

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON RELATIVE CLAUSES
IN THE OLD ENGLISH VERSION
OF BEDE'S *HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA GENTIS ANGLORUM*¹

RAFAL MOLENCKI

University of Silesia

In this paper I wish to discuss the late ninth century stage in the development of English relative constructions. The material for the study has been taken from the Old English version of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*. I shall mainly concentrate on the markers of relative clauses and the restrictive vs. non-restrictive distinction.

Since, as is well known, none of the currently available theories of linguistic change is fully convincing and satisfactory enough, I have made use of concepts from various models of linguistic analysis. I have mostly limited myself to discussing the surface syntax, bearing in mind Warner's (1982:8) observation that "any account of the grammar of a dead language must necessarily present and discuss the surface syntax and only rather cautiously attempt more abstract analyses". I realize that such an approach has its limitations and does not contribute much to the theory of historical syntax, but I treat this study merely as an introduction to my further research. Also Nagucka (1984:6) expresses her conviction that "a purely descriptive analysis is always sterile but indispensable as a starting point of research, that hypothetical speculations are vacuous if not supported by concrete language material".

The OE text is, for the most part, an almost literal translation from the early eighth century Latin original. This is my impression after reading both

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Ruta Nagucka of the Jagiellonian University for the patience she showed to me — a beginner in the field of historical linguistics. Her remarks and suggestions on the earlier drafts of this paper helped me avoid many inconsistencies and inaccuracies.

versions, but I also found the support of the view in Ker's *Dark Ages* (1977:237). The problem may arise whether the Latin original did not impose its syntax on the OE translation. It may well have been so, but we must remember that the translator (King Alfred the Great himself or one of his close associates) was an Old English native speaker writing for the Old English speaking audience. When discussing OE translations from Latin, Mitchell (1965:66) observes that they were influenced by Latin prose style. He cannot see how it "could have been otherwise. But it is equally important to realise that this powerful and moving sentence ... contains nothing which is not 'good Old English'. It follows therefore that we must avoid the tendency ... to rush around slapping the label 'Latinism' on anything which deviates in the slightest from our preconceived notions of the norm of ordinary speech". In my paper I have included the original Latin sentences wherever I think they may add to the understanding of OE constructions.

The relative clauses in King Alfred's English most often correspond to those in the Latin:

- (1) on þa ylcan tid, þe Albanus to him gelæded wæs 34/29² [at the very time, when Alban was led to him]
ea hora, qua ad eum Albanus adducebatur
- (2) þa wæs eft here hider sended, se wæs cumende on ungewenedre tide on herfeste 44/28 [Once more an army was sent here, which arriving unexpectedly at harvest time]
Rursum mittitur legio, quae inopinata tempore autumnu adueniens

but sometimes they also render Latin participles:

- (3) Palladius biscop wæs ærest sended to Scottum, þa ðe on Crist gelyfdon 46/30 [Bishop Palladius was first sent to Scots, those who believed in Christ]
Palladius ad Scottos in Christum credentes ... primus mittitur episcopus
- (4) Oðþe se wer, se ðe his wiife gemenged bið 74/19 [or a man who has approached his wife]
aut vir suae coniugi permixtus

By the term relative clause (hereafter RC) I mean the attributive construction which either identifies or additionally describes the referent of a gi-

² I generally follow Miller's Modern English translation, but sometimes, in order to illustrate better some phenomenon, I try my hand at a more literal translation. As for the punctuation, I have preserved that of Miller's version, although sometimes it may be inconsistent or even misleading (cf. Mitchell's 1985:88 objections to the editorial punctuation).

ven noun phrase (NP) in the main clause. The construction is predicative, i.e. it contains a *verbum finitum*. Other terms for RC used in the literature are the adjective (adjectival) clause and the attributive clause. RC are introduced by the relative pronoun, whose form in most Indo-European languages developed either out of the interrogative pronoun (e.g. Latin *qui*) or the demonstrative pronoun (e.g. German *der*). RCs are traditionally divided into restrictive (limiting, defining) clauses, which restrict the class of referents to the one /ones referred to in the clause, and non-restrictive (descriptive, appositive) clauses, which are used as afterthoughts giving additional information about the already identified referent (Quirk et al. 1979: 858f or Radford 1981:257ff). There is also another distinction between definite (i.e. those referring to a specific antecedent) and indefinite RCs. Apart from "pure" relative clauses linguists also distinguish subgroups of prepositional RCs, introduced by the combination of preposition+relative pronoun, and of adverbial RCs, which in Modern English are introduced by adverbs *where*, *when*, *why* and *how* — *This is the place where [=in which] I was born*. Sometimes these clauses may appear "headless" — *This is where I was born* — and are referred to as Free RCs (Radford 1981:258). All the above mentioned types occur in *Historia Ecclesiastica*, but I will mainly deal with restrictive and appositive clauses, which are most frequent.

