

HE THEN SAID...:
(UNDERSTUDIED) DEVIATIONS FROM V2 IN EARLY
GERMANIC*

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ABSTRACT This paper discusses a V3-pattern in Early Germanic that has so far not been considered independently. In this construction, a clause-initial XP is followed by the adverbial element OHG *do*/OE *þa*/OS *tho* (lit. ‘then’), which is directly followed by the finite verb. Based on a pilot study of the OHG translation of Tatian’s gospel harmony and the OE Blickling Homilies, it is shown that the pattern exhibits slightly different properties in OE and OHG. In OHG, the element preceding *do* is usually a pronominal shifting topic, while in OE, the clause-initial XP may also be a full DP that is either a shifting topic or a continuing topic. To account for these differences between OE and OHG, we argue that OE *þa* is first-merged as the head of a clause-medial projection that serves to mark the boundary between the topic and the focus domain. In contrast, OHG *do* (and OS *tho*) is a topic marker that is either part of the fronted shifting topic, or base-generated as a head in the left clausal periphery. As to its internal syntax, we propose a grammaticalization path for *do/þa/tho* in which a demonstrative adverb first turns into an adverbial discourse marker that may also serve expletive functions before it eventually grammaticalizes into the topic particle addressed in this paper.

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1 INTRODUCTION

As is well known, Old High German (OHG), Old English (OE) and Old Saxon (OS) exhibit variation in the position of the finite verb in root clauses, displaying V2/V1, as well as V3 or verb-late(r) word orders, which seem to be governed by factors relating to information structure and discourse anchoring. The analysis of these patterns and the structure of the left periphery in Early Germanic more generally have been a much debated topic in the generative literature of the last three decades (cf. e.g. Lenerz 1984; Fuß 2003; Axel 2007; Speyer 2008; Petrova 2012; Walkden 2014; Hinterhölzl 2017; Speyer & Weiß 2018 for German and early Germanic; Kroch & Taylor 1997; Petrova & Speyer 2011; van Kemenade 2012; van Kemenade & Westergaard 2012; Los & van Kemenade 2018 for English). In this paper, we discuss a peculiar V3-pattern in OHG, OE and OS that has so far not attracted much attention (but see Ruhfus 1897 for some instructive early remarks). The construction under investigation features an XP in clause-initial position (typically a pronoun) followed by an apparently adverbial element OHG *do* / OE *þa/þonne* / OS *tho* (lit. ‘then’, henceforth *þa/tho*), which immediately precedes the finite verb, as in (1).

- (1) (a) *sie tho antalengitun imo. neín* (OHG)
 they *do* answered him.DAT no
 ‘They said to him: ‘No.’
Responderunt ei: non
 (T. 337, 10–11)¹
- (b) *he þa clepode hluddre stefne* (OE)
 he *þa* cried loud voice
 ‘He cried with loud voice.’
 (coblick,HomS_8_[BIHom_2]:15.17.186)
- (c) *Petrus thô gimahalde [...]* (OS)
 Peter *tho* said
 ‘Peter said [...].’
 (*Hel.* XXXVIII, 3136)

The pattern XP-*þa/tho*-V_{fin} is attested in all early West Germanic languages. Since it may occur independently of the Latin source in OHG translations as

¹ For the sake of convenience, in this paper all relevant text passages from the OHG Tatian (*T.*) are cited according to the edition indicated in the bibliography. The examples are quoted by page number and line. The Blickling Homilies (*coblick.*), the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Ælfric’s Lives of Saints, and the Heliand (*Hel.*), instead, are cited following the editions adopted by the respective digital corpora.

in (1 a) and appears in non-translational texts as in the OE example (1 b), it can be taken to be a native trait of these languages. The element *þa/þo* used in the construction is etymologically related to the demonstrative paradigm; it is traditionally taken to be a temporal adverb that links the temporal setting of its clause to the preceding discourse context.² When occurring in clause-initial position, it typically marks a sequence of actions or events in the narration (cf. e.g. [Los & van Kemenade 2006](#), [Donhauser & Petrova 2009](#), [Trips & Fuß 2009](#)). In this function, it consistently triggers inversion/V2, compare the OE example in (2).³

- (2) *Þa for he norþryhte be þæm lande* (OE)
þa went he northwards by that land
'Then he went northwards to that land.'
(coorosiu,Or_1:1.14.7.227)

Apart from its use as an anaphoric/deictic temporal adverb, *þa/þo* can assume a number of additional functions. In (3), for instance, it is used both as a conjunction introducing a (preposed) temporal subordinate clause and a correlative resumptive adverb referring back to the temporal interval specified in the preposed adverbial clause.

- (3) *Ða se wisdom þa ðis spell asæd hæfde, þa* (OE)
when the wisdom þa this story said had then
ongan he eft singan
began he again sing
'When Wisdom then had told this story, he began to sing again.'
(coboeth,Bo.25.57.1,1039, also cited in: [Fischer, van Kemenade, Koopman & van der Wurff 2000](#): 57)

2 The West Germanic temporal adverbs/conjunctions OE *þa* and OHG/OS *þo* go back to a Proto-Germanic demonstrative root (cf. e.g. [Ramat 1981](#); OE *þa* corresponds to the accusative singular feminine of the demonstrative stem *þa-*). The extended forms OE *þanne*, *þonne*, *þænne*, *þenne*, OHG *danne*, *denne* and Gothic *þan* are usually taken to be adverbial formations that are derived from the demonstrative root by adding a nasal suffix. What these elements have in common is their anaphoric and deictic function in relation to something previously mentioned.

3 The special behavior of clause-initial *þa/þo* is particularly apparent in OE, since subject pronouns usually do not undergo inversion in main declaratives, as shown in (i) (cf. [Mitchell 1985](#); [van Kemenade 1987](#); [Kiparsky 1995](#); [Kroch & Taylor 1997](#); [Pintzuk 1999](#) among many others).

- (i) *Be ðæm we magon suiðe swutule oncnawan ðæt [...]* (OE)
by that we may very clearly perceive that
'By that, we may perceive very clearly that [...].'
(CP 26.181.16, in [van Kemenade 2009](#): 92)

It has been established that the placement of *þa/þo* relative to the verb and other constituents of the clause is intimately linked to discourse- and information-structural properties. For example, it appears that in OHG, clause-initial *þo* functions as a temporal anaphor that relates the temporal setting of a V2 root clause to a temporal interval given in the discourse context, while it introduces a new foregrounded action/event/situation along the main story line of a narrative when it directly follows the finite verb in a V1 declarative (Betten 1987; Donhauser & Petrova 2009). In OE, it appears to have an additional function in embedded clauses, where it serves to separate the topic from the focus domain when occurring in clause-internal position; moreover, it seems to be linked to special pragmatic functions in exclamative, interrogative and imperative main clauses (cf. Los & van Kemenade 2006; van Kemenade 2009; Links 2018; van Kemenade & Links 2020).

The structure in (1), however, has neither been studied as an independent V3-construct nor from a comparative Early Germanic perspective in previous research. Focusing on OE and OHG, this paper aims to deepen our understanding of the syntactic and discourse-semantic properties of XP-*þa/þo*-V_{fin} orders. In particular, we want to investigate whether there are any differences between OE and OHG concerning (i) the range of discourse functions and (ii) the range of elements that may occur in clause-initial position in this construction. To these ends, we present the results of two pilot studies we conducted in the *Referenzkorpus Altdeutsch* (Donhauser, Jost & Lühr 2018) and the YCOE corpus (Taylor, Warner, Pintzuk & Beths 2003), where we looked for the pattern in the OHG translation of Tatian's gospel harmony (830, East Franconian) and the OE text of the Blickling Homilies (10th century, West Saxon/Anglian). We will then develop a theoretical analysis of our findings based on the following hypotheses:

- i. OE root-clause *þa* is a clause-medial functional head that performs a discourse function similar to that found in subordinate structures, in which this element serves to mark the boundary between the topic and the focus domain;⁴
- ii. OHG *þo* can be either analyzed as being fronted to the prefield of the clause together with a shifting topic, giving rise to an apparent V3-configuration, or as the head of a projection in the clausal left periphery attracting a topic into its specifier.

⁴ We would like to specify here that in subordinate clauses, the pattern does not usually present surface V3, as an anonymous reviewer pointed out; however, embedded contexts clearly show that the temporal adverbial in question serves to demarcate the boundary between the topic and the focus domain.

