ON THE NON-EXPRESSED OBJECT OF OLD ENGLISH INFINITIVES

CONCHA CASTILLO

University of Málaga

1. Introduction

In this paper we are concerned with the manifold types of Old English infinitival "transitive" constructions where no lexical or overt DP is instantiated in the object position, and the claim is made that a common (historical) origin could be invoked for all of them where no movement to the C(omplementiser)P(hrase) position applies. The sequences below would serve as illustrations of the pertinent paradigm of "retroactive infinitives", which is made up of adverbial clauses of purpose (as in (1)), relative clauses (as in (2)), and tough-sequences and be-to-constructions (as in (3) and (4), respectively). The line in each case is used to indicate the gap in object position.

(1) a. rice men sendon heora dohtor thider [__ to laeranne]
rich men sent their daughters there to teach
‘rich men sent their daughters there to be taught’
(Bede 3 6.172.16) (Fischer 1991: 157)

b. hine ...of thaere byrig gelaeddon [__ to staenenne]
him from the city led to stone
‘[they] led him out of the city to be stoned’
(AECHom I, 3 46.32) (Fischer 1991: 157)

(2) a. Ic haebbe mete [__ to etenne]
I have food to eat
(Alc.P.V.72) (Allen 1980: 275)

b. Fela ic haebbe [eow __ to secganne]
many things I have you to say
‘I have many things to tell you’
(CP 237.12) (Mitchell 1985, I: 390)
are involved exclusively with infinitival constructions, which seem to constitute a coherent group. Thus, it being the case that e.g., infinitival relative clauses in Old English have been analysed in depth by the authors just mentioned (among others), it will be argued that crucial properties of the former such as their semantic force and decisive gaps in their syntactic paradigm would seem to group them together, not with corresponding finite relatives, but with adverbial clauses of purpose, for which similarly a structure without Wh-movement can be entertained.

It must be noted that the illustrations presented in this paper have been extracted from the philological and/or linguistic literature available. As implied above, it is not our concern to find out new data or to scrutinise original texts, but to offer an approach in which to analyse certain structures and data already gathered and/or analysed in the literature from a slightly different perspective. The references to texts are as given in the sources, which are specifically the following: Visser (1963-73), Allen (1980), Mitchell (1985), van Kemenade (1987), Fischer (1991), and Denison (1993).

The paper is organised as follows. In section 2, clauses of purpose will be the first to be used as proof that object pro can be argued to be instantiated in Old English infinitival constructions instead of a null operator. The reason why they have been chosen as the starting point of the discussion is that infinitival purpose clauses represent themselves the referential meaning of the infinitival inflection in its essence, which inflection is shared by all our sequence-types. After analysing other instances of object pro in the language in 2.1, section 3 will be devoted to presenting crucial facts about relative clauses that seem to get a satisfactory explanation if, in a parallel fashion to purpose clauses, these constructions are claimed to originate in the language displaying a configuration lacking Wh-movement. Tough-sequences will also be held as evidence for the plausible instantiation of pro (cf. 3.2).

2. Exploring the possibility of the absence of Wh-movement

Our starting point will be adverbial clauses of purpose such as those in (1) above, which are not included in Allen (1980) or van Kemenade (1987), but which belong within the paradigm of infinitival structures presented in Fischer (1991). Their interest lies in that they can be argued to incorporate originally in themselves the distinguishing semantic property of infinitives, as is the very meaning of purpose or finality that they convey. Thus, it is a well-known fact that the infinitival marker to starts out as a purpose marker after developing from the preposition meaning “direction towards” (cf. for instance Haspelmath (1989)).

