlát hins helga Óláfs konungs, þá  
 after torture.A and death.A the holy Olaf.G king then  
 var líkamr hans tekinn þegar ok fluttr til  
 was body.N his taken.M.N immediately and moved.M.N to  
 húss nokkurs  
 house.G some  
 ‘After the torture and death of the holy King Olaf his body was  
 immediately taken away and moved to a certain house’  
 (Hóm 112.8)

- d. en er Þórir heyrði þetta sagt, þá var  
 but when Thori.N heard this.NEU.N said.NEU.N then was  
 very annan veg en hann hugði  
 much other way.A than he thought  
 ‘But when Thori heard this, it was very different from what he  
 (had) thought’ (Hkr I.348.2)
- e. þau skip er næst lágu þeim, þá kómu  
 those.NEU.A ships which closest lay.3P them.D then came.3P  
 þeir á stafnljám  
 they.M on stem-hooks.D  
 ‘Those ships that were closest they grabbed with hooks’  
 (Hkr II.7.17)

## (ii) Topicalization of heads

A special feature of Old Norse syntax is the topicalization of heads of phrases, whereby the complement is left behind in its base position.

- (102) a. *sú* mun þér *mín þjónosta* hallkvæmst  
 that.F.N will you.D my service.N most-useful.F.N  
 ‘That service of mine will be most useful to you’ (Hkr II.89.5)
- b. *þau* skal segja *orð* *mín maðr manni*  
 those.NEU.A shall tell words.A my man.N man.D  
 ‘Those words of mine shall be told from man to man’  
 (Hkr II.262.19)
- c. *væta* var á *mikil* um daginn  
 wetness.N was on great.F.N in day.A-the  
 ‘It was very wet during the day’ (Hkr II.231.10)
- d. *styrks* eiga ván *af Skota-konungi*  
 support.G have hope.A of Scots-king.D  
 ‘have hope of support from the king of the Scots’ (Hkr II.210.20)
- e. ok *af* hefir þú mik ráðit *brekvísi* við þik  
 and off have.2S you.N me.A advised importunity.D with you.A  
 ‘And you have taught me not to be importunate with you’  
 (Laxd 98.14)
- f. *sjá* má ek þik  
 see can.1S I you.A  
 ‘I can see you’ (Laxd 125.19)
- g. *heyra* skal ek yðr láta, konungr, *bæn* þá  
 hear shall.1S I you.P.A let king.N request.A that  
 ‘I shall let you hear that request, O king’ (Hkr II.158.17)

All the examples in (102) show various head categories in the topic position, with their complements positioned further to the right. In (102a, b) the topics are determiners separated from their NP complements; in (102c) a noun is separated from its modifying adjective; in (102d) a head noun is separated from its PP complement; in (102e) a preposition is separated from its complement; and in (102f, g) there are non-finite verbs in the topic position, separated from their objects.

(iii) Topicalization of modifiers

Even modifiers may be singled out and topicalized. Modifiers of nouns may be topicalized, leaving the rest of the modified phrase behind. The most common case is the topicalization of an adjective, as in (103a) or a quantifier; for example (103b, c). In (103d, e), adverbs modifying adjectives are topicalized.

- (103) a. *góðan eigum vér konung*  
 good.M.A have.IP we king.A  
 ‘We have a good king’ (Hkr II.464.1)
- b. *engi var hann skarts-maðr ok heldr fámálugr*  
 no.M.N was he vanity-man.N and rather quiet.M.N  
 ‘He was not vain and rather quiet’ (Hkr II.44.2)
- c. *hversu margar vilDIR þú kÝr eiga?*  
 how many.P.F.A wanted.2S you.N cows.A own  
 ‘How much livestock did you want to have?’ (Hkr II.133.11)
- d. *vel var Sveinn jarl vingaðr við lenda men*  
 well was Svein.N earl friendly.M.N with landed men.A  
 ‘Earl Svein was on very friendly terms with the landed men’  
 (Hkr II.66.8)
- e. *svá var Þorkell mikils metinn af konungi þann*  
 so was Thorkel.N great.G valued.M.N from king.D that  
 vetr, at [...] winter.A that  
 ‘Thorkel was so highly valued by the king that winter that . . .’  
 (Laxd 219.10)

### 9.7.2 Stylistic fronting

The specifier position of IP (‘Spec-IP’), marked  $\beta$  in (90), is the position immediately after the finite verb in main sentences and between the complementizer and the finite verb in subordinate clauses. In normal cases, the subject moves to this position, and this is where non-topicalized subjects

usually appear in an unmarked surface structure, as in most of the sentences in (95)–(103) above.

Other sentence elements may also appear in this position, both in main sentences and in finite subordinate clauses, as a result of stylistic fronting. This occurs first of all in subjectless sentences, where the subject position is ‘vacant’:

- (104) a. *má þar ekki stórskipum fara*  
 can there not big-ships.D travel  
 ‘One cannot travel there with big ships’ (Hkr II.10.1)
- b. *en má þó eigi synja henni*  
 but can though not deny her.D  
 ‘But she can still not be denied it’ (Korm 293)
- c. *eina dottur er Droplaug hét*  
 one daughter.A who Droplaug.N was-called  
 ‘one daughter called Droplaug’ (Dpl 144.29)
- d. *lágu hestarnir á kafi annat skeið, svá at draga*  
 lay.3P horses.N-the on snow.D other time so that pull  
*varð upp*  
 became up  
 ‘The horses sank into the drifts now and again, so that they had to be pulled out’ (Eg 260.23)
- e. *trúið á goð vart, er alt hefir ráð*  
 believe.IMP.2P on god.A our who all.NEU.A has condition.A  
*yðart í hendi*  
 your(P) in hand.D  
 ‘believe in our god, who has your life in his hands’ (Hkr II.234.12)

In (104a, b) there are subjectless sentences with an adverbial in the subject position. In (104c) there is a relative clause with a relativized subject and the predicate complement in the subject position. In (104d) there is a subordinate clause without a subject, and here a non-finite verb is fronted. And in (104e), a quantifier has been fronted, leaving the rest of the NP behind. Even in sentences where the subject is present elsewhere, a non-subject may occupy Spec-IP:

- (105) a. *ok finna hann aðrir menn á djúpi*  
 and find.3P him.A other men.N on deep.D  
 ‘And other men find it in deep water’ (ML 147.13)
- b. *var þeim gefinn dagverður*  
 was them.D given.M.N day-meal.N  
 ‘They were given breakfast’ (Hkr II.333.15)



- c. at *fallnir* væri búðarveggir hans  
 that fallen.P.M.N were.SUB.3P booth-walls.N his  
 ‘that the walls of his booth might have fallen down’ (Gunnl 3.6)
- d. var *hans þá* norðan ván  
 was him.G then from-north expectation.N  
 ‘He was then expected to come from the north’ (Hkr II.97.12)
- e. sem *nú* hefi ek í framsögu sakar minnar  
 as now have.1S I in presentation case.G my  
 ‘as I now have in the presentation of my case’ (Nj 351.4)

In (105a, b), Spec-IP is occupied by an object, in (105c) by a non-finite verb, in (105d) by the complement of the NP functioning as the subject of the sentence, and in (105e) Spec-IP is occupied by an adverbial. In (105a) and (105e) the subject remains in the specifier of VP, and in the other sentences in (105) it is extraposed and adjoined to the right.

### 9.7.3 *Left adjunction*

Different kinds of adverbials, especially sentence adverbials, are adjoined to the left of VP, the position marked  $\gamma$  in (90). On the surface, these appear immediately after the finite verb in subordinate clauses, as in (106a), and in main sentences they follow a non-topicalized subject, as in (106b), or whatever else appears in Spec-IP. The adverbials in question are primarily sentence adverbials, including negation, but other free adverbials also occur, as in (106c–e).

- (106) a. ef herra Sigvatr er *eigi* í dalinum  
 if lord Sigvat.N is not in valley.D-the  
 ‘if Lord Sigvat is not in the valley’ (DN II.100)
- b. er hon *eigi* vakið  
 is she not woken.F.N  
 ‘She is not woken up’ (Fbr 178.1)
- c. hann var *þar* lögmaðr  
 he was there law-man.N  
 ‘He was a lawyer there’ (Hkr II.182.21)
- d. Þorgautr skarði hafði *um haustit* borit njóns  
 Thorgaut.N Skardi had in autumn.A-the carried spying  
 um farar Guðleiks  
 of voyages.A Gudleik.G  
 ‘In the autumn Thorgaut Skardi had been spying on Gudleik’s  
 voyages’ (Hkr II.99.7)

- e. Þorgeirr fagnaði *vel* konungi ok hans mönnum  
 Þorgeir.N received well king.D and his men.D  
 ‘Þorgeir received the king and his men well’ (Hkr II.451.11)

In rare cases a sentence adverbial may intervene between the finite verb and the subject. This is possible if the subject remains in VP:

- (107) a. þat vitu *ok* allir menn  
 it.A know.3P also all men.N  
 ‘Everybody knows it, too’ (ML 32.3)  
 b. gjaldi *þó* umboðsmaðr jammikit.NEU.A af  
 pay.SUB though commission-man.N equally-big of  
 sínu  
 his.RFL.NEU.D  
 ‘The commissioner shall still pay an equal amount from his own means’ (ML 108.16)

More than one element may be adjoined to the left of VP:

- (108) a. at þeir rænti *hann ekki*  
 that they.M robbed.SUB.3P him.A not  
 ‘that they did not rob him’ (DN II.156)  
 b. því at ek þarf *þess nú ekki*  
 that.D that I need.IS it.G now not  
 ‘because I do not need it now’ (Reykd 213)  
 c. þótti honum *skógar þar eigi* fjarlægir  
 seemed.3S him.D woods.N there not distant.P.M.N  
 ‘It seemed to him that there were woods not far away’ (Eg 97.6)

In (108b) two elements intervene between the finite verb and the negation. The sentence in (108c) is more complicated; *honum* is in Spec-IP, but this is followed by the subject, an adverbial, and the negation. Unless the whole sequence *þar eigi fjarlægir* can be analysed as an embedded clause with a deleted infinitive *vera* ‘be’, the three elements following *honum* – *skógar þar eigi* must all be left-adjoined to the adjectival phrase *fjarlægir*.

#### 9.7.4 Right adjunction

Several kinds of sentence elements can be extraposed and adjoined to the right of VP, with the result that they usually occur at the end of the sentence, in the position marked  $\delta$  in (90). The most noticeable cases of right adjunction are of course those that affect parts of the sentence that would otherwise not occur at the end, such as subjects and parts of phrases.

Clausal subjects are generally right-adjoined, as shown in 9.5. We have already seen examples of right-adjoined non-clausal subjects in section 9.2.1. Further examples are:

- (109) a. þá váru í Vallandi jarlar tveir  
 then were.3P in Valland.D earls.N two  
 ‘Then there were two earls in Valland’ (Hkr II.27.1)
- b. þá tók til orða Guðræðr Dala-konungr  
 then took to words.G Gudrœd.N Dales-king  
 ‘Then Gudrœd, king of the Dales, spoke up’ (Hkr II.126.7)

A kind of ‘double’ extraposition of a subject and an indirect object is found in constructions like the following:<sup>7</sup>

- (110) þau skal segja orð mín maðr manni  
 those.NEU.A shall tell words.A my man.N man.D  
 ‘Those words of mine shall be told from man to man’  
 (Hkr II.262.19)

Demonstratives and nouns may take clauses as complements (cf. 4.4.2 and 5.1.2). The head is then left behind in its base position while the clause is moved to the right:

- (111) a. þat var eitt sinn, at Sigurðr konungr vildi ríða  
 it.N was one time.N that Sigurd.N king wanted ride  
 af bæ  
 from farm.D  
 ‘One time King Sigurd wanted to ride from the farm’ (Hkr II.3.12)
- b. hefir hon þat í hug sér at gera þá hluti  
 has she that.A in mind her.RFL.D to do those things.A  
 nǫkkura er honum þœtti eigi betr  
 some which him.D seemed.SUB.3P not better  
 ‘She intends to do something which he would not like any better’  
 (Laxd 50.24)

<sup>7</sup> This may be an old stylistic figure; cf. the Tjurkø inscription from about 500 A.D:

wurte runoz an walhakurne Heldaz Kunimundiu  
 wrought runes.A on the Welsh-grain.D Helda.N Kunimundi.D  
 ‘Helda carved runes on the Welsh grain (=gold?) for Kunimundi’

- c. þau orð bað Ásta at vit skyldim bera  
 those words.A asked Asta.N that we.DU.N should.SUB.1P bring  
 þér, at nú þætti henni allmiklu máli skipta,  
 you.D that now seemed.SUB her.D all-big matter.D concern  
 at þér tækisk stórmannliga  
 that you.D took.SUB.RFL great-manly  
 ‘Asta asked us to bring you these words, that it was now of great  
 concern to her that you behave like a great man’ (Hkr II.44.8)

Non-clausal complements are also extraposed:

- (112) a. þvílík minni hafa menn hingat Haralds konungs  
 such memories.A have.3P men.N here Harald.G king  
 ‘People here have such memories of King Harald’ (Hkr III.129.19)  
 b. en annan veg á þingit sátu þeir á einum  
 but other way.A on assembly.A-the sat.3P they.M on one  
 stóli Rognvaldr jarl ok Þorgnýr  
 chair.D Rognvald.N earl and Thorgny.N  
 ‘But on the other side of the assembly Earl Rognvald and Thorgny  
 sat on one seat’ (Hkr II.140.21)

The construction in (112b) might be analysed as a pronominal copy within the sentence, representing an extraposed heavy subject. But since *þeir Rognvaldr jarl ok Þorgnýr* would be a perfectly normal phrase (cf. 5.2.1), (112b) must be a regular case of extraposition of a complement from a DP.

