Journal of Germanic Linguistics **26.2** (2014):127–155
doi: 10.1017/S1470542714000038

The Evolution of the Definite Article in Old High German

Andrew Kraiss

Hendrix College

This paper is an investigation of the early use of the Old High German demonstrative as a definite article. Previous work has often failed to take into account the many ways that the definite article can be employed or the fact that new grammatical structures sometimes evolve over great lengths of time. This paper discusses the evolutionary process and stages of article use in three individual OHG documents, the *Isidor* translation, the *Tatian* translation, and Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*, the three longest OHG documents in Franconian dialects. It proposes that a definite article did exist from the earliest recorded examples of OHG although with differing uses at different times (and places).[*]

1. Introduction.

It is clear that the West Germanic definite article is derived from a demonstrative pronoun or adjective, but when it came to be used as an article has remained in dispute. Harbert (2007:142) summarizes the disagreement:

> The point at which this transition is complete is hard to pin down. Behaghel (1923–32) asserts that they had already lost the deictic force of demonstratives by the time of OHG. On the other hand, Abraham (1997) claims that in MHG neither the definite nor the indefinite article had yet developed its modern meaning, and speaks of OHG and MHG as belonging to a 'pre-article' phase. Philippi (1997) claims they were still demonstratives … and that they only became true definite articles in late medieval times.

[*] This study is a revised version of portions of my doctoral dissertation, Kraiss 2011. I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for many helpful comments on earlier drafts of the work. Remaining errors are mine.

© Society for Germanic Linguistics

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The source of the difficulty lies in the misconception that there is a specific point in time when the demonstrative becomes a definite article akin to the article used in Present Day German (PDG). Leiss (2000, 2007) and Abraham (1997) see the loss of aspect as the key evolutionary development for the advent of the definite article in OHG.

This paper is a functional analysis of the article in German that allows the identification of articles by their use in OHG and later periods of German. Section 2 discusses the pre-OHG situation in terms of a definiteness cycle. It also discusses recent research by Leiss (2007, 2000), Hawkins (2004), and Lyons (1991) on the evolution of articles that helps identify stages in the development from deictic to definite article within the context of use and can be applied to OHG. Section 3 gives a brief overview of the texts used for the study and analyzes evidence from those texts in light of the research discussed in section 2. The last section concludes that there was a definite article in OHG, but that its use differed in earlier stages of German compared to later stages.

Before proceeding, it is useful to discuss some of the terminology employed throughout the paper. Lyons (1999) and Mathews (2005) provide the following definitions. Lyons (1999:1–20, 157–198) provides more extensive discussion of the terminology. A DETERMINER is a grammatical unit that limits the referent of a noun phrase and refers to both DEMONSTRATIVES and DEFINITE ARTICLES. Demonstratives are distinguished from definite articles in that they show DEIXIS. *Deixis* is derived from a Greek term meaning "to point out" and is traditionally used with demonstratives such as English *this* or *that* to point out to the listener the referent that the speaker has in mind.

The definite article (such as *the* in English) marks a noun phrase as DEFINITE but does not indicate deixis. DISCOURSE DEIXIS points out something named either in the preceding discourse, that is, ANAPHORA or in the following discourse, that is, CATAPHORA. VISIBILITY can refer to physical visibility to speaker and listener or to textual visibility in the sense of anaphora and cataphora. A determiner can be DISTAL if it refers to something far away either physically or within the discourse, or PROXIMAL if it refers to something close either physically or within the discourse. The terms *distal* and *proximal* are generally used to refer to demonstratives but, as I show below, can also refer to definite articles.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2. Definiteness Cycle and the Genesis of the German Definite Article. Greenberg (1978:61) posited a "cycle of the definite article" consisting of three stages: definite article, nongeneric article, and noun marker. Van Gelderen (2007:286, 2011:17) bases the cycle on the Principle of Feature Economy:

(1) **Principle of Feature Economy:**
Minimize the semantic/interpretable features in the derivation.

Adjunct	>	Specifier	>	Head	>	Affix
semantic	>	[iF]	>	[uF]	>	

Van Gelderen expands the formulation to account for the syntactic position (the top row in 2) and the semantic/feature role (the bottom row in 2), and to include two earlier stages of Adjunct and Specifier. I propose that the Adjunct in the German DP/Definite cycle is a noun.

(2) DP / Definiteness Cycle

Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5
Adjunct	>	Specifier	>	Head	>	Affix	>	Zero
Noun Phrase	>	Demonstrative	>	Definite Article	>	Case/ Nongeneric	>	Class Marker
semantic	>	[iF]	>	[uF]	>	Zero	>	Zero

Van Gelderen (2007:286) compares this diachronic process to a process by which a light verb such as *go* becomes a future auxiliary. This verb contains the semantic features [MOTION], [FUTURE], and [LOCATION]. When used in combination with a verb that contains the features [MOTION] and [LOCATION] such as *bring* as in *I'm gonna bring that*, only the feature [FUTURE] of *go* is activated allowing it to be grammaticalized to a future auxiliary. A demonstrative noun might be considered a light noun. It has the features [DEIXIS] and [DEFINITENESS] (and possibly others). When used with another noun, it might retain only the feature [DEFINITENESS]. Demonstratives could begin as adjuncts to nouns or adjectives but be reanalyzed as DP Specifiers and later grammaticalize as

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

an article Head of DP.[1] The Head Preference Principle (HPP) triggers grammaticalization:

(3) **Head Preference Principle:** Be a head, rather than a phrase.

