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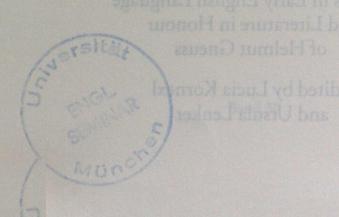and Literature in Honour
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Forsooth, a Source:
Metalinguistic Thought in Early English

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In his invaluable book *English Language Scholarship: A Survey and Bibliography from the Beginnings to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, Helmut Gneuss (1996: 8) stresses that an 'interest in the vernacular and a conscious concern with the use and employment of the English language reach far back into the first millennium AD'. Grammatical study was primarily devoted to Latin until the end of the Middle Ages, but there can be no doubt that the careful analysis of metalinguistic sources such as glossaries, dictionaries and grammars are an equally indispensable tool for our understanding of the earlier stages of the vernacular.[1] In my discussion of the history and functions of English *forsooth* and semantically and functionally similar adverbs and phrases such as OE *soþlice* (> ME *soothli*), and OE *to soþan/to soþe*, I here want to call attention to the immense value of these metalinguistic sources not only for lexical and grammatical issues, but also for the study of historical syntax, and specifically, historical pragmatics, a comparatively modern discipline of historical linguistics which has until now not fully taken advantage of the treasures hidden in this kind of source.

FORSOOTH IN THE *OED* AND
JOHNSON'S *DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*

According to the *OED*, PDE *forsooth* is '[n]ow only used parenthetically with an ironical or derisive statement'. That this restricted use is not a recent phenomenon – as the adverb 'now' seems to suggest – becomes clear by the entry for *forsooth* in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). The entry starts with the name of the lexeme, its word class, its Germanic etymo-

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[1]   I distinguish between 'metalinguistic' and 'metatextual': while 'metalinguistic' refers to sources which comment on language such as dictionaries or grammars or also accounts of translation practices, 'metatextual' refers to deictic elements which structure and organise a text such as conjunctions and discourse markers.

logical roots ('Saxon') and then describes its semantics, illustrated by various examples:

FORSOO'TH. adv. [forsoðe; Saxon]

1) in truth; certainly; very well; It is used almost always in an ironical or contemptuous sense.

Wherefore doth Lysander / Deny your Love, so rich within his soul, / And tender me, *forsooth*, affection.   *Shakespeare*

[further examples]

The decisive step from a collection of more or less difficult or rare words to a full-fledged monolingual English dictionary allowing for the inclusion of words such as *forsooth* had already been made at the beginning of the eighteenth century by John Kersey and his successors (Gneuss 1996: 35-36). Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*, however, set completely new standards in almost all lexicographical aspects so that the 'arrangement and definitions of meanings show a degree of perfection remarkable for the eighteenth century' (Gneuss 1996: 37). With respect to the *forsooth* entry, this characterization is certainly appropriate, because Johnson does not only provide etymological, morphological and semantic information, but also refers to its usage constraints when stating: 'used almost always in an ironical or contemptuous sense'. In essence, Johnson does not provide less information than the *OED* and the entry thus allows an assessment of the pragmatic status of *forsooth* in Early Modern English, which would have been hard to discern from literary sources only.

Johnson's entry for *forsooth*, however, is not finished here but is of a bi-partite structure, startling us with its second part because it lists a meaning and use of *forsooth* not mentioned in the *OED*:

2) It [= *forsooth*] is supposed to have been once a word of honour in address to women. It is probable that an inferior, being called, shewed his attention by answering in the word *yes, forsooth,* which in time lost its true meaning; and instead of a mere exclamatory interjection, was supposed a compellation. It appears in *Shakespeare* to have been used likewise to men.

Our old English word *forsooth* has been changed for the French madam.
                                                                          Guardian

Two features about this description are highly noteworthy. Firstly, it provides additional information on the categorization of *forsooth*, which had been identified as an 'adverb' at the beginning of the entry. Here, it is alternatively characterized as an 'exclamatory interjection'.[2] This 'interjection' is said to be used as a 'compellation' (= 'appellation'; cf. *OED* s.v. *compellation*) used for addressing women, and Johnson even provides a 'probable' explanation for this semantic change.

Secondly, this entry also exemplifies the importance of the crucial new method Johnson introduced into the lexicography of English, the method of illustrating the words and their meanings with quotations from literature.[3] In the case of *forsooth*, Johnson quotes as usual from sixteenth and seventeenth century literature (e.g. Shakespeare) in the first part of the entry, but cites (without exact reference) from an almost contemporary issue of the *Guardian* in the second part.[4] Even though he sounds sceptical – '[i]t is *supposed* to have been *once*' (my emphasis) – Johnson nonetheless records the meaning of *forsooth* referred to in the quote from the *Guardian*: *forsooth* is listed as being used as a polite title for women, or, to be linguistically more precise, as a social deictic and a referent honorific used for addressing women.[5] Johnson does not conceal his scepticism, however, and comments on this quote, explaining that his readings of Shakespeare do not seem to support the interpretation of the semantic change suggested by the *Guardian*. He does not, however, generally doubt the fact which puzzles us, i.e. the use of *forsooth* as an honorific, but only its restriction to addressing women. Later, when he comes to edit Shakespeare, Johnson states more categorically (cf. Tucker 1962: 15-16): 'Forsooth, a term of which I do not well know the original meaning was used to men and to women.' Besides being now more uncompromising about the use of *forsooth* as an honorific title for both sexes,[6] Johnson at the same time sounds more unresolved about the history of the word of which he does not 'know well the original meaning'.

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[2] For the problem of 'word classes', see below, pp. 268-270; for the interface between adverb and interjection, see p. 270.

[3] See Gneuss 1996: 36-37 and bibliographical references *ibid.* 116-118.

[4] The full quote – from no. 26 (1713) – states that 'ever since the word *Forsooth* was banished for *Madam*, the Word *Woman* has been discarded for *Lady*'; cf. also Tucker 1962: 16.

[5] For the distinction between different kinds of honorifics, mainly referent vs. addressee honorifics, and their interrelation see Levinson 1983: 90-92 and Traugott & Dasher 2002: 226-231.

[6] For a more detailed discussion, see Tucker 1962.

In this paper, I will therefore try to shed some light on the etymology and history of *forsooth* in the earlier periods of English up to Johnson. This analysis also has to discuss the history of other linguistic items meaning 'truly, in truth', in particular OE *soþlice* (ME *soothly*) and Old English phrasal expressions such as *to soþan*. This is essential because *forsooth(e)* only becomes a high-frequency item in Middle English (cf. Appenzeller-Gassmann 1961: 47-48; Swan 1988: 259), ousting the semantically and pragmatically similar Old English phrases and taking over some of their functions. Since I focus on the description of these adverbs in metalinguistic sources, it is first of all necessary to give a brief sketch of the categorization of adverbs in linguistic research.

THE CATEGORY 'ADVERB' IN CONTEMPORARY LINGUISTICS

The words and phrases in question belong to the category 'adverb'. The term 'adverb', however, is misleading, because these items may not only modify verbs (He <knocked> loudly *at the door*),[7] but also adjectives (He wrote an ex-tremely <interesting> book) or adverbs (He started smoking very <heavily>). In addition to these functions on the phrase level, adverbs may also have a wider scope extending over the whole sentence and are accordingly termed sentence or sentential adverbials (cf. <You are> probably <right> or Fortunately, <no one complained>). In contemporary linguistics, 'adverbs' are therefore commonly classified into three subgroups according to semantic and, more importantly, syntactic properties (cf. Quirk *et al.* 1985: 478-653):[8]

scope: phrase	adjuncts	*to walk slowly*
scope: sentence	disjuncts	*Frankly, he is [...]*
scope: sentence/text	conjuncts	*therefore; moreover; thus*

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[7] Medieval and Early Modern Grammars commonly took the term *adverbium* in the strict sense of a 'word added to a verb whose meaning it modifies or explains' (see below, p. 269 and p. 280).

[8] I will here use the terminology of the *University Grammar*, because this is based on the most influential monograph in the field which classifies the different kinds of '-juncts' according to ten syntactic criteria (Greenbaum 1969). 'Subjuncts' are excluded because the whole category of 'subjunct' has been repeatedly criticised; for a recent assessment, see Valera 1998: 267-270. Biber *et al.* (1999: 762-892) return to a tripartite system and distinguish circumstance (= adjuncts), stance (= disjuncts) and linking adverbials (= conjuncts).