Relative clauses are often extraposed and right-adjoined:

- (113) a. þér vilduð eigi eitt orð þola er  
 you.P.N wanted.2P not one word.A endure which  
 mælt var við yðr  
 spoken.NEU.N was with you.P.A  
 ‘You would not endure one word that was spoken to you’  
 (Hóm 34.19)  
 b. af hafinu gengr langr hafsbotn til landnorðrs, er  
 from sea.D-the goes long sea-gulf.N to land-north.G which  
 heitir Svarta-haf  
 is-called Black-sea.N  
 ‘From the ocean a long gulf stretches towards the north-east,  
 which is called the Black Sea’ (Hkr I.9.4)

- c. sannliga er sá sæll er rétt trúir  
truly is that.M.N happy.M.N who right.NEU.A believes  
ok vel lifir  
and well lives  
'He who holds correct beliefs and lives virtuously will be truly  
happy' (Hóm 2.16)

Modifying adjectives and quantifiers may also be extraposed:

- (114) a. maðr kom til hans gofugligr  
man.N came to him.G noble-looking.M.N  
'A noble-looking man came to him' (Hkr III.152.16)
- b. hann spurði, hverr fyrir skipi því réði inu  
he asked who.N for ship.D that decided.SUB the  
vegliga  
magnificent.NEU.D  
'He asked who was in charge of that magnificent ship'  
(Hkr II.245.1)
- c. váru lagðir út vörusekkar nokkurir á hlaðit sex  
were laid.P.M.N out wool-sacks.N some on yard.A-the six  
'Six sacks of wool had been placed in the yard' (Gunnl 10.8)

In a coordinated phrase, the second conjunct may be extraposed, resulting in a discontinuous coordination.<sup>8</sup> This is analogous to what may happen to modifiers within a NP; cf. 4.3.1.

- (115) a. vil ek yðr lög bjóða ok frið  
want.1S I you.P.D law.A offer and peace.A  
'I will offer you law and peace' (Hkr II.58.6)
- b. jarl svarar vel orðum konungs ok stilliliga  
earl.N answers well words.D king.G and calmly  
'The earl answers the king's words well and calmly' (Hkr II.209.13)
- c. þeir er góðir eru ok réttrúaðir  
those.M.N who good.P.M.N are.3P and right-believing.P.M.N  
'those who are good and of true faith' (Hkr II.473.8)

<sup>8</sup> Examples (115a–c) are from Lødrup 1983. (115d) was suggested to me by Mørck (p. c.).

- d. var þetta bref gort í prestgarðinum viðr  
 was this letter.N done.NEU.N in parsonage.D by  
 Hofskirkju á Þótni [...] ok innsiglat oss sjalfum  
 Hof-church.A on Thotn.D and sealed.NEU.N us.D selves.P.D  
 hjáverandum  
 by-being.P.D  
 ‘This letter was composed and sealed in the parsonage at Hof  
 Church in Thotn in our own presence’ (DN II.447)

As can be seen from these examples, different relational categories can be split up in this manner.

It seems that the second conjunct in a subject may be left-adjoined to VP, rather than right-adjoined:

- (116) en Þórir fór eptir um daginn ok hans lið út  
 but Thori.N went after in day.A-the and his group.N out  
 til skipa sinna  
 to ships.G their.RFL  
 ‘But Thori and his men went out to their ships the day after’ (Hkr  
 II.499.3)

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## Subordinate Clauses

Subordinate clauses have a syntactic function within a larger syntactic unit, the matrix sentence or clause. They may function as arguments of verbs, or as adverbial adjuncts; and they can be complements or modifiers of various lexical categories.

Old Norse has both finite and non-finite subordinate clauses. In previous chapters we have seen how these various types function within the sentence or the phrase. In this chapter the emphasis will be on the internal structure of the clause types.

### 10.1 Finite clauses

#### 10.1.1 *Tense and mood*

In subordinate clauses the use of the tenses does not differ significantly from that of main clauses. Even in subordinate clauses the point of reference may be the moment of utterance, rather than the time reference established by the matrix sentence. In (1a) below, the two situations described in the main and subordinate clauses are simultaneous, and they are both in the past relative to the moment of writing. Therefore the preterite is used in both sentences. In (1b) the event described in the subordinate clause is prior to the event in the main sentence. Since the main sentence is in the preterite, the verb of the subordinate clause is in the preterite perfect. However, the verb in the subordinate clause may be in the present if the event described here occurs simultaneously with that of the main sentence, even if the verb of the main sentence is in the preterite, as in (1c).

- (1) a. *í borginni var hofðingi sá, er Óðinn var kallaðr*  
 in castle.D-the was chieftain.N that who Odin.N was called.M.N  
 ‘In the castle was a chieftain who was called Odin’ (Hkr I.11.1)

- b. hann *hrósaði* því at hann *hefði veitt* Gunnari  
 he boasted that.D that he had.SUB given Gunnar.D  
 banasár  
 death-wound.A  
 ‘He boasted that he had given Gunnar his death-blow’ (Nj 172.19)
- c. *riðu* þeir heiman [...] þar til er þeir *koma* upp  
 rode.3P they.M from-home there to that they.M come.3P up  
 undir Valfell  
 under Valfell.A  
 ‘They left home and rode until they turned up near Valfell’  
 (Gunnl 3.8)

When the time reference of the main sentence is future, a simultaneous future event in the subordinate clause may be expressed in the present, as in (2a), or in the future, as in (2b), while an event that is completed at the future point in time is expressed in the present perfect; cf. (2c).

- (2) a. ok má þetta endask, ef ek *ríð* hvatliga  
 and can this.NEU.N end.RFL if I ride.1S quickly  
 ‘And this can be done if I ride fast’ (Nj 290.14)
- b. skuluð ér nú þat vita [...] at svá mikit eptirmál  
 shall.2P you.P.N now that.A know that so big action.N  
*mun* hér *verða* um brennu þessa, at margan *mun*  
 will here become about burning.A this that many.S.M.A will  
 þat *gera* hofuðlausan  
 it.N make headless.M.A  
 ‘You must realize now, that there will be so many actions taken after this burning that many people will lose their heads’ (Nj 305.15)
- c. þá er allir menn *eru* *riðnir* ór Döllum [...]  
 then when all men.N are.3P ridden.P.M.N from Dales.D-the  
 þá skalt þú rísa ór rekkju  
 then shall.2S you.N rise from bed.D  
 ‘When all the men have left the Dales, then you shall get out of bed’  
 (Nj 20.13)

The preterite of the future auxiliary *munu* is used to express the future time reference relative to a past moment established in the main sentence in (3a). Another clause embedded further down usually has the verb in the preterite, as in (3b).



- (3) a. þá sór konungr þess at hann *myndi* veita henni  
 then swore king.N that.G that he would.SUB grant her.D  
 þá þœn  
 that request.A  
 ‘Then the king swore to grant her that request’ (Hóm 107.26)
- b. hugði þat hvær maðr sá er þar var at hvert  
 thought that.A every man.N that who there was that every  
 þœn *myndi* í sundr bresta þegar er niðr *kæmi*  
 bone.N would.SUB in pieces break then when down came.SUB  
 ‘Everybody who was there thought that every bone would break to  
 pieces when he fell down’ (Hóm 119.30)

Finite subordinate clauses may have the verb in the indicative or in the subjunctive.<sup>1</sup> The indicative is used to express factivity, the subjunctive is used in a non-factive sense.

- (4) a. satt er þat, at mjök er niðr fallit ríki  
 true.NEU.N is that.N that much is down fallen.NEU.N power.N  
 Haralds konungs ins hárfagra  
 Harald.G king the hair-fine.DEF  
 ‘It is true that King Harald the Fine-haired’s kingdom has suffered a  
 great decline’ (Hkr II, 51.14)
- b. ok geyma þess at engi komisk í braut  
 and heed that.G that nobody.M.N come.SUB.RFL away  
 ‘and make sure that nobody escapes’ (Nj 298.18)

The distinction between factive and non-factive sentences is not always clear, and the use of one of the moods rather than the other does not always seem well motivated. There are many types of context where either mood is found, and some contexts where the mood is more or less conventionalized and thus depends more on the matrix verb (or other elements of the matrix sentence) than on the semantics in each particular instance.

In accordance with its historical origin, the subjunctive has two different semantic functions, optative and potential. The optative is used in complement clauses of verbs meaning ‘want’, ‘permit’, ‘forbid’, ‘ask’, ‘command’, ‘force’, etc.

- (5) a. þess vil ek biðja þik at þú gefir mér á  
 that.G want.1S I ask you.A that you.N give.SUB.2S me.D on

<sup>1</sup> The following presentation of the use of moods is based to a large extent on Dyvik (n. d.).

diski hǫfuð Jóhannis baptiste

plate.D head.A Jóhannis.G baptist

‘I want to ask you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a plate’  
(Hóm 107.30)

- b. ok ætluðu at banna Óláfi, at hann færi út  
and intended.3P to forbid Olaf.D that he went.SUB out  
‘and wanted to prevent Olaf from getting out’ (Hkr II.10.5)

The imperative cannot be used in subordinate clauses. Instead, the optative subjunctive is used, often in the present tense, regardless of the tense of the matrix verb. Consider the following sequence, where sentence (6b) with direct speech in the imperative, follows immediately after (6a), with two subordinate clauses in the subjunctive.

- (6) a. biðr hann Vémund nú, at hann fái Hánef í  
asks he Vemund.A now that he get.SUB Hanef.A in  
hendr þeim ok fari aldregi með slíkt illmenni  
hands.A them.D and go.SUB never with such bad-man.A  
‘He now asks Vemund to hand over Hanef to them, and never travel  
around with such a bad man’ (Reykð 168)
- b. ‘heldr láttu mik sjá fyrir honum,’ segir hann  
rather let.IMP.2S-you.N me.A see for him.D says he  
‘“Let me take care of him instead”, he says’ (Reykð 168)

In the same way as the modal verb *skulu* ‘shall’ is used instead of the imperative in main sentences to express a command, it is also used in subordinate clauses. The meaning of the auxiliary itself should make the use of the subjunctive redundant, but we may find both the indicative and the subjunctive in such clauses:

- (7) a. bað hann at þeir Þorgnýr skyldu ganga í  
asked he that they.M Thorgny.N should.3P go in  
málstofu  
meeting-hall.A  
‘He asked Thorgny and his men to go into the meeting-hall’  
(Hkr II.139.12)
- b. þau orð bað Ásta at vit skyldim bera  
those words.A asked Asta.N that we.DU.N should.SUB.1P bring  
þér  
you.D  
‘Asta asked us to bring you these words’ (Hkr II.44.8)

The potential subjunctive is used after predicates expressing meaning, intention, assumption, hope, belief, doubt, fear, etc., as in the following examples.

- (8) a. flestra allra hluta þeira ætla ek at vér hafim  
 most all things.G those suppose.1S I that we have.SUB.1P  
 nú getit  
 now mentioned  
 ‘I suppose that we have now mentioned most of those things’  
 (Kgs 26.25)
- b. ek hefi hina skilning at engi sé þeira maki  
 I have.1S the opinion.A that nobody.M.N be.SUB their equal.N  
 ‘I am of the opinion that nobody is their equal’ (Nj 209.6)

After verbs of saying, the indicative presents the content of the clause as an assertion on the part of the speaker, while the subjunctive presents it as a report of somebody else’s assertion:

- (9) a. þat skalt þú eiga til at segja at ek em eigi þræll  
 that.A shall.2S you.N have to to say that I am not slave.N  
 ‘You shall have to say that I am not a slave’ (Nj 42.19)
- b. þá munu þat mæla sumir, at ek flýja  
 then will.3P that.A say some.P.M.N that I flee.SUB.1S  
 þaðan fyrir hræzlu sakir  
 from-there for fear.G sakes.A  
 ‘Then some will say that I am running away from there because of fear’ (Nj 253.27)

Clauses expressing purpose or concession have their finite verb in the subjunctive:

- (10) a. þá rannsakaðu varning þinn at eigi verði  
 then examine.IMP.2S-you.N goods.A your that not become.SUB  
 síðan fyrir spjöllum  
 later for damage  
 ‘Then examine your goods, so that they do not later turn out to be damaged’ (Kgs 4.35)
- b. lítil var gleði í stofunni, þótt nökkurir menn  
 little.F.N was joy.N in room.D-the although some men.N  
 drykki  
 drank.SUB.3P  
 ‘There was little joy in the room although some men were drinking’  
 (Eg 264.24)

Clauses expressing consequence or cause may have either mood, depending on whether the content is presented as factive or not. This means that in causal clauses the subjunctive is used mainly after a negated main sentence, as in (11c).

- (11) a. nú verðum vér eigi þeir ættlerar at Emundr  
 now become.1P we not those family-wretches.N that Emund.N  
 þurfi oss ráð at kenna  
 need.SUB us.D advice.A to teach  
 ‘We are not of such a degenerate family that Emund need give us advice’ (Hkr II.193.7)
- b. hann er svá maðr, at mér er mest forvitni á at hitta  
 he is such man.N that me.D is most curiosity.N on to meet  
 ‘He is the one that I am most curious to meet’ (Hkr II.336.8)
- c. ekki spyrir þú þessa af því, at þú vitir  
 not ask.2S you.N this.NEU.A of that.D that you know.SUB.2S  
 þat eigi  
 it.A not  
 ‘You are not asking about this because you do not know it’ (Nj 371.18)
- d. eigi vil ek út ganga, því at ek em maðr gamall  
 not want.1S I out go that.D that I am man.N old  
 ‘I do not want to go out because I am an old man’ (Nj 301.9)

Potentiality is also expressed by the modal auxiliary *munu* ‘may, will’. As with *skulu* ‘shall’ above, it is used in subordinate clauses in the indicative or in the subjunctive:

- (12) a. þess vænti ek, at guð mun leiðrétta skaða þinn  
 that.G expect.1S I that god.N will repair damage.A your  
 ‘I expect that God will repair your damage’ (Hkr II.452.8)
- b. ætlar þú, at betra færi myni gefask við  
 think.2S you.N that better opportunity.N may.SUB give.RFL with  
 Ólaf  
 Olaf.A  
 ‘Do you think that any better opportunity will arise with Olaf?’  
 (Hkr II.479.9)

The normal mood in relative clauses is the indicative:

- (13) a. var þeira dóttir Húngerðr, er þar foeddist upp  
 was their daughter.N Hungerd.N who there was reared.RFL up  
 ‘Their daughter was Hungerd, who was brought up there’ (Gunnl 2.5)
- b. í annarri nōkkurri freistni sem hann má annat  
 in other some temptation.D which he may other.NEU

tveggja yfirstíga með lofi eða undirliggja með brigsli  
 two.G overcome with praise.D or underlie with blame.D  
 ‘in another temptation which he may either resist with praise or  
 yield to with blame’ (Hóm 18.10)

The subjunctive is used when the head noun has a generic or non-specific interpretation, especially in negative, interrogative or imperative contexts:

- (14) a. engi er sá maðr í húsi þínu er þori nefna  
 no.M.N is that man.N in house.D your who dare.SUB name  
 þik  
 you.A  
 ‘There is no man in your house who dares call you by your name’  
 (Hóm 151.7)
- b. er nōkkurr sá maðr á þingi, er þat kunni  
 is some that man.N on assembly.D who that.A can.SUB  
 at segja  
 to tell  
 ‘Is there any man at the assembly who can tell (us) that?’  
 (Hkr II.304.14)
- c. hafðu tvau hundruð váðmála eða  
 have.IMP.2S-you.N two hundred.P.A wool-cloth.P.G or  
 þrjú með þér á skip, þau er til  
 three.NEU.A with you.D on ship.A those.NEU.A which to  
 seglbóta sé fallin  
 sail-mendings.G be.SUB.3P fallen.P.NEU.N  
 ‘Take two or three hundred yards of woollen cloth with you on the  
 ship, which you can use to repair the sails’ (Kgs 6.16)

### 10.1.2 *Word order*

The main word order patterns are almost the same in subordinate clauses as in main sentences. Most of what has been said about word order in sections 8.4.6, 9.2.1, and 9.7 therefore also applies to finite subordinate clauses.

