CHAPTER I

OLD ENGLISH WORD-ORDER

N.B. Numerals in heavier type, e.g. (38), refer to Sections.

1. Inspection of any OE prose text enables us to distinguish three different kinds of order in the OE sentence:

(i) *Common order* (subj. + verb + obj. + adverb), usual in principal sentences, e.g. Se cyning besæt hie on ðære ceastre, Manega leasa Cristas cumað on minum naman cweðende 'Ic eom Crist'. This is obviously the ancestor of our modern order; it may of course be varied in Old as in Modern English to give emphasis to a particular word, e.g. Tocwiesed hreod he ne forbriett 'A bruised reed he shall not break', but the inflectional character of OE allows an order no longer possible, e.g. Deman gedafenað setl, which we cannot render 'A judge befits sitting', since in modern English the order normally determines the syntax: Ælfric, however, uses either 'setl gedafenað deman' or 'deman gedafenað setl', according to the emphasis intended.

2. (ii) *Conjunctive order*, the normal one in subordinate clauses, e.g. þa he hie him eft ageaf 'when he had restored them to him', þær hie se cyning besæt 'where the King had besieged them'. Subordinate order might appear to be a good name for it, but, since it is found also after co-ordinating conjunctions, e.g. ond he gewundad wæs 'and he was wounded', ac he hine feor forwræc 'but he banished him far', and after many other conjunctives, e.g. relative pronouns and some adverbs when they stand first in the sentence, it will be more appropriate to speak of it as conjunctive order.

3. (iii) *Demonstrative order*, found in principal sentences after the demonstrative adverbs þa, þonne, þær, when they are head-words, e.g.:

Ða answarode he him. 'He then answered him.'
Ðonne cymð se Antecrist. 'Then shall come Anti-Christ.'
Ðær besæt hie se cyning. 'There the King besieged them.'

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Sentences like 'ond þa he ferde to Rome', common in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, are no exception to the rule, since the head-word *ond* determines the order and *þa* is internal.

4. It will be well at this point to note the characteristic differences between demonstrative and conjunctive order. In the first, the verb has front position (after the head-word) with the pronouns immediately following; in the second, the pronouns stand all together immediately after the conjunctive, and quite separated, except accidentally, from the verb, which stands at the end. These differences appear clearly in almost any pair of correlated sentences, e.g.:

> Ðaða he slep, þa genom He an rib of his sidan.
> 'While he slept, God took a rib from his side.'
> Ðær he hine on þæm wuda gemette, þær ofslog he hine.
> 'He slew him just where he found him in the forest.'

It should be clearly understood that it is the position of the finite verb which matters; the end-position of the verbals in 'We sind of Criste cristene gehaten', 'he ne mihte þa gyt his Hælend gretan' is idiomatic, but it does not make the order in such sentences conjunctive. Contrariwise, in sentences like 'ond he ham eode to his huse', 'ær he acenned wæs of Marian', where an adverbial phrase stands after the verb as a sort of tag, the order is still conjunctive as the separation of the subject-pronoun from the finite verb shows.

5. Any page of prose will provide evidence that in Old as in Modern English the common order of the principal sentence is not infrequently retained in the subordinate clause, especially when the finite verb is an auxiliary, e.g. þa he wæs gewundad (instead of the normal 'þa he gewundad wæs'), and similarly in co-ordinate sentences after *ond*, *ac*, etc. Is this retention of common order permissible in the demonstrative sentence also? Can we (as in Modern English) say e.g. 'Ða he onswarode' instead of 'Ða onswarode he', or 'Ðær he besæt' instead of 'Ðær besæt he'? We shall attempt to answer this question in the two following chapters.

