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# Incipient articles in Old East Scandinavian varieties

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## Abstract

This is a study of the semantics of definiteness marking and of its applicability to the Old East Scandinavian linguistic scenario. Contrary to the Modern Continental Scandinavian languages, Old East Scandinavian varieties did not possess fully-fledged definite articles, although all three demonstrative systems (*hinn*, *-inn*, *sá/þænn*, and *sjá/þænni*) show some evidence of being used as markers of definiteness. A semantic analysis of these forms in extracts from the *Scanian Law* and *Guta Lag* reveals the differentiated intermediate stages along the cline of grammaticalisation these definiteness markers found themselves in during this linguistic period. This confirms, in turn, that despite not being employed as definite articles proper, *hinn*, *-inn* and *sá/þænn* show some degree of semantic bleaching.

Keywords: Old East Scandinavian, Old Danish, Old Swedish, Old Gutnish, Grammaticalisation, Definite Article, Definiteness Marking, Semantics.

## 1. Introduction

From a typological viewpoint, languages that have a morpho-syntactic category of articles are not very common; Dryer (1989, quoted in De Mulder & Cartier 2011: 522) notes that only about 8 percent of the world's languages have both a definite and an indefinite article, and most of these cluster in Western Europe. Typically, the definite article develops first, only to be followed by the indefinite article later (Heine 1997). The Modern Scandinavian languages developed definite article systems out of a range of different demonstrative systems, in a process of grammaticalisation. Definite articles developing out of demonstratives represents a well-known grammaticalisation trajectory (see e.g., Heine & Kuteva 2009: 109–111; Himmelmann 1997) and its stages have been documented in great detail for other Germanic languages, most notably for English

(Traugott 1980: 49; Millar 2000; Crisma 2011; Sommerer 2018). This article focuses on North Germanic by investigating Old East Scandinavian.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 2 introduces demonstrative systems in Old Scandinavian and provides some of their earliest attestations in article-like contexts. Section 3 discusses a semantic analysis of definiteness, identifying the various stages in the grammaticalisation trajectory for incipient articles. Section 4 discusses incipient articles in *Äldre Västgötalagen* as analysed in the work of Skrzypek (Skrzypek 2009<sup>a</sup>; 2010; 2012; Skrzypek et al. 2021), to provide a basis of comparison with Section 5, which contains an analysis of definiteness marking in two Old East Scandinavian texts: the *Scanian Law*, an Old Danish work, and *Guta Lag*, an Old Gutnish codex. The conclusions and some suggestions for further research are synthesised in Section 6.

## 2. The Old Scandinavian tripartite demonstrative system

### 2.1. Introduction

Neither Proto-Germanic nor Proto-Indo-European had developed definite articles (Haugen 1976: 98; Hawkins 2009: 51–53; Lander & Haegeman 2014: 281; Millar 2000: 198; Perridon & Sleeman 2011: 3; Skrzypek 2012: 194), which means that each of the Germanic languages developed definite articles independently (Philippi 1997). This process, despite it presenting peculiarities in every Scandinavian language, shared a common source (i.e., members of the demonstrative system) and common developmental patterns within the Scandinavian linguistic family. As demonstratives are themselves the product of a grammaticalisation process (Diessel 1999), the emergence of definite articles represents the change from a grammatical meaning to a more grammatical meaning, which can be subsumed under the umbrella of grammaticalisation, even though grammaticalisation is usually thought of as a change from a lexical to a grammatical meaning (Kuryłowicz 1965). In terms of Andersen (2006: 233), it is a case of *Regrammation*: “a change by which a grammatical expression through reanalysis is ascribed different grammatical content (change within and among grammatical paradigms)”. This section will examine the Old Scandinavian tripartite demonstrative system and provide some of the earliest attestations of these demonstratives which

predate the Old Scandinavian period. The periodisation of Scandinavian followed here is that of Haugen (1976: 89–243):

- Proto-Scandinavian (to 550 A.D.)
- Common Scandinavian (550–1050 A.D.)
- Old Scandinavian (1050–1350 A.D.)

Old Scandinavian presents a tripartite demonstrative system consisting of an incipient article *hinn* (which also had an enclitic form without the initial *h-*, attached to the noun), the distal demonstrative *sá/þænn* (the nominative *s*-forms of which are substituted by the accusative *þ*-forms at an early stage in Old East Scandinavian), and the proximal demonstrative *sjá/þænni* (Delsing 2002: 930–931; Millar 2000: 22–24; Skrzypek 2012: 62–65).

Millar (2000) classifies demonstrative systems in the earliest Germanic languages into three groups: (i) just the simple demonstrative alone (distal) (as in Gothic); (ii) simple (distal) and compound (proximal) demonstrative (as in all early West Germanic dialects), and (iii) simple (distal), compound (proximal), and an article (as in the North Germanic languages). This boils down to three synchronic states: (i) a *that*-stage, (ii) a *that/this* stage, and (iii) a tripartite *that/this/the* stage. Miller notes that it is tempting to see these stages as reflecting a chronological progression, as we know that the proximal demonstrative is an innovation in Germanic, and that having forms for definite articles that are separate from the distal demonstrative is an innovation in the histories of both Dutch and English. It is unclear what this says about the status of the tripartite system in North Germanic, given that it is attested early, and in part derives from different elements, as we will see in the next section.

## 2.2. The incipient article *hinn* and enclitic *-inn*

The etymology of the incipient article *hinn* has been traced back to two Proto-Indo-European items: *\*k-* (a deictic element related to *h-* in English *he/him*) and demonstrative *\*eno* resulting in the Proto-Germanic form *\*jaino-* (English *yon*) (Heltoft 2001: 87–89; Lander & Haegeman 2014: 281; Pfaff 2019: 171; Skrzypek 2009<sup>b</sup>: 72–73; Skrzypek et al. 2021: 32; Stroh-Wollin 2020: 221–223). The exact order in which these

items combined is a matter of dispute, with three main theories. The first theory treats *inn* as the original form to which the deictic item *h-* was later attached (Skrzypek 2009<sup>b</sup>: 72; Syrett 2002: 723). The second theory considers *hinn* to be the original element, with *inn* resulting from initial *h*-drop (Jónsson 1901 and Neckel 1924, cited in Skrzypek 2009<sup>b</sup>: 73). The third theory suggests that *hinn* derives from the 3rd person singular masculine pronoun *hann*, which also traces its etymological roots back to Proto-Indo-European *\*k-* and *\*eno* (Millar 2000: 22, 322; Perridon 1989, cited in Skrzypek 2009<sup>b</sup>: 73). For the purposes of this paper, the origin of the form is not relevant for the subsequent development. The paradigm of *hinn* is given in Table 1, and that of the enclitic *-inn* in Table 2; note these paradigms are attempts at a reconstruction of East Norse forms.

Singular			
	M.	N.	F.
Nom.	hinn	hit	hin
Acc.	hinn	hit	hina
Gen.	hins	hins	hinna(r)
Dat.	hinum	hinu	hinni
Plural			
	M.	N.	F.
Nom.	hini(r)	hin	hina(r)
Acc.	hina	hin	hina(r)
Gen.	hinna	hinna	hinna
Dat.	hinum	hinum	hinum

Table 1. Old East Scandinavian paradigm of the incipient article *hinn* in (Delsing 2002: 930)

Singular	M. <i>a-</i> stem	M. <i>-an</i> stem	F. <i>-i</i> stem	F. <i>-on</i> stem	N. <i>-a</i> stem	N. <i>-ia</i> stem
Nom.	fiskr-inn	nakki-nn	dygþ-in	haka-n	ben-it	riki-t
Acc.	fisk-inn	nakka-nn	dygþ-ina	haku-na	ben-it	riki-t
Gen.	fisks-ins	nakka-ns	dygþ-inna(r)	haku-nna(r)	bens-ins	rikis-ins
Dat.	fisk-inum	nakka-num	dygþ-inni	haku-nni	ben-inu	riki-nu
Plural						
Nom.	fiska-nir	nakka-nir	dygþ-inar	haku-nar	ben-in	riki-n
Acc.	fiska-na	nakka-na	dygþ-inar	haku-nar	ben-in	riki-n
Gen.	fiska-nna	nakka-nna	dygþ-inna	haka-nna	bena-nna	rika-nna
Dat.	fiskum-in	nakkum-in	dygþum-in	hakum-in	benum-in	rikum-in

Table 2. Old East Scandinavian noun inflections with enclitic *-inn* (Delsing 2002: 930)

Attestations of *hinn* as a free morpheme before the Old Scandinavian period are scarce, as are attestations of demonstratives in general. Bare nouns are the norm, even in definite contexts. One of the earliest attestations of *hinn* is that found in (1) from the Strøm runic inscription, dating back to c. 500–600 (the transitional period between Proto-Scandinavian and Common Scandinavian):

- (1) wate hali **hino** horna  
 wet stone this horn  
 ‘Let the horn wet this stone!’

