Scandinavians and verb-second in Northumbrian Old English

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1. Introduction

It is beyond dispute that contact with Norse during the early medieval period had a significant impact on the grammatical structure of English, including its syntax.[1] When it comes to the precise nature of this contact and this impact, however — questions of how, when, and where — there is still little consensus. At one end of the scale, it has been argued that the discontinuity was such that Old English died out entirely, and that what we call Middle English is in fact a North Germanic language, a Scandinavian wolf in Anglo-Saxon sheep's clothing.[2] Though not going quite so far, Miller in a recent overview work refers to 'fused Norse-English', and a 'high degree of convergence in both vocabulary items and morphological and syntactic structure'.[3] At perhaps the other extreme, in a now dated but

[1] As well as at the *Gersum* Project conference in Cambridge, September 2018, earlier versions of this work have been presented in Logroño (October 2017), Aarhus (October 2018), Leiden (December 2018) and Oslo (January 2019). Thanks to audiences at all of these events for their comments and questions. Particular thanks go to Kristin Bech and editors Sara Pons-Sanz and Richard Dance for their comments on a draft version, to my research assistant Nicole Tamer (who carried out the majority of the Durham Ritual data collection), to the Durham Priory Library Project (for digitizing the manuscript), and to Julia Fernández Cuesta (for alerting me to the existence of this resource, and for discussion of various philological points). Any errors or inadequacies in this chapter are entirely my fault.

[2] Emonds and Faarlund, *English: The Language of the Vikings*. For critical reviews and reactions, see Barnes, 'Review of Emonds & Faarlund'; Bech and Walkden, 'English is (Still) a West Germanic Language'; Stenbrenden, 'Why English is Not Dead'; and the papers in *Language Dynamics and Change* 6 (1).

[3] Miller, *External influences on English*, p. 91 and p. 147, respectively.

thorough and still highly regarded study, Thomason and Kaufman state that 'Norse influence was pervasive […] but it was not deep, except in the lexicon'.[4] And, in recent years, the example of Norse structural influence thought to be on safest ground — the third person plural pronouns *they*, *their*, *them* — has been shown to be shaky after all.[5]

The present chapter adds to this debate by re-examining a proposed case of deep syntactic influence: the rise of strict verb-second. Work by Kroch, Taylor, and Ringe (henceforth KTR) has argued that this development, the first traces of which can be found in Northumbrian Old English, was triggered by Norse-speaking learners of English.[6] If true, this fundamental change in basic constituent order would be the most dramatic example of Norse-induced structural change discovered to date. I argue here, however, that — for a variety of reasons to do with the how, when, and where — the hypothesis as proposed by KTR cannot be correct.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: Section 2 introduces the phenomenon in question and empirical evidence, and provides a replication of KTR's findings for Northumbrian Old English. Section 3 considers the contact scenario in more detail, providing reasons to rethink KTR's proposal, and Section 4 gives a brief overview of other relevant linguistic features transferred into English from Norse. Section 5 summarizes and concludes.

Before continuing, a terminological note is in order. I use the term *Norse* to refer to any and all North Germanic varieties that might have been in contact with English during the relevant period, following much of the literature; other authors, e.g. KTR, prefer *Scandinavian* or *Nordic* for the same varieties.[7] Speakers of both Old East Norse (ancestor of

[4] Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact*, pp. 302–3.
[5] Cole, 'A Native Origin for Present-Day English *They*, *Their*, *Them*'.
[6] Kroch and Taylor, 'Verb Movement in Old and Middle English'; Kroch, Taylor and Ringe, 'The Middle English Verb-Second Constraint'. The two works overlap substantially, so that referring to them jointly as KTR is not unjustified.
[7] For the term *Norse*, see e.g. Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact*; Townend, *Language and History*; Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse*, vol. 1, p. 8; Lutz, 'Norse Influence on English' and 'Language Contact

modern-day Danish and Swedish) and Old West Norse (ancestor of modern-day Faroese, Icelandic and Norwegian) settled in Britain and Ireland during the early medieval period, at different times and in different places. To the extent that these varieties were distinct at the time of Norse-English contact, this difference is immaterial for our purposes, as all historically attested North Germanic varieties robustly display strict verb-second in main clauses.

2. Verb-second in the history of English

Among the Germanic languages other than English, verb-second constituent order is nearly ubiquitous: one, and only one, constituent can (and must) precede the finite verb in main clauses.[8] When the subject is initial, this yields subject-verb constituent order, common in all verb-second languages. If, however, another constituent is in initial position, then the subject most occur post-verbally (sometimes referred to as 'subject-verb inversion'). Example (1), an Anglo-Norse runic inscription, illustrates this: the object ('good comb') is in initial position, the finite verb *kiari* comes second, and the subject 'Thorfastr' follows the verb.[9]

(1) *kamb : koþan :* *kiari : þorfastr*
comb good made Thorfastr
'Thorfastr made (this) good comb.'
(Norse, E 4, Lincoln, ?eleventh century)

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and Prestige'; Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*. Durkin, *Borrowed Words*, p. 175, provides further discussion of this issue.

[8] Holmberg, 'Verb Second', provides an overview of the nature and distribution of the verb-second phenomenon, with references.

[9] On the dating and interpretation of this inscription, found on a comb-case, see Barnes & Page, *The Scandinavian Runic Inscriptions of Britain*, pp. 292–5. See also Jesch, this volume.

To avoid ambiguity, I will refer to this syntactic system as ‘strict verb-second’. Strict verb-second is a robust characteristic of all textually attested varieties of Old Norse.[10]

2.1 Two varieties of Old and Middle English

A system that looks like strict verb-second is also at play in some Middle English texts, as KTR observe: (2) is an example with subject-verb inversion.[11]

(2) *Lauerd, of me haue I noht, bot þu sende it me.*
lord of me have I nothing but you send it me
‘Lord, by myself I have nothing unless you send it to me.’
(Middle English, *Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet*, fifteenth century; CMBENRUL,3.60)

However, strict verb-second is not the usual system found in Old and Middle English. In West Saxon Old English and most Middle English texts, a different system is found, which I will term ‘information-structural verb-second’. In this system, whether or not the finite verb is found in second position depends on properties of the subject. Specifically, verb-second order is always found when the subject is initial, or when the subject is newly introduced into the discourse. If a non-subject constituent is in initial position, then we find the verb in third

[10] See e.g. Þórhallur Eyþórsson, ‘Verbal Syntax in the Early Germanic Languages’, pp. 248–51; and Faarlund, *The Syntax of Old Norse*, pp. 191–3. Somewhat unusually from a modern Germanic perspective, Icelandic also permits verb-first declaratives, as does Old Norse; see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, ‘V1 Declaratives and Verb-Raising in Icelandic’; and Butt et al., ‘V1 in Icelandic’. This order is also found in Old and Middle English. I will abstract away from this complication in what follows, as it does not affect the argument.
[11] Unless otherwise stated, Old and Middle English examples are taken from the YCOE, YCOEP and PPCME2 parsed corpora, and the identifiers provided relate to these.

position when the subject is a pronoun, as in (3). When the subject is old or given information in the discourse, as in (4), we find variation between verb-second and verb-third order; (4) is an example with verb-third order.

