

On the Grammaticality of Poetry: The Asyndetic Verb-Late Clause in Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*

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This article discusses asyndetic verb-late clauses in Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*, which has long been considered a problematic text within the Old High German corpus in part because of clauses like these. Clauses with a dependent clause's verbal syntax and no complementizer have been characterized as ungrammatical and/or rare (Behaghel 1932, Schrodtt 2004, Axel 2007) and thus have not been included in accounts of early German syntax. I argue that asyndetic verb-late clauses are grammatical and that they can function as main or dependent clauses. Crucially, they demonstrate that main verb fronting was not obligatory in 9th-century German. Although Otfrid marked the main-subordinate asymmetry by various grammatical means, including verbal syntax, I demonstrate that verbal prosody also influenced syntax: Heavy verbs are more frequent in clause-late or -initial position and light verbs in clause-second position, regardless of the main-dependent distinction. I suggest that prosodically-sensitive verbal syntax is characteristic of Otfrid's exclusively oral vernacular. In contrast, Otfrid imports the concept of differentiating main and dependent clauses *grammatically* from Latin. The *Evangelienbuch*, then, represents an attempt to transform an oral vernacular into a written language by imposing, however imperfectly, the norm of grammatically distinct main and dependent clauses onto a prosodically-sensitive verbal syntax.*

Keywords: Old High German, syntax, orality, prosody, obligatory verb fronting, verb-final main clauses

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1. Introduction.

This article examines the asyndetic verb-late clauses in the Old High German (OHG) *Evangelienbuch* written by the monk Otfrid von Weissenburg sometime between 863 and 871. These clauses are notable in that they exhibit the later-than-second verbal syntax of a dependent clause but no complementizer:¹

- (1) Er uns ginádon sinen ríat
 he us mercy his meted
 'He meted out to us his mercy.' (L 27)

This clausal pattern would be ungrammatical in today's standard variety of German, which requires that a finite verb occupy the second position, if there is no complementizer.

- (2) a. Anna...hat ihn gestern bei der Arbeit gesehen.
 Anna AUX him yesterday at DET work seen
 'Anna saw him at work yesterday.'
- b. Ich weiß,...dass ihn Anna gestern bei der Arbeit
 I know that him Anna yesterday at DET work
 gesehen hat
 seen AUX
 'I know that Anna saw him at work yesterday.'

This complementarity between finite verb and complementizer, Harbert (2007:401) observes, is the "foundation of the standard analysis" of the main-subordinate clause asymmetry in the generative framework, in which fronted finite verbs and complementizers are associated with the same clause-second C(OMP) position.

In light of this distributional pattern in Standard German, examples such as 1 are of particular interest to scholars because they seem to indicate that the fronting of finite verbs to second position in the absence

¹ To gloss the examples throughout the paper, I used as a reference *Bible Gateway* (<https://www.biblegateway.com/>), as well as Piper 1887 and Braune & Reiffenstein 2004.

of a complementizer was not obligatory in OHG. If such asyndetic verb-late clauses occur often in the oldest Germanic daughter languages, it is unlikely that complementarity was a feature of their common parent. Studies arguing for an early complementarity, like Axel (2007), have looked to discount clauses such as in 1 mainly by observing that the texts in which they are more frequently attested are poetic, which implies that their syntactic structures cannot be treated as grammatical.

This article is divided into four sections. First, I argue in section 2 that Otfrid's asyndetic verb-late clauses are grammatical. This clause type occurs at a rate of about 1 in 10, and many of these attestations do not interact with the poetic structure. In this section, I also examine the common, anachronistic assumption that 9th-century prose reflects an underlying competence better than poetry from the same period. Accepting that the grammar produced asyndetic verb-late clauses implies that verb fronting was not obligatory. The placement of the verb, however, is thought to be the primary means of distinguishing main and subordinate clauses throughout German's attested history. How then is the difference between main and dependent clause maintained? Section 3 demonstrates that Otfrid had various means for grammatically marking dependent clauses, among them the subjunctive mood. Although the poet was clearly sensitive to the difference between main and dependent clauses, the data at the heart of section 4 complicate the situation. I present evidence that prosody interacts with syntax: Heavy verbs are more likely to occur in clause-late (or -initial) position, whereas light verbs are attested more frequently in clause-second position, regardless of whether that clause is main or dependent. How one and the same text can reflect two seemingly incompatible principles of verb placement, one prosodic and the other syntactic, is the focus of section 5. The rest of this introduction establishes the theoretical and empirical parameters for the analysis.

1.1. Theoretical Parameters: Asyndetic Verb-Late Clauses in German.

Asyndetic verb-late clauses occur less frequently than other OHG clause types. Yet they are important for recent discussions—largely played out within the framework of generative syntax—of how OHG clause structure worked. The main bone of contention is whether or not obligatory leftward movement of the finite verb in the absence of a complementizer is a later, language-specific development or an earlier development in Common Germanic. Works that support the former

conclusion (Lenerz 1984, 1985) emphasize occurrences of verb-late/-final main clauses across the daughter languages and characterize these clauses as syntactic residues of a COMP-less verb-final clause inherited from Proto-Indo-European (PIE) and Proto-Germanic.² This archaic template, which would have produced more stylistically marked clauses, exists alongside the innovative object-verb (OV) complementizer phrase (CP); ultimately the latter replaces the former (Lenerz 1985:117–119). Thus, one can expect an early Germanic and poetic text such as the *Evangelienbuch* to have both modern-looking CPs and asyndetic verb-late clauses. These latter clauses only appear to violate complementarity; in fact, their structure has no complementizer position to which the finite verb can move. To this group of studies I add the “information structure” account of Schlachter (2012), which assumes that Lenerz’s COMP-less template underlies all asyndetic verb-late clauses in OHG (pp. 76, 136–137).³

A second type of study (for example, Pintzuk 1993 and Koopman 1995 for Old English; Eypórsson 1995, 1996, 2001 for the runic inscriptions) argues that genuine examples of asyndetic verb-late clauses in Germanic are, in fact, rare and thus concludes that complementarity—with its obligatory fronting of finite verbs in the absence of a complementizer—developed much earlier. Axel (2007:32–34, 68–77) discusses OHG at length and remains unconvinced by Lenerz’s (1985:106, 108) claim that relevant tokens occur frequently. Instead, she argues that many of Lenerz’s examples are not asyndetic verb-late main clauses at all but instances of verb-third or asyndetic verb-late dependent clauses, which do not violate complementarity. That is, verb-third clauses qualify as a legitimate variant of verb-second, and asyndetic verb-late dependent clauses qualify as verb-final clauses with inaudible complementizers (see also Axel-Tober 2012:185). Axel acknowledges that the Otfrid text, in particular, contains a large number of asyndetic verb-late clauses, including, one presumes, examples that cannot be characterized as one of these variants. However, the *Evangelienbuch* is

² See also Weerman 1988, Kiparsky 1995, 1996.

³ Schlachter’s account deviates from that of Lenerz in its adoption of Hinterhölzl (2004, 2009) and Haider’s (2005) underspecified CP. Lenerz (1985) assumes the innovative CP template has a fixed OV structure, while Schlachter assumes a “mixed OV and VO system” (pp. 60–62).

poetic and exhibits end rhyme, which can influence the placement of the finite verb, as shown in 3.

- (3) Er uns ginádon sinen **riat** thaz súlichan kúning
 he us mercy his meted that such king

uns gihíalt
 to-us preserved

‘He meted out to us his mercy in that he preserved such a king for us.’
 (L 27)

Otfrid’s asyndetic verb-late clause, then, is a feature of poetry rather than grammar, and is “extragrammatical,” as Axel (2007:70) calls it. Thus, none of the counterexamples to obligatory fronting in OHG constitute actual evidence, and one can adopt, for this early stage of the language, the standard generative analysis of a modern-like main-subordinate clause asymmetry.

Deciding whether to accept complementarity for OHG is consequential for the analysis of its clauses. As the examples in 4 demonstrate, assuming complementarity and the obligatory fronting of finite verbs in the absence of a complementizer allows for the disambiguation of ambiguous clauses.

- (4) a. Cléin-ero githánk-o so íst ther selbo Fránko so íst
 penetrating-GEN acuity-GEN so is this same Frank so is

ther selbo édilinc ther héizit avur Lúdwic
 this same nobleman who/this one is.called again Ludwig

‘Of penetrating acuity, so is this selfsame Frank, so is the very same nobleman,/. whose name, again, is Ludwig.’

‘His name, to repeat, is Ludwig.’ (L 17–L 18)

- b. Si sálda gimúati Sálomones gúati
 be salvation bestowed Salomon-GEN the.exemplary
 ther biscof ist nu édiles Kóstinzero sédales
 who/this one bishop is now noble-GEN Konstanz-GEN seat-GEN
 ‘Salvation be bestowed unto the exemplary Salomon,/. who/He is
 now the bishop of the noble seat of Konstanz.’ (S 1–2)

The status of *ther* in these examples is ambiguous in that it can be either a demonstrative or relative pronoun. These two possible readings arise from a clausal ambiguity: How one analyzes the pronoun in both clauses relates to whether or not one treats the clause as an embedded relative or a (mostly) independent clause.⁴ Adopting complementarity, however, would imply that the clause in 4a is a verb-second main clause with an initial demonstrative, while that in 4b is a verb-final relative clause with extraposed constituents.⁵ Note how assuming complementarity makes these 9th-century clauses look more like modern standard language clauses, on which the notion of complementarity is based. If one allows for the possibility that finite verbs are not automatically moved into second position in the absence of a complementizer, one can no longer justify these two interpretations of *ther* based only on verbal syntax.

In sum, there are two types of analyses of asyndetic verb-late clauses in OHG. The first type (Lernerz 1985, Schlachter 2012) concludes that they existed but were produced by a separate, inherited grammar. The other type (Axel 2007) maintains that they did not exist, in the sense that they were not produced by any OHG grammar. As one anonymous reviewer of the present article noted, these views are similar in that both

⁴ Holler 2008 and Gärtner 2001 are two examples of studies noting that independent clauses can still be integrated into preceding clauses. Gärtner (2001:97, 99, 138) specifically discusses clauses from Modern German that are similar to 4a and concludes that they are syntactically independent verb-second clauses with initial demonstrative pronouns, but at the same time they are integrated into the informational unit of a matrix clause.