The scope of adjuncts is restricted to the phrase level. Disjuncts and conjuncts, on the other hand, have an extended scope over the sentence or even discourse. Both play a peripheral role in the sentence and may thus be paraphrased by separate sentences usually consisting of a verb of communication and a manner adjunct. Style disjuncts such as *frankly* (cf. '*Frankly*, I'm tired'), which express the speakers' comments on the form of the communication, are thus short for '*Frankly speaking*, I'm tired', '*I'm being frank when I say* [...]' or '*Put frankly*, [...]'.[9] These paraphrases show that most of the adverbs in question may function on different levels with different meanings and different scopes, a phenomenon called 'layering' (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993: 124-126).

Also 'conjuncts', which convey the 'speaker's assessment of the relation between two linguistic units' (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 612-631), may be replaced by a separate matrix clause with a verb of communication and an adjunct such as 'one can say/I will say *thus/further/likewise* that [...]'. Rather than adding information, conjuncts connect units of discourse of different sizes (phrases, sentences, paragraphs, text) and are – as their name 'conjunct' or 'linking adverbial' (Biber *et al.* 1999: 875-892) suggests – located at the interface between 'adverb' and 'conjunction'.

OLD ENGLISH ADVERBIALS MEANING 'TRULY'

Inventory

The core items signifying the concept 'truth' in Old English are the neuter noun *soþ* 'truth' and the formally identical adjective *soþ* 'true'. The adverbial function – 'truly' – can be expressed by derived adverbs in *-e* or *-es* or prepositional phrases. Derivational adverbs are *soþe* and *soþlice* (< *soþlic* adj.) in *-e* and *soþes* with genitive suffix *-es*.[10] Among the phrasal items, prepositional phrases with *to* (governing the dative) are the most important, namely *to soþe* and *to soþan*.[11] The most frequent of these items by far is *soþlice* (4806 instances), followed by

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[9] For speakers' comments on or evaluations of the sentence (content disjuncts), e.g. 'She *wisely* didn't attempt to apologise' ('*It was wise of her* that she didn't attempt to apologise').

[10] On the formation of adverbs in Old English, see Campbell 1959: § 661 (suffix *-e*), § 662 (suffix *-lice*), and § 668 (case endings).

[11] For *for soþ*, see below, pp. 273-278. There are also a few scattered examples of *mid soþe* 'with truth'.

the prepositional phrases *to soþan* (109 instances), *to soþe* (66 instances), and *soþes* (57 instances).[12]

Distribution

Apart from idiolectal differences,[13] the distribution of the various possibilities shows a clear distinction between poetry and prose. The Old English poetical texts almost exclusively employ the phrase *to soþe*, most often in collocation with a verb of communication such as *secgan* 'tell':[14]

> Gif þu him *to soðe* sægst hwylce þu selfa hæfst bisne on breostum (GenA/B 570).[15]
>
> Secge ic þe *to soðe*, sunu Ecglafes, þæt [...] (Beo 590).[16]

Soþlice, on the other hand, is extremely rare in poetry (altogether 25 instances), but is employed in various 'layered' functions in Old English prose:[17] on the phrase level, it is – albeit rarely – used as a manner adjunct. Similar to the cases of *to soðe* cited above, the adjunct use is predominantly found in direct speech with a first person subject in phrases such as *ic secge soþlice* 'I tell (you) truly'.[18] These instances of *soþlice* (and later also *soothli* and *forsooth*) as manner adjuncts with a verb of communication are crucial for all their additional uses as style disjuncts and pragmatic markers: the speaker wants to stress the assertion of another clause by explicitly pointing to its truth value.

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[12] The instances are counted from *The Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (*OEC*). The texts are quoted from this source. For the list of Old English texts, see Cameron 1973.

[13] Ælfric, for example, never uses *soþes*. For further illustration, see below, pp. 267-268.

[14] Other examples from poetical texts are *Segdest us* to soðe *þæt* [...] (Sat 63, 428), *Forþan ic eow* to soðe *secgan wille, þæt* [...] (And 458), *Secge ic ðe* to soðe *ðæt he swiðe oft* [...] (And 617), [...] *wære þær ænig yldra oððe gingra þe him* to soðe *secggan meahte* (El 157), *Ic eow* to soðe *secgan wille* [...] (El 573), *Ic þe* to soðe *secgan wille, bi me lifgendre nelle ic lyge fremman* (Jul 130), *Men ne cunnon secgan* to soðe, [...] (Beo 50), *Þa wæs Biowulfe broga gecyðed snude* to soðe, *þæt* [...] (Beo 2324).

[15] 'If you tell him *truly* which exemplary precept you yourself hold in your bosom'.

[16] 'I tell you *for sure*, son of Ecglaf, that [...]'.

[17] For a full account of the functions of OE *soþlice* and the relevant examples see Lenker 2000; for regularities in the semantic and pragmatic history of English adverbs meaning 'truly' from an onomasiological perspective, see Lenker (forthcoming).

[18] Cf., e.g., 'Nacode he scrydde, and *swa ic soðlice secge*, ealle nyd-behæfnysse he wæs dælende þam þe þæs behofodon' (LS 8 (Eust) 8) 'The naked he clothed; and, *as I truly tell*, he distributed to every necessity of them that had need thereof'.

First, this underlying and possible substitute phrase – 'I tell you truly' or 'I tell you for sure' – gives rise to the adverb's use as an intensifier or 'emphasizer' (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 485). In direct speech, *soþlice* is employed quite frequently as a phrasal emphasizer modifying an adjective or adverb.[19] In Old English narrative prose (i.e. not in direct speech), it mostly serves a different function: as a sentence adverbial, it loses much of its original meaning, extends its scope from the phrase level to at least the sentence or even discourse level and at the same time develops a metatextual function – it is used to mark the structure of textual organisation, demarcating episode boundaries on the global level of discourse[20] or highlighting certain sentences on the local level of discourse (cf. Lenker 2000).[21]

This analysis suggests that the reasons for the variety of expressions for 'truly' and their different distribution are determined by functional factors. This assumption will now briefly be tested by an analysis of the works of two Old English authors who are assumed to show a special awareness for such functional differences because they did not only write prose but also metalinguistic treatises.

Ælfric and Byrhtferth

In his homilies, Ælfric[22] clearly distinguishes between different expressions for adverbial 'truly'. For 'truly' modifying a verb or verb phrase only, Ælfric almost exclusively uses the prepositional phrase *to soþan/to soþon* (see Godden 2000: 764, s.v. *soþ*). *Soþlice*, on the other hand, is mainly employed as an emphasizer ('indeed') or as a sentence adverbial with text-organising function (Godden 2000: 764, s.v. *soþlice* 'as a loose connective').

Another author who quite unambiguously employs different means for the different scopes is Byrhtferth.[23] As the common expression for 'truly' on the

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[19] Cf. 'Ic eom *soðlice* romanisc. and ic on hæftnyd hider gelæd wæs' (LS 8 (Eust) 344) – 'I am *truly* a Roman, and I was brought hither in captivity'.

[20] In the *West Saxon Gospels*, the beginnings of gospel lections read during the Service, i.e. the beginnings of episodes, are regularly marked by sentence-initial *soþlice* (see Lenker 2000: 235-238); for *soþlice* as an episode boundary marker in Old English narrative prose, e.g. in the Old English *Apollonius*, see *ibid.* 238-243.

[21] For earlier accounts along these lines, see BT, where *soþlice* is classified as a 'conjunction' or 'quasi-conjunction' (i.e. conjunct) with a meaning similar to PDE 'but'; see also Mitchell 1985: II, 603-604.

[22] For Ælfric's Latin-Old English grammar, see below, pp. 271-272. The data for Ælfric here are taken from Godden's *Glossary* to the two Series of *Catholic Homilies* which is an immensely valuable guide to Ælfric's vocabulary.

