WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO IMPERSONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH

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The Early English Impersonal Construction: An Analysis of Verbal and Constructional Meaning, by Ruth Möhlig-Falke, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, xvii+546pp.

Ruth Möhlig-Falke’s *The Early English Impersonal Construction* (2012) is a thoroughgoing investigation of the Old English impersonal construction, from a syntactic perspective, within the framework of cognitive grammar and corpus-based data. In the present review, however, some oversight and problems requiring further investigations are identified including the following points: (1) polysemous situations and syntactic variations are often found with verbs used impersonally; (2) though the dative-accusative syncretism has already started, unambiguous case-endings are kept throughout the Old English period; (3) synonyms influence each other syntactically; (4) when there is ambiguity, there is a need to go back to the manuscript(s); (5) many exceptions, if not too many, remain that must be explained in some way or the other. The best way to analyse the impersonal construction is still to be found.

**Keywords:** Old English, Middle English, impersonal, meaning and form

1. Introduction

Möhlig-Falke’s (M-F’s) book consists of two parts: eight chapters of theoretical discussions with examples (pp. 3–236) and Appendices (pp. 237–522). This study seems to be at the threshold of a new approach of historical linguistics based on the data of the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (DOEC in the text). This kind of approach may well guarantee statistic precision in the number of examples of a verb in various forms; it avoids a human error in miscalculation or the careless omission of one or two examples. This also means that the theoretical framework must be highly accountable. The author takes the approach of functional-cognitive analysis,
because she recognises the fact that a verb may have more than one meaning according to the syntactic environment it takes and that a verb may be used impersonally as well as personally (p. 4). She also considers Latin influence in explaining “some of the lexical idiosyncrasies in the syntactic uses of impersonal verbs” (p. 5), as deponent verbs are often glossed impersonally.

In section 1.2 (What is Impersonal? Preliminary Notes on Terms and Terminology), after quoting Denison (1993: 61), the author lists four formal characteristics common to impersonal expressions (pp. 5–6); they are, in short, (1) V (3rd person singular), (2) no nominative argument, (3) + Dat/Acc and (4) + Gen/Pre-ph/þæt-cl./ (to +)inf. She further exemplifies the seven basic patterns: (1) (1.1) hyngrede (+ Dat/Acc), (2) (1.2) scamað (+ Acc + Gen), (3) (1.3) sceamað (+ Dat/Acc + Prep-ph), (4) (1.4) gedafeneð (+ Dat/Acc + to-inf), (5) (1.5) licað (+ Dat/Acc + þæt-cl.), (1.6) becom (+ Dat/Acc + Prepph + hu-cl.), (6) (1.7) gelamp (+ þæt-cl.), (7) (1.8) nap, sniwde (+ Ø)—the constructions in (6) and (7) without Dat/Acc should be treated separately, because they never pertain to the shift from impersonal to personal. The remaining constructions, (8) to (10), are outside her classification. For these, she refers to a study by Ogura (1986: 135–202): (8) (1.9) was leofre (+ Dat + þæt-cl.), (1.10) cuð is (+ þæt-cl.), (9) (1.11) was wana (+ Dat + þæt-cl.), (1.12) was wana (+Gen), and (10) (1.13) beboden was (+ Dat) (which she analyses “beon/wesan/weorðan combined with a past participle, always showing a dative argument” (p. 9)), (1.14) geholpen weorðe (+ Dat). She adds three more examples of what she calls “a rather special impersonal construction that occurs with a handful of emotion, cognition, and utterance verbs” and names it “an infinitive of obligation” (p. 10): (1.15) Nic (C) 1582 Soð is to wundrigenne, (1.16) CP 29.201.19 Dæm hlaforde is to cyðanne and (1.17) Nic (A) 17.1.1 to sóðon wel hyt ys to wundrianne, of which (1.15) and (1.17) are manuscript variants.

M-F gives a Modern English translation to each example, often using

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1 Abbreviations I use are: V = verb, Dat/Acc = Dative or Accusative, i.e. morphologically ambiguous owing to the syncretism (Möhlig-Falke uses Acc/Dat, but because of the frequency and for syntactic reasons I will explain later, I use Dat/Acc), Gen = Genitive, Prep-ph = Prepositional phrase, þæt-cl. = þæt-clause, inf. = infinitive. OE (Old English) and ME (Middle English) are used when the actual words or phrases of these periods follow immediately.

2 I write Nic (C) 158, instead of Nic (C) [0106(158)], to save space. I basically go back to editions, not to the DOEC, so as to examine a particular example in a larger context.
personal expressions so as to meet the demand of modern readers. For instance, her example (1.20) *Beo* 639 *Dam* *wife pa word wel locodon* ... is translated as ‘the woman was much pleased by the words,’ although it might better be translated as ‘these words satisfied the woman very much,’ because *pa word* (nominative plural) is the subject of *licodon*. This is not an impersonal construction but it is necessary to quote it as an alternative construction; thus, impersonal without Dat/Acc of person (impersonal by Ogura), impersonal with Dat/Acc of person (‘impersonal’), Nom (nominative) of thing with Dat/Acc of person (‘personal’), and Nom of person (personal) should be distinguished, and moreover, the distinction between Dat/Acc of person and *to +* Dat/Acc of person should be made, because the latter, being identified as an oblique case, may remain ‘impersonal’ (cf. OE *me byncþ > I think* and ME *to me hit semeth > it seems to me*).

M-F presents the formal criteria A and B, which apply to (1.1)–(1.16), i.e. (p. 12):

**Criterion A:** The predicate verb is invariably marked for third-person singular.

**Criterion B:** A noun phrase or pronoun in the nominative singular that could formally control verbal agreement is absent.

Her investigation on previous studies looks nearly perfect in both the traditional and theoretical approaches. She examines both personal and impersonal constructions of each verb in question. She explains the use of a formal subject *hit* as follows (p. 13):

The strictly formal definition of *impersonal* as applied here also excludes patterns with a formal subject *hit*, since the pronoun OE *hit* / ME *it* is morphologically ambiguous with regard to nominative and accusative case (singular, neuter) and can therefore be interpreted (and usually is) as a grammatical subject in nominative case that controls verbal agreement. Patterns involving such a formal subject *hit* will in the following be referred to by the term of *hit-construction* or *hit-extraposition*, the latter being used specifically whenever a clausal complement follows (see Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985: §18.33)).

Though her viewpoint is clear enough, she fails to mention *þæt*, which correlates *þæt* of the *þæt*-clause following, and often occurs in the works showing some Anglian influence such as *Bede*, e.g. *Bede* 3 8.180.28 *pa gelamp þæt þæt hus eall was in fyren þ ongon semninga byrnan* ‘then it happened that the whole house was in fire and suddenly began to burn’ [Ca. ða
She notices the fact that a few verbs like *sceamian* takes both impersonal and personal reflexive constructions so that it is sometimes “difficult to draw the distinction” (p. 13), quoting *Chrodr* I 30.7 *ponge do þu caflice, te sceamie þe* ‘then do promptly, be not ashamed of thyself’ (pp. 13–14). She summarises the section 1.2 by observing that “*impersonalhood* is here considered to be a property of morphosyntactic patterns but not of individual verbs. A certain number of verbs in Old and Middle English are capable of being *used* in one or more impersonal patterns, but they may also occur in various personal patterns” (p. 14). If it is true that some verbs can be used impersonally, various constructions of such verbs should be examined so as to identify all the features of these verbs.

In section 1.3 (The Development of Impersonal Expressions in English) M-F summarises Visser (1963), Ogura (1986) and her own survey and gives the following statistics: “forty-seven verbs occur in IMP[impersonal]ace/dat patterns in the OE data, and about thirty-two adjectives and nouns appear in impersonal copula constructions…. About sixteen OE verbs also occur in IMPzero patterns…. Impersonal passive uses are found with about seventeen patterns in Old English …” (p. 14). For the loss of impersonal expressions she cites “three avenues,” quoting Seefranz-Montag (1984), Lightfoot (1979) and Fischer and van der Leek (1983) (p. 15), that is:

(i) Loss of a number of verbs that were capable of impersonal use (e.g. ME *thinken* ‘seem, appear,’ *bōten* ‘avail,’ *reusen* ‘repent’)

(ii) Insertion of formal (h)it (e.g. *It seems (to me) that …; It behooves (me) to …*)

(iii) Reinterpretation (reanalysis) of the dative argument of person as a nominative subject (e.g. *to like, to hunger, to thirst, to need*)

Particularly on (iii) M-F points out that “in some cases a copula construction with an adjective or adjectival participle finally superseded an impersonal verb (e.g. *I am ashamed, I am hungry/thirsty/cold*)” (p. 15). Examples of personal constructions are found in Old English, often in double glosses, e.g. *MtGl(Li)* 25.35 [*esuriui*] *ic gehyncgerde l ic wæs hincgrig*, and in personal/impersonal contrasts as in variants, e.g. *JnGl(Li)* 19.28 [*sitio*] *ic ðyrsto, (WSCp) me þyrst*. She also mentions that “[a]bout sixty-three verbs are...

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3 From the DOEC I may add *LS 16* (Margaret Cot.Tib.A.iii) 14.1 *Paet genihtsumap þæt þu dydest* ‘it is sufficient that thou didst.’

4 She uses [and] instead of a Tironian note.
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recorded in IMPacc/dat patterns between about 1200 and 1500 for the first time” (p. 15). It is likely that loan synonyms are used in the impersonal construction analogically. The ultimate loss of the impersonal construction may be due to the levelling of case distinction and the establishment of the SVO word order. Her remarks at the end of section 1.3 reflect the aim of this study: “The question of why the IMPacc/dat construction not only remained productive but apparently even increased in its productivity for about 200 years after most of these changes had taken place is a much discussed issue and one of the starting points for the present investigation” (p. 15).

