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Direct Speech in *Heliand* and Otfrid von Weissenburg's *Evangelienbuch*: A Shared Vernacular Tradition?

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Abstract

This paper compares *Heliand* (Old Saxon) and Otfrid von Weissenburg's *Evangelienbuch* (Old High German) with each other and with several Old English poems to determine the extent to which those poems partake of a common stylistic tradition as regards their handling of direct speech. Particular attention is given to the location and form of the *inquit* and to terms of address. Close examination of those features confirms the well-known fact that *Heliand* uses a style that is very close to the Old English poetic tradition, whereas the *Evangelienbuch* is much more innovative stylistically. However, it also reveals significant differences between *Heliand* and Old English poetry, that go beyond matters of dialect or meter. Conversely, it shows that, for all its innovation, the *Evangelienbuch* is not entirely exempt from traditional features characteristic of West-Germanic alliterative poetry.

Keywords

Direct speech – *Heliand* – Otfrid von Weissenburg – *Evangelienbuch* – alliterative poetry – Old English – terms of address

The long ninth century saw many Latin religious works being translated and/or adapted into Germanic languages, including several versions of the Gospels. Among them are the Old Saxon *Heliand* (c. 830) and Otfrid von Weissenburg's Old High German *Evangelienbuch* (c. 870). The two texts have much in common. They are near contemporaries, they were both produced in the East Frankish part of the Carolingian Empire and they both relate the life of Christ, as told in the Gospels. However, there are also important differences between the two, both in terms of style and sources.

Heliand is based on a Latin harmony of the Gospels derived from Tatian's *Diatessaron* (c. 170), supplemented by gospel commentaries.[1] It is composed in alliterative verse very similar to Old English poetry, even though Old Saxon verse has its own specificities, most obviously a tendency to use many more unaccented syllables.[2]

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[1] The exact chain of transmission is difficult to establish. Several Latin versions of the *Diatessaron* (probably originally written in Syriac) circulated in the West, including one preserved in the extant Codex Fuldensis. However, that version has been corrected to reflect Vulgate readings, whereas it seems much of the Western *Diatessaron* tradition (including *Heliand*) derives from another (lost) version, uninfluenced by Vulgate readings (William L. Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship* (Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1994), especially 333). The author of the *Heliand* may also have had access to the Old High German translation of the text (Dennis H. Green, 'Three Aspects of the Old Saxon Biblical Epic, the Heliand', in *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Tenth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. Dennis Howard Green and Frank Siegmund (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 249). The gospel commentaries used include the works of Bede, Alcuin and Hrabanus Maurus (Marion Gibbs and Sidney M. Johnson, eds., *Medieval German Literature: A Companion* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 40).

[2] It is usually accepted that Old English biblical poetry had a strong influence on the *Heliand* (Dennis H. Green, 'Three Aspects', 248), but Old Saxon poetry probably also had an influence on Old English literature (Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press,

Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch* is not based on Tatian, even though it is likely that Otfrid knew of the text.[3] It weaves together different sources (the Gospels themselves but also commentaries on the Gospels, to a much greater extent than in *Heliand*) to produce a coherent narrative supplemented by interpretive passages.[4] Stylistically, the poem is a radical innovation: Otfrid invents a new verse form, probably based on Latin hymns, characterized by the use of rhyme between the caesura and the end of the long line.[5]

The Gospels make extensive use of direct speech and so do *Heliand* and the *Evangelienbuch*. This makes it possible to conduct a systematic examination of a large number of passages with the same textual function and thereby to achieve a fine-grained comparative analysis of the styles of the two poems. The aim of this paper is both to determine where the poems fit in a broader West-Germanic vernacular tradition (especially with respect to Old

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2009), 65-103), and the two languages were close enough to be mutually intelligible, thus facilitating sustained interactions (A. N. Doane, *The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon Genesis B and the Old Saxon Vatican Genesis* (Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 52; see also Ciaran Arthur's contribution to this issue. For the specificities of Old Saxon verse, see Seiichi Suzuki, *The Metre of Old Saxon Poetry: The Remaking of Alliterative Tradition* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004).

[3] Walter Haug, *Vernacular Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: The German Tradition, 800-1300, in its European Context*, trans. Joanna M. Catling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 30.

[4] Christopher Young and Thomas Gloning, 'Gospel harmony: Otfrid von Weissenburg's *Evangelienbuch*', in *A History of the German Language Through Texts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

[5] The hymns attributed to Saint Ambrose are usually considered a likely source, but Otfrid's verse should probably be seen as a new system inspired by those hymns rather than as the direct transposition of a Latin model into Old High German (Katerina Somers Wicka, *From Phonology to Syntax: Pronominal cliticization in Otfrid's Evangelienbuch*, Linguistische Arbeiten 530 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009), 72-73). The use of rhyme in Latin hymns is itself a fairly recent innovation at the time of Otfrid. Classical Latin poetry made no use of it (Christine Mohrmann, *Études sur le latin des Chrétiens : Latin chrétien et médieval* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1961), p. 121).

English poetry) and whether is it legitimate to think that a shared stylistic tradition encompassing Old English poetry, *Heliand* and Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch* did exist.[6]

It is well-known that *Heliand* shares many similarities with Old English poetry, but how far do they extend as regards direct speech? Does *Heliand* follow the same paradigm, give or take a few adjustments, or do the differences go deeper? Conversely, we know that Otfrid did not use a traditional style, but was he entirely immune from it or is there evidence that he was a participant in a broader vernacular tradition?

To make quantitative comparisons easier, I have selected an identical number of speeches for each language: all 245 speeches from *Heliand*, the first 245 speeches in the *Evangelienbuch* and all speeches in five Old English poems (*Genesis A*, *Andreas*, *Beowulf*, *Elene* and *Juliana*), totalling 245 speeches.[7] Those poems were chosen to strike a balance between relevance (with several religious texts comparable with *Heliand* and the *Evangelienbuch* in terms of contents) and representativeness (with texts from all four major Old English poetic codices).

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[6] We have a comprehensive (albeit dated) description of direct speech in Old English, Old Norse, Old Saxon and Old High German poetry in Andreas Heusler, 'Der Dialog in der altgermanischen erzählenden Dichtung', Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur 46 (1902), 189-284. Direct speech in Old English poetry is studied in detail in Élise Louviot, *Direct Speech in Beowulf and Other Old English Narrative Poems* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016). For Old High German, see also Monika Schönherr, 'Redewiedergabe im althochdeutschen Diskurs: Eine textlinguistische Studie', *Germanica Wratislaviensia* 135 (2012), 139-153 and John L. Flood, 'Answering back in Old High German', *Magister et amicus. Festschrift für Kurt Gärtner zum 65 Geburtstag*, ed. V. Bok & F. Shaw (Vienna: Edition Prasens, 2003), 289-314.