CHAPTER II

SENTENCES INTRODUCED BY ÐA

6. We begin with *þa*-sentences. In every OE prose text as printed principal sentences of the form '*þa he com*' occur, and in some they abound. Are we to accept such sentences as representing good OE usage? The evidence of texts which are translations from Latin is here very instructive; wherever there is an obvious correlation, with or without correlating adverb, the supposed principal sentence turns out to be a subordinate clause. Here are four examples out of many from Ælfric's *Pentateuch*:

Gen. xxvii. 38.	Ða he swiðe weop. Ða wearð Isaac sarig
xxxi. 21.	Þa he ferde mid þam þingum. Ða cyðde man Labane
Num. xii. 4.	Þa hi wæron ut agane; Drihten astah niðer on genipe
Deut. ix. 15.	Ða ic niðer eode of þam munte. Ic wearp þa bredu of minum handum

So Grein punctuates; the Latin, however, has Cumque fleret, Cumque abiisset, Cumque fuissent egressi, Cumque de monte ardente descenderem, for the four first sentences. It is important for our argument to remember that the punctuation of all our printed copies of OE texts is the work of modern editors; and the mere substitution of commas for other stops in each of the passages cited is enough to make the first sentence subordinate and the syntax normal. Instead of repeating this evidence for *Bede*, let us rather use that work to give examples of *þa*-sentences with common or conjunctive order which the Latin does certify as principal; they are six in number:

34. 26. Þa S. Albanus gegyrede hine ða his munucgegyrelan
102. 20. Þa se Godes wer is sægd þæt be forecwæde
252. 1. [Þa þis þa gedon wæs] þa se biscop ond heora lareowas ham hwurfon
324. 21. Þa Ðeodor þa ongunnon bernisse adwæscte
360. 12. Þa þæt rice þa...fremde cyningas forluron
444. 8. [Þa he þus gespræc] þa he...of worulde gewat

In all these, however, the readings on one ground or another are suspect: the first and fifth have a pleonastic *þa...þa* which is never

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found in principal sentences (some MSS. omit the first *þa* in
360. 12 and it ought to be omitted in 34. 26 also); the *þa* in 102. 20
translates Latin *quibus* (a continuative relative) and should be
þam (=*þā*); the Latin in 252. 1 has 'et ipsi sacerdotes' ('the
clerics also'), and one MS. actually has '*ond* se biscop'; in 324. 21, B,
an excellent MS., omits the first *þa*, while in 444. 8 the same MS.
instead of '*þa* he' has 'he *þa*', which as we shall see is normally
followed by conjunctive order. The reader will be able to judge for
himself how frail is the support for a '*þa* he com' form of principal
sentence when he is assured that the six passages cited are the
strongest evidence for it which can be produced. In the Gospels
we have:

Matt. ix. 37. Ða he sæde. (*V*. Tum dicit.)
Mk. xiv. 10. Ða Iudas Scarioth, þæt is wiþersaca...ferde to þam
    heah-sacerdum. (*V*. Et Judas Iscariotes.)

Since translators usually followed the sacred text closely, 'Ða' is
probably right in *Matt.* and 'ond' a certain correction in *Mark*;
it may be noted, however, that the Lindisfarne version has 'ond'
in both passages.

7. We turn now to OE texts which are not translations from
Latin, and here our task will be to find an alternative interpretation
of the sentence-form we are considering. To record and examine
every supposed instance would obviously be a labour requiring a
whole volume to itself; we shall therefore simplify the problem by
excluding those instances (happily the great majority) in which
correlation immediately suggests a different construction and only
the editor's punctuation is at fault. Simple examples of such mis-
punctuation are numerous in Ælfric's *Lives of the Saints,* both in
text and translation, e.g.:

    I. 32. Ða ic geseah þa halgan Godes gerynu. Ða wearp ic me sylfe
forð on þa flor (where the translation has 'Then I beheld the holy
mysteries. Then I cast myself, etc.').
    II. 518. Ða he com ful neah into þære cypinge. Ða gehyrde he...
(where the translation has 'And so he came into the market. Then he
heard, etc.').

