CHAPTER NINE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

Two main questions have been investigated in this dissertation: how (and why) verb–particle collocations have developed from OE to modern times so as to provide one of the major resources of present–day English, and how they are used in the Ormulum c.1200. The two studies carried out in tandem have each shed light on the other, with the synchronic study of Orm suggesting lines of inquiry for the diachronic study and vice versa.

In Chapter 1 I introduced the topic and outlined the plan of the dissertation. The tendency of group–verbs to confound grammatical distinctions suggested the use of an uncomplicated syntactic framework which would least distract attention from the data. The set of particles, although not closed, was shown to be susceptible to definition by listing, and within that set the prefix and preposition were defined syntactically—the latter extended to uses in which the particle was not a constituent of a prepositional phrase—and the adverb was defined negatively from the others. In Chapter 2 I surveyed the syntax of particle group–verbs in English, setting up an eight–way classification and drawing attention both to the characteristic properties of each class and to the links between them.

The general history of group–verbs began in Chapter 4. Works and authors cited frequently included Beo, Or, Ro, WHom, Chron, Pet, Chron., Aw, Sj, SK, SM, SW, Lay. Brut, Bevis, Rolle, Chaucer, PPL. A and B, Cay, Cleanmess, and Past, L. Chapter 4 dealt with the prefix/adverb/preposition trichotomy and the relationship between the categories. Important results for OE were the distinction of compound verbs from verb–particle
collocations and the rejection of the term 'separable prefix'. In early ME a new development was identified, a quasi-elliptical use of prepositions before clauses, which was shown to be a short-lived experiment as far as was concerned.

Chapter 5 dealt with the phrasal verb, class 1 (e.g. **fall out**) and class 2 (e.g. **use up**). The word-order of verb-adverb collocations was followed through from OE to ME, and the 'particle shifts', by which adverbial particles came to appear in post-verbal rather than pre-verbal positions, were explained as consequences of changes in the positional rules for verbs in relation to other major sentence elements, though association between adverbial particles and prepositional phrases also played a part. Initial placement of the particle was discussed, and ME survival in prose of particle-verb order was investigated in *Pat.Chron.*, Rolle, *Eng. Writings*, and *Past.L.* The Final Continuation of *Pat.Chron.* showed few traces of OE patterns of particle position and *Past.L.* none, and though Rolle used a proportionately low number of particle-verb strings, the absolute number was quite high and suggested influence from Latin writings. The means by which verb-adverb collocations developed idiomatic meanings were considered, as were the functional pressures for the development of phrasal verbs—principally the decline of the OE unstressed prefixal system. Idiomatic particle use was shown to be virtually incompatible with pre-verbal particle placement.

In Chapter 6 I followed the prepositional verb, class 3 (e.g. **deal with**), from OE to late ME, detailing the many morphological, syntactic and functional factors which together brought about the syntactic and semantic unification of verb and preposition. Various properties were explained by a syntactic restructuring c.1200, of which the most striking was the prepositional passive. The earliest example found was of **faren wiō in SJ.**

1 Manuscript dated c1225 in MEED 'Plan and Bibliography', p.76.
which had previously been thought, wrongly, to be a prepositional passive. The brief flowering of quasi-elliptical propositions was seen as a catalyst in the early use of the prepositional passive. I also compared the rise of the prepositional passive (e.g. *He was dealt with*) with that of the indirect passive (e.g. *He was dealt an ace*) and concluded that their origins were different, notably in that nominative-oblique syncretism in nouns and subjectless passives played no significant part in the development of the prepositional passive. The importance of preposition stranding in various patterns in the active voice was shown to be independent of the change of order from particle-verb to verb-particle.

In Chapter 7 I dealt briefly with the remaining particle group-verbs, class 4 (*get on with*), class 5 (*put (sb.) up to*), class 6 (*remind (sb.) of*), class 7 (*get on together*), and class 8 (*get (sth.) over with*). The latter two were dismissed as of minor importance. I also considered the *V + NP + prep pattern (take notice of)* and showed that it developed a prepositional passive for reasons similar to those involved in class 3 but some 150 years later. The prepositional passive of class 4 seemed to be an early ModE development. I mentioned the growth of class 4 at the expense of classes 2 and 3.

