

Appendix 3

A GLOSSARY OF METRICAL TERMS

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Alliteration: Identity of sound at the beginning of a word. The words *bealu* and *bōt*, for example, alliterate because they both begin with the same sound (they are said to alliterate on *b*). The consonant clusters *sc-*, *sp-*, and *st-* alliterate only with themselves, but palatal and velar *g* and *c* can alliterate with each other. Thus, *sceadu* alliterates with *sceaðe*, not with *strang*, but *gōd* and *giefan* alliterate despite beginning with different sorts of *g*. Vowels and diphthongs also alliterate with each other (*earm* and *aldor*, for example, alliterate). In Old English verse, alliteration is metrically functional, in that it indicates stressed syllables and binds pairs of verses into lines. See also **Line** and **Double Alliteration**.

Anacrusis: One or two extrametrical syllables that can appear before the first lift of Types A and D. Only prefixes and the negative particle *ne* are generally found in anacrustic positions. For example, *The Dream of the Rood* line 14a, *forwunded mid wommum*, is a Type A with an anacrustic prefix ([x] / xx / x). Verses featuring anacrusis generally have Bliss's caesura in position 1: see **Caesura**.

A-verse: See **On-verse**.

B-verse: See **Off-verse**.

Caesura: The pause that separates the on- from the off-verse. It is generally indicated by a perceptible blank space in modern editions of Old English verse texts. It should be made noticeable during recitation. In Bliss's system, the caesura refers to a syntactic boundary within the half-line. Thus, in *Beowulf* 440a, *lāð wið lāþum*, Bliss's caesura falls in position 1 (*lāð | wið lāþum*), whereas in 2008b, *lāðan cynnes*, it falls in position 2 (*lāðan | cynnes*). Bliss discovered an important correlation between the position of the caesura, on the one hand, and **Anacrusis** and **Double alliteration**, on the other.

Clause-initial drop: The first metrical **Drop** of a **Verse clause**. For example, in the following verse clause from *Beowulf* (lines 661–62), *Ðā him Hrōþgār ġewāt/mid his hæleþa ġedryht,/eodur Scyldinga/ūt of healle*, there are seven metrical drops (*Ðā him*, *-gār ġe-*, *mid his*, *-þa ġe-*, *-ga*, *of*, and *-le*), but only *Ðā him* is clause-initial. If a **Particle** appears outside the clause-initial drop, then it receives a stress: see **Kuhn's laws**.

Contraction: The phonological process whereby a disyllabic word like **seohan*, with intervocalic *h*, lost its *h*, thereby becoming monosyllabic *sēon* (with compensatory lengthening). In earlier Old English poems, contracted words often scan according to their earlier, disyllabic form (a phenomenon known as non-contraction). For example,

in *Beowulf* 1275b, *dēapwiċ sēon*, *sēon* must scan disyllabic for the verse to feature four rather than three positions (/ \ / x, not / \ /).

Dip: See **Drop**.

Double alliteration: The presence of two rather than just one alliterating lift in a verse. Double alliteration is allowed only in the first half of the line, given that alliteration of the second lift in the second half-life is strictly prohibited in verse of the classical type.

Drop: One of three possible metrical positions (the other two are **Lift** and **Half-lift**). A drop is generally occupied either by one unstressed syllable or by several adjacent unstressed syllables. Because an unstressed syllable is represented by a letter “x” in scansion, a metrical drop is generally represented by as many “x” letters as unstressed syllables are in the drop. See **Drop expansion/protraction**.

Drop expansion/protraction: One of the two processes of syllabic equivalence that enable the four-position principle to work. The other process is **Resolution**. By means of drop expansion, several unstressed syllables count as a single drop as long as they are all adjacent. For example, in the half-line *folce tō frōfre*, *-ce* (an inflectional syllable) and *tō* (a non-postponed preposition) are unstressed and adjacent, and so they constitute a single drop (*folce tō frōfre* is a four-position Type A: / xx / x). See also **Four-position principle**.

Epenthesis: See **Parasiting**.

Five types: Each of the five basic rhythmical patterns that a normal half-line of Old English poetry can adopt. They were first postulated by the German philologist Eduard Sievers, who labelled them A, B, C, D, and E in order of decreasing frequency. Assuming (1) that a verse consists of four positions, (2) that there are three types of metrical position, and (3) that the first stressed position of a verse cannot be a half-lift, then Sievers’s five types are the only stress patterns that can occur.

Four-position principle: The most fundamental rule of Old English verse composition, according to which a normal verse is metrical, regardless of its number of syllables, as long as it contains four positions. Verses of more than four syllables are adjusted to a four-position scheme by means of two processes: **Resolution** and **Drop expansion**. Thus, five-syllable verses like *sceaþena brēatum* (with resolution of *sceaþe-*) and *folce tō frōfre* (with *-ce tō* occupying a single, expanded drop) have the same four-position configuration as the four-syllable verse *hūsa sēlest*. There are two principled exceptions to the four-position principle: see **Type A3** and **Type D***.