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The OHG pattern is also attested – with very similar functions – in the OS Heliand (9th century). More generally, we will argue that these patterns are probably Germanic in nature, as will be shown based on data from the Gothic Bible (4th century, cf. Klein 1994). Moreover, we will propose a diachronic scenario for West Germanic in which an original Proto-Germanic demonstrative *p*-adverb undergoes grammaticalization along a pathway that involves at least three different stages: (i) a group of fully deictic adverbs still attested in the modern languages; (ii) an adverbial discourse marker, which may also assume expletive functions; (iii) a topic particle (possibly a head in the left clausal periphery), which disappears in all Germanic languages by the end of the oldest stage.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, we will give an overview of the various instantiations of the notion of ‘topic’ in Early West Germanic. The results of the pilot study carried out in the OHG Tatian translation and the OE Blickling Homilies are presented in Section 3. Based on the relevant empirical findings, Section 4 develops a theoretical analysis of XP-*pa/tho*-V_{fin} orders and sketches a scenario for its historical development in Early Germanic. Section 5 wraps up and gives a concluding summary.

2 THE NOTION OF ‘TOPIC’ IN EARLY WEST GERMANIC

A notion that will be of crucial importance in the following discussion is that of ‘topic’. While this concept plays an important role both in descriptive and in theoretical studies of the information-structural properties of utterances, there does not seem to be a universally shared definition or taxonomy of it that may be applied without further clarification (cf. e.g. Schachter 1973; Firbas 1975; Reinhart 1981; Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl 2007). Moreover, the information-structural analysis of older texts naturally poses an additional challenge, since the encoding and realization of information-structural categories visible in the overt syntax e.g. of OHG and OE are not necessarily comparable to those in the modern stages of these languages.

In the present study, the information-structural role of the constituent surfacing to the immediate left of *pa/tho* was systematically investigated in order to establish whether this could be a relevant trigger for the licensing of the construction at stake. In order to classify our data, we assumed the hierarchy proposed by Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi & Frascarelli (2010), who suggest a tripartite division of topichood into the following categories:⁵

⁵ Note that the label “continuing topic” used here corresponds to Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl’s (2007) “familiar topic”.

- (4) **Shifting Topic:** what the sentence is about, realizes a referent newly changed, newly introduced or newly returned to;
Contrastive Topic: an element which introduces alternatives but has no impact on the focus value of the clause (also in the sense of Krifka, Féry & Fanselow 2007);
Continuing Topic: a given, *d*-linked constituent, generally realized in a pronominal form.

In the following examples, we illustrate each of these categories based on our OHG and OE data involving the construction investigated here and providing the context in order to determine the relevant categorization with reasonable certainty.

In the OHG example in (5), the constituent preceding *tho* is a shifting topic. In the pre-text, two referents, both realized pronominally, interact with each other: *sie* ('they' = the Jews) and *her* ('he' = Jesus). In the utterance preceding the root clause introduced by *her tho*, Jesus (*ther heilant*) says something to the Jews, and these react by taking up some stones. In the following clause, the topic is switched again. The subject *her* is, thus, a given referent reintroduced in the discourse.

- (5) **Shifting Topic (OHG)**

context

[*tho quad In ther heilant, uuâr uuâr quidu ih Iû er thanne abraham uuari er bim ih. Tho namun sie steina thaz sie vourphin In Inan*]

'Jesus said to them: 'Verily, verily, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.' Then they took up stones to cast at him.'

clause

her tho barg sih [...]

he(= Jesus) *tho* hid REFL

'Jesus hid himself [...].'

Ihesus autem abscondit se

(T. 131, 26)

The phrases to the left of the two occurrences of *pa* in the OE example in (6), instead, can be categorized as contrastive topics according to Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl's (2007) taxonomy. In the pre-text, a state of affairs is described in which the two referents (Arnulf and Rodulf) are mentioned. In the following clause, it is recounted that Arnulf took one part of the reign, while Rodulf took one other part of it. Both these referents (and the following referent Oda, which is, however, not followed by *pa*) belong to a set of alternatives interpreted contrastively but – crucially – not jeopardizing the Focus value in

each of the clauses (the country to the east of the Rhine, the middle district and the western side, respectively). In (6), a passage from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and not from the Blickling Homilies is used to exemplify this category since the information-structural status of the corresponding referents is particularly evident and therefore more adequate for illustrative purposes.

(6) **Contrastive Topic (OE)**

context

[*Þæt wæs þeah mid Earnulfes gefafunge, & hi cwædon þæt hie þæt to his honda healdan sceoldon. forþæm hira nan næs on fædrenhealfe to geboren. buton him anum*]

'This, however, was done with the consent of Arnulf; and they agreed that they should hold in subjection to him; because none of them had by birth any claim on the father's side, except him alone.'⁶

clause

Earnulf þa wunode on þæm londe be eastan Rin, & Arnulf þa dwelt on the land by eastern Rhine and Ropulf þa feng to þæm middelrice, & Oda to Rodulf þa took to the middle-kingdom and Oda to þæm westdæle [...]
the western-part

'Arnulf dwelled on the country east of the Rhine, and Rodulf took the middle district, and Oda the western part [...].'

(cochronA-1,ChronA_[Plummer]:887.10.975)

In (7), the pronoun *he* preceding *þa* arguably realizes a continuing topic. In the last passage of the pre-text, it is said that he (= Jesus) sacrificed himself to save humanity. In all three clauses, the pronominal subject points to the same referent. In the following sentence, the same pronoun is immediately followed by *þa* and also refers to Jesus. Hence, there is no topic shift, and the interpretation of *he* is not contrastive:

(7) **Continuing Topic (OE)**

context

[*þa æt nehstan he let his lichoman on rode mid næglum gefæstnian & deap he gebrowode for us, forþon þe he wolde us þæt ece lif forgifan*]

'Then soon he let his body be nailed on the cross, and he suffered death for us, because he wanted to give us the eternal life.'

⁶ Translation from [Giles & Ingram \(1986\)](#).

clause

& he þa onsende his þone wuldorfæstan gast to helle
 and he þa sent his the glorious spirit to hell
grunde
 abyss

‘And he sent his glorious spirit into the abyss of hell [...]’
 (coblick,HomS_26_[BIHom_7]:85.30.1056)

With these premises in mind, in Section 3 a first pilot study of the distribution and information-structural properties of the pattern XP-*þa/þo* is presented and discussed in detail.

3 METHODS

3.1 Corpus study

To investigate the distribution and information-structural properties of this construction, we carried out a first pilot study in which three texts were primarily considered: the OHG Diatessaron (830, East Franconian), the OE Blickling Homilies (10th century,⁷ West Saxon/Anglian), and the OS Heliand (first half of the 9th century, Old Saxon).

These three sources have similar contents in that they are all religious texts. The OHG Diatessaron is a translation of Tatian’s gospel harmony, a prose text in Latin depicting episodes from the Christian New Testament. The OE text is a collection of sermons dealing with key feasts of the Christian faith, including Pentecost, Mary’s assumption, as well as some saints’ feast days. The Heliand, the largest text available for OS, is an epic poem recounting episodes from the life of Jesus. However, each of these texts exhibits structural peculiarities that merit closer inspection in order to make sense of the data attested in the corpus.

In the first place, the OHG Tatian, like virtually all longer prose texts available for (especially Early) OHG, is a translation. As noted by Axel (2007: 18), this text was neglected for a long time by historical syntacticians since it was assumed to be too close to the Latin source and therefore not representative of the native syntax of this language stage. Only in the last decades has this text been re-considered as a valid source for syntactic investigations (cf. e.g. Dittmer & Dittmer 1998, Sonderegger 2003, Fleischer, Hinterhölzl & Solf

⁷ The YCOE file of the Blickling Homilies (coblick.o23) is dated between the 10th and 11th century in the corpus; however, Morris (1967) dates the manuscript around 971 and claims that the vocabulary used in the text is archaic. We will follow Morris’ (1967) dating.