HPP is another principle of feature economy. It is easier for the language learner to analyze given linguistic input as a phrasal head than as a full phrase. In case of an ambiguous structure, the language learner would analyze it in the way that is closest to the surface structure, that is, as a head. "This change is slow, however, since a child learning the language will continue to have input, for instance, of a pronoun as both a phrase and a head" (van Gelderen 2007:283). The German definite article (a head) can, in fact, still be used as a demonstrative (a phrase).

The stem of the Germanic noun would be a noun class marker at the end of the definite cycle. The cycle could then begin anew.

> Once the functional element has lost its semantic and interpretable features, it becomes a probe looking for an element to value its uninterpretable features. I assume it can value these with elements that are themselves inactive; otherwise renewal would not take place. Some elements are straightforward renewers: demonstratives have phi features and adverbs temporal or spatial ones. (van Gelderen 2011:20)

A demonstrative retains interpretable features. The demonstrative may be grammaticalized to a definite article that no longer has interpretable features and only indicates definiteness. The modern Germanic languages all show this third stage of the cycle.

The DP-hypothesis states that the referential interpretation of NP is determined in Head, D. In languages that do not have articles (and may not have DP in their grammars), if referentiality is to be marked, it must be marked some other way. Philippi (1997) argues that case can act as a functional head and saturate a referential argument position for NP. Using examples from Turkish, Finnish, and Russian, she shows that genitive or partitive case can be used to mark an NP as weak (indefinite) and accusative case can be used to mark an NP as strong (definite).

[1] Here, I disagree with Leiss (2000:94), who claims that demonstratives have less deictic capacities than articles.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Philippi (following Abraham 1997) and Leiss (2000, 2007) also claim that the older Germanic languages use a system of accusative/genitive case alteration similar to Russian to mark NPs as definite or indefinite. In this system, only perfective verbs can govern direct objects in both accusative and genitive case. The accusative marks the object as definite and the genitive marks the object as indefinite. Imperfective verbs can only govern objects in the accusative case but use accusative to mark the object as indefinite. Imperfective verbs, therefore, cannot mark an NP as definite. Russian can compensate for this deficiency by using a perfective verb prefix when it is necessary to mark an NP as definite.

(4) [–PERF] On kolo-l drov-a
he split-PRET wood-ACC-[-DEF]

[+PERF] On *ras*-kolo-l drov-a
he PERF.PREF-split-PRET (the) wood-ACC-[+DEF]
Leiss (2000:12)

Abraham (1997) finds that OHG could do the same with perfective prefixes, but that it was different in that the object in the accusative governed by an imperfective verb was ambiguous with respect to definiteness. He postulates a later stage in OHG when durative verbs lost their status as morphologically marked imperfectives. Eventually aspect was lost entirely and replaced by a tense system. Abraham admits that "the basis for this generalization for OHG is as yet limited and is in need of more statistical support" (p. 46).

At some point German ceases to use case to mark definiteness and develops a definite article. Philippi (1997) sees a causal connection between the weakening of case morphology and the rise of the definite article: the former results in determiners being reanalyzed as the functional head of the NP. Leiss (1994, 2007) holds a similar view and describes the loss of the aspect system and rise of an article system as a "parametric change" or "grammatical revolution" (Leiss 1994:319). Yet the two systems could exist side-by-side, at least for some time. Leiss 2007 identifies three phases of development. The first phase proceeds as follows:

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> … a demonstrative pronoun referred anaphorically to indefinite objects (in a SVO-serialization) as well as to definite objects (in a SOV-serialization). This process of anaphoric reference turns indefinite rhematic material into given information. Thus indefinite objects become definite "one clause later". (p. 97)

In the second phase, demonstrative pronouns are used in rhematic positions to mark definite objects. They do not refer anaphorically to preceding information but to knowledge shared by speaker and listener. This is called HYPODETERMINATION.

The third phase according to Leiss is HYPERDETERMINATION. In this phase, definite articles are used with any definite argument including inherently definite subjects, which gives rise to the anaphoric function of the definite article (this function, however, should not be confused with the anaphoric function of the demonstrative pronoun, which emerges in the first phase). Leiss does not define definiteness or elaborate on the different ways definite articles can be used. However, once the definite article has emerged, its domain of use continues to expand.

Hawkins (2004:84–86) identifies four stages of semantic/pragmatic evolution of articles derived from demonstrative pronouns. I include the deictic pronoun as stage 0. Hawkins' stage 2 picks up where Leiss (1994) left off.

(5) 0. Use as deictic only
1. Abandonment of deictic restriction and adoption of anaphoric function for visible or recently mentioned nouns
2. Expansion of the range of use from visible to nonvisible nouns
3. Universal or generic use with little or no pragmatic delineation
4. Extension to specific indefinite reference and purely syntactic purposes, for example, as a noun class marker

Lyons (1999) discusses how the proximal/distal dichotomy of demonstratives can be found in article use as well. The difference between a proximal demonstrative such as English *this* and a distal demonstrative such as English *that* is usually quite obvious. Most languages with a definite article, however, use the same word as both proximal and distal article. In its proximal function, such a word would be used to refer either to an object that is physically close or to something recently mentioned. The anaphoric use is derived from the article

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

use when deictic concepts are transferred to the temporal dimension of discourse.