[23] Byrhtferth explicitly deals with the adverb, which he calls *biword* 'byword' in his

phrase level, Byrhtferth uses the prepositional phrase *to soþe* employed as a manner adjunct.[24] For the extended scope as a sentence adverbial, there is one single instance of *soðes*.[25] Like in Ælfric's work, the common form for the sentence adverbial is *soþlice*. It is only used once on the phrase level, as an emphasizer in 'ac we sceolon gelyfan þæt he is soð man and *soðlice* soð God in þære þrynnysse'.[26] More commonly (14 instances), *soþlice* is employed for the extended scope rendering Latin *autem, igitur, namque, scilicet* and *uero* (cf. the Glossary in Baker & Lapidge 1995: 460).

ADVERBS AND CONJUNCTIONS IN EARLIER GRAMMARS

If my basic contention is correct, i.e. that metalinguistic sources of the respective period are of great value for establishing syntactic scope and hence pragmatic functions, we should find support for such a functional restriction of *soþlice* as found in Ælfric and Byrhtferth in the most important grammatical treatise of the Anglo-Saxon period, Ælfric's *Grammar*. To understand this and also later metalinguistic sources, it is first of all necessary to sketch the problems of word class theory in the history of English metalinguistic texts.

Following the categorization of Dionysius Thrax, there are eight parts of speech that turn up again and again in the Latin grammatical tradition, namely (1) noun, (2) pronoun, (3) article, (4) verb, (5) participle, (6) adverb, (7) conjunction, and (8) preposition (see Vorlat 1975: 43; Law 1997: 264-269). Medieval grammarians take on Thrax's classification with only two adjustments: articles are omitted because they do not exist in Latin, and the interjection is detached from the adverb and becomes a separate word class (Vorlat 1975: 43). The standard sequence in medieval grammars thus is *nomen, pronomen, uerbum, aduerbium, participium, coniunctio, praepositio*, and *interjectio*.[27]

Enchiridion (Baker & Lapidge 1995: 88-89).

[24] See Baker & Lapidge 1995: 58 (ll.52, 60), 60 (ll. 86-87), 64 (l. 158), 70 (ll. 242-243), and 74 (l. 309).

[25] 'Swa ys seo brachwil on þæs mannes eagan, heo ys *soðes* atomus on þissum cræfte' – 'Truly, the atom in this science is like the time it takes a man to blink his eye' (Baker & Lapidge 2000: 110-111, ll. 91-92).

[26] '[B]ut we must believe that he is a true man and *truly* a true God in the Trinity'(Baker & Lapidge 1995: 128-129).

[27] For a comprehensive account of the word classes in medieval and Early Modern grammatical terminology, see Vorlat 1975. I cite many of the Early Modern English grammars from this source; for the dictionaries, see also the information provided by the *EMEDD*.

The word classes which are important for our study – adverb, interjection, and conjunction – together with the preposition form the *minor parts of speech*, which generally receive little attention from the grammarians (Vorlat 1975: 366-419). These minor parts of speech are separated from the other word classes by their indeclinable character[28] and their dependency on other word classes ('particles').

The classification of adverbs into syntactically determined subgroups outlined above (pp. 264-265) is a fairly modern one: in traditional grammatical treatises, adverbs are not usually categorized according to their syntactic properties. The most influential early grammarians (Thrax, Varro, Donatus, and Priscian) take the term *adverbium* in the strict sense of a word added to a verb whose meaning it modifies or explains, and the authors indulge in elaborate, if not to say tedious, semantic classifications of adverbs.[29] This exclusively semantic approach is taken on by most of the English grammarians[30] – also those following the traditions of Ramus or the Port-Royal Grammar.[31] The subcategories we now call 'disjuncts' and 'conjuncts' are not mentioned in any of the grammars of the Medieval and Early Modern Period (Vorlat 1975: 366-387). This is not really surprising, because these categories are, as shown above, mainly based on syntactical properties. In the early grammars, however, syntax is mostly restricted to questions of concord and government (cf. Gneuss 1996: 15).[32]

The early grammars are, however, not completely worthless for the issue in question. Though they do not openly refer to their syntactical properties, the grammarians repeatedly point out that the distinction between the various word

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[28] Most of the grammars classify into 'variabiles' (i.e. noun, pronoun, verb, participle) and 'invariabiles' (i.e. adverb, conjunction, preposition, interjection); cf. Vorlat 1975: 46.

[29] Donatus, for example, has *adverbia finata et infinita*, and furthermore the categories *adverbia loci, temporis, numeri, negandi, adfirmandi, demonstrandi, optandi, hortandi, ordinis, interrogandi, similitudinis, qualitatis, quantitatis, dubitandi, personalia, vocandi, respondendi, separandi, iurandi, eligendi, congregandi, prohibendi, eventus, comparandi* (II, XIII). Priscian has *temporalia* (with further subclassification), *locorum, dehortativa, abnegativa, confirmativa, iurativa, optativa, hortativa, remissiva, qualitatis, quantitatis, dubitativa, congregativa, discretiva, similitudinis, ordinativa, intentiva, comparativa, superlativa, diminutiva* (XV, 28-37).

[30] For a sample text from a Middle English grammatical text, see below, p. 280.

[31] The Rameian tradition, for example, contrasts adverbs as word connectors with conjunctions as clause- and sentence connectors (see Vorlat 1975: 368).

[32] For the English grammars, another reason may lie in the fact that sentence adverbials are rather rare in Old and Middle English and only slowly become more common from the Early Modern English period onwards; cf. the summary in Swan 1982: 538-539.

classes of the group of indeclinables is not always clear-cut.[33] The Greek tradition had, as mentioned above, no separate category for the 'interjection' but subsumed it under the adverbs, an alternative which is repeatedly discussed in Latin and English grammars.[34] In the Rameian tradition, adverb and interjection are again part of one class: '*Interjections*, commonly so termed, are in right *Adverbs*, and therefore may justly lay title to this roome [...]' (Ben Jonson; cf. Vorlat 1975: 378).[35]

Even more importantly for the present study, already Priscian and Donatus point out that there is no clear distinction between adverbs and conjunctions. In a discussion of the adverb, Donatus, for instance, explains that there is sometimes no way of determining whether a specific item is an adverb, a conjunction or a preposition, unless its function in the sentence is taken into account:

> Sunt etiam dictiones, quas incertum est, utrum coniunctiones, an praepositiones, an adverbia nominemus [...], quae tamen omnes sensu facile dinoscuntur, [...] horum quaedam accentu discernimus, quaedam sensu (II, XV).

English grammarians take on this remark time and again, i.e. that word class 'is determined by function' (Vorlat 1975: 367), which means that the grammarians do indeed see the differences in scope an adverb may extend to, but do not use this as a property for classification. For the Early Modern grammarians, it does not seem to be an important issue, since Newton, in an imitation of Wallis, states: 'I shall reckon some of these Words as Adverbs, and some of the *Adverbs* as *Conjunctions*, they being often used in both Senses, there will be no great harm done' (Vorlat 1975: 376).[36]

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[33] Various grammarians further remark that a number of prepositions – in Latin as well as in English (cf. *up*) – may also function as adverbs (Vorlat 1975: 376). Adverbs are furthermore often considered to be of an abbreviating character, because they may be paraphrased by a prepositional phrase consisting of a preposition and a noun. Thus *sapienter* is seen as short for *cum sapientia* or English *wisely* short for *with wisdom* (see the examples of the tradition of the Port-Royal Grammar given in Vorlat 1975: 374, 380).

[34] On the discussion about the interjection, see Vorlat 1975: 409-419.

[35] So, when Dr Johnson refers to *forsooth* as an adverb as well as an interjection in the *forsooth* entry (see above, pp. 262-263), he was certainly aware of the close relation between the two word classes, and his use of the term 'interjection' in the entry for *forsooth* could suggest that he regards the interjection as a subgroup of the adverbs.

[36] These uncertainties are only mentioned in the chapters on the adverb, not in the chapters on the conjunction. Thus an item termed an adverb may also serve as a conjunction or, for that matter, interjection, but not vice versa. The same is true for Present Day linguistics, which accepts a hierarchy for adverbs but not for conjunctions, a sensible practice because

Ælfric's Grammar

On this basis, my next concern is to test whether the earliest extensive grammatical account referring to English, Ælfric's Latin-Old English *Grammar* (ed. Zupitza 1880), supports our analysis that *soþlice* is mainly employed with an extended scope as a sentential adverb organizing textual structure.