[7] This paper is based on these editions: the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records; Otto Behaghel & Burkhard Taeger, eds. *Heliand und Genesis* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1984); Oskar Erdmann & Ludwig Wolff, *Otfrids Evangelienbuch* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1973). All translations are my own.

The presence of the *inquit*

The initial *inquit*

For Andreas Heusler, early Medieval Germanic narrative poems treated direct speech as a discrete entity which had to be clearly marked off, in particular through the use of an initial *inquit*, i.e. an explicit introduction of the type 'then, so-and-so spoke'. For him, all West-Germanic alliterative poetry conforms to that model (including *Heliand*) whereas rhymed poetry constitutes a major break from tradition, with more varied and more fluid techniques adapted from Latin poetry.[8]

Close study of the selected texts largely confirms that diagnosis. The five Old English poems, and Old English poetry more generally, always use an initial *inquit*.[9] *Heliand* usually does so as well, though there are some exceptions (14 out of 245 speeches or 6%). Exceptions in the *Evangelienbuch*, however, are more numerous (71/245 or 29%), and the proportion increases after book I: only 11% in book I (5/44), but 33% afterwards.[10] This suggests that Otfrid may have started his work with a certain model in mind, before moving away from it.

The earlier model could be traditional Germanic alliterative poetry, but it could also be the Gospels themselves. In the Vulgate, short initial *inquits* are used fairly systematically and it so happens that some of the first speeches without an initial *inquit* in Otfrid have no direct equivalent in the Vulgate (*Evangelienbuch*, I, 11:7-18, I, 15: 45-50 and I, 16:19-20,

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[8] Andreas Heusler, 'Der Dialog', 245-251.

[9] None of the few exceptions noted by Heusler (pp. 245-246) is truly convincing: two merely show an imperfect match between the content of the speech as described in the *inquit* and in the actual speech (*Beowulf* 2813 and 3111-3115), one is located far before the speech, but present (*Daniel* 598-607), and two correspond to passages not recognized as speech beginnings nowadays (*Beowulf* 1067-1069 and *The Battle of Finnsburh* 26).

[10] 66/201 speeches: 31% in book II, 36% in book III and 27.5% in the section of book IV included in this study.

corresponding to episodes without any direct speech in Luke 2).[11] In both *Heliand* and the *Evangelienbuch*, the lack of an initial *inquit* is compensated through the presence of a short interpolated *inquit* (e.g. 'quað he', 'he said') in almost all cases.[12]

The interpolated *inquit*

Interpolated *inquits* are not found in Old English poetry,[13] but are relatively common in both *Heliand* (151/245 or 62%) and the *Evangelienbuch* (117/245 or 48%).

In *Heliand*, the *inquit* is invariably of the type <finite form of *queðan* + subject personal pronoun> and it is typically located at the end of the first half-line of the speech. There are very few genuine exceptions,[14] but there is a slight variant: in 12 instances, the *inquit* is located in the middle of the first half-line, after a string of unstressed words, as in the following examples:

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[11] The very first speech without an initial *inquit* (I, 5:65-66), however, has a direct equivalent in Luke 1:38, where the *inquit* is *dixit autem Maria*. The text used for the Vulgate is that of the *Clementine Vulgate Project* (2005), http://vulsearch.sourceforge.net/index.html (last accessed 13 May 2019).

[12] In *Heliand*, the only exception is 165b-170a, where the narrative slips directly from the angel's decision to punish Zachary to words pronounced by the angel. In Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*, there is one instance of a speech which seems to use a final *inquit* instead (see further below, section 2.3) and another where a sentence expressing the speakers' wonder directly segues into a speech (III, 18, 55-56).

[13] The only two exceptions in the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records are a translation from the Old Saxon (*Genesis B* 278a) and a text transcribed after the medieval period (*The Battle of Finnsburh* 24a), see Louviot, *Direct Speech in Beowulf*, 44.

[14] In 5590b-5602, an interpolated *inquit* appears in the middle of the speech (5598a), when the speaker starts addressing another character. In 5483b-5486, it appears in the second sentence, after a kind of oath (corresponding to Matthew 27:25, 'His blood is on us and on our children!'). In 3202b-3207, the interpolated *inquit* is delayed until the end of the second half-line of the speech, possibly for metrical reasons, since the first naturally stressed word of the sentence (e.g. a noun or lexical adjective) occurs in the second half-line.

ʽni bium ic’, **quað he**, ʽthat barn godes (...)’ (*Heliand* 915b)

*‘I am not’, **he said**, ‘God’s child (...)’*

ʽnis that’, **quað he**, ʽmannes reht (...)’ (*Heliand* 3013b)

*‘It is not’, **he said**, ‘the right of [any] man (...)’*[15]

The effect of that variant is twofold. On the one hand, the *inquit* is better integrated into the verse: this would be the *inquit*’s ‘natural’ position according to the metrical laws governing Old Saxon verse.[16] On the other hand, the string of unstressed words marking the beginning of a new sentence is significantly extended, and thus more noticeable.[17]

A striking feature of the interpolated *inquit* in *Heliand* is its superfluity. While the interpolated *inquit* may compensate for the lack of an initial one (13 instances, see above), in most cases (138/151 or 91%), it is used in addition to it. In some, the initial *inquit* is so long that the interpolated one is helpful in clarifying where the speech begins:

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[15] See also 397b, 499b, 915b, 997b, 1004b, 1845b, 2325b, 2581b, 3013b, 3038b, 4968b and 5934b.

[16] Old English and Old Saxon verse obey a metrical law commonly known as Kuhn’s Law, which specifies that so-called ‘sentence particles’ (i.e. unstressed words which, unlike determinative adjectives, for instance, are not attached to a specific word or phrase) can only be located in the first unstressed portion of the clause. *Inquits* such as ‘quað he’ are made of such sentence particles and should therefore never be found at the end of a half-line (as they usually are), if they were considered part of the meter. Hans Kuhn, ‘Zur Wortstellung und -betonung im Altgermanischen’, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 57, 1933: 1-109; Momma Haruko, *The Composition of Old English Poetry,* Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 20, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1997, especially p. 55-75.

[17] Kendall shows that one consequence of Kuhn’s Laws is that some half-lines are specifically marked as sentence-initial (by the presence of sentence particles) and can therefore play a structural role insofar as they make it easier for the audience to notice the beginning of a new sentence: see Calvin B. Kendall, *The Metrical Grammar of Beowulf*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 29.

