

## Case alternations with temporal bare NP adverbials in Old English

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### 1. Introduction

AIM: the nature of case alternations found with bare NP adverbials (BNPA) in Old English (OE).

Even though BNPA's have received some attention in the literature, the focus is usually on how the 'case-forms' developed to prepositional phrases (PPs), ignoring the fact BNPA's remain present as a category independent of PPs all the way to Present-Day English. The question of case alternation itself is addressed only from the perspective of case loss and case replacement. Case alternation, however, is present throughout the OE period, as it is not uncommon for a language with a richer case system to exhibit multiple case possibilities for BNPA's (e.g. Slavic languages).

- (1) a. *te subote* 'that Saturday' – genitive SC  
b. *tu subotu* 'that Saturday' – accusative  
c. *subotom* 'on Sundays' – instrumental
- (2) a. **Prošlym letom** Pavel rabotal dolgo RUSSIAN  
last.INST summer.INST Pavel worked long  
'Last summer Paul worked (for) a long time' (Kučera & Trnka 1975:87)
- b. Ona dežurila **prošlyj god**  
she duty-made last.ACC year.ACC  
'Last year, she was on duty' (Szucsich 2001:110)
- c. Pëtr **vsju noč'** rabotal  
Pëtr whole.ACC night.ACC worked  
'Pëtr was working for the whole night' (Szucsich 2001:110)

### 2. Instrumental/Dative BNPA's

singular N: presence of quantifier, demonstrative, adjective is obligatory (one rarely finds examples such as & *Wodnesdæge & Frigedæge forgan flæsc* 'on Wednesday and Friday sustain from meat'.(cochdrul,ChrodR\_1:33.4.502))

QUANTIFIERS: *sum* 'some', *ælc* 'each/every', *æghwilc* 'each', *gehwilc* 'any of', *ænig* 'any', *nan* 'no'

(INDEXICAL) ADJECTIVES: *nehst* 'next', *ær* 'earlier', *forþgogende* 'past, last', *gemyndgadan* 'past, departed', *æfterfylgend* 'following', *ylce* 'same', *æfter* 'following, next', *Drihtenlic* 'God's', *oðer* 'other', *forma* 'first, earliest', *uferan* 'later', *morgenlican* 'of to-morrow', *gio* 'former', *gerstan* 'of yester-day', *healf* 'half ordinal numbers (*þy þridan dæge* 'third day')

DEMONSTRATIVES (weak and strong): *þy*, *þon* & *þys* (instrumental), but also dative (3i)

- (3) a. *ða sume dæg* eode he swa swa he oft dyde  
then some day went he so so he often did  
'then one day he went away so as he often did'  
(coaelive,ÆLS\_[Swithun]:204.4350)
- b. ac *þys æftran geare* þu swyltst on Babilone on Maius monðe  
but this.INST following year you die on Babylon on May month  
'but the next year you will die in Babylon in the month of May'  
(coalex,Alex:38.2.485)
- c. & *ðy ylcan geare* forðferde Osríc Norðanhymbra cyning  
and that.INST same year departed Osríc Northumbrians' king  
'and that same year Osríc, the king of Northumbria, departed'  
(cobede,BedeHead:5.24.24.142)
- d. *þæt preostas ælce Sunnandæge* folce bodigan ...  
that priests each Sunday.DAT people preach  
'that priests should preach to the people every Sunday'  
(cocanedgD,WCan\_1.1.1\_[Fowler]:52.63)
- e. He *þa sumre nihte* geseah him ætstandan Godes ængcel  
he then some night.DAT saw him near-stand God's angel  
'He then one night saw a God's angel standing near him'  
(cogregdC,GD\_1\_[C]:4.26.24.282)
- f. & *se man læte him blod ælce monþe* ...  
and the man let him blood every month.DAT  
'and the man should let out his blood every month'  
(colaece,Lch\_II\_[3]:47.1.16.4000)
- g. Ond Hermes *þa sona onfeng fulwihte þy ærestan Easterdæge*  
and Hermes then soon received baptism that.INST earliest Easter-day.DAT  
'and Hermes was then soon baptized the first day of Easter'  
(comart3,Mart\_5\_[Kotzor]:Au28,A.13.1579)
- h. & on *þam baðe gehwilce morgene* drince mylsce drincan  
and on that bath every morning.DAT drink sweet drinks  
'and in that bath every morning he should drink sweet drinks'  
(colaece,Lch\_II\_[1]:42.1.5.1437)
- i. *broðor, ic þe bidde, þæt þu me þissere nihte* ne forlæte  
brother I you bid that you me this.DAT night.DAT not abandon  
'Brother, I bid of you that you don't abandon me this night'  
(cogregdC,GD\_2\_[C]:33.167.11.2042)

plurals can be bare (usually days of the week and 'special' days)