The distal uses of an article are those that "require some inferencing to interpret; the hearer must calculate, using background knowledge and experience, what the referent is" (Lyons 1999:161). Lyons uses the example of the North Frisian dialect Fering described by Ebert (1971a, 1971b) that does have distinct proximal and distal articles:

> Fering has two definite articles, the 'A-article' and the 'D-article'. The D-article is used anaphorically as in (1), cataphorically, where the referent is identified in a following relative clause as in (2), and where the referent is visible in the physical context as in (3):
>
> 1 Oki hee an hingst keeft. **Di** hingst haaltet.
> 'Oki bought a horse. **The** horse is lame.'
> 2 **Det** buk, wat hi tuiast skrewen hee, dochts niks.
> '**The** book that he wrote first is worthless.'
> 3 **Dön** kaater kleesi.
> '**The/those** cats are scratching.'
>
> The A-article is used with uniques as in (4), generics as in (5), referents unique or identifiable in the wider situation as in (6), referents identified by a prenominal adjective as in (7), in associative occurrences as in (8), and (rather than a possessive) with inalienable properties as in (9):
>
> 4 a san
> 'the sun'
> 5 A kaater kleesi.
> 'Cats scratch.'
> 6 Ik skal deel tu a kuupmaan.
> 'I must go (down) to the grocer.'
> 7 A fering spriik as det spriik, wat a feringen snaaki.
> 'The Fering language is the language that the Föhrer speak.'
> 8 Jister wul wi deel an Sina bischük, an üüs wi diar uunkem, do as a dör feest.
> 'Yesterday we wanted to go (down) and visit Sina, and when we got there the door is locked.'
> 9 Hi ded ham a hun.
> 'He gave him his hand.' Lyons (1999:62)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The proximal uses of the Fering D-article type overlap with the uses of the distal demonstrative, which is why a distal demonstrative can come to be used as a definite article, as is the case in Fering and German, but which also make it difficult to identify articles in a written text. When an article is used with nouns that have more abstract referents, such as in Lyons' examples above, the usage identifies it as a definite article even if the article is derived from a demonstrative. To this day, in German, what looks like an article can be interpreted as a distal demonstrative, for example, *der da* meaning 'that one there'; or, any time the determiner is stressed, it is interpreted as a demonstrative, for example, ***das*** *Buch* is interpreted as '**that** book' as opposed to unstressed *das Buch* that has the neutral meaning 'the book'. (German *dies-* 'this' and *jen-* 'that' are not necessarily stressed, but they cannot be confused with an article.) The evidence from Fering suggests an innovative way of analyzing data from any language, but it may be especially useful for other Germanic languages such as OHG.

3. Article Usage in the Texts.

This section examines evidence for the types of article use discussed above. Both translations often contain *ther, thie, thaz* where the Latin original contains a demonstrative or a bare noun. This is an indication that *ther, thie, thaz* could be used as a distal demonstrative or as an article.

For this study, I examined the major texts in Old Franconian dialects: The *Isidor* translation, the *Tatian* translation, and Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*. The OHG *Isidor* translation is dated to the last decade of the eighth century. It has been argued that it is composed in an otherwise unknown West Franconian dialect by an author who was fluent in Latin and Old French (see Bostock 1976:118–125). The OHG translation of Tatian's Gospel harmony was written in East Franconian about AD 830. The *Evangelienbuch* is a poetic Gospel harmony, not a translation, and is considered to have been composed between 863 and 871. Otfrid's dialect was yet another variant of Franconian known as South Rhenish Franconian. For my study, I used the entire *Isidor* translation and selections from *Tatian* translation, as well as the *Evangelienbuch* of length roughly equal to the entire *Isidor*. The passages from *Tatian* and the *Evangelienbuch* were selected at random, but all of them appear at the beginning of chapters since that is where new objects and ideas tend to be introduced.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

For the *Isidor*, I used Eggers 1964, for *Tatian*, Sievers 1892, and for the *Evangelienbuch*, Erdmann & Wolf 1957. References to line numbers are from these editions.

3.1. Use of the Article for Genitives.
There is one use of a determiner, which quite clearly cannot be demonstrative, namely, a determiner used in a partitive genitive construction. The *Isidor* translation contains the phrase *in zeihne dhero liudeo*, which translates the Latin phrase *in signum populorum* 'in (a) sign of the people'. The people are not mentioned in the text immediately preceding this passage, so *dhero* has no anaphoric or deictic function. The same Latin phrase appears again later in the paragraph without a determiner.

Within the older system, where (in)definiteness is indicated by interaction between aspect and case, genitive objects are indefinite regardless of whether they appear with perfective or imperfective verbs. When the genitive object is, in fact, definite, the determiner (now an article) is needed to show that. The selections from the *Tatian* translation contain many such genitives. Some examples are given in 6.

(6) a. 2.1 in tagun Herodes thes cuninges Iudeno
in days Herod.GEN the.GEN king.GEN Judea.GEN
'in the days of Herod the king of Judea'

b. 2.3 after giuuonu thes biscofheites
after custom the.GEN bishopric.GEN
'according to the custom of the bishopric'

In 6a, the noun in the genitive case appears for the first time in the corresponding narrative. More examples of this type appear in Appendix. It is very unlikely that a demonstrative could be used in this way, as there is no deixis shown. The function of the determiner is purely grammatical, that is, the semantics has been lost and the demonstrative has been grammaticalized to an article.

In the *Evangelienbuch*, determiners in the genitive case appear everywhere where they are not part of a possessive construction. In some cases, the determiner could be intended simply as a demonstrative in the genitive case, as shown in 7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(7) a. I.3.17 thaz was David, thero gomono ein,
that was David the.GEN/those.GEN men one

ther zi kuninge gireim
who as king counted

'that was David, one of the/those men who is counted as a king'

b. II.8.11 Tho zigiang thes lides joh brast
then disappeared the.GEN/that.GEN drink.GEN and lacked

in thar thes wines
to-them there the.GEN/that.GEN wine.GEN

'Then their drink disappeared and they lacked wine.'

In 7a, *thero gomono* is in a cataphoric relationship to the relative pronoun *ther*. More examples can be found in Appendix.

In all the examples in 8, the nouns in question have been previously mentioned in the text. The determiners could therefore be demonstratives intended to convey the anaphoric relationship. Yet there are other nouns that have not been previously mentioned.