(*N KJ50*, Skrzypek et al. 2021: 47)

Definer *hino* follows the noun it modifies, *hali*. Another of the earliest attestations of definer *hinn* is present in example (2) from the Eggja inscription, c. 650 (Common Scandinavian):

- (2) Rune text: huwAR ob kam hAr(i)(e) a **hi(t)** lat  
 Old West Norse: Hverr of kom her á hitt land?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All the rune texts and the transliterations taken from the Skaldic Project website: <https://skaldic.org/>

‘Who brought the host over to the other country?’

([NKJ101](#) {make hyperlink for

<<https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?id=21887&if=default&table=mss#>>}; see also

Lander & Haegeman 2014: 287)

Definer *hit* precedes the noun it modifies, *lat* ‘land’. During the Proto-Scandinavian and the Common Scandinavian periods, demonstratives could both precede or follow the noun. Word order within the noun phrase was fairly free, owing to the non-configurational character of the language inherited from Proto-Germanic (Braunmüller 2002: 653–654; Hawkins 2009: 57; Perridon & Sleeman 2011: 13; Roehrs & Sapp 2004: 290–291), and we will see the other demonstratives exhibiting the same positional variability below. Position is relevant for the scenario of the genesis of the enclitic *-inn*, which must have originated in contexts where *hinn* immediately follows the noun. There is some debate about the role of the weakly inflected adjective, with two main theories, schematised in (3a-b) (Delbrück 1916; Grimm 1898; Nygaard 1905; Pollack 1912, all cited in Ratkus 2018: 27–28 as well as Skrzypek et al. 2021: 46):

- (3) a. N *hinn* Adj → N-*inn* Adj  
b. N *hinn* → N-*inn*

The scenario in (3b) does not require the presence of an adjective, and is supported by attestations like (1). The pattern in (3a), on the other hand, does require the presence of a (weakly inflected) adjective, typically *after* the noun, as in (4), from the Common Scandinavian Swedish 9th-century Rök runestone:

- (4) þiaurikR **hin** þurmuþi  
þjóðríkr **the** great/valiant  
'Theodoric the great, the valiant.'

(Perridon 1997: 357)

Here the definer *hin* and the weak adjective *þurmuþi* are both in postposition to the noun *þiaurikR*. This scenario builds on various theories of the origin of the weak adjectival inflection (a Germanic innovation) in the use of postpositional epithets like Old English *Wulfmæ̅r se geonga* ‘Wulfmæ̅r the Young’ (Wright 1910: 104), summarised by e.g. Ringe as follows:

The syntactic developments involved are not entirely clear, because it is not clear (for example) whether lexemes marked with the suffix had always been adjectives which could appear attributively within the NP or were originally nouns in apposition (therefore separate NPs) which were reanalysed as attributive adjectives.

(Ringe 2006: 170)

The development of *postnominal* determiners and weak adjectives as a set combination, in 'lockstep', is surprisingly uniform in all the attested early Germanic languages (Pfaff & Walkden forthc.), even though the determiner is cognate with *sá/þænn* rather than *hinn* in the West Germanic languages. The close relationship between determiner and weak adjective continues in all the modern Scandinavian languages, even though the combination is now prenominal, as in (5a-d), from Pfaff (2019: 166):

(5) a. den \*(store) mann-en (Swedish/Norwegian)

DET big man -DEF

b. tann \*(stóri) bilur-in (Faroese)

DET big car -DEF

c. den \*(gule) bil (Danish)

DET yellow car

d. hinn \*(fullkomni) bíll (Icelandic)

ART perfect car

The suffix marks definiteness on its own when there is no adjective; but if there is an adjective, a free morpheme determiner is added. This determiner derives from the



*sá/þænn* paradigm in all the Scandinavian languages, apart from Icelandic, where the article derives from *hinn*. This is why the term 'adjective article' is used to describe the free morpheme determiner. This restriction is supposed to hold only for the free morpheme determiner in its definite article use, not for its demonstrative use (Pfaff 2019: 166). This received wisdom, however, is at odds with the use of a definite article when it modifies a nominal head that is postmodified by a relative clause, as in (22) below – it cannot be a demonstrative in this use, but has to be a definite article; we will return to this point in section 3.4.

Whichever the exact order of these developments, it resulted in enclitic *-inn* attaching to the corresponding noun. One of the first enclitic attestations can be found in the identical 11th century runic inscriptions *U 644* and *U 669* from Sweden (borderline between Common Scandinavian and Old Scandinavian), as *antini* (Old West Norse *ǫndinni*) 'the spirit' in example (6) (italics mark anchors, while the NP with demonstrative/article is given in bold; this system is applied to all the examples in this paper):

- (6) Rune text: *sterkar auk \* hioruarþr \* litu \* reisa \* þinsa \* stain eftR \* kisl \* broþur \* sin \* kuþ hialbi \* antini uisti nuk \* ufaih \* þeir hieku*  
 Old West Norse: *StyrkárR ok HjorvarðR létu reisa þenna stein eptir Gísl, broður sinn. Guð hjalpi ǫndinni. Véseti ok Ófeigr þeir hjoggu.*  
 'StyrkárR and HjorvarðR had this stone raised in memory of Gísl, their brother. May God help (his) spirit. Véseti and Ófeigr, they cut.'

([U 669](https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?table=mss&id=17489&if=runic) {make hyperlink for <<https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?table=mss&id=17489&if=runic>>}); see also Perridon 1997: 357)

### 2.3. The simple distal demonstrative *sá/þænn*

The etymology of *sá/þænn* can be traced back to the Proto-Indo-European deictic root *\*so*, *\*to*, which resulted in the Proto-Germanic forms *\*sa*, *\*so*, *\*þat*; in addition to the Old Scandinavian forms, this etymological development into distal demonstratives is also found in the West Germanic languages, such as the Old English demonstrative *se* (M.), *seo* (F.), *þæt* (N.) (Lander & Haegeman 2014: 281; Millar 2000: 21, 306). Whilst in

Old West Scandinavian the nominative masculine and feminine forms of this linguistic item are *sá* and *sú* respectively, these forms were replaced by accusative *þ*-forms *þænn* and *þe* at an early stage in Old East Scandinavian (Delsing 2002: 931; Faarlund 2004: 33–34; Skrzypek 2012: 58, 63). The paradigm of *sá/þænn* is given in Table 3.

Singular			
	M.	N.	F.
Nom.	(sá /) þænn	þæt	þe
Acc.	þænn	þæt	þa
Gen.	þæss	þæss	þera / þærra
Dat.	þem	þy	þeri
Plural			
	M.	N.	F.
Nom.	þe(r)	þe / þø(n)	þa(r)
Acc.	þa	þe / þø(n)	þa(r)
Gen.	þera / þærra	þera / þærra	þera / þærra
Dat.	þem	þem	þem

Table 3. Paradigm of the simple distal demonstrative *sá/þænn* (Delsing 2002: 931)

In its earliest attestations, *sá/þænn* can either follow or precede the noun, just like *hinn*. In (7) and (8) from c. 375–570 (the last stages of Proto-Scandinavian), the demonstrative precedes the noun:

- (7) Rune text: ek erilaz **sa wilagaz** hateka :  
 ‘I the eril am called the wily (one)’

([DR 261](#) {make hyperlink for

<https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?table=mss&id=19084&if=runic>}); see also Lander & Haegeman 2014: 286)

- (8) e=k irilaz hrozaz h=rozez o(r)te **þat azina** ut alai(f=u)  
 ‘I the eril Hrozaz, (son of) Hrozaz worked up this stone för Ailifo

([NKJ71 U](#) {make hyperlink for

<https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?table=mss&id=21868&if=runic>}); see also Lander & Haegeman 2014: 286)

Example (9), again from Sweden's 9th-century Common Scandinavian Rök runestone (same source as (4)), has demonstrative *þaR* follow the noun *runaR*:

- (9) Rune text: aft uamuþ stonta **runar þar**  
‘In memory of Væmod stand these runes.’

