PATHWAYS OF CHANGE
GRAMMATICALIZATION IN ENGLISH

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Pathways of Change
Grammaticalization in English

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**Soplice and witoldlice**

Discourse markers in Old English

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1. Introduction

Those who study grammaticalization processes from a semantic-perspective widely agree that the early stages of grammaticalization are characterised not only by semantic weakening but, more importantly, by strengthening and increased subjection (Hopper and Traugott 1993; Brinton 1996). In an application of this approach Traugott (1995b) has recently examined the role of the development of discourse markers in a theory of grammaticalization. She argues — on the basis of an analysis of the development of Modern English *indeed, in fact and besides* — that the cline "clause-internal adverbial > sentence adverbial > discourse particle" should be added to the inventory of clines that are the subject of grammaticalization.

In this paper I want to show that the Old English adverbs *soplice* and *witoldlice* can serve as examples for such a cline. In Old English we find these adverbs used in several coexisting functions: from original manner adverbs and sentential adverbs (disjuncts) they develop to boundary markers, i.e. discourse particles marking thematic discontinuity. Such a 'layering' of functions is a characteristic of all language change and in particular a property of the early stages of grammaticalization processes (Hopper and Traugott 1993: 124–126).

2. *Soplice* and *witoldlice*: The traditional approach

Adverbs such as *soplice* and *witoldlice* are notoriously difficult for linguists:
The lexicographers have much work to do with *eornostlice*, *sodlice*, *witodlice*, and the like. When I consider the great variety of Latin words they translate (see BT(S), s.v.v.) and when I read Ælfric De Coniunctione (…), I do not envy them (Mitchell 1985: §3168).

The validity of Mitchell’s statement can be illustrated by the entry for *eornostlice* in the most recent of the dictionaries of Old English, the *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE; Cameron et al. 1987): \(^2\)

\[2\]  
**eornostlice** (ca. 325 occ.)  
A.1 strictly, solemnly  
A.2 steadfastly, stalwartly, resolutely  
B. used as an introductory or conjunctive adverb, especially to render a variety of Latin conjunctions; when used in this way, the word is usually placed initially in the sentence or clause, but is sometimes postponed (often, but not always, reflecting the position of the Lat. conjunction translated)  
B.1 therefore, then, so, accordingly (without any definite expression of consequence or result)  
B.1a rendering *ergo* ‘therefore, then, so, accordingly’  
B.1a.i rendering *ergo*, used in interrogative constructions  
B.1b rendering *igitur* ‘then, therefore, accordingly, consequently’  
B.1c rendering *itaque* ‘and thus, accordingly, therefore’  
B.2 indeed, in fact, truly; for in fact  
B.2a rendering *quippe* ‘indeed, for, for in fact’  
B.2b rendering * enim* ‘since in fact, inasmuch as, for, because’  
B.2c rendering *etiam* ‘and indeed, in fact, for’  
B.2d rendering *autem* ‘but, yet, but indeed’  
B.2e glossing *dumtaxat* ‘to this extent; at least, at any rate’

*Eornostlice*’s propositional meaning as a manner adverb ‘strictly, solemnly’ (cf. its etymology ‘in an earnest way’) obviously presents little problem (cf. “A”). Much more important for the present issue are the meanings collected under “B”: after a somewhat general introduction, the lexicographer seeks help in the Latin words which *eornostlice* commonly renders, and their Modern English translations. The Latin and Modern English lexemes used are, however, so polysemous and multifunctional that *eornostlice* likewise appears to be strangely polysemous and multifunctional.

This lexicographical procedure is not unique to the DOE but is applied in most other dictionaries as well; as examples cf. the entries for *soplice* and *witodlice* in one of the standard dictionaries of Old English, Bosworth-Toller’s *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (BT; 1882–98): \(^3\)

\[3\]   
**soplice**:  
I. as adv. Truly, really, certainly, verily  
II. as conj. Now, then, for, representing Latin *autem*, *ecce*, *enim*, *ergo*, *nam*, *vero*  
**witodlice**:  
adv. I. Certainly  
II. with a somewhat indefinite sense, translating many Latin words, indeed, surely, truly

The lexicographers of the DOE are actually the less to be ‘envied’ in the cases of *soplice* and *witodlice* when the 325 occurrences of *eornostlice* are set against 1633 of *witodlice* and 4801 of *soplice*. \(^5\) The Latin words these particles translate are even more numerous, polysemous and also more varied in their semantic-syntactic properties. As an example, cf. the evidence from the Gospels according to Matthew and John in the *West-Saxon Gospels* (= WSG): \(^5\)

\[4\]   
**Matthew**:  
*eornostlice* autem (1 occ.), ergo  
soplice autem, ecce, enim, ergo (1 occ.), nam, vero  
**witodlice** autem, ecce, enim, ergo, etiam, igitur, itaque, nam, quidem, siquidem, utique, vero, et factum est  
**John**:  
*eornostlice* –  
soplice autem, enim, ergo, vero  
**witodlice** autem, enim, ergo, igitur, itaque, quidem, utique