Thô **sprak** thar ên [gihêrod] man

[oƀar uuarf] uuero, the uuas thes uuerodes thô

an [theru burg innan] biscop thero liudio

– Kaiphas uuas he hêten; habdun ina gicoranen te thiu

[an theru gêrtalu] Iudeo liudi,

that he thes godes hûses gômien [scoldi],

[uuardon] thes uuîhes -: ʽmi thunkid uunder mikil', **quað he**,

ʽmâri thioda, - gi kunnun manages giskêđ – (*Heliand* 4144b-4151)

Then there ***spoke*** *a noble man over the crowd of man; he was the bishop of that multitude then, of the people in the fort (he was called Caiaphas; the Jewish people had chosen him that year so that he should take care of the house of God, guard the sacred place): 'I think it is a great wonder',* ***he said****, 'illustrious people, you know many things.*

However, only 26 of the 138 relevant initial *inquits* (19%) are longer than the standard two lines, while most are short and efficient, so that no clarification is necessary:

Thuo **sprâcun** im sân angegin

iungron sîna: ʽte huî [bist] thu sô gern tharod', **quaðun sia**,

ʽfro mîn, te faranne? (*Heliand* 3986b-3988a)

Then his disciples at once ***spoke*** *back to him: 'Why are you so eager,* ***they said****, 'my lord, to go there?'*

Thuo **sprak** im eft is hêrro angegin:

ʽhuat, thu thik biuuânis', [**quathie**, ʽuuissaro] treuuono. (*Heliand* 4688b-4689)

Then his lord ***spoke*** *back to him again: 'You believe', he* ***said****, 'you have unwavering loyalty.'*

The use of interpolated *inquits* in *Heliand* is thus clearly not intended to make the beginning of direct speech less conspicuous. On the contrary, it marks speech openings more strongly. In that sense, *Heliand* may use a device not found in Old English poetry, but it still strives for a similar effect.

Interpolated *inquits* are less frequent in Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch* (48%) than in *Heliand* (62%), but they are much more likely to play a functional role. Once again, there is a progression: only 10 interpolated *inquits* in book I (23% of all speeches), but 48%, 58% and 47.5% respectively in subsequent books, keeping in mind that book III, which shows the highest proportion, was composed last and most freely, by Otfrid's own account.[18] The proportion of interpolated *inquits* used without an initial *inquit* also gradually increases: 50% in book I, against 65, 58 and 58% in subsequent books (59% overall).

As in *Heliand*, however, instances where two *inquits* are used occur both when the initial *inquit* is potentially insufficient and when it seems perfectly functional on its own:

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[18] In his prefatory epistle to Liutbert (verse 29-46), Otfrid explains that book III was composed last (*hoc enim novissime edidi*, 'this one I produced last', verse 35) and contrasts the way in which it was composed with the rest of the poem. Whereas the other books were written in the correct order (*ordinatim*, 31), always 'according to the way one or another of the evangelists had written' (*ut modo quid iste quidve alius caeterique scriberent*), in the third one, Otfrid omitted much material (*multa et parabularum Christi et miraculorum eiusque doctrinae… praetermisi*, 'I omitted both many parables and many miracles of Christ as well as much of his teachings', 33-36) and no longer followed any particular order (*non jam ordinatim*), working instead from memory (*qualiter meae parvae occurrerunt memoriae* 'in the way they presented themselves to my poor memory', 37). This idea is repeated in the preface to book III (1, 7-8): *Ni scríbu ih nu in alawár \ so sih ther órdo dregit thár, / súntar so thie dáti \ mir quément in githáhti* ('In truth, now I do not write according to chronological order, but rather according to how the events come to my thoughts').

Gab druhtin ántwurti \ mit súazlicheru mílti,

wólta thes bigínnan, \ thaz muat zi wége bringan.

Er huab in úf tho thaz múat, \ so er uns émmizigen dúat,

zi thes gótnisses gúati; \ thaz was in úngimuati.

'Ih ságen', **quad**, 'iu in war mín: \ er ímo so ịst thaz wésan min (*Evangelienbuch* III, 18: 57-61)

***The lord answered** with sweet kindness, he wanted to begin to bring their heart to the right way. He elevated the heart then, as he still does for us, towards the virtue of holiness; it was in a bad disposition. 'I am telling you', **he said**, 'in truth: my being is before him'*

si gab ántwurti so zám:

'níaman', **quad si**, 'drúhtin; \ theist al mit thínen mahtin!' (*Evangelienbuch* III, 17: 55b-56)

***she answered him** properly thus: 'no one', **she said**, 'my lord; it is entirely in your power')*

The interpolated *inquit* is typically located in the middle of the first half-line of the speech,[19] and its form is the same as in *Heliand* (finite form of *quedan* + subject personal pronoun), though it can vary more in the *Evangelienbuch*. Otfrid omits the pronoun in about 30% of all instances.[20] He also occasionally adds other elements. At the end of book I, *quad er zi ín* (I, 27,

[19] I, 11, 7-18 contains an interpolated *inquit* in the middle of the speech (middle of 11a). III, 8, 33-34 and III, 23-40 also contain a second interpolated *inquit* a few lines after a first one located in the usual place. Another type of exception concerns the longer interpolated *inquit*s discussed below, which start at the usual place but can extend further.

[20] 35/117 interpolated *inquits* located in the usual place; 36/119 with the additional interpolated *inquits* in book III.

19a; see also IV, 9, 9a) has a slightly augmented form of the verb *quedan*.[21] In book II, *quad er innan thés* (II, 14, 15a) adds an adverbial phrase meaning 'meanwhile', 'at that point'. However, most additions occur in books III and IV, and those tend to be more significant.[22] The longest occurs near the end of book III, completing the whole line: *quad er sár \ tho zen júngoron thár* (III, 24, 103, 'he then said at once to the disciples there'). It seems, therefore, that the use of the interpolated *inquit* in the *Evangelienbuch* shows continuity with *Heliand*, but that, once again, Otfrid gradually frees himself from the constraints of that paradigm.

Final *inquit*

Final *inquits*, i.e. short segments of text located after the speech and whose function is to identify who is speaking, are very common in modern written English prose.[23] Such is not the case, however, in the texts studied here. The only possible instance is found in Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*:

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[21] Both *zi* and *ín* can be used as adverbial particles to modify the meaning of a verb. *Inquedan* is attested as meaning 'to answer', comparable with Old English *oncwæðan*). *Zuoquedan* is attested as a synonym of 'say' (and *zuo* and *zi* can both be equivalents of Present-Day High German *zu*), but I have not found any other instance of *ziquedan*.

