

A short history of «Forth»

XAVIER CAMPOS VILANOVA¹
Universitat Jaume I de Castelló

INTRODUCTION

Considering the history of the English language as a continuum of written bodies, this paper attempts a short history of *forth* within the scope of the theorem defined by K. Sroka², albeit somehow improved in several organizational details with ideas mainly by Roberts³ and Quirk et al⁴.

This approach is an application of a theoretical frame intended for the description of present-day English phrasal verbs using an assorted textual body stretching over the continuum.

Historical linguists have been advised to avoid such «mixture of synchronic and diachronic considerations»⁵, but I have taken the risk given the facts apparent from the data here presented.

This paper aims to show that the phrasal verb system has had a somewhat regular syntactic continuity throughout the history of the English language; that is, the system has remained distributionally the same since the earliest texts of the language. What seems to have changed is the particular «fondness of centuries» for a certain position within the system, not the system itself.

Some objections can be argued against the conclusions of this research: a) the experiment focuses only upon *forth* and overlooks the «two dozen or so particles which contribute to the phrasal verb pattern»⁶, b) rejecting texts from wider registers, the textual body here considered is limited within a certain type of highly curricularised «literature» frequently trodden by scholars and students, and c) the data are not quantified.

Yet the following counter-objections seem to be reasonable: a) the particular study of *forth* allows this observer to keep the experiment under control as a trial version towards

1. This is an improved version of a paper given to The Seventh International Conference On English Historical Linguistics (ICEHL-7) in Valencia, Spain, September 25th 1992. The present research has been supported by a grant from Fundació Bancaixa Castelló (Proj. A-29-FI).

2. Vid. K. A. SROKA, 1972, *The Syntax of English Phrasal Verbs*, Mouton, The Hague, 217 p. A most useful introduction to Sroka's ideas is F. Fernández, 1979, Notas en torno al Phrasal Verb en inglés contemporáneo, *English Studies* Universidad de Valladolid.

3. Vid. M.H. ROBERTS, 1936, The Antiquity of the Germanic Verb-Adverb Locution, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 35, pág. 466-481.

4. Vid. R. QUIRK et al., 1972, *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, Longman, ninth impression (corrected) 1980, esp. chapters Five, Six, and Eight.

5. Vid. M. RYDÉN, 1979, An Introduction to the Historical Study of English Syntax, Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm, pág. 26.

6. Vid. D. DENISON, 1985, The Origins of Completive *up* in English, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 1: LXXXVI, pág. 37.

new observations and data supporting, or not, the results here presented, b) the bulk of twelve centuries of written corpora is extremely difficult to be defined as «finite», and c) the distributional capacities of *forth* over the centuries is precisely the limited aim of this paper. Percentages and quantification, then, are not necessary here.

The transition from spatial to non-spatial meanings of *forth*, as well as what happened since former times –when *forth* was «one of the most common phrasal adverbs» in the rich corpus studied by Hiltunen⁷– up to current days when *forth* is «a rather formal or old-fashioned word»⁸, deserves perhaps some further attention.

This paper –upon careful reading– reveals also: a) the coexistence in Old English of the Indo-European preverbal consolidation with the «new» phrasal system developed by some Germanic languages⁹, b) that *forth*, as expected as a non-pure prefix¹⁰, decayed both as a preposition and a prefix although largely supplanting the loss with its functions as an adverb, and c) that all the positions predicted by Sroka are present throughout the history of the language¹¹.

THE BODY OF DATA¹²

Position *a*. The one typical of adverbs in phrasal constituency with the verb. Two large subdivisions can be recognised: *aA* (the adverb in final position) and *aB* (the adverb followed by another adverb or adverbial).

7. Vid. R. HILTUNEN, 1983, *The Decline of the Prefixes and the beginnings of the English Phrasal Verb*, Turun Yliopiston Julkaisuja Annales Universitatis Turkuensis, 251 pág.

8. Vid. SINCLAIR et al., eds., 1987, *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, Collins, Birmingham, pág. 572.

9. Vid. J. de la Cruz, 1972, *The Origins of the Germanic Phrasal Verb*, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, vol. 77, págs. 73-96.

10. Vid. J. de la Cruz, 1975, *Old English Pure Prefixes: Structure and Function*, *Linguistics*, vol. 145, págs. 47-81.

11. Sroka defines four types of exceptions to Position *a*. No *forth*-exceptions of the like have been sampled in the textual body under observation. Some Old English exceptions –obviously, other than those using *forth*– are to be found in Campos (forthcoming) «Old English Phrasal Verbs under the Scope of K. Sroka's Distributional Theorem», *Articles and Papers of the 6th International Conference of the Spanish Society for English Medieval Language and Literature*, Universidad de Valladolid, September 1993.

