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## "Gode to lofe 7 him selfum ecre hœle" : Pronouns with "self" in reflexive usage in the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle", Manuscript E

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**“Gode to lofe 7 him selfum ecre hæle”  
Pronouns with *self* in reflexive usage  
in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Manuscript E**

In the analysis we attempt to view Old English reflexive patterns with *self* collected from Manuscript E of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* through the prism of cognitive linguistic research on reflexive situation types in Kemmer (1993). Underlying syntactic patterns in Modern English, direct, indirect and logophoric situation types have been considered in a very different setting, Old English being a synthetic language. We have tried to establish some characteristics of the ten cases which constitute our corpus, pertaining to the number of events constituting a given reflexive situation and the number of event participants, their semantic roles and the nature of the interaction between them.

**Key words:** Kemmer, direct reflexive situation type, indirect reflexive situation type, Old English reflexives, *self*

## 1. Introduction

In this analysis we attempt to view Old English reflexive patterns with *self* as they occur in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Manuscript E, through the prism of the conceptual structure of reflexivity found in Modern English. Given that the emergence of modern reflexives in English is inextricably linked to a variety of factors and ultimately to the whole system shifting from the synthetic to the analytic, as convincingly argued by van Gelderen (2000), our goal is very modest: we aim to present a synchronic analysis of just a handful of cases, limited to a few specific observations. The research is premised upon a cognitive linguistic methodology and specifically on the notion of a **reflexive situation**, i.e. a conceptual arrangement of the scene underlying a reflexive pattern. We shall try to establish some characteristics of the reflexive situations underlying

the cases which constitute our corpus, pertaining to the number of events constituting a given reflexive situation and the number of event participants, their semantic roles and the nature of the interaction between them. The theoretical basis for this analysis is provided mainly by Kemmer (1993); this theoretical basis will be our starting point.

## 2. Reflexivity as a conceptual relation in situation types

In her analysis Kemmer (1993) takes a broad view of conceptual relations involved in transitivity, voice and reflexivity in English. Her basic claim is that underlying linguistic constructions there is a set of situation types which are universal in nature and which are crystallized in a set of prototypical, language specific, linguistic manifestations. The grammatical relations of transitivity, voice and reflexivity all have a common denominator: a situation type in which a few parameters can take different values, thus resulting in transitive and intransitive, active, passive, middle and reflexive grammatical structures. By and large, prototypical reflexive patterns pertain to situations which, with respect to the number of participants, their elaboration and the event structure, locate them between those coded by transitive clauses and middle constructions.

Kemmer distinguishes three reflexive situation types: direct, indirect and logophoric. Among these the **direct reflexive situation type** has a privileged status. It describes events which involve a single event frame, in simple terms such that has one transmission of energy between event participants in its scope. There are two participants in the event, remaining in a relation of co-reference. They maintain distinct thematic roles in the interaction. The initiating **Agent**, typically the referent of the subject of the clause, is human, acts volitionally and is responsible for the event. It is the controlling force and a salient cause of this event. The Agent's action typically involves direct physical contact with the second participant in this event, the **Patient**. As a result of this direct contact and the physical force applied, the endpoint of the action chain, and the Patient, is immediately and thoroughly affected. Being co-referential with the Agent, the Patient is human, yet it remains inactive and non-volitional, a salient effect of the event. Such a conceptual arrangement of the situation underlies the reflexive prototype, as in (1):

- (1) *John hit himself.*

Translating the conceptual configuration into grammatical relations, we note that the co-referring event participants are co-arguments of the verb – the Agent is the antecedent and the subject, and the Patient is the reflexive and the object.

The **indirect reflexive situation type** adds a third participant to the configuration of conceptual relations. Now the Agent instigates an action which prototypically involves transfer of possession, the entity acted upon is the inanimate Patient. The action carried out by the Agent affects the third participant who bears a thematic role of a **Recipient** or **Beneficiary**. The effect of the action has an impact on the Agent, as the relation of co-reference now holds between the Agent and the Beneficiary/Recipient. The indirect reflexive situation type yields some less prototypical reflexive constructions in English, as in (2) and (3):

- (2) *John bought himself a book.*
- (3) *John bought a book for himself.*

Finally, the **logophoric reflexive situation type** is defined by Kemmer as comprising more than one event frame in its scope. In simple terms this amounts to more than one action chain, typically involving subordination on the linguistic plane. The prototypical logophoric reflexive situation pertains to reportive contexts and introduces a new thematic role. The initiator of an action, due to the verbal or mental character of this action, is now the **Mental Source**. Linguistically the Mental Source is the subject and the verbal/mental activity is the verb, such as *say* or *think*, of the main clause. The scene of the subordinate event can be arranged only partially independently of the main clause participant, as the defining feature of the logophoric configuration is the relation of co-reference ranging across the clause boundary. As locally free reflexives are rare in English, and the Mental Source is necessarily the antecedent of the reflexive, the typical co-reference relations link all/at least three participants: note the indices in (4):