[22] 12 instances: *quad ér tho ubarlút* (III, 6, 31a), 'he then said (very) loudly'; *quad er tho zi ín* (III, 10, 23a), 'he answered then'; *quad er tho* (III, 10, 33a), 'he said then'; *quad tho Pétrus* (III, 14, 31a), 'Peter said then'; *quad er tho* (III, 14, 47a), 'he said then'; *quadun se sár* (III, 24, 62a), 'they said at once'; *quad thiu suéster* (III, 24, 83a), 'the sister said'; *quad er sár \ tho zen júngoron thár* (III, 24, 103a-103b); 'he then said at once to the disciples there'; *quad ther méistar* (IV, 2, 31a), 'the master said'; *quad er zi ín* (IV, 9, 9a), 'he answered'; *quad er ubarlút* (IV, 12, 5a), 'he said (very) loudly'; *quad er sár* (IV, 12, 25a), 'he said at once'. *quad er tho* is the only form short enough to still fit in the middle of the half-line instead of completing it.

[23] Jessie Sams finds that, in her corpus of newspapers and fiction, the final position is used in more than 80% of all instances: 'Genre-controlled constructions in written language quotatives', in *Formulaic Language: Distribution and historical change*, ed. Roberta Corrigan et al., Typological Studies in Language 82 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2009), 147-170.

‘Quím!’ quad druhtin zi imo in wár (*Evangelienbuch* III, 8: 35a)

‘Come!’ said the lord to him in truth.

However, the represented speech is so short that the *inquit* is in fact located exactly where one would expect an interpolated *inquit*. The form, too, is not entirely atypical for an interpolated *inquit*, especially one located in book III. In other words, if we interpret this as an interpolated *inquit* (albeit in a speech so short it ends right there), then there are analogues elsewhere in the *Evangelienbuch*; if we interpret it as a final *inquit*, then there are none.

Overwhelmingly, in *Heliand* and in the *Evangelienbuch* as in Old English poetry, lines containing a verb of speech and situated just after a speech, simply refer to the next speech. Lines referring back to the preceding speech are few, they always occur in addition to an initial and/or interpolated *inquit* and their role typically goes beyond signalling direct speech, either highlighting the effects produced by the speech or clarifying the organization of the poem, in particular after a very long speech.[24] *Heliand* shares with Old English poetry the occasional use in that position of the phrases ‘so spoke X’ and ‘after/according to those words’, which have no equivalent in the *Evangelienbuch*. Given how infrequent such phrases are in *Heliand* and in Old English, it is difficult to assess whether their absence in the *Evangelienbuch* is indicative of a significant stylistic departure.[25] Conversely, it would be misguided to interpret the similarities observed between the *Evangelienbuch* and the other poems as a clear sign of their

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[24] *Heliand* 330a, 949a, 1020, 1325b, 2030a, 2067a, 2718a and 4808a; *Evangelienbuch* I, 23:57; I, 24: 13-14; II, 7: 15; II, 7:75; III, 4: 29; III, 24:37 and IV, 6:27 IV, 7:89; IV, 9:11and IV, 13:39.

[25] Only 5 occurrences of *aftar them uuordun* ‘after those words’ in *Heliand* (330a, 2030a, 2067a, 2718a and 4808a), none of them located immediately after the speech and 1 instance of *sô sprac X* ‘so spoke X’ (949a). Instances are only slightly more numerous in Old English; see Élise Louviot, ‘Transitions from Direct Speech to Narration in Old English Poetry’, *Neophilologus* 97:2 (2013), 383-393.

belonging to a shared tradition: the lack of a final *inquit* in all the texts examined is consistent with what one would expect from a corpus marked by orality, since reliance on final marking for the identification of the speaker would potentially be confusing in oral performance.[26]

Length of the initial *inquit*

In all three corpora, the most typical length is either 1 or 2 full lines of poetry.

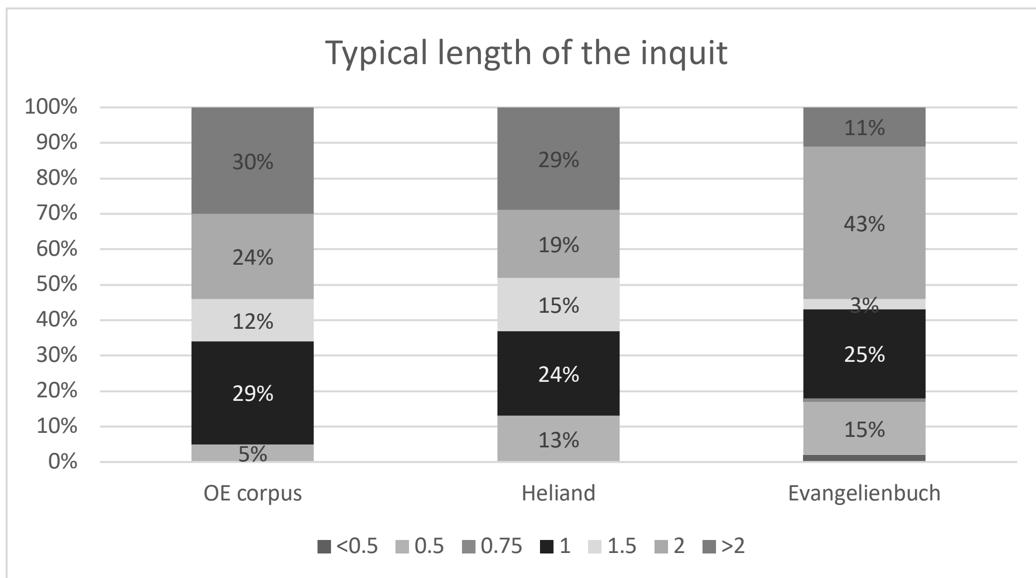

Figure 1: Typical length of the *inquit*

	<0,5	0,5	> 0,5 but <1	**1**	1.5	**2**	>2	Total

[26] Initial *inquits* are also the norm in spoken English today: Michael McCarthy notes that while the verb 'say' can be used in all three positions, for other verbs the initial position is the only attested one in his data; *Spoken Language and Applied Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 171. It should be noted that by 'marked by orality' I do not mean to suggest that the poems considered were composed orally. Rather, I assume that their style was influenced by oral traditions (whether Germanic secular poetry or Latin hymns) and that they could be read aloud.