In the majority of the RCs in *The Ecclesiastical History* the word order is like in other OE subordinate structures, i.e. the object and/or the adverbial come before the verb — also in non-restrictive clauses, more similar to independent coordinate constructions. The infinitive when used as the object of a preterite-present verb always precedes it. One notable exception is the copula BEON/WESAN, which very often occurs immediately after the subject:

- (5) Ac se cwellere, se ðe his arlease handa adenede ofter pone arfæstan sweoran ðæs martyres 40/7 [But the executioner who stretched forth his impious hands against the pious neck of this martyr]
- (6) ceastre-torras-stræta-brycge on heora rice geworhte wæron, þa we to dæg sceawian magon 44/5 [Cities, towers, roads and bridges were constructed under their rule, which we can see today]
- (7) Wæs se æresta abbud þæs ylcan mynstres Petrus haten mæssepreost, se wæs eft ærendwreca sended in Gallia rice 90/25 [The first abbot of this monastery was a priest called Peter, who was then sent as an envoy to Gaul]
- (8) her beoð swype genihtsume weolocas, of þam bið geweorht se weolocreada tælgh 26/9 [there is also here abundance of molluscs, from which is made the dye of "shell-fish red"]

Similarly to Latin the usual mood in the RC is the indicative. However, we have come across several instances of the subjunctive mood³. According to Visser (1966:858), "the modally marked form expresses the speaker's reserve as to the possibility of the fulfilment of the condition in the clause. When this reserve is absent a modally zero form is used". This is also valid for Latin, but it is interesting to note that the English subjunctive was used to render the Latin participial constructions, deprived of modality:

- (9) Ac þe sculon of Gallia rice biscopas cuman, þa þe æt biscopes halgunge in witscipe *stonde*⁴ 72/15 [But bishops shall come to you from Gaul, who may assist as witnesses at a bishop's consecration] quando de Gallis episcopi veniunt, qui in ordinatione episcopi testes adsistent
- (10) ða heht he his geferan, ðat hio sohton sumne earmne ðearfan, se ðe *wære* micelre untrumnisse—woedelnisse hefigad 388/10 [then ordered he his companions that they sought some poor man in a needy condition, who would suffer from great infirmity and poverty] iussit suis quaerere pauperem aliquem maiore infirmitate vel inopia gravatum
- (11) he gewunade gerisenlice leoð wyrcan, þa ðe to aftenstnisse—arfæstnisse *belumpen* 342/4 [he was wont to compose suitable songs, which would tend to religion and piety] quia carmina religioni et pietati apta facere solebat.

RCs seem to be one of the most common hypotactic construction in the OE text. In all five books of *The Ecclesiastical History* I have been able to find some 1150 examples of what may be described as the RC, of which about six hundred are clearly restrictive introduced chiefly by the demonstrative pronoun + *þe* or by *þe* itself, 350 unambiguously non-restrictive (usually introduced by the demonstrative), there being some 200 borderline cases, whose status cannot be unequivocally determined (cf. Traugott 1972:103). Mitchell (1985:168) rightly observes that "often we neither know nor care whether we are limiting or describing, we are simply using a syntactic device in which it is enough to connect the qualifying clause to the main noun, the qualification itself being of a neutral sort". Then he presents a table showing the percentage of limiting and descriptive RCs in OE poetry:

Relative	Number of Clauses	Percentage of Clauses		
		Limiting	Descriptive	Ambiguous
þe	690	85	5	10
se	602	38	41	21
'seþe	49	70	10	20
se'þe	236	96	2	2
seþe	378	76	8	16

