What Really Happened to ‘Impersonal’ and ‘Reflexive’ Constructions
in Medieval English

In Ogura (1986) and (1989) I made investigations on ‘impersonal’ (i.e. with a verb in
the third person singular that takes the dative of person) and ‘reflexive’ (i.e. with a
coreferential pronoun) constructions from about the ninth to the thirteenth century. It is
obvious that these constructions continue throughout the medieval period, but the same
criteria cannot be adopted after the thirteenth century owing to the morphological
levelling. In this paper I exemplify the Middle English situation of these constructions
and try to explain how they survived being partly reinforced by Old Norse and Old
French verbs and partly remodeled by the native feature of Old English syntax.

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