- (4) *John<sub>i</sub> thought he<sub>i</sub> cut himself<sub>i</sub>.*

As a final remark in this introductory section let us once again relate the notion of a situation type and reflexive constructions in language. As Kemmer defines them, situation types involve recurring properties of the contexts systematically associated with a linguistic expression and they belong to the **conceptual** plane. Examples (1–4) represent typical realizations of them on the plane of the English language. The direct reflexive situation type underlies the construction which is acknowledged to be the prototype. Yet the number of extensions from the prototype or from the other construction types form a rich inventory of forms in Modern English. Precisely how reflexive forms conform to, or extend from, the three construction types/situation types in Old English will be for us to establish in the following sections.

### 3. Old English system of reflexives

The cases collected for this analysis from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Manuscript E, all include a post-modified pronoun as a reflexive marker. The story of reflexivity in English is ultimately the story of *self*. Yet the modern system originates from a very different one, in which it is plain pronouns which did double duty, marking both disjoint reference and co-reference, as in (5) (Keenan 2002; König and Siemund 2000; van Gelderen 2000). In other words, if confronted with an utterance equivalent to (6) in Old English, the hearer would not be able to judge from the sound of it if the speaker means an act of suicide or a homicide.

(5)  $He_k$  liked  $him_{j, k}$

(6)  $She_i$  killed  $her_{i, j}$

The text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* freeze-frames both ways of marking reflexivity, plain pronoun reflexive uses by far outnumbering those reinforced by *self*.

Finally, let us note that in Modern English a pronoun post-modified by *self* is a polysemous category, ranging over both **reflexive** and **emphatic** meanings, which are in complementary distribution in the syntactic organization of the language. In a diachronic perspective, the emphatic marker came first, before any reflexive use developed (König and Siemund 2000). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* attests to such sequential ordering. A brief overview is now given of the Chronicle before we deal with the corpus and the reflexive patterns.

### 4. The Chronicle

The Chronicle consists of seven extant manuscripts which are generally distinguished in scholarly practice from one another by letters of the alphabet, A–G.<sup>1</sup> Earle and Plummer (1892 [2000]: xxiii) point out that of these seven MSS it can be said that they in fact contain four chronicles – G is a copy of A, B and C are almost identical and F is copied from E, thus leaving A, C, D and E as distinct Chronicles. These stem from a common original but the relationship between them is extremely complex (Bately 1986), and their length and contents differ greatly, although the content is fairly uniform up to the year 891; this

<sup>1</sup> Plummer (2000: xxiii) denotes the MSS  $\bar{A}$ , A, B, C, D, E, F; his A equating to the G of other authors. He points out (2000: xxviii) that Earle preferred this notation, which avoids the implication that G is more recent than F; in fact G is a little less than two centuries earlier than F. G has also been referred to as W after Whelock who published an edition. Some authors use the notation A, A2, B, C, D, E, F, where A2=G.

uniform material is generally referred to in the literature as the *common stock*. The original was compiled from various sources in the latter half of the ninth century, listing events from the Roman invasion up to 892. From then on items were added to the manuscripts more or less contemporaneously, probably in a number of different churches, and certainly at Winchester, Abingdon and Canterbury. There is no certainty about the nature of the original compiler’s sources, but there is little doubt that he drew on Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

The histories of the seven extant manuscripts of the Chronicle are well covered in the literature, particularly by Earle and Plummer (1892 [2000]: xxiii-cxxxvii) for MSS A and E, Bately (1986: xiii-xvi) for MS A, Irvine (2004: xiii-xviii) for MS E. A useful overview of all the extant versions is given in Swanton (2000: ix-xxviii).

The source of data for this article, MS E, the Laud Manuscript<sup>2</sup>, is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The whole of this MS was written by one scribe up to the year 1121, and it then continues in various hands to its end in 1154. It contains significant amounts of material relating to Peterborough abbey, where it was written, and is the only manuscript to extend much beyond the Norman Conquest. It is thought to be based on a chronicle which is very similar in its earlier sections to the annals which form the basis of MS. D. William Lisle (who died in 1637, and from whom Laud probably inherited the manuscript) made many notes both in the MS itself and also on paper interleaved in it. Many of these notes are collations from the A MS. In form E is similar to A, in that the annual years are listed consecutively, with blanks for years in which no material was available or in which no significant events occurred.

