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

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{TENSE} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{PERS/NUM} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{MOOD}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
-\text{COMPL} & +\text{COMPL} & \text{HINGRIAN} \\
\downarrow & \downarrow & \\
\text{NULL} & \text{NP} & \\
[3/Sg] & \text{Pron 1/Sg} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Mē} & \text{hingrode} & \\
\end{array}
\]

B. Complement of Preposition

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

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

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

ær ‘before [time]’; with dative.

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

andlang ‘along,’ with genitive.

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

behteonan ‘on this side of,’ behindan ‘behind,’ beneopan ‘beneath,’ be-utan ‘outside’; all with dative.

betweoh betweonum betweonan ‘between, among’; with dative and accusative.

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

for, fore ‘for’

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

geond ‘through’; with accusative, and dative.

in ‘in’

mid ‘with’; with dative, and instrumental.

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

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

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

ongean ongeğn ongên ‘opposite, against’; with dative, and accusative.

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

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

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

under ‘under’

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

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

Many of these prepositions have Modern English cognates with the same functions: fram deade to life ‘from death to life,’ þurh þā duru ‘through the door,’ on bonne seofon dæg ‘on the seventh day.’ But some have been replaced by other forms: Hē ymb þā gatu feohende wēron ‘They were fighting around the gate’; Ealle þās þing [hē] spræc mid big-spellum ... and nān þing ne spræc bultan big-spellum ‘All these things he spoke with parables, and no thing did he speak without parables.’ Some have remained in the language but have changed meaning: ðif ic ... him gule yfel wīþ yfel ‘if I ... should repay him evil for evil.’ Of has split into two forms, Modern English of and off. And so on.