[SQUEAKING] [RUSTLING] [CLICKING]

ARTHUR BAHR: So as promised, you got longer and fuller accounts of some of the syntactic principles especially and word order stuff that we got the kind of simplified or somewhat simplified version of in Baker last time. I'm going to hit what I consider the high points of Mitchell and Robinson's account of syntax through the pages that we read for today. But I'm happy to take questions throughout.

So starting really with-- one thing I will say at the top of page 63, because I had to look this up, the use of a single verb form where modern English would use a resolved tense or mood-- so a resolved tense simply means one where you use a form of the verb *to be,* at least in this case-- so "is going" or "was going."

I think I mentioned before, for our phrase in modern English, we would tend to say, "The sun is shining." Old English would be much likelier to simply to use the conjugated form of that verb: *sēo sunne scīneð,* "shineth" in its cognate, rather than *is scīnende,* which it could theoretically say. But it would sound quite unidiomatic in Old English.

So in terms of their, Mitchell and Robinson's that is, account of word order, which starts on page 63, I want to highlight paragraph 145 on the next page, on page 64. This S - V word order is most common in subordinate clauses. I previewed and we talked a little bit about that last time, that when you're dealing with a subordinate, a complex sentence in Old English-- that is to say, one with a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses-- be very much on the lookout for the verb to come at the end of that subordinate clause.

This can be tricky, especially if you're dealing with the past tense of a strong verb that may not have an ending. So make sure, when you're looking for the verbs, that you're looking at the end of the clause in particular. And then the next bit that I wanted to note, the top of page 65-- a context in which you get the verb subject, what they're calling the verb subject word order, is in principal clauses introduced by certain adverbs.

So they give the example "Then came the dawn," which sounds archaic, poetic, whatever you want to call it. In Old English, it would not sound-- it would just sound totally normal. And we've seen gazillions of examples, I think, already in our relatively brief time reading of *þā* - verb - subject. And we're going to see still more.

This is not an absolute rule, as paragraph 147 explains in some detail. At the 2/3, maybe 3/4 of the way down that long paragraph, they write that the old preference for VS-- that is to say verb-subject word order-- after an adverb, as in modern German, is, at times, conquered by the new preference-- that is to say new in Old English-- for a subject-verb word order. So it's not a hard and fast rule, as at least in my memory of studying German it is, that the verb has to be second. But it is still a strong preference. All right, any questions about their account, their more detailed account of word order?

I think Mitchell and Robinson do quite a nice job of explaining both recapitulation and anticipation. We saw examples of anticipation last time. Recapitulation is the sort of flip side of that. I like their comparison of this to a modern politician who has the desire, but not the ability to be an orator. And they call it the device of pausing in mid-sentence and starting afresh with a pronoun or some group of words which sums up what has gone before.

So they give the simple example from Alfred's preface to the translation of the pastoral cure, [LATIN], Alfred writes, *Ūre ieldran, ðā ðe ðās stōwa ær hīoldon,* "Our ancestors, who previously occupied these places"-- so he's got a relatively long-- and it's not even that long. But he's got a subject, and then a dependent clause. So our ancestors, who previously occupied these places, *ðā ðe ðās stōwa ær hīoldon...*

And then he, as Mitchell and Robinson say, pauses, as it were, for thought, and then goes on *hīe lufodon wīsdōm.* So that *hīe* might look like-- indeed, it could be an object. But in this case, it's a recapitulative nominative that looks back to the subject, *Ūre ieldran.*

And that ambiguity gets resolved by the fact that *wīsdōm,* which is the actual direct object-- there's nothing for wisdom to do there, if it's not the direct object. And in fact, *lufodon* has a plural verb ending. So we know that *hīe* has to be the subject.

This is not wildly common, the recapitulation. It's certainly less common than anticipation. But it is something to be aware of because it sounds-- yeah, I mean, as Mitchell and Robinson say, it looks like the kind of thing-- it feels like the kind of thing that happens from oral delivery, when you're not sure how the sentence is going to end. And you get partway through. And you're like, oh God, what was I doing? And yet, here in Old English, we often see it in written sources, when presumably they had time to go back and edit, but, for whatever reason, didn't feel that it was necessary to do so.