From a different perspective, verbs in the infinitive are subject to certain morpho-syntactic conditions which prevent them from taking lexical or overt
subjects and which lead to the instantiation of PRO. In Minimalist terms, this
would be expressed by saying that infinitival Infl is incapable of checking nominative Case, a restriction that has remained unchanged from Old English onwards though, as will be noted, there are more possibilities for PRO_{arb} in Old English. What we would like to argue is that, in addition to the impossibility of checking nominative, infinitives start out in Old English already characterised as forms that can avoid checking accusative Case against the corresponding DP object. Thus, what matters for our purpose is the gap in object position preceding the verb in the sequences in (1) above, which appears below with additional examples as (5).

(5) a. rice men sendon heora dohtor thider [PRO_{arb} ___ to laerne]
   rich men sent their daughters there to teach
   ‘rich men sent their daughters there *to teach
   /to be taught
   /for them to teach’
   (Bede 3 6.172.16) (Fischer 1991: 157)

b. hine ... of thaere byrig gelaeddon [PRO_{arb} ___ to staenenne]
   him from the city led to stone
   ‘they led him out of the city *to stone
   /to be stoned
   /for them to stone’
   (AECHom I, 3 46.32) (Fischer 1991: 157)

c. se ealdormann hie betahte lythrum monum,
   the nobleman them delivered-up to corrupt men
   [PRO_{arb} ___ to healdenne]
   to hold
   ‘the nobleman delivered them up to corrupt people *to take hold of
   /to take hold of him
   /for corrupt people to take hold of’
   (Oros. 292.28) (Visser 1963-73, II: 999)

d. tha sealde he (Pilatus) hyne (Jesus) hym, (the Jews) [PRO_{arb} ___ to ahonene]
   then gave he him to them to hang
   ‘then he delivered Him up to them *to hang
   /to hang Him
   /for them to hang’
   (Old English Gosp., John 19.16) (Visser 1963-73, II: 999)

(6) rice men sendon heora dohtor, thider [c_{pO_{arb}}t to laerne]

However, none of the object gaps in the (purposive) adverbial clauses in (5) can remain as such in Present-Day English, as indicated by the asterisk marking the first alternative offered in the translation above. This situation cannot be imputed – at least not exclusively – to a wider use of PRO_{arb} in Old English, since (5c, d) instantiate controlled PRO and not PRO_{arb} and nevertheless the object gap is likewise ungrammatical in Present-Day English.

Therefore, either (i) an overt pronoun must occupy the object position, as in (5c, d) – to take hold of him/to hang Him – or (ii) the passive infinitive must be employed, as in (5a, b) – to be taught/to be stoned. A third possibility can be entertained for all the cases in (5), which consists in substituting an overt DP subject preceded by the complementiser for or for arbitrary or otherwise controlled PRO. In this case, the gap would be the trace left by the corresponding operator, as shown in (7) (which would correspond to (5a, c)):

(7) a. rich men sent their daughters, there [c_{pO_{arb}} for [m them to teach t]]
   b. they led him, out of the city [c_{pO_{arb}} for [m them to stone t]]
   c. the nobleman delivered them, up [c_{pO_{arb}} for [m corrupt people to take hold of t]]
   d. he delivered HIM, up [c_{pO_{arb}} for [m them to hang t]]

Concentrating then on the ill-formed translations into Present-Day English in (5), it must be concluded that the use of null operators is wider in Old English. Specifically, the occurrence of null object operators in Present-Day English adverbial clauses of purpose would seem to depend upon the C head in CP being

---

1 Note that there are recent proposals in the literature according to which even PRO would check Case, which would be specifically null Case.
2 The “defective” character of infinitives as regards Case-marking has been argued in the literature to respond to their nominal properties (cf. van Gelderen (1996), Fischer (1996)).
filled up overtly (as in (7)), a situation which, on the other hand, cannot be explained away here and which deserves further study. The point we would like to make is that, instead of assuming such diachronic contrasts in the use of null object operators in adverbial clauses, it seems possible to entertain an analysis in which no (WH)-movement of an empty operator takes place in the Old English sequences and in which object pro is instantiated.