There are, however, two important differences. Firstly, finite subordinate clauses lack topicalization; they do not have free movement to the specifier position of CP. The only elements that can move to Spec-CP of a finite subordinate clause are interrogative phrases. This will be further treated in the following section. Secondly, the finite verb does not move to the C-position in subordinate clauses. In most subordinate clauses the C-position is occupied by a complementizer, and the finite verb stays in the I-position, following the subject, and preceding a sentence adverbial; cf. the configuration (90)

in Chapter 9:

- (15) a. ef konungr bannaði eigi  
if king.N forbade not  
'if the king did not forbid it' (Eg 190.21)
- b. ef hann var eigi þinn bróðir  
if he was not your brother.N  
'if he was not your brother' (Hkr III.346.14)
- c. þvíat þeir höfðu ekki komit til Færeyja  
because they.M had.3P not come to Faroes.G  
'because they had not come to the Faroes' (Hkr II.279.7)

This means that the canonical subject position on the surface is between the complementizer and the finite verb. As we have seen in 9.7.2, non-subjects may undergo stylistic fronting and move to this position. This happens in subordinate clauses as well as in main sentences:

- (16) a. í þau konungs herbergi er *helzt* munu vera góðir  
in those king.G quarters.A which most may.3P be good  
siðir í hafðir  
customs.N in had.P.M.N  
'in those king's quarters where good customs must especially be  
observed' (Kgs 42.22)
- b. með þvílíkri stórmensku, sem nú leiðir hon hann inn  
with such greatness.D as now leads she him.A in  
'with as much grandeur as she now leads him in' (Hkr II.44.20)

Stylistic fronting is common when the subject is missing from the clause, especially in relative clauses where the subject is relativized and therefore absent:

- (17) a. sú sveit, er *honum* hafði fylgt  
that troop.N which him.D had followed  
'the troop which had followed him' (Hkr II.80.4)
- b. eina dottur er *Droplaug* hét  
one daughter.A who Droplaug.N was-called  
'one daughter called Droplaug' (Dpl 144.29)
- c. maðr þessi er *bref mitt* hefir ok *Ólafr* heitir  
man.N this who letter.A my has and Olaf.N is-called  
'this man who has my letter and who is called Olaf' (DN II.156)
- d. af þeim færeyskum mǫnnum, er *þá* váru  
from those Faroese men.D who then were.3P

þar komnir

there come.P.M.N

‘from those Faroese men who had then come there’ (Hkr II.278.5)

Certain types of subordinate clauses may have the structure of main sentences. These are of two types. One type consists of clauses with no complementizer, the finite verb in C, and no topic. They are in other words verb initial on the surface. These are used in two different functions: as conditional clauses instead of clauses introduced by *ef* ‘if’, as in (18a, b); or as the second conjunct in coordinated subordinate clauses; cf. (18c, d).

- (18) a. hefði þá verit þetta boðit, þá væri  
 had.SUB then been this.NEU.N offered.NEU.N then were.SUB  
 margr maðr sá á lifi, er nú er dauðr  
 many man.N that on life.D who now is dead.M.N  
 ‘Had that been offered then, many a man who now is dead would  
 have been alive’ (Hkr III.205.12)
- b. hefði hann eigi skapaðr verit, [...] þá hefða ek eigi  
 had.SUB he not created.M.N been then had.SUB.1P I not  
 gjört lögbrót  
 done law-breach  
 ‘Had he not been created, I would not have broken the law’  
 (Kgs 143.20)
- c. yðr er kunnigt, at ek em hér kominn á þinn  
 you.P.D is known.NEU.N that I am here come.M.N on your  
 fund ok hefi ek farit langa leið  
 meeting.A and have.1S I travelled long way.A  
 ‘You know that I have come here to meet you and that I have  
 travelled a long way’ (Hkr II.115.2)
- d. Njáll spurði, hvárt hann ætti á öllum þeim, eða  
 Njal.N asked whether he had.SUB on all them.D or  
 ætti fyrimenn at svara fyrir alla málinu  
 had.SUB.3P foremen.N to answer for all case.D-the  
 ‘Njal asked whether he had a case against all of them, or whether the  
 leaders had to answer for the whole case’ (Nj 155.15)

The other type of subordinate clauses with a main clause structure is introduced by *at* followed by a topic and the finite verb in C:

- (19) a. þat vil ek, at mann þenna, er Björn heitir,  
 that.A want.1S I that man.A this who Bjorn.N is-called

takir þú til þín  
take.SUB.2S you.N to you.G

‘I want you to take care of this man, whose name is Bjorn’ (Nj 398.2)

- b. en þó vil ek, at fé þetta þiggir þú  
but still want.1S I that money.A this accept.SUB.2S you.N  
af mér  
from me.D

‘But still I want you to accept this money from me’ (Hkr II.115.18)

It is of course not clear from the surface structure that the preverbal object NPs in (19) are in the topic position, as shown in (20a). Instead, one could posit a structure like (20b), which is the one assumed for the clauses in (16), in other words stylistic fronting to Spec-IP.

- (20) a. at CP[DP[fé þetta]<sub>k</sub> þiggir<sub>j</sub>; IP[þú<sub>i</sub> VP[<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> <sub>t<sub>k</sub></sub> af mér]]]  
b. CP[at IP[DP[fé þetta]<sub>j</sub>; þiggir<sub>i</sub> VP[þú <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> af mér]]]

The reason why the analysis in (20a) might be preferable, is that clauses introduced by *at* often express assertions on the part of the speaker, or new information, and the element following *at* is pragmatically very topic-like. Another advantage of (20a) over (20b) is that the subject, which is an unstressed pronoun, is moved to the subject position Spec-IP, rather than remaining in VP, which would yield a very marked structure.<sup>2</sup>

### 10.1.3 Nominal clauses

In this and the following sections, I will discuss the structure of different types of finite subordinate clauses. There are two kinds of nominal clauses; those introduced by the complementizer *at* ‘that’, and indirect questions introduced by the complementizer *ef* ‘if’ or by an interrogative word or phrase. Typically, nominal clauses function as complements of various lexical categories, for example verbs and prepositions:

- (21) a. ok *bað* at þeir skyldu fara ofan til strandar  
and asked that they.M should.3P go down to beach.G  
‘and asked that they go down to the beach’ (Eg 32.12)  
b. skal ek nauðga þeim til at þeir segi mér it  
shall.1P I force them.D to that they.M tell.SUB.3P me.D the

<sup>2</sup> A third, but less relevant, argument is that the structure (20a) has survived in modern Norwegian precisely after the complementizer *at*, and in a few other sentence types with similar pragmatic functions.



sanna

true.DEF.NEU.A

'I will force them to tell me the truth' (Nj 197.4)

- c. ok *spurði ef* Hrappr hefði komit þar  
and asked if Hrapp.N had.SUB come there  
'and asked if Hrapp had come there' (Nj 195.31)
- d. ek *veit* eigi *hverr* hann er  
I know.1S not who.M.N he is  
'I don't know who he is' (Fbr 15.7)

It is very common for nominal clauses to be complements of a demonstrative. This is the rule when the clause has the role of a subject or an adjunct, as in the following examples:

- (22) a. er *þat* minn vili at svá gerim vér allir  
is that.N my wish.N that so do.SUB.1P we all  
'It is my wish that we all do so' (Hkr II.319.18)
- b. eigi vil ek út ganga, *því* at ek em maðr gamall  
not want.1S I out go that.D that I am man.N old  
'I do not want to go out because I am an old man' (Nj 301.9)
- c. *þat* er engum manni blint, hverjar  
that.N is no man.D blind.NEU.N what  
*föður-bætr* hugðar eru Hákonu konungi  
father-compensations.N intended.P.F.N are.3P Hakon.D king  
'It is obvious to everybody what compensation for his father is intended for King Hakon' (Hkr III.408.14)

Sometimes the demonstrative may be omitted, so that the clause by itself has the function of a subject or an adjunct; cf. 9.5 and the examples which follow:

- (23) a. eigi er undarligt, at þú sér kallaðr Óláfr  
not is strange.NEU.N that you.N be.SUB.2S called.M.N Olaf.N  
digri  
stout.DEF  
'It is no wonder that you are called Olaf the stout' (Hkr II.85.15)
- b. þá rannsakaðu varning þinn at eigi verði  
then examine.IMP.2S-YOU.N goods.A your that not become.SUB  
síðan fyrir spjöllum  
later for damages  
'Then examine your goods, so that they do not later turn out to be damaged' (Kgs 4.35)

- c. *eigi er mér kunnigt hversu víðfleyg vár*  
 not is me.D known.NEUT.N how wide-flying.F.N our  
*rœða vill gerask*  
 conversation.N will make.RFL  
 ‘I do not know how widely known our conversation will be’  
 (Kgs 13.34)

A kind of ‘cleft’ construction is used to express non-specific time reference. The demonstrative *þat* followed by a clause is the subject of a sentence with the time expression as its predicate, and as usual, the clause is extraposed:

- (24) a. *þat var eitt haust at hvalr kom út á Vatnsnes*  
 that.N was one autumn.N that whale.N came out on Vatnsnes.A  
 ‘It happened one autumn that a whale appeared out at Vatnsnes’  
 (Korm 206)
- b. *þat var eitt sumar, at skip kom út í Leiruvági*  
 that.N was one summer.N that ship.N came out in Leiruvag.D  
 ‘It happened one summer that a ship landed out in Leiruvag’  
 (Eg 294.8)

It is important to note that the ‘clefted’ element, the time expression, does not have exclusive reference, as in modern cleft sentences. It is rather a way of presenting a non-specific time. Therefore (24a) should not be read as ‘it was in the autumn that . . .’, but rather as in the translation given.

Old Norse lacks specific complementizers for cause, consequence, concession, purpose, etc. Instead, combinations of *at* and an adverb or an oblique neuter form of the demonstrative are used. The demonstrative may be governed by a preposition, as in (25b).

- (25) a. *eigi vil ek út ganga, því at ek em maðr gamall*  
 not want.1S I out go that.D that I am man.N old  
 ‘I do not want to go out because I am an old man’ (Nj 301.9)
- b. *hér mun ek gefa ráð til, fyrir því at ek fyrirman*  
 here will.1S I give advice to, for that.D that I envy.1S  
*Þorgíslu ekki þessar ferðar*  
 Thorgisl.D not this journey.G  
 ‘Here I will give advice, because I do not envy Thorgisl this journey’  
 (Laxd 181.24)
- c. *gerum svá at guði líki vel*  
 do.IMP.1P so that god.D please.SUB well  
 ‘Let us act so as to please God’ (Hóm 35.21)

- d. betra er þér at vera góðum þó at hann  
 better.NEU.N is you.D to be good.M.D though that he  
 sé illr  
 be.SUB bad.M.N  
 ‘It is better for you to be good even though he is bad’ (Hóm 23.20)
- e. lítil var gleði í stofnuni, þótt nokkurir  
 little.F.N was joy.N in room.D-the though-that some  
 menn drykki  
 men.N drank.SUB.3P  
 ‘There was little joy in the room although some men were drinking’  
 (Eg 264.24)

The combination *þó at* is often spelt *þótt*, as in (25e).

The complementizer *er*, which is otherwise used to introduce relative clauses (see the next section), may occasionally be used in nominal clauses:

- (26) a. fannsk þat á öllu, er hon þóttisk  
 found.RFL that.N on all.NEU.D that she seemed.RFL  
 vargefin  
 ill-matched.F.N  
 ‘It showed in everything that she thought she was marrying beneath  
 her’ (Nj 25.24)
- b. Kári hljóp til þess er hann kom at læk einum  
 Kari ran to that.G that he came to brook.D one  
 ‘Kari kept running until he came to a brook’ (Nj 303.14)

Dependent sentence questions are introduced by the complementizer *ef* ‘if’ or *hvárt* ‘whether’:

- (27) a. Egill spurði, ef Þorfinnr hefði varr orðit við  
 Egil.N asked if Thorfinn.N had.SUB aware.M.N become with  
 fǫrunauta hans  
 companions.A his  
 ‘Egil asked if Thorfinn had seen anything of his companions’  
 (Eg 266.8)
- b. Njáll spurði Gunnar hvárt hann myndi til þings  
 Njal.N asked Gunnar.A whether he would.SUB to assembly.G  
 ríða  
 ride  
 ‘Njal asked Gunnar whether he was going to ride to the assembly’  
 (Nj 71.26)

- c. ok spurðu hvárt þeir hefði ekki þar  
 and asked.3P whether they.M had.SUB.3P not there  
 um riðit  
 about ridden  
 ‘and asked whether they had not ridden that way’ (Nj 310.12)

Dependent phrasal questions are introduced by an interrogative word, or a phrase containing such a word. Most syntactic categories can be questioned.

