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A CONTRIBUTION
TO THE PROBLEM OF WORD-ORDER
IN OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH

An interesting, though not very common phenomenon in Current English word-order is afforded by the occurrence of the inverted subject (inverted word-order, *VS*) in declarative sentences¹ which is, on the one hand, far less frequent than in German and Scandinavian languages² — in this respect English goes parallel with French —, and, on the other hand, also far less frequent than in Old and Middle English, both resorting to the inverted word-order in many cases in which it is no longer admitted in Current English.³ Thus we meet — among other cases of its use in older English — the inversion of the subject especially in the so-called introduced declarative sentences, e. g.:

a) after the stressed (emphatic) object in the front position of the sentence: *þas lareomas asende se eadiga papa Gregorius, Aelfric; wael-raeste geceas Byrhtnoðes maeg*, The Battle of Maldon; *me sendon to þe saemen snelle*, ib.; *Hem oftok a menestral*, Iacob and Iosep; *Hym louede yung, him louede holde, Erl and barun*, The Lay of Havelok the Dane 30; *Vtlawes and theues made he bynde*, ib.; *A fat swan loved he best of any roost*, Chauc., *Cant. Tales*, Prologue 206; *but hood, for jolitee, mered he noon*, ib. 680, etc.

In Current English the frontal object does not occasion the inversion of the subject (expressed either by a noun or a personal pronoun), comp.: *Numbers of the men she knew already*, Thack., *Van. Fair*, ch. 29; *The great sea-chest none of us had ever seen open*, Stevenson, *Treas. Island*,

¹ Comp. Jespersen, *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles* (MEG) VII 2.22 ff; Poutsma, *A Grammar of Late Modern English*, Part I, Ch. VIII 5 ff.

² Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, 3rd ed., § 14, Id., MEG VII 2.18; Aronstein, *Englische Stilistik*, § 24; Poutsma, o. c., P. I, VIII 6; for German comp. Behaghel, *Deutsche Syntax* IV, § 1466, Heyse, *Deutsche Grammatik*, 29. Aufl., pp. 546 f.

³ Jespersen, MEG VII 2.19, 2.49; Eienkel, *Geschichte der englischen Sprache* II, *Historische Syntax*, § 597; Aronstein, l. c.; the same development is also stated for Old and Middle French, cp. Foulet, *Petite syntaxe de l'ancien français*, 5e éd., § 450; Lerch, *Historische französische Syntax* III, § 395 ff; Dauzat, *Histoire de la langue française*, § 514, ascribes the Old French inversion to the Germanic influence.

ch. 1; *The second winter at Malta Joan enjoyed less*, Baring, *Darby and Joan*, ch. 15; *A man so overflowing with health and life he had seldom seen*, Galsw., *Maid in Waiting*, ch. 4, etc.

The inversion, however, is the rule also in Current English after a negative frontal object: *Not another word had he to say to me*, Stev., *Kidnapped*, ch. 4; *But no knob or spring could we discover*, Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*, ch. 17; *They got into their cab, and not one word did they say the whole way home*, Galsw., *Maid in Wait.*, ch. 35; *We abate nothing of our just demands; not one jot or tittle do we recede*, W. Churchill, *The Second World War II*, ch. 10, etc.⁴

b) after the frontal adverbial adjunct: *þa aras sum aegleaw man*, Gospel, Luke X 25; *Ond þaes on Eastron worhte Aelfred cyning lytle werede gemeorc*, Winchester Chr.; *On þam dagum rixode Aepelbyrht cyning on Cantwarebyrig riclice*, Aelfric, *Lives of the Saints*; *On al þis yuele time heold Martin abbot his abbotrice XX wintre and half gaere*, Peterborough Chr.; *þis gaere for þe king Stephne ofer sae to Normandi*, ib.; *This thretty wynter... hath he gone and preched*, Piers Plowman, etc.

In Current English the inversion of the subject is regularly brought about by negative frontal adverbs and adverbial adjuncts, as well as after some adverbs which are not negative in form, but are felt as negative, thrown by emphasis to the front position; inversion is, however, very frequent with intransitive verbs and in passive constructions when the subject, being a more weighty word than the predicate, is placed towards the end of the sentence; thus in: *Never would she show him or that girl that they could hurt her*, Galsw., *Beyond II 3*; *in none of his plays had he ever come so near the truth*, Deeping, *The Bridge of Desire*, ch. 36; *No sooner does one expect you to go straight on... than you double round the corner*, Hardy, *Jude the Obscure VI 4*; *Not for a hundred years have the relations between Moslems and Hindus been so poisoned*, Churchill, o. c. I 5; *for hardly had Ahab reached his perch; hardly was the rope belayed to its pin... when...*, Melville, *Moby Dick*, ch. 134; *Only in Richmond Park did she remember that...*, Galsw., *Indian Summer of a Forsyte*, ch. 2; *Only when they left the house... did his normal eloquence return*, Cronin, *Citadel I 4*; *Rarely has so generous a proposal encountered such a hostile reception*, Churchill, o. c. II 10; *Finally came the parting with Miss Amelia...*, Thack., *Van. Fair*, ch. 6;

⁴ Poutsma, o. c., P. I, VIII 11; Grad, *Affectivity and Inversion in Modern English*, in *Zbornik filozofske fakultete II*, Ljubljana 1955.

With Hubert's fate was wrapped up the fate of her beloved home, Galsw., *Maid in Wait.*, ch. 1; *In Dinny flamed up compassion for young Croom*, Id., *Over the River*, ch. 31, etc.⁵

c) after a predicative thrown by emphasis to the front position: *Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre*, Chauc., *Cant. Tales*, Prol. 47; *Whyt was his berd*, ib. 331; *Fair was this yonge wyf*, ib., *The Milleres Tale* 3233, etc.; comp. still Sh., *R. Jul.* III 1: *Villain am I none*.

