

# Foreground information or absence of case marking. An analysis of the case systems in the Old Scanian text *Consolatio Animae*

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In this article, I examine whether nominative and/or apparently caseless forms in the nominal system of the Old Scanian text *Consolatio Animae* (c. 1425) should be analysed as foreground information (in accordance with Eva Skafte Jensen's theory on foreground information and nominative case in Old Danish) or whether as I have previously argued, such forms should be analysed as examples of the final stage of the case-system development in Danish where neither nouns nor typical noun-phrase modifiers are marked for case due to reductions of the redundancy in noun-phrase-internal agreement. I argue that although the majority of the occurrences agree well with Jensen's foreground-information theory, a number of unambiguously unsuffixed forms remain unaccounted for. Although formed by analogy with other unsuffixed nominative forms, some of these few remaining forms cannot be said to be marked for case. Furthermore, they are not only used in foreground-information contexts and as subject or subject complement, where we would expect the use of nominative, but also in background-information contexts and for other syntactic functions. As such, these forms constitute a significant precursor of the modern Danish system with lack of case marking in the nominal system.

**KEYWORDS:** Old Danish; Scanian dialect; case-system reduction; information structure; nominative