In the next section (1.4 Explanations for the Diachronic Development of Impersonal Expressions) several points M-F mentions need comment. Although the loss of object-fronted word order was accelerated by the establishment of the SVO order, the occurrence of the OV order in the impersonal construction was infrequent from the start, when O is a noun: e.g. CP(H) 8.53.9 Biscepe gedafnað ðæt he sie tælleas. ‘It befits a bishop that he should be blameless (i.e. A bishop should be blameless)’ and ÆCHom II,36 308.133 Lareowum gedafenað þæt hí mid wisdomes sealte geleaffulra manna mod sylton. ‘It befits teachers that they salt the minds of believing men with the salt of wisdom (tr. By Thorpe).’ These examples are given to show that the O (dative noun) V order was found throughout the Old English period, even though infrequent, especially with gedafenian. M-F quotes Allen (2000) on the survival of this construction up to 1600, and again quotes Allen (1995) on the loss of case distinction in each dialectal area of the Middle English period (p. 17). This suggests that there must have been a period when a construction with distinct case endings, a construction with ambiguous case endings, and a construction without case endings overlap across the dialectal borders, and this calls for a more detailed survey with sufficient examples.

One highly problematic description should be mentioned. Quoting Allen (1995, 1997), M-F observes that the loss of lexical case did not lead to a quick demise of the impersonal construction and “preposed dative Experiencers flourished in the 13th and 14th centuries, when lexically assigned dative and genitive cases for objects had already been lost in most dialects” (p. 17). So far the description seems acceptable, but the next comment is problematic: “Several OE verbs, such as behōven ‘to befit,’ even developed IMPacc/dat uses only from the very late 11th or early 12th century on—at a time when lexically assigned object case was already in decline (Allen (1997: 15)).” She (or Allen) might have referred to Ogura (1986) for the
following examples (boldface mine):

(1) MtGl(Li) 6.32 [scit enim pater uester quia his omnibus indigetis]
    wat forðon fader iuer forðon of ðæm allum ge behofes īu bе-
    holfes
    ‘for your father knows that you need all of these’

(2) JnGl(Li) 3.7 [oportet uos nasci denuo]
    geriseð ī behofoð ī gedæfneó iuc snude ī
    (Ru2) giriseð ī bihofoð iow alle…. snude of-niowe
    ‘it befits you all (that you) should be borne again quickly’

(3) a. BenRGl 53.89.14 [quibus ut indigent solacia ministrentur. ut
    absque murmuratione servant]
    þæm behofiað þæt hi helpan beon geþenode buton ælcere
    ceorunge þæt hi þeowian.
    ‘it befits them to be served with comfort (and) to serve with-
    out murmuring’

b. BenR 53.85.12
    Sy him gefultumod, gif hy þæs behofiaþ, þæt hy þurh þæs
    fulutures froer butan ceorunge þenien;
    ‘Let them be supported, if they need it, so that they may
    serve through the comfort of support without murmuring.’

c. BenR Wells 53.84.12
    Beo him geseald fultum, gif hig þæs behofiað, ðæt hig ðurh
    þæs fulutures frofor butan ceorunge þenian;
    ‘Let help be given to them, if they need it, so that they may
    serve through the comfort of support without murmuring.’

(4) Solil 27.18
    Ælces licuman æagan behofað þreora þinga on hym silfum to
    habbæn[n]e;
    ‘The eyes of each body need to have three things in themselves.’

(5) ChronE (Irvine) 1093.18
    he his fyrde gegaderode & into Engleande hergende mid maran
    unræde ferde þone him a behofode,
    ‘he gathered his troop and went harrying with greater ill-advice
    than it had ever befitted him’

5 ChronE (Plummer)1093(228.6) him abehofode is now replaced by (Irvine) 1903.18
him a behofode in the DOEC. For the two examples of ChronE 1131 I quote from
Plummer so as to show that no greater changes are made.
Examples (3b) and (3c), with personal constructions, are cited for comparison. Even though most examples are from the 11th to 12th century, examples in *Lindisfarne* (MS Cotton Nero D. iv, the latter half of the 10th century) and Rushworth (MS Auct D. 2.19, the 10th century) should not be ignored. The example in Matthew is a double gloss, “personal ɫ impersonal,” and that in John is a triple gloss for *Li* and a double gloss for *Ru2*, both in the impersonal construction. It is true that OE *behofian* was used mostly personally, but it was also already used impersonally due to the process of the semantic-syntactic rivalry among the synonyms, as shown in the following diagram (quoted from Ogura (1986: 133)):

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Behofian had twofold meanings, ‘to need’ and ‘to behove,’ and shifted its meaning from the former to the latter through the synonymy with and syntactic influence from *gedafenian*, a chiefly ‘impersonal’ (i.e. having a feature of Dat/Acc (person)) verb. What matters is the fact that (i) *behofian* already had the potential to be used impersonally owing to the syntactic influence from its synonyms and (ii) interlinear glosses showed differences in quality as is clearly seen in *Lindisfarne*, which should not be underestimated in its use of natural Old English syntax.

One aspect of M-F’s approach which seems appropriate is that she considers the observations of various scholars impartially. In this spirit, she refers to Seefranz-Montag (1984) in explaining one of the causes of the loss of impersonal constructions, that is, “the structural development of English from a topic-prominent to a subject-prominent language” (p. 18), in the pro-
cess of change from Indo-European syntax to Old English syntax, and this leads her to refer to the disappearance of the middle voice in the section 3.2.1 (pp. 69–72).

The impersonal construction should be investigated both semantically and syntactically, as is seen in the role of some groups of verbs which express “physical, emotional, or cognitive experiences” (p. 21). Also, of course, the historical merger and loss of case-marking and the subsequent reanalysis of word order should be considered, as well as the influence of loan words.

In 1.6 (The Data) M-F says that her study is based on the DOEC data, although at the same time she notices that the DOEC is suitable for linguistic analysis but unbalanced, because the extant texts are largely religious (p. 26). The other point she mentions needs comment as well. In the discussion of the division between early and late Old English, she makes “a rough distinction between early Old English (until about 950), late Old English (about 950 to about 1050), and transitional Old English in manuscripts from the second half of the 11th and the early 12th centuries” (p. 27). I should rather draw the line between early and late Old English at about the year 1000, or more precisely before and after Ælfric, since an obvious stylistic distinction is found there. For the transitional period, I could say 1100–1200, or between the Peterborough Chronicle (1121–1154; MS Laud Misc. 636) and Trinity Homilies (c1200; MS Cambridge, Trinity College 335 (B.14.52)). What seems puzzling is the comment (probably based on Allen (1995, 1997)): “These late manuscripts [late 11th and 12th centuries] sometimes show alterations in their morphology and syntax that may have been scribal modernizations” (p. 27). How free, can we think, were the scribes in the Old English period to modify or “modernize” the “syntax” of a manuscript? The two manuscripts, MS Cotton Otho C. i, vol. 2 and MS Hatton 76, which she herself quotes as examples (1.23) and (1.24), were both written before the middle of the eleventh century, but the latter often shows remarkable differences in contexts. The final continuation of the Peterborough Chronicle (1132–1154) can be called “modern,” but still it is better to say that it is idiosyncratic. Among the Psalter glosses, the Lambeth Psalter (c1025) is very reliable under the influence of the Winchester

6 See Clark (1957: lxvi), “the modernity of this language,” “most of the basic developments leading to Modern English are illustrated in this brief text,” etc.
school, while the Salisbury Psalter (c1100) is quite unreliable, showing weakness in glossing. This means that each scribe shows individual characteristic features, which are difficult to trace chronologically. As an example of “scribal modernizations” she points out Soliloquies (MS Cotton Vitellius A. xv; XII med in Ker No. 215) (p. 27). Since the description of the manuscript focuses on letter forms and a few of inflectional endings, the word best used in describing the text is “medieval” (medieval hand, medieval signature, etc.); it is quite misleading for M-F to use the phrase “scribal modernization.” Moving on to another point she names manuscript variants as “doublets” but counts them in her data, which seems appropriate. It is also helpful that she refers to Gneuss ([1992] 1996: 146–147) and include interlinear glosses in her investigation (p. 29). It should also be noted that she uses the MED and OED databases as the basis of her study so as to “trace the further syntactic development of the various impersonal verbs in form of a diachronic outlook” (p. 30).

2. Points of Discussion from her Chapters 2–8

2.1. Points of Discussion from Chapter 2

In Chapter 2 (Functional Aspects of Old English Grammar), M-F refers to both traditional and theoretical grammar and identifies the cases which relate to impersonal and other constructions in Old and (early) Middle English. She presents four nominal cases of Old English which “had the prototypical semantic functions”: (1) Nominative: Agent, or Effector, (2) Accusative: Patient, or Affected, (3) Dative: Goal or Location, and (4) Genitive: Source (p. 38). Her theory works in its own way in analysing examples, and I shall add comments on her examples from a more traditional, philological perspective.

Her examples are (2.10) AELS (Thomas) 357 gif þu wilt gehyran þone halgan apostol ‘if you will hear the holy apostle,’ where gehyran ‘to hear’

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7 See Gneuss (1972) and Hofstetter (1988), although the regulations of the “school” should not be generalized or overestimated.

8 It may be a minor point, but M-F always uses the form OE (ge)þyncean in contrast to OE (ge)þyncan. In the DOEC we find only one instance of þyncean (inf.) (CP 42.307.14), while there are four of þyncan (CP 36.255.2, 36.261.19, 42.306.6; ChronD 1052.1.63) and seven of þyncan (WHom 20.1 54, 88; WHom 20.2 129; HomS 3 9; HomM 11 163; Or 3 7.66.6; Bo 38.119.9). There are no instances of geðyncean or geþyncean.