In Current English the inversion is still observed with a substantival subject: *Great was Mr. Tulliver's wonder*, Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* I 11; *An amazing fellow was Henry*, A. Bennet, *Riceyman Steps* II 4, etc. But: *Beautiful white it was*, Galsw., *Over the River*, ch. 2; *A poor lot they are*, Id., *The Island Pharisees*, ch. 7, etc.⁶

As may be seen from the above instances of the old period, the second place in the sentence was occupied by the verb, attracted there by its modifier, i. e. the stressed frontal object, and adverbial adjunct respectively; in this way the subject, whose place in non-introduced declarative sentences was normally in front of the verb as early as that period, was thrown after it.

It must be admitted, however, that in the examples of the above kind the direct (non-inverted, regular) word-order, too, is often to be found in older English, a fact explicitly pointed out also by Mossé, *Manuel de l'anglais du moyen âge* II, § 173, 3, who in a note states the non-compulsory use of the inversion in such cases, giving at the same time the following two instances: *sume hi diden in cruceþus*, Peterborough Chr. 29; *al þou most sugge*, *The Fox and the Wolf* 207.

Mossé puts too little stress on the fact that the direct arrangement is met with especially in cases in which the subject is expressed by a personal pronoun. Comp. also: *nu ic neom myrðe þæt ic beo þin suna nemned*, Gospel, Luke XV 19; *Nu þu me forlaered hæfst on mines herran hete*, Genesis; *Rihtlice hi sind Angle gehatene*, Aelfric, *Lives of the Saints*; *Aefter þysum wordum, he gewende to þam aerend-racan*, ib.; *sume treowu he wætrode to þam þæt hie þy swiðor sceoldon weaxan*, Cura Past.; *þæt wif he onfeng fram hiere ieldrum*, Bede's Eccl. Hist.; *A þousent shep ich habbe abiten*, *The Fox and the Wolf* 203; *Mani þusen hi drapen mid hungaer*, Peterb. Chr.; *Calibeorne his smeord he smeinde bi his side*, Lazamon's Brut 21133; *His spere he nom an honde*,

⁵ Jespersen, MEG VII 241; Poutsma, o. c., P. I, VIII 7 a; Grad, o. c.

⁶ Jespersen, MEG VII 231; Poutsma, o. c., P. I, VIII 18; Grad, o. c.

ib. 21144; *Ricth-wise men he louede alle*, The Lay of Havelok the Dane 37; *Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne*, Chauc., *Cant. Tal.*, *Prol.* 52 (frequent construction in Chaucer!); *To herte knyf hue* (= she) *sette*, King Horn 101; *Nu ze habbeþ iherd þane ende of Floriz*, Floriz and Blanche-flur 181, etc.

As early as that period, and probably under the influence of the numerous cases with the non-inverted personal pronoun, the direct word-order is also to be found in far less numerous examples with a substantival subject, as in: *In þat time al Hengelond þerl Godrich hauede in his hond*, Havelok the Dane 999; *þo þe bataile was ido*, The Chronicle of Rob. of Gloucester 108; *The reule of seint Maure... This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace*, Chauc., *C. T.*, *Prol.* 173; *Therefore, in stede of weping and preyeres, Men moot yeve silver to the poore freres*, ib. 231, etc.

As appears from the statistics given by Huchon, *Histoire de la langue anglaise* I 257, the inverted word-order in such cases was still predominant in Old English (*Chronicle* 3 : 2, *Cura Past.* 3 : 2, *Aelfric's Homilies* 3 : 1), but the percentage of instances of the direct arrangement were already considerable in that period and were constantly increasing in the course of the following centuries, especially sharply when, with the collapse of declension, the direct arrangement was given a syntactic function, becoming, as a sort of "morphème",⁷ vital to the understanding of sentences of the subject-verb-object pattern;⁸ the numerous examples of non-inversion, especially resorted to in cases with a pronominal subject, show that older English, as it were, overtook contemporary French where in similar cases even the pronominal subject had strictly to obey the Old French rule of inversion, comp.: *Karlun aþrum nus ja*, *Rol.*; *Vers Engleterre passat il la mer salse*, ib. 372; or *sai jo veirement que...*, ib.; *ja n'en descendrat il*, *Voyage de Charlemagne*; *Aultre chose ne sçay-je*, *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, No. 36; comp. as late as the 17th century: *Une chose ai-je à dire*, *La Fontaine, Contes* III 6, etc.⁹

⁷ J. Vendryes, *Le Langage*, p. 93.

⁸ Comp. Jespersen's statistics for this pattern in older English: 40 % in Alfred's prose, only 16 % in Beowulf (poetry!), but 66 % in Ancræn Riwe (13th cent.), 84 % in Chaucer's prose (Jespersen, *MEG* VII 2.18).

H. Reis states that one quarter of all principal clauses in Beowulf exhibits the object (adverbial adjunct) — subject — verb pattern, and sees in this word-order a survival of one of the three possible Old Germanic arrangements (H. Wunderlich-H. Reis, *Der deutsche Satzbau*, 3. Aufl. p. 94 ff).

⁹ The pronoun-subject could be still omitted in the old period of French, cp. Foulet, o. c., § 457, Lerch, o. c., § 395, Note.

The strong tendency to use the pronominal subject in front of the verb in the English of that period is clearly proved by examples in translations and adaptations from French in which we already meet the direct word-order in the English construction in spite of the French inversion, comp.: *Nou þou hest y-hyerd þe zennes*, The Ayenbite of Inwyrt (French original: *Ore as-tu oi les pecchiéz*); *And þervore þet zuyche zennes arizeþ communliche ine tavernne, þet is welle of zenne, þervore ich mylle a lite take of þe zennes*, ib. (French: ... *por ce voel je un poi toucher des pecchiéz*); *þaz þou ssoldest to cleve, ich nelle nazt lete asskapie þis mes*, ib. (French: *Se tu devoies crever, ne lairai-je pas ce mes eschaper*), etc. Owing to such examples one cannot quite agree with the view of J. Delcourt¹⁰ that "l'anglais a dû suivre en cela (sc. ordre des mots) l'exemple que lui avait montré le français qui de bonne heure avait substitué l'ordre direct à l'inversion germanique", but, on the contrary, it may be assumed that already at this early date the tendency in English to conform to the direct arrangement in the so-called introduced sentences began to take root more intensively and probably prior to the similar development in French. It should also be observed that this tendency — probably first realised in the cases with a pronominal subject (euphonic and rhythmic considerations also playing an important part in this development¹¹) — originated at a time when phonetic development had not yet reduced or eliminated the old declensional endings, a fact which argues in favour of the hypothesis expressed by Jespersen¹² who supposes that the direct (logical) arrangement began to predominate already before the decay of the old declension, or, in other words, the origin of the new fixed direct word-order is not due, as is usually assumed, to the decay of the inflectional system in Old and Middle English.¹³

¹⁰ J. Delcourt, *Initiation à l'étude historique de l'anglais*, 1944, § 272.