It is first of all important to note that Ælfric's account, which is based on a Latin excerpt of Priscian,[37] does not mention *soþlice* in his section on the adverbs ('Incipit Aduerbium'; Zupitza 1880: 222-242).[38] Ælfric does, however, explicitly refer to the adverb (!) in his section 'De Coniunctione' (Zupitza 1880: 257-266), a fact which shows that Ælfric considers the scope of the adverb to be not the verb phrase but the sentence: he thus implicitly classifies *soþlice* as a 'conjunct'.

Ælfric even further distinguishes between two uses of *soþlice* as a 'conjunction'.[39] First, *soþlice* (and also *witodlice* and *gewislice*) are found as translations of the Latin conjunctions *autem, enim, uero* and *nam* etc. which belong to the group of the *Expletivae* or *Completivae* 'þa gefyllaþ and gefægerjaþ þa ledenspræce, and, þeah þe hig forlætene beon, ne byð swa ðeah þære spræce andgit forlæten' ('which fill and adorn the Latin, and, even if they are left out, the sense of the utterance will not be lost'; Zupitza 1880: 261):

> [H]er synd þa: *autem, enim, uero, quidem, equidem, quoque, nam, namque, uidelicet. tu autem, domine, miserere mei et resuscita me.* ðu, soðlice, drihten, miltsa me and arær me. *ego enim sum dominus, deus tuus* ic, soðlice, eom drihten ðin god. [...] *doctum sum. nam legi* ic eom gelæred; soðlice, ic rædde. *erat namque in sermone uerax.* he wæs, soðlice, on spræce soðfæst [...].

Ælfric explicitly refers to the loss of the propositional meaning ('ne byð swa ðeah þære spræce andgit forlæten') which is essential for the use of *soþlice* as a sentential adverb with text-organising function.[40] This is most obvious in the

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most disjuncts and some of the conjuncts (*now, here* etc.) may also be employed as manner adjuncts.

[37] On the Latin source for Ælfric's *Grammar*, the *Excerptiones de Prisciano*, see now Porter 2002.

[38] *Witodlice*, by contrast, renders some the adverbs listed among the 'con- vel adfirmativa, þæt synd fæstnigende oþþe seþende: [...] eft oþre adfirmativa: *profecto* witodlice; *scilicet* and *uidelicet* gewislice; *quippe* and *nemphe* witodlice; *sic est* swa hit is; *et similia*' (Zupitza 1880: 226-227).

[39] See also Swan 1988: 129-130.

[40] For the loss of propositional meaning ('bleaching') and pragmatic strengthening as prototypical features of grammaticalization and similar kinds of language change, see Hopper & Traugott 1993: 87-93.

last example cited above (*erat namque in sermone uerax* 'he wæs, *soðlice*, on spræce soðfæst'):[41] Ælfric would certainly not have chosen *soþlice* to render *namque* (but one of the alternatives such as *gewislice* or *witodlice*) if its propositional meaning 'truly' had still been principal to him, because this ambiguity could have obstructed the understanding of the proposition of the sentence, which has to do with 'true speaking' (Lat. *uerax*, OE *soþfæst*).

The adverbs used in the function of a conjunction are, however, certainly not only stylistically important for the adornment of a text. Ælfric also lists *witodlice* etc. among the *Rationales*, 'þas sind for sumon gesceade gesette on endebyrdnysse ledenspræce' ('which are set for an (understanding of the) argument in the text organisation of Latin'; Zupitza 1880: 263), i.e. they have to do with adding reason/reasoning to discourse, translating Latin conjunctions such as *ergo, igitur, ita, itaque* and *utique*.

In sum, Ælfric's *Grammar* does indeed prove to be helpful for an analysis of the syntactic scope and pragmatic functions of OE *soþlice*. This adverb, which is morphologically clearly an adverb marked by the suffix *-lice*, is not listed among the adverbs but is employed to render Latin conjunctions. Ælfric thus stresses the function of *soþlice* as an organiser and marker of the textual structure, similar to Latin *autem, igitur, nam*,[42] and thus describes it exactly as an item we today call a 'conjunct'.

MIDDLE ENGLISH *SOOTHLI*

Soothli, the Middle English form of OE *soþlice*, remains a high-frequency item until the end of the Middle English period and is used in the same three functions as OE *soþlice*. As a manner adjunct it is found in 'And thus I may you *sothli* telle, [...], I am in Tristesce al amidde, [...]' (Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, 4.3496-7).[43] Its use as an emphasizer is, for example, suggested by the semantic contrast *soothly* vs. *as I gesse* in 'But Venus is it *soothly*, as I gesse' (Chaucer, *KnT* (1) 1102). In narrative contexts, the scope of the adverb extends – like in Old English – to the whole sentence: '*Soothly*, the goode werkes that he dide biforn that he fil in synne been al mortefied and astoned and dulled by the ofte

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[41] 'He was, *therefore*, true-speaking/reliable in his speech'.

[42] For the pragmatic force of these Latin items, see Kroon 1995.

[43] For a fuller account of the history of *soothli* and more detailed examples, see *MED* s.v. *soothli*, Heuer 1932: 134-135, and Lenker (forthcoming). The Middle English examples are taken from the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* (online version).

synnyng' (Chaucer, *ParsT* (10) 232). In prose texts, *soothly* or *for soothly*[44] often follow quotations, as may be seen in another example from Chaucer's *Parson's Tale*, an argumentative piece of prose on the seven deadly sins:

> Homycide is eek by bakbitynge, of whiche bakbiteres seith Salomon that 'they han two swerdes with whiche they sleen hire neighebores'. *For soothly*, as wikke it is to bynyme his good name as his lyf. Homycide is eek in yevynge of wikked conseil by fraude [...]. For which the wise man seith 'Fedeth hym that almoost dyeth for honger'; *for soothly*, but if thow feede hym, thou sleest hym (Chaucer, *ParsT* (10) 565-570).

(For) soothly here clearly marks the textual structure, i.e. the end of the quotation, in a similar function which may today be indicated by 'end of quote'. It also signals the continuation of the original argument and/or highlights the author's personal opinion in respect to the quotation. Other frequent collocations with conjunctions such as *but soothly, and soothly* or *now soothly* also testify to its similarity to conjunctions and its discourse function as a demarcating marker on the local level of discourse.[45]

FORSOOTH: ETYMOLOGY AND HISTORY

Even though *soothli* is amply employed in Middle English and fulfils all of the functions of OE *soþlice*, a new item – *forsooth* – enters the semantic field at the beginning of the Middle English period. *Forsooth(e)* is frequently attested from the beginning of the thirteenth century onwards in all dialects of Middle English. It appears in various forms, such as (to list only the main variants) *for soþ* and *for soþe* and also the univerbated forms *forsoþ, forsoþe, forsuth, forsute*, and Southern *vor zoþe, vorzoe* (*OED* s.v. *forsooth*; *MED* s.v. *forsoth*). It is used in all the functions sketched above for *soþlice* and *soothly*.[46]

In contrast to these, however, it is abundantly used – in what is basically an emphasizer function – in answers to questions, in positive as well as in negative ones (see also *MED* s.v. 2b).

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[44] For the conjunction *for* see below, n. 63. For the replacement of *forsothe* by the conjunction *for* in the Later Version of the Wycliffe Bible, see below, p. 282 and n. 69.

[45] For the explanatory force of these collocates, see Traugott & Dasher 2002: 168 (for *actually* and *in fact*) and Lenker (forthcoming).

[46] For a survey of the history on *forsooth*, see *OED* and *MED* s.v., Appenzeller-Gassmann 1961: 47-48, and Swan 1988: 259-262.

Boece. 'Ye/Yis, *forsothe*', quod I (Chaucer, *Boece*, 3, pr11.203; pr12.57)
'Nay/No *forsothe*', quod I (Chaucer, *Boece*, 3, pr12.150; 4, pr2.100 etc.)

In this function, it is also quite frequent in original Middle English prose, for example in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*: '"Ye *forsothe*", said the queen [...]' (Book 13, cap. vii; etc.).

Yet the scope of *forsooth* may at times also be wider and extend over the whole sentence (see Swan 1985: 260). Accordingly, like *soþlice/soothly* it is found in collocations with conjunctions such as *and* and *but* and is also employed in the metatextual function sketched for *soothly*: it may, for instance, indicate the end of an episode:

> [...] And *forsothe* this foreseide woman bar smale bokis in hir right hand, and in hir left hand sche bar a ceptre. [end of episode] ...
> And whan she saughe this poetical muses [...] (Chaucer, *Boece*, 1, pr1.41).

