Manuscript Evidence and Metrical Authenticity:

A Response to Seiichi Suzuki

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The vast majority of the approximately 60,000 verses that constitute the surviving corpus of Old English poetry can be shown to present, despite their differing number of syllables, a basic structure of exactly four metrical positions.¹ Indeed, four-position verses are so numerous in the texts, and obvious scribal corruptions are so frequent, that Sieversian metrists have traditionally regarded the few verses that apparently consist of less than four positions as the mere products of scribal interference, even if those verses are unobjectionable in terms of grammar, sense, and alliteration.² The *communis opinio*

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¹ On the relationship between syllables and metrical positions in Old English verse, see, for example, Sievers 1893: §§9–10; Fulk 2002: 337–340; Pascual 2014: 811–812; 2015: 174–175. A full exposition of the four-position principle can be found in Cable 1974: 84–93. For a historical account of this principle, see Pascual 2016.

² The following quote is illustrative of the traditional sceptical position of Sieversian metrics towards manuscript evidence: “Die überlieferung ist also gerade für die dichtungen der classischen zeit, des 7. und 8. jahrhunderts, durchschnittlich um 200 bis 250 jahre jünger als die texte selbst und gibt alle anglischen gedichte in fremder dialektform wider. Es ist selbstverständlich, dass bei einer solchen art der überlieferung auch das metrum vielfach gestört worden ist, durch einsetzung jüngerer und dialektisch abweichender sprachformen, von eigentlichen textverderbnissen ganz abgesehen. Doch lassen sich die meisten fehler dieser art mit ziemlicher sicherheit erkennen und beseitigen” (Sievers 1893: §75). “The attested remains of poetry from the classical period, of the seventh and eighth centuries, are thus on average about 200 to 250 years

against catalectic verses was recently challenged by Eric Weiskott (2013), who postulated, on the basis of a few verses from the text of *Beowulf*, the rule that the three-position / x / contour is an authentic pattern of Old English metre. As I demonstrated in a subsequent response (Pascual 2013-2014), however, of all the verses that Weiskott gathered in support of his case, only l. 2150a, *lissa ġelong*, can be unambiguously analysed as an instance of the / x / contour. Such empirical insufficiency is a clear indication of the unreliability of Weiskott's argument. If it were credited, one would be compelled to believe that, in the more than 6,000 verses of *Beowulf*, there is only one unambiguous example of a verse type that was purportedly licensed by the metrical system. Given the frequency with which scribes have obviously tampered with their exemplar during the process of transmission,³ it seems a more prudent decision to regard *lissa ġelong*, in spite of its suitable sense and correct alliteration, as a product of scribal interference, rather than to derive an *ad hoc* metrical rule to account for this instance alone. Thus, the scarce attestation of unequivocal instances of three-position verses in the manuscript poses an insurmountable obstacle to the case for their metrical authenticity.

younger than the texts themselves, and they put all Anglian poems into the form of an alien dialect. It is obvious that in manuscript remains of such a nature the metre also is frequently disrupted by the insertion of more recent and dialectally incongruous linguistic forms, quite aside from actual textual corruption. Yet most faults of this sort can be recognized and removed with a fair amount of certainty." I thank R.D. Fulk for discussing this passage with me.

³ See, for example, Lapidge 2000 and Neidorf 2013, where a selection of notorious scribal errors in the transmitted text of *Beowulf* can be found. On the nature of the textual transmission of Old English poetry, see Sisam 1953: 29–44; Orton 2000: 200–208; and Neidorf 2017.