Chapter 8 reviewed the evidence for Scandinavian influence on the development of English group-verbs. The behaviour of verb-particle collocations in ON was shown to be similar to and in some ways in advance of contemporary English usage, so that the possibility of structural influence or of the reinforcement of existing tendencies was a reasonable suggestion. However, little evidence was found of features of English which must be due to Scandinavian influence rather than to internal developments, apart from individual idioms. The evidence of OE and early ME suggested that *up* as a marker of completion might well be an imported feature, but the limited evidence of early ON meant that the hypothesis remained unproven.
The _Ormulum_ was introduced in Chapter 3, where its content, style and metrical scheme were examined, and it was found to be suitable for use as a large, homogeneous sample of early ME of the Midlands. In Chapter 4 I listed the compound verbs which appeared in _Orm_ and then examined the adverb/preposition borderline. I showed that particles used in front of infinitive clauses required careful syntactic examination, and that several of the more idiomatic verb-particle collocations had infinitival complements. At the end of the chapter I gave a list of particles found in _Orm_.

In Chapter 5 I studied the verb-adverb collocations of _Orm_, nearly 95% of the 512 examples occurring with the particle after the verb; the remainder appeared to be relics of recessive OE word-order principles, with a preponderance of lexical verbs that were non-finite and/or in clause-final position. Careful scrutiny of the examples showed that the constituency of the adverbial particle was sometimes difficult to determine, whether with the verb or with a prepositional phrase, and that association of an adverbial particle with a prepositional phrase or equivalent semantic completion appeared to play a part in the choice between V-p-0 and V-0-p order in active class 2 examples. However, the fact that a particle might have 'effective value' did not appear to be relevant. There was limited development of Aktionsart values in particles, always merged with spatial (or spatio-temporal) values; the group-verb _wasshenn offe_ identified in _MED_ and _MED_ was not in fact class 2. The absence of pure Aktionsart value, for example of colourless completive _up_, might be connected with the survival and indeed vitality of certain prefixes, especially _for-_. Figurative use of class 1 and 2 collocations was reasonably common.

The development of the prepositional verb in _Orm_ was studied in Chapter 6. I showed that all of the syntactic and semantic preconditions for restructuring were present in _Orm_ but that only doubtful traces of
its effects could be seen—certainly not a prepositional passive. A
detailed analysis of preposition stranding in relative clauses suggested
that stranding was a precursor and not merely a symptom of syntactic re-
structuring. Verb-preposition collocations in Órn could show consider-
able idiomatic development, and many examples were shown to be replace-
ments of OE compound verbs or verbs which governed a case in OE; however,
verb-preposition collocations did not appear to be formed from the actual
syntactic dissolution of compound verbs. An analysis of the behaviour in
Órn of OE dative-governing verbs supported conventional accounts of the
everal stages of derivation of the indirect passive, although the final
stage with non-oblique subject NP did not occur in Órn.

There was little to say about Órn in Chapter 7, as none of the
classes 4–8 had developed group-verb properties in Órn. V + NP + prep
units showed semantic equivalence to transitive verbs but no evidence at
all of syntactic restructuring. For classes 1–3 Órn stood right at the
threshold of modern syntactic and semantic developments.

