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Apo koinou in Old English poetry

Brown, Raymond David, Jr., Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1990
APO KOINOU IN OLD ENGLISH POETRY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

Raymond David Brown, Jr., B.A., M.A.

** ** ** **

The Ohio State University
1990

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Alwen Brown  
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To the memory of Stanley J. Kahrl
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Where readers find instruction or pleasure in this dissertation, there they have found, most likely, the influence of Dr. Alan K. Brown, whose patience and hard work I hope to imitate should I ever function as the advisor for a dissertation, but whose insight, I fear, will always be deeper than mine. Similar thanks are due the other members of my advisory committee, Drs. Terence Odlin and Christian K. Zacher, and Dr. Stanley J. Kahrl, who never got to see how it all turned out. I am grateful that the custom in this situation does not require me to specifically cite the places where the suggestions of all these people were incorporated, so that I can thereby take some undeserved credit. For whatever the reader finds displeasing I, of course, take all the blame.
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CHAPTER I

ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS WORK

Shortly after I began seriously studying Old English poetry, I started trying to get closer to the manuscripts by mentally depunctuating the editions I read. Nearly the first time I did so, I found passages that caused an amusing sensation: I had the illusion that the poet was flipping my mind in a somersault. After a minute's hypochondria, another minute's reflection on the passages showed me the real cause of this: I had understood a word or group of words two or more times even though that stretch of language was written down only once. A little research informed me that this was a recognized construction, but one so obscure that its second-century Greek name, ἀπὸ κοινοῦ, had never found acceptance into the English language. The existence of the construction (Englished hereafter into "apo koinou") had long been recognized as a sort of marginal possibility in Old English poetry, but no one except Herbert Meritt, in a very restricted study of the construction in early Germanic literature in general, had ever paid it much attention, although Bruce Mitchell was beginning to do so.
Yet the more I read of my depunctuated Old English poetry, the less reason I saw for the construction's obscurity. It seemed to be everywhere, sometimes used with powerful poetic effect. This, I decided, was something that the scholarly world should be shown, and thus this project began.

And that remains the most important purpose of this dissertation: not just to tell, but to show those interested in Old English poetry the potential power and beauty of the construction as employed by talented poets, and to convince them of its ubiquity. That aim entails the odd result that in this dissertation every chapter has an ulterior motive. There is a lot of analysis which must be done, and the chapters are mostly constructed in support of this analysis. I must explain precisely what I mean when I use the term "apo koinou" and discuss what means we have of separating possible instances of the construction into likely and unlikely cases (Chapters II and III). I have been forced to classify types of the construction in new ways (Chapters IV and V). I also classify the kinds of effects poets produced with the construction and show these effects at work in two particular poems (Chapters VI and VII), and I discuss the construction as a device of oral poetry (Chapter VIII) and explore the implications of apo koinou for the editing of Old English poetry (Chapter IX). But all of this analysis, necessary as it may be, takes third place to the aims of
convincing readers of the importance of the construction to Anglo-Saxon poets by showing them example after example, and of explaining those examples in such a way that, after finishing my study, readers will have both eyes open for apo koinou.

They will have to, for no attempt is made here to recover all examples of the construction—such a project would be impossible. There is no way to establish doubtful cases as likely except through the kind of literary analysis we associate with close reading, one at a time (see Chapter III) and such a list would always be out of date the instant it was revised. Moreover, a list of simply possible examples would be both of questionable value and prohibitively lengthy—a project taking many years, assuming it could be finished at all by someone whose language and culture is at least a thousand years different from the language and culture of the texts. I am still being occasionally surprised by finding what seems, after the discovery has been made, an obvious and effective example of the construction in a poem I have read many times before. What's more, I do not even include all examples discussed by Bruce Mitchell and Herbert Meritt (although I do include a fair number)—and this is not usually because their examples are in any way inferior, but simply because there are so many examples in Old English poetry that it was more convenient, for my purposes, to turn to my own, more
familiar notes instead of their books. This means, by the way, that readers who continue to be interested in apo-
koinou after finishing this dissertation (all of them, I hope) will have yet another reason to read Meritt's book and
Mitchell's chapter in *Old English Syntax*—both well worth reading in their own right.

But although I don't try for completeness, I do try to include passages for discussion on every occasion where it is reasonable to do so; nearly 150 poetic passages containing apo koinou have found their way into this study, each on the average containing twice that many examples of the construction. Given the main purposes of the dissertation, it is reasonable to say that these passages make up the most important part of the work—my efforts can only have value insofar as they result in improving our specific understanding of particular passages of poetry. One sort of reader will, I hope, approach the dissertation from the back, making use of the index of Old English poetic passages which my computer and I have provided.

A few of my attempts at explication consist of little more than translation; all but a few do contain translations, most of them crudely literal—which seemed the best way to approach translation where word-order is of such great importance to the points I am trying to make. Some apo koinou passages are so complex that translation does not accomplish much in the way of explaining what is going on
syntactically—paraphrases do a better job of bringing out the constructions—but with the exception of two passages only (Exodus 172-78a, and Phoenix 90-103, both in Chapter VI) I have provided translations anyway (although I may additionally provide a paraphrase). Originally, I had intended to provide translation with one passage, paraphrase with another, guided only by my feeling for what would most quickly and efficiently point out the syntactical problems, but Bruce Mitchell, a man with far more experience than I in making arguments about Old English syntax, said in a private communication that "Few people are going to have the patience to spend time working out whether your paraphrase is accurate or not." I am still not absolutely certain he is right, but the possibility was disturbing enough to get me to change my ways in all cases where the problems of translation are not so great that including one doesn't just make this author look silly.

Fault can always be found with any translation. I hope the reader will ignore, or at any rate forgive, any faults of mine that are irrelevant to understanding the syntactical problems I am trying to deal with in the quoted passages.

To help keep attention focused on those problems, I have generally followed the convention of underlining koinons in the Old English and the translations. Where more than one koinon is found in the same place, I have alternated underlining with boldface, and both with capitals—going as
far as necessary to keep the koinous separate in the 
reader's mind. Because editorial punctuation is one of the 
chief causes of our lack of appreciation of apo koinou (and 
for other reasons dealt with in Chapter IX), I have excluded 
all punctuation from the Old English. Early in this 
dissertation there will be two manuscript-oriented examples, 
but except for these, my de-punctuated samples of Old 
English verse will be based on the Anglo-Saxon Poetic 
Records (ASPR). Any other deviations from the ASPR will be 
explained in my text or in my notes.

Within the translations, the reader will often find 
parentheses and brackets. I use both in an attempt to 
distinguish explication (parentheses) from explanation 
brackets). Sometimes, of course, it is difficult to say 
where the line should be drawn between bringing out what is 
in the poem and presenting my ideas about how the poem 
should be read, and I can only excuse myself by arguing that 
an attempt to distinguish which sometimes fails is better 
than no attempt at all.

This dissertation purports to generalize about all Old 
English poetry, and I have, I believe, read enough of it in 
preparation for this project that I don't need to worry 
about the validity of such generalizations. But I have not 
read all of it. My original intention was to leave about a 
thousand lines unread, for several reasons. First, I hoped 
that I would in time think of new techniques, new ways of
looking at Old English poetry, and it is important, in that case, to be able to test myself on verse I haven't thought about before. Second, I believed (and still believe) it is a good idea for people in my profession to remind themselves, every few years, of what it is like to read Old English poetry for the first time—those who teach it need to be reminded of its difficulties, and all students of the poetry need to be reminded of the experience of first discovering meanings in its often odd syntax. Third, I love this discovering of Old English poetry and want to save some for dessert as I advance in years—for this reason I have included in my portion of unread poetry one of the more famous poems that have accumulated at least a fair portion of critical respect: Judith. There is no reason for leaving it out that is intrinsic to Judith—it simply happens to be the only major poem that, by chance, I had never looked at at the time I made the decision to leave some Old English poetry out of my reading. The other unread verse consists of The Menologium, The Gloria I, The Creed, The Kentish Hymn, The Metrical Preface to Wærferth's Translation of Gregory's Dialogues, Christ and Satan 479-729, and Psalms 111-150 of The Paris Psalter.

With the Paris Psalter material, this comes to considerably more than a thousand lines—closer to three thousand—but these poems are totally unsuitable for my purpose. Frankly, I only read as far as I did in The Paris
Psalter so that I would at least be able to say here that I have read ninety percent of all Old English poetry.

The main problem with The Paris Psalter is that it attempts a far more direct sort of translation from Latin than any other Old English poem based on a Latin source. The manuscript presents side-by-side versions which, although the Old English translation is not drawn from the manuscript's Latin, are still close enough to show us a far more mechanical approach than in any other Old English verse translation. Here (and no place else, I believe) the poet really is influenced often by the Latin word-order, making most possible koinons unsuitable for evidence. What's more, Jerome's psalms range from the fairly clear, with a few anomalies, to the completely muddled and unintelligible; even if I were able to eliminate cases of possible Latin influence on the syntax, I would still have had to attempt to distinguish between those psalms the poet (1) understood, (2) thought he understood, but didn’t, and (3) couldn’t possibly have understood—an impossible project. A hint of the sorts of problems that arise in trying to use The Paris Psalter can be seen in verse six of Psalm 55, presented here in a form as close to a picture of the manuscript's side-by-side versions as I can make with print:

Inhabitabunt
&abscondent
ipsi calcaneum
meum obserua
bunt.sicut ex
pectautit anim

On eardia& pa &e swa
pongea&,pat heo
gehyden halun
mine.swa min
sawl bed pat &u
swylce heo for na
Here is a third place where I offer no translation, but I suspect those readers who don't know Latin or Old English will not be much worse off than those who do. It is possible to translate what it says—the Paris Psalter poet proves that—but I admit to having no idea what most of it means. Of course, the poet may in his heart have truly believed that he did know what it means! The problems of trying to use The Paris Psalter are just too mind-boggling for me to try to deal with.

Fortunately, there is an enormous number of examples of apo koinou in the other Old English poetry I have read, which still amounts to eighty percent of the total, and ninety-six percent of all Old English poetry excluding The Paris Psalter. The added two thousand unread lines of the latter may prove to be the saving of my plan in the long run, for if the dissertation is published my attention will inevitably be drawn, both by friendly and unfriendly critics, to much of what I've left unread, and by the time whatever fuss I have caused is over I may be lucky to still have one thousand lines of which I am safely ignorant. I only hope that some of what is left is found outside The Paris Psalter.

The poems do not all get equal treatment in what follows. As was perhaps bound to be the case, there are
some short poems which seem to contain no likely cases of apo koinou (The Rune Poem, for instance), and others (Juliana and The Dream of the Rood, for instance) where I can find only a few examples, none of which are especially interesting. Most of the inequality of representation, however, is due to the fact that I would like to do what little I can to increase my readership. Although I made an effort to include the examples of apo koinou that I found most interesting no matter what the source, and although I must devote a good deal of attention to the Meters of Boethius at one point, in general I have tried to show blatant favoritism to those Old English poems with which the greatest number of readers are likely to be familiar: Beowulf and the more famous poems of The Exeter Book. I invite all readers to review my representations of passages which are favorites with them, and to see to what extent the license of apo koinou readings brings out senses which, in themselves, are more syntactically and stylistically plausible and natural than those which the unavoidable straitjacket of familiar editorial punctuation must impose.
Notes to Chapter I


2 Especially in "The Dangers of Disguise: Old English Texts in Modern Punctuation" Review of English Studies 31 (1980), pp. 385-413, where he treats the construction as one of six types of syntactical problem areas, where modern punctuation is misleading. In 1985 Mitchell's *Old English Syntax* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) was published, in which a short chapter in the second volume is devoted to ἄντω Χο[ν]ο[ν]. Not all that much of my thunder was stolen, since Mitchell did not discuss the unexpected density of such constructions in the poetry and did not go out of his way to show what kinds of effects they could have on a poem, and I had for compensation at least the partial support of the most famous authority on Old English syntax. This was of great benefit in giving me the confidence to go on--indeed, it is imaginable that without it I might not have produced this dissertation.


CHAPTER II
ON THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF APO KOINOU

Sentence Boundaries in Old English Poetry

Let us begin with a passage from an Old English poem as we actually find it written down, transcribed as precisely as my machine will permit:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{\textit{\textbf{\(\delta a\ \text{was\ ge\ myndig.bode\ beorn\ beadwe\ heard.\ eode\ Inburh\ bra\ an\ o\ oretta\ eine\ gefyrfred\ maga\ mode\ rcf\ meotude\ getreowe\ stop\ on\ str\ ote\ stig\ wisode\ swa\ him\ n\ \text{mamig\ gumena.\ongitan\ ne\ mihte\ synfuira\ geseon\ [BLOT]H\ e\ sigora\ weard\ on\ \text{pam\ wang\ stede\ ware\ be\ told\ [BLOT]\ lofine\ leodfruman\ mid\ lofe\ sinu.}}\}} \\
& \quad \text{(Andreas, 981-89)}
\end{align*}
\]

And, for those with no Old English, here is as closely equivalent an experience as I can provide, but one lacking, unfortunately, in any of the charm of the poetry.

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{then\ was\ mindful.\ (the?)\ mind-patient\ (one?)\ (the)\ man\ in\ war\ hard.\ went\ Incity\ quickly\ (the)\ resolute\ champion\ by-zeal\ benefited\ (the)\ man\ in-mind\ vigorous\ to-God\ faithful\ advanced\ on\ (the)\ street\ (the)\ way\ pointed-out\ so-that\ for-himself\ none\ of-(the)-men\ perceive\ not\ could\ of-(the)-sinful-(ones)\ see\ [BLOT]\ \text{Had\ Victories'}\ \text{Lord}\ \text{in\ that\ plain\ place\ with-protection\ sur\ rounded\ [BLOT]}\ (the)\ dear\ people-leader\ with\ his\ glory.}
\end{align*}
\]

Here is Old English poetry in all its messiness, including even a stain on the manuscript which obscures the
end of betolden and makes questionable the capital H.
"Alterity" may be an overused word, and its use questionable when we make the Middle Ages seem too science-fictionishly alien--certainly the above selection is not so alien as to be impenetrable--but obviously, mixed with the familiar, there is a good deal of the alien here. Read aloud, the selection is obviously poetry, but it is organized in a way totally different from the poetry of later periods. And why did the scribe present it as he did? Surely literate Anglo-Saxons must have known from foreign sources about arrangement of poetry in verses. On the other hand, one can't exactly say that it was written like prose, either, for most OE prose gives the reader far more hints about organization through punctuation. Here, the scribe seems to begin by indicating the division of the verse into half-lines with points, but then seems to lose interest (the H, if we could be sure of it, might also be considered punctuation), and this is, comparatively speaking, one of the more heavily punctuated sections of Old English poetry, and one where the purpose of the punctuation is relatively clear. In many cases, editors can't agree whether the points--and one never finds anything but points except at the end of a big section²--are metrical, rhetorical, or grammatical.

It is true that the alliterative and metrical patterns--the half-lines themselves, whether pointed or not--give many
hints about organization; we don't need grammatical punctuation to organize our talk, and the manuscripts could forgo punctuation in the same way. But many times the lack of grammatical punctuation really does seem to leave important questions open. Where, in the selection above, are the sentence boundaries?

It may be of some help, when thinking about such problems, to remember that poets have often shown a fondness for a syntactic complexity uncharacteristic of either speech or formal prose. Think of (as an extreme) Shelley's multiple embeddings, as in Laon and Cythna's

From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion Of waters, as in spots forever haunted
By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are inchanted To music, by the wand of Solitude.
That wizard wild, and the far tents implanted
Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood
Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curved flood.

(CWS I, 334: 200-07)

or the finicky but surprising use of verbs in Augustan poetry, as with the gapping reversal in "Now Leaves the Trees, and Flow'rs adorn the Ground;" from Pope's Pastorals: Spring (PAP, 125: 43). Nor need poetry be old or good for us to find unusual syntactic complexity in it—think of Rod McKuen's nowning of previously unnounable adjectives.

Perhaps Old English poets also did this familiar thing—with, of course, the usual alien twist. Often, where we find Anglo-Saxon poets violating the customary Old English
word-order for prose, we can only assume that they did it to conform to whatever must have seemed to them the best metrical and alliterative arrangements. On the other hand, in those places where we can be sure they employed syntactic complexities for artistic effect they utterly defeat the expectations of the uninitiated—as in the example above, for instance, where, using the technique of "variation," the poet distributed appositives in half-lines throughout the verse in such a way that sometimes it is impossible to say where one sentence stops and another starts—indeed, it may be misleading even to speak of "sentences" in such passages. On the other hand, it is always possible to make sentences out of them if we are determined to do so, and even if such an approach is mistaken, it must be admitted that we have done so because such passages do contain complete thoughts. Here is another such a passage—a less problematic one—without punctuation. (However, since we are not native speakers of Old English, I will henceforth go at least so far in my presentation of the poetry as to give my readers the "punctuation" provided by the conventional editorial division into half-lines.)

Ic þære wine Deniga
fLEAN Scildinga frinan wille
beagan bryttan swa þu bena eарт
þeoden marne ymb þinne sif

(Beowulf, 350b-53)

And here, as a help to those unfamiliar with Old English and as a reminder for those who are not, is as "literal" a
translation as I can provide.

I about that (the) friend of Danes (OBJ)
(the) leader of Scyldings (OBJ) intend to ask
(the) distributor of treasures (OBJ) as you a
petitioner are
the great prince (OBJ) concerning your journey

The syntactical situation in these lines is to my way of
tinking fairly simple, given the profusion of appositives.
The only conceivable complication is the possibility of
having to understand frinan wille ("intend to ask") as the
verb twice because of its position between the objects. As
we will see later, there are reasons why, at first, readers
or listeners might tend to take it this way, but surely by
the time the audience gets to beoden marne ("great prince")
they will feel that the circularity of the passage—bas
("about that") refers pretty much to the the same thing as
ymb binne si" ("concerning your journey")—combined with the
simplicity of the message ("I'll go ask the king about it.")
means that Wulfgar's main idea is to make Hrothgar sound as
impressive as possible, and that the formulaic appositives
are virtually formal titles. Notice how they line the left
side, continually interrupting what little is being said; in
a translation that strives harder than mine to capture the
spirit of the poem, it might be a good idea to print those
appositives in fraktur capitals. Thus, by the end of the
passage, the audience will simply be taking all the
appositives as objects of frinan wille without having to
think further about any wider implications of the word
Now to return to the passage from Andreas, presented this time as the ASPR presents it, but with the editorial punctuation removed, and divided into two parts for ease of discussion:

\[
\text{Sa was gemynlig modgeyalig} \\
\text{beorn beadwe heard eode in burg brae} \\
\text{anred oretta elne gefyrred} \\
\text{maga mode rof meotude getreowe} \\
\text{stop on stræte}
\]

(Andreas, 981-85a)

And, again, a very literal translation.

Then was mindful (the?) mind-patient (one?) (the) man in war hard went in (the) city quickly (the) resolute champion by zeal benefited (the) man in mind vigorous to God faithful advanced on (the) street

The syntax involved in the Old English version of syntactic complexity turns out to be a lot "looser" than what we would have expected based on our experience of later poetry. When Shelley plays with our perceptions we respond—justifiably—with a faith that there is a single correct way to disentangle the syntax and that doing so will give us yet more important information. Much Old English poetry leaves options open in such a way that any interpretation seems equally applicable. Does it really matter, in the passage above, where an editor chooses to put the stops? I would say that it doesn't—the poem is what it is, basic meaning is not changed (within limits!) by their inclusion, placement, or total exclusion, and indeed, the dissolution of sentence boundaries here gives the poem (and
the hero Andrew) a certain drive that it (and he) wouldn't have had otherwise. It could be that one reason manuscripts of Old English poetry, late as they are, are but lightly punctuated is because this syntactic looseness was important to the Anglo-Saxons.

If we carry on with the same passage, we see that in addition to the looseness associated with variation, there are other ways in which sentence boundaries can be dissolved.

\[
\text{stig wisode} \\
\text{swa him namig gumena ongitan ne mihte} \\
\text{synfuira gesecn hafde sigora weard} \\
\text{on pam wangstede ware betolden} \\
\text{leofne leodfruman mid lofe sinum} \\
\text{(Andreas, 985b-89)}
\]

\[
\text{(the) way pointed out} \\
\text{so that for himself none of (the) men perceive} \\
\text{could} \\
\text{of (the) sinful ones see had Victories' Lord} \\
\text{in that place with protection surrounded} \\
\text{(the) dear people-leader with his glory}
\]

(A possibly confusing variation has been put in boldface.)

Just what stig wisode is doing in this passage is a highly disputable matter. The resolute champion himself is the last subject we have seen, but the most immediately natural interpretation—that Andrew pointed out the way—is made unlikely by the fact that there is no reason for him doing so. On the other hand, it might at first sight seem that the sense of 985b-87 is "The Lord of Victories had pointed out the way so that. . . ." However, since this would leave 988-89 seemingly without subject and auxiliary
verb, 985b is customarily regarded as a parenthetical comment meaning that the way was pointed out to Andrew."