⁵ Even if one adopts a variably headed CP and assumes an intermediate head for this clause, as Schlachter does (see note 1), the assumptions of complementarity would still have consequences for 4b and point to the clause being subordinate and its pronoun relative.

argue for a sort of extragrammaticality: The asyndetic verb-late clause is assumed to be stylistically marked and grammatically peripheral in both accounts. However, while Lenerz and Schlachter believe its pragmatically marked status links to the clause's archaic roots, Axel sees no etymological connection to earlier verb-final clauses.

There is another point on which the two sides agree, namely, the problematic status of the verb-late main clause in particular. The aforementioned studies accept some version of complementarity for OHG: While Axel maintains it holds for all clauses, Lenerz and Schlachter accept that it holds for all clauses that are CPs.⁶ Verb-final main clauses, thus, are not CPs in the latter's analysis. Asyndetic verb-late dependent clauses, in contrast, are less problematic for the complementarity hypothesis; Lenerz (1985:113, 118) and Axel (2007) and Axel-Tober (2012) analyze these as CPs with phonologically null complementizers. In contrast, Schlachter (2012) does not comment on their status at all. Ultimately it is the asyndetic main clause, with its verb in later-than-third position and empty C, that is difficult for all of these studies to reconcile with complementarity.

1.2. Defining the Asyndetic Verb-Late Clause in Otfrid.

The dataset for this study comprises all clauses from eight chapters of the *Evangelienbuch: Ad Ludowicum* (L), *Ad Salomonem* (S), Book 1, chapter 1 (I 0 II, chapter 8 (II 8), Book III, chapters 2 and 12 (III 2; 12), Book IV, chapter 18 (IV 18) and Book V, chapter 19 (V 19). My first step is simply to assess how many clauses are consistent with the prediction of complementarity; namely, how many clauses have clear verb-second syntax and how many have verb-final syntax with a potential subordinator in second position (C⁰). I first present the data (see table 1) and then explain how I sorted clauses into categories.

⁶ Schlachter's (2012) variably headed CP, while able to explain verb-early dependent clauses (with overt complementizers), cannot capture asyndetic verb-late clauses.

	Verb-second ⁷	Verb-final	Ambiguous	Asyndetic verb-late	Total
Lud	78 (61%)	29 (22%)	10 (8%)	11 (9%)	128
Sal	25 (43%)	23 (40%)	3 (5%)	7 (12%)	58
B I 1	87 (48%)	66 (37%)	8 (4%)	19 (11%)	180
B II 8	45 (48.4%)	31 (33.3%)	2 (2.2%)	15 (16.1%)	93
B III 2	29 (46.0%)	19 (30.2%)	9 (14.3%)	6 (9.5%)	63
B III 12	36 (48%)	30 (40%)	4 (5%)	5 (7%)	75
B IV 18	39 (54.2%)	17 (23.6%)	9 (12.5%)	7 (9.7%)	72
B V 19	45 (58%)	22 (29%)	7 (9%)	3 (4%)	77
Total	384 (51%)	237 (32%)	52 (7%)	73 (10%)	746

Table 1. Rates of occurrence per clause type.

Table 1 indicates that many, but not all, clauses in the dataset appear to conform to the theory of complementarity. Here are two examples of clauses that I categorized as unambiguously verb-second (the first column) and unambiguously verb-final (the second column).

- (5) a. Waz quit fon mir ther liutstam?
 what say about me.DAT the people.NOM
 ‘What are the people saying about me?’ (III 12, 7)
- b. İli thu zi note theiz scóno thoh gilute
 strive.IMP you eagerly that-it beautifully but sound.PRS.OPT
 ‘Strive eagerly that it might but sound beautifully’ (I 1, 37)

The finite clause in 5a is unambiguously verb-second; in 5b it is unambiguously verb-final, as there is more than one constituent between the complementizer and finite verb. Note that the generative analysis provides for the extraposition of constituents. Therefore “verb-final” is defined as any position following second position rather than absolute final position.

⁷ Though verb-first and -second clauses are pragmatically distinct, in the generative tradition their verbs are all assumed to appear in second position.

The third category comprises “ambiguous” clauses, which have an apparent complementizer and only one constituent separating it from the finite verb. An example is given in 6.

(6) [Sprah druhtin zi ímo sinaz wórt] tház er fuar-i
spoke lord to him his word] that he go-PRET.SBVJ

hémort tház er fuar-i thárasun
homewards that er go-PRET.SBJV thither

‘The Lord said to him that he should go home, that he should go thither.’ (III 2, 21–22)

A generative analysis might treat these *thaz*-clauses as verb-final with extraposed adverbials, but a verb-second analysis with preclausal *thaz* is also possible.⁸ Very short clauses also belong to this category.

The last category in table 1 comprises asyndetic verb-late clauses. These clauses are unambiguous with respect to verbal syntax in that their verbs occur later than second position, but there is no possible complementizer. Examples of this category are in 7.

(7) a. Lékza ih therera búachi iu sentu
text I this book-GEN.SG you.PL send

in Suábo richi
into Swabians-GEN.PL kingdom

‘I send to you in the Swabian kingdom the text of this book’ (S 5)

b. Régula therero búachi uns zeigot hímilrichi
rule the books-GEN us shows heaven-kingdom

‘The books’ meter shows us the Kingdom of Heaven’ (L 9)

Example 7b illustrates how I have included in this category clauses with surface verb-third, in accordance with Somers (2018). This study shows that the intervening constituents in Otfrid’s verb-third clauses exhibit none of the uniformity assumed in accounts, like Tomaselli (1995), Axel

⁸ These sorts of ambiguous clauses could also be captured by Hinterhölzl (2004, 2009) and Haider’s (2005) variably headed CP.

(2007:73-74), and Walkden (2014:71–72; 84–88) and ultimately concludes that there was no verb-third clause type in the *Evangelienbuch*. Section 4.1 below demonstrates that analyzing verb-third clauses in terms of information structure is also unwarranted.

Finally, it should be noted that Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch* also contains single-word clauses, as in 8.

- (8) a. Ih ságen iu quad in wára
 I say to.you.PL said in truth
 ni bín ih thera fúar-a.
 NEG am I the.GEN.SG group-GEN.SG
 'I say to you, he said, in truth: I am not part of that group.'
 (IV 18,17)
- b. Ni sínt thie ímo ouh derien
 NEG are DEM-REL him also inflict.loss.3PL.PRS.SBJV
 in thiu nan Fránton werien
 as-long-as him the.Franks protect-PRS.SBJV
 'There are none who can inflict loss unto him, as long as the Franks defend him.'⁹
 (I 1,103)

I consider one-word clauses featuring words of saying, such as *verba dicendi* in 8a, or the verb *to be* in 8b as exceptional and do not include them in the tally of verb-second clauses.¹⁰

I conclude by highlighting the fact that asyndetic verb-late clauses do not occur rarely in this dataset: One in every 10 clauses exhibits this pattern. Thus, it is worthwhile to examine Axel's (2007) claim that the phenomenon in Otfrid is extragrammatical, rather than grammatical. Whether there is actual evidence of meter and rhyme being the primary impetus behind these clauses is the subject of the next section.

⁹ A more literal translation reads as follows: 'those who can inflict loss unto him, are not (that is, do not exist), as long as the Franks defend him'.

¹⁰ Though rates of *pro*-drop are low in the *Evangelienbuch*, these constructions occur without subject pronouns and take on a grammatical function. For example, the *verba dicendi* mark instances of direct discourse, much like quotation marks do in modern orthography.

2. Otfrid's Asyndetic Verb-Final Clause is Grammatical.

In this section, I argue that the asyndetic verb-late clause in the *Evangelienbuch* is grammatical and should factor into any account of Otfridian clause structure. Thus, it is important to explain what I mean by the term *grammatical* and how my definition differs from that of previous studies (section 2.1) and then to demonstrate how the Otfrid data satisfy this definition (section 2.2).

2.1. Assuming Grammaticality in 9th-Century German.

Generative syntax is a framework that relies heavily on native speaker intuitions, which presents challenges for the study of historical varieties. Crucially, this view of syntax disconnects the token (or instance of production) from the underlying grammar (or competence) that generated it. The fact that a particular structure is attested in itself does not constitute evidence of its grammaticality; tokens are instead established as accurate reflections of underlying competence, that is, as grammatical, only through the intuitions of native speakers. This method cannot be applied to historical varieties. This notion of grammaticality means that historical linguists must always be aware that their data are imperfect reflections of competence. Distorted competence must be considered a very real possibility for 9th-century German data: All of its major texts are either translations of a Latin source or works of poetry. Received wisdom suggests that one should treat the data with care.

To date, I have encountered in the literature two strategies to distinguish the “good” data from the “bad” in 9th-century German syntax. The first dates back to Ruhfus (1897) and applies to works of translation, such as Tatian’s *Evangelienharmonie*; this strategy only analyzes structures that deviate from the source. Thus, the unacceptably compromised data are those for which one cannot rule out the possibility of syntactic transference. Identifying bad data in a poetic text also involves comparison, in this case performed against 9th-century prose texts rather than a Latin source. For example, based on the observation that asyndetic verb-late clauses occur more frequently in Otfrid than in Tatian or Isidor, Axel (2007:77–78) concludes that the structure is extragrammatical.¹¹ Axel’s logic is based on the assumption that the

¹¹ Axel’s *extragrammatical* seems to be synonymous with *ungrammatical*, though in using the former, the author avoids making explicit claims about how

prose of the 9th-century—even if it is a translation—is more grammatical and a better reflection of actual competence than its poetry. So uncontroversial is this conclusion that scholars often do not defend or even explicitly express it, as is the case in Axel's (2007) study of OHG, which is based on a corpus of prose texts (especially pp. 3, 16–22).¹²

However, the question is where this view comes from. I argue that the reasons behind the prevailing assumption that 9th-century poetry is less grammatical than 9th-century prose are faulty and do not constitute actual evidence of the ungrammaticality of poetry. The first is the discomfort scholars feel about the variation in surface order patterns in texts such as the *Evangelienbuch*. Robinson (1997:2–3), for example, chooses to examine Isidor over Otfrid, because a more variable verbal syntax makes the latter text difficult to work with. I am less inclined to believe that Robinson does not like a good challenge than I am to conclude that he is equating more regular, easily identifiable syntactic patterns with grammaticality. Unless one wants to maintain that, for example, written standard languages, with their regularized syntax, are inherently more grammatical than nonstandard oral varieties, one must reject this equivalence.

More generally, it seems this assumption stems from modern notions of the relative grammaticality of poetry and prose. Most modern literates have been exposed to verse whose lyrical modes of expression are removed from our daily idiom, while prose seems closer to everyday discourse.¹³ However, it is important to remember that early medieval writing occurred in a fundamentally different environment—one in which a new Latinate literacy was developing, while vernacular culture was still overwhelmingly oral (see, for example, Green 1994:47, 49; Edwards 1994:141)—and its prose and poetic expressions are also different from modern prose and poetry. The product of the oral

a 9th-century speaker would judge these tokens, while still conveying her belief that they exist only to satisfy poetic exigencies.

¹² See Cichosz 2010:52, however, for a different approach.

¹³ This assumption also requires re-examination, as even a cursory analysis of spontaneously produced syntax reveals. The gulf between everyday discourse and written prose is wide; see, for example, the introduction to Miller & Weinert's (1998) book, *Spontaneous Spoken Language*.

tradition, Ong (2012:34) reminds us, was crucially poetic, not ornamentally so. Poetic language was mnemonic language: It was rhythmic, it alliterated or had assonances; it was rooted in patterns of speech, more planned and formal than everyday discourse, but thoroughly dependent on it as well. That is, any poetic language that deviated significantly from more spontaneously produced language would tax the memory. Otfrid is not bound by these cognitive constraints, but he is still composing verse in a world in which mnemonic, or poetic, language is the primary vehicle of cultural memory, the public form of the vernacular.¹⁴ The poetic scene in 9th-century Weissenburg was vastly different from a modern one, in which poetry occupies a more peripheral cultural and linguistic space.

Just as distinct from its modern counterpart is 9th-century prose. In the OHG corpus, there are only a few short examples of vernacular prose writing, such as the *Wessobrunner Gebet*. Practically all prose works are translations of Latin texts, in which the possibility of syntactic distortion is obvious. This is particularly true for Tatian, a mostly line-by-line translation of Latin. However, the question is whether or not the same applies to Isidor, which scholars see as an excellent translation, or “our best early source of Old High German prose” (Robinson 1997:2). Is this text the best snapshot of a 9th-century speaker’s competence? The answer must be no: Prose writing is the default for the modern literate, but only after years of schooling in the standard language. In contrast, prose vernacular writing in 9th-century German was a completely new phenomenon, while poetic vernacular writing—also new and surely challenging in that the poet must find ways to visually represent what had existed previously only as sound—at least had an autochthonous oral tradition to draw on. Producing a vernacular prose translation required consciously developing a written language appropriate for the task. Matzel (1970:517, 519; see also Green 1994:45 for a summary) describes the Isidor translation in this way, noting that Latin provided a model for how a written language ought to look with a regularized grammar and orthography. In sum, its syntactic system is a constructed one, informed by the vernacular but also necessarily deviating from it. It is a fallacy to

¹⁴ That many runic inscriptions (for example, those on the Golden Horn of Gallehus and the Ruthwell Cross) are in fact alliterative poetry underscores how poetic public language was.

assume Isidor is a more accurate reflection of a natural native speaker competence than the *Evangelienbuch*.

To be clear, I do not argue here that 9th-century poetry is the better source of grammatical data. I only point out that discounting its structures on the grounds that they are not attested in 9th-century prose is based on dubious assumptions. The extant prose texts are not an appropriate stand-in for native speaker judgments, and the potential for the distortion of competence is present in either genre. I submit that the only real strategy historical linguists have is to try to identify and explain the patterns attested in the data, which must include analysis of the potential influence of pragmatic factors. Given the small size of the corpus, it is more productive simply to accept all data as grammatical, unless a compelling empirically grounded, text-specific case can be made for their pure artificiality. Whether there is compelling evidence of the asyndetic verb-late clause's artificiality in Otfrid is the topic of the next section.

2.2. Accepting the Grammaticality of the Asyndetic Verb-Late Clause.

In this section, I argue against the characterization of asyndetic verb-late clauses as poetic phenomena, which can be found even in basic descriptions of OHG syntax, such as Schrod's (2004:204) *Althochdeutsche Grammatik II*: "Die Späterstellungen bei Otfrid sind reimbedingt und damit keine aussagekräftigen Belege" [Cases of verb-late are conditioned by rhyme and, thus, are not meaningful pieces of evidence]. This conclusion is often accompanied by an example or two, like the one in 9.

(9) Er uns ginádon sinen ríat thaz súlichan kúning
 he us mercy his meted that such king-ACC

uns gihíalt
 us preserved

'He meted out to us his mercy in that he preserved such a king for us.'
 (L 27)

According to Schrod (2004), the verb-late placement of *ríat* simply mirrors the subordinate clause structure in the b-verse. Note that data such as these do not actually preclude the structure's grammaticality: The

verb-late placement could be grammatical and satisfy the end-rhyme scheme simultaneously. A more accurate phrasing would be that, unless one can exclude the possibility that end-rhyme influenced syntax, one cannot conclusively state that the verb-late syntax of the clause in the a-verse is the reflection of a speaker's underlying competence.

Axel's (2007:70) statement is stronger: Because instances of verb-late syntax generally satisfy poetic exigency, none should be accepted as grammatical. However, if verb-late syntax is only there for poetic purposes, most, if not all, asyndetic verb-late clauses should have rhyming finite verbs. The data clearly show that verb-late verbs are not confined to rhyming position: Of the dataset's 73 asyndetic verb-late clauses, 20 clauses, which is over a quarter of all tokens, do not feature finite verbs that rhyme:

- (10) a. Lúdwig ther snéllo thes wísduames fóllö
 Ludwig the brave DET.GEN wisdom-GEN full
 er óstarrichi ríhtit ál [so Fránkono kúning scal]
 he Eastern-Kingdom rules all as the.Franks-GEN king ought
 'Ludwig the brave, full of wisdom, he rules the whole Eastern
 Kingdom, as the king of the Franks ought.' (L,1–2)
- b. Quad er io bi nóti lagi dáwalonti
 said he ever in need lay-PRET.SBJV dying
 'He said that he lay in desperate circumstances, dying.' (III 2 7 a–b)

Among these 20 clauses there are 11 asyndetic verb-late tokens that function as main clauses, as in 10a, and 9 that function as dependent, as in 10b.¹⁵

As discussed in section 1.1, it is the verb-late main clause that is most relevant to the debate between Lenerz (1985) and Axel (2007). That is, the verbal syntax of tokens such as 10a should be attributable to extragrammatical pressures. In this case, however, it is clear that end-rhyme is not to blame, as the finite verb is not in verse-final position.

¹⁵ Tokens of main clauses include: L 1-2; L 19; L 75; L 89; L 91; I 1 3; I 1 8; I 1 13; S 5; III 2 29-30; IV 18 16. Tokens of dependent clauses include: L 7-8; L 31-32; S 18-19; S 48; I 1 43-44; I 1 78; I 1 88; III 2 7; V 19 16.

Strengthening the argument that the verb's placement was not a poetic choice is the fact that a verb-second configuration would have yielded the exact same metrical cadence, as shown in 11.

- (11) a. As attested: er óstarríchi ríhtit ál
 b. With verb-second: er ríhtit óstarríchi ál

Though the source of Otfrid's metrical cadences is unclear, it is generally accepted that he aimed for an undulating lift-dip beat structure, with the verse's dips held to one syllable (see Bostock 1976:210 for more details). In this instance, however, the two variants are identical. The only other possible motivation for the verb-late placement—outside of it being a grammatical option, that is—is a phonotactic one: Perhaps Otfrid wanted to avoid having two rhotics in a row.¹⁶ There is evidence against this argument as well. Namely, it is not difficult to find er+r-sequences elsewhere in the *Evangelienbuch*: Er ríchisot githíuto (I 5 29); Er ríat thaz man biwúrbi (III 26 27a); so er rúarta imo thaz óra (V 17 23b). It is unlikely that Otfrid would produce an ungrammatical structure simply to avoid a phonotactic sequence attested elsewhere.

As was the case in 10a, there is no evidence that the metrical cadence influenced verbal syntax in 8 of the remaining 10 verb-late main clauses. These clauses show one of the following: They have metrically viable verb-second alternatives, but Otfrid opted for the verb-late placement instead (L 89; I 1 3; I 1 8); they do not conform to their metrical cadence but also have no metrically viable verb-second alternatives (L 19; L75; S 5; III 2 29-30); they do not conform as attested, but could have, had the poet opted for verb-second syntax and cliticization, a common process attested throughout the *Evangelienbuch* (Somers Wicka 2009:87–99).¹⁷

- (12) mit éidu iz déta fésti thaz ér then mán ni wésti
 with oath it confirmed that he the man NEG knew
 'He confirmed it with an oath that he did not know this man.'
 (IV 18 16a)

¹⁶ Thanks for pointing out this possibility go to an audience member who attended my talk at GLAC-22.

¹⁷ The cliticization of a vowel-initial subject or object pronoun occurs in 230 (or 71%) of 326 total collocations attested throughout the work.

Example 13a is a made-up sequence with verb-second (and pronominal encliticization), whereas 13b,c are similar verb-second examples.

- (13) a. mit éidu dét-iz fësti
with oath confirmed-it
- b. er détaz híar nu festi
he did-it here now certain
'He confirmed it now.' (IV 27 16)
- c. Gihórt-iz filu mánag fríunt
heard-it very many friend
'Very many a friend heard it.' (I 9,3)

Note how the imagined verb-second version of 12 in 13a eliminates the extraneous unstressed beat. Only two clauses (L 91 and I 1 13) show a conformance to their cadence that would have been undone by the verb in second position. These two clauses might matter more if there were evidence that Otfrid was loath to violate a strict lift-dip rhythm, but this was clearly not the case: Of the 516 lines and 1,032 verses in my dataset, by my count only about 57% of verses conform to their metrical cadence; 47% do not. Thus, metrical conformity in Otfrid is better described as a tendency, rather than an imperative. Though the grammaticality of asyndetic verb-late dependent clauses has not been called into question in the literature, it is worth noting that the dropping of *thaz* 'that' also does not seem to be conditioned by the meter. Below is an example of how the line could have incorporated a clause-initial complementizer—as the oft attested clitic group *theiz* 'that it'—into the exact same cadence.¹⁸

- (14) a. ih wéiz iz gót wórahta
I know it God made
'I know God made it.' (I 1 80 a)

¹⁸ *theiz* occurs 77 times in the *Evangelienbuch*, alongside 14 uncliticized *thaz* *iz* occurrences (Somers Wicka 2009:35).

b. With *thaz*:

ih wéiz theiz gót wórahta
 I know that-it God made
 'I know that God made it.'