([Ög 136](#) {make hyperlink for <https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?id=15196&if=runic&table=mss>>}; see also Haugen 1976: 172)

*Sá/þænn* also appears to be used as an incipient ‘adjectival article’ at this early stage, witness example (10) from the Skern 2 stone from Denmark, c. 1000. Quite remarkably, both demonstrative *þan* and definer *hin* appear to have the same function, and are both in postnominal position.

- (10) Rune text: soskiriþr : risþi : stin : finulfs : tutir : at : *þinkaur* : *usbiarnar* : *sun* :  
**þan**:<sup>2</sup> **tura** : uk : **hin** : **turutin:fasta** :  
‘Sasgerðr, Finnulfr's daughter, raised the stone, in memory of Óðinkárr Ásbjörn's son, the dear (one) and the (one) faithful to his lord.’

([Skern 2](#) {make hyperlink for <https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?id=18906&if=runic&table=mss>>}; see also Perridon 1997: 357)

Example (10) appears to suggest some functional overlap between the demonstratives *hinn* and *sá/þænn* with respect to introducing postpositional epithets, i.e. the combination of determiner and weakly inflected adjective that may have given rise to the ‘adjective article’ of examples (5a-d). Note that the article *se* in the Old English phrase cited earlier, *Wulfmæ̅r se geonga* ‘Wulfmæ̅r the Young’, is a cognate of *sá/þænn*, but unlike *sá/þænn*

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<sup>2</sup> Although the original text shows the Swedish transliteration *þoh*, we here follow the Danish practice by transliterating the ansuR rune as *q*. In addition to this, we consider the *h* in *þoh* to be an error for *n*. We are very thankful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this to us.

in the continental North Germanic languages and *hinn* in Icelandic, Old English *se* did not develop into a specialised adjective article but was used as a definite article more generally. If our reading of (10) is correct, both *hinn* and *sá/þænn* could be used as 'adjective articles' at the end of Common Scandinavian.

#### 2.4. The compound proximal demonstrative *sjá/þænni*

The proximal demonstrative is a relative innovation; we saw above that it is absent in Gothic. The paradigm is given in Table 4:

Singular			
	M.	N.	F.
Nom.	þænni / sasi	þætta	þæssi
Acc.	þænna / þansi	þætta	þæssa
Gen.	þæssa	þæssa	þæssa
Dat.	þæssum / þæmma	þæssu	þæssi
Plural			
	M.	N.	F.
Nom.	þæssi(r)	þæssi(n)	þæssa(r)
Acc.	þæssa	þæssi(n)	þæssa(r)
Gen.	þæssa	þæssa	þæssa
Dat.	þæssum / þæmma	þæssum / þæmma	þæssum / þæmma

Table 4. Paradigm of the compound proximal demonstrative *sjá/þænni* (Delsing 2002: 931)

*Sjá/þænni* is formed from *sá/þænn* by the addition of the intensifying suffix *-si*, resulting in a reinforced deictic component (Skrzypek 2012: 64), which suggests that *-si* apparently served to restore some of the deictic force apparently lost by *sá/þænn* (Wagner 2017: 64–65). This demonstrative could also precede or follow the noun. Example (11) from Denmark's 9th-century Common Scandinavian Gørlev stone exhibits the compound proximal demonstrative *þonsi* (a form of *sjá/þænni*) in postposition after the noun *stin*.

- (11) Rune text: þiaupui ÷ risþi ÷ **stin þonsi** ÷ aft upinkaur ÷  
 'Thjóðvé raised this stone in memory of Oðinkárr.'

([DR 239](#) - Gørlev {make hyperlink for

<<https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?table=mss&id=19062>>}; see also Haugen 1976: 173)

This demonstrative was not as widely employed as *sá/þænn* and *hinn*, its attestations are scarce until the Old Scandinavian period, and we haven't found any mention of the use of *sjá/þænni* as an 'adjectival article' in the literature.

Definite articles typically develop out of distal rather than proximal demonstratives; proximal demonstratives tend to refer to entities in the immediate situational context, whereas distal demonstratives signal to the hearer that an additional effort may be required to identify the referent, as it is not 'nearby' (De Mulder & Cartier 2011: 530). As identifiability is a key characteristic of the semantics of definite articles, this means that this is a characteristic shared by distal demonstratives and definite articles, but not by proximal demonstratives.

### 3. Demonstratives versus definite articles

#### 3.1. Introduction

The grammaticalisation (or more specifically regrammation, see 2.1. above) of demonstratives into definite articles has been argued to involve a number of intermediate stages, although opinions differ on how these stages should be defined and diagnosed. A robust and well-argued proposal is presented in (12a-b) (from Lehmann 1982: 57); Lehmann hypothesises two separate trajectories for the demonstrative pronoun (12a) and the demonstrative determiner (12b); it is the latter that develops into a definite article:

(12) a. deictic particle + categorical noun → demonstrative pronoun → anaphoric pronoun → 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun (Lehmann 1982: 57)

b. deictic particle + categorical noun → demonstrative determiner → weakly demonstrative definite determiner → definite article → affixal article → noun marker (Lehmann 1982: 57)

The grammaticalisation trajectory in (12b) is one of progressive semantic bleaching. The demonstrative starts to be associated with a noun, and becomes a determiner. The next reduction is the deictic content, which is neutralised, with the element only expressing definiteness and specificity; the element has become a definite article. If the conditions are right (the element is positioned after the noun, for instance), the article can become a

bound morpheme (cf. the discussion of *hinn* and *-inn* above). A possible next step is the loss of definiteness, so that only specificity remains. If specificity is lost, the element will have lost all referential meaning, and the remaining function is that of marking the word it is attached to as a noun (Lehmann 1982: 41). Note that the stage of “weakly demonstrative definite determiner” is not described in any detail in Lehmann (1982); ‘weakly’ refers to the element being weakly grammaticalised, and a possible diagnostic can be that the element is still optional, in the same sense that demonstratives are optional and only used when their lexical content is called for (cf. Lehmann’s discussion of the optionality of other “weakly grammaticalised” formatives (1982: 63, 183)). Although the notion of optionality is not without problems (Lehmann 1982: 14), the notion of OBLIGATORIFICATION is an important diagnostic in Lehmann’s parameters (e.g., Lehmann 1982: 148). Once items leave the lexicon and enter the morphosyntax, they become part of mechanised routines and tend to become obligatory; in PDE, definite articles are obligatory (if definiteness is not already expressed by other determiners, like possessive pronouns) irrespective of whether definiteness is relevant in that particular context. It follows that the frequency with which incipient articles are used in the various stages of a language can be an important diagnostic for whether they are proper definite articles or still weakly demonstrative definite determiners.

It is not only frequency that is going to be an important diagnostic but also the semantic contribution that the demonstrative and the definite article make to an utterance. For a more fine-grained description of this stage in the grammaticalisation trajectory, we will make use of Skrzypek’s work on the grammaticalisation of demonstratives in Old Scandinavian (Skrzypek 2010, 2012; Skrzypek et al. 2021). Skrzypek’s investigations take semantic categories and their labels from Hawkins (1978), a widely-used set. We will discuss these steps one-by-one.

### 3.2. Stage I: Situationally evoked deixis

Demonstratives have ‘pointing’ functions in the situational context but in many cases, determiners can also be used (see (13a-b) below), although there is a clear sense that only the demonstrative is doing any pointing. The definite article allows the hearer to make the correct identification because it conveys a signal from the speaker that the hearer

should be able to identify the referent – the speaker assumes that the referent is part of the Common Ground (because it has been mentioned earlier, or because of the knowledge about the world that the speaker assumes the reader to have). This is Prince’s category SITUATIONALLY EVOKED (Prince 1981: 237).

- (13) a. Pass me **that/the saw** over there, please.  
b. Can you pass me **that/the salt**?

The fact that there is overlap between the two forms already at this stage shows that these semantic stages do not map neatly onto Lehmann’s categories in (12b).