Half-lift: One of three possible metrical positions (the other two are **Lift** and **Drop**). A half-lift is generally occupied either by a long syllable with secondary stress or by a resolved disyllabic sequence. If a half-lift is immediately preceded by an unresolved lift, then the half-lift may be occupied only by a short syllable with secondary stress (as in *Beowulf* 31a, *lēof landfruma*; but cf. 780a, *betlic ond bānfāg*, in which the half-lift *-fāg* is

long despite being immediately preceded by an unresolved lift). A half-lift is generally represented with a reverse solidus: \. See **Kaluza's law**.

Half-line: Also known as “verse.” A metrical unit that consists of four positions. Two half-lines linked by the alliteration of their first stressed positions constitute a **Line**. The first half of the line is known as **On-verse**, the second half as **Off-verse**.

Heavy syllable: See **Long syllable**.

Hypermetric verse: A special variety of verse that consists of more than four positions. In the first half-line, a hypermetric verse often consists of a lift and drop followed by a four-position Type A verse. In the second half-line, a hypermetric verse often consists of an expanded drop followed by a four-position Type A verse. For example, line 20 of *The Dream of the Rood*, *swætan on þā swīþran healfe. / Eall ic wæs mid sorgum ġedrēfed*, is hypermetric. Hypermetric verses generally occur in clusters and feature double alliteration in the first half of the line. The poem *Maxims I* features a heavier variety of hypermetric verse.

Kaluza's law: A generalization made by the German philologist Max Kaluza in 1896. Kaluza observed a correlation in *Beowulf* between the operation of **Resolution**, on the one hand, and the etymological length of the endings involved, on the other. Resolution obtains if the ending of the resolvable sequence was short in early Old English; if the ending was long, then resolution is suspended. Thus, in *Beowulf* 76a, *folcstede frætwan, -stede*, which must resolve for the verse to have four rather than five positions (/ \ / x, not / \ x / x), ends in a vowel that was short in early Old English (*stede* < **stædi*). On the other hand, in 31a, *lēoflandfruma, -fruma*, which must suspend resolution for the verse to have four rather than three positions (/ / \ x, not / / \), ends in a vowel that was long in early Old English (*fruma* < **frumō*). Kaluza's law has important implications for the dating of *Beowulf* and for Old English metrical theory.

Kuhn's laws: Two generalizations first made in 1933 by the German philologist Hans Kuhn about the **Metrical grammar** of Old English verse. According to Kuhn's First Law, the metrical behaviour of particles depends on their location within the **Verse clause**. If placed in the first drop of a clause (see **Clause-initial drop**), then particles are metrically unstressed, but they receive metrical stress if displaced from that location. According to the second law, the first drop of a clause must always contain at least one particle (in other words, a drop consisting only of proclitics cannot be clause-initial). Thus, the first drop of *Beowulf* 1277b, *ġegān wolde* (a Type C: x / / x), contains only a prefix, and no particles, and so it must be clause-non-initial.

Lift: One of three possible metrical positions (the other two are **Half-lift** and **Drop**). A lift is generally occupied either by a long stressed syllable or by a resolved disyllabic sequence. If a lift is immediately preceded by an unresolved lift, then that lift can be occupied by a short stressed syllable alone, as in *Beowulf* 1678b, *on hand ġyfen* (a Type C verse in which the second lift, *ġy-*, is short). A lift is generally represented with a solidus: /.

Light syllable: See **Short syllable**.

Line: The metrical unit that consists of two verses (or half-lines) linked by the alliteration of stressed syllables (i.e. lifts).

Long syllable: A syllable that ends in a long vowel or diphthong, or a vowel or diphthong (regardless of length) plus at least one consonant. For example, the root syllables of *gōdes*, *mēara*, and *worda* (*gō-*, *mēa-*, and *wor-*, respectively) are long.

Metrical grammar: The system of rules that govern the arrangement of the constituents of a **Verse clause**. From a metrico-grammatical point of view, a word will belong to one of three categories: **Stress-word**, **Proclitic**, and **Particle**. Particles, unlike stress-words and proclitics, evince a variable metrical behaviour, which is governed by **Kuhn's laws**.

Metrical position: See **Position**.

Non-contraction: See **Contraction**.

Non-parasiting: See **Parasiting**.

Off-verse: The second half of an alliterative long **Line**. Its first lift always alliterates with the first and sometimes also the second lift of the on-verse, whereas its second lift is systematically non-alliterating. Also known as "b-verse." See **Alliteration**.

On-verse: The first half of an alliterative long **Line**. Its first lift always alliterates with the first lift of the off-verse. Participation of the second lift in the alliteration depends on metrical and stylistic factors. Also known as "a-verse." See **Alliteration**.

Parasiting: The phonological process whereby monosyllabic words like prehistoric **wuldr* and **māðm*, which end respectively in a liquid and a nasal consonant, developed a parasite vowel before the final consonant, thereby becoming disyllabic (*wuldor*, *māðum*). In Old English verse (especially in earlier poems), words like *wuldor* and *māðum* must often scan according to their earlier monosyllabic value (a phenomenon known as non-parasiting). Parasiting is also known as "epenthesis."

