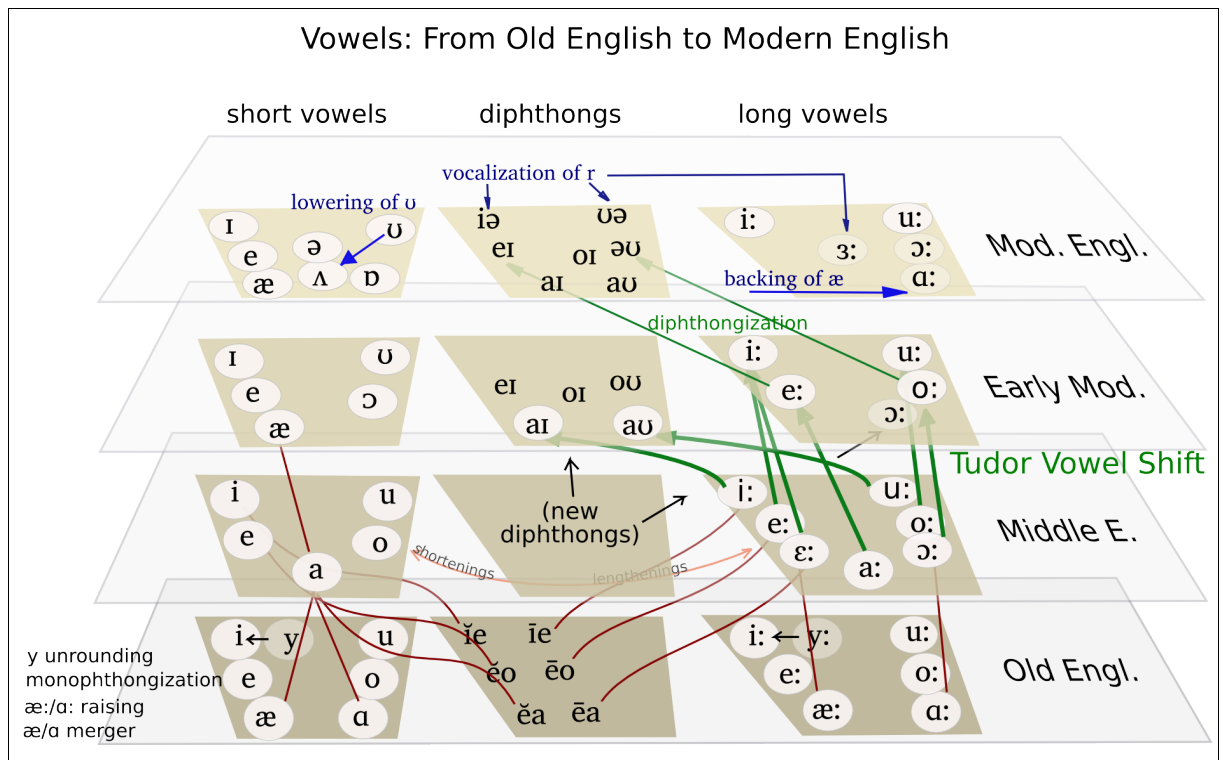


2.4. Vowels: From OE to Modern English



2.4.1. Unrounding of front rounded vowels

Following earlier unrounding of /ø(:)/ > /e(:)/, /y(:)/ also gets unrounded > /i(i:)/

2.4.2. Monophthongization of OE diphthongs

All OE diphthongs merge (back) into the respective monophthongs, usually:

- ea > æ
- eo > e
- ie > i

2.4.3. Treatment of /æ(:), ɑ(:)/

- Short /æ, ɑ/ merge in ME /a/ (later again fronted to /æ/ in Mod.E.)
- Long /æ:, ɑ:/ don't merge but raise to /ɛ:, ɔ:/ respectively
- New long /a:/ is created through lengthening of short vowels (see below)

2.4.4. New diphthongs

A fairly large number of new closing diphthongs arise in ME, through vocalisation of former OE consonants /j, ȝ, w, ȥ/ at the end of a syllable. For instance:

OE	ME	Mod.E.
weg [-ej]	-ei	way
dæg [-æj]	-ai	day
dragan [-aȝ-]	-au	draw
seah	-au	saw
hrēowan [-æaw]	-ɛu	rue
snīwan	-iu	snow
dāh [-aȥ]	-ɔu	dough
sōhte	-ɔu	sought

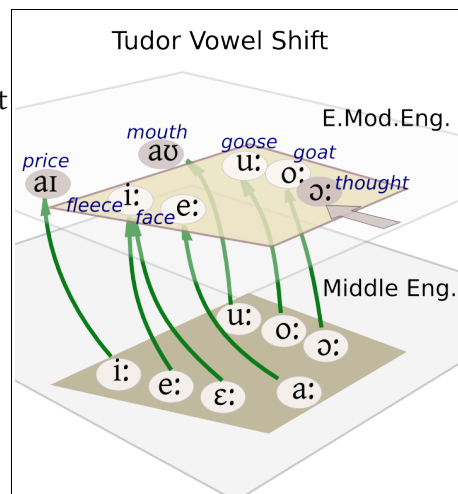
2.4.5. Lengthenings and shortenings

Syllable length gets regularised:

- any short vowel at the end of a syllable (“open syllable”) gets lengthened, e.g. *tǣ.kan* > *tā.kan* (Mod.E. *take*)
- conversely, some long vowels get shortened before consonant clusters⁵, e.g. *cēpte* > *cĕpte*; *mētte* > *mĕtte* (cf. Mod.E. *keep/kept*; *meet/met*)
- paradoxically, some special consonant clusters have a lengthening rather than shortening effect: /rd, rn, ld, nd, mb/, e.g. *fēld* > *fēld*; *cīld* > *chīld*

2.4.6. Tudor Vowel Shift (Great Vowel Shift)

- All long vowels raise
- The highest vowels, /i:, u:/ get “pushed” out and become diphthongs /aɪ, aʊ/(*price, mouth*)
- The remaining back vowels raise one step each:
/o:/ > /u:/ (*goose, boot*)
/ɔ:/ > /o:/ (*goat, boat*)
- The remaining front vowels raise up to two steps each:
/e:/ > /i:/ (*meet, fleece*)
/ɛ:/ > /i:/ (*meat, heat*)
/a:/ > /e:/ (*face, take*)
- New /e:, o:/ then also diphthongise > present-day English /eɪ, əʊ/



⁵ and in some other environments; the exact rules are complex.

- New /ɔ:/ is created through monophthongization of former diphthongs (*thought*, *bought*)

2.4.7. Changes within Modern English

- Shortening of some instances of /u:/ > /ʊ/ (*book*)
- Lowering of some instances of /ʊ/ > /ʌ/ (*blood*, *but*)
- Backing and lengthening of some instances of /æ/ > /ɑ:/ (*father*, *bath*, *dance*, *castle*)
- Vocalisation of /r/ in syllable-final position (in non-rhotic dialects), leads to new class of centering diphthongs /iə, uə, eə/ and central long vowel /ɜ:/

3. Grammar of Old English

3.1. Pronouns and other grammatical items

3.1.1. Important “small words”

<i>se</i>	‘the/that’ (masc.)
<i>sēo</i>	‘the/that’ (fem.)
<i>heo</i>	‘she’
<i>hie</i>	‘they’
<i>hit</i>	‘it’
<i>ðe/þe</i>	Relative pronoun ‘that’ (not article ‘the!’)
<i>se ðe</i>	Relative pronoun, like <i>ðe</i> alone
<i>ðā</i>	temporal adverbial ‘then’ (cf. German <i>da</i>). Very frequent in narrative sequences. (But also a demonstrative pronoun form)
<i>him</i>	not just dative singular ‘him’, but also plural ‘them’ (cf. Mod.E. <i>’em</i>)
<i>ne</i>	negation particle
<i>n-</i>	negation particle, affixed to verb form (<i>is</i> > <i>nis</i> ; <i>hæfde</i> > <i>næfde</i> ; <i>wæs</i> > <i>næs</i> ; etc.)
<i>ge-</i>	perfective particle, affixed to verb forms (cf. German <i>ge-</i> in past participles)
<i>hwā</i>	who?
<i>hwȳ</i>	why? (lit. instrumental form of <i>hwā</i> , ‘with what’)
<i>swā</i>	adverb ‘so’
<i>gif</i>	‘if’
<i>ac</i>	‘but’
<i>and/ond/7</i>	‘and’ (very often abbreviated with the special symbol 7 in the manuscripts)
<i>þæt/ðæt</i>	‘that’