Arguing in favour of a structure where no movement to CP applies would be a simpler or more economical option from a theoretical point of view. That is, though the infinitive would avoid checking accusative Case overtly both in a (standard) configuration where the empty operator raises to COMP (see (6)) and in a structure with pro (see (8) below), the latter would posit just a one-step derivation. On the other hand, the instantiation of object pro would not be unique to the sequence-types under study in this paper. As will be argued in the following subsection, a non-overt pronominal category is liable to be attested in several Old English constructions, though of a different type: specifically, configurations where a finite verb selects for an object with arbitrary reference.

(8) rice men sendon [heora dohtar] thider [cprθarbpro, pro, to laeranne].

The way in which the head antecedent and pro would get dependent upon each other from a configurational point of view would be through coindexation with the empty complementiser (cf. Θ above). If necessary, the relation of predication existing between the antecedent — which would be the subject — and the purposive subordinate — which would act as predicate in such relation of predication — would be attained through agreement between both sides, hence the index in the outer brackets of the CP.

Thus, object pro would be identified by the head antecedent, whose phi-features (person, number ...) would be identical to those of object pro. As for the licensing condition holding on pro (cf. Rizzi (1986) on the two-fold condition of identification and licensing required by the null pronominal category), it would be the AgrO head — which is the position within IP assumed for objects to move to — that would license the null category.3

This way, it seems plausible to argue in favour of the object position in infinitival purpose clauses as being occupied by pro, which would stay within IP. Let us recall that we have started with adverbial clauses of purpose because they seem to incarnate most directly the values of infinitives, and it is infinitives that happen to be characterised by this strategy of least effort which renders the instantiation of object pro as a sufficient mechanism to ensure a relation of coindexation between an overt DP (the antecedent) and an object syntactic position. As noted in the Conclusion, this theoretical account seems not to be tenable after Old English, given certain diachronic changes, and object pro must be substituted by an object operator moving to CP.

At the same time, adverbial clauses of purpose evidence that there are differences between Old English and Present-Dy English with respect to the occurrence of empty categories, whether they are object operators (as in the standard account) or object pro (as in the present approach). It is this difference between both stages that set us on the track of stipulating a different original history than that currently assumed for infinitival constructions with a gap in object position. As will be argued in §3, relative clauses (and likewise tough-sequences) can also be held as evidence that there is no movement in these Old English sequence-types, though this time the reason will lie in the blanks of the Old English paradigm as compared to Present-Day English.

2.1. Object pro in Old English

It is a well-known fact that Present-Day English lacks object pro,4 on a par with the similarly absent subject pro, cf. Rizzi (1986):

(9) a. Esto lleva proarbit [a pro, concluir lo siguiente]
this leads to conclude the following
b. *This leads proarbit [pro, to conclude the following]

Thus, the AgrO head cannot possibly be a licensor for the null pronominal category in English, in contrast with e.g., Spanish (see (9a) above) or Italian. However, as argued in Rizzi (1986: 531ff.), things were not always like this, and instances of object pro can be gathered from Old English, Middle English, and Early Modern English, it being Old English that we would be specially interested in:

(10) a. he iohannes biebad heafed biheawan
he John's ordered head cut
'he ordered them to cut off John's head' (Juliana 294) (Visser 1963-73, III: 1343)

b. thet uerste ... somoneth to worthispie god
the worst summons to worship God
'the worst compels us to worship God' (Ayenbite 104.33) (Rizzi 1986: 532)

3 Let us recall that previous to the advent of AgrOP in the theory, it was the V head that was responsible for the licensing of pro.