(3) *æfter his gebede* ***he*** *ahof þæt cild up*

after his prayer he lifted the child up

'After his prayer he lifted the child up.'

(cocathom2,+ACHom_II,_2:14.70.320)

(4) *þeah hweðer* ***his hired men*** *ferdon ut*

though whether his household men went out

'Nevertheless his retainers went out.'

(cochronE, ChronE_[Plummer]:1087.26.2994)

There are further complications — for instance, verb-second is near-categorical also when the adverb *þa* is in initial position — but the above is a reasonable characterization of the dominant constituent order patterns, if somewhat idealized.[12]

KTR's proposal is set against this backdrop. They observe that the two systems — information-structural verb-second and strict verb-second — are distributed regionally in Middle English: strict verb-second is found in certain Middle English texts from the north

[12] For recent overviews of the by now very substantial literature on Old and Middle English clausal constituent order, see van Kemenade and Westergaard, 'Syntax and Information Structure'; Eitler and Westergaard, 'Word Order Variation in Late Middle English'; Walkden, *Syntactic Reconstruction and Proto-Germanic*, pp. 67–89; Walkden, 'Language Contact and V3 in Germanic Varieties New and Old', pp. 70–74.

and from the East Midlands, while information-structural verb-second is found elsewhere.[13] From here it is but a short hop to an inference of Norse influence.

The main aim of KTR's work is to explain the loss of *both* of these types of verb-second system in favour of the more rigid Subject-Verb-Object constituent order that characterizes Present-Day English. Here they appeal to accommodation theory: during the Late Middle English period, speakers of the strict verb-second northern variety would have encountered speakers of the information-structural verb-second southern variety. They would have 'accommodated' to these speakers by attempting, consciously or unconsciously, to adapt their own usage to match that of their interlocutors. In doing so, they would have sometimes overshot the mark, inferring from sequences of (for instance) Adverb-Subject-Verb that the system of southern Middle English was not information-structural verb-second but rather simple Subject-Verb-Object, and modifying their own usage accordingly. The loss of verb-second in the history of English is thus a case of syntactic hypercorrection, on KTR's account. London, as a centre of dialect mixture and an increasingly prestigious locale in general, may have had an important role to play in first creating the conditions for accommodation to take place and then endowing the newly created variety with the prestige needed to spread.

For present purposes, this plausible story, a central part of KTR's account, is not important. Instead this chapter focuses on a different question: how did strict verb-second arise in the first place? In order to investigate this, we need to take a closer look at the Old English situation, and Northumbrian Old English in particular.

[13] KTR do not use these terms, instead preferring 'IP-V2' and 'CP-V2'. I avoid these, as subsequent research has revealed the assumptions underlying them to be problematic. In particular, the discovery of information-structural conditioning on subject-verb ordering in Old and Middle English (Bech, 'Pragmatic Factors in Language Change' and 'Word Order Patterns in Old and Middle English') postdates KTR's work. On the syntactic analysis of the types of verb-second, and their relation to verbal morphology, see Walkden, 'Rich agreement and verb movement in early English'.

2.2 Northumbrian Old English constituent order

As is well known, the overwhelming majority of the surviving Old English textual record is in West Saxon dialect. Texts from other dialects are very rare, and those from the north and east of the country are extremely few and far between. For early (pre-tenth-century) Northumbrian Old English we have only a handful of short texts: *Cædmon's Hymn*, *Bede's Death Song*, the *Leiden Riddle*, the runic inscription on the Ruthwell Cross, and the Franks Casket inscription. The three surviving later (tenth-century) texts are more substantial, though all of them are glossal translations: the Lindisfarne Gospels, the part of the Rushworth Gospels traditionally attributed to Owun (Rushworth 2), and the Durham Ritual (or Durham Collectar). In investigating Northumbrian Old English, it is important to bear in mind Fernández Cuesta and Senra Silva's caution that we cannot assume that these texts are linguistically similar or identical: 'Northumbrian Old English' is a post-hoc label assigned to a collection of texts from a specific (and large) area, not a true dialect in anything like the modern sense.[14]

As far as clausal syntax and constituent order is concerned, the early Northumbrian texts offer slim pickings. Subject-initial clauses do not help us to distinguish between information-structural verb-second and strict verb-second — for that we need clauses in which a non-subject constituent occupies the initial position. Unfortunately, *Cædmon's Hymn*, *Bede's Death Song*, the *Leiden Riddle*, and the Franks Casket inscription contain no relevant examples between them. The Northumbrian version of *Cædmon's Hymn* is particularly frustrating in this regard: it opens with an adverb *nu* 'now', as in (5). However,

[14] Fernández Cuesta and Senra Silva, 'Does Old Northumbrian Exist?'. Cf. also Hogg, 'On the Impossibility of Old English Dialectology'.

under the most usual reading, the first-person plural subject is unexpressed (‘we’ is found in later West Saxon manuscripts), thus providing us with nothing to distinguish between the two systems.[15]

(5) *Nu scylun hergan | hefaenricaes uard / […] / uerc uuldurfadur*

now should.PL praise heaven-kingdom-GEN ward work(PL?) glory-father

‘Now we should praise Heaven’s Lord, the work(s) of the Father […]’ (?)

(*Cædmon’s Hymn*, O’Donnell; Northumbrian critical edition)

The Ruthwell Cross inscription contains an example (6) that at first sight looks more promising:

(6) *miþ strelum giwundad alegdun* ***hiæ*** *hinæ limwoerignæ*

with arrow.DAT wounded lay they him.ACC limb-weary.ACC

‘Wounded with arrows they lay him down, weary’ (?)

(Ruthwell Cross inscription)

In this example it appears that a non-finite verbal constituent (*miþ strelum giwundad*) is in initial position, followed by the finite verb *alegdun*, followed by a postverbal subject pronoun

[15] For the reading in which the subject is unexpressed, see van Gelderen, *History of English Reflexive Pronouns*, p. 126; *Cædmon’s Hymn*, ed. by O’Donnell; and Walkden, *Syntactic Reconstruction*, p. 172. An alternative reading (e.g. Mitchell, ‘Cædmon’s *Hymn*, Line 1’) has *uerc uuldurfadur*, construed as nominative plural, functioning as the subject. Bammesberger (‘*Nu scylun hergan*’) summarizes the arguments for and against these two readings and proposes a third possibility: to treat the infinitive as passive, with *hefaenricaes uard* etc. as the subject. Neither of these alternative readings helps us, though; in both cases the subject would be discourse-new, and thus expected to be postverbal under either of the two verb-second systems. Furthermore, its position after the non-finite verb *hergan* under both these readings suggests that it is extraposed and therefore in any case not suitable as a diagnostic for the position of the verb.