I have made up a similar table, which shows the distribution of restrictive and non-restrictive RCs in *Historia Ecclesiastica* and the results largely correspond to those for OE poetry. Since the overwhelming majority of *seþe*-clauses in Bede are Mitchell's *se'þe* or *seþe* type⁵, I have decided to group them together under one entry *seþe*:

Relative	Number of Clauses	Percentage of Clauses		
		Restrictive	Appositive	Ambiguous
þe	412	89	2	9
se	387	17	64	19
se þe	274	80	1	19

As can be seen in the above table, the most frequent (more than 400 examples) marker of the RC is the indeclinable word *þe*, whose origin in Germanic languages is obscure⁶. However, this is not the only function of this word. Mitchell (1965:86) enumerates as many as six functions of *þe* in Old English. Apart from being the relative pronoun/particle?, it may, rarely though it is, introduce adverbial clauses of manner and time, but very often serves as a "subordinating particle turning an adverb into a conjunction" (e.g. *for þæm* = *therefore* and *for þæm þe* = *because*).⁷ In *Historia Ecclesiastica* all clauses introduced by *þe* itself are, in my opinion, relative. The vast majority of them are unambiguously restrictive:

- (12) Fæger word þis syndon—gehat þe ge brohtan us—secgað 60/1 [Fair are the words and promises that you brought us and say]
- (13) in þære stowe, þe mon gyt nemneþ Agustinus aac 98/15 [in the place that one still calls Augustine's oak]

³ I have disregarded the reported speech and other constructions where the subjunctive mood in the embedded clause is predominant (cf. Mitchell 1985: 223).

⁴ The apparently wrong singular verb form with the plural subject may be due either to the scribal error or to the fact that the scribe may have come from the north of England, where singular and plural subjunctive had identical form already (cf. Campbell 1959: 302).

⁵ Cf. the criteria of Mitchell's classification on pp. 92—93 in this paper.

⁶ A cognate form *the* is used in the contemporary Old Saxon poem *Heliand*: Manega uuaron the sia iro mod gespon.

⁷ Mitchell (1965: 88) attributes the use of *þe* as a relative pronoun to "a special adaptation" and adds that we "can perhaps get nearest to its original force by translating it as 'namely'".

However, there are several dubious instances:

- (14) *þa frægn hine—ashode his mæssepreost on his agen geðeode, þe se cyning ne cuðe ne his higen 198/5* [Then his priest asked him in his own language, which neither the king nor his household knew]
Quem dum presbyter suos lingua patria, quam rex et domestici eius non noverant ... interrogasset
- (15) *swa mycel lufu godcundre lare, ðe he læran ongon 362/28* [so much love for the word of God, which he began to teach]

Few *þe*-clauses are certainly non-restrictive:

- (16) *ealle ... utflugon butan his wiif an, ðe hine swiðust lufade 422/31* [all fled out, save his wife only, who loved him best]
omnes ... in fugam convertit: uxor tantum, quae amplius amabat

The majority of non-restrictive clauses are introduced by the demonstrative pronoun, which is declined according to the number, gender and case. The number and gender normally agree with the antecedent NP, whereas the case is taken from the RC:

- (17) *Colmanus se biscop, se of Scottum cwom wæs Breatone forlætende 272/19* [Bishop Colman, who came from the Scots, left Britain]
- (18) *in Cantwara byrig, seo wæs ealles his rices ealdorburg 60/12* [in Canterbury, which was the capital of all his kingdom]
- (19) *in Farne þæm ealonde, þæt is on twæm milum from þære byrig ut on sæ 202/9* [at the island of Farne, which is two miles out at sea from the town]
- (20) *in Scē Paulas cirican þæs apostoles, þæs monungum he gelæred wæs 296/32* [in the church of the apostle St. Paul, by whose admonitions he had been taught]
- (21) *gelaðede Cenred þone cyning, þam he Myrcna rice sealde 464/7* [invited king Cenred, to whom he gave the kingdom of Mercians]
- (22) *stænenne cirican getimbrede æðeles geweorces, þære gen to dæge mæg mon geseon þa weallas stondan 144/3* [he built a stone church of noble workmanship, of which the walls may be still seen standing]
- (23) *se biscop genom mid hine Æðelbyrge þa cwene, þa he ær brohte 150/1* [the bishop took with him queen Æthelburh, whom he had previously brought there]
- (24) *Orcadas þa ealond, þa wæron ut on garsecge butan Brotone 30/19* [the Orkneys, islands [which were] out in the sea beyond Britain]