In an essay published in the present issue of *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*, Seiichi Suzuki has made a case for a three-position interpretation of seven verses from the text of *Beowulf* and twenty verses from that of *Genesis A*, on the grounds that they present no defects of either sense or alliteration. Unlike Weiskott, he seriously engages with the problem of their relatively scarce attestation in the manuscripts, offering a sophisticated solution that deserves careful consideration. Suzuki defines catalexis as the result of an inherent tendency in the verse structure towards the deletion of a weak metrical position, or drop, especially if the drop is verse-final or follows two clashing lifts. According to Suzuki, Old English poets, on account of the normative status of the four-position principle, conscientiously resisted this natural tendency. Occasionally, however, when their vigilance against catalexis faltered, the poets succumbed to the composition of three-position verses. From this point of view, the scarcity of catalectic verses is not an indication of their metrical inauthenticity, but a logical consequence of the poets' resistance to their composition. In support of this view, Suzuki argues that, among the three-position verses that he identifies, the catalectic Type D- configuration // x is the most frequent (nine instances in *Genesis A* plus five in *Beowulf*), followed by Type C-, x / / (five instances in *Genesis A*).⁴ This is exactly what, according to his account of catalexis, should be expected. Because both Types D (/ / x x) and C (x / / x) have second drops that are subject to the two conditions that favour their deletion, Suzuki reasons that it must have been particularly difficult for

⁴ The lower incidence of catalectic verses in *Beowulf* is interpreted by Suzuki as an indication of its author's greater success in resisting the tendency towards drop deletion.

poets to avoid the sporadic composition of verses with a three-position Type D- or C- configuration.⁵

This response subjects Suzuki's theory of catalexis to critical analysis. First, it will demonstrate that many of the verses that he identifies as genuinely consisting of only three metrical positions either are more susceptible to an alternative scansion or else present, despite Suzuki's contention to the contrary, additional problems of sense or grammar that signal the presence of textual corruption. Most of these verses, which must obviously be excluded from his list of genuine instances of catalexis, are interpreted by Suzuki as Types D- and C-, precisely the three-position verse types that, according to his account of catalexis, ought to have a higher incidence. The definition of catalexis upon which Suzuki's theory is predicated therefore appears to be empirically unsatisfactory, since it can be demonstrated to make the wrong prediction about the evidence. Second, attention will be paid to the few unambiguous three-position verses that remain in Suzuki's lists after the abovementioned exclusions. Of these, the majority seem to present a Type A- structure (/ x /) with impeccable sense and alliteration. Are they to be regarded as genuine manifestations of catalexis or errors of transmission? The present response contends that the balance of probability supports the longstanding assumption that overly short verses are invariably the result of scribal interference.

Careful examination of the five verses from *Genesis A* that Suzuki classifies as instances of Type C- may lead us to the conclusion that they are not genuine instances of

⁵ Of these two, Type D- is, according to Suzuki, the most likely to undergo catalexis, since its verse-final drop follows a drop that has already undergone prominence reduction on account of the two adjacent lifts that precede it.

catalexis. The catalectic interpretation of three of them, 1349a, *nū ofor seofon niht*, 1449a, *Hē þā ymb seofon niht*, and 2322a, *ymb seofon niht*, hinges on the assumption that the manuscript sequence *seofon niht* represents two simplexes, both of which receive primary stress. These two words constitute a compound in both Middle and Modern English (*seoueniht* and *sennight*, respectively),⁶ however, and so it is only natural to suppose that the reading *seofon niht* also represents a compound in Old English. Consequently, *Genesis A* 1349a, 1449a, and 2322a are not catalectic Type C- verses, as Suzuki maintains, but Type A3 verses with a half-lift instead of a drop occupying the last metrical position of the verse, as in, for example, *Beowulf* 1995a, *þæt ðū þone wælgæst*.⁷ This scansion is corroborated by their distribution: they and similar verses, like *Exodus* 63a, *Heht þā ymb twā niht*, and *Andreas* 185a, *Nū bið fore prēo niht*, always appear in the on-verse, while Type C is more frequent in the off-verse.⁸ Therefore, Suzuki's assumption that these three instances from

⁶ The Middle English word *seoueniht* appears written together, as a compound, in *Lazamon* (ca. 1205); see Fulk 1992: §199; see also Hutcheson 1995: 159 n. 13.