9 No comma after Goal, which may be a printing error.
takes an accusative of person, and (2.11) CP 18.129.23 Ne mæg nan mon twam hlafordum hieran ‘No man can obey two lords,’ where hiēran ‘to follow, obey’ takes a dative of person; both may mean ‘to follow (a person),’ but the former may properly be translated ‘to hear,’ because in the preceding sentence we see the words þe hatwende rǣd ‘the healing advice,’ and the non-prefixed hiēran often takes a dative of person when it means ‘to obey, follow’ (see CHM s.v. ± hiēran, BT s.v. hýran, gehýran). These examples are quoted to show “different degrees of opposedness between subject and object” (p. 39) and so “a lesser degree of opposedness” can be seen in (2.11).

The next comparison between OE (ge)līcian (‘to please; be pleased, like’) (2.12) and (ge)cwēman (‘to please’) (2.13) calls for comment. It is true, as M-F claims, that (ge)cwēman was not used impersonally in Old English, while (ge)līcian took both personal and impersonal constructions. But it is risky to say that it was never used. For instance, it is also true that (ge)-
līcian was used as a rendering of (com)placere (and especially in ‘bēon/wesan + past ptc,’ e.g. [bene placitum est] wel gelicad is), which made its impersonal use rather frequent, and that bēon/wesan gecwēme (> ME queme (adj.)) is another synonymous expression, which was used personally in Old English (e.g. JnGl (Li) 8.29 [placita sunt ei] ḍaðe ge-cuoemo ā sint him; cf. (WSCp) þe him synt gecweme) and both personally and impersonally in Middle English (see MED s.v. queme (adj.), e.g. Orm 466 He was .. God prest & Godd full cweeme and Lay Brut (C) 1214 hit wes him swiðe queme). For the rare example of OE beon gecweme in the impersonal construction as a variant of beon welgelicad, see the following examples from Psalter glosses A (Vespasian Psalter (c875–900: Mercian)) and D (Regius Psalter (c950: early West Saxon)):

(8) Ps 146.10 [beneplacitum est ei]

   A: welgelicad is him
   D: ʒecweme is him

(9) Ps 149.4 [beneplacitum est domino]

   A: welgelicad is dryhtne
   D: ʒecweme is drihtne

10 CHM stands for Clark Hall and Meritt and BT, Bosworth-Toller.

11 See also Ps 55.13 [placeam] (D) ic cweome and (E) ic licige as examples of the personal construction, and Ps 76.8 [bene placitum sit] (A) wel gelicad sie, (D) wel ʒecwemed si as those of the impersonal construction.
The above illustration is to show that such remarks as “never used in OE” or “appeared from ME” (especially in the conclusion, e.g. on p. 236) should be used very carefully; rather, it is preferable to say “we have never found an example in extant texts outside interlinear glosses” or “we have no unambiguous example in extant texts, but such a construction can be influenced through the rivalry among the native OE synonyms.”

I have two additional comments on terminology. The use “deletion” or “omission” from a philological viewpoint is misleading. Subject can be “understood” or “unexpressed” without someone’s will after a coordinating conjunction, even though the subject is altered, as in M-F’s example (2.14) ÆHom 21 68 from heora geleafleast ‘their unbelief’ in Ø [He] ‘God.’ As she quotes (2.15) from the clause preceding to (2.14), a stylistic-syntactic change, which can be called a shift between marked and unmarked topics, should be found from a larger context. In addition, when M-F mentions “sentence-initial position,” she should also distinguish between a noun and a pronoun.

2.2. Points of Discussion from Chapter 3

Chapter 3 (Aspects of Verb Meaning and Constructional Meaning: Theory and Methodology) explains M-F’s cognitive-functional approach. As I have mentioned earlier, I have no critical comments on her theoretical attitude, as long as her examples are properly chosen. When she says that “[s]ome of these verbs [under investigation] are polysemous and occur in more than one lexical field, and usually only one or two of their polysemous verb senses actually appear in impersonal use” (p. 52), she takes (tō)becuman and langian as examples. She adds: “A semantic classification solely along the lines of lexical fields leaves open why, for instance, some polysemous verbs link up with the impersonal construction in only one or two of their verbs (sic) senses or why a verb like (ge)līcian seems to show a fairly clear correlation between personal transitive use and the meaning ‘to please’ and impersonal use and the meaning ‘to like’ (see also Fischer & van der Leek 1983)” (p. 52). We might observe that gelīcian is a verb that is chosen as a rendering of Latin (for complare or complacui esse), and so are gedafenian and gebyrian (for oportere) and sceamian (for confundere or erubescere). Her discussion of “causative” emotion and “stative” emotion (pp. 56–60) may give some solution to the comparison between (ge)līcian

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12 The word “nonoccurrence” under her note 18 sounds more natural.
and *plesen* (although she needs to include *(ge)*cweman as well), and so with *sceamian* and *(ge)*scendan or with *forhtian* and áfǣran, but then she may be involved in investigating both impersonal and reflexive constructions.

One of the reasons why the impersonal construction has been kept throughout Old and Middle English periods can be clarified when the various constructions—impersonal, reflexive and ‘be + past participle,’ which were possibly derived from the middle voice—are all investigated in context. In other words, the morphological loss of the middle voice no doubt gave birth to these constructions. She explains middle voice in section 3.2.1 and subjectivity in section 3.2.2, and summarises her methodological approach, maintaining again the alternative syntactic patterns and constructions as well as the impersonal construction of the verbs she chose to be examined.

2.3. Points of Discussion from Chapter 4

In Chapter 4 (Semantic Analysis of Old English Verbs Capable of Impersonal Use) M-F selects 130 verbs and then excludes some constructions. The constructions that are ruled out are (1) those with a formal *hit*-subject, (2) those with a nominative subject “that controls verbal agreement” (my Nom(th) (nominative of thing)), (3) those with verbs of motion in combination with a prepositional phrase denoting a body part (e.g. *(be)*cuman on mōde / tō mynde ‘to come to one’s mind’), (4) *bēon/wesan* + adj/noun/past ptc, (5) IMPzero use, i.e. the verb alone with or without prepositional phrase, (6) constructions where the verb is combined with a full verb capable of impersonal use, (7) uses with the verb in a singular and potentially ambiguous impersonal instance (Visser’s *hleoðrian* in this instance), (8) constructions with a particular case of *manian* and *mynegian*, and (9) impersonal passive uses (pp. 80–82). It is rather regrettable to rule out all of these instances, while she investigates all the constructions alternative to impersonals in relation to the verbs she chooses.

In (3), for instance, fixed collocations are characteristic of Old English, especially poetry, and to exclude them as unsuitable for “a detailed syntactic and semantic analysis” (p. 80) sounds too rigid. In (4), a *þæt/hu*-clause may function as the subject of the construction and can be consequently excluded. But the ‘verb + *þæt*-clause’ construction, like *gelamp þæt* ..., may also be classified into this category. In (5), IMPzero can be excluded if it is in an interlinear gloss or a literal translation often found in Ælfric’s *Grammar*. (6) needs a further explanation, because in *GenA* 1691 *Ne meahte hie gewurðan weall stænne up forô timbrian* ‘they were not able
to agree on further building up the stone wall’ (or, ‘it cannot be agreeable for them to further build up the stone wall’), though *meahte* is in the third person singular, it is, as she admits, *gewurðan* itself which is often used impersonally. No one would think that either *magan* or *onginnan* is used impersonally in this context, as she suggests Denison (1990) does. Also, I do not think that Wahlén (1925) meant the impersonal use of the auxiliary, when he included *mæg cunnian* in his Group 8 (see Ogura (1986: 17–18)). In (7), *PPs 134.17 hleodrige* is in the subjunctive singular, but this is not used impersonally. This Old English construction is excluded not because it is doubtful but because the Latin verb is in the plural in a different context: cf. *PsGla 134.17 [Non clamabunt in guttore suo] na ᵇy clypiað on hracan heare* ‘they do not cry but clearing their throat.’ When dealing with the *Paris Psalter*, it is necessary to refer to other Psalter glosses and compare the syntax, which in most instances can be altered for prosodic reasons. In (8), her explanation about the example *LS12 (NatInBapt)* needs comment. The title cannot be interpreted as the subject, because it is written in a later hand. In most cases the title should be considered separately from the following context (see Morris, p. 161). For (9), it is necessary to give good reason for excluding impersonal passive uses with a dative object, because *helpan* and *beodan* are such common verbs that their investigation cannot be avoided. It is not a matter of the use of the technical term “impersonal passive,” which can be defined with any terms she likes.

She further excludes “all verbs that are not recorded before 1150,” and leaves forty-seven “verb lexemes” for her investigation (p. 83). For the prefixed and non-prefixed verbs she sets her own principle, saying that “both the simplex and the ge-prefixation of verbs were to be included if they both occurred in the DOEC,” and rules out, for instance, *weordan*, “because it is (1) not found in the impersonal use, and (2) not attested in the meanings of ‘to happen’ and ‘to agree, be pleased,’ which are the meanings found with *geweordan* when it is used impersonally” (p. 84). To say that we find “one example” means something. To say there is “no example,” however, means almost nothing, because Old English extant texts, even in the data of the DOEC, are limited, and there might have been an example if another piece of manuscript was let for us.13

13 See also the explanation on p. 90 about OE *gremian*: “which never occurs in impersonal use in Old English.”
In her study, M-F acknowledges that she understands the polysemous situation of Old English verbs and uses the *Thesaurus of Old English* (TOE) when choosing the verbs to be investigated. She classifies the forty-seven verbs into eight groups (I put comments in square brackets): (a) Physical sensation: *acan*, *calan*, *(ge)egl(i)an*, *(ge)hyngrian*, *(ge)sweorcan* [for its metaphorical sense ‘to become sad’], *(ā)hrēotan*, *þyrstan*, *wlātian*, *(ge)yxelian* [in the sense ‘to feel bad’]; (b) Emotion: *(ge/of)hrēowan*, *hrēowsian*, *langian*, *(ge)līcian*, *of/mislīcian* [this is not in the list of pp. 83–84], *(ge)-lustfullian*, *(ge)lystan*, *lustian*, *(of)earmian*, *ofþyncean*,14 *(ā/ ge/of) sceamian*, *(ā)twēonian/twȳnian*, *(ge)twēon/twēogan*, *(ge)wundrian*; (c) Cognition: *(ge)mǣtan*, *(ge)swefnian*, *(ge)þyncan* [the DOEC does not have this infinitive form but *(ge)þyncan*; ðyncan is found once in CP 42.307.14], *misþyncan* [the DOEC does not have this infinitive form]; (d) Existential experience: *(be/ge/gebe/ā)limpan*, *tōgelimpan*, *mislimpan*, *(ge/tō)sāran*, *(ge)-tīdan*, *misīdan*, *getīman*, *misīman*, *geweorþan*, *misweorðan*; (e) Motion: *(ge)missan* [the DOEC does not have the infinitive form of *missan* and *gemissan*], *(ge)nēalēcian*; Motion metaphorically for Emotion: *an/on/gehagian*; (f) Ownership and Appropriateness: *(tō)becuman*, *(ge/tōge)hyriam*, *(ge)-dafenian*, *ge(h)rīsan*; (g) Nonavailability: *behōfian*, *beþurfan*, *(ge)nēodian*; Availability: *(ge)nihtsumian*, *genugan* (genēah); (h) Benefaction: *(ā)*dugan (dēah), *framian*, *fremian*, *(ge)spōwan*, *misspōwan*. Her (b), (c), (d), (f) and (h) corresponds to Elmer (1981)’s Please/Desire and Rue verbs, Seem verbs, Happen verbs, Behove verbs and Avail verbs, respectively.

M-F exemplifies both personal and impersonal constructions of each verb. She uses various “semantic frames,” for instance, *acan*: <Feeler, Body-part, Stimulus>, in order to specify semantic features of each verb (where words in boldface are “profiled and regularly occur as arguments” of the verb “in personal (in)transitive patterns” (p. 89)). As long as her own principle is fixed, her theory may be feasible, even though these semantic features (or roles) increase markedly so as to show subtle shades of meanings of these verbs. My concern is the appropriateness of the examples. For instance, she could have referred to a manuscript variant of (4.20) *GD2(C)* 19.143.20 *hreow*, where MS. H (Hatton 76) has *behreowsode*, an obvious synonym; but she excluded the verb from her list.15 (4.34) *Bo* 41.142.19 is based on

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14 There is only one form of this in the DOEC: ThCap 1 (Sauer) 21.327.25.

15 (4.27) *GD1(C)* 2.16.22 *Pa gelamp* does not have a corresponding part in MS. H, which often avoids circumlocutions.
MS. C (Cotton Otho A.vi), which has *men* (Dat. sg.) and the construction is impersonal, while MS. B (Bodley 180) has *mon*, a definite pronoun, and a personal construction follows later. This means that the eleventh-century manuscript shows a different syntactic-stylistic choice. This kind of additional explanation is necessary; a stylistic variation should be considered in addition to the forms that fit semantic and syntactic classifications.

Group (f) Ownership and Appropriateness is important owing to the overlapping of the semantic fields ‘to happen,’ ‘to belong to’ and ‘to befit,’ and to that of syntactic constructions, dative and *to + dative*, which I may present as follows:

- ‘to happen’: *becuman*, *gebyrian*, *gedafenian*, *gelimpan*, *gerisan*
- ‘to befit; behave’: *gebyrian*, *gedafenian*, *gerisan*, (behofian)
- ‘to belong to’: *byrian*, *gelimpan*
- ‘to need’: *(be)þurfan*, *neadian*, (behofian)
- + Dat: *becuman*, *(ge)byrian*, *gedafenian*, *gelimpan*, *gerisan*, behofian
- + *to + Dat*: *(ge)byrian*, *gelimpan*, *(be)limpan*, behofian

M-F’s semantic frames are as follows (p. 105):

**becuman**:

(A) ‘to come to’: <Moved, Source, Path, Goal>

(B) ‘to become’: <MovedAffected, GoalResult>

(C) ‘to happen, fall to’: <MovedExperienced, GoalExperiencer>

(ge/tōge)*byrian*:

(A) ‘to happen, befall’: <Experiencer, Experienced>

(B) ‘to belong to, befit’: <Claimee, Claimed>

(C) ‘to concern, grieve’: <Experiencer, Experienced>

(D) ‘to get, receive’: <MovedTransferred, GoalRecipient>

(E) ‘to belong to, be entitled to, befit’: <MovedClaimed, GoalClaimee>

**gedafenian**: <Claimee, Claimed>

**ge(h)risan**: <Claimee, Claimed>

Two notes in this chapter should be mentioned in particular. Note 15 (p. 111) lacks detailed information. The examples of the translation of *expedit* appear in *MtGl(Ru)* 5.29, 5.30, 18.6 and 19.10 (see Ogura (1986: Appendix 1)). Note 16 needs comment. It says: “Behōfian occurs in impersonal use only very late in the OE period. Its first impersonal uses fall into the late 11th and early 12th centuries” (p. 111). She may find earlier examples of use in Ogura (1986: 251–252), and Appendix 1, *MtGl (Li)* 6.32.
2.4. Points of Discussion from Chapter 5

In Chapter 5 (Investigation of the Impersonal Syntactic Uses of Old English Verbs), M-F gives results statistically, based on her investigation of forty-seven Old English verbs in a total of 10,025 quotes from the DOEC (p. 112). Some of her decisions may need comment. When there is a dubious case (of hit) or an ambiguous morphological form (hie between nominative and accusative), she says that “the decision was made in favor of personal (i.e. nominative case) interpretation” (p. 113). This means that the statistic results would be different if the decision were made in favour of an impersonal interpretation, and one may wonder what the results would be if these cases were left ambiguous. If we were informed when and where (i.e. in which texts) these cases could occur, it would tell the reader the approximate date ambivalence between personal and impersonal constructions was found. Her example (5.1) OrW 31 gif us on ferðe geneah ‘if we suffice in our soul’ (or rather, ‘if it is sufficient in our soul’) is acceptable, because the following co-ordinate clause is personal (ond we willað heal-dan heofoncyninges bibod ‘and we are willing to keep the command of the heavenly king’). This stylistic alteration should be investigated in a larger context, not only in terms of the alternative constructions that a particular verb takes. We also note that concerning the impersonal passive, she gives “only four verbs” (p. 117), i.e. (ge/mis)lician, (ge/mis)þyncean, (be/ge)-limpan and (ge)dafenian. (A/ge)liefan ‘to grant, allow’ and bebeodan ‘to bid, command,’ although these are not counted in her forty-seven verbs from the start.

Ambiguous cases are to be separated from unambiguous ones. However, note that the ambiguity between dative and accusative can be solved when all the examples of a particular verb are investigated; (ge)lystan, for instance, shows 93 ambiguous forms in Table 5.3, but this is basically a verb with the accusative, and the examples of the unambiguous dative (here 21 times) would be rather marked. The cases that OE verbs govern can be from one to three, and dative-accusative syncretism has been apparent from early Old English. M-F often says that “the verb shows no clear tendency” or “no clear diachronic development can be discerned with this verb” (p. 123), but it is clear that either dative or accusative can be governed by particular verbs. In (5.5) PsGlH 109.4 hine is used, and also in PsGlE, but PsGlF, I, J and K have him. It may be too strict in saying that the accusative form is “archaic” (p. 152, note 7), though the form mec is rather old and poetic (in ChristC 1414 mec ongon hreowan ‘it began to be grievous for me’).
Not all the glosses are unreliable. (5.15) is quoted to show that “[a] particular use with a postposed preposition that may be more independent of a Latin model is found with geweorðan (‘to agree’)” (p. 127). Since the preceding examples (5.13) and (5.14) are quoted from Rushworth 2 (Mk 4.38 to de gihyreð) and Lindisfarne (Mk 13.10 gerises to bodanne), M-F implies that prose is “more independent” than glosses. (5.15) LS 10.1 (Guth) 15.2 þa geweorð him betweonan (‘then it was agreeable between themselves’) is a natural word order, because polysyllabic prepositions are regularly postposed. ‘Geweorðan + Dat’ is also natural: e.g., El 611a Hu mæg þæm geweorðan ‘How can it come to pass with him?’ In addition, M-F points out that “[t]he increase in the total number of occurrences between about 950 and 1050 has to do with the generally much larger body of texts dating to the late OE period” (p. 128). Manuscript variants should also be checked and information must be added. For instance, (5.20) ChronD 1053.12 and him geyleloðe ‘and he grew sick’ is found only in D; (5.21) WHom 20.1 108 swa þæt hy ne sceamad na ‘so that they are not ashamed’ is in BH, and H has heom instead of hy, an unambiguous accusative, which morphologically agrees with the following personal expression, þæt hy syn-gian ‘although they have sinned.’ I can give examples of ambiguous us: WHom 20 (El) 167 And þæs us ne scamað na, ac us scamað swyþe … ‘and we are not ashamed of it at all, but we are ashamed very much….‘ (5.28) shows different contexts between MSS C and H, which should be quoted for comparison:

(10) a. GD2(H) 7.116.18 (= her (5.28))

Soðlice swa ic þæs godan weres wundra ma drinke swa me hyra swyðor þyrsteð.
‘Truly the more I drink of the wonders of this good man, the more severely I thirst (lit. it thirsts me) for them.’

b. GD2(C) 7.116.19

Soðlice swa me þæs godan weres wundor habbað geblissod, þæt ic swyþor drince, swa me swyþor þyrsteð.
‘Truly, as the wonders of this good man have blessed me, that I should drink much, so it thirsts me very much.’