- (25) *Æfter Agustini fyligde in biscophade Laurentius, þone he forðon bi him lifigendum gehalgode 106/17* [Laurentius succeeded Augustine as bishop, whom he had consecrated in his own lifetime]
- (26) *Wæron heora cyningas in þa tiid Sebbe—Sighere, þara we beforan gemyndgodon 280/30* [Their kings at that time were Sebbe and Sighere, whom we have mentioned before]
- (27) *fif Moyses boca, ðam seo godcunde æ awriten is 26/27* [the five books of Moses, in which the Divine law is written]

For the above sentences (17) — (27) another interpretation is also possible. The demonstrative pronoun may be deprived of its relative function altogether (or, perhaps better, has not acquired it yet) and retains its purely demonstrative value, thus being a marker of a co-ordinate, paratactic construction. Such an interpretation would support the view that originally, in early Old English, as well as in Proto-Germanic, there were no specifically relative pronouns at all and later they developed out of the demonstrative pronoun. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* "the use of the demonstrative as a relative appears to have come about simply by the subordination of the second of two originally consecutive sentences to the first" (1971:252). Thus in Bede's

- (28) *Hi wæron Withgylses suna, þæs fæder wæs Witta haten, þæs fæder wæs Wihta haten—þæs Wihta fæder wæs Woden nemned, of ðæs strynde monigra mægða cyningcynn fruman lædde 52/11* [They were sons of Wihtgils, whose father was called Witta, whose father was Wihta and Wihta's father was called Woden, from whose race the royal families of many tribes derived their origin]

þæs-clauses may be analysed either as short consecutive sentences (*þæs* = *his*) or as RCs (*þæs* = *whose*). The following sentence, where the head NP is repeated in the second clause, supports the former view:

- (29) *Lærde he Scs Paulinus se biscop eac swelce Godes word in Lindesse, seo mægð is seo neahste in suðhealfe Humbre streames 142/31* [Bishop Paulinus also taught God's word in Lindsey. This province is the nearest on the south side of the river Humber]

That relativization was introduced into Germanic languages as an adjunctive process is claimed by O'Neil (1976:202), who points to the fact that RCs are "almost always at the margins of the main clause". It was only in late Old English and early Middle English that 'flanked constructions' appeared and this factor contributed to the change from adjunction to embedding. However, there are numerous examples of what O'Neil would call flanked constructions in *Historia Ecclesiastica*:

- (30) *—pæt folc, ðe hider com, ongan weaxan—myclian 52/16* [And the people, who came here, began to increase and multiply]

(cf. also (17) in this paper).

Romaine (1984:446) criticizes the traditional views on parataxis vs. hypotaxis, saying that "both paratactic and hypotactic constructions may occur in sequence with no formal connecting link between them. There are clues, other than the presence or absence of certain grammatical items, (rhythm, intonation, stress, context are used now and always were).⁸ The absence of a hypotactic marker does not necessarily prove that a construction is paratactic". In the same volume Ramat (1984:399) expresses his conviction that interpretation of clauses like (17) through (28) as relative is "largely a pragmatic matter".

Considerable difficulties crop up in the analysis of the following sentences, with verbs corresponding to Modern English 'is called/named.' If we adopted the relative interpretation, we would encounter the demonstrative pronoun for restrictive usages:

- (31) *þa cwom sum arwyrðe abbudesse to hire, seo wæs haten Æpelhild 184/8* [Then came a venerable abbess to her, who was called Æthelhild]
- (32) *Seo æfter twæm gearum gebohte tyn hida lond hire in æhte in þære stowe, seo is cweden Streoneshealh 236/32* [She after two years acquired by purchase ten hides of land at the place which is called Whitby]
- (33) *þyssum tidum pæt mynster, pæt mon nemneð Æt Coludes burg 348/27* [At this time the monastery which one calls Coldingham]
- (34) *Æfter medmiclum fæce sealde him mynster þritiges hiwisca on stowe, seo is gecyged Inhripum 456/18* [And a short time after he assigned him a monastery with 30 hides at the place which is called Ripon]