¹¹ Hirt, *Handbuch des Urgermanischen* III 217, giving the example: *nīper he ahreas*, even thinks this arrangement a survival of the older word-order when the unstressed ("tiefbetont") personal pronoun used to precede the (also weakly stressed) verb and occupy the second place in the sentence, i. e. immediately after the stressed front-word ("Wackernagels Gesetz").

¹² Jespersen, *Language, its Nature, Development and Origin* XVIII, § 13; comp. also Id., *Progress in Language*, § 75.

¹³ For French as well, Lerch, o. c. III 269 ff, denies any connection between the decay of the two-case Old French declension and the establishment of a fixed, uniform arrangement.

In connection with the problem of inversion, we shall deal in these pages with the question whether in the old stage of the language the inversion of the subject also took place in the principal clause when this was preceded by a subordinate clause (usually an adverbial clause); inversion is, as known, rigorously observed in Modern German¹⁴ and Scandinavian languages, but it does not take place in Modern English — at least not with transitive verbs, nor with intransitive verbs with a pronominal subject¹⁵ —, which in this respect again agrees with Modern French. Comp.:

Mod. E.: *When I entered his room, he (my father) was reading a letter.* Fr.: *Quand j'entrai (je suis entré) dans sa chambre, il (mon père) lisait une lettre.* Ger.: *Als ich in sein Zimmer trat, las er (mein Vater) einen Brief.* Dan.: *Da jeg trådte ind i hans værelse, læste han (min far) et brev.* Sw.: *När (Da) jag kom in i hans rum, läste han (min fader) et brev.*

For older English the question is answered in the affirmative by Einkenel, o. c., § 59 η: »Wird irgend ein Satzteil aus dem Gefüge des

¹⁴ Behaghel, o. c. IV, § 1472; Heyse, o. c., p. 547; for other languages (Gothic, Norse, Old Greek, Russian, etc.) comp. also Hirt, *IGr.* 5, 346, and o. c. III 220 f.; Behaghel, *Btr.* 53, 405; Delbrück, *Synt. Forsch.* 4, 14. Both Behaghel and Hirt suppose an Indo-European origin of this word-order, but they also admit other arrangements in our problem.

¹⁵ Jespersen, *MEG* VII 251. The inversion, however, is possible with an intransitive verb (be, come etc.) and a substantival subject, comp.: *for, ere I Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain*, Sh., *R. Jul.* III 1; *Even while they were talking came a male for advice*, Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, ch. 52; *As they debated the story, came a loud knock at the door*, Thack., *Van. Fair*, ch. 25; *While the government of the Tudors was in its highest vigour, took place (= occurred) an event which...*, Macauley, *Hist.* I, ch. 1 (quoted from Poutsma), etc. But usually the weak *there* ("grammatical subject") is used in the front position of the principal clause, e. g.: *As I was sitting at breakfast this morning, there comes a knock at the door*, Dick., *Chuz.*, ch. 39, etc. (see below!).

Poutsma, o. c., P. I, VIII 8 a, also only gives examples with intransitive verbs bearing on our problem; here are, however, two examples of inversion with transitive verbs: *But just, when all was fair, and I was to see him safe aboard ship for Rome, if not to Rome itself, met us that son of a — the Lord Anthony of Burgundy, and his men, making for Flanders*, Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, ch. 48 (here, the inversion is perhaps due to the long apposition, following the subject, "Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder!"); "*Hoo,*" Ringo said. "*Me ask her? I bet if she stayed here wouldn't no Yankee nor nothing else bother that trunk, nor Marse John neither, if he knowed hit.*" W. Faulkner, *The Unvanquished*, ch. 2.

In Modern French the inversion with intransitive verbs in our construction is possible as well.

Satzes herausgehoben und emphatisch an die Spitze desselben gestellt, so ruft dies meist Inversion hervor. Das letztere ist im AE. häufig, gegen das Mod. seltener. Dieser Fall, gewöhnlich wie er ist, braucht nicht belegt zu werden, nur der Sonderfall, in welchem, dem AE. unbekannt (?) ein Präp.-Adv. an die Spitze tritt... me. *Out goon the sverdes*, Ch., ne. *Off goes his bonnet*, Sh., Rich. II, mod. *On they came*, üä;¹⁶ sowie ein anderer, in welchem der an die Spitze gestellte Satzteil in ganzen (Adverbial-) Sätzen besteht, verdient Erwähnung: ae. *Syððan he com ofer Waetlinga-straete, worhton hi þæt maeste yfel*, Sax. Chr.; me. *þa wile þe heo tveoneden þus, clepede Membricius*, Laz.; *whanne Cristis chirche þrof, weren no sich pope and cardenals, and siþen þes prelatiſ weren comun yn, regnide anticrist wiþ synne*, Wyclif; ne. *not as the world gives, give I unto you*, Sweet, Syntax; mod. (?) *If this is not poetry, may the name perish*, Acad. 17. Febr. 1900, p. 149.