## 5. The corpus

Pending the analysis proper let us consider the corpus. Out of 34 occurrences of *self* in Manuscript E 10 post-modify pronouns in reflexive configurations, 5 convey the idea of sameness (e.g. ME1061 *And on þam sylfan gearre forðferde Wulfric abbod, and on the/that self year died Wulfric Abbot, “and in the same year died Wulfric Abbot”*) and 19 are emphatic markers (e.g. ME999 *he woldon sylf, they willan-Pret3Pl self “they would/desired”*; ME1093 *he sylf mid feawum ætbærst, he self with few at-burst “he himself with a few made his escape”*). Even this informal count of such an insignificant number of cases confirms the claim which we have already referred to, that the use of the form which is in Modern English a marker of both reflexivity and emphasis

<sup>2</sup> It was owned by Archbishop Laud. The front page has the inscription: *Liber Guil. Laud Archiep. Cant. et Cancellar Vniuersitet. Oxon. 1638.*

originated as the emphatic construction. Our focus remains on the 10 cases with *self* as the marker of reflexivity.

In the analysis we shall always provide the date under which the quoted clause occurs in Manuscript E; annal numbering can vary between the manuscripts and the material given under a specific date in MS E may not necessarily occur at the same annal number in other MSS. The translation comes from the OMACL (The Online Medieval and Classical Library) version of the *Chronicles*.

## 6. Reflexive patterns with *self* in Manuscript E

Following Kemmer's basic distinction between reflexive situation types, let us start with the **number of events** encoded in the reflexive structures under study, see Table 1.

**Table 1.** Classification by number of events

Number of events	Number of cases
Single event	8
n-event	2

All but two uses are single event structures. The two exceptional cases are provided in (7) and (8) below. The reflexive pronoun in (7) does not belong to the nuclear part of the scene, which is *he swealt* (*he died*). It codes an argument of a much less independent process, as indicated by the participial suffix. A less processual character of the event puts its status as a clause to question, yet we would classify the situation as a non-prototypical 2-event type rather than a non-prototypical single-event type. In this we follow Langacker's (1991) claim that the notion of clausehood can best be captured in terms of more prototypical and less prototypical clausal structures, and that drawing an absolute boundary between a clause and a non-clause would prove gratuitous. We can further add that an in-depth analysis of (7) would call for its consideration in light of Givón's claim, correlating semantic binding of events and their syntactic integration into an explicitly iconic principle: "The stronger the semantic bond is between two events the more extensive will be the syntactic integration of the two propositions into a single clause." (1993: 2).

- (7) **ME2** 7 he swealt ofsticod fram **him sylfum**.

and he died stabbed from him self

This year died Herod, stabbed by his own hand.

In the same vein, the infinitival clause in (8) will count as a separate event. Let’s note that the syntactic integration of the complex clause is lower than in (7), hence the semantic integration of events is much looser.

- (8) **ME1086** Wala wa, þæt ænig man sceolde modigan swa hine sylf upp ahebban 7 ofer ealle men tellan.

Alas, that any should show courage/Mut (German) so him ACC self up heave up-Inf and over all men tell-Inf.

Alas, that any man should presume so to puff himself up, and boast o’er all men

Let us turn now to the configuration of participants in the reflexive situations underlying the clauses in the corpus.

**Table 2.** Classification by number of event participants

Events by number of participants	Number of cases
Two-participant event	3
Three-participant event	4
Four-participant event	3

In the **number of participants** three cases conform to the prototypical, two-participant **reflexive pattern** in Kemmer’s research, as in (1), in which the reflexive codes the object of the transitive verb which co-refers with the subject in that relation. However, not even one of these cases is that simple. Let us first note the structural position of the reflexive pronoun as a complement of the transitive preposition *fram* (*from, by*) in (7) cited previously and *mid* (*with*) in (9) below.

- (9) **ME874** 7 he geare wære mid him sylfum

And he ready-Adv beon-Subj.3Sg with him self-Dat

and he would be ready with himself

Let us note, though, that Swanton’s (2002) translation of (9) is an emphatic pattern: *and he himself would be ready*.

Likewise, the verb in (8) above is not a prototypical transitive verb, as the second argument accompanies what appears to be a relational predicate *ahebban upp* (*up-heave up*).