- (4) *þæt hi Sunnandagum & mæssedagum* Godes cyrican georne secan  
that they Sundays.DAT and massdays.DAT God's churches gladly seek  
'that they on Sundays and mass days should visit God's churches'  
(coblick,HomS\_14\_[BlHom\_4]:47.155.594)

### 3. Accusative BNPs

General agreement in the literature: temporal extent (Sato 2009)  
'how long' rather than 'when'

combines with:

- a) numerals
- b) quantifier *eal* 'all', adjective *onwalge* 'whole, entire'
- c) demonstratives

- (5) a. *þa heht Neron healdan Simones lic þry dagas*  
then ordered Neron hold Simon's body three days.ACC  
'then Neron ordered for Simon's body to be held for three days'  
(coblick,LS\_32\_[PeterandPaul[BiHom\_15]]:189.324.2449)
- b. and *Æpelstan cing ricsode xiiii gear and x wucan*  
and AÆthelstan king ruled 14 years.ACC and 10 weeks.ACC  
'and king AÆthelstan ruled for 14 years and 10 weeks'  
(cochronC,ChronC\_[Rositzke]:940.1.1142)
- (6) a. and *wacode ealle þa niht ofer ðæs wodan lic,*  
and remained-awake all the night.ACC over this madman's body  
'kept the vigil all night by the madman's corpse'  
(coelive,ÆLS\_[Maur]:206.1616)
- b. *Ic beo mid eow ealle dagas op gyfylnesse þisse worlde*  
I be with you all days.ACC until end of-this world  
'I will be with you always until the end of this world'  
(coblick,LS\_20\_[AssumptMor[BiHom\_13]]:145.130.1782)
- c. *Ond of ðæm mynstre uteode oft onwalge wucan*  
and of the monastery outwent often whole week.ACC  
'and for the whole week he went out of the monastery'  
(cobede,Bede\_4:28.364.9.3647)
- (7) a. and *hi sæton þa niht embe Crist sprecende*  
and they sat that night.ACC about Christ speaking  
'they sat the whole night speaking about Christ'  
(coelive,ÆLS\_[Cecilia]:252.7261)
- b. & *his lic læg on byrigene þa Sætarniht: & Sunnaniht*  
and his body lay on grave that Saturday-night.ACC and Sunday-night.ACC  
'and his body lay in the grave the Saturday night and the Sunday night'  
(cocathom1,ÆCHom\_I\_14.1:296.184.2708)

#### 4. Genitive BNPA's

the make-up similar to that of dative NPs: quantifiers, demonstratives and adjectives

differences: a) genitive allows 'bare' Ns (no quantifier, no adjective)  
b) no plural (?) (except for the partitive genitive, with 20+)

'day' and 'night' (most often)

- (8) a. He com **nihtes** to Criste  
he came night.GEN to Christ  
'He came to Christ by night'  
(coaelhom,ÆHom\_13:69.1921)
- b. þær hi **dægæs and nihtes** heora Drihten heroden  
where they day.GEN and night.GEN their Lord praised  
'where they praised their Lord day and night'  
(coalive,ÆLS\_[Eugenia]:54.223)

days of the week

- (9) And we lærað þæt man geswice **Sunnandægæs** cypinge and folcgemota  
and we learn that one withdraw Sundays from-market and from-folk-meetings  
'We learn that one should withdraw from market places and folk-meetings on Sunday'  
(cocanedgD,WCan\_1.1.1\_[Fowler]:19.22)

'summer' and 'winter'

- (10) Ceorles worðig sceal beon **wintres** & **sumeres** betnyed;  
commoner's premises shall be winter.GEN and summer.GEN fenced  
'a commoner's premises shall be fenced winter and summer'  
(colawine,LawIne:40.105)

plural - ?\* *þære daga*

Traugott 1972: in earlier stages GEN was restricted to fixed phrases

Mitchell 1985: genitives are similar to accusatives in 'defining the time **within** which something happens'

Koike 2004, a.o: genitives express duration (*during-PP*)

Evidence: ???