More importantly, the Modern English translations given for the Latin adverbs in the Old English dictionaries are contestable themselves as they merely reflect the general sense or adverbal categories to which the words are commonly allocated: ‘causal’ for *enim* and *nam*, ‘consecutive’ for *ergo* and ‘adversative’ for *autem*, *at* and *vero*. \(^6\) That this is a far too simplistic treatment of these particles can be illustrated by the entry for *autem* in the *Mittelleateinisches Wörterbuch*, which shows that the lexicographers of Latin are confronted with exactly the same problems and that they react to them in a similar way, namely by referring to the Greek lemmata translated or to the supposed Latin synonyms: \(^7\)
The evidence from the Latin and Old English dictionaries shows that a full entry for *soplece* or *witodlice* is likely to go on for pages. It would provide a great many Modern English translations, but it would still — or therefore — not be very helpful.

3. The discourse-level approach

This paper argues that *soplece* and *witodlice* should be investigated on a different level of language analysis since their purely semantic analysis is not only difficult but in some cases even misleading. *Soplece* and *witodlice* will be shown to function as text-structuring discourse markers in Old English narrative discourse, where they are employed as highlighting devices and, more importantly, markers of episode boundaries or shifts in the narrative.

This will be demonstrated by an account of the discourse functions of their Latin counterparts, in particular *autem*, and by an analysis of different Old English texts from the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century. The restriction to prose texts is not coincidental, but corresponds to the textual distribution and thus one of the important properties of *soplece* and *witodlice*. Of the about 4800 occurrences of *soplece* only 25 are found in poetry (most of them merely adverbs in direct speech); *witodlice* is only attested once in poetry. This evidence suggests that the discourse functions of *soplece* and *witodlice* are restricted to prose texts as well.

4. Morpho-syntactic analysis

Both *soplece* and *witodlice* are adverbs derived from adjectives by means of the adverbial suffix *-e*. The bases *sople* and *witodlic* are themselves derivations from *sop* 'true; (truth)' and *witod* 'certain; appointed, ordained', so that both adverbs have a basic semantic meaning 'verily, truly, assuredly, knowingly'. Modifying verbs, they can e.g. be employed as manner adjuncts (Quirk et al. 1985: 8.79).

More frequently they function as 'emphasizers', expressing the semantic role of modality since they have a "reinforcing effect on the truth value of the clause or part of the clause to which they apply" (Quirk et al. 1985: 8.99):

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(7) *Ic eom soplece romanise.* and *ic on heftnyd hider gelæd weas*  
    (Eustace 344)  
    'I am truly a Roman, and I was brought hither in captivity'  
    (transl. Skeat 1900: 211)

(8) *Apolloni, ic oncneawe soplece ðæt ðu eart on eallum pingum wel gelæered*  
    (Apollonius 16,24)  
    'Apollonius, I know truly that you are well taught in all things'  
    (transl. Swanton 1975: 166; cf. Latin "Apolloni, intelligo te in omnibus esse locupletem")

In these cases *soplece* serves as a truth-intensifier and fulfils a highly subjective and speaker-oriented function which adds a strong illocutionary force to the speech acts; cf. in particular performative speech acts such as Apollonius' promise

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(9) *Ic sille eow soplece hundteontig husendra mittan hwætes to ðam wurde ðæt ic hit gebohte on minum lande*  
    (Apollonius 10,7)  
    'Truly, I will supply you with a hundred thousand measures of wheat for the price I bought it in my country'  
    (transl. Swanton 1975: 163; cf. the Latin "Dabo itaque vobis C milia frumenti modios eo precio quo in patria mea mercatus sum")

or the (10) consistent translation of Latin *Amen, (amen) dico vobis* in the West Saxon Gospels by *Soplece ic eow sece* (Matthew 6,16, 10,15, 11,11 etc.; Mark 3,28, 8,12 etc.; Luke 4,24, 12,37, 13,16 etc.; John 8,51, 12,24, 13,16). These formulaic expressions are used when Jesus reinterprets the Old Testament by virtue of his authority as the Son of God.

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(10) Consistent translation beginning with Matthew 6,16, the Friday after Easter.
In the functions described so far — manner adjunct and emphasized — soplice is primarily found in direct speech with a first person (singular) subject, which means that in these cases the subject of the sentence is identical with the speaker. This constraint is a consequence of the propositional meaning of the lexeme, in particular the denotive and connotative features of ‘truth’ which demand a human agent with high trustworthiness, most likely the speaker himself.