Etymology

Forsooth is commonly considered to be a univerbated and lexicalized form of an Old English prepositional phrase *for soþ* and thus comparable to the later formations of that kind such as PDE *indeed* or *in fact*. The *OED* (s.v. *forsooth*), for instance, states that *for* (prep.) and *soþ* (n.) are 'written as one word'. In this view, the preposition *for* would govern the (endingless) accusative of the neuter noun *soþ*.[47] Though this explanation seems very plausible, it is not as straightforwardly indisputable as it seems at first glance.

The main problem is that *for soþ* is, as shown above (pp. 265-268), not a usual expression for Old English 'truly'. In contrast to the prepositional phrases *to soþe* or *to soþan*, which are richly documented, the phrase *for soþ* it is only attested seven (!) times in Old English. Moreover, the distribution of these attestations is rather unbalanced. Four instances are found in translations from King Alfred's Circle, three of them as manner adjuncts modifying the verb *witan* such

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[47] OE *for* can govern the dative, accusative and ablative, but with a difference in meaning (cf. BT, *OED*, *MED* s.v. *for* and Appenzeller-Gassmann 1962: 49-58); cf. also the rather complex the history of the Present Day German prepositions *vor* (locative; with dative) and *für* ('instead of' etc.; with accusative) whose distinct meanings were only fixed in the eighteenth century; cf. Grimm & Grimm 1878: s.v. *vor*.

as 'Ic *for soð* wat, þæt ...' ('I know *truly/for sure* [...]').[48] Two of them are imperative constructions 'Wite þe *for soð*'.[49] The fourth Alfredian instance is also found in collocation with a verb of communication – *secgan* – and is again an imperative 'Sage him *for soð*, ðæt [....]' ('Tell him truly, that [...]).[50]

Two of the non-Alfredian attestations are collocates with *secgan* as well, namely one in *Maxims II* 'Næni eft cymeð hider under hrofas, þe þæt her *for soð* mannum secge hwylc sy meotodes gesceaft [...]' (Max II, 63)[51] and the second in two manuscripts of one of the versions of Vercelli Homily I 'De Parasceve': '& *for soð* ic eow secge, cwæð he, þætte [...]' (Scragg 1992: 191).[52] This instance, which translates Latin 'Uerumtamen dico uobis [...]' (Matth XXVI, 64), is particularly interesting because only two of the manuscripts write *for soþ*; manuscript H replaces this expression by the much more usual *to soþan* (Scragg 1992: 24). The phrase *for soþ* is not used in the other version of Vercelli I either, which translates *uerumtamen* by the more common '*soþ* is þonne þæt ic eow secge [...]' (Scragg 1992: 22).[53]

This last expression is morphologically ambiguous and thus opens a new perspective on the etymology of *forsooth*: since in Old English the noun and adjective *soþ* are formally identical, there is no way to decide whether *soþ is þonne þæt* in this case should be analysed as 'it is true' or 'it is the truth'. More importantly for the analysis of *for soþ*, there is no clear-cut distinction between the noun and the adverb either, even in cases when *soþ* is followed by a *þæt*-clause, a surrounding where an adverb would be required (Heuer 1932: 135). We very frequently find expressions such as '*soþ* ic þe *secge* þæt [...]' (Alex 40.5), '*soþ* ic þe *talige* þæt [...]' (Beo 532), or 'þæt þu *soþ* wite hu þæt geeode

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[48] 'Ic *for soð* wat, þæt þæt nis minre gegearnunge, þæt ic ildenne onfo to lifigenne [...]' (Bede 3, 11.190.29).

[49] 'Wite þu *for soð*, gif þæt þine agne welan wæron þe þu mændest þæt þu forlure, ne meahtest þu hi na forleosan [...]' (Bo 7.17.20), and 'Wite þu *for soð* þæt nan god ne dereð þæm þe hit ah' (Bo 14.32.31).

[50] 'Sage him *for soð*, ðæt he ne mæg þone siðfæt gefyllan, þe he gemynted hæfð; forþon þe Godes willa is ðæt he fere to Columban mynstre to læranne' (Bede 5, 9.410.17).

[51] 'No one returns here below the heavens who might tell people that *for certain* what the creation of the Lord is like'.

[52] Cf. also its variant 'And *for soð* ic eow sæcge, cwæð he, þætte þæt nuhwænne gelimpeð <þæt> ge geseoð mannes Sunu sittende on þa swiðran healfe þæs ælmihtigan Fæder, & on heofonas wolcnum on middaneard cumene' (HomS 24.2 [Schaefer], 190).

[53] A similar case of avoidance of *for soþ* is attested in the earliest example listed in the *MED* (s.v. *forsooth*). A manuscript of the saint's life of St Juliana (*c.* 1225) replaces the form *for soð* by the at that time clearly more common *to soðe*.

þa [...]' (ChristA,B,C 440).[54] In all these cases, the form *soþ* is used adverbially as a manner adjunct with a verb of communication. Campbell (1959: § 668) points out that there are some adjectives which use the accusative singular neuter adverbially, among them *soþ* (though especially in Northern dialects; see *ibid.* n. 1),[55] so that an endingless form *soþ* modifying a verb of communication can either be a noun, an adjective or an adverb.

Since the paucity and uneven distribution of the prepositional phrase *for soþe* in contrast to the frequent *to soþe* and *to soþan* make it hard to believe that such a rare variant form should suddenly become so dominant from the beginning of the Middle English period onwards, it may perhaps be sensible to ask for another explanation for the etymology of *forsooth(e)*. Alternatively, *forsoothe* can be analyzed as an adverb formed from an adjective OE *forsoþ* by the Old English adverbial suffix *-e*.[56] The adjective *forsoþ* is then regarded as a composite form of the adjective *soþ* and the prefix *for-*.[57]

The prefix *for-* is widely attested in Old English and carries an intensifying force when added to an adjective such as *forceald* to *ceald* 'very cold', *forswiþe* to *swiþe* 'very strong' (Quirk & Wrenn 1957: 110; *DOE* s.v. *for-*).[58] It is most interesting to note that this prefix is exceptionally common in the Alfredian works, e.g. *formicel* 'very great' (3 instances), *forswiþe* 'very great, utterly', *forlytel* 'very little', *fordysilic* 'very foolish', *forsweotole* 'very clearly', and *forinwordlice* 'thoroughly, genuinely' (Wülfing 1897: § 277).[59]

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[54] I have here chosen examples from poetry because there is very little loan influence there. In addition, the expression *soþ ic (eow) secge* is abundantly attested in translations of Latin *Amen dico uobis* in the Lindisfarne, Rushworth and West Saxon Gospels, which could have been been evoked by the uncertainty of the word class of Latin *Amen*, a loan from Hebrew.

[55] Grimm & Grimm 1878 (s.v. *fürwahr*) point out similar problems as regards the interpretation of German *fürwahr* (which is structurally identical to English *forsooth*). It appears in the adjectival form *vür war* and the nominal form *vür ware* which in Middle High German finally merge into German *fürwahr*.

[56] This analysis more easily explains the most frequent Middle English form *forsoothe* with the suffix *-e*: the analysis as a prepositional phrase would have required a case shift from the attested forms *forsoþ* (*for* plus endingless accusative) to *for* governing the dative in *-e*, which seems strange for a frozen form such as *forsoþe*.

[57] The *MED* may perhaps also advocate this assumption, because it gives *forsoþ* (one word) as the Old English word and only then states 'also for soth (phrase)'. Clark Hall (1960) also lists *forsoþ* 'indeed, verily', but both works may also consider it to be an already lexicalized form.

[58] This prefix has to be distinguished from the verbal prefix *for-* which also intensifies, often with a shift to a perfective aspect, e.g. *forbærnan* 'burn up', *fordon* 'destroy' (Quirk & Wrenn 1957: 110).

[59] Wülfing complains in almost all the cases that these forms are not correctly interpreted or translated by other scholars.