(8) a. I.3.27 thie warun wurzelun thera saligun bluomun
they were roots the.GEN holy flower
'they were roots of the holy flower'

b. I.3.28 muater thera marun thera gotes drutthiarnun
mother the.GEN exalted the.GEN god's bride
'mother of the exalted God's bride'

c. II.8.38 ther thero thriosezzo was furisto gimazzo
who the.GEN table was first tablemate
'who was the first tablemate of the table'

Although these objects have not been recently mentioned by name they are known to the reader. *The holy flower* and *the exalted* as well as *the*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

bride of God are metaphors for Mary. *The table* is identifiable as *the Lord's table*, or the table of the last supper. Identifiability combined with definiteness seems to require the article for these partitive genitives.

3.2. Proximal Use of the Article.

The *Isidor* translator uses determiners 440 times. The overwhelming majority of these determiners are of the type used as articles in PDG, and they are often used where no determiner is present in the Latin original. Such usage suggests that at least some of these determiners were construed as articles.

The OHG of the *Isidor* sometimes makes anaphoric use of a determiner. A referent can be first introduced without a determiner, for example, I.6 *daz er fona fater ist gaboran* 'that he from father is born' and then referred back to with a determiner, for example, I.6 *fona demo selbo fater* 'from the/that same father' to show an anaphoric relationship. Jäger (1917) finds 32 examples in the *Isidor* where the determiner has a clearly anaphoric function. Jäger sees this as article usage but notes that possessive pronouns can also be used in place of articles to convey anaphora. Jäger's analysis, however, does not acknowledge the fact that demonstratives can also be used anaphorically, and, therefore, these demonstratives cannot be said to be articles for this reason alone. Such frequent use of determiners where none are present in the Latin text is, however, consistent with anaphoric article use.

The *Tatian* translation also contains numerous examples of nouns that appear for the first time without a determiner and later on, when the object or person is referred back to, with a determiner. In these cases, the Latin original never uses determiners for the second mention. Leiss (2007:92) cites one such example from the beginning of the *Tatian* translation that contains a rhema without an article and thema with an article:

In ipso **uita** erat;	thaz uuas in imo **lib**;
Inti **thaz lib** uuas **lioht** manno.	& **uita** erat **lux** hominum.
Inti **thaz lioht** …	& **lux**
In him was **life** and **the life** was **the light** of men. **The light** …	
lib [+RHEMA]	thaz **lib** [+THEMA]
lioht [+RHEMA]	thaz **lioht** [+THEMA]

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

There are many other examples. In 9, an OHG line is followed by the corresponding Latin text: 9a shows the first mention of the noun *boat*, while example 9b shows the second mention of this noun.

(9) a. 52.1 Imo stigantemo in **skef** folgetun imo sine iungiron.

Et adscendente eo in **navicula** secuti sunt eum discipuli eius.

'With him climbing into (the/a) boat, his disciples followed him.'

b. 52.2 … **thaz skef** uuard bithekit mit then undon.

… **navicula** operiretur flucyibus.

'the/that ship was covered with waves.'

Example 10 offers especially compelling evidence for article use: Since *thiu scaf* and *thio zigun* refer to hypothetical sheep and lambs, it is very unlikely that *thiu/thio* is a demonstrative. For more examples of this type see Appendix.

(10) 152.2 so hirti zisceidit **scaf** fon **zigon**, inti sezzit **thiu scaf** fon sineru zesavvun inti **thio zigun** fon sineru uuinistrun.

Sicut pastor segregate **oves** ab **hedis**, et statuet **oves** quidam a dextris suis, **hedos** autem a sinistris.

'Thus (a) shepherd separates sheep from lambs and sets the sheep at his right and the lambs at his left side.'

The *Evangelienbuch* also contains many determiners that appear to be proximal articles. It is more difficult to determine whether they are articles or demonstratives though, since the *Evangelienbuch* is an original composition, with no Latin text for comparison. However, there is one clear example:

(11) I.3.9-12 Ni was Noe, ih sagen thir ein,
not was Noah, I tell you once,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in then thaz minnista deil,
among them the least part

'I tell you now, Noah was not the least of them.'

The determiner in this example is almost certainly an article, not a demonstrative, since the author is not pointing out and comparing specific parts (*deil*). The *Evangelienbuch* also contains many clear examples of distal articles.

3.3. Distal Use of the Article.
All of the works examined show that distal articles can be used for at least some of the purposes identified above. However, none of them contain examples of a distal article used with referents with inalienable properties. In this section, various distal uses of the article are discussed.

First, an article can be used to express the uniqueness of an object. In PDG, nouns that denote unique objects such as *sun*, *moon*, *earth*, *devil*, *heaven*, *hell*, *life*, *death*, *sin*, and *night* require an article. In contrast, in the OHG translation of the *Isidor* or *Tatian* uniqueness does not seem to play a role in article use. The *Isidor* translation has words for sun, earth, heaven, and devil that never appear with a determiner of any kind. Similarly, the selection from the *Tatian* translation contains words for earth, life, and sin that are never used with an article to express uniqueness.

In the *Evangelienbuch*, however, an article is used with unique objects. The first mention of night (*naht*) and foundation (of the earth) (*fundament*) contains an article:

(12) a. II.1.13 Er mano rihti thia naht,
before moon steered the night

joh wurti ouh sunna so glat,
and became also sun so smooth

'before the moon steered the night and before the sun became so smooth'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

b. II.1.22 thaz fundament zi houfe, thar thiu erda ligit ufe:
the foundation to ground where the earth lies on:
'the foundation was laid where the earth now lies'

This usage is common in PDG and other Germanic languages, but it is applied to somewhat different sets of nouns in different languages and dialects. Otfrid mentions heaven (*himil*), earth (*erda*), moon (*mano*), and sun (*sunna*) for the first time without an article. The use of the article to encode uniqueness tends to expand over time. Examples 16 show the early stages of such use.