3.1.2. Personal pronouns

		1.Pers.	2.Pers.	3.Pers. Masc.	3.Pers. Neuter	3.Pers. Fem.
Sg	Nom	ic	ðū	hē	hit	hēo
	Acc	mē (mec)	ðē (ðec)	hine	hit	hīe
	Dat	mē	ðē	him	him	hire
	Gen	mīn	ðīn	his	his	hire
Pl	Nom	wē	gē		hīe	
	Acc	ūs	ēow		hīe	
	Dat	ūs	ēow		him	
	Gen	ūre	ēower		hira	
Dual	Nom	wit ('we two')	git ('you two')			
	Acc	unc	inc			
	Dat	unc	inc			
	Gen	uncer	incer			

3.1.3. Demonstrative Pronouns / Articles

		Sg.Masc.	Sg.Neut.	Sg.Fem.	Pl.
'the'/'that'	Nom	se	ðæt	sēo	ðā
	Acc	ðone	ðæt	ðā	ðā
	Dat	ðām	ðām	ðære	ðām
	Gen	ðæs	ðæs	ðære	ðāra
	Instr	ðȳ	ðȳ		
'this'	Nom	ðes	ðis	ðēos	ðās
	Acc	ðisne	ðis	ðās	ðās
	Dat	ðissum	ðissum	ðisse, ðisre	ðisra
	Gen	ðisses	ðisses	ðisse, ðisre	ðissum
	Instr	ðȳs	ðȳs		

3.2. Nouns

3.2.1. Regular strong/weak nouns

Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak
--------	--------	--------	--------	------	------	------

	Masc.	Neuter I	Neuter II	Fem.	Masc.	Neuter	Fem.	
Sg	nom	stān	þing	scip	gief-u	nam-a	ēag-e	tung-e
	acc	stān	þing	scip	gief-e	nam- an	ēag-e	tung- an
	gen	stān- es	þing- es	scip- es	gief-e	nam- an	ēag- an	tung- an
	dat	stān- e	þing- e	scip- e	gief- e	nam- an	ēag- an	tung- an
Pl	nom/acc	stān- as	þing	scip-u	gief-a	nam- an	ēag- an	tung- an
	gen	stān- a	þing- a	scip- a	gief- a	nam- ena	ēag- ena	tung- ena
	dat	stān- um	þing- um	scip- um	gief- um	nam- um	ēag- um	tung- um

3.2.2. Some minor noun classes

	Athematic Masc.	Athematic Fem.	U-stem Masc.	Family -r nouns	-r plurals	
Sg	nom/acc	mann	bōc	sun-u	brōðor	lamb
	gen	mann- es	bēc	sun-a	brōðor	lamb- es
	dat	menn	bēc	sun-a	brēðer	lamb-e
Pl	nom/acc	menn	bēc	sun-a	brōðor	lamb-ru
	gen	mann- a	bōc- a	sun- a	brōðr- a	lamb- ra
	dat	mann- um	bōc- um	sun- um	brōðr- um	lamb- rum

Observations:

- Genitive plural always *-a*
- Dative plural always *-um*
- Accusative is usually the same as nominative, except in a few groups in the singular
- Gen. Sg. *-es* (source of modern English possessive *-s*) only in a part of the neuter/masc. nouns
- Plural *-as/es* (source of modern English plural *-s*) only in some masculine nouns
- Plural *umlaut* in the “athematic” nouns: source of Mod.E. *man/men, mouse/mice* pattern
- Note: No plural marking in many neuter nouns (*ðing*) and in the family nouns (*brōðor, sweostor, fæder, mōdor, dohtor*)
- Endings *-es, -e, -a, -um, -an* largely correspond to Modern German *-s, -e, -e, -en, -en* (*des Steins, dem Steine, der Steine, den Steinen* etc.)