2008). Overall, the OHG Tatian does contain a large number of constructions that deviate from the Latin source and seem to mirror the translator's native competence of Old East Franconian. It must be pointed out, however, that in many cases the syntax of this text appears to replicate and be directly dependent on the Latin original. For this reason, the sentences extracted from this text in the present study were not only considered in isolation, but systematically compared to the corresponding constructs in the Latin source, which is included in the digital corpus. Note that exactly the same situation applies to other larger prose texts of OHG (e.g. *Isidor, The Monsee Fragments*, a part of the *Minor Old High German Monuments*, etc.), so that for the sake of convenience, we opted to investigate the OHG source that contains the most occurrences of the structure analyzed here.

The Blickling Homilies is a collection of homiletic texts compiled by (an) anonymous author(s) (cf. Dalbey 1969; Gatch 1989) for an unknown audience, which probably consisted of unlearned laypersons or members of the clergy. The tone of the work is catechetical rather than exegetic. The YCOE corpus (Taylor et al. 2003) reports that the text is not translated from Latin (see the text information file provided with the corpus); however, it must be noticed that the unknown author(s) of the homiletic collection had a variety of sources in Latin at their disposal, ranging from exegetic homilies to apocryphal materials, which were manipulated and adapted for the probably unlearned audience of the homilies (see Dalbey 1969); as Dalbey (1969) shows, however, the manipulated Latin sources are translated freely and expanded by the author(s) of the Blickling Homilies. In the text, quotations in Latin can be found, which are usually followed by a rather free translation; for the present study, we payed attention as to whether our examples replicate the Latin quotation (if present).

As far as OS is concerned, it is to be noted that both extensive texts available for this language stage (the Heliand and the Genesis) have a metrical structure, which is certainly not an optimal prerequisite for a source to be considered a reliable testimony of the (written) verb syntax of OS. The Heliand, the larger of the two, was therefore considered only for the sake of comparison and only in those cases in which the dominating metrical pattern, the alliterative verse, cannot be assumed to be responsible for the surfacing of the structure at stake.

The OHG and OS data were extracted from the *Referenzkorpus Altdeutsch* (ReA, Donhauser et al. 2018, searchable via ANNIS, cf. Krause & Zeldes 2016), the largest repository of morphologically and syntactically annotated texts from the OHG and the OS period. Given that the same query can enable us to search for the same pattern in both OHG and OS, we chose to use

the *Referenzkorpus Altdeutsch* instead of the parsed HeliPad for OS (Walkden 2015), for the sake of comparability of the results. As for the OE data, the York Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE, Taylor et al. 2003), processed through Corpus Studio (Komen 2011), was consulted. Given that these two corpora differ both in their levels of annotation and in their hierarchical structures, the data were extracted by using different search strings. Considering that in the Version 1.0 of the *ReA*, the *do/tho* occurring in this construction is annotated as an adverb with respect to its part-of-speech categorization (and in order to minimize possible errors), the string “lemma=“do” & pos=“ADV” & #2_i_#1” for OHG and the string “lemma=“tho” & pos=“ADV” & #2_i_#1” for OS was used to retrieve all occurrences of *do/tho* from the text in which this element is tagged as such. Note that in the *ReA* one may, in principle, build the search string in order to limit the scope to either main or embedded clauses (the tier “clause” includes e.g. the categories “CF_I_M” and “CF_U_M” for main clauses respectively introduced by a coordinating element like *inti* ‘and’ and not introduced by any overt element). However, since many OHG connectors have an objectively ambiguous status and are thus rather unsystematically annotated as coordinating conjunctions, subjunctions or adverbs in this corpus, the search was extended to all above-mentioned occurrences of the lemma. The relevant results (namely all main clauses in which *do/tho* appears in the prefield and is preceded by at least one constituent) were then filtered manually.

For OE, we decided to elicit main clauses which present either a subject or object (both in pronominal and in DP form) directly preceding *þa/þonne*, which in turn directly precedes a finite verb. This search string is restrictive enough to retrieve patterns with an XP directly preceding the adverbial and the finite verb but is open enough to retrieve sentences in which the XP preceding the adverbial is not exclusively in the nominative. With the corpus used, it is not possible to search directly for the lemma, so the CorpusSearch2 (Randall 2009) query syntax was combined with the string “then_word” provided by the definition of syntactic labels in the Corpus Studio suite (Komen 2011). This label permits to elicit the occurrences of *þa/þonne*, excluding other types of adverbials and the homophonous plural demonstrative *þa*.⁸ Furthermore, the string “objectonly” was used not only to retrieve objects in the accusative, but also in the dative.

Of the resulting constructions, we excluded all frame-resuming structures of the type in (8a)–(10a), in which *þa/tho* functions as a correlative taking

8 For replicability purposes, the CorpusSearch2 (Randall 2009) strings are reported here: “(subjectoe iPrecedes then_word) AND (then_word iPrecedes finiteverb)” for DP or pronominal subjects and “(objectonly iPrecedes then_word) AND (then_word iPrecedes finiteverb)” for DP or pronominal objects.

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up the reference of a preposed adverbial clause with which it is co-indexed, as well as embedded clauses in which this pattern surfaces and that were occasionally found amongst the results elicited, cf. (8b)–(10b).

- (8) (a) *mit diu er tho uzgieng, tho quad ther heilant[...]* (OHG)
 when he *do* out-went *do* said the Savior
 ‘As he was going out (of the temple), Jesus said [...].’
Cum ergo exisset, dicit Ihesus [...]
 (T. 159, 7)
- (b) *So er tho gihorta thaz er cumig uuas [...]* (OHG)
 when he *do* heard that he sick was
 ‘When he heard that he was sick [...].’
Ut ergo audivit quia infirmabatur [...]
 (T. 135, 3)
- (9) (a) *Þa he þa genealæhte Gerusalem, þa becom he ær* (OE)
þa he þa approached Jerusalem *þa* came he before
to Betfage þæm tune neh Oliuetes dune
 to Bethphage the city near Olives mount
 ‘As he was approaching Jerusalem, he came first to Bethphage,
 the city near Mt. Olive.’
 (coblick,HomS_21_[BlHom_6]:69.73.866)
- (b) [...] *þæt he þonne mid læwedum mannum onfo* (OE)
 that he *þonne* with lay men receive
þæs heardestan þeowdomes.
 the hardest service
 ‘[...] that he may receive the hardest service together with the
 laity.’
 (coblick,HomS_14_[BlHom_4]:49.169.602)
- (10) (a) *Thô sie bi thes uuatares staðe furðor quâmun* (OS)
tho they at the water bank further came
thô fundun sie thar ênna frôdan man [...]
tho found they there an old man
 ‘When they were near the bank of the river, they found an old
 man...’
 (Hel. XIV, 1172–1173)
- (b) [...] *that he ine thô generidi* (OS)
 that he him *tho* saved
 ‘[...] that he saved him.’
 (Hel. XXXV, 2949)

In the former case ((a)-examples), indeed, the adverb in preverbal position anchors the temporal setting of the root structure to a time interval specified in the fronted adverbial clause and cannot therefore be assumed to perform the same function as the cognate element investigated here. The cases in which this pattern occurs in subordinate structures ((b)-examples), instead, were not considered because both OHG and OE are generally treated as *basically asymmetric-V2* languages in which the finite verb is raised to a higher CP or TP head in main, but not in subordinate clauses (cf. [Axel 2007](#) for OHG; [Walkden 2014](#) for an overview of Old Germanic; [Pintzuk 1999](#); [Fischer et al. 2000](#); [van Kemenade & Westergaard 2012](#) for OE).⁹ In the (b)-sentences above, thus, the adverb is arguably positioned in some middle-field position in OHG and has retained a referential function; as far as OE is concerned, van Kemenade argues for sentences like (9b) above that the adverbials *þa/þonne* are located above the TP and divide the utterance between a given and a new domain; the present investigation aims to determine whether the main clauses with the V3 pattern under consideration exhibit similar discourse functions in OE.

3.2 Results

The overall results of the corpus study are summarized in Table 1. The construction is attested in all three texts, although with different frequency rates. Remarkably, it occurs much more often in the OE than in OHG and OS texts. As we will see, this might be due to functional properties of *þa* that diverge from those of its OHG/OS counterparts. The fourth column indicates the per mille frequency of the structure relative to the total number of main declarative clauses in the texts investigated.

