The Constituent Order of *Hwæt*-Clauses in Old English Prose

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The aim of the present study is to conduct a comprehensive corpus analysis of the constituent order of main declarative clauses with the interjection *hwæt* 'what' in the clause-initial position in Old English prose texts. On the basis of his analysis of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Walkden (2013) claims that such *hwæt*-clauses pattern with subordinate clauses with respect to their verb position. My study confirms Walkden's basic empirical findings that *hwæt*-clauses do not behave like typical main clauses as far as their constituent order is concerned. However, there are numerous differences between them and subordinate clauses introduced by *hwæt*, that is, free relatives and embedded questions. The analysis suggests that the conditions favoring the use of the V-final order in main *hwæt*-clauses resemble the ones identified for ordinary V-final main clauses in Bech 2012. What is more, the study shows that the functional differences between *hwæt*- and *hwæt þa*-clauses noted in Brinton 1996 are blurred in Old English prose because of a regular variation between *hwæt þa*-S and *hwæt*-S-*þa* patterns. The data also suggest that *þa* in *hwæt þa*-clauses should rather be analyzed as an independent clause element.

Keywords: *hwæt*, *hwæt þa*, Old English, interjections, V-final main clauses

1. The Place of *Hwæt* and *Hwæt þa* Among Old English Interjections. Until recently, the status of *hwæt* in Old English (OE) syntax has seemed quite clear. Since *hwæt*, as an interrogative pronoun, belongs to the group of secondary interjections—that is, words from other word-classes also used as interjections (Sauer 2009:172)—it can fulfill a number of distinct functions in OE. It can function as one of the wh-words in direct and indirect questions, shown in 1a and 1b, respectively, as a relativizer in free relative clauses (usually within the combination *swa hwæt swa* 'whatever') as in 1c, as well as an interjection, as in 1d. For years it has generally been assumed that the interjection *hwæt* is an extra-clausal

element, which, by definition, plays "no part in the syntax of the sentence" (Mitchell 1985:§1234).

(1) a. Hwæt <u>woldest</u> **þu** nu   æt me?[1]
        what   would   you now at me
        'What do you want from me now?'

                                (coaelhom,ÆHom_20:161.3022)

   b. ða gyt he ahsode hwæt **heora cyning** haten <u>wære</u>
      then yet he asked what their king   called were
      'Then yet he asked what their king's name was'
                                (cobede,Bede_2:1.96.29.904)

   c. &   bewiste   **swa hwæt swa** him þearf <u>wæs</u>
      and watched over whatever   him need was
      'And he watched over whatever he needed'
                          (cogregdC,GDPref_and_4_[C]:27.299.26.4441)

   d. Hwæt, **ge** nu <u>gehyrað</u> hu   he Gode   yfelsacað.
      what   you now hear   how   he God.DAT blasphemes
      'What, now you hear how he blasphemes God.'
                          (coverhomE,HomS_24.1_[Scragg]:198.169)

Brinton (1996:179–210) treats *hwæt* in main declarative clauses such as 1d as a pragmatic marker close in function to Modern English (ModE) *you know* and notes that "[t]he use of pragmatic *hwæt* appears to be much less frequent in prose than in verse" (p. 192). Since the use of *hwæt* is a well-known feature of OE poetry (several poems including *Beowulf*, *The Dream of the Rood*, and *Fates of the Apostles* begin with it), its relatively low frequency in OE prose is associated with the less oral character of this group of texts.

Regardless of whether *hwæt* is viewed as an interjection or a pragmatic marker, its status as an extra-clausal element without any discernible influence upon the clause structure had not been questioned until Walkden (2013) suggested an alternative analysis. Walkden argued

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[1] In all the examples presented in this paper, finite verbs are underlined and subjects are shown in bold.

that *hwæt*-clauses pattern with subordinate, not with main clauses, as far as the position of the verb is concerned, since the finite verb tends to appear in clause-final or clause-late position, as in 1b,c. In his study, Walkden claimed that *hwæt*-clauses such as 1d should be analyzed as wh-exclamatives "parallel in interpretation to Modern English *How you've changed!*" (2013:484–485). Under this analysis, *hwæt* is not an extra-clausal interjection but a fully-fledged clause constituent.

Interestingly enough, for Walkden (2013), there is no structural or functional difference between clauses with simple *hwæt*, such as 1d, and clauses introduced by the combination *hwæt þa* 'what then', as in 2; he merges both types in his analysis and claims that they both follow the same patterns and are exclamative in their illocutionary force.

(2) Hwæt ða   **Israhela bearn**   endemes hrymdon[2]
    what then Israel's' children together lamented
    'What, then the children of Israel lamented together'
                                        (cootest,Num:13.31.4142)

In contrast, Brinton (1996) makes a distinction between *hwæt* and *hwæt þa*, claiming that while the former is the functional equivalent of *you know* in both poetry and prose, the latter (used only in prose) is different and most closely approximates the ModE use of *so,* denoting "clausal connections on a more global level" (p. 195).

Functional considerations aside, there may be two structural interpretations of *þa* in a *hwæt þa*-clause: *Hwæt* may be treated as an interjection and *þa* as an adverb (which is how these elements are annotated in the YCOE corpus); alternatively, both may be treated as a single pragmatic marker (or a complex interjection) in which *þa* has no temporal meaning and no additional discourse-organizing function (which seems to be Brinton's interpretation, though her study is focused on function and not structure of these clauses). Thus, the status of *þa* in *hwæt þa*-clauses such as 2 is not obvious; *hwæt þa* is not traditionally regarded as a complex interjection, and it is not listed in any of the general studies of OE interjections (for example, Offerberg 1967 in Hiltunen 2006:94, Mitchell 1985:§1239, Sauer 2009:172). Walkden, in his analysis of *hwæt*—which is based on two prose texts, *Lives of Saints*

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[2] *ða* is an alternative spelling of *þa*.

and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*—notes that *hwæt* and *þa* are "normally collocated ...by Ælfric" (Walkden 2013:472, note 11); he does not count *þa* as a clause constituent in his analysis of word order patterns, even though he glosses *þa* in *hwæt þa*-clauses as 'then' (Walkden 2013:480, example 36). However, if *þa* is an independent clause constituent, it is quite intriguing to see that it shows some specific syntactic behavior when preceded by *hwæt*: *Þa* on its own causes very regular S-V inversion in OE (Pintzuk 1999:91, Fischer et al. 2000:118, Haeberli 2002, Ringe & Taylor 2014:399), while *hwæt þa* usually fails to invert the verb and the subject, as in 2 above and 4 below.

Brinton (1996) shows that there is also a difference between clauses with simple *hwæt* and *hwæt þa* with respect to subject type. She notes that "almost every instance" of simple *hwæt* in poetry co-occurs with a 1st or 2nd person pronoun (p. 185) and suggests that "it functions in a similar way in prose as in verse" (p. 192), though she admits that a full investigation of the use of *hwæt* in OE prose is beyond the scope of her study. Her examples from prose, however, mostly do contain 1st and 2nd person pronouns (1996:192–193), as in 3.

(3) Hwæt, **we** <u>witon</u> ðæt we ma   lufiað ðone æcer
    what   we   know that we more love   the   field

    ðe   ær   wæs mid ðornum aswogen
    which before was with thorns   choked

    'What, we know that we love the field more which first was choked
    with thorns'   (Alfred, Gregory's Pastoral care 52, 411.16–17,
                                            after Brinton 1996:193)

On the basis of her analysis of *Lives of Saints*, Brinton notes that clauses with *hwæt þa* are different from clauses with simple *hwæt* since, in the former, subjects are mostly nominal, and in over half the cases the subject is a proper name (p. 194), as in 4.

(4) … Hwæt ða   **cecilia** hi sylfe <u>gescrydde</u> mid hæran   to lice
       what then Cecilia herself clothed   with hair-cloth to body
       'What then Cecilia clothed herself with hair-cloth on her body'
                                    (ÆLS [Cecilia] 10–14, after Brinton 1996:194)

Thus, for Brinton, the difference between simple *hwæt* and *hwæt þa* is as follows: They perform different functions, have different distribution (*hwæt þa* is used only in prose), and are associated with different subject types. For Walkden, *hwæt* and *hwæt þa* are structurally similar exclamatives, though this does not mean that they could not perform all the discourse functions described by Brinton (1996). The two theories are supposed to complement each other rather than stand in opposition (Walkden 2013:488). One of the aims of this study is to check if the functional discrepancy suggested by Brinton (1996) is in any way reflected in the constituent order of *hwæt-* and *hwæt þa*-clauses, which are not differentiated by Walkden (2013).

The structure of this article is as follows: Section 2 discusses some basic facts about OE constituent order, with a special focus on the V-final order, which Walkden (2013) associates with *hwæt*-clauses, and with a summary of Walkden's (2013) main findings. In section 3, the methodology of the present study is explained. Section 4 presents the results, showing how *hwæt*-clauses differ from subordinate clauses introduced by *hwæt* and bringing to light some interesting similarities between the order in *hwæt*-clauses and coordinate clauses. Section 5 offers an alternative analysis of *hwæt*-clauses, showing how the variables that increase the frequency of V-late and V-final in main clauses work in *hwæt*-clauses. Section 6 concludes the article.

2. V-Final Order in OE and the Presence of *Hwæt*.

There is a well-known asymmetry between OE main and subordinate clauses in terms of constituent order: While the former show a strong tendency for V-2, the latter have the finite verb placed in the clause-final or clause-late position (Fischer et al. 2000:49–53). Nonetheless, it is not impossible to find subordinate clauses with V-2 or even V-1 order and V-final main clauses: The asymmetry is manifested by strong tendencies, not categorical order distinctions.

The V-final order, defined as S...V with a heavy intervening element such as a nominal object, a nominal or adjectival complement, or a nonfinite verb form (Mitchell 1985:§3911), is rare in main clauses unless they are coordinated (that is, introduced by the coordinating conjunction *and* or *ac*; Fischer et al. 2000:53, Ringe & Taylor 2014:419). That said, however, some recent corpus studies of OE report that V-final coordinate clauses are not as common in OE as traditionally assumed (Cichosz et al.

2016, Bech 2017). In noncoordinate main clauses, the frequency of the V-final order is "generally on the low side" (Ringe & Taylor 2014:406), but "is much higher than previously acknowledged" (Pintzuk & Haeberli 2008). It is usually assumed that the use of the V-final order in main clauses is a reflection of the Proto-Germanic clause structure (Mitchell 1985:§3916).

On the basis of her detailed corpus-based study, Bech (2012) identified several factors that promote the use of V-final order in OE main declarative clauses (pp. 74–75):

(i)   Information structure: In OE main V-final clauses, the subject usually conveys given information, though it is not necessarily pronominal.[3]

(ii) Weight: Verbs in OE main V-final clauses are often heavy; ca. 37% of verbs in Bech's sample of V-final clauses have three syllables, while the result for SVX clauses is only 4.5%.

(iii) Verb type: Verbs in OE main V-final clauses are punctual rather than durative, that is, they do not express qualities, states or stances; copula verbs are rare, while in SVX clauses they constitute 44.6% of the early OE and 38.7% of the late OE sample (figures from Bech 2001:107–109).

Bech (2012) also studied the functions of SXV main clauses in discourse organization and found that the relation is not straightforward. However, "it seems that verb-final order is often used in the substructure of the text, after the main events have been introduced" (p. 82), as in 5, which is presented as "a rather common discourse environment for verb-final clauses" (p. 80).

(5) On þære ilcan tide wurdon twegen æþelingas afliemde of Sciþþian (XVS), Olenius 7 Scolopetius wæron hatene, . . . 7 hie ðær æfter hrædlice tide from þæm londleodum þurh seara ofslægene wurdon

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[3] However, it must be emphasized that V-final is not the only order in which given subjects predominate; the same may be observed in SVX clauses (Bech 2001:182).

(SXV). Ða wurdon hiora wif swa sarige on hiora mode... þætte... (XVS) (Or., p. 29:1. 14)

At the same time were two noble-men driven from Scythia (XVS), Plynos and Scolopythos were called, … and they there after short time by the land-people through treachery killed were (SXV). Then became their wives so sorrowful in their minds… that… (XVS).

(after Bech 2012:80–81)

All in all, the V-final order is not a feature unique to OE subordinate clauses, and its (infrequent) use in main clauses may be associated with a number of clear and verifiable factors (though their role in discourse is not fully understood).

Constituent order in *hwæt*-clauses has not been considered separately in general studies of OE syntax, since *hwæt* as an interjection has not been thought to have any impact on element order. However, Mitchell (1985:§2547, note 95) does note a potential relation between the presence of an interjection (or a coordinating conjunction) and the untypical S-V order after *þa* 'then' and *þonne* 'then':

Clauses in which *þa* or *þonne* follows conjunctions like *ac*, *forðæm*, and *ond*, or interjections like *efne* and *hwæt*, must be considered separately, because of the possible influence of these words on the element order.

Thus, even though *hwæt* is an extra-clausal interjection for Mitchell, he does note its potential influence on the order of the following clause. Walkden (2013) assumes that an extra-clausal element cannot influence constituent order, but if this was true, why would OE *and*- and *ac*-clauses show patterns different from other main clauses? The conjunctions *and* and *ac* are conventionally and uncontroversially analyzed as extra-clausal, so the extra-clausal status of a word does not preclude its influence on constituent order. Thus, the aim of this study is to explore in detail the influence of *hwæt* on constituent order regardless of its (more or less certain) extra-clausal status.

Walkden (2013) claims that *hwæt*-clauses pattern with subordinates in their positioning of the finite verb, but his analysis leaves several issues open. First of all, he compares *hwæt*-clauses with all subordinate clauses (taking the aggregate figures for all types of subordinate clauses as a

reference point), even though his analysis of *hwæt*-clauses as exclamatives requires them to pattern with a specific subtype of embedded clauses, that is, free relatives (p. 479). Next, he claims to have shown that *hwæt*-clauses pattern with subordinate clauses. However, this turns out to be true only for the material in Bede; in *Lives of Saints*, where subordinate clauses are weakly V-final (only 38% with V-final/V-late order), "it cannot be said that *hwæt*-clauses pattern with subordinate clauses; instead they seem to follow a pattern of their own, with the verb much more likely to be later than in other clauses in general" (Walkden 2013:474). Thus, the claim that *hwæt*-clauses pattern with subordinate clauses is, in fact, based on one text (Bede) with only 29 *hwæt*-clauses. The aim of this study is to follow up Walkden's analysis and test the validity of his claim for the entire set of *hwæt*-clauses in the YCOE corpus.

3. Research Design.

The present study aims to deepen our understanding of the structure of *hwæt*-clauses in OE prose by finding answers to the following research questions:

(i)   Is the position of the verb in *hwæt*-clauses similar to the position of the verb in subordinate clauses introduced by *hwæt*?

(ii) Could *hwæt*-clauses be analyzed as main clauses in which the information status of the subject, length of the verb, and verb type have an impact on the particularly frequent use of the V-final pattern?

(iii) Are there any differences in constituent order between clauses with simple *hwæt* and clauses with *hwæt þa*?

(iv) Is *þa* in *hwæt þa*-clauses a part of the interjection phrase or an independent adverb?

The study has been conducted on the basis of the YCOE corpus (Taylor et al. 2003) searched by means of the CorpusSearch 2 application (Randall et al. 2005–2013). All main clauses containing *hwæt* annotated as an interjection have been extracted and subjected to a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis. All free relatives and dependent questions introduced by *hwæt* have also been analyzed to provide a solid empirical basis for testing the hypothesis that *hwæt*-clauses pattern with

subordinate clauses (all queries used to extract the data are shown in appendix 1).

In the constituent order analysis, all the patterns are first presented with descriptive labels allowing for their identification, and then the analysis is focused on patterns that are structurally unambiguous. In order for the analysis to be comparable with Walkden's (2013) study, both *hwæt* and *hwæt þa* are treated as extra-clausal in the calculation of verb positions, but an alternative calculation with *þa* as a clause constituent is presented in the final section of this paper.

For a clause to be considered unambiguously V-late, there must be an element following the verb and an element intervening between the subject and the verb, as in 6a.[4] Unambiguously V-final clauses need to fulfill the latter condition only, as in 6b. Clauses in which a nonfinite form is the only element following the finite verb, as in 6c, are not considered as clear examples of V-late (even though this is what the surface order suggests) because they could be analyzed as V-final with verb-raising (see Ringe & Taylor 2014:413). Counting them as either V-final or V-late would be theory-biased, so they are excluded from the qualitative part of the analysis.

(6) a. Hwæt, **we** feala þinga geseoð
      what   we many things see

      on þyssum woruldlicum gesceaftum ðæt is an þing
      on these   worldly   creatures   that is one thing

      & hwæðre   ðreo þing fullice on him hafað
      and nevertheless three things full   on them have

      'What, we see many things among the creatures of the earth which are one thing and nevertheless have three full things in them'   (coverhom,HomS_2_[ScraggVerc_16]:147.2112)

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[4] The weight of the element is also a significant factor. That means that for Mitchell (1985:§3911), pronominal objects and light monosyllabic adverbs intervening between S and V do not indicate V-late. This factor is included in the analysis, and the results appear at the end of section 4, in table 5.

b. Hwæt ða **se ælmihtiga God**
   what   then the almighty   God

   þas   earman cynincges bene   <u>gehyrde</u>
   the   poor   king's   prayer heard

   'What then the almighty God heard the poor king's prayer'
   (coaelive,ÆLS_[Book_of_Kings]:445.3980)

c. Hwæt ða   **Mathathias** on mode <u>wearð</u> geangsumod
   what   then Mathathias   in mind was   vexed

   'What then Mathathias became anxious'
   (coaelive,ÆLS_[Maccabees]:224.4961)

A clear example of V-1 requires the finite verb to be placed immediately after *hwæt* (*þa*) with some other constituent following the verb, as in 7a; in unambiguous examples of V-2, an element is placed between *hwæt* (*þa*) and the finite verb, with another constituent (other than a nonfinite verb form) following the verb, as in 7b. All clauses in which the verb is at the same time the first/second and final constituent, such as 7c, are analyzed as ambiguous and excluded from further analysis.[5]

(7) a. Hwæt ða   <u>gelyfdon</u> **forwel menige**
       what   then believed   very   many
       'What then many people believed'
       (cocathom2,ÆCHom_II,_9:78.212.1581)

   b. Hwæt ða **Basilius** <u>bæd</u> þone ælmihtigan God
      what   then Basil   bade the   almighty   God

      þæt he his lif   gelengde þam læce   to hæle
      that he his life prolonged the doctor.DAT to health

      'What then Basil asked the almighty God that he prolonged the doctor's life'   (coaelive,ÆLS_[Basil]:598.881)

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[5] In the analysis, clausal arguments are not counted as clause elements because they would always take the clause-final position (see Behaghel's Law), and there is no possible variation between alternative orderings.

c. Hwæt **heo** <u>dydon</u>, swa swa he cwæð
   what they did   as   he said
   'What, they did as he said'   (cobede,Bede_2:2.102.4.954)

Clauses in which the finite verb is clause-final or clause-late with no element intervening between the subject and the finite verb (x-S-V or x-S-V-x), as in 8, are also considered ambiguous because the element preceding the subject may be analyzed as a topicalized constituent, and the clause could then be treated as V-2 (Ringe & Taylor 2014:406). Therefore, such clauses are also excluded from the qualitative part of the analysis (as they are in Bech 2012).

(8) Hwæt, hine eac swylce **sæ &   eall wætercynn** <u>ongeaton</u>
    what   him also   sea and all   water-kind   perceived
    'What, also the sea and all sea-creatures saw him'
                    (coverhom, HomS_2_[ScraggVerc_16]:75.2077)

All the observed patterns, including the ambiguous ones, are presented in tables 2–4. The subsequent analysis, however, focuses only on the clear examples of V-1, V-2, V-late, and V-final (see tables 6–13), classified according to the methodology presented above.

4. Do *Hwæt*-Clauses Pattern with Subordinate Clauses?
Table 1 shows that as far as OE prose is concerned, the combination *hwæt þa* is more frequent than simple *hwæt*, but the difference is not overwhelming. Other combinations of *hwæt* and an interjection and/or an adverb are present, but their frequency in the corpus is very low.

Interjection	Ælfric	Other texts	Total
hwæt þa	231	30	261
hwæt	35	196	231
la hwæt	1	10	11
eala hwæt	0	7	7
ono hwæt	0	7	7
hwæt þonne	0	5	5
hwæt la	1	3	4
hwæt þa la	2	0	2
hwæt nu	0	2	2
ono hwæt þa	0	1	1
Total	270	261	531

Table 1. The frequency of occurrence of *hwæt*
in main declarative clauses in OE prose.

What is more, it turns out that there is a significant difference between Ælfric's writings and other OE prose texts in the proportion of clauses with *hwæt þa* and simple *hwæt*: 231 out of 261 uses of *hwæt þa* (88%) can be found in the texts written by Ælfric. Thus, *hwæt þa* does not come across as a collocation used in OE prose generally; it rather seems to be a characteristic element of Ælfric's style. Moreover, out of the 30 uses from other texts, 16 come from Gregory's Dialogues (H), so the distribution of *hwæt þa* in the YCOE corpus is far from being even.

It is also noteworthy that there are 28 clauses with simple *hwæt* that are used at the beginning of a quotation, as in 9. With respect to *hwæt þa*-clauses, no such cases have been identified.

(9) &   him to cwæð:
and him to said

Hwæt, **ðæt** <u>is</u> gedauenlicre ðæt ðu   me fulwige
what   that is fitting   that you me baptize

'And said to him: What, that is fitting that you should baptize me'
(coverhom, HomS_2_[ScraggVerc_16]:12.2030)

Thus, the discourse-opening function of *hwæt* (that is, introducing direct speech) seems restricted to clauses with simple *hwæt*, and even there, it is quite limited in OE prose, at least when compared to OE poetry.

   Coming back to constituent order, in clauses with simple *hwæt* there is a strong tendency for a simple adverb (*þa, þonne* or *nu*) or another interjection (*la*) to appear later in the clause, as in 10; 70 such clauses have been identified in the data, which means that 30% of clauses with simple *hwæt* follow this pattern.

(10) a. Hwæt **he** ða   on ðare manfullan scilde <u>abisgode</u>
       what   he then on the   evil   shield occupied
       'What, he was then occupied with the evil shield'
                                    (coapollo,ApT:1.14.11)

   b. Hwæt, **þu** <u>wast</u> nu   þæt ic þe ne leoge
       what   you know now that I you not lie
       'What, now you know that I am not lying to you'
                                 (coboeth,Bo:14.32.32.586)

   c. Hwæt, **ic** þonne ær   <u>sæde</u> þæt þæt hehste good
       what   I   then before said that the highest good

       & sio hehste gesælð   an   wære.
       and the highest happiness one were

       'What, I said before that the highest good and the highest happiness were one thing'   (coboeth,Bo:34.85.6.1620)

   d. Hwæt, ge, **la**, syndon unwise men.
       what   you alas are   unwise men
       'What, you are alas unwise men'
                    (coverhomE,HomS_24.1_[Scragg]:138.103)

   It is interesting that these follow-up elements are exactly the same as the ones that co-occur with *hwæt* in the clause-initial position, as in 11.

(11) a. Hwæt þa **se godspellere** <u>gegrette</u> his gebroðra
       what   then the evangelist   greeted his brothers
       'What then the evangelist greeted his brothers'
                    (coaelive,ÆLS_[Mark]:15.3199)

b. Hwæt nu,   **wisdom** is an anlepe   cræft þære sawle
   what   now   wisdom is a   solitary craft the   soul's
   'What now wisdom is a solitary craft of the soul'
                                          (coboeth,Bo:32.72.13.1340)

c. hwæt þonne **þæt mod** in þæm lichomlecan lustfulnesse
   what then   the mind in the   carnal   delight

   sume gemete þurh   ned   **bið** gebunden
   some way   through need is   bound

   'What then the mind is through need in a way bound in carnal
   delight'   (cobede,Bede_1:16.88.9.804)

d. Hwæt la,   **ge**   syndon unwise men
   what   alas you   are   unwise men
   'What alas, you are unwise men'
                     (coverhom,HomS_24_[ScraggVerc_1]:12.13)

The position of *þa*, *þonne*, *nu*, and *la* in *hwæt*-clauses seems unrestricted:
The element may be placed either immediately after *hwæt* or later in the
clause (usually between the subject and the verb) without any noticeable
influence on the meaning, as in 10d and 11d, where the only difference
between the clauses is the position of *la*. Therefore, it is not certain
whether *hwæt þa* should indeed be treated as a unit from a syntactic point
of view, since the data suggest that the elements could be separated, as in
10a. The number of clauses with *hwæt...þa* in the YCOE corpus amounts
to 30. The factor underlying this variation seems to be subject type: The
subjects in *hwæt þa*-, *hwæt þonne*-, and *hwæt nu*-clauses are hardly ever
pronominal. When the subject is a pronoun, it usually precedes the
adverb, as in 10; in clauses with *la* no such restriction is observed. It is
natural to assume that the status of *þa* in *hwæt þa*-clauses is the same as
the status of *nu* in *hwæt nu*-clauses or the status of *þonne* in *hwæt þonne*-
clauses: All these are simple adverbs known to trigger similar syntactic
behavior in main clauses, leading to regular S-V inversion of both
pronominal and nominal subjects (they are treated as operators in Kroch
& Taylor 1997, Pintzuk 1999, Haeberli 2002, Kemenade & Westergaard
2012). In contrast, *la*, as an interjection, is not subject to this line of
reasoning. If one assumes that these adverbs are not a part of an extra-

clausal interjection phrase but are fully-fledged clause constituents, the question is why they fail to cause S-V inversion when preceded by the interjection *hwæt*, as explored in the following part of this section.

Table 2 shows the distribution of various element order patterns in clauses with simple *hwæt* and *hwæt þa*. The patterns are grouped into 4 main categories: V-final, V-late, V-2, and V-1.

Order	Pattern[6]	*hwæt*		*hwæt þa*	
		N.	%	N.	%
V-final	*hwæt (þa)*-S-x-V	50	21.6	52	19.9
	hwæt (þa)-x-S-V*	7	3.0	3	1.1
	hwæt (þa)-S-V_{NF}-V_F	0	0	0	0
	hwæt (þa)-S-x-V_{NF}-V_F	3	1.3	0	0
V-late	*hwæt (þa)*-S-x-V-x	54	23.4	61	23.4
	hwæt (þa)-x-S-V-x*	5	2.2	4	1.5
	hwæt (þa)-S-x-V_F-V_{NF}*	2	0.9	5	1.9
V-2	*hwæt (þa)*-S-V*	49	21.2	7	2.7
	hwæt (þa)-S-V_F-V_{NF}*	6	2.6	0	0
	hwæt (þa)-S-V-x	49	21.2	87	33.3
	hwæt (þa)-x-V-S	4	1.7	36	13.8
V-1	*hwæt (þa)*-V-S-x	2	0.9	6	2.3
TOTAL		231	-	261	-
V-1/V-2		**55**	**34.0**	**129**	**53.3**
V-1		2	1.2	6	2.5
V-2		53	32.7	123	50.8
V-final/V-late		**107**	**66.0**	**113**	**46.7**
V-final		53	32.7	52	21.5
V-late		54	33.3	61	25.2
TOTAL (ambiguous excluded)		**162**	**-**	**242**	**-**

Table 2. Constituent order in main clauses with *hwæt* and *hwæt þa*.

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[6] Patterns that are not clear representatives of a given order are marked by an asterisk in tables 2–4. V_F stands for finite verb, V_{NF} for nonfinite verb. Following Walkden 2013, short clauses in which the verb is at the same time the first/second and last constituent are counted as V-1 and V-2, respectively (and not V-final). It should be noted, however, that they are marked as ambiguous and excluded from further analysis.

As shown in table 2, there are 87 *hwæt þa*-S-V-x clauses in which *þa* fails to cause S-V inversion, as in 11a above; there are 6 *hwæt þa*-V-S clauses in which inversion does take place after *þa*, as in 12a, and 36 *hwæt þa*-x-V-S clauses in which inversion does take place, but it is not *þa* (or not only *þa*) that triggers it, as in 12b.

(12) a. Hwæt þa   <u>asprang</u> **micel oga** ofer heora nehgeburum
         what then arose   great fear over their neighbors
         'What then there was great fear among their neighbors'
                              (cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_25:380.34.4831)

   b. Hwæt þa, sona <u>wurdon</u> **his earan** geopenode
      what then soon were   his ears   opened
      'What then soon his ears were opened'
                              (coaelhom,ÆHom_18:36.2522)

In table 2, clauses such as 12a are classified as V-1 because the whole combination *hwæt þa* is analyzed as a unit. However, it seems more plausible to assume that the S-V inversion is caused by *þa*, as in 13, than to analyze 12a as an example of the infrequent V-1 order, which, by the way, does not co-occur with the verb *aspringan* 'arise' even once in the YCOE corpus.

(13) Þa   <u>asprang</u> **þis wundor** wide geond   þætt land
      then arose   this wonder wide through the land
      'Then this wonder travelled wide through the land'
                              (coaelive, ÆLS[Peter's_Chair]:75.2318)

As far as the general element order differences between clauses with *hwæt þa* and simple *hwæt* are concerned, table 2 shows that if syntactically ambiguous clauses are excluded (the biggest group are short *hwæt (þa)*-S-V clauses with the finite verb being the second and the final element), *hwæt þa*-clauses exhibit the V-2 order more often than clauses with simple *hwæt*: The two groups are clearly different. The main difference between them is related to the frequency of S-V inversion: In the case of *hwæt þa*, 42 out of 129 V-1/V-2 clauses (32.5%) show inversion, as in 12 above, while in clauses with simple *hwæt* the same may be observed in only 6 out of 55 clauses (11%), as in 14.

(14) Hwæt on ðæs siwenigean eagum <u>beoð</u> **ða æpplas** hale
     what on the bleary   eyes   are the apples whole
     'What, the apples of the bleary eyes are whole'

<div align="right">(cocura,CP:11.69.1.439)</div>

    Nonetheless, despite the differences between clauses with *hwæt þa* and those with simple *hwæt*, both groups have an intriguingly high proportion of clauses with V-final/V-late order. For example, in Bech's (2012) study, only 214 out of 2,500 main clauses are S-x-V. After adding up S-x-V (that is, V-final) and S-x-V-x (that is, V-late) and considering only structurally unambiguous clauses, the proportion of V-late/V-final in Bech's sample of main clauses is only 19% (14% if coordinate clauses are excluded).[7] In the case of *hwæt*- and *hwæt þa*-clauses, the proportion of V-late/V-final is much higher (66% and 47%, respectively). Let us recall Walkden's (2013) claim that *hwæt*-clauses pattern with subordinate clauses with respect to verb position. Considering the frequency of V-late/V-final in *hwæt (þa)*-clauses, this seems to be more than justified. However, Walkden's claim is based on aggregate figures for all subordinate clauses and all nonconjoined main clauses; the analysis is purely quantitative and does not take into account the quality of the elements other than the finite verb.[8] In order to verify the claim, an analysis similar to the one presented in table 2 has been conducted for two groups of subordinate clauses introduced by *hwæt*: dependent

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[7] The figures are calculated on the basis of tables 4.1 and 4.2 in Bech 2012:71–73. In her study, structurally ambiguous clauses are counted as "other". If one excludes such clauses, the number of main clauses in the sample is reduced to 2,158 and the proportion of V-final/late becomes 19% (214 SXV clauses plus 204 SXVX clauses). If one excludes coordinate clauses (on the basis of the data from Bech's table 4.2), the proportion of V-late/final falls to 13.7% (92 SXV clauses and 115 SXVX clauses out of 1,705 noncoordinate main clauses minus 196 structurally ambiguous noncoordinate main clauses).

[8] Walkden (2013) is not explicit about the procedure that allowed him to arrive at the figures he presents in his article, but the queries that he used to extract the data from the YCOE corpus are available on the Internet. The basis for the division into V-1/V-2 and V-late/V-final is the surface position of the finite verb in the clause (the elements ignored in the calculation are dislocated phrases, adverbial clauses, interjections, and negative particles). Short, structurally ambiguous clauses seem to be included in the statistics and treated as V-1/V-2.

questions, as in 15a, and free relatives introduced by *hwæt* and *swa hwæt swa*, as in 15b,c. The logic behind this decision was that i) different types of subordinate clauses may show different proportions of element order patterns (Quirk & Wrenn 1957:94, Traugott 1972:108, Stockwell & Minkova 1987:509), and ii) if *hwæt*-clauses resemble subordinate clauses, they should be closest to those subordinates that are introduced by the same introductory word.

(15) a. Nat   ic hwæt **ic** þe   mare <u>secge</u>
      not-know I what I you more say
      'I do not know what else to tell you'

<div align="right">(coeuphr,LS_7_[Euphr]:115.115)</div>

    b. ne ondræde ic hwæt **man** me <u>do</u>
      not fear   I what men me do
      'I am not afraid of what people may do to me'

<div align="right">(coaelive,ÆLS_[Martin]:176.6075)</div>

    c. &   nym swa hwæt swa **þu** ðines <u>finde</u>
      and take whatever   you yours find
      'And take whatever you find that is yours'

<div align="right">(cootest,Gen:31.32.1269)</div>

The order of free relatives is especially interesting: Walkden's (2013) analysis of *hwæt*-clauses as exclamatives is based on the assumption that they should resemble free relatives and not direct questions in their constituent order. (Indirect, that is, dependent questions are not mentioned).

Table 3 shows that dependent questions with *hwæt* in OE prose are to a great extent short, syntactically ambiguous clauses with S-V order; the proportion of such clauses reaches 40%.

Order	Pattern	N.	%
V-final	*hwæt* -S-x-V	80	15.4
	hwæt$_{SB}$[9] -x-V	30	5.8
	hwæt-x-S-V*	6	1.2
	hwæt -S-V$_{NF}$-V$_F$	44	8.5
	hwæt -S-x-V$_{NF}$-V$_F$	18	3.5
	hwæt$_{SB}$ -x-V$_{NF}$-V$_F$	13	2.5
V-late	*hwæt*$_{SB}$ -x-V-x	26	5.0
	hwæt$_{SB}$ -x-V$_F$-V$_{NF}$*	4	0.8
	hwæt -S-x-V-x	3	0.6
V-2	*hwæt* -S-V*	205	39.5
	hwæt -S-V-x	42	8.1
	hwæt -S-V$_F$-V$_{NF}$*	3	0.6
V-1	*hwæt* -V-S	33	6.4
	hwæt$_{SB}$ -V*	2	0.4
	hwæt$_{SB}$ -V-x	10	1.9
TOTAL		519	-
V-2/V-1		**85**	**28.4**
V-1		43	14.4
V-2		42	14.0
V-late/final		**214**	**83.6**
V-final		185	61.9
V-late		29	9.7
TOTAL (ambiguous excluded)		**298**	**-**

Table 3. Constituent order in dependent questions introduced by *hwæt*.

When all unclear examples are excluded, it turns out that the proportion of V-late/V-final clauses in the investigated group is higher than in main clauses with *hwæt*. What is more, some of the *hwæt*-V-S dependent questions could also be analyzed as direct questions, as in 16a, which would decrease the already low proportion of V-1/V-2. However, a good example illustrating that *hwæt*-V-S may be used in dependent questions

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[9] The label *hwæt*$_{SB}$ is used for subordinate clauses in which *hwæt* fulfils the role of the subject in the embedded question/free relative that it introduces.

is 16b (see 16c for the same meaning rendered with *hwæt*-S-V; both clauses are unambiguously subordinate).