Yet, in the majority of their occurrences the scope of the adverbs soplice and witodlice is not restricted to the phrase level, but extends to the whole sentence. So soplice and witodlice function as disjuncts, expressing either the comment that what is being said is true (‘content disjuncts’; Quirk et al. 1985: 8.127) or conveying the speaker’s assertion that his words are the unvarnished truth (‘style disjuncts’; Quirk et al. 1985: 8.124). So in examples (11) and (12), soplice is used instead of the full phrases “sop is þet ic sege” or “soplice ic eow sege” (cf. examples 6 and 10).17

This change in perspective involves increased syntactic freedom and scope. As sentence adverbials soplice and witodlice are not part of the core syntactic structure and are thus optional from a syntactic point of view. More importantly, there is no longer any constraint on the subject of the sentence, which may even be inanimate (cf. example 18). When used as a style disjunct, soplice introduces the voice of the speaker — in addition to the proposition of the sentence. It functions as a speaker comment which conveys the speaker’s assertion that his words (the proposition of the sentence) are true, e.g. the assertion that Eustace (subject) is a righteous man in (11) and (12):

(11) Wæs he soplice19 on rihtwisnesse weorcum ... swiðe gefraetwod
      (Eustace 4)
      ‘Truly he was greatly adorned ... with works of righteousness’
      (transl. Skeat 1900: 191)

(12) Wæs he witodlice swiðe æþele on rihtwisnesse and stræng on gefeohte ...
      (Eustace 14)
      ‘He was indeed very noble in righteousness, and strong in fight ...
      (transl. Skeat 1900: 191)

This development from manner adverb to style disjunct corresponds to the Modern English situation where “… a manner adverb that may co-occur with the verb tell (when tell is being used performatively) can also function as a style disjunct” (Schreiber 1972: 323).20

5. Discourse particles in Latin

The usefulness of a discourse-level approach in historical linguistics has recently been demonstrated by Brinton’s (1996) account of pragmatic markers in the history of English and Kroon’s (1995) investigation of the discourse functions of a number of Latin coordinating conjunctions, in particular those which above have been shown to be the Latin counterparts of soplice and witodlice. Kroon finds that adverbs and conjunctions which in the traditional approach are regarded as carrying a causal or consecutive meaning (nam, enim, igitur and ergo) and those with a supposedly adversative sense (autem, vero and at) actually work on very different levels of discourse, which she calls the representational, presentational and interactional level. While vero, ergo and at function on the interactional level of communicative acts and moves, autem, nam and igitur are connectives on the level of textual organization (Kroon 1995: 371–375).

Autem, the most common Latin counterpart of soplice and witodlice should, according to this analysis (Kroon 1995: 226–280), no longer be classified as an adversative conjunction but as a boundary marker functioning on the textual level:

(13) Autem is a presentational particle which marks the discrete status of a piece of information with regard to its verbal or non-verbal context. Depending on whether the particle is applied locally (on the level of the sentence) or more globally (on the level of the text) it can be characterized as a “highlighting” or “focusing” device, or as a marker of the organization of the text (viz. of thematic discontinuity) (Kroon 1995: 226).

6. Visual clues: Old English initials in MS Cambridge, University Library, II. 2. 11

My investigation of the discourse functions of soplice and witodlice was, however, not sparked off by textual but rather by visual clues. In a main witness for the Gospel lectionary in Anglo-Saxon England (cf. Lenker 1997), a mid-eleventh century manuscript of the West Saxon Gospels (Cambridge, University Library, II. 2. 11), the Old English Gospel text is subdivided into about 200 sections by rubrics. These Old English and Latin rubrics indicate on which day of the liturgical year the following text is commonly read during the performance of the mass. While the first words of the Latin Gospel lection are cited in the rubric, its beginning in the Old English text is highlighted by an initial; cf. the rubric for the lection beginning with Matthew 4.12 (for the Friday after Epiphany):
Discourse-analytically, it is important that lections have to be complete episodes with a coherent structure. At their beginnings the participants, time, location etc. have to be mentioned as otherwise the congregation would not be able to understand the lection. These characteristics of the beginning of Gospel lections are strikingly similar to the characteristics of episode boundaries, which are indicated by a change in time, location, participants, the action sequence etc. In the texts, these changes are commonly denoted by a number of concrete linguistic cues, e.g. syntactic markers such as ‘frame-shifting’ spatial and temporal adverbials, the use of full noun phrases where anaphoric pronouns are expected, certain conjunctions or explicit metacomments and discourse particles (Brinton 1996: 44).