⁹ Note, however, that the general treatment of V2 in OHG and OE is slightly different. While the general assumption for OHG is that the verb systematically moves to C° in V2 clauses, in the literature on OE both a higher and a lower type of V2 have been proposed: one in which the verb occupies C° (e.g. in *wh*-questions), and one in which it is hosted in a lower head position of a projection labeled FP ([Fischer et al. 2000](#); [van Kemenade & Westergaard 2012](#)) or IP ([Pintzuk 1999](#)) (e.g. in cases in which a frame-setting topic surfaces in first clause position, immediately followed by the verb).

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	non- correlative V2 constructions $\bar{p}a/tho > V_{fin}$	non- correlative V3 constructions XP > $\bar{p}a/tho > V_{fin}$	Total main declaratives in the text	Frequency of V3 constructions investigated (‰)
OHG Tatian	469	36	4,766	7.55
OE Blickling Homilies	114	78	3,182	24.51
OS Heliand	291	6	3,533	1.70

Table 1 Frequency of $\bar{p}a/tho > V_{fin}$ and XP > $\bar{p}a/tho > V_{fin}$ in the investigated texts

In what follows, the main features of the construction attested in each of the varieties investigated here will be highlighted in order to establish to what extent the single structures in OHG, OE and OS are functionally comparable.

3.2.1 Old High German

In the OHG construction investigated here, *do* generally translates Lat. *autem* ‘however, instead’ (11 a), appears in a main clause introduced by the coordinating conjunction *at / et* ‘and’ (11 b-11 c) or occurs independently of the Latin source (11 d). These examples are interesting for a number of reasons. Although in (11 a) the linear arrangement of the construction is basically the same as in Latin (the subject and *do / autem* precede the finite verb in the same order), the German translator added an accusative personal pronoun (*iz*) after the verb in order to avoid what he arguably felt was a violation of the rules of syntax in his variety. While object drop is productive in Latin, it is not in OHG. This is evidence that the OHG structure does not replicate the syntax of the Latin clause here. What is more, light pronouns like *iz* in (11 a) are non-extraposable elements (cf. Axel 2007), i.e. they cannot be moved into the so-called postfield (the clause-final position). This implies that in this clause, the verb must have been raised into the left periphery and that this is, thus, a genuine case of V3 root-clause word order.¹⁰ In (11 b), there is no diagnostic evidence for V-to-C movement in the OHG clause, but the structure

¹⁰ Even though it can be generalized that V-to-C movement in matrix clauses is already part of the grammar of OHG, there are good reasons to think that the syntax of this language stage must have been unstable to some extent. In the prose texts of OHG, indeed, clauses are attested in which the word order does not replicate the Latin one and there is independent evidence to assume that the verb has remained in situ. Cf. the following example, in which the direct object is placed in the middle field in OHG and post-verbally in Latin and the finite part of the verb in the German clause appears to the right of a verb particle (the lexeme being *frambringan*).

does not replicate the Latin one. In (11 c), however, not only does the linear syntax of the OHG clause differ from the original (*et ipse* vs. *her thô*), which suggests that this string must have been grammatical in the translator's variety; the finite verb is also followed by a light pronoun (*inan*), which is – like *iz* in (11 a) – a non-extraposable element. This implies that in both (11 a) and (11 c), the finite verb must have been moved from V° to C° over the pronoun, which occupies a position in the middle field. The most significant piece of evidence in favor of the native status of this construction is the fact that XP-*do* need not replicate a pattern present in the original text, as in (11 d).

- (11) (a) *Sie thô furgoumolosotun iz* (OHG)
 they *do* ignored it
 'They ignored it.'
Illi autem neglexerunt
 (T. 125, 7)
- (b) *Her tho quad [...]* (OHG)
 he *do* said
 'He said [...].'
At ille dixit [...]
 (T. 58, 2)
- (c) *her thô inphieng inan in sine arma* (OHG)
 he *do* took him in his arms
 'He took him in his arms.'
 Lat. *et ipse accepit eum in ulnas suas*
 (T. 7, 5))
- (d) *Sie tho antalengitun imo. neín* (OHG)
 they *do* answered him no
 'They answered to him: 'No'.
Responderunt ei: non
 (T. 236, 2)

That the correspondence between *do* and *autem* is not fully systematic is also witnessed by the fact that there are cases in which *autem* is present in the Latin clause, but fails to be translated in the OHG text (12):

Given that verb particles are immovable elements in OHG, it can be assumed that (i) is a main clause with a verb-final order that does not depend on the Latin model:

- (i) *enti · ubil man · fona ubilemo horte · ubil fram bringit* (OHG)
 and evil man from evil treasure evil V.PRT brings
 'And an evil man out of his evil treasure will bring forth evil things.'
et malus homo de malo thesauro profert mala (*Monsee Fragments* 9, 19–20)

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- (12) *Cristes cunni uuas sô* (OHG)
Christ's generation was so
'Christ's birth was in this way.'
*Christi **autem** generatio sic erat*
(T. 5, 7)

In the OHG construction, *do* is immediately followed by the finite verb in the great majority of cases, but occasionally an adverbial clause intervenes between it and the verb (13). Note that in the OHG sentence, the position of the verb is different from the Latin source, and *iratus est* has been re-formulated to include a post-verbal reflexive pronoun, which is one of the non-extraposable categories in OHG. There is no independent evidence that the pattern 'subject > adverbial clause' is native in V2 main clauses (i.e. that it is not a syntactic calque from Latin), since adverbial clauses typically occur in first clause position in contexts in which the OHG word order differs from the Latin. Nevertheless, this cannot be excluded, since in the following periods, Middle High German (MHG) and Early New High German (ENHG), this is a frequent pattern in the native syntax of German (14 a–14 b) and is still attested in Present-Day German (PDG) (14 c). The MHG and the ENHG example have been excerpted from the *Referenzkorpus Mittelhochdeutsch* (Klein, Wegera, Dipper & Wich-Reif 2016) and the *Bonner Frühneuhochdeutschkorpus* (Besch, Lenders, Moser & Stopp 2017), respectively.

- (13) OHG
Thie cuning thô mit thiu her thaz gihorta, arbalg
the king *do* when he that heard got.angry
sih
REFL
'When the king heard thereof, he was angry'
Rex autem cum audisset, iratus est
(T. 125, 8)

- (14) (a) MHG
wane vnser here ihenc xpenc do er gemartert wolde
 for our Lord Jesus Christ when he martyred had.to
werden [...] reit vil othmuoticlichen her
 be rode very humbly here
 ‘For our Lord Jesus Christ humbly rode here [...] before being martyred.’
 (*Leipziger Predigen A 139ra, 24–28*)
- (b) ENHG
Basilius [...] da er seiner Heyrath halben Rat
 Basil when he his marriage because.of counsel
hielt/ befandte er sol [...]
 took decided he should [...]
 ‘Basil, after reflecting on his marriage, decided that he would [...].’
 (*Moscouia D1r., 17–18*)
- (c) PDG
... mein Freund, als er mit unserem damaligen
 my boyfriend when he with our then-
Pflegling unterwegs war, musste Strafe zahlen.
 nursing on.the.way was had.to fine pay
 ‘My boyfriend got a fine while he was taking our then-dog for a walk.’
 (<https://www.dogforum.de/thread/85584-ordnungsamt-wer-wurde-schonmal-kontrolliert/>)

In the sentences attested in the OHG text, the preposed XP is a personal pronoun in the great majority of cases (Table 2).¹¹ This could be due to the dialogic nature of the contexts in which the construction appears, in which the referent almost exclusively intervenes in the narrative scene to reply to or answer someone else’s statement or question. More importantly, this constituent is almost systematically a shifting topic (Table 3) (also cf. Axel 2007: 225).¹²

11 An anonymous reviewer points out that there might be a functional asymmetry between personal and demonstrative pronouns (as shown, for instance, by Los & van Kemenade 2018 for OE), in that the former could mark continuing topics, whereas the latter could mark shifting topics. We leave this interesting question for future research.

12 An example of an XP-*ba/* *tho* construction in which the clause-initial constituent is a full DP is given in (i). Note that also in this case, the preposed XP is a shifting topic. The example in (ii), instead, illustrates one of the two attested sentences in which the DP in first clause position does not realize a shifting, but a continuing topic:

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Pronouns	33	91.7%
DPs	3	8.3%
Tot.	36	100%

Table 2 Distribution of DPs and personal pronouns in the XP-*do* pattern in OHG

Shifting	34	94.4%
Continuing	2	5.6%
Tot.	36	100%

Table 3 Distribution of topic types in the XP-*do* pattern in OHG

Note that the kind of ‘open’ search query used to retrieve the OHG data in the *ReA*, which allowed to detect *all* occurrences of adverbial *do*, only produced results in which the constituent to the left of *do* is a subject. Based on the data obtained here, this must have been at least a privileged configuration in sentences containing the XP-*do* construct in OHG.¹³

(i) **context**

[*tho her arstantenti gibót uuinte Inti seuue inti quad. suige Inti árstumme. uuard tho gitan mihhil stilnessi.*]

‘Then rising up, he commanded the winds, and the sea, and said: “Be quiet! Be still!”, and there came a great calm.’

clause

thie man tho vountrotun sus quedante untar zuisgen ... (OHG)
the men *do* marveled so saying among-themselves

‘The men marveled and said among themselves ...’
(*T.* 86, 22–27)

(ii) **context**

[*Tho quad her in: gitruobit ist mín sela io unzin tod: beitol hier inti uuahhet mit mir*]

‘He (= Jesus) said to them: “My soul is sorrowful until death. Stay here and watch with me.”’

clause

Inti her tho ergieng fon in so steines vourf ist ... (OHG)
and he *do* went from them how stone’s cast is

‘And he (= Jesus) went a little further ...’ (lit. ‘as far as a stone’s cast’)
(*T.* 294, 10–15)

¹³ In the present paper, we focus on the pattern occurring in the left periphery of the clause. To be sure, the sequence XP-*tho* is also attested in the middle field in the OHG Tatian, as illustrated in

Summarizing the main findings of the study of the data for this variety, there seems to be a strong tendency for this pattern to be associated with the licensing of a pronominal shifting topic (in the sense explicated in Section 2) performing the function of a subject. As we will see, the distribution of the pre-*þa* phrase is not as neat in OE with respect to its information-structural, phrasal and syntactic-functional properties.

3.2.2 Old English

As already stated in Section 3.1, the text of the Blickling Homilies is not a direct translation of a Latin source, but rather a manipulation of composite materials probably in Latin; occasionally, quotations in Latin surface in the text,

the following examples. In (i), *do* surfaces in clause-final position to the right of a pronominal cluster; in (ii), it follows a full DP; in (iii), it appears between a subject and an object pronoun:

- (i) *gibot her in tho thaz [...]* (OHG)
 ordered he.NOM them.DAT do that
 ‘He ordered them that [...].’
& precepit illis
 (T. 130, 15–16)
- (ii) *abur nam inan ther diuual thô In hohan* (OHG)
 again took him.ACC the.NOM devil do in high.ACC
berg thrato
 mountain very
 ‘Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain.’
Iterum assumit eum diabolus In montem excelsum ualde
 (T. 50, 16–17)
- (iii) *uuas hér tho sie lerenti sósó [...]* (OHG)
 was he.NOM do them.ACC teaching as
 ‘He was teaching them as [...].’
erat enim docens eos sicut [...]
 (T. 75, 24)

These data might raise the question as to whether the very same construct is also possible in the area of the clause below C and, if so, what consequences this has for a structural analysis of the phenomenon. Note, however, that while this cannot be excluded, examples like (i)-(iii) are problematic for a number of reasons. In the first place, it is not an easy task to determine whether the *do* in these sentences is the same as in the structure addressed in our study or the homophonous deictic adverb. In (i), for instance, *do* could be assumed to translate the clause-initial (temporally interpreted) *&* (= *et*) in the Lat. clause. A similar observation could be made with respect to (ii), which follows a passage containing the almost identical sentence *thô nam Inan ther diuual In thie heilagun burg* (‘then, the devil took him to the holy city’). In this structure, *do* is unambiguously to be interpreted as a temporal adverb. Secondly, in examples like (i) and (iii), the pronouns preceding *do* instantiate continuing – and not, as one would expect looking at the numbers in Tab. 3, shifting – topics. It is left to future research to ascertain whether and to what extent the left-peripheral and the formally identical middle-field sequences illustrated here correspond to one and the same phenomenon.

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followed by a rather free translation. As far as the structure investigated in this paper is concerned, however, there is only one sentence which is a direct translation of a passage in Latin, cf. (15).

(15) **context (Latin passage)**

[*Tunc Sanctus Andreas surgens mane abiit ad mare cum discipulis suis [...]*]

‘Then, Saint Andrew rose up and went to the sea in the morning with his disciples.’

clause (free OE translation)

Se halga Andreas þa aras on morgen, & he eode to the holy Andrew þa rose on morning and he went to þære sæ mid his discipulum the sea with his disciples

‘The holy Andrew rose then the following day and went to the sea with his disciples.’

(coblick,LS_1.2_[AndrewMor[BiHom_19]]:231.61.2965)

As one can see, the Latin adverbial *tunc* ‘then’ is translated as *þa* in the English version; however, the word order differs, since in the OE text, the adverbial is placed after the DP subject. Given the fact that OE has the possibility of starting a sentence with *þa*,¹⁴ we surmise that the choice of the author(s) to translate this sentence as DP subj > *þa* > finite verb is dictated by their OE native grammar. It will be shown in the following, in fact, that this word order choice follows precise discourse-structuring requirements.

Furthermore, some of the sentences elicited by the query clearly show movement of the finite verb, as in (16), where the finite verb is followed by a light adverbial, which cannot be subject to extraposition.

14 Cf. the following example, where the adverbial *þa* is in clause-initial position:

- (i) *þa æfter þære mæssan seo modor and seo dohtor astrehton* (OE)
then after the mass the mother and the daughter prostrated
hi on gebedum æt þære byrgene.
themselves on prayers at the city
‘then, after the mass, the mother and the daughter prostrated themselves in prayers at the city.’
(coaelive,ÆLS[Lucy]:20.217)

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Shifting	32	61.6%
Contrastive	2	3.8%
Continuing	13	25%
Ambiguous	5	9.6%
Tot.	52	100%

Table 5 Distribution of topic types in the XP-*þa* pattern in OE (subjects)

Even though shifting topics are found in the majority of cases, also continuing topics and contrastive topics are attested in this construction, suggesting that the function of the adverbial in these V3 structures is to signal a topic > focus relation.

Finally, OE also presents object pronouns preceding the adverbial (25 cases).¹⁶ The figures are presented in Table 6.

Shifting	3	12%
Contrastive	0	—
Continuing	17	68%
Ambiguous	5	20%
Tot.	25	100%

Table 6 Distribution of topic types in the XP-*þa* pattern in OE (objects)

As can be seen from Table 6, there is not only an asymmetry between OE and OHG as far as the structural properties of the subjects are concerned, but also between the types of topics favored by subjects and objects in OE. In fact, object pronouns favor a continuing topic reading, in contrast to the subjects, which are more often associated with a shifting topic reading. This fact may be incidental and related to the structural nature of the objects found, which, being pronouns, are more likely to express a familiar d-linked constituent.

Moreover, in seven cases, object pronouns realizing continuing topics are preceded by a shifting topic DP.

- (i) & hine þa gegyrede mid hærenum hrægle swiþe heardum &
 and himself þa girded with hairy garments very hard and
unwinsumum
 unpleasant
 ‘and he clothed himself with garments made of hair, which were very hard and
 uncomfortable.’
 (coblick,LS_17.1_[MartinMor[BiHom_17]]:221.187.2834)

¹⁶ Recall that the search string enables to search both for object DPs and pronouns.

- (17) **context**
 [*Se costigend; þa eode to him; & him to cwæþ, Gif þu sie Godes sunu, cwep þæt þa stanas to hlafum geweorþan*]
 ‘The tempter went to him, and said: “If you are the son of God, command that these stones become bread”.’
- clause**
Se Hælend; him; þa ondswarode (OE)
 the Saviour him þa answered
 ‘The Saviour then answered him [...]’
 (coblick,HomS_10_[BIHom_3]:27.6.356)

Both *the tempter* and *the savior* are topics in the passage under consideration; in the context, however, the aboutness topic is constituted by *the tempter* whereas in the V3 structure, *the savior* (referred to in the preceding context via a pronoun) becomes the shifting topic, whereas *the tempter* is resumed by an object pronoun and realizes a continuing topic.

Albeit restricted to only one text, these data open up new perspectives for the organization of discourse in OE; in fact, our data clearly show that the adverbials *þa* and *þonne* serve as topic particles in the V3 structures investigated, and the presence of more than one topic before the particle suggests a more articulated structure for the (OE) domain above TP. Finally, the fact that the particle follows any type of topic and that more than one topic can be found before it suggests that the particle occupies a fixed position in the OE clausal spine, probably in the left periphery (but cf. below for a more fleshed out syntactic analysis); this piece of data corroborates and provides new insights to Links’s (2018) and van Kemenade & Links’s (2020) analysis, who show that the particles *þa* and *þonne* occupy a fixed position in interrogative, exclamative and imperative root clauses, which they locate between the CP and the TP, and clearly serve the information structural organization of the utterance.

Finally, even though the investigation in the present paper is restricted to the Blickling Homilies for OE, the V3 structure is attested in further non-translated texts, such as Ælfric’s Lives of Saints (18) and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (19), where a shifting topic and a contrastive topic, respectively, can be observed.

- (18) **context**
 [[...] *aris and far mid him, forþan þe ic hi asende*]
 ‘Arise and go with them, because I have sent them.’ (It is the Holy Trinity who utters this sentence to Peter)

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clause

Petrus þa eode ardllice to ðam mannum (OE)

Peter þa went quickly to the men

'Peter quickly went towards the men.'

(coaelive,ÆLS [Peter's_Chair]:116.2352)

(19) **context**

[& *heton heom sendan mare fultum. [...]*]

'And [they] commanded them to send more help [...].'

clause

Hy þa sendan heom mare fultum. (OE)

they þa sent them more help.

'And they sent more help.'

(cochronA-8,ChronA_[Plummer]:449.7.142)

These data strengthen our claim that the V3 pattern under consideration and the function of *þa/tho* as signaling a topic are a common Germanic phenomenon.

3.2.3 Old Saxon

As already shown in Table 1, the XP-*tho* construction occurs in six clauses in the OS text. Interestingly, in all the sentences in which *tho* surfaces to the right of a (non-coindexed) constituent in the Heliand, the clause-initial phrase is a shifting topic, as is dominantly the case in the OHG Tatian. In (20)–(22), three of these structures – in which the metrical pattern of the Heliand does not seem to play a role in licensing the presence of post-initial *tho* – are illustrated. The example in (20) is part of the narration of the Archangel Gabriel's appearance to Zachary to announce the imminent birth of his son, who shall be called John (the Baptist). In the pre-text, the angel introduces himself and tells Zachary what God has ordered for Zachary's child. After a relatively long passage in which the angel enumerates God's wishes, Zachary speaks. The referent *Zacharias*, followed by *tho*, was present in the background in the preceding part of the text as the recipient of Gabriel's words, but was inactive and is reintroduced here as the performer of an action (*gimahalda* 'said'), thereby qualifying as a shifting topic.

- (20) **context**
[Ic is engil bium, Gabriel bium ic hêtan [...]] Nu hiet he me an thesan sîð faran, hiet that ic thi thoh gicûðdi, that thi kind giboran [...]] He quað that the gôdo gumo Iohannes te namon hebbean scoldi [...]] quað that it Kristes gisîð an thesaro uuîdun uuerold uuerðan scoldi [...]]
 ‘I am his (= God’s) angel, my name is Gabriel [...]. Now he wanted me to come here to tell you that a son will be born to you [...]. He said that the good man shall be called John [...] and ordered that he shall be a thane of Christ’s in this world [...].’
- clause**
Zacharias thô gimahalda [...]] (OS)
 Zachary *tho* said
 ‘Zachary said [...].’
 (*Hel.* II, 120–139)

The same goes for (21) and (22): in both cases, the previous narrative passage contains different topics, and the relevant sentence re-introduces two referents, John and Peter respectively, which are immediately followed by *tho*. In (21), the context is dialogic: the Jews tell John what they heard about the forthcoming birth of Jesus, and he replies to them, thereby marking a shift in the sentence topic. Similarly, in (22) the context preceding the XP-*tho* clause contains the referents Jesus, Elijah and Moses, and the light surrounding the scene, while Peter intervenes as an external actant who interrupts the description.

- (21) **context**
[thô quâmun ina sôkean tharod fon Hierusalem Iudeo liudio [...]] that hêr lango giu, quaðun sie, liudi sagðun, uueros uuârlîco, that he scoldi an thesa uuerold cuman]
 ‘Then, some Jews came to look for him out of Jerusalem [...]
 “[The man] about whom many have been talking about” – they spoke – “the people said in truth that he will be born”.’
- clause**
Iohannes thô gimahalde [...]] (OS)
 John *tho* said
 ‘John said [...].’
 (*Hel.* XI, 909–914)

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- (22) **context**
[blīcandi sô thiu berhte sunne [...] Elias endi Moyses quâmun thar te Criste uuið sô craftagne uuordun uuehslean [...] skên that berhte lioht, uuas thar gard gôdlic endi grôni uuang, paradise gelīc]
 '[He] (= Jesus) shone like the bright sun [...]. Elijah and Moses came there to talk to Christ [...]. And that light shone brightly, there was the good garden and the green field, like in Paradise.'
- clause**
Petrus thô gimahalde [...] (OS)
 Peter tho said
 'Peter said [...].'
 (*Hel.* XXXVIII, 3125–3136)

In all attested occurrences, the construction appears in sentences in which the re-activated topic is a referent whose predicate consists of a lexical verb of speaking (*gimahlian*, *sprekan* 'speak', *biddian* 'ask' or *farloignian* 'deny'). In the following tables, the categorization for all six examples present in the text is given.

Pronouns	2	33.3%
DPs	4	66.7%
Tot.	6	100%

Table 7 Distribution of DPs and personal pronouns in the XP-*tho* pattern in OS

Shifting	6	100%
Continuing	0	—
Contrastive	0	—
Tot.	6	100%

Table 8 Distribution of topic types in the XP-*tho* pattern in OS

If the distribution of the phenomenon in the Heliand can be taken to be representative of its usage in OS, it seems therefore that the XP-*tho* construction in this variety behaves very much in the same way as in OHG, in which the great majority of the XPs preceding *do* are shifting topics. However, it must be noticed – given the limitations posited by such a low record – that in OS there is more variation with respect to the syntactic nature of the subject, since

it is a DP in four out of six cases. It comes with little surprise that the six sentences attested in the OS Heliand all contain a verb of saying. Despite its poetic nature, this text has a narrative structure which includes a large amount of dialogic contexts in which direct speech dominates (as is generally the case in biblical recountings). Dialogic sequences are – by definition – contexts in which turn taking takes place. Indeed, the same is true of the OHG Tatian, which presents similar contents and in which over one-third of the attested XP-*do* constructions (13/34) surface in sentences with *quedan* ‘say’, *antlengen* ‘answer’ or *ruofan* ‘cry’ as the lexical verb. Given the low frequency of the phenomenon in OS, it is not easy to ascertain whether the distribution of pronominal and DP referents to the left of *tho* is more similar to that of OHG or of OE. This could, in fact, be at least in part idiosyncratic. What can be determined with certainty is that in all six cases attested in the Heliand, the referent is already part of the prior discourse and therefore given. In the four sentences in which the pre-*tho* constituent is a DP (which is systematically a proper noun), the referent needs to be newly returned to because the passage following its last mention is more than three sentences long.

3.2.4 Summary of the empirical findings

From the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the pilot sample collected for OE, OHG and OS, it emerges that the V3 pattern elicited has similar properties in the three West Germanic languages investigated, thereby qualifying it as a typical Germanic phenomenon. In fact, the adverbial/particles *þa/tho* generally follow a Topic. Its function seems to consist in dividing the utterance into a topic and a focus domain.

Some distributional differences emerge, however, from the comparison of the types of elements preceding the particles *þa/tho*; in OE, in fact, the adverbial/particle can follow both a nominal DP and a pronoun in both subject and object function, and there is also more variation as far as the types of Topics involved in the structure are concerned. The distribution in OHG is almost exclusively restricted to pronominal subjects encoding a Shifting Topic. The following tables summarize the findings for the three languages.¹⁷

¹⁷ In Tables 9 and 10 we only compare the distribution of subject DPs and pronouns in the three languages investigated; OE also presents object pronouns in the structure elicited, but there are no comparable data for OHG and OS.