### 3.3. Stage II: Direct anaphoric reference

The literature on diachronic trajectories of the definite article usually propose that the first use of the article will be with referents that are linked to a specific antecedent (an 'anchor') in the previous discourse (a textual as opposed to situational use), although this function is prototypically expressed by pronouns:

- (14) I came into *a spacious room*. **It/The room** was sparsely decorated and rather gloomy. (After Skrzypek et al. 2021: 15)  
(15) Fred was discussing *an interesting book* in his class. I went to discuss **it/the book** with him afterwards. (After Hawkins 1978: 86, quoted in Skrzypek et al. 2021: 16)

Hawkins labels this stage “direct anaphoric reference”, and here, too, there is overlap with the demonstrative:

- (16) Beside the barn there is *a little cottage*. **The/This cottage** was built in 1875. (Skrzypek 2012: 45, after Fraurud 2000: 246)  
(17) There was *a lamp* in the room. On **the/this/that lamp** there was.. (Skrzypek 2010: 147)  
(18) Fred *bought a new house*. **The extravagant purchase/This extravagant purchase** drained him of all money. (Skrzypek 2012: 17)

For Skrzypek (2012: 49), following Dahl (2015: 31) and Lyons (1999: 332), this overlap between articles and demonstratives creates the “bridging context” required to propel the grammaticalisation of demonstratives along the cline. In terms of using these semantic categorisations as diagnostics of a particular grammaticalisation stage, we are interested in more precise reasons why demonstratives are used in instances like this, beyond “functional overlap” (Skrzypek 2010: 148) or “stylistic reasons” (Skrzypek et al. 2021: 16). We could tentatively describe a possible function of the demonstrative in (16)-(17) as Topic Shift, where particularly the distal demonstrative signals that the referent is going to be the new topic (Breban 2012: 281). Although Topic Shift can include the reactivation of earlier topics (see e.g., Breban 2012: 279), both demonstratives and definite articles can reactivate a referent that has not been mentioned in the recent discourse without that referent going on to be topic (Gundel et al., 1993; see also Skrzypek et al.’s (2021: 161ff) discussion of Ariel’s (1988) *Accessibility Marking Scale*).

The overlap between definite article and demonstrative in (18) is due to the fact that the anchor is the entire predicate – *buy a new house* – rather than an NP. Demonstratives – both as determiner and as pronoun – can refer to the entire previous sentence or stretch of discourse, so to an entity of a higher order than a referent. Instead of topic-shifting, singular *this* “rather establishes a new attention focus by shifting the addressee’s attention to the state of affairs expressed in the preceding sentence” (Becher 2010: 1312). *This* differs from *it* in that the latter *does* have to refer to a specific constituent; however, once *this* has established a higher-order entity, that entity can then be referred to by *it* (Becher 2010: 1312).

#### 3.4. Stage III: Indirect anaphoric reference

Where there is a clear one-to-one correspondence between the antecedent and the NP in the case of direct anaphoric reference, it has long been noted that definite articles can link to 'anchors' by a more tenuous semantic relationship. This category is labelled “inferred” in Prince’s (1981) taxonomy. An example is (19):

(19) I got on *a bus* yesterday and **the driver** was drunk. (Prince 1981: 233)



In (19), *the driver*, although strictly speaking new to the discourse, is nevertheless accompanied by a definite rather than an indefinite article because the speaker assumes that the hearer can infer that this is the driver of the bus; the definite article is signalling to the hearer that they should be able to identify this referent. So there is an anchor– *a bus* – but its identifiability demands a greater effort on the part of the hearer, as it relies on the knowledge that buses have drivers.

This category is typically associated with the definite article rather than the demonstrative, and hence a good candidate for diagnostics of when the stage “weakly demonstrative definite determiner” is reached (see also De Mulder & Cartier 2011: 527).

(20) I got on *a bus* yesterday and **\*that driver** was drunk. (cf. (19))<sup>3</sup>

Some cases that resemble (18) are classified by Skrzypek as falling into this category, which would mean that indirect anaphoric reference is not a useful tool for diagnosing grammaticalisation. We think these cases are better classed as direct anaphoric reference, summing up states-of-affairs (stretches of discourse) rather than signalling identifiability; we will discuss a case in section 4.3 below (example (25)). An additional diagnostic category, not mentioned by Skrzypek but by Breban (2012), is nouns with modifiers, particularly relative clauses. Contra-intuitively, definite articles may appear with nouns that refer to a referent that is new in the discourse – Breban refers to them as “definite first-mentions” (Breban 2012: 282). The reason that definite articles are nevertheless possible here is that the restrictive relative clause itself “activates the general knowledge necessary to locate the referents in a contextual set” (Wagener 2017: 74). Here the

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<sup>3</sup> De Mulder & Cartier (2011: 527) note that the use of the demonstrative instead of the definite article in such a context actually deactivates the referent; they give the following examples from Charolles (1990):

- (i) We arrived in a village. **The church** was on a hill.
- (ii) We arrived in a village. **That church**, really, how awful!

definite article also signals identifiability: although *the money* in (21) has not been mentioned before, the hearer will be able to identify it once the entire NP is processed:

(21) She used **\*that/the money** [<sub>RelCl</sub>that she had earned over the summer] as a deposit for the flat

In Prince's (1981) terms, these postmodified definite NPs have the status of "containing inferrables". There is an interesting footnote here to the general observation that the modern reflex of *sá/þænn* is an 'adjective article' only when there is a following adjective (see (5)), and a demonstrative elsewhere, as the continental Scandinavian languages nevertheless can use it as the determiner for heads that are postmodified, even though that head is already marked for definiteness by the *-inn* affix:

(22) Det er mange uvennlige mennesker man støter på i hverdagen. Men (**de**) **rørlegger-ne** som fikset vasken til bestemor, var ytterst sympatiske  
'You meet plenty of unfriendly people in your everyday life. But the plumbers who fixed grandmother's sink were extraordinarily nice' (Modern Norwegian; Wagener 2017: 74)<sup>4</sup>

Wagener acknowledges that *de* cannot be a demonstrative here, and that it must be a definite article. This means that restrictive relative clause postmodifiers can also be used as a diagnostic for grammaticalisation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This use may be restricted to Norwegian. Our Swedish informants marked the use of a free morpheme article here as 'non-standard' and more acceptable to younger speakers than to older ones. One speaker of a more Norwegian-influenced variety of Swedish pointed out that *de* in this use can also be a pronoun, 'they', and would then have demonstrative force; cf. the singular use as in (i):

(i) Han kille-n som lagade min vask var trevlig  
he guy-the who fixed my sink was friendly  
'that guy who fixed my sink was friendly'

<sup>5</sup> Wagener makes the excellent point that *sá/þænn* has an edge over the *-inn* affix in that the affix is "excluded from contexts where reference is unique but not specific" – witness the absence of the affix but

In (22), the definite article is “licensed” by a relative clause, because it is the presence of that clause that makes the referent identifiable and hence legitimates the use of an element (the article) that signals identifiability. This context is identified by De Mulder & Cartier (2011: 529) as one of “pragmatic” definiteness because, like (19), it requires more effort on the part of the hearer to recover the referent, unlike “semantic” definiteness where the identification of referents does not require such extra scaffolding. De Mulder & Cartier (2011: 529) note that some West Germanic dialects make a formal distinction between pragmatic and semantic definiteness because they require a 'strong' definite article for the former, and a 'weak' definite article, a slightly more grammaticalised version, also in terms of phonological content, for the latter. De Mulder & Cartier (2011: 530) argue that the less grammaticalised ‘strong’ article, being phonologically more salient, is a natural choice to signal to the hearer that more processing effort will be required. This take on the grammaticalisation of demonstratives constitutes another argument in favour of calling the environment as in (22) a bridging context, i.e. a context that may facilitate the grammaticalisation of strong into weak definite articles.

### 3.5. Stage IV: Unique reference

This category also relies on the knowledge the speaker assumes to be present in the Common Ground but, in this case, there is no anchor in the discourse, and the referents are typically unique: *the sun*, *the queen*, etc.

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the presence of *sá/pænn* in (i), where *elev* ‘pupil’ does not refer to a specific pupil. Unlike the affix, *sá/pænn* “is compatible with both specific and non-specific reference” (Wagener 2017: 78):

- (i) **Den elev** som opptrer i miniskjørt, blir utvist  
the pupil COMP appears in miniskirt will-be expelled  
‘The pupil who appears in a miniskirt will be expelled’ (Wagener 2017: 78)

(23) \***That/The Prime Minister** has just resigned. (adapted from Hawkins 1978: 116, quoted in Skrzypek et al. 2021: 23)

As with the previous category, there is no overlap between the demonstrative and the definite article here, so this category also makes a good diagnostic tool for grammaticalisation.