(1) Subject:

- (28) a. nökkurr sá maðr [...] er þat kunni at segja hvern  
 some that man.N who that.A can.SUB to tell who.M.N  
 valdi er verks þessa  
 perpetrator.N is deed.G this  
 ‘somebody who can tell us who is guilty of this deed’ (Hkr II.304.14)
- b. þat er engum manni blint, hverjar  
 that.N is no man.D blind.NEU.N what  
 fǫður-bætr hugðar eru Hákonu konungi  
 father-compensations.N intended.P.F.N are.3P Hakon.D king  
 ‘It is obvious to anybody what compensation for his father is  
 intended for King Hakon’ (Hkr III.408.14)

(2) Complement of verb:

- (29) a. seg mér þetta gersamliga, hvat ek skal síðan  
 tell.IMP.2S me.D this.NEU.A completely what.A I shall.1S since  
 gera  
 do  
 ‘Tell me exactly what I shall do afterwards’ (Barl 33.32)
- b. hitt verður enn ekki sagt, hverjum þú unnir  
 that.NEU.N becomes still not said.NEU.N who.M.D you.N love.2S  
 mest  
 most  
 ‘It has still not been said whom you love the most’ (Laxd 231.15)
- c. ekki er þat blint, hvers þú eggjar  
 not is that.N blind.NEU.N what.G you.N incite.2S  
 ‘It is obvious what you are urging’ (Hkr II.110.1)

(3) Predicate complement:

- (30) a. ek veit eigi hvern hann er  
 I know.1S not who.M.N he is  
 ‘I don’t know who he is’ (Fbr 15.7)
- b. eigi er mér kunnigt hversu víðfleyg vár rœða  
 not is me.D known how wide-flying.F.N our conversation.N

vill gerask  
 will make.RFL  
 'I do not know how widely known our conversation will be'  
 (Kgs 13.34)

## (4) Adverbial adjunct:

- (31) a. þess er fyrst leitanda hvaðan skurðarskírn hófsk  
 that.G is first searching.NEU.N whence circumcision.N raised.RFL  
 'First we must examine where circumcision comes from'  
 (Hóm 53.20)
- b. ok spurði, hvernig farit hafði með þeim Eiríki konungi  
 and asked how gone had with them.D Eirik.D king  
 'and asked how things had gone with King Eirik and his men'  
 (Eg 225.21)

## (5) Complement of preposition:

- (32) a. eigi þykki mér skipta, í hvárum flokki ek em  
 not seems me.D concern in which party.D I am  
 'I do not care which side I am on' (Hkr II.454.2)
- b. hann hirði þat aldri, at hverjum hann keypti korn  
 he cared that.A never at whom.D he bought corn  
 'He never cared whom he bought corn from' (Hkr II.247.12)
- c. Þórarinn fann, hvar til mælt var  
 Thorarin.N found where to spoken.NEU.N was  
 'Thorarin understood what they were talking about' (Hkr II.157.17)

Note that in (30b) the degree of an adjective is questioned. As can be seen from all the examples in (32), the whole prepositional phrase moves along with the interrogative word. Preposition stranding seems to be very rare, and no example involving an interrogative word or phrase has been found. (But see section 9.7.1 and example (98) there.) Note the order of the preposition and its complement *hvar* in (32c). It is common for both *þar* 'there', its derivatives, and the corresponding interrogative form to precede the preposition (cf. 7.3).

While complementizers are generated in the C-position, interrogative phrases cannot move to C, which is a head position. Instead they move to the specifier position of CP, as they do in interrogative main sentences. The C-position in dependent phrasal questions is usually empty, as can be seen from the examples above. This is however not always the case. The interrogative phrase is sometimes followed by the complementizer *er*, as in the following examples.

- (33) a. seg mér hinn sæli sunr, hvat er þik hryggir  
 tell.IMP.2S me.D the dear son.N what.N which you.A grieves  
 ‘Tell me, dear son, what grieves you’ (Barl 6.36)
- b. ok hǫfðu spurt [...] hvern mannskaða ok fjárkaða  
 and had.3P heard what man-loss.A and money-loss.A  
 er hann hafði þar gert  
 which he had there done  
 ‘and had heard what injuries and robberies he had inflicted there’  
 (Eg 60.3)

#### 10.1.4 *Relative clauses*

The term **relative clause** is used here to cover all sorts of clauses which contain an open slot whose interpretation depends on an **antecedent** outside the clause in the phrase to which it belongs. The antecedent may be a noun, a determiner, or an adverb.

Typical relative clauses are introduced by the complementizer *er* or *sem*. The more common one is *er*; *sem* is originally a comparative particle meaning ‘as’, but during the Old Norse period it came into use as a regular relative complementizer, first in Norwegian, then in Icelandic.

All nominal functions can be relativized. In (34) subjects are relativized; in (35) relativized objects are shown in (a) the accusative, (b) the dative, and (c) the genitive; while (36) gives examples of relativized complements of prepositions.

- (34) a. í borginni var hǫfðingi sá, er Óðinn var kallaðr  
 in castle.D-the was chieftain.N that who Odin.N was called.M.N  
 ‘In the castle was a chieftain who was called Odin’ (Hkr I.11.1)
- b. öllum guðs vinum ok sínum þeim sem þetta bref  
 all god.G friends.D and his.RFL those.D who this letter.A  
 sjá eðr heyra  
 see.3P or hear.3P  
 ‘to all God’s friends and those of his own who see or hear this letter’  
 (DN II.4)
- (35) a. er sú kona illa gift, er þú átt  
 is that woman.N badly married.F.N who you own.2S  
 ‘The woman who is your wife made a bad marriage’ (Nj 29.3)
- b. eptir tölum sona sinna, þeira er hann blótadi  
 after number.D sons.G his.RFL those.G who he sacrificed

til Óðins

to Odin.G

‘according to the number of sons that he sacrificed to Odin’

(Hkr I.46.15)

- c. þeir höfðu þat með sér sem þeir þurftu  
 they.M had.3P that.A with themselves.D which they.M needed.3P  
 ‘They had with them what they needed’ (Finnb 56.21)

- (36) a. í þau konungs herbergi er helzt munu vera góðir  
 in those king.G quarters.A which most may.3P be good  
 siðir í hafðir  
 customs.N in had.P.M.N  
 ‘in those king’s quarters where good customs must especially be  
 observed’ (Kgs 42.22)

- b. þat er mér þótti engi vón í vera  
 that which me.D seemed no hope.N in be  
 ‘that in which I thought there was no hope’ (Barl 101.32)

- c. gofgir menn munu biðja dóttur þinnar úr þeim  
 noble men.N will.3P ask daughter.G your from those  
 ættum sem þér þóttu ernirnir fljúga at  
 directions.D which you.D seemed.3P eagles.N-the fly at  
 ‘Noble men from those parts where you thought the eagles flew will  
 propose to your daughter’ (Gunnl 5.11)

The preposition in the relative clause may be omitted if it is the same as a preposition in the matrix sentence:

- (37) út um dyrr þær, er ganga mátti upp á húsit  
 out of doors.A those which go could up on house.A-the  
 ‘out through the door which led upstairs’ (Eg 221.12)

Even other nominal functions may be relativized, such as a genitive complement of a noun, as shown in (38a), a dative of comparison, as in (38b), or an instrumental dative, as in (38c).

- (38) a. spjót þat, er alnar var löng fjöðrin ok járn  
 spear.A that which ell.G was long.F.N blade.N-the and iron.D  
 vafit skaptit  
 clad.NEU.N shaft.N-the  
 ‘a spear, the blade of which was an ell long and the shaft bound with  
 iron’ (Laxd 170.22)
- b. þá fundu menn hans í gamma einum konu þá,  
 then found.3P men.N his in hut.D one.M.D woman.A that

er þeir hǫfðu enga sét jamvæna  
 who they.M had.3P none.F.A seen even-beautiful.F.A  
 ‘Then his men found in a hut a woman so beautiful that they had  
 never seen anyone like her’ (Hkr I.145.6)

- c. at samtengja góða menn ok illa þeirri samtengingu er  
 to join good men.A and bad that union.D which  
 illir menn mætti batna af samvistu góðra  
 bad men.N might.SUB.3P improve from togetherness.D good.P.G  
 ‘to join good and bad people in a union by which bad people could  
 improve through living with good people’ (Hóm 79.24)

Finally, the relative clause may have a very loose connection to the matrix sentence:

- (39) hvílik er sjá skírn er sá er skírnarbrunni  
 how.F.N is this baptism.N which that.M.N is baptismal-font.D  
 hreinni er skírðr er?  
 cleaner.M.N who baptized.M.N is  
 ‘What is this baptism like, which makes the one who is baptized  
 cleaner than the baptismal font?’ (Hóm 58.30)

If the antecedent is a noun with temporal reference, the clause may have the function of a temporal clause. In such cases, the clause may even be introduced by *nær* ‘when’.

- (40) a. þat var eitt sinn, er þeir hǫfðu upp gengit með  
 that was one time.N when they had.3P up gone with  
 konungi  
 king.D  
 ‘One time when they had gone up (on land) with the king’  
 (Korm 268)
- b. svá gæta þau þess tíma nær þau þurfu at  
 so watch.3P they.NEU that time.G when they.NEU need.3P to  
 flýja kulda  
 flee cold.A  
 ‘So they watch for the time when they have to flee from the cold’  
 (Kgs 9.18)

The antecedent may be the dative or the genitive neuter singular of the demonstrative *sá* preceding an adjective or an adverb (cf. 6.3). These constructions express a corresponding or relative degree (much like English *the* with comparatives).



- (41) a. þín pinsl ok hefnd er æ því meiri er  
 your torment.N and punishment.N is ever that.D bigger.F.N as  
 þú drepr fleiri kristna menn  
 you.N kill.2S more Christian men.A  
 ‘Your torment and punishment will be all the harder the more  
 Christian men you kill’ (Barl 5.6)
- b. Orminn skal því lengra fram leggja, sem hann  
 Serpent.A-the shall that.D longer forward lay as he  
 er lengri enn önnur skip  
 is longer.M.N than other ships.N  
 ‘The Serpent shall be placed as much further forward as it is longer  
 than other ships’ (Hkr I.440.10)
- c. þat er æ þess ljósari er sjölf er nátt myrkvari  
 it.N is ever that.G brighter as self.F.N is night.N darker.F.N  
 ‘The darker the night is, the brighter it is’ (Kgs 32.27)

In an alternative construction, the comparative clause is followed by a main clause where an adjective in the comparative (often the same as the one preceding the clause) preceded by *þess* (rarely *því*) is topicalized:

- (42) a. þess meir er hann drekkur er þá sótt hefir, þess  
 that.G more which he drinks who that illness.A has, that.G  
 meir þyrstir hann  
 more thirsts him.A  
 ‘The more he who suffers that illness drinks, the thirstier he gets’  
 (Hóm 148.30)
- b. þess fleira er þú hafðir, þess fleira  
 that.G more.NEU.A which you.N had.2S that.G more.NEU.A  
 girndisk þú  
 desired.2S.RFL you.N  
 ‘The more you had, the more you wanted’ (Hóm 148.31)

Relativization may cross clause boundaries, since the relativized element may belong to a clause embedded under the relative clause:

- (43) a. þau verk hans, er allir þeir, er heyrði,  
 those deeds.A his which all those.M.N who heard.SUB.3P  
 vissi, at hégómi væri  
 knew.SUB.3P that nonsense.N were.SUB  
 ‘those deeds of his, which were known to be nonsense by all those  
 who heard them’ (Hkr I.6.4)
- b. gofgir menn munu biðja dóttur þinnar ór þeim  
 noble men.N will.3P ask daughter.G your from those

ættum sem þér þóttu ernirnir fljúga at  
 directions.D which you.D seemed.3P eagles.N-the fly at  
 ‘Noble men from those parts that the eagles seemed to fly from, will  
 propose to your daughter’ (Gunnl 5.11)

- c. þat er manns-fótr sá, er ek hygg, at engi  
 that.N is man-foot.N that which I think.1S that none.M.N  
 skal hér í kaupstaðinum ljótari vera  
 shall here in town.D-the uglier.M.N be  
 ‘That is a man’s foot which I think is uglier than any here in town’  
 (Hkr II.157.13)

The sentence in (43a) is interesting, since it is a counter-example to the (allegedly universal) principle that a subject can not leave a clause introduced by a complementizer; for example, English *a story which everybody knew* (\*that) *was nonsense*. The structure of (43c) is particularly complex, since the relativized element is the standard of comparison, which can be a dative phrase in Old Norse (cf. (38b) above and 6.3). If that kind of relativization were possible in English, we would get something like \**a man’s foot which I think that none is uglier than*.

A resumptive pronoun may occur in the relative clause. This usually occurs when a 1st or 2nd person pronoun is the antecedent of a relativized subject, as in (44a), but it may also be found in other contexts.

- (44) a. ek em brauð lifanda er niðr sté ek af himni  
 I am bread.N living who down stepped.1S I from heaven.D  
 ‘I am the living bread who descended from heaven’ (Hóm 39.10)
- b. þótti sá einn með fullu mega heita  
 seemed that.M.N one with full.NEU.D may.INF be-called  
 sækonungr, er hann svaf aldregi undir sótkum ási  
 sea-king.N who he slept never under sooty beam.D  
 ‘It seemed that only one who never slept under a sooty beam could  
 be called a real sea-king’ (Hkr I.57.16)
- c. upp mun maðr rísa ór gyðinga fólki er allar  
 up will man.N rise from Jews.G people.D who all  
 þjóðir munu hafa ón mikla til nafns hans  
 peoples.N will.3P have hope.A great to name.G his  
 ‘Out of the Jewish people will a man rise, in whose name all  
 peoples will have great hope’ (Hóm 62.29)

In (44c) there is a resumptive possessive pronoun. This construction can be compared with (38a), where a possessive is likewise relativized, but without the resumptive pronoun.