hiæ. Since subject-verb inversion of this kind is virtually unattested[16] in West Saxon texts with personal pronouns, this could be taken as evidence for strict verb-second. However, another reading is more likely. This section of the inscription closely parallels part of the *Dream of the Rood* poem, and in the context of that poem it is clear that the non-finite verbal constituent in fact belongs to a separate clause, as (7) shows:

(7) *eall ic wæs mid strælum forwundod. Aledon hie ðær limwerigne*

all I was with with arrow.DAT wounded lay they there limb-weary.ACC

'I was all wounded with arrows. They laid the limb-weary one there'

(codream,63.61.96, codream,63.63.98)

If this reading can be applied to the Ruthwell Cross example in (6) as well, then the second clause is verb-initial, an example of so-called Narrative Inversion.[17] As such, it does not bear on the question of whether Northumbrian Old English had information-structural or strict verb-second.[18]

The evidence from early Northumbrian texts is inconclusive, then, and we must turn to the later texts to shed light on the question. Here we immediately run into a different problem: all three of the tenth-century Northumbrian texts we have are in glossal form. Assuming the glossator to have adopted a translation strategy in each case that is more-or-

[16] Haeberli, 'Features, categories and the syntax of A-positions', p. 335; van Bergen, 'Pronouns and word order in Old English', p. 25. See in particular chapter 2 of van Bergen for discussion of the rare counterexamples.
[17] On verb-initial clauses in early Germanic, see Walkden, *Syntactic Reconstruction*, pp. 92–94, and references cited there.
[18] Conner, 'The Ruthwell Monument Runic Poem', argues that the runic inscription is an addition from the late-tenth or early-eleventh century, not from the eighth as usually assumed. If correct, this is another reason that this example must be discarded as evidence for early Northumbrian syntax. Eagle-eyed readers will notice that the preceding clause in (7), *eall ic wæs …*, appears to lack subject-verb inversion, an indicator of information-structural verb-second. However, since the *Dream of the Rood* in its Vercelli Book form is so clearly West Saxon in its linguistic features, this does not tell us anything about Northumbrian.

less a word-for-word rendering of the Latin original, investigating constituent order in these texts would seem like a fruitless endeavour. The situation is not as grim as all that, though. For the Lindisfarne Gospels, Nagucka has shown that the glossator does exercise some degree of syntactic independence, for instance with regard to the order of possessor and possessee (*dauides sunu* ‘David’s son’ for *filii david*). She argues that this independence means that the text warrants the term ‘glossal translation’ rather than gloss *tout court*.[19] More important for us are instances where a single word in Latin must be rendered by more than one in Old English. In particular, Latin rarely uses pronominal subjects, and the glossator inserts them relatively systematically in the Old English.[20] Pronominal subjects are particularly probative for the difference between information-structural V2 and strict V2, since they always represent given information. Thus, if we find subject-verb inversion, we can conclude that we are dealing with strict V2 and not information-structural V2.

An example can be seen in Figure 1, from the Durham Ritual manuscript. Here, the Latin verb form *tribuam* ‘give.1SG’ is glossed as *ic sello* ‘I give’, with a personal pronoun subject preceding the verb form.

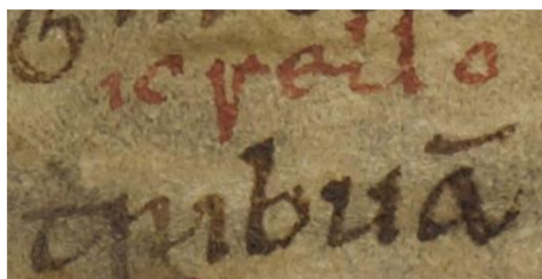

Figure 1. *tribuam* glossed as *ic sello* in the Durham Ritual manuscript (Durham, Durham Cathedral, MS A.IV.19), fol. 1^{r}. Image courtesy of the Durham Priory Library Recreated project, licensed under CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0.

[19] Nagucka, ‘Glossal Translation in the Lindisfarne Gospel According to St Matthew’.
[20] Berndt, *Form und Funktion des Verbums*, pp. 65–68; Walkden, ‘Null Subjects in the Lindisfarne Gospels’.

KTR take advantage of this fact by investigating the placement of these inserted personal pronouns, which cannot be due to any property of the Latin original, in the Lindisfarne Gospels and in Rushworth 2, as well as in West Saxon. Most of the time, the pronominal subject precedes the verb. The interesting case, as before, is when a non-subject constituent is in initial position. KTR's findings for such clauses are given in Table 1.[21]

Variety	Inversion	Total	Inversion (North. only)	Total
Northumbrian	5	58	14	82
West Saxon	0	58	–	–

Table 1. Subject-verb inversion in the Lindisfarne Gospels and Rushworth 2 with a non-subject in initial position (results from KTR)

Here there is variation, but subject-verb inversion — i.e. a postverbal pronominal subject — is found in nineteen instances out of a possible 140, i.e. in 13.6 per cent of all possible instances. This might not seem like much, but compared to the *West Saxon Gospels*, in which the pronominal subject and verb are *never* inverted, it is striking, and constitutes evidence for the presence (however marginal) of a strict verb-second system. An example is given in (8).

[21] Taken from Kroch and Taylor, 'Verb Movement', p. 321, Table 4. KTR's data are based on Skeat's edition, which is not unproblematic: see Fernández Cuesta, 'Revisiting the Manuscript of the Lindisfarne Gospels'.

(8) Latin: *oculos habentes*

Lindisfarne: *ego habbað gie*

Rushworth: *ego habbas gie*

eyes have.PL you.PL

'You have eyes'

(Mark 8:18; West Saxon: *eagan ge habbað*)

Bearing in mind Fernández Cuesta and Senra Silva's warning, I investigated the Durham Ritual glossal translation in order to see whether the same behaviour is found there too. The edition used is that of Stevenson, since this edition is available in the public domain, but a full collation against the manuscript was undertaken; this was facilitated immeasurably by the fact that the manuscript was digitized in 2016 as part of the Durham Priory Library Recreated project, and is publicly available online. Only declarative, non-conjoined main clauses were taken into consideration. The results are presented in Table 2 and visualized (as percentages) in Figure 2.