Second, an article can be used with nouns whose referents are identified by a prenominal adjective. The older Germanic languages use the so-called strong and weak declensions to indicate indefiniteness and definiteness, respectively. In OHG, the following adjective forms were uninflected: in the nominative case, masculine/feminine/neuter forms, both singular and plural, and in the accusative case, the neuter singular form. The uninflected forms arose through loss of unstressed syllables. Then new adjectival inflection was created by adding to these uninflected forms either nominal endings inherited from Proto-Indo-European or recently introduced pronominal endings. Thus, a strong declension came into being, which in the modern Germanic languages indicates indefiniteness.

Interestingly, pronominal inflections are not used for masculine or neuter nouns in the *Isidor* translation, and of 20 feminine examples, only five show pronominal inflection (Braune/Eggers 1975:216, Anm. 2). These uninflected adjectives, in fact, do not seem to indicate indefiniteness of the noun they modify; on the contrary, the nouns appear to be definite by identifiability:

(13) a. III.2 almahtic fater 'almighty father'
b. III.2 got chisalbot 'God annointed'
c. III.2 heilac chiruni 'holy sacrament'
d. V.4 heilac gheist 'Holy Ghost'
e. IV.6 heilac chiruni 'holy sacrament'
f. IV.10 heilac druhtin 'Holy Lord'
g. IX.9 liuzil chind 'little child'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

A good test for the use of a determiner solely as a definiteness marker is its compatibility with superlatives. "It is a general fact that languages which have definiteness marking use it with superlatives: *the cleverest boy, *a cleverest boy*. And it is clear that what is involved here is definiteness in the narrow, grammatical sense" (Lyons 1999:246). In the *Isidor* translation, there are only 3 examples of superlatives modifying nouns. Two of them contain a determiner:

(14) a. IV.2 in dhemu eristen deile
'in the first part'

b. V. 9 mit dhem hohistom salidhom
'with the highest holiness'

These determiners can hardly be considered demonstratives in this context. There is one example of a postposed adjective with weak declension:

(15) V.1 frido herost-o
peace highest-DEF
'the highest peace'

There are many examples of superlatives used as adjectival nouns. Some of them appear with determiners:

(16) a. IV.4 in dhemu eristen
'in the first'

b. V.4 dher hohist-o
the highest-DEF
'the highest one'

c. IX.9 dhea herost-un
the highest-DEF
'the highest ones'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

However, other such adjectival nouns show either weak declension alone, as in 17, or null declension, as in 18.

(17) a.	IV.7	erist-o	'(the) first'
b.	IV.7	aftrist-o	'(the) last'
c.	IV.7	fona erist-in	'from (the) first'
d.	V.4	hohist-o	'(the) highest'

(18) a.	IV.4	azs erist	'at first'
b.	V.10	azs iungist	'at (the) youngest'

In all of the above examples, there is some kind of definite marking. The occasional use of an article, even though definiteness could be marked by adjective declension alone, indicates that there is a grammatical transition underway.

In the language of the *Tatian* translation, it is also possible to mark definiteness on an adjective by using the weak declension, as shown in the first line of example 19 (the *-e* ending).

(19) 101.2

Uuarun	tho	nahenti	sih imo	firnfoll-e	man…
were	then	approaching	him	sinful	men

Erant	autem	appropinquantes ei		publican…
were	then	approaching	him	tax collectors

'The sinful men (Lat. *tax collectors*) were approaching him at that time...'

When the weak declension is used in conjunction with a determiner, it continues to be used as an agreement feature marking definiteness alongside the determiner. This may explain why unstressed adjectival endings did not disappear: They were repurposed as agreement.

It is likewise possible to mark indefiniteness with the strong adjective declension alone.

(20) a. 4.3

arriof	mihhiler-o	stemnu	
exclaimed	great-INDEF	voice.DAT	

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

exclamavit voce magna
exclaimed great voice.DAT

'exclaimed in a loud voice'

b. 151.7 uuanta thu grim man bist
because you wrathful-INDEF man are

quia homo austerus es
because man wrathful are

'because you are a wrathful man'

c. 151.8 bithiu ih grim man bin
because I wrathful-INDEF man am

quia ego homo austerus sum
because I man wrathful am

'because I am a wrathful man'

Here, again, the declension functions as agreement when used within a semantically indefinite context, for instance, with the weak quantifier *many*:[2]

(21) 105.2 manigiu guot gisaztiu
many good-INDEF arrangements

multa bona posita
many good arrangements

'many good arrangements'

The strong declension is also used with collectives and abstract nouns:

[2] For details on weak versus strong quantifiers, see Diesing 1992.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(22) a. 52.2 mihhil giruornessi
great-INDEF unrest

motus magnus
great unrest

'great unrest'

b. 52.6 mihhil stilnessi
great-INDEF peace

tranquillitas magna
great peace

'great peace'

c. 53.10 mit mihhilu ungirehhu
with great-INDEF vigor

magno impetus
great.DAT vigor

'with great vigor'

In contrast to the *Isidor* translation, the selections from the *Tatian* translation do not contain definite objects with an adjective and a determiner. Adjective declension in the *Evangelienbuch* appears the same as in the *Isidor* in the sense that the use of an article with definite objects modified by adjectives appears to be optional:

(23) a. II.9.16 skal iz geistlichaz sin,
shall it spiritual be

so skenkent sie uns then guatan win
then pour they us the good wine

'if it is spiritual, they will pour us the good wine'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

b. II.9.88 ni drunki thu io in war min alabeziron win.
not drank you ever in truth I.GEN very-best.DEF wine

'in truth you never drank the very best wine'

The word *wine* in each example can be said to be definite based on the adjective declension and/or the context. In 23a, the speaker is referring to a specific type wine, the better one of two, and an article is used. In 23b, *(the) very best wine* is definite wine but not specific or identifiable wine, and therefore, an article apparently is not required.

