

**Information-structural categories in the main texts
of early German inheritance**

Word order variation and information structure in Old High German: An analysis of subordinate *dhazs*-clauses in Isidor

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Abstract

One of the earliest texts written in Old High German exhibits an extraordinarily high percentage of verb-early position in subordinated clauses introduced by *dhazs*. This paper shows that copula and auxiliary verbs end up more frequently in a higher clause position than main verbs. It demonstrates that these verb types occur with different information-structural values and concludes that they relate to different sentence structures. At the same time it is a contribution to the philological debate about differences between the so-called quotation syntax and the rest of the text.¹

1. Introduction

Until recently it was considered to be a well-established fact that Old High German already displayed the same verbal syntax as Modern German (Fourquet 1974, Lenerz 1984): in main clauses the finite verb shows up in second position (Verb-second) while in subordinate clauses it occurs in final position (Verb-end). This complementary distribution led to the by-now classic generative analysis of den Besten (1977): in main clauses the finite verb ends up in the Complementizer-position (*linke Satzklammer* 'left sentence brace'), while in subordinate clauses it remains in the final INFL-position (*rechte Satzklammer*) since the Comp-position is blocked by a lexical complementizer.

Old English, which shows a similar distribution, received an analogous analysis in Kemenade (1987). However, more recent studies on Old and Middle English (Pintzuk 1993, 1999; Kiparsky 1996; Fuß and Trips 2002) support the view that there are more positions than the ones standardly assumed. There is a high number of embedded clauses showing a non-final verb position, which is identified with an INFL-medial grammar.² Since

there are at the same time many cases of subordinations with the finite verb in final position, it is assumed that INFL-final and INFL-medial grammars coexisted side-by-side in the same speaker (Kroch 1989). The ultimate change, then, is seen as the result of a competition process between these two grammars.³

For Old High German, however, contradictory data have been known for more than 100 years. Diels (1906: 164) considered early verb placement (or Verb-second) in subordinate clauses as a quite common fact, triggered by the intonation of the first “word” (1906: 168). Rannow, who investigated exclusively the syntax of Isidor in comparison to the Latin original, also regarded intonation to be responsible for non-canonical ordering, but considered it only as a relevant factor in explaining the occurrence of the postverbal parts of the clause (1888: 119).

Finally, when later work pointed out the existence of early verb placement in subordinate clauses, it was mainly analysed as a type of extraposition in support to maintain the Verb-end analysis (Lenerz 1984: 129, Bortler 1982: 198). In contrast, Tomaselli (1995) and Fuß (1998) have argued for an INFL-medial position in Old High German. Schlachter (2004), adopting this analysis, has shown that the postverbal constituents in embedded Verb-second clauses are to be interpreted as focussed. Robinson (1997) has investigated all embedded clauses of the Old High German Isidor translation on the basis of their semantic and syntactic function in relation to the main clause, the active/passive status, and the kind of selecting verb. His data seems to show that Verb-end is more common in adverbial and relative clauses than in indirect questions and complement *dhazs*-clauses. Nevertheless, he notes that in adverbial *dhazs*-clauses in which the postverbal constituent is not a sentential constituent or a predicate the verb occurs in 50% of all cases in a higher position and speculates that such clauses seem to be less subordinated, in “that their meaning is often the main content of the whole sentence in which they appear, and almost always asserted information” (1997: 83).

The main problem with all these analyses is that they only focus on the type of clauses that fit the given explanation. For instance, Robinson’s group of adverbial *dhazs*-clauses is a very small one indeed. But what is the reason for early placement in the other cases? Tomaselli bases her analysis on a few Verb-third main clauses, which are very rare in Old High German, and Schlachter mainly argues with copular constructions. Thus, the results cannot be generalized.

This paper therefore wants to narrow the gap between theoretical explanation and empirical findings. It aims at a classification of the different causes of early verb placement in subordinate clauses, thus creating a secure starting point for further theoretical work.

We limit the empirical base of this study to the *dhazs*-clauses, because the syntactic status of *dhazs* as formal marker of subordination is not in doubt in the majority of cases. In addition, the *dhazs*-clauses have played an important role in the traditional view of how subordinate structures developed (cf. Müller and Frings 1959). As a data base we chose the earliest prose text, the so-called Old High German Isidor from the end of the 8th century.

The paper is organized as follows. After a short presentation and evaluation of the Old High German text we present a word class distinction of the finite verb in early position and a classification of the postverbal constituents. In the next section it is shown that these constituents have different values of focus. The results and some of the consequences are discussed in the final section.

2. The significance of the Isidorian treatise

The texts of the so-called Isidor group vary a great deal with respect to their length, which is certainly one of the reasons why they get different degrees of scholarly attention. The text most known and studied is a translation of a theological treatise written in Latin by Bishop Isidor of Sevilla (560–636) *De fide catholica ex veteri et novo testamento contra Iudaeos* ‘About the catholic faith from the Old and New Testament against the Jews’. Together with the Latin text it has been handed down in a codex BN, Ms lat. 2326 in Paris named (P). Until folia 22 the Old High German text is written side by side with the Latin text, then the Old High German part remains empty up to folia 34, where there is no more space left for the translation (Krotz 2002: 20). It has been edited by Hench (1893) and more recently by Eggers (1964), the latter of which will be the basis for the quotations in this paper.⁴ Since the beginning of the treatise is not recorded in (P), Eggers restores parts of it from a codex from the monastery in Mondsee (M) which is nowadays kept in the Austrian National Library of Vienna. This manuscript consists of five small texts: beside the translation of the Isidorian treatise, which is a fragment of only five pages, it contains parts of the Gospel of St. Matthew, fragments of a further treatise and two more homilies. All the texts were transcribed from non-Bavarian texts into the Bavarian language (Matzel 1970: 45).