3.2.3. Some additional irregularities

- Nouns with syncopation: *hēafod-hēafdes* ‘head’; *engel-engles* ‘angel’
- Nouns with *æ/a* or *ea/a* alternation, depending on vowel in ending: *dæg-dagas*
- Nouns with loss of /h/ between voiced sounds: *feoh-fēos* ‘money’
- Nouns with loss of /ɣ/ or /w/: *here-herges* ‘army’; *beadu-beadwe* ‘battle’

3.3. Verbs

3.3.1. Strong Verbs

3.3.1.1. The seven ablaut series from Germanic to Mod.E.

Class		Present	Past 1/3Sg	Past Plural	Past Participle
I	IE	-ei-	-oi-	-i-	-i-
	G	-ī-	-ai-	-i-	-i-
	OE	bītan	bāt	biton	biten
	ModE	bite		bit	bitten
II	IE	-eu-	-ou-	-u-	-u-
	G	-iu-	-au-	-u-	-u-
	OE	cēosan	cēas	curon	curen
	ModE	choose	chose		chosen
III	IE	-eN-	-oN-	-N-	-N-
	G	-iN-	-aN-	-uN-	-uN-
	OE	singan	sang	sungon	sungen
	ModE	sing	sang		sung
IV	IE	-eR-	-oR-	-ēR-	-R-
	G	-eR-	-aR-	-ǣR-	-uR-
	OE	beran	bær	bæron	boren
	ModE	bear	bore		born(e)
V	IE	-e-	-o-	-ē-	-e-
	G	-e-	-a-	-ǣ-	-e-
	OE	etan	æt	ǣton	eten
	ModE	eat	ate		eaten
VI	IE	-a-	-ā-	-ā-	-a-
	G	-a-	-ō-	-ō-	-a-
	OE	bacan	bōc	bōcon	bacen
	ModE	bake			
VII	IE	-	-	-	-
	G		Reduplication		
	OE	feallan	fēoll	fēollon	feallen
	ModE	fall	fell		fallen

Ablaut Series: Underlying pattern

	Pres.	Past1	Past2	
I	-ei-	-oi-	-i-	Common pattern A: e-o-zero (“Voll-, Abtön-, Schwundstufe”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I: combined with diphthongal [i] (+cons.) • II: combined with diphthongal [u] (+cons.) • III: combined with nasal or liquid +cons. • IV: combined with liquid (l/r)
II	-eu-	-ou-	-u-	
III	-eN-	-oN-	-N-	
IV	-eR-	-oR-	-ēR-	
V	-e-	-o-	-ē-	Common pattern B: short-long (“Vollstufe, Dehnstufe”)
VI	-a-	-ā-	-ā-	

Strong verbs, examples by series:

I	rīdan, rād, ridon, riden	‘ride’
	līðan, lāð, lidon, liden	‘walk’
	wrītan, wrāt, writon, writen	‘write’
II	frēosan, frēas, fruron, froren	‘freeze’ (cf. G. <i>frieren</i>)
	lūcan, lēac, lucon, locen	‘close’
	cēosan, cēas, curon, coren	‘choose’ (cf. G. <i>kren</i>)
III	bindan, band, bundon, bunden	‘bind’
	singan, sang, sungon, sungen	‘sing’
	helpan, healp, hulpon, holpen	‘help’
	weorpan, wearp, wurpon, worpen	‘throw’ (cf. G. <i>werfen</i>)
IV	stelan, stæl, stælon, stolen	‘steal’
	niman, nam, nōmon, numen	‘take’ (cf. G. <i>nehmen</i>)
V	sprecan, spræc, spræcon, sprecen	‘speak’ (cf. G. <i>sprechen</i>)
VI	bacan, bōc, bōcon, bacen	‘bake’
VII	hātan, hēt, hēton, hāten	‘be called’ (cf. G. <i>heiflen</i>)