Third, an article can be used with nouns that name generic objects. In the *Isidor* translation and in the selections from the *Tatian* translation, an article is not found with generic objects. In the *Evangelienbuch*, however, determiners are used in cases of what could be called a generic reference:

(24) a. I.3.5 Adam thero gomono was manno eristo.
Adam the.GEN men was men.GEN first
'Adam was the first man of all.'

b. I.3.20 thaz er ward githiuto kuning thero liuto
that he became honorably king the.GEN people
'that he became honorable the king of the people'

In these examples, the nouns in question all refer to people in general. The use of the article may also have to do with the fact that they are all in the genitive case (see section 3.1 above).

There is another type of generic reference to something other than people that requires the use of the article in cases other than genitive:

(25) a. I.1.18 nim gouma thera dihta:
take notice the.GEN literature.GEN

thaz hursgit thina drahta
it encourages your senses

'Take notice of literature: It encourages your senses.'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

b. I.3.15 Thio buah duent unsih wisi, er Kristes altano si.
The books do us wise he Christs ancestor be
'The books tell us that he is Christ's ancestor.'

c. II.9.18 so mugun sie mit ruachon uns sagen in then buachon.
so may they with care us tell in the books
'So they may tell us in their books with care.'

Here Otfrid is referring to literature and the books of the bible in general. The *Isidor* and *Tatian* translators may not have had any opportunity to use articles for such references.

Fourth, an article can appear with nouns whose referents are identifiable. In the *Isidor* translation, determiners and possessive adjectives appear with certain referents at all times including the first mentioning, regardless of how they appear in the Latin source. In the *Isidor*, these referents are primarily well-known biblical characters and things. For example, *burc* when it refers to Jerusalem, *tempil* when it refers to the temple in Jerusalem, and *samanunge* in the sense of synagogue, always appear with a determiner. *Dhazs heilege chiscribe* 'the Holy Scripture' always appears with a determiner and an adjective (see Jäger 1917:37–42). This kind of determiner use appears to be motivated by identifiablity alone. It conveys no proximal or distal sense and should therefore be considered an article.

The *Tatian* translation also provides evidence of identifiability being encoded by determiners used as articles. The word for *savior* appears as *ther heilant* 13 times in the text selections. It appears without a determiner only when used to address Christ.

In all cases, *heilant*/*ther heilant* is a translation of the Latin *Ihesus*. It would not make sense for the translator to use it in the distal (or proximal) sense of *that*/*this savior* so many times throughout the text when it is clear to the audience to whom he is referring. This must be an example of an article. There are other examples of this type:

(26) a. 5.13 in themo gastihuse
in the/that guesthouse

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in diversorio
in inn

'in the/that inn'

b. 52.2 in themo seuue
in the/that sea

in mari
in sea

'in the/that sea'

c. 53.3 in then seo
in the/that sea

in mare
in sea

'into the/that sea'

The *gastihus* is the inn where Mary and Joseph wish to stay the night of Jesus' birth, and it is only mentioned this one time in the text. The sea (that is, the Sea of Galilee) is not mentioned previously. These determiners therefore do not contain a deictic element and are better described as articles.

The selection from the *Evangelienbuch* also contains examples of an article used with nouns whose referents are identifiable to the reader:

(27) a. I.1.21 Sie duent iz filu suazi,
they do it very sweetly

joh mezent sie thie fuazi,
and measure they the metrical-feet

'They do it very sweetly and measure the metrical feet.'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

b. I.1.22 thie lengi joh thie kurti, theiz gilustlichaz wurti.
the length and the brevity so-that (it) pleasing appears
'The length and the brevity makes it pleasant.'

c. I.1.42 zit joh thiu regula; so ist gotes selbes brediga
timing and the rules so is God's own sermon
'timing and the rules; so is God's own sermon'

All of these nouns are mentioned for the first time in the passages above. They all refer to the structure of poetry. Since they denote entities known to the reader or listener, the article encodes their identifiability.

Finally, an article can be used in cases of associate occurrence. In the *Tatian* translation, there is another example of determiners that for similar reasons are not likely to be demonstratives:

(28) a. 5.1 Iesse gibar Dauiden then cuning.
Jesse begat David.ACC the.ACC king.ACC
'Jesse begat David the King.'

b. 5.2 Dauid ther cuning gibar Salomonen.
David the king begat Salomon.ACC
'David the King begat Salomon.'

King David is not mentioned previously in the text. The determiner therefore cannot be a demonstrative or express an anaphoric relationship. It is used in an associative occurrence and as such is a distal definite article. The *Isidor* and the selections from the *Evangelienbuch* do not contain examples of this use of the definite article.

3.4. Cliticized Articles.

Finally, certain determiners appear as clitics. Since a stressed word such as a demonstrative would not cliticize, this clearly shows that these words are articles.