Examples (15) to (18) show the text division of the first chapter of the Gospel according to Luke ("Birth and childhood of John the Baptist and Jesus"):

(15) Lk 1,26 Soplice on pam syxtan monde was asend gabriel se engel fram drihtne on galilea ceasre ... (Lk 1,27–38)

(16) Lk 1,39 Soplice on pam dagum aras maria and ferde on muntland mid ofte. on uideisce ceasre. ... (Lk 1,40–55)

(17) Lk 1,56 Soplice maria wunude mid hyre swylce pry monpas. and gewende ha to hyre huse. Lk 1,57 Da was geyfilled elizabethe cennigd. and heo su nu cende ... (Lk 1,58–80)

With a total of 37 instances soplice and witodlice are the second most common of the boundary markers employed and are only outnumbered by the particle ha whose function as a discourse marker is undisputed (cf. e.g. Enkvist and Wärnvik 1987; Kim 1992). For the WSG, Kim’s thorough discourse-level analysis (1992) provides convincing evidence that ha-clauses in this text signal some kind of discourse discontinuity, indicating a shift of topic, ground, time-line, scene, listener or content. The fact that more than half of the lections begin with ha, soplice, witodlice or — in two instances — eornostlice thus suggests that not...
only pa, but also soplice and witodlice should be regarded as explicit markers of discourse discontinuity.28

7. Soplice and witodlice in Old English narratives

In a next step the analysis will now concentrate on the discourse functions of soplice and witodlice in selected passages from texts which are comparatively independent of their Latin exemplars, the Old English translation of the Greek-Latin romance Apollonius of Tyre (ed. Goolden 1958) and the “Life of Saint Eustace” by Ælfric (ed. Skeat 1900: 190–218).

The Old English Apollonius is a narrative text whose plot of various, sometimes unrelated adventures is structured by means of short chapters. A number of chapter beginnings (Chapters 3, 4, 6, 16, 17, 49, 50 and 51) are denoted by the boundary marker soplice which only rarely has a Latin adverb as its counterpart in the exemplar (most probably vero in 6, 1, 16, 17 and 51, 1). Soplice here signals an interruption of a thematic chain by a change in time, aspect, participants or action sequence. At the beginning of Chapter 3 Antiochus continues to abuse his daughter (3,1 “On pismum pingum soplice purhwunode ..”) and then asks her admirers a riddle — a definite turn in the sequence of events which brings about the misfortune of the young men who fail to solve the riddle: their heads are set up over the town gate.

3,1 On pismum pingum soplice purhwunode se arleastesa cyngc Antiochus ... he asette da redels þus cweleonde: “...” ... And þa heafda ealle wurdun gesette on ufweardan þam geate.

3,1 In fact the infamous king Antiochus persisted in this state of affairs ... he set them a riddle, saying: ‘...’ ... And their heads were all set up over the gate’ (transl. Swanton 1975: 159)

Antioch persists in this cruelty (4,1 “Mid þi soplice ... purhwunode”) until a new protagonist, Apollonius, enters the scene. In his greeting Apollonius maintains his right to marry the king’s daughter because “ic eom soplice of cynelicym cyynne cumen” (4,8), employing in his speech alliteration and an emphaziser, the truth-intensifier soplice. As a next break in the thematic chain, indicated to the reader by pa soplice (4,19), Apollonius receives the riddle, the precondition for the next turn of events, his successful solving of the riddle:

4,1 Mid þi soplice Antiochus se walreowas cyninge on þysse walreownessse þurhwunode, da was Apollonius gehaten sum iung man se was swide welig ... 4,6 Eode þa into þam cyninge and cwæd: “Wes gesund, cyninge ... Ic eom soplice of cynelicym cyynne cumen and ic hydde pinre dohtor me to gemæccan”... 4,9 Apollonius pa soplice onfangenum readelse hine bewende hwon fram þam cyninge, and mid þy pe he smeade ymbe þet ingehy, he hit gewan mid wisdom and mid Godes fulume he þet sod æærede.

4,1 While the cruel king Antiochus in fact persisted in this cruelty, there was a certain young man called Apollonius who was very wealthy ... 4,8 He went to the king and said: “All hail, King ... I come in fact from a regal family, and I ask for your daughter as my wife” ... 4,15 Then, truly, having received the riddle, Apollonius turned himself a little away from the king, and when he had considered the sense he solved it with wisdom, and with God’s help he guessed the truth” (transl. Swanton 1975: 159–60)

The transition from Chapter 50 to 51 finally demonstrates that (pa) soplice can also, though much less frequently, mark the termination of an episode, the end of a sequence of actions involving certain participants. With pa soplice in 51,1 Apollonius is reintroduced as the protagonist.

50,2 For pa soplice þanon to Tharsum mid his wife and mid his dohtor ... 50,29 Heo rente pa soplice hire handa him to and het hine gesund foran, and Philotheman, þare forscildgodan dohtor, Thasias nam to hyre. ‘50,2 Then afterwards he went to Tharsus with his wife and his daughter. ... 50,29 Then indeed, she extended her hand to him and bade him go in safety; and Thasias took to herself Philothemia, the daughter of the guilty woman’.