Pronoun	Pron-V	V-Pron (not V2)	XP-Pron-V	XP-V-Pron	Total
ic (1SG)	23	0	32	0	55
ðv (2SG)	11	13	15	20	59
he (1SG)	1	0	0	0	1
ve (1PL)	216	13	87	10	326
gie (2PL)	3	3	1	2	9
hia (3PL)	1	1	2	1	5
Total	255	30	137	33	455

Table 2. Subject-verb inversion in the Durham Ritual

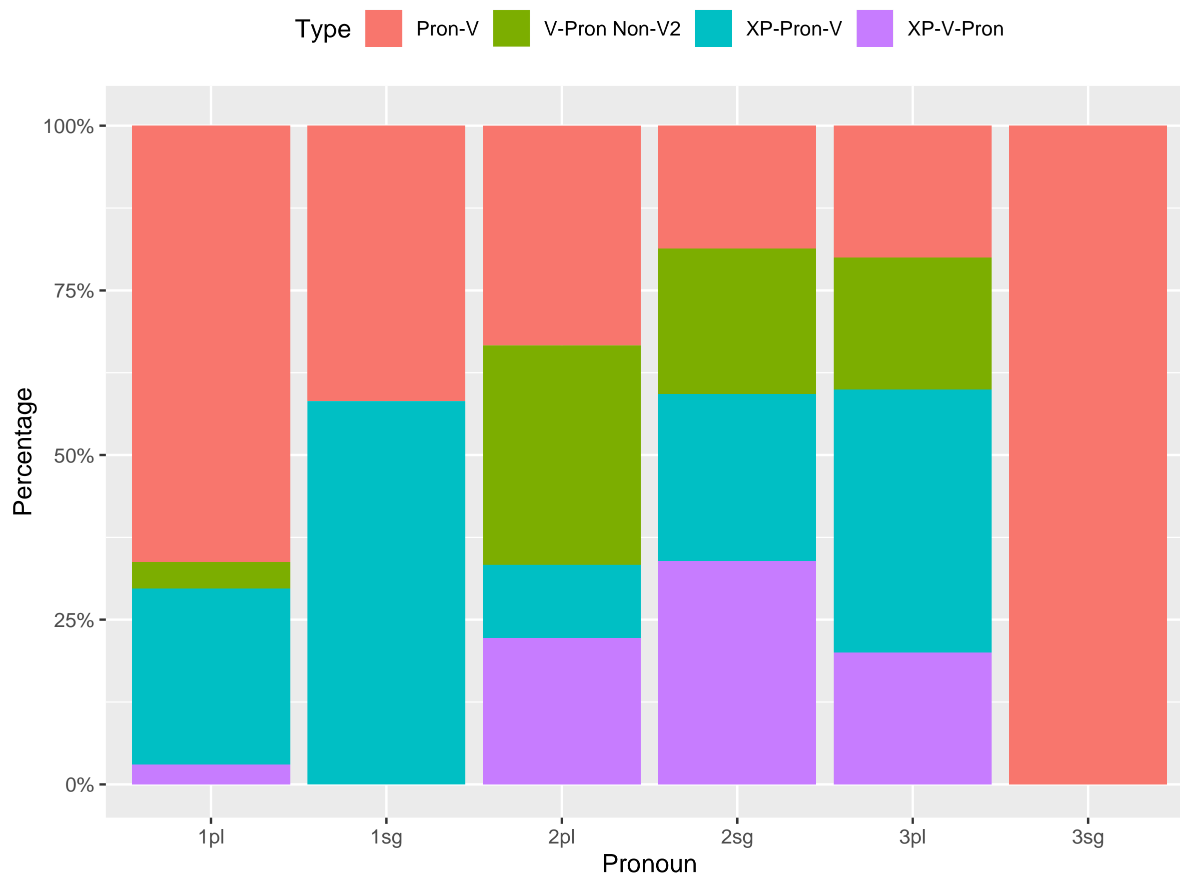

Figure 2. Percentages of different verb positions, by person and number.

Of particular interest here are the columns XP-Pron-V and XP-V-Pron, which show the proportion of inversion when a non-subject constituent is in initial position (XP stands for 'any phrase'). Thirty-three of 170 examples (19.4 per cent) exhibit inversion, providing evidence for a strict verb-second system. An example with inversion from the Durham Ritual is (9), shown in Figure 3.

(9)	Latin:	*murenulas*	*aureas*	*faciemus*		*tibi*
	Northumbrian:	*bvlas*	*gyldenno*	*gidoe*	*ve*	*ðe*
		necklaces	golden	make	we	you.OBL
		'we make golden necklaces for you'				(Durham Ritual, fol. 2r)

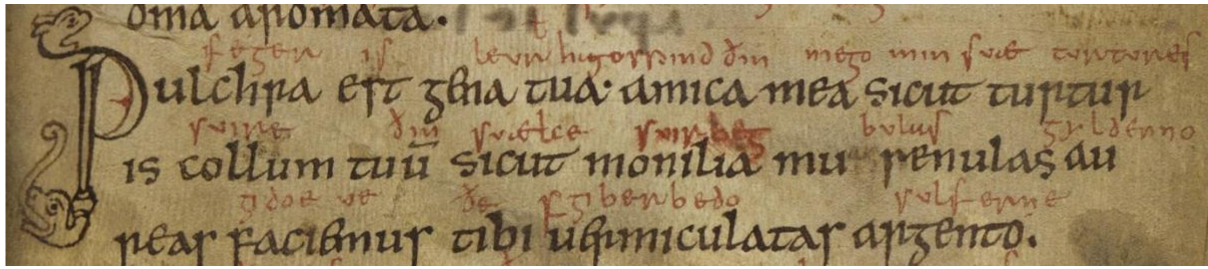

Figure 3. Subject-verb inversion in the Durham Ritual manuscript (Durham, Durham Cathedral MS A.IV.19), fol. 2^{r}. Image courtesy of the Durham Priory Library Recreated project, licensed under CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Since the results line up with what KTR found for the Lindisfarne Gospels and Rushworth 2, we may be justified in tentatively claiming that strict verb-second was found in northern varieties of Old English.[22] Whether the difference between the texts is meaningful is an open question; it does not emerge as significant in a Fisher's exact test (p=0.2215). The traditional view is that the Durham Ritual was written later, though this has recently been called into question.[23] On the other hand, the influence of the West Saxon 'standard' on the Durham Ritual is thought to be greater. It is also thought to be a more linguistically conservative text, though is not uniformly so: some features, such as the spread of *-e* for *-a* in *n*-stem nouns and the extension of genitive singular *-es* from the *a*-stems to other declensions, seem to be more advanced in the Durham Ritual than in the Lindisfarne glosses.[24]

[22] I will not attempt to explain the differences between pronouns evident in Table 2 and Figure 2: *ic* (1SG) seems to invert categorically, whereas *ðv* (2SG) and *ve* (1PL) are much more variable, and the other person-number combinations are not attested frequently enough to say anything with any certainty. KTR do not provide separate figures for the different pronouns; it would be extremely interesting to see whether the same distribution holds in the Lindisfarne Gospels and Rushworth 2 as well, and if so, why.

[23] The traditional dating is based on the fact that Aldred refers to himself as *presbyter* 'priest' in the Lindisfarne Gospels and *profast* 'provost' in the Durham Ritual, on the grounds that the latter rank is more senior and suggests that he had been promoted in the meantime (assuming of course that the two Aldreds are one and the same individual). However, Roberts ('Aldred', pp. 48–51) argues that *presbyter* itself denotes a high rank within the church; if so, this argument for dating collapses. I am grateful to Sara Pons-Sanz for discussion of this point.

[24] Ross, 'Conservatism in the Anglo-Saxon Gloss to the Durham Ritual'; Rodríguez Ledesma, '*Zelotes* and *elnvnges*'; Fernández Cuesta & Rodríguez Ledesma, 'Reduced forms in the nominal morphology of the Lindisfarne Gospel Gloss'.