4 Except for very specific cases such as help or say, cf. (14), for which nevertheless an analysis without pro can be entertained, as noted afterwards.
c. **het** *hiene*tha *niman* & *thaeran* *bescufen*
   ordered him then take and therein cast
   ‘he ordered him then to be taken and cast inside’
   (Or. 34.13) (Denison 1993: 189)

d. **ic Beda Cristes theaw ... sende gretan thone**
   I Beda Christ’s servant send greet the
   *leofastan cyning & halettan Ceowulf*
   most-beloved king and honour Ceowulf
   ‘I, Beda, Christ’s servant, send people to greet and honour the
   most beloved King Ceowulf’
   (Bede 417.7) (Denison 1993: 189)

The internal configuration for e.g., (10c, d) would be as in (11), where an arbitrary null object controls PRO:

(11) a. **het pro-w** [PRO, *hiene*tha *niman*]
    b. **ic sende pro-w** [PRO, gretan thone *leofastan cyning*]

    **Sendance send**’ in (11b) must illustrate a case of (direct) object pro. **Sendance gretan** could not actually be taken as an elaboration of **sende** (which should mean for *sende gretan* to be considered as a unity or verbal complex) since the subjects demanded by each predicate must be different.

    On the other hand, though the claim could be made for several matrix predicates in these construction-types to subcategorise for a dative DP instead of an accusative DP, this would not seem to contravene the basic tenet that object pro existed in Old English. Thus, the verb *hatan* ‘order’ cleanly subcategorises for a dative DP in (12) below (cf. his *gesihum* ‘his companions’), which fact could lead us to think of (11a) above as involving a dative controller and therefore as illustrating a (non-pertinent) case of indirect-object pro.

(12) **het he his *gesihum,*
    ordered he his companions
    *thone bispoc mid his *preostum samod* *geandwerdian* 
    the bishop with his priests together oppose
    ‘he ordered his compatriots to oppose the bishop together with his priests’
    (AECHom I,29 416.4) (Denison 1993: 179)

However, we would like to argue that whether pro instantiates accusative or otherwise dative Case cannot mean a serious difference in the case of English since the pro configuration of verbs checking dative Case has disappeared through time in the language, in a parallel fashion to those checking accusative: see the ungrammaticality of (13) below, whose matrix verbs would subcategorise for dative DPs. On the other hand, the pro configuration would seem to be constrained in Present-Day English to the verbs *say* and *help*, which would select for a dative in Old English. But even here it is possible to entertain an analysis involving just *PRO* and no object pro, cf. *He has helped [PRO to fix the machine].* The point I wish to make them is that it can be argued for Present-Day English to lack any instances of object pro, whether they used to check accusative or dative in Old English (and in later stages).

(13) a. **He advised her/textual/ to be careful**
    b. **They can teach people/textual/ to play the piano**

(14) a. **They said to him/textual/ to be careful with the suitcase**
    b. **He has helped them/textual/ to fix the machine**

There are still other, more conflictive, sequence-types which can also be held to evidence the existence of object pro in Old English. These are perception structures (see (15) below).

It must be pointed out that verbs of perception subcategorise for bare infinitives (on a par with some of the predicates illustrated in (10) above), whereas the main structures that we are concerned with in this paper take a to-infinitive. The distinctive properties of each infinitival type is undoubtedly an important issue, both from the point of view of semantics (cf. Fischer (1996) for a difference in meaning between both forms), and from a morpho-syntactic perspective. In this last respect, the occurrence of the to or zero-infinitive seems to be linked to the Case subcategorised for by the matrix predicates: oblique, dative, or genitive objects tend to occur with verbs that are constructed with the to-infinitive, whereas accusative objects are more likely to accompany verbs that take the bare infinitive (cf. Mitchell (1985: 392ff.) and his references to Callaway (1913)).

Nevertheless, whether it is the to-infinitive or the zero-infinitive that is instantiated, or whether a verb subcategorises for accusative or dative, etc. (as previously noted in this subsection), these are issues that do not interfere with the occurrence of pro in the structures currently illustrated, that is (10) above and (15) below.