⁸ In his paper on OE conjunctions Mitchell (1984: 272) expresses his belief that in Old English "phonological differentiation existed between demonstrative *pæt* and conjunction *pæt* (...), between demonstrative *se* and relative *se* (...), but in the absence of intonation patterns and native informants, we are frequently unable to decide which we have". And in his recent monumental work on OE syntax he adds that "the term ambiguous demonstrative/relative should not be taken as implying that the choice is simply between a subordinate clause and an independent sentence in the modern sense of the words. None the less, there are many OE examples in which — while it must remain a matter of doubt whether all Anglo-Saxons would have read or spoken them in the same way — it seems reasonable to claim that forms of *se* — in all possible genders, cases, and numbers — are used as relatives" (1985: 94f).

And merely two lines above there is a sentence:

- (35) *sealde tyn hiwisca landes on ðære stowe, þe cweden is Stanford 456/16* [gave him 10 hides of land at the place which is called Stamford]

RC in (35) has the word order typical of subordinate clauses, whereas the SVO order in (31) through (34) is characteristic of parataxis. Functionally, however, there seems to be no difference, the second clauses in both (34) and (35) have the same role.

It is also with the passive *wæs haten* and archaic *hatte*⁹ that the zero-pronoun is often used. Traugott (1972:105) calls such structures reduced relatives: "The only constructions in which deletion of the relative pronoun occurred at all frequently ... were those with (*ge*)*haten* called ... and those with demonstrative *pæt* as head" The relativity of these constructions, however, seems doubtful to me. I would rather interpret them as appositive, co-ordinate structures conveying some additional information about the NP that they modify:

- (36) *þa feng to Dera rice his fæderan sunu Ælfrices, Osric wæs haten 152/5* [the son of his uncle Ælfric, Osric by name, succeeded to the throne of Deira]
- (37) *OND ðær he onfeng his agenre ceastre bisscopscire, Parisiace hatte 170/7* [And there he received the bishopric of his own town, which is called Paris]

These were the only types of what Traugott would call reduced relatives that I found *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Nowhere in the text, however, have I come across contact clauses (or *apo koinou* constructions) of the type *He hit the boy likes Mary*, described in Jeffers and Lehiste (1980 : 115) as possible in Old English due to the overt case marking.

Another very common marker of the relative construction in Old English is the combination of the declinable demonstrative pronoun with the invariable *þe*, where most clauses are restrictive (especially Nom. Sg. Masc. *se þe* and Common Plural *þa þe*. Traugott (1972 : 103) questions the independent relative status of this structure, saying in the footnote: "A fourth relative: *se þe*, *seo þe*, *pæt þe* is sometimes cited in the literature; the *se* part has the case of the head, not of the pronominalized noun in the relative clause, however, and therefore can better be called an emphatic demonstrative followed by

⁹ For an interesting analysis of these two passives and of the verb *hatan* see Nagucka 1980.

the indeclinable *þe* than a fourth type of relative". Thus, the demonstrative pronoun is constructed as a member of the main clause:

- (38) Gif he æne siða onfongen, haten ham hweorfan,
ne wille, *se þe* hine feormade—*se ðe* ge-
feormad wæs, seon heo begen biscepes dome
scyldige 278/18 [If he be received once,
and when ordered to return home, refuses,
both the entertainer [= he who entertained]
and the guest [= he who was entertained] shall be liable to excom-
munication by the bishop]¹⁰
- (39) stodon his geferan oðre, þa ðe mid him
cwomon 296/7 [stood his other companions,
those who with him came]
- (40) ða wæs somninga hiofones smyltnes tosliten,
ðære ðe we ær lioðon uut 384/20 [then
suddenly there was an interruption of
the calm weather in which we had put out]

(cf. also (3) and (4) in this paper).

Strangely enough, no Nom. Sg. Feminine form *seo þe* is to be found in *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Once, however, the masculine form is used, referring to a woman:

- (41) forwhon þonne, *se þe* blodryne þrowað
monaðaðle, ne alefað hire in Drihtnes
cirican gongan? 78/15 [why should one,
who is menstruous, not be allowed to go
to the Lord's church?]