Once again, metrically viable alternatives are available to Otfrid that would have allowed for a clause that appears more canonical.

With no access to native speakers, there is no way to conclusively demonstrate that asyndetic verb-late clauses were grammatical—as defined in generative syntax—in Otfrid's variety of South Rhenish Franconian. What can be said is that there is no evidence supporting Schrodtt (2004) and Axel's (2007) assertions that the structure is created entirely by rhyme and meter. I have also argued in this section against anachronistically assuming that Otfrid's is a poetic syntax in the modern understanding of the phrase, namely, that it exhibits an idiom-stretching lyricism that routinely creates clauses so different from everyday discourse that one must understand them as adhering to a different set of grammatical rules. This conception of 9th-century German vernacular poetry ignores the early medieval cultural context in which it was produced. It also ignores Otfrid's own words found in the preface (*Ad Liutbertum*), in which he discusses his decision to opt for Frankish idiom even when it conflicted with prescribed Latin norms: "ut morum se locutio praebuit, dictare curavi" [I have taken pains to write as customary speech has showed itself (to be)] (translation from Magoun 1943:885). Thus, he produced clauses that contained structures such as double negation, "ob usum tamen cotidianum" [on account of everyday usage] (Magoun 1943:885). The general didactic purpose of the poem (section IV) is to make the Latin Gospels more accessible to monolingual Frankish speakers so that one could "in his own language become familiar with the most holy words . . ., understanding in his own language the Law of God" (Magoun 1943:876). Though Otfrid discusses here Latin influence rather than poetic influences, the point is still relevant: The poet aimed to produce idiomatic language that less educated Franks could understand and thus consciously chose structures from everyday discourse.

I move forward, then, with the understanding that asyndetic verb-late clauses are grammatical, even idiomatic, that they are produced by the same grammar that yields other more canonical-seeming clauses, not some

poetic grammar. In the next section, I discuss how this clause type can be functional within a clausal system, that is, used as main or dependent, even though its verb is always final and complementizer absent.

3. The Asyndetic Verb-Late Clause Can Be Dependent or Main.

In this section, I show that Otfrid's asyndetic verb-late clauses function as dependent or main despite the fact that the two common markers of subordination in German—the presence of a subordinator and verb-late syntax—are fixed in this clause type. I argue that these clauses are less ambiguous with respect to clausal function than they appear because of how Otfrid uses the subjunctive mood to mark for dependency.

3.1. Distinguishing Asyndetic Verb-Final Main and Dependent Clauses.

Holler (2008:190–91) demonstrates the difficulties in distinguishing main and dependent clauses even in Modern German: Many clauses are easy to categorize, but noncanonical clauses, such as Gärtner's (2001) V2 relative clauses (see note 4), undermine the idea of a neat binary distinction. Unfortunately, many of the pragmatic and grammatical criteria that could identify clause type in modern languages will not be effective in analyzing the asyndetic verb-late clauses of OHG. The formal cues—verbal syntax and presence of complementizer—obviously cannot elucidate their status. Neither does information structure, if one accepts Schlachter's (2012:144) conclusion that verb-late clauses, be they asyndetic or not, fulfill the same discourse function of providing background information. Features like intonation and prosody are unrecoverable for a historical variety. Instead, I rely mostly on “interpretational aspects” Holler (2008:191) and look to the context of the asyndetic verb-late clause to assess whether or not there is a logical connection between it and surrounding clauses, one that could be made explicit through the addition of a complementizer.

Looking to context allows for the categorization of asyndetic verb-late clauses into two groups: those that function as arguments in a preceding clause, as in 15, and those that do not, as in 16.

- (15) a. (ih weiz) iz gót worahta
 I know it-ACC God made
 ‘I know (that) God made it.’ (I 1,80)

- b. (Wánana sculun Fránkon éinon thaz biwánkon) ni sie
 why should Franks alone this avoid NEG they
 in frénkisgon bigínnen sie gotes lób singen?
 in Frankish begin.SBJV they God-GEN praise sing.SBJV
 ‘Why should the Franks alone avoid this, (that) they may not
 begin to sing God’s praise in Frankish?’ (I 1 33–34)

- (16) a. Lúdwig ther snéllo thes wísdumes fólló er
 Ludwig the brave DET-GE wisdom-GEN full he
 óstarrichi ríhtit ál (so Fránkono kúning scal)
 Eastern-Kingdom rules all as the-Franks-GEN king ought
 ‘Ludwig the brave, full of wisdom, he rules the whole Eastern
 Kingdom, as the king of the Franks ought.’ (L 1–2)

- b. Sar Kríachi joh Románi iz máchont so gizámi
 ADV Greeks and Romans it did so beautifully
 ‘First of all, the Greeks and Romans did it so beautifully.’ (I 1 13)

The clause in 15a is an argument of the preceding predicate *weiz*, while the asyndetic clause in 15b with the predicate *bigínnen* connects to correlative *thaz* and explains what the Franks have been forgoing. The second asyndetic clause, in turn, is an argument in its preceding clause. In contrast, 16a is the work’s opening clause and so can have no connection with its preceding clause. The clause in 16b connects to preceding discourse, but it is impossible to imagine a dropped complementizer *thaz*, especially with an initial *sar* signaling the new and emphatic information that follows. All in all, there are 45 asyndetic verb-late clauses that can be interpreted as main, 28 as dependent.

The two categories exhibit surface similarities but are different with respect to grammatical mood. Beginning with the surface similarities, a verb-third analysis of this same dataset (see Somers 2018:90) identifies the absolute position of finite verbs in asyndetic main and dependent clauses. Those data are represented in table 2.

n=73	Main (n=45)	Dependent (n=28)
Verb-third (n=32)	16 (36%)	16 (57%)
Verb-fourth+ (n=41)	29 (64%)	12 (43%)

Table 2. Verb position in asyndetic verb-late clauses.

These distributions are not significant ($p=0.0915$).¹⁹ Somers (2018:92) also identifies the types of sentential constituents that occur before the finite verb in main and dependent asyndetic clauses: Both show a wide array of prefinite constituents, including subject and object pronouns, adverbs, noun phrases, and prepositional phrases. The only identifiable difference is that clauses in the former category tend to be in the indicative mood, the latter in the subjunctive (table 3).

n=73	Main (n=45)	Dependent (n=28)
Indicative (n=43)	39 (86.7%)	4 (14.3%)
Subjunctive (n=30)	6 (13.3%)	24 (85.7%)

Table 3. Mood differences.

These distributions are significant ($p<.00001$). This strong correlation points to two conclusions. First, it suggests that Otfred is sensitive to the distinction between main and dependent clauses, and second, that the subjunctive mood was one way to signal this distinction. The fact that the subjunctive mood serves as the only characteristic distinguishing the asyndetic dependent clauses from the main implies that Otfred saw dependency as a condition that he could mark through various means, not just through verb-late syntax and overt complementizers.

3.2. *The Subjunctive Mood as a Marker of Dependency.*

Comparing asyndetic dependent clauses to clauses marked as dependent through a verb-late syntax combined with *thaz* strengthens the argument that Otfred used the subjunctive mood as another dependency marker.

¹⁹ The Fisher Exact Test Calculator at <https://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/fisher/default2.aspx> performed all calculations for 2x2 contingency tables in this article.

That is, asyndetic dependent clauses show a higher rate of subjunctive verbs than do dependent clauses with complementizer *thaz*.

n=120	Indicative mood	Subjunctive mood
thaz-clause (n=92)	30 (33%)	62 (67%)
asyndetic dependent (n=28)	4 (14%)	24 (86%)

Table 4. *Thaz* versus asyndetic dependent clauses, part I.

These data indicate that Otfrid was more likely to mark a dependent clause with the subjunctive when the dependency marker *thaz* was absent. However, the number of tokens is too small to establish this preference as significant ($p=0.0919$). Expanding the dataset to include all relevant tokens from two new chapters—*Ad Hartmuat et Werinbertum* and Book I, chapter 5—adds 19 tokens: 16 *thaz*-clauses and three asyndetic dependent clauses. The expanded dataset suggests that a similar preference may hold throughout the work.²⁰

n=139	Indicative mood	Subjunctive mood
thaz-clause (n=108)	36 (33.3%)	72 (66.7%)
asyndetic dependent (n=31)	4 (12.9%)	27 (87.1%)

Table 5. *Thaz* versus asyndetic dependent clauses, part II.

These results are significant ($p=0.0266$) and indicate that the subjunctive mood alone could mark a clause as dependent. Otfrid is sensitive to a main-dependent clause distinction and provides for its grammatical marking in all clause types.

That Otfrid's use of a complementizer to mark dependency is not invariable points to the conclusion that he had various means by which to signal it and sometimes used one, sometimes more than one to do so. It is still unclear why Otfrid opted for the asyndetic variant when he did. I am skeptical that the meter created the phenomenon (section 2.2), though it could be that the poet opted for the perfectly grammatical asyndetic dependent clause when he thought it achieved a more desirable rhythm.

²⁰ I chose these chapters because of their length and inclusion in Vollmann-Profe's (1987) edition.

There is also no evidence that Otfrid used asyndetic dependent clauses in instances of indirect speech, as Axel-Tober (2012:189–191) claims: This dataset exhibits more variation in the types of predicates that take asyndetic dependent complements:

(17) With a main clause correlative

a. <i>flīzan</i>	‘to strive (for something)’	(I 1 4)
b. <i>biwankôn</i>	‘to avoid’	(I 1 34)
c. <i>drahtôn</i>	‘to consider’	(I 1 43–44, 44)
d. <i>wesan adeilo</i>	‘to forgo’	(I 1 116)
e. <i>gilouben</i>	‘to believe’	(V 19 16)
f. <i>sagên</i>	‘to say’	(II 8 46, 46)

(18) With no correlatives in the main clause

a. <i>fergôn</i>	‘to ask’	(S 18, 18–19)
b. <i>firlīhan</i>	‘to grant’	(S 48)
c. <i>wesan in flīze</i>	‘to endeavor to do something’	(I 1 2)
d. <i>wizzan</i>	‘to know’	(I 1 80; II 8 48)
e. <i>lesan</i>	‘to read’	(I 1 88)
f. <i>bitten</i>	‘to ask’	(III 2 5)
g. <i>quedan</i>	‘to say’	(III 2 7; IV 18 22)
h. <i>duan zi guhugte</i>	‘to remind’	(V 19 32)
i. <i>gibietan</i>	‘to command’	(II 8 26; II 8 35)

Some of these predicates can introduce complements containing indirect speech, for example, *quedan* and *sagên*, but many others do not, such as *wesan adeilo* and *biwankôn*. Wunder (1965:194–197) also places verbs such as *gibietan*, *fergôn*, and *bitten* in a different category: Though they are *verba declarandi*, whose dependent clauses express a pronouncement, they generally do not introduce indirect (or direct) speech in Otfrid, for example: *Emmizen nu ubar ál ih druhtin fêrgon scal, mit lôn er iu iz firgêlte joh sînes selbes wôrte* ‘I shall always ask the Lord by all means (that) he may bestow unto you in accordance with his promise’ (S 17–18). Wunder identifies additional predicate types, including verbs of believing or thinking (*gilouben*, *wizzan*, and *drahtôn*), verbs of preparing, doing, or the absence of the same (*flīzan*, *biwankôn*, and *wesan adeilo*), which are not associated with indirect speech.