Old English corpus	0 / 0%	12 / 5%	0 / 0%	**70/ 29%**	28 / 12%	**59 / 24%**	73 / 30%	242
Heliand	0 / 0%	29 / 13%	0 / 0%	**55 / 24%**	35 / 15%	**45 / 19%**	67 / 29%	231
Evangelienbuch	3 / 2%	27 / 15%	2 / 1%	**43 / 25%**	5 / 3%	**75 / 43%**	20 / 11%	175

Table 1: Typical length of the *inquit* (raw figures and percentage)

However, some differences can be noted. Old English shows a stronger aversion to very short *inquits* than *Heliand* and the *Evangelienbuch*. The *Evangelienbuch* is the only text where an *inquit* may take up less than the whole half-line (‘<0.5’) or more than one half-line but less than a full line (‘0.75’). It is also the only text with such a strong preference for even figures (valid units are the half-line, the line and one or two couplet(s), but other options are unusual) and the least likely to opt for a long *inquit*: *inquits* longer than two lines are relatively common in Old English poetry and *Heliand*, but much less so in the *Evangelienbuch*. Longer *inquits* are slightly more common in the first book of the *Evangelienbuch*, but there is no consistent trend.[27]

Form of the initial *inquit*

Discourse markers

Discourse markers are short, highly frequent words or phrases, typically found in initial position, which are not integrated into the syntax of the sentence and have very little semantic content, but which play an essential role in structuring discourse and/or in signalling the

[27] The average length is 2 lines in book I, 1.4 in book II, 1.8 in book III and 1.9 in the beginning of book IV, with mean lengths of 2, 1, 2 and 2 respectively.

speaker's attitude (typical examples include 'well' or 'you know' in Present-Day English).[28] The frequent use of a discourse marker at the beginning of the *inquit* in Old English poetry and *Heliand* contributes to the impression of a heavy boundary between the beginning of the speech event and the rest of the narrative. The most common discourse marker is *tha*/*thô* ('then'), which is also the discourse marker most commonly used in narrative in both languages.[29] *Tha*/*thô* is used in 58% of initial *inquits* in the Old English corpus (with important internal disparities, however)[30] and 53% of them in *Heliand*. In *Heliand*, the marker typically occurs in initial position (72% of all instances), whereas a near-initial position (usually the second word of the sentence) is more typical in the Old English poems (only 38% in initial position).

The *Evangelienbuch* has comparatively fewer instances of *tho* (60 out of 174 *inquits*, or 34%) and they are less likely to occur in initial position than in *Heliand* (22 instances out of 60 or 37%). Furthermore, they can occur significantly further in the line than in Old English: they can occur at the caesura (I, 4:57a; II, 14:35a; III, 2:29a; III, 20:174a, III, 23:27a) and even beyond it (II, 14:79; III, 20:130; III, 24:80), with the consequence that *tho* does not act so much

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[28] See Élise Louviot, 'Pragmatic uses of *nu* in Old Saxon and Old English', in *New Trends in Grammaticalization and Language Change*, ed. Sylvie Hancil, Tine Breban and José Vicente Lozano (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2018), 259-290, p. 260.

[29] See Anne Betten, 'Sentence Connection as an Expression of Medieval Principles of Representation', in *Internal and External Factors in Syntactic Change*, ed. Marinel Gerritsen and Dieter Stein (Berlin & New York: Mouton De Gruyter, 1992), 157-174.

[30] The frequencies range from 22% in *Beowulf* (10/45), 30% in *Elene* (12/40), and 59% in *Juliana* (17/29) to 73% in *Andreas* (49/67) and 85% in *Genesis A* (52/61). The differences in frequency are heavily linked to the formulas favoured in each poem: thus *Beowulf*'s dominant formula, based on the verb *maþelian*, does not include a discourse marker, whereas formulas based on the verbs *andswarian* or *andsware agefan*, which are dominant in *Andreas* and *Genesis A*, typically include *þa*.

as a boundary and should probably be regarded as a temporal marker in some of those cases, since discourse markers are less likely to be found in the middle of a clause.

The choice of the verb

The most frequent verbs are almost the same in all three languages, with a heavy dominance of *sprec(h)an* and *cweðan/quethan/quedan*.

Old English corpus	*Heliand*	*Evangelienbuch*
cweðan & prefixed forms 22% (71/316) *without prefixed forms* *10% (32) + 12% (39)*	*sprecan* & prefixed forms **35%** (114/325) *without prefixed forms* ***34%*** *(110) + 1% (4)*	*sprechan* & prefixed forms **29%** (68/231) *without prefixed forms* ***27%*** *(63) + 2% (5)*
maðelian 11% (36/316)	*quethan* 15% (50/325)	*quedan* 11% (26/231)
(ge)sprecan 9% (28/316)	*seggian* 8% (27/325)	*antwurti geban* 10% (24/231)
andswarian 9% (29/316)	*hetan* & prefixed forms 8% (26/325)	*zellan* & prefixed forms 10% (23/231)
andsware agefan 6% (20/316)	*grotean* 6% (19/325)	*fragen* 4% (10/231)

Table 2: Verbs most commonly used

The Old English corpus is less obviously dominated by one verb, which is due in part to its composite nature, as individual poems often favour one or two verbs, but not necessarily the

same ones. However, it is in the *Evangelienbuch* that the greatest diversity is found, with many verbs of speech being used only once.[31] Once again, there is a progression in the course of the poem: *sprechan* is extremely dominant at the beginning of book I (15/25 verbs of speech or 60%), but much less so afterwards (48/206 or 23%).[32] Strikingly, however, whereas Anglo-Saxon poets have no qualms about repeating virtually the same *inquit* several times in a row, Otfrid varies word order and vocabulary so that the form of the *inquit* is always different from one instance to the next, even at the beginning of the poem.[33]

Formulas

Both Old English poetry and *Heliand* use conventional *inquits*, but they are very different in nature. In Old English poetry, most common verbs of speech have an associated formula. In many cases, the predicate occupies the two stressed positions in the half-line and the subject may be added either as an unstressed element within it or as a stressed noun phrase in a separate half-line:

- *(ond / þa) (he / gen / þus) worde/-um cwæð*, '(and/then) (he/again/thus) said with a speech', 16 occurrences;
- *ond / he þæt word ge-/acwæð*, '(and/ he) made this speech', 19;
- *him (þa)/ þa him andswarode* or *him (þa) (ædre) <SUBJECT> andswarode*, 'then (in turn) he/<SUBJECT> answered them/him', 23;
- *ædre him / þa him / him þa <SUBJECT> agef andsware*, *idem*, 19).

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[31] 40 instances, against 15 in the five Old English poems and 12 in *Heliand*, some of which being variants of more common phrases such as *anduuordi garo habban* instead of *word garo habban*.

[32] 22/54 in book I (41%), 12/43 in book II (28%), 21/100 in book III (21%) and 8/34 in book IV (24%).