One explanation of this odd form may be the scribal error, as earlier in the sentence only the neuter *wiif* (and not masculine *wifmann*) occurs. But *se* appears in all four extant manuscripts of *Historia Ecclesiastica*, so perhaps it is an indefinite pronoun, which interpretation is supported by Miller's translation of the *se* as Modern English 'one'. In the section on concord Mitchell (1985: 207ff) writes that "lack of agreement in gender is sometimes due to the triumph of natural over grammatical gender ..., the same explanation

¹⁰ These structures appear to be analogous with the colloquial Polish *ten, co, tego, co* etc. or Old Polish *jenże, jaże, jeże* (Słysz modlitwę, jaż nosimy, A dać raczy, jęgoż prosimy). As Gołąb (1972: 39) writes "ZE is the West Slavic general subordinating conjunction ... etymologically continuing the primary relative *iže/jbže*". Certain dialects of Polish still make use of the combination of demonstrative + *że* for marking relatives: *mgła ta, że dziś rano była* (lit.: fog this that this morning was).

can be applied to examples with indefinite *se þe*", and the statement is illustrated by the same quotation from Bede.

I have been able to find one instance of the masculine *se ðe* and several neuter *þætte* [= *þæt þe*], where the demonstrative pronoun and *þe* are spelt together:

- (42) ne sceal he hine wyrðne telgan broðra,
Godes þeowa gesomnunge, *se ðe* hine gesiið
hefigadne beon þurh yfelnesse unrehtes
willan 80/31 [he shall not deem him
worthy of the congregation of the brethren
and God's servants, when he sees himself
[literally: he who sees himself] burdened
by the evil of unrighteous desire]
- (43) oð þæt þær wæs deop seað adolfen, *þætte*
wæpnedmonn meahte oð his sweoran inn
standan 178/9 [till a deep pit was
hollowed out, in which a man might stand up
to his neck]

Traugott (1972: 103) described the spelt-together *se þe*, *seo þe* and *þætte* as very rare and distinct from *se þe*, *seo þe* and *þæt þe* respectively. Mitchell (1985: 112–129) criticizes Traugott's classification and gives a comprehensive, detailed analysis of the combination *demonstrative* + *þe*. He distinguishes three types: (1) '*se þe*', where the *se* element is in the case of the adjective clause, (2) '*se*' *þe*', where the *se* element is in the case of the principal clause and (3) *se þe*', where the *se* element is in the case appropriate to both clauses. In *Historia Ecclesiastica* most examples are of the second or third type, i.e. the *se* element is in concord with the verb of the main clause. So the spelling difference in (42) and (43) must, in my opinion, be due to the scribal inconsistency, as the sentences would be interpreted in the same way if *se ðe* and *þætte* were spelt separately.

The relative clause usually follows its head NP immediately, but it may also be extraposed and separated from the head. In Modern English the extraposition is plausible only in the restrictive usage, but the pattern is usually avoided, whereas in Old English it was quite common and was also acceptable for appositive RCs:

- (44) Fram þam ylcan casere Claudie wæs sended
Uespassianus on Breotone, se æfter Nerone
ricsode 30/24 (By the same emperor
Claudius was sent to Britain Vespasian,
who ruled after Nero).

- (45) slogan eall-₇ cwealdon pæt hi gemetton¹¹ 44/22 [slew and murdered all they met]

This separation from the head may sometimes lead to ambiguity:

- (46) Æðelwald his broðor sunu, se ær him
riice hæfde 192/25 [Æthelwald, his
brother's son, who had reigned before him]

where *se* may refer to either brother or son, and only the knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon history or consultation with the Latin original (*a fratruo, id est fratris sui, qui ante eum regnavit filio Oidilualdo*) can determine which interpretation is correct.