Consider further the thetic statement in (10) below, in which the deictic element of the setting *þær* (*there*) is in the subject position of the clause and the argument occurs in the object position. What follows the argument is a complex of stacked phrases, in which the reflexive is the complement of the preposition *betwux* (*between, among*), which is itself a complement of the head noun *þeode-SFSgDat* (*people, nation*). Using cognitive linguistic tools we would specify the relation of the co-referent noun phrase *ðere þeode* (*the/that-Dat nation*) and the reflexive as one between the trajector and landmark of a relational predicate *between*. The whole chunk *ðere þeode betwux heom sylfum* (*among that nation*), we shall argue, is an event participant, the semantic role of which is Locative. We shall count (10) as a **three participant event** then.

- (10) **ME867** 7 þær wæs mycel unðwærnesse ðere þeode betwux heom sylfum,  
 There was much dissension the/that-Dat nation between them-Dat self-Dat  
 and there was much dissension in that nation among themselves

In Kemmer's view, three participant events most typically encode transfer of possession, as in (2–3). This is hardly true of (11) below. The reflexive pronoun is now embedded in the prepositional complement of an other-referring object of the transitive verb *ceosan* (*choose*). We have decided to treat the case as a three participant event, even if it departs from a prototypical three-participant situation, such as would be in: *They chose themselves an abbot*. In terms of semantic roles the reflexive will be more adequately described as Locative rather than Beneficiary.

- (11) **ME1131** 7 ðes oðer dæies æfter Sancti Iohannes messedæi. cusen þa muneces  
 abbot of hem self  
 And the/that-Gen other day-Gen after St. John's mass-day chose-PretSubjPl the/those  
 monks abbot of them self  
 The other day after the festival of St. John chose the monks an abbot  
 of themselves

In parallel, (12) departs from the situation taken by Kemmer to be prototypical in not coding transfer of possession. As with Modern English *put*, for example, the preterit plural *wrohton* in agreement with the collective noun *here* (*army*) appears to be a ditransitive verb and the reflexive pronoun is a complement of the prepositional head of its prepositional phrase argument. It is not Beneficiary, though. We would argue for its interpretation as Locative.

The form of the verb is unclear, the OMACL translation links the verb to the strong verb *wreacan* (*wreak*), perhaps in the sense similar to today’s *wrought iron*. Yet it may also be the transitive pattern of the weak verb *wyrcean* (*work*), with plural inflectional endings on the participial form and metathesis in the stem. We shall adopt the latter interpretation in the gloss:

- (12) **ME885** Her todælde se forsprecena here (...) 7 wrohton oðer fæsten ymb hi sylfe.  
 And worked-3Pl other fortress-Acc around they-Acc self  
 and wrought another fortress around themselves

Unlike the previous examples, (13) does indeed denote transfer of possession and we suggest it should properly be treated as an elliptical structure with an elided subject and verb that need to be pragmatically enriched from the preceding context 7 *hit todæld on fower*.

- (13) **ME1017** Her on þisum geare feng Cnut cyning to eall Angelecynnes rice. 7 hit todæld on fower. him sylfum West Seaxan.  
 Here on this-Dat year took/seized Cnut king to all England kingdom and it-Acc divided on few: him-Dat Wessex-GenAdj  
 This year took the king Knut England, and divided it into four parts: Wessex for himself

Transfer of possession is also coded in (14) below, yet we shall insist the case is a **four-participant schema**, absent from reflexive patterns in Modern English. We assume that *to* has been elided in the coordinated structure *Gode to lofe 7 him selfum ecre hæle*. The dative case endings on the adjective *ece* (*eternal*) and the noun *hæl* (*salvation*) as well as the coordinating conjunction *and* appear to support our claim. Given this, we shall posit that the direct and indirect objects in this schema are followed by another argument, semantically a Goal.

- (14) **ME855**. (7 þy ilcan geare gebocade Æðelwulf cining teoðan dæl his landes ofer eal his rice) Gode to lofe 7 him selfum ecre hæle.  
 God-dat to love-SFDat and him-Dat self-Dat everlasting-SFDat salvation-SFDat  
 the honour of God and for his own everlasting salvation.

Part of the four-participant schema is realized in the most recalcitrant case in the corpus, in (15) below:

- (15) **ME992** (7 þa on þere nihte ðe hi on ðone dæi togædere cumon sceoldon,) ða sceoc he on niht fram þære fyrde him sylfum to mycclum bismore,

when shake-Pret3Sg he on night from that army him-Dat self-Dat to much/many-PIDat disgraces-PIDat

(On the day preceding the day of the battle) he skulked away from the army, to his great disgrace

Even if not physically separated by a comma, we consider the clause with the manner-for-motion verb *shake* to be the core event. The reflexive indirect object and the prepositional Goal, *him sylfum to mycclum bismore* (*himself to much disgrace*) should actually be treated as an elliptical structure of what originally might have been something like *He did it himself to his disgrace*. In other words we assume that *himself to much disgrace* part is a clause-long commentary on the preceding core clause. Note that in the OMACL translation this fragment is physically separated by means of a comma, rendered as if a different structure altogether. Accordingly, we shall treat this case as a partially realized four-participant reflexive schema.