Summarizing this section, then, it seems that two verb-second systems are at work in Old and Middle English. Old English texts are mostly characterized by information-structural verb-second, though some hints of a strict verb-second system are found in tenth-century Northumbrian texts. In Middle English, too, there are geographical differences in the distribution of the two systems. The question to explore now is why this should be the case, and this question is the topic of Section 3.

3. The contact scenario

KTR propose that the strict verb-second system evidenced in Northumbrian Old English and northern Middle English texts is a result of Norse influence. This section evaluates the possibility of such Norse influence from the perspective of how, when and where it could have happened. To give the game away, the conclusion will be that Norse influence is not likely to have played a major role, at least as regards the findings for Northumbrian Old English discussed in Section 2.2 above.

3.1 How?

Before turning to the specifics of the Norse-English contact situation, some words on the theorization of language contact are necessary. One common outcome of contact is transfer: material from one language is copied and incorporated into another. Languages are not objects bouncing off each other in abstract space, however: as McIntosh put it, ‘what we mean by “languages in contact” is “users of language in contact” and to insist upon this is much more than a mere terminological quibble and has far from trivial consequences’.[25]

[25] McIntosh, ‘Codes and Cultures’, p. 137.

Following work by van Coetsem, Smits, and Winford, I assume two types of transfer.[26] 'Borrowing' occurs under recipient-language agentivity, mediated by speakers who are psycholinguistically dominant in the recipient language. It is a largely conscious process, and hence is dominant among those elements of language most subject to conscious reflection, such as non-basic vocabulary. 'Imposition', on the other hand, occurs under source-language agentivity, mediated by speakers who are psycholinguistically dominant in the source language, and is most likely to be found in those domains of language that are less subject to conscious reflection, such as basic phonology and syntax. Not all contact effects involve transfer of material, though. A third possibility is 'restructuring', defined as 'changes which a speaker makes to an L2 that cannot be seen as the transfer of patterns or material from their L1'.[27] Adults are well known to be lousy language learners in comparison to children, and adult language learners may for instance simplify the morphology and phonology of the language they are learning in ways that have nothing to do with their first language.[28]

We can proceed to evaluate these three possibilities — borrowing, imposition, and restructuring — against what we know about the situation during the Old English period. Borrowing is perhaps the least likely *a priori*. Winford makes a powerful case that direct syntactic borrowing — the borrowing of a syntactic pattern or structure without concomitant lexical material — is highly constrained, and may not exist at all.[29] Imposition and restructuring (through simplification) have both been proposed in the literature, though. The scenario for imposition is a simple one: Norse-speaking learners of Northumbrian Old

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[26] Van Coetsem, *Loan Phonology*, and *Transmission Process in Language Contact*; Smits, 'Two Models for the Study of Language Contact'; Winford, *Introduction to Contact Linguistics*, and 'Contact-Induced Changes'. The borrowing-imposition dichotomy is adopted by many researchers working on Norse-English contact, for instance Townend, *Language and History*; see pp. 201–7; and Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*.
[27] Lucas, 'Development of Negation in Arabic and Afro-Asiatic', p. 145; and 'Contact-Induced Language Change', p. 529. *L1* and *L2* refer to a speaker's first and second language respectively.
[28] See in particular Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Typology*, Chapter 3.
[29] Winford, 'Contact-Induced Changes', pp. 385–88. For counterarguments see Lucas, 'Contact-Induced Grammatical Change'.

English transferred the constituent order of their dominant language into the language that they were learning. This is presumably what Miller has in mind when claiming that '[s]ome northern areas […] adopted the more strict Nordic V2 rule'.[30]

KTR's scenario is a different one, and is based on morphological simplification. According to them, Norse-speaking learners of Northumbrian Old English failed to learn Old English morphology accurately, in particular the system of verbal endings. As support for this, they adduce the replacement of the marked segment /θ/ by the less marked /s/ in the third person which characterizes the transition to Northern Middle English.[31] This caused a problem, however: the rich system of verbal agreement characteristic of Old English was, according to KTR, a prerequisite for the more flexible kind of verb-second constituent order found in West Saxon (and, by hypothesis, in earlier Old English in general). Strict verb-second, by contrast, had no such prerequisite, and so the Norse-speaking learners were able to fall back on it.[32]

All three scenarios will be considered further in the following subsections. One immediate problem arises for both an imposition and a morphological-simplification-based scenario, though. Both scenarios presuppose that there would have been large numbers of Norse speakers learning Old English in adulthood as a second language. However, Townend has convincingly argued, based on a wide variety of evidence, that Old English and contemporary Old Norse would have been mutually intelligible — enough so at least that

[30] Miller, *External Influences*, pp. 144–45.

[31] The Norse-influence account for the emergence of third person verbal *-s* which KTR draw upon has a long pedigree, starting with Noreen, *Altisländische und altnordische Grammatik*, p. 162. For critical discussion see Miller, *External influences*, p. 128, and Cole, *Old Northumbrian Verbal Morphosyntax*, pp. 26–34.

[32] The presentation here is somewhat oversimplified, and the strict relation between morphology and syntax that KTR draw upon here — dubbed the Rich Agreement Hypothesis — has been the subject of very extensive discussion in theoretical linguistics (see e.g. Bobaljik, 'Realizing Germanic Inflection'), with inconclusive results. It is impossible to do justice to the Rich Agreement Hypothesis and its application to the history of English in the confines of this chapter; see Walkden, 'Rich agreement and verb movement in early English', for critical discussion. For the purposes of the present discussion I assume for the sake of argument that KTR's assumptions about rich agreement are correct.

receptive multilingualism would have been possible, with each side of the conversation communicating in their own language and comprehending the other, much like conversations between present-day Norwegians and Swedes or Danes.[33] But if this was so, why would there have been extensive second-language learning of Old English on the part of Norse-speakers? Today's Swedes and Danes do not rush out to take classes in Norwegian. And without these 'imperfect' second-language acquirers as agents of contact, the argument for morphological simplification or for imposition evaporates.[34]

This is not to say that there was no morphological simplification in Northumbrian Old English texts. There demonstrably was: Rodríguez Ledesma has shown that genitives are frequently zero-marked in the Lindisfarne gloss, for instance, and that genitive *-es* spreads by analogical extension to other noun classes in the Durham Ritual.[35] Word-final *-n* is also lost in morphological endings in late Northumbrian Old English. These, however, are changes that are paralleled across Germanic in both high- and low-contact varieties. For example, loss of final *-n* can also be found in Alemannic, Dutch, Frisian, and North Germanic, almost certainly independently. Meanwhile, Northumbrian Old English productively preserves some morphological archaisms which are lacking in West Saxon, such as the distinct first person singular indicative verbal ending *-o*. Contact with Norse of the simplifying type may have been involved in the development of Northumbrian Old English morphology, then, but this is by no means a necessary assumption, and indeed it seems quite unlikely given the other considerations in this section.

[33] Townend, *Language and History*, pp. 181–5. It should be emphasized that for Townend and the tradition he follows, mutual intelligibility is a continuum, not a strict binary: languages may be more or less mutually intelligible.