Similarly also Mossé, o. c. II, § 173: «L'ordre inverse verbe-sujet est des plus fréquents en moyen-anglais. Voici les principaux cas où il se présente: ... 7. Après les subordonnées conjonctives placées en tête: *and so hi were in þo ssiþe, so aros a grat tempeste of winde*, Sermon of Kent; *Annd tatt te Laferrd Jesu Crist Wass borenn her to manne...*, *þatt dide he forr to shaewenn swa Unsezzennndlig mecnesse*, Ormulum 3608.»

This is not the view of R. Huchon, o. c. I 257: «... et il est à remarquer que, contrairement à l'usage de l'allemand moderne, une proposition subordonnée précédant la principale n'exerce sur le verbe de cette dernière aucune influence décisive. Aussi écrira-t-on sans inversion: *gif þu þonne þis lytle bebod tobrecst, þu scealt deape sweltan*, Hom. Th. I 14, bien que, çà et là dans l'Orose, on ait pu noter quelques constructions inverses telles que: *Aefter þaem þe Romeburg getimbred waes IIII hunde wintrum & XXVI, feng Alexander to Macedonia rice*, Or., p. 122.»

It thus seems that this question, an interesting one and still at issue for Old French as well,¹⁷ deserves more attention and research if we are to obtain more exact if not definitive judgments. These we shall try to present in these pages, in so far as our rather limited choice of older texts has allowed us to form them.

Of the examples quoted by Einkenkel, his statement is unquestionably confirmed only by the first, Old English instance which in fact

¹⁶ For this construction see Jespersen, MEG VII 2.44; Grad, o. c.

¹⁷ Lerch, o. c. III, § 395 e; Grad, *L'inversion du sujet dans la principale précédée d'une subordonnée en ancien français*, in Razprave SAZU, Ljubljana 1955.

exhibits the inverted subject in the principal clause, with a transitive verb and its object expressed; but unfortunately it is an isolated instance of inversion, other examples — which we came upon in our texts — with the preceding subordinate opening with *siððan* exhibit the direct word-order in the postponed principal clause (see below).¹⁸ In Einkenel's Middle English examples, however, we find the inverted arrangement with intransitive verbs, and as inversion with such verbs is still possible in Modern English as well, they cannot be considered good evidence for our problem. Nor can the two Modern English examples quoted by Einkenel satisfy us: in the first the inverted arrangement is undoubtedly occasioned by the frontal negative,¹⁹ and in the second the head-clause represents an optative sentence, expressed by means of the verb *may*, and, as is known, in such cases the inversion is commonly observed, comp.: *May you be happy*, etc.²⁰

As for the instances quoted by Mossé we think too that they are not well chosen for the purpose of demonstrating the prevalence of the inverted word-order in our field: in his second example the inversion in the postponed principal clause must be ascribed to the frontal demonstrative object *that* (comp. also: *þat may I ful wel swere, bi God!*, Havelok the Dane 252; *this thoughte he wel ynoughe That...*, Chauc.; still in Mod. English: *On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen; That shall she, marry, Sh., RJul. I 3; That shall I do, my liege, Id., Henry the Sixth II, III 2; That will I learn to-morrow*, Scott, *The Abbot*, ch. 12,²¹ while in the first instance it is due to the frontal demonstrative (correlative) adverb *so*; in older English this, as well as some other

¹⁸ In: *Syððan furþum weox Of cildhade, symle cirde to him Aehte mine*, Cynewulf's *Elene* 914, the pronoun-subject *he* is omitted both in the subordinate and the principal clause; in Holthausen's view its place would be after *syððan*, and *symle* respectively.

An example of the preceding object-clause with inversion in the following head-clause is furnished by the Lay of Havelok the Dane 29992: *And hrow he weren wreken wel, Haue ich sey(d) you euerildel*. But comp. also: *Wher that he be, I can nat sothly seyn*, Chaucer, *Cant. Tal., The Miller's Tale*.

¹⁹ See also Grad, *Affectivity and Inversion in Modern English*.

²⁰ Jespersen, *MEG* VII 2.22; Poutsma, o. c., P. I, VIII 21a.

²¹ Comp. Poutsma, o. c., P. I, VIII 8k: "The word-order in the following examples, presumably common enough in older English, is now only occasionally met with, except, perhaps, in the language of the illiterate. *'He speaks the truth'*, said a second voice firmly. *'Ay, that doth he'*, said a third, Lytton, *Rienzi* I, ch. 3."

demonstratives, such as: *þa(po)*, *þonne*, *þan(ne)*, *þer*²² are very often met with in this position, their function being to link the subordinate and the principal clauses; they appear almost regularly in Old English, less frequently in Middle English when the language began to get rid of them for stylistic reasons; as will be seen, they were far less in use after the subordinates opening with the conjunctions *when* and *if* than after those introduced by an adverb-conjunction or a compound conjunction. Comp.:

þa he þa se cyning þas word gehierde, þa het he hie bidan on þaen ealande, Bede's *Eccl. Hist.*; *Mid-þy he þa Paulinus biscop Godes word bodade ond larde, ond se cyning elde þa-git to gelyfanne...*, *þa waes sume daege se Godes wer ingongende to him*, *ib.*; *Betwux-þam-þe he clypode to Criste þa-git, þa tugon þa haepen an pone halgan to slaeg*, Aelfric's *Lives of the Saints*; *þa hie fulle waeron, þa cwaep he to his leorning-cnihtum*, Gospel, John VI 12; *Ac sona-swa hie to Beam-fleote comon, ond þæt geweorc geworct waes, swa hergode he on his rice*, Winchester Chr., *þa se cyng þæt hierde, þa wende he hine west*, *ib.*; and *þonne se cyng waes on Normandige, þonne waes he maegester on þisum lande*, Peterborough Chr.; *þonne þy ylcan daege þe hi hine to þaem ade beran willað, þonne todaelað hi his feoh*, Alfred's *Geogr. Treatise*; *Ase hi ferden here wai in þe morewentide, þenne seyen hi twolf zungemen after hem ride*, Jacob and Iosep 406; *Bot sone when he herd ascry þat king Edward was nere þarby, þan durst he noght cum nere*, Laurence Minot; *And huanne þe mes byþ y-come on efter þe ofer, þanne byþ þe burdes and þe trufles vor entremes*, Ayenbite of Inwyt (French original: ... *lors sont les bordes e les truffes por entremes*); *And whan he drowgh to þe dore, þanne dymmed his eighen*, Piers Plowman 356; *Whaenne swa aei ferde funde to þan þaerde, þeonne fleo þa fuzeles feor i þan lufte*, Lazamon's *Brut* 21748; *Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth Inspired hath... The tendre croppes... Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages*, Chauc., *Cant. Tal.*, Prol. 5; *And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, So hadde I spoken with hem...*, *ib.* 30; *Whanne*