(29) Ein scaf er stantan gisah, thaz was zem opphere gimah;
a sheep he standing saw that was to-the sacrifice suited
'He saw a sheep standing there that was suitable for sacrifice.'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

This preposition-determiner contraction occurs throughout the *Evangelienbuch* with the preposition *zu* and the determiners *them* (*zem*) and *ther (zer)*. The fact that this contraction exists shows that *them* and *ther* cannot be demonstratives in those instances, as only an unstressed function word, such as an article, could cliticize. In 33, *them* is used as a distal article with a noun (*sacrifice*) whose referent is identifiable in the wider context and that has not been previously mentioned. Although the contraction never occurs with other prepositions in the *Evangelienbuch*, new grammatical constructions often begin with a narrow scope of applicability. Then they either expand their scope over time or die out. The *zum* contraction probably represents the initial stage, following which, during Middle High German and PDG, the scope of the construction expands to include other prepositions and articles. This process, known as extension, is beyond the scope of the present article. For a similar development involving the extension of the *-st* verb ending in OHG, see Somers 2011. As an affix, the article is in stage 4 of the DP cycle, as defined by van Gelderen.

4. Summary and Conclusions.

I can now construct a more nuanced explanation of article use in the major OHG texts. All three works employ a definite article. The difference between them and the PDG texts is in how the use of the article is restricted. I have shown that the development of articles in OHG did not happen quickly and in all contexts simultaneously.

The OHG works all contain an article used for partitive genitives and a proximal article. The proximal article developed from the demonstrative, and the partitive genitive use of the article was probably the first use of the new article. The development of the definite article in the works examined here cannot be viewed as a purely teleological development though; the works examined are snapshots of different dialects that do not necessarily represent stages in a singular development. All of the works contain a distal article used with nouns whose referents are identifiable to the reader. Distal article use with other types of nouns varies widely. The distal article was found with prenominal adjectives in the *Isidor* translation and in the *Evangelienbuch* selections. The absence of a distal article in the selections from the *Tatian* translation may be coincidental. It may be present in other parts of the work, which were not selected.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Both works that contain the distal article also contain prenominal adjectives that alone convey (in)definiteness: Strong and weak declension conveys indefiniteness and definiteness, respectively. This indicates that the article was still in the process of developing this function. Associative use of the distal article was found only in the selections from the *Tatian* translation. Use of the article for generic and unique objects was found only in the *Evangelienbuch* selections. Use for generics and uniques is the most abstract use of the distal article. This usage may therefore be a late development, but comparative work is necessary to confirm this hypothesis. The *Evangelienbuch* also contains examples of the earliest article clitics, restricted to the preposition *zu* used with singular, masculine, and neuter nouns. These preposition/determiner conjunctions are the most compelling evidence for the definite article, since cliticization only occurs with unstressed grammatical items, that is, articles, not demonstratives.

The evolution of article use appears to progress from less abstract to more abstract. Once the article acquires more abstract functions, its phonological form starts to become reducible, which allows cliticization, and the next stage of the DP/definiteness cycle (stage 4: affixation) is realized.

APPENDIX

The selections from the *Tatian* translation contain many such genitives (see example 6 in the main text). In all instances except 53.9, the noun in the genitive case appears for the first time in the corresponding narrative:

2.3 al thiu menigi uuas thes folks
all the crowd was the.GEN people.GEN
'all the crowd was of the people'

2.3 in thero ziti thes rouhennes
in the time the.GEN sacrifice.GEN
'in the time of the sacrifice'

2.4 in zeso thes alteres thero uuihrouhbrunsti
on right the.GEN altar.GEN the.GEN incense.GEN
'on the right of the altar of the incense'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

3.5 thes hoisten sun
the.GEN high.GEN son
'of the highest son'

3.7 thes hoisten megin
the.GEN high.GEN power
'of the highest power'

4.17 uuizago thes hohisten
prophet the.GEN high.GEN
'prophet of the highest'

53.6 sun thes hohisten gotes
son the.GEN high.GEN God's
'son of the highest God'

53.9 in thaz cutti thero suino
in the.GEN/that.GEN herd.GEN the.GEN pigs.GEN
'in the/that herd of the pigs'

Examples from the *Evangelienbuch* of determiners in the genitive case that appear everywhere where they are not part of a possessive construction (see example 7 in the main text):

II.8.14 theih mithon ouh nu westa thes wines ist in bresta
that-I just also now know the.GEN wine.GEN is gone for-them
'that I just now realized that they are out of wine'

II.8.25 Gibot si then sar gahun
ordered they then very quickly

then thes lides sahun
those-who the.GEN/that.GEN drink.GEN watched

'Then they quickly ordered them who were in charge of the drink …'

II.9.5 thes wazares gismeken joh wir then sens intheken
the.GEN water taste and we the sense discover
'we taste the water and realize the meaning'

II.9.19 sehsu sint thero fazzo,
six are the.GEN/those.GEN jugs

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

thaz thu es weses wizo
so-that you be wise of-it

'there were sixty jugs, just so you clearly know'

II.9.46 er suorgata thero worto,
he worried the.GEN/those.GEN words

bi thiu skeint er iz so harto;
because showed he it very much

'he worried about the words because he showed it clearly'

II.9.93 Joh hugi filu harto thero geistlichero worto
and think very carefully the.GEN/those.GEN sacred words
'And think very carefully about the/those sacred words'

Examples of nouns from the *Tatian* translation that appear for the first time without a determiner and when the object or person is referred back to, with a determiner (see examples 9 and 10 in the main text):

52.3 Her tho uuas in **themo skefe** ubar houbitphuliuui slafenti.
Ipse vero erat in **puppi** super cervical dormiens.
'At that time he was sleeping on pillows in the/that ship.'