### 3.6. Stage V: Generic reference

Generic referents prototypically have indefinite marking, but some languages also allow definite articles:

(24) **A lion/The lion** is a ferocious beast. (After Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 407)

Demonstratives are not possible here, so this is another category which can be used as a diagnostic.

### 3.7. Diagnostics

Our discussion so far has introduced Skrzypek's grammaticalisation cline, where we have identified Stage III as a clear diagnostic for signalling a parting-of-the-ways of the semantics of the demonstrative and the definite article. We suggested that Stage II can also be employed for that purpose if the use of the demonstrative form does not appear to show the more typically demonstrative functions of Topic Shift or reactivation, or takes as its anchor a higher order referent than an NP. Table 5 sums up the alignment of semantic categories and grammaticalisation stage, from Skrzypek (2012: 49), with an additional column recapitulating the potential of each category as a diagnostic.

Grammaticalisation	Category	Diagnostics
Stage I	Deixis	Pointing function: Demonstrative; else: Definite article
Stage II	Direct Anaphora (textual deixis)	Topic shift/Reactivation/ Anchor ≠ NP: Demonstrative; else: Definite article
Stage III	Indirect Anaphora (textual deixis)	Definite article
Stage IV	Unique Reference (non-textual)	Definite article
Stage V	Generics (non-textual)	Definite article

Table 5. The grammaticalisation stages of the definite article, with potential diagnostics

### 3.8. Revisiting *hinn* and enclitic *-inn*

In the case of the forerunners of the definite article *-inn*, Stage I is represented by the clear demonstrative use of *hino* in (1) above, which points to a referent in the immediate situation. Of the other Common Scandinavian runic inscriptions discussed in section 2, examples (8), (9) and (11) are like (1), also SITUATIONALLY EVOKED (*this stone, these runes*). Examples (3), (4), (10), and possibly (7), however, are of the type [*proper name*] – *the* – (*weak*) *adjective*, not situationally evoked and not contrastive, and their analogues in the modern Germanic languages would be the definite article or the 'adjective article'. Example (2) is demonstrative. The translation *the other country*, taken from the Skaldic Project website, appears to emphasise the distal semantics, the kind of contrast evoked in two-part demonstrative systems (*that country* evokes *this country*); Wagener (2017: 69), citing Stroh-Wollin (2009: 3, fn1), notes that contrastivity is one of the last remaining niches for demonstrative *hinn* after its post-1300 decline. Example (6) is indirectly anaphoric, with the *-inn* affix. The Skaldic Project website translates by a possessive: 'his soul'; but the situation fits a system where definite articles rather than possessives are used with inalienable possession (Skrzypek 2020: 182–185; Skrzypek et al. 2021:

232); Wagener (2017: 62) labels such uses indirect anaphoric reference, and explicitly says that the demonstrative *sá/þænn* is incompatible with this type of reference.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4. Incipient articles in *Äldre Västgötalagen*

##### 4.1. Introduction

This section discusses Skrzypek's investigation of the *Äldre Västgötalagen*, the oldest extant Old Swedish text written in the Latin alphabet; the findings will be compared to two other Old East Scandinavian texts from the same period (around 1200) in section 5. Skrzypek (2009<sup>a</sup>: 205–218; 2010: 145–162; 2012: 78–92) argues that this is the point that the category of definiteness is emerging in Swedish, although it does not yet seem to have reached its modern status, judging by the fact that there is no indefinite article at this stage (the development of indefinite articles typically lags behind the development of definite articles, see e.g. Crisma 2015; Crisma & Pintzuk 2016; Skrzypek et al. 2021: 68). The use of definite articles in the text also scores low on Lehmann's parameter of OBLIGATORIFICATION: the corpus contains fewer definite articles than would be expected

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<sup>6</sup> Wagener provides a (truncated) example from Old Icelandic; the untruncated version, however, shows that this particular attestation is actually an example of direct anaphoric reference (see (i) below), but this does not invalidate his general point that body parts (inalienable possession) count as identifiable, and can have the *-inn* affix at first mention.

- (i) Kemur þá Stígandi til móts við hana. Hún fagnar honum vel og býður að skoða í *höfði honum*. Hann leggur **höfuðit** í kné henni og sofnar skjótlega. 'Stígandi comes that day to meet her. She greeted him well, and offers to look through (the hair of) his head (*i höfði honum* 'at head his'). He laid his head (*hofuðit* 'the head') down on her knee, and soon went to sleep' (*Laxdæla saga* Chapter 38; Anonymous, *The Laxdale Saga*, Muriel A. C. Press, Icelandic Saga Database, Sveinbjorn Thordarson (ed.), [http://www.sagadb.org/laxdaela\\_saga.en](http://www.sagadb.org/laxdaela_saga.en)).

Skrzypek (2020) finds that once inalienable possession starts to be marked by a possessive pronoun (rather than being expressed by a bare noun), there is a division of labour between possessive and definite article affix in that the possessive marks the first mention, but the affix successive (direct anaphora) mentions. This is exactly what we see in (i).

for a language with a fully developed definiteness system, although it must be noted that legal texts generally contain few definite expressions (Dahl 2015: 37; Skrzypek 2009<sup>a</sup>: 206). This section revisits Skrzypek's investigation in the light of the diagnostics we have discussed in section 3.

#### 4.2. The text

*Äldre Västgöotalagen* is the oldest extant Old Swedish text written in the Latin alphabet and, with around 15,000 words, also the longest Old East Scandinavian text. It is contained in the manuscript *Codex Holmiensis B59*, which dates from circa 1280. The language of the text is quite archaic, however, which is why the composition of the text has been dated to the beginning of the 1200s at the latest (Carlquist 2002: 809–810; Peterson 2018; Skrzypek 2009<sup>a</sup>: 205–207; Skrzypek 2012: 17). *Äldre Västgöotalagen* belongs to the legal genre, being a collection of some of the first laws of Västergötland; legal texts in fact constitute the bulk of the earliest extant Old East Scandinavian texts (Dahl 2015: 31).

#### 4.3. Enclitic *-inn* in *Äldre Västgöotalagen*

A total of 23 forms of enclitic *-inn* are identified by Skrzypek in *Äldre Västgöotalagen*, presenting a very low rate, of 1.53 realisations per 1,000 words (Skrzypek 2009<sup>a</sup>: 211; Skrzypek 2012: 79). The link between the anchor and the form with enclitic *-inn* can have direct anaphoric reference, although Skrzypek notes that there is some functional overlap here with the free morpheme determiner *den*. The distance between anchor and enclitic form appears to be greater than the distance between the anchor and the free morpheme determiner, with a higher rate of topic shifting to other referents in the intervening discourse, which suggests that *-inn* has the function of reactivating an earlier topic.

With respect to indirect anaphoric reference, Skrzypek provides example (25); the form in question has enclitic *-inn* as well as a free morpheme determiner *þem*:

(25) *Varþær supærmán dræpin allær ænskær maþær þa skal böta firi*  
be southerner killed or English man then shall pay for

marchum fiurum þem **sakinæ** sökirk ok tvar marchar konongi  
marks four to-the-person charge-the seeks and two marks king

‘If a German is killed, or an Englishman, compensation must be given through four marks to the person who presses the charge and there are two marks to the king.’

(*Äldre Västgötalagen* aM:5, Skrzypek 2012: 83; our translation)

Note that there is no NP antecedent; instead, the accusative singular noun *sakinæ* (in bold) takes the entire state-of-affairs – the murder – as its anchor (the relevant phrase in italics). According to our diagnostics, this is not a clear-cut article use; note that a PDE translation with a demonstrative is also possible.

Skrzypek (2020) presents a more articulated subdivision of indirect anaphora contexts, with the "lexical/semantic" type the earliest one to occasionally show the incipient definite article; the examples and descriptions she provides seem to be like (25) in that they do not have NP antecedents (Skrzypek 2020: 185–186). The type as in (19) is apparently overwhelmingly expressed by bare nouns in the *Äldre Västgötalagen*. In Skrzypek (2012), however, she does provide an example of enclitic *-inn* with unique reference, as in (26):

(26) Allum slikum malum skal af landi skiptæ mæþ brevi til  
all such cases shall of country part with letter to  
**pavæ-ns**  
pope-the.GEN

‘All such cases must be transferred from the (jurisdiction of the) district to the pope by a letter.’