[33] E.g. *álfol* ***sprah*** *er wórto* (I, 25:4a, 'he spoke fully with words') is followed by *Zi ímo* ***sprah*** *tho líndo* (I, 25:10a, 'to him spoke then softly').

> For the verb *maðelian* (‘to speak formally’, ‘to speak in public’), the subject, typically a proper noun, is an intrinsic part of the formula as it occupies one of the stressed positions in the half line *(<NAME> maþelode*, 36 occurrences, most of them in *Beowulf*). For *sprecan*, a similar half-formula occurs, but it is looser since the subject can take more varied forms (*þa <SUBJECT> spræc*, 4 occurrences), and the phrase *þa spræc* or *spræc þa* (‘then spoke’) is also used a few times at the beginning of a line, but it can no longer be called a formula in the strongest sense, since it occupies no stressed position in the verse and is therefore of limited use in helping the poet compose metrically satisfactory half-lines.[34]

In *Heliand*, this type of unstressed recurring phrase is the norm. The phrase *thô sprac* (‘then spoke’, typically followed by a subject noun phrase, either directly or after a pronominal indirect object and/or the adverb *eft*) occurs no less than 50 times to introduce a speech (out of 231 *inquits* or a proportion of 22%). Some variants occur (e.g. with *endi* ‘and’, *than* ‘then’ or *thar* ‘there’ instead of *thô*) but they are much less common. When the phrase is used, *sprecan* is either the first of several verbs of speech or the only one. Even outside that phrase, the verb *sprecan* is rarely used after another verb of speech (11/110 or 10%). Conversely, the verb *quethan* is very rarely followed by another verb of speech (4/50 or 8%). It is either used on its own (16/50 or 32%) or, more often, after at least one other verb of speech (30/50 or 60%). In almost all instances (48/50 or 96%), it is followed by a noun clause introduced by *that*, i.e. some indirect or narrated speech which sums up the contents of the direct speech.

Taken together, the phrases *thô sprac* and *quað that* represent 30% of all verbs of speech used to introduce direct speech in *Heliand* (98 out of 325). By contrast, ‘true’ formulas of the

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[34] Milman Parry defines the traditional type of formula such as those found in Homer as ‘a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea’ and explains that ‘[T]he definition thus implies the metrical usefulness of the formula’: see ‘Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. I. Homer and Homeric Style’, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 41 (1930), 73-147, at 80.

type encountered in Old English are rare, with only a handful of occurrences: *thô habda eft is uuord garu* ('then again he had his speech ready', 6 occurrences) and <NAME> *thô gimahalda* ('X spoke formally', 3). While some other verbs occur multiple times, they follow no discernible pattern.

As for the *Evangelienbuch*, it is unlikely to make great use of alliterative formulas, given its form, but one might expect reflexes of the alliterative tradition to occur occasionally or new types of formulas to appear. There is some evidence of both, but it is limited.

As shown above, the verb *sprechan* and the linking word *tho* are both quite common in the *Evangelienbuch*, so it is not surprising that they should occur together. The most common word order is the same as in *Heliand* (*tho sprah*), even though the *Evangelienbuch* shows more variety, and the most traditional-looking phrases occur at the very beginning of the poem. The half-lines *Thó sprah ther bíscof* ('then the bishop spoke', I, 4:47a) and *Thó sprah sancta Mária* ('then saint Mary spoke', I, 7:1a), which match the dominant pattern in *Heliand*, are thus found among the very first *inquits* of the poem and have no equivalent later on. Further half-lines combining *tho* and *sprechan* can be found, but only a few appear in that order and none is followed by a subject noun phrase completing the half-line.

Otfrid does not shun repetition entirely. *Inquits* based on the phrase *ántwurti geban* ('give an answer'*)*, in particular, often echo each other. Two thirds of the instances of the phrase in our corpus use the word *ántwurti* for the rhyme, with the result that a small group of words with the appropriate rhyme tend to be repeated in that context (*giwúrti* and *mílti* in particular). The similarities even go beyond the rhyme itself as can be seen from this list:

gab si ịmo ántwurti \ **mit súazera giwurti** (I, 5:34)

She gave him an answer ***with sweet joy***

bi thiu gáb er **mit giwúrti** \ **suazaz** ántwurti (I, 27:32)

*About this he gave **with joy** a **sweet** answer*

Gáb er **mit giwurti** \ in ávur ántwurti (I, 27:39)

*He gave an answer back **with joy***

Tho gab er imo ántwurti, \ thoh wírdig er es ni **wúrti** (II, 4:91)

*Then he gave him an answer, though he was not **worthy** of it*

Gab er mo ántwurti \ **mit súazeru giwúrti** (II, 7:57)

*He gave him an answer **with sweet joy***

Slíumo tho thie líuti \ gabun ántwurti (II, 11:35)

Soon then the people gave an answer

Gab er mo ántwurti \ **mit míhileru mílti** (II, 12:27)

*He gave him an answer **with great kindness***

Gáb iru **mit mílti** \ tho druhtin ántwurti (II, 14-79)

*The lord gave her then an answer **with kindness***

Gab er mo ántwurti \ **mit míhileru mílti** (III, 2:9)

*He gave him an answer **with great kindness***

Gab ér tho ántwurti \ thaz Pétrum thuhta hérti (III, 13:19)

He then gave an answer which seemed harsh to Peter

Sie gabun ántwurti \ mit grozeru ún**giwurti** (III, 18:25)

They gave an answer with great reluctance

Er gáb in thes **mit thúlti** \ **suazaz** ántwurti (III, 18:37)

*He gave thus a **sweet** answer **with patience***

Gab druhtin ántwurti \ **mit súazlicheru mílti** (III, 18:57)

*The lord gave an answer **with sweet kindness***

Er gab tho ántwurti \ then líutin **mit giwúrti** (III, 20:109)

*He then gave an answer to the people **with joy***

Ér gab tho **mit thúlti** \ then liutin ántwurti (III, 22:35)

*He then gave an answer to the people **with patience***

Gab er mo ántwurti \ **mit** mámmenteru **mílti** (IV, 11:25)

*He gave him an answer **with** gentle **kindness***

However, this is not a genuine formula: there is considerable freedom in how Otfrid associates the small group of recurring words, at least one instance where he uses none of them (III, 13:19) and multiple instances where *ántwurti* occupies another position in the line (I, 27:26; I, 27:47; II, 14:50; III, 16:31; III, 17:55b; III, 20:7; III, 20:174; IV, 4:63a). Aside from this case, there is little to no evidence that Otfrid tries to devise memorable or reusable *inquits* based on the same rhyming pattern.