[34] See, however, Warner, 'English-Norse contact', for a different perspective, proposing koinéization as the driver of contact-induced change.

[35] Rodríguez Ledesma, '*Dauides sunu* vs. *filii david*', and '*Zelotes* and *elnvnges*'.

3.2 When?

It is also important to bear in mind that contact with Norse cannot be regarded as a single, unchanging event; rather, over the hundreds of years in which speakers of these languages were in contact with one another, many different types of scenes involving many different actors were played out. Pons-Sanz explains that Norse contact with English can be divided into three phases.[36] The first of these, the 'hit-and-run' phase from the end of the eighth century to the middle of the ninth, can be forgotten about fairly quickly, since occasional raids are not known for their deep morphosyntactic impact.

Phases two and three are more linguistically interesting. Phase two, the 'settlement' phase from the mid-ninth century to 1000, is characterized by large-scale settlement of areas of the British Isles by immigrants from Scandinavia. That this settlement was large-scale, and more than just a few bands of warriors as posited by Sawyer, can no longer be doubted in the face of the combined archaeological and linguistic evidence: Kershaw and Røyrvik suggest absolute numbers of immigrants in the region of 20,000–35,000.[37] During this period, the lexical influence of Norse was already making itself felt, and at least some Norse place-names (for instance, those in *-by*) were emerging.[38] Phase three, the 'conquest' phase, is coterminous with the raids on England led by Sweyn Forkbeard and the subsequent direct rule of England by Cnut and his sons from 1016 to 1042.

[36] Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, pp. 6–7, building on historical overviews such as Keynes, 'The Vikings in England'.

[37] Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings*. Counterarguments are mustered in Hadley, 'Scandinavian Settlement of England' and 'Scandinavian Settlement'; Abrams and Parsons, 'Place-names and the History of Scandinavian Settlement'; and Kershaw and Røyrvik, '"People of the British Isles" Project', the latter with discussion of recent genetic evidence.

[38] On lexical influence, see e.g. Pons-Sanz, *Norse-Derived Vocabulary in Late Old English Texts*; on place-names, see e.g. Abrams and Parsons, 'Place-names and the History of Scandinavian Settlement'.

To Pons-Sanz's three phases we can add a fourth, the 'shift' phase, from 1042 until the eventual death of Norse as a spoken language in England. The date of the latter is a matter of some debate, and it is difficult to bring evidence to bear on the question.[39] Thomason & Kaufman suggest that by 1100 the shift was nearly complete; Townend describes the death of Norse in England as 'probably being an event of the eleventh and twelfth centuries', with the date of death varying from region to region depending on local circumstances.[40] Regardless, we know that Norse *did* die out as a spoken language in England, as from the better-documented Early Modern English period onwards there is no hint of it being used.

With changing times came a change in the nature of the language contact situation. As regards prestige relations between the two languages, some have argued that the two languages were roughly equal in status, while others have made the case that Norse enjoyed the prestige advantage.[41] A more nuanced view holds that the prestige differential between the two languages was not stable over time, and varied situationally.[42] Certainly during the conquest phase, at the very least, the language of the Scandinavian monarchs during the first half of the eleventh century must have had considerable prestige, and towards the end of the shift phase Norse would have had very little. But during the settlement and conquest phases, in particular, speakers of Norse and English would have interacted in a wide range of settings with a wide range of power dynamics. McIntosh's point about the users of languages is again relevant.

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[39] Overview discussions can be found in Ekwall, 'How Long Did the Scandinavian Language Survive in England?', Page, 'How Long Did the Scandinavian Language Survive in England? The Epigraphical Evidence', and Parsons, 'How Long Did the Scandinavian Language Survive in England? Again'.
[40] Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact*, p. 282; Townend, *Language and History*, p. 204.
[41] For the former view, see Hock, *Principles of Historical Linguistics*, pp. 410–11; Hansen, 'Historical Implications of the Scandinavian Element', p. 68 and p. 78; Townend, *Language and History*, p. 204; and, following him, Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Typology*, p. 52. For the latter view, see Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact*, p. 303; and Lutz, 'Norse Influence on Old English' and 'Language Contact and Prestige'.
[42] Dance, 'English in Contact', p1727; Miller, *External Influences*, pp. 97–98; and Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, pp. 274–276.

What do these chronological considerations have to do with the three scenarios of borrowing, imposition, and simplification mentioned above? In light of the mutual intelligibility of Old English and Norse demonstrated by Townend, only one of these four phases is likely to be characterized by second language learning, and that is the shift phase, the point at which communities — and presumably individuals — were moving away from the Anglo-Norse they had spoken in earlier years.[43] During this phase we should expect to see evidence for imposition and perhaps also simplification, in communities where an important fraction of the population had historically spoken Norse; see Section 4. But the Northumbrian Old English glossal translations that display evidence for strict verb-second, discussed in Section 2.2, are known to have been written during the tenth century, towards the end of Pons-Sanz's second phase, the settlement phase. Chronologically, then, the scenarios of imposition and simplification are a poor fit. Borrowing is a better fit, though in the late tenth century Norse had probably not yet reached the pinnacle of its prestige in the British Isles.

3.3 Where?

Geographical considerations also militate against all three scenarios. KTR are quite clear that they view Northumbria as 'the area of contact at the appropriate time'.[44] As a rough generalization, the north and east of England were certainly more heavily affected by Scandinavian settlement than other areas of the country. However, when we look at the crucial area — that part of Northumbria that was historically Bernicia, corresponding roughly

[43] See Hansen, 'Historical Implications of the Scandinavian Element'; and Walkden and Morrison, 'Regional Variation in Jespersen's Cycle', pp. 190–93 for more detailed discussion of this point.
[44] Kroch and Taylor, 'Verb Movement', p. 320.

to present-day Northumberland and County Durham, north of the River Tees — all the evidence suggests that Scandinavian settlement was comparatively light.

Turning first to Norse place-names, these are very densely packed in several areas of England, but the River Tees is a striking point of discontinuity. Norse place-names are much sparser north of it: the Key to English Place-names lists only eighteen place-names of Norse origin in County Durham and twenty-three in Northumberland, compared to well over a hundred in the North Riding of Yorkshire alone.[45] Evidence of Scandinavian material culture north of the Tees is also very slender indeed: Kershaw and Røyrvik map over a hundred find sites for Scandinavian metalwork in Britain, and precisely none of these are in the area north of the Tees.[46] What documentary evidence exists also suggests that, politically and administratively, this northern area was never considered part of the 'Danelaw'; during the tenth century it remained under the control of the house of Bamburgh rather than the Danes in York.[47] Finally, the evidence from dialect words in modern English varieties also suggests that the Tees functioned as an important cut-off, with the northwest of England patterning with Yorkshire and the East Midlands in using dialect words of Norse origin, against Northumberland, County Durham and the southwest, which did not.[48]