In coordinated relative clauses, two different argument phrases in different cases may be relativized.

- (45) þeir eru sumir er þetta ætla ok þat  
 they.M are.3P some.P.M.N who this.NEU.A think and that.N  
 þykki  
 seem  
 ‘There are some people who think this and believe that’ (Kgs 82.4)

The complementizer *en* may be used instead of *er*, especially in Norwegian texts:<sup>3</sup>

- (46) a. þau helgu orð en í bókinni váru  
 those sacred words.A which in book.D-the were.3P  
 ‘those sacred words which were in the book’ (DN II.99)  
 b. þá bœn en hon bæði fyrsta  
 that prayer.A which she prayed.SUB first.F.A  
 ‘the prayer which she prayed first’ (Hóm 107.26)

As can be seen from many of the above examples, it is very common for a demonstrative to precede the relative clause directly, rather than to precede the head noun; cf. 5.1.2. The demonstrative has the case of the antecedent, not that of the relativized element. This rule is sometimes violated in learned literature translated from or written under the influence of Latin, or other foreign languages. In the same kind of style we may also find a demonstrative governed by a preposition belonging to the relative clause:

- (47) a. með illgjörnum ok úsiðsömum, þeir er  
 with ill-willed.P.D and indecent.P.D those.M.N who  
 frið hafa meðal sín í syndum sínum  
 peace.A have.3P between themselves.G in sins.D their.RFL  
 ‘with the ill-natured and indecent, who have peace between themselves in their sins’ (Hóm 5.4)  
 b. elska guð ok varðveita boðorð hans fyrir  
 love god.A and observe commandments.A his for

<sup>3</sup> Even the word *ok* ‘and’ has been interpreted by some scholars (e.g. Christoffersen 2003) as a relative particle in sentences such as

þar er garðr hjá ok heitir Haugsgarðr  
 there is farm.N by which is-called Haugsgard.N  
 ‘There is a farm nearby which is called Haugsgard’ (Laxd 68.20)

There is however no need for such an interpretation, given the rather free deletion of subjects in coordinated sentences described in section 9.4.2. The sentence above may simply be translated as ‘There is a farm near by *and* it is called Haugsgard’.

*þann* er vér erum skapaðir  
 that.M.A who we are.1P created.P.M.N  
 ‘to love God for whom we are created, and observe his  
 commandments’ (Hóm 30.14)

In some rare instances an interrogative word may precede the complementizer. This clearly also has a foreign pattern.

- (48) *tvau* *bref* *virðuligs* *herra Hákonar* *konungs* [...] *í*  
 two letters.A worthy lord Hakon.G king in  
*hverjum* *er* *konungrin* *býðr* [...]  
 which.P.D that king.N-the orders  
 ‘two letters from His Highness King Hakon, in which he orders ...’  
 (DN I.122)

Relative clauses introduced by *er* or *sem* may have adverbs of place, time, or manner as their antecedent. They thus introduce clauses with adverbial functions, such as temporal, shown in (49) and (50a); local, as in (50),<sup>4</sup> and manner, as in (51).

- (49) a. *Þorsteinn*, *son* *Egils*, *þá* *er* *hann* *óx* *upp*, *var* *allra*  
 Thorstein.N son.N Egil.G then when he grew up was all  
*manna* *fríðastr* *sýnum*  
 men.G most-handsome.M.N looks.D  
 ‘when he grew up Thorstein, Egil’s son, was the most handsome of  
 all men’ (Eg 293.1)
- b. *en þegar* *er* *þeir* *kenndu* *Egil* *þá* *þóttusk*  
 but then when they.M knew.3P Egil.A then seemed.3P.RFL  
*þeir* *vita* *at* *hann* *mundi* *eigi* *hafa* *unnit* *á* *Þorgrími*  
 they.M know that he would not have won on Thorgrim.D  
 ‘But as soon as they recognized Egil, then it seemed clear to them  
 that he could not have killed Thorgrim’ (Fbr 162.6)
- (50) a. *einhverja* *nótt*, *þá* *er* *veðr* *var* *kyrrt* *lögðu*  
 some night.A then when weather.N was calm.NEU.N laid.3P  
*þeir* *upp* *í* *móðu* *eina*, *þar* *er* *illt* *var* *til*  
 they.M up in river.A one there where bad.NEU.N was to  
*hafna*  
 harbours.G  
 ‘One night when the weather was calm they landed in a river where  
 the harbour conditions were poor’ (Eg 252.19)

<sup>4</sup> The word *þar* and its derivatives are strictly intransitive prepositions (cf. 7.1.3), but so as not to complicate the presentation at this point, they are included with the adverbs here.

- b. váru þau bein færð langt í brott,  
 were.3P those bones.N brought.P.NEU.N far away  
 þar sem sízt var manna vegr  
 there where latest was men.G road  
 ‘Those bones were taken far away, to the last place where people  
 would go’ (Laxd 227.21)

- (51) a. Sveinn jarl hafði látit taka um haustit hálfu landaura  
 Svein.N earl had let take in autumn.A-the half taxes.A  
 af Íslands-farinu, svá sem fyrr var vant  
 of Iceland.G-ship.D-the such as before was accustomed.NEU.N  
 ‘In the autumn Earl Svein had taken half the landing-tax of ships  
 from Iceland, as was formerly the custom’ (Hkr II.63.12)
- b. heiman hefi ek þik búit, svá sem ek kann best  
 from-home have.1S I you.A prepared so as I can.1S best  
 ‘I have prepared you for leaving home as well as I can’ (Laxd 52.20)

The antecedent *þá* is often omitted, so that *er* has the function of a temporal complementizer all by itself; for example:

- (52) a. at vér berim þetta fyrir alþýðu, er ek sé at  
 that we carry.SUB.1P this.A before people.D when I see.1S that  
 nokkur framkvæmð mætti at verða  
 some progress.N might.SUB at become  
 ‘that we put this before the people when I see that some progress  
 may be made at it’ (Hkr II.49.10)
- b. Óláfr konungr fór, er váraði, út til sævar  
 Olaf.N king went when became-spring out to sea.G  
 ‘When spring came King Olaf left for the sea’ (Hkr II.145.15)

**Comparative clauses** are a special type of relative clause. They are introduced by *sem* ‘as’ or *en* ‘than’. The most common antecedent of *sem*-clauses is the adverb *svá* ‘so, as’ which modifies an adjective or a quantifier. The clause and its antecedent are thus parts of an adjectival phrase; cf. 6.3 and the following examples:

- (53) a. svá þróttlaust fólk sem þetta er  
 so powerless people.N as this.NEU.N is  
 ‘powerless as this people is’ (Fbr 213.17)
- b. svá margir af Síðumönnum sem hann vildi  
 so many.P.M.N of Sida-men.D as he wanted  
 ‘as many of the men from Sida as he wanted’ (Nj 394.8)

The antecedent may also be *slíkr* ‘such’, *þvílíkr* ‘such’, *sami* ‘same’, or the adjective *jafn* ‘even’, either by itself or prefixed to an adjective:

- (54) a. ok veittr beini slíkr sem þau þurftu  
and given.M.N help.N such as they.NEU needed.3P  
‘and given the help that they needed’ (Korm 272)
- b. sætt ok yfirboetr þvílíkar sem þér  
agreement.A and compensations.A such.P.F.A as you.P.N  
vilið sjalfir gørt hafa  
want.2P self.P.M.N done have  
‘such agreement and compensation as you would have wanted to offer yourself’ (Hkr II.258.17)
- c. allt er mér slíkt it sama nú í  
all.NEU.N is me.D such.NEU.N the same.DEF.NEU.N now in  
hug, sem þá röeddum vit  
mind.D as then talked.1P we.DU  
‘My thoughts are still the same regarding everything as we talked about then’ (Laxd 203.21)
- d. jafnt er sem þér sýnisk  
even.NEU.N is as you.D seems  
‘It is as you think’ (Nj 142.6)
- e. jafndigr sem hann er langr  
even-thick.M.N as he is long.M.N  
‘as thick as he is long’ (Kgs 16.34)

Comparative clauses introduced by *sem* may also occur where an antecedent or an adjective is not present. This is particularly common with the verb *þykkja* ‘seem’.

- (55) a. þá heyrðu þeir brest ok dett sem  
then heard.3P they.M crash.A and thump.A as  
nøkkut felli  
something.NEU.N fell.SUB  
‘Then they heard a crash and a thump, as if something fell’  
(Hkr II.150.22)
- b. honum þótti sem þeir hefði þá engi fong til  
him.D seemed as they.M had.SUB.3P then no means.A to  
at berjask við Ólaf konung  
to fight.RFL with Olaf.A king  
‘It seemed to him that they did not then have the means to fight against King Olaf’ (Hkr II.75.9)

The antecedent of a clause introduced by *en* ‘than’ is the comparative element of adjectives or adverbs.

- (56) a. at þú sér eigi minni maðr eða úríkari [...] en  
 that you.N be.SUB.2S not lesser man.N or poorer than  
 áðr vartu  
 before were.2S-you.N  
 ‘that you will not be a lesser or poorer man than you were before’  
 (Hkr II.212.24)
- b. fyrr mun hann því afla en ek fœra honum  
 before will he it.D accomplish than I bring.SUB.1S him.D  
 hofuð mitt  
 head.A my  
 ‘He will have to accomplish it before I offer him my head’  
 (Hkr II.285.19)
- c. ok hafði langt starf, áðr en lands-fólkit hefði  
 and had long struggle.A before than lands-people.N had.SUB  
 honum hlýðit orðit  
 him.D obedient.NEU.N become  
 ‘and had a long struggle before the people of the country had  
 become obedient to him’ (Hkr II.282.17)

The combination *fyrr en* is usually used with a negation in the sense ‘not until’:

- (57) hann hafði þess heit strengt, at láta eigi skera hár  
 he had that.G vow.A made to let not cut hair.A  
 sitt né kempa, fyrr en hann væri einvaldskonungr  
 his.RFL nor comb before than he were.SUB absolute-king.N  
 yfir Noregi  
 over Norway.D  
 ‘He had made a vow not to have his hair cut or combed until he was  
 the absolute king of Norway’ (Eg 6.13)

Parts of comparative clauses can be deleted, so that, for example, only a NP remains on the surface.

- (58) a. ok váru galnir sem hundar eða vargar  
 and were.3P mad.P.M.N as dogs.N or wolves.N  
 ‘and were mad as dogs or wolves’ (Hkr I.17.19)

- b. at engi jarl væri meiri ok frægri  
 that no earl.N were.SUB greater.M.N and more-famous.M.N  
 en Sigurðr  
 than Sigurd.N  
 ‘that no earl was greater and more famous than Sigurd’ (Gunnl 29.1)

In *en*-clauses there is sometimes a pleonastic negation:

- (59) þá varð hon þó fyrri gør en engi  
 then became she though earlier.F.N done.F.N than none.F.N  
 annarra  
 others.G  
 ‘then it was still done earlier than any of the others’ (Hóm 118.15)

A relative clause with *sem* may have an interrogative word or phrase in the topic position. These are unspecified relative clauses, with the meaning ‘whatever, whether (or not)’, etc.

- (60) a. heita þér fullkominni minni vináttu ok  
 promise you.D perfect my friendship.D and  
 málafylgð við hvern sem þú átt  
 case-assistance.D with who.M.A as you.N have.2s  
 ‘promising you my full friendship and help in lawsuits against  
 anyone whom you have a case with’ (Finnb 91.22)
- b. vil ek þat festa yðr, at koma aldri í Orkneyjar,  
 want.1s I that promise you.D to come never in Orkneys.A  
 hvat sem konungr mælir um þat  
 what as king.N says about it.A  
 ‘I will promise you never to go to the Orkneys, whatever the king  
 says about it’ (Hkr II.212.3)
- c. hvárt sem hann bað fyrir úvinum eða hann ávítaði  
 whether as he prayed for enemies.D or he chided  
 þá  
 them.M.A  
 ‘whether he prayed for his enemies or chided them’ (Hóm 46.3)

### 10.1.5 *Adverbial clauses*

Although many types of subordinate clauses with an adverbial function have the form of a relative or a nominal clause, Old Norse also has a few



complementizers introducing adverbial clauses specifically. Most of these have either a temporal or a conditional function.

The complementizers *meðan* ‘while’ and *unz* ‘until’ introduce temporal clauses:

- (61) a. vill þú nokkut taka við fjárfari mínu,  
 want.2S you.N some.NEU.A take with money-affair.D my  
 meðan ek em í brautu  
 while I am away  
 ‘Will you look after my business while I am away?’ (Nj 63.23)
- b. fara unz þeir koma í Saurbœ  
 travel.3P until they.M come in Saurbœ  
 ‘(they) travel until they come to Saurbœ’ (Korm 225)

Conditional clauses are introduced by *ef* ‘if’, *nema* ‘unless’, or *utan* ‘unless’:

- (62) a. ef reiði stöðvask eigi, þá tekur hon frá manni alla  
 if anger.N stops.RFL not then takes she from man.D all  
 forsjó verks  
 foresight.A work.G  
 ‘If anger is not checked, it takes all ability to plan his work away  
 from a man’ (Hóm 27.13)
- b. ef hann var eigi þinn bróðir, þá áttu engu  
 if he was not your brother.N then have.2S-you.N no  
 ætt til at vera konungur  
 family.A to to be king.N  
 ‘If he was not your brother, then you have no dynastic right to be  
 king’ (Hkr III. 346.14)
- c. hann sagði, at hann myndi eigi þiggja, nema annat  
 he said that he would.SUB not accept unless other  
 fé kvæmi í mót  
 money.N came.SUB in return  
 ‘He said he would not accept it unless it was paid for in return’  
 (Nj 195.20)
- d. þat má fyrirfarask ok spillask utan þat verður  
 it.N may destroy.RFL and spoil.RFL unless it.N becomes  
 skjótliga tínt ok reykt  
 quickly cleansed.NEU.N and smoked.NEU.N  
 ‘It may be destroyed and spoiled unless it is quickly cleansed and  
 smoked’ (DN II.48)

## 10.2 Non-finite clauses

Non-finite clauses, or infinitival clauses, are subordinate clauses with the verb in the infinitive, and without an overt subject. They (almost always) have the infinitive marker *at* which immediately precedes the verb.