The Isidorian translation was written in the last decades of the 8th century (Eggers 1964: VIII) in the southwest Franconian dialect and originates from the area of Lorraine (Sonderegger 2003: 129). The basic motivation for its origin is the theological debate about the nature of Christ: is he the real son of God or was he ‘as human being’ adopted by God the Father? The dispute between adherents of the Trinity doctrine and followers of Arianism had undergone a revival at the end of the 8th century, at which time Arianism was known as Adoptianismus, a movement represented by Felix von Urgel. This heresy was condemned by church councils in Regensburg in 792 and in Frankfurt in 794. The text defends the doctrine of the Trinity, arguing with quotations from the Old Testament which show “that Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit are, contrary to the proclamations of the followers of Adoptianism, for example, one equally in essence and in substance” (Nordmeyer 1958: 33).

Nordmeyer supposes that the text “was intended to be read aloud, perhaps before a mixed audience of clerics and lay persons assembled in council to judge the Felician heresy” in order to “account with some plausibility for the translator’s rhetorical and exegetical additions and enlargements of his text” (1958: 33).

If Nordmeyer is right, the huge number of deviations from the Latin text would find a functional explanation: the translator tried to make the content of the treatise as explicit as possible so that even a theologically uneducated lay public would be able to understand it.

Because of its relative independence from the Latin original, the Old High German Isidor version is considered an excellent piece of translation (Lippert 1974: 28). Nevertheless, it’s exactly because of this outstanding quality that it hasn’t always counted as a good object for syntactic investigation. Gering, as quoted in Robinson (1996: 3) points out that the Isidor “is so free a translation that we cannot be quite sure whether a deviation from the Latin is required by the grammar of German, or simply better style. Such a deviation in Tatian is so infrequent, however, that when one occurs it must be because of German grammar“.

We will argue, however, that the Isidor is a well-suited text for the study of information structure for the following reasons.

First, stylistic effects are grounded in the grammatical system. Scrambling in Modern German, for instance, which refers to the non-canonical sequencing of constituents in the middle field, is certainly governed by grammatical rules that, at the same time, create stylistic or information-structural effects.

Second, the frequency of a certain structure in the corpus is indicative of its being a core property of grammar. In anticipation of one of the results, we found 50% of early verb positions in subordinate *dhazs*-clauses. Since a huge number of these occurs independently of the Latin original and since these clauses are part of a text which has been evaluated as an outstandingly good translation, we have to take them as part of the Old High German syntax.

Third, since we conclude that both verb positions (the early and the final one) are part of the Old High German syntax, we can have a closer look at the ordering of the other constituents. Deviations from the Latin text can lead to interesting clues about different structures of German and Latin with respect to information flow. The influence of the Latin original is a factor which has to be controlled for although it is not as important as, for instance, in the Tatian translation (see Petrova and Solf, this volume). On the contrary, it seems that the Latin original of the Isidorian treatise was revised in order to make it more “Germanic”. Ostberg (1979), who investigated all Latin versions of the text, points out that as “the [Latin] version represented by [Paris-Latin] and [Mondsee-Latin] is consistently closer to the German text than any of the other [manuscripts] examined, it would appear that the translation effort was closely connected with the drafting of the [Latin] ‘Vorlage’ itself” (Ostberg 1979: 205). He furthermore concludes that „most of the alternations apparent in the translation, especially those involving clarification and emphasis, must – in the absence of evidence to the contrary – continue to be regarded as the translator’s own contribution.“ (Ostberg 1979: 205)

Furthermore, there is another factor besides the Latin influence which has to be controlled for: the so-called quotation syntax, where the author quotes parts from the Old Testament to strengthen his arguments. Matzel (1970: 357) therefore differentiates between two techniques of translation: the argumental parts should be considered as free paraphrasing which mainly aims to explain the difficult theological reasoning, while the quotation parts are much closer to the Latin original using more archaic means of expression. However, regarding the status of the quotation syntax, a systematic investigation is still lacking about the differences (and similarities) between the two systems, differences which, for example, refer to the attraction of the relative pronoun or the collocation of the definite article (see Matzel 1970: 357, note 855). An example of the different evaluation of syntactic phenomena with regard to quotation syntax is the view on Verb-first sentences. Robinson (1994) concludes that Verb-first sentences, which

mainly occur in the quotation syntax, aren't an Old High German pattern at all, but a foreign one. However, this interpretation can't be correct as Verb-first patterns are well established in all Germanic languages. Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2005) show for the Old High German Tatian that verb-initial placement can be analysed as encoding a coordinating discourse relation with mainly two functions: first it coordinates pieces of discourse at the same level of text structure (typically of narration), and second, it serves to return from a "subordinating", elaborating discourse part to the main line of discourse structure (Petrova 2006: 162). Although the precise status of the quotation syntax is still unclear, its potential influence should nevertheless be taken into account.