Is it possible that hæfde sigora weard could stand as subject and auxiliary verb for two sentences—the ones on either side of it? (The capital H discussed on pages 12-13, if it is really there, is not necessarily the sign of the beginning of a new sentence, but merely shows—when it shows anything about syntax—that the scribe thought there was an important syntactic juncture there.) There are cases where this would be a good question—certainly it makes good sense to describe such half-lines as beorn beadwe heard in the previous Andreas selection as standing as subject for two sentences (if only because doing so makes no difference to the overall meaning and ends pointless editorial dispute)—but in this case, it's probably not a good idea. There is another objection to taking hæfde sigora weard with what precedes it, which is that the word order O-V-Aux-S (or O-V-quasi-auxiliary-S, if you prefer) seems a bit extreme even for OE poetry. Thus, we can conclude with reasonable safety that hæfde sigora weard goes with what follows it.

So let's go along with the customary interpretation. Putting all of 981-989 into a more traditional, less "literal" translation, placing periods almost at random to satisfy modern conventions, we get:

Then the patient one was thoughtful. The man, hard in war, went quickly into the city. The one resolute of battles, benefited by zeal, a man vigorous in mind, faithful to God, advanced on the street (the
way being pointed out) in such wise that none of the
men, the sinful ones, were able to perceive, to see
him. The Lord of Victories had surrounded the dear
leader of people with His protection, His glory, in
that place.

But notice that the placement of the clause at lines
986-87a (swa him næmig gumena / ongitan ne mihte / synfulra
geseon) with what came before it is totally arbitrary. There
is no reason, besides an unsupportable theory that
subordinate clauses follow main clauses in poetry, not to
also imagine that there is a sentence beginning at 986 which
says "In such wise that none of the men. . . could see him,
the Lord. . . had surrounded the dear leader. . . with His
protection. . . ." In other words, God had made Andrew
invisible, which is still the usual interpretation of the
passage anyway. It is worth pointing out that, here, the
Janus-like nature of the clause cannot in any way be said to
arise as a possibly incidental effect of variation--it
simply works equally well with the thoughts on either side.

Sometimes when Old English poetry presents its audience
with such a potential dissolution of ordinary sentence
boundaries, it is accompanied by a change of sense in the
middle element.

hæfde him on hreōre  halige treowa
forbon he geleādde  ofer lagustreamas
maeghmorda mœst  mine gefrēge
on feorhgebeorc holfan hæfde
eallum eorfcynne  ece lafe
(Exodus, 366-70)

Here it makes excellent sense to assume that the
underlined clause goes with what came both before and after
it. The passage plays with the fuzzy semantic field of forbon (see Chapter IV): the clause first explains the result of Noah's loyalty to God and forbon means "for the reason just stated," then the same clause explains the logical implication of carrying around the future of the earth and forbon means "for the following reason," or, more precisely in this case, "the following is the reason I can make this assertion." I must provide two translations of the central element in such situations:

(Noah) had in his heart holy loyalty; for that reason he led over the sea-streams the greatest of treasure-hoards in my knowledge. / The following is the reason I can make the assertion that he led over the sea-streams the greatest of treasure-hoards in my knowledge: (he) had in life-refuge, for all earth's kin, earth's eternal remnant. . . .

Once again, the feeling that we have to make a decision about sentence boundaries has led us, for however tiny a distance, away from the poem. But, where in the Andreas example we could resolve the problem merely by saying that some stretch of language in the poem works twice because it made no difference, or because it is virtually a side-effect of the technique of variation, here the decision is more positive. The distinction between the two implications of forbon is fine. Indeed, it is finer that an attempt at a translation can show—if Modern English allowed us to put a "therefore" clause before its dependent clause, I could have translated forbon with a single word—but it does make a fairly important difference.
Two-faced stretches of language like those above can be found literally by the thousands in OE verse. They range, in tiny increments, from the sorts of virtually incidental spots found in Beowulf 350b-53 to the sort of faint kinesthetic effect found in Andreas 981-85a and the sort of equal attraction of an adverbal clause found in 986-87a, to the sort of shift in meaning or emphasis found in Exodus 366-70, to places where they do make a very great difference indeed.

Here is an example of the latter, from one of the most thoroughly analyzed sections of Beowulf. Although Beowulf's fight with Grendel has been studied innumerable times, this peculiar syntactic feature seems never to have been publicly observed before.

_{forð near æststop}_
_{nam þa mid handa higeþtigne}_
_{rinc on ræste ræhte ongean}_
_{feond mid folme he onfeng hraþe}_
_{inwitþancum ond wif earm gesæt}_  
_{(Beowulf, 745b-49)}

We enter the passage with Grendel grabbing Beowulf, we leave it with Beowulf grabbing Grendel, and in the middle we have a syntactical revelation of Grendel's mistake: his failure to realize that some food might be able to fight back, or, to put it another way, that an object might be a
subject. Rinc on ræste should be taken as both object and subject, and feond mid folme should also be understood twice, with feond object of both rahte ongean and onfeng. The lines immediately following the above passage make it apparent that it is important we understand that Beowulf has already grabbed Grendel: the poet assumed that we would not imagine that Grendel is the subject of the entire passage. But if, as Klaeber (and, presumably, Dobbie) suggests, an audience would have entertained the improbable idea that onfeng takes only an "understood" object here, or, as Kock, Grein, Heyne and, in an even odder way, Toller suggest, an audience would have taken inwitbancum as onfeng's object, it is possible—even likely—that they would, indeed, have imagined that he in line 746b was also Grendel. On the other hand, if onfeng is behaving more as one might expect it to, feond is its object, and there is no object left for rahte ongean except rinc, and no object left for nam at all except higebihtigne alone. But it is hard to believe that listeners could so easily have broken the likely connection between higebihtigne and rinc, or that the poet could have expected them to, and we are at an impasse unless we assume that some half-lines must have been understood twice. That one simple assumption enables us to get rid of many troublesome ones (I have not even mentioned the many attempts on the part of scholars in the past to emend the passage). If we adopt it, we render the congested
transparent, the confusing easy, and reveal a real artistic purpose. The battle is truly joined.

Nor would the audience have had as much trouble understanding what was going on in the passage as we might expect. Not only would they have been helped by a normal understanding of onfeng, but by the fact that he is more likely to introduce an old subject than a new one, by the fact that feond is more likely to refer to a monster than a human (out of twenty-four appearances of various forms of the word in Beowulf, only six refer to humans, and only two of those—in lines 2289 and 2671—do so where there is a monster involved), and, if the reader will pardon my bringing up what must sound circular right now, by the fact that the Anglo-Saxon audience was accustomed to such two-sided constructions.

I confess that I included the above example so early in this discussion chiefly for its shock and advertising value, and I expect that, in spite of all I have said, many readers will be reluctant to deal with Beowulf 745b-49 in this way until they see more evidence that my final claim in the preceding paragraph is true. For that reason, I will provide another passage where a double understanding—this time of a clause—makes a great difference in our understanding of a poem. If the example below seems more convincing, please bear in mind that this could be because it has not been nearly so intensely picked-over by previous
sille ic þe ealle  sunu davides
þecoden israela  XXX punda
swætes golde and mine suna twelfe
gif þu mec gebringest  þat ic si gebryrđed
þurh þæs cantices cwyde  Cristes linan
gesemes mec mid sofe and ic mec gesund fadic
wende mec on willan on wæteres hrige
ofor coferflod  caldeas secan
(Solomon and Saturn I, 13-20)

(will) give I you wholly  son of David
king of Israel thirty pounds
if you me bring (i.e., "bring it about") so that I
be incited
through that song’s saying by Christ’s line (i.e.,
"rule")
(you will) reconcile me with truth and I (will)
myself (OBJ) healthy dispose
take myself willingly on (the) water’s ridge
(i.e., "surface")
over (the) river Habor to seek the Chaldees.

Even here, questions have been raised by scholars—
whether the word at the end of line 16b should be "incited"
or "terrified"; whether linan is instrumental, genitive, or
accusative; whether what appears only as fa in the
manuscript should be fadic, fare, or something else (I go
with fadic because it governs the accusative); and others
besides. None of them bear on my point, which is that here
we have a protasis which must be understood twice, because
there are apodoses on both sides of it.

If the clause beginning with sille is not an apodosis,
it is pointless. Anyway, I don’t believe there are any
scholars who don’t connect this clause with the if-clause.
The problem in the passage comes from taking everything
after gif as part of the protasis. It works well enough to
take 18a as saying "if you reconcile me with truth," and even the next half line might be taken as meaning something like "and if I turn out [mentally?] healthy", but to understand an "if" with the rest of the passage is to produce nonsense or, at best, a very unlikely metaphor. But if there is a two-sided protasis, the passage makes good, solid sense. Saturn—at least in this poem—comes from Chaldea, and he is saying that, in addition to giving Solomon gifts, if the king of Israel can educate him to the true meaning of the Paternoster he will acknowledge its truth and go home.10

All practiced readers of Old English poetry have experienced hundreds, perhaps thousands, of situations where they feel called upon to make a decision about the syntactic boundaries of a sentence, clause, phrase, or word—where some stretch of language seems to work equally well with two or more alternatives. And I am sure that in at least a few of these cases, they have experienced the peculiar psychological effect I spoke of in the first chapter—where they feel their syntactic understanding of a stretch of language being swivelled around because they find it necessary to see the syntactic connection differently in some way on encountering a later stretch of language—and that this has struck these old hands as a poetic gain, and that it has occurred to them that here, perhaps, a decision was not really called for and that, indeed, a decision would
ruin the effect. They have concluded that the effect was intended.

It is my contention that a surprisingly large number of such stretches of language are so intended—that this particular breed of syntactic complexity is an important traditional element of Old English poetic style.

Thus I have traded, I fear, one kind of alienness for another. Although even the manuscripts themselves are more readable under such an assumption, the near-total disappearance of such syntactic constructions from the literature of modern languages means that readers of OE poetry must make what will seem to them a very alien assumption in order to gain that advantage. These constructions also present an unusual problem for linguists, who, in the presence of syntactic ambiguity, generally inquire into the problem of dis-ambiguation, and thus tend to see only one acceptable structure. Formally, at least, the theoretical work of some linguists allows for more than one structure—even the trees of transformational grammar might be constructed, say, with yellow and blue ink for those parts of the construction that engender the dual-purpose middle part, which could be printed in green ink. But this is probably not the sort of thing Chomsky had in mind,11 and I wonder how many other linguists would be unhappy in the presence of two syntactic structures for the same stretch of language, both of which must be taken with
equal seriousness. Another one of my jobs in this dissertation is to make the assumption seem less alien not only for Old English scholars, but even linguists, if possible; alterity isn't as good as understanding.

A Term for the Construction

I intend to use the ancient term *apo koinou* for the kinds of constructions advertised above. Here is a formal definition. *Apo koinou is a construction leading to a peculiar psychological effect—a change in the syntactic understanding of a stretch of language on encountering some later stretch of language so that it seems necessary to understand it more than once, where there is no processing breakdown.*

The final clause is necessary in order to differentiate *apo koinou* from garden-path sentences.¹² The classic garden path can serve here as an example:

The horse raced past the barn fell.

Here, the reader or listener is "led down the garden path" by taking, through local application of the rules of government and binding,¹³ a participle as a finite verb. When we reach *fell*, we see that we were wrong, backtrack, and revise our understanding to exclude the first interpretation. When we have *apo koinou*, neither syntactic structure can be rejected as wrong, and we allow both.¹⁴
There is a certain sense in which this is "unnatural"—but poetry is unnatural language, and audiences throughout history have been trained by their poets to listen or read "unnaturally" (as they would have had to, for instance, when encountering my examples from Shelley and Pope). The psycholinguistics that serves as handmaiden to the investigation of Artificial Intelligence has been forced by the garden-path phenomenon to allow for "unnaturalness"—the salient term, here, is "conscious effort." Marcus, who believes English can be parsed deterministically, says:

There is enough information in the structure of natural language in general, and in English in particular, to allow left-to-right deterministic parsing of those sentences which a native speaker can analyze without conscious effort.¹⁵

A somewhat circular, but mercifully quick and dirty definition of conscious effort is offered by Milne, who says "any grammatical sentence that seems abnormal to read, requires conscious effort."¹⁶ Under this definition, I am quite willing to agree with Marcus and to acknowledge that apo koinou requires conscious effort. Of course, this definition may be too quick and dirty for some, and the only way I know of to get any real grip on "conscious effort" is to try to measure reaction time in psychological experiments—but I willingly acknowledge that the psychological flip-flop effect produced by apo koinou could probably be shown experimentally to increase reaction time even in a culture where it is acceptable and, therefore,
"grammatical". Audiences for poetry attune themselves to syntactic oddities—their enjoyment is increased by application of conscious effort, and it is not unthinkable that, when listening to poetry, educated and enthusiastic audiences slip out of whatever their normal mode is, and slip into a state approaching pseudo-parallelism.  

Another couple of definitions are necessary. Obviously, some term is needed for that part of the construction which is taken in common with two other stretches of language, and I will use the traditional term koinon for it, but the final part of the construction is in some ways even more important, and also needs a term. Audiences cannot feel the psychological effect and scholars cannot cry "Aha! Apo koinou!" until the koinon has already passed by. That is, there is a point in time, which varies from person to person and situation to situation, when a new linguistic structure which includes part of the old linguistic structure will seem to spring into existence, and although this phenomenon may occur any time after the appearance of the koinon, it cannot occur before, and it can be said that the phenomenon is in some sense created by that part of the new linguistic structure which occurs to the right of the koinon. I cannot find a traditional term for the important stretch of language which makes us aware that a previous stretch is to be taken twice, and so I have provided my own. I call it the pivot, both because it makes one's mind turn back and
because of a spectacular example in The Meters of Boethius (see the mimesis section in Chapter VI). I also hope that this term will help rid us of the idea that the koinon is the most important part of the construction; psychologically, at least, it is not, although it is the most efficient way, perhaps, to point out the construction to others. Because of its efficiency as a guide, henceforth I will point out the koinon in my examples by underlining, and, where there is potential for confusion because of close proximity of koinons, I will also use boldface and, occasionally, capitals.

I use the first two terms because there is a certain amount of scholarly tradition behind them, but my definition of apo koinou does not exactly match either of the definitions created by the two scholars who previously devoted the most attention to the construction in Old English. Bruce Mitchell's working definition, which is simply something like "a spot where it seems necessary to understand a word or group of words twice when they are expressed only once" (this approximate paraphrase grows out of the whole of section 3790 of his Old English Syntax) broadens Herbert Dean Meritt's definition, and I find myself somewhere in the middle. Because I want to limit the term apo koinou to instances where my psychological effect is felt, it is important to me to specify that our understanding change on encountering some later stretch of
language after the koinon—that is, the koinon, or at least the weightiest part of it, must be found between two of the elements which it must be understood more than once in respect to. There may be some apokoinouish aspect to "Those who cherish God fear Him, yearn for heaven," but it is not the thing itself. "For heaven yearn those who cherish God fear him" would be. This qualification is contained in Meritt’s definition, which I quote in full:

Διὸ κατοικία is a syntactical construction in which a word or closely related group of words, occurring between two portions of discourse, contains an idea which completes the thought of the first part, to which it is grammatically related, at once supplies the thought essential to the following part, to which it may also be grammatically related, and is not felt to belong more closely with the first part than with the second.19

Another of Meritt’s qualifications is also important to me. It does need to be said that both parts of the construction must be felt to have approximately equal weight in completing the thought—although just what that feeling might consist in is not immediately obvious, and I will explore that question later. Otherwise, my definition is probably broader. I am not sure what Meritt meant by "grammatically related" (although it seemed obvious before I started to think about it), nor am I sure how "closely related" a group of words needs to be to produce the effect. At any rate, this latter qualification may be unnecessary; if apo koinou occurs, then the words in the construction are related closely enough to produce it. And although I
accept, on the whole, the idea that the koinon should complete the thought of the first part, I do have some reservations. For one thing, the qualification works far better with Old English than with languages such as Latin, where extremely mobile word-order sometimes leaves me puzzled as to just what "completing the thought" might mean. For another, Meritt himself points out that even in Old English there are apo koinou constructions where the koinon does not complete the thought of the first part. Examples such as this one

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{pa } \text{pat onfundende se } \text{be fela } \text{æror} \\
& \text{modes myrðes } \text{mannan cynne} \\
& \text{fyrene gefremede}
\end{align*}
\]

(\textit{Beowulf}, 809-11a)

then that (OBJ) found-out he who many earlier mind's troubles (OBJ) for mankind crimes (OBJ) accomplished

are extremely rare, but they do seem to call forth the psychological phenomenon I'm trying to explore.

(I should add, here, that in one way my definition is broader than either of the others: I do believe that there are certain special and infrequent situations in which it may make more sense to speak of a koinon being understood three or more times.)

The scholarly tradition which justifies my use of the terms is a relatively late one. When ancient writers used the term, they were referring to a construction which seems (to one who grew up speaking English, at least) so unremarkable that it is hard to understand why they bothered
thinking about it at all. *Apo koinou* in this old sense refers simply to a situation where a stretch of language works with two or more coordinate clauses or phrases. J. C. M. Grimm gives the following example:

Liv. XXXV. 32. 7. Atheniensis maxime in eam rem idonei uisi sunt et propter ciuitatis dignitatem et uetustam societatem cum Aetolis.

The Athenians seemed most suitable for this thing, both because of the dignity of their state and their long-standing partnership with the Aetolians.

Apparently, writers such as Apollonius Dyscolus and Aelius Herodianus felt, as some handbooks of English grammar do even today, that saying "both because of this and that" was somehow more problematical than saying "because of both this and that." Unlike the writers of those handbooks, however, ancient grammarians decided that this situation especially required that "because of" be understood twice. Perhaps highly flexible word-order made coordination seem an especially delicate thing, easily subject to disruption, and the fact that *et propter*. . . *et*. . . was easily understandable was a surprise, and genuinely gave the ancients the feeling of having to understand *propter* twice. I can't feel it, and neither, I suspect, can most Modern English speakers—even those who make daily use of those handbooks of English grammar—but it is at least imaginable that, for native speakers of ancient Greek and Latin, the psychological effect I spoke of earlier was felt even in this category of *apo koinou*. (Whether an Anglo-Saxon could
probably depends on the kind and extent of his or her training in Latin.) It falls today into the category of things that need to be understood more than once only in the trivial sense that we must understand some relationship or other between any word in a sentence and the other words in the sentence.

It was not until modern times that scholars began using the term "apo koimou" in a wider way that corresponds roughly to my own. Their usage of the term varied according to their interests and especially according to the language they happened to be discussing, but in most cases and in general, they dealt with speech and writing where it seemed syntactically preferable to understand something more than once, and the constructions which did this—all of them at least similar—were assumed to be a general Indo-European heritage. (The earliest such use that I have found so far is in a note in an edition of Horace edited by Macleanê in 1853.) This is not to say, however, that the ancients did not recognize the existence of the wider possibility, and although the Greeks had no word for it, the Indians did. Meritt pointed out that the Sanskrit term kakaksivat ("in the manner of a crow's eye," from the idea that a crow had but one eye to look through both its eye-holes with) was used by the commentator Kulluka to describe how the word tallena works in the following passage from the Manavadharmasastra.
4. 83: çirahsnatasca tailena nangam kimcidapi sprçet
"Having bathed his head with oil let him not touch his body"

Some Doubts

Almost every English-speaking scholar today would, I suspect, feel an urge to insert a comma after "with oil" in the quotation above. Such constructions are simply too rare in print to feel otherwise, unless you have trained yourself (conceivably, perversely) to it. In English-speaking countries today the effect, as purposeful artistry, can only be inarguably found in some of the segues in medleys of dated popular songs. And even our understanding of the construction in those medleys must be helped along by something in the music—usually a one-chord modulation. The music is almost necessary to our understanding.

I would say that our difficulty in understanding the construction is the result of history and the increasingly high status of prescriptive grammar. The effect was sought after long ago in many Indo-European languages, and is now avoided—at least in print.

When I began this study, I felt that apo koinou had virtually disappeared from common speech as well as literature. Since then, keeping an ear out for it, I have discovered that, while it is hardly one of the most
frequently heard constructions in Modern English, it is far from uncommon. One can even find it on television where, although speakers, simply by virtue of the fact that they are speaking, cannot produce as many "correct" sentences as they could in print, even Tim McCarver is at least trying to mind his P's and Q's. In fact, the latest and one of the best of my televised examples was produced by Tim McCarver during the CBS Saturday afternoon baseball game on August 11, 1990, when he said, "You take more chances when you're ahead than you do when you're behind you can't afford to take chances." My own failure to perceive the koinons around me marks me as a print-addict, and this, unfortunately, is the situation of most of those who would study something like apo koinou.