⁷ Suzuki argues that the A3 scansion for 2322a, *ymb seofon niht*, is problematic, because the initial drop of Type A3 tends to be occupied by more than one syllable. Nevertheless, it is not improbable that manuscript *ymb* stands for disyllabic *ymbe*, as a glance at the two surviving versions of *Soul and Body* demonstrates. L. 10a, which reads *sy(m)le ymb seofon niht* in the Exeter version, appears as *symble ymbe seofon niht* in the Vercelli one. The fact that each version of the poem contains a different form of the preposition suggests that the scribes felt free to replace whichever form of the preposition *ymb(e)* they found in their exemplar with its alternative, and so the Type A3 scansion for *Genesis A* 2322a cannot be easily ruled out.

⁸ Moreover, verses like these appear only clause-initially, as is required of Type A3. For more supporting evidence for regarding the treatment of numeral plus a noun as a compound, see Fulk et al 2008: 323.

Genesis A are derived from a Type C verse through deletion of the final drop is undermined by the evidence.

Suzuki's Type C- analysis of l. 2142b, *nis woruldfēoh*, is likewise inadvisable, because this verse probably became deficient in the course of textual transmission, as a glance at its context in the manuscript suggests:

wordum mīnum nis woruldfēoh

þe ic mē āgan wille (*Genesis A* 2142–2143).⁹

‘by my words there is no worldly wealth

that I wish to possess.’

As can be seen, l. 2143, *þe ic mē āgan wille*, apparently an unpaired Type A half-line preceded by three anacrusic syllables, is anomalous. If *nis woruldfēoh* were taken at face value, as Suzuki's analysis requires, one would have to believe that the co-occurrence of this aberrant verse with two other metrical irregularities (an unpaired verse and trisyllabic anacrusis) in the manuscript is the product of chance. In order to avoid crediting such an improbable coincidence, it seems better to concur with Eduard Sievers that there is a lacuna after *woruldfēoh* (1887: 476). The virtue of this hypothesis is that it provides a unitary explanation for the three contiguous metrical aberrations, conceiving of them not as three separate authentic exceptions to metrical norms, but as the defective outcome of the accidental loss of a portion of text. Even if the original reading is now irrecoverable, on account of its suspect text-critical character, l. 2142b should not be adduced as genuine evidence for the reality of catalexis in *Genesis A*.

⁹ In citations of Old English from editions other than *Klaeber's Beowulf*, macrons and other visual cues, such as dots for palatalization, have been silently added.

The remaining instance in his list of Type C- verses, l. 2600a, *Hīe dydon swā*, is especially problematic. As Sievers indicates (1885: 498; see also Fulk 1992: §355.4), the presence of the West-Saxonism *dydon* often generates metrical problems both in *Genesis A* and elsewhere in Old English poetry, as in, for example, *Genesis A* 142a, *drugon and dydon*; *Daniel* 196b, *cūð gedydon*; *Beowulf* 1828b, *hwīlum dydon*. In all of them, the substitution of the Anglian, poetical form *dēdon* systematically restores metricality, and so, if this regularity is not to be left unaccounted, the conclusion that *Genesis A* 2600a is in actuality a four-position Type B verse with scribal substitution of *dydon* for *dēdon* seems unavoidable. This verse does not, therefore, constitute legitimate evidence for the authenticity of catalexis. The exclusion of this instance from his body of evidence leaves Suzuki with no genuine examples of catalectic Type C- verses. If the *Genesis A* poet found it difficult to resist the tendency towards the deletion of the verse-final drop after two clashing lifts, as Suzuki maintains, it is remarkable that the entire text of the poem does not contain a single unambiguous instance of Type C-, like the hypothetical **ġif ēa hwelċ*. It follows that Type C- is not a reality of the metre. The inauthenticity of Type C- casts serious doubts on the reliability of Suzuki's definition of catalexis as a whole. Indeed, as the analysis of the verses from *Genesis A* and *Beowulf* that he classifies as Type D- will confirm, there seems to be no reason to believe in the existence of the natural tendency towards drop deletion upon which Suzuki's theory of catalexis is predicated.