(*Äldre Västgötalagen* GB:8, Skrzypek 2012: 88; our translation)

The masculine genitive singular *pavæns* constitutes an instance of overt definiteness marking of a unique referent who the writer expects to be part of the Common Ground. This use marks Stage IV in the grammaticalisation process outlined in Table 5. Skrzypek et al. (2021: 162) conclude that as early as 1200, Old Swedish marks the distinction



between demonstratives and incipient definite articles formally, by having the enclitic for the latter, and the free morpheme for the demonstrative.

#### 4.4. The distal demonstrative *sá/þænn* in *Äldre Västgötalagen*

The distal demonstrative *sá/þænn* is used with direct anaphoric reference in *Äldre Västgötalagen*, as in (27), where the feminine accusative singular demonstrative *þa* is used with the second mention of the referent *mark* ‘property’ (first mention in italics, second in bold):

- (27) Værþær boræn a *mark* abyrd ma se  
 is put on property secretly-planted-corpse may see  
 bloð ok bænd hinnugh sum dræpit var. þa skal  
 blood and lethal-wounds thither where killed was then shall  
 þen böta sum. **þa mark.** a.  
 this-one pay which that property owns

‘If the corpse of a slain man is taken secretly to some property, (and) if blood from the lethal wound can be seen in the direction where he was killed, he shall pay who owns this ground.’

(*Äldre Västgötalagen* aM:14, Skrzypek 2010: 155; our translation)

Skrzypek notes the considerable distance between first and second mention, which is consistent with the demonstrative being used as a reactivation device rather than as an incipient article. In the case of the next example, however, she notes with some surprise that we seem to be dealing with indirect anaphoric reference, so that this would represent Stage III in her grammaticalisation scale (Skrzypek 2010: 156; 2012: 86–87):

- (28) Uærþær maþær dræpin ok af daghum takin. þa skal uighi a  
 is man killed and of day taken then shall killing on  
 þingi lysæ [...] han skal uider þy **banorþi** gangæ.  
 thing proclaim [...] he (the killer) shall by this accusation go

'If a man is killed, the killing shall be [...] made public on the first thing [...] He [the killer] shall confess this accusation.'

(Äldre Västgötalagen aM:1, Skrzypek 2010: 156)

This example resembles (25), and the phrase *þy banorþi* appears to be a similar recapitulation of a state-of-affairs rather than indirect anaphoric reference of the type *a bus – the driver* as in (19). The fact that the demonstrative also works in the translation supports this analysis, rather than an analysis in which *þy* is an incipient article (or “semi-article” in Skrzypek 2010: 154).

#### 4.5. Conclusion

It seems, then, that the Old Swedish enclitic *-inn* is further advanced along the grammaticalisation cline than *sá/þænn*; the former has a clear instance of marking unique reference (Stage IV) whereas there is no evidence that *sá/þænn* has moved beyond Stage II. It is clear, however, that overt definiteness marking was still highly optional at this point.

In order to provide a complete picture of the grammaticalisation of overt definiteness in Old East Scandinavian, section 5 will look at all three members of the demonstrative system (*hinn*, *sá/þænn* and *sjá/þænni*), in terms of their semantics, their relative frequency, and how the forms compare in the various Old East Scandinavian varieties in terms of their position on the grammaticalisation cline.

### 5. Incipient articles in the *Scanian Law* and the *Guta Lag*

#### 5.1. Introduction

The *Scanian Law* is a legal codex whose language dates back to the very beginning of the 1200s (Frederiksen 2002: 820). Composed in the region of Scania, they constitute oldest extant Old Danish text written in the Latin alphabet (Peterson 2018). The analysed version of the *Scanian Law* is that contained in the manuscript *Codex Holmiensis B76*, dated to circa 1325 (Frederiksen 2002: 821). The text of the *Scanian Law* contains around 19,000 words in this manuscript, divided into 225 chapters. The first 78 chapters

are investigated here, amounting to 6,052 words — roughly one-third of the complete work. *Guta Lag*'s language, also a legal work, is dated to the early 1200s — the oldest extant Old Gutnish text written in the Latin alphabet (Carlquist 2002: 812; Haugen 1976: 190; Peterson 2018; Vrieland 2011: 25; Skrzypek P.C.). The manuscript selected for the investigation of *Guta Lag* is *Codex Holmiensis B64*, dated to the first half of the 1300s (Carlquist 2002: 812; Peterson 2018; Vrieland 2011: 3–4, 6, 34). *Guta Lag* contains around 12,000 words in this manuscript, divided into 65 chapters. The first nine chapters have been selected for the investigation, amounting to 5,853 words, approximately half of the total. The linguistic materials belonging to these two codices reproduced in the analysis section have been taken from and follow the numeration of the digital repository *Fornsvenska Textbanken* (Delsing 2017).

The *Scanian Law* and *Guta Lag* are also situated in the Old East Scandinavian continuum, are of a similar date as the *Äldre Västgötalagen*, and of the same genre (legal texts). Their language is very homogeneous, and the samples selected should be representative of the whole. The Old East Scandinavian legal codices are authentic texts rather than translations, and potentially reflecting native Old East Scandinavian patterns and peculiarities (Frederiksen 2002: 820; Skrzypek et al. 2021: 75). The original Old Danish and Old Gutnish texts have been studied alongside two Modern English academic translations of these works, those of Peel (2015: 36–54) and Tamm & Vogt (2016: 56–69).

It is clear from the relatively low numbers of *hinn*, *-inn*, *sá/þænn*, and *sjá/þænni* in the two sets of laws that none of these items are far advanced on the OBLIGATORIFICATION-scale. We need to keep in mind that definiteness can still be left unexpressed, or expressed by other means. In example (29), for instance, definiteness is marked by a weak adjective, *sammæ* ‘same’:

- (29) Skil by withær annur um marcæ skiael ællær  
 disagree village with another about boundaries divide either  
 wipær þorp. þa scal næfnæ tolf mæn. þe ær  
 with thorp then shall name twelve men who that

aldungæ æræ j bygden. oc lata swæriæ markæ  
elders are in village-the and let swear boundaries  
  
skiæl þær sum þe wiliæ. oc þe þoro fore gupi.  
divide there which these want and these dare before god  
  
Skil oc mæn j by um ornummæ. oc andræ  
disagree and men in village about apart and other  
  
iorþ. þa ær þættæ **sammæ** ræt.  
land then is this same law

‘If a village disagrees with another village or with a thorp about boundaries, then twelve men who are elders in the area shall be nominated and they shall swear about the boundaries as they will and dare before God. If men of the village disagree over land apart and other lands, then this falls under the same law.’

(*Scanian Law* 71, translation based on Tamm & Vogt 2016: 66)

## 5.2. The incipient article *hinn*

There are 52 occurrences of the incipient article *hinn* in the *Scanian Law* (8.59 per 1,000 words) compared to 15 in the *Guta Lag* (2.56 per 1,000 words). The semantic analysis of *hinn* is presented in Table 6:

Grammaticalisation	Category	Scanian Law	Guta Lag
Stage I	Deixis	44	11
Stage II	Direct Anaphora	8	4
Stage III	Indirect Anaphora	-	-
Stage IV	Unique Reference	-	-
Stage V	Generics	-	-

Table 6. Semantic distribution of *hinn* in the *Scanian Law* and *Guta Lag*

*Hinn* presents an identical semantic distribution in both works, the most prominent syntactic function it develops being that of a mere situational-deictic marker (Stage I): 44 deixis instances in the *Scanian Law* and 11 in *Guta Lag*. Most of the deixis-tokens are pronouns. With respect to direct anaphoric reference, there are 8 instances of *hinn* in the *Scanian Law* and 4 in *Guta Lag*; an example is (30):

- (30) Tha en nequar vill siir kirchiiu giera at mairu maki than hann fyr  
 When anyone wants himself church build for more comfort than he before  
 hafthi. tha scal hann giera af nju lutum.  
 had. then shall he build (one) of nine parts.  
 En tiunt scal iemvel kirchia hafa sen lut  
 and tithe shall as-well church have its part  
 sum prestr senn- þar til et **hin nya** ier vigþ  
 such-as priest his there till that that new (one) is consecrated

‘When anyone wants to build himself a church to greater comfort than he had before, then shall he make (one) of nine parts of his income. And the church shall receive its tithe and the priest his, until the new one is consecrated.’