But such uses can be dismissed as the application of deletion-rules (something I will deal with shortly), and given the fact that most of the ancients did not bother to record their awareness of apo koinou in its modern sense, the skeptic must be forgiven for wondering whether it isn't a modern phantom, a reading into old literature of something its authors didn't intend. Indeed, I find it odd, to say the least, that none of the surviving ancient Greek or Latin metawritings mention it (assuming, that is, that they really did not feel the psychological effect of what I call apo koinou in what they called apo koinou).
All I can do about this is shrug and acknowledge that the ways of the ancients often seem mysterious to us. Horace, at least, seems to me to have been especially fond of it, and in OE verse, to return to my own specialty, there is scarcely anyplace where one can read more than a hundred lines without running across a possible instance; many passages seem packed with it. Language and probability being what they are, one may expect a certain number of possible cases of apo koinou to arise accidentally in the manuscripts, but there must come a point when reasonable people will no longer accept any individual case as likely to be an accident.

It would be some help if there were a modern Indo-European language in which apo koinou could still be found as conscious artistry in support of more than a segue between two bad songs, and fortunately, Meritt has found evidence that there is at least one. He cites the following passage from a Lithuanian daina, where the second lines of each stanza are the objects of verbs on either side (the translation is his):

Nenulydikit
margū skryniu rasztéli
nenudrukusit
bė Tīlzes drukorélio

Let not the rain fade
The fair chests' inscription
You will not imprint
Without the engraver of Tilsit

Nenulàuzikit
margū skryniu kojelès
nepadarysit
bė Isrūts diezerélio

Do you not break
The feet of the fair chests
You will not replace
Without the Isrūt artificer
Lithuanian has the reputation of being a very archaic Indo-European language; it is amusing, at least, to speculate that this is one of the ways in which this might actually be true. At any rate, there are more varied opportunities for apo koinou in a language that depends heavily on inflection and pays less attention to word-order. "Analytic" languages will tend to automatically associate a phrase with only one other word or group of words depending on its place in the sentence. In other words—jumping ahead two paragraphs to my example from Horace—"Seething with harsh choler the liver swells," is very unlikely to seem equivalent to "The seething liver swells with harsh choler" in spoken modern English.

The conscious artistic use of apo koinou in modern Lithuanian, however, is no reason for abandoning skepticism entirely. Given the small number of potential examples of apo koinou accumulated by earlier OE scholarship, any linguist might dismiss them as "errors" or point to such sentences as the one Bruce Mitchell cites as a possible example of modern English apo koinou—"There's a man at the door wants to speak to you"—and say that here we have an example of a rule which deletes relatives. The words "a man at the door" is not a koinon, some linguists would say; instead, it is generally understood among native speakers that "who" is deleted before "wants" in certain cases, and no doubt similar rules could be proposed for many
supposed cases of apo koinou in Old English—and other Indo-European languages, for that matter (Sanskrit, perhaps, excepted).

My linguist is not really the straw man he might appear to some. It is at least possible that in some cases of what looks like OE apo koinou there really is a relative-deletion rule at work, (e.g., Her on bys geare gefor Alfred was at Beafum gerefa—"Here in this year died Alfred was reeve at Bath"—in the Parker Chronicle for 906). This objection, however, seems appropriate only to a few cases in Old English, most of them in prose (see the last part of Chapter III), and if apo koinou is possible at all, surely such cases as the Sanskrit example above, or Horace's "Cum tu... Telephus laudas brachia—vae!—meum feruens difficili bile tumet iecur." (C.I.13.4—"When you praise Telephus' arms—woe!—seething with angry passion / with harsh bile my liver swells.") or even the Old English:

Ic þone deman  in dagum minum
wille weorþian  wordum and dædum
lufian in life

(Guthlac A, 618-20a)

I that Judge in my days
would honor by words and deeds
show love to in life

must be taken seriously.

The problem is that almost all apo koinou can be explained as the deletion of something or other. If a stretch of language simultaneously finishes one idea and begins another, it is nearly always possible to find a
possible relationship between that stretch and one of the
two sides which can be made explicit, or to insert a stretch
of language which will separate them. The Sanskrit example
can be explained as *atha* ("then") deletion and the Guthlac
example can be explained as and-deletion. Only the
passage from Horace seems immune. Of course, the Sanskrit
has already been labeled with a term equivalent to apo
koinou by a native speaker, and it scarcely seems
satisfactory to posit "and-deletion" for the Guthlac passage
when one cannot say from which side of the underlined
language the hypothetical "and" has been deleted.
Nevertheless, the assertion can always be made, and with
deletion rules still somewhat fashionable and apo koinou so
unrecognized, I feel compelled to point out that the
situation in Old English poetry is too complicated to rely
on deletion rules to dismiss apo koinou. To the degree one
uses an and-deletion rule to get rid of apo koinou, to that
degree one must take seriously the apo koinou constructions
which make use of *and*, as in the following example:

```
ond be grunde grœfe  geonge swa me wisaf
har holtes feond    ond hlaford min
woh faref
```

(Riddle 21, 2-4a)

...and along the ground (I) dig, going as me
guides the hoary enemy of the forest *and* my lord
walks bent. [The solution is a plow, the hoary enemy
is an ox, and the lord is a farmer.]

In what circumstances would "and" be deleted, anyway?
The same considerations apply to relative deletion. There are a fair number of examples, in varying environments, where a se be-clause is a koinon, but as an example, here is one of them.

begn nytte beheld
se be on handa bær  hroden ealowge
scencte scir wered

(Beowulf, 494b-96a)

(a) retainer of service took charge
who/he who in hands bore  (a) decorated ale-cup
poured clear sweet (drink)

Of course, one can use and-deletion to account for this example, but in that case I would refer the skeptic to the previous two examples.

This does not mean that the construction cannot be eliminated in other ways. Instrumental and ablative phrases, such as those found in the examples from Guthlac A, Horace, and the Manavadharmacastra, can be translated as prepositional phrases and mentally punctuated as such. I would honor that Judge in my days, show love to (Him) by words and deeds in life. Seething with harsh choler, the liver swells. If you bathe your head with oil, you'd better not touch yourself. And what can be done with phrases can also be done with clauses; I have already shown it being done in my "traditional" translation of the passage from Andreas. The fact is that not a single example of apo koinou can be found that cannot be denied by claiming, in one way or another, to know the mental "rules" which constrain the author, and by claiming, on the audience's
side, that although it may be possible to take the stretch of language more than one way, those same "rules" make it unlikely that many did. And I do not dispute that speakers of language have such rules (although it might be better to examine the evidence of each language prior to deciding what those rules might be); in some cases, these postulated rules will be at work.

The benefit of the doubt, however, ought, it seems to me, to go to apo koinou. Why assume a problem where there need be none? Surely the first rule of editorial practice ought to be that when something on the page of a manuscript makes perfectly good sense, one ought to do nothing to interfere with that sense unless there are extraordinarily good reasons for doubting. When a stretch of language falling between two others invites the contact of both, grammatically and contextually, surely the most likely assumption is that that contact was felt.

This is true even where, as in the Guthlac A example, the koinon is surrounded by a sort of variation. The koinon often seems stronger if what surrounds it is more clearly different ("I that Judge would honor by words and deeds will show kindness to my children"), but even if the very same words were on both sides of the koinon ("I that Judge would honor by words and deeds would honor") the grammatical contact is still felt. In fact, if we drop other poetic factors out of consideration, it seems fair to me to say
that when we have what seems intuitively like variation, the closer the variants are to each other, the harder it is to say whether apo koinou is a by-product of variation or vice-versa. In real poetry, where other factors such as context and meter are apparent and extremely close variation is rare, it seems fairest to say that many of the most interesting examples of apo koinou can be found where the construction and variation work hand in hand, as equal partners. In fact, if Anglo-Saxon poets did not accustom us to variation, there would be far fewer koinons, for one of the more common ways they work hand in hand is where our expectation of an appositive creates the first interpretation of the koinon:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{wes be feaxe  on flet boren} \\
&\text{grendles heafod  ðæt guman druncon} \\
&\text{egeslic for eorlum  on ðære idese mid} \\
&\text{wîteson wrætlic  weras on sawon}
\end{align*}
\]

(\textit{Beowulf, 1647-50})

Then was by the hair onto the floor carried
Grendel's head where men drank
horrible before the men and the lady with (them)
a wondrous sight the men beheld

There are, in addition, some cases where apo koinou seems to motivate the variation (see the last part of Chapter VIII).

But alongside these are many cases where the variation seems primary, which, to repeat myself, is only to say that there are, indeed, doubtful cases of apo koinou in OE poetry. Before I consider how to treat the vast majority of these, however, I want to return to the relatively small number of cases where it can be objected that a relative is
missing. There are koinons to be found in Modern English where no relative-deletion rule can account for them, such as the Tim McCarver sentence mentioned earlier—"You take more chances when you're ahead than you do when you're behind you can't afford to take chances"—and I believe that the sort of and-deletion rule which would most easily account for this construction in non-apo koinou terms simply does not exist. (An "and" between "behind" and "you" would also imply "when", but there can be no such implication when the "and" is deleted.) But since the objections based on the idea of a deleted relative do apply to most of the cases that might be called "apo koinou" in Modern English, I'd like to take time here to show how such constructions might actually be apo koinou in certain cases in Modern English even if a deletion rule is at work. If I can show that such constructions exist in Modern English in spite of a deletion rule, I will have shown how much more likely it is that even such passages as the Parker Chronicle one above are apo koinou. Besides, as a devotee of structural efficiencies, I feel a compulsion to exploit happy coincidences when I run across them, and since those readers to whom apo koinou is alien will start off best by thinking about Modern English examples, this exercise, I hope, will also have the advantage of conveying to them one way that it might "feel" to those who use it. I'll follow this with some other attempts to give readers an idea of other ways apo koinou
can work, psychologically, before returning to of the problems that inhere in any attempt to establish any individual case as apo koinou.

**Getting a Feel for Apo Koinou**

Let's begin by agreeing, then, that "There's a man downstairs wants to speak to you" is probably the result of something like a deletion-rule. But not even the existence of such a rule will necessarily prevent apo koinou from occurring (in everyday speech, at least) in circumstances that seem outwardly very similar; here is the danger of trying to describe people's interior events. Take the sentence, "My roommate bought this new VCR records at three different speeds." Although the situation is similar on the surface, already, I think, most people intuitively would be more unsure of it. The vast majority of the sentences found in print that use the proposed relative-deletion rule begin with an existential "there" or "it", and this zeroing-in on a particular subclass by litterateurs is reason to suspect that we may be dealing in the "downstairs" sentence with an oddly restricted deletion-rule that is an aspect of a class dialect.

The "VCR" sentence may have been produced in this way: the speaker begins by focusing on his roommate's buying habits and in mid-speech shifts focus to the wonderfulness of the new VCR itself. Most of us, I think, have heard such
sentences produced; they identify themselves chiefly by a pause that works this way:

"My roommate bought this [pause, shift] new VCR records at three different speeds."

Such constructions are produced intentionally and listeners understand the two-sided syntax thanks to the pause, which, by violating an important convention for pausing and coming immediately after the first word of the new constituent, draws the listener's attention to that word as a possible beginning of a new structure.\(^{27}\) Thus, even in a language where apo koinou is regarded, at best, as an error, apo koinou exists.

But there is no evidence that apo koinou was regarded as an error among the Anglo-Saxons; indeed, the evidence of the number of potential koinons in the poetry points the other way, since there is plenty of opportunity for negative feedback from an audience during poetic performance. One would expect more instances of (supposed) anacoluthon in the prose style, which is less ancient and formal and impressive, but the situation is quite the reverse (see the comparison of the prose and verse versions of The Meters of Boethius coming up in Chapter III.) And it is easy to see how such a situation might arise, for where the people have not internalized their punctuation system (which, for the Anglo-Saxons, was basically rhetorical as soon as they adopted something complex enough to be called a system), and where there is no written prescriptive grammar, it is
far more likely that such sentences would become an accepted part of peoples' verbal repertoire. They are a verbal efficiency which, while appealing to laziness, are yet poetically useful.

A more likely explanation than deletion for the origin of many apo koinou constructions in everyday Germanic— one that has the advantage of also accounting for sentences that are not so easily grafted on to Modern English trees—was advanced by Meritt, who thought it likely that its growth was given the greatest impetus by asyndetic parataxis— which also was not an error in Old English, but a common way of stringing what we would call sentences together. (As Mitchell does, I use the term "parataxis" in "a purely formal sense to mean a construction in which sentences or clauses are not formally subordinated one to the other.")

To oversimplify a bit, Meritt's idea is that in a language where it is quite common to hear such discourse as "I stole a pig. I ate." the influence of the second verb over its obvious object will probably be felt, and asyndetic parataxis will tend to turn into apo koinou. (This theory does not account for verbal koinons, but perhaps it doesn't have to. At any rate, it at least has the advantage of basing itself on an observable fact about Old English.) To quote Meritt:

If the possible koinon happens to be an object which the following verb requires, there is good reason to believe that the construction has ceased to be asyndetic. In all cases of asyndetic parataxis in
which the first clause has the inverted word order, the difference from ἀπὸ κοινοῦ is but little and the two may easily merge. . . . In the modern period the mechanical relegating by punctuation of every part of a sentence to its particular niche has contributed to the disappearance of such expressions in literature. But it is doubtful if punctuation corresponds with actual speech. When one says: "So I spoke to the waiter I said 'See here'," he is linking one idea with another without any break either in thought or in speech. It would seem likely that there is no dark secret about such constructions and that they were felt as normal speech from the earliest period of Germanic."

Just how normal could such apo koinou feel? My "love" example from a popular song medley draws attention to itself by novelty, and there are examples of apo koinou (from the poetry, anyway) that no doubt seemed equally novel to the Anglo-Saxons, but if there was still, by the time of the Old English period, an "everyday" sort of apo koinou, then the psychological phenomenon I am interested in is unlikely to have been felt very strongly in those ordinary circumstances. Jespersen maintained that the psychological feeling of apo koinou was even detectable in such Modern English "contact clauses" as "This is the boy we spoke of," and, whether or not what he felt was indeed what most native speakers feel, we can, I think, appreciate Jespersen's feeling if we contemplate the clause.

Not much to it after all, is there?

Some OE apo koinou, I suspect, and perhaps a lot of it, made an equally weak impression—especially where it was
purely a verbal efficiency, serving no larger rhetorical or literary function. Perhaps such apo koinou even required less conscious effort than usual—the more common the type of construction, after all, the less "abnormal" it seems—and one type, at least, so often seems to serve no larger purpose that one may characterize those cases where it does as exceptions to a rule. This type is the apo koinou which uses clausal adverbial koinons (see Chapter IV). We have already seen examples of such clauses: the swa-clause in Andreas 981-89 (the rule) and the forban-clause in Beowulf 677-80 (the exception). I will, of course, throughout most of this dissertation be devoting my attention to the more literarily interesting exceptions, but it ought to be pointed out how common such low-conscious-effort koinons are. Indeed, syffgan-clauses are so common that I will go out on a limb by saying that I believe an Anglo-Saxon audience would have received more of a jolt, after hearing the word syffgan, if what followed had not been a koinon.

Many of these work as apo koinou simply by virtue of the fact that poetry moves through time and when the koinon is more weakly connected with what comes first, the total effect may be one of approximately equal weight. Here is an example using a syffgan-clause.

oft Scyld Scefing sceapena breamum monegum megpm meodsetla ofteah egsode eorlas syffgan wreat wear6 feascaeft funden he þæs frofre gebad weox under wolcnum weorfmyndum pah (Beowulf 4-8)
Often Scyld Scefing from hosts of harmdoers from many tribes mead-benches drew away frightened men after he was first propertyless found he for that comfort got grew beneath (the) skies in honors prospered

To paraphrase in such a way as to get most directly to the syntactic meat, Scyld conquered many enemies after he was found propertyless he got comfort for that and grew. The anaphora of bes in line 7b (surely he didn’t need comfort for having conquered enemies, did he?) makes it seem obvious that the middle clause goes more closely with the last (in spite of Klaeber’s punctuation). But poetry moves through time. It goes quite well with the first principal clause until we hear the last principal clause, and yet, since there is no reason to reject its association with the first principal clause on the grounds either of grammar or meaning, it produces the psychological effect which characterizes apo koinou. Again, given the ubiquity of this type of apo koinou in OE verse and the fact that there is nothing else of importance (that I can detect, anyway) being conveyed by it, it is unlikely that the effect was as striking as it seems when translated into Modern English.

I would hate to leave the reader at this point with the impression that the ubiquity of clausal adverbial koinons implies a ubiquity of not conveying much else of importance. The rule has a relatively large number of exceptions. Not only do many apo koinou readings of such clauses provide information more important than that somebody did one thing
after another, but they often provide mimetic, emphatic, 
kinesthetic, conceptual, and rhetorical poetic effects, 
about which I have a good deal more to say in Chapter VI.

Summary

Old English poetry, as we find it in the manuscripts, 
not only lacks indications of sentence boundaries through 
punctuation, but often lacks any reliable syntactic 
indication of them. One reason for this is that the poets 
were indulging in a syntactic play called apo koinou, where 
there is a change in the syntactic understanding of a 
stretch of language so that it seems necessary to understand 
it more than once, where there is no processing breakdown. 
The existence of this construction might present problems 
for linguists, and could be challenged by some of them as 
actually being the result of deletion-rules, but the 
evidence for the artistic use of apo koinou comes from many 
languages, including at least one modern one, and not only 
is it too much to believe that all examples are the result 
of different sorts of deletion-rules, but apo koinou is 
possible even where the deletion-rule is relevant and apo 
koinou is regarded as ungrammatical. This is not to say 
that there are no doubtful cases of apo koinou in Old 
English poetry--apparent cases range from those as striking 
as Beowulf 745b-749 all the way to instances where it’s 
better to just call a potential koinon a passing effect of
variation and forget about apo koinou (as in Beowulf 350a-53).

And where shall we draw the line? That brings me back to the problem of establishing any individual case asapo koinou, and I'll discuss that in the next chapter.
Notes for Chapter II


2 Except for the Paris Psalter which is, as usual, a special case.

3 These and other good examples of such syntactical play in Shelley and Pope, plus illuminating discussions thereof, can be found in Timothy R. Austin's Language Crafted (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984) pp. 102-10 and 47-55.

4 All quotations from OE poetry henceforth will be de-punctuated versions of what I find in The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, 6 vols. (New York: Columbia UP, 1931-1953), referred to hereafter as ASPR. Any other modifications I make will be explained in the text.


6 The weirdness of my attempt at a translation is caused mainly by the fact that English no longer has a causal word which works like forban--I am sure the expression was easy and natural in Old English, because these uses were common. See Bruce Mitchell, Old English Syntax (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), vol. II, pp. 523-24.


9 T. H. Toller, in the supplement to An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), p. 668, adopts for this one passage a definition for onfon which reads "...with a non-material object, to get a condition of mind, adopt a mode of conduct, grasp with the mind:-- He onfěŋ hrafe inwitbancum be had crafty thoughts at once. . . ."

10 Of course, the question of whether the second apodosis begins at line 18 or 19 still remains unsolved. Personally, I consider the "and if I turn out healthy" sort of
translation for 18b unlikely enough that (since the "and"
makes the start of the clause at 18b seem improbable) I
start the new apodosis at line 18. Certainly, "If you teach
me about the Paternoster then you will reconcile me with
truth" seems more likely, given the poem's heavy-handed
pedagogical technique, than the alternative.

I infer this from an argument in *Aspects of the
where Chomsky says, "If this [moving the initial NP to first
position when it is to be the subject and the inflections
are ambiguous] is universal, it suggests the generalization
that in any language, stylistic inversion of "major
constituents"... is tolerated... up to the point where a
structure is produced that might have been generated
independently by the grammatical rules." The argument could
be extended to apo koinou with little trouble.

See, for example, Bradley L. Pritchett, "Garden Path
Phenomena and the Grammatical Basis of Language Processing",
*Language* 64 (1988), pp. 539-76, where the idea of processing
breakdown is crucial to garden-path sentences.

See especially p. 542.

Since most linguists believe the ambiguity in
globally ambiguous sentences is either usually not felt at
all, or felt on such a low level that it is not recognized,
apo koinou is automatically differentiated from these. (If
linguists ever change their minds about this, I will have to
add another clause to my definition.) I wonder, however,
whether the dual interpretations of any globally ambiguous
sentence might not both be strongly felt where they are set
up in the way most apo koinou is automatically set up—that
is, in a situation where both interpretations are
appropriate to the larger context. Imagine, for instance, a
chapter in a Mickey Spillane novel, where in a large room
full of peaceful people only his hero and villain are armed
(with .45 caliber pistols) and the last sentence of which is,
"Mike Hammer killed the man with the forty-five."
Certainly, whatever the odds are of a reader noticing both
possibilities, they are much increased over the usual
chance of a reader noticing them.

for Natural Language*, (Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press,

Robert William Milne, "Predicting Garden Path
"Pseudo-parallelism" is another AI term, where the "parsing mechanism" avoids backtracking by taking all possible grammatically permissible paths from a given state simultaneously, and throws away any paths that fail.


Meritt, p. 30. He does say that he doesn't consider such constructions "normal".


Arguably, it can be found in some modern poetry, as in Hopkins' "The cross to her she calls Christ to her..." (The Wreck of the Deutschland, 24, 8) and, in fiction, in what sometimes are representations of popular speech and sometimes might not be, as in Agatha Christie's "Horrid, the whole thing had been, quite horrid," found in Absent in the Spring, (New York: Berkley-Jove, 1988) p. 40.