Genesis A 907a and 2876a, which Suzuki, following A.N. Doane's second edition of the poem, reads as instances of Type D- (*bearm tredan* and *dæges briddan*, respectively), are in actuality regular verses that Doane has failed to interpret correctly. The traditional reading of ll. 906-907, as printed in Krapp 1931, is the following:

Þū scealt wīdeferhð wēriġ þīnum

brēostum bearm tredan brādre eorðan.¹⁰

‘You shall always, weary, on your

belly walk the bosom of the broad earth.’

According to the traditional interpretation, l. 907a is a regular expanded Type D*2 with double alliteration on *b*. The editorial reading *wēriġ* at 906b, which stands for manuscript *werg*, ‘accursed,’ is introduced in order to avoid the catalectic verse *werg þīnum*. Unwilling to accept both editorial *wēriġ* and manuscript *werg þīnum*, Doane decides to place *brēostum* at the end of 906b, thereby generating the three-position verse *bearm tredan* at 907a,¹¹ which Suzuki takes as an instance of Type D-. Nevertheless, as R. D. Fulk has demonstrated (2004), l. 906b probably is a standard four-position Type A verse with scribal substitution of *werg* for Anglian **werge*, and so the relocation of *brēostum*, upon which Suzuki’s catalectic analysis of l. 907a is predicated, is unnecessary. In regard to l. 2876a, which has traditionally been printed as *dæġes þriddan up*,¹² Doane believes that the adverb *up* is the first word of the second half-line rather than the last word of the first. This lineation causes problems in both halves of the line. L. 2876b as printed by Doane, *up ofer dēop wæter*, must be analysed as a Type A2b with alliteration on the second lift.¹³ This is

¹⁰ This is also the reading adopted in, for example, Klaeber 1913, Holthausen 1914, Wells 1969, and Anlezark 2011.

¹¹ Doane, aware that the three-position *bearm tredan* is irregular, accepts Ludwig Ettmüller’s emendation of *bearm* to *bearme* (1850), which is nonetheless anomalous, since it contains a short lift after an inflectional ending.

¹² This is the reading in Holthausen 1914, Krapp 1931, Wells 1969, and Anlezark 2011.

¹³ The adverb *up* is ictic elsewhere in *Genesis A* and in *Beowulf* (cf. *Beowulf* 1373b, for example).

implausible, because Type A2b requires double alliteration, which is strictly forbidden in the off-verse (Bliss 1967: §§54, 79). The placement of *up* in 2876a not only restores metricality to both verses, but also corrects the line's alliteration: both *dægēs þriddan up* and *ofer dēop wæter* are regular four-position verses (Type D4 and Type B, respectively) with predictable *d* alliteration on the first lift of the off-verse. Thus, ll. 907a and 2876a as interpreted by Suzuki do not reflect the metrical practice of the *Genesis A* poet, and hence they should be excluded from his list of instances of catalectic Type D-.

There are compelling linguistic reasons to believe that another two verses from *Genesis A* in Suzuki's list, 2058b, *ēað mihte*, and 2668a, *sprecan sīne*, are originally four-position verses that have been corrupted in the process of transmission. The manuscript reading at l. 2058b, *ēað mihte*, is regarded as grammatically deficient by the vast majority of editors. Doane, following E. G. Stanley (1986: 195), reads *ðe ēað mihte*, since the comparative expression *ðe ēað* and the verb *magan* not infrequently co-occur in Old English, as in, for example, *Andreas* 368a, *þæt hīe þe ēað mihton*. Nevertheless, as Sievers indicates (1885: 513; see also Wells 1969: 211), comparative *ēað* is meaningless in this context, in which the poem's narrator, without establishing any comparison, merely reports Abraham saying that God will help the Israelites. Most editors accordingly emend *ēað* to *ēaðe*, the positive form of the adverb, on the reasonable belief that the failure of a scribe to copy the final letter of authorial *ēaðe* resulted in a verse that is defective in terms of both metre and sense. Concerning l. 2668a, Doane, following the manuscript, prints it as *sprecan sīne*. As he mentions in the commentary to his edition (2013: 388; see also Sievers 1885: 453), however, the word *sprecan*, "counsellors," which translates Latin *servōs*, is a *hapax legomenon* elsewhere unattested. Since the Old English idiomatic term for "counsellor" is

gespreca, it appears reasonable to concur with the majority of the poem's editors that a scribe accidentally failed to copy the prefix *ġe-* (as is assumed, for example, in *Beowulf* 652a, [*Ġe*]*grētte þā*), and that therefore l. 2668a is in actuality a regular four-position Type C verse with resolution of the first lift.