- (63) a. ok ætluðu      *at* hengja hann  
 and intended.3P to hang him.A  
 ‘and intended to hang him’ (Hkr III.307.3)
- b. hann hafði þeim því heitit, *at* fylgja þeim á  
 he had them.D that.D promised to follow them.D on  
*fund*      Svía-konungs  
 meeting.A Swede-king.G  
 ‘He had promised them to go with them to meet the king of the Swedes’ (Hkr II.139.20)

Infinitival clauses generally have the same syntactic functions as finite clauses introduced by *at*; cf. 10.1.3. Thus they are subjects, or complements of verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. In nominal functions they are often headed by determiners. The various syntactic functions of such clauses have been presented in previous chapters.

### 10.2.1 Structure

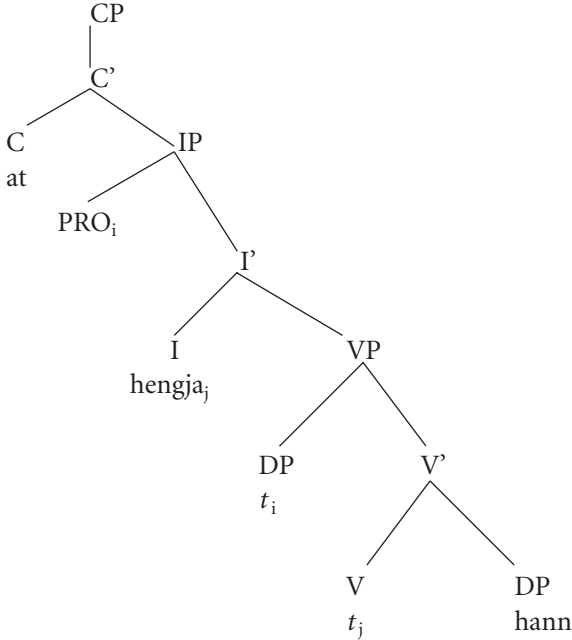
Infinitival clauses are CPs. They are usually introduced by the complementizer *at*, traditionally referred to as the ‘infinitive marker’, in the C-position. The specifier position of IP, the canonical subject position, is always empty. But since infinitival clauses do have an understood subject, which not only has a semantic role, but even plays a role in the syntax, we assume an abstract element as the subject of infinitival clauses. This is a phonologically empty pronoun, symbolized as PRO in common generative practice. PRO always occupies the Spec-IP position, thus preventing anything else from moving in there. Therefore there can be no stylistic fronting in non-finite clauses. The I-position has the feature [-FINITE], and the infinitive verb always moves there, which can be seen from the fact that it precedes a negation.

- (64) a. *at* láta eigi skera hár      sitt  
 to let not cut hair.A his.RFL  
 ‘not to have his hair cut’ (Eg 6.13)
- b. *at* ágirnask ekki Svía-konungs veldi  
 to covet not Swede-king.G power.A  
 ‘not to covet the power of the king of the Swedes’ (Hkr II.118.9)

Since the subject position is phonologically empty, the result is that *at* is always adjacent to the verb on the surface. The fact that there is an intervening abstract element may be the reason why *at* and the verb are always separated by a space in the manuscripts.

The structure of the infinitival clause *at hengja hann* in (63a) is given in (65).

(65)



### 10.2.2 *The complementizer*

The complementizer is normally *at*, as we have seen. It is generally omitted after the verb *vilja* ‘want’, as in (66a, b), and occasionally also in other contexts, such as in purpose clauses; for example, (66c).

- (66) a. Sigurðr konungr vildi ríða af bæ  
 Sigurd.N king wanted ride from farm.D  
 ‘King Sigurd wanted to ride from the farm’ (Hkr II.3.12)
- b. konur vildu þat bera at henni  
 women.N wanted.3P it.A carry to her.D  
 ‘The women wanted to bring it to her’ (Gunnl 6.15)

- c. hann fór heimta landskyldir Inga konungs  
 he went collect land-rent.A Ingi.G king  
 'He went to collect King Ingi's rent' (Hkr III.360.15)

The complementizer is generally omitted when infinitival clauses are coordinated:

- (67) þat var siðr konungs, at rísa upp snimma um morna  
 it.N was habit.N king.G to rise up early in morning.A  
 ok klæðask ok taka handlaugar, ganga síðan til kirkju  
 and dress.RFL and take handwashes.A go since to church.G  
 ok hlýða óttu-song  
 and hear morning-song.A  
 'It was the king's habit to get up early in the morning, get dressed and wash his hands and then go to church to hear matins' (Hkr II.81.21)

Two other complementizers are used to introduce infinitival clauses: *en* 'than', and *nema* 'than, except':

- (68) a. sá þeir Markús þá engi annan sinn kost,  
 saw.3P they.M Markus.N then no other their.RFL solution.A  
 en róa suðr undan  
 than row south away  
 'Then Markus and his men saw no other solution than to row away towards the south' (Hkr III.457.12)
- b. Kjartan kaus heldr at vera með konungi en fara til  
 Kjartan.N chose rather to be with king.D than go to  
 Íslands  
 Iceland.G  
 'Kjartan chose to stay with the king rather than go to Iceland'  
 (Laxd 129.17)
- c. engi maðr á qnnur mál at deila í kirkju  
 no man.N has other matters.A to perform in church.D  
 nema biðja fyrir sér ok qllu kristnu fólki  
 except pray for himself.D and all Christian people.D  
 'Nobody has any other business to perform in church than to pray for himself and for all Christian people' (Hóm 36.16)

Since *en* and *nema* are also complementizers, there is no room for *at* in addition. It does occur in rare cases, however, that *en* is followed by *at*.

- (69) þér væri heldr heyriligt at bæta yfir við  
 you.D were.SUB rather becoming.NEU.N to repair over with

hann en at flimta hann  
 him.A than to deride him.A  
 ‘It would suit you better to reconcile yourself with him than to  
 deride him’ (Hallfr 103.23)

### 10.2.3 *Preposing*

While finite nominal clauses allow fronting to Spec-CP of interrogative phrases only (cf. (28–33) above), infinitival clauses allow fronting of all kinds of phrases, except interrogative phrases, which do not occur in non-finite clauses.

- (70) a. ok ætlaði brullup sitt at gera i Nóregi  
 and intended wedding.A his.RFL to do in Norway.D  
 ‘and intended to hold his wedding in Norway’ (Hkr II.428.5)
- b. ok lætr illa við upp at standa  
 and sounds badly by up to stand  
 ‘and complains about having to get up’ (Fbr 14.18)

In infinitival clauses more than one phrase may be preposed:<sup>5</sup>

- (71) a. ek hafða nú ætlat sex skip ór landi at hafa  
 I had.1S now intended six ships.A from country.D to have  
 ‘I had now intended to take six ships out of the country’  
 (Hkr II.201.19)
- b. engi þorði þenna kurr djarfliga upp at bera  
 nobody.M.N dared this complaint.A bravely up to bring  
 fyrir konungi  
 before king.D  
 ‘Nobody dared to bring this complaint up boldly before the king’  
 (Hkr II.102.11)

The fact that more than one phrase is allowed before the complementizer shows that this is not just topicalization of the kind we find in main sentences. It should rather be analysed as left-adjunction to CP, or possibly raising into the matrix sentence. A similar preposing can be found even in finite clauses.

- (72) þat er sagt eitt vár, at Óláfr lýsti því  
 that.N is said.NEU.N one spring.A that Olaf.N announced that.D  
 fyrir  
 for

<sup>5</sup> The examples in (71) are taken from Kristoffersen (1996).

Þorgerði, at hann ætlar útan  
 Thorgerd.D that he intends from-out  
 ‘It has been told that one spring Olaf told Thorgerd that he  
 intended to go abroad (Laxd 81.1)

How to analyse the structures in (71) and (72) is mainly a theoretical question, and I will not pursue it further here.

#### 10.2.4 *Control*

The unexpressed subject PRO of infinitival clauses is like a pronoun in that it receives its interpretation from the context, or it may have a non-specific reference. The element that has the same referent as PRO is said to **control** PRO. The control properties of Old Norse are in principle the same as those of English or modern Scandinavian, and depend largely on the syntactic function of the clause and on the semantic content of the matrix verb.

When the clause is the complement or adjunct of a verb, or part of a PP or a NP with that function, the controller is an argument of that verb. If the verb is monotransitive, so that the clause is the only complement, the controller is the subject of the matrix sentence.

- (73) a. *Kjartan* kaus heldr at vera með konungi en fara til  
 Kjartan.N chose rather to be with king.D than go to  
 Íslands  
 Iceland.G  
 ‘Kjartan chose to stay with the king rather than go to Iceland’  
 (Laxd 129.17)
- b. ok kann *ek* þat at segja þér  
 and can.1S I that.A to tell you.D  
 ‘And I can tell you that’ (Band 43.17)
- c. *margir menn* fóru at finna Gunnar  
 many men.N went to meet Gunnar.A  
 ‘Many men went to meet Gunnar’ (Nj 72.15)
- d. þá áttu engi ætt til at vera konungr  
 then have.2S-you.N no family.A to be king.N  
 ‘Then you have no dynastic right to be king’ (Hkr III. 346.15)

If there is a nominal complement of the verb in addition to the clause, this complement normally controls PRO, and of two objects, the dative (indirect object) is the controller.

- (74) a. *konungr bað hann blíðum orðum at taka við*  
 king.N asked him.A kind words.D to take with  
*kristni*  
 Christianity.D  
 ‘The king asked him in kind words to convert to Christianity’  
 (Hkr I.394.8)
- b. *ok bannaði þeim braut at halda*  
 and forbade them.D away to keep  
 ‘and forbade them to go away’ (Hkr I.403.21)
- c. *ok gaf þeim rúm at sitja hjá sér*  
 and gave them.D room.A to sit with himself.D  
 ‘and he gave them room to sit with him’ (Nj 342.7)

If a verb can shift between a monotransitive and a ditransitive construction—in other words, if it can be used either with or without a complement in addition to the clause—the control may shift accordingly between subject control and object control. Thus (75a) has subject control, while (75b) has object control.

- (75) a. *hann ætlaði at fara eptir fiskum til Gása*  
 he intended to go after fish.D to Gasi.G  
 ‘He was planning to go to Gasi for fish’ (Reykd 188)
- b. *þér ætla ek at fara til Islands*  
 you.D intend.1s I to go to Iceland.G  
 ‘I plan for you to go to Iceland’ (Hkr II.308.4)

With the verb *heita* ‘promise’, the subject is the controller, even though it is a ditransitive verb:

- (76) a. *hann hafði heitit honum at annask úmegð hans*  
 he had promised him.D to support helpless.A his  
 ‘He had promised him to provide for his children’ (Reykd 158)
- b. *hann hafði þeim því heitit, at fylgja þeim á*  
 he had them.D that.D promised to follow them.D on  
*fund Svía-konungs*  
 meeting.A Swede-king.G  
 ‘He had promised them to go with them to meet the king of the Swedes’ (Hkr II.139.20)

The verb *bjóða* ‘offer’ may have either subject or object control, depending on the context:

- (77) a. þá bera þeir upp ørendi sín ok buðu  
 then bring.<sub>3P</sub> they.<sub>M</sub> up missions.<sub>A</sub> their.<sub>RFL</sub> and offered.<sub>3P</sub>  
 konungi at fara með honum  
 king.<sub>D</sub> to go with him.<sub>D</sub>  
 ‘Then they brought up their business and offered to go with the king’ (Hkr II.448.16)
- b. Áskell bauð Vemundi at hafa fé þat  
 Askel.<sub>N</sub> offered Vemund.<sub>D</sub> to have money.<sub>A</sub> that  
 ‘Askel offered Vemund that money’ (Reykd 197)

When the infinitival clause has the subject role, PRO may either be controlled by a phrase in the matrix sentence, or it may have a non-specific reference.

- (78) a. varð þeim seint at koma liðinu ór  
 became them.<sub>D</sub> slow.<sub>NEU.N</sub> to come people.<sub>D</sub>-the out-of  
 býnum  
 town.<sub>D</sub>-THE  
 ‘It took a long time for them to get all the people out of the town’ (Hkr III.449.16)
- b. hofðingligri íþrótt ok nytsamligri þykki mér sú at  
 nobler skill.<sub>N</sub> and more-useful seems me.<sub>D</sub> that.<sub>F.N</sub> to  
 kunna vel á boga  
 know well on bow.<sub>D</sub>  
 ‘I think it is a much nobler and more useful skill to be good at the bow’ (Hkr III.292.6)

### 10.2.5 Agreement

The subject PRO has no case, gender, or number. A predicate complement in an infinitival clause therefore agrees with the controller of PRO.

- (79) a. þá áttu enga ætt til at vera konungr  
 then have.<sub>2S</sub>-you.<sub>N</sub> no family.<sub>A</sub> to be king.<sub>N</sub>  
 ‘Then you have no dynastic right to be king’ (Hkr III. 346.14)
- b. ok báðu hana til at verða vísa, hvernug konungr  
 and asked her.<sub>A</sub> to to become certain.<sub>F.A</sub> how king.<sub>N</sub>



- myndi vilja  
would.SUB want  
'and asked her to find out what the king wanted' (Hkr II.163.24)
- c. betra er þér at vera góðum  
better.NEU.N is you.D to be good.M.D  
'It is better for you to be good' (Hóm 23.20)

### 10.2.6 *Raising*

We have seen in section 9.3.2 how the complement of an infinitive can be raised into subject position in the matrix clause, as in (80), for example.

- (80) en yðr er þat sannast at segja  
but you.P.D is that.N truest.NEU.N to tell  
'But to tell you the absolute truth' (Eg 34.13)

In a similar fashion, the complement of an infinitive can be raised into object position in the matrix clause, resulting in a construction known as 'infinitival relative'. Even the complement of a preposition may be raised, as in (81d).