51,1 Apollonius pa soplice forgeaf þam folce micle gifa to blisse, and heorse welleas wurdon geestadelaode. He wunode þa þar six mondas ... ‘51,1 Apollonius then, indeed, gave the people great gifts to rejoice them; and their walls were restored. Then he stayed there six months ...

The information given in the soplice-classes is not the most salient for these episodes. The clauses do commonly not contain the core events of the episode, but provide the background information for the events to follow. With respect to grounding, Brinton (1996: 116–143) has lucidly analyzed this for the functions of the different parts of the Old English ‘gelamp-construction’ (pa hit gelamp þet; pa hit gewearð þet),31 a much more obvious episode boundary marker in Old
English, which "grounds episodes in the narrative ... and guides the reader through the episodic structure of the text" (143). She suggests that events which are temporally or causally prior to the core events of the episode are "back-grounded in this fashion if they constitute the initiating or instigating event of the episode" (133). While the main clause serves as a metacomment upon the narrative structure, the complement clause establishes the necessary conditions for the episode to occur. *Soplice* is functionally synonymous with the main clause of the 'gelamp'-construction and thus serves as a metacomment upon the narrative.

Ælfric's "Life of Saint Eustace" shows that the demarcating force of *witodlice* and *soplice* is also found in texts which were not translated but composed in Old English. The first episode after the introduction, which is marked by means of a 'gelamp'-construction ("Hit gelamp sume deæge"), relates the events which lead to Placidas' conversion (24). Placidas, who goes out hunting hart, departs from his companions and has a vision of a hart between whose horns the likeness of Christ's holy rood glitters. In this core section of not only the episode but the whole homily, *witodlice* is used three times to guide the reader by explicitly indicating the most important events (cf. Skeat's more and more emphatic translations 'veryly', 'indeed' and finally 'behold'):

(24) **Hit gelamp sume deæge** þet he ferde ut on huntað mid eallum his werode and his wuldræ. ... þa hi ealle ymb bone huntað abysgode wæron þa æteowode him-sylfum an ornæte heort ... Pa æt nixtan wurdun hi ealle georeode and he ana unwerig him æfter fyldige. *Witodlice* þurh gode ne þe he swif gewergod wæs ... and feor fram his geferum gewat. Se heort *pa witodlice* astah on anne healne clud and þær gestod ... Him þa god geswetelode þet he him swilcne dom ne gedrede ne his marges micelnesse ne wundrode. *Witodlice* betwæs þaes heortes hornum gelitenode gelincys þære halgan cristes rode breothere bonne sunnan leona (24-43)

'It happened one day that he went out hunting with all his company and array ... When they were all busied about the hunting, then there appeared to himself an immense hart, ... then at last they were all tired and he alone, unwearied, followed after it ... Verily through God's predestination neither his horse nor himself was wearied ... and he departed far from his companions. Then indeed the hart mounted up on a high rock and there stood. ... Then God revealed to him that he should not fear such power, nor wonder at the greatness of his might. **Behold**, between the hart's horns glittered the likeness of Christ's holy rood, brighter than the sun's beam'.

(transl. Skeat 1900: 193)

*Witodlice*’s use as a highlighting device here is functionally similar to its employment as an episode boundary marker, which is also a highlighting device on the more global level of textual organization (cf. Kroon's description of the functions of *aetum* in [13]).

For (*pa*) *soplice*, the findings agree even more closely with those for the other texts. In example (25), the *soplice*-clause indicates a change in the action sequence and an orientation toward a new central event when, after a lengthy dialogue, Eustace and his wife leave their home to find a priest who will baptize them.

(25) *Pa cwæð* Placidas to hire: "þet ylice me sæde se þe ic geseah". *Pa soplice* to middre nihtæ hi ferdon swa heora menn yryston to cristenes manna sacræda ... and halsodan hine þet he hi gefullod (88-91)

"Then said Placidas to her: "He whom I saw said the same to me". Then verily at midnight they went, so that their servants should not know it, to the Christian men's priest ... and entreated him to baptize them' (transl. Skeat 1900: 197)

A change in time, location, participants and action sequence is denoted by *pa soplice* in (26). After the baptism and the last words of the priest, Placidas, who is now called Eustace, gathers a few companions in order to return to the place of his vision.