53.3 Ein habeta in imo **diuuala** …
Unus enim habebat **demonia** …
'One had demons in him …'

53.4 Noh mit **ketinun** giu mohta in einig man gibintan, uuanta her ofto mit **fuozthruhin** inti mit **ketinun** gibuntan zibrah **thie ketinun** inti **thio fuozthruhi**…

Et neque **catenis** iam quisquam eum poterat ligare; quoniam Sepe **compedibus** et **catenis** vinctus disrupisset **catenuas** et **compedes** comminuisset …

'No-one could keep him bound with chains anymore because often when he was bound with foot shackles and chains he broke the/those chains and smashed the/those foot shackles …'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

53.9 Uuas thar nalles fer fon in **cutti suino** managero ezenti. **Thie diuuala** batun in sus quedante: oba thu unsih uzuuerphes, senti unsih in **thaz cutti thero suino**.

Erat autem non longe ab illis **grex porcorum** multorum pascens. **Demones** autem rogabant eum dicentes: si eicis nos, mitte nos in **gregem porcorum**.

'Not far from him there was (a) herd of pigs feeding. The demons bade him thus saying: if you throw us out, send us into the/that herd of pigs.'

53.10 Sie tho uzgangante fuorun in **thiu suin**, inti mit mihhilu ungirehhu **thaz cutti** uuas biskrenkit in **then seo** …

At illi exeuntes abierunt in **porcos**, et mango impetus **grex** precipitatus est in **mare** …

'Then going out they went into the/those pigs and with (a) great commotion the/that herd was drowned in the sea …'

53.11 Thie sie fuotiritun fluhun inti sagetun in **burgi** inti accarun allu.

Qui autem pascebant eos fugerunt et nuntiaverunt in **civitate** et in agros omnia.

'Those who cared for them fled and told everyone in (the) town and fields.'

53.12 Senu tho al **thiu burg** gieng ingegin themo heilante, inti gisehanemo imo inti **then man** sizzentan fon themo **thie diuuala** uzgiengun …

Et ecce tota **civitas** exit obviam Ihesu et viso eo et **hominem** sedentem a quo **demonia** exierant …

'So then all the/that town went toward the Savior and seeing him and the/that man from whom the/those demons had left …'

53.13 Mit thiu her tho arsteig in **skef**, bat in **ther man** fon themo **thie diuuala** uzgiengun …

Cumque ascenderet **navem** rogabat **eum vir** a quo **demonia** exierant …

'As he stepped into (the) boat, the/that man whom the demons had left begged him …'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

REFERENCES

Abraham, Werner. 1997. The interdependence of case, aspect and referentiality in the history of German: The case of the verbal genitive. van Kemenade & Vincent 1997, 29–61.
Behaghel, Otto. 1923–1932. *Deutsche Syntax*, vols. I-V. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.
Bostock, J. Knight. 1976. *A handbook Old High German literature*. Oxford: Clarendon.
Braune, Wilhelm & Hans Eggers. 1975. Althochdeutsche Grammatik. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.
Diesing, Molly. 1992. Indefinites. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Ebert, Karen H. 1971a. *Referenz, Sprechsituation und die bestimmten Artikel in einem nordfriesischen Dialekt (Fering)*. Bredstedt: Nordfriisk Instituut.
Ebert, Karen H. 1971b. Zwei Formen des bestimmten Artikels. *Probleme und Fortschritte der Transformationsgrammatik*, ed. by Dieter Wunderlich, 159–174. Munich: Hueber.
Eggers, Hans. 1964. *Der althochdeutsche Isidor* (*Altdeutsche Textbibliothek 63*.). Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.
Erdmann, Oskar, & Ludwig Wolf. 1957. *Otfrids Evangelienbuch* (*Altdeutsche Textbibliothek 63*.). Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.
Gelderen, Elly van. 2007. The definiteness cycle in Germanic. *Journal of Germanic Linguistics* 19. 275–305.
Gelderen, Elly van. 2011. *The linguistic cycle: Language change and the language faculty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Greenberg, Joseph H. 1978. *Universals of human language*, vol. 3. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Harbert, Wayne. 2007. *The Germanic languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hawkins, John A. 2004. *Efficiency and complexity in grammars*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
Jäger, Paul. 1917. *Der Gebrauch des bestimmten Artikels bei Isidor und Tatian vergleichend dargestellt*. Leipzig, Germany: Leipzig University dissertation.
Kemenade, Ans van, & Nigel Vincent. 1997. *Parameters of morphosyntactic change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kraiss, Andrew. 2011. *Determiner phrase and definiteness in Old High German*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison Dissertation.
Leiss, Elisabeth. 1994. Die Entstehung des Artikels im Deutshen. *Sprachwissenschaft* 19. 307–319.
Leiss, Elisabeth. 2000. *Artikel und Aspekt: Die grammatischen Muster von Definitheit* (*Studia Linguistica Germanica 55*.). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
Leiss, Elisabeth. 2007. Covert patterns of definiteness/indefiniteness and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

aspectuality in Old Icelandic, Gothic and Old High German. *Nominal determination: Typology, context constraints and historical emergence*, ed. by Elisabeth Stark, Elisabeth Leiss, & Werner Abraham, 73–102. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
Lyons, Christopher. 1999. *Definiteness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Mathews, Peter. 2005. *Concise dictionary of linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Oubouzar, Erika. 2000. *Zur Geschichte der Nominalgruppe im älteren Deutsch: Festschrift für Paul Valentin. Akten des Pariser Kolloquiums*, März 1999, ed. by Yves Desportes. Heidelberg.
Philippi, Julia. 1997. The rise of the article in the Germanic languages. van Kemenade & Vincent 1997, 62–93.
Sievers, Eduard. 1892. *Tatian: Latein und Altdeutsch*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.
Somers, Katerina. 2011. The introduction and retention of the *-st* ending in Old High German. *Journal of Germanic Linguistics* 23. 141–181.

Hendrix College
Department of Foreign Languages
1600 Washington Ave
Conway, AR 72032
USA
[kraiss@hendrix.edu]

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1470542714000038 Published online by Cambridge University Press