Which is not to say, of course, that the construction cannot be found in non-Indo-European languages. I suspect that it can.

Mitchell, Old English Syntax II, section 2304.

A pause before "this" is more likely to be interpreted as a complete change of direction.

Although there are occasional apparent borrowings from liturgical punctuation (which was, in turn, borrowed from musical notation) early in English vernacular literature, mostly we find only occasional and inconsistent pointing, more or less as in the poetry. By the time of Ælfric, though, the liturgical punctuation had come to the fore. See Peter Clemoes, Liturgical Influence on Punctuation in Late Old English and Early Middle English Manuscripts, Cambridge Occasional Papers, No. 1 (Cambridge: printed for the Department of Anglo-Saxon, 1952), pp.16-17.
Such as *pa genam se engel sone fone mann wearp eft in pent fyr* ("Then took that angel immediately that man (obj.) threw back into the fire.") (Bede 3, 2121)


31 Meritt, pp. 110-11.

CHAPTER III
THE LIKELIHOOD OF PARTICULAR CASES

Introduction

No line can be drawn. Any koinon might be an accident and the case can always be made, with greater or lesser probability, that any individual potential koinon is closely bound with what comes before or after it. Probabilities are all we can assign to koinons. We are, after all, talking about intention, and the possible reactions of an audience long dead whose native tongue we have laboriously reconstructed. It will be of little service to those of us trying to understand how Old English poetry actually worked for me to play New Critic and write only of what we can understand when reading an Old English poem. We must ask what Anglo-Saxons did understand and, being unable to answer the question precisely, fall back on probability. It will turn out to be easier to talk about what Anglo-Saxon poets did generally with apo koinou than, in many cases, to talk about specifics—but more about that at the end of this chapter.

Although I cannot draw a line, I can provide a very hazy sort of map. There are likely reasons for doubting whether
a potential koinon was intended as such, and likely reasons for belief, and those likely reasons can, in turn, be shown to become more likely or less likely in certain circumstances. What I can do here can never be complete, but will, I hope, suggest ways of dealing with such perplexities when they arise in connection with real OE verse lines.

Before discussing those likely reasons for doubt and belief, however, it is best to first get out of the way seemingly good reasons for doubt which really don’t work all that well. Such reasons can be drawn from consideration of emphasis in speech, and from doubts concerning certain kinds of adverbial koinons.

Stress and Intonation

It is time to introduce yet another new term--this one to replace that over-used word, "ambiguity". A distinction needs to be made--one which, had it been made earlier, might have spared critics and linguists the sorts of misunderstandings implied in this despairing quote from Austin:

Unfortunately, closer examination [of the supposed unanimity between linguists and literary critics on the importance of ambiguity as a key to the mind] reveals major discrepancies between critical and linguistic understandings of what even constitutes ambiguity, discrepancies that threaten to invalidate any sustained dialog between critics and linguistic analysts.
It has already been pointed out that apo koinou, by definition, never entails a processing breakdown, which means apo koinou is never exactly ambiguous, since passages where it is at work do not so much present the audience with two or more possible meanings as two or more certain, or intended meanings. The effect achieved by apo koinou might better be called diplopia (or, in rare cases, triplopia).

A lot of what theorists have called ambiguity in poetry is, I believe, at least an attempt on the part of the poet to achieve diplopia. The poet attempts to suggest not contradictory things, or things irrelevant to each other, but things which are in some way complementary, and hopes that the reader/listener will understand both. When the poet is not simply using print to appeal to the eye, this means that both diplopic senses must require the same stress and intonation—not always an easy thing to make sure of.

One chilling success was achieved in modern times by Hopkins with the word will in

Ah, as the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though world of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.

As Empson pointed out, "Will weep may mean: 'insist upon weeping, now or later,' or "shall weep in the future," and Hopkins' accent only intensifies this². I should only add that, crucial as it is to the point of the poem, one can only conclude that Hopkins hoped will weep really would mean
both things.

Unfortunately, Anglo-Saxon poets, whether they ever wrote their poetry down or not, rarely used accent marks to show unambiguous stress, and very little is certain. Yet, if we use a stress and intonation natural to Modern English in reading OE poetry, there are very few potential koinons that cannot clearly give the impression of apo koinou. The musical graph below should, crude as it is, be sufficient to show one way this can work, if we assume pitch and intensity to rise and fall simultaneously. (A 3 under a tie is not a pitch number, but is only supposed to show that the timing of the syllables, at that point, approximates the effect of a triplet.)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{3} \\
\end{array}
\]

\text{oppæt him eft onwoc heah Healfdene heold benden lifde} \\
\text{(Beowulf, 56b-57)}

\ldots \text{until after was born to him high Half-Dane ruled, while (he) lived. . .}

(The rest after \text{heah Healfdene} would in some circumstances probably lead the listener to start a new sentence with \text{heold}, but I am assuming that in oral delivery Anglo-Saxon poets made some sort of short break between each half-line for the purpose of allowing the audience to assimilate what has come before. That is, I agree with Tolkien and Mitchell that, for a number of reasons, the
recital of OE verse must have been "slow and deliberate," and in slow and deliberate speech, there would naturally be a "juncture" break between almost all half-lines. If a pause between half-lines was regular, it would have had no part in the listener's analysis of sentence boundaries. If I am wrong, on the other hand, then there is no problem--simply eliminate the rest.)

It takes very little trouble, usually, to discover what sort of stress and intonation will lead to a potential koinon actually being taken as a koinon. In fact, the example above is one of the more difficult--usually, where the koinon constitutes a half-line, the problem is solved by simply reading the sentence as if you haven't made up your mind that it ends at the nearest possible resting-place.

Old English poetry is composed of rhythmic/metrical units which usually are tightly bound, syntactically, relative to the units around them. This means that even if we knew nothing of oral-formulaic theory, we would have to say that there would be a pronounced tendency on the part of audiences and poets to regard each half-line as a semi-independent unit--a block in part of a larger pattern. And this, in turn, means that as the blocks are laid out in time, there will be a tendency for audiences and readers, at least, (and poets, too, in my opinion) to consider a greater range of possibilities than they would with prose, and to take any possibly larger syntactical unit composed of these
blocks as just that until proven otherwise. To follow the same tendency, you usually use the same sort of stress and intonation for the koinon that you found in the earlier part of the sentence—you remain "neutral," and let the meter do the work for you, as in Beowulf 740-41's as he gefeng braðe forman sife slæpendne rinc slat unwearnun ("but he took quickly at the first opportunity a sleeping warrior [he] sliced unhindered").

\[\text{forman sife slæpendne rinc slat unwearnun}\]

There is no need, I hope, to write out any more "music." In the case of many half-line koinons and clausal koinons, the problem is less one of trying to find how it might have been said if apo koinou were intended than trying to imagine how it could have been said otherwise. Try saying "If we had some ham we could have some ham and eggs if we had some eggs" in such a way as to conceal the apo koinou construction. I don't believe it can be done. The same impossibility, I believe, applies to such OE passages as

\[\text{se ðe wæstrum wæold wærah and peahete manfæhsu bearn middangeardes wonnan wæge}\]

\text{\textit{<Genesis A. 1376b-79a>}}

Strong and angry was he who ruled with waters hid and covered the wicked feud's children of earth with a dark wave.
This suggests, by the way, that apo koinou was an easy way to achieve the effect of diplopia. Its easiness may have led OE poets to use it as a ready ornament, and to use it rather carelessly, automatically, at times. Yet do not be too quick to judge. Even in such a passage as the following (where, for the first of many times to come, dual translations for the koinons are necessary) there is a certain kinesthetic satisfaction in feeling the beat of the lines slow down. I don't know that it can ever be said that OE verse koinons are entirely pointless.

hie þa wuldist weard wædum gyrede
scyppend usser bet heora sceome beccean
freæ frumhrægle

(Genesis A, 941-43a)

Them then glory's Guardian with clothes dressed. With clothes dressed our Creator, Our Creator ordered their shame covered. Ordered their shame covered the Lord, with original clothes.

Doubts concerning Adverbial Koinons

Adverbial clauses are hardly ever influenced by surrounding variation; the mere fact that they are whole clauses helps to ensure that. For this reason, I will not have much to say about them in this chapter (but see Chapter IV for more on all adverbial koinons). Some subtle cases do exist, but most times, either a clause would simply never be taken two ways (which can even be true of a svægan-clause, as in

ða wæs Heregar dead

min yldra ðæg un lifigende
bearn Healfdenes se wass betera sonne ic
eifSan ba farhSe feo bingode
sende ic Wylfingum ofer wætres hrycg
ealde madmas
(Beowulf 467b-72a)

Then was Heregar dead, my older brother unliving,
unliving the son of Halfdane—he was better than I!
After (I) that vendetta by payment settled, sent I
to the Wulfings over the water’s ridge old
treasures. . . .

or the clause will naturally be taken two ways simply by
virtue of the fact that poetry moves through time, as in
my Scyld Sceing example from Beowulf 4-8. In other
words, most of the time diplopia is either nonexistent or
obvious. OE poetry is chock-full of these latter cases.

The other sort of adverbial koinon—made out of
prerpositional phrases, dative/instrumental phrases which may
be translated with prepositions, and adverbs—can with
reasonable frequency be found in places where one might
wonder about the influence of variation (for instance,
wordum and dedum in my Guthlac A example on page 38), and my
remarks on the problem of variation later will bear on them,
as well as koinons consisting of other parts of speech. But
there is another problem connected with these short
adverbial koinons. Some students of Old English poetry may
feel that in certain spots, such koinons may fade into
insignificance—that the "metrical drive" of the poetry may
override any double sense in spots like

cwealmdrecre swealh
bes middangeard monnes swate
eafter welswenge wea was arared
tregena tuddor

(Genesis A 985b-98a)
after walswenge wea wæs aræred
tregena tudor

(Genesis A 985b-88a)

Killing-blood swallowed this earth man's gore after a slaughter-stroke. (?) Woe was raised up, misfortunes' offspring...

Here one may feel (as Donoghue does) that Kuhn's "Satzpartikelgesetz" law prevents after walswenge from being taken with wea... (The problem arises out of consideration of where the clause begins. Kuhn's idea is that in a clause those words which only sometimes take stress, which class includes the finite verb wea above, must cluster in a dip either before or immediately after the first stressed word when they don't take stress.)

Kuhn's two laws contain within them the hypothesis that old Germanic poets and their audiences had an internalized definition of clauses like our own, where divisions between clauses were always clear-cut. But we have already seen that this hypothesis is doubtful, and if OE syntax is loose in

þætte wrecend þæ gyt
lifde æfter lapum lange þrage
æfter guþceare Grendles modor
ides aglæcwif yræþ gemunde

(Beowulf 1256b-59)

... that the avenger then yet lived after (her) foes a long time after war-sorrow. After war-sorrow, Grendel's mother, lady monster-woman, kept (her) misery in mind... 

I see no good reason to assume that there is a special rule that would make it tight in the Genesis A example. This objection, of course, applies to all metrical laws that are
like Kuhn's two famous ones. One can only have a rule about the placement of types of words at the beginning or ending of clauses if one is clear about what the beginning and ending of a clause might be—where OE poetic practice fuzzes that distinction, the rule requires, at the very least, some rethinking and revision.

Case Ambiguity

There is a class of koinons that strikes me as more convincing than any other, more probable in that their efficiency is greater—more is achieved by them simply on their face. Apo koinon based in case ambiguity is more diplopic, everything else being equal, than other kinds. The images are more widely separated. And although opportunities for making use of case ambiguity are, theoretically, many, the breakdown of the old Germanic distinction between nominative and accusative seems especially simple to exploit, and it is not uncommon to find passages such as Beowulf 746-48b's nam ba mid handa higebihigne rinc on raete rahte ongean feond mid folme ('[Grendel] grabbed then with hands the mind-strong, the man in bed reached against the enemy with a hand') or Wanderer 51-53's bonne maga gemynd mod geondhweorfe greteg gliwistefum georne geondesceawaf secpa gesedan swimmaga eft onweg ('Whenever the memory of kinsmen turns through (his) mind, greets with melody, eagerly looks through the halls of
men swim away again"") or Genesis 2009b-2012a's Megé sifedon fæmnan and wudwan freondum beslægæne from hleowstole bettend læddon ut mid æhtum ("Women travelled, wives and widows violently removed from [lit., 'slain away from'] friends, from the protection-seat enemies led out with property"). Almost all koinons making use of case ambiguity are of this type. Where one of the two cases is neither nominative nor accusative, rarely is that not simply because one of the two verbs in the construction just happens to take a non-accusative object, so that the result is no more diplopic than apo koinou without case ambiguity, as can be seen in the following example, where breac takes the genitive:

\begin{verbatim}
ber ic gumcystum godne funde
beaga bryttan breac ponne moste
\end{verbatim}

(Beowulf, 1486-87)

...that I through man-virtues found a good dispenser of money / a dispenser of money (I) made use of when I was permitted.

Those nominative/accusative examples are rare, however, when compared to other types of apo koinou, and in a way that's too bad, since they are in a sense clearer examples. There are fewer problems understanding how they are to be understood in two ways. They also seem more clearly intentional—at least to modern English speakers unused to apo koinou—because they can stand wholly on their own: they are more intrinsically "literary," more pun-like, and they do seem to require more strenuous efforts at justification
on the part of anyone who wants to punctuate them out of existence. But they can be. Just as any pun might be an accident, so might any one of these.

Doubts Based on Caesural Separation

We have already seen several cases where, although some members of an Anglo-Saxon audience might have felt apo koinou, there is some doubt whether or not this is a mere side effect of the placement of variations and the koinons were unintentional. Before doing what I can to show how such doubts can, in some cases, be decreased, it would make things simpler if it were possible to establish that there are at least a few cases of potential apo koinou where we can conclude that the effect was never felt in the first place. We can fairly often find places in the poetry where the placement of the caesura seems to exclude what might otherwise have the potential for being taken apo koinou, as in The Battle of Finnsburh 3's: *ne ūs ne dagąš eastan...*ne her draca ne fleorgef*, where, without the pause, there might be some justification for hearing *eastan* as a koinon. ("It isn't dawning from the east a dragon doesn't fly here.") With luck, it might be possible to generalize some rules with such instances.

Unfortunately, hard and fast rules will turn out to be very few, indeed. In fact, I have discovered only one—a sub-case of what is not a rule, but merely a tendency
(though a tendency which is well worth keeping in mind).
As Meritt pointed out, apo koinou is rarely at work where
the potential koinon, as in the Finnsburh example above,
occupies "a half-line along with the first part of the
construction... [because the]... intervening pause
vitiates somewhat the feeling that there is a common
element..." 7 Although it is not improper to attribute
this vitiation to the effect of metrics, as Meritt did, the
real reason this is inevitably so is that when a potential
koinon ends a half-line, the first part of the construction,
which is necessarily a whole constituent, ends there, too.
The case is just the opposite when a potential koinon begins
a half-line with the second part of the construction, as in
The Rimming Poem 9's ba was wastmum aweahd word onpreht
("then was with fruits awakened the world enlivened"); the
pause is found in the middle of the first constituent and
strengthens the feeling of apo koinou. (In other
situations--especially where the koinon occupies a whole
half-line--the influence of a caesura is more neutral and
the likelihood of apo koinou more subject to other factors
such as strings of variations. Examples of such, then, will
be discussed in the following section.)

It is not universally true, however, that a caesura
after a potential koinon that ends a half-line keeps that
koinon from becoming actual. Meritt found especially
convincing cases where such a koinon is the object of two
verbs on either side, and found one case where the effect is reinforced by a parallelism with the previous line:

*pær git eago* *stream* earmum þehton
*mæton* merestrætana mundum brugdon

(Beowulf 513-14)

where you two the sea-stream with arms enfolded,
measured the sea-street with hands pulled

The parallelism does seem to assure apo koinou here, but where there is no such extra impetus I find more convincing some cases where a subject is the koinon. Consider first the following example:

*pæ com halig god*

wera cneorissa weorc sceawigan
beorna burhfeasten and þat beacen somod
Þe to roderum up rœran ongunnon
Adames eaforan and þæs unrans
stifferhæ cyning stœcre gefremede

(Genesis A, 167b-83)

Then came holy God
the men's generations' work beheld
the men's fortress and that beacon together
that up to heaven began to raise
Adam's offspring and of that bad plan
the firm-minded King a hindrance accomplished

No other subject is offered before the clause ends three-and-a-half lines later. In such cases, provided the clause does not go on too long, I feel a sort of "delayed reaction" apo koinou when the next clause begins, so that the psychological effect of a pivot, in the example above is not felt until somewhere around and þæs unrans. I do not doubt that many will not feel this; it is at about the limit of length where I feel it. Probably some members of the audience, on the other hand, felt it after an even longer
time. The point is, that the longer the remainder of the clause is, the more likely the effect is to have been unintentional, since the poet would have been less and less able to count on it, and that, contrarily, the shorter the remainder of the clause after the koinon, the surer the apo koinou and the more likely the intention:

Enoch siffan ealderdom ahof freofgosped folces wisa nalles feallan let dom and drihtscipe þenden he hyrde wæs heafodmagæ

(Genesis A, 1197-1200)

Enoch afterwards leadership raised up peace-success the people’s leader didn’t at all let decline renown and lordship while he was herdsman of chief-relatives

Of course, it can be objected that the subjects can be understood in both potential pivots, and the same can be said where an object is the potential koinon. Whether or not such spots are actually taken apo koinou depends on the proximity of the verb (since nalles feallan let comes immediately after its subject, it seems illogical, at least in that example, to say that the subject is understood) and on other factors beyond enumeration, parallelism being just one of the possibilities. It seems safe to say that although a potential koinon at the end of a half-line is usually not actualized, the caesura can occasionally, and in the right circumstances, be overcome.

Notice, however, that I did not underline either sceawigan or ahof in the two previous examples from Genesis.
Potential verbal koinons seem more closely bound with the first element than any other type when they are found at the end of a half-line. (Another example: Beowulf 1965-66a's woruldcandel scansigel sufan fus—"the world-candel shone the sun hastening from the south"). I do not believe that these examples, or most such, were either intended as apo koinou or taken that way by anyone, and I'd like to be able to present a rule saying that apo koinou can automatically be discounted in these situations. I cannot, however, because of instances like this:

swa he byrht feondscipe
to cwale monige Cristes folces
demde to deape

(Elene 498b-500a).

as he through enmity to killing many of Christ's folk sentenced to death.

Admittedly, demde is here at the beginning of a half-line, but the effect of apo koinou would obtain even if it were at the end, and although I have not noticed any actual examples of such koinons, I don't want to make up a rule that is drawn only from what I happen to have noticed.

Here one might argue that all of monige Cristes folces demde is a koinon, in spite of the way it straddles the half-line, and, indeed, that seems to be the way out of such problems. It is the final prepositional phrase, the pivot, which creates the koinon and harks back to a parallel first element. Thus, though it sounds like a quibble, I can say that where a potential verbal koinon constitutes less than a
half-line, is found at the end of the half-line, and is surrounded by obvious variations, we ought first to ask ourselves whether we have correctly identified the koinon and, if we have, we can dismiss it. Cases where some other structure works against the half-line structure in this way are not, I might add, all that common.

Unfortunately, yet two more qualifications need to be made to this rule. First, where the verb is an auxiliary surrounded by infinitives, the binding between these two types of words is strong enough to overcome the caesura. Auxiliary koinons ending a half-line are extremely rare, but one example is remarkable enough as an example of the effect of auxiliary-infinitive attraction to make the case, I think. In the following passage, it is at least possible that the poet intended the infinitive in line 74a to be taken with the auxiliary in line 70; if so, however, he defeated his own plan by preceding it with an adjective clause ending with an auxiliary:

hwaþre ic me ealles þæs ellen wylle
habban ond hlyhhan ond me hyhtan to
fretwian mec on ferfðweg ond fundian
sylf to þam sîpe þe ic asettan sceal
gæst gearwian ond me þæt eal for gode þolian
blindre mode

(Resignation, 70-75a)

However, I will take courage from all that and laugh, and hope in myself, adorn myself in (my) life-way and hasten myself on the journey that (for which) I perform must ready (my) soul, and for myself suffer all that in the sight of God with a cheerful mind.

One cannot call all of 73b a koinon, for asettan cannot be
understood twice—it *makes no sense* to say "the journey for which I must perform." On the other hand, it is hard to avoid understanding sceal twice because of its proximity to gearwian and its isolation by be on the one side and ond on the other, and the likeliest way to hear the lines can, I believe, best be represented by "...on the journey that I must perform, must ready my soul (for)..." I urge the reader to read the passage aloud and think about it.

The second qualification is that where such a koinon is found in the middle of a chain of koinons, it can occasionally gain enough force to be felt. For more on this, see my discussion, three pages ahead, of lines 1-3a of the *Proem* to The *Meters of Boethius*.