(*Guta Lag* 3.3, Peel 2015: 38)

No instances of *hinn* have been found in the grammaticalisation Stages III, IV, or V, so there are no signs of this form moving into incipient article territory on the grammaticalisation cline. This usage of *hinn* is not found in the Modern Continental Scandinavian languages — with *hinn* in its independent form having disappeared from them altogether (see (5) above). This usage of *hinn* is clearly reminiscent of that found in Old West Scandinavian which resulted in the Modern Icelandic adjectival article (Faarlund 2004: 56–57; Perridon & Sleeman 2011: 9, 11–14; Stroh-Wollin 2009, 2020; Skrzypek 2009<sup>b</sup>: 67), i.e., a relic of Proto-Scandinavian and Common Scandinavian.

What is striking about these 12 instances of *hinn* is that all of them are followed by an adjective, without an overt nominal head. This is reminiscent of proposals for the origin of the weak adjectival inflection. The paradigm of the weak adjective is suspiciously similar to that of the weak nouns, which are supposed to be the counterpart of the third

Latin declension (*nōmen*, Gen. *nōminis* ‘name’), which is also the one used for agent nouns based on verbs: *edō* (gen. *edōnis*) ‘glutton’ (from *edēre* ‘eat’), also in Gothic: *staua* (gen. *stauins*) ‘judge’ {from *\*stōjan* ‘judge’}, *wardja* (gen. *wardjins*) ‘guard’ from Proto-Germanic *\*wardjon-*, an extended form of *\*war-* to watch, guard (cf. PDE *aware* < *on ware* ‘on one’s guard’); also for Latin names, based on adjectives: *Catō* (gen. *Catonis*) ‘the sly one’ from *catus* ‘sly’, *Rufō* ‘the red one’ from *rufus* ‘red’ (Wright 1910: 104; see also Fertig 2013: 38–40). The PIE ancestor of the -n suffix (still visible in the non-nominative cases) in these forms was derivational rather than inflectional, and had an individualising function (cf. Welsh *coed* ‘wood’ versus *coeden* ‘a tree’). The weak declension then came to be associated with specificity and definiteness because of this individualising function; ‘the [ADJECTIVE] one’ picked out a specific individual. Ratkus’ investigation of Gothic, where the weak adjective can occur without a determiner, shows that its use seems to be “semantically ‘intensive’ or ‘particularising’” (Ratkus 2011: 163).<sup>7</sup>

A scenario of this individualising function first being signalled by the weak inflection and then requiring to be propped up by a second element – *hinn* – when the natural processes of phonological erosion made the inflection less distinct would be a typical case of reinforcement, which is often found in grammaticalisation. But adjectives used as nouns are potentially problematic, so it is also possible to find a trigger within morphology; an originally nominal inflection could have been reanalysed as adjectival if it attached to an adjectival stem (cf. ‘sly’, ‘red’ in the examples above), and if there was some ambiguity about whether the form was an adjective or a noun. In Gothic *sa blinda*

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<sup>7</sup> For reasons of the later decline of *hinn*, see Wagener (2017: 71-2); he notes that the individualising function can be identified for *sálpænn*, not for *hinn*, witness the fact that *hinn* needs to be repeated for each (weak) adjective (cf. Pfaff’s notion of weak adjectives as incomplete), even though the adjectives are supposed to apply to the same referent. But the individualising function does hold for *the* in PDE example (i) – each *the* picks out a separate referent:

- (i) The short and the long-haired man got us out of the trouble (Wagener 2017: 73)

‘the blind one’, *sa* ‘that/the’ indicates a noun, but *blinda* is an adjective; there is a clear PDE analogue in phrases like *the blind*, *the poor* (can only have plural reference) or *the deceased*, *the accused* (can have both singular and plural reference); the presence of *the* indicates that they are NPs, but it is unclear whether the adjectives have become nouns here (by conversion) or that we should think of these phrases as shorter forms of *the blind ones*, *the poor ones*, *the deceased one*, *the accused one* (see Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 538). So *hinn* may well have stepped in as a reinforcer while the weak adjectival inflection was still alive and kicking. This scenario would favour an analysis as in (3a) rather than as in (3b), and would also align with analyses in which weak adjectives are “defective” or “incomplete” APs and require the presence of *hinn* for that reason (as has been argued for Old Icelandic *hinn* in Pfaff 2019, building on Börjars & Payne 2016).

### 5.3. Enclitic *-inn*

There are 49 attestations of *-inn* in the *Scanian Law* (8.10 per 1,000 words) and just 6 in *Guta Lag* (1.03 per 1,000 words): this latter figure is very low not only when compared to the *Scanian Law*, but even when compared to its frequency in *Äldre Västgötalagen*, which, as we saw in section 4.3, is also quite low. Semantically, enclitic *-inn* presents an identical picture in our corpora as was reported for *Äldre Västgötalagen*: no Stage I instances, but Stages II and III are represented in both works (Table 7):

Grammaticalisation	Category	Scanian Law	Guta Lag
Stage I	Deixis	-	-
Stage II	Direct Anaphora	45	2
Stage III	Indirect Anaphora	4	4
Stage IV	Unique Reference	(1) <sup>8</sup>	-
Stage V	Generics	-	-

Table 7. Semantic Distribution of *-inn* in the *Scanian Law* and *Guta Lag*

Example (31) exemplifies *-inn* marking direct anaphoric reference in the *Scanian Law*:

(31) Far *bondæ* sön konu oc förær hanæ j bo mæth  
 takes *householder's* son wife and leads her in dwelling with  
 faþur sinum oc aflær barn wiþær hana oc læghs æy  
 father his and begets children with her and agree not  
 fælagh theræ j mællin vm tha dør **bonda-ns** sön  
 partnership their in between when then dies householder's-the son  
 tha taki all hans börn fullan lot æftir theræ faþær  
 then take all his children full lot after their father

‘If a householder’s son takes a wife and leads her into the house of his father and he begets children with her and no partnership is agreed between them, and the householder’s son dies, all his children shall take a full lot after their father.’

(*Scanian Law* 5, Tamm & Vogt 2016: 56)

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<sup>8</sup> This important attestation is not from our sample but found in an attachment to the *Scanian Law*; see the discussion of (32) below.



The referent of the bare noun antecedent *bondæ* ‘householder’, introduced at the beginning of (31), is next referred to as *fapur* ‘father’ and then once again by *bondans* ‘the householder’ —a masculine genitive singular form of the noun + enclitic *-inn*. Instead of *bondans sön* ‘the householder’s son’, the writer could have opted for *hann* ‘he’ but instead opts for the full NP, so may have had a sense that this referent needed to be reactivated. We noted in section 3.3 that both articles and demonstratives can reactivate without the referent becoming Topic or having to be selected from a range of other referents. We can diagnose Stage II here, noting, as in section 3.3, that incipient articles cannot yet be distinguished from demonstratives at this stage.

There is one attachment to the *Scanian Law* that introduces an ordination by the pope that we know was issued in 1215 (so dates this attachment as also belonging to the early 13<sup>th</sup> Century):<sup>9</sup>

- (32) Paw-**in** hawir allum cristnum mannum forbuthit iernbiwrth  
 Pope-the has all Christian men forbiddem ordeal-by-fire  
 ‘The pope has forbidden all Christian men the ordeal by fire’.

This is a clear instance of unique reference, i.e. stage IV.

#### 5.4. The distal demonstrative *sá/þænn*

With 108 realisations, *sá/þænn* is the most frequent lexeme of the tripartite demonstrative system in the *Scanian Law* (17.85 occurrences per 1,000 words). The picture is very similar in *Guta Lag*: with 77 forms (13.16 per 1,000 words), *sá/þænn* is also the most frequent lexeme of the tripartite demonstrative system there (though we need to bear in mind that this count also includes pronouns). Direct comparisons with *Äldre Västgötalagen* are not possible, as Skrzypek (2010; 2012) does not provide frequency data for *sá/þænn*.

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<sup>9</sup> We are very grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this example out to us.

The most common semantic realisation of *sá/þænn* is that of situational-deictic Stage I in both the *Scanian Law* and *Guta Lag*: 54 times in the former and 41 in the latter (see Table 8 below). The majority of these items are pronouns.