Our claim: genitives locate a situation in time and have a segmented structure

focus/parallel/list contexts: effect of 'individuated events' (NB. tendency, not a rule)

- (11) a. *ðæs ylcan gearæs* **gefor** **Wulfsie bisceop on Licedfelda**,  
this same year.GEN departed Wulfsy bishop on Lichfield  
and Leofwine abbud on Cofantreo feng to ðam bisceoprice,  
and Leofwine abbot on Coventry succeeded to the bishopric  
and **Ægelward abbud on Glæstingabyrig gefor**,  
and Egelward abbot on Glastonbury departed  
and **Godwine abbud on Wincelcumbe**,  
and Godwin abbot on Winchcomb  
(cochronC,ChronC\_[Rositzke]:1053.11. 1995-1997)

'This same year died Wulfsy, bishop of Lichfield, and Leofwine, abbot of Coventry succeeded to the bishopric; and Egelward, abbot of Glastonbury, died, and Godwin, abbot of Winchcomb'

- b. and *þæs geares* **wæron ofslegene ix eorlas and i cing**,  
and this year. GEN were killed nine earls and one king  
'and during that year seven earls and one king were killed'  
(cochronC,ChronC\_[Rositzke]:872.31.681)

(12) a- (ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WORLD, OR ON THE SPRING EQUINOX)

We can find the first day of this world through the day of the spring equinox, because the day of the equinox is the fourth day of this world's creation. Before that day there were three days without the sun and the moon and all the stars, and **on the fourth day of the creation of this world the almighty Creator created the sun and in the early morning** set it in the middle of the east where the equinoctial circle is reckoned to be, so that, in the course of the year, it would always adjust the day and the night there in an equal balance.

- b. **ðæs ylcan dæg**es he gesette ðone monan fulne on æfnunge, on eastdæle  
the same day.GEN he placed the moon full on evening on east  
mid scinendum steorrum samod, on ðæs hærfestlican emnihtes ryne  
with shining stars together on the autumnal equinox course  
'On the same day he placed the moon full in the evening in the east together with shining stars, in the course of the autumnal equinox, and fixed Easter time by the beginning of the moon'  
(cotempo,ÆTemp:2.3.76)

#### SEQUENCING/SEQUENTIAL INTERPRETATION

Genitive of the bare demonstrative *þæs* can have the meaning 'after this', 'afterwards'; usually there's a (sequencing) temporal adverb (*þa* 'then', *þonne* 'then', *sona* 'soon')

- (13) a. and *þa burh* *þær* getimbred on foreweardne sumor, and **þæs** foran to  
and the fortress there build on early summer and this.GEN before to  
*hlafmæssan þa æt Stæfforda*  
Lammas that at Stafford  
'and built a fortress there in the early summer, and afterward before Lammas the one at Stafford'
- b. *þa ðæs* oþre geare *þa æt* Eadesbyrig on foreweardne sumor  
then this.GEN other year.DAT that at Eddisbury on early summer  
'then [after this] in the following year the one in Eddisbury in the early summer'  
(cochronC,ChronC\_[Rositzke]:914.2.1.1117)
- c. & he *þonne þæs* eft lytelre tide þolige  
and he then this.GEN again little time suffered  
'and he then after this again suffered for a while'  
(coorosiu,Or\_1:5.24.24.479)
- d. & *sona þæs*, *þy* æfterran geare, Romane wunnan wið Fulcisci  
and soon this.GEN the following year.DAT Romans lived with Vulcanians  
'and soon after this the following year the Romans lived with the Vulcanians, the people'  
(coorosiu,Or\_2:6.49.29.954)

Genitive is capable of expressing sequence **within** the time expression; in (14b), 'that day' does not strictly provide time reference for the event of Matthew inviting Christ to his house, but yields a sequencing effect, whereby events are temporally ordered, and the interpretation is 'later/later that day'

(14)a. þa ða se hælend ferde on sumere byrig. ða geseah he sittan sumne mannan. æt tollsetle Matheus gehaten. and he cwæð to him. folga me; Matheus aras and filigde ðam hælende þærrihthe fram his tolle.  
'As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. "Follow Me," He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him'  
(cocathom2,ÆCHom\_II,\_37:272.3.6117-6.6120)

b. and gelaðode hine **þæs dægæs.** to his huse;  
and invited him that day.GEN to his house  
'and invented him #(later) that day to his house'  
(cocathom2,ÆCHom\_II,\_37:272.6.6121)  
(‘Later, Matthew invented Jesus and his disciples to his house as dinner guests’)

INDEFINITE CONTEXTS: genitives seem to be preferred with *an* 'one' (datives rather occur with *sum* 'some') – the exact role of *an* 'one' is far from being clear, and we leave this for future research

## 5. Cross-linguistic perspective

- correspondence between case and 'meaning'
- how idiosyncratic is case?

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