(16) a. ac   sege me hwæt <u>hæfst</u> **þu** gedon
          but tell   me what have   you   done
          'But tell me what you have done | But tell me: what have you
          done?'   (conicodA, Nic_[A]:3.2.4.136)

   b. Soþlice þonne þu   þine ælmessan
       truly   when   you   your almsgiving

       do nyte   þin   wynstre hwæt <u>do</u> **þin swyþre** …
       do not-know.SBJ   your left   what do   your right

       'Truly when you give your alms, do not let your left hand know
       what your right hand does'   (cowsgosp,Mt_[WSCp]:6.3.293)

   c. ...nyte   þin   wynstre hand hwæt **þin swiðre hand** <u>do</u>
       ...not-know.SBJ your left   hand what your right   hand do
       'Do not let your left hand know what your right hand does'
                                         (coaelhom,ÆHom_31:55.4162)

Two particularly interesting patterns involve a complex verb phrase in the clause-final position, as shown in 17.

(17) a. He wot   hwæt **he** me eawian <u>wile</u>
          he knows   what he   me show   will
          'He knows what he wants to show me' (cosolilo,Solil_1:49.7.629)

   b. Nu   ic gehire hwæt **ðu** <u>woldest</u> witan
       now I   hear   what you   would   know
       'Now I will hear what you want to know'
                                         (cosolilo,Solil_2:56.10.734)

The pattern shown in 17a, with the finite verb following the nonfinite form, seems to be a norm with hardly any deviations: It is found in 44 dependent questions introduced by *hwæt*. Only three exceptions, as in 17b, have been identified in the data. What is more, the same order

(nonfinite followed by finite) may be observed in clauses with some constituents following the complex verb phrase, as in 18.

(18) Ac   gehiere   ge   feohgietseras
      but hear.IMP you misers

    hwæt be eow gecweden <u>is</u> on Salomonnes bocum
    what   by you said   is on Salomon's   books

    'But hear, misers, what is written about you in the books of
    Salomon'   (cocura,CP:44.331.5.2235)

Such clauses are not distinguished in table 3. However, if one counts all the clauses in which the nonfinite and the finite verb form are adjacent (there are 97 such clauses altogether), the ratio of the order finite > nonfinite to nonfinite > finite in dependent questions is 9 to 88.

It should be emphasized that the pattern shown in 17a is missing from table 2: Main clauses introduced by the interjection *hwæt* (or *hwæt þa*) never follow it. Instead, the alternative ordering, subject–finite verb–nonfinite verb, is found without any exceptions, as in 19.

(19) Hwæt, **ælc   mon   <u>mæg</u>** witan
      what   each man   may   know

    hu   hefig sorg   men   beoð seo gemen his bearna
    how heavy sorrow man.DAT is   the care   his children's

    'What each man may know what a heavy sorrow it is for a man to
    take care of his children'   (coboeth,Bo:31.70.27.1314)

If clauses with elements following the complex verb phrase are included in the calculation, the ratio of the order finite > nonfinite to nonfinite > finite in main clauses with *hwæt* and *hwæt þa* is 17 to 8. Thus, despite the clearly lower numbers, the tendency is the reverse of the one revealed for dependent questions. Naturally, the pattern shown in 19 is not unknown in subordinate clauses (in generative accounts it is analyzed as verb raising and treated as a variant of V-final; see Ringe & Taylor 2014:413). However, the asymmetry between its use in main clauses with *hwæt* versus dependent questions with *hwæt* is striking and

casts some doubt on Walkden's (2013) claim that the two groups of clauses behave in a similar way.

Turning to free relatives, table 4 shows that the distribution of orders is similar to that in dependent questions, if short, structurally ambiguous clauses are not taken into account.

Order	Pattern	N.	%
V-final	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)-S-x-V	75	28.5
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)$_{SB}$-x-V	26	9.9
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)-x-S-x-V	3	1.1
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)-S-V_{NF}-V_F	6	2.3
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)$_{SB}$-x-V_{NF}-V_F	7	2.7
V-late	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)-S-x-V-x	6	2.3
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)$_{SB}$-x-V-x	13	4.9
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)$_{SB}$-x-V_F-V_{NF}*	1	0.4
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)$_{SB}$-V_F-V_{NF}*	1	0.4
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)-x-S-V-x*	1	0.4
V-2	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)-S-V*	64	24.3
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)-S-V-x	44	16.7
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)-S-V_F-V_{NF}*	4	1.5
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)$_{SB}$-V_F-V_{NF}*	1	0.4
V-1	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)-V-S	1	0.4
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)$_{SB}$-V-x	7	2.7
	(*swa*) *hwæt* (*swa*)$_{SB}$-V*	3	1.1
TOTAL		**263**	**-**
V-2/V-1		**52**	**27.5**
V-1		8	4.3
V-2		44	23.4
V-late/final		**136**	**72.3**
V-final		117	62.2
V-late		19	10.1
TOTAL (ambiguous excluded)		**298**	**-**

Table 4. Free relatives introduced by *(swa) hwæt (swa)*.

S-V inversion hardly ever takes place in free relatives. This is natural considering the fact that it is the relativizer *(swa) hwæt (swa)* that often functions as the subject of the free relative, as in 20.

(20) &   eac eall **swa hwæt swa** neodðearflic <u>byþ</u> ic eow secge
    and also all   whatever   necessary   is   I   you say
    'And I will also tell you whatever is necessary'
<div align="right">(cogregdC,GD_2_[C]:22.147.26.1769)</div>

In clauses with complex verb phrases, similarly to dependent questions, the finite verb has a tendency to follow the nonfinite form, as in 21.

(21) Frumwæstmas synd eac
    first-fruits   are   also

    swa hwæt swa us ærest on geoguðe acenned <u>bið</u>
    whatever   us first on youth   born   is

'The first fruit is also whatever is born to us first in our youth'
<div align="right">(coaelhom,ÆHom_31:109.4183)</div>

If clauses with elements following the complex verb phrase are included in the calculation, the ratio of the order finite > nonfinite to nonfinite > finite is 7 to 20. Thus, the tendency is the same in both groups of subordinate clauses, and it is different from the one revealed for main *hwæt*-clauses (though, because of the lower frequency of complex verb phrases in free relatives, the difference is less overwhelming than the one noted for dependent questions and main *hwæt*-clauses).

In order to further understand the differences between the investigated clause types, elements intervening between S and V in the (x)-S-x-V-(x) patterns have been analyzed with respect to their weight, and the results are presented in table 5.

Intervening element	main clauses				dependent questions		free relatives	
	hwæt		*hwæt þa*		*hwæt*		*(swa) hwæt (swa)*	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
light	53	49.5	17	15.0	59	27.6	42	30.9
heavy	54	50.5	96	85.0	155	72.4	94	69.1
TOTAL	107	-	113	-	214	-	136	-

Table 5. Weight of the intervening elements in (x)-S-x-V-(x) clauses.

It turns out that a large number of (x)-S-x-V-(x) clauses in all the groups of *hwæt*-clauses (especially main clauses with simple *hwæt*) cannot be treated as clear examples of the V-final/V-late pattern because the element(s) intervening between the subject and the finite verb are light: They are either pronouns, as in 22a, or short (monosyllabic) adverbs, as in 22b.

(22) a. Hwæt, **ic** þe gesceop &   geliffæste
         what I you made   and made alive
         'What, I created you and gave you life'
                            (coverhom,HomS_40.3_[ScraggVerc_10]:150.1482)

    b. Hwæt **þæt fyr** ða barn   onbutan þam bottle
        what   the fire then burned around   the bottle
        'What, the fire then burned around the bottle'
                            (cocathom2,ÆCHom_II,_37:278.202.6268)

If such clauses are excluded from the sample of V-final and V-late clauses, the difference between main *hwæt (þa)*-clauses on the one hand and both types of subordinate clauses introduced by *hwæt* on the other hand becomes evident, as shown in table 6.

Order	main clauses				free relatives		dependent questions	
	hwæt		*hwæt þa*		*(swa) hwæt (swa)*		*hwæt*	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
clear V-1	2	1.8	6	2.7	8	5.5	43	17.9
clear V-2	53	48.6	123	54.7	44	30.1	42	17.5
clear V-late	18	16.5	53	23.6	10	6.8	21	8.7
clear V-final	36	33.0	43	19.1	84	57.5	134	55.8
clear total	109	-	225	-	146	-	240	-

Table 6. Constituent order in various types of *hwæt*-clauses.

The frequency of clear V-final order in the set of structurally unambiguous clauses with *hwæt* is different in main clauses and in subordinate clauses. In free relatives and dependent questions, the

proportion of V-final is virtually identical (56–57%); in main clauses with simple *hwæt*, it is 34%, and in *hwæt þa*-clauses—only 19% (though with a high proportion of V-late). Of course, 34% is a low proportion compared to subordinate *hwæt*-clauses, but it is still high compared to main clauses, which are supposed to be predominantly V-2 in OE. Even the relatively lowest result of 19% observed in *hwæt þa*-clauses deserves an explanation. Only ca. 50% of both *hwæt*- and *hwæt þa*-clauses have the expected V-2 order. Neither clauses with simple *hwæt* nor *hwæt þa*-clauses have the same or similar proportion of V-late/V-final order as the subordinate *hwæt*-clauses (the difference is statistically significant, the two-tailed Fisher's exact test, p=0.0054 for clauses with simple *hwæt* and p<0.0001 for clauses with *hwæt þa* compared to both types of subordinate clauses with *hwæt* combined).

Moreover, it is noteworthy that the results obtained by Bech (2012) for coordinate clauses are virtually the same as the ones identified for *hwæt*- and *hwæt þa*-clauses in the present study. In Bech's (2012) sample, ca. 19% (122 out of 649) of syntactically unambiguous coordinate clauses follow the V-final order, while 49% (318 out of 649) are V-2 (SVX or XVS).[10] These numbers show that *hwæt (þa)*-clauses pattern with coordinate (and not subordinate) clauses in their verb position: *Hwæt þa*-clauses follow the same constituent order patterns as coordinate clauses in Bech's study, whereas *hwæt*-clauses exhibit the V-final pattern with a relatively higher frequency than Bech's coordinate clauses but with the same proportion of V-2.

If only texts written by Ælfric are taken into account (*Lives of Saints*, *Catholic Homilies I* and *II*, *Supplemental Homilies* and letters), the difference between *hwæt*- and *hwæt þa*-clauses becomes considerable, as can be seen in table 7.

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[10] These calculations are based on Bech's (2012) table 4.2 (p. 73): 795 coordinate clauses minus 146 "other" (that is, structurally ambiguous) clauses.

Order	main clauses				free relatives		dependent questions	
	hwæt		*hwæt þa*		*(swa) hwæt (swa)*		*hwæt*	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
clear V-1	0	0	6	3.0	3	5.0	2	3.8
clear V-2	5	21.7	109	54.8	26	43.3	11	21.2
clear V-late	4	17.4	48	24.1	2	3.3	3	5.8
clear V-final	14	60.9	36	18.1	29	48.3	36	69.2
clear total	23	-	199	-	60	-	52	-

Table 7. Constituent order
in various types of *hwæt*-clauses in Ælfric's texts.

The less numerous *hwæt*-clauses indeed follow the V-final order very regularly; the frequency of V-final/V-late orderings is higher in them than in free relatives, and it is close to that in dependent questions (the difference between main clauses with simple *hwæt* and subordinate *hwæt*-clauses in Ælfric is statistically insignificant). In *hwæt þa*-clauses, the proportions resemble the ones presented in table 6 (which is natural considering that most of *hwæt þa*-clauses are found in Ælfric's texts). This group of clauses is significantly different from subordinate *hwæt*-clauses used by Ælfric (p=0.006).

Having established that main *hwæt (þa)*-clauses do not generally pattern with subordinate clauses with respect to their verb position (contrary to Walkden 2013), the question now arises what the reason is for the high frequency of V-final and V-late orders in this group.

5. Alternative Analysis: *Hwæt (þa)*-Clauses as Main Clauses.

As discussed in section 2, it is not impossible to find V-final main clauses in OE, though it is a minority pattern, even in coordinate clauses (Cichosz et al. 2016, Bech 2017). In this section, I show that the order in *hwæt (þa)*-clauses is influenced by the same factors that increase the use of the V-final order in main clauses. Let us recall that according to Bech 2012, these factors include subject type (S-x-V clauses do not introduce new subjects), verb weight (verbs in S-x-V clauses are heavy), and verb type (verbs in S-x-V clauses are dynamic and/or punctual, rather than durative).

5.1. Subject Type.

Table 8 presents the analysis of the information value of subjects in clauses with simple *hwæt*. All pronominal subjects are treated as given, whereas nouns are classified as old (directly repeated), accessible (with the referents inferable from the context), or new (introducing discourse-new referents).

Information value	Subject	V-final		V-late		V-2		V-1	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
Given	1st/2nd prs. prn.	11	30.6	4	22.2	23	43.4	0	0
	3rd prs. prn.	4	11.1	2	11.1	4	7.5	2	100
	other prn.	1	2.8	1	5.6	5	9.4	0	0
	old noun	12	33.3	6	33.3	11	20.8	0	0
	accessible noun	5	13.9	1	5.6	2	3.8	0	0
New	new noun	3	8.3	4	22.2	8	15.1	0	0
TOTAL		36	-	18	-	53	-	2	-

Table 8. Information value of subjects
in structurally unambiguous *hwæt*-clauses.

Although the percentage of clauses with new subjects is indeed the lowest among V-final clauses, it is quite low among *hwæt*-clauses in general. This is not unexpected considering that 57 out of 109 structurally unambiguous clauses with simple *hwæt* contain pronominal subjects, which, by definition, cannot refer to new information.

In table 9, figures are given for *hwæt þa*-clauses, in which the ratio of pronominal to nominal subjects is drastically different from the one in clauses with simple *hwæt*, as there is only one case of a pronominal subject (confirming Brinton's 1996 observations).

Information value	Subject	V-final		V-late		V-2		V-1	
		N.	**%**	**N.**	**%**	**N.**	**%**	**N.**	**%**
Given	1st/2nd prs. prn.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	3rd prs. prn.	0	0	0	0	1	0.8	0	0
	other prn.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	old noun	35	81.4	48	90.6	78	63.4	0	0
	accessible noun	5	11.6	1	1.9	4	3.3	0	0
New	new noun	3	7.0	4	7.5	40	32.5	6	100
TOTAL		**43**	-	**53**	-	**123**	-	**6**	-

Table 9. Information value of subjects
in structurally unambiguous *hwæt þa*-clauses.

The majority of subjects in V-final and V-late *hwæt þa*-clauses are
nouns, and so one would expect their information value to be high.
However, the nominal subjects in these clauses most often refer to old,
directly repeated material, as in 23.

(23) Cuðberhtus ða   to ðam engle anmodlice   cwæð; ...
     Cuthbert   then to the angel without hesitation said

     Hwæt ða **Cuðberhtus** æfter þæs engles lare
     What then Cuthbert   after the angel's instruction

     his cneow beðode
     his knee   bent

     'Then Cuthbert said to the angel without hesitation ... What then
     Cuthbert bent his knee as the angel instructed him'
                                    (cocathom2,ÆCHom_II,_10:82.44.1640)

By contrast, subject nouns in V-2 *hwæt þa*-clauses are quite often new (32%), as in 24a, and the extreme is represented by *hwæt þa*-V-S clauses, in which all 6 subjects are clearly discourse-new, as in 24b.

(24) a. Hwæt þa   færlice   <u>com</u>   **fæger Godes engel**
        what then suddenly came   fair   God's angel
        'What then a fair angel of God came suddenly'
                        (coaelive,ÆLS_[Sebastian]:296.1389)

    b. Hwæt þa   <u>wearð</u> gelæht **sum geleafful bocere**,
       what then was   taken   some faithful   learned man

       harwencge   and eald, se   hatte   Eleazarus
       grey-haired and old, this called.PASS Eleazarus

       'What then a faithful learned man, grey-haired and old, who was called Eleazarus, was captured'
                    (coaelive,ÆLS_[Maccabees]:31.4849)

The crucial factor is S-V inversion: In clauses with inverted subjects—both *hwæt þa*-x-V-S and *hwæt þa*-V-S, as in 24a and 24b, respectively—the subjects tend to be new, while in clauses without inversion, the subjects are predominantly given. Because the number of inverted subjects in clauses with simple *hwæt* is lower than in *hwæt þa*-clauses, the proportion of new subjects is also lower. On the whole, however, it must be stated that the average information value of subjects in both *hwæt þa*- and *hwæt*-clauses is low, which may have increased the frequency of the V-final order noted in this group.

5.2. Weight of the Verb.
Another factor mentioned by Bech (2012) in connection with V-final main clauses is the weight of the clause-final verb. Table 10 presents the weight of verbs in all structurally unambiguous clauses with simple *hwæt*; weight is measured by number of syllables.

Verb weight	V-final		V-late		V-1/V-2	
	N.	**%**	**N.**	**%**	**N.**	**%**
1 syllable	3	8.3	6	33.3	20	36.4
2 syllables	18	50.0	10	55.5	25	45.4
3 syllables or more	15	41.7	2	11.1	10	18.2
TOTAL	**36**	-	**18**	-	**55**	-

Table 10. Weight of verbs in structurally unambiguous *hwæt*-clauses.

It is evident that the percentage of heavy verbs is exceptionally high in V-final *hwæt*-clauses, as in 25.

(25) Hwæt **se dry**   ða   on eallum ðingum
     what   the wizard then on all   things

     þæs apostoles lare   gehyrsumode
     the   apostle's instruction obeyed

     'What, the wizard then in all situations obeyed the apostle's
     instructions'   (cocathom2,ÆCHom_II,_31-32:244.105.5436)

Hardly any of the V-final clauses contain light monosyllabic verbs, but in clauses showing other orders, such verbs are quite frequent, as in 26.

(26) Hwæt, **he** is giet <hal> &   gesund
     what   he is yet   whole and healthy
     'What, yet he is whole and healthy'   (coboeth,Bo:10.22.5.358)

In *hwæt þa*-clauses, illustrated in table 11, the tendency is the same, though the difference between V-late and V-1/V-2 clauses is clearer than in clauses with simple *hwæt*.

Verb weight	V-final		V-late		V-1/V-2	
	N.	**%**	**N.**	**%**	**N.**	**%**
1 syllable	3	7.0	9	17.0	42	32.5
2 syllables	17	39.5	24	45.3	56	43.4
3 syllables or more	23	53.5	20	37.7	31	24.0
TOTAL	**43**	**-**	**53**	**-**	**129**	**-**

Table 11. Weight of verbs in structurally unambiguous *hwæt þa*-clauses.

More than half of the V-final clauses contain heavy verbs, as in 27a, while light monosyllabic verbs are relatively frequent in V-1/V-2 clauses only, as in 27b.

(27) a. Hwæt ða **God** on swefne hi   gewarnode
         what then God on sleep them warned
         'What, then God warned them in their sleep'
                              (cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_7:233.33.1219)

   b. Hwæt þa **ure hælend Crist** com to þisse weorulde
         what then our savior Christ came to this world

      on þære sixtan ylde
      on the   sixth age

      'What then our savior Christ came to this world in the sixth age'
                              (coaelhom,ÆHom_22:498.3605)

Thus, in both, *hwæt*- and *hwæt þa*-clauses, the weight of the verb has an impact on its position. A similar calculation conducted for subordinate *hwæt*-clauses revealed that only 9% of V-final dependent questions and 28% of V-final free relatives contain heavy verbs. At the same time, in 29% of the former and 33% of the latter, the verbs are monosyllabic, which makes V-final main and V-final subordinate clauses with *hwæt* completely different in this respect. Let us recall that in Bech's (2012) study, 37% of verbs in SXV clauses are heavy, while in SVX clauses, the corresponding figure is only 4.5%. Thus, the influence of weight on the position of the verb in *hwæt*- and *hwæt þa*-clauses is even stronger than in ordinary main clauses.

5.3. Verb Type.
Finally, Bech (2012) claims that verbs appearing in the clause-final position are dynamic in nature. This claim is confirmed in my sample of *hwæt*-clauses. As shown in table 12, almost 78% of the clause-final verbs are punctual rather than durative.

Verb type	V-final		V-late		V-1/V-2	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
durative	8	22.2	7	38.9	36	65.5
punctual	28	77.8	9	61.1	19	34.5
TOTAL	**36**	-	**16**	-	**55**	-

Table 12. Types of verbs in structurally unambiguous *hwæt*-clauses.

As for the durative verbs, they are mostly verbs of being, as in 26 above, and they are rarely used in V-final and V-late *hwæt*-clauses. In *hwæt þa*-clauses, the tendency is less clear because, as shown in table 13, punctual verbs are relatively frequent in the whole group of clauses. This observation is consistent with Brinton's (1996) analysis of *Lives of Saints*, which points to the "overwhelmingly dynamic, telic, and active" nature of verbs in *hwæt þa*-clauses (p. 194), visible in all clauses of the group regardless of the verb position.

Verb type	V-final		V-late		V-1/V-2	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
durative	3	7.0	10	18.9	27	20.9
punctual	40	93.0	43	81.1	102	79.1
TOTAL	**43**	-	**53**	-	**129**	-

Table 13. Types of verbs in structurally unambiguous *hwæt þa*-clauses.

Nonetheless, the clause-final verbs often seem to carry the crucial part of the message, as in 25 and 27a, which goes hand in hand with Bech's (2012:75) interpretation of V-final main clauses:

> The verb thus seems to play an essential role in the clause, to the extent that from an information structure point of view, its final position may

even be a result of its importance (on the assumption that high information value elements occur at the end of the clause); there is focus on the verb.

Brinton (1996:188–189) claims that one of the functions of clauses with simple *hwæt* in OE poetry is to provide evaluation of the narrative point: They never introduce mainline events but rather comment upon the narrative. The same cannot be claimed for OE prose on the basis of the present study: Clauses with simple *hwæt* often tend to push the narration forward, just like clauses with *hwæt þa*, for which the function is defined by Brinton as denoting "an event occurring sequentially in the plot" (p. 196), so that they "express foregrounded events, or mainline events in the plot development" (p. 194).

However, the claim that *hwæt*-clauses fulfill different functions in OE poetry versus prose is undermined by the following observation: Many *hwæt*-clauses in OE prose contain *þa*, *þonne*, or *nu* later in the clause (as shown at the beginning of section 4). Naturally, due to the presence of these adverbs, these clauses introduce mainline events, as in 25, since the main function of *þa* and *þonne* in main clauses is to mark the main line of the narrative (Wårvik 2011, Los 2015:196). Note that ca. 50% of clauses with simple *hwæt* contain pronominal subjects (see table 8), which precludes the use of the *hwæt þa*-S pattern (recall that pronominal subjects regularly intervene between *hwæt* and *þa* in contexts such as 10a). Thus, some of the clauses with simple *hwæt* could actually be syntactic variants of *hwæt þa*-clauses with a different subject type, given the functional similarity between the two (both tend to introduce mainline events). When a *hwæt*-clause in OE prose does not contain any of the adverbs, it can, indeed, often be interpreted as a commentary on the mainline event, just as in OE poetry, exemplified by 28.[11]

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[11] The presence or absence of the adverbs also seems to correlate with the semantic type of the verb: In clauses with durative verbs, *þa*, *þonne*, or *nu* are rarely used (there are only 7 such cases), while in clauses with punctual verbs, this happens much more often (that is, in 29 clauses). Only clauses with simple *hwæt* and unambiguous constituent order patterns are included in this calculation.

(28) Hwæt **we** on þam gecnawan <u>magon</u>
　　 what we on this understand may

　　 þæt þeos world is scyndende & heononweard
　　 that this world is hurrying and passing away

　　 'What, by this we can understand that this world is in haste and
　　 nearing the end' (coblick,HomU_20_[BlHom_10]:115.147.1467)

　　 Bech (2012:82) suggests that "verb-final order is often used in the substructure of the text, after the main events have been introduced," which means that *hwæt*-clauses without the adverbs—which do not introduce mainline events—could be expected to have the V-final order more often than clauses following the pattern *hwæt*-S-*þa/þonne/nu*. However, as shown in table 14, the tendency is actually the reverse: If one of the adverbs is present, the clause has the V-final order more often, though the difference is not overwhelming. Moreover, the dominant pattern is structurally ambiguous: The light narrative-sequencing, or time-sequencing adverb is usually the only element intervening between the subject and the verb, as in 29b below, and thus the clause cannot be treated as a clear example of V-final or V-late.

þa, þonne, nu	V-final		V-late		V-1/V-2		ambiguous		Total
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.
With	19	26.0	7	9.6	8	10.9	39	53.4	73
Without	17	15.6	11	10.1	47	43.1	34	31.2	109

Table 14. Time-sequencing adverbs in long *hwæt*-clauses.[12]

　　 Thus, the functional difference between clauses with simple *hwæt* (commentary on a mainline event) and *hwæt þa* (introducing a mainline event) suggested in Brinton 1996 may be the direct consequence of the

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[12] The table includes data for all structurally unambiguous clauses plus those ambiguous clauses that contain an element other than S and V. The logic behind this decision is that in short clauses, the ambiguous order *hwæt*-S-V is the only possible option, so no variation is technically possible (not a single instance of the theoretically possible alternative order, that is, *hwæt*-V-S, has been identified in the data).

presence or absence of *þa* in the clause. In OE prose, clauses with simple *hwæt* often contain these adverbs placed later in the clause. This may be the reason for an apparent lack of a clear-cut functional distinction between these groups of clauses. Finally, the conclusion is that the functional difference between clauses with and without the time-sequencing adverbs is not reflected in their constituent order, at least not in the way suggested by Bech (2012).

Interestingly, in places where *hwæt*-clauses are used to introduce speech (which happens relatively rarely, as shown at the beginning of section 4), V-final/V-late is a minority pattern: Only 3 clauses out of 28 follow it. The most common order in this group is V-2, as in 29a, or S-x-V with a light intervening element, as in 29b.

(29) a. he cwæð: Hwæt, **ðu** <u>meaht</u> gesion
     he said what you might see

    lytelne cið   on ðines broður eagan
    little   straw on your brother's eye

    'He said: What, you can see a little straw in your brother's eye'
                  (cocuraC, CP_[Cotton]:33.222.24.81)

  b. & cwæð to eallum þam gemote:
     and said to all   the assembly

    Hwæt, **ge** nu <u>gehyrað</u> hu he Gode   yfelsacað.
    what you now hear   how he God.DAT blasphemes

    'And said to the whole assembly: What, now you hear how he blasphemed God'   (coverhomE,HomS_24.1_[Scragg]:198.169)

To sum up, it seems that information structure, verb weight, and verb type influence the order of elements in *hwæt (þa)*-clauses, which leads to a conclusion that *hwæt (þa)*-clauses pattern with main clauses of a specific type. Their constituent order shows i) limited availability of S-V inversion (especially in clauses with simple *hwæt*), and ii) higher-than-average frequency of V-final (provided that the clause is not used to introduce speech). Lack of S-V inversion is typical of clauses that tend not to introduce new subjects into the narration, while the frequency of V-final is increased due to verb weight and (to some extent) verb type,

with durative verbs preferring V-1/V-2 and punctual verbs favoring V-final/V-late (at least in clauses with simple *hwæt*). The relation between function and verb position is not clear, but the presence or absence of a time-sequencing adverb seems crucial for the functional classification of a *hwæt*-clause, which is another argument for treating *þa* in *hwæt þa*-clauses as a functionally independent constituent.

6. Summary and Conclusions.

The study has shown that it is an overgeneralization to state that main *hwæt (þa)*-clauses pattern with subordinate clauses because:

(i)   The frequency of the unambiguously V-final order is higher in both types of subordinate clauses introduced by *hwæt* than in main clauses with *hwæt*, and the difference is especially striking in clauses with *hwæt þa*.

(ii)   In clauses with complex verb phrases, the finite form regularly precedes the nonfinite form in main *hwæt (þa)*-clauses, while in subordinate clauses, the tendency is the reverse.

(iii) Neither *hwæt þa*-clauses nor clauses with simple *hwæt* pattern with subordinate *hwæt*-clauses with respect to verb position, though the latter are closer to subordinate clauses than the former (especially in Ælfric's texts).

(iv)   The position of the verb in main *hwæt (þa)*-clauses is sensitive to verb weight, while in subordinate clauses, the verb tends to take the clause-final position regardless of its length.

There are two further points that should be highlighted. First, clauses with simple *hwæt* and *hwæt þa*-clauses are not identical in their element order tendencies, especially as far as S-V inversion is concerned. While *hwæt*-clauses rarely follow the V-S pattern (and, as a result, rarely introduce new subjects into the narration), *hwæt þa*-clauses show inversion more often, though less often than main clauses that are not preceded by *hwæt*. The presence of the interjection at the beginning of the clause regularly (though not categorically) blocks the inverting influence of *þa*, which results in the *hwæt þa*-S-V order.

Second, it must be emphasized that even though the regular co-occurrence of *hwæt* and *þa* in OE prose has led some scholars to treat the two words as a unit (see Brinton 1996, Walkden 2013), such an analysis is not unproblematic. First of all, *hwæt þa* as a collocation appears only in OE prose, and it is to a large extent limited to Ælfric's writings, which makes its distribution rather restricted. What is more, *þa* appears very frequently in *hwæt*-clauses, where it is placed between the subject and the verb. If the subject is pronominal, *þa* is not placed before it, which suggests regular variation between *hwæt þa*-S-V and *hwæt*-S-*þa*-V based on subject type, with a similar narrative function of both patterns.

Finally, it should be noted that *hwæt* is not the only (extra-clausal) element that decreases the rate of inversion after *þa*. As shown in 30, the same inversion-blocking effect may be observed in clauses introduced by the interjection *efne* and in coordinate clauses with *and*.

(30) a. Efne þa **Godes engel** æfter Herodes deaðe <u>æteowde</u>
      lo   then God's angel after Herod's death showed

    Iosepe   on swefnum on Egypta lande þus cweþende.
    Joseph.DAT on sleep   on Egypt land thus saying

    'Lo, then after Herod's death God's angel showed himself to Joseph in his sleep in the land of Egypt, thus saying'
                       (cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_5:222.167.1029)

  b. &   þa **faam** of his muðe ut <u>eode</u>
     and then foam of his mouth out went
     'And then foam went out of his mouth'
                      (cobede,Bede_3:9.184.24.1845)

  c. &   ða **Drihten** eowre spræca <u>gehyrde</u>
     and then Lord   your speech heard
     'And then the Lord heard your speech' (cootest,Deut:1.34.4495)

Thus, it seems that *þa* may not cause S-V inversion in certain syntactic contexts, namely, in the presence of a particular type of extra-clausal elements (coordinating conjunctions and interjections, as noted by Mitchell 1985:§2547, note 95). In all of these contexts, *þa* introduces a new event, so it seems functionally independent of the preceding

interjection/conjunction. In such a situation, one would be justified in treating *þa* in *hwæt þa*-clauses as a structurally independent clause element. If *þa* is analyzed as a clause-initial constituent, the frequency of V-2 in *hwæt þa*-clauses is automatically decreased, since all *hwæt þa*-S-V-x clauses can no longer be classified as V-2 (and because there is no intervening element between the subject and the verb, such clauses must be excluded from the study sample as ambiguous). After recalculating the frequencies, there is still a difference between the two groups in the relative frequency of V-2 and V-late, as shown in table 15. When the groups are combined, the order in main *hwæt*-clauses is still different from the order in subordinate *hwæt*-clauses (see table 6).[13]

Order	*hwæt*		*hwæt þa*		Total	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
clear V-1	2	1.8	0	0	2	0.8
clear V-2	53	48.6	42	30.4	95	38.5
clear V-final	36	33.0	43	31.1	79	32.0
clear V-late	18	16.5	53	38.4	71	28.7
clear total	109	-	138	-	247	-

Table 15. Constituent order in *hwæt*-clauses
(*þa* treated as a clause constituent).

If only texts written by Ælfric are taken into account (to limit the problem of intertextual differences), as in table 16, the order distribution

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[13] It must be admitted, though, that the difference is mainly related to the relative frequency of V-final and V-late. Therefore, table 15 illustrates the only way of calculating the results in which the percentage of V-late/V-final in main *hwæt*-clauses resembles that in subordinate clauses (showing no statistically significant difference between the two groups, as it does in Walkden 2013). However, the way in which this result is obtained is completely different since Walkden does not count *þa* as a clause constituent in his study. This shows that methodological decisions (type of subordinate clauses considered in the analysis and the way in which structurally ambiguous clauses and light intervening elements are treated) may seriously change the results of this (and probably any other) constituent order study.

does not pattern with that in free relatives or dependent questions either (see table 7): *Hwæt*-clauses show the V-2 order more often than dependent questions and less often than free relatives; they also show V-final less often than either of these groups. Therefore, on the basis of these results, it would be difficult to claim that the position of the verb in main *hwæt*-clauses resembles that in subordinate *hwæt*-clauses: Differences exist, and they are relatively extensive.

Order	*hwæt*		*hwæt þa*		Total	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
clear V-1	0	0	0	0	0	0
clear V-2	5	21.7	39	31.7	44	30.2
clear V-final	14	60.9	36	29.3	50	34.2
clear V-late	4	17.4	48	39.0	52	35.6
clear total	**23**	-	**123**	-	**146**	-

Table 16. Constituent order in *hwæt*-clauses in Ælfric's texts
(*þa* treated as a clause constituent).

What is more, the study has shown that it is possible to analyze *hwæt*-clauses as main clauses and to explain the exceptionally high incidence of the V-final order in them on the basis of the factors identified for other main clauses: the information value of the subject, weight (length) of the verb, and verb type. It seems that *hwæt*-clauses have the V-final order so often because they are used in contexts that generally favor this order in main clauses: They mostly contain low information subjects as well as dynamic (and often long) verbs. When they are used in OE prose in a different, less typical context—that is, when they introduce new subjects and contain short monosyllabic durative verbs, or introduce speech—they have the V-2 order. Thus, *hwæt*-clauses do not tend to be V-final because of *hwæt*; rather, they have the V-final order for similar reasons and in similar contexts as other main (coordinate and noncoordinate) clauses in OE prose. In his study, Walkden does not take coordinate clauses into account, claiming that "constituent order in these clauses is not well understood" (Walkden 2013:471, note 9). However, it seems that *hwæt*-clauses actually bear some resemblance to coordinate clauses: They do not show regular S-V

inversion after *þa* and have higher-than-average frequency of V-late/V-final order (compared to noncoordinate main clauses). Therefore, grouping *and*-, *ac*-, *efne*-, and *hwæt*-clauses together seems empirically justified (though a detailed comparison of all these clause types is needed to verify the hypothesis), whereas the claim that *hwæt*-clauses follow the same patterns of constituent order as subordinate clauses is not supported by the corpus data discussed in the present study.

APPENDIX

Query 1:   used to extract main clauses with the interjection *hwæt* (including *hwæt þa*-clauses)

       node: IP-MAT*
       query: ((IP-MAT* iDoms INTJ*)
              AND (INTJ* Doms hw+at|Hw+at))

Query 2:   used to extract free relatives introduced by *hwæt* (including *swa hwæt swa*-clauses)

       node: CP-FRL*
       query: ((CP-FRL* doms WPRO*)
              AND (WPRO* iDoms hw+at|Hw+at))

Query 3:   used to extract dependent questions introduced by *hwæt*

       node: IP-MAT*
       query: ((IP-MAT* iDoms CP-QUE*)
              AND (CP-QUE* doms IP-SUB*)
              AND (CP-QUE* doms WPRO*)
              AND (WPRO* iDoms hw+at|Hw+at))

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