The addition of an extra syllable to another two verses classified by Suzuki as Type D-, *Genesis A* 1098b, *wāt ġearwe*, and 2629a, *heht bringan*, not only improves their metre, but also renders them more idiomatic in Old English. The co-occurrence of the adverb *ġearwe* and different forms of the verb *witan*, which is very common both in *Genesis A* and elsewhere in poetry, frequently involves the presence of a pronominal subject for *witan*, as in, for example, *Genesis A* 41b, *þā hē hit ġeare wiste*, 2626a, *þȳ hē wiste ġearwe*; *Beowulf* 2656b, *Ic wāt ġeare*; *Azarias* 170b, *Þæt ic ġeare wiste*. Accordingly, most editors of the poem (Holthausen 1914, Krapp 1931, Wells 1969, Anlezark 2011), following Friedrich Graz's original suggestion (1896: 70–71), emend l. 1098b to *Wāt ic ġearwe*, thus assuming that a scribe unintentionally failed to copy the subject of the verb.¹⁴ Without this addition, the passage seems defective, since the verb lacks a subject, and *wāt* is not distinctively first person. In regard to l. 2629a, *heht bringan*, Suzuki's analysis is a particularly questionable one, because the passage in which this verse occurs is defective (Wells 1969: 227; Doane 2013: 386). One of its several defects is the absence of an object for the verb *heht*, which is otherwise very common (cf. *Genesis A* 2667b, *Heht him fetigean tō*; 943b, *hēt hīe from hweorfan*; *Beowulf* 2337a, *Heht him þā ġewyrcean*). As a result, many editors emend this verse to either *heht hīe bringan* (Krapp 1931, Anlezark 2011) or *heht him bringan* (Doane 2013), thereby improving both its sense and its metre. Regardless

¹⁴ Sievers (1885: 512) proposes *wāt nū ġearwe* or *wāt þēah ġearwe*.

of whether these emendations are accepted, the textual problems that attend l. 2629a render Suzuki's catalectic analysis suspect.

As can be seen, there are good non-metrical reasons to believe that six of Suzuki's nine instances of Type D- in *Genesis A* are more likely to be regular verses that either have been misinterpreted by Doane or else have suffered some kind of corruption in the course of transmission. Turning now to the instances of Type D- that Suzuki identifies in *Beowulf*, we will see that three of them (1889a, 1926a, and 1129a) present problems of sense or grammar that suggest that they are not authentic. The first, l. 1889a, *hægstealdra*, is part of a clause that lacks a grammatical subject. This absence is particularly questionable because the genitive plural *hægstealdra* and its apposite *felamōdigra*, in the previous verse, require a nominative noun on which to depend (as in, for example, *Genesis A* 1862b, *hægstealdra wyn*). It is therefore probable that a word in the nominative case is missing after *hægstealdra*, and so l. 1889a as it appears in the manuscript is incomplete. The editors of *Klaeber's Beowulf* supply *hēap*, which rectifies both the metre of this verse (rendering it a Type E with double alliteration on *h*) and the grammar of the clause.

If l. 1926a, *hēa healle*, is taken at face value, as Suzuki's analysis demands, then the noun *healle* must be interpreted as a nominative plural apposite to the singular noun *bold* in l. 1925a (Fulk et al. 2008: 222). This is unidiomatic, however, both because the reference in 1925a is to a single hall, not several, and because nouns that are in apposition usually agree in number with each other. Indeed, the editors of *Klaeber's Beowulf*,

crediting Ernst A. Kock's hypothesis (1918: 116), emend to *hēah on healle*,¹⁵ a regular four-position Type A verse in which *hēah* is a singular masculine adjective parallel to the singular noun phrase *bregorōf cyning* in l. 1925b. Because this emendation, in addition to rectifying the metre of the verse, results in a grammatically correct appositive relation, *hēah on healle* is likely to be the original verse as composed by the author.

Suzuki's acceptance of the manuscript reading at l. 1129a, *unhlitme*, on which his catalectic interpretation of this verse is based, is likewise inadvisable. The immediately preceding word in the manuscript, *finnel*, is nonsense, and hence virtually all the editors of the poem emend it to *Finne*, since it is the dative of the proper name Finn that this passage (which is part of the Finnsburg episode) unambiguously requires. The most logical way to make sense of this notorious corruption is to assume that l. 1129a as it stands in the manuscript is incomplete, and that some linguistic material preceding *unhlitme* was accidentally attached to *finne*, in the previous verse, in the form of an *l*.¹⁶ The manuscript reading at l. 1129a, *unhlitme*, should be taken, therefore, not as the product of a metrical rule, but as the outcome of defective textual transmission.

¹⁵ Kock conjectures that a scribe erroneously interpreted *hēahon*, written together in his exemplar, as an uncontracted weak plural form, and subsequently altered it to a contracted strong one (see Fulk et al. 2008: 222).

¹⁶ The editors of *Klaeber's Beowulf* (Fulk et al. 2008: 187–188) hypothesize that l. 1129a originally read *hē unhlitme* (a regular Type C verse), and that, on account of damage in the exemplar, only the first upright of *hē* was legible to the scribe, who mistook it for an isolated *l* and attached it to the preceding *finne*, thereby generating both a nonsensical word in l. 1128b (*finnel*) and an irregular three-position verse at 1129a (*unhlitme*).

What is common to all of the verses discussed so far, in addition to their peculiar metrical structures, is that they exhibit problems of a non-metrical character, which would normally disqualify them as evidence for metrical argumentation (Pascual 2013-2014: 65). Once these verses are excluded from Suzuki's lists of catalectic instances in *Genesis A* and *Beowulf*, the total number of three-position verses left is thirteen. Of these, eight are classified as Type A- and five as Type D-.¹⁷ The proportion of Type A- to Type D- verses undermines Suzuki's conceptualization of catalexis as the result of the poets' sporadic failure to resist the natural tendency towards drop deletion in the structure of the verse. He argues that the second drop of Type D (/ / x x), inasmuch as it follows a drop that has already been subjected to prominence reduction by the two preceding lifts, is most likely to undergo deletion. Therefore, if his conceptualization of catalexis were correct, it is Type D-, not Type A-, that should be the most substantially represented in the texts. The smaller number of three-position verses with a Type D- configuration indicates that there are no empirical reasons to believe in the existence of a strong tendency towards the deletion of a verse-final drop preceded by two clashing lifts. Consequently, Suzuki's hypothesis that the scarcity of catalexis is a principled consequence of the poets' resistance to such a tendency appears at odds with the evidence. Thus, even though the thirteen three-position verses discussed above are acceptable in terms of sense and alliteration, the incidence of unambiguous instances in the texts is so low, and the probability of scribal error is so high, that they are better regarded as accidents of transmission devoid of metrical significance.

¹⁷ Type A-: *Genesis A* 1308b, 1338b, 1515a, 1856b, 2227a, 2235a; *Beowulf* 1404b, 3102b. Type D-: *Genesis A* 1112a, 1701a, 2290a; *Beowulf* 1546a, 3171b.