Perception structures must face an extra difficulty, which is that either a two-place or a three-place analysis can be entertained in their case (though, to be fair, other predicates such as the order-type are also affected by this structural ambiguity). Thus, either the DP object belongs within the subordinate clause, and it is only pro-w that is needed as subject of the latter (as in the two-place analysis of (16a)), or on the other hand, the DP object is analysed as object of the matrix verb of perception (as in the three-place configuration of (16b)). In this second configuration-type, object pro would be needed on a path with pro-w as subject of the subordinate.
quences, we will refer to the close connections existing between these and adverbal clauses of purpose.

As mentioned in §2, the referential meaning of adverbial clauses of purpose is, as their name clearly indicates, that of purpose or finality, which is in turn the original meaning of the marker to as such infinitival verbal inflection. Thus, whereas adverbial clauses of purpose represent the referential meaning of the infinitival inflection in its purest form, complement clauses in general would represent the case where purpose to has ultimately developed into an ordinary clausal marker (cf. He began to cry/They believe him to be a good employer). However, clausal structures of the types in (2-4) would be located next to adverbal clauses of purpose on the pertinent scale given that the meaning of purpose or finality is most clearly enhanced in these subordinate structures.

Specifically, infinitival relative clauses are closest to clauses of purpose. That this is so is evidenced by two facts. First, the lack in Old English of infinitival relatives where the noun to be modified is subject, and actually the lower frequency of such relatives throughout the history of English, which could be due to the absence of a [+V] predicate in the matrix clause which should properly match the (original) meaning of purpose of the subordinate. Cf. the contrast between (2a) above, repeated below as (17a), where haebbe ‘have’ (which is [+V]) would behave as the corresponding predicate, or (17b), where need would play that role, and on the other hand (18b), where no such predicate exists and the only constituent preceding the relative is the external argument itself (i.e. thingis and man, respectively):

17. a. Ic haebbe mete [to etenne]  
I have food to eat (Alc.P.V 72) (Allen 1980: 275)  
b. We need a man [to send to Bristol]  

18. a. ... the necessite of thingis [to comen]?  
(Chaucer, Boece V pr. 4.34) (Visser 1963-73, II: 979)  
b. The man [to send to Bristol] must be a lawyer  

Second, the actual ambiguity existing in multiple constructions between an adverbial clause of purpose reading (as in (19a') and (20b) below) and a relative clause reading (as in (19a') and (20a) below), ambiguity which can be attested in all periods of the language:

19. a. Ic sende thisum folce flaesc to etanne  
I sent these people flesh to eat  
a'. sende thisum folce {flaesc} [CPOI[p]PROh to etanne]  
a''. sende thisum folce flaesc [CPOI[p]PROh to etanne]  

3. Evidence for the lack of movement in Old English

This section will be devoted to the infinitival sequence-types in (2-4), and the claim will be made that crucial facts concerning the paradigm of some of them seem to receive an appropriate explanation if their structure in Old English is argued to lack movement, that is the raising of an object operator to CP. It has already been noted that the possibility exists for (infinitival) clauses of purpose to instantiate an object pro coindexed through the C head position with the head antecedent in the matrix clause. Before dealing with relative clauses or tough-se-
Although Old English infinitival relatives can be analysed as involving the movement of an object operator to COMP, as in (24) below, this move should be sustained only by the desire to establish a parallel with finite relatives, since no overt object occupies the CP position in the infinitival type. In the approach presented here, this last fact – the vacancy of CP – is taken as an indication that (25) can actually be the structure entertained by infinitival relatives originally in Old English. Since, as argued in §2, adverbial clauses of purpose seem to be best analysed as involving no empty operator being raised to CP, and infinitival relatives – which further share, at least partially, a purposive meaning with the adverbial type – lack any sign of overt elements in CP, it does seem plausible to argue in favour of an Old English structure common to both infinitival purpose clauses and infinitival relatives where object pro is instantiated.