Where a koinon stands at the beginning of a half-line, the caesura always ensures that the feeling of apo koinou will come across. This will occur even in the middle of the most patently obvious variation. Such lines as *Phoenix* 188-89a's done on bam telgum timbran onginnef nest gearwian ("then on those branches (it) to build begins a nest to prepare") may seem stupidly repetitive to some modern tastes, but the caesura still ensures the feeling of apo koinou (although it is another question whether such koinons were intentional). It will occur even when the koinon is a verb surrounded by words standing for the same referent where one can only assume that the sole importance of the particular words that were used lay in their
alliterative potential, as in

\[ \text{\textit{par him tacna fela tires brytta}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{onwrah wuldres helm wordgerynum}} \]

(Christ II, 462-63)

There to them many signs the Giver of honor revealed glory's Helm by word-mysteries.

It is possible (and I think this happened to Meritt) to allow the extreme tediousness of some of these sorts of passages—especially where the koinon is a verb—to distract one from the effect of a break after an incomplete first constituent followed by no break in the second constituent, so that one may come to feel that the pivot is simply an appositive; a good cure for this is to keep reading the Old English aloud. It may also help to compare such boring instances with apo koinou passages where such koinones are surrounded by variants which vary in meaning in such a way that significant extra information seems to be given, or a striking image formed, as in Beowulf 1357’s hie dygel lond warigeaf wulfhleoðu (They a secret land guard wolf-hills).

**Doubts Based on the Placement of Variations**

Even in the above case, where the feeling of apo koinou is inevitable no matter how the construction participates in variation, we can make no firm conclusions about the poet’s intention. It seems reasonable to say that, in general, koinons beginning a half-line are extremely likely to have been intentional since any reasonably intelligent poet will presumably avoid what must inevitably be taken a certain way
if he doesn't want it taken that way, but any particular case may have been created by an overriding desire to include an appealing variant, or by a variant forced by his inability to handle the formal demands of the poetry any other way, or simply by a lapse in judgment. (At least a few cases, I believe, must have been intentional only in the sense that the poet, primarily interested in something else, realized on some level that he was creating a stretch of language that would be taken two ways and concluded that no harm would be done by it.)

Such probabilistic conclusions end every sort of investigation into the relationship of variation and apo koinou. Even the most obviously doubtful koinons, such as those in Beowulf 350b-53, or in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>þæ was on salum</th>
<th>sinces brytta</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gamolfeax ond</td>
<td>gubrof georce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gelyfde</td>
<td>helyrde on Beowulf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brego beorhtdena</td>
<td>gehyrde on Beowulf folces hyrde</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Bewulf, 607-610)

where, looked at diplopectically, the text could be translated:

Then was in happiness (the) treasure's giver old-haired and war-vigorous in help believed (the) ruler of (the) Bright-Danes agreed with, in respect to Beowulf (the) folk's herdsman (his) steadfast thought

and where the pattern of variation (with epithets for Hrothgar tending to the left and his thoughts tending to the right) seems to justify us in putting heavy stops after gubrof, beorhtdena, and gepoht, can only be said to be
highly unlikely, for similar objections might be made to

δος αλφρεδος έολδσπέλι ΰεοθη
cyning westsexna craeft MELDCDE
leofwyrhta list

(Proem, Meters, 1-3a).

The hypothetical syntax is rather complicated here, but I hope that the indications of koinons, coupled with repetitive translation, will make it clear:

Thus Alfred for us an old story interpreted. An old story interpreted the king of the West-Saxons. The king of the West-Saxons announced (his) art. The poet ANNOUNCED (his) art. The poet ANNOUNCED (his) cleverness.

A more traditional translation would go

Thus Alfred interpreted an old story for us. The king of the West-Saxons announced his art, the poet his cleverness.

and would be justified by pointing to the repeated pattern in the first and second lines (with S in the a-verses, O-V in the b-verses) and by placing the emphasis on the apparent case of ellipsis. But to say that line 3a involves an ellipsis is to say that the verb must be understood twice in relation to the two S-O groups (cyning westsexna craeft and leofwyrhta list) it falls in the middle of, in an art form where word-order is relatively free and things might easily have been otherwise. The two categories tend to melt together in such situations, but in this case "apo koinou" sounds to me like a better word than "ellipsis", although "ellipsis" might be justified if lines 2-3a went cyning Westsexna meldode craeft leofwyrhta list. That determination, however, would depend entirely on what followed it. Imagine
that list is followed by *gelædde fæm folce cyþde cynehd*.

*cierras Boetii* (so that the whole thing would be translated, word for word, as "king of-the-West-Saxons announced (his) art (the) poet (his) cleverness brought forth to-the people made known (the) kingly-state (the) affairs of-Boethius").

In such a case, where it seems silly to assert that one verb in particular is being understood between any possible subject-object or object-subject pair from *leogwyrhta* through *cynehd*, I'd likely start talking about apo koinou again.

Notice, also, that *meldode* is a verbal koinon at the end of a half-line, and yet reads quite smoothly as a koinon.

Although the *Beowulf* 607-610 example above might be considered a chain of apo koinou constructions, it is nevertheless usually true that such chains seem to provide an impetus that not only makes what would be a weak koinon strong:

```
hæaf sce awyrgde wulf tostenced
deor ðædscua dryhten bin eowde
wide towrecene ðæt se waldend ær
blode gebohtes ðæt se bealofulla
hyneð heardlice ond him on hæft nimeð
```

(Christ 1, 256-60)

The damned wolf has scattered, the ferocious deed-shadow, Lord, your flock. The ferocious deed-shadow, Lord, your flock (has) widely driven asunder, has widely driven asunder what you, Ruler, earlier with blood bought. What you, Ruler, earlier with blood bought—that the evil-full (one) severely weakens and grasps for himself in a fetter. but also, as in the example from the Proem, can make into a koinon what would not in any other circumstance be one.
Again, I have been directing myself more towards the feeling the passages give rise to than the intention of the poet, but where the probability of an audience perceiving apo koinou rises, the probability of a poet’s intention to produce it rises also. (There is, of course, a more direct way to argue for intention: the argument based on what I call “literary” considerations. For more on this, see the end of the next section.)

It has already been pointed out in Chapter II that apo koinou and variation often work hand in hand and there is often no necessary reason for considering one or the other primary. This is almost always the case when the koinon occupies a whole half-line and the variants are nearly synonymous, as in Beowulf 830-31b’s svylce oncyþfe/ ealle gebette/ inwidsorge (“likewise [he] distress totally remedied malice-sorrow”). Here, the natural half-line pauses do not work against the tendency of a stretch of language to invite the grammatical and contextual contact of what it comes between, since there’s a pause on either side. Moreover, the fact that this is poetry seems to help push the apo koinou interpretation in an uncomplicated example like this. In prose, one would be tempted to group oncyþfe ealle gebette all together, and a student of prose style, seeing inwidsorge following, would probably feel compelled to use some term like “variation” to describe it.

Yet, when such koinons are verbal, even a slight
complication, such as an indirect object, can seem to eliminate this effect:

Sa git him eorla bleo inne geselde
mago healfdenes mapmas XII

(Beowulf. 1666-67)

Then yet to him (the) protector of men within gave, the kin of Halfdane, twelve treasures.

(There is a temptation to say that the potential koinon above is also eliminated by the fact that it comes between two subjects, but I am not sure. Something like "the protector of men then within sulked the kin of Halfdane" seems a lot more likely to be taken as apo koinou than the actual lines.)

Notice, however, that it is not the adverb within the half-line that I am calling a complication. Prepositional phrases and even subjects within a half-line where the verb dominates can stand as part of a verbal half-line, and the whole half-line can often stand as a successful koinon. The example below has both prepositional phrase and subject and is nevertheless extremely simple:

Fæder ond modor frio pu mid heortan
mag gehwylcne

(Precepts, 9-10a)

Love you (your) father and mother with (your) heart.
Love you each relative with (your) heart.

Syntax can become so complicated that one can only conclude that some Anglo-Saxons heard (or read) apo koinou at work in a passage and some did not, as in the selection below.
If one sees genesen hæfde as a koinon, the selection amounts to this:

Thus he had survived each enmity. The son of Ecgtheow had survived (each) dangerous battle, courage-work.

But one could easily argue that the fact that gehwane also must be understood twice, forcing ellipsis, destroys the feeling of apo koinou. It is well to remember, however, the passage from the Proem to The Meters of Boethius above. One cannot automatically use ellipsis as an argument against a koinon— at least, not when we are dealing with a chain of koinons.

The Prose/Verse Disproportion

In the absence of objections to a potential koinon that are specific to the poetic context, or such objections as are mentioned above, there must always be a presumption in favor of potential verse koinons being actual, simply because Old English poetry contains so many more potential koinons than Old English prose and it is too much to imagine that this difference could be accidental. This contrast is most easily and convincingly shown by comparing the OE prose and verse versions of the Meters of Boethius—the only occurrence in the OE corpus of a closely related prose and verse translation of the same text.¹⁰ (One is undoubtedly a
translation of the other—probably the poetry of the prose."

So that those interested may assure themselves that little if any of the syntactic oddness derives from Boethius himself, I will skip ahead to those sections of the manuscripts which actually translate the Latin poetry, and display with translations the first hundred such lines of poetry and the prose that is analogous to them. I will begin with the prose, which amounts to chapters II; III. ii, lines 10-14; IV; and VI, lines 9-15. The following poetry consists of numbers 2, 3, 4, and the first thirteen lines of 5 in the ASPR. Potential koinons are either italicized or in boldface. Commentary will be found at the bottoms of the pages, keyed to the Old English by alphabetical footnoting.

In the interest of fairness, I have ignored potential koinons in the poetry that seem to me highly doubtful (with the exception of line 65b, which I include as a possible example of an important type of koinon—the koinon "pun"—which otherwise would have been excluded in this sample). For instance, the bonne-clause beginning at line 22 in the might be seen as a subordinate clause that extends through line 27a. On the other hand, I have tried to at least point out the possibility of a koinon in the prose wherever I could find it and no matter how unlikely, as I did with the gif-clause that corresponds to that bonne-clause. The result is a score of 24 potential koinons for the poetry (excluding line 65b), and five for the prose. The
proportion seems about normal to me—there is a higher percentage of apo koinon constructions in the poetry than is usual, but due to the vocatives in Boeth. i, met. 5, the same is true of the prose. At any rate, we will have to be satisfied with such results, since Anglo-Saxon writing offers us nothing else so fairly comparable.

There is little in the nature of the poetry itself that would explain this difference. In this particular 100 lines, there are only three koinons that might be explained as the creation of surrounding appositives (ll.4b-5a, 47b, and 96b). What's more, although it is obvious that the prose version conjoins clauses with coordinating conjunctions more often than poetry—a fairly effective apo koinon preventative—there is no formal reason why an Anglo-Saxon poet might not have chosen, say, to write

\[ sittæs \ yfele \ men \ giond \ eorðricu \ on \ heahsetlum \ and \ halige \ priccað \ under \ heora \ fotum \]

in agreement with the prose version, instead of what he actually did write in ll. 67-69b. If you agree with the general scholarly consensus that the poetry was based on the prose, the elimination of and must seem even more purposeful.

No OE poem or group thereof is "typical." In this case, there seem to be even more adverbial koinons in proportion to other types than is usual, although their number, even speaking of OE poetry generally, is quite high. Even so,
this hundred lines gives us examples of many of the important types.

**PROSE**

II (Boeth, i, met. 1)

Those songs which I, a wretch, formerly pleasantly sang I must now lamenting sing, and with very discordant words compose although I formerly sometimes fittingly found; but I now weeping and sobbing straightforward words mis-find. Me blinded these untrustworthy world-fortunes and me abandoned as blind in this dim hole and me then robbed of each pleasantness when I always best trusted in them. When I always best trusted in them, then turned they to me their back and from me with all departed. Why must, alas, my friends say that I a lucky man am? How can he be lucky who in these fortunes may not continue?

III.i, 10-14 (Boeth. i. met. 2)

Notice that *ac* stops what might have been a koinon—the *beah*-clause—from being one.

*It is conceivable that the *gif*-clause continues only as far as the second *nu*, and that it is thus a koinon, but those two *nu*'s make that seem very unlikely. Nevertheless, I will count it.*
world-sorrows, just as this spirit now does, now that it has nothing else but mourning.

IV (Boeth. i. met.5)
eala þu scippend heofones 7 eorþan þu pe on þam ecgan setle ricsæt þuþe on hrædom færelde þone heofon ymbhæorfest 7 þa tungiu þu gedest þe gehyrsume 7 þa sunnan þu gedest þat heo mid heore beorhtan sciman þa þeostro adwæscþ þære sweartan nihte swa def eac se mona mid his blacan leohete þat þa beorhtan steorran dunniaþ on þa heofone ge eac hwilum þa sunnan heore leohetes bereafþ þonne he betwux us 7 hire wyrd ge eac hwilum þone beorhtan steorran þe we hataþ morgensteorra þone ilcan we hataþ ofre naman æfensteorra þu þe ðam winterdagum selest scorte tida 7 þæs sumeres dahum langran þu þe þa treowu þurh þone steorcþan wind norþan 7 eastan on hæresttid heora leafa bereafþ 7 eft on lencten ọpbru leaf selest þurh þone swymtan suðanwesetnan wind hwæt þe ealle gesceafta heorsumiaþ and þa gesetnessa þinra beboda healdaþ butan men anum se þe offerheorð eala þu mimihtiga scippend and rihtend eallra gesceafta help nu þinum earmum moncyynne hwy þu la drihten ære woldeþ þat seo wyrd swa hwyrfan sceoldel heo þreat þa unscyldigan 7 nauht ne ðreaþ þam scildigum sittaþ manfullæ on heahsetlum 7 halige under heora fotum þyrcaþ sticiæ þeohde beorhte earðtas 7 þa unrihtwisan talaþ þa rihtwisan nauht ne deregaþ monnum manne æpas ne þat least lot þe beof mid þa wrencum bewrigen forþam went nu fulneah eall moncyyn on tweonunga gif seo wyrd swa hweordan mot on yfelra manna gewið 7 þu heore nelt stiran eala min drihten þu þe ealle gesceafta ofersibst hawa nu mildelice on þas earman eorþan 7 eac on eall moncyyn forþa hit nu eall winþ on þa yfum þisse worulde

O you creator of heaven and earth, you who in the eternal throne rule, you who in swiftness about-turn the course of the heaven—and those stars you make obedient to yourself, and you make the sun so that

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"The forþam-clause might be a koinon, in which case one would translate the word as "because" in addition to "wherefore." In that case, however, the vocative italicized near the end of the selection would, it seems to me, have to be taken monopically as part of either the subordinate or principal clause. Thus, the number of potential koinons is the same either way. Nevertheless, it is possible that writer or audience or both could shift gears completely here in spite of the gif-clause contained in the forþam-clause, and I count three koinons in this selection."
it erases with its bright beams the darkness from the dim night, as does also the moon with its shiny light so that the bright stars become obscure in the heaven, and also at times robs the sun of its light whenever it [the moon] is between us and it [the sun], and also sometimes that bright star that we call the morning-star (the same we call by another name evening-star)—you who in the winter days give short hours and in the summer days longer, you who rob the trees of their leaves through the harsh wind from the north and east in autumn and in spring give other leaves back through the mild southwestern wind—[gasp!] what!—all creatures are obedient to you and hold the firmness of your commands except men alone, who disregard you, O you almighty creator and guide of all creatures. O you almighty creator and guide of all creatures, help now your poor man-kin. Why did you, alas, Lord, ever want that the course of events had to turn out this way? It oppresses the unguilty and doesn't a bit oppress the guilty. The sinful sit in high thrones and crush the holy under their feet; bright talents remain hidden and the unrighteous blame the righteous. Not a bit do evil oaths harm men, nor the false wile that with them is concealed by tricks, wherefore nearly all mankind will go in division if the course of events is so permitted to turn according to evil men's will and you will not restrain them, O my Lord, you who oversee all creation. O my Lord, you who oversee all creation, look now mercifully on this poor earth and also on all mankind, because now it all struggles in the waves of this world.

VI, lines 9-15 (Boeth. i. met. 7)
Loca nu be þare sunnan and eac be oþrum tunglum þon swærtan wolcnu him beforegan gaþ ne mahon hi þon heora leohht sellan swa eac se suserna wind hwilum mid miclum storme gedrefeþ þa se þe ær wæs smylte wedere glæshlutru on to seonne þon heo þon swa gemenged wyrþ mid sân yþum þon wyrþ heo swiþe hraþe ungładu þeah heo ær gladu wære on to locienne hwæt eac se broc. . .

Behold now concerning the sun and other stars: whenever dark clouds go before them, then they cannot give their light. So also the southern wind sometimes with a great storm stirs up the sea that earlier was, in smooth weather, glass-pure to look on. When it then becomes so mixed up with those waves, then it becomes very quickly unbright, though
it was earlier bright to look on. What! Also the brook...  

POETRY

2 (Boeth. i. met. 1)

Hwæt ic leoda fela
lustlice geo
sanc on sælum
nu sceal sícfigende
wope gëwæged
wrecce giomor
sîngan sarcwidas
me þics sícsetung hafað

What! I many songs
gladly formerly
sang in prosperity
(and) now must, sobbing,
with weeping afflicted,
a sad wretch,
sing pain-sayings.

Me this sighing has
hindered, has hindered (me)
this sobbing
so that I those songs cannot
conjoin as fairly
though I many formerly then
composed of truth-sayings
when I was in prosperity.
Though I many formerly then
composed of truth-sayings
when I was in prosperity
often I now mischoose
evident speech
and yet unusual
earlier sometimes found.
Earlier these world-
prosperities found me

The division of the participle from its accompanying verb across the line is somewhat odd, but has the rhythmic effect of making þes geœcæa more than "just" a variation of bios sicetung and forcing an apo koinou reading. The only way to avoid such a reading is to put a heavy pause between agelled and þes geœcæa that seems to me unnatural, and changing the line-division to accommodate such a pause would leave us with a half-line consisting of the metrically improbable, single-lift, three-syllabled þes geœcæa (and a perhaps metrically justifiable but even uglier me bios sicetung hafað agelled for the previous line). Although it seems to me that changing the line division to bring the whole verb structure into 5a would also be metrically unjustifiable (hafað would also be stressed), its position at the beginning of the half-line would still give it the force of a koinon.

Here is one of a number of cases where the clause seems to go fine with what comes first until the poet gives us something it goes with better. See also lines 22, 28b, 52, 65b, 68, 79, 83, and 85.
nearly blind.

10. **me bas woruldealæ**  
    **welhwæs blindne**

"Unless it doesn't suggest anything of the sort, the coupling by apo koinou in line 9b momentarily suggests that the poet's earlier poetry was also "blind", unless it actually implies that through an -re ending on uncufre which doesn't quite compute. Failing to find a way to make the word an adverb parallel to gecoplice in the prose version, one wants to do the next-best thing and make it a direct object, which I do in my translation. But I can find no instances of findan taking the dative--or even taking the genitive in the sense of finding (and getting) of something from something else. Sedgefield glosses it as a dative, and maybe he knew something I don't--the only way I can get uncufre to work that way is to imagine something as unsatisfying as "and yet in respect to unusual (speech) (I) earlier sometimes found (speech)"; or to create puzzlement by imagining "and yet in respect to unusual (speech) earlier sometimes found me these world-prosperities nearly blind."
The same sorts of problems obtain if we imagine the word is instrumental. Notice that in either case a single apo koinou construction is still there. ("Often I now mischoose evident speech and yet by means of/accompanied by/in respect to unusual speech earlier sometimes found me these world-prosperities nearly blind in this dim hole foolish misled.") One wishes for the double apo koinou construction; it makes more sense.

By the way--it is interesting to see the Anglo-Saxons posing us, here, yet another riddle, this time about their own poetic technique. How are we to take misfo in the prose and miscyrrre in the poetry? What, that is, does it mean as an indicator of bad poetry that one has mis-found, or mis-chosen, straightforward or evident words? Does it mean that the poet's fault is that he has failed to find straightforward speech, or that he has found straightforward speech? There is much in OE poetry, including the kind of stuff I'm thinking about in this dissertation, to make me suspect that the latter. Poetry is high and fancy speech, different from straightforward prose. But there is nothing in this difficult passage itself to help us. How are we to take beah, for instance?

Usually the verse of Boethius is of very little help, and in this metre, the verse is of less help than usual. Boethius says nothing specific about poetic technique, and arguably nothing about technique at all. The lines that come closest, however you choose to take them, are lines 3 and 4: Ecce mihi lacerae dictant scribenda Camenae / et veris elegi fletibus ora rigant ("Lo! mangled muses dictate writings to me and with true tears elegaic verses wet my
in this dim hole foolish misled
and me they robbed of advice and comfort
on account of their untrustworthiness (the prosperities) which I in them always best
used to trust!

They to me turned their backs bitterly and their bliss from (me).
Why would you my world-friends say and sing that I a lucky man am in the world?
Those words are not true now when fortune cannot always dwell with (me).

3 (Boeth. i. met. 2)

O, in how fierce and how bottomless a pit labors the darkening spirit whenever the strong storms of world-busyness beat it.

whenever the strong storms of world-busyness beat it, then it, striving, abandons its own light alone

and with woe forgets that eternal joy (and) presses into the darkness of this world, afflicted by sorrows, as has occurred now with this spirit, now that it doesn't know more

before God's good but mourning the alienated world. Now that it doesn't know more
him is frofre ðearf
before God’s good
but mourning
the alienated world,
it needs comfort.