MS. C has two impersonals with the swa-swa correlative construction, and the swyþor-swyþor correspondence, which complicates the syntax. MS. H revises this confusing syntax into a simpler swa-swa construction.

M-F considers the use of genitive case, which is found with tosælan and spowan with dative/accusative, exceptional: (5.31) Rid 16 4 gif me þæs tosæleð ‘if this fails me’ and (5.32) ECHom II,37 276.112 Da ða him þæs
ne speow ‘When they did not succeed with this,’ and adds that “[t]hese instances may be interpreted much along the lines of the Dēor genitives discussed by Erickson (1975)” (p. 133), without quoting the lines, which must be the famous repetition (Deor 7, 13, 17, 20, 27, 42 Þæs ofereode, þisses swa mæg ‘That passed away; so may this.’ Her explanation goes: “Lexically assigned (i.e., semantically motivated) genitive objects gradually became obsolescent in the course of late Old English, when more and more genitive-object verbs shifted to accusative objects” (p. 133). One of the reasons for this shift is the stylistic choice made by Ælfric, who standardised Old English with his writings.

M-F gives examples which are characteristic of particular verb groups. (5.38) HomU 40 (Nap 50) 12 and (5.39) ÆCHom I, 18 324.205 illustrates Dat (noun) V constructions with gebyrian and gedafenian, although the construction itself is not so frequent throughout Old English. When an infinitive or an inflected infinitive follows a verb used impersonally, the choice is not directly connected with the impersonal constructions; it is the verb that takes either an infinitive or a to-infinitive. Sometimes the choice may follow a Latin construction, but often it depends on the verb itself. M-F is quite right in saying that it is “difficult to affirm a diachronic development from bare to to-infinitival complements in the available data on the English impersonal verbs, and (5.46) Jul 401 þynceð with to fremman is a good example, although fremman is not inflected after to." (5.47) ÆCHom II,16 161.20 V + Dat (noun) + inf (La hu. ne gedafenode criste swa ðrowian ‘Lo, how it did not befit Crist to suffer like this’) and (5.48) ÆLS (Peter’s Chair) 130 Dat (noun) + V + to-inf (us Iudeiscum ne gedafenað to geneal-ecenne eow hædenum mannum ‘it does not befit us Jews to come close to you heathens’) are noteworthy examples.

(5.55) Num 21.5 and (5.56) ÆHom 21 312 are given to show indirect influence from Latin, and M-F observes that the degree of Latin influence is “difficult to determine” (p. 142). It would have helped if she had quoted the possible Latin source. Here I quote both examples again with “possible

16 An example of to fremmanne is found in Riddle 88 26: Wit wæron gesome sæcce to fremmanne; næfre uncer äþær his ellen cyðde ‘We two were united to do strife; either of us never revealed its strength.’ There is a variant reading [W: to fremman ne næfre]. Two forms of infinitives have different functions but can be used alternatively. See Tupper, Jr. (1968).

17 Even though we have no corresponding Latin sentence, this looks like a rhetorical question. It means, therefore, ‘Lo, it did not befit Christ to suffer like this.’
Latin source”:

(11) Num 21.5 (Latin from Morris)
[Deest panis, non sunt aquæ: anima nostra iam nauseat super cibo isto leuissimo.]
We nabbað naðor ne hlaf ne wæter. ðus wlataþ nu for ðīnum leohtostan mete.
‘We have neither bread nor water, and now we feel loathing because of this lightest food.’

(12) ÆHom 21 312 (Latin from Pope)
[Deest panis, non sunt aquæ; anima nostra iam nauseat super cibo isto levissimo.]
We nabbað þone hlaf þe us lyste etan,
And us nu wlatað wið þysne leohtan mete.
‘We do not have the bread which we would like to eat, and now we feel loathing against this light food.’

Both *deest* (< *dēesse* ‘want’) and *nauseat* (< *nauseāre* ‘disgust’) can be translated as either personal or impersonal, because of the Old English verbs, *nabban* (*ne* + *habban*) and *wlatian*, chosen as renderings, one became personal and the other impersonal. Has she written all the sentence in her (5.56), it would be clear that the Old English relative clause is independent from Latin and *lystan*, another verb that is often used impersonally, appears with *us* (dat/acc) and *pe* (nominative).

M-F clarifies the Old English situation when she says at the end of section 5.2.2.5: “the question of Latin influence on morphosyntactic patterns in early English is highly verb-specific” (p. 143). It should be noted that the Latin-English correspondence in translation has been far from one-to-one, with the exception of highly literally environments (like proper nouns), and Latin words may have more than one rendering as manuscript variants or according to context.

For the expression ‘this is my dear son, in whom I take great pleasure,’ which is quoted in (5.60) and (5.61), I will give a list of quotations so as to show a grammatical choice between a relative clause and a co-ordinate clause, and/or between the use and non-use of a preposition, as well as between the impersonal and personal construction, with *(ge)*līcian (from Ogura (1986: 110), but revised after the DOEC data with my revisions in bold-face):
An obvious personal construction is found in (13b), while (13a), (13e) and (13g) are unambiguously impersonal. In (13c), (13d) and (13f), the particle *þe* can be considered either nominative or dative, and the same with *þet* in (13h). Although the Latin is much the same in (13f) and (13g), the Old English translations differ syntactically. The impersonal construction may occur conventionally in this kind of biblical sentence, and the chronological development would be hard to trace.

Examples in section 5.2.4 (Borderline Cases of Impersonal Patterns) need further explanation. (5.70) *BenRGl* 53.89.14 *þam behofiað* can be considered impersonal, meaning ‘it befits them’ or ‘it is necessary,’ even though both Latin and OE verb forms are in the plural. In (5.71) *Solil 1* 20.8 *beþorften* is in the subjunctive plural, i.e. ‘they needed,’ not ‘it was necessary for them.’ (5.72) *WCan 1.2* (Torkar) 45 *be þam þe him ær licodon oðra manna hengestas to stelenenne* ‘because it had pleased them before
to steal other men’s horses’ is personal, since *licodon* is in the (indicative/subjunctive) plural, meaning precisely ‘horses of other men had pleased them (to be stolen).’ What matters here is not the relative occurrence of independent uses in translating Latin but the morphological identity of singular or plural verb forms. It would be inappropriate to try solving the problem of syntactic ambiguity by the identification of scribes or the dating of manuscripts, where the Old English homiletic tradition went on up to the thirteenth century. Germanic features should be evaluated more than any Latin influence when analysing Old English syntax, because, as has always been widely observed, constructions totally foreign to English cannot be introduced, unless there is an equivalent element in the source language, however slight or subtle it may be. The formal properties that M-F gives in her summary (p. 149), therefore, seems unacceptable.

The dative-accusative syncretism, as I have often mentioned, started from the very beginning of the Old English period, especially with such personal pronouns as *me*, *þe*, *us*, *eow*, *unc* and *inc*, in contrast with unambiguous accusative *hine* and unambiguous dative *him* and *heom*. Verbs of tasting like *ētan* governed the genitive as well as the accusative, and verbs like *helpan* and *þancian* were still used with the dative of person and the genitive of thing in Middle English, especially in the southwest even in the thirteenth century. Manuscript variants should always be checked, in order to identify alternative constructions or structural overlap which would possibly reflect the stylistic, as well as syntactic, varieties. To take the middle voice into consideration is justifiable, but the impersonal construction is one of the ways to express the middle voice for which morphological loss was the starting point. The influence of Latin is rather limited from a structural viewpoint. Interlinear glosses should be classified according to the degree of latitude in interpretation into rather flexible (like *Lindisfarne, Rushworth* and *Lambeth Psalter*), less flexible (like most Psalter glosses, *Liber Scintellarum, BenRGl*), and one-to-one literal glosses. It should also be noted that the non-expression of the pronoun subject is often found in Old English verse and prose (especially in the *Chronicle*), and this cannot be attributed to the influence of Latin.

In her Note 7 (p. 152), M-F mentions that there are only two examples of *hrēowan* with accusative Emoters in poetry and quotes only one, *ChristC* 1414. She should have cited the other one, if there are only two: *GenA* 1276 *Hreaw hine swiðe þæt he folcmægþa fruman aweahte, æðelinga ord, þa he Adam sceop* ‘It repented him greatly that he, the prince of the nobles, gave life to the first-born of people, when he made Adam.’ In Note 8 she
quotes \(ÆGenPref\) 105 *hine sylfne gewyrð* as one instance of an accusative Agreer with *geweorðan*. If an example of the verb with an accusative denoting ‘to happen’ would help, there is one: \(CP(H)\) 28.197.14 *Da geweard hine ðæt he gecierde inn to ðæm scæfe* ‘Then it happened to him that he went into the cave.’ In Note 13 she says that *(ge)hrēowsian* “appears only with eight impersonal instances, all of which are found in interlinear glosses” and refers to section 5.2.2.1 without mentioning which texts and lines they are. In Note 14, she is right in saying, contrary to Traugott (1992: 211), that *(ge/mis/of)līcian* with complement clauses can be found in Ælfric’s homilies, etc. without direct influence of Latin.

