

## CAUSES, CONJECTURES AND CONJUNCTIONS IN EARLY OLD HIGH GERMAN TRANSLATIONS

### 1. The Old High German causal conjunctions

Any consultation of a dictionary of the Old High German Tatian translation, or indeed a dictionary of Old High German as a whole, might lead one to believe that the words *bithiu*, *wanta* or *bithiu wanta* were virtually interchangeable, at least in their function as causal conjunctions. For example, in his second edition of the Tatian Sievers lists as the second meaning of *bithiu* ›quia, weil, denn‹ (p. 464), as the first meaning of *uwanta* ›quia, weil, denn‹ (p. 482), and lists *bithiu uwanta* as a simple variant of *uwanta*, again in the same meanings (p. 483).<sup>1</sup>

Of course, the repeated listing ›quia, weil, denn‹ would tend to imply that these three words are simply variants of one another. But they are not. To state the obvious, the first of these words is Latin. It is not in fact a translation of the Old High German words it is listed after, but rather the word that the Old High German words are supposed to translate. The distinction is important, and I will show why below.

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<sup>1</sup> In his ›Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch‹, Schützeichel lists, among other meanings for *bithiu*, ›denn, weil‹, and for *bithiu wanta* (under the same entry) ›da, weil, denn‹. For *wanta* he lists, among other meanings ›da, weil, denn‹. Note also Scholten's (1897) statement (p. 412) that »In T. wird dagegen [as opposed to Otfrid: OWR] *bithiu* gerade so und ebenso häufig gebraucht wie *wanta* und *bithiu wanta* (s. d.), also = ›weil, denn‹ für l. *quia, quoniam, eo quod, nam*«. Also (p. 417) »Am Ende des vorangehenden Hauptsatzes steht *bithiu* im T. zwar nicht (wie O. 3,23,52) [but see my discussion further on: OWR]; daß das jedoch der Sprache nicht fremd war, ist aus dem zu einem Wort gewordenen *bithiu wanta* herzuleiten, das gerade so gebraucht wird wie *wanta* allein; also = ›weil, denn‹.«