That northern Northumbria was not the heart of the contact situation has long been recognized. In defining his 'great Scandinavian belt' of linguistic influence, Samuels explicitly excludes the former kingdom of Bernicia; similarly, Thomason and Kaufman's scenario for the Norsification of English has the new variety originating in Lindsey (today part of northern Lincolnshire), spreading to Fourboroughs and then to Norfolk in the second

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[45] See e.g. the map in Sawyer, *Age of the Vikings*, p. 161; Watts, 'Northumberland and Durham', p. 210; and the online Key to English Place-names (<http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/> [accessed 31 July 2020]).
[46] Kershaw and Røyrvik, '"People of the British Isles" Project', p. 1677, Figure 3.
[47] Holman, 'Defining the Danelaw', pp. 4–7; Pons-Sanz, *Analysis of the Scandinavian Loanwords*, p. 29.
[48] Kolb, 'Skandinavisches in den nordenglischen Dialekten', particularly p. 149. I am grateful to Stephen Laker for drawing my attention to this source.

half of the tenth century.[49] Of course, there would have been contact between speakers of English and Norse in the area north of the Tees during the tenth century. However, if the sources drawn on in this section are right, it cannot be described as a particularly high-intensity contact situation by the standards of English-Norse contact in general.

We do not know for sure that the composers of the three Northumbrian Old English glosses were from this area, of course. We know relatively little about them. Two of the three texts – the glosses to the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Durham Ritual – are generally thought to have been composed by the same individual, Aldred, provost of Chester-le-Street in County Durham; the dominant view is that Aldred is single-handedly responsible for glossing the whole of the Lindisfarne Gospels at least, though he probably also had access to earlier Old English translations of the Gospels, now lost.[50] The other text, Rushworth 2, is attributed to Owun, who is usually thought to have copied from Aldred's slightly earlier gloss.[51] In a careful analysis, Pons-Sanz suggests that both Aldred and Owun must be from near Chester-le-Street, Aldred's workplace. In support of this, the lexical evidence (to be discussed in more detail in Section 4) suggests that Aldred is 'from an area with some, albeit not very heavy, Scandinavian presence' — an area in which Norse speakers were present in small numbers, with some strong and some weak social network ties to speakers of English.[52] This ties in exactly with the evidence from place-names, metalwork, etc. discussed in this section.

In sum, what we know or can reasonably infer about the origin of the late Northumbrian Old English texts and their authors casts doubt on the idea that the contact situation would have been intense enough for transfer of a feature such as basic word order,

[49] Samuels, 'Great Scandinavian Belt', p. 269; Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact*, pp. 284–299.
[50] On Aldred and the attribution of these texts, see recently Jolly, *Community of St. Cuthbert*; Brown, '"A Good Woman's Son"'; Roberts, 'Aldred'; and Cole, 'Identifying the Author(s) of the Lindisfarne Gloss'.
[51] Kotake, 'Did Owun Really Copy from the Lindisfarne Gospels?', provides an overview of scholarship on Owun, and answers his own question with a clear 'no'.
[52] Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, pp. 253–57.

still less for contact-induced morphological simplification. Taken together with the previous two subsections on the how and the when, none of the three scenarios of borrowing, imposition or restructuring seems like a good fit for the situation we can reconstruct. What remains is to look at other potential Norse contact features of these texts more closely, and Section 4 is devoted to this task.

4. Corroborating linguistic evidence

This section examines the evidence for Norse influence in Old English in general, and in Northumbrian Old English in particular. This kind of circumstantial evidence is important: if a whole suite of (the right kind of) linguistic features can be argued to be transferred from Norse, that strengthens the overall narrative, and makes it more plausible that strict verb-second is a Norse-induced change. As we will see, however, the accumulated evidence points in the opposite direction.

Beginning with the lexicon: the overall lexical impact of Norse on English was non-trivial, but most instances of lexical transfer — including almost all the candidates for ‘basic’ vocabulary status — are first attested during the Middle English period. Pons-Sanz’s comprehensive overview of lexical effects in Old English lists 179 robustly Norse-derived words, of which 174 are open-class lexical words (mostly nouns, but also verbs, adjectives and adverbs).[53] Moreover, the five Norse-derived function words are all either questionable, late, or both. Two, *fra/fro* and *fraward* ‘from’, are prepositions, a word class known to awkwardly straddle the lexical-functional divide, and as spatial prepositions they are perhaps more properly classed as lexical rather than functional.[54] They are also not attested until the

[53] Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, pp. 126–27. See also Durkin, *Borrowed Words*, pp. 179–80.
[54] Mardale, ‘Prepositions as a Semilexical Category’, with references.

eleventh century, and the same is true for the conjunction/quantifier *baðe* ‘both’ and the pronoun *hanum* (the latter only attested once, in the Aldbrough inscription from Yorkshire).[55] As for the conjunction *oc*, there are a handful of examples, of which the only convincing one is the difficult-to-date Arras scribble.[56] The evidence from function words is particularly important if we put any stock in borrowability hierarchies of the kind developed by Thomason, who develops a four-point scale based on intensity of contact, ranging from ‘casual’ to ‘intense’. In this scale it is fairly easy to situate Norse-Old English contact at the ‘slightly more intense’ level at most. At this level, lexical borrowing is of non-basic vocabulary, mostly content (lexical) words, and structural borrowing is minor. Since none of the function words unambiguously predate the eleventh century, the early situation could even be said to be ‘casual’, with borrowing only of content words (mostly nouns), and no structural borrowing at all.[57]

Turning to the late Northumbrian Old English texts, we find none of the aforementioned function words attested. The complementizer *æd*/*æt*, found in the Lindisfarne Gospels and sometimes adduced in this context, is not considered to be a borrowing by Pons-Sanz because of the possibility that it emerged as a reduced by-form of Old English *ðæt*.[58] Likewise, *til* ‘to, until’ is likely to be an inheritance (compare Old Frisian *til*), especially since it is found in early Northumbrian texts such as *Cædmon’s Hymn*.[59] The lexical effects of Norse on Old Northumbrian, then, seem to have been exclusively of the lexical/content

[55] Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, pp. 65–66, pp. 89–90, and p. 40, respectively.
[56] Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, pp. 119–20.
[57] Thomason, *Language Contact*, pp. 70–71. Cf. also Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact*, pp. 74–76; and Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, pp. 123–25. As Thomason points out, typological similarity might skew the scale in favour of structural borrowing in certain instances. See Matras, *Language Contact*, pp. 156–57, for criticism of borrowability scales in general, though.
[58] Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, p. 415.
[59] Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, p. 492, partly responding to Krygier, ‘On the Scandinavian Origin of the Old English Preposition *til* “till”’. Krygier also identifies a potential instance of *til* in the Paris Psalter, a non-Northumbrian Old English text; Dance (*Words Derived from Old Norse*, vol. 2, p. 252, note 979) points out that it is doubtful whether we are really dealing with the preposition here, however.

type. Pons-Sanz is keen to emphasize that these words were not just technical terms or need-based borrowings: Aldred, for instance, uses clear borrowings in general domains where Old English already possessed equivalent terms, such as *dearf* 'bold' and *song* 'song'.[60] Nevertheless, these are not items of basic vocabulary in the sense, for instance, of a Swadesh list. All in all, these borrowings are neither trivial nor of the kind that would license the inference of major structural transfer.