When there is a series of RCs in one sentence, the first one usually starts with *þe* and the other/s/ are introduced by the demonstrative pronoun. It was idiomatic not to repeat *þe* (Mitchell 1965: 77):

- (47) Ic þe soðlice secgo, þætte pæt wæron
engla gastas þe þær cwomon, þa me to þam
heofonlecan medum cegdon-₇ laðodon, þa ic
symle lufade-₇ wilnade 266/30 [I tell you
of a truth, that they were the spirits of
the angels who came there, who called and
summoned me to the heavenly reward, which
I have always loved and desired]

I have found few instances of *þæt* introducing a restrictive RC whose head is masculine, which might be the evidence of the claim that as early as the ninth century THAT may have started to be used as a relative marker. Here I consulted the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which describes THAT as "the general relative pronoun, referring to any antecedent, and used without inflexion irrespective of gender, number and case ..., introducing a clause defining or restricting the antecedent and thus completing its sense" (1971: 252). Then two examples from the ninth century are quoted:

- c.825 *Vespasian Psalter* VII, 7: In bebode ðæt ðu bibude
c.858 *Charter in OE texts* 438: Ðes landes bæc, ðet
eðelbearht cyning
wullafe sealde

In both these sentences the head is neuter (*bebod* is neuter and *boc* may be either feminine or neuter), so the clauses may be interpreted as appositive RCs with *þæt* used as the neuter demonstrative. What is more, in none of the

¹¹ "pæt — not þe — is the norm after the antecedent *eal*" (Mitchell 1985: 103).

OE grammars available to me have I come across *þæt* as the marker of the RC. Only Lightfoov (1979 :323) writes that in complement clauses "*þe* and *þæt* appear to be usually interchangeable in ALL [emphasis mine, R. M.] constructions, although *þæt* gradually supplants *þe* in the course of OE". On the other hand, Mitchell (1984:281) clearly states that originally *þe* and *þæt* were "quite distinct and that *þæt* was a conjunction introducing what we would describe as a noun clause in apposition with a preceding object governed by a preposition". In *Old English Syntax* he objects to Kellner's (1924:205) view that "as early as the time of Alfred the Great, the neuter *þæt* seems to become indifferent to gender and number" and agrees with McIntosh (1947-8:81, after Mitchell 1985:201), who speaks of "occasional examples in OE of what appears to be, or could easily grow into, a relative *þæt* after masculine and feminine antecedents". It is remarkable that in both examples of *þæt* introducing the restrictive RC in *Historia Ecclesiastica* the head NP is modified by an ordinal number:¹²

- (48) Wæs he se ðridda cyning in Ongolpeode cyningum þæt allum suðmæ-
gðum weold-₇rice hæfde oð Humbre stream 108/26 [He was the third
among the kings of England who ruled over all the southern provin-
ces and held sway as far as the river Humber]
- (49) Wæs he ærest ærcebiscopa, þæt him eall Ongolcyn hyrnesse geþafode
258/10 [He was the first archbishop to whom the whole English race
yielded obedience]

Another example of *þæt* following a masculine head is disambiguated as the appositive nominal clause when compared with the Latin original:

- (50) opðæt heora riht cyning Wihtred, þæt wæs in rice gestrongad 360/13.
[till their rightful king Wihtred, son of Ecgberth, was firmly seated
on the throne] donec legitimus rex Victred, id est filius Ecgberti,
confortatus in regno

Prepositional RCs are of three types. They either start with the restrictive *þe*, which is always followed by the 'stranded' preposition (or, more accurately, postposition):

- (51) in Ongolcynnes cirican ... þe he ofer beon scolde 254/29 [into the Church
of England over which he should rule]
- (52) þa adle forecwæde þe heo on forðferde 318/25 [she foretold the illness
of which she died]

¹² Incidentally, in Modern English *that* is much preferred to WH-relative when an ordinal number modifies the head.

- (53) *þyslic wæs seo syn, þe se cyning fore ofslegen wæs* 228/5 [such was the sin for which the king was slain]

or the non-restrictive combination of a preposition+ demonstrative:

- (54) *he hit gehyrde from þæm seolfan Uttan mæsseproeste, in þæm-
þurh þone þis wundor gefylled wæs* 200/25 [he heard it from the priest Utta himself, in whose case and through whom this miracle was wrought]

- (55) *ongon heo on hire mynstre cirican timbran, in are ealra þara haligra apostola, in þære heo wilnade þæt hire lichoma bebyrged wæs* 176/3 [she began to build a church in honour of all the holy apostles, in which she wished her body to be buried]

or the sequence of preposition+ demonstrative+ *þe*, which is usually restrictive:

- (56) *Se cyning his gēpoht, bi ðæm þe ic ðe ær sæde, þære cwene in deagolnesse onwreah* 130/28 [The king his intentions, of which I told you before, disclosed in secret to the queen]