3.3.1.2. Effects of Verner’s Law (grammatical alternation)

Where a strong verb stem ends in one of the sounds sensitive to Verner’s Law, the first two forms in the strong verbs table have the normal, unshifted value (original Germanic voiceless fricative), and the last two forms have the shifted value (original Germanic voiced fricative). Typical alternations: þ:d, s:r, h:g.⁶

IE	Germ	OE	OE spelling	Example
/t/	/θ/	/θ~ð/	⟨þ, ð⟩	sēoðan ‘seethe’
	/ð/	/d/	⟨d⟩	sudon (cf. G. <i>sieden, gesotten</i>)
/s/	/s/	/s/	⟨s⟩	cēosan ‘choose’
	/z/	/r/	⟨r⟩	curon (cf. G. <i>kiesen, erkoren</i>)
/k/	/x/	/x~ç~h/	⟨h⟩	tāh
	/ȝ/	/ȝ~g/	⟨g⟩	tigon (cf. G. <i>ziehen, gezogen</i>)

⁶In German (due to independent sound changes occurring there), the corresponding alternations are *d:t, s:r, h:g* (*sieden-gesotten; ziehen-gezogen*)

3.3.1.3. Additional vowel alternation

Alternation in present tense between 1Sg and 2/3 Sg., caused by *i*-mutation: *helpan-hilpst-hilpð* (cf. German *helfen-hilfst-hilft*)

3.3.2. Personal endings

Personal endings of strong verbs

	Present	Past
1Sg	help-e	healp
2S	hilp-st	hulp-e
3Sg	hilp-ð	healp
Plural	help-að	hulp-on
Subjunct. Sg.	help-e	hulp-e
Subjunct. Pl	help-en	hulp-en

Personal endings of weak verbs

	Present	Past
1Sg	fremm-e	frem- ed -e
2Sg	frem-est	frem- ed -est
3Sg	frem-eð	frem- ed -e
Plural	fremm-að	frem- ed -on
Subjunct. Sg.	fremm-e	frem- ed -e
Subjunct. Pl	fremm-en	frem- ed -en

3.3.3. Weak verbs

3.3.3.1. Regular weak verbs (classes 1/2)

	1a	1b	1c	1d	2
Infinitive	frem mm -an	her- ian	hǣl-an	sell-an	luf- i -an
Pres 1Sg	frem mm -e	her- ie	hǣl-e	sell-e	luf- i -e
2Sg	frem-est	her-est	hǣl-st	sel-est	luf-ast
3Sg	frem-eð	her-eð	hǣl-ð	sel-eð	luf-að
Pl	frem mm -að	her- ia ð	hǣl-að	sell-að	luf- i -að
Past 1Sg	frem-ed-e	her-ed-e	hǣl-d-e	se al -d-e	luf-od-e

(*fremman* 'do, carry out'; *herian* 'praise'; *hǣlan* 'heal'; *sellan* 'give'; *lufian* 'love')

Class 1: former Germanic verbs in *-jan*.

Class 1a: *-jan* suffix has caused WGerm gemination (consonant doubling)

Class 1b: (stem ends in *-l/r*): *-jan* suffix is still partly visible as /j/ (<i>), sometimes spelled <g>)

Class 1c: (long stem vowel): *-jan* suffix no longer visible, but has caused *i*-umlaut on the stem vowel

Class 1d: *i*-umlaut has failed to happen in past tense, therefore vowel alternation (so-called "back umlaut")

3.3.3.2. Class 1 Weak Verbs as causative verbs

Many weak verbs in class 1 (former *-jan* verbs) are causatives derived from an underlying strong verb or noun. Examples:

Strong verb	Causative weak verb
<i>sittan</i> 'sit'	<i>settan</i> 'set' = 'cause to sit'
<i>rīsan</i> 'rise'	<i>rāran</i> 'rear' = 'cause to rise'
G. <i>winden, wand</i>	G. <i>wenden, -ete</i> = 'cause to turn'
G. <i>schwimmen, schwamm</i>	G. <i>schwemmen, -te</i> = 'cause to swim'

Causative *-jan* verbs:

- are formed from the 2nd principal part (past tense form) of the strong verb (*sittan-sat*)
- final consonant undergoes Verner's law, if applicable (*rīsan > rāran*, /s > z > r/)
- final consonant undergoes gemination
- stem vowel undergoes *i*-umlaut

3.3.3.3. Class 3 weak verbs (irregular)

		'have'	'live'	'say'	'think'
	Infinitive	habban	libban lifgan	secgan	hycgan
Pres	1Sg	hæbbe	libbe lifge	secge	hycge
	2Sg	hæfst, hafast	lifast leofast	segst	hygst, hogast
	3Sg	hæfð, hafað	lifað leofað	segð	hygð, hogað
	Pl	habbað	libbað	secgað	hycgað
Past	1Sg	hæfde	lifde leofode	sægde	hygde, hogode

3.3.4. Preterite-Present verbs

Present tense looks like strong verb past tense; past tense looks like weak verb.

	Present	Past
1Sg	sceal	scol- d -e
2Sg	scul-e	scol- d -est
3Sg	sceal	scol- d -e
Plural	scul-on	scol- d -on
Subjunct. Sg.	scul-e	scol- d -e
Subjunct. Pl	scul-en	scol- d -en

- List of preterite-presents:

wāt-witon-wiste [I] ('know', cf. Mod.E. *to wit*; G. *weiß*)
 cann-cunnon-cūðe [III] ('know', cf. G. *kann*)
 sceal-sculon-scolde [IV] ('shall', cf. G. *soll*)
 deah-dugon-dohte [IV] ('avail', cf. G. *taugt*)
 dearr-durron-dorste [IV] ('dare')
 man-munon-munde [IV] ('remember'; cf. *mind*)
 ðearf-ðurfon-ðorfte [IV] ('need'; cf. G. [*be*]*darf*)
 mæg-magon-meahte [V] ('be able to; may', cf. G. *mag*)
 āh-āgon-āhte [V] ('owe', cf. G. *eigen*)
 mōt-mōton-mōste [VI] ('must', cf. G. *muss*)

3.3.5. Other irregular verbs

		'be'		'do'	'go'	'want'
		sindon	bēon	dōn	gān	willan
Present	1Sg	eom	bēo	dō	gā	wille
	2Sg	eart	bist	dēst	gæst	wilt
	3Sg	is	bið	dēð	gæð	wile
	Plural	sind(on)	bēoð	dōð	gāð	willað
	Subjunct. Sg.	sīe	bēo	dō	gā	wille
	Subjunct. Pl	sīen	bēon	dō	gā	wille
Past	1Sg	wæs		dyde	ēode	wolde
	2Sg	wære		dydest	ēodest	woldest
	3Sg	wæs		dyde	ēode	wolde
	Plural	wæron		dydon	ēodon	woldon
	Subjunct. Sg.	wære		dyde	ēode	wolde
	Subjunct. Pl	wæren		dyden	ēoden	wolden

3.4. Syntax

3.4.1. V2 clause structure

OE main clauses mostly have a structure similar to German (Verb-second syntax, "sentence brace")

For comparison: German clause structure

	Vorfeld	Linke Klammer	Mittelfeld	Rechte Klammer
V2	Hans	hat	Maria heute mittag	angerufen
	Heute mittag	ruft	Hans Maria	an
V1		Ruft	Hans heute mittag Maria	an?
V-end		weil	Hans heute mittag Maria	angerufen hat
		weil	Hans heute mittag Maria	an ruft