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	OHG		OE		OS	
Subject pronouns	33	91.7%	27	51.9%	2	33.3%
Subject DPs	3	8.3%	25	48.1%	4	66.7%
Tot.	36	100%	52	100%	6	100%

Table 9 Distribution of subject DPs and personal pronouns in the sample

	OHG		OE		OS	
Shifting	34	94.4%	32	61.6%	6	100%
Contrastive	2	5.6%	2	3.8%	0	—
Continuing	0	—	13	25%	0	—
Ambiguous	0	—	5	9.6%	0	—
Tot.	36	100%	52	100%	6	100%

Table 10 Distribution of topic types in the sample

In consideration of the facts illustrated above, in the next section it will be proposed that the particle *þa/tho* found in this construction is not the same lexical entry as its fully deictic counterpart, but the result of a grammaticalization process affecting a referential adverb (at least) in the three varieties considered here.

4 THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

4.1 A grammaticalization path for *þa/tho*

Let us turn to the origin and grammaticalization of *þa/tho*. In order to account for the variation observed, we will make two claims:

1. In OE root-clauses, *þa* performs an information-structural function similar to that found in subordinate structures, in which this element serves to mark the boundary between the topic and the focus domain. This is corroborated by the fact that the finite verb is often located in a lower structural position in the attested data.
2. OHG *do* also plays an information-structural role and functions as a topicalizing particle, i.e. it is fronted to (or merges in) the prefield of the clause in combination with a shifting topic. It thus gives rise to an apparent V3-configuration.

As noticed above, the OHG pattern is attested – with very similar functions – in the OS Heliand. In fact, there are reasons to suppose that these patterns may be Germanic in nature, as will be shown based on data from Gothic (Wulfila’s Bible written in the 4th c., cf. Klein 1994).

For the reconstruction of the grammaticalization process, it must be pointed out that *pa/Tho*, which is etymologically related to the PIE and ProtoGerm. demonstrative paradigm, is also used to mark a sequence of actions or events in the narration (cf. Los & van Kemenade 2006; Donhauser & Petrova 2009). Based on the facts presented above, we tentatively propose the following grammaticalization scenario (Figure 1) for the West Germanic languages, in which one basic form successively grammaticalized acquiring different functions.

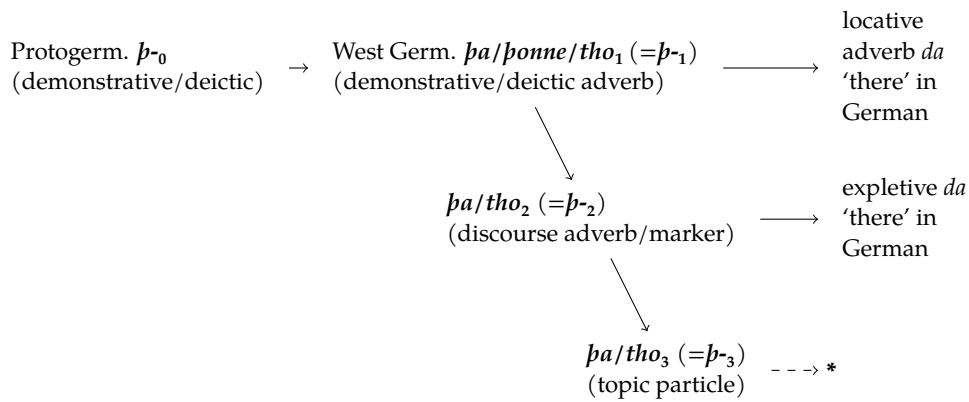


Figure 1 Grammaticalization of *pa/Tho*

The subsequent developments of this basic form can be described as follows:

1. The demonstrative/deictic adverb p_{-1} survives in the PDG locative adverb *da* 'there', as in the following example:

(23) *Er stand da neben ihr.* (PDG)
 he stood there next.to her
 'He was standing there next to her.'

2. The discourse adverb/marker p_{-2} survives for example in the German expletive *da* 'there' (especially in historical and dialectal varieties, cf. e.g. Mayerthaler & Mayerthaler 1990; Weiß 1998; Bayer & Suchsland 1998; Richards & Biberauer 2005; Donhauser & Petrova 2009; Fuß 2009; Light 2015), even though it is possibly not the only use for the weak

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adverb that originated from the deictic adverb. Note that the expletive element is typically realized in the prefield (but can be also be realized in sentence-internal positions in other Germanic languages, such as English *there*). It thus maintains a phrasal status in PDG:

- (24) *Da brandelt was.* (PDG, dialectal)
there burns something
'Something is burning.'
(Kratzer 2004, cited in Light 2010: 255)

3. The topic particle p_{-3} – used in the West Germanic sequences investigated in this paper (i.e. XP- pa/tho -V_{fin}) – probably originated from the second type described above (but we cannot exclude that it directly descended from the first one). However, it disappeared in all languages leaving no traces.

It is clear that p_{-3} is a West Germanic innovation, but the use of a particle in this function seems to be a more general Germanic strategy, given the existence of particles with similar functions in Gothic. For example, Klein (1994) interprets the two Gothic particles þanuh and þaruh as foregrounding discourse markers with the function of signaling the change of the speaker or of the grammatical subject, as illustrated by the examples (25) and (26).

- (25) *frah þan ina Iesus qipands: Iva ist namo þein?* (Goth)
asked þan him Jesus saying what is name your
þaruh qap: harjis
þaruh said Legion
'Then Jesus asked him, saying, "What is thy name?"
And he said, "Legion".'
(Luke 8.30, adapted from Klein 1994: 256)

- (26) *þaruh qap Iesus du þaim twalibim [...]* (Goth)
þaruh said Jesus to the twelve
þanuh andhof [...] *imma Seimon Paitrus [...]*
þanuh answered him Simon Peter
'Then Jesus said to the twelve [...]. Simon Peter answered him [...].'
(John 6.67–68, adapted from Klein 1994: 260)

Note further that the particles þanuh and þaruh are morphologically complex and include the particle *-uh* (cf. Ferraresi 2005: 155ff), which is analyzed by

Ferraresi (2005: 155) as having a “discourse-cohesive function”. It “introduces a new element in the discourse, carrying the narration on” (Ferraresi 2005: 159). As pointed out by Axel (2007: 36f), it is often analyzed as a coordinating element that cliticizes to the finite verb or to the heads of different types of XPs, but its function has not yet been fully understood (cf. also Eythórsson 1995: 53ff, Eythórsson 1996: 118, Walkden 2014: 107ff).

4.2 On the syntax of *pa*/*tho*₃

4.2.1 Internal syntax

We argue that, despite some specific differences, the grammaticalization scenario proposed above for the demonstrative/deictic *p*-adverb proceeded similarly to Cardinaletti & Starke’s (1999) proposal of an increasing structural deficiency in the pronominal domain, as illustrated in Figure 2.

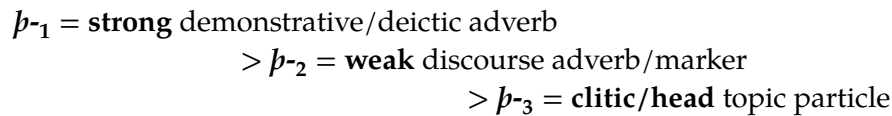


Figure 2 Increasing structural deficiency of *pa*/*tho*

We will adopt a slightly adapted version of Cardinaletti & Starke’s (1999) proposal here and we will claim that the strong and the weak versions of the *p*-adverbs have a phrasal status (as was shown in 4.1 with examples from Modern German), while the clitic particle has the status of a head. The strong demonstrative p_{-1} clearly retains a deictic function. The discourse adverb p_{-2} is assumed to have directly grammaticalized from this deictic adverb. However, it occupies the typical position of weak pronouns in German and Italian (cf. Cardinaletti & Starke 1999) or, more rarely, the prefield in its expletive function (as shown in example (24)). In the last step, the (phrasal) weak discourse adverb p_{-2} is claimed to be reanalyzed as a head element p_{-3} , in line with the Head Preference Principle formulated by van Gelderen (2004, 2006).¹⁸ However, as is illustrated in the next subsection, the result of this grammaticalization process is taken to be different in OE and in OHG/OS. In

¹⁸ Note that similar developments driven by a Spec-to-Head reanalysis have also been proposed for other languages. For instance, Old French, Old Italian and Old Occitan exhibit an optional left-peripheral element *si/si* which derives from the corresponding deictic adverb *si/si* (lit. ‘so’) and has been assumed to have undergone grammaticalization to a CP-head (cf. Ferraresi & Goldbach 2002, Ledgeway 2008, Meklenborg 2020). Just like the Old West Germanic particle investigated in this paper, the original lexeme *si/si*, bearing a modal meaning, has survived

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all the languages considered, the particle ended up as a head, but targeted different positions. Following [van Kemenade \(2009\)](#), we assume that in OE, *þa* ended up as a head in the I-domain. In contrast, for OHG and OS, we explore two different scenarios for *do/tho*, both compatible with the data presented above.