Indeed, this is the view shared by the majority of editors of *Genesis A* and *Beowulf*, who have proposed reasonable emendations for most of them.¹⁸

The traditional notion that the exceptionally scarce attestation of a verse type in the manuscripts is an indication of metrical inauthenticity – and hence of scribal error – is confirmed by the evidence furnished by poems surviving in more than one copy. For example, while l. 8a of *The Capture of the Five Boroughs* is transmitted as a three-position verse in the A version of this poem (*dēora bȳ*), its three other versions preserve the four-position verse *ond dēora bȳ* instead; *Soul and Body I* 81b, *wilddēora*, a catalectic verse, corresponds to the regular Type A *wildra dēora* in *Soul and Body II*; at l. 52a, the A text of

¹⁸ Thus, *Genesis A* l. 1308b, *prēohund lang*, is emended to *ond prēohund lang*, a regular four-position Type B verse (Holthausen 1914, Krapp 1931, Anlezark 2011; see Sievers 1885: 512); l. 1338b, *ælcēs twā*, to *ælcēs twēgen*, a regular Type A (Holthausen 1914; Sievers 1885: 512); l. 1515a, *holmes hlæst*, to *and holmes hlæst*, a Type B (Holthausen 1914, Krapp 1931, Wells 1969, Anlezark 2011; Sievers 1885: 512); l. 2227a, *drihten mīn*, to *Ea lā, drihten mīn*, a Type B (Holthausen 1914; see Graz 1896: 75); l. 2235a, *gēðafode*, to *pær gēðafode*, a Type A3 (Holthausen 1914); l. 2290a, *wiðerbreca*, to *and wiðerbreca*, a Type C (Holthausen 1914, Krapp 1931, Anlezark 2011; see Sievers 1885: 453 and Cosijn 1894: 454; cf. *Genesis A* 64a, *his wiðerbrecan*). For *Genesis A* 1112a, *sunu selfa*, and 1701a, *samod sāmworht*, some editors read *sealde selfa* (Holthausen 1914, Krapp 1931; see Graz 1896: 71) and *sāmworht samod* (Holthausen 1914; see Sievers 1885: 513), assuming that the manuscript readings are the result of scribal transposition (on the plausibility of this assumption, see footnote 19 below). In regard to l. 1856b, some editors read *lēofliċ wīf tō*, on the belief that the preposition *tō* is part of the on-verse rather than the off-verse. Although this interpretation is not persuasive, the incidence of trisyllabic verses is so low that *lēofliċ wīf* is most probably the result of defective textual transmission. For *Beowulf* 1404b, *gēgnum fōr*, 1546a, *brād brūnecg*, 3102b, *searo gēpræc*, and 3171b, *kyning mǣnan*, the editors of *Klaeber's Beowulf* (Fulk et al. 2008) respectively read *pær gēgnum fōr* (Type B), *brād ond brūnecg* (Type A2b), *searogimma gēpræc* (Type E), and *ond cyning mǣnan* (Type C).

Solomon and Saturn reads *heofonrīces*, a three-position verse, whereas the *B* text reads *heofona rīces*, a regular Type A; and the two-position *ond purh help*, at *Daniel* 292a, appears as the regular Type B *ond purh hylde help* at *Azarias* 13a (Neidorf 2016).¹⁹ These examples, which could readily be multiplied, demonstrate that it is the accidental omission of linguistic material from an original four-position verse that is responsible for the abnormal metrical structure of the catalectic equivalent. Since the effect of these omissions on grammar and alliteration is either insignificant or non-existent, it is advisable to concur with editors of *Genesis A* and *Beowulf* that, despite their acceptable grammar and alliteration, the thirteen instances remaining in Suzuki's lists of catalexis have been generated by similar errors of transmission.

¹⁹ Since the surviving texts of both *Daniel* and *Genesis A* were written out by the same scribe, the demonstrably defective reading at *Daniel* 292a furnishes strong confirmation that the text of *Genesis A* should not be taken at face value. As Leonard Neidorf indicates (2016), the evidence of parallel texts also confirms that this scribe was able to spoil the metre of a verse by changing the order of its words (*Daniel* 297a, *ūser yldran*, which violates the rule of precedence, as opposed to the correct *Azarias* 18a, *yldran ūsse*, which is likely to be the authorial form). The hypothesis that the manuscript readings *sunu selfa* and *samod sāmworht*, at *Genesis A* 1112a and 1701a, respectively, are the result of transposition should thus be given serious consideration (see footnote 18 above).

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