²² See Mossé, o. c. I, § 191, II, § 162. — Quite similarly the adverbs *so*, *da*, and *si* (*lors*), opening the postponed principal clause in older German and older French (and other Romance languages), occasion the inversion of the subject, see Behaghel, o. c. IV, § 1472, H. Paul, *Mittelhochdeutsche Gr.*, § 355, Lerch, o. c. III, § 395 e, Meyer-Lübke, *Gram. der rom. Sprachen* III, § 651.

Mossé's instance is a translation from French: *Et si cum furent en la muer, si leva un grant torment.*

dame Prudence... hadde herd al that hir housonde lyked for to seye, thanne axed she of him..., ib., *The Tale of Melibeus* 15, etc., etc.²³

With intransitive verbs, we often find the demonstrative local adverb *there* in the front position of the principal clause, sometimes still having its full local value, but usually already representing the weak *there*, "a mere anticipative element occupying the place of the subject which comes only later" (OED) (a sort of "grammatical subject"). Thus in: *And ealle þa hwile þe þæt lic bið inne, þær sceal beon gedrync and plega...*, Alfred's *Geogr. Treatise*; *For if we luf God in al oure hert, þar es na thyng in us thurgh þe whilk we serve to syn*, Rolle of Hampole; *And as I wente, ther cam by mee A whelp...*, Chauc., *The Book of Duchesse* 388; *And after þat he hadde endid alle his goodis, þer fell a gret hungre in lond*, Wyclif, etc. But the weak *there* may also be omitted, as seen from Einkenel's and other modern examples (see above!), and perhaps this is also the case of Huchon's example with inverted subject (see above!) and intransitive use of the principal verb (*fon to rice*).²⁴

In the same position and after a preceding concessive subordinate, we frequently meet in Middle English the adversative adverb *yet* which again occasions the inversion, e. g.: *Thouz we culled þe catte, zut sholde þer come another To cracchy us*, Piers Plowman 185 (with inverted weak *there*); *thogh Argus... sete to rekene in hys countour, And rekened with his figures ten... Yet shoulde he fayle to rekene even The wondres...*, Chauc., *The Book of Duchess* 435; *For though a widwe hadde noght a sho...*, *Yet wolde he have a ferthing*, Id., *Cant. Tales*, ProL 253; *But*

²³ The introductory *then* with the following inversion is still occasionally met with in modern texts: *When I have chased all thy foes from hend, Then will I think upon a recompense*, Shak., *Henry the Sixth* I, 1 2; *When they are gone, then must I count my gains*, Id., *King Richard the Third* I 1; *If the king offer not a sacrifice of a fair girl...*, *then shall he fall and his house*, Haggard, *King Sol. Mines*, ch. 11; *When the dance is over, then will I speak to some of the great chiefs*, ib., ch. 10.

²⁴ Examples in Old and Early Middle French, similar to Huchon's inverted instance, owe the inverted word-order in the postponed head-clause to the fact that the first part of the compound conjunctions (for inst. *apres ce* in *apres ce que*, *ainz* in *ainz que*, *pour ce* in *pour ce que*, see Grad, o. c.) was in that period still felt as an adverbial adjunct belonging to the head-clause in which it occasioned — owing to its front-position — the inversion of the subject. Similarly, and with the same result, *aefter þæt* (*þaem*) in *aefter þaem þe* could have been felt as part of the postponed head-clause, but other similar (unfortunately extremely rare) examples do not support such a supposition, e. g.: *Aefter þan þe ic arise of deaðe gesunf, ic eow eft gemete*, Aelfric (direct arrangement in the head-clause! see below!).

al be that he was a philosophre, Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre, ib. 297; And al-be-it so that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy diligence, ib., *The Tale of Melibeus* 29; ib. 51, etc. Still in Mod. English: But, though thou art adjudged to the death, Yet will I favour thee, Shak., *The Comedy of Errors* I 1; Although we fancy not the cardinal, Yet must we join with him., Id., *Henry the Sixth* II, I 5.

The inversion of the subject in the principal clause of the above examples is due to the introductory (correlative) adverb, serving as a connecting link between the subordinate and the postponed principal clause and almost regularly occasioning the inversion (as pointed out by Huchon, l. c., the inversion is especially the rule after short, monosyllabic adverbs; for some exceptions see below!). But as early as that period the language could do without such correlative adverbs in the front position of the principal clause, and — a most important fact concerning our problem! — in this case the principal regularly exhibits the direct, non-inverted arrangement, the whole hypotactical group thus already assuming its modern form. Examples with a pronominal subject are especially numerous, comp.:

OE: And þeah man asette twegen faetels full ealað oððe waeteres, hy (= hie) gedod þaet aegþer bið oferfrozen, sam hit sy sumor, sam winter, Alfred's *Geogr. Treat.*; Siððan ic hie ða geliornod haefde, swaeswae ic hie forstod, ond swa ic hie andgit fullicost areccean meahte, ic hie on Englisc amende, Alfred, *Letter to Werferth*; Aefter þan þe ic arise of deaðe gesunf, ic eow eft gemete, Aelfric (quoted from Einkenel, o. c., p. 27); Ac siððan ðes ðin sunu com, ðe his spede mid miltestrum amierde, ðu ofsloge him faett cealf, Gospel, Luke XV 30; And ða hie ne meahton hine inn bringan for ðaere menige, hie openedon ðone hrof ðaer se Haelend waes, ib., Mark II 5; Soðlice ða se Haelend geseah hiera geleafen, he cwaed to ðaem laman, ib.; ða se Haelend ðaet on his gaste oncneow, ðaet hie swa betweoh him dohton, he cwaed to him, ib.; And ða he ðaem huse genealaechte, he gehierde ðone swæg, ib.; ða se Haelend his eagan upp ahof and geseah ðaet micel folc com to him, he cwaed to Philippe, ib., John VI 4; and þa he þaet geseah, he hine forbeah, ib., Luke X 31; ib., Luke X 34; Matthew XII 2; þaenne se yrdling unscend þa oxan, ic laede hi to laese, Dialogues of Callings, No. 4; ib., No. 15; Ond ymb XXXI wintra paes-þe he rice haefde, he wolde adraefan anne aepeling, Winchester Chr.

ME: And þo he herde speken of mete, He wolde blepeliche ben þare, *The Vox and the Wolf*; Als she shulde hise cloþes handel On for to don,

and blame þe fir, She saw þerinne a liht ful shir, Havelok the Dane 586; And as I lay and leonede and lokede on þe matres, I slumberde in a slepyng, Piers Plowman 9; ib. 14; As John þe apostel hit syȝ myȝ syȝt, I syȝe þat cyty of gret renoun, The Pearl 985; As (John) þise stonz in writ con nemme, I knew þe name after his tale, ib. 997; And as they sat, they herde a belle clynke, Chauc., Cant. Tales, The Pardoner's Tale 664; Axe not why, for though thou aske me, I wol not tellen goddes priuete, ib., The Miller's Tale; But er that he had maad al this array, He sente his knave . . ., ib.; but ther — as thou hast told me heer — befor, that . . ., I am al redy to chaunge . . ., ib., The Tale of Melibeus; and whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee serue, ib., The Knight's Tale; For thogh the feend to hir y-coupled were, She wolde him overmacche, ib., The Marchantes Tale; For that he schold alway upon hir thinke, Sche yaf him such a maner love-drinke, Id. (quoted from Eichenkel, o. c., p. 110); And syȝen I have in þis hous hym þat al lykez, I schal ware my whyle wel, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight 1234; Bot þo sche ran so up and down, Sche made many a wonder soun, Gower, Conf. Am. 4097, þaz þou ssoldest to cleve, ich nelle nazt lete asskapie þis mes (despite the French original with inverted subject: *Se tu devoies crever, ne lairai-je pas ce mes eschaper*), The Ayenbite of Inwyt.²⁵

The direct word-order is especially very frequent after the temporal subordinate opening with the conjunction *when* whose use was spreading more and more in Middle English, presenting also numerous examples of the subordinate preceding the principal clause, as in: *Hwan he felede hise foos*, He made hem lurken, Havelok the Dane 67; ib. 1848; *And quhen the kyngis hounde has seyn Thai men assale his master swa*, He lap till ane . . ., The Bruce 451; *huan he comp ayen he heȝ al þis vorlore*, Ayenbite of Inwyt 69; *And whan þat ony gode knyght þat was hardy and noble cam to see this rialtee*, he wolde lede him into his paradys, Manderville's Travels; *Hwen þu bihaldest te mon þu art in Eve point*, Ancrene Riwe; *Vor hwanne hin longeth*, ich him singe, The Owl and the Nightingale 890; ib. 894; *Whan he ros up of his orysoun*, He zede yn hys celle up and down, Handlyng Synne 4033; *Whan sche þis vertu hadde sein*, Sche let þe leste drope . . . doun falle, Gower, Conf. Am. 4146;

²⁵ Cases (with a personal pronoun as subject) of non-inverted word-order in our problem are also met with in Middle High German, see H. Paul, l. c., and V. Michels, *Mittelhochdeutsches Elementarbuch*, 3. Aufl., § 313, Anm. 2. The non-inverted arrangement disappeared towards the end of the Middle High German period.

Whan Melibeus retourned was in-to his hous, and saugh al this meschief, he, lyk a mad man ... gan to wepe, Chauc., *The Tale of Melibeus* 2163, etc., etc.

The non-inverted arrangement is also the rule after a conditional subordinate introduced by *gif* (*if*); numerous examples are afforded by Old and Middle English, comp.: *Gif ge me ut adrifað fram eowrum geferscipe, ge etað myrta eowre grene*, Aelfric's *Colloquy*, *Se Coc*; *gif ic wiste hwaet he waere, ic wolde licgan aet his forum*, Id. (quoted from Einkenkel, o. c., § 132); *Gif ge so lice wiston hwaet is, Ic wille mildheortnesee*, Gen.; and *gyf þar man an ban finde unforbaerned, hi hit sceolan miclum gebetan*, Alfred's *Geogr. Treat.*; *gif he moste þa-gyt twa gear libban, he haefde Yrlande gemunnon*, Peterborough Chr.; *zef hit nere for mi luue, He nere nozt fram his londe icome*, Floriz and Blanche-flur 737; ib. 677; *if ich þe holde on mine uote ... And þu were of pine rise, þu sholdest singe an oper wise*, The Owl and the Nightingale 51; ib. 209; *And if we grucche of his gamen he will greve us alle*, Piers Plow. 153; *Yif y late him lioves go, He mihte me wirchen michel wo*, Havelok the Dane 509; *If ihc come to live Ihc schal þe take to wye*, King Horn 559; *if he wol nat tarie, ... we wol this tresor carie ...*, Chauc., *Cant. Tal.*, *The Pardoner's Tale* 799, etc. etc.²⁶

[Inversion, however, seems to have been observed after the negative, thrown by emphasis to the front position of the principal clause, e. g.: *Gif þu waere her, naere min broðor dead*, Gospel, John (quoted from Einkenkel, p. 27); *Gif he nere yfel myrcende, ne sealdon we hyne naefre þe*, Ev. Nic. (Id., p. 28); *if ich me holde in mine hegge, Ne recche ich neuer what þu segge*, The Owl and the Nightingale 59; ib. 56; *Though men me wolde al in-to peces tere, Ne shal I never ... Birrenge a word*, Ch., C. T., *The Shipmannes Tale*; the two Old English examples, quoted by Behaghel, o. c. IV, § 1472: *gif hit ðanne cucu feoh waere, ne þearf he þaet geldan*, Lieberm. 34, 28; *se ðe slea his agene þeowne esne, ne bið he ealles swa scyldig*, ib. 32, 17, also owe the inversion in the head-clause to the stressed frontal negative (Behaghel ascribes it to the preceding subordinate); comp. also: *þeah sumum men gesceote laesse dæl, ne bið swa-ðeah na mare miht on ðam maran dæle þonne on ðam laessan*, Aelfric, *Eucharist*.