An easier question to answer is why Otfrid would use the subjunctive to indicate dependency; this association makes particular sense in light of similar patterns in Ecclesiastical Latin (see Collins 1985:224), the one (written) language in which Otfrid was educated.

- (19) a. Quārē Paulus Rōmam iit?
 why Paul to.Rome went
 ‘Why did Paul go to Rome?’
- b. Discipulus rogat quārē Paulus Rōmam ierit
 disciple is.asking why Paul to.Rome went.SBJV
 ‘The disciple is asking why Paul went to Rome.’

In Ecclesiastical Latin, the subjunctive could still convey that the proposition of a clause was hypothetical, but also functioned as the “mood of subordination” (Collins 1985:224) or a grammatical marker of subordination. The indirect and direct questions in the examples have the same indicative semantics, and the subjunctive mood in 19b instead signals the “syntagmatic dependence,” to use Schrodts’s (2004:187) term, of the dependent clause.

German still shows traces of a correlation between the subjunctive and dependency, but it is unclear whether or not this early association reflects a native speaker’s intuition or if it was borrowed into early written German from a Latin model. It is easy to imagine both being true: There could have been a preexisting association in the vernacular, but any systematicity in the recognition and grammatical signaling of dependency markers strongly implies a Latin source. The syntax of today’s spontaneous spoken language exhibits less grammatical subordination, less embedding, and more fragmentation than its highly developed written standards. Speakers link clauses together, though less tightly and not exclusively through formal grammatical markers (Miller & Weinert 1998:20–24). Given the fact that 9th-century Frankish was an overwhelmingly spoken phenomenon with hardly any written tradition and no standard form, it is highly improbable that the *Evangelienbuch* is simply capturing a wholly autochthonous, systematic, formal grammatical marking of dependency that was not influenced by the one model of a written language known to the poet, in which this systematicity was long established. This section’s evidence of subjunctive as one of several

dependency markers demonstrates that Otfrid had a sensitivity to the main-dependent clause distinction but not a fully regularized way of signaling it.

4. Asyndetic Verb-Late Clauses are Significant.

So far I have argued that the *Evangelienbuch*'s asyndetic verb-final clauses are grammatical, not purely poetic (section 2), and functional features within their system (section 3). These conclusions are significant because they suggest the obligatory fronting of finite verbs was not part of Otfrid's grammar, which itself undermines claims that complementarity developed in Proto-Germanic. If complementarity had expunged asyndetic verb-late clauses from the grammar many centuries before, it would be difficult to explain why the most extensive original composition in early OHG still has them. If they are archaisms, as Lenerz (1985) and Schlachter (2012) claim, then the grammar of everyday discourse should no longer generate them; they can only be generated by some separate, ancient grammar. In this case, the question is how ancient syntactic structures are retained in an oral culture and to what extent this retention is even possible without literacy. Section 2 shows that Frankish vernacular culture was almost exclusively oral into the 9th century and beyond.

To this I add the observation that verbatim memorization plays a limited role in the transmission of oral culture. Ong (2012:62-63) describes two types of verbatim memorization identified by scholars. The first type is the ritualized language of a magical rite; the second is a "cultivated verbatim rendition" of a narrative that is fostered by either musical accompaniment or a complicated, rigid scansion. Neither type has much in common with the original composition of several thousands of lines of loosely metered verse. The only route I can see to an archaic asyndetic verb-final clause that is no longer in Otfrid's—or anyone else's—active grammar would be if pagan rituals, perhaps like the Merseburg charms, were transmitted through verbatim memorization, and Otfrid mined them for unfamiliar, yet old-sounding, clausal patterns. It is unlikely that he would do this when his goal was to create an idiomatic written Frankish, as I discussed in Section 2. What is more, Otfrid states in his preface that he wrote the *Evangelienbuch* to neutralize the sounds of "worldly voices" and the "offensive song of laymen" (Magoun 1943:873). This unfavorable disposition toward the oral

heritage is inconsistent with the notion that he also reproduces syntactic structures specifically associated with that tradition.²¹

Thus, I conclude that asyndetic verb-final clauses were valid features of Otfrid's grammar and one must account for them. In this section, I test whether constituent ordering in asyndetic verb-final clauses patterns consistently, both internally and externally, with other more canonical looking clauses. I begin with an in-depth critical engagement with information structural accounts of these clauses in OHG—Schlachter (2012) and Lötscher (2009)—and assess their applicability to the current dataset.²² Information structural analyses build on Behaghel's (1932:3–6) Growth Principle, which highlights both the prosodic and discourse value of constituents: Less important, light, anaphoric constituents occur closer to the beginning of a clause, whereas more important, heavier constituents toward the end. Schlachter (2012) and Lötscher (2009) generally emphasize the role of information structure over prosody as being decisive in verbal syntax. I show, however, that their patterns are not borne out in this study and that the prosodic status of the finite verb—whether it is heavy or light—is a better predictor of verbal syntax.

4.1. The Information Structural Account of Asyndetic Verb-Late Clauses.

Though Lötscher (2009) and Schlachter (2012) both argue that information structure influences OHG clause structure, they each identify different patterns in their data and, thus, analyze verb-late main clauses differently.²³ I begin with Lötscher's (2009:313–316) description of these clauses in Otfrid. He asserts that an overwhelming number of them begin with a heavy, stressed constituent, which should be a “contrastive or new topic,” which is followed by at least one weak, anaphoric

²¹ Somers (2021) argues that Otfrid consciously tries to create a prescriptive, elevated variety of written Frankish as something apart from, and superior to, the spoken varieties that existed at the time and the translated Frankish that dominated in the monasteries.

²² This late mention of Lötscher 2009 is because it does not weigh in on larger questions of OHG clause structure.

²³ Like other analyses of the asyndetic verb-late clause in OHG (Lernerz 1985, Axel 2007), Lötscher 2009 and Schlachter 2012 treat the main clause variant as theoretically more problematic and focus attention on it.

constituent that functions as a “continued topic,” or “background.” Weak constituents attach enclitically to the preceding heavy element. Lötscher’s example 38c, reproduced in 20, illustrates this configuration.

(20) Druhtin Kríst sar zi imo sprach
 Lord Christ immediately to him said

so er nan érist gisah
 when he him first saw

‘Lord Christ immediately said to him, when he saw him for the first time.’
 (II 7 35)

Lötscher’s assessment of *druhtin Kríst* as heavy seems to be based on the constituent’s status as a full determiner phrase/noun phrase (DP/NP); he does not explain how it functions as a contrastive or new topic within discourse.²⁴ These main clauses are no different from other main clauses with the finite verb in clause-initial position, which Lötscher argues is the basic position of the finite verb in the main clause (p. 312). A constituent may but need not be fronted. If it is preposed for grammatical reasons—as opposed to information structurally motivated ones—fronting is restricted to one constituent. However, more than one constituent may be fronted for pragmatic, or “information structurally motivated,” reasons. Verb-final main clauses fall into the latter category: The late position of the verb is due to this process of “expanded fronting,” through which a heavy element is preposed and the light element (or elements) is placed in second position, in accordance with Wackernagel’s Law. This process yields trivially verb-late clauses.

Yet, the particular arrangement of heavy and light constituents that suggests expanded fronting in Lötscher’s analysis is attested less frequently than other configurations in my dataset: Among my 45 verb-late

²⁴ There is no evidence that *druhtin Kríst* is contrastive or new in its context. The chapter (*Stabat Johannes est ex discipulis eius duo*) describes how Christ finds his first disciples through the intermediary of John the Baptist. The disciples’ big moment of recognition when they first meet the Lamb of God (*selbon drúhtinan Kríst!*) occurs just 7 lines before. Thus, the following mention of Christ does not constitute new or emphasized information. There is also no evidence that the reference is contrastive, in opposition to, say, John the Baptist.

main clauses only 17 (less than 38%) are consistent with the expanded fronting analysis, while 28 (62%) are not.²⁵ Of the 28 clauses that are inconsistent, 23 clauses (51%) have initial light elements, as in 21a—the pattern that Lötscher characterizes as exceptional, and 4 clauses have more than one heavy constituent preceding the finite verb, as in 21b.²⁶ Finally, one clause has an initial discontinuous constituent, as in 21c.²⁷

- (21) a. Oba ir hiar findet iawiht thés
 if you here find anything of.that
 thaz wírdig ist thes lésannes
 which worthy is of.reading
 iz iuer húgu irwálo wísduames fóllós
 it your spirit investigate.SBJV wisdom-GEN full-GEN
 ‘If you find anything here of that, which is worthy to read, your spirit, of full wisdom, may investigate it.’ (S 7–8)
- b. Lúdwig ther snélló thes wísduames fólló
 Ludwig the brave DET.GEN wisdom-GEN full
 er óstarrichi ríhtit ál
 he Eastern-Kingdom rules all
 ‘Ludwig, the brave, full of wisdom, he rules all the Eastern Kingdom.’ (L 1–2)
- c. Lékza ih therera búachi iu sentu in Suábo richi
 text I this book-GEN to.you send in Swabian kingdom
 ‘The text of this book I send to you in the Swabian kingdom.’ (S 5)

²⁵ L 41 a; L 91; S 44 a; I 1 77 a; III 2 20 a; III 2 29-30; III 12 12 a; II 8 12 a; II 8 12 b; II 8 31 a; II 8 41 a-b; II 8 43 a; IV 18 21 a; IV 18 25; L 48 b; II 8 31 b; IV 18 16 a

²⁶ L 1-2; L 19 a; L 75; S 17

²⁷ L 27 a; L 50; L 89; S 8; I 1 3; I 1 9 a; I 1 10 a; I 1 13; I 1 24 a; III 2 11-12; III 12 9 a; III 12 25 a; III 12 44 b; V 19 23 a; II 8 8 a-b; II 8 39 b; IV 18 6 a-b; IV 18 18 b; IV 18 35 b; I 1 8; III 12 12 b; II 8 43 b; II 8 44

Note that the light pronominal *iz* in 21a could have been placed after the heavy constituent *iuer húgu* with no disruption to the end rhyme, which undermines the claim that poetic considerations drive such orderings. Lötscher provides no evidence, nor discusses the claim, that verb-late main clauses with initial light constituents are particularly affected by meter and rhyme. It would be impossible to treat *óstarrichi* in 21b as a light, enclitic, anaphoric constituent, particularly as this is the work's opening sentence. The pronoun *ih*'s placement into a linear/surface verb-second position creates a discontinuous constituent in 21c; it is difficult to see how the discourse value of constituents can be crucial in driving verbal syntax, when the heavy new topic is divided in half.

