

# Sievers Types



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# Overview: Basic Patterns

Table 1: The basic Sievers types

| Type           | Pattern | Examples                                 |                         |
|----------------|---------|--|-------------------------|
| A              | / x / x | eorlic ellen; glādne Hrōðgār; wīde sīðas | (cf. 2 trochees)        |
| B              | x / x / | ond Halga til                            | (cf. 2 iambs)           |
| C              | x / / x | gebūn hæfdon                             | (cf. iamb + trochee)    |
| D <sub>1</sub> | / / \ x | frēan Scyldinga                          | (cf. spondee + trochee) |
| D <sub>2</sub> | / / x \ | wēold wīdeferhð; hār hilderinc           | (cf. spondee + iamb)    |
| E              | / \ x / | healærna māst                            | (cf. spondee + iamb)    |

- ▶ Classical terminology unsuitable given
  - ▶ The variable number of syllables to a dip
  - ▶ (The principle that foot boundaries must coincide with word boundaries)

But we can speak of rising and falling feet.

## Overview: Extended Patterns

Table 2: Sievers types with optional anacrusis and extended dips

| Type           | Pattern                   | Examples                 |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| A              | [x x] / x (x x x x) / x   | hāþene æt hilde          |
| B              | (x x x x) x / x (x) /     | and tō þāre hilde stōp   |
| C              | (x x x x x) x / / x       | hē lēt hēo þæt land būan |
| D <sub>1</sub> | [x x] / (x x x) / \ x     | Offa þone sālidan        |
| D <sub>2</sub> | [x x] / (x x x) / x (x) \ | eald enta ġeweorc        |
| E              | / \ x (x) /               | wālrāste ġeċēas          |

## Type A1: /x/x

- ▶ Two lifts, no halflifts

(1)  $\begin{array}{cccccc} / & \times & / & \times \\ \text{gomban} & \text{gyldan} \end{array}$

*Beowulf* 11a; basic pattern

(2)  $\begin{array}{cccccc} / & \times & / & \times \\ \text{Scyldes} & \text{eafera} \end{array}$

*Beowulf* 19a; resolved second lift

(3)  $\begin{array}{ccccccccc} \times & / & \times & \times & \times & / & \times \\ \text{Gewāt} & \text{him} & \text{bā} & \text{tō} & \text{waroðe} \end{array}$

*Beowulf* 234a; anacrusis, longer first dip, resolution

## Type A2 (Heavy Verse): /\ \

- ▶ A halflift in either or both dips

(4) glædmān Hrōðgār

*Beowulf* 367b; a secondary and a tertiary stress

(5) witena wēlhwylc

*Beowulf* 266a; resolved first lift

(6) sigerōf kyning

*Beowulf* 619b; resolved first lift

(7) fyrdsearu fūslicu

*Beowulf* 232a; both halflifts resolved

## Type A3 (Light Verse): xx/x

- ▶ No “first” lift
- ▶ At least two unstressed syllables before the remaining lift
- ▶ Limited to on-verse
- ▶ Single alliteration

(8)       $\begin{matrix} \times & \times & \times & \times & / & \times \end{matrix}$   
Næs þæt þonne mātost

*Beowulf* 1455a

(9)       $\begin{matrix} \times & \times & \times & \times & \times & / & \times \end{matrix}$   
ðāra þe hē geworhte

*Beowulf* 1578a

## Type B: x/x/

- ▶ Rarely more than one resolved lift
- ▶ Variable number of unstressed syllables in the first dip; rarely more than two in the second

|      |                 |                               |  |
|------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--|
| (10) | × / × /         | ond Grendles hond             | <i>Beowulf</i> 927b; basic pattern                                 |
| (11) | × / × /         | tō <u>sele</u> þām hēan       | <i>Beowulf</i> 919b; first lift resolved, contraction maintained   |
| (12) | × / × /         | on <u>nicera</u> <u>mere</u>  | <i>Beowulf</i> 845b; both lifts resolved                           |
| (13) | × × × × / × /   | swylcē hīe æt Finnes hām      | <i>Beowulf</i> 1156a; longer first dip                             |
| (14) | × × × / × /     | Scolde his aldorȝedāl         | <i>Beowulf</i> 805b; longer first dip, parasiting vowel suppressed |
| (15) | × × × × / × × / | þāra þe hit mid mundum bewand | <i>Beowulf</i> 1461b; longer dips                                  |

## Type C: x//x

- ▶ Variable number of unstressed syllables in the first dip; just one in the second
- ▶ Rarely a resolved second lift
- ▶ Second lift is often carried by a short syllable (the second element in a compound)

(16)  $\begin{array}{ccccccc} \times & / & / & \times \\ \text{on} & \text{we} & \text{g} & \text{þ} & \text{a} & \text{n} & \text{o} \end{array}$  *Beowulf* 844b; basic pattern

(17)  $\begin{array}{ccccccc} \times & / & / & \times \\ \text{æ} & \text{t} & \text{W} & \text{e} & \text{a} & \text{l} & \text{h} \end{array} \text{þ} \text{e} \text{o} \text{n}$  *Beowulf* 629b; contraction suppressed

(18)  $\begin{array}{ccccccccccc} \times & \times & \times & \times & \times & / & / & \times \\ \text{þ} & \text{o} & \text{n} & \text{n} & \text{e} & \text{h} & \text{e} & \text{o} & \text{n} & \text{þ} & \text{a} & \text{t} & \text{s} & \text{i} & \text{n} & \text{c} & \text{s} & \text{t} & \text{a} & \text{r} & \text{a} \end{array} \text{ð}$  *Beowulf* 1485b; longer first dip

(19)  $\begin{array}{ccccccc} \times & \times & / & / & \times \\ \text{a} & \text{c} & \text{h} & \text{e} & \text{s} & \text{i} & \text{g} \end{array} \text{e} \text{w} \bar{a} \text{p} \text{n} \text{u} \text{m}$  *Beowulf* 804a; first lift resolved

(20)  $\begin{array}{ccccccccccc} \times & \times & \times & \times & / & / & \times \\ \text{N} & \text{o} & \text{i} & \text{c} & \text{m} & \text{e} & \text{a} & \text{n} & \text{h} \end{array} \text{e} \text{r} \text{e} \text{w} \text{æ} \text{s} \text{m} \text{u} \text{n}$  *Beowulf* 677a; first lift resolved

## Type D: //\x

- ▶ Second foot often a compound or derived form
- ▶ Second dip of D<sub>1</sub> has just one unstressed syllable, first dip of D<sub>2</sub> up to two
- ▶ Either lift may be resolved; rarely both
- ▶ Halflift usually not resolved; in D<sub>1</sub> may be just a short syllable
- ▶ Second lift in D<sub>1</sub> may be a short syllable
- ▶ May be “expanded” with (usually) one unstressed syllable after the first lift, requiring double alliteration (D\*<sub>1</sub>, D\*<sub>2</sub>)

## Type D1: //\x

(21) *gūðfremmendra*

*Beowulf* 246a; basic pattern

(22) *čeasterbūendum*

*Beowulf* 768a; parasiting vowel suppressed

## Type D2 //x\

(23)  $w\acute{e}old \acute{w}ideferh\grave{h}\ddot{o}$  *Beowulf* 702a; basic pattern

(24)  $b\acute{a}d \acute{b}olgenm\acute{o}d$  *Beowulf* 709a; basic pattern

(25)  $\underline{maga} \acute{m}a\acute{n}e \acute{f}ah$  *Beowulf* 978a; resolved first lift

(26)  $\underline{D}uru \acute{s}ona \acute{o}narn$  *Beowulf* 721b; resolved first lift, longer dip

## Type D\*I: /x/\\x

(27) ēode  $\begin{array}{cccc} / & \times & / & \backslash \\ & & & \times \end{array}$  yrremōd *Beowulf* 726a

(28) eorlum  $\begin{array}{cccc} / & \times & / & \backslash \\ & & & \times \end{array}$  ealuscerwen *Beowulf* 769a; resolved second lift

(29) onbrād  $\begin{array}{cccc} \times & / & \times & / \\ & & & \backslash \end{array}$   $\begin{array}{c} \backslash \\ \text{pā} \end{array}$   $\begin{array}{c} \backslash \\ \text{bealo} \end{array}$  hŷdīg *Beowulf* 723a; anacrusis, resolved second lift

## Type D\*<sub>2</sub>: /x/x\

(30) lēoda landȝeweorc *Beowulf* 938a

(31) ȝehnȝēgde helle gāst *Beowulf* 1274a; anacrusis

## Type E: /\x/

- ▶ Either lift may be resolved; rarely both
- ▶ Dip usually a single unstressed syllable, sometimes two
- ▶ Some verses ambiguous between D<sub>2</sub> and E; alliteration, syntax, content may help

(32) dēaðfā<sup>g</sup>e dēog

*Beowulf* 850a; contraction maintained

(33) sundnyt<sup>t</sup>e drēah

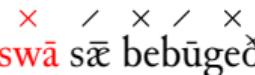
*Beowulf* 2360b; contraction maintained

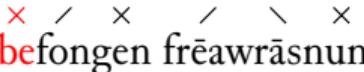
(34) wālfā<sup>g</sup>ne winter

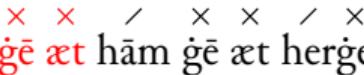
*Beowulf* 1128a; parasitic vowel suppressed

## Anacrusis

Verses of types A (/x/x) and D (//\x) may start with one or two unstressed syllables, which are considered extrametrical:

(35)  *swā* sā̄ *bebūgeð* *Beowulf* 1223b (type A<sub>1</sub>)

(36)  *be*fōngen *frēawrāsnum* *Beowulf* 1451a (type D\*<sub>1</sub>)

(37)  *gē* æt *hām* *gē* æt *hergē* *Beowulf* 1248a (type A<sub>1</sub>)

# Foot Boundaries

Table 3: Foot boundaries according to Sievers

|                |           |  |
|----------------|-----------|--|
| A              | / x   / x | eorlic ellen; glādne Hrōðgār; wīde sīðas |
| B              | x /   x / | ond Halga til; swā giōmormōd             |
| C              | x /   / x | gebūn hæfdon; be ūðlāfe                  |
| D <sub>1</sub> | /   / \ x | frēan Scyldinga; hār hilderinc           |
| D <sub>2</sub> | /   / x \ | wēold wīdeferhð                          |
| E              | / \ x   / | healærna māst                            |

- ▶ Verses like *ond Halga til* and *be ūðlāfe* favour a feet division based on word boundaries (see esp. Russom).
- ▶ Some scholars abandon Sievers's types altogether (see again Russom).

## Bibliography

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