Anticipation-- so if you take a look at the second paragraph in section-- or I mean, I think that's-- whatever that sigil is in 148 on page 66, the common use of a pronoun to anticipate a noun clause may be compared with that or with this. So the simple example that they give is *Þā þæt Offan mæġ ærest onfunde þæt se eorl nolde yrhðo ġeþolian.*

So literally, they write, or they translate, "When the kinsmen of Offa"--*Offan mæġ*-- "first learned that thing"-- so *ærest onfunde þæt*-- the first *þæt*-- namely that, the second *þæt,* "the leader would not tolerate cowardice." Literally, "the noble, the earl, the noble did not desire to suffer cowardice." Those two "that"s are a very good example of anticipation.

So when you see that first *þæt,* you have to basically keep your mind flexible and say, all right, I don't quite know what this that is doing there. Keep reading. And then when you see the verb *onfunde,* which is going to require a direct object-- and in this case, the direct object is going to be a noun clause. "He found out." He found something out. What did he find out? "He found out that"-- it's that discovery that *onfunde* is going to be-- is a transitive verb that needs a direct object and that the direct object is going to be a clause. That's what retroactively, as it were, clarifies that the first *þæt* is anticipation.

So as I said last time, you don't have to translate that first *þæt.* You just have to be able to parse it correctly and understand what it's doing. Any questions on that? *Hit* is a perfectly viable, although less common alternative to *þæt,* as an anticipatory pronoun.

The other thing to be aware of is, however, even though *þæt* and *hit* are by far the most common, because they are the accusative, when you have verbs, which Old English has quite a number of, as we've discussed, when you have verbs that take a different case from the accusative, you will see the anticipatory pronoun or demonstrative, in whatever the case is, that that verb takes. So for example, *wēnan,* the verb "to believe," which takes the genitive, what form would that *þæt* take instead?

AUDIENCE: *þæs.*

ARTHUR BAHR: *þæs,* exactly, very good, yeah. All right, any questions on anticipation? So the splitting of heavy groups on page 67, paragraph or section 149-- this is an example. This is basically the splitting of compounds, compound subjects and compound objects that we talked about last time. So they just go into more detail. And I don't think there's anything substantively different that we need to dwell on. But if I'm wrong, let me know.

And then next, on page 68, we have correlation. Again, this is mostly review of things that we talked about last time. I would highlight the bottom of page 68 in section 151. They note that word order-- this is really just recapitulating. See what I did there-- recapitulating stuff that we saw in Baker.

Word order is an even more useful and reliable guide than context, for it may be taken as a pretty safe rule for prose that, when one of two correlative *þā* clauses has the word order verb subject, it's the principal clause. And *þā* must mean "then." The temporal clause introduced by *þā*-- and really, that's the subordinate clause introduced by *þā* ("when") may have the word order S ... V or simply SV.

So in that case, we see that the subordinate clause most commonly, I would say, does have that S ... V, where the inflected form of the verb in the subordinate clause gets kind of shunted to the end of the clause as we've discussed earlier. But again, not a hard and fast rule.

And this is true-- even though they give the they specify that this is, in the case of specifically with *þā,* it's equally the case, as they go on to clarify, with *þone ... þone, þǣr ... þǣr, þider ... þider,* and *þā ... þā* in section 152. Any questions on that?

So noun clauses on page 70-- this is where we most typically get instances of anticipation with *þæt* or *hit.* And they refer you back to paragraph 148 for all of that. My reading of these pages is really that they're mostly concerned with assuaging our fears about the indicative versus the subjunctive.

So the upshot of all of this-- there's a lot of detail and many examples on pages 71 and the top of 72. I would say that the upshot takes place in the second full paragraph of page 72. We may say that while the rules set out above often works, fluctuation between the subjunctive and the indicative in Old English noun clauses is often of little significance.

So what this means for you practically is you really don't need to worry about translating, about how you translate that mood, whether it's indicative or subjunctive. Simply use whichever seems most idiomatic or most natural in modern English. And if I want to test you on what the ending is, I'll ask specifically. I won't be judging you based on your translation of an ambiguous indicative or subjunctive.