In sum, the treatise was intended to be as clear as possible in order to convince the hearers with its theological content. We therefore expect it to use the tools of information structure in a consistent manner. The results, however, should be checked against other Old High German texts to make sure that they are not simply idiosyncratic properties.

3. Syntactic subgroups of *dhazs*-clauses

3.1. Methodology and first results

As already mentioned, we have built up a corpus of subordinate *dhazs*-clauses of the treatise. *Dhazs* can occur in adverbial clauses, complement clauses and relative clauses. Relative *dhazs*-constructions have not been considered since their status as main or subordinate clauses is often unclear. Compare (1a), where *dhazs* is analysed as a demonstrative pronoun evoking a Verb-second configuration,⁵ and (1b), where it is interpreted as a relative pronoun of a relative clause with an extraposed subject:

- (1) *Dhazs ni saget apostolus noh forasago*
 that not says apostle nor prophet
ni bifant
 not found-out
 a. 'that neither the apostle says nor the prophet found [it] out'
 b. 'neither what the apostle says nor the prophet found-out'
 ... *nec apostolus dicit nec propheta conperit.*

(II.3, 103)

Even if the Latin original points to a certain translation, we don't mechanically transfer it to the Old High German text when a different interpretation is possible. Consider, for instance, the following clause, where the Latin text suggests a verb-final interpretation of the first *dhazs*-clause. At the same time it could be interpreted as a relative pronoun or as a correlative demonstrative pronoun of a main Verb-second clause.⁶

- (2) *Dhazs ir chundida dhazs dher selbo gheist ist*
 'that he announced that the same spirit is
got.
 God'
Ut eundem spiritum ostenderet esse deum.

(III.10, 248)

Without considering such unclear cases, we found 56 clauses introduced by *dhazs* in the whole manuscript. More than half of these, 30, display an early verb position. On the basis of the standard analysis of Old High German as a Verb-end language, this is a spectacular result. Before we start to analyse these clauses we have to make sure that early verb placement is not simply conditioned by the dominance of the Latin syntax or the quotation style, whatever it might be.

Table 1. The influence of Latin and quotation syntax

	V-early position		V-end position		Total
parallel to Latin	11	58%	8	42%	19
deviant from Latin	19	51%	18	49%	37
quotation syntax	9	82%	2	18%	11
part of argumentation	21	47%	24	53%	45

A first look at the two subsystems 'parallelisms' and 'deviations' leads to the conclusion that verb position is not primarily conditioned by the Latin. 58% of the clauses with Verb-early position are parallel, which is only slightly higher than the 51% which are deviant. Within the deviant clauses Verb-early and Verb-end position are nearly equally represented. These results point to the fact that the translator selected the verb position very deliberately and independently of the Latin original. Therefore, the Latin influence on verb placement is not a significant factor.

With respect to quotation syntax we come to a different result: while in the theological argumentation parts Verb-early and Verb-final placement are equally represented (48% : 52%), the 11 *dhazs*-clauses occurring in quotation show a different distribution. With 9:2 cases, Verb-early in quotation syntax is much more common than Verb-end. This extraordinarily high proportion of Verb-early placement points to the fact that quotation syntax indeed behaves differently. We might hypothesize that these Verb-early positions are in fact due to a Latin influence. But a comparison reveals that only 3 cases are totally parallel to the Latin original, while 4 sentences differ with respect to verb placement and in one case only the nominal constituents are changed. Thus, quotation syntax indeed seems to be more than just a copy of the Latin text although it might have been influenced by it.

Table 2. Position of the *dhazs*-clause and clausal function

<i>Dhazs</i> -clause	Verb-early position	Verb-end position
extraposed	30	23
preposed	0	3
adverbial clause	8	5
complement clause	22	21

The position of the subordinated clause doesn't seem to be decisive: nearly all of the sentences are extraposed; the only three instances of preposing out of the group with Verb-end cannot be regarded as significant. Thirteen of the total of 56 clauses are adverbial ones; more than half of these, 8, show an early verb position. However, 22 of the remaining 43 complement clauses also display an early verb position, which is a little bit more than half of all cases. Thus, we conclude that the degree of syntactic integration cannot be the decisive factor. Rather it seems to be the distribution of the informational content between main and subordinated clauses.

3.2. Types of finite verbs

At this point we understand 'early verb position' as a purely descriptive term for the position of the finite verb. It could thus be a INFL-medial position as proposed by Tomaselli (1995) and Schlachter (2004), and it has recently also been interpreted as a TP selecting a vP by Weiß (to appear). It could also be a Verb-end position as suggested by Axel (2007), leading to

the consequence that all postverbal material has to be interpreted as extraposed. Before interpreting the structural position of the finite verb we want to determine its status as an auxiliary, copula or main verb in order to see if a more finely differentiated word class distinction helps to identify preferences for certain positions. Robinson observes that “the verb *uuesan* ‘be’ is different from all other verbs. In subordinate clauses it frequently ends up before predicate nominals or adjectives, or, if they precede, before the subject” (1997: 149) and he states that “this is clearly not just because the specific form of the verb found is a ‘light element’” (1997: 149).⁷ Apparently he is referring to the copula status of the verb. However, as table 3 shows, copulas and auxiliaries show the same syntactic behaviour:

Table 3. Position and type of the finite verb

	Verb-early	Verb-end
auxiliary verb	12	8
main verb	9	12
copula verb	9	6

Copulas and auxiliaries prefer early placement with 60:40% (if such a small number of examples allows a statistically relevant result at all). Main verbs, on the other hand, seem to prefer the end position with nearly the same percentage.