12. These are the abbreviations and acronyms here used: *ARV* = *A Room with a View*, vid. Forster; *A-S Chr.* = *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, vid. Plummer; *ÆCH* = *Æfric's Catholic Homilies. The Second Series*, vid. Godden; *B* = *Beowulf*, vid. Swanton; *Br.* = *Brut*, vid. Bennett & Smithers; *CE* = Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, vid. Alexander; *CT* = Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, vid. Guardia; *DQC* = Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, vid. Steane; *Fl. & Bl.* = *Floris and Blancheflour*, vid. Bennett & Smithers; *FT* = Chaucer's *The Freres Tale*, vid. Guardia; *GGK* = *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, vid. Barron; *Hav.* = *Havelok*, vid. Bennett & Smithers; *Hilt.*, vid. Hiltunen; *HKB* = A present-day English translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain*, vid. Thorpe; *Hom.* = *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, vid. Bazire & Cross; *HPD* = Shakespeare's *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, vid. Alexandre; *J* = William Blake's *Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion*, vid. Keynes; *KH61* = William Shakespeare's *King Henry the Sixth. Part One*, vid. Alexandre; *KT* = Chaucer's *The Knyghtes Tale*, vid. Guardia; *Ly.* = *Lyrics*, vid. Bennett & Smithers; *MT* = Chaucer's *The Millere his Tale*, vid. Guardia; *OEO* = *Old English Orosius*, vid. Bately; *ON* = *The Owl and the Nightingale*, vid. Bush; *PW* = Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, vid. Bush; *ST* = Chaucer's *The Shipamnes Tale*, vid. Guardia; *TA* = Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*, vid. Brown; *U* = James Joyce's *Ulysses*, vid. Joyce; *Vesp. Psal.* = *The Vespasian Psalter*, vid. Sweet; *WAF* = *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, vid. Forster; *WT* = Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, vid. Alexander.

aA1. Adverbs in absolute final position:

- (1) (*ÆCH* 29, p. 42) *Nim pæt ðin is and ga ðe forð.*
- (2) (Hilt., p. 200) *ase Pet child wext and comp uorþ.*
- (3) (*PL X*, 194-5, p. 403) *Children thou shalt bring In sorrow forth.*
- (4) (*U*, p. 194) *So through the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unliving son looks forth.*

aA2. Adverbs in relative final position (RFP) followed by a juxtaposed independent sentence:

- (5) (Hilt., p. 200) *þa hit eall com forð, þa weorð hit eall of earcedæcnes wives*
- (6) (*PL XI*, 175-6, p. 428) *Let us forth, I never from thy side henceforth to stray*
- (7) (*J* 66: 57-8, p. 703) *They look forth, the Sun is shrunk: the Heavens are shrunk Away*

aA3. RFP. The adverb + conjunction + sentence:

- (8) (*ÆCH* 285, p. 27) *Hit wexð and gæð forð and ne cann þysses geleafan nan ðing.*
- (9) (*Fl. & Bl.*, 190, p. 48) *þai wenten forht and leten fe coppe stonde.*
- (10) (*SA* 1555-6, p. 553) *It would burst forth, but I recover breath And sense distract, I know well what I utter.*
- (11) (*J* 54, 1-2, p. 684) *In Great Eternity every particular Form gives forth or Emanates Its own particular light.*

aA4. RFP. The adverb + an apposition or another appositional noun such as a vocative or a complement to the grammatical subject of the sentence:

- (12) (*B* 612-3, p. 62) *Eode Wealh feow forð, cwen Hroð- gares, cynna gemyndig.*
- (13) (*Lyr. N* 37, p. 127) *Huþe forð, Hubert, hosede pye!*
- (14) (*TA V*, iii, 44, p. 129) *Come forth, you seed of sulphur, sons of fire.*
- (15) (*U*, p. 107) *Come forth, Lazarus!*

aA5. RPF. Initial position, as considered by the theorem (Sroka, *op. cit.*, p. 83). Two main subdivisions can be recognised: 1) pre-contiguous, and 2) pre-removed¹³:

aA5.1. *Pre-contiguous*, within which two different types are to be recognised: a) proclitic, and b) orthotonic.

aA5.1.a. *Proclitic*¹⁴:

- (16) (*Vesp. Psal.* 13: 2, p. 200-1) *dryhten of heofne forð locað ofer bearn monna.*
- (17) (*Hom.* 1: 145-6, p. 22) *and sume hamwearde be wege forð ferdon.*

aA5.1.b. *Orthotonic*:

- (18) (*B* 2069, p. 132) *Ic sceal forð spreca.*
- (19) (*CT, KT* 108-9, p. 120) *His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood to Thebes-ward.*
- (20) (*PL VII* 320-1, p. 348) *Forth flourished thick the clust'ring vine, forth crept the swelling gourd, up stood the corny reed.*
- (21) (*PW, Honour*, p. 26) *Forth leap'd Philedon of new life possest.*

13. These two terms belong to Roberts, 1936, *op. cit.*, páf. 467.

14. These two terms also belong to Roberts, 1936, *op. cit.*

aA5.2. *Pre-removed*. Roberts (1936, *op. cit.*, p. 476) says that this order does not exist in Old English. He is obviously wrong¹⁵:

(22) (*Hom.* 8, 104-5, p. 112) and *forð* mid þam halgum reliquium gan, swa þus a halgan apostolas myne-godon.

(23) (*ON* 747, p. 27) Mid þisse worde *forð* he *ferde*.

(24) (*CT*, Chaucer's Tale 192-3, p. 450) And *forth* upon his way he *glood* As sparcle out of the bronde.

(25) (*PL* II 506-7, p. 243) And *forth* in order *came* the grand infernal peers.

(26) (*U*, p. 260) And *forth* from the skirt of his coat Mr Dedalus *brought* pouch and pipe.

aB1. The adverb followed by another single-word adverb:

(27) (*B* 948-9, p. 78) *heald forð* tela niwe sibbe.

(28) (*CT*, *ST* 293, p. 408) These hundred frankes he *fette forth* anon.

(29) (*HPD* I, v, 68, p. 1036) It *waves me forth* again; I'll follow it.

(30) (*U*, p. 391) *Look forth* now, my people, upon the land of behest.

aB2. The adverb followed by a noun phrase as an adverbial:

(31) (*A-S Chr.* A, p. 16) Her Cerdic *forþferde*, and Cynric his sunu *ricsode forð* xxvi wintra.

(32) (*Hav.* 89, p. 56) So *yede he forth* ilke day.

(33) (*CT*, *MT* 311, p. 260) This *passeth forth* al thilke Saturday.

aB3. The adverb followed by a prepositional phrase as an adverbial:

(34) (*Hom.* 6, 245-7, p. 89) and þa rihtwisan *farað forð* mid þam Hælende into þam ecan life.

(35) (*CT*, *FT*, 305, p. 644) Lat us *go forth* abouten oure viage.

(36) (*WT* IV, iv, 551-3, p. 403) I'll write you down; The which shall *point you forth* at every sitting What you must say.

(37) (*WAF*T, p. 46) His soul *went forth* into one exclamation.

aB4. The adverb followed by a finite verb clause as an adverbial:

(38) (*OEO* 25-6, p. 152) and him self *leat forð* þæt him mon aslog þæt heafod of and weard Cristes martyre.

(39) (*GGK* 1310-1, p. 96) Clepes to his chamberlayn, chos his wede, *boʒeʒ forth*, quen he watʒ boun, blyfely to masse.

(40) (*DQC* IV, i, 3-4, p. 77) I think some enchantress dwelleth here, That can *call them forth* whenas she please.

(41) (*CE*, V, i, 158, p. 133) nor *send him forth* that we may bear him hence.

aB5. The adverb followed by a non-finite verb phrase as an adverbial:

(42) (*ÆCH* 106-7, p. 84) Hi ða *ferdon forð* si ðigende and efne se earn on ðam ofre gesæt mid fisce geflogen.

15. Seven examples of Old English pre-removed adverbs can be seen in my forthcoming «Old English Phrasal Verbs Under the Scope of K. Sroka's Distribuitional Theorem».

- (43) (*PL V*, 36-7, p. 299) One *called me forth* to walk With gentle voice.
 (44) (*PL X*, 203-4, p. 403) Thorns also and thistles it shall *bring thee forth* unbid, and thou shalt eat th'herb of the field.
 (45) (*HKB*, iv.14, p. 120) Arvirargus (...) *went forth* to do battle.

Position b. The position of prepositions. The preposition followed by a non-nominative personal pronoun. Non-phrasal verbs. The only example I have identified in the corpus studied is the following:

- (46) (*Br.* 119, p. 150) Ar ður *uorð* him *wende* mid aðelen his folke.