Grammaticalisation	Category	Scanian Law	Guta Lag
Stage I	Deixis	54	41
Stage II	Direct Anaphora	45	27
Stage III	Indirect Anaphora	7	9
Stage IV	Unique Reference	-	-
Stage V	Generics	-	-

Table 8. Semantic distribution of *sá/þænn* in the *Scanian Law* and *Guta Lag*

The construction demonstrative + noun presents an identical semantic distribution in our corpora: it appears in both direct anaphoric contexts and in indirect anaphoric contexts. No instances of this structure were found in Stages IV or V. Example (33) is a direct anaphoric instance from *Guta Lag*:

- (33) Nv iru enn friþr andrir tuer [...] andrir tuer [...]  
 now are also periods-of-peace other two [...]  
 þet ier *aldra manna friþr* [...] Drepr þu mann a þaim friþi.  
 This is of-all men period-of-peace [...] slay you man in that period-of-peace  
 þa byt so miclu vereldi wiþr landa alla sum hinn ier dyr  
 then pay so much to-the-general assembly as that is worth  
 sum þu drapt. banda haldr þir engun fyr þan þu byt hafr.  
 as you slew peace-circle hold you not before that you pay fine  
 Sargar þu mann eþa ber a þaim friþi. þa byt þriar marcr.  
 Wound you man or strike in this period-of-peace then pay three marks  
 A þaim friþi ma engin firi andrum spiella  
 in these periods-of-peace shall no-one for another destroy  
 huatki hus eþa garþa.

whichever house or boundary-fence

‘Now there are, moreover, two other periods of peace. [Explanation for the existence of the two periods of peace]. This is the universal period of peace. [Description of the dates.] If you kill a man during this period of peace, the fine to the general assembly is as great a wergild as he whom you killed is worth. No peace circle will protect you before you have paid the fine. If you wound a man or strike him during this period of peace, the fine is three marks. During this period of peace no one may destroy another’s house or boundary fence.’

(*Guta Lag* 9, translation adapted from Peel 2015: 43)

*Friþir* ‘periods of peace’ is introduced at the beginning of this section of text, and re-labelled as a singular *aldra manna friþr* ‘period of peace for all men; universal period of peace’. After its introduction, this referent is first picked up by *pro* (unexpressed pronoun): *laupar* ‘(it) runs’..., *standr* ‘(it) lasts’ ... , *laupr* ‘(it) runs’... in the description of the dates (omitted from (33) for reasons of space), which shows that *aldra manna friþr* does indeed establish a referent. When the referent is no longer a subject, it can no longer remain unexpressed and has to be spelled out by a full NP, so all the three cases of the masculine dative singular *þaim friþi* are instances of direct anaphora (Stage II).

The discussion in section 3 above argued that Stage III, indirect anaphoric reference, is the crucial stage in which there can be said to be a parting of the ways of demonstrative and definite article. We also argued there that definite articles can occur with first-mentions if the noun is further specified by a postmodifier, like a relative clause; this is a position in which the definite article signals identifiability, one of its main functions, and also one which is not shared by the demonstrative. An instance of *sá/þænn* in this function is (34):

- (34) æn wiliæ the æftær **thæn laghdagh ær thingmen lægiæ**  
but want these after the law-day which assembly-men determine  
til ey aftær fœræ tha bœte the konungi thre mark

to not after give then pay these king three marks

‘But if they do not want to return it [i.e. their part of an inheritance] on the lawday determined by the men of the assembly, then they must pay three marks to the king’

(*Scanian Law 18*, translation adapted from Tamm & Vogt 2016: 59)

It is interesting that the demonstrative + noun construction with *sá/þænn* has not resulted in a grammaticalised definite article template in Modern Scandinavian. Wagener (2017: 65) claims for Old Norse that this function was already expressed by the *-inn* affix, and that this is the reason why the freestanding definite article did not progress any further; but we saw in section 3.4 that the modern languages do in fact show further progress into indirect anaphoric reference territory in the case of nouns postmodified by a relative clause. In the *Scanian Law*, six of the seven attestations of indirect anaphoric reference do not have adjectives, so they cannot be labelled adjectival articles; but five of the seven attestations of indirect anaphoric reference are of a noun postmodified by a relative clause. In the *Guta Lag*, none of the nine attestations have adjectives, but eight are of a noun postmodified by a relative clause. It looks as if the use of *sá/þænn*, though already at stage III of the grammaticalisation process, and past the point where the demonstrative parts company with the article, was more general in its use than the adjective article of the modern North Germanic languages as in (5a-d).

##### 5.5. The compound proximal demonstrative *sjá/þænni*

The compound proximal demonstrative *sjá/þænni* ‘this’ is only attested infrequently in the *Scanian Law* and the *Guta Lag*: 5 attestations in the *Scanian Law* (0.83 forms of *sjá/þænni* per 1,000 words), and 4 in the *Guta Lag* (0.68 per 1,000 words), the lowest rate of all the items investigated. *Sjá/þænni*, then, constitutes the least preferred choice among the Old East Scandinavian members of the tripartite demonstrative system. There are no figures available for this item in Skrzypek's Old Swedish studies. All instances are pronouns.

Grammaticalisation	Category	Scanian Law	Guta Lag
Stage I	Deixis	5	4
Stage II	Direct Anaphora	-	
Stage III	Indirect Anaphora	-	
Stage IV	Unique Reference	-	
Stage V	Generics	-	

Table 9. Semantic Distribution of *sjá/þænni* in the *Scanian Law* and *Guta Lag*

## 6. Conclusion

This article has conducted a semantic analysis of a range of demonstrative elements (*hinn*, *-inn*, *sá/þænn*, and *sjá/þænni*) in Old Scandinavian texts in order to track their position on the grammaticalisation cline in (35) (repeated from (12b):

(35) deictic particle+category noun → demonstrative determiner → weakly demonstrative definite determiner → definite article → affixal article → noun marker (Lehmann 1982: 57)

The semantic metric used to diagnose position on the cline was the same as employed for Skrzypek's investigation of the Old Swedish legal text *Äldre Västgötalagen* (Skrzypek 2012), inspired by Hawkins (1978): Deixis → Direct Anaphora → Indirect Anaphora → Unique Reference → Generics. Our investigation looked at Old Danish (the *Scanian Law*) and Old Gutnish (*Guta Lag*), which are texts from the same period and of the same genre. We revised the metric to take into account demonstratives as determiners of first mentions of nominal heads that are followed by a postmodifier, typically a relative clause, as a diagnostic of indirect anaphoric reference, a key-stage in the grammaticalisation process. In our view, this is the stage where demonstratives and definite articles part company and no longer overlap; we also limited this stage to cases

where the antecedent is a noun rather than a stretch of discourse. No forms of *hinn*, *-inn*, *sá/þænn*, and *sjá/þænni* were found as generic definiteness markers, i.e., fully-fledged definite articles (Stage V). There was a clear difference between enclitic *-inn* and the simple distal demonstrative *sá/þænn* in that enclitic *-inn* is not found with nouns that are identified as expressing deixis, 'in the situation', i.e., situationally evoked, but appear systematically as direct and indirect anaphoric markers; the latter category means that they mark a referent as 'identifiable', one of the key properties of definite articles. There is a caveat, however: most of the demonstratives found in the deixis category were pronouns, i.e., free morphemes, whereas pronominal use is not possible for *-inn*. Significant for its status as definite article is that *-inn* is also found with unique reference (Stage IV). *Sá/þænn* still appears as a situational-deixis marker (mostly as a pronoun), but with some instances of direct and indirect anaphoric reference; the latter category is the one we associate with definite-article-hood. Of particular interest is the fact that we do not see much evidence of *sá/þænn* being a precursor to the adjective article of today; instead, it is predominantly found as a determiner of nouns that are postmodified by relative clauses. Finally, the incipient article *hinn* was not found with indirect anaphoric reference (i.e. as a pure identifiability-marker) but is found with adjectives, and without nominal heads – possibly foreshadowing its use as an adjectival article. In legal prose, however, attributive articles can be expected to be restrictive only, and hence in definite contexts with direct anaphoric reference; in turn, this accounts for heads of second mentions being ellipted, as their referents can be recovered from the first mention: *build a church – the new one* (see, e.g., (30)). This could suggest that we should not make too much of their occurrence with ellipted heads, as this could be a natural consequence of the requirements of the genre rather than necessarily a feature of *hinn* at this stage of the language.

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