4 (Boeth. i. met. 5)

 fundraiser
scirra tunliga
hefones and eorðan
þu on heahsetle
ecum ricsast
and þu ealne hræse
hefon ymbhwearfest
and þurh ðine halige

stars compel
that they attend to you
just as the sun
the dark nights’
darkness erases
through your might
with shiny light.

through your might
with shiny light
through your might

the moon controls the bright
stars
through your mights’
success--

at times also (the moon)
robs the sun of its
bright light
whenever it can consume
what necessarily comes so

close together
just as that great

----------

Yet another adverbial, different only in that it is
composed of a propositional phrase and an instrumental
phrase instead of being a clause, and in that it does not
really go better with what follows it--rather, it is equally
applicable to what is found on both sides of it.

Although no doubt sincerely felt, surely there is some
sense in which we may call this filler. In that it acts as
a koinon, it is so much a superior filler--here we really do
have, I believe, a segue that acts, in a less obtrusive way,
like the Modern English song-medley segue. It’s a slicker
way of getting from topic A to topic B than saying,
"...and speaking of the moon..."
morning-star
that we by another name
evening-star
hear named
you compell it
so that it performs/ob-
serves the sun's journey
each year.
Each year
it must depart, must
teach before.
What! You, Father, make
the summer-long days
very hot

Perhaps, to be fair, one ought to name 47a as another
instance of possible creation of a koinon by surrounding
appositives, since the principle seems to be the same--it is
surrounded by two clauses conveying something like the same
information. But one might also claim that the two quasi-
appositive around 47a, and the two appositives around
sceal, are there because they are an easy way of making a
koinon. Is it too much to suggest that the circularity of
these two apo koinou constructions is meant to be suggestive
of cycle and epicycle? 45b-48a is, after all, likely a
comment on the morning-star/evening-star relationship.
Within the period of a year--one journey of the sun from any
given spot in the sky to the same spot at the same time of
day, one circuit of the earth--Venus will appear as both a
morning-star and an evening-star, and during its change from
one role to the other, it will depart (behind the sun) and
then travel in front of the sun. Could the two apo koinou
constructions be whirling us around with Venus?

"It's easy enough to see why any sort of cycle or
repetitive series might attract a poet to apo koinou, and
later we will see other poets similarly attracted.

Here we have an odd, sort of "forced" koinon. Selest
has no object unless we take that horrible word ba as
introducing a noun clause (what Mitchell calls an
through that hateful wind.
0, what! On earth
all creatures
obey your command (your
command
perform [those] in heaven
also the same)
with mind and strength
except men alone,
who work against your will
most often,
alar, you eternal
and you almighty,
of all creatures
the creator and guide. Oh, you eternal
and you almighty,
of all creatures
the creator and guide,
honor your poor
earth's offspring.

"indefinite adjective clause"). Benumen has no object
unless we take pa as a demonstrative. Leafa gewhelces, as a
pivot, wrenches pa from one class to the other and answers
the implied question in the first part of the apo koinon
construction.
"Here is a noun phrase surrounded by two equally
appropriate verbs. What applies to clausal koinons like
6b-7 also applies here.
I should take a moment here to look at mode and mægne
(57a)—another stretch of filler, I think, not unlike 8
except that I choose not to call it apo koinon—it's a good
example of why a koinon has to come in the middle to produce
the psychological effect I'm interested in. No doubt there
is a certain sense in which 57a has to be understood twice,
but if that understanding comes to us all at once, then it
doesn't have to be understood twice in the sense I'm
interested in.
"Vocatives are syntactically associated with surrounding
material about as loosely as is possible, O reader, it is
almost impossible, in the absence of the modern punctuation
system, to place one between two whole clauses in writing
without producing the effect of apo koinon. Notice that the
prose writer, in the lines of IV that correspond to the
first 24 lines of 4, manages to avoid the effect of apo
koinon by placing anything that resembles complete sentences
or clauses in the middle of a grand, initial, vocative
gesture. The writer of poetry avoids vocative apo koinon in
this section by turning phrases into clauses. Afterwards,
where the prose produces vocative apo koinon (here and in
83-84a), so does the poetry. Vocative apo koinon in IV and
the course of events to go in accordance with the will of evil men

entirely so much?

Of all (men) so greatly they very often harm the unguilty.

Evil men sit throughout the earth-kingdom on thrones;

(they) crush the holy under their feet, unknown to (other) men.
70. hwi sio wyrd swa wo
wendan sceolde
swa sint gehyydde
her on worulde
gend burga fela
beorhte craeftas
unrihtwise
eallum tidum
habbað on hospe

75. rihtes wisran
rices wyrfran
bif þat lease lot
lange hwile
bewrigen mid wrencum
nu on worulde her
monnum ne deriað
mane afas
gif ðu nu waldend ne
wirde steoran

80. ac on selfwille
sigan latest

(It is) unkown to men
why the course of events
should turn out so wrong.
In that way are hidden
here in the world
throughout many cities
bright talents.
Throughout many cities
bright talents
the unrighteous
all the time
hold in contempt.
The unrighteous
all the time
hold in contempt
those who are wiser in the
Right than them,
worthier of a kingdom.
That false wile will be
a long while
concealed with tricks
now [that?] in the world
here
evil oaths won’t [don’t?]
harm men
if you now, Ruler, won’t

guide the course of events,
but allow (men) to fall into
self-will.

the general idea of the whole activity. Evil men oppress the
holy, and nobody even knows about it. That’s the way it is
with evil men. The absence of a new verb binds the half-line
more firmly to what has come before—until what follows
demands that we take the koinon idiomatically with hwi.

The poet seems to have been thinking more of Alfred (or
been more self-conscious, if he was Alfred) than the prose-
writer in this section. The prose continues to enumerate
complaints which do not necessarily have all that much to do
with each other. Noble arts remain hidden and the
unrighteous accuse the righteous (of keeping the noble arts
hidden?). In the poetry, the koinons suggest more explicit
connections. Noble arts are hidden in the world because the
unrighteous have them— in contrast with Alfred, who
publishes them. Since the unrighteous who conceal noble arts
are the same as those who hold in contempt those who are
worthier of kingdoms and wiser in the right— a fate that
might well befall Alfred, too, if the course of events goes
so much in accordance with the will of evil men— the verse
unrighteous seem a lot more like a particular species of
unrighteous who come from the northeast.
If you now, Ruler, won't
guide the course of events
but allow (men) to fall into
self-will,
then I know that world-men
will willfully divide
throughout the corners of
the earth
except for a few alone,
O my Lord,
you who oversee all
the world's creatures.
O my Lord,
you who oversee all
the world's creatures
look now on mankind
with merciful eyes,
now that the world's waves
strive and labor [against]
them, poor earthmen, in
multitudes here.
Now that the world's waves
strive and labor [against]
them, poor earthmen, in
multitudes here,
honor them now.

You can from the sun
clearly consider,
and from each
other star
which across dwellings
brightest shines:
if dark before them
clouds hang
they cannot thus send light
in gleams
before the thick mist
becomes thinner.
Thus, often the southern
wind fiercely stirs up
the smooth, grey,
glass-pure sea
whenever them mixes-together
great storms, great storms
stir up the whale-sea.
Whenever them mixes-together
great storms, great storms
stir up the whale-sea,
Do I really believe that all the koinons cited in *The Meters of Boethius* are enclosed by real cases of apo
koinou--cases probably intended by the author? I'm not
sure. The sheer weight of their preponderance over prose
convinces me that most of them are intended, and my
conviction is only strengthened by the fact that there are
poems (many riddles, *Juliana*, and *The Rune Poem*, for
instance) in which apo koinou appears scarcely more often
than in prose--another strong indication that there is
nothing in the Old English poetic form per se that would
encourage the formation of koinons. But in a stretch of
prose comparable to a hundred lines of poetry I do find at
least two potential koinons which, I am convinced, are
accidents, and there may be more. It seems reasonable to
believe that at least as many are accidents in the poetry,

"It is not as uncommon as you might think to find a
koinon in the middle of another. Such "superkoinons" are
generally associated with variation and are palindromic.
Here's an example from *Genesis A*.

On him the Ruler, honor--firm Providence, a token set,
set a protection-symbol. A token set, set a protection-
symbol the Lord.

*Genesis A*, 1043b-45a)
too. But which ones?

Here I must give my best imitation of a gallic shrug. All I have done in this chapter and the previous one is (I hope) to alert scholarship to a vast and virtually unexplored field. Chances are, any potential apo koinou construction was intended, but, unfortunately, we cannot use this preponderance of intention to our advantage by approaching the problem of finding intended apo koinou negatively. That is, with one exception (the very restricted and qualified case of verbal koinons at the end of a half-line) we can't hit on a program for eliminating classes of potential koinons as unintended. All we can do is to find supporting evidence of a "literary" nature—evidence that the apo koinou construction might be doing something in support of something else in the poem. This seems to me to be the surest guide. Where we can find real poetic gains in the apo koinou construction, we have isolated a case where the probability of intention is highest—but that is a procedure that can only be carried out one koinon at a time and the success of which will be limited by our sympathy, intelligence, and understanding. There will always be a number of potential constructions concerning which we can only say, "Most of these are intentional, but don't ask me which ones."

That koinons which are unsupported by our "literary" evidence were not as important to Anglo-Saxon audiences is,
fortunately, a good working hypothesis. (And even if it isn't, do we have a choice?) For these unimportant koinones, we need only make observations about what apo koinou in general might do for an Old English poem.

The kinesthetic effect of apo koinou is always at work, as I already pointed out. Such effects are always welcome in poetry, and are probably especially welcome in a poetry where there is always an underlying, slow, and fairly regular beat of a progression of short half-lines.

What's more, the sensation of having one's mind twisted around is amusing, if the thing is not overdone (which, as far as I can tell, it never is in Old English verse) and works very well in conjunction with variation, giving to the figure at least the illusion of density.

In the time since Paetzel found variations by looking for "ein für das Verständnis genügend gekennzeichneter Begriff" which is "noch einmal... dem Hörer oder Leser vor die Seele gerückt" (a notion sufficiently marked for the understanding... once more... placed before the mind of the listener or reader), much has been done to expand our ideas of what sufficient marking might be, given what the poet might want us to understand. Yet there are still many cases of seemingly otiose variation—spots where there is a lot to be said for the point of view Paetzel's definition implies. Where apo koinou is also found in conjunction with these cases, we need not wonder quite so
much that the Anglo-Saxons found them pleasing.

We might also make a few observations on what apo koinou in general could do for an oral-formulaic poet. It would be an enormous convenience to a man trying to produce a poem on the spot, half-line by half-line, to be able to make a stretch of language do twice the work it usually does—it would give the poet more options in the selection of formulas, for instance. (I do not, by the way, believe that most Old English poetry, as we have it, is, strictly speaking, oral-formulaic—but for what I mean by this, see Chapter VIII.)

Of course, it is far too early yet to begin thinking about what might be left over after scholarship discovers what it can about the more literary examples of apo koinou. Though the style that goes with the job pushes critics into an implicit claim of godhood at times, this dissertation forces me to confess that I cannot even begin such an exploration here—it is beyond the power of any one critic. As far as I am concerned, then, potential koinons fall into two classes: those for which I can find a literary explanation, and those for which I must, in fariness to the poetry, assume that I am too stupid to find a literary explanation. And I suspect that anyone who works with apo koinou will have to adopt that attitude for many years to come.

The lines of my hundred where I fail are 9b, 22-23a, 32b
(except insofar as it is an especially slick segue from invocation to proposition—but since all koinons are, in a sense, segues, this seems insufficient to qualify for a "literary" explanation) 39b (with the same sort of caveat), 59-60, 65b (which wasn't counted anyway), 79-80, and 83-84a. And as long as I am owning to being less than omniscient, I should point out that 9b is provided with an explanation in my notes, but that I don't really believe it, and that the best I can do is to assume that something in this line or the one before it has gone kerflooie—which is to say, since I am a foreigner in this culture, that there is a fairly high probability that it is my understanding which has gone kerflooie."

A surprisingly high number of the apo koinou constructions in the *Meters of Boethius* passage can be provided with such explanations, however.

No doubt there will always be cases of otiose variation, but understanding apo koinou's workings in Old English poetry further reduces the number of such cases. In lines 4b-5a, for instance, both the apo koinou itself and the interruption of the koinon by the line-break are mimetic of the effects of real-life sobbing. Mimeticapo koinou also changes the way we understand what we first take to be "loose" variation around *sceal* in 47b, the variants of which turn out not to be variants at all, but to say distinctly different things. (See the note on this.) The
superkoinon at lines 96-97a gives us a whirlpoolish effect mimetic of the storms it talks about. The koinon at line 10 "misleads" us, by its association with 9b, into being shocked at line 11 in something like the way Boethius must have been shocked.

Such effects are not that uncommon in Old English poetry. The effect of the apo koinou in lines 52b-53 is to take from and give back to the reader the understanding of 54a, the referent of which is what is actually being taken away and given back.

English majors are, either by inclination or training, adept at mimesis-spotting, and perhaps we make more of mimesis than it deserves. These effects may not have been any more impressive to an Anglo-Saxon audience than the emphatic effects found in lines 37—which emphasizes the One Cause—and 68a—which puts evil men the more firmly on thrones. (The understanding which comes with the pivot here creates, in my head, a cartoon of an evil king using a holy man for his footstool.) All apo koinou—and all variation, for that matter—is in some degree emphatic (although sometimes, with adverbials, what is emphasized is not the koinon) but there are ways in which apo koinou can be especially emphatic.

I do not quite know how to classify the effect at 56a; it is almost a joke. Reflect on the fact that God only needs to command once. Perhaps "explanatory" would be a good
term, although, having noticed no cases where explanation seems to be the chief function of the construction outside of these hundred lines, it is a term I won't be using in the rest of this dissertation. Certainly lines 72-74a, where apo koinou suggests causal connections not in any way suggested in the prose, might well be called explanatory. (See the note on those lines.)

Another and better koinon "pun" we have seen in the note to the doubtful 65b. The others cases for which I am not too stupid to find the poetic gain I classify under the general term "rhetorical." In most cases, such apo koinou is rhetorical in the pejorative sense of the term that is commonly heard in the age of the focus group—the there is some sort of trickery involved. This is the case in the apo koinou around lines 6b-7, which embeds the past, puts the emphasis on the present, and creates expectations in the audience which set it up for the mimetic apo koinou around line 10, where the form of the poem "misleads" the reader, suddenly, into this dim hole along with Boethius. Such is not the case, however, with the apo koinou around lines 28b-30a, which turns a statement of the conditions resulting from the soul forgetting its own light into a reason for line 30b—thus helping to turn the whole poem into a sort of prayer.

We will often see these ends—the most common "literary" ends of apo koinou—being served in the chapters that
follow, and Chapter VI will be wholly devoted to a discussion of them.

Summary

Since any koinon might be an accident, we can only talk in terms of probability about whether a potential apo koinou construction was or was not intentional. Even koinons that rely on subject-object ambiguity and which seem more pun-like and, thus, more convincing on their face than other koinons, might be an accident just as any pun might be an accident. However, two places which seem like solid ground from which to begin doubting koinons also turn to quicksand. Stress and intonation can always be adjusted to support an apo koinou reading, and many apo koinou constructions cannot be concealed no matter what the stress and intonation. Non-clausal adverbial koinons cannot be doubted on the basis of anything like Kuhn's metrical laws, because they rely on a clear-cut distinction between the beginnings and endings of clauses that the apo koinou construction vitiates.

The only clear case where we can say that a potential koinon cannot be actual is the much-qualified one of a verbal koinon at the end of a half-line. If we have determined that the koinon really does not extend beyond the verb, these can be eliminated when the verb constitutes less than a half-line, is not an auxilliary surrounded by infinitives, and is not found in the middle of a chain.
Where a koinon stands at the beginning of a half-line, on the other hand, since a break after an incomplete first constituent is followed by no break in the second constituent, it is virtually assured that such koinons will be heard as koinons, and it is reasonable to expect that a skilled poet will not produce such koinons without intending them. Their probability is high even when surrounded by obvious variations.

The question of intention is more problematic when we are dealing with potential koinons occupying a whole half-line. Chains of such koinons usually (but not always) seem to provide an impetus that makes even weak verbal koinons stronger, and apo koinou and variation often work hand in hand in such a way that there is no necessary reason for considering one or the other primary. Yet, in the case of verbal koinons, at least, even a slight complication can eliminate the psychological effect of apo koinou.

The most important reason for a presumption in favor of potential verse koinons being actual is the disproportion between apo koinou constructions found in prose and verse. A comparison of one hundred lines of the verse Meters of Boethius and the prose from which the verse was presumably drawn results in a score of 24 potential koinons for the poetry and five for the prose (only three of which might be explained as the creation of surrounding appositives). Some, no doubt, are accidents, but surely most of them are
not, and yet we can only appeal to probability when discussing particular koinons. There are some good general reasons for a poet to use apo koinou, but the surest guide to high probability is support of a "literary" nature—evidence that the apo koinou construction might be doing something in support of something else in the poem. (For what it's worth, I can provide seventeen of the koinons found in the Meters of Boethius experiment with such explanations.)
Notes to Chapter III


5. Mitchell, in "The Dangers of Disguise: Old English Texts in Modern Punctuation," Review of English Studies 31 (1980), pp. 396 and 406, points out that even beginners, when given the original manuscript punctuation, "...see for themselves that... secga geseldan may be used apo koinou as both the object of gretefe and geondeceawad and also the subject of swimmef," and that "...the insistence that it must be either the object of the preceding verbs or the subject of the verb which follows destroys the sweep of the verse paragraph." But The Wanderer is rich in spots where it makes more sense to take something apo koinou than not to do so. See Chapter VII.

6. Here is another case where the possibility of variation creates the apo koinou—where our first understanding of a koinon is that it is a variation. Fæmnan and wuduwan seems an appositive to mægfe before it becomes the object of læddon.


9. Meritt, pp. 38-41. After all of Meritt's fussing over the issue, by the way, he finally acknowledges on pp. 40-41 that "...it is likely that Klaeber [Fr., "Textual Interpretation of Beowulf", Modern Philology 3 (1905), pp. 237 ff.] was very near the truth when he stated that a simple word or phrase occupying a medial position between two terms of variation should be assigned the æmæ æmæ function whenever it occurs at the beginning of a line."

10. The poetry, as always, is taken from the ASPFR. The prose is de-punctuated from King Alfred's Old English
"Rhapsodize on" might be a better term than "translate," since the OE treatment is so free.

Readers interested in philosophy must assume throughout this dissertation that I am a follower of Hirsch. I'm not, but I find him, in his writings through *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: U of Chi. P, 1976) the least unsatisfactory of the better-known theoreticians, and this is not the place for a 7,000-word essay on theory. Readers so interested in philosophy that they can't bear its absence may contact me for a xerox of my unpublished "Natural Hermeneutics: How to be Against Theory." (Such readers will probably be familiar enough with various theorists to see that I actually have more in common with Richard Rorty—though I am not in complete agreement with him, either.)

Walther Paetzel, *Die Variationen in der altergermanischen Alliterationspoesie,* Palaestra 48 (Berlin: Mayer und Müller, 1913) p. 3.

Unless my reading patterns are warped, works on Old English poetry which give us new insights into how variation can work are the rule rather than the exception. Among those that I have recently found especially interesting are Eugene Kintgen's "Echolic Repetition [which fits Paetzel's definition!] in Old English Poetry, Especially *The Dream of the Rood*" in *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 75 (1974), pp. 202-23; Fred C. Robinson's "Two Aspects of Variation in Old English Poetry" in *Old English Poetry: Essays on Style,* ed. Daniel G. Calder (Berkeley: U of Cal P, 1979), pp. 127-45; and Robinson's *Beowulf and the Appositive Style* (Knoxville: U of Tenn. P, 1985). This has probably been going on since A. G. Brodeur's *The Art of Beowulf* (Berkely: U of Cal. P, 1959).

It is always possible, as in this instance, that the use of "literary" standards to isolate probable koinons can backfire and produce apo koinou constructions that most will find unconvincing. This is not a very serious problem where, as in the case of 9b, our lack of conviction arises from some sort of textual problem, but it is inevitable that some koinons will fail to convince for other, more subjective reasons. There are no doubt a few such in this dissertation, but, being myself and not the reader, I must leave it to the reader to find them. There are obviously standards with which we can control our literary judgments of likelihood—for instance, we can try to make sure that what looks good locally is not contradicted by some larger poetic purpose, and we can try to guard against "forcing" an
interpretation by avoiding overly-complicated reasoning—but each critic's standards must be at least slightly idiosyncratic, and the hope that we can reason our way to universal standards that offer us philosophical certainty is belied by the previous twenty-five hundred years of philosophy. This is no cause for despair; lacking this talisman, most critics, in whatever field of study, have nonetheless found themselves with wide areas of agreement, and in the long run common sense will (as it always, in fact, has) continue to serve as a guide.