In each of these substitute a comma for the first full-stop. Other
examples are not quite so simple; here are two from *ASC* 894:

(i) Ða he þa wæs þiderweardes ond sio oþeru fierd wæs hamweardes; ond ða Deniscan sæton þær behindan forþæm þe hiora cyning wæs gewundod on þæm gefeohte. Ða gegaderodon þa þe in Norþhymbrum bugeað sum hund scipa....

(ii) Ða se cyning hine þa west wende mid þære fierde wið Exan-cestres ond se here þa burg beseten hæfde; þa he þær to gefaren wæs, þa eodon hie to hiora scipum.

In both passages we have a single period with correlation. It may be said with confidence that the sentence-form 'þa he þa' (or, with a noun, 'þa se cyning þa') is in the *Chronicle*, as elsewhere, in-variably subordinate; there are three examples in the paragraph immediately following the last passage cited. Moreover, the clause 'þa he þær to gefaren wæs' in (ii), catching up and amplifying the previous clause, is idiomatic in OE, e.g.:

Blick. 225*a*. Ða he þa hæfde þone hired gesibbodne ond þær dagas wel manige wæs, þa he þa eft mynte to his mynstre feran. Ða wearð he færinga swiðe untrum.

This should be read as a single period 'When he had made peace among the household and had now been among them many days, on his beginning to think of returning to his monastery he suddenly became very ill'; and similarly in *Bede* 36. 33:

Ða he þa mid swinglum wæced wæs ond he ealle þa witu geþyldelice abær. Ða se dema þæt þa oncneow...þa het he hine heafde beceorfan.

8. Excluding therefore sentences which, like those cited, ob-viously admit of another and very idiomatic construction, let us now examine those passages in the chief OE prose-writers which seem at first sight to present veritable instances of the 'þa he com' type in principal sentences. We begin with the *Homilies* of Ælfric, in which by general consent are to be found the finest examples of the mature OE prose style:

Hom. I. 26. 29. He nolde geniman us neadunge of deofles anwealde buton he hit forwyrhte; þa he hit forwyrhte genoh swiðe þaða he gehwette and tihte ðæra Iudeiscra manna heortan to Cristes slege.

So Thorpe, making two principal sentences. We have better sense, and the sense we expect, if we take the second sentence as a causal clause qualifying the previous sentence, 'He would not have taken us by force from the devil's power unless the devil had forfeited his

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power, since he did indeed forfeit it altogether when he whetted the hearts of the Jews to the slaying of Christ '.

Hom. I. 144. 14. Þa Maria, þæt halige mæden, and þæs cildes fostor-fæder wæron ofwundrode þæra worda.... And se Symeon him ða sealde bletsunge.

If the text is good, this must be admitted as a veritable instance of the 'ða he com' form; though it may be pointed out that the mere omission of 'And' would give us a period in which the second sentence is principal and the first subordinate. This construction would be possible in *Bede* or *Blickling* even with the 'And', since we frequently find *and* in apodosis in these texts; it does not occur however in Ælfric.

Hom. I. 152. 24. Þa eal þæt folc, þe þæt wundor geseh, herede God....

This is the end of a long quotation from St Luke's Gospel (xviii. 43); the reading in the Gospel text is 'ond (not þa) eal þæt folc', and we can hardly doubt that 'þa' is a scribal error: the *ond*-sigil (7) was frequently confused by copyists with *þa*. The Vulgate has 'Et omnis plebs...'.

Hom. I. 418. 21. Ða se eadiga Laurentius ðwoh heora ealra fet and ða wudewan from hefigtimum heafod-ece gehælde. Eac sum ymesene man mid wope his fet gesohte biddende his hæle.

Thorpe's punctuation misses the point of the sentence before, which tells us how L. distributed alms to poor strangers and widows, and at last came to a widow called Quiriaca who had given shelter to many persecuted persons, and (he continues) '*when* the blessed man had washed the feet of them all and relieved the widow of a troublesome head-ache, a blind man also sought his feet, weeping and praying for a cure '. The syntax is quite normal.

Hom. I. 482, ft. Þa, forðam ðe he nolde from his gebeorum beon gecweden manswara, ðone beorscipe mid blode gemencgde. 'Then, because he would not be called a perjurer, [he] stained the banquet with blood.'