- (81) a. hqrð tíðendi hefi ek at segja þér  
harsh news.A have.IS I to tell you.D  
'I have harsh news to tell you' (Nj 97.7)
- b. ek átta annat at starfa  
I had.IS other.NEU.A to do  
'I had other things to do' (Hkr III.293.1)
- c. var þeim gefit ǫl at drekka  
was them.D given.NEU.N ale.N to drink  
'They were given ale to drink' (Eg 234.8)
- d. þeim er bú áttu ok börn fyrir at hyggja  
those.D who farm.A owned.3P and children.A for to think  
'those who had a farm and children to look after' (Hkr II.417.25)

The verb *taka* 'take' is used with an infinitival complement, to mean 'begin'. Even in a non-agentive sense, as in (82b), *taka* has a subject which controls the PRO of the clause.

- (82) a. hon tók at gráta  
she took to cry  
'She began to cry' (Nj 18.1)

- b. Egill tók at hressask  
 Egil.N took to recover.RFL  
 ‘Egil began to recover’ (Eg 287.5)

Furthermore, even an infinitival clause with a verb that does not take a subject may occur with *taka* in this sense, as in (83a). We thus get a matrix sentence with no subject, and an infinitival clause with no PRO. This makes these *taka*-constructions look more like raising constructions, an analysis which is supported by the fact that the complementizer may be missing, as in (83b).

- (83) a. nú tók at líða at Kormáki  
 now began to pass at Kormak.D  
 ‘Now Kormak began to fade away’ (Korm 302)
- b. er hausta tók  
 when become-autumn took  
 ‘When autumn began to fall’ (Hkr II.263.4)

There thus seems to be a transition from an initial stage where *taka* is a regular verb which takes an infinitival clause with subject control, to a stage where *taka* is an auxiliary verb which allows raising of the subject of a lower VP into the matrix subject position. In such a construction there is no longer room for a complementizer.

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## Reflexive Binding

There are three kinds of reflexive elements in Old Norse: pronouns, determiners, and clitics. Pronouns have a separate reflexive form for the 3rd person only; this 3rd person form exists only in the oblique cases. For the 1st and 2nd persons, the regular personal pronouns can be used with reflexive reference. There is no number distinction in the 3rd person reflexive pronoun. The reflexive determiner is the 3rd person possessive. Here, too, the regular possessive determiners are used in the 1st and 2nd persons. The clitic is attached to the verb, and has the form *-sk* for all the oblique cases and for all the persons, except that the 1st person also has a separate form *-mk* (cf. 3.7.4 and 8.2).

### 11.1 Bound by subject

The general rule of reflexive binding is as in other Germanic languages: the reflexive is bound by the subject of the sentence or the clause. In (1) the reflexive pronoun is used, as an accusative object in (1a), a dative object in (1b), and as a genitive complement of a preposition in (1c). In (2) there are examples of the reflexive determiner used in NPs. In (3) the clitic *-sk* has the function of an object of the verb to which it is attached.

- (1) a. Flosi bjó sik austan  
 Flosi.N prepared himself.A from-east  
 ‘Flosi prepared himself to go west’ (Nj 294.10)
- b. menn Hákonar hlífðu sér lítt  
 men.N Hakon.G protected.3P themselves.D little.NEU.A  
 ‘Hakon’s men did not protect themselves much’ (Hkr III.444.24)
- c. þeir er frið hafa meðal sín  
 those.M.N who peace.A have.3P between themselves.G  
 ‘those who have peace between themselves’ (Hóm 5.5)
- (2) a. reið hann heim með flokk sinn  
 rode he home with people.A his.RFL  
 ‘He rode home with his people’ (Finnb 92.6)

- b. hann ók heyjum sínum á oxnum  
 he transported hay.D his.RFL on oxen.D  
 ‘He transported his hay on the oxen’ (Fbr 85.17)
- c. Ása in illráða var áðr farin á fund fður  
 Asa.N the wicked was before gone.F.N on meeting.A father.G  
 síns  
 her.RFL  
 ‘Asa the wicked had already gone to meet her father’ (Hkr I.72.13)
- (3) a. ef ek skal giptask bónda einum  
 if I shall.1S marry.RFL farmer.D one  
 ‘if I shall be married to a farmer’ (Hkr III.142.5)
- b. þvázk þér ok verið hreinir  
 wash.IMP.2P.RFL you.P.N and be.IMP.2P clean.P.M.N  
 ‘Wash yourselves and be clean’ (Hóm 11.23)
- c. bjósk hann þá til hólmgöngu  
 prepared.RFL he then to duel.G  
 ‘He then got ready for the duel’ (Eg 235.21)

In accusative with infinitive constructions, the nominative subject of the matrix sentence also binds a reflexive within the lower VP. But the reflexive may also be bound by the accusative, as in (4c).

- (4) a. er Óláfr sá langskipin eptir firðinum fara ok  
 when Olaf<sub>i</sub>.N saw longships.A-the after fjord.D-the travel and  
 róa í móti sér  
 row towards himself<sub>i</sub>.D  
 ‘when Olaf saw the longships travel along the fjord and row towards him’ (Hkr I.252.6)
- b. hann kvað þat vera herskip sín  
 he<sub>i</sub> said that.A be warships.A his<sub>i</sub>.RFL  
 ‘He said those were his warships’ (Hkr II.132.22)
- c. bað hann sína menn vápna sik  
 asked he his.RFL men<sub>i</sub>.A arm themselves<sub>i</sub>.A  
 ‘He asked his men to arm themselves’ (Hkr I.377.1)

In infinitival clauses, a reflexive is bound by PRO, which means that it has the same reference as the element outside controlling PRO (cf. 10.2.4).

- (5) a. tók Óláfr þá at fýsask mjök at fara til  
 took Olaf<sub>i</sub>.N then to desire much to go to

ættleifðar sinnar  
 family-place.G his<sub>i</sub>.RFL  
 ‘Olaf then began to want to go to the home of his ancestors’  
 (Hkr I.346.6)

- b. kvað sik vera þann Finninn, er konungr hafði  
 said himself.A be that Finn<sub>i</sub>.A-the who king.N had  
 játat at setja gamma sinn þar  
 permitted to set hut.A his<sub>i</sub>.RFL there  
 ‘said that he himself was that Finn who the king had given  
 permission to set up his hut there’ (Hkr I.133.7)

## 11.2 Bound by dative phrase

A reflexive may be bound by a dative phrase instead of by a nominative subject. This is very common where the dative phrase has a ‘subjectlike’ function, such as with the verb *þykkja* ‘seem’.

- (6) a. þótti honum nú sitt lif meðallagi gott  
 seemed him<sub>i</sub>.D now his<sub>i</sub>.RFL life.N reasonably good.NEU.N  
 ‘His life now seemed reasonably good to him’ (Barl. 153.8)  
 b. ef honum þykkir sér þat nökkt fullting  
 if him<sub>i</sub>.D seems himself<sub>i</sub>.D it.N some help.N  
 ‘If he thinks that will be of any help to him’ (Eg 235.8)

Also other, more ‘objectlike’ datives may bind reflexives:

- (7) a. ok keypti þar pell ágætlig, er hann ætlaði  
 and bought there materials.A excellent which he intended  
 konungi til tígna-klæða sér  
 king<sub>i</sub>.D to state-clothes himself<sub>i</sub>.D  
 ‘and bought there some very fine material which he procured for the  
 king for his robes of state’ (Hkr II.99.2)  
 b. Óláfr konungr þakkaði henni vel orð sín  
 Olaf.N king thanked her<sub>i</sub>.D well words.A her<sub>i</sub>.RFL  
 ‘King Olaf thanked her well for her words’ (Hkr II.45.19)

A dative phrase may even bind a reflexive within a subject phrase. Since reflexive pronouns do not have nominative forms, this can only involve the possessive determiners.

- (8) a. þótti þeim [...] seta sín ill ok úfrelsi  
 seemed them;<sub>D</sub> stay.N their;<sub>i,RFL</sub> bad.F.N and unfree.F.N  
 ‘They found their stay both unpleasant and oppressive’  
 (Hkr II.308.9)
- b. en því váru Davíði léttari sínar sakar  
 but therefore were.<sub>3P</sub> David;<sub>i,D</sub> lighter.P.N his;<sub>i,RFL</sub> charges.N  
 fyrir guði  
 before God.D  
 ‘But therefore David’s charges before God were less serious for him’  
 (Kgs 114.32)

### 11.3 Bound by accusative phrase

Occasionally, a reflexive may be bound by an accusative object. In these cases, too, the reflexive may be part of the subject.

- (9) a. eigi mátti frjalsa hann frá dauða öll sín konungleg  
 not could save him;<sub>i,A</sub> from death.D all his;<sub>i,RFL</sub> royal  
 sæla  
 bliss.N  
 ‘All his royal bliss could not save him from death’ (Barl 175.38)
- b. konungur mat Kjartan um fram alla menn fyrir  
 king.N valued Kjartan;<sub>i,A</sub> in forward all men.A for  
 sakir ættar sinnar ok atgervi  
 sake family.G his;<sub>i,RFL</sub> and ability.G  
 ‘The king valued Kjartan above all men because of his family and his ability’ (Laxd 128.17)

Although they are rare and contrary to the general rule, there are as we have seen, a few examples of reflexives being bound by phrases that cannot be considered subjects at any level of analysis. There seems, however, to be a strict linearity requirement in these cases, since the antecedent always precedes the reflexive.

### 11.4 Distributives

When the possessive determiner *sinn* is bound by *hverr* ‘each’ or *hvárr* ‘each (of two)’, the result is a construction with distributive meaning.

- (10) a. at sinn þriðjung Nóregs skyldi eignask hverr  
 that his.RFL third-part.A Norway.G should assign.RFL each.M.N  
 þeira  
 them.G  
 ‘that each of them should take one third of Norway for himself’  
 (Hkr I.437.20)
- b. Ólafur konungur sjalfr ok þeir Kolbjörn báðir  
 Olaf.N king self and they.M Kolbjorn.N both.M.N  
 hljópu þá fyrir borð, ok á sitt borð hvárr  
 jumped.3P then for board.A and on his.RFL board.A each.M.N  
 ‘King Olaf himself and Kolbjorn then both jumped overboard, each  
 of them on their side’ (Hkr I.452.13)
- c. þykkir nokkut sinn veg hváru  
 seems somewhat.NEU.A their.RFL way.A each.NEU.D  
 ‘Each of them thinks that he or she has it their way’ (Laxd 66.6)
- d. í hverri þeirri deild landsins er sitt lögþing ok  
 in each that part.D land.G-the is its.RFL law-assembly.N and  
 sín lög  
 its.RFL laws.N  
 ‘Each part of the country has its own legislature and its own laws’  
 (Hkr II.135.7)

In distributive constructions, the reflexive and the binder may have all kinds of syntactic functions. The *hverr/hvárr* phrase which binds the reflexive is the subject in (10a, b), a dative experiencer in (10c), and the complement of a preposition in (10d), while the reflexives are an accusative object in (10a), the complement of a preposition in (10b), an adverbial accusative in (10c), and the subject in (10d). As can be seen from (10c), the linearity requirement mentioned in the previous section does not seem to apply in distributive constructions.

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# Subject Index

- ablative 18, 20, 108, 115, 171
- ablaut 42, 51
- accusative 17, 20–3, 25–30, 32–3, 36, 38, 111–15, 165, 168, 283
  - lexical accusative 22, 139, 141, 170
  - structural accusative 22, 139, 141, 144
- accusative with infinitive 22, 51, 121–5, 151–5, 160, 281
- adjective 16, 24, 55, 67–73, 109, 262
  - strong (indefinite) adjectival declension 36–7, 40, 68, 95
  - weak (definite) adjectival declension 36, 40–1, 67, 95
- adjunct 18, 168–88
  - adverbial adjunct 180, 232, 258
- adjunction 5–6, 161, 196, 230, 238–43
- adverb 95–6, 108, 119, 137
- adverbial:
  - free adverbial 168
  - sentence adverbial 153, 238
- agent 17, 63, 66, 121, 126, 133, 172–3, 179, 198–9, 204, 214, 220
- agreement 16–7, 23–4, 33, 36, 41, 53, 58–9, 68, 82, 91, 94–5, 123, 130–2, 134–5, 138, 149–50, 154, 186, 200–3, 208, 277–8
- anaphor 123–6
- antecedent 259
- apposition 90, 93
- article:
  - cliticized article 57–8
  - definite article 16, 36, 39, 55–60, 67, 71, 73, 80, 82
  - double article 58
  - indefinite article 56–7, 74
- assimilation 11–12, 15, 38, 43
- auxiliary verb 127–39, 159, 189, 204
- benefactive 99, 170, 174, 177, 199
- c-command 4
- cardinal number 16, 34
- cardinal points 108
- case 16–24
  - lexical case 21–3
  - structural case 21–3
- causative 143, 148
- clausal complement 79–80, 117, 156–60, 166
- cleft construction 255
- clitic 35, 39, 57, 88, 228, 280
- cliticization, *see* clitic
- comitative 111, 114, 174, 178
- comparative 36, 40, 67–8, 97
  - comparative clause 266–8
  - comparative construction 103–6, 262
- complementizer 86, 193, 250, 272–4
- compound noun 64
- conditional clause 252, 270
- consonants 9–10
  - consonant lengthening 13
  - consonant simplification 12
- control 275–7
- coordination 119, 134, 166, 201, 221, 252, 264, 273
  - discontinuous coordination 242
- D-structure 3
- dative 18, 20, 22, 24–31, 36, 97–9, 105, 111–15, 142, 146, 165, 170–1, 282–3
  - absolute dative 173
  - dative of comparison 260
  - dative plural 24–6, 31–2, 36, 40
  - possessive dative 111
- declarative sentence 157, 231
- deep structure, *see* D-structure
- definite article 16, 36, 39, 55–60, 67, 71, 73, 80, 82
- definite declension, *see* adjective: weak (definite) adjectival declension
- deletion 119–20, 166–8
- demonstrative 16, 33–5, 78, 81–7, 84–6, 88, 240, 254
- dental suffix 45, 51
- determiner 16, 24, 36, 38, 169, 280
  - demonstrative 16, 33–5, 78, 81–7, 84–6, 88, 240, 254