As for evidence of structural effects beyond function words, it is striking that the major syntactic and morphological features said to be a result of Norse influence are first detectable in the Middle English period. In morphology, the main contender is the pronoun *they* and its case forms, which appear in Middle English; the idea that these can only be transferred from Norse has recently been demolished by Cole.[61] The fate of this pronoun has important ramifications, since it has served for generations as the poster child in general treatments of Norse influence.[62] Nevertheless, there are other, less drastic instances of morphological influence: Miller adduces the participle -*and*(*e*) and the distribution of -*ing*, for instance.[63] In syntax, some cases of Norse influence that have been proposed include the transition from Object-Verb to Verb-Object order, the rise of verbal particles, and the shift to simple postverbal negation.[64] For all of these, the evidential basis is Middle English texts, not Old English ones.

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[60] Pons-Sanz, *Lexical Effects*, p. 253.
[61] Cole, 'A native Origin for Present-Day English *They*, *Their*, *Them*'.
[62] For instance, Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Typology*, pp. 52–53; Miller, *External Influences*, pp. 128–30; Durkin, *Borrowed Words*, pp. 175–79, to name but a few recent examples.
[63] Miller, *External Influences*, pp. 130–32.
[64] See Trips, *From OV to VO in Early Middle English*; Elenbaas, 'Synchronic and Diachronic Syntax', pp. 269–79; and Walkden and Morrison, 'Regional Variation in Jespersen's Cycle', respectively. For a sceptical treatment of some proposed cases of Norse syntactic influence on Middle English, including the first two of these, see Bech and Walkden, 'English is (Still) a West Germanic Language', pp. 71–91. A full overview of Norse syntactic influence on English is still to be written.

KTR do mention one piece of corroborating evidence for Norse structural influence in late Northumbrian Old English, and that is the mixed, variable paradigm of verbal endings -*s* and -*ð*, similar to those found in later northern texts.[65] They cite Whitelock for the claim that the earlier Northumbrian Old English texts do not show this variability, and conclude that Norse-speaking second-language learners are responsible for the mess.[66] Recent research has revealed a significant problem for this account, however. Cole has shown in detail that the variation between -*s* and -*ð* in the Lindisfarne glosses, though not categorically determined, is nevertheless far from arbitrary, and is conditioned by subject type and adjacency — in the same way as the 'Northern Subject Rule' known to hold for certain northern English varieties from the Middle English period onwards.[67] Crucially, there is nothing similar in Norse. If these constraints are endogenous in origin, as it seems they must be, this casts doubt on the explanatory value of invoking second-language learning, especially since the chronological and geographical considerations discussed in Section 3 make this unlikely anyway.

In sum, if strict verb-second in late Northumbrian Old English varieties were the result of Norse influence (whether through borrowing, imposition, or morphological simplification), then it would be the only instance of structural transfer known to us from these texts. Aldred and Owun's glossal translations are characterized by moderately extensive transfer of non-basic content words from Norse, but there is no evidence for transfer of function words, basic vocabulary, or any other structural properties. In general, the structural effects of Norse contact emerge later in the history of English, probably as a result of language shift.

[65] Kroch and Taylor, 'Verb Movement', p. 320, citing Brunner, *Abriss der mittelenglischen Grammatik*.
[66] Whitelock, *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader*.
[67] Cole, *Old Northumbrian Verbal Morphosyntax*. We cannot conclude that this was a general property of Old Northumbrian, however; Fernández Cuesta and Langmuir ('Verbal morphology in the Old English gloss to the Durham Collectar') find no effect of either subject type or adjacency.

5. Outlook

In this paper I have presented evidence from the glosses to the Durham Ritual to support KTR's claim that strict verb-second is found in Northumbrian Old English (Section 2). I have also evaluated three contact-based scenarios for the emergence of strict verb-second in these varieties, and found them all wanting. Geography (Section 3.3) and the lack of corroborating linguistic evidence (Section 4) militate against transfer through borrowing, while both chronology (Section 3.2) and geography are particularly problematic for any scenario that draws upon second-language learners in or before the tenth century.

If Norse influence wasn't responsible for the rise of strict verb-second, then where did it come from? One possibility is that it was there all along. KTR acknowledge that they cannot rule out that strict verb-second antedated the arrival of the Scandinavians.[68] In other work I have suggested that it might be the information-structural verb-second system of West Saxon Old English that is the innovation. Strict verb-second is found in most other early Germanic varieties: Old Saxon, Old Norse itself, and most Old High German texts. This raises the possibility that it might be reconstructable all the way to Proto-Northwest Germanic, if not further.[69] Constituent order evidence from the early North and Northwest Germanic runic inscriptions has often been thought to rule this out, but Þórhallur Eyþórsson has shown clearly that evidence for a strict verb-second grammar can be found here too, though it is not categorical.[70] (10) is a representative example with subject-verb inversion.

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[68] Kroch and Taylor, 'Verb Movement', p. 322.
[69] Walkden, 'Language Contact', pp. 70–74. I note here with some embarrassment that this is virtually the opposite of the diachronic scenario presented in Walkden, *Syntactic Reconstruction*, pp. 89–92.
[70] Þórhallur Eyþórsson, 'Variation in the Syntax of the Older Runic Inscriptions'.

(10) *hariuha hai**tika** farauuisa*

Hariuha.NOM am-called.I knowing-danger.NOM

‘I am called Hariuha, the one who knows danger.’

(Sjælland bracteate 2; Þórhallur Eyþórsson, p. 33, his (9))

Rather than being evidence of Norse influence, then, strict verb-second may in fact reflect a far older shared innovation.

This chapter should not be read as an attempt to downplay Norse structural influence on English in general. Old English may not have many good candidates for such influence, but Middle English has several, many of which seem to involve the increase in use of a structure that is common to the two languages.[71] Contact between these two typologically similar languages in such cases plausibly had a catalysing or accelerating effect rather than involving direct and wholesale borrowing, supporting Dawson’s suggestion that koinéization is a good characterization of the process involved.[72] The crucial phase was probably what we have labelled the ‘shift’ phase, from 1042 onwards, when the Norse language was dying out in England. In this connection it is interesting to observe that strict verb-second is much more widespread in the Middle English *Northern Prose Rule of St Benet* than it is in the late Northumbrian Old English texts: over 90 per cent in most contexts, according to KTR’s count. Thus, Norse influence may indeed have played a role in catalysing a rise of strict verb-second during this later phase, even if — as I hope to have shown — the roots of strict verb-second in Old English must lie elsewhere.

[71] See e.g. Miller, *External Influences*, on the shift to verb-object order, p. 144; and Walkden & Morrison, ‘Regional Variation in Jespersen’s Cycle in Early Middle English’, on negation, p. 195.
[72] Dawson, ‘Defining the Outcome of Language Contact’.

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