"Loose" variation is a term borrowed from Claes Scharr, Critical Studies in the Cynewulf Group, Lund Studies in English, Vol. 17 (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1949) which is used for variation which "repeats something that we already know" and is opposed to "close" variation.
CHAPTER IV
ADVERBIAL AND INTEGRAL KOINONS

Some new distinctions

The earlier distinction between koinons which take up a half-line or less and those where the koinon is, in Meritt's words, a "dependent clause between two independent clauses or an independent clause between two dependent clauses" is an early recognition, in my opinion, of a real qualitative difference between two kinds of koinons; the dividing line, however, is drawn slightly off the mark. I would say instead that the qualitative difference is to be found between koinons which are adverbial, in the widest sense of the word, and the rest, which I'll call integral koinons. The difference lies in the inherent looseness of the former; Meritt's idea of "completing the thought" is relevant to the distinction between the two--although it might be better to say something like "completing what is necessary to a clausal structure." Adverbial koinons--which consist of adverbial clauses, prepositional phrases, dative/instrumental phrases which can be translated with prepositions, and more-or-less "pure" adverbs--can always be removed without damage to the clausal structure of the
other two apo koinou elements. Here are three examples of such koinons from Beowulf:

1. *wæs sio hond to strong*
   *se ðe meca gehwane*  *mine gefræge*
   *swenge ofersohte*  *bonne he to sæcce bar*
   *wepen wundrum heard*  *næs him wihte ðe sæl*

   (Beowulf, 2664b-87)

   The hand was too strong which, so I’ve heard, overtaxed every sword by its swing whenever he carried a wondrously hard weapon to battle he wasn’t a bit better off for it.

2. *þat ðam þeodne was*
   *sifast sigehwillæ*  *sylfes ādum*
   *worlde geweorcæ*  *þæ se eorþdraca*  *ær geworhte*
   *swelan ond swellæn*  *þæ hæt scea onfand*
   *þæt him on brecostum*  *bealoniðe weolli*
   *attor in innan*

   (Beowulf 2709b-15a)

   That was, for that king, the last victory-time of works by his own deeds in the world, when the wound which the earth-dragon had given him began to burn and swell he immediately found it out that in his breast with wickedness venom swelled within.

3. *him on eaxle læg*
   *brecostnet broden*  *þæt gebearh feore*
   *wif ord ond wif ecge*  *ingæng forstod*

   (Beowulf 1547b-49)

   On his shoulder lay the woven breast-net that protected the life against point and against edge hindered entrance

Even in example number one, where the instrumental *þæ* in the pivot contains the idea of the preceding clausal koinon, a feeling of relative disconnectedness persists, and this is even more the case with the second example. If the koinon there had been lost, we would have noticed nothing but the absence of alliteration, and this is the case with most
adverbial koinons. Adverbial koinons may contain important, even crucial, ideas, but structurally they might almost—but not quite—be said to be autonomous. In Jesperson's terms, they are at the farthest remove from the main idea of a clause or phrase that it is practical to classify, and are thus "tertiary."

Whether or not such a clause produces in an audience the feeling of apo koinou depends purely on what information the surrounding material contains. In the second example, for instance, the koinon specifies the time referred to in the first clause, and the pivot is the result of the koinon and thus seems to go with it even better than the first element, dragging the dependent clause out of association with the first clause and into association with another and thus producing the necessary psychological effect.

All other koinons I call integral koinons because all of these are either integrated into the clausal structure of at least one of the two surrounding elements, or integrated into some larger, sentence-like structure where it stands as the principal clause and is thus necessary. Some few non-adverbial clause koinons are more "disposable" than the rest, but even the loosest stands at least as subject for one of the other two elements. Here are six integral koinons from Beowulf, proceeding from non-clausal to clausal examples:

1. þonne hniton feban
eaforas cnysedan  
(Beowulf 1327b-28a)

. . . when foot-soldiers clashed together, when foot-soldiers struck the boars (on the helmets)

2. gefeng þa be eaxle nalas for fahðe mearn  
guðgæata leod  
grendles modor  
brægd þa beadwe heard þa he gebolgen was  
feorhgeniðlan  
þet heo on flét gebeah  
(Beowulf, 1537-40)

The man of the war-Geats then grabbed by the shoulder (didn’t despair of life at all) Grendel’s mother. The battle-hard one whipped Grendel’s mother around, the life-enemy, when he was angry, so that she fell on the floor.

3. hwæbere he his folme forlet  
to lifwæpbe  
last weardian  
earn ond eaxle  
(Beo 970b-72a)

However, he abandoned his hand as a life-protector to guard his rear. (He) abandoned as a life-protector to guard his rear (his) arm and shoulder.

4. þæt we him ða guðgætawa  
gyldan woldon  
gif him bislicu  
bearf gelumpe  
helmas ond heard sweord  
(Beowulf, 2636-38)

. . . that we would repay him the war-equipment if such a need as this befell him, would repay if such a need as this befell him, the helmets and hard swords.

5. gif ic þonne on eorðan  
owihte með  
þinre modlufan  
maran tilian  
gumena dryhten  
þonne ic gyt dyde  
guðgeworca  
ic beo gearo sóna  
gif ic þæt gefrige  
ofer flódæ begang  
þæt þec ymbsettend  
egesan þywað  
(Beowulf 1822-27)

If I on earth can in any little way earn more of your mind-love, lord of men, than I yet did with war-works, I will immediately be ready if I learn that over the flood’s circuit neighbors threaten you with horror.
6.  

\begin{align*}
\text{se be on hands ber broden ealowæge} \\
sceante scir wered
\end{align*}

\text{(Beowulf 494b-96a)}

a retainer took charge of service, who in hands bore a decorated ale-cup. He who in hands bore a decorated ale-cup poured clear sweet drink.

In all these examples, with the exception of the sixth, the absence of the koinon would leave us groping for an explanation, and the koinon in the sixth is in spite of its disposability more tightly bound to the pivot than an adverbial koinon can ever be, since it is the subject of the pivot—which must be the case with all such clauses, if they are to be taken apo koinou, for if the final element contained all the necessary arguments for its own verb, there would be no koinon. The association of such koinon clauses with the other two elements of the construction may be the weakest when, as in the ninth example, the clause serves as a subject. In cases where an adjective clause or noun clause (I am here again using Mitchell's unusual definitions)* serves as the object of even one of the verbs on either side, there is an even closer structural relationship between the koinon and the first and last elements than there is either with such examples as my sixth one, or with adverbial koinons. I can find no such koinon in \textit{Beowulf}, but here is one from \textit{Elene}, where the koinon is the object of the verb in the first element before becoming the subject for the verb in the pivot:
They then in a crowd found 1000 spirit-wise men, those who most readily knew ancient history among the Jews thronged then in a crowd where in power on a throne waited Caesar's kin

Here, if the koinon had been lost, we might not have noticed that anything was wrong outside of alliteration, but we might easily have gotten the wrong idea, concluding that the original group of three thousand \( \text{hio} \) returned to Elene along with the one thousand. \( \text{I cannot think of any cases where an adjective clause koinon, without being the object of a verb, is genitive, dative, or instrumental, but I don't believe that discovering one will wreck my system.} \)

The genitive will be closely bound to a noun, I predict, and the others will fit into my scheme as translatable with prepositions and thus "adverbial". Note also that the effect of number five, where we find an independent clause between two dependent clauses, is still one of necessary structural relation to the two other elements, as opposed to the looseness of the first three examples. There are so many adverb clauses which are koinons, in comparison with other kinds of clauses, that this important difference tends to get buried.

Meritt, it seems to me, reasons circularly on this score when he maintains that clausal koinons "may be so long
and drawn out that all the compactness characteristic of the ʰwō kōnō construction may be lost." Compactness is a characteristic of the half-line constructions to which he devotes most of his study, as it is in my first and second examples of integral koinons, but the length of the koinon has no absolute relation to the psychological effect. The best we can say is that the longer the koinon, the more relevant, in some way, the surrounding material must be. And, for that matter, there are "half-line" koinons (although I'll own they are rare) which are long enough to be diffuse, and yet do not interfere with the psychological effect. In my fourth integral koinon example, for instance, the addition of an adverbial clause to a complete half-line verbal koinon weakens it without in any way eliminating it, and I would maintain that in my third example, the addition of to lifwrape last weardian strengthens the psychological effect of what would otherwise be a very weak koinon (see pp. 72-74). In short, one has to say "it all depends" too often in response to the old system for classifying koinons.

This does not mean that my own system is entirely free from problems, but the problems found there arise from doubts about how Anglo-Saxons might have taken certain clauses—chiefly, hwnonne-clauses. One can say with assurance that hwnonne was on its way to being a word which could introduce adverb and adjective clauses in Old English, but in no particular case can I be certain that native
speakers would not have heard it as a noun clause. 

I suspect that examples of such clauses often do more to promote confusion than clarification, since native speakers of Modern English will, I think, tend to feel their force as adverbial when they are not firmly in place as the object of a verb—but in the circumstances of a discussion of apo koinou, there is a hope for really getting a reasonably accurate idea of what *hwonne* does. A discussion of clauses such as the one below, where the koinon at first seems to lean towards being a noun clause, then seems to lean towards being an adverbial clause, might be very helpful in giving beginning students of Old English at least a hint of what the semantic range might have felt like to an Anglo-Saxon.

\[
\text{lida bi}\text{p longe on sipe} \quad \text{a mon sceal se}\text{peah leofes wenan gebidan þæs he gebædan ne mag} \quad \text{hwonne him eft gebyre weorðe} \\
\text{ham cymíf gif he hal leofa}\text{þ} \\
\text{(Maxims I, 103-05a)}
\]

A sailor is long on a voyage, but one must always expect the dear man, wait for what he can't hasten, (wait for) when an opportunity may come to him again / Whenever an opportunity comes to him again, he will come home if he lives whole.

In all of the (few) cases I've found where *hwonne* heads a koinon⁷, there is always some element of the adverbal to it--it is the potential looseness of *hwonne*-clauses that is being taken advantage of. Here the koinon is more closely bound, structurally, to the first element, being the object of the verb *gebidan*, but it is pulled into association with the pivot because of its separation from *gebidan* by another
verb, and because it goes so well with line 105a. The explanation of the sailor’s excuse (what can’t be hasten?) is turned into reassurance for the potentially unfaithful woman left behind on land—in this case, I think it would be appropriate to translate the second meaning of *hwonne* as "just as soon as".

In other words, we have here another example of what I call a rhetorical koinon, which is a subject that must be postponed until Chapter VI.

**More on the Attraction of Adverbial Koinons**

In the case of clauses, at least, there has always been a strong tendency on the part of editors to suggest via punctuation that adverbials are subordinate to the clauses they follow. But if we ask ourselves, "With which clause is the adverbial clause more logically associated, by virtue of the information it and its surrounding clauses contain?" the answer, surprisingly often, is "The clause that it precedes." Yet another example, punctuated by both Klaeber and Dobbie with a stop before *sona*, is

```
ac wæs wide cuð
þætte Ongenðio ealdre besnyfede
þætþen Hreþling wið Hreþnawudu
þa for onmedlan ærest gescohton
geata leode guþscilfingas
sona him se froða fæder Ótheres
eald ond egesfull ondslyht ageaf
(Beowulf 2923b-29)
```

…but it was widely known that Ongentheow robbed Þæthcyn son of Hreþel of life near Savenswood when, for pride, the people of the Geats first
attacked the wa:—Scyldings immediately the sage father of Othere, old and terrible, gave them a blow in return.

In passages like this, the question is not so much why readers and listeners would be likely to take the adverbial as subordinate to the last clause as why anyone would believe there is any point to taking it with the first. A partial answer to that question is given in number 2537 of Mitchell's *Old English Syntax*, where he quotes from two reviews and a private communication from M. L. Samuels on the subject:

First, he suggested, 'there is, in Germanic alliterative verse, an undoubted preference for postmodification (and parataxis where relevant)'. We may see here the influence of what Heusler termed Zeilenstil: 'in the early tradition the beginning of both sentence and whole-line coincided', whereas Bogen- or Hakenstil, in which the sentences often begin in b-lines, is later. If this is so, 'it must follow that all subordinate clauses starting in the second half-line must, originally in the tradition at least, be regarded as "trailing" and not anticipatory or periodic. That, at least, would account for the preferences of earlier editors, especially the German ones.'

Two objections can be made to this line of reasoning. First, although there is certainly a tendency for most types of subordinate clauses to follow their principal clause in prose and, presumably, in speech, there is a multitude of exceptions, and, poetry being the artificial sort of creature it is, one would expect to see more exceptions, not fewer. Second, to make Zeilenstil the sole, or most common method of organizing clauses at the start of the
poetic tradition is to beg the question—the oldest evidence we have is Anglo-Saxon poetry! Even so, however, the idea that the earliest Germanic poets, struggling to hammer out a form, kept the beginnings of principal clauses flush left has a certain intuitive appeal, and even if one rejects that idea as yet another example of the naive assumptions the literate make about the illiterate, the tendency of subordinate clauses to come last in speech must have had some influence in the poetry.

What sort of influence? We can at least be sure that that tendency left the audience for poetry with the expectation that a subordinate clause was likely, everything else being equal, to follow a principal clause with which it was associated, and that is why, in passages like Beowulf 2923b-29, following my principle of remembering that poetry moves through time, I see apo koinou and allow that the editors were half-right. The connection between the first clause and the temporal clause is at least close enough to make me feel safe in assuming pa is a conjunction, and there is nothing better to join the clause to until the thought of the third clause has come clear.

The same principle applies to other words we find heading adverbial clauses in Old English verse, and here the reader will have an opportunity to watch that principle in action with all the most important conjunctions—with a few important exceptions: oppet, pet as head-word for clauses of
purpose and result, and non.

Having just dealt with a ba-clause, I’ll continue with clauses of time. Hwonne has just recently been discussed, and my earlier chapters have included several sypban koinons (for example, the one in Beowulf 4-8). Bonne koinons are equally common. I have already displayed one at line 3 of Meters of Boethius 3, and there are a couple of bonne koinons in Beowulf, too; for a change of pace, however, I offer the second koinon in the selection below--an especially tasty example from a different sort of poem:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þæt he þa þunyn totyhæ} & \text{ and þa teð þurhsmyhtæ} \\
\text{ond þa eagan þurheteð} & \text{ ufan on þæt hæofod} \\
\text{ond to ætwelæn} & \text{ ofrum gerymæ} \\
\text{wyræmum to wiste} & \text{ bonne þæt werie} \\
\text{lic acolod bife} & \text{ þæt he længe ær} \\
\text{werede med wædum} & \text{ bife bonne wyrma gifele} \\
\text{sæt on eorpan} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Soul and Body I, 119-25a) (see also Soul and Body II, 114-20a)

\[
\text{. . .so that he cuts up the tongue and bores through the teeth and eats through the eyes above in the head and for the feast makes room for other worms for the meal when that exhausted body which was once long clothed in garb has cooled it is then the worms’ morsel, food on earth.}
\]

Those who want a Beowulf example where possible are referred to 1179b and 1741b.

There are no examples of a benden koinon in Beowulf, but here is one from Daniel:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{fragyn þa ða mængæo} & \text{ hwæt hine gemætte} \\
\text{benden reordberend} & \text{ reste wunode} \\
\text{wearð he on þam egesan} & \text{ acol worden} \\
\text{þa he ne wisse} & \text{ word ne angin} \\
\text{swefnes sines} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Daniel, 122-26a)
(Nebuchadnezzar) asked then the company what he dreamed while the voice-bearer [Nebudhadnezzar?] dwelled in rest he became frightened in that terror when he didn't know word or intent of his dream.

A comparison with line 3 of The Dream of the Rood should convince the reader that, in spite of the odd use if the singular in the example above, the koinon is basically formulaic—simply a fancy way of saying "at night."

Ar, as a conjunction, doesn't head any koinons in Beowulf either; such koinons aren't terribly frequent, but here is one from Andreas:

\[\text{ær ða modigan mid him mægel gebedan trecowepeftan } \text{ær hie on tu hwoerfan æðer þara eorla eðrum trymede heofonrices hyht}\]

\text{(Andreas, 1049-52a)}

Then the bold, faithful comrades took counsel with him before they split up in two all the men encouraged each other in the hope of heaven.

This exhausts all the words which commonly head temporal clauses except obbet, which is a special case. As E. G. Stanley and others have remarked, in Beowulf obbet sometimes begins a numbered section, or is found before a new development in the narrative where "until" seems a poor translation. And in other spots in Beowulf, and in Old English poetry in general, even where obbet does seem to mean "until" it frequently signals a transition or some new direction for the action. In either case, the word would seem to discourage apo koinou. There is nothing in the word \textit{per se} that would prevent the formation of koinons ("I fasted until I broke down and ate three eclairs I had spent
the day thinking about pastry." but it is not hard to see why it is rarely used in this way. Although Old English poetry often seems "recursive" to us, and is described so, the poems do move forward through time and not even Anglo-Saxon poets found much use for a koinon the pivot of which must necessarily turn the narrative back in time. One does, very rarely, find an obbat-clause which might be a koinon, but they are rare enough in proportion to the number of obbat-clauses as a whole to make the possibility of accident seem likelier than usual. The least unlikely may be the one at the end of Beowulf, where advancing the action is not a priority any more and where lingering over the funeral pyre seems called for. If the clause actually was intended to be a koinon, the poet's idea would have to have been something like defining a discrete period of mourning.

swogende leg
wope bewunden  windblond gelæg
obbat he ða banhus  gebrocn hæfte
hat on hreþre  higum unrotæ
modceare mændon  mondryhtnes cwæalm
(Beowulf, 3145b-49)

The roaring fire, wound about with weeping, put down the wind until it had broken the bone-house, hot in its breast in (their) hearts the unhappy (people) moaned their sorrow, the death of (their) man-lord.

As for clauses of place, þær koinons are fairly common.

gæst yrre cwóm
eatol æfengrom  user neosan
þær we gesunde  sæl weardodon
þær wæs hondscie  hild onsage
feorhbealu fægum
(Beowulf, 2073b-77a)

The wrathful spirit came, horrible, evening-
hostile, to seek us out where we, uninjured,
guarded the hall, there combat was fatal to
Hondscio--deadly evil for the doomed man.

Pider koinons are uncommon in the poetry, but, then,
there aren't very many biders in the poetry to begin with.
Here is an elegant use of a bider clause from Guthlac A:

nu þu most feran  bider þu fundadest
longe and gelome  ic þec lædan sceal
(Guthlac A, 6-8)

Now you may go to the place you wished for long and
frequently I shall lead you.

The same kind of problem obtains with banon as with oppat--
the pivot of a banon-koinon would lead us back to where we
were. Also, it sounds unnatural to modern ears to put this
sort of subordinate clause first, and I believe it also
sounded unnatural to the Anglo-Saxons. It seems to require
far greater mental effort than usual to figure out that the
second overlapping constituent of *"I stopped in Phoenix,
from where I drove to Tucson. I shopped at Goldwater's"
implies that the speaker first shopped at Goldwater's, and
then drove to Tucson. At any rate, I can find few such
clauses which even have the potential of being koinons, and
none of those sound at all likely to me.

Forpon, like hwonne, has a way of slipping in and out of
its role as head-word of an adverb clause in koinons--in
this case, however, not because the commonly-used extensions
of its sense were growing in number, but because its
semantic field had been fuzzy all along. The word in the
poetry still often seems to mean primarily "for that" or
"for that, that". Mitchell cites as possible apo koinou a
good example—Beowulf 679, where "forban means 'therefore'
in relation to the preceding clause and 'for the reason I am
about to explain' in relation to what follows." 14 Below is
a simpler example. I wind up translating forson first as
"because" and then as "therefore", but it is worth
wondering—although Anglo-Saxons undoubtedly understood the
difference between cause and consequence—whether the
audience, when exposed to a koinon which uses the same word
for purposes which are in some ways opposite, felt the
difference as strongly as the translation makes it seem.

ac ic ðær heæsufyres  hætes wene
créfes ond attres  forðon ic on hafu
bord ond byrnan  nelle ic beorges weard
forfleon fotes trem

(Beowulf, 2522-25a)

. . .but I expect hot battle-fire there, breath and
poison; therefore I have on me shield and mail-
coat. Because I have on me shield and mail-coat I
will not flee a footstep from the guard of the
barrow.

Inevitably, there will also be koinons where forbon is
probably best taken purely as a subordinating conjunction.

þu eart weoroda god
forbon þu gefyldest  fòldan ond rodoræ
wigendra hélo  wuldres ðines
helm alwihta  ðie þe in heannessum
ece hælo  ond in eorðon lōf
beorht mid beornum

(Christ I 407b-12a)

You are God of hosts because you filled earth and
heaven, Protector of warriors, with Your glory,
helm of all creatures, eternal prosperity be to you
in the highest and on earth praise, bright among
men.
He is God of hosts because He made the hosts, and because He made the hosts, the hosts praise Him.