If we look at the clauses with early auxiliary placement with respect to their lexical fillings, we find the following distribution:

Table 4. Position and type of the auxiliary

	Verb-early	Verb-end
ist	5	
sii	2	1
uuari	1	
uuerde	1	
uuard	2	6
uurdi		1
mahti	1	
scolda		1

The table shows a nearly complementary distribution: the auxiliary forms based on the verb *be* mainly appear in an early verbal position, whereas the forms with *uuerdan* tend to appear in final position. Thus Robinson's statement about the significance of the verb *uuesan* can be strengthened and modified: *uuesan* ends up in early position with an extraordinarily high frequency, differently than other verbs. Since its behaviour is the same as a copula and as a auxiliary verb and since the other auxiliary verbs prefer final position, one of the reasons for early placement could be its light phonological and semantic weight. On the other hand, the forms of *uuerdhan* which prefer the final position behave rather as main verbs, which could be due to the fact that they are still at the very beginning of the grammaticalization path from main verb to auxiliary.⁸

The 9 copula constructions⁹ are mainly selected by verbs of saying; consider for instance:

- (3) *dhoh* *ir* *in* *cyres* *nemin* *quadhi*, *dhazs* *ir*
 although he in Kyros name said_{SUBJ} that he
ist *got* *ioh* *druhtin*
 is God and Lord
 'Although he used Kyros' name when he said that he is God and
 the Lord'
deum et dominum ita esse testatur dicens

(III.2, 151)

Nevertheless, the selecting main verb doesn't seem to be decisive for early verb placement since Verb-end clauses occur with the same type of verb:

- (4) *Hear* *quidit* *umbi* *dhazs* *christus* *got* *endi* *druhtin* *ist*.
 here says about that Christ God and Lord is.
 'Here is said that Christ is God and the Lord'
Quia christus deus et dominus est.

(III heading, 130)

Fourquet (1939: 139–140) already observed that in clauses with only one nominal element (as he called it) the final verb could occur either in final or in early position. But in clauses with two nominal elements as in (5) the finite verb behaves quite regularly, usually occurring between these two elements. We will return to this type of clause in section 4.

- (5) *dhazs ir gote uuas ebenchiliih*
 that he God_{DAT} was equal
 ‘that he was equal to God’
 ...*esse se equalem deo*

(V.3, 406)

3.3. Syntactic functions of postverbal elements

Conforming to the three verbal classes (main verb, copula and auxiliary) we distinguish between the following kinds of postverbal elements. Main verbs typically select a DP or a PP, copulas select a predicative nominal or adjective and auxiliaries either are followed by a DP and a non-finite verbal form or they introduce the verbal complex followed by a prepositional phrase. Accusative or dative objects never occur after the non-finite verb; they always follow the finite verb. Only prepositional phrases tend to be placed at the end of the clause either after the finite or after the non-finite verb. We found the following distribution:

Table 5. Syntactic functions of the postverbal constituents

V _{main} + DP/PP	9
V _{cop} + DP/AP predicative	9
V _{aux} + XP + V _{non-finite}	8
V _{aux} + V _{non-finite} + PP	4

The group [V_{main} + DP/PP] is an important one for the claim of an INFL-medial position since examples with postverbal accusative or dative objects or with pronominal forms are usually not analysed as extraposed. We found the following examples:¹⁰

- (6) “*dhazs ih fora sinem anthlutte hneige*
 that I in front of his face subjugate
imu dheodun,..”
 him people_{PL}
 ‘That I subjugate his peoples in front of him’
ut subiciam ante faciem eius gentes

(III.2, 153)

- (7) “*dhazs dhu firstandes heilac chiruni*“
 that you understand_{SUBJ} holy secret
 ‘that you understand the holy secret’
...et archana secretorum...
 (III.2, 159)
- (8) “*dhazs uuerodheoda druhtin sendida mih zi*
 that army Lord sent me to
dhir“
 you
 ‘that the Lord of the armies sent me to you’
quia dominus exercitum misit me ad te
 (III.9, 236)
- (9) *dhazs imu arsterbandemu siin fleisc ni chisah*
 that he_{DAT} die_{ParttPres/DAT} his flesh NEG saw
enigan unuillun.
 any decomposition
 ‘That when he died his flesh did not decompose’
quia moriens caro eius non uidit corruptionem ...
 (IX.12, 719)
- (10) *dhazs sie ni eigun eouuihd, huuazs sie*
 that they NEG own anything, what they
dhar uuidar setzan.
 there against oppose
 ‘that they have nothing to object’
dum non habeant quod proponant
 (V.5, 430)
- (11) *Endi dhazs mittingart firleizssi diubilo*
 and that earth leave_{SUBJ/PRET} devils_{GEN}
drugidha endi auur aruuegodi zi sines
 idols and again return_{SUBJ/PRET} to his
scheffidhes huldin.
 Creator_{GEN} mercy
 ‘and that the world leaves the deceptions of the devils and again re-
 turns to its Creator’s mercy’
*Omissisque mundus demonum simulacris reconciliaretur gratie
 conditoris.*
 (V.10, 507)