²⁶ In Old and Middle French as well, preceding subordinates opening with the conjunctions *quand* and *si* do not, as a rule, occasion inversion in the postponed head-clause, see Grad, o. c.

For the front-position of the negative, followed by the verb, see also Behaghel, o. c. IV 12, and Hirt, o. c. III 223.

Of course, examples — though not very numerous — with an introductory demonstrative and the inverted arrangement are to be found as well; thus in: *Gif ge for-ðy me fram adrifað, ðæt ge ðus don, ðonne beo ge ealle ðraelas*, Aelfric's *Colloquy*, *Se Coc* (Latin text: ..., *tunc eritis omnes coci*); *gif ure godo aenige mihte haefdon, þonne woldan hie me ma fultumian*, Bede's *Eccl. Hist.*, and *gyf we aenige bote gebidan sculan, þonne mote we þaes to Gode earnian*, Wulfstan, *Homily*; *Gif we ða gastlican mihte ðaer-on tocnawað, ðonne undergyte we...*, Aelfric, *Eucharist*; with the direct word-order in spite of the frontal adverb: *Gif ic aenegum þegne þeoden-madmas geara forgeafe, ... þonne he me na on leofran tid leanum ne meahte minre gife gylðan*, Genesis.]

The direct word-order after the conditional subordinate might be brought about by analogy with examples in which the conditional subordinate (protasis) appears without the conjunction *if* and with the subject inverted (originally this construction represented an interrogative sentence), and with the non-inverted arrangement in the principal clause (apodosis, representing the answer to the preceding question), as in: *Ahte ic minra honda geweorc... þonne ic mid þys werode...*, Caed., *Gen.* (from Einkenel, p. 45); *ablinde þe heorte, heo is eð ouercumen*, Anc. R. (ib.); *Ich mihte habbe bet i-don, hefde ich þen i-selðe*, *Poema Morale*; *for nadde they but a shete... And a bak...*, *They wolde hem selle...*, Chauc., *C. T.*, *The Chanouns Yemannes Tale*, etc.²⁷

We think, however, that such examples could not but strengthen the tendency to produce the direct word-order in our field — the same construction is to be found in German as well, and nevertheless the direct arrangement has not been introduced in the postponed principal clause ("Nachsatz", cp. Behaghel, o. c. IV, § 1472) — but not cause it directly, because it also appears very early after subordinates of other kinds, as seen from our examples above. A marked tendency to form the direct word-order is also evidenced by instances in which we meet the non-inverted subject even after a frontal object, and adverbial adjunct respectively, comp.: *þa hi forð eodon, feores hi ne rohton*, *The Battle of Maldon*; *Hwan he havede 't greyped so, Havelok þe yunge he dede þerinne*, *Havelok the Dane* 714; *Whan Melibeus hadde herd that...*, *anoon he consented to hir conseiling*, Chauc., *C. T.*, *The Tale of Melibeus*

²⁷ This is the view of Behaghel, o. c. IV, § 1472.

2240; *Whan th' orisoun was doon of Palamon, His sacrifice he dide*, ib., *The Knightes Tale*, etc.

Parallel (and perhaps by analogy) with the numerous cases of the direct arrangement in the principal clause with a pronominal subject, we also see, as early as the old period and especially in Middle English, the non-inverted substantival subject appear; thus in:

þa hit (sc. *saed*) *up eode, seo sunne hit forswaelde*, Gospel, Mark IV 5; *Til þe lizt of day sprang, Ailmar him þuzte lang*, King Horn 493; *Annd sone anan se þiss wass sezzd þurh an off Godess enngless, A mikell here off enngleped Was cumenn ut off heffne*, Ormulum 3368; *Gif twa men oþer III coman ridend to an tun, al þe tunscepe flugaen for heom*, Peterborough Chr.; *þanne sho havede brouht þe mete*, Haveloc anon bigan to ete, Havelok the Dane 649; ib. 474, 657, 1824; *þa hit wes daei a marzen...*, *Arður þa up aras and strehte his aermes*, Laz. Brut 14003; *Whanne ich zong was... meny zer hennes*, *My fader and my frendes founden me to scole*, Piers Plow. VI 35; *zif ze in þis londe mid þesþe bep ifonge, zoure dom is idemed*, Jacob and Iosep 413; *When þe nyhtegale singes, þe wodes woxen grene*, Suete Lemmon; *Whan they han goon nat fully half a mile...* *An oold man and a poore with hem mette*, Chauc., C. T., *The Pardoner's Tale* 711; *And also sone as that he was gon, That oon (of hem) spak thus unto that oother*, ib. 806; *And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn, His salte teres trikked doun as reyn*, ib., *The Prioresses Tale*; *Whan that they comen... out of toune, This Somnour... gan to rounne*, ib., *The Freres Tale*; *Whan that our pot is broke...*, *Every man chit, and halt him yvel apayd*, ib., *The Chanouns Yemannes Tale*; *Whan we came to the forest syde, Every man dide ryght anoon As to huntynge fil to doon*, Id., *The Book of Duchesse* 372; *þaz ho (= she) were burde bryztest, þe burne in mynde hade þe lasse luf in his lode*, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight 1283; *And zit whanne he was fer, his fadir save him*, Wyclif, etc. (most examples are again furnished by the subordinates opening with the conjunctions *when* and *if*).