Lötscher (2009:316, note 40) suggests that data such as 21a, which has an initial light element, could still fit into the expanded fronting hypothesis. Consider the example in 22.

(22) So was er io mit ímo sar mit imo
so was he always with him right-away with him

wóraht er iz thar so wás ses io gidátun
did he it there whatever they ever did

sie iz allaz sáman rietun
they it all together planned

'He thus was with him all the time, he did it together with him;
whatever they did, they planned it together.' (II 1 15)

Here the argument becomes circular. The author states that the pragmatic function of *sie* in 22 is unclear and that "we could assume ... that the pronoun has a special topic function within the context," which means the clause would be consistent with the expanded fronting hypothesis. Lötscher presents no evidence that *sie* is a heavy, new, or contrastive topic. In fact, such a reading seems impossible: In the chapter's first 14 lines Otfrid notes that God the Father and Son have always existed and then observes that they both created everything together; indeed *sáman*, which itself occurs preverbally—though not initially—is the most likely candidate for new topic emphasis. Beyond the assertion that there is a predominant heavy-light constituent pattern in verb-late main clauses, there is no reason to assume that *sie* is a heavy topic.

I can only speculate on why Löttscher's (2009) pattern for asyndetic verb-late clauses is not widely attested in my dataset. Löttscher's analysis presents hardly any numbers: The author never says how many clauses he looked at for his study, only that examples were drawn mostly from Book II (p. 319). The absence of indications that the analysis is based on a defined dataset undermines any statements made regarding frequency. One would need to know, for example, how many verb-late main clauses there are in Book II and what proportion of those clauses exhibits the heavy-light pattern before accepting conclusions on the frequency of that pattern. Such presentations of data are absent in the work, which implies that its conclusions are not empirically grounded and instead based on a general impression of the data. In contrast, the current study draws on a defined dataset (see section 1.2), consisting of clauses taken from multiple samples of continuous text. Thus, its conclusions are more reliable.

Now I turn to Schlachter's (2012) information structural analysis of asyndetic verb-late main clauses, which diverges from Löttscher 2009 in how it distinguishes verb-third from verb-final clauses. That is, Schlachter argues that these configurations are distinct with respect to discourse structure. The study also draws its data from a different text, the OHG Isidor. A quick note on the study's data presentation: Schlachter maintains that translations of the Biblical passages differ stylistically from the rest of the translation, referred to as the "treatise." Thus, she keeps data from each separate, a distinction I maintain in the discussion below. Schlachter also includes in the study's dataset St. Matthew's Gospel from the *Monsee-Vienna Fragments*, which she argues were translated by someone else (pp. 20–25). In what follows, I demonstrate that, as was true for Löttscher 2009, the patterns she asserts for Isidor are not useful for understanding those of Otfrid.

Schlachter (2012:136–138, 156) identifies two syntactic configurations that she argues connect to distinct discourse structures. The first of these is verb-third (XP-XP-Verb-XP), which comprises "mostly copula constructions with a preverbal adverb" (p. 156). These clauses generally begin with a thematic constituent—one that connects to the preceding discourse "in the broadest sense" (p. 144)—and a focused constituent follows. I reproduce Schlachter's (2012:137) example 143:

- (23) Dhiu chiuuisso ist bighin gotes sunes
that certainly is beginning of-God's Son

‘That certainly is the beginning of God’s Son.’

(I II.4, Eg. 116, He. 4, 1–2)

Schlachter claims this pattern for verb-third clauses in the treatise translation, though she never states how many of its 11 unambiguously verb-third clauses are copula constructions with initial thematic constituents and focused adverbs. Verb-third is poorly attested among the nontreatise clauses in Schlachter’s dataset with only four tokens, though these few tokens mostly exhibit the opposite discourse structure with the focused constituent in clause-initial position and tend *not* to be copula constructions with preverbal adverbs (p. 138).

There is additional confusion surrounding the information structure that actually characterizes verb-third clauses in Schlachter’s analysis. Namely, the configuration in the various summaries following its initial presentation in section 4.3.1 becomes primarily associated with a *focus*-initial discourse sequence. Consider the final summary and discussion (p. 209), in which the author asserts that verb-third is “typically” characterized by focus-initial clauses. This conclusion is surprising, as the author never states how many Foc-Top-Verb configurations are attested among the 11 unambiguously verb-third treatise clauses, noting only that such constructions occur more frequently in the Biblical passages and St. Matthew’s Gospel. Given that the Biblical passages’ sole verb-third token is focus-initial, as are two of three verb-third clauses in St. Matthew’s Gospel (p. 138), one can deduce that two, perhaps three, of the eleven treatise clauses are also focus-initial; the rest presumably begin with a thematic constituent, which is followed by the focused constituent.²⁸ Given the absence of numbers, however, one can only surmise how many unambiguously verb-third clauses are associated with either discourse pattern. There is no clear empirical demonstration of what verb-third clauses are.

I reach the same conclusion for Schlachter’s (2012:129, 144, 153–156, 209) second distinct information structure, which connects to unambiguously verb-final (XP-XP-XP-Verb), or “V-end” clauses. Unlike unambiguously verb-third clauses, which have preverbal focused

²⁸ It is possible that all three of the St. Matthew’s Gospel tokens are focus-initial, but the author only presents two examples and does not comment on the missing third clause.

constituents that sometimes occur in initial position, verb-final clauses never have initial focused constituents. Instead, they begin with a thematic constituent, which can be nominal or pronominal. They contain only familiar information and continue the narration/argument (or provide parenthetical metacommentary), rather than conveying new information. However, Schlachter (2012) is not explicit about how many of its 16 unambiguously verb-final clauses (14 treatise clauses, 2 non-treatise) actually fit this description. For example, there is no empirical demonstration that initial constituents tend to be thematic, despite the reference on page 140 to a set of 13 tokens that begin with a “d-pronoun.” Based on the examples provided (pp. 140–141), clause-initial d-pronouns include thematic time adverbials, such as *dhar after* ‘thereafter’, but also prepositional phrases, such as *umbi dhen samun* ‘about the/this seed’ and full DP/NPs, such as *dhazs himilsca folc* ‘the heavenly people’. As is evident in the Otfrid data below, one cannot assume such constituents are discourse-given, as Schlachter implies. Also problematic is that one of the few examples provided is taken from the study’s set of ambiguous clauses (example 153a, p. 140). Because the author does not explicitly identify the 13 tokens as unambiguously verb-final, it is unclear whether they all belong to this category, or whether this number includes some ambiguous clauses that were later analyzed as verb-final.

The question of whether or not Schlachter (2012) maintains analytical separation between the unambiguous and ambiguous categories is consequential: The work uses a hypothesized correlation between syntax and information structure to disambiguate sequences it has identified as ambiguous, such as XP-XP-Verb, in which the verb is both verb-third and verb-final (pp. 144–147). The argument runs the risk of circularity if one does not first establish that a correlation exists in the unambiguous clauses. Without this first crucial step, one only has asserted associations that are then used to sort ambiguous data, a process that can create the appearance of a pattern where none is present. This sort of argumentation is present in Schlachter’s analysis of the verb-third/-final ambiguous clauses: She asserts, but does not demonstrate, an association between focus-initial discourse structures and verb-third, and a negative association between this information structure and verb-final. These assumed associations then provide the means of categorization: Any ambiguous clauses with initial focused constituents must be verb-third and cannot be verb-final. The work does not state exactly how

many of the 24 (or 22) ambiguous clauses are disambiguated in this way, but the process and its results must be viewed with caution.²⁹

Beyond these issues, there is little evidence that Schlachter's (2012) information structurally defined syntactic categories are relevant for Otfrid. Beginning with the verb-third pattern (XP-XP-Verb-XP), recall that Schlachter identifies these as mostly copula constructions with a preverbal adverb that is focused or "focuses" the other preverbal constituent, while being itself thematic.³⁰ Of the 45 asyndetic verb-late main clauses in my dataset, 10 fall into Schlachter's verb-third category.³¹ None of the 10 is a copula construction; only two exhibit a preverbal adverb (II 8 8 and II 8 44). Turning to the contention that verb-third is associated with focus-initial clauses, this does not appear to be true for Otfrid, whose clauses with the XP-XP-Verb-XP sequence exhibit no unanimity in their initial constituents: Five of the ten clauses have initial pronouns, which, Lötscher's analysis notwithstanding, are generally understood as thematic.³² The remaining five begin with full DP/NPs or prepositional phrases, prosodically heavy constituents that are more likely to be focused.³³ None appear to have any relevant antecedents. In sum, I find no evidence of an information structurally defined verb-third clause in Otfrid.

The same can be said for the verb-final (XP-XP-XP-Verb) pattern, which Schlachter (2012) associates with (initial) anaphoric constituents; these clauses should only convey familiar information rather than new information. There are 22 main clauses in my dataset that exhibit the unambiguous verb-final pattern.³⁴ Five (23%) contain only thematic or

²⁹ There are discrepancies between the numbers of each clause type in tables 3 (p. 127) and 4 (p. 130), several of which—including this one—are not adequately explained in the text.

³⁰ I include in this verb-third category clauses that exhibit more than one postverbal constituent, so XP-XP-Verb-XP+ sequences: L 75; III 2 11-12; II 8 44.