Both restrictive and appositive adverbial RCs are equally introduced by the words which in Traugott's (1972:105) description are "identical in form with the 'basic' adverbs of the category":

- (57) *þæt he æðr eac swylce bebyrged beon moste, þær he mycle tid for Dryhtne campode* 374/2 [that he might too be buried there where he had so long contended for the Lord]
- (58) *heo wæs abbudisse geworden, in þæm þeodlonde þe is geceged Elige, þær heo mynster getimbrode Gode wilsumra fæmnena* 318/9 [she became abbess in the district called Ely, where she founded a monastery of virgins devoted to God]
- (59) *he semninga gewat in Hibernia Scotta ealond, þanon he ær cwom* 352/2 [he suddenly departed to Ireland, the island of Scots, whence he previously came]
- (60) *on his hors hleop- rad þider he ær mynte* 178/34 [jumped on his horse and rode to the place he had previously intended]

The RCs in (57) and (60) are 'headless', so they are examples of the so-called Free RCs, if we assume that the head NP underwent deletion. Another possible interpretation may be that are adverbial clauses of place (cf. Quirk et al. 1979:745 and 863). Similarly, the subordinate clause in

- (61) *þæt we no gefyllað, þæt we æt fulwihte hatað* 212/26 [that we do not

fulfil what we promise at baptism may be analyzed either as the nominal object clause or as the RC with omission of the antecedent (cf. Mitchell 1985:85). In such cases the clause is always introduced by *ðæt* in Old English.

The adverbial relative pronouns in (57) through (60) are rendered in Modern English by *wh*-words, the forms that developed in early Modern English. Nevertheless, *wh*-, or rather *hw*-forms do appear in OE indefinite RCs (ModE *wh-ever*) in the frame *swa hw-swa*:¹³

- (62) *he mid dēde gefylde, swa hwæt swa mid worde lærde* 94/21 [he fulfilled in deed whatever he taught in word]
- (63) *ond þurh swa hwelces bene swa he gehæled sy, þisses geleafa-wyrconis seo lefed God onfenge-allum to fylgenne* 98/31 [and the faith and works of him through whose prayers he is healed, be believed acceptable to God and to be followed by all]
- (64) *swa hwær swa he sæt, þæt his gewuna wæs þæt he his honda upweard hæfde ofer his cneo, symle Ðrihtne Gode his gooda þanc sægde* 188/9 [wherever he sat, he habitually kept his hands on his knees with the palms upwards, and he was continually thanking God for his mercies]

Of other relatives mentioned by Mitchell (1985:217), I have found one example of *swelc*, which was "occasionally used":

- (65) *þa stafas mid him awritene hæfde, be swylcum men leas spel secgað* 328/6 [had the words with him written out, about which men tell idle tales]

CONCLUSION

In the paper I have attempted to present the late ninth century English relative clauses. The data from the OE version of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* prove that the system of relative clauses was far from being fully established. For each observation counterexamples can be found easily, and this fact is illustrated throughout the paper. Thus, we may only speak of general tendencies in this development. The transition from adjunction (parataxis) to embedding (hypotaxis) seems to have taken place already in *þe*-clauses, which in Bede's text are mostly restrictive. Various interpretations of *se*- and *se-þe*- clauses are the evidence of the transitory character of these

¹³ Analogous structures are used in other Germanic languages of that time:

So hue so ogon genimid obres marnes ... that he it eft mid is selbes seal san antgel-den mid gelicum lidion — Old Saxon *Heliant* 1529 ff.

So wer so izzit fon thesemo brote lebet in ewidu — Old High German *Tatian* 82/10.

constructions. The encroachment of *þe*-clauses upon the appositive territory (e.g. in sentences (14) — (16)) may be treated as the first sign of the triumph of *þe*-clauses over those introduced by the demonstrative pronoun. This development distinguishes the English language from other West Germanic languages (High German or Dutch), where the inflected demonstrative pronoun gained full dominance as the relative marker. Chiefly for phonological reasons, OE *þe*-clauses became *þat*-clauses in early Middle English, but sentences (48) and (49) in the paper bear witness to the fact it may have begun as early as in the ninth century. These *þat*-clauses were later to compete with the new WH-relatives, descended from the interrogative pronoun.

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