It seems then that there are three very different logics at work in the texts examined here. The Old English corpus displays oral-traditional formulaicity: poets have access to a range of traditional phrases and/or patterns which can be combined with other elements to facilitate composition.[35] The existence of a multiplicity of patterns is explained not just by the composite nature of the corpus examined, but by the need to be able to meet different metrical and/or alliterative demands.

Heliand has very few formulas of that type, but it has two highly recurring phrases with very specific functions and a complementary distribution: *thô sprac* at the beginning of a speech event and *quað that* to introduce a short indirect or narrated speech which itself introduces direct speech. If they can be regarded as formulas, it is not in the oral-traditional sense but in a

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[35] In addition to Milman Parry's article quoted above (footnote 34), see especially Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 24 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960) and John Miles Foley, *How to Read an Oral Poem* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

linguistic one. Indeed, they match several of the criteria identified by Alison Wray for formulaicity, in particular criteria D (‘the word string as a whole performs a function in communication or discourse [in addition to] conveying the meaning of the words themselves’), E (‘this precise formulation is the one most commonly used by this speaker/writer when conveying this idea’), H (‘there is greater than chance-level probability that the speaker/writer will have encountered this precise formulation before in communication from other people’) and to some extent C (‘this word string is associated with a specific situation and/or register’).[36] Clearly, there is a degree of conventionalization here which means the poet is not free to use just any lexically-appropriate verb or to use them in any syntactically-appropriate way.

The *Evangelienbuch*, conversely, is characterized by a great degree of freedom and stylistic experimentation. The poet clearly enjoys devising varied forms, even when he reuses the same words. What is perhaps most interesting is the presence of echoes of the Old Saxon ‘formula’ for marking the beginning of a speech event at the very beginning of the poem, which suggests some familiarity with the style used in *Heliand*.

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[36] Alison Wray, *Formulaic Language: Pushing the Boundaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 116-121. Regarding criterion H, Old English evidence and the fact that the *Saxon Genesis* has three instances of *thuo sprak* followed by a subject noun phrase (and some grammatical words), suggest that the phrase existed outside *Heliand*. Other criteria include ‘By my judgment there is something grammatically unusual about this word string’ (A) or ‘By my judgement, part or all of the word string lacks semantic transparency’ (B), which are clearly not met here. This does not disqualify the phrase from being a formula, however: the diagnostic tool is meant to clarify why a certain phrase is intuitively perceived as a formula and to compare different kinds of formulas, but matching more criteria does not necessarily make a phrase more formulaic (indeed, some criteria are mutually exclusive).

Terms of address

Terms of address are another distinctive stylistic feature of direct speech. The Old English poetic corpus is heterogeneous in this respect: *Genesis A* and *Beowulf* use varied terms, but show a marked preference for terms denoting status (e.g. *wigendra hleo* 'protector of warriors', *freodrihten min*, 'my lord') and, to a lesser extent, for personal names, terms denoting kinship (e.g. *mago Ebrea*, 'son of the Hebrews'), and terms of endearment (*wine min* 'my friend', *leofa*, 'dear').[37] Such terms account for more than 80% of all occurrences. By contrast, in hagiographic poetry (including *Andreas*, *Juliana* and *Elene*), such terms account for less than 50% of all occurrences, as there is much more variety, with more explicitly religious terms (e.g. *wealdend engla*, 'ruler of angels', or *lifes fruma*, 'origin of life', for God rather than *þeoden (mæra)*, '(illustrious) prince') and more terms describing psychological traits (e.g. *wis*, 'wise', or *mildheort*, 'benevolent'). Some of the innovation is directly inspired by the sources the hagiographers work with, but this is usually not the case, suggesting a shift in paradigm in the Old English poetic tradition rather than merely a greater indebtedness to Latin sources.

In all five Old English poems, terms of address are relatively numerous (221 for 245 speeches or a ratio of 0.9), and it is not uncommon for multiple terms of address to be used consecutively when addressing a powerful figure (typically God, but also a secular lord such as

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[37] The boundaries of those categories are necessarily arbitrary to some extent. I have followed the same guidelines as in *Direct Speech in Beowulf*, so as to have comparable data. When a term combines two elements (e.g. 'my dear Beowulf', with a name and a term of endearment), 0.5 point has been attributed to each category. Words such as 'dear', 'friend', 'good' or 'best' are counted as terms of endearment, whereas anything more specific (e.g. 'wise', 'beautiful', etc.) counts for the 'diverse' category. Words denoting status include straightforward titles such as 'lord', but also terms such as 'ruler' or 'protector'. On the other hand, 'saviour', 'healer' and 'counsellor' are all treated as belonging to the 'diverse' category.

Hrothgar in *Beowulf* for instance).[38] In that case, the poet uses different terms in a figure known as variation (e.g. *brego Beorhtdena* ‘leader of the splendid Danes’, *freowine folca* ‘friend of the people’, *wigendra hleo* ‘protector of warriors’, and *eodor Scyldinga* ‘prince of the Shieldings’, all used in the same speech, *Beowulf* 427a-430a).

Heliand and the *Evangelienbuch* both use significantly fewer terms of address (80 and 78 respectively, or a ratio of 0.3) and display considerably less variety, often using simpler phrases and reusing the same phrases more often. In both poems, the person most frequently addressed is Christ, typically with a term meaning ‘lord’, which explains why the ‘status’ category is even more strongly represented (52 and 54% of all terms respectively) than in *Genesis A* (38%) or *Beowulf* (34%).

In *Heliand*, typical terms of address combine one or two term(s) for status and/or a positive adjective and/or a possessive form: *frô mîn* ‘my lord’, *drohtin frô mîn* ‘lord, my lord’, *frô mîn the gôdo* ‘my good lord’, *mâri drohtin* ‘illustrious lord’, *lieƀo drohtin* ‘dear lord’, etc. The construction X *the gôdo* is particularly distinctive as it is found both in *Heliand* and the *Saxon Genesis* (and in its translation in Old English, *Genesis B*), but not elsewhere in Old English poetry. Elaborate periphrases such as those found in Old English are very rare, but it is common for the poet to use multiple terms consecutively when a character is addressing Christ.

The *Evangelienbuch*, once again, shows an evolution in Otfrid’s style. Terms of address are most frequent in the first book, and least likely to be literal translations from the Latin in

[38] See Louviot, *Direct Speech in Beowulf*, 141-157.

the first two books.[39] Additionally, the only three instances where multiple terms of address are used to honour an important addressee are all located in book I.[40]

Terms of endearment are not very common (only 8% of all occurrences), but most of them are in the first two books as well. This is significant since this is clearly a 'Germanic' stylistic feature: none of the terms of endearment has an equivalent in the corresponding passages in the Gospels, whereas the vocabulary used has equivalents both in Old English and Old Saxon.[41] In particular, *manno líobosta* 'dearest of men'(I,22:43b) has a direct equivalent in *Heliand* (*manno lioƀosto*, 821b) and in Old English poetry (*monna leofast*, *Juliana* 84a, *Genesis A* 1328b and 1749a), as well as a number of close parallels in Old English poetry (e.g.