Most of these coinages are adverbs, a finding which is even more prominent in Ælfric, who – apart from a single attestation of *forcuþ* 'wicked' – only uses *for-* with adverbs, namely *forcuþe* 'wickedly, badly', *foreaþe* 'very easily', *foreaþelice* 'very easily', *forhraþe* 'very quickly', *foroft* 'very often', *forswiþe* 'greatly', and the intensifier *forwel* (only with *fela, menige, oft*) 'very' (Godden 2000: Glossary). In Wulfstan, the only relevant form is *forwel* 'very', which is only used as an emphasizer in the phrase *forwel oft* 'very often' (8 times; Baker & Lapidge 1995: Glossary). Among these late Old English coinages, *forswiþe* and *forwel* are obviously the most important ones because they – like *forsooth(e)* – mainly function as intensifiers or emphasizers.

There are no formal reasons why OE *forsoþ* should not be analyzed as an (endingless) accusative singular neuter of the adjective *forsoþ* (with an intensifying prefix) which is used instead of the simple adjective *soþ* as a manner adjunct in collocates with verbs such as *witan* and *secgan*. Even though there may be no way to determine the etymology of *forsooth* with certainty, the last Old English attestation, from a charter of King Æthelstan, at least suggests an adjectival base *forsoþ* with the adverb suffix *-e*, because we would alternatively need an interpretation in which the preposition *for* now governs the dative instead of the accusative of the earlier instances:[60] 'I will *forsoþe* þat he come' (Ch 451.1 [Birch 339], 23).

It would be rather inadvisable to ask for a watertight etymological explanation for a phrase which came to be used by many speakers who may have had both interpretations in mind, and so it would be equally unwise to regard either of the two possibilities as completely unacceptable. The alternative theory suggested here which centres on the intensifying force of *forsooth* through its prefix *for-*, however, helps to explain why a form which was, in contrast to other prepositional phrases, an extremely rare variant suddenly became so frequent at the beginning of the Modern English period. I would therefore like to suggest that *forsoþ* originated as an adverbial form of the intensifying complex adjective *forsoþ*. This word formation pattern is strong in the later Old English period, in particular in the intensifier *forwel*, and may have been much more common in spoken language than our preserved language data allow us to infer.

Yet the ambiguity of the expression *for soþ(e)* certainly increased in the Middle English period through the influx of many prepositional phrases from French and through English expressions coined on the French model. French

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[60] See above n. 47.

usually prefers prepositional phrases to adverbs, e.g. *en vérité* instead of English *soþlice/soothly* or German *wahrlich* as a translation for Latin *Amen*.[61] In her monograph on Middle English prepositional phrases functioning as emphasizers, Appenzeller-Gassmann (1962: 48-58) lists a number of expressions with *for* which were modelled on French *per* or *pour* (< Lat. *pro (por), prae, per*),[62] e.g. *par fay, par dee, for Godes/Christes/my love, for Goddis sake*. None of these, however, is semantically similar to *forsooth* so that *forsooth* requires a separate category in her study. Though there can be no doubt that the intensifying force of *forsooth* was strengthened by these analogical forms, which were used as oaths and vows in French and Middle English, the prepositional phrase was certainly not regarded as the sole source for *forsooth* by speakers of Middle English. This is evident from the attested ME *forsoothli* which does not allow an analysis as a prepositional form, but only as an adverb *soothli* with an intensifying prefix *for-* (*MED* s.v. *forsoothli*).[63]

FORSOOTH IN MIDDLE ENGLISH METALINGUISTIC SOURCES

Dictionaries

Although ME *soothli* could be shown to remain a frequent and multifunctional item, it is only mentioned as a manner adjunct in metalinguistic texts of the

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[61] See the distinction between French and Latin drawn by the Port-Royal Grammar: 'Et c'est pourquoy dans les Langues vulgaires, la pluspart des ces adverbes s'expliquent d'ordinaire plus élegamment par le nom avec la preposition: ainsi on dira plûtot *avec sagesse, avec prudence, avec orgueil, avec moderation*, que *sagement, prudemment, orgueilleusement, modérément*, quoi qu'en Latin au contraire il soit d'ordinaire plus élegant de se servir des Adverbes.' It is interesting to note that Brightland, in his translation of this passage, adds 'I speak generally, for it holds not always' and thus separates the English usage from French (Vorlat 1975: 380).

[62] The history of these prepositions is equally confusing in Latin and French; see *AND* s.v. *par* (var. *per, por, pur*). It is important to note, however, that Latin *per* and French *par* may not only function as prepositions, but – just like English *for* – as intensifying prefixes or particles so that also Anglo-Norman expressions such as *pur vrai* (Lat. *vere*) or *par/pur veir* are ambiguous (see *AND* s.vv. *vrai, veir*).

[63] This makes the morphological analysis of expressions as the ones quoted above from Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* even more difficult. If we have a look at these again, we see that '*For soothly, as wikke as it is* [...]' or '*for soothly, but if thow feede hym, thou sleest hym*' (Chaucer, *ParsT* (10) 565-570) does not only allow an interpretation as conjunction plus adverb, but perhaps also the interpretation as an adverb *forsoothly*; see also below n. 69. The conjunction *for* only appears at the beginning of the Middle English period (cf. *MED* s.v. *for* conj.).

Middle English period. In these sources, which are unfortunately only preserved from the end of the Middle English period (Gneuss 1996: 15-18; Thomson 1984: xiii), it is *forsooth* which takes the place of *soþlice*.

Forsooth is mentioned in first two bilingual English-Latin dictionaries, the *Promptorium Parvulorum* and the *Catholicon Anglicum* (cf. Gneuss 1996: 19). The *Promptorium Parvulorum* (Mayhew 1908: s.v. *fforsoth*) classifies *forsooth* as an 'aduerb' and also mainly lists Latin adverbs as translation equivalents: '*fforsoth: uere, utique, quin imo, profecto, siquidem, amen; aduerb*'.[64]

The *Catholicon Anglicum* (dated 1483; Herrtage 1881) is rather more sophisticated in its lexicographical methods and it 'is noteworthy as it gives several Latin synonyms for very many of the c. 8,000 English entries, often together with explanations of their differences in meaning' (Gneuss 1996: 19). The *Catholicon* accordingly is a much more valuable source for determining the functions of Middle English *forsothe* and it clearly distinguishes the meanings (and functions) of *forsothe* from those of *sothely*.

forsothe	*Amen, Autem, certe, enim, enion, eciam, equidem, nempe, nimirum, profecte, quippe, reuera, siquidem, utique, vero, vere, quidem, quoque, porro, veraciter, quin, quineciam, quinimmo, quinin, veruntamen.*
sothely	*uere, amen & cetera; ubi trewly.*

While *sothely* is obviously regarded as the manner adjunct (cf. Lat. *uere* and the English synonym *trewly*),[65] *forsothe* is listed as rendering Latin conjunctions, e.g. *uero* (not *uere*) and the full list, which is rather similar to the items rendered by *soþlice* in Ælfric's *Grammar* (see above, pp. 271-272). The conjunct *forsothe* has ousted *soothli* in the Middle English sources.

Grammatical Texts

Grammatical treatises dealing with the vernacular also only survive from the end of the fourteenth century onwards, and their production reaches its peak as

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[64] The *Promptorium* lists the adjective *soth* (Soth, or *trew: Verus, -a, -um*) but not the adverb.

[65] *Trew* 'true' and the adverb *trew(e)ly* 'truly' are not considered here because they enter the semantic field of 'truth' only at the end of the Middle English period undergoing a semantic change from 'faithfully, steadfastly'. The original meaning is still mentioned as the first one in the *Catholicon* (s.v. *trewe*): '*trewe fidelis, verux, verus* [...]'. For the history of *truly*, see Lenker (forthcoming).

late as 1460-80. These Middle English grammatical texts, which are now conveniently collected in Thomson (1984), were not designed as abstract grammars but as 'working tools' (Thomson 1984: xiv) and show an immense degree of interdependence. Because of their repetitive character, it suffices to quote exemplary samples from one of the sources here.[66] The adverb, in accordance with the Latin school tradition, is seen as modifying the verb only:

> How knos þu aduerbe? A party of speech þat ys vndeclynyt, þe wych ys cast to a verbe to declare and fulfyll þe sygnific(ac)ion of þe verbe [...] (Thomson 1984: 6).