(26) "... and gemunanæd me io hannic ic bidde eow". *Pa soplice* eft on ærne mergen genam eustachius feawa gefaran, and ferde to þære stowe þær he ær þa ge-syðde geseah (103-5)

"... and remember me, John, I pray you". Then verily again in the early morning Eustace took a few companions and went to the place where he had before seen the vision" (transl. Skeat 1900: 197)

In this homily, *soplice*'s demarcating force is, however, restricted to marking sub-episodes. Major shifts in the narrative are indicated by 'gelamp-constructions', such as *Hit gelamp sume deæge* (24) or *Æfter pissum was geworden* (27).”

(27) *Æfter pissum was ge-worden* micel herung on þam lande þe eustachius ær on wes ... (222) ... *Pa ferdon sollice* twegen cempan þa wæron genemde antiochus and achaius ... (230)

"After this there was made a great invasion of the country wherein Eustachius had been first ... Then went two soldiers who were named Antiochus and Achaius ..." (transl. Skeat 1900: 205)
8. The two versions of Wærferth's translation of Gregory's Dialogues

The pragmatic functions of soplice and witodlice can be confirmed by a comparison of chapter-initial examples taken from a text which has come down to us in two Old English versions. Gregory the Great's Dialogues on the Lives and Miracles of the Italian Fathers (ed. Hecht 1900) is an extremely clearly structured text which in short episodes (capitula) relates miracles of holy men. It was first translated by Bishop Wærferth of Worcester in 890 and was revised anonymously about a century later. The modifications found in chapter-initial sentences from the First Book which are not caused by the Latin text indicate substitution possibilities and can therefore serve as a kind of historical test-frame. Cf. the following selection of examples:

Wærferth of Worcester (890) anonymous reviser (950–1050)

(28)

a. ... b. ...

Sōdlīcse sume dege hit gelamp, hit ... Sōdlīcse sumon dege hit gelamp, hit an nunne of ēam iclan mynstrē ... an nunne of ēam iclan mynstrē ... eode ... ēa geseah heo ēanne leahtrīc ... ēa geseah heo ēanne leahtrīc and ... (1900: 30)

'Truly, one day it happened, that a nun of the same monastery ... went; then she saw a lettuce ...'

(29)

a. ... b. ...

Ēa et nextan becom ēisses iclan weres ... Witodlice ēa et necestan se hīlīsa pyses hlīsa to cyhnysse Romana biscope ... ylcan weres bodunge becom to cyhnysse Romanebyri. (1900: 34)

'Then at next the fame of the same man became known to the Roman bishop ...'

(30)

a. ... b. ...

Eac hit gelamp on some tid, ē OMITTED ... Sōdliche on oðrum timan him comon to comon twegen men to ... and ēa sealde twegen men ... ēa sealde he him ... (1900: 66)

'It also happened some time, that two men came to him ... and then he gave them ...'

Already the original translator employs a number of the particles and phrases which have above been shown to serve as episode boundary markers: the text is structured by the use of ēa (29a, 31c), soplice (28a), and 'gelamp-constructions' (28a, 30a), either alone or in combination. The most striking result of the comparison of the two versions is, however, that the reviser explicitly marks the beginning of the chapter by witodlice (31b) or uses sentence-initial soplice and witodlice (29b, 30b, 31d) to replace ēa or a 'gelamp-construction'. This is a clear indication that soplice and witodlice are functionally equal to discourse markers with a more obvious demarcating force, such as the 'gelamp-construction', and that they indeed functioned as episode boundary markers for a 'native speaker' of Old English.

9. Conclusions

A comparison of the morpho-syntactic and functional characteristics of soplice and witodlice with the properties of other Old and Middle English discourse particles as established by Brinton (1996: 265–267) shows that these Old English words fit well into the pattern. They are high-frequency words which often occur in sentence-initial position. As sentence adverbials, they exist outside the core syntactic structure and are syntactically detachable from the sentence. They show an apparent lack of semantic content and are therefore able to work at both local and global levels of discourse. More importantly, the discourse-level analysis of their functions shows them to belong to the linguistic devices which denote the textual structure of Old English narratives: from original manner adjuncts, truth-intensifying emphazizers and sentence adverbs (style disjuncts) soplice and witodlice develop into semantically bleached and pragmatically enriched indicators of thematic discontinuity and are consequently employed as...
episode boundary markers. They thus follow exactly the stages of grammaticalization Traugott proposes for the adverbial cline “manner adverb > sentence adverbial > discourse marker” (Traugott 1995b).

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Notes

1. For the later development of soplac see Lenker (1999); witodlice is not attested after the Old English period.

2. The Dictionary of Old English has, to this point, only been issued to the letter “E”, so that the entries for soplac and witodlice are not yet available.

3. See also the entry for sothi in the Middle English Dictionary (Kurath et al. 1954–); “... 3) as quasi-conj. a) used as a connective (often translating L autem, enim, vero); and, for, b) with adversative sense (often translating L autem, vero); but; c) with causal sense (often translating L enim); because, for since” or the entry for soothly in the OED: “... (2) Used to render L autem, enim, ergo etc. Obs.”. In BT, the introductory sentences to the entry for witodlice — with a somewhat indefinite sense, translating many Latin words — show that the editors were well aware of the problems connected with these particles.

4. Counts according to the frequency list of the Microfiche Concordance to Old English (Healey and Venezky 1980; MCOE); soplac is filed under the separately issued ’high-frequency words’.


6. For the treatment of these particles in traditional grammars and handbooks see Kroon (1995: 1, 132–143 [nam, enim], 217–225 [autem, vero, at]).

7. Other dictionaries, such as the Mittellateinisches Glossar by Habel and Gröbel (1959), refer to autem and enim as “meaningless fillers”. The only dictionary which includes discourse-pragmatic information is the Oxford Latin Dictionary (1968), s.v. autem: “5) introducing a fresh idea or consideration ... 6) exp. indignation or surprise in questions and exclamations”.

8. One of the most obvious problems is the rather clumsy Modern English translation ‘verify’ which is commonly used for both adverbs.

9. Soplac and witodlice are attested in translated texts of the earlier periods of Old English (cf. MCOE and Swan 1988: 92). These texts do not lend themselves to a discourse-pragmatic investigation as most of them are too dependent on their Latin exemplars.

10. Cf. Modern English soothsayer and the archaic in sooth. Witad is the past participle of the verb witian ‘to order, to decide’, which is cognate to the verb witan ‘to know’.

11. For the four broad categories of grammatical function of adverbials — adjectives, subjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts — see Quirk et al. (1985: 501–647).

12. On the level of the phrase, soplac is a manner adverb modifying secon. On the level of the sentence the whole phrase swa ic soplac seconge serves as a style disjunctor.

13. The passages from Apollonius are cited by chapter and line number, the passages from Alfric’s “Life of St Eustace” by line numbers only. The translations, which are taken from Swanton’s Anglo-Saxon Prose (1975; Apollonius) and Skeat’s edition of Eustace (1990), demonstrate the difficulties of translation.

14. As further examples cf. Apollonius 2,14, 4,8, 8,11, 14,30, 16,9, 21,20 etc. or Eustace 128, 137, 202, 209, 369 etc.

15. For this functional shift see Swan (1988: 91–110) and Sato (1990). Other similar Old English introductory adverbs which may even be used as conjunctions are e.g. axe fordon, huru, nu, uno, ple, panon, bidet, pa, peah, ponne, sibpan, swa (Mitchell 1985: §§1101, 1862, 2418).

16. Likewise in Modern English, most of the common emphatics (certainly, indeed, surely, for certain, for sure) can function as disjuncts (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 8.100).

17. For further attestations of the full phrases cf. Wulfstan’s homilies (WHom 13,79 “And þe is witodlice ful sof ...”, Hom 17,65 “Eala, eala, soð is þe ic eow sege ...”, Whom 20,11 “Leofan men, geænawad þæt soð is ...”; cited from MCOE).

18. Traugott finds that “the proposed adverbial cline involves increased syntactic freedom and scope” (1995b: 1). This violates “the principles of bonding and reduced scope frequently associated with grammaticalization” (1995b: 1); for an accordingly modified definition of grammaticalization see Traugott (1995b: Chapter 5).

19. In Modern English, sentence adverbials are mostly placed sentence-initially. This is not in all cases true for Old English, though the examples from the WSG (10, 14–18) demonstrate that there is a tendency to front them. They are always found in the left periphery of the sentence. For a more detailed discussion of this syntactic slot see Traugott (1995b: 3.1).

20. The syntactic conditions are described as “[IP+ [+[–P, –performative, –communication, +linguistic, +declarative] [youIP] [Adv name]]]” (Schreiber 1972: 525).

21. Most of the research on discourse particles is, sometimes critically, based on Schiffirn (1986) (cf. Kroon 1995: 7–57 and Brinton 1996: 29–65 for the literature on discourse analysis and its terminology). Kroon’s three levels more or less correspond to the more familiar distinction between the ideational or propositional, the textual and the interpersonal level. The ideational or propositional level considers the semantic content proper. On the textual level methods of organization which create a coherent discourse are investigated. The interpersonal level refers to the social and expressive functions of communicative acts and moves.

22. According to Brinton, episode boundaries correspond to one of the following points of change: “a change in time”, “a change in location”, “a change in participants”, “a change in the action sequence, with an orientation toward a new central event, or the activation of a new schema”, “a change in ‘possible world’”, “a change from general to specific, or the reverse” and “a change in perspective or point of view” (Brinton 1996: 43–44).