(24) \( \text{ic}_n \text{ haæbbe [np mete] \{cpO} \{ip \text{PRO}_i \text{ to etenne}\}} \)

(25) \( \text{ic}_n \text{ haæbbe [np mete] \{cpΘ \{ip \text{PRO}_i \text{ pro} \text{ to etenne}\}} \)

It is of course important to note that it is currently assumed in the literature that, though Old English relative clauses seem to generally obey some of the conditions necessary for Wh-movement to apply, the lack of negative evidence as regards some configuration-types make it impossible to fully ascertain the occurrence of the former (cf. Allen (1980) and van Kemenade (1987)). Thus, it is plausible to assume the non-application of Wh-movement in e.g., relative clause constructions, which further makes the account proposed here possible.

3.3.1. Preposition-stranding vs. pied-piping

Of the two mechanisms generally available in Present-Day English relative clauses whenever a prepositional object is relativised, preposition-stranding is the only possibility in Old English infinitival relatives, pied-piping not being available until the fourteenth century. Thus, configurations such as [about which to worry], [in which to live], and [with which to console the sick], where the PP is moved to CP, are not allowed in (26) below. Instead, the preposition must be left in its original position, which is before the verb in the general case in Old English, cf. Present-Day English [to worry about], [to live in], [to console the sick with].

(26) a. \( \text{theah he nu nanwuht elles naæbbe ymbe to sorgienne though he now nothing else not-have about to worry though he now nothing else to worry about} \)

\( \) (Boeth.XL.1 p.24.15) (Allen 1980: 276)

b. \( \text{Drihten, thu the geccure thaet faet on to eardienne Lord you yourself chose that vessel in to live Lord, you chose for yourself that vessel to live in} \)

\( \) (Blick 157) (van Kemenade 1987: 151)
c.  *he haeafde mildheortynsse tha untruman & tha thearfan*
   he had mercy the sick and the poor
   mid frefigenne
   with to console
   ‘he had enough mercy with which to console the sick and the poor’

   (Bede 545,13) (Visser 1963-73, II: 981)

These facts are wholly consistent with those shown in the previous section as regards the non-occurrence of overt items in the CP of (non-prepositional) infinitival relatives. The fact that it is not until the second half of the Middle English period that the CP of infinitival relatives is filled up with PPs, it being the case that pied-piped phrases occur in *se/seo/thaet* relatives from the beginning of Old English (pied-piping is actually the only possibility in *se/seo/thaet* relatives), seems to point out in the direction of infinitival relatives as being generated in Old English (and/or before) in close connection, not with finite relative clauses, but with infinitival constructions such as adverbial clauses of purpose (cf. section 2). Thus, it is possible to assume that infinitival relatives share with purpose clauses a structure where the object position is filled up with *pro*, and where no movement to CP applies.

The configuration proposed here for e.g., (26a) above would be therefore as in (27) below, which would parallel the type of structure posited for adverbial clauses of purpose (section 2), and would be identical to the configuration assumed for infinitival relatives with no preposition-stranding (section 3):

(27)  *theah he [NP nu nanuwt elles], naebebe [CPθ₁ ip [PRO₉₆ [VP₉₅ [PP ymbe pro₆₅ to sorgienne]]]]*

On the other hand, though infinitival relatives are identical to *the* relatives (see (28) below) in being characterised by preposition-stranding (cf. Allen 1980; van Kemenade 1987), it seems to us that this must not be taken as evidence for a common origin for both types, since only *the* relatives are crucially marked by the occurrence of a complementiser (*the* itself) as the C head.