The next bit that is actually quite interesting, because Mitchell and Robinson read the same text differently in two different places in their book, comes in paragraph or section 159 on page 73. They get very exercised and in my understanding not-- well, I don't entirely understand why they get so exercised about the question of whether an interrogative pronoun can-- whether you can use interrogative words also as relative pronouns in Old English.

As we talked about last time, modern English finds this completely normal. We say, "Who is there?", *who* being interrogative, and also "I know who is there," where *who* is a relative pronoun. For my money, Old English actually does this quite a lot as well. And we see one example in a very cool phrase from "The Wanderer." This is the quoted bit in 159. *Ond iċ hēan þonan wōd winterċearig ofer waþema ġebind, sohte sele drēorig sinċes bryttan, hwǣr iċ feor oþþe nēah findan meahte þone þe in meoduhealle mīne wisse.*

So the main verb here is-- if I can find the chalk, there's profusion. So the main verb here is *sohte.* By the way, notice-- where is the *iċ?* Notice how far that initial *iċ* is separated from its verb. You have *hēan þonan wōd winterċearig ofer waþema ġebind*-- You have to wait all the way past that, almost a line and a half, to get to the main verb.

So they are saying that this is a main verb that has as objects both a noun and a clause containing a dependent question. And what they mean by that here is that *sohte* has one object, one direct object, which is just the noun, hall. "I sought a hall." And then the second direct object is that whole clause.

"I sought a hall." And I also-- although, that's all implied. There's no "and I also." "I sought a hall, ... sought where I-- I looked for the place where I, far or near, might find one who, in the mead hall, might know"-- et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Now, what's interesting about *this*-- take a look at note 1 at the bottom of the page. The first object of *sohte* is *sinċes* bryttan in our text, where the attractive compound *sele drēorig,* "sad for a hall," is accepted. So basically, what they're saying here is that if you flip to-- let's see. Yeah, on page 279, where you actually have the text of "The Wanderer" in Old English, they print these lines, 23 through 27-- yeah, they print them completely-- well, completely differently.

They pull together *sele drēorig* into a single compound. So this is a good example of how ambiguous Old English poetry can be. The very same editors in the very same edition of their own textbook are in one case reading *sele* as the accusative object or as one of the accusative objects, one accusative object of the verb sohte.

And in the *second,* where it's *seledrēorig.* here, *sele* becomes part of a compound that's modifying the speaker of the sentence. And they read *sinċes bryttan,* "a dispenser of treasure," as the object. Of course, you can do that because the weak noun ending of *bryttan* is so ambiguous.

It could be accusative. So it could be "I, dreary for a hall"-- i.e. really in search of a hall-- "sought dispenser of treasure." Or it could be, as on page 73, "I sought sad," meaning-- so *drēorig* is going to become modern English *dreary.* But it really means "sad" in Old English.

"I sought the hall of a dispenser of treasure." So in-- on page 73, *bryttan* has to be genitive. And as they're construing it on page 279 in the actual text, it's accusative. So this is a great example of-- and honestly, both are possible. So it's a great example of how the ambiguity of endings in Old English creates ambiguity in the literature itself. So the grammatical characteristics or texture of the language inflect literally and metaphorically the poetic potential of the language.

And you can see, if you have the whole text and you and you can turn to page 279-- you can see the facsimile of the opening page of "The Wanderer" from *The Exeter Book.* And you can see how different the script looks and how, in Old English, there is actually quite a bit of word separation.

They don't take us all the way down-- oh yeah, so if you take a look at-- it's sort of opposite line-- it's about opposite line 26 and 27. If you look at the left-hand side, you can see a long S. It sort of looks like *sohte.* And then I see a word-- I see a pretty clear word separation between *sele* and *drēorig* right after that. So I think the scribe at least seems to have construed it as this option.

AUDIENCE: If you look up above though in the first couple of lines where it's really clear, there's also a word separation between all sorts of other things.

ARTHUR BAHR: Yes.

AUDIENCE: Which presumably are being interpreted as compounds by M and R.

ARTHUR BAHR: Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly.

AUDIENCE: Every one that looks like, to me, a compound word has word separation in Old English.