The subjectless 'gemencgde' is a certain sign that the sentence is co-ordinate to 'Herodes swor þæt he wolde hire forgyfan swa hwæt swa heo bæde' just before and has the same subject: *ond* has

therefore been omitted before '*þa*' and the adverb is no longer the head-word.

Hom. II. 6. 12. Ða æfre smeade God fram frymðe middaneardes hu he mihte mancynnes gehelpan....Ða nolde he asendan to ure alysed-nysse naðor ne engel ne heah-engel...ac sende se Fæder his ancenne-dan sunu.

Thorpe translates 'Then God ever meditated how he might help mankind. Then he would not send, etc.' There is, however, a far more natural meaning, viz. '*Since* God was always thinking from the beginning of the world how he might help mankind, he would not send for our redemption either angel or archangel, but sent his only-begotten Son.' The syntax is normal and the sense what the argument requires.

Hom. II. 212. 21. Ða Iordanis seo ea on emtwa toeode.

Thorpe renders 'Then the Jordan separated into two parts'. Ælfric is describing the stages by which Israel reached the promised land: after the death of Moses they begat a great progeny in the wilderness, they then came under Joshua to the nations to which they had been called 'when the river Jordan parted in two and they went over dryshod'; here we have the continuative *ða* (38) common in Ælfric.

Hom. II. 260. 28. Ða sum rice ðegen ðearle wæs gelyfed on Dryhten, his nama wæs Joseph: and he genealæhte ða hrædlice to ðam ealdormen.

This passage is exactly like *Hom*. I. 144. 14 just above and the same explanation applies. There is no need to cite instances in which a sentence is introduced by *Hwæt þa* or *Efne þa*, since the usage both of Ælfric and other writers makes it quite clear that interjections like *Hwæt* and *Efne* were normally followed by con-junctive order, e.g.:

Hom. I. 78. 28. Hwæt þa God on swefne hi gewarnode. 'Lo! then God warned them in a dream.'

The *þa* in such phrases was no doubt enclitic to the interjection and unstressed.

9. Our examination of the *Homilies* has left us with possibly two examples of the '*þa* he com' type of principal sentence. If we may take the Homilies on St Cuthbert or St Benedict as a standard,

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there are on the average four and a half demonstrative *þa*-sentences
to a page, and, therefore, some 2700 in the work as a whole. This
gives us less than one exception to every thousand examples of the
normal construction, a proportion which can easily be accounted
for by scribal error. Let us now pass to *Orosius* (included here
because the Latin original throws no light on the passages
cited):

Oros. 46. 7. Þa under þæm gewinne hie genamon frið wið þa
wæpnedmenn. Siþþan wæs hiera þeaw....

Read as one sentence and we have good sense and normal syntax:
'When they had made peace with the men, it was ever after their
custom, etc.'

Oros. 62. 7. And þa þæt eastrice in Asiria gefeoll, þa þæt westrice in
Roma aras.

This sentence is the second member of a clause following 'Swa
gelomp þætte' and should be so punctuated: 'so it befell that [just
when Babylon became subject to Cyrus Rome was delivered from
the Tarquins] and just when the Eastern Empire fell in Assyria the
Western Empire arose in Rome.' The syntax is normal, the con-
junctive order of 'þa...aras' being determined by 'ond [þætte]'
which (and not *þa*) is the head-word. Examples might be mul-
tiplied; here is one:

Bede 400. 27. Ða ic hreowsende wæs, ða ic mid ðy heafde com on
þone stan dryfan.

Here also the sentence depends on 'Ða gelomp' and should be so
pointed; it may be observed that in this passage two MSS. read
'þæt' for the second 'þa', which makes the interpretation given
quite certain.

Oros. 284. 33. Þa he þæt geascade, þa he gefor on þam færelte.
'Having learnt this, he died on his journey.'