The accounts then only provide information on the different patterns of Latin adverb formation from the different classes of adjectives, but virtually no English examples. This method is also applied in the descriptions of the 'conjunctions':

> How knos a coniunccion? A party of speech þat ys vndeclynet and ionys oþer partys of spechys togedyr. How many thyngus longon to a coniunccion? III. Wech iij? Powere, fygur and ordyr. [How mon]y powers of coniunccion byn þer? V. Wech v? Sum be copulatyuis, sum byn [disiunctiuis, sum] byn explatyuis, sum casuels and sum racionels (Thomson 1985: 7).

The only account of the conjunction which is not from Priscian or Donatus and which supplies some information on the vernacular is found in Thomson's 'Accedence Text D' (1984: 32-44; Cambridge, Trinity College, O. 5. 4, ff. 4v-6v). This source provides an exposition of the various categories of conjunctions which is unusually full and, more importantly, it gives sample sentences and their English translations (cf. Thomson 1984: 244):

> How knowest a coniunccion? A party of reson that is not declynyd [...]. How knowest a coniunccion expletyf? That at fulfylleth the sentence of a reson that is folwyng, as 'I forsothe haue souped, thu forsothe not', *Ego quidem cenaui tu vero non* (Thomson 1984: 42).

Like in Ælfric's *Grammar*, the adverb meaning 'truly' is here considered a 'conjunction' of the subgroup *Expletivae*. This supports the findings from the dictionaries, namely that *forsooth* is used for functions which require a wider scope and has taken over the text-organising functions which in Old English had been fulfilled by *soplice*.

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[66] Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 356B, ff. 54v-57v and 48r (Text A in Thomson 1984).

The General Prologue to the Revision of the Wycliffite Bible

Though these sources are basically very congruent in their description of the functions of *forsooth*, it could still be argued that *forsooth* is just a translation equivalent indiscriminately used for certain Latin conjunctions, in translations as well as in metalinguistic treatises. This common argument, which surely has always to be taken into account in the Middle Ages, is in this case especially prompted by the double use of *forsooth* in the example of the grammatical text quoted above (as a translation of *nam* and *vero*). The case can, however, be tested through a closer look at one of the other few metatextual documents of the Middle English period, the General Prologue to the revision of the Wycliffite Bible (1397),[67] where *forsoth*, again rather surprisingly, is explicitly referred to twice:

> And whanne oo word is oonis set in a reesoun, it mai be set forth as ofte as it is vndurstonden, either as ofte as reesoun and nede axen; and this word *autem*, either *vero*, mai stonde for *forsothe*, either for *but*, and thus I vse comounli; and sumtyme it mai stoned for *and*, as elde gramariens syn (Forshall & Madden 1850: 57).

The author here explicitly asks for a repetition of certain conjunctions to make the reasoning of the text, the textual organisation, transparent. He includes the adverb *forsothe* among the words rendering Latin *autem* and *vero* and marks their similiarity, but also difference, to unambiguous conjunctions such as adversative *but* and connective *and*. In a second instance, the revisor deals more generally with the problems of translating items belonging to the '*minor parts of speech*' (see above, p. 269), e.g. 'aduerbis, coniunccions, and prepositions':

> [A] translatour hath greet need to studie wel the sentence, both bifore and aftir, and loke that suche equiuok wordis acorde with the sentence [...]. Also this word *ex* signifieth sumtyme *of*, and sumtyme it signifieth *bi*, as Jerom seith; and this word *enim* signifieth comynli *forsothe*, and, as Jerom seith, it signifieth *cause thus, forwhi*; [...]. Manie such aduerbis, coniuncciouns, and preposiciouns ben set ofte oon for a nother, and at fre choice of autouris sumtyme; and now tho shulen be taken as it acordith best to the sentence [...] (Forshall & Madden 1850: 59-60).

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[67] For the value of this Preface and similar sources see Thomson 1984: xiv.

Forsothe is here said to 'commonly' be the correct translation of *enim*, a conjunction signifying result or inference 'cause thus, forwhi'. These references to *forsooth* in the Prologue evoke the impression that the reviser of the Wycliffite Bible regards *forsothe* as a tricky case, because he otherwise would not have cared to comment on it twice. Both instances agree on the description of *forsothe* as a translation of Latin conjunctions and thus testify to the analysis of *forsothe* as a conjunct with scope over the whole sentence.

The revision of the Bible translation itself, however, points towards a change of attitude on the side of the reviser(s). In the Old Testament, *autem, vero* and *enim* are almost always translated by *forsothe* and *sothely* in the earlier version, and very frequently so in the second version (the alternative being *but*). In the New Testament, the earlier text again renders them by *forsothe* or *sothely*. The revised text, however, almost exclusively uses the conjunctions *but* or *and*, or leaves *autem, vero* etc. unrendered (Forshall & Madden 1850: xxiii, note a). This becomes clear through a comparison of some verses of the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter XXVI ('The Plot against Jesus' in the Earlier and Later Version):[68]

Verse	Latin	Earlier Version	Later Version
XXVI, 8	[uidentes] autem	sothely	and
XXVI, 9	[potuit] enim	forsothe	for
XXVI, 10	[sciens] autem	sothely	But
XXVI, 12	[mittens] enim	forsothe	–
XXVI, 17	[prima] autem [die]	forsothe	And
XXVI, 24	[filius] quidem	forsothe	Forsothe
XXVI, 26	[cenantibus] autem	forsothe	And
XXVI, 29	[dico] autem [uobis]	forsothe	And
XXVI, 32	[postquam] autem	forsothe	But
XXVI, 33	[respondens] autem	sothely	–
XXVI, 41	quidem [promtus est]	forsothe	for
XXVI, 43	[errant] enim	forsothe	for

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[68] In Lenker (forthcoming), I compare the renderings of the parallel texts Matth XXVI, Mark XIV, Luke XXII and John XIII into Old English (West-Saxon Gospels, Lindisfarne Gospels) and Middle English (Earlier and Later Version of the Wycliffe Bible).

This comparison shows that the reviser, though he argues strongly in favour of *forsothe* in the General Prologue where he refers to it as the 'common' translation of *enim*, has almost completely abandoned the word by the time he comes to the New Testament.[69] This first of all allows us to infer that contemporary writers and grammarians regarded *forsothe* as a conjunct with text-organising function which should be employed in prose texts to translate Latin conjunctions, but is also seems to indicate that the high esteem of *forsooth* as a conjunction in prose texts was rather short-lived. To test this suggestion, we will finally again turn to the metalinguistic sources of the Early Modern English period.

FORSOOTH IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DICTIONARIES

Johnson's evaluation of *forsooth* as an ironically used adverb and interjection shall now be considered in the light of the accounts of other metalinguistic sources from Early Modern English times covering the period we have not dealt with yet, e.g. dictionaries from 1560 to the middle of the seventeenth century. The most important dictionaries of this period are now very conveniently accessible in *The Early Modern English Dictionaries Database* (*EMEDD*; ed. Ian Lancashire) which includes 16 works from 1530 to 1657: six bilingual dictionaries,[70] five English hard-word dictionaries,[71] the first full English-only dictionary by Thomas Blount (1656), three specialized lexicons,[72] and the first full English word-list by Richard Mulcaster in his *The first part of the Elementarie* (1582).

In accordance with the meagre findings for Middle English, *sotheli* is only mentioned once in these dictionaries (as a manner adverb).[73] The situation is

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[69] See here again the interesting case of the conjunct *forsothe* being replaced by the fairly 'new' conjunction *for* (see above, n. 63); for a more detailed analysis see Lenker (forthcoming).

[70] John Palsgrave (1530; English-French), William Thomas (1550; Italian-English), Thomas Thomas (1587; Latin-English), John Florio (1598; Italian-English), John Minsheu (1599; Spanish-English), and Randle Cotgrave (1611; French-English).

[71] Edmund Coote (1596), Robert Cawdrey (1604, based on the transcription by Raymond Siemens; and 1617), John Bullokar (1616), and Henry Cockeram (1623).

[72] Bartholomew Traheron's translation of Vigon (1543), William Turner on herbal names (1548), and John Garfield on scientific terms in J. Renou's *Dispensatory* (1657).