In Chapter 8 I could find little evidence of Scandinavian influence
on the use of group-verbs in Órn; perhaps two or three verb-adverb collo-
cations and four or five prepositional collocations. This was surprising
in view of the considerable Norse lexical influence. However, there were
many collocations which could have had mixed English-Scandinavian parentage.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL BORROWINGS

I have shown that the growth of group-verbs in English since the OE
period is almost wholly explicable from internal resources and pressures.
Translation from Latin was a stimulus to the development of new lexical
resources, some of them group-verbs, but it also encouraged the use of
artificial p-V combinations as loan-translations which did not take root
in the language. In the ME period the borrowing of Latin compound verbs
and of French verbs may have inhibited the growth of the group-verb by providing alternative means of expression (thus Kennedy, de la Cruz: see p.156 above), although by helping to destroy the compound verb system it may eventually have contributed indirectly to the success of the group-verb (thus Konishi,² and cf. p.168 above). Some prepositional collocations are borrowings or calques from French. Common sense argues that the mingling of Norse with English in large areas of the country must have fostered the development of the group-verb, but there is little hard evidence. A Celtic substratum has been canvassed by some scholars for certain prepositional uses in English and other Gmc languages: de la Cruz outlines the similarities between Celtic languages and English and Scandinavian in the field of preposition stranding but finds it 'hard to indulge in the temptation of assigning a Celtic origin to the English and Scandinavian structures'.³

Within English it has long been the case that phrasal verbs often originate, and are used freely, in informal speech and writing and in certain technical registers. Kennedy finds many more in a fifteenth-century ballad than in the Digby play of the Conversion of St. Paul, and most of the combinations in the latter are in stage directions or servants' conversation (Verb-Adv. Combination, p.15). Samuels points out the early use of complective up in cookery and medical writings (Ling. Evolution, p.164). Jespersen and others have noted the ME tendency to use a French loan-word side by side with a native synonym (GSEL, pp.89-90), and examples are readily found where the native synonym is a phrasal verb, e.g. for to

²Tosochichi Konishi, 'The Growth of the Verb-Adverb Combination in English —A Brief Sketch', in Studies in English Grammar and Linguistics: A Miscellany in Honour of Takeshi Otsuka, edited by Kasuo Araki et al. (Tokyo, 1953), pp.117-28 (p.120). This is not an important contribution to the subject.
³'Synt. Change', p.172; see also pp.171-75 and the references p.172 note 4 and p.175 note 8.
reduce and bryngr even ... a plesant colour to be synht (BkLondon 99.9). Further examples de la Cruz, 'Latin', pp.33-34; early examples are certainly an indication that the native expressions are more familiar (in the sense of known) and perhaps that they are more familiar in tone as well. In the informal, private letters of the Paston family there is very widespread use of idiomatic phrasal verbs, e.g. shuff ... out (73.54), worn out (103.46), sealed up (173.10), rubbe on (337.45), and so on. Phrasal verbs have a high rate of turnover: not only are new ones coined in many dialects, especially those of AmE (e.g. luck out, rest up), but older idioms drop out of the language too. In nineteenth-century novels one finds such phrasal verbs as cosher up 'pamper', cry/praise up 'extol', go forward 'be in progress', good up 'good', knock under 'submit', lug out fig. 'draw sword' (cf. draw upon, p.211 above), put about 'embarr- rass, inconvenience', shrug up (shoulders), tackle to 'set to', and many others.

Kennedy has made an approximate count of the proportion of verb-adverb combinations to native compound verbs in various texts from OE to the fifteenth century, also comparing Romance-derived compound verbs in the later texts (Verb-Adv Combination, pp.11-13). He finds a low proportion of combinations at first, rising in the thirteenth century but halted in the fourteenth century by the inrush of Latin and French compounds. Konishi has drawn a crude graph of new uses, based on OED, which shows peaks c.1600 and again post-1900 ('Growth', p.125).

As to the passive of the prepositional verb, it is very common in Past. A., and Visser observes that 'it appears to have been a special favourite [in the sixteenth century] in familiar letters and other texts...'