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[39] Ratio of terms per number of speeches: 0.43 (book I), 0.31 (book II), 0.27 (book III), 0.33 (beginning of book IV) and 0.32 overall. Proportion of terms literally translated from the Latin: 21% (book I), 35% (book II), 76% (book III), 54% (beginning of book IV) and 50% overall. If one considers all translations from the Latin (even those that are amplified or modified in some way), the trend is similar: 58% (book I), 41% (book II), 90% (book III), 69% (beginning of book IV) and 68% overall.

[40] I, 5:15-32 (corresponding to Luke 1:28-33); I, 15:27-31 (Luke 2: 34-35) and I, 22:43-52. There are four other speeches later in the poem which use several terms, but they are much less elaborate and cannot be considered instances of variation. Thus, one speech merely uses *druhtin* twice (III, 13:13-18) and another has both *líobo man*, and *Bruader* 'brother' (II, 7:27-32; see also III, 10:9-12 and IV, 13: 23-28). This cannot be compared to I, 22:43-52, which uses no less than four different terms to celebrate the addressee (*manno líobosta*, *min sún guater*, *sún* and *min éinega séla* : 'dearest of men', 'my good son', 'son' and 'my own soul').

[41] The relevant terms are *manno líobosta* and *min sún guater* 'my good son' (I, 22:43b-46a), which are both part of a list of terms translating the Latin *Fili* 'son'; *gúate man* 'good man' (I, 12:17a and II, 7:16a), *líobo man* 'dear man' (II, 7:27a) and *friunt mín* 'my friend' (II, 8:45a and II, 12:37a), all without equivalent in the Gospels; *Drúhtin gúato* 'good lord' (III, 4:23a), which translates *domine* (John 5:7); *Davídes sun thes gúaten* 'son of the good David' (III, 10:10b corresponding to *domine fili David* 'lord son of David', Matthew 15:22) and *drúhtin min líobo* 'my dear lord', following another instance of the word *drúhtin* a few lines earlier (IV, 13:23a-28a), while the Latin merely has one instance of *domine* (Luke 22:33).

gumena leofost, *hyse leofesta* 'dearest of men', *Andreas* 575a, 595b and 811b). *Friunt mín*, used twice in book II, also has a close equivalent in Old English (*wine min*, which, in *Beowulf*, is followed by a name when used: *Beowulf* 457b, 530b and 1704b).[42]

When Otfrid translates a term of address from the Latin, he is typically quite scrupulous even by modern standards. Thus, *domine* is almost systematically rendered as *druhtin*; *rabbi*, which is glossed in the Vulgate as *magister* (John 1:38) is subsequently translated as *meistar*; *mulier* becomes *wib*.[43] Unlike Old English verse hagiographers, who tend to be uncomfortable with family terms used in a religious sense for strangers or disciples,[44] Otfrid also has no problem translating literally the terms *filia* (*tohter* 'daughter', III, 14:47b corresponding to Mark 5:34 and Luke 8:48), and *filioli* (*kíndilin mínu* '(my) little children', IV, 13:3b; John 13:31).

These findings are consistent with the observations regarding formulas in initial *inquits*. *Heliand* may look similar to Old English poetry, but it tends to favour highly consistent phrases over the variety and inventiveness of Old English poetic formulas. As for the *Evangelienbuch*, it shows echoes of phrases found in Old English or Old Saxon verse, but they are mostly confined to the first books of the poem. Interestingly, the cut-off point is not the same for every feature considered: while the conspicuous traditional formula for the initial *inquit* disappears very soon after the beginning of book I, terms of endearment are retained well into book II, if not beyond. Other features such as the reliance on an interpolated *inquit* show a gradual increase throughout the poem. The evidence does not point to a composite text, with one part, perhaps, written significantly earlier than the rest, but rather to a continuous evolution in the style of the poet as he becomes ever more experienced in the new form of poetry he has chosen to use.

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[42] The poetic fragment *Waldere A* (12a) has *wine min* used as a term of address on its own, however.

[43] There is only one instance (II, 14:27a) where *domine* is translated as *fró min*. Otherwise, the word *druhtin* is systematically selected (very occasionally expanded with *Krist* or a term of endearment).

[44] See Louviot, *Direct Speech in Beowulf*, 146-147.

Conclusion

Close examination of direct speech in *Heliand* and Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch* confirms that the two poems are extremely different from each other stylistically. At the same time, it reveals that the ways in which they relate to a larger West-Germanic vernacular poetic tradition are perhaps more complex than one would think. While *Heliand* undeniably belongs to an alliterative tradition very close to the Old English one, its handling of direct speech shows idiosyncrasies that go much beyond matters of dialect or meter. Whether *Heliand* is compared to poems considered most 'traditional' or archaic, such as *Genesis A* or *Beowulf*, or to more innovative texts such as Cynewulf's poems, it is clear that the Old Saxon poem displays a different kind of formulaicity, less exuberant and perhaps also less productive.[45] At the same time, some idiosyncrasies, like the frequent use of interpolated *inquits*, do not fundamentally alter the sense of a shared aesthetic favouring the representation of speech as strongly delineated units.

As for Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*, it displays both an awareness of the traditional style visible in *Heliand* and a manifest intent to eschew it. Echoes of the traditional diction are few and their distribution is extremely consistent. No matter which element is considered, the progression is virtually always the same: (near-)traditional elements are most numerous at the beginning of book I, whereas book III, which we know to have been written last, displays the greatest level of innovation. It seems clear that the distribution is not random: as Otfrid grows more experienced, he develops a very individual style and becomes increasingly unlikely to rely on traditional diction.

As a consequence, it does seem legitimate to consider that both *Heliand* and Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch* are connected to a shared vernacular tradition which also includes Old English

[45] On the specificities of Cynewulf's style, see in particular Janie Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity: The Adaptation of Latin Rhetoric in Old English Poetry* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

poetry, even though they relate to that tradition in very different ways. *Heliand* is a willing participant when the *Evangelienbuch* is an outright rebel, but they share a common background. That being said, there is no reason to think that this background was strictly identical or homogeneous: the differences among Old English poems and between *Heliand* and the Old English corpus as a whole are significant enough to suggest considerable variation existed within that shared heritage.