2.5. Points of Discussion from Chapter 6

Chapter 6 (A Comparison with Alternative Syntactic Constructions) promised to introduce a fresh look at the topic of investigation of this study. From a stylistic perspective I consider it indispensable to delve into the reasons for the choice of personal, impersonal, reflexive, ‘*be* + past participle,’ the indefinite *man* construction, etc. What M-F has really done, however, is to simply examine various constructions of each of the verbs she has chosen. This type of study may clarify the syntactic features of each verb or sometimes tendencies of the shift from impersonal to personal, when we have sufficient examples, but it falls short of being a comprehensive survey. Still, this is a good investigation from the standpoint of understanding the semantic-syntactic relations of each verb, as she exemplifies by (6.1a) *Alex* 9.2 *becuman* in a personal construction denoting ‘to come’ and (6.1b) *HomU* 51 9 *becuman* with the dative of person in an impersonal construction denoting ‘to befit.’ The verb group that poses a problem is that of Ownership and Appropriateness. However, she often refers to Latin influence without definite evidence. Here she mentions Latin influence again with *(ge)hrēowsian* and *(ge)wundrian*, saying that “[t]heir impersonal uses are new and, in the case of *(ge)hrēowsian*, clearly influenced by Latin” (p. 160). Besides (5.5) *PsGlH* 109.4, she quotes *ChrisC* 1414 in Note 7 of the preceding chapter (p. 152), but I am not convinced with her words. Her example (6.16) *ÆLS* (Vincent) 195 *wundrode* is based on a deficient text. (6.17) *Instr* 166 *Gif mon ... gehreowað* is an example of an indefinite *mon* construction, and (6.18) *CP* 52.407.15 *we ure scomigen* is a reflexive construction; these are the examples where we need to show a greater variety of constructions.

M-F continues talking of the Latin influence and late Old English instances (pp. 162–163, 166, 168–169). It would be better to remark on this
when all examples (including verbs and expressions which she has ruled out from this investigation) are re-examined. Since almost all homiletic texts are one or the other interpretation of Latin sources, interlinear glosses alone should not be targeted as texts under Latin influence. But it cannot be decisively said, as she rightly points out, that ‘hit ... swā gedôn (bare infinitive)’ is Latinate in contrast with ‘hit ... to dōnne,’ when examples of the same verb are compared, e.g. (6.34) ChronE (Plummer) 1085.35 and (6.35) ÆCHom I,27 405.146 (p. 169). It is true that most Old English texts belong to the later period, but it seems a little risky to conclude that most constructions originated in late Old English and/or under Latin influence. The DOEC data are based on editions chosen by the staff or on the transcriptions produced by the staff of the DOE project, and not directly on the manuscripts, even though the references are made to them. As we have composite texts, we have composite editions. Hit-extraposition, for instance, should not necessarily be related to the co-existence of Dat/Acc person. Also, “extremely rare” (p. 171) does not mean “no examples.” The ‘it happened to him that’ construction with gelimpan actually occurs in Mt (WSCp) 18.19, Deut 15.9 and GD(C) 51.339.24. If these constructions arose in late Old English and under Latin influence, what could the former, early Old English constructions have been? I note also (6.43) LS 10.1 (Guth) 8.1 should be quoted in full, otherwise the translation is misleading. Here I quote the full sentence with þa-þa correlative construction: Đæt gelamp sumere nihte, þa se halga wer Guðlac his gebedum befeal, þa gehyrde he grymetigenda hryþera and mislicra wildeora ‘That happened one night; when the holy man Guthlac devoted himself to his prayers, then he heard roaring cattle and manifold wild beasts.’

Section 6.3 (The External Possessor Construction) includes various interesting examples. In (6.47) Fates 54 ond him wæs Gad nama ‘and his name was Gad,’ him functions as possessive dative and so the label Possessor may be suitable. In (6.50) ÆCHom II,23 200.49 and of heora muðe and nosþyrlum stod stincende steam ‘and smelling steam stood from her mouth and nostrils,’ heora is labelled Possessor and her: Dat.SG, although this is the genitive case of the personal pronoun that indicates possession (i.e. not stod hi(e)re of muðe). In (6.51) BenR 65.124.12 him þincð on his gepance ‘It appears on his thoughts (sic),’ we have his already, and him is identified as Perceiver/Possessor. This is clear when the corresponding part of BenRGl is compared: BenRGl 6.5.110.4–5 [dum ei suggeritur a cogitationibus] ponne hit bið getiht fram his geþohtum ‘then it is supplied from his thoughts.’
M-F discusses reflexive and passive constructions with the verbs she has chosen. (6.80) Solil 1 19.14 Hyt is gecwæden on þære æ þet man sceole lufian hys neðstan swa swa hyne sylfne “it is said in this gospel that man shall love his neighbor like himself” (which can be translated more properly like “it is said in the law that one must love his neighbour like himself”) is more indirect way of teaching a “law” than in a direct way (i.e. the law manifests that you must love …). This is a kind of stylistic nuance to be noted when reading Old English contexts. In summary (section 6.7, pp. 197–199), two things deserve comment. Latin interference, as well as the Latin influence that she often mentions, does not mean that Latin impersonal constructions had a direct influence on Old English impersonals. Latin deponent verbs like loquor and videor are rendered into such expressions as (hit) is gecwæden and þyncþ or is gebuht. It is true that Middle English impersonals are either inherited from Old English impersonals or survived under the influence of Old French impersonals (e.g. avenir ‘to befit,’ cu- venir ‘to behoove,’ remembrer ‘to remember,’ etc.). It is also true, as she recognises, that both impersonal and reflexive constructions are found with some chosen verbs like (ge)lician, (ge)sceamian and (ge)þyncan. These possible descendants of the middle voice must be examined, but the Celtic influence (which is mentioned through Filppula (2008)) cannot be easily accepted without sufficient evidence. Rather, Old and Middle English manuscript variants and stylistic variants in similar contexts may help find the historical development of the “English” language.

Note 24 (p. 202) on the three passive instances of forscamian in the Psalter glosses should be identified; they are PsGlD 24.4 [Confundantur] Syn gescende l forscamode, and H and G forscamod.

2.6. Points of Discussion from Chapter 7

In Chapter 7 (The Diachronic Perspective), M-F tells us how Old English impersonal constructions were lost or survived in Middle and early Modern English. It is true when she says that “[t]he loss of the majority of verb lexemes inherited from Old English … cannot be the reason the impersonal construction was lost after 1500” (p. 205), but I cannot understand the reason why she chooses me met (7.1) as an example of “archaic” (OED s.v. mete vb2 1, MED mēten (v.3.)), though the verb had not so many examples outside Genesis (37.5, 37.6, 37.9, 41.1, 41.5, 41.11, 41.17), and as thee list as an example of “poetic.” OED labels “archaic” and “poetic” are put from a Modern English standpoint; they do not mean that a particular
lexeme or expression was “archaic” or “poetic” in medieval use.\footnote{OED mete vb\textsuperscript{2} 1 is labelled “trans. (impers)” and “Obs.” after quotations between eOE and a1643; list vb\textsuperscript{1} 1 is labelled “impers. trans.,” and 1b “archaic.” The latter can be poetic, when one sees quotations from 

\textit{Orm}, \textit{Brut}, \textit{Cursor}, Chaucer \textit{LGW} and \textit{Gawain}, but not exclusively so.} Figures 7.1 and 7.2 seem visually convincing, but the title of Figure 7.2 (Verbs which newly developed impersonal uses in Middle English) needs comment. They developed impersonal uses (or sometimes used impersonally by chance) because they were influenced by (prefixed or non-prefixed) synonyms, by native synonyms in the case of loan verbs, or by particular contexts where the verbs were employed. ME quemen, for instance, was used impersonally under the influence of \textit{liken, plesen} and \textit{be(n) queme}.

She gives three grammatical properties of Old English, which were the bases of the impersonal construction, i.e. (1) subjectlessness, (2) morpho-

distinction and (3) flexibility of word order (p. 213). The last property tends to be emphasised by theoretical linguists, but the dative that precedes the verb should be identified if it is a noun or a pronoun. All three properties, as she recognises, were responsible for the ultimate demise of the impersonal construction (p. 213), owing to the fact that the shift from a complement/subject clause to a pronominal subject, the dative-accusative

syncretism, and the change from OVS to SVO order had already started as soon as Old English was written down.

But such structures like hit-extraposition and `hit + dat/acc` are already found in Old English, as (6.41) \textit{Beo} 1753 Hit ... gelimpeð þæt shows, even though infrequent. For the distinction between the dative and the accusative, when Old English feminine and weak declensions are considered, they are ambiguous without demonstrative pronouns. When demonstrative pronouns are levelled into a common form \textit{be/the} or \textit{pat/pet/that} in the course of Middle English, the word order is necessarily established. She is good in referring to the reflexive construction (7.3.2.3) and passive or adjectival constructions (7.3.2.4) at this stage, where the impersonal construction not only give way to the personal construction but also are used in the rivalry of various alternative expressions. The semantic shift in relation to the syntactic shift is very subtle to represent. When a medieval construction is translated into Modern English, verbs may necessarily be altered. The loss of the impersonal construction is, therefore, partly due to the loss of Old and Middle English verbs or verbal expressions, though native and loan
synonyms and synonymous expressions replaced some of them.

