Scansion

P. S. Langeslag
Aids in Scansion

- Terasawa’s Appendix B
- “Electronic Beowulf”
Step 1: Locate the Four Lifts in the Long Line

1. Identify words that alliterate and take stress by nature, position, or alliteration.
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   - Stress words: nouns, adjectives, infinitives, participles, heavy pronouns and adverbs
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   - **Stress words:** nouns, adjectives, infinitives, participles, heavy pronouns and adverbs
   - Prepositions, demonstratives, etc. take stress if they appear after their stress word
   - Finite verbs, adverbs, etc. take stress if they appear after the first lift in the clause
   - Finite verbs furthermore take stress if they alliterate
   - The second element in a compound may count as a full lift where needed

2. Identify the remaining, non-alliterative lift(s).
   - This should include the fourth lift and at most one lift in the a-verse.

Light Verse (Type A3)
If you can only identify one lift in the a-verse, you may be looking at a light verse. To make sure, verify that the sole lift alliterates with the b-verse and that it is preceded by several unstressed syllables.
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   ▶ **Stress words:** nouns, adjectives, infinitives, participles, heavy pronouns and adverbs
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   ▶ Finite verbs, adverbs, etc. take stress if they appear *after* the first lift in the clause
   ▶ Finite verbs furthermore take stress if they alliterate
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Step 2: Identify any Half-Lifts

Secondary Stress

- The second element in a general compound
  - *beofonrice*, *waldorfæder*

Tertiary Stress

- Long derivational suffixes
  - *beofonlic*, *aldorleas*, *befignes*
- The medial syllable in a class 2 weak preterite
  - *sceawode*, *bogodon*
- The second element in a compound proper noun
  - *Bēowulf*, *Hrōþgār*, etc.
- The second element in a compound no longer transparently recognizable as such
  - *gārseg*, *hlāford*.
- Prefixed words in which the prefix bears full stress
  - *unriht*, *inwit*
Step 3: Check for Resolution and Assign Unstressed Positions Accordingly

Necessary condition for resolution:
A short syllable under *some* degree of stress followed by another syllable, usually short
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Necessary condition for resolution:
A short syllable under *some* degree of stress followed by another syllable, usually short

Do not resolve when:
- The resulting verse would have fewer than four syllables
- The first syllable in the sequence and the preceding syllable are both full lifts
- (The first syllable is under secondary stress and the second is historically long)
Step 4: Identify Verse Type

1. Start at the end
2. Treat an unstressed sequence as a single drop
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1. Start at the end
2. Treat an unstressed sequence as a single drop

Table 1: The Sievers types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Basic Pattern</th>
<th>Maximum Pattern</th>
<th>Minimal Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>/x/x</td>
<td>xx/xxxxx/x</td>
<td>wordum secge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>/\x</td>
<td>xx/\x</td>
<td>inwit\hancum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>/x/\</td>
<td>xx/xxxxx/\</td>
<td>hord ond hl\eoburh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>//\</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>si\ger\f kyning</td>
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<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>xx/x</td>
<td>xxxxxx/x</td>
<td>\de w\e ealle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>x/x/</td>
<td>xxxxxx/xx/</td>
<td>\buh h\æstne h\ad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>x//x</td>
<td>xxxxxxx//x</td>
<td>ge\fyld hafa</td>
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<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>//\x</td>
<td>xx//\x</td>
<td>\bæodcyninga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>//x</td>
<td>xx//x\</td>
<td>fl\eat f\amigheals</td>
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<tr>
<td>D*1</td>
<td>/x/\x</td>
<td>xx/xxx/\x</td>
<td>eorles and\wlitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D*2</td>
<td>/x/x\</td>
<td>xx/xxx/x\</td>
<td>wearp \da wundenm\æl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>/xx/</td>
<td>/xxx/</td>
<td>d\æa\df\æge d\æog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Verifying Your Identification

- (CLASP)
- Bliss, *The Metre of “Beowulf”*
- “Electronic Beowulf”
Bibliography