³¹ L 1-2; L 75; L 91; S 8; III 2 11-12; III 2 29-30; II 8 8; I 1 8; II 8 44; IV 18 16a

³² Object pronoun: S 8; I 1 8; subject pronoun: III 2 11-12; II 8 8 (with *man* 'one'); reflexive pronoun: II 8 44

³³ L 1-2; L 75; L 91; III 2 29-30; IV 18 16

³⁴ L 27 a; L 50; S 44 a; I 1 9 a; I 1 10 a; I 1 77 a; III 2 20 a; III 12 12 a; III 12 44 b; V 19 23 a; II 8 12 b; II 8 31 a; II 8 39 b; II 8 43 a; IV 18 18 b; IV 18 21 a; IV

anaphoric preverbal constituents.³⁵ Preverbal constituents here include subject, object, and indefinite, as well as anaphoric adverbials, such as *thar* ‘there’. In contrast, 10 (45%) of the 22 clauses contain preverbal constituents with no apparent antecedents whatever in their chapters.³⁶

(24) a. Johánnem sume ouh nénnent
 John some also name
 ‘Some also name John.’ (III 12 12a)

b. (Thaz warun séhs kruagi, zi thiu was thar ginúagi, tho zi thén
 rachon thio drúhtin wolta máchon.)
 ‘There were six jugs; for this it was enough then for the thing
 that the Lord wanted to do.’ (II 8 29–30)

Thaz méz wir ofto zéllen joh séxtari iz nénnen
 DET measure we often calculate and sester it call
 ‘We often calculate according to this measure and we call it a
 sester.’ (II 8 31)

(nam íagilih in redinu, thrízug stunton zéhinu. Odo zuíro
 zéhanzug.)
 ‘Each (jug) takes 30 times ten or two times one hundred.’
 (II 8 32–33)

In this chapter, as shown in 24a, Jesus asks his disciples who people think he is. They respond that people have mistaken him for John, among others. This reply, and the constituent *John* in particular, represents new information within this context. Example 24b illustrates that constituents with definite determiners, Schlachter’s “d-pronouns,” are not automatically discourse-given. *Thaz méz* has no earlier reference in the chapter—this discussion of measurements and the dimensions of the jugs constitutes new information. Instead, the definiteness of the noun empha-

18 25; IV 18 35 b Also included in this category are the four clauses that exhibit more than three preverbal constituents (XP-XP-XP+-Verb): L 48b; S 17; II 8 41; III 12 25a.

³⁵ I 1 9a; III 12 44b; V 19 23a; II 8 39b; IV 18 18b

³⁶ L 27a; L 48; S 17; I 1 77; III 12 12a; II 8 31; II 8 43; IV 18 21; S 44; III 2 20a

sizes this one particular measure to which Otfrid introduces the reader. In colloquial English one might say something like: *There is this measurement we call a sester*. In my dataset, only five tokens begin with a d-pronoun, all of which are full DP/NPs.³⁷

I find the remaining seven clauses difficult to assess in a way that is consistent with Schlachter's (2012) analysis.³⁸ This difficulty arises in part from the nature of the clauses themselves: Their preverbal constituents include some obviously discourse-given, anaphoric elements, but also full DP/NPs, whose status remains unclear to me. Rigorous analysis of these clauses is hindered by the fact that Schlachter's work does not adequately lay bare its methodology for assessing whether constituents are truly thematic. As discussed, isolating initial d-pronouns is not a satisfactory means for identifying thematic constituents. Schlachter's section 4.4.2 presents one possibility for assessing whether a clause continues an argument or narrative sequence. Namely, it looks at whether verb-final main clauses occur at the beginning, middle or end of text sections, presumably building on the assumption that new information is conveyed in section-initial—not in section-internal/-final—clauses. This cannot be a satisfactory method for Otfrid and its much longer chapters. Even if I assumed that all seven clauses were consistent with Schlachter's discourse analysis—which seems unlikely to me—the data would then have 12 clauses that have the predicted information structure, 10 that do not. There is no evidence that syntactic pattern correlates with information structure.

4.2. *Light and Heavy Verbs in Otfrid.*

The previous section demonstrated that existing information structural accounts of asyndetic verb-late clauses in OHG do not elucidate the current data. Yet it is difficult to relinquish Behaghel's notion that prosody influenced constituent ordering in the early Germanic clause, more so than more modern conceptions of the clause might allow for. In this section, I present evidence of a correlation between prosody and syntax by focusing on the finite verb. Hopper (1975:52–57) provides the context for this analysis. The goal of his work is to reconstruct the basic

³⁷ II 8 31; II 8 43; IV 18 21; IV 18 25; II 8 41

³⁸ L 50; II 8, 12; IV 18, 25; I 1 10a; III 12, 25a; II 8 41; IV 18 35

clausal patterns of Proto-Germanic by comparing the strikingly similar surface patterning of the early Germanic languages (pp. 13–14).

In Hopper's Germanic clause, there is no assumption of an implicational relationship between verbal syntax and clause type—main or dependent. Instead, he asserts that clauses may be independent of, or integrated into, their preceding discourse, and he connects each discourse status to different syntactic configurations and verb weight. Verb-second and verb-final may occur with either discourse type, and neither is crucially defined as main or dependent:

(25) a. Independent of preceding discourse (emphatic):

Main clause:	verb-first syntax	heavy verbs
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b. Integrated into preceding discourse (pragmatically neutral):

Main clause:	verb-second syntax	light verbs
	verb-late syntax	heavy verbs

Dependent clause:	verb-second syntax	light verbs
	verb-late syntax	heavy verbs

The only predicted correlation here is between verbal syntax and verb weight: Light verbs tend to occur in clause-second position, heavy verbs—in clause-late; verbal syntax does not particularly correlate with the main/dependent distinction. That is, it is the weight of the verb that matters, and the attraction of light verbs to second position—an expression of Wackernagel's Law—can occur in either context. Heavy verbs, in contrast, tend to remain in clause-late position, unless the pragmatic context is emphatic, in which instance they can appear in clause-first position.

Because the distinction between light and heavy verbs is important, let me define them more precisely. According to Hopper (1975:56), verbs “of light weight” comprise one or two syllables and have little or no lexical content. Semantically the light verb contributes little to the clause. I understand prosodic lightness as following from the lack of lexical content in that verbs that are lexically empty do not require a lot of phonetic material to distinguish them from other lexical items. Thus, light verbs are defined primarily by their lexical lightness. A copula verb is the classic example of this class: Its various conjugations are short with prosodically

light syllables, and it is so devoid of lexical content that some linguistic varieties, like African American Vernacular English, drop it entirely. Hopper identifies other types of verbs as being of low lexical yield, including auxiliaries and “certain unemphatic verbs” (p. 19), such as “verbs of making, writing and dedicating in inscriptions and verbs of saying in colloquy” (p. 56); these verbs tend to occur in the unstressed, enclitic clause-second position. Hopper does not explain why auxiliaries and verbs such as *to make* belong in the same light verb category. Thus, to avoid a circular argument (verbs of making are light because they occur in second position, and verbs of making occur in second position because they are light), I consider why some apparently lexical verbs might actually be light.

Auxiliary verbs are a good starting point because they demonstrate that lexical content can be spread across a complex predicate. Unlike auxiliaries in Modern German, finite verbs in early periphrastic perfect and passive constructions were not semantically empty bearers of inflection, as evidenced by inflecting nonfinite verbs attested in early dialects. Yet they still required a noun-like participle to convey the full meaning of the predicate. The finite verb itself is light, compared to the lexical nonfinite verb. The idea that predication can extend beyond the finite verb to include other substantives and need not be confined to the verbal complex is not a new one. Jespersen (1942) first coined the term *light verb* to describe English verbs with little lexical content, such as *to make*, *get*, *give*, and *take*, that would combine with substantive complements and whose predication contribution was not the same as that of a main verb. An example of this sort of construction from English is *to give an answer*, where the verb is light and does not predicate as fully as the simplex variant *to give money* (Sundquist 2018:261). Jespersen’s definition of light verb is different from the one I work with: Jespersen refers to a distinct class of verbs, different from auxiliaries in that they form complex predicates with noun phrases, prepositional phrases, and adjective phrases. In fact, Butt & Lahiri (2013) argue explicitly that light verbs are not auxiliaries. However, these light verbs and the verbs in auxiliary+participle constructions all exhibit a complex predicate in which the main verb, to one extent or another, is bleached of lexical content and relies on some additional constituent to fully convey meaning.

In sum, Hopper’s (1975) clausal types indicate that the weight of the finite verb shapes verbal syntax in crucial ways and provide one with

testable research questions. Are light verbs more likely to occur in clause-second position (in main and dependent contexts)? Are heavy verbs more likely to occur in clause-late or -first position (in main and dependent contexts)? Light and heavy verbs can be distinguished on lexical grounds—heavy verbs predicate fully on their own, whereas light verbs do not—but these sorts of distinctions can be difficult to draw based on historical data, because such an analysis involves clarifying semantic nuances inaccessible to the modern non-native speaker. This statement applies particularly to any search for complex predicates built outside of the verbal complex.

Thus, I define light and heavy verbs along syntactic lines: I treat the finite verbs in periphrastic formulations—that is, auxiliary + participle and preterit/optative-present + infinitive constructions—as light.³⁹ The nonperiphrastic but obviously lexically empty copula verbs also belong in this category. All remaining nonperiphrastic lexical verbs count as heavy, with three exceptions: I treat separately the verb *duan* ‘to do’ and the two nonperiphrastic preterit-present verbs *eig* ‘to have’ and *weiz* ‘to know’ in the hopes of minimizing the potentially confounding impact of idiosyncratic data on correlations. *Eig* and *weiz* present an interesting case in that they have the stative semantics of other preterit/optative-presents (and the copula verb) and could be considered of low lexical yield. However, Jespersen (1942) would treat them as light. The case of *duan* in 26 illustrates the difficulties in identifying light verbs with complex predicates built outside of the verbal complex, for example, with a noun phrase.

- (26) a. Tharána dátun sie ouh thaz dúam
 through.this did they also the glorious.deed
 ‘Through this they did another glorious achievement/effected
 great renown.’ (I 15)
- b. In hímileiches scóne so wérde iz iu zi lóne
 in heaven-GEN splendor so may it unto.you to.reward
 mit géltes ginúhti thaz ír mir datut zúhti
 with degrees enough that you unto.me did education

³⁹ These data also include cases in which the infinitive is not overt, but implied (see L 1–2).