- determiner (*cont.*)  
 distal demonstrative 36, 81  
 proximal demonstrative 81  
 possessive 16, 36, 39, 59, 90, 283
- devoicing 15
- diphthongs 10
- directional 108, 111, 115
- discontinuous phrase 148
- distal demonstrative 36, 81
- distributive 283–4
- double article 58
- DP-analysis 81
- dual 35, 39, 49, 200
- dynamic meaning 131
- East Nordic 1
- ergative 220
- existential quantifier 73
- experiencer 198
- experiencer verb 127
- external argument 204, 216–23
- extraction 228, 233–4
- extraposition 27, 73, 86, 156, 196, 196n, 201, 238–40, 255
- factivity 246
- feminine 23, 27, 32–3, 36, 40
- finite clause 79, 117, 156, 224, 244–71
- finite verb 41, 48, 121–3, 189–94, 203
- free word order 229
- futhark 7
- future 129, 133, 245
- gender 16, 23, 44
- genitive 19, 22–7, 30–1, 55, 59–67, 97–8, 100, 116–17, 145, 165, 173, 260  
 argument genitive 61  
 descriptive genitive 61  
 genitive plural 24–6, 31–3, 36, 40  
 objective genitive 64–6  
 partitive genitive 20, 61, 97, 101, 137, 145  
 possessive genitive 61  
 subjective genitive 62
- gerund 138, 215–16, 219
- gerundive 133
- historical present 190
- i-umlaut 14–15, 25, 32, 49, 52
- Icelandic 2, 7, 10, 12, 194n, 259
- imperative 51, 190, 221, 228–9, 231
- inalienable possession 170
- inchoative 131
- indefinite declension, *see* adjective: strong (indefinite) adjectival declension
- indicative 49, 51, 246, 248
- indirect object 144
- Indo-European 161
- infinitival clause 79, 86, 102, 117, 156, 179, 185, 271, 281
- infinitival relative 278
- infinitive 41, 49, 51, 122–3, 137–8, 151, 158, 215  
 accusative with infinitive 20, 51, 121–5, 151–5, 160, 281  
 infinitival clause 79, 86, 102, 117, 156, 179, 185, 271, 281  
 infinitival relative 278  
 preterite infinitive 51, 123, 155
- infinitive marker 122, 271–4
- ingressive 159
- instrumental 18, 20, 111, 114, 142, 170, 172, 174, 178, 260
- internal argument 210–11
- interrogative clause 86, 157
- interrogative phrase 250
- interrogative pronoun 16, 36, 91–3
- interrogative sentence 226–8, 231
- interrogative word 265, 269
- irregular verb 47–8
- kinship terms 27, 30
- lexical accusative 22, 139, 141, 170
- lexical case 22
- linearity requirement 283–4
- locative 18, 20, 108, 111, 115, 174
- masculine 23–4, 31, 36, 38
- medio-passive 126–7
- modal verb 128–30, 155, 220
- mood 16, 41, 190–1, 246–50
- narrative 231
- negation 225–6, 232  
 pleonastic negation 269
- negative quantifier 73
- neuter 23, 30, 33, 36, 38
- new information 196, 199, 253
- nominative 17, 20–1, 24–33, 35–6, 38
- non-finite clause 156, 158, 224, 271–9
- non-finite verb, *see* verb
- non-specific reference 74, 85
- North Germanic 1
- Norwegian 2, 10, 12, 33, 49, 74, 101, 253n, 259, 264
- noun 16, 23–33  
 compound noun 64

- deverbal noun 61–2, 78  
 strong noun 23–31  
 weak noun 23, 31–3  
 number 16, 23–4, 41, 201  
 numeral 35, 61, 73
- object:  
   clausal object 79  
   cognate object 140–1  
   double object construction 141  
   indirect object 144  
   object raising 103  
   object role 63, 133
- oblique case 20, 31–2, 40, 139, 217, 220  
   oblique subject, *see* subject
- Old Icelandic, *see* Icelandic  
 Old Norwegian, *see* Norwegian
- optative 246–7  
 orthography 7, 12  
 OV order 161, 163
- participle 16, 36, 67–73, 122  
   perfect participle 36, 38, 41, 53, 67, 122, 130, 187, 211–12  
   present participle 32, 36, 40–1, 49, 67, 122–3, 132–3, 146, 150, 172, 187, 215, 219
- particle 93, 148, 163–4
- partitive 19–20  
   partitive genitive 20, 61, 97, 101, 137, 145
- passive 22, 126, 132–3, 140, 170, 172–3, 179, 196, 211–15, 218
- patient role 18, 66, 100, 139, 143, 165, 198–9, 217, 220
- patronymic 77
- perfect participle 36, 38, 41, 53, 67, 122, 130, 187, 211–12
- perfect stem 41–2, 45, 53
- perfect tense 130–1
- person 41
- place name 138, 151
- pleonastic negation 269
- plural 24–33, 35–6, 40, 49, 51  
   dative plural 24–6, 31–2, 36, 40  
   genitive plural 24–6, 31–3, 36, 40
- positive (adjective) 36, 40, 67
- possession 114, 199  
   inalienable possession 170
- possessive dative 111
- possessive determiner 16, 36, 39, 59, 90, 283
- possessive genitive 61
- potential subjunctive 246, 248
- predicate adjunct 168, 185–8
- predicate complement 17, 131, 149–51, 154, 185, 208, 233, 257, 277
- preposition 79, 85, 101–2, 147–8, 150, 164, 166, 260  
   complex preposition 109, 111, 116  
   double preposition 109  
   intransitive preposition 108–10, 117, 119, 148, 163  
   preposition stranding 227, 233, 258  
   primary preposition 107  
   secondary preposition 107
- present participle 32, 36, 40–1, 49, 67, 122–3, 132–3, 146, 150, 172, 187, 215, 219
- present stem 41–2, 45, 49–51
- present tense 41, 244  
   historical present 190
- preterite infinitive 51, 123, 155
- preterite stem 41–2, 45–6, 51–3
- preterite tense 41, 52, 244
- preterite-present verb 47, 51–3
- PRO 271, 275, 277, 281
- pro-drop 221
- progressive aspect 137
- pronoun 16, 35–6, 81, 124–5, 165, 229, 280  
   interrogative pronoun 16, 36, 91–3  
   personal pronoun 87–91  
   resumptive pronoun 263
- pronunciation 7
- proper name 12, 25, 56, 67, 70–1, 77, 89, 138
- prosody 10–1
- Proto-Germanic 161
- proximal demonstrative 81
- quantifier 16, 33–6, 38, 73–5, 84, 109  
   existential quantifier 73  
   negative quantifier 73  
   universal quantifier 73
- quantity 10–11
- question:  
   dependent question 86, 157  
   disjunctive question 92, 226  
   phrasal question 157, 227, 257  
   sentence question 157, 226, 256
- raising:  
   object raising 103  
   subject raising 125, 135, 138, 202, 204–10, 278–9
- recipient 18, 66, 99, 141–2, 144, 165, 170, 199, 217
- reciprocal expression 75, 125–6
- reduplicating verb 45, 48
- reference:  
   non-specific 74, 85

- reference (*cont.*)  
 specific 58, 85  
 unique 58
- reference phrase 56
- reflexive 124  
 reflexive suffix 53, 124–5, 153, 209  
 reflexive pronoun 35  
 reflexive verb 53–4, 123–7, 211  
 relative clause 78, 84, 86, 105, 237, 241, 249, 251, 259–69
- resumptive pronoun 263
- runes 7
- S-structure 3
- semivowel 9, 13–4
- sentence adverbial 153, 238
- singular 25–31, 36, 38, 40
- spatial expression 115, 174
- specific reference 58, 85
- speech act participant 35
- standard of comparison 105
- stem class 23
- stress 10
- stress shift 14
- strong declension, *see* adjective
- structural accusative 22, 139, 141, 144
- structural case 21–3
- stylistic fronting 236–8, 251, 253
- subject 4, 17, 123, 128, 139, 189, 232, 280–2  
 clausal subject 135, 223–4, 240  
 oblique subject 154, 195n  
 semantic subject 21  
 subject properties 194–203, 280–2  
 subject role 62–3  
 unspecified subject 220
- subjectless sentence 133, 135, 216–23, 237
- subjunctive 50, 52, 190–1, 246, 248  
 optative subjunctive 246–7  
 potential subjunctive 246, 248
- superlative 36–7, 40, 67–8, 97, 181
- supine 41, 53, 122
- surface structure, *see* S-structure
- syllable 11  
 stressed syllable 10–1  
 unstressed syllable 9–12
- temporal clause 182, 270
- temporal expression 111, 113, 115, 175
- tense 16, 41, 190, 244–5
- title 31, 77
- topic 195, 227, 231–6
- topicalization, *see* topic
- u-umlaut 11–12, 14, 26, 28, 32–3, 36–7, 40, 43, 51
- umlaut:  
 i-umlaut 14–15, 25, 32, 49, 52  
 u-umlaut 11–12, 14, 26, 28, 32–3, 36–7, 40, 43, 51
- unaccusative 197, 210
- unique reference 58
- universal quantifier 73
- verb  
 auxiliary verb 127–39, 159, 189, 204  
 experiencer verb 127  
 finite verb 41, 48, 121–3, 189–94, 203  
 irregular verb 47–8  
 modal verb 128–30, 155, 220  
 motion verb 159, 187  
 non-finite verb 41, 48, 121–3  
 preterite-present verb 47, 51–3  
 reduplicating verb 45, 48  
 reflexive verb 53–4, 123–7, 211  
 strong verb 38, 41–5, 52–3  
 weak verb 38, 41, 45–7, 52–3
- verb second 191–2
- VO order 160–3
- vowels 8–9  
 long vowels 8–10  
 short vowels 10  
 vowel deletion 13
- weak declension, *see* adjective
- West Nordic 1
- word order 160–6, 191–7, 229–43, 250–3  
 free word order 229
- X-bar theory 2–3

# Word Index

- á 109, 114, 175  
af 102, 115, 173, 178–9  
allr 37, 73, 84  
annarr 39, 75, 126  
at (infinitive marker) 122, 137–8, 158, 271–2  
at (preposition) 114, 137, 176  
at (subjunction) 86, 157, 182–3, 253, 255
- báðir 34  
betr 96  
bezt 96  
biðja 151, 160  
bjóða 277  
bóndi 32  
bót 66  
boeta 66  
bróðir 27  
búa 45
- dagr 25, 173  
dóttir 30  
draumr 64  
dreyma 23, 64, 218
- ef 184, 253, 256, 270  
eiga 47, 130, 225  
einn 35, 39, 73–4  
einnhverr 73, 85  
ek 35  
ekki 225  
en 104, 264, 266, 268, 273  
engi 40, 73, 225  
er 182–3, 256, 259, 266
- fá 45, 130  
faðir 27  
falla 45  
fé 30  
finna 43  
fyrir 109, 112, 179, 228  
fyrir en 268
- gagn 107  
ganga 45  
gera 47, 127  
geta 130
- hafa 47, 50, 130–2, 210  
hans 59  
heilagr 38  
heim 108  
heita 45, 48, 66, 138–9, 276  
heldr 104  
hennar 59  
hér 108, 111  
hinn 38, 56–7, 67, 80  
hjá 107  
hundrað 61 n  
hvaðan 228  
hvar 228, 258  
hvár 36, 39, 73, 75, 91–2, 126, 283  
hvárt 226, 256  
hvat 36, 91, 157, 227–8  
  hví 228  
hvé 96, 228  
hvé nær 228  
hvernig 228  
hverr 36, 39, 73, 75, 91–2, 157, 227, 283  
hversu 96, 228  
hví 228
- í 109, 176  
-ing 24, 28  
-ingi 62  
-ingr 62  
inn 56, 67  
-inn 56–7, 82
- jafn 103, 267
- koma 44, 50  
kunna 48, 128–9, 158  
kýr 29
- láta 152

- liggja 44  
líka 218  
líkr 99  
lítill 38
- maðr 27, 63, 136  
margr 73  
með 114, 170, 178  
meðan 184, 270  
mega 48, 51, 128  
meir 96  
mest 96  
miðil 107  
mikill 38  
minn 39, 59  
minna 218  
minnr 96  
minst 96  
-mk 54, 280  
móðir 30  
muna 48, 52  
munu 48, 51, 53, 123, 128–9, 155, 245, 249  
mær 28
- nema 184, 270, 273  
nær 261  
nøkkurr 39, 73, 96
- of 98  
ok 73, 104, 231, 231n, 264  
okkar 39, 59  
ór 115
- prestr 25
- sá 33, 81, 88, 105, 261  
þat 156, 255  
því 179  
sami 68, 267  
segja 47  
sem 93, 103, 181–2, 259, 266–7, 269  
sik 53  
sinn 39, 59, 283  
sjá 44  
sjalfr 75–6, 90–1  
-sk 54, 123–4, 126, 280  
skulu 48, 51, 53, 123, 128–9, 155, 247
- slíkr 267  
sofa 44, 50  
sonr 26  
standa 44  
sumr 37, 73  
svá 103, 156, 182, 266  
sýnask 207, 209  
systir 30
- taka 159, 278–9  
til 98, 101–2, 107, 109, 116, 148, 176, 179  
þá 180, 234  
þar 108, 111, 118, 165, 182, 258  
þat 156, 255  
þessi 34, 81  
þinn 39, 59  
þó 183  
þóat 183, 256  
þora 158  
þótt 183, 256  
þú 35  
þurfa 48  
því 179  
þvílíkr 267  
þykkja 47, 50, 125, 144, 202–3, 207, 209,  
267, 282
- um 164, 175–6  
-ung 24, 28  
unna 48  
unz 184, 270  
utan 270  
uxi 31
- várr 59  
vegr 168  
vera 50–1, 130–8, 210–13, 215  
verða 131–8, 211–13  
verr 96  
verst 96  
við 101  
vilja 47, 50–1, 123, 158, 272  
virðask 207, 209  
vita 51
- yðvarr 39, 59  
ykkar 39, 59