Thus the preceding pages may have shown the following results concerning the problem of word-order in the principal clause preceded by an adverbial subordinate in Old and Middle English:²⁸

²⁸ It should be pointed out that such hypotactical constructions are not very frequent, especially in the oldest stage of the language, its characteristic feature being the loose association of clauses (parataxis; for this problem s. also Kläber, *Anglia Beibl.* 52, 216 ff. and *Anglia* 25, 275 ff; 27, 246); only in Middle English

a) The inverted word-order (*VS*) is the rule after an introductory demonstrative (correlative) adverb almost regularly used in Old, less frequently in Middle English in the front-position of the postponed (declarative) head-clause;

b) whenever the demonstrative (correlative) adverb does not appear in this position — and such examples are far from being rare, they are almost the rule after subordinates opening with the conjunction *when* and especially *if* — it is the direct arrangement that had already asserted itself not only with a pronominal but also a substantival subject; some instances (especially with a pronominal subject) are to be found as early as Old English, and they become quite frequent in Middle English, proving that in this case, too, the tendency in English to resort to the direct (logical) word-order began to take root at this early date without having undergone any foreign influence, thus presenting an important divergence from other Germanic languages in this respect;²⁹

c) examples of the inverted arrangement in the non-introduced postponed head-clause can be found with intransitive verbs, which, however, already in that period, are frequently preceded by the weak "there"; in some cases the inverted word-order is occasioned by a negative, thrown by emphasis to the front-position of the postponed principal clause.

Povzetek

Prispevek k problemu besednega reda v stari in srednji angleščini

V začetku članka omenja avtor, da je raba invertiranega besednega reda (*VS*) v asertivnih stavkih v moderni angleščini na eni strani mnogo redkejša kot v drugih germanskih jezikih — v tem pogledu gre angleščina vzporedno s francoščino —, na drugi strani pa tudi redkejša kot v starem jeziku, v katerem je splošno nastopila inverzija subjekta v tako imenovanih uvedenih stavkih, t. j. takih, ki so se začenjali s kakim drugim stavčnim členom kot osebkom; tako n. pr. je lahko zaradi posebnega poudarka stopil na čelo stavka bodisi

when parataxis gives way to more precise indications of logical relationship and subordination (hypotaxis) do cases of our construction appear in a greater number.

²⁹ For similar hypotactical constructions in Middle High German, functional differences (concerning the subordinate) for cases mentioned under a), and those under b) respectively, are supposed by Karg, *Hypotaxe bei Hartmann von Aue*, Germanica (Festschrift für Sievers, 1925), p. 455.

objekt bodisi prislovno določilo in pritegnil k sebi (na drugo mesto v stavku) glagol, medtem ko je osebek moral zavzeti mesto za glagolom. Vendar avtor poudari dejstvo, da je tudi v uvedenih stavkih raba direktnega (logičnega) besednega reda (*SV*) že v stari dobi tudi možna in razmeroma kar pogostna, zlasti v primerih, ki imamo v njih osebek izražen z osebnim zaimkom. Taki primeri po avtorjevem mnenju potrjujejo Jespersenovo domnevo, da se je direktni red začel v angleščini uveljavljati že pred razpadom stare fleksije, oziroma da ni šele le-ta povzročil njegovega nastanka, kot se to splošno domneva. Zanimivo je, da so zadevni primeri v starejši angleščini pogostnejši kot v istodobni francoščini (ki je tudi poznala in zelo dosledno spoštovala pravilo o inverziji v takih primerih), kar — hkrati z dejstvom, da v prevodih tiste dobe iz francoščine, kjer v originalu srečamo še invertirani subjekt, že najdemo direktni besedni red v angleškem tekstu — nikakor ne govori za to, da bi bila angleščina prešla k logičnemu redu pod francoskim vplivom, kakor nekateri mislijo.

Predmet sprednje razprave je še sporno vprašanje, ali je angleščina v stari dobi tudi poznala inverzijo subjekta v (asertivnem in neuvedenem) glavnem stavku, pred katerim je stal adverbialni podredni stavek, kar je strogo pravilo v moderni nemščini in v skandinavskih jezikih, ne pa zopet v francoščini. Na podlagi primerov, ki jih je našel v dosegljivih mu starih tekstih, je avtor glede tega problema prišel do naslednjih zaključkov:

a) invertirani besedni red v zapostavljenem glavnem stavku je pravilo za uvodnim demonstrativnim (korelativnim) adverbom, ki se je v stari angleščini skoro dosledno, manj pa v srednji angleščini rabil na čelu glavnega stavka ter povzročil inverzijo. Taki demonstrativni adverbi so bili: *þa*, *so*, *þanne*, *þere* (prim. nem. *so*, *dann* ter starofranc. *si*, *lors* v isti poziciji ter s prav tako sledečo inverzijo);

b) kadar koli pa takega korelativnega adverba ni bilo — in taki primeri niso izjemni niti v najstarejši dobi in postajajo vse pogostnejši v srednji angleščini ter zlasti skoro ne poznajo izjem za odvisniki, uvedenimi z veznikom *when* ter zlasti *if* — pa že srečamo direktni besedni red, in sicer zopet predvsem v primerih s pronominalnim subjektom ter, verjetno pod vplivom le-teh, tudi že v primerih s substantivnim subjektom; tudi tu je torej logični red brez tujih vplivov pognal močne korenine že v tej dobi ter ustvaril pomembno razliko k drugim germanskim jezikom;

c) primeri obratnega besednega reda v našem problemu se najdejo pri intranzitivnih glagolih (kar je možno še danes), a so že v oni dobi često uvedeni s šibkim prislovom *there* (»gramatikalni« subjekt); v nekaterih primerih pa moremo pripisovati inverzijo nikalnici, ki jo je emfaza postavila na začetek glavnega stavka in ji je (kot še danes v nekaterih primerih) neposredno sledil glagol, a le-temu šele subjekt.

Podrobnosti ter navedbo strokovne literature glej v angleškem besedilu razprave oziroma v opombah.