

Engaging with Old English Verse



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Prose to Verse I

From the Old English Prose *Consolation of Philosophy* (ch. 9)

Ðonne sēo sunne on hādrum heofone beorhtost scīneð þonne aþēostriað ealle steorran, forþām
þe heora beorhtnes ne bēoð nān beorhtnes for hire.

Prose to Verse I

From the Old English Prose *Consolation of Philosophy* (ch. 9)

Ðonne sēo sunne on hādrum heofone beorhtost scīneð þonne aþēostriað ealle steorran, forþām þe heora beorhtnes ne bēoð nān beorhtnes for hire.

From the Old English Verse *Consolation of Philosophy* (m6)

Ðonne sīo sunne sweetolost scīneð,
hādrost of hefone, hræðe bīoð aðýstrod
ealle ofer eorðan ōðre steorran,
forðæm hiora birhtu ne bið āuht
tō gesettane wið þære sunnan lēoht.

(3–7)

Prose to Verse 2

From the Old English Prose *Consolation of Philosophy* (ch. 29)

Ðē ðe wille fullice ānweald āgan, hē sceal tiligan ærest þæt hē hæbbe ānweald his āgenes mōdes, and ne sīe tō ungerisenlice underðēod his unþēawum.

Prose to Verse 2

From the Old English Prose *Consolation of Philosophy* (ch. 29)

Ðē ðe wille fullice ānweald āgan, hē sceal tiligan ærest þæt hē hæbbe ānweald his āgenes mōdes, and ne sīe tō ungerisenlice underðēod his unþēawum.

From the Old English Verse *Consolation of Philosophy* (m16)

Sē þe wille ānwald āgon, ðonne sceal hē ærest tilian
þæt hē his selfes on sefan āge
ānwald innan, þȳ lās hē æfre sīe
his unþēawum eall underðȳded.

(1-4)

Prose to Verse 3

From the Old English Prose *Consolation of Philosophy* (ch. 38)

Ic þē mæg reccan of ealdum lēasum spellum sum swiðe ānlic spell þære spræce þe wit nū ymbe spræcon.

Prose to Verse 3

From the Old English Prose *Consolation of Philosophy* (ch. 38)

Ic þē mæg reccan of ealdum lēasum spellum sum swiðe ānlic spell þære sprāce þe wit nū ymbe sprācon.

From the Old English Verse *Consolation of Philosophy* (m26)

Ic þē mæg ēaðe ealdum and lēasum
spellum reccan sprāce gelice
efne ðisse ilcan þe wit ymb sprecað.

(1–3)

Prose Syntax: Headclauses

- (1) [_S Se cyning] [_{Od} hine] [_V **lufode**]
- (2) [_S Se cyning] [_P him tō] [_V **cwæð**]
- (3) [_S Se cyning] [_V **gēaf**] [_{Oi} him] [_{Od} land]
- (4) [_{Adv} þā] [_V **wolde**] [_S se cyning] [_{Od} hīe] [_{Vnon-fin} gewemman]
- (5) [_{Adv} Nū] [_S gē] [_V **habbað**] [_{Vnon-fin} gehyrað] [_P be þām tȳn bebodum]

Prose Syntax: Subclauses

- (6) [_{Adv} þā] [_S hēo] [_{Od} þæt] [_V **gehērden**]
- (7) [_{Od} þæt [_S man] [_{Od} cristene men] [_P tō dēaðe] [_V **ne fordēme**]]
- (8) [_{Adv} þonne] [_S wē] [_{Od} ūrne hneccan] [_P mid þām stolum] [_V **befōð**]
- (9) [_{Adv} þā þā] [_S hē] [_V **gebletsode and bræc**] [_{Od} fif hlāfas]

Verse Syntax: Headclauses

- (10) [_V **Næs**] [_{O_i} him] [_S fruma] [_{Adv} æfre] *Genesis A 5b*
- (11) [_V **Gewāt**] [_{O_i} him] [_{Adv} þā] [_P tō waroðe] *Beowulf 234a*
- (12) [_{Od} hine] [_S weard] [_V **biheold**] *Guthlac A 105b*
- (13) [_S hleahtor] [_V **wæs**] [_A gryrelic] *Riddle 33 3b*

Verse Syntax: Subclauses

(14) [Od þæt [Od hine] [S weroda god] [I wordum] [V nægde]]

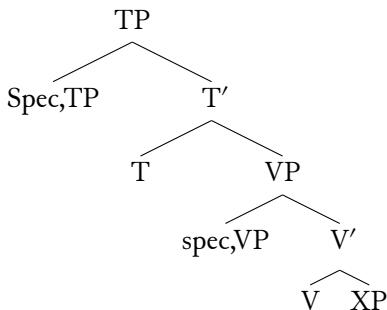
Exodus 23

(15) [Od hwæþer [A cwice] [V lifdon] / [S þā þe ...]]

Andreas 129b–130a

Verb Position

OE is a verb-second (V₂) language in at least some respects [...]. [I]n short, topicalization of one constituent to a left-peripheral position (spec,CP) is required in root clauses, although the verb in most cases only moves to T. (Ringe II, 394)



Verbs as Particles

In verse, particles are normally placed together at the beginning of the clause, either before or after the first stress-word [...]. If displaced from these normal positions, particles [...] receive rhythmic stress. (Terasawa 28)

Displaced Verbs

× × / / × | × / / ×
Hwæt! | Wē Gārdena | in gēardagum

 / / \ × | / × / ×
þēodcyninga | þrym **gefrunon**

*Beowulf*₁₋₂

Variation 1/2

Nū sceolon herigan | heofonrices weard,
meotodes meahte | and his mōdgeþanc,
weorc wuldorfæder | swā hē wundra gehwæs,
ēce drihten | ōr onstalde.

Cædmon's Hymn 1-4

Variation 2/2

Hē ærest scōp | eorðan bearnum

heofon tō hrōfe | hālig scyppend,

ðā middangeard | moncynnes weard,

ēce drihten | æfter tēode

fīrum foldan | frēa ælmihtig.

Cædmon's Hymn 5–9

Poetic Diction

- ▶ Archaisms (encouraged by alliterative requirement)
- ▶ Compounding (encouraged by metrical constraints)

Recommendation: learn both elements of a compound.

More in **session 8**.

Translation

Wiht cwōm gongan þær weras sǣton
monige on mǣðle, mōde snottre;
hæfde ān ēage ond ēaran twā,
ond twā fēt, twelf hund heafda,
hrycg ond wombe ond honda twā,
earmas ond eaxle, ānne sweoran
ond sīdan twā. Saga hwæt ic hātte.

(*Riddle 86*)

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