4.2.2 External syntax

For the present analysis, we assume the existence of a scrambling or topic position below the C-domain (thus in the T-domain) both for OE and OHG (and OS), which corresponds to the low projection that has been independently claimed for OE (cf. [van Kemenade 2009](#) on ΣP) and (Modern) German ([Frey 2004](#) on TopikP). Furthermore, in following the split-C-hypothesis (cf. [Rizzi 1997](#)), we assume the existence of a more articulated structure of the left periphery. This yields the following cartographic structural representation:

$$(27) \quad \underbrace{\text{ForceP} > \text{TopP} > \text{FocP} > \text{TopP} > \text{FinP}}_{\text{C-domain}} > \underbrace{\text{TopP} > \dots}_{\text{I-domain}}$$

In all the languages considered, topicalized or scrambled material is moved from its base position to the specifier position of a TopP in the I-domain for information-structural reasons. However, we claim that the languages considered differ with respect to the base position of the particle and to subsequent movement options.

For OE, *þa* is assumed to be merged directly in the head of low TopP in the I-domain, in line with the analysis proposed by [van Kemenade \(2009\)](#) for subordinate clauses. Thus, both shifting and continuing topics are moved to SpecTopP in the I-domain for information-structural reasons.

$$(28) \quad [_{CP} [_{\text{TopP}} \text{DP}_i [_{\text{Top}'} [_{\text{Top}^\circ} \textit{þa}] \dots t_i]]]$$

No fronting of DP+*þa* to the left periphery takes place, since *þa* is merged as a head in the clausal spine (in the I-domain) and does not form a constituent with the DP.

and is still attested in modern Romance, whereas the particle has disappeared in all three languages. Cf. the following example from Old French:

- (i) *Seur chele porte, si avoit un pumel d' or,*
on this door *si* had a pommel of gold
‘On this door there was a golden door handle.’
(Old French, in [Meklenborg 2020](#): 47)

As to OHG (and OS), two different analyses are compatible with the data we collected. Under one analysis, the DP is merged in situ with the topicalizing particle and is then fronted to the position hosting topicalized elements in the I-domain (SpecTopP) for information-structural reasons (topicalization) and further attracted to the C-domain – for discourse/information-structural reasons (shifting). Assuming a Split-CP hypothesis, the exact position of this cluster in the C-domain could be something along the lines of Frey’s (2004) SpecKontrP or the specifier of a projection in which shifting topics are hosted (cf. Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl 2007).

- (29) (a) $[_{Top'} [_{Top^\circ}] \dots \langle DP+do \rangle] \quad \rightarrow$ topicalization
 (b) $[_{TopP} \langle DP+do \rangle_i [_{Top'} [_{Top^\circ}] \dots t_i]] \quad \rightarrow$ fronting to C-domain
 (c) $[_{CP} \langle DP+do \rangle_i [_{C'} [_{C^\circ}] [_{TopP} t_i [_{Top'} [_{Top^\circ}] \dots t_i]]]]]$
 where $\langle DP+do \rangle = [_{PrtP} [_{DP} pro/NP] do]$

This explanation is in line with an old observation by Ruhfus (1897: 12, 73, etc.), who considers the sequence *her do* in Tatian as the result of the combination *her+do*, which he analyzes as one accent-bearing element in the prefield. Moreover, it offers an account that is compatible with those cases in which *do/tho* is found in combination with a pronominal or DP topic in the middle field (cf. the data illustrated in fn. 12).

An alternative analysis is possible which preserves the status of *do* as a head in the clausal spine and circumvents possible Criterial Freezing effects. Let us assume that the particle is base-generated in the head position of a topic projection in the C-domain. The DP is first moved to the position hosting topicalized elements in the I-domain (SpecTopP) and further attracted (or directly \bar{A} -moved) – for information-structural reasons – to the Spec position of the projection in the C-domain where the particle is merged. Under this hypothesis, we must necessarily assume a split C-domain in order to further accommodate the fronting of the finite verb. As represented below, we could assume the presence of a projection for shifting topics in the C-domain (Shift-TopP, cf. Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl 2007), in which the OHG (and OS) particle is base-generated. This would explain the particular shifting nature of *her+do* in OHG (and OS), in contrast to OE.¹⁹

¹⁹ In general terms, it is possible that this second option involving a fixed position of the particle in the left periphery might be the result of a structural reanalysis of the first option, in which the topic marker is supposed to be first-merged in the middle field.

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- (30) (a) [Top' [Top°] ... DP] → topicalization (optional)
 (b) [TopP DP_i [Top' [Top°] ... t_i]] → merger of *do* and fronting of DP to C-domain
 (c) [ShiftTopP DP_i [ShiftTop' [ShiftTop° *do*] ... [TopP t_i [Top' [Top°] ... t_i]]]]

This analysis would leave unexplained the rare cases in which the DP occurs in combination with the particle in the middle field. Therefore, a different explanation should be found for each of these cases attested in the corpus (such as translation adhering to the Latin syntax, different function of the particle in these cases, etc.).

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, we addressed an understudied deviation from V2 in Early Germanic, namely a non-correlative syntactic pattern in which the clause-initial area hosts a constituent in first position followed by an originally adverbial-deictic element, which in turn precedes the finite verb in C°. This phenomenon is common to OHG, OE and OS.

Based on a first pilot study of three texts (the OHG Tatian, the OE Blickling Homilies and the OS Heliand), we have shown that in all three varieties, the post-initial element *þa/þo* can be analyzed as a particle signaling the presence of a fronted topic in the immediately preceding position. The behavior of this construction, however, slightly differs between OHG and OS on the one hand and OE on the other hand. Assuming Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl's (2007) taxonomy of topics, the corpus data reveal that in OHG and OS, the XP-*do/þo* construction is almost exclusively associated with a shifting-topic reading of the raised constituent, which is a subject in all attested sentences and realized pronominally in over 90% of cases (the latter fact, however, might be accidental). In OE, instead, this pattern does not seem to correlate with a specific topic type, since the XP surfacing to the left of the particle can function as a shifting, continuing or contrastive topic. What is more, the OE construction also allows for non-subjects and more than one XP in the position preceding *þa*. Thus, it seems sensible to assume that OE *þa* performs a function in root clauses that is similar to that discussed by van Kemenade (2009) for the same element in embedded clauses, namely the marking of the boundary between the topic and the focus domain of the clause.

To account for these differences, we propose distinct derivations for OHG/OS and OE. In OHG and OS, two analyses are suitable to explain the data available, even though more data could provide more evidence in favor of one or the other analysis. Under one analysis, the DP originates in the mid-

dle field together with *do/þo* and cyclically moves to a Spec,TopP positioned in the higher I-domain to check a topic feature and subsequently to the left-peripheral specifier hosting shifting topics for discourse and/or information-structural reasons. Alternatively, *do/þo* can be analyzed as a head in the clausal spine into whose projection the DP is cyclically moved via the lower Spec,TopP. In OE, *þa* is first-merged in the head position of the higher-IP Spec,TopP. The (shifting, continuing or contrastive) topic, which is base-generated in the I-area, is moved into the specifier of this projection to satisfy information-structural requirements in the overt syntax. In this configuration, the referential XP and *þa* do not form a constituent.

Moreover, we have tentatively proposed that this topic marker realizes the third stage of a grammaticalization path along which one basic deictic-demonstrative form that can be traced back to Proto-Germanic has successively developed acquiring different functions, some of which are still present in single West Germanic varieties.

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