23. The underlined words and phrases in the following examples show the correspondences to these linguistic clues.
24. *Witodlice* as a boundary marker is e.g. used in John 20,1: "Witodlice anono restredage see magdalenece maria com non mergen er hit leodh waree to hare bygenne ...": "Assuredly, early on the Sabbath Mary Magdalene, in the morning before it was light, went to the tomb...".

25. The evidence is not as clear when we consider the whole Gospel text, in particular Chapters 5-13 of the Gospel according to Matthew, where the translator, which may be a different one than in other parts of the translation, indiscriminately renders every *austem* and *enim* he or she can find in the Latin exemplar by *sopliche*. The textual distribution of *sopliche* and *witodlice* for Latin *austem* has been repeatedly used to prove that there were at least two translators involved — one for Mt and Joh and the other for Mk and Lk (cf. Lenker 1997:50–4).

26. The importance of a manuscript's layout must not be underestimated from a text-semtic point of view. As there is commonly no paragraph indentation in Old English manuscripts, the highlighting of the first letters was certainly an important and striking feature for both the copyists and readers of the text.

27. 92% of the about 1200 sentence-initial *pa*-clauses investigated by Kim show one or more of these discourse shifts (see the summary in Kim 1992:152). For points of disagreement concerning the specific discourse functions of *pa* see Enkvist and Wärvik (1987); Kim (1992:1–6) and Brinton (1996:9–11).

28. This assumption is further supported by the differences between the four Gospels. In contrast to the predominance of *pa*, *sopliche* and *witodlice* in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Gospel according to John uses a much broader variety of lection-initial words, such as different temporal adverbials, determiners or pronouns (listed among "others" in [19]). This can be explained by the different textual structure of this Gospel which is not organized as a collection or sequence of episodes, but as long elaborated speeches in which the narrative parts are interwoven.

29. As the exact exemplar of the translation is not known: for the relationship of the Old English translation, of which only Chapters 1–22 and 48–51 are extant, with the reconstructed Latin exemplar see Goolden (1958:xx–xxv).

30. Antiochus, the wicked king of Antioch, rapes and abuses his daughter and as he therefore does not want her to get married asks her admirers a supposedly insoluble riddle: whoever is successful in solving the riddle gets his daughter as a wife, whoever does not is beheaded. *Sopliche* here marks a change in aspect.

31. The syntactic construction "[pa] *VÆHAPPEN* (hit) (Adv) þet Complement Clause" occurs most frequently with the verbs *geliman, geþwerban, beon*, but also with *gelbynan, getiminian, agan* and *geselan* in poetic texts (Brinton 1996:116).

32. As an interesting case of an explicit metacomment which shows that the 'gelamp-construction' is also semantically similar to *sopliche* cf. Eustace 361: "Nu ic harbe eall þis gesed swa hit gelamp ..."; ‘Now I have said all this as it happened ...’ (transl. Skeat 1900:213).

33. For an example in which *ernoslice* marks a change in the action sequence cf. Eustace 419: "Ernoslice se casere geseah þas wundoriccan wafersyne, þæt se leo horc ne oðhran, þa heter gegefecon anne æreene oxan and þone onalan and þa halgan ther-on don ..."; ‘Earnestly the emperor saw this wonderful spectacle, that the lioness touched them not; then bade he fetch a brazen ox and heat it and put the saints therein’ (transl. Skeat 1900:217).

34. In line 153, an episode begins with "on þam dagum gelamp", the sub-episode (162) with "sopliche after þam he hi ferdon twegen dagas". Other episodes with an initial 'gelamp-construction' are e.g. Eustace 141, 316, 391.

35. Cf. Yerkes (1979:xvi): "The anonymous reviser changed thousands of words and phrases, sometimes no doubt to render the Latin more closely, at other times apparently only to bring the diction of the translation up to date or into conformity with that of his own dialect". The examples selected for comparison most probably belong to the second group.

36. Cf. also Schifferin’s 'tentative suggestions as to what specific conditions allow an expression to be used as a marker: ... it has to be syntactically detachable from a sentence, it has to be commonly used in initial position of an utterance, it has to have a range of prosodic contours (e.g. tonic stress and followed by a pause, phonological reduction), it has to be able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse ... this means that it either has to have no meaning, a vague meaning ..." (1986:326). — For their "range of prosodic contours" cf. Mitchell (1985:§2423): "I believe that in Old English phonological differentiation existed between adverbs ... and conjunctions of the same spelling"; for a similar case cf. the written and spoken form of Modern English "you know".

37. It is evident that the different meanings coexist for a certain period. Initially there is only a redistribution or shift, not a loss, of meaning. In the case of *sopliche* and *witodlice* the originally salient truth-intensifying meaning persists over time and also constrains the later uses of the grammaticalized form (cf. Hopper and Traugott 1993:87–93).

**Texts**


**References**