2.7. Points of Discussion from Chapter 8

In Chapter 8 (Conclusion) the main points of M-F’s investigation are restated and summarised. One of the important observations relates to the consideration of the middle voice. The morphological distinction being lost, the middle “sense” had to take various syntactic “shapes” like impersonal, reflexive, and ‘be + past participle.’ But there are many shortcomings in the study. It is regrettable that M-F did not include interlinear glosses in the corpus so that we may see what Latin forms can be rendered into the impersonal construction. It is also difficult to look for manuscripts datable and reliable due to scribal practices. We must remember that in this study the data used is based on particular editions chosen by the DOE, and some manuscripts which have not yet been edited were transcribed by the staff. We must also remember that we can only read the extant texts; we could be more decisive if we had many more texts, but this is not the case. It would also be helpful if we could determine when and where each text in question was written. We can do better with texts from the Middle English period, but the situation is not so easy when we go back to Old English.

2.8. Comments on Misprints

Some words and phrases which seem misprints, and a few minor things to be noted, are summarised as follows:

1. On p. 35, first paragraph, “transitity” should be read as “transitivity.”
2. Example (3.3) should be cross-referred to (2.14) and (2.15).
3. (4.44) MtGl (Ru) 19.10 should be printed in one page, either p. 106 or p. 107, so as to make the example visually understandable.
4. (5.57) translation for gææeledo should be ‘succeed.’
5. P. 213 “privileded” should be read as “privileged.”
6. P. 216 “acceptablity” should be read as “acceptability.”

3. Comments on Appendices

Appendices are great, but comments are necessary on some points. First, I question the grouping of verbs, especially concerning with groups (f), (g) and (h) (cf. p. 86). In Table A. 2a, p. 242, OWNERSHIP ((tō)becuman,
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... (ge/tōge)byrian), APPROPRIATENESS ((ge)dafenian, ge(h)risan) and AVAILABILITY (behōfian, beþurfan, (ge)nēodian, (ge)nihtsumian, *genugan (genēah)) need reconsideration. Semantically, (ge/tōge)byrian goes with (ge)dafenian, and more appropriately, OWNERSHIP and APPROPRIATENESS may go together. Behōfian stands in the middle of these groups and AVAILABILITY, while other four verbs may be united (cf. Ogura (1986: 133)). The same is true with Table A. 3.

Appendix B seems to be the core of her investigation. Comments would be helpful for Inconclusive and Nonclassifiable instances. M-F categorises an instance as “inconclusive” when “the pattern is not interpretable or at least problematic for interpretation within the present context, usually because it is open to more than one interpretation on syntactic, morphological, or semantic grounds,” and as “nonclassifiable” when it “either lacks any relevant morphosyntactic information … or deviates considerably from OE word order and inflectional marking …” (p. 251). It seems acceptable, therefore, if the instances to which she assigns the labels, especially those in the category of “nonclassifiable,” are interlinear glosses or Ælfric’s Grammar, but there are many instances excluded even though they are not in glosses and sometimes from major works. When classified “inconclusive,” some explanation or reasoning should be given. I have checked as many instances as possible in these categories19 and picked out some which need explanation as to why they are categorised in these litter bins. These are given below in 3.1. and 3.2.

3.1. Inconclusive Instances

1. Table B. 12 langian: MaxI 169 Longað þonne þy læs þe him con leopa worn, ophe mid hondum con hearpan gretan; hafaþ him his gliwes giefe, þe him god sealde ‘They long for the less, who knows great many songs or knows how to play harp with hands; they have his gift of pleasure which God gave them.’ The subject must be ‘they,’ when the form hafaþ is also taken into account.

2. Table B. 14a lician: HomU 33 (Nap 41) 1 Ne dear ic nu for godes ege sodes gesweogian, ac licige, swa hit licige, sod ic wille secgan, gime, se þe wille ‘Now I dare not keep silence for fear of

19 I left untouched the examples which seem acceptable in these categories, especially those instances in LibSc, ÆGram and word-for-word glosses. I checked all examples in verse and prose, Li, Ru, and all the versions of the Psalter glosses.
true God, but be pleased, as it pleases, I wish to tell the truth, take heed, who wishes to.’ Two forms of licige are subjunctive singular; when the verb form gime is considered, the first licige may function as imperative.

3. Table B. 14a lician: Bede 5 17.460.7 Mid þy he wæs rihtgelyfed on geleafan mid his geferum gemeted, þa licade ðís betwih opre ðæð þæs ylcan sinões þæt hi on heora sinõðgewrit ongeþeoddon, 7 þus writon betwyh him ‘While he was found orthodox in belief with his comrades, then among other acts of this synod this is sufficient that they prospered in their synodical documents and written thus among them.’ The meaning is different from the context, and it seem difficult to group this instance with other examples.

4. Table B. 14b gelician: HomFr II 11 ðær gelicade þa[m þis leoht gesce]op in þam hordfate, halgan ãæste: beorht on br[eostum bearn leoht]e scan ‘there to the one who made this light, holy spirit, it was pleased in the treasure-receptacle, bright in breast, the son showed by light.’ Some of the words and parts of words in this fragment are missing and the restoration is often criticised as doubtful.

5. Table B. 21a twēogan/twēon: Bo 41.146.29 Þær mæg þin mod þin geceadwisnes geseon openlice þþ hit nu ymb tweoð ælces þinges ‘There thy mind and thy reason can see clearly that it now doubts everything around.’ It is really doubtful if hit represents mod (neut.) or hit with the impersonal construction. The glossary to the Sedgefield’s edition (1968) suggests the “only pers.” (against nine impersonal) use. There is no doubt, however, that this verb takes the genitive.

6. Table B. 26b geþyncan: Rim 6 þegnum geþyhte ‘advantageous for thanes,’ where geþyhte is the past participle of þeôn ‘to thrive.’ This is not an example of gepyncan.

7. Table B. 26b geþyncan: GDPref and 4(C) 32.307.20 eac þær wæs gegearwod oper ad, þæs heanes wæs geþuht, þæt wære aþæned fræm þære eordan of þone heofon ‘there also another pyre was ready, which was thought something high, which would be stretched from the earth to the heaven.’ Is the genitive þæs heanes that makes the phrase difficult to analyse? This modifies oper ad and does not pose any problem.

8. Table B. 27b gelimpan: ChristA 78 Ne we soðlice swylc ne gefrug-nan in ærdagum æfre gelimpan ‘Truly we have never heard such (a
thing) happen in the days of yore (that ...).’ There is an emendation of *swylc ne* to *swylcne*, which may make the analysis easier.

9. Table B. 27b *gelimpan*: *MSol* 207 ðær to ðam moning gelomp *suð ymbe Sanere feld* ‘there it happened to the residents in a taxing district in the south around Sanere land.’ The existence of *to* makes the sense ambiguous.

10. Table B. 27b *gelimpan*: *Ap*. 1.6 *Da gelamp hit sarlicum gelimpe* ‘Then it happened in a sad misfortune.’ *Sarlicum gelimpe* must be in the dative, but not in reference to a person.

11. Table B. 27b *gelimpan*: *Bede* 1 16.72.24 *Ac gif þe foor gelimp in Gallia mægðe* ‘But if the journey into the region of the Gauls should happen to thee.’ The verb has a noun subject *þe foor* ‘the journey.’

12. Table B. 27b *gelimpan*: *Bede* 5 6.400.26 *Pa gelomp mid þa god-cundan foresencode þære synne to witunge minre unhersunnesse* ‘Then it happened with divine providence concerning the sin as punishment of my disobedience.’ The verb takes a clause without *þæt*.

13. Table B. 31a *geweorðan*: *El* 646 *þonne þeos æðele gewyrd* ‘than this noble Happening,’ not a verb but a noun. See Graden (1958: Glossary).

14. Table B. 31a *geweorðan*: *Seasons* 87 *na þu þæs andfeng æfre gewyrþe* ‘thou shouldest never be a defender of it.’ The verb is in the subjunctive, personal use.

15. Table B. 31a *geweorðan*: *PPs* 7.6 *Aris, Drihten, on þinum yrre, and ræs on minre feonda mearce, and geweorða þe sylfne þara* ‘Arise, Lord, in thy anger, and attack into my enemy’s border, and make thyself respected by them.’ This is not an example of *geweorðan* but *geweorðian* ‘to honour.’ See O’Neill (2001: 176).

16. Table B. 31a *geweorðan*: *Bede* 4 14.296.8 *Þa frugnon heo þone sittendan bi his stealle, hu be him geweorðan scولد, þone þe hy untrumne neosian cwomon* ‘Then they asked the man sitting beside his place, how it must be about him, whom they come to visit, the sick.’ The verb is in the infinitive, impersonal use.

17. Table B. 31a *geweorðan*: *GDPref and 3(C)* 25.229.3 *forðon hit is neodþearf, þæt ure spræc eft hi sylfe gebige to þam gemetfæstum 7 arwyrðum fæderum, þara lif ascean 7 mære gewearþ geond Suplangbeardna land* ‘it is necessary, therefore, that our speech should go back to modest and honourable fathers, whose life will
be departed and become famous beyond the land of South-Lombards.’ The verb is better translated as ‘become.’

18. Table B. 31a geweorðan: Æspir 9 and se halga gast hy todælp dæghwamlice git godes halgum mannum be ðam, þe him gewurð, ælcum be his mæde and his modes geornfulnysse ‘and the Holy Ghost divides them everyday even now to God’s saints, to whom they show respect, according to his virtue and eagerness of his mind.’ There is a variant reading gewyrð, but the verb is not geweorðan but geweorðian ‘to respect.’

19. Table B. 34a an/onhagian: CP 53.417.12 Donne hit bið onstyred md ðære lustbærnesse, & hit onhagað to ðæm ðingum ‘When it is excited by pleasure, and has opportunity for such things.’ Hit is unambiguous; when the preceding sentence is considered, it is clear that hit means mod ‘the mind.’

