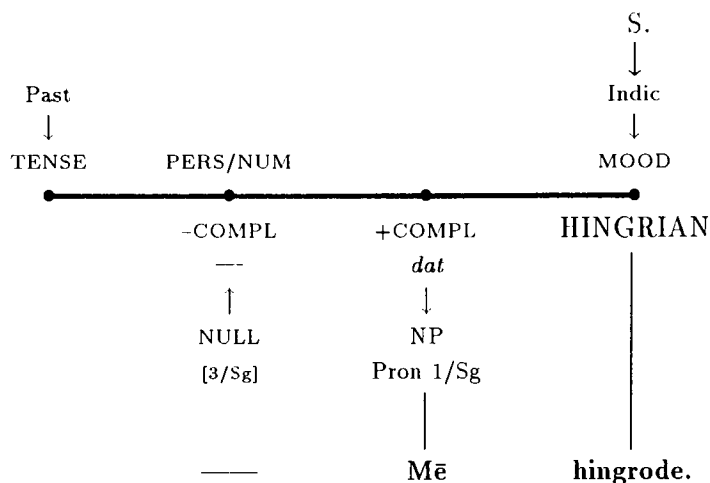


‘Impersonal’ verbs are an anomaly from the point of view of most verb-centered patterns: **Mē hingrode** ‘I hungered.’



B. COMPLEMENT OF PREPOSITION Government of case by preposition is a structurally simple matter, because prepositions are single lexical items and any preposition governs directly the head of its complement: [**Hē sette his hand ofer þāra wera ēagan** ‘He set his hand on (the) eyes of the/those men’—**ofer** governing the case of **ēagan** but not the case of **þāra wera** (which is governed as shown in Section C, next).

Case governance with prepositions did not follow a one-for-one scheme over the historical span and geographical spread of Old English. Ælfric, for example, in reworking texts of his homilies after they had begun to circulate, changed case forms from dative to accusative frequently with **purh** and several times with **ofer**. What follows therefore is a simple listing of the main prepositions and their characteristic case governance.

æfter ‘after, along, according to’; with dative, usually.

ǣr ‘before [time]’; with dative.

æt ‘at, by, on, upon’; with dative, and accusative.

andlang ‘along,’ with genitive.

be/bī ‘by, along,’ with dative, and instrumental.

beġondan ‘beyond’; with dative.

beheonan ‘on this side of,’ **behindan** ‘behind,’ **beneoþan** ‘beneath,’ **be-ūtan** ‘outside’; all with dative.

betwēoh betwēonum betwēonan ‘between, among’; with dative and accusative.

būtan ‘without, except’; with dative, and accusative.

for, fore ‘for’

fram ‘from, by’; with dative, and instrumental.

ġeond ‘through’; with accusative, and dative.

in ‘in’

mid ‘with’; with dative, and instrumental.

of ‘from, away from, out of’; with dative.

ofer ‘over, across, beyond, opposed to’; with accusative.

on ‘on, in, among, (on)to’; with accusative, and dative/instrumental.

ongēan ongeġn ongēn ‘opposite, against’; with dative, and accusative.

tō ‘to, into, at, by’; with dative, usually.

tōweard, tō .. weard ‘toward(s)’; with dative.

þurh ‘through, during’; with accusative, usually.

under ‘under’

wiþ ‘towards, against’; with genitive, and accusative, and dative.

ymb ‘about, around (a place), after (time)’; with accusative and dative.

Many of these prepositions have Modern English cognates with the same functions: **fram dēaðe tō life** ‘from death to life,’ **þurh ðā duru** ‘through the door,’ **on ðone seofodan dæg** ‘on the seventh day.’ But some have been replaced by other forms: **Hīe ymb ðā gatu feohtende wæron** ‘They were fighting around the gate’; **Ealle þās þing [hē] spræc mid biġ-spellum ... and nān þing ne spræc būtan biġ-spellum** ‘All these things he spoke with parables, and no thing did he speak without parables.’ Some have remained in the language but have changed meaning: **ġif ic ... him gulde yfel wið yfle** ‘if I ... should repay him evil for evil.’ **Of** has split into two forms, Modern English *of* and *off*. And so on.