This looks like a certain instance, but fortunately the C manuscript,
a better authority, reads 'þa gefor he' and enables us to correct it.
     The *Chronicle* abounds in *þa*-sentences, and here if anywhere we
might expect to find indubitable instances of the 'þa he com' type

of principal sentence if they exist at all. Yet the only one of the kind is:

ASC 762 (E). Þa man gehalgode Pyhtwine to bisceop. 'Then P. was consecrated bishop.'

Even for this exceptional instance a simple explanation is possible; in the early annals of the *Chronicle* the more usual connective is not *þa* but 'ond þa', as in 755 just before where it occurs eight times, and 'ond þa' in our passage would make the syntax normal, *ond* and not *þa* being the head-word. One remarkable feature of the evidence from the *Chronicle* ought to be mentioned: we frequently find in its pages six or eight *þa*-sentences in succession, and if the 'þa he com' type had been a real one there could hardly have failed to be instances of *two* such sentences in sequence, which no repunctuation could have made into a correlated pair. It can scarcely be luck that whenever we find a supposed instance of the 'þa he com' type there is, except in the passage just cited, the appropriate demonstrative sentence next to it.

10. This concludes our survey of the evidence for the 'þa he com' form of principal sentence in the five principal works of OE prose. We have found that almost all the supposed instances of it are explicable by the rules of normal syntax and that even the half-dozen exceptions are, for one reason or another, not of a kind to carry conviction; we are justified therefore in concluding that in prose this sentence-form is unambiguously subordinate.

11. Let us now go on to consider the further problem whether the 'þa com he' type, which is usually a principal sentence, is unambiguously so or may also be a subordinate clause. It will be necessary to examine the evidence carefully since the wide pre-valence of the clause seems not to be generally realized; no example of it is given by Sweet in his excellent *Primer* among the sentences which form Chapter I, although these illustrate almost every other type of OE clause; and the editors of texts almost invariably print such clauses as principal sentences, especially when the verb is stressed, e.g.:

Matt. viii. 18. Ða geseah se Hælend þa menigu; þa het he hig faran.

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The Vulgate has 'videns autem Iesus...', and there is, therefore, a strong presumption that the first sentence is a temporal clause— 'when Jesus saw the multitude'. Let us apply the same test to a few other passages (which might be greatly multiplied) from works which are translations from the Latin:

Gen. xxxii. 25. Þa geseah he þæt he hine oferswiðan ne mihte; þa æthran he....
Exod. ii. 12. Þa beseah he hine ymbutan...; þa ofsloh he þone Egyptiscan.

So Grein points, making two pairs of demonstrative sentences. The Vulgate, however, has 'Cum videret quod eum superare non posset, tetigit, etc.', and 'Cum circumspexisset, percussum Aegyptium [abscondit]', and there can be little doubt that the first sentence in each of the OE passages should be taken as a temporal clause.

Oros. 156. 29. Ða ascedan hiene his þegnas....Ða ondwyrde he.
           234. 21. Ða bæd he þæt mon þone triumphan him ongean brohte. Ða sende mon....

So Sweet, making two pairs of demonstrative sentences. But in each passage the Latin begins with a temporal clause 'cum a sociis increparetur' and 'cum nuncios de victoria misisset', and again there can be little doubt that we should render 'when his thanes asked him' and 'when he demanded a triumph'.

Bede 118. 6. Þa for se wallende leg..., þa getreowde he in godcundne fultum.
          166. 28. Þa com he ærest on Westseaxum, þa þuhte him....

So Miller correctly, as the Latin shows, 'cum furens se flamma dilataret', etc.

12. Such passages establish quite clearly the 'þa com he' type of subordinate clause as a genuine OE idiom. It would be wearisome to review further examples at length, but it may be worth while to indicate briefly and in general terms the kind of context in which a clause is specially appropriate. Wherever a sentence like 'þa gehyrde he', 'þa befran he hine', is followed immediately by another of the same form, e.g. þa cwæð he, the juxtaposition usually demands correlation; here are three examples: