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Beowulf (Part 1)

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# Towards a linguistic interpretation of Kuhn's Laws: With special reference to Old English *Beowulf*\*

## Part I

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### Abstract

While generally discussed in metrical terms, Kuhn's (1933) Laws are intended by the proponent to represent archaic linguistic properties of early Germanic preserved in alliterative poetry. This paper critically evaluates Kuhn's two Laws from a linguistic rather than metrical perspective based on examination of Old English *Beowulf*. The Laws reflect the earlier word order whereby unstressed light elements called by Kuhn 'satzparkel', such as pronouns, short adverbs, and light finite verbs, tend to cluster in clause-initial position. While Kuhn's insight is significant, there are also problems with his notion of *satzpartikel* and the application of the Laws. Moreover, the use of Kuhn's Laws as metrical conventions is questionable.

The paper consists of three Parts. Part I (this volume) contains Section 1: Introduction, Section 2: Background and significance of Kuhn's Laws: clitics in general and in early Germanic, Section 3: Definition of *satzpartikel* and other terms, and part of Section 4: Kuhn's First Law or Germanic law of clause particles. Part II (Volume 96) contains the rest of Section 4, Section 5: Kuhn's Second Law or Germanic law of the clause-initial position, and part of Section 6: Distinction of clause particles and phrase particles. Part III (Volume 97) consists of the rest of Section 6, Section 7: Stress on clause-initial alliterating verbs and the analysis of A3 verses, and Section 8: Conclusions. A list of references is appended to each Part.

**Keywords:** Kuhn's Laws, clitics, Germanic alliterative verse, Old English, *Beowulf*

## 1. Introduction

Kuhn's (1933) two Laws on the distribution of unstressed light elements (i.e. pronouns, conjunctions, short adverbs, auxiliaries, and particles) in early Germanic alliterative verse have aroused much controversy among Anglo-Saxonists in recent years. On the one hand, they are treated as stipulations that govern verse composition and serve as criteria for metrical analyses and text criticism (Slay 1952; Bliss 1967; Campbell 1970; Stemsrud 1970; Lucas 1985, 1987; Donoghue 1987, 1997: 69–76; Kendall 1991; Fulck 1992; Orton 1999; Fulck et

al. 2008). On the other hand, Mitchell (1985: 984) legitimately asks why Kuhn is ‘canonized.’ The Laws have been criticized for low statistical validity, circularity, and Kuhn’s unclear formulation and are even condemned as ‘pernicious’ (Schwetman 1993: 47, 49), ‘an inadequate generalization...worse than no generalization at all’ (Blockley and Cable 1995: 270), and ‘syntax poorly formulated’ (Stockwell and Minkova 1997: 250–251). Various alternatives and interpretations have been proposed instead (Cosmos 1976; Russom 1987, 1996, 1998; Cable 1991; Hutcheson 1992, 1993, 1995; Getty 1997, 2000, 2002; Momma 1997; Mines 2002; also Kristján Árnason 2002).

This paper argues that Kuhn’s Laws are observational facts concerning the archaism of early Germanic whereby unstressed light elements tend to cluster in clause-initial position or, less often, after the clause-initial stressed word. Violations of the Laws are in part attributed to change in word order and sentence prosody. Kuhn’s Laws are not metrical conventions nor is there any evidence that they are strictly observed.

Although the scope of application of the Laws is early Germanic alliterative verse in general, the discussions of the present paper are restricted to Old English *Beowulf* because the language of *Beowulf* is generally accepted to show more archaic features than that of other early West- and North-Germanic texts, especially second position phenomenon that is not observed otherwise (Kuhn 1933; Fourquet 1938; Hock 1985; Harkness 1991; Pintzuk 1999; Fulk et al. 2008; Suzuki 2008).

In what follows, section 2 discusses historical and general linguistic background of the Laws and the distribution of light elements including second positioning of light finite verbs in Old English. Section 3 discusses Kuhn’s definition of *satzpartikel*, which he intends to be clitics, in relation to other classes of words, i.e. *satzteilpartikel* and *satzteil*. Section 4 discusses violations and implications of Kuhn’s First Law and argues that the Law is unlikely to have been a poetic convention. Section 5 shows that the effect of the Second Law follows from several linguistic properties. Section 6 reexamines the distinction between two kinds of unstressed elements, *satzpartikel* and *satzteilpartikel*, and shows that, irrespective of their class status, grammatical elements show the contrast between clause-early and unstressed vs. clause-late and stressed. Section 7 examines stress on alliterating finite verbs in clause-initial and early position and argues that Kuhn’s Laws do not justify one-lift analysis or Bliss’s notion of ‘ornamental’ alliteration. Section 8 summarizes what I claim to be the interpretation and value of Kuhn’s Laws.

## 2. Background and significance of Kuhn's Laws: Clitics in general and in early Germanic

As will be discussed in more detail below, the Laws concern sentential clitics or *satzpartikeln* such as conjunctions, pronouns, short adverbs, and finite verbs that tend to cluster in clause-initial or early position. In Kuhn's understanding, this phenomenon is comparable to cliticization phenomena observed in other early Indo-European languages such as Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, and Old Irish as discussed by Wackernagel (1892), which is considered to be a pioneering work on second position clitics and supplies a model for Kuhn (1933: 3–4). While Kuhn's *satzteilparkeln* are generally received as clitics in metrical works, the assumption requires justification. Thus, this section discusses properties of clitics to see if Kuhn's *satzteilpartikeln* are in fact clitics.

Clitics are generally grammatical words such as conjunctions, pronouns, auxiliaries, and particles that lack their own prosodic domain and 'lean on' a neighboring word as a host (Zwicky 1977; Klavans 1982, 1985; Hale 2007 among others). Clitics are typically unstressed although unstressed words are not necessarily clitics. They are often phonologically reduced and attached to the preceding word, in which case they are enclitics, or the following word, in which case they are proclitics. For example, contracted auxiliaries in Present-day English as given in (1a) are enclitics (Zwicky 1970; Kaisse 1985) and the negative particle attached to the finite verb in Old English as in (1b) is a proclitic (Campbell 1959; Brunner 1965; Fulk 1992).

(1) a. Present-day English auxiliary reduction

he is > he's; she has > she's; I have > I've; you had > you'd, we will > we'll,  
they would > they'd, etc.

b. Old English negative contraction

ne wæs > næs 'not was'; ne is > nis 'not is'; ne wolde > nolde 'not would', etc.

In addition to the direction of attachment, the two kinds of clitics in (1) differ in their domain. Auxiliaries in Present-day English have the entire clause as their domain, while the negative particle consistently precedes the finite verb that serves as its host. That is, Present-day English auxiliaries are sentential clitics, but Old English negative particle is a verbal clitic.

As another prominent feature of clitics, they may occur in a specific position of their

domain, typically in second position, which may either be after the domain-initial word or element depending on languages (Wackernagel 1892; Zwicky 1977; Klavans 1982, 1985; Anderson 1992, 1993, 2005; Fortson 2004: 146–147). In (2) are given examples of sentential clitics that are placed after the clause-initial word in some of the early Indo-European languages.

- (2) a. Sanskrit (example from Hock 1996: 215)

ádanti *ha sma vá* etásya puránnam  
 eat PCL PCL PCL his earlier-food  
 ‘They eat his earlier food.’ (KS 23.2)

- b. Greek (example from Fortson 2004: 147)

ẽ *rhá nú moi ti* pithoio  
 ‘may you indeed now trust me somewhat’ (*Iliad* 4.93)

- c. Latin (example from Fortson 2004: 146)

tú *autem* in neruō iam iacēbis  
 ‘But you will soon be lying in custody.’ (Plautus, *Curculio* 718)

As has been shown, prosodic deficiency and syntactic anomaly are the two prominent characteristics of clitics. Clitics may have different categories as their domain: sentential clitics, phrasal clitics, and clitics that attach to a particular class of words such as verbal clitics. Depending on the direction of attachment, clitics may either be proclitics or enclitics. Early Indo-European languages such as Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin are known to have second position clitics.

In early Germanic, pronouns and short adverbs tend to cluster in clause-initial position in a specific order. In (3) are given some examples from *Beowulf* (Hopper 1975: 32–33, 71–72; Hock 1985; van Kemenade 1987, 2002; Pintzuk 1996, 1999; Momma 1997; Suzuki 2001, 2008, 2008–9).<sup>1</sup>

- (3) *Ðā mē þæt* gelærdon léode míne 415  
 then me that advised people my  
 ‘therefore my people advised me thus’

ond *hī hýne þā* bēgen      ābróten      hæfdon,      2707  
 and they him then both      destroyed had  
 'and then they had destroyed him together'

Pronouns and short adverbs in Old English have been claimed by some to be clitics (van Kemenade 1987, 2002; Pintzuk 1996, 1999; Suzuki 2008–9). The clustering phenomenon is not restricted to verse and is also observed in prose such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (Hopper 1975: 32; Hock 1985).

Moreover, light verbs, especially monosyllabic auxiliaries, show a tendency to occur in second position as exemplified in (4) (Fourquet 1933: 192–194; Hopper 1975: 56–58; Hock 1982, 1992; Harkness 1991: 97–104; Suzuki 2008).

(4)    Ðā *wæs* on búrgum      Béow      Scýldinga,      53  
       then was in strongholds      Beowulf      of-Scyldings  
       'then in the cities was Beowulf of the Scyldings'

Hýge *wæs* him hínfús,      755a  
 heart was him eager-to-get-away  
 'his heart was eager to get away'

In *Beowulf* second position is either after the clause-initial linking word or stressed word as given in (4) (Kuhn 1933). The language of *Beowulf* also shows an alternation between light verbs in second position after the clause-initial *þā* as in 53 in (4) and heavier verbs in clause-initial position followed by *þā* as in (5) (Fourquet 1933: 912; Andrew 1940: 13; Cable 1970: 83–84; Harkness 1991: 102–104; Getty 2000: 51–52, 2002: 324; Suzuki 2008; also Kuhn 1933: 100).

(5)    Gewát *þā* ofer wæðholm      wínde gefýsed      217  
       went then over sea      wind impelled  
       'then, over the sea-waves, blown by the wind, it traveled'

The given alternation suggests that second position of light verbs originates from the prosodic inversion of the clause-initial verb (Kuhn 1933: 100; Halpern 1995; Pintzuk 1999; Hale 2007; Suzuki 2008).

While clause-initial clustering of light elements gradually declined, Kuhn (1933: 97–101) assumes that the phenomenon has its effect in the development of verb-second order, which became the typical main clause order in later Old English (also Wackernagel 1892; Hock 1982, 1991, 1992). Further, Kuhn (1933: 93) observes that the first position that precedes second position was extended from one word to one constituent. In fact, other scholars have also observed changes in the ‘second’ position of finite verbs during the Old English or in early Germanic. That is, as Pintzuk (1999: 175) notes, while the stressed topic consists of one word in *Beowulf*, in later Old English the topic preceding clitic pronouns are often complex, as given in (6).

- (6) þas drohtunge & þis liif þu scealt gesettan            Bede 64.21–22  
       this conduct    and this life you shall    establish  
       ‘you shall establish this conduct and this life’  
       (Example from Pintzuk 1999: 175)

Moreover, concerning the position of finite verbs with respect to light elements in clause-initial position, Hock (1985: 79) observes that finite verbs follow a sequence of light elements in *Beowulf*, but then follow one word in later Old English, which results in second position after the clause-initial noun phrase, thus concluding that *Beowulf* represents the most archaic stage in the development of second position (also Ries 1880, 1907; Kuhn 1933: 98–99; Fourquet 1938).

The following sections critically examine Kuhn’s Laws from a historical linguistic perspective, first, as to what extent the Laws concern the order of clause-early light elements that is realized in alliterative poetry at the earliest attested stage of Germanic and, second, as to whether violations of the Laws represent innovative orders after the reanalysis of verb-second order.

### 3. Definition of *satzpartikel* and other terms

According to Kuhn (1933: 8, 88–107), his two generalizations on early Germanic alliterative poetry represent archaic linguistic features concerning sentential clitics that lead to a major word order shift in a later period. The generalizations are based on stress and word order as the title of Kuhn’s thesis indicates. Kuhn discussed only verse and his Laws are stated in

metrical terms for two reasons (Kuhn 1933: 2). First, information on stress is only available from verse structure in early Germanic texts except for a few prose texts where stress is marked. Second, poetry tends to preserve archaic features better than prose. Phrasal stress on which the Laws are based, however, is not marked in the poetic texts and must be interpreted from available evidence and metrical analysis. The Laws thus presuppose metrical analyses such as Sievers's (1885, 1893) that supplies the necessary information on stress. Since Kuhn's Laws concern the distribution of sentential clitics in early Germanic, Kuhn's intention was to define *satzpartikel* as a sentential clitic rather than to classify words depending on their degree of stress. In defining *satzpartikel*, Kuhn (1933) distinguishes it from the other two classes of words: *satzteil* and *satzteilpartikel*. While the German term *satz* is ambiguous between 'sentence' and 'clause', what is intended by the word in *satzpartikel* is 'clause'. Therefore, I use Mines's (2002) translation: 'clause particle' and 'phrase particle' for Kuhn's *satzpartikel* and *satzteilpartikel*, respectively. I use 'particle' for Kuhn's *partikel* instead of 'clitic' intended by Kuhn because Kuhn's *partikeln* include words that are apparently not clitics as will be discussed below. For *satzteil* I use 'stressed word' because, although it is not what the German term means, stress is the feature that distinguishes between *satzteil* and two kinds of particles.

Kuhn's clause particles are unstressed or weakly stressed words that belong to the entire sentence rather than to its part, more specifically, 'substantive pronouns, many adverbs and finite verbs, linking words, in part also adjectival pronouns, occasionally non-finite verb forms and predicate nominals, perhaps also vocatives' (...substant. pronomina, viele adverbien und finite verben, bindewörter, zum teil auch adject. pronomina, gelegentlich infinite verbformen und prädicatsnomina, vielleicht auch vocative; Kuhn 1933: 5). Further, linking words are 'conjunctions, relative pronouns, adverbs and particles, interrogatives at the beginning of indirect questions' (... conjunctionen, relat.pron., adverbien und partikeln, fragewörter an der spitze indirecter fragesätze; cf. Kuhn 1933: 50–51). In contrast, phrase particles are words with no or weak stress that belong to phrases rather than clauses such as prepositions and demonstrative adjectives (Kuhn 1933: 4–5). The difference between the two is that clause particles potentially have freedom in distribution in a clause and thus may become sentential clitics while phrase particles are bound to a phrase and thus cannot be sentential clitics. Although Kuhn does not specify, the negative particle *ne* must be a phrase particle because it consistently precedes the finite verb and thus is comparable to verbal prefixes.

Clause particles, when stressed, are exempt from the Laws (Kuhn 1933: 10). Given the





lícað léng swā wēl, 1853b–1854a  
 please longer so well  
 'So well your heart's temper has long pleased me'

Short adverbs in idioms such as *þā gēn* 'further, still', *þā gýt* 'further, besides', *nū þā* 'now then', and *swā þēah* 'so nevertheless' are phrase particles in contrast to sentential adverbs used on their own because they are bound to the idiom phrase in which they occur (Kuhn 1933: 12–13). Pronouns used on their own are clause particles but those in a prepositional phrase must be phrase particles if unstressed although they are mostly stressed. Prepositions are phrase particles, but the same word forms used as adverbs are clause particles. Although the distinction between clause particles and phrase particles affects the application of the Laws, it is not always straightforward (Stockwell and Minkova 1992: 317–318). This issue will be further discussed in section 6 below.

In his article, Kuhn discusses the distribution of Germanic sentential clitics or his clause particles from the historical Indo-European perspective. While sentential clitics in other early Indo-European languages are enclitics that are attached to the clause-initial accented word, clause particles in Germanic alliterative poetry typically precede the first metrical stress of the clause and less often occur after the clause-initial metrical stress. According to Kuhn, Germanic clause particles are thus apparently proclitics rather than enclitics. Because of this difference between early Germanic and other early Indo-European languages, Kuhn (1933: 5–7, 66–68, 89) assumes that clitics in early Germanic were not of Indo-European origin and attributes the development of Germanic proclitics to the initial word stress. That is, if enclitics follow words with initial stress, there would be too many unstressed syllables: thus clitics had to precede stressed words and become proclitics in Germanic. This scenario, however, is speculative.

In Kuhn's definition, all unstressed elements that belong to the entire clause are clause particles and this category includes unstressed lexical verbs and other words that are apparently not clitics. More specifically, clause-initial lexical verbs and many of auxiliaries are often unstressed in poetry, but there is no evidence that all of them are clitics (Slay 1952; Cosmos 1976: 312; Getty 2002). Non-finite verb forms, predicate nominals, and vocatives may be unstressed in verse, but are generally not clitics, either, because clitics are typically grammatical words. Clitics are unstressed in general, but lack of stress is not a sufficient condition for clitichood.

Moreover, various classes of clause particles show different distributions (Blockley and Cable 1995; Momma 1997; Suzuki 2001). For example, conjunctions consistently occur in clause-initial position and are generally not considered clitics. On the other hand, most pronouns and many of short adverbs occur unstressed in clause-early position and thus are considered to be clitics as discussed in section 2 although some occur later in the clause (Pintzuk 1996, 1999; Momma 1997; Suzuki 2008–9). Finite verbs have more freedom in distribution. While the basic order of early Germanic languages was SOV, verb-initial and verb-early orders were used for particular grammatical functions of marking interrogative, imperative, and negative sentences and for pragmatic functions of stage-setting and continued discourse (Mitchell 1985; Traugott 1992; Pintzuk 1999; Fischer and van der Wurff 2006). In addition, light verbs tend to occur in clause-early position. Postposition of heavy elements in clause-final position was frequent, which makes the otherwise clause-final verb non-final (Traugott 1992; Pintzuk and Kroch 1989; Pintzuk 1999). In contrast to pronouns and short adverbs that occur in clause-early position due to prosodic lightness, finite verbs may occur in clause-early position for non-prosodic reasons. While clause particles are those that typically occur in a clause-initial drop, one problem of Kuhn's notion of clause particles is that it subsumes heterogeneous elements in one category: content words, typically finite lexical verbs, as well as grammatical words and non-clitics in addition to clitics (Blockley and Cable 1995: 265, 277). Kuhn chose to use the term *partikel* to subsume both proclitics and enclitics in lack of appropriate German term, but his use of the term is not coextensive with clitics.

Kuhn's clause particles share the property of showing the contrast between unstressed in clause-early position and stressed in clause-late position although reasons for occurring in clause-early position vary, that is, not restricted to being clitics. In addition, as will be shown below, the above mentioned contrast in stress is not implied by either of the Laws.

#### 4. Kuhn's First Law or Germanic law of clause particles

Kuhn's First Law or *das germanische satzpartikelgesetz* states: The clause particles occur in the first drop of the clause, proclitic either to its first or second stressed word ('Die satzpartikeln stehen in der ersten senkung des satzes, in der proklise entweder zu seinem ersten oder zweiten betonten worte'; Kuhn 1933: 8).

According to this First Law, clause particles occur either in the clause-initial drop or, in Kuhn's words, proclitic to the first stressed word, as in (9a), or in the drop following the

clause-initial lift or, likewise in Kuhn's words, proclitic to the second stressed word, as in (9b).

- (9) a. *wæs se grímma gæst* Gréndel háten, 102  
 was the grim spirit Grendel called  
 'the grim spirit was called Grendel'

*þā him wæs mána þéarf.* 201b  
 since him was of-men need  
 'since he had need of men'

- b. *Hýge wæs him hínfús,* 755a (also in (4))

In contrast, Kuhn's First Law excludes clause particles that occur in the second or later drop in the clause.

There are two kinds of violation of the First Law in *Beowulf* (Kuhn 1933: 10–14; Bliss 1967; Momma 1997: 57–63; Orton 1999; Fulk et al. 2008: 324). The first kind consists of clause particles preceded by a complex element in contrast to clause particles preceded by a simplex element as in (9b) (Slay 1952: 14; Schwetman 1993: 48; Momma 1997: 57–63). For example, in (10a), the unstressed verb in italics follows the clause-initial complex element and thus is in the second drop of the clause in violation of the First Law (Kuhn 1933: 11–12).

- (10) a. *Tō lāng ys tō réccenne* 2093a  
 too long is to recount  
 'it is too long to tell'
- b. Hére-Scýldinga  
 warlike-Scyldings  
*bétst béadorinca* *wæs on bael géaru.* 1108b–1109  
 best warriors was on pyre ready  
 'the best of warriors of the War-Scyldings was ready on the pyre'

In (10b) the unstressed verb after the lexical subject is in the initial drop of the third verse. In both clauses the First Law predicts that the unstressed verb is in clause-initial position.

However, in (10a) the verb is between two phrases, both of which begin with the same word. The given order might be intended to separate these two phrases by the verb. In (10b) the unstressed verb follows the subject that occupies two verses.

If Kuhn's First Law reflects archaism as Kuhn (1933) claims, the examples as in (9) that conform to the Law reflect a chronologically earlier pattern than the examples in (10) that violate the Law. The difference between the two can be attributed to change in second position and clausal prosody. More specifically, at an earlier stage unstressed finite verbs are preceded by no more than one lift, i.e. occur before the first lexical word as in (9a) or after one simplex lexical word as in (9b). At a later stage, they may follow the clause-initial complex lexical element, which is more than one lift as in (10). In *Beowulf* there are only two such examples, given in (10a, b), and both have monosyllabic forms of 'to be', which are lightest both in terms of meaning and prosodic weight.

Another potential violation is the verb, if unstressed, of 1166a in (11) (Kuhn 1933: 10; Stemsrud 1970: 5; Russom 1987: 106–107; 1998: 133 fn. 80).

- (11) Swylce þær <sup>ˈ</sup>Únferþ þýle  
also there Unferth spokesman  
æt fótum *sæt* fréan Scýldinga; gehwylc hiora his férhþe tréowde,  
at feet sat lord of-Scyldings each of-them his spirit trusted  
1165b–1166  
'There too Unferth the spokesman sat at the feet of the prince of the Scyldings: each of them trusted his spirit'

The a-verse is hypermetrical with two alliterating nouns, i.e. *fótum* and *fréan*, and two non-alliterating content words, i.e. *sæt* and *Scýldinga*. If *sæt* is unstressed, then it is a clause particle in the second verse in violation of the First Law. However, as Fulk et al. (2008: 192) aptly assume, the a-verse in (11) is comparable to two verses and there is in fact the same phrase as in 1166a that occupies an entire line given in (12) only with an additional relative particle at the beginning (Kuhn 1933: 10; Stemsrud 1970: 5).

- (12) þē æt fótum *sæt* fréan Scýldinga, 500  
who at feet sat of-king of-Scyldings  
'who sat at the feet of the king of the Scyldings,'

Although there is a difference in the position of the finite verb in the clause between (11) and (12), the stress on *sæt* in (12) suggests that the same verb form in a nearly identical phrase in (11) is more likely to be stressed than not. In addition to this nearly identical line where the verb is stressed, the metrical behavior of finite verbs in *Beowulf* supplies evidence for the stress on the verb in (11). In *Beowulf* unstressed verbs are most frequent in clause-initial position and are restricted to auxiliaries in second position while clause-late verbs are consistently stressed (Suzuki 2008). Therefore, a lexical verb in clause-late position as in (11), i.e. in this case after three lifts, is more likely to be stressed than not. As has been shown, violation of Kuhn's Law depends on metrical analysis and this issue will be further discussed in section 7 in Part III.

A similar violation of a pronoun is given in (13) (Kuhn 1933: 12), where the unstressed pronoun follows the subordinating conjunction and the subject.

- (13) þæt ðā áglæcean            hȳ            éft    gemétton.            2592  
       that the warriors            themselves again met  
       'that they came together again, dreadful foes'

Fulk et al. (2008: 251) claim that this pronoun in 2592b must be stressed in accordance with the Law and thus assume that it may be a scribal addition. While Kuhn's First Law predicts that the pronoun directly follows *þæt* in the a-verse, an occurrence of an unstressed pronoun after the subject in (13) may be accounted for as follows. In 2592b *hȳ* is reciprocal (Fulk et al. 2008: 251), referring to the preceding subject, i.e. *Beowulf* and the dragon (Fulk et al. 2008: 347). Since pronouns are typically anaphoric rather than cataphoric, the reflexive *hȳ* is placed after the nominal subject and not before it as is predicted by the Law.

Another violation by a pronoun is given in (14), where the clause-initial sequence of light elements *Nū ic þec mē...* is disrupted by two vocatives, i.e. *Bēowulf* in 946b and *secg bet[e]sta* in 947a (Kuhn 1933: 12).

- (14)                                    Nū ic, Bēowulf, þec,  
   now I Beowulf you  
       secg bētesta,            mē for sūnu wýlle  
       man best                me as son will

fréogan on férhþe;

946b–948a

love in heart

‘now, Beowulf, best of men, in my heart I will love you as a son’

Note that the violation in (14) is different from other violations given in (10) and (13) because the unstressed pronoun *mē* in (14) is preceded by stressed vocatives. Vocatives are not part of the sentence and thus must be disregarded in terms of the position in the clause. The clause-initial sequence of light elements *Nū ic þec mē...* is similar to those observed in other clauses except that *þec* is stressed presumably by being placed in verse-final position while the verse-initial *mē* is unstressed. The violation given in (14) apparently cannot be attributed to change in word order.

Comparable violations of the First Law in other Old English poems have been discussed in the literature. In (15) are given examples of unstressed finite verbs in the second or later verse of the clause (Lucas 1985: 386–387; Momma 1997: 59–60).

(15)

Ða se ælmihtiga

then the Almighty

*let* his hōnd cúman

þær se hálga þeow

GuthB 950–951

let his hand come

where the holy servant

‘Then the Almighty caused his hand to come where the saintly servant...’

hy gesúnde æt hám

they safe at home

*findað* wítode hím

wíste ond blisse

Rid 43 6b–7

find appointed them

sustenance and bliss

‘they find, safe at their home, sustenance and bliss appointed to them’

þæt we, tíres wóne,

that we of-glory lacking

á butan énde

*sculon* érmþu dréogan

ChristA 270b–271

for-ever without end

should misery suffer

‘that we, bereft of glory, should suffer misery for ever without end’

There are several differences between violations in *Beowulf* given in (10) above and those from other poems in (15). On the one hand, the violating finite verbs are restricted to monosyllabic forms of *bēon/wesan* in (10) after one element. On the other hand, in (14) the verbs may be lexical and/or disyllabic. In addition, they may follow more than one element in the clause in which they occur. In *Beowulf*, unstressed finite verbs are typically clause-initial as in 2389 in (16a). If not clause-initial, line-initial verbs comparable to those in (15) alliterate as in 1854a in (16b).

- (16) a. *lēt ðone brégostól*                      *Bíowulf héaldan,*                      2389  
           let that princely-seat                      Beowulf hold  
           'let Beowulf hold the royal throne,'
- b.    *Mē þīn módséfa*  
           *lícað léng swā wēl,*    1853b–1854a (also in (8))

The differences between (10) and (15) can be attributed to change in second position and clausal prosody. That is, unstressed lexical verbs were originally restricted to clause-initial position as in (16) but later came to be placed in second position as in (15). Second position started after one word and was extended to the position after one element. It was originally the position for lightest finite verbs and was extended to longer forms and heavier verbs. The facts as observed conform to Kuhn's scenario of the development of the verb-second order.

Violations of pronouns in other poems are given in (17) (Lucas 1985: 387–388 Momma 1997: 59).

- (17) *Élene máðelode*    *him* on ándswáre                      El 642  
           Elene spoke                                      him in answer  
           'Elene spoke to him in answer'
- Ond swa þéarfendlic*  
     and so indigent  
           *him* to éarféðum ána cwóme,                      GuthA 431b–432  
           them to affliction alone should-come  
           'and should arrive thus indigent, alone, to their affliction'





*Beowulf* (Suzuki 2008–9).

If Kuhn's Law reflects archaism, it follows that the examples that conform to the First Law given in (9), (16) and (18) represent the earlier stage while those in violation of the Law given in (10), (13), (15), (17), and (19) represent the later stage. The difference in the distribution of clause particles implies that the prosodically weak position in the clause where unstressed light elements may occur was originally clause-initial or less often after one stress, but this second position later became after one element, which may be complex (Kuhn 1933). The implications appear to conform to the observations discussed in section 2 that the first element that precedes pronouns is longer at a later stage; see the example in (6) and discussions there. In addition, only light finite verbs may occupy this second position as exemplified in (10) from *Beowulf*, while the occurrence of other verbs in this position as in (15) apparently reflects a later stage.

While most violations discussed so far reflect innovation in word order, there are also violations other than (14) above that are irrelevant to the historical change. Unstressed words at the beginning of an infinitival phrase violate Kuhn's First Law, but this position is comparable to clause-initial position. The violations thus should not be excluded nor do they represent a later stage of the language. One such example in *Beowulf* is the unstressed clause-late pronoun *him* in (20) where the pronoun occurs at the beginning of an infinitival phrase, which is preceded by another that shares the same finite verb, i.e. *gefrægn* in 2773a.

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| (20) | Ðā ic on hlǣwe gefrægn<br>then I in mound heard<br>éald énta gewèorc<br>old of-giants work<br><i>him</i> on béarm hládon<br>him in bosom load<br>sýlfes dóme;<br>of-self choice<br>'then I heard that one man in the mound pillaged the hoard, the old work of giants,<br>loaded in his bosom cups and plates at his own desire' | hórd réafian,<br>hoard plunder<br>áne mánnan,<br>one man<br>búnan ond discas<br>cups and plates<br>2773–2776a |
|------|--|---|

The pronoun in 2775a violates the First Law because it occurs in the fifth verse of the clause that begins with *Ðā* in 2773a. However, it is at the beginning of the second infinitival phrase

and cannot occur earlier than it does due to the presence of the first. Therefore, the pronoun is quasi-clause-initial (Lucas 1987: 146).

Similar violations of the First Law are unstressed infinitives given in (21) (Momma 1997: 60–61).

- (21) wolde on héolster fléon,  
 would in hiding-place flee  
*sēcan* déofla gedræg; 755b–756a  
 seek of-devils host  
 ‘he would flee to his hiding-place, seek his rabble of devils’
- Scolde Gréndel þónan  
 should Grendel from-there  
*féorhsēoc* fléon under fénhléodu,  
 mortally-wounded flee under fen-slopes  
*sēcean* wýnléas wíc; 819b–821a  
 seek joyless home  
 ‘Grendel must flee from there, mortally sick, seek his joyless home in the fen-slopes’

In both examples, the infinitive is part of the second infinitival phrase of the sentence. Again, the unstressed infinitives cannot occur in clause-initial position due to the presence of the first infinitival phrase. With the following two alliterating nouns as the two lifts, the verb fills the verse-initial but non-clause-initial drop in violation of the First Law. Again the infinitives in (21) are quasi-clause-initial (Lucas 1987: 146). The metrical pattern of the infinitive given in (21) above is comparable to the more frequent pattern of clause-initial finite verbs as in (22) where an unstressed verb is followed by two lifts.

- (22) is his éafora nú  
 is his offspring now  
 héard hér cūmen, *sōhte* hólðne wine. 375b–376  
 hard here come sought trusty friend  
 ‘now has his hardy offspring come here, sought a fast friend.’

The violations such as (20) and (21) above must be distinguished from those discussed further above where clause particles could potentially occur in the first drop of the clause. At any rate, unstressed lexical verbs, either finite or non-finite, are neither clitics nor particles in the normal sense of these terms.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples from *Beowulf* are cited from Fulk et al. (2008). Present-day English translation is cited from Donaldson (2002), unless otherwise noted, and adapted where necessary. Accent marks are supplied. When the same verse occurs more than once, glosses and translation are given only in its first occurrence.

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