Position c. Typical of Adverb-Preposition words (A-P). Ambiguous position. Two subdivisions can be recognised: *cA* and *cB*.

cA. The position of the A-P between the verb and a noun phrase. Commutation necessary to work out the grammatical function of the A-P word. Adverbial function if Verb + A-P word + noun phrase as an Object = Verb + non-nominative personal pronoun + adverb, as it usually happens in position *a*:

- (47) (*ÆCH* 77-8, p. 62) *Teoh* ðu *forð* renscuras gif ðu miht. (= ? *teoh* Pu hie *forð* gif Pu miht)
 (48) (*Ly.* N 26, p. 127) *Sete forð* Py o Per fot. (= *sete* hin *forð*).
 (49) (*DQC* II, i, 114-6, p. 57) A woful tale bids Dido to unfold Whose memory (...) *beats forth* my senses (= *beats* them *forth*).
 (50) (*ARV*, p. 68) (...) a faint flush of pleasure that *called forth* a deep flush of shame. (= *called* it *forth*).

cB. The position of the A-P between the verb and a noun phrase. Commutation necessary to work out the nature of the A-P word. Prepositional function if Verb + A-P word + noun phrase = Verb + preposition + non-nominative personal pronoun, as it usually happens in position *b*. *Forth* is a poorly occurring preposition in the history of the language. Bruce Mitchell¹⁶ says that its prepositional use «is doubtful». Bosworth and Toller admit that *forth* is an Old English preposition, but give no examples and send the reader into three dictionaries of the Modern Period where prepositional occurrences of Old English *forð* are expected to be shown¹⁷. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives a most fuzzy example surrounded by a poor syntactic environment (the absence of a finite verb form at least) that makes it impossible to be thoroughly intelligible¹⁸.

Shakespeare and Marlowe are the only writers in the body noticed as users of rare occurrences of *forth* as an A-P word with prepositional function¹⁹:

- (51) (*KH6I* I, ii, 53-4, p. 592) Ordained is to raise this tedious siege And drive the English *forth* the bounds of France.
 (52) (*DQC* IV, iii, 39-40, p. 82) Will Dido raise old Priam *forth* his grave and build the town again the Greeks did burn?

16. Vid. *Old English Syntax*, 1985, Clarendon, Oxford, pág. 497.

17. Vid. *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 1898, OUP, 1983 reprint, pág. 320.

18. Vid. vol. IV, pág. 473. The fuzzy example is «On enithade and swa for eallne donne giogohad».

19. *Forth* as an element of some compound prepositions is not rare in Shakespeare and Marlowe.

SELECTION OF TEXTS

- ALEXANDER, P. ed., 1951, *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, Collins, London & Glasgow, 1973 reprint.
- BARRON, W. R. J. ed., 1974, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Manchester University Press, 1991 reprint.
- BATELY, J. ed., 1980, *The Old English Orosius*, The Early English Text Society, Oxford University Press.
- Bazire, J. and Cross, J. E. ds., 1982, *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, King's College London Medieval Studies, 1989.
- BENNETT, J. A. W. and SMITHERS, G. V. eds., 1968, *Early Middle English Verse and Prose*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1989.
- BROWN, D. ed., 1966, *Ben Jonson. The Alchemist*, A & C Black Publ., London, 6th impression 1988.
- BUSH, D. ed., 1966, *Milton. Poetical Works*, Oxford University Press, 4th impression 1977.
- COLERIDGE, E. H. ed., 1912, *Coleridge. Poetical Works*, Oxford University Press, 1980.
- FORSTER, E. M., 1905, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Edward Arnold Publ. Ltd., London, 1969.
- , 1908, *A Room with a View*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1986.
- GODDEN, M. ed., 1979, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies. The Second Series*, The Early English Text Society, Oxford University Press.
- GUARDIA, P. ed. and trans., 1978, *Godfrey Chaucer. The Canterbury Tales. Los Cuentos de Canterbury*, Bosch Casa Editorial S.A., Barcelona.
- HILTUNEN, R. 1983, *The Decline of the Prefixes and the Beginnings of the English Phrasal Verb*, Turun Yliopisto Julkaisuja Annales Universitatis Turkuensis.
- JOYCE, J. 1922, *Ulysses*, Penguin Books in association with The Bodley Head, 1977.
- KEYNES, G. ed., 1966, *Blake. Complete Writings*, Oxford University Press, 1976.
- PLUMMER, Ch. ed., 1892, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1929 reprint.
- STEANE, J. B. ed., 1969, *Christopher Marlowe. The Complete Plays*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1978.
- SWANTON, M. ed., 1978, *Beowulf*, Manchester University Press, 1986.
- SWEET, H. ed., 1885, *The Oldest English Texts*, The Early English Text Society, Oxford University Press, 1966 reprint.
- THORPE, L. trans., 1966, *Geoffrey of Monmouth. The History of the Kings of Britain*, Penguin Books, 1982.