‘In heaven’s splendor, so may you be rewarded to an abundant degree, that you educated me.’ (S 22)

- c. Deta éiner thes tho rédina firspráh thie selbun thégana
 did one of.them then speech defended this same hero
 ‘One of them then said, defended this same.’ (III 12 23)

The degree to which *duan* predicates on its own varies across the examples. In 26a, *duan* could be taken the most literally in that *dátun thaz dúam* can translate as ‘did another glorious deed’, though a somewhat less literal meaning is also possible: ‘effected great renown’. The more literal reading is not possible for 26b, however, in which *datut zúhti* ‘effected an education’ must refer more globally to the set of actions undertaken by the bishop that effected Otfrid’s education. The *duan* in 26c is semantically the least literal, most generic of the three; it must combine with *rédi* and is best translated simply as ‘said’. Also attested in the work is the simplex verb counterpart, *redinôn* ‘to state, explain’.

The nuances in the expression of just one potentially light verb, *duan*, should demonstrate how difficult it can be to identify lexically light verbs without the aid of syntactic correlates, such as periphrastic constructions. I am relatively confident that 26c contains a light verb construction, but it is less clear whether the predicates in 26a,b are light or heavy. Pursuing this issue requires a fine-grained analysis that lies beyond the scope of this article. Thus, for the present analysis I divide the data into two main groups: Clauses with periphrastic or copular predicates, which are unproblematically light, are separated from nonperiphrastic/copular predicates. Also taken out of the provisionally heavy group of predicates are clauses with nonperiphrastic preterit-present verbs and *duan*, the latter of which has real potential for a generic use in Jespersen-style light verb constructions. Despite these precautions, there is the possibility that other “lighter” nonperiphrastic verbs, such as *duan*, found their way into the “heavy” category. However, in defining the “light” category along syntactic lines, I ensure that no heavy verb was tagged as light. This methodology could inflate the rate of apparently heavy verbs in clause-second position erroneously because of the presence of unidentified light verbs in the heavy category. Given these limitations, it is notable that the correlation between heavy verbs and verb-final syntax, as I show below, is still significant.

Consider the distribution of light and heavy verbs across the data, as shown in table 6. Verb-first and -second clauses are included as separate categories—due to their pragmatic differences and also to reflect the connection between verb-second clauses and light verbs (Hopper 1975). Not included in table 6 are 33 *duan* and 19 nonperiphrastic preterit-present tokens, which I treat separately, 13 ambiguous tokens comprising the discourse marking *quad* ‘said’ (see example 7a in section 1.2), and 16 coordinated clauses where I could not distinguish verb-first and verb-second.

n=665	Light (n=235)	Heavy (n=430)
Verb-first (n=121)	39 (17%)	82 (19%)
Verb-second (n=209)	102 (43.5%)	107 (25%)
Verb-late (n=224)	55 (23.5%)	169 (39%)
Asyndetic verb-late (n=69)	15 (6%)	54 (13%)
Ambiguous (n=42)	24 (10%)	18 (4%)

Table 6. Light and heavy verb distribution across unambiguous clause types.

These initial numbers already seem consistent with the patterns outlined in Hopper 1975 in that almost half of light verbs surface in clause-second position (43.4%) and a majority of heavy verbs—in clause-late position (52%). Now consider the same numbers broken down according to verb placement only (table 7), leaving the ambiguous clauses to the side for the moment. There is a marked preference for heavy verbs in clause-first and -late position, which contrasts with the even distribution of light and heavy verbs in second position. The numbers continue to be consistent with Hopper's hypothesis.

n=623	Light (n=211)	Heavy (n=412)
Verb-first (n=121)	39 (32%)	82 (68%)
Verb-second (n=209)	102 (49%)	107 (51%)
All verb-late (n=293)	70 (24%)	223 (76%)

Table 7. Light and heavy verb distribution across unambiguous clause types, by verb placement only.

These distributions are statistically significant at $p < .01$ (chi-square = 33.98; $df=2$).⁴⁰

Assessing the weight of the verb can also elucidate a set of ambiguous clauses. Recall from section 1.2 the 29 clauses in which a surface clause-second verb follows a complementizer. These clauses (see example 27) remained ambiguous in the typology because existing analyses disagree on whether their finite verbs are underlyingly clause-second or -final.

- (27) In thésemo ist ouh scínhaft so framso inan lázit thiú craft
 in this.one is also evident as well as him lets the power
 thaz ér ist io in nóti gote thíononti
 that he is always eagerly God serving

‘In this one it is also evident, as well as his power lets him, that he
 is always eagerly serving God.’ (L 65–66)

However, these clauses—like those in the unambiguous categories—also fit into the narrative outlined in Hopper 1975, in which the clause-second position prefers light verbs and disprefers heavy ones: 19 (65.5%) of these surface verb-second clauses have light verbs, and only 10 (34.5%) heavy.

Now I assess the distribution of light and heavy verbs across all aforementioned clause types, adding the disambiguated *thaz*+V2 clauses to the verb-second category:

⁴⁰ When $n > 300$, a Chi-square Test was performed instead of a Fisher Exact Test; this test is sufficient when at least 80% of the cells have an expected frequency of 5 or greater, and no cell has an expected frequency smaller than 1.0: <http://vassarstats.net/fisher2x3.html>. Any subsequent 2x3 contingency tables were also tested here, unless indicated otherwise.

n=652	Light (n=230)	Heavy (n=422)
Verb-first (n=121)	39 (32%)	82 (68%)
Verb-second (n=238)	121 (51%)	117 (49%)
All verb-late (n=293)	70 (24%)	223 (76%)

Table 8. Light and heavy verb distribution across unambiguous clause types and disambiguated *thaz*+V2 clauses.

These distributions are significant at $p < .01$ (chi-square=42.38; $df=2$).

The final numbers under consideration are those for *duan* and the nonperiphrastic preterit-present verbs, *eig* and *weiz*.

n=287	<i>duan</i> (n=33)	<i>eig</i> and <i>weiz</i> (n=19)	periphrastics (n=235)
Verb-first (n=48)	4 (12%)	5 (26%)	39 (17%)
Verb-second (n=128)	18 (55%)	8 (42%)	102 (43.5%)
Verb-late (n=68)	9 (27%)	4 (21%)	55 (23.5%)
Asyndetic verb-late (n=19)	2 (6%)	2 (11%)	15 (6%)
Ambiguous (n=24)	0	0	24 (10%)

Table 9. Light and heavy verb distribution across *duan* and the stand-alone preterit-present verbs.

For now, I only note that the distributions of *duan* and the nonperiphrastic preterit-present verbs, *eig* and *weiz*, resemble those of the lexically light periphrastics (see table 9), indicating that *duan*, *eig*, and *weiz* are probably also light.

These data indicate that verbal syntax in the *Evangelienbuch* is sensitive to verb weight: The finite verbs in clause-first and -late position are heavy most of the time, whereas the finite verbs in clause-second position are mostly light. These data provide empirical support for the patterns described in Hopper 1975 for Germanic, which are shaped by verbal weight, not just by whether the clause is main or dependent. Indeed, paying attention to the weight of the finite verb can elucidate seemingly noncanonical clausal patterns, such as asyndetic verb-late clauses, which result from a tendency for main verbs to occur in clause-late position, especially when they are heavy. This tendency holds in main and dependent contexts. The same is true for *thaz*+verb-second

clauses, which exhibit more light verbs than heavy. Again, the clause's status as dependent is not the defining factor of verbal syntax in these tokens; it is the verb's weight. Both types of noncanonical clauses are but different manifestations of early Germanic's sensitivity to prosody. Just as there is an undeniable correlation in Otfrid between verbal syntax and verb weight, there surely is one between verbal syntax and a clause being main or dependent. The fact that so many clauses in the *Evangelienbuch* seem to conform to modern expectations supports this point. It is easy to see how the stage is set for a reanalysis of this correlation between clause type and syntax as a central distributional principle of German syntax. However, reanalysis had not yet happened in Otfrid's grammar, and it is the "noncanonical" clauses, anomalous only if one ignores verb weight, that signal this fact.

5. Implications and Conclusions.

In this article, I argued that Otfrid's asyndetic verb-late clauses should precipitate a rethinking of how one assesses his clausal system. As I concluded in section 2, these data are legitimate, and their existence undermines any assumption of complementarity for this particular text. Indeed, 10% of the clauses in this dataset defy this pattern; if one adds the 29 *thaz*+V2 clauses to the 73 asyndetic verb-late clauses, the percentage rises to almost 14% (102 clauses out of a total of 746). These calculations do not take into account those clauses whose structures are seemingly disambiguated only by assuming complementarity first (as discussed in section 1.1). In fact, the actual number of clauses that violate complementarity could be higher.

The data presented in this article also seem to point in two opposite analytical directions. On the one hand, they exhibit patterns that imply that the poet was sensitive to the distinction between main and dependent clauses. That is, the dataset contains many apparent main clauses with clause-first and -second finite verbs and dependent clauses with clause-late finite verbs. There is also evidence that Otfrid used the subjunctive mood as a grammatical marker of dependency (discussed in section 3). On the other hand, the data also indicate that verbal syntax was organized along prosodic lines in ways that are independent of the main-dependent distinction, hinging instead on the weight of the verb. The question is, how can there be evidence of two such different strategies in one text?

I interpret the *Evangelienbuch*'s verbal patterns, with its contradictory tendencies that simultaneously confirm and ignore the distinction between main and dependent clauses, as the end product of Otfrid turning his theretofore only spoken vernacular into "good" written Frankish.⁴¹ Remember that Otfrid's Frankish was a mostly oral variety until the poet audaciously decided to compose in it a work of significant length. Green (1994:272) notes that Otfrid and other writers like him, for example, the poet who composed *Héliand* and even Notker writing over a century later, were doing something novel. There was no fixed tradition or set of norms established for free composition in the vernacular to guide Otfrid as he endeavored to turn sounds into written verse. Indeed, in his preface the monk describes the struggle to discipline his "barbaric" Frankish through the imposition of grammar and meter (see Magoun's 1943:880, 886 translation of Otfrid's preface). Though Otfrid was educated in Latin and was certainly familiar with its abstract grammatical concepts, such as clause, dependency, and parts of speech, his spoken Frankish followed principles that bear a closer resemblance to those of modern spoken varieties, in which prosodic, pragmatic, and functional factors play a larger role in the shaping of syntax. Thus, the fact that the *Evangelienbuch* exhibits both a categorically and prosodically organized syntax is not terribly surprising: The work represents an innovative attempt to apply written regularities to an oral vernacular.

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⁴¹ See the *Evangelienbuch*'s opening chapter (I 1) for evidence that Otfrid intended to produce a great work to rival those from the classical world.

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