20. Table B. 36a byrian: Bede 1 16.88.23 he bið freo of þære sóðfæstnesse, þe he lufað; he bið hæfted of þære lustfullnesse, þe bireð he geneded ‘he is free because of the truth, which he loves; he is imprisoned because of the pleasure, which he happens (to be) needed.’ There are manuscript variants: [B. þe he gebyreð genyded (þe out of þæ); O. ða he byreð genyded].

21. Table B. 46 fremian: ÆCHom II,35 262.61 Ne derode Iobe naht þæs deofles costnung. ac fremode. forðan ðe he wæs fulfremdre on gedincðum ‘The devil’s temptation did not hurt Job but did good, because he was perfect in agreement.’ I find no problem in understanding this sentence; ne derode and ac fremode make syntactic contrast.

3.2. Nonclassifiable Instances
There are so many examples in the category that I select only those which need comments.

1. Table B. 5b gesweorcan: PsGlF 105.30 [cessuit] geswearc. PsGlI has this verb as the second gloss in a double gloss, ablan l. geswac, but this version is not mentioned.

2. Table B. 12 langian: PsGlJ 81.5 [ambulant] hi langap. This is an obvious mistake for gangoþ.

3. Table B. 20c gesceamian: PsGlF 34.4 [Confundantur] gesceamian þ gescende, H gesceamien; cf. A sien gescilde, B sien gescende, C syn gescynde, D gescamigen, E Gescamigen, G gesceamigan, I beon gescynde l. scamigan hi, J syn gescænde, K gescæmigen.
The Latin differs between Roman and Gallican texts in the following part, and $F$ is nonclassifiable probably because of the double gloss, even though it is the first gloss, not the second.

4. Table B. 20d *forsceamian*: PsGlK 24.4 [Confundantur] *forscanode*. This must have been glossed *forsceamode*. PsGlD has a double gloss, *syn gescende t forscomode*, but is classified as ‘Passive/Adjectval Participle,’ which is the first gloss, not the second. I wonder what principle the author uses in classifying this as Nonclassifiable.

5. Table B. 20e *ofsceamian*: MtGl(Li) 11.20 [exprobrare] *of-sceomage t forcuoeða* (cf. Ru1 æt-witan, WScp hispan). Is this nonclassifiable because of the double gloss? This is the first gloss, not the second. Is the principle on the acceptability of the double gloss thoroughgoing? It is true that the first gloss is not always appropriate and the second gloss not always rejectable. If the judgement should be made case by case, it must be noted in the Notes for Explanation (pp. 250–251).

6. Table B. 31a *geweorðan*: LkGl(Li) 4.42 [Facta] *ge-warð*. Skeat (rpt. 1970) has *a- t ge-warð*, but *a-* is not seen in the manuscript.

7. Table B. 32b *gemissian*: MtGl(Li) 26.75 [Recordatus est] *gemyste (sic) t eft-gemyndig wæs* (cf. Ru1 and WScp gemunde). The first gloss may show a misunderstanding of the verb.

8. Table B. 33b *genēalǣcan*: MtGl(Li) 8.25 [accesserunt] *to geneol-econ t to-cuomon* (cf. Ru1 eodun to him, WScp hig genealahtton). This is probably the prefixed *to* that makes the analysis difficult, although the prefix which goes back to L ad- is often glossed *to*.

9. Table B. 33b *genēalǣcan*: MtGl(Li) 13.27 [accedentes] *to-geneol-econ* (cf. Ru1 cumende, WScp eodon). The element, probably a prefix *to*-, is clearly visible in the manuscript.

10. Table B. 33b *genēalǣcan*: MtGl(Li) 25.22 [accessit autem et qui duo talenta acceperat] *geeolecde uuteldlice 7 seðe tuoegre cręfta onfeng*. Is this nonclassifiable because of the literal translation (with ‘and’), which deviates from the natural structure? The same is true with 25.24 [accedens autem et qui unum talentum acceperat] *geneolecde uuteldlice 7 seðe án cræft onfeng*. Cf. WScp 25.22: *Pa com ec opre sepe pa twa pund underfeng* ‘Then also came another one who received two pounds’ and 25.24 *Da come sepe án pund underfeng* ‘Then came he who received one pound.’
11. Table B. 33b genēalǣcan: MtGl(Li) 26.69 [accessit ad eum] geneolecde to hine (cf. Ru1 eode to him, WSCp cóm to hym). It is an obvious mistake for him.

12. Table B. 33b genēalǣcan: LkGl(Ru2) 9.42 [et cum accederet elisit illum daemonium et dissipauit] 7 miōdy gineolicade agroette hine ðe diowul 7 giøreade. The word order after geneolecde is VOS and V. WSCp changes the verb and order but the sentence is not so clear unless the personal pronouns can be identified: And þa he hyne lædde him to. Se deofol hine for-nam 7 fordyde ‘and then he (the man) led him (the child) to him (Christ); the devil took him and destroyed (him).’

13. Table B. 33b genēalǣcan: LkGl(Li) 15.25 [appropinquaret domui] geneolecde to huse (cf. WSCp þam huse genealehte). The use and non-use of to may make the analysis difficult; also cf. LkGl(Li) 18.35 [appropinquaret hiericho] geneolecde ðære byrig. Is there any good explanation for the difference between ‘draw near to the house’ and ‘draw near the city’ (without ‘to’)? Either was acceptable in Old English, as long as the case distinction is attained morphologically. It should also be noted that Latin does not have ad in either phrase.

14. Table B. 33b genēalǣcan: LkGl(Li) 22.47 [appropinquauit iesu] geneolecde ðe hælend (cf. Ru2 to-gineolicadun ðæm hælende, WSCp he ge-nealæhte þam hælende). The noun (with the demonstrative) ðe hælend is ambiguous in its case, while Ru2 and WSCp have the unambiguous dative.

15. Table B. 33b genēalǣcan: LkGl(Li) 24.15 [ipse iesus appropinquans] he se hælend geneolecde. Recapitulation is a typical feature of Old English and I can see no problem here.

16. Table B. 36b gebyrian: PsGlG 7.15 [Ecce parturit iniustitiam] efne gebyreð on rihtwisnesse (cf. I efenu geeacnode unrihtwisnesse, J efne cænneþ on unrihtwisnesse). This can be classified as an example of geberan ‘to bring forth.’

17. Table B. 37a gedafenian: JnGl(Li) 3.7 [oportet uos] geriseð þ behoфаð þ gedæñedead iuc (sic) (cf. Ru2 giriseð þ bihoфаð iow alle, WSCp eow gebyrað). The third gloss in a triple gloss. For the dual dative, Skeat follows MS iuc, but this must be inc.

18. Table B. 38 ge(h)rīsan: PsGlIC 64.12 and 101.25 [anni] gerys. This is obviously ‘years,’ though in the masculine declension.

19. Table B. 38 ge(h)rīsan: PsGlD 92.5 geriðað, F geriðað, G geri-
sað, H gerisaþ, J geriseþ (cf. A gedeafineað, B gedafeniað, C gedafænað, I gedafnaþ). There is a difference between the Latin texts, Roman [decent] and Gallican [dece], but the renderings do not follow the difference in both lexemes and forms.

20. Table B. 38 ge(h)rīsan: LkGl(Li) 24.26 [nonne haec oportet pati christum] ahne ðas gerás geðrouia crist ‘Doesn’t it befit Christ to suffer these things?’ In the construction of rhetorical questions the verb takes the accusative and bare infinitive. WScp follows Old English grammar with the dative: hu ne gebyrede criste ðas þing þoligean.

21. Table B. 38 ge(h)rīsan: LkGl(Ru) 4.19 [annum] geras. This is an example of ‘years’ (see PsGlC 64.12 and 101.25).

4. Summary

As I have mentioned at various places, M-F’s investigation is painstaking and cohesive. What should be remembered, however, are (i) the impersonal construction should be investigated in comparison to other constructions, that is, personal, reflexive, be + past participle, etc., in order to see them from stylistic as well as a semantic and a syntactic viewpoint, (ii) the study is not precise in separating the texts which have no direct influence of Latin from interlinear glosses, because most Old English texts are under Latin influence to some extent, but the DOEC does not quote Latin for CP, Or, Bo, Bede and Ælfric’s homilies as they are not literal translations, (iii) the Old English homiletic tradition goes on to the thirteenth century; it is better not to claim that some features appear from late Old or early Middle English, because what we have in hand is a limited number of examples in a limited number of extant texts, and (iv) the conflict or rivalry among Old English synonyms should always be considered by looking at manuscript variants or searching for similar expressions in different texts.

M-F’s method of investigation and the reviewer’s suggested approach can be compared by the following diagrams.
Möhlig-Falke’s:

- Construction 1: impersonal
- Construction 2: reflexive
- Construction 3: be + past ptc
- Construction 4: personal

Group (A) $V_{1-n}$

Reviewer’s:

- Semantic field
- $V_1 \leftrightarrow V_2 \leftrightarrow V_3 \leftrightarrow V_4 \leftrightarrow V_n$
- Impersonal
- Reflexive
- Personal
- be + past ptc

M-F divides verbs into several semantic groups and investigates various constructions of each verb. I put verbs in a semantic field and, keeping their rivalry in mind, investigate each construction these synonyms take. What I focus on most is the rivalry, which results in semantic-syntactic influence on constructions and triggers constructional changes. As long as we treat examples carefully, we may find some significant results even in a limited corpus.

Owing to the computer corpora, historical surveys on morphology and lexicology have become tremendously precise. What we have to do now is to define the sense of words or expressions in larger contexts than in single examples in a corpus quoted as sentence units, where no single unit exactly matches one of Modern English.

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