- V2 clauses: in main clauses; first position filled by arbitrary element (often but not always the subject); second position filled with finite verb; final position filled with the remainder of the verb complex.
- V1 clauses: in questions, in some subclauses, and in vivid narrative sequences⁷
- V-final clauses: in subclauses

Same structure in Old English:

- (1) æfter ðām þe Rōmeburg getimbred **wæs**[...], **wearþ** Gaius Gallica cāsere
 nachdem Rom gebaut war [...], ward G. G. Kaiser
- (2) Ða **gewearð** hit þæt þæs mædenes fostormodor into ðam bure **eode**
 da geschah es dass des Mädchens Amme in das Zimmer ging

but with the following extra rules:

- Unstressed pronouns often go before the verb, even if that means having more than one element before the verb:
- (3) Heo hyre **andwirde** and cwæð: [...]
 Sie ihr antwortete und sprach: [...]
 - (4) Æfter þisum wordum he **eode** on ðone weg
 nach diesen Worten er ging auf den Weg
- After *and*, the second part of a clause often has V-final word order as if it was a subclause:
- (5) Her **com** Æþelflæd [...] to Scergeate and þær ða burh **getimbrede**
 heuer kam Æ. [...] nach S. und da die Burg erbaute
- There is a lot of freedom in moving additional constituents after the final verb, even if the clause is built after an underlying V-final pattern. (cf. spoken German:
- (6) a. ... dass er das bestimmt heute abend noch **macht**; but also:
 b. ...dass er das bestimmt noch **macht** heute abend.

⁷ cf. German colloquial joke-telling syntax: “Kommt ein Pferd in die Bar. Sagt der Barkeeper....” etc.

- (7) Mid þi þe he þas þingc **wæs** sprecende to him silfum
 mit demdass er diese Dinge war sprechend zu sich selbst
 ('as he was saying this to himself...')

3.4.2. Some more example sentences

- (8) Soðlice on me earmre **is** mines fæder nama reowlice **forworden** ...
 wahrlich an mir Armen ist meines Vaters Name kläglich verdorben

... and me nu forðam deað þearle **gelicað**
 ... und mir nun deswegen Tod sehr gefällt

- (9) Ic **eom** soðlice of cynelicum cynne **cumen** ...
 ich bin wahrlich von königlichem Geschlecht gekommen

... and ic **bidde** þinre dohtor me to gemæccan
 ... und ich bitte deine Tochter mir zu⁸ vermählen

- (10) Ic **can** þone dom and ic hine æt þam geate **geseah**
 ichkenne dieses Urteil und ich es an dem Tore sah

- (11) **Bewænde** hine þa to ðam cynincge and cwæð:
 wandte ihn⁹ da zu dem Könige und sprach:

þu goda cyningc, þu **asettest** rædels; **gehyr** ðu þa onfundennesse.
 du guter König, du setztest Rätsel; höre du die Lösung

- (12) Mid þy þe se cyningc **gehirde** þæt A. þone rædels swa rihte **arædde**
 Mit dem dass der König hörte dass A. die Rätsel so richtig erriet

3.4.3. Other syntactic observations

Subordinating clusters:

mid ðy ðe ... = "mit dem, dass ..." = 'when...'
 æfter ðām ðe... = "nach dem, dass ..." = 'after...'
 ær ðām ðe... = "vor dem, dass..." = 'before ...'
 Forðām ðe... = "dafür, das..." = 'because ...'

Inflected infinitive:

to-infinitives have a special "dative" inflected form of the infinitive, ending in *-nne*

- (13) Hwæt is nu mare ymbe þæt **to** sprecanne
 was ist nun mehr um das zu sprechen
 ('was gibt es darüber nun mehr zu sprechen?')

⁸ This *tō* is not introducing the infinitive (as in G. *zu vermählen*), but is a postposition belonging to the preceding *mē* (*mē tō* = 'zu mir')

⁹ There is no special reflexive pronoun (*himself/sich*) in OE. Here, *hine* 'him' is used in reflexive function.