ARTHUR BAHR: Yeah, yeah. So that's a very good point. And it's quite un-- so you're right. It's quite unreliable. And even into the middle English period, one often has a noticeable, quote unquote, "word separation" between even prefixes of verbs-- all of these scribes seem to be figuring out-- making it up as they go along in many cases. So you're quite right, Alyssa, the fact that there looks like-- that there is some kind of separation between *sele* and *drēorig* does not necessarily mean that it has to be construed that way.

AUDIENCE: The way they write W's is so cursed. They look like Ps.

ARTHUR BAHR: Yes.

AUDIENCE: A lot of the variations in here I've seen before look like long S's. But there R's a little janky, like that. Oh, P and W, I don't know how to deal with that.

ARTHUR BAHR: Yeah, Old English Ws, it's super interesting. So that's the win. That's the wynn. And for whatever reason, we haven't-- so take a look at--

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE].

ARTHUR BAHR: Where do you see that?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] in the fourth line. [INAUDIBLE].

ARTHUR BAHR: Yes, good. So excellent. *Swā* and then *cwæð.* You can see that nice C-wynn, and then the A-E ligature for the ash, and then the-- oh, by the way, I think I've been using eth and thorn interchangeably and haven't maybe ever actually given the full explanation.

So eth and thorn-- thorn, eth-- these are absolutely interchangeable in Old English. There's no difference in pronunciation, or meaning, or anything like that. So thorn-- God, I can't even write today-- and eth. In Old Norse and modern Icelandic, this is the unvoiced and this is the voiced. So [f] versus [v]. But there's no difference in Old English.

To your point, Alyssa, about the weirdness of the wynn, I think that the reason that we haven't-- everybody transliterates the wynn to W is because the wynn and the thorn look so similar in Old English. I mean, there is a difference. So the thorn-- take a look at line 5.

wrāþra, you can see there's a wynn-R blurring into the A. And then the thorn, there's a marked ascender above the line. So that's the difference between the wynn and the thorn, is that the wynn kind of looks like a thorn if you got rid of the top ascender.

AUDIENCE: Wait. So how would you write a P in Old English or in this specific script?

ARTHUR BAHR: That's a great question. P is quite an unusual letter in Old English.

AUDIENCE: It seems to only occur in [INAUDIBLE].

ARTHUR BAHR: Yeah, so we saw it in *plēolić*-- the Aelfric thinks it's very *plēolić* or dangerous to translate Genesis. If you can find a P real quick--

AUDIENCE: Right after *Swā*-- *Swā cwæð eardstapa...*

ARTHUR BAHR: Yes.

AUDIENCE: There's a mark of serif on it.

ARTHUR BAHR: Yeah, it looks like a little bit of a serif. So they've accentuated this. So there's a P. And then a wynn is more like-- also, in many scripts, the chamber of the wynn is quite a lot bigger than the chamber of the P. This scribe doesn't seem to observe that, unfortunately. But yeah, it's a great question. I think the short answer probably, Tara, is context. I mean, a P-- as so often is the case in Old English-- have you gotten used to this yet? How do you tell the difference between x and y? Context. So yeah.

AUDIENCE: Sorry, where is the line [INAUDIBLE]?

AUDIENCE: Oh, OK. I didn't see that.

ARTHUR BAHR: This was all a very entertaining digression from the bottom of page 73. No, it's good. I mean, there isn't actually a lot of grammar to get through today. So this is perfect. And now, it'll be up on the interwebs for those who had to miss today. Let's take a look at the top of page 74.

They say *hwilċne* is strictly an interrogative introducing a noun clause. And the literal sense is et cetera, et cetera. It is easy to see how such a juxtaposition of noun and interrogative would lead to the use of the interrogative as a relative. But this stage has not been reached in Old English.

For our purposes, you don't need to worry about this. Just translate it as it's written and you'll be fine. OK? Well, not as it's written in the word for word sense, but just translate the words in the word order that they have to be. All right, and that's actually-- oh no, there's one more little bit on page 75, the accusative and the infinitive.

We've talked about this as well, the fact that Old English, because it doesn't have a passive infinitive form, often uses-- well, I shouldn't say often, can use the infinitive as a sort of implied passive infinitive, as Mitchell and Robinson note toward the bottom of section 161. Any questions on that?

All right, I think that's all of the grammar that you had to go through for today. So it's a quick day for our recording friend. Thank you very much.