Particle: A word that does not depend on any other element within the clause, but which is not as strongly stressed as a **Stress-word**. Particles include finite verbs, personal and demonstrative pronouns, conjunctions, and most adverbs (mostly monosyllabic). The metrical behaviour of particles is variable: see **Kuhn's laws** and **Clause-initial drop**.

Position: Each of the four structural components of a normal half-line. There are three different types of position: **Lift**, **Half-Lift**, and **Drop**. The possible permutations of these three types of position are the **Five Types** (assuming that a half-lift cannot precede the first lift of the verse).

Proclitic: A word that is rhythmically subordinated to a following **Stress-word**. Proclitics, which are almost always unstressed in verse, include prefixes, prepositions, and demonstratives and possessives in attributive position. If prepositions are postponed, however, they receive stress. See also **Particle**.

Resolution: One of the two processes of syllabic equivalence that enable the **Four-position principle** to work. The other process is **Drop expansion** or protraction. By means of resolution, a short stressed syllable and its unstressed successor become metrically equivalent to a long stressed syllable. Thus, the disyllabic sequence *ġiefan*, in which *ġie-* is short and stressed, undergoes resolution, thereby becoming equivalent to a long stressed syllable like *ġeald* (both disyllabic *ġiefan* and monosyllabic *ġeald* occupy just one **Lift**: /). Resolution can be suspended if the potentially resolvable sequence is immediately preceded by an unresolved stress, as in *Beowulf* 1678b, *on hand ġyfen* (a Type C verse).

Rhyme: Identity of sound at the end of a word. For example, the words *stunde* and *wunde*, both of which occur in verse-final position in *The Battle of Maldon* line 271, feature rhyme. In Old English verse of the classical type, rhyme plays no structural role.

Short syllable: A syllable that ends in a short vowel or diphthong. For example, the root syllables of *stede* and *ġiefan* (*ste-* and *ġie-*) are short. Some authors refer to them as light syllables.

Stress-word: A word that always receives metrical stress regardless of its location within the clause. Nouns, adjectives, infinitives, and participles are stress-words (which means that their stressed syllables generally occupy lifts or half-lifts in poetry). See also **Particle** and **Proclitic**.

Syncope/syncopation: The loss of a vowel from the middle of a word (e.g. *ængum*, from earlier *ænigum*). Scribes of Old English poetic texts were in the habit of restoring originally syncopated vowels, but these must often be ignored in scansion (as in *Beowulf* 2416b, *gumena ænigum*, which scans / x / x, not / x / \ x). Originally syncopated vowels are sometimes underpunctuated in scholarly editions of Old English poetry.

Type A3: One of the two non-four-position rhythmical types accepted by the metre. The other is **Type D***. Type A3 is a three-position verse consisting of an expanded drop, a lift, and a drop: x [...] / x. The initial drop contains particles, and so Type A3 verses are clause-initial: see **Kuhn's laws** and **Clause-initial drop**. Because of their exceptional character, Type A3 verses are confined to the on-verse. For example, *Beowulf* 710a, *Ðā cōm of mōre* (xxx / x, with *m* alliteration), is a Type A3.

Type D*: One of the two non-four-position rhythmical types accepted by the metre. The other is **Type A3**. Type D*, or D expanded, is a Type D verse with an extra unstressed position between the two lifts: / x / \ x. As can be seen, it consists of five positions. Because of their exceptional character, Type D* verses are confined to the on-verse and must feature double alliteration. For example, *Beowulf* 223a, *sīde sǣ-næssas* is a Type D*.

Verse: see **Half-line**.

Verse clause: Any clause that occurs in verse. In a given passage of poetry, there are as many verse clauses as verbal phrases. In *The Wanderer* line 14b, *hycge swā hē wille*, there are two verse clauses (*hycge* and *swā hē wille*). In *Beowulf* lines 191b–93, *wæs þæt*

ġewin tō swȳð, /lāþ ond longsum, /þe on ðā lēode becōm, /nȳdwracu nīþgrim, /nihtbealwa mǣst, there are also two (*wæs þæt ġewin tō swȳð, lāþ ond longsum*, on the one hand, and *þe on ðā lēode becōm, nȳdwracu nīþgrim, nihtbealwa mǣst*, on the other). The first drop in a verse clause is important from a metrico-syntactic point of view: see **Clause-initial drop** and **Kuhn's laws**.

Word-foot theory: Geoffrey Russom's theoretical alternative to Sievers's system. The basic principle is that each verse is made up of two metrical feet (whereas in Sieversian metrics each verse is made up of four positions). Metrical feet, according to Russom, are patterned on the rhythmical contours of native Old English words (there are, then, as many metrical feet as there are word-rhythms in the language). A set of rules governs the combination of feet into verses, and a different set governs the combination of verses into lines. An uninterrupted series of unstressed syllables between feet is considered extrametrical (whereas in Sievers's system it constitutes a metrical unit, known as **Drop**). The word-foot theory was first proposed by Russom in *Old English Meter and Linguistic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).