Finally, let us consider (16). We shall claim that it adds the indirect object *heom* (*them-Dat*) to the three participant pattern as in (11).

- (16) **ME1097** Ða Wylisce men syððon hi fram þam cyngre gebugon heom manege ealdras of heom sylfan gecuron.

The Welsh men since then they bowed/revolted from the king them-Dat many elders of them-Dat self-Dat chose

The Welshmen after they had revolted from the king chose them many elders from themselves

Let us now consider the nature of the event participants in terms of their **animacy**. The results in Table 3 come as no surprise.

**Table 3.** Classification of event participants by property of animacy

Arguments by property of animacy	Number of cases
Human co-referring participants	10
Non-human co-referring participants	0

On Kemmer’s account, typical reflexive situations which give rise to Modern English constructions hinge on the configuration of **semantic roles**. Let us first recall the asymmetry between agenthood and patienthood of co-referent participants in the prototypical reflexive situation type. There is then the co-reference between the Agent and the Beneficiary in the indirect reflexive situation type and the inanimate Patient as an affected entity in this relation. Finally, the Mental source instigating an act of utterance or other mental activity and its relation to the scene of the subordinate event furnished with co-referring entities construe the logophoric situation type. Little in the data we are considering conforms to the above patterns, see Table 4:

**Table 4.** Classification by semantic roles of event participants

Semantic roles of participants	Number of cases	Cases by the date
Agent – Patient	1	ME 1086
Experiencer – Patient	1	ME 874
Agent – Beneficiary – Patient	1	ME 1017
Agent – Beneficiary – Patient – Locative	2	ME 992, ME 1097
Agent – Beneficiary – Patient – Goal	1	ME 855
Patient – Agent	1	ME 2
Agent – Patient – Locative	3	ME 867, ME 885, ME 1131
Mental source (logophoric)	0	0

The above are only schematic notations which, as throughout the Old English period the language remained essentially synthetic, allowing relative freedom in the syntax, assume different linear realizations.

## 6. Conclusions

The most striking fact which distinguishes Old English reflexive patterns with *self* from typical Modern English construction schemas pertains to their distribution as landmarks of relational predicates rather than verbal ones. Let us note again Old English *fram*, *upp*, *mid*, *betwux* (*between*), *ymb* (*around*), *of* (*twice*) followed by the reflexive marker in Manuscript E. Needless to say, most of these structures will make perfect syntactic patterns in Modern English; our claim is only that these are not prototypical or typical distributional patterns in the light of Kemmer (1993). However, drawing any definite conclusions about

the prototype status of such structures in Old English would be inappropriate here, given the limited number of cases.

The second observation we would make is that the Old English four participant schemas are rendered in Modern English by other means.

Third, let us note that logophoric reflexives have not been found in the document.

It is also interesting to see how far the verbs that lexicalize the reflexive patterns with *self* in the Chronicle conform to or extend from the two main types posited as prototypical in Kemmer's framework: physical action and transfer of possession. *Wyrca* (*work*) and *ofstician* (*stab*) are good instantiations of the schema of a physical action exerted by an instigator on another event participant, *ahebban* (*heave up*) is a metaphorical expression attesting to up-down orientational metaphor in language and its axiological valuation. The transfer of possession schema is also very specific in the eyes of a Modern English speaker. Lexicalized as *ceosan* (*choose*), it invokes the cultural model of feudal hierarchy and feudal relations of possession.

Finally, let us point out that the variety of theta roles in terms of which we have captured the semantic and conceptual relations between event participants in the cases under study is richer than those posited for reflexive situations in Kemmer (1993).

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### Streszczenie

W artykule przeanalizowano 10 przypadków użycia schematów składniowych kodujących refleksywność w języku staroangielskim w Manuskrypcie E dokumentu *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Wybrane przykłady wykorzystują jeden z dwóch współistniejących wówczas sposobów wyrażania zwrotności, w którym zaimek osobowy jest intensyfikowany przez *self*. Myślą przewodnią artykułu było zastosowanie optyki badawczej przyjętej przez Kemmer (1993) do opisu refleksywności we współczesnej angielszczyźnie, tak aby wyłonić zasadnicze kierunki zmiany języka w pewnych wybranych parametrach schematów konstrukcyjnych typowych dla sytuacji ujmowanych jako (proto)typowe konstrukcje zwrotne we współczesnym języku angielskim.