[73] Florio (1598) lists *soothly* as a translation of Italian 'Veramente, Veracemente', together with its synonyms 'truly, verily, according to veritie and truth, indeed, rightly, as truth is', which suggests that *soothly* is only seen as a truth-intensifying adverb, i.e. with its full propositional meaning 'truly'.

clearly different for *forsooth*, which is recorded in several sources. Only the Latin-English dictionary of Thomas Thomas (1597), however, takes up the tradition found in the earlier metalinguistic treatises and regards *forsooth* as a translation equivalent for Latin conjunctions. It is listed as a rendering of Latin *enim*, *etenim* ('coniunct.'), *enimvero* ('coniunct.') and *vero* ('coniunct. discret.'). This single attestation of *forsooth* as a conjunct(ion) in a Latin-English dictionary further corroborates the analysis that *forsooth* used to be a common choice for the translation of Latin conjunctions in earlier English prose.

The other dictionaries which mention *forsooth* are bilingual dictionaries for the vernaculars French and Italian, namely Palsgrave (1530), Florio (1598) and Cotgrave (1611).[74] Palsgrave's entry simply lists *for sothe* as a rendering for French *certes, pour certain*. Florio's Italian and Cotgrave's French dictionaries are fortunately much more informative: in Florio, *forsooth* is mentioned ten times, but exclusively in the interactive dialogue collocates 'yea, forsooth' (translating Italian *Gnaffe si, Madesi, Messeri*) or 'no, forsooth' (translating Italian *Gnaffe no, Madenò, Madonna no, Mainò*). It is here obviously only used as an emphasizer or interjection strengthening the proposition of *yes* or *no* in dialogue. Accordingly, Cotgrave (1611) explicitly refers to *forsooth* once as an 'interiection, confirming the word whereto it is ioyned' (s.v. *df*).[75] This also agrees with most of the other occurrences of *forsooth* in this source which all relate to the interactive context of spoken dialogue: it is listed as for 'Madia no: No forsooth, or, in sooth sir, no', 'c'est mon: yes forsooth, truly, certainly, doubtlesse, indeed' or 'Si: yes forsooth haue I, or yes that I haue'. The most interesting instance, however, is the entry for 'Nendea' which gives 'no indeed-law, marrie no forsooth' and describes this as 'a womans oath, or negatiue'.[76]

CONCLUSION

We have thus now come back to Johnson's definition of *forsooth* in his *English Dictionary*: the other Early Modern English metalinguistic sources confirm that *forsooth* is an interjection and also testify to the high frequency of the inter-

[74] Considering the etymology and meaning of the word, it is not surprising that it neither appears in the Hard Word Dictionaries nor in those covering the scientific registers.

[75] It is also listed for *voire* ('but, yea but; surely, certainly, verily, indeed, forsooth'), *voirement* ('surely, certainly, verily; forsooth, in deed') and *voyrement* ('surely, verily, indeed, forsooth').

[76] Sylvia Adamson has pointed out to me that in Early Modern English drama *forsooth* seems to have been used as an oath uttered by women in order to avoid more concrete expressions.

active intensifying expressions 'yes, forsooth' and 'no, forsooth' which Johnson sees as the origin of the semantic change resulting in *forsooth* being used as an honorific. Since the employment of *forsooth* as an appellation is not recognized in any of these dictionaries, we might hypothesize that Johnson (and his source, the *Guardian*) are mistaken. Another metalinguistic witness, Elizabeth Elstob's *Rudiments of Grammar for the English Saxon Tongue* (1715: 50), however, supports Johnson's view and even provides additional sociolinguistic and pragmatic information on the use of *forsooth* at Elstob's time:

> For whereas it [= *forsooth*] is not only a note of Affirmation, it is used as a word of Compliment and Respect, which we find exacted with great Niceness from their Children, by the meaner sort in and about the City of London, where they are sure to be taught to say *Forsooth Mother*, and *Forsooth, Grandmother* etc.

Following these metalinguistic descriptions of Johnson and Elstob, Tucker (1962) finds a number of instances in primary literature where *forsooth* is used as an honorific and quotes, for instance, a passage from Shenstone's *Essays on Vanity* where 'one girl was annoyed because the traveller called her "sweetheart" instead of "Madam" and another brought him within a foot of running down a precipice because of his calling her a "forsooth"'. Similarly, Shaftesbury in his *Letter concerning Enthusiam* (1708) tells us that beggars speaking to people whose status they do not know will 'innocently come out with a *Good Sir!* or a *Good Forsooth!*' (Tucker 1962: 16). These examples demonstrate that *forsooth* – in addition to being considered a 'City Word' – is predominantly used by the would-be genteel and speakers of the lower classes, whom Elstob calls 'the meaner sort in and about the City of London'. Elstob's account thus even allows us to refine Johnson's explanation of the semantic change of *forsooth*. The adverb *forsooth* was from the very outset predominantly employed with an intensifying force. From collocates in which it intensified the force of 'yes' and 'no', *forsooth* developed into a word of 'compliment and respect' (Elstob, *Guardian*), a social deictic, only to be finally restricted in its use to ironical or contemptuous senses (Johnson, *OED*). If we acknowledge Elstob's description, this pejorative change was not only provoked by its overuse – a common development with intensifiers – but also by the fact that is was overused by a special group of speakers, the 'meaner classes', or may even have developed into a swear word used by female speakers.

It would have been very difficult for modern linguistic research to unearth the development of *forsooth* and its pragmatic functions had not Johnson and

Elstob been so painstaking in their metalinguistic descriptions. Metalinguistic sources thus not only allow us to test and corroborate the interpretation of data gained by the analysis of primary texts (cf. the corroboration of the analysis of *soþlice* as a 'conjunct' by Ælfric's *Grammar* etc.); they may, in addition, even open new paths and perspectives for research on the syntax and pragmatics of the earlier stages of English. *Forsooth* is a fine test case for a study like this because it has – from its first appearance – been a pragmatically sensitive item for whose interpretation we cannot rely on our language intuition alone: in order to avoid anachronistic traps, metalinguistic sources are not only a valuable tool, but an indispensable methodological necessity. These metalinguistic sources do not only testify to an interest in the English language as an abstract system, but also – as Helmut Gneuss rightly stresses – to questions of pragmatics because of their 'conscious concern with the *use* and *employment* of the English language' (1996: 8; my emphasis).[77]

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'The Dictionary is some Advantage to the System': Alphabetical Order and Topical Relations in Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopaedia*

MONIKA BRASS

With the above-mentioned statement in the 'Preface' of his *Cyclopaedia*[1], Ephraim Chambers raises a question central to most of the encyclopaedic undertakings of the late 17th and 18th century: how to arrange the material to be presented in an encyclopaedic dictionary. The problem gained prevalence in the 18th century because the traditional way of ordering an encyclopaedia on systematic principles was challenged in the late 17th century by the alphabetical order which ignores topical interrelations altogether. Voltaire, who gave the 1769 edition of his *Dictionnaire philosophique* the title 'La Raison par Alphabet' (1769 [1994]: I, 251), was not the only one who was trapped by the paradox of the alphabet being a most rational method of arranging material and yet at the same time dissolving the organic structure of knowledge (cf. Didier 1996: 1). Nearly all the compilers of encyclopaedic dictionaries in the 18th century had to cope with the problem of how to reconcile the alphabetic with the encyclopaedic order.[2]

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[1] Chambers 1728. This edition is here cited as *C*, I or *C*, II, referring to the first or second volume respectively. In full this quotation reads: 'It may be even said, that if the System [i.e. systematic order] be an Improvement upon the Dictionary [i.e. alphabetical order]; the Dictionary is some Advantage to the System; and that this is perhaps the only Way wherein the whole Circle or Body of Knowledge can be deliver'd' (*C*, I, p. 1).

[2] Although he does not reflect on it philosophically as Chambers does, John Harris, the author of the first modern scientific encyclopaedia in English, devises a strategy of compensating for the disadvantages of the alphabetical principle. Ephraim Chambers elaborates on his devices and deals with the problem in his methodological reflections. The 'Prospectus' and the 'Discours préliminaire' of the *Encyclopédie* by Diderot and d'Alembert revolve around the same topic; their authors explicitly pay respect to Chambers for establishing an alphabetical order which has all the advantages of a systematic arrangement. William Smellie, the compiler of the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in his 'Preface' also asks the question of what order is most adequate for the presentation of scientific topics.