In this connection I notice a curious stylistic trick of the narrator of J. D. Salinger'S Seymour: An Introduction (1963), supposed to be an American college teacher of English: ... just over two months have gone by, Elpased (Penguin ed., 1964, repr. 1975, p.113), and similarly consorted with, banced around with (p.83), live, hole up (p.104), come out, emerge (p.159), batten down, fastened (p.140), shadowed, dimmed out (p.149), etc.
written in a colloquial style’ (Hist. Syntax, iii-2, 2125, and cf. pp.2127-28 on the impact of the later grammatical tradition).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Naturally this dissertation leans on earlier work and leaves much scope for further investigation. In writing it I have found Visser’s collection of data very useful: his Hist. Syntax is cited on nearly fifty pages. I have had occasion to criticise his analysis of particular examples, but that is not to belittle the remarkable utility of his original data and summaries of previous work. I have also referred repeatedly to the work of Gaaf, Marchand and de la Cruz, and of course to the major historical dictionaries.

Future work in this field will be greatly assisted by the completion of the MEB and the compilation of the new Dictionary of Old English. A concordance of material collected for the latter has recently been issued in microfiche form, too late for me to use here, but such tools would have been of assistance at various points of this work, for example on collocations of up, alibian, forstman and girwan (see Chapter 8). I was able to use a partial concordance of OE kept on computer files to look for examples of athindan and on (see p.62 note 32).5

The syntax of group-verbs is of course bound up with many other areas of English syntax, some of which I have indicated in the course of exposition. The use of prepositions to introduce clauses and the flowering of ‘quasi-ellipsis’ could profitably be related to the history of NPs and of the nominal properties of infinitives and finite clauses as they change over time. It would be valuable to trace the connection between the rise of the phrasal verb and that of collocations like blow dry, paint red,

5 I am grateful to Mrs S. Hockley and Mrs C. Griffin of the Oxford University Computing Service for material sent to me on 11 June 1980.
pipe clean (on which see Visser, Hist. Syntax, i, 577-86). An exhaustive study of early Scandinavian material might possibly permit a more precise dating of the origin of completive umm, whilst a systematic dialectal survey of ME texts might help to establish on a quantitative basis the case for Scandinavian reinforcement of group-verb patterns. Close investigation of a range of ME texts might also establish in greater detail the functional connection between the decay of prefixes and the rise of group-verbs.

As my title indicates, I have been able to deal only with aspects of the history of group-verbs: the subject has wide ramifications. I have examined individual examples in some detail as a necessary preliminary to historical analysis, and I have tried to gather and interpret data in such a way that the historical development is made clear where clarity is possible. However, the complexity of linguistic change is such that one would not wish, and could not hope, to have the last word.

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6 An earlier study by K. G. Ljunggren did not, however, turn up any other crucial examples: Studier över förhållandet mellan verbalpartikel och verb i fornsvenskan (dissertation, Lund, 1932).
The list of works consulted is classified in a way suggested by the plan of the dissertation: (A) bibliographies, (B) dictionaries, (C) works dealing mainly with PE and with (synchronous) linguistic theory, (D) works dealing specifically with Org. (E) works dealing mainly with the history of English and with diachronic linguistic theory, (F) works on other languages, (C) miscellaneous works, (H) texts cited. I have not included a large number of works on PE which I found unhelpful or which duplicated other accounts. For abbreviations of the titles of journals and series see pp. vii–viii.

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CD* Bischofs Werferth von Worcester Übersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen ..., ed. by Hans Hecht, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa, 5 (Leipzig, 1900)

GenA Genesis, lines 1-234 and 852-2936
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HolA On Lofsong of ure Lefdi, see WölD

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Past.L.  Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, ed. by Norman Davis, 2 vols (Oxford, 1971-76) [by letter and line]


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Sat* Christ and Satan, in ASPR i


SK *The Life of Saint Katherine*, ed. by Eugen Einenkel, BETS 80 (London, 1884) [by line]

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St Kenelm Saint Kenelm, in EMEVP

Svens* Sveriges runinskrifter*, ed. variously by Sven Söderberg, Erik Brate, and others, 14 vols (1900 - ) [by volume and inscription]

SW *Sadles Wardes*, in EMEVP

Sweet's Reader Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, rev. by Dorothy Whiteslock (Oxford, 1967) [by selection and line]


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