(28)  *Seo gesiith the we god myd gesoey scylon is angyt*
      *the sight that we God with see shall is understanding*
      (Sol. 676) (Allen 1980: 267)

That *se/seo/thaet* relatives – on a par with interrogative structures – do not allow for preposition-stranding (cf. (28) above, virtually impossible with a demonstrative relative in the place of *the*) has been explained by van Kemenade (1987) as being due to prepositions not being proper governors. Though it is not

our concern in this paper, and adopting this last claim by van Kemenade, we would like to point out that the preposition-stranding phenomenon, which is impossible in *se/seo/thaet* relatives, but which is found in *the* relatives, is due in the latter to the configuration of Old English CPs (we refer the reader to Castillo, in preparation) and that it is made possible by null operators not requiring being properly governed, which means that no E(npty)C(a teg)Y()P(rinciple) would apply. What actually concerns our discussion is that no ECP is violated in (27) above either (that is, in an approach where the object position is *pro*) since, though prepositions are not proper governors (*ymbe* ‘about’ in the pertinent case), the corresponding object position is not occupied by a trace, but by *pro*.

3.2. Tough-sequences

Certain facts about the adjectival sequences in (3), repeated below as (29), can also seem to agree with the instantiation of a *no-movement-to-CP* structure. Though they cannot be taken as direct evidence for an object *pro* configuration, they certainly welcome such structural type.

(29)  a.  *... he uniethe waere to gehealdenne*
      *he difficult was to control*
      (CP 172.11) (Visser 1963-73, II: 991)

b.  *wundro ..., tha the nu to seccenne syndon*
    *wonders..., which now too long to narrate are*
    (Bede 174.22) (Visser 1963-73, II: 1012)

*Tough* or *easy-to-please*-sequences are problematic in Present-Day English given that they are ergative constructions where no movement from the subordinate into the main clause seems to apply. That is, although the external subject of the adjectival predicate is assigned no theta-role by the latter, but by the predicate in the embedded clause (see (30a) below, which shows clearly that *John* is not the real subject of *tough*, but the object of *control*), there should be no motivation for this DP to leave this original position given that it can check all its features on that site (against the AgrOP of *control*). This way, it must be contradiciorily assumed that the pertinent DP is base-generated in a non-thematic subject position. As expected, an operator is in charge of moving into CP and establishing a relation of coindexation between the position in the main clause and that in the subordinate.

(30)  a.  *[e] is tough [PRO₉₅ to control John]*

b.  *John, is tough [CP₉₄ [PRO₂₄ to control τ₄]]*

We would like to centre our attention on the fact that the external subject has no thematic role in Present-Day English, but that the situation seems to be dif-
different in Old English. Thus, the complexity of tough-sequences in Old English lies in the fact that the corresponding adjectives are not ergative from the start, or at least not clearly so, which seems very logical on intuitive grounds: thus, it is to be expected that this construction starts out in Old English with adjectival predicates that are liable to be understood in both ways. This is certainly the opinion of Fischer (1991), who agrees that easy or tough-adjetives do seem to assign an external theta-role, a statement which should be supported by further research on the field, as has been done by e.g., van der Wurff (1987, 1990, 1992).

What matters for our purpose is that if, in a parallel fashion to the remaining infinitival sequences in this paper (adverbial clauses, relative constructions ...), we posit an Old English structure with object pro, this move seems to agree with the fact that the DP antecedent is a thematic or quasi-thematic subject in this period, given that (non-expletive) pro should be identified by a real or thematic constituent. This thematic constituent would be he, as the subject of (waere) uniethe in (31) below.

(31) ... he, uniethe waere [CPθ[IP, PROarb, pro, to gehealdenne]]

A final comment is in order in relation to the be-to-constructions illustrated in (4). As noted in section 3, they seem to provide no specific evidence for any possible advantageous occurrence of object pro (apart from the fact, common to all the structures under discussion in this paper, of a more economical derivation), though for the sake of coherence they should be analysed in identical fashion to all other infinitival structures with a gap in object position (with which they additionally share a purposive meaning). Let us recall that they would be very close to tough-sequences, though they need not be taken as ergative structures, that is the predicate be (to) would take a thematic subject, which would identify the object of the subordinate verb:

(32) thas thing, sint [CPθi[IP, PROarb, pro, to done]]

4. Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to draw the interest of the reader towards certain facts concerning Old English infinitival constructions with a gap in object position. The set of pertinent structures include adverbial clauses of purpose, relative clauses, tough-sequences, and be-to-constructions, though they all seem to share a (quasi)-purposive meaning. It has been argued that stipulating an original structure in the language (i.e. Old English and/or before) where pro occupies the object position in these clausal-types would seem to explain such facts as: (i) the wider use of object gaps in Old English infinitival adverbial clauses of purpose as compared to Present-Day English; (ii) the non-occurrence of lexical items in the CP of infinitival relative clauses – whether these include PPs or not – and also, though to a lesser extent, (iii) the seemingly non-ergative meaning of tough-sequences in Old English.

In the approach presented here, there would be no Wh-movement to CP of a null object operator; instead the null pronounal category would occupy the base-generated object position, and would be interpreted as identical to the head antecedent through coindexation with the empty complementiser. Further, arguing in favour of the existence of pro in the Old English infinitival-types under study would be supported by the independent existence of this null category in certain Old English sequences, though with a distinct flavour of arbitrary reference. Relative clause constructions represent a clear case for the absence of Wh-movement to COMP since it is not until the second half of the Middle English period that pied-piped phrases are instantiated in that position (cf. a place in which to live). Actually, the first instance of movement to CP in infinitival structures corresponds to indirect questions (cf. He didn’t know what to say), which start being recorded in the thirteenth century.

This way, infinitival relative clauses (the same as tough-sequences or be-to-constructions) should seem to respond to a grouping with purpose clauses, rather than with their finite relative-mates. (Infinitival) purpose clauses seem to incarnate in a most direct way the values of infinitives, and it is infinitives that happen to be characterised by this property of taking null objects (on a par with null subjects).

An account of the pertinent infinitival structures in terms of pro is of course more economical than one in terms of an operator from the point of view of the theory, given that in the former there would be no instantiation of movement to CP. However, such analysis would not be tenable after the Old English period, because of the crucial appearance of pied-piping in infinitival relatives, which would be a clear sign of movement to the above-mentioned position. To this should be added other factors such as:

(i) A change in the conditions demanded by infinitival adverbial clauses of purpose, according to which the gap in object position must now be linked to a lexically-filled CP, cf. the deviance of Present-Day English *They sent their daughters there to teach as against the well-formedness of They sent their daughters there for them to teach. Such change could very well agree with a change in the null category being instantiated (i.e. a null operator instead of pro). Why the null operator of adverbial clauses of purpose should demand or prefer, at least in Present-Day English, an overtly-filled CP, we cannot answer here.

(ii) The consolidation of tough-sequences as ergative structures, that is as constructions with a non-thematic subject, which would not readily admit pro.
(iii) The general demise of object *pro (with arbitrary reference) in the language (cf. the ungrammaticality of *This leads to conclude the following, and such extant types as They said/helped to be careful with the suitcase, which would even be argued not to involve *pro).

REFERENCES

Adamson, Sylvia – Vivien Law – Nigel Vicent – Susan Wright (eds.)
1990 Papers from the 5th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics.
Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Allen, Cynthia

Beukema, Frits – Peter Coopmans (eds.)

Callaway, Morgan

Castillo, Concha
1993 *Configuration of CP in Old and Middle English*.

Chomsky, Noam

Denison, David

Fischer, Olga
1991 “The rise of the passive infinitive in English”, in Dieter Kastovsky (ed.), 140-188.

Gelderen, Elly van

Haegeman, Liliane – Jacqueline Guéron

Haspelmath, Martin

Hogg, Richard M. (ed.)

Jespersen, Otto
1940 *A modern English grammar on historical principles*. Part V. Copenhagen: Munksgaard.

Kageyama, Taro

Kastovsky, Dieter (ed.)

Kemenade, Ans van

Kemenade, Ans van – Nigel Vincent (eds.)
1997 *Parameters of morphosyntactic change*. Cambridge: CUP.