- (12) *dhazs ir dhoh in dheru chihurfī zi*
 that he after all in this_{FEM/DAT} turns_{SUBJ/PRET} to
gotes minniu endi zi rehtnissa uerchum.
 God_{GEN} love and to justice's work
 'that after all he turns by the virtue of this to God's love and to the
 work of justice'
ut uel per ipsam reuerteretur ad amorem dei et operationem iustitię
 (V.10, 501)

- (13) "*dhazs dhu faris zi dhinem fordhrom*"
 that you go to your ancestors
 'that you go to your ancestors'
ut uadas ad patres tuos
 (IX.2, 622)

The first three examples with postponed accusative object or postponed pronouns are part of quotation syntax. Examples (9) and (10) display accusative objects independently of quotation syntax. Both occur in negated clauses with postverbal indefinite pronouns or adjectives which have to be interpreted as focussed. Only (11) exhibits no specially marked accusative object, neither influenced by Latin nor quotation syntax. It could, however, be interpreted as a main clause. Interestingly (12) and (13) are constructed exactly as the Latin original. Nevertheless the clause final PPs in (12) and (13) have to be regarded as features of a Germanic syntax and are typically analysed as extrapositions. We conclude that the evidence for a structural early verb position within this group is based on just a few examples, which are mainly part of quotation syntax.

The group [V_{cop} + DP/AP predicative], in contrast, doesn't seem to be influenced either by quotation syntax or by the Latin text. We only find deviations from the Latin original as in (14) or (15), the only example which seems to imitate at least the ordering of the last constituents being (16):

- (14) *dhazs ir selbo Christ ist chiuuisso got*
 that he himself Christ is certainly God
ioh druhtin
 and Lord
 'that he himself, Christ, is certainly God and the Lord'
Quia idem deus et dominus est
 (III.1, 135)

- (15) “*dhazs ir gote uuas ebenchiliih...*”
 that he God_{DAT} was equal
 ‘that he was equal to God’
Esse se equalem deo
 (V.3, 406)

- (16) *dhazs dher selbo gheist ist got.*
 that the same spirit is God
 ‘that the same spirit is God’
Ut eundem spiritum ostenderet esse deum.
 (III.10, 248)

One possible analysis of the types [V_{aux} + XP + V_{non-finite}] is to regard them as cases of verb projection raising with the finite verb occurring in final position and the verbal projection with the non-finite verb extraposed to the right (cf. Axel 2007: 98-104). Between the finite and the non-finite verbal form only little material is included: out of a total of 8 cases the subject appears 5 times, as in (17) and (18), and only once does an object (19), an adverb (20) or PP (21).

- (17) *dhazs fona dhemu almahtigin fater dhurah inan*
 that from the_{DAT} almighty father through him
ist al uuordan
 is all created
 ‘that all is created by the almighty father and by means of him’
quando a patre per illum cuncta creata esse noscuntur
 (II.3, 99)

- (18) *dhazs dhar ist christ chizeihnit*
 that there is Christ meant
 ‘that there is meant Christ’
intellege christum
 (III.2, 148)

- (19) “*dhazs druhtin dhir ist huus zimbrendi*”
 that Lord you_{DAT} is house building
 ‘that the Lord is building a house for you’
quod edificaturus sit domum tibi dominus
 (IX.2, 620)

- (20) *dhazs (...)* *christ iu* *ist* *lange* *quhoman*
 that (...) Christ yet is long ago come
 ‘that Christ came long ago’
(...) christus olim uenisse cognoscitur
 (V.6, 455)

- (21) *dhazs ir* *selbo gotes sunu* *uuard in* *lihhe*
 that he self God_{GEN} son was in body
chiboran
 born
 ‘that God’s son himself was born as a human’
eundem filium dei natum in carne monstremus
 (V.1, 381)

As Weiß points out (to appear: 7), clauses like (17) with an extraposed pronominal are not grammatical in modern dialects which allow verb projection raising. He therefore assumes that such constructions with a right adjoined VP are also not possible in Old High German and proposes an analysis with leftward movement of the finite verb. However, independently of the proposed analysis all of these clauses have to be regarded as examples of a typical Old High German syntax.

The group [V_{aux} + V_{infinit} + DP/PP] only consists of four examples. They all belong to the argumentative part of the treatise.¹¹

- (22) *dhazs dhiz* *ist* *chiquedan* *in* *unseres druhtin*
 that this is said in our Lord_{GEN}
nemin
 name
 ‘that this said in the name of our Lord’
Quod in persona specialiter christi domini nostri accipitur.
 (III.3, 174)

- (23) *dhazs ir* *sih auur dhurah* *hreuun*
 that he himself again through remorse
mahti chigarauuan zi chinisti.
 could prepare to salvation
 ‘that he could prepare himself for salvation by remorse’
ut per penitentiam reparari possit ad ueniam
 (V.10, 498)

- (24) *dhazs ir iesus uuardh chinemnit in*
 that he Jesus was named in
bauhnungum dhes chiuuarin iesuses
 naming the_{GEN} true_{GEN} Jesus_{GEN}
 ‘that he was called Jesus in naming the true Jesus’
ut iesus nominaretur ad significandum illum uerum iesum.
 (IV.2, 545)

These examples have to be evaluated like the ones in (12) and (13): although they apparently copy the Latin original, they are instances of a genuine Germanic syntax which is still used in present-day German.

In the next section we try to find out if all the postverbal positions are motivated by the same information-structural purpose.

4. The Influence of information-structural factors

We start our investigation with the hypothesis that the last or the postverbal parts of the clause are reserved for focussed information. This assumption is a very old one (cf. Rannow 1888: 119; Erdmann 1886: 190). Lacking the notion of focus it was understood as a specially stressed position. Since access to pronunciation in historical texts is not available, one method to find the focussed parts of the clause is text interpretation. Admittedly this isn’t a very transparent instrument either since discourse often allows different interpretations. Only in some cases do we find lexical items which we can take to be reliable indicators for focus interpretation. Before interpreting the information-structural values of the *dhazs*-clauses with early verb position, we have to define the concepts to be used.

As a starting point we adopt Molnár’s (1993) approach to information structure, where Focus-Background, Topic-Comment and Theme-Rheme are located on different layers (for a detailed discussion, see Petrova and Solf in this volume). Thus, Topic and Focus, which are often interpreted as complementary categories, may overlap under certain circumstances. The Topic-Comment layer will not be treated here since topics, which are the better studied concept of this dichotomy, typically occur at the beginning of the clause and not at the end. The notions of Theme and Rheme refer to the status of discourse referents and are classified by the features [new] and [given]. The former means “newly introduced into discourse”, while the latter covers previously mentioned or accessible entities. In the theological argumentative Isidor treatise the given items are, for instance, *God, Christ, the Holy Spirit,*

the prophet, and so on, which are under discussion throughout. A first approximation of the concept of Focus might use the notions of highlighting or marking of the relevant part of the utterance (cf. Petrova and Solf, this volume) Thus, Focus can be used to highlight old or new information. If it overlaps with new information, it is to be characterized as “new information Focus”, but this overlap is not obligatory. It also may coincide with old information. Other definitions of Focus recognize the potential overlap of Focus with old information and try to save the notion of “newness” by defining it as, for instance, a “new state of information in the addressee’s mind” (Lambrecht 1994: 210, quoted by Petrova and Solf, this volume). Nevertheless, such a definition cannot explain the rhetorical relations of the argumentative theological treatise we are dealing with in a satisfying way. The often repeated or derived claim that *Jesus is God* can never be considered as new information; it is always a known proposition whether it is accepted or not. We therefore adopt the semantic definition of Focus proposed by Rooth (1985, 1992) and developed by Krifka (2007: 6). This says that “Focus indicates the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions.” In our example the excluded alternative in interpretation is the heretic view that Jesus should be regarded as a human being and not the son of God. This special pragmatic use could also be described as a means to “correct or confirm information” (Krifka 2007: 11), which can be considered as a case of contrastive Focus (Krifka 2007: 21). In any case, these functions of Focus, including new information Focus and contrastive Focus, should also be subsumed under the general definition of Focus as exclusion of alternatives.

Using this definition we try to determine typical interpretations of the postverbal material and to find a motivation for its position, be it extraposed or not.

4.1. DPs or PPs after the finite main verb

We cannot confirm the traditional view that the constituents after the finite main verb represent focussed information if we understand focus in the sense of exclusion of alternatives. Sometimes the reading of exclusion is only possible if we extend the focus phrase and include the predicate. Restriction to the postverbal NP leads to an interpretation which can better be described as “new information” or as rhematic material. Consider, for example, (7), repeated here for convenience as (25).

- (25) “*dhazs dhu firstandes heilac chiruni*”
 that you understand_{SUBJ} holy secret
 ‘that you understand the holy secret’
 ... *et archana secretorum...*

(III.2,159)

The ‘holy secret’ is not contrasted with something else; its reference is vague as it is newly introduced within the quotation part. The focus rather includes the predicate answering the question: “*What do you want me to do?*” In contrast, the postverbal personal pronouns in (8), repeated here as (26), which typically indicate givenness, seem to contradict the observation that the postverbal material is new. As already mentioned, however, these sentences are quotations from the Old Testament. Being imported into the text of the Isidor treatise the pronouns cannot refer to known material. They count, therefore, as unknown material.

- (26) “*dhazs uuerodheoda druhtin sendida mih zi*
 that army Lord sent me to
dhir”
 you
 ‘that the Lord of the armies sent me to you’
 quia dominus exercitum misit me ad te.

(III.9, 236)

Only the continuation of the text in (27) explicitly suggests an interpretation for the referent of the pronoun *mih* in (26):

- (27) *Huuelih ist auur nu dhese druhtin*
 which one is however now this Lord
fona uuerodheoda drohtine chisendit, nibu
 from army Lord sent, if not
auur dher selbo druhtin nerrendeo christ
 again this same Lord Redeemer Christ
 ‘Which one, however, is this Lord sent by the Lord of the armies, if not just the same Lord Redeemer Christ?’

(III.9, 238)

The same holds for the postverbal preposition phrase in (13), here (28).

- (28) “*dhazs dhu faris zi dhinem fordhrom*“
 ‘that you go to your ancestors’
ut uadas ad patres tuos.
 (IX.2, 622)

In fact, we do not know who this person addressed by *dhu* is, nor who his ancestors are. Thus, if our interpretation of the postverbal parts in quotation syntax is on the right track, we have found one of their characteristics: they typically introduce new material.

Nevertheless, in the argumentative part there are some cases where the postverbal constituent is focussed in the sense that other alternatives are excluded. They typically involve negations with a focussed indefinite adjective or pronoun where the excluded alternative consists of the positive counterpart. Thus, the postverbal constituents only provide focussed information if they include a focus-inducing element:

- (29) *dhazs imu arsterbandemu siin fleisc ni chisah*
 that he_{DAT} die_{PartPresDAT} his flesh NEG saw
enigan unuullun.
 any decomposition
 ‘that when he died his flesh did not decompose’
quia moriens caro eius non uidit corruptionem ...
 (IX.12, 719)

- (30) *dhazs sie ni eigun eouuihd, huuzs sie*
 that they NEG own anything, what they
dhar uuidar setzan.
 PART oppose
 ‘that they have nothing to object’
dum non habeant quod proponant
 (V.5, 430)

4.2. Constituents within or after the verbal complex

Our findings that material after the main verb is only interpreted as new information unless it is accompanied by a focus-inducing pronoun or adjective does not seem to be true if we look at the examples (22) and (24): both consist of a complex DP where the Genitive and the adjective can be interpreted as contrastively focussed. We conclude that in addition syntactic

complexity can also be a motivation for postverbal Focus. This seems to be true if we look at the simple DP *zi chinisti* ‘to salvation’ in (23), which cannot be evaluated as focussed.

The picture is different for constituents between the finite and the non-finite verb. Except for (33), they all have to be interpreted as contrastively focussed.

- (31) *ist al uuordan* (II.3)
 (32) *ist christ chizeihnit* (III.2)
 (33) *ist huus zimbrendi* (IX.2)
 (34) *ist lange quhoman* (V.6)
 (35) *uuard in lihhe chiboran* (V.1)

We thus conclude that focussed (contrasted) material is not inserted in relation to finiteness, but in relation to the main verb and that it prefers the preverbal position. Postverbal focussed material apparently needs a special lexical or syntactic marking to be licensed. However, in establishing this generalization a methodological problem may arise: having no access to pronunciation we have no means to decide whether a constituent which is not lexically marked can be interpreted as focussed or not. I am aware of this problem, but the only way to deal with this issue is to rely on the weaker method of textual interpretation.

4.3. Identificational and predicative constructions

Typical focussed information occurs in copular constructions that are analysed as identificational clauses,¹² where the second NP serves to fix the identity of the first NP:

- (36) *dhazs ir selbo Christ ist chiuuisso got ioh*
 that he self Christ is certainly God and
druhtin
 Lord
quia idem deus et dominus est (...)
- (III.1, 135)

(37) *dhazs ir ist got ioh druhtin*
 that he is God and Lord
 (III.2,151)

(38) *dhazs iesus ist druhtin*
 that Jesus is Lord
dominum esse iesum

(VI.2, 549)

The context is always the same: after a quotation or argumentational part the author confirms that the previously mentioned Christ has to be God and Lord, where we interpret the last NPs as being focussed. None of the constituents delivers new information. Nevertheless, other interpretations are possible: it could be that the first part of the equation is the prominent one (if *ir selbo* or *iesus* were stressed). It is even possible that the copula itself is stressed, which leads to an interpretation in which the truth value of the assertion is focussed (cf. Höhle's Verum-Fokus 1992). Nevertheless, we assume that it is the postverbal constituent which is focussed, the sentence adverb *chiiuusso* in (36) can be seen as an indication of this interpretation. In this respect copulas are identical to auxiliaries, which also appear before the focussed material. We thus get the following ordering:

(39) Background / Verb_{aux/cop} / Focus_{contr} / Verb_{main} / New information
 Focus (lex. induced)
 Focus (syntact. compl.)

5. Results

We have argued that only by distinguishing different types of *dhazs*-clauses can we arrive at insightful explanations of the interaction between sentence structure and information structure.

The widely held belief that the preferred position for focussed constituents is the clause-final one must be modified in the sense that not all constituents at the end are focussed in the same manner or are focussed at all. Prepositional phrases often simply provide new material, and have to be interpreted as rhematic. Sometimes they provide given material as in (23).

The majority of Verb-early clauses headed by main verbs also lack postverbal contrastive focus, the postverbal material has to be classified as new rather than contrastive. In this case the new information focus com-

prises the entire VP. At the same time it has been shown that these clauses mainly occur in the quotation parts of the text.

The situation is different for auxiliaries and copulas in early position, which are usually followed by a contrastive constituent. A typical case is the identificational copular clause, where the postverbal nominal element is contrasted with alternative interpretations. The majority of these structures are independent of the Latin or quotation syntax. Furthermore, the observation that the verb *uuesan* (to be) plays an outstanding role in early verb placement can be strengthened and modified. Not only as a copula verb but also as an auxiliary *uuesan* prefers an earlier position in the clause. We therefore assume a structural Verb-early position for auxiliaries and copula verbs, which, following Fuß and Trips (2002), we identify with *vP*. This genuine Old High German structure is then used for structures with early main verbs as they typically occur in quotation syntax. They have the common feature of a special information-structural pattern and point to a different stylistic system, which could be described either as archaic or as contact induced.

At the same time there are many Verb-end structures with copulas and auxiliaries (and, of course, main verbs). These belong to the subsystem of subordinated clauses which already existed in Old High German and became generally established in the later development; consider (40) and (41):¹³

- (40) *dhazs christ (...) er allem uueraldim fona*
 that Christ before all worlds by
fater uuard chiboran.
 (the) father was born
 ‘that Christ before the beginning of the worlds was born by the father’
...ante omnia secula filius a patre genitus esse declaratur. (II.3, 97-98)

- (41) *Hear quidit umbi dhazs christusgot endi druhtin ist.*
 here says about that Christ God and Lord is
 ‘here is said that Christ is God and the Lord’
Quia Christus deus et dominus est.

(III. heading, 130)

The later unification of the syntactic position for finite verbs has the disadvantage of an information-structural ambiguity common to subordinated clauses with Verb-end. If there is more than one constituent before the verbal complex, as for example in (40), it is not necessarily clear whether the preverbal constituent is focussed or if the whole subordinate clause is to be

interpreted as backgrounded. The contrastive reading means that ‘Christ is the son of the divine father and not of a human being’. In contrast, the background reading just summarizes the knowledge of Christ’s birth as a starting point for further argumentation. This interpretation gains support by the fact that Verb-end clauses typically occur at the beginning or at the end of a paragraph.

The Verb-end analysis also accounts for clauses where main verbs are followed by constituents which are marked by a focus-inducing element or by syntactic complexity. These are analysed as extrapositions triggered by a special prosodic pattern.

Finally, we don’t regard these different verb positions as parts of different grammars but as different means of the same grammar with special discourse functions. It is possible that information structure allows different sentence structures as in the example quoted by Fourquet (mentioned in section 3.2 as (5), here (42)). Fourquet obviously did not see any regularity in the position of the predicative adjective with respect to the dative object except for the fact that the verb apparently has to occur in the penultimate position. In (42) the predicative adjective shows up after the copula and in (43) it is preverbal. In both positions they have to be interpreted as focussed as revealed by the context given in brackets [].

- (42) *“dhazs ir gote uuas ebenchiliih.”*
 that he God_{DAT} was equal
 ‘that he was equal to God [and not just in the same form]’
esse se equalem deo.
 (V.3, 406)

- (43) *dhazs ir chihoric uuari gote*
 that he obedient was_{SUBJ} God_{DAT}
 that he should be obedient to God [and no longer disobedient]
ut esset deo subiectus
 (V.9, 491)

Following our analysis of copular structures, *uuas* in (42) occurs in v° . The focussed predicative adjective corresponds to the established information-structural pattern. Nevertheless, the Verb-end analysis is not excluded since the extraposed constituent is lexically marked: the adjective *ebenchiliih* ‘equal’ is a composition of *eban* and *chiliih*, both meaning ‘equal’. Its specific lexical (and prosodic) structure determines the final position in the clause. In contrast, *chihoric* ‘obedient’ in (43) has no special lexical focus

device and makes use of the usual preverbal focus placement of the ‘regular’ Verb-end construction. The extraposition of *gote* guarantees that there is no information-structural ambiguity in the sense that a background reading is not available.

We are aware of the fact that our results are based on a very small number of examples and might be better described as hypotheses. In future research we hope to test these findings against all the subordinated clauses of the Isidor text.

Notes

1. I want to thank Svetlana Petrova and Roland Hinterhölzl for interesting discussions and comments on an earlier version of this paper.
2. At this point in the discussion, we don’t distinguish between the different proposals for the landing-site of the finite verb be it VIP as in Kiparsky (1996), vP as in Fuß and Trips (2002) or TP and vP as in Weiß (to appear).
3. But see Hinterhölzl (2004) for a critical evaluation of the double base hypothesis.
4. We opted for Egger’s edition because it is accessible to a greater public. Since we not only quote the line, but also the chapter and the paragraph, it will be possible to find the quoted clauses in Hench’s edition as well.
5. The Verb-second analysis is based on Jäger’s (2005) account of negation, where the negative particle is clitised to the finite verb.
6. See Fleischer (2006) for methodological problems in general.
7. This fact, already noted by Fourquet (1974: 318–319) has not yet received a satisfactory explanation.
8. This point was stressed by Svetlana Petrova in a personal communication.
9. Seven times with the pattern *uuesan/sin* + NP/AP, two times with the pattern *uuerdan* + NP/AP.
10. We don’t consider Verb-first constructions. Many of them are parallel to the Latin text as in the following example: *Dhazs ni bilibun ano herrun iudaeoliudi fona iudases chunne* ‘that the Jews of the family of Judas are without masters’ *Non defuisse principes iudeorum populi ex genere iuda* (VIII.1, 581).
11. Again, we won’t consider a Verb-first construction from the quotation part: „*dhazs chiendot uuerdhe dhiu aboha ubarhlaupnissi...*” That finished be_{SUBJ} this bad offence. *Ut consummetur praeuaricatio* (V.6, 448).
12. For a recent discussion of copular clauses, see Geist (2006).
13. We take examples with a final verbal complex as cases of Verb-end even if the finite verb occurs in the penultimate position.

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