**Nu** clauses are also causal when they are subordinate. A nu koinon has already been displayed in my analysis of the first hundred lines of the *Meters of Boethius*—line 85b in my numbering there, and Number Four, line 55b in the ASPR. There is only one reasonably safe example of such a clause in *Beowulf*:

```
nu sū lungre geong
  hord sceawian  under harne stan
Wiglaf leofa  nu se wyrm ligef
  swegef sare wund  since befreafod
bio nu on ofoste  pct ic ærwelan
goldæht ongite
```

*(Beowulf 2743b-46a)*

Now you go quickly to see the hoard under the grey stone, dear Wiglaf, **now that** the worm lies (dead), sleeps sorely wounded, deprived of treasure, be now (shading into "therefore") in haste that I the ancient wealth, the gold-property, might perceive.

The shading of the last **nu** into "therefore" is an effect of the odd, three-part correlation (which seems, incidentally, to have the effect of making the apo koinou even more secure than it would otherwise have been). The final clause "borrows" some causality from the causal implication of the subordinate **nu** ("now that"="since").

Clauses of comparison headed by **swa** also frequently serve as koinons:

```
reced weardode
  unrim eorla  **swa** hie oft ær dydon
bencþelu bereden
```

*(Beowulf, 1237b-39a)*

Countless men guarded the building **as they often**
had before (they) bared the bench-planks

So do concessive clauses headed by beah:

Be he usic garwigend gode tealde
hwate helmberend beah Æla hlaford us
bis ellenweorc ana æfðhte
to gefremmane folces hyrde
for Æam he manna næst marða gefremede
dæda dollicra nu is se dæg cumen
þæt ure mandryhten mægenes behofað
godra guðrínc

(Beowulf 2641-48a)

. . . because he counted us good warriors, keen
shield-bearers, although (our) lord thought to
accomplish this courage-work for us alone, the
keeper of the folk, because he, most of men,
accomplished glories, reckless deeds now the day
has come when our man-lord has need of the strength
of good warriors.

I can shorten this list by referring the reader back to
Solomon and Saturn I, 13-20, discussed on pp. 24-26, for an
example of a conditional koinon with gif, and can end it by
admitting that I have found no examples at all of koinons
which are inarguably result or purpose clauses. One would
not expect to find any result-koinons, of course; result
clauses invariably follow their main clauses today, and
Mitchell has found no cases in which a result clause
precedes the main clause in Old English'. Purpose clauses,
however, are not so severely restricted, and it was quite
reassuring to me when I found Mitchell speaking of "rare
examples" of first-position purpose clauses in Old
English. Even so, I suspect that someone will someday
discover at least one clear case of a purpose-clause koinon
in Old English poetry where I have failed.
This list, lengthy, but necessary, has demonstrated sufficiently, I hope, that my principle—that adverbials are easily pulled from a preceding main clause to a following one if the latter is somehow more appropriate—applies to all but three of the more important conjunctions which head adverbial clauses. Some of those head-words, however—*for*, *bon*, *bam*, and *by*; *bonne*; *ber*; and *pa*—have such a wide semantic reach that they are pulled almost too easily.

Mitchell, thinking of such passages as

\[
\text{fæ wæs morgenlech} \\
scofen ond scynded eode scealc monig} \\
swiðhicgende to sele þam hæn \\
searowundor seon}
\]

(Beowulf, 917b-20a)

( ? Then morning-light was moved forward and hastened. When morning-light was moved forward and hastened,) many a retainer went strong-minded to that high hall to see the curious wonder.

feels that Campbell’s idea that reciters may have used intonation with such passages to indicate their own preference for *then* or *when* \(^*\), \(\ldots\) may have presented that choice in starker terms than the actual situation warranted and that there may have been an intermediate stage between 'Then' and 'When'." Mitchell points to modern usage of *for* in support. "In my experience," he says, "there are times when even the intonation patterns of an utterance I hear spoken do not enable me to say firmly that *for* is co-ordinating rather than subordinating or vice versa."**

Mitchell is careful to specify that this is a feeling and that he is using the word "feel" deliberately, but I wonder
whether he wasn't being too cautious. Certainly, in writing—the only evidence we have available—*ba* has importance only as an undifferentiated time-pointer; even in prose, it is but an element in a clause which is principal or subordinate only as a whole and is determined to be so by circumstances outside of the *ba*. Could the situation in writing simply be a reflection of the usual situation in speech?

I feel fairly certain that a native speaker could, if he chose, say something like "Ic for. *A wraec mec min hlaford."—but notice the special circumstances in which we tend to give words like *ba* that kind of emphasis. There is a significant possibility for misunderstanding, since setting out is usually a result of exile, and in order to avoid confusing the listener, *ba* gets special and unusual emphasis. One reason for suspecting that it was only in such situations that *ba*, *ber*, and *bonne* received any special intonation is the very fact that it was found necessary to differentiate between principal and subordinate clauses which followed them by means of word order. (There are always exceptions, of course, but the rules laid out by Andrew on the first two pages of *Syntax and Style in Old English* work remarkably well for Old English prose.) I also suspect a usual lack of contrastive phonemic differentiation because of passages like this one:

```
swylce hi me geblendon bittre tosomme unswetne drync ecedes ond geallan
```
Likewise they mixed bitterly together for me an unswet drink of vinegar and gall.

Then for folks I received fiends' agents followed me with torments didn't worry how hateful and stung me with scourges. I all that pain for you in humility suffered—scorn and harsh speech—

when they bent a hard spiny circlet around my head, thrust with threats (it was made of thorns!)

when I was hung on a high beam, fastened to a cross—when with a spear they promptly poured gore from my side, blood to the sod—so you would thereby be saved from the tyranny of the devil—then I flawless suffered punishment, evil hardship till I sent alone from my body the living soul.

Of course, it's not unusual to find poetic passages where remembering the usual word-order for clauses seems to be no help; my guess, however, is that in most of those cases the immediate context usually clears things up right away. Here, a string of four problematic ba clauses stretches far enough to deny us a context that could reasonably be called "immediate". The first three ba
clauses present events in temporal order and there is, therefore, a sense in which it would be meaningful to translate clauses two and three as "next I was hung..." and "next they poured..." in spite of word-order. There is, in other words, something "thennish" about those clauses. But what precedes them makes this interpretation highly questionable. The events in the bonne clause at line 1439 do not follow the event in the first two lines in any of the gospels, yet it seems that that bonne must be translated "then": if it were heading a subordinate clause it would be frequentive (more or less equivalent to the German wann) and would make no sense at all—translating "then" in the sense of "in those times" saves it. The force of that bonne, however, carries over to the clause at 1441b and is reinforced by eall, suggesting that the clause refers to the entire experience of the crucifixion (and not just to the scourging). Since it can hardly be said that Christ suffered pain for us and next they crowned him with thorns, the first ba clause seems "whennish", creating a "whennish" mood for the next two which is only reinforced when we reach the last ba clause at line 1451, which points back to all three and which, moreover, echoes the gebplade in line 1442, creating an envelope for the temporal series. The first three ba clauses are, all together, in an apo koinou relation to the clause beginning ic bat sar and the final ba clause.
This suggests not merely that *ba* is to be read as an example of Mitchell's "intermediate stage," but that the poet, creating tension by playing the "nextness" of the second and third *ba* clauses against the usual word-order for non-demonstrative clauses, expected his readers to judge the relationships between the clauses purely by context. Assuming he was reasonably intelligent (I believe the author of *Christ III* was unusually good and that that implies at least that he wasn't stupid) he could not have counted on someone who was reading the poem aloud, perhaps to an audience, to have correctly differentiated between intonationally divergent adverbs and conjunctions in this long string of *bas*. Such writing, it seems to me, would only have been effective if *ba* was undifferentiated enough, in normal speech, to prevent any premature "interpretation".

Of course, this conclusion would have less force if *Christ III* were written for private, devotional reading and still less force if it were written in the situation at the other extreme—at the dictation of an oral poet who had not fully comprehended the effect on a poem of transmission through writing. I do not claim to have proven that the grammatical status of *ba* or any other adverb/conjunction was generally not indicated by intonation, only that there might be reasons good enough to incline someone towards that view.

In the poetry, however, there are stronger reasons for believing that intonation did not matter for the head-words
bar, bonne, and ba—even if it was used to make distinctions between adverb and conjunction in ordinary speech. Examples such as the one from Christ III above, coupled with cases like Beowulf 2923b-29 (the "Ravenswood" selection at the beginning of this section), suggest that the "rules" for clausal word-order fail more often in poetry than in prose because the requirements for oral delivery of the poetry must take precedence, and fail all the more often because many times what is required is an apo koinou interpretation. Although the word-order (ba-VP-S-O) in the central clause of Beowulf 2923b-29, would, outside of poetry, strongly suggest that ba is an adverb, the sense of the passage ensures that it will be taken as a conjunction no matter what the intonation. A good rhythmic reading of the passage will make the intonation of ba irrelevant anyway, prevent any possible confusion on the part of the audience, and encourage them to take the clause apo koinou. It is at least worth wondering why the observation that word-order rules often fail in the poetry, independently arrived at by our own syntacticians, "allows" many cases of apo koinou where an apo koinou interpretation provides the most common-sense sort of connection possible between the clauses.

Again, clauses in ba, bar, and bonne were used very loosely and the strong distinctions we make in modern European languages may be making these conclusions look more remarkable than they are. Even if there was phonemic
differentiation, in the poetry the pure connective force of these words seems to have been what was most important. Not only are there an impressive number of instances where it seems we must interpret the clause in defiance of its word-order, but the situation is further complicated by cases where, even though we think we can point to an example of such a clause indisputably going against the normal prose word-order, we find on closer examination that the clause is just as "ambiguous" (in Modern English terms) as most of the others. The following example is yet another way of pointing to the looseness of these clauses:

```
selfa ne dorste
under yf a gewin  al dre gɔneːpæn
drihtsype dreogan  þær he dome forleas
ellenmærðum
```

(Beowulf, 1468b-71a)

(Hunferth) didn't himself dare to risk his life performing noble work under the strife of waves. In that situation he lost glory, courage-fame.

In spite of the word-order, it would never even occur to us to make the þær-clause subordinate unless we were specifically thinking about the principal/subordinate problem. Here, however, we may be reacting through habits created by our native language. The word "where", when following close upon a reference to a place, seems to have strong enough associations with place to confuse us by its subordination and if, for a split-second, we think "where" to ourselves instead of "there," we associate the clause with place and see that it is impossible--Hunferth, the
previous clause informs us, will not be travelling beneath the waves. But the real opposition of alternatives in this clause can be better shown by translating either by "in that situation" or "in which situation" and it turns out that we still, finally, have no idea whether in this case we have a clause which must be interpreted against its word-order or not. Nor, really, does it make much difference in the meaning of the poem which way we decide.

Whether or not we want to make conclusions about the intonation of those three words, examples like these should make us very wary of any theory about such clauses which would bind them as tightly to the clauses with which they are associated as they would be in Modern English. The use of these clauses in Old English seems to lie somewhere between, or overlap, what we usually think of as the proper study of discourse analysis and what we usually think of as the proper study of syntactical analysis. This implies, to repeat myself again, that adverbial apo koinou in Old English poetry was far less remarkable to the Anglo-Saxons than my attempts to put it into Modern English makes it seem, unless the construction served some other, more important purpose. Such other purposes I will deal with after a short chapter discussing a type of koinon which seems to fall totally outside the field of syntax, and yet was probably more impressive to the native audience than all but the most clever uses of integral and adverbial koinons.
Summary

Koinons may be divided into adverbial and integral. Adverbial koinons can always be removed without damage to the clausal structure of the other two apo koinou elements, but integral koinons are either integrated into the clausal structure of at least one of the two surrounding elements, or integrated into some larger, sentence-like structure where they stand as the principal clause and are thus necessary.

In the case of clausal adverbial koinons, at least, editors have always tended to suggest via punctuation that they are subordinate to the clauses they follow. But surprisingly often they go better with the clause they precede. There is, indeed, a tendency (but no more than that) for subordinate clauses to follow principal clauses in Germanic, and this probably helped audiences to hear apo koinou constructions in the poetry: a koinon which goes fairly well with the first subordinate clause will be taken as subordinate to that clause until the audience hears the second principal clause, with which it goes better. This principle applies to all the words we find heading adverbial clauses in Old English verse with the exception of oppet, bet as head-word for clauses of purpose and result, and banon.
It is at least imaginable that, in the case of *ba*, *bar*, and *bonne*, the situation in writing was simply a reflection of the situation in speech—that these words usually lacked contrastive phonemic differentiation. And even if there was such differentiation, intonation does not seem to matter all that much in the poetry; the pure connective force of these three words seems to have been what was most important.
Notes to Chapter IV


2 There is a tendency for O.E. poetry to use the -e and -um forms for adverbial modification—forms which can be translated as prepositions, in other words, and which indeed usually seem more likely to have been thought of as instrumental. One does find exceptional spots where words ending in -e seem purely adverbial—the very last passage cited in Chapter VI contains an example of such a koinon—but they are fewer than I, at least, expected. Few forms ending in -lice qualify as koinons, for they must have more than three syllables to stand alone in a half-line, and must stand alone to avoid association with a single verb and thus be taken independently as koinons. There is no half-line adverb of the -lice type in Beowulf which inspires me with enough confidence in the poet’s intention to place it in my collection of apo koinou passages at the beginning of this chapter. The least unlikely, perhaps is found in lines 1634b-39:

```
cyningbalde men
from þæm holmclife hafelan þær
earfoðlice þeora æghwæþrum
felamodigra feower scoldon
on þæm wælstenge weorcum geferian
to þæm goldsele grendles heafod
```

King-bold men bore the head from the sea-cliff hardship-ish-ly, for every two of very brave them, four had to on the battle-pole with labor carry to the gold-hall Grendel’s head.

Making, of course, four in all, since the normal way to carry a wælsteng is, one assumes, with a man on each end. This interpretation is, at least, no more troublesome than the other attempts to deal with the problematic æghwæþrum.

Absolute constructions (which are almost always made either with the dative or instrumental and are thus translatable with prepositions although, in such cases, they might better be translated some other way) would also theoretically fit well into the category of adverbial koinons, but I have found no such koinons and there is some doubt whether there are any absolutes in Old English poetry at all. See Bruce Mitchell, Old English Syntax (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), II, pp. 914-940.


- Meritt, p. 51.


> Here is a type for which, using J. B. Bessinger, Jr.'s *A Concordance to The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (Ithaca: Cornell U. P., 1978), I can provide a complete list. Aside from the *Maxime I* passage already included, the koinons are *Christ* and *Satan* 620b-21, *Riddle 15* 10b-11a, *Phoenix* 93-96a, and possibly *Genesis* 1426b-28a and *Elene* 254-55.

- It is possible—even likely—that Klaeber and Dobbie were influenced in their choice of punctuation in this selection by feeling the need to draw a line between the messenger's synopsis and the beginning of his direct narrative. But even assuming that such a distinction is meaningful here, it seems most practical to say that the direct narrative begins with the subordinate clause. I would say that trying to make such a distinction is misleading unless it is somehow made clear in the edition that lines 2926-27 segue between synopsis and direct narrative.


- Conditional clauses, of course, must be excepted, and temporal clauses are pre-positioned so often that one wonders about them, too.

- Not only are some types of subordinate clauses likely to be found before the main clause, but there are many cases of alternatives to types where principal-subordinate order is usual. See Mitchell, *Old English Syntax* I, pp. 779-94.

- The idea that a preference for postmodification is a result of the influence of Zeilenstil amounts to what I'd call a "strong" version of the theory, where even in the large number of cases such as the *Beowulf* 2923b-29 quote above, where a subordinate clause begins a whole line, an editor would usually attach the clause to what precedes it out of a belief that the influence of Zeilenstil was strong enough
to make Anglo-Saxon poets feel that subordinate clauses naturally "trailed" in nearly all situations. Here we have, I believe, a doubtful theory compounded by a doubtful theory about the first theory's implications. Even if Zeilenstil were real, there is no evidence in the poetry for this degree of influence. Whatever verifiable preference for postmodification there is in the poetry can be more than adequately accounted for by the general tendency of Germanic languages to do the same thing outside of poetry.

13 E. G. Stanley, "Some Observations on the A3 lines in Beowulf", Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope, ed. Robert B. Burlin and Edward B. Irving, Jr (Toronto: U. of Toronto P., 1974) pp. 139-64. One simple possibility that would explain such passages is that in such cases of stain is an adverb instead of a conjunction—see Bruce Mitchell, "Old English 'of st' Adverb?", Notes and Queries 223 (1978), pp. 390-94. If so, of course, clausal adverbial apo koinou would be impossible in such cases.

14 Mitchell, Old English Syntax II, p. 911.

15 Mitchell, Old English Syntax I, p. 794.

16 ibid., p. 793.


18 "Old English 'of st' Adverb?", Notes and Queries 223 (1978) p. 394.

19 New York: Russell & Russell, 1940. These are, of course, the two least controversial pages in Andrew's two books. What is important in them for this discussion is the distinction between "conjunctive" (i.e. subordinate) order and demonstrative order following pa, bonne, and ber. "It is the position of the finite verb which matters," says Andrew. The finite verb has first position after the head-word in demonstrative order, and is final in subordinate order. Common order (SVO), when found after those three words, is often subordinate and the question is whether it is ever, in that circumstance, a demonstrative sentence—a question to which, unfortunately, Andrew answers with an unqualified "No!". Nevertheless, SVO following one of those three words is usually subordinate, just as "conjunctive" order is almost always subordinate and "demonstrative" order, Andrew's opinion notwithstanding (pp. 18 & 29), is usually demonstrative even in the poetry.

My own view of Andrew is not far from Mitchell's.
Usually, when someone's work is described as "flawed, but stimulating," the idea seems to be that it is really not worth reading, but Andrew, in spite of his urge to make hard and fast rules our of general tendencies, is very much worth reading for the stimulation alone.

20 I take geniflan as a form of nibla and feonda geniflan as a subjective genitive.

21 The possibility that the poetry, as we have it in the manuscripts, is the creation of unsophisticated "primitives" (named by whatever euphemism) who didn't care about such details I consider the least likely of all for the vast majority of the verse. See Chapter VIII.

22 This means, incidentally, that Beowulf 1471b-72a might be defended as a koinon. Line 72b is ne was bæn cœrum swa and the second overlapping constituent might be translated as "Where (in the situation in which) he (Hunferth) lost glory, courage-fame, it was not so with the other (Beowulf)." Whether the bær-clause is or is not a koinon makes no difference, of course, to the argument being presented here.
Anglo-Saxon poets seem to have liked going in circles. Chiastic patterning can be found on all levels, from the shortest to the longest units, from what Niles, borrowing from Homeric scholarship, sometimes calls "ring composition" to the actual verbal echoes that distinguish Bartlett's "envelope" patterns.¹ Warriors go riding, praise Beowulf, then go riding, after which one of them sings the praise of Beowulf, comparing him favorably to Sigemund and comparing Heremod unfavorably to Beowulf, after which the warriors go riding.² Sea-voyages are described, with a loving attention that suggests that circularity fascinated most Anglo-Saxon poets, with at least the mirrors of embarkation and disembarkation surrounding the voyage, and often with other mirrors as well.³ And it is not unusual to find apo koinou in the middle of such passages reinforcing the circularity:

> pa stod on stæfe  stibilice clypode  
> wicinga ar  wordum malde  
> se on beot ahead  brimlipendra  
> ærænde to þam eorle  þær he on ofre stod  
> (Battle of Maldon, 25-28)

Then stood on the bank (and) stoutly called the pirates' messenger. The pirates' messenger with words talked. With words talked he who boastfully

142
related the sea travellers' message to the leader, where he stood on the opposite bank.

This is, perhaps, an extreme example—the koinons seem to serve no other good purpose—but apo koinou is an entertaining way of getting from one shore to the other. The flip-flop effect of apo koinou is a good in itself. Thus, when I see poets (and one poet in particular) exploiting this effect now and then as a binding agent in poetry, I surely cannot be blamed for discussing it even though one particular type of Slinky does not quite fit my definition of apo koinou.

In every respect but one, however, it does fit; one need only remove the qualifier "syntactic" from my definition, "Apo koinou is a construction leading to a peculiar psychological effect—a change in the syntactic understanding of a stretch of language on encountering some later stretch of language so that it seems necessary to understand it more than once, where there is no processing breakdown." The psychological effect at the core of my enquiry is in every way the same in this sort of construction, except that it lacks the strengthening quality of being syntactical—at least if you take the sentence as being the boundary of the field of syntax. It makes up for that in other ways, though.

I call such koinons disjunct, and, with one questionable exception, I find them in their pure, paradigmatic form only in Maxims I, where the poet uses every apokoinoush trick
in his power to hook the maxims together into meaningful progressions. Here is such a paradigm:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{rad sceal mid snyttr} & \quad \text{ryht mid wisum} \\
\text{til sceal mid tilum} & \quad \text{tu beo} & \quad \text{gemecan} \\
\text{sceal wif ond wer} & \quad \text{in woruld cennan} \\
bearn mid gebyrdum
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{(Maxims I 22-25a)}\]

Good sense shall go with intelligence, justice with the wise, a good man with a good man. Two are companions. Two are man and wife. A woman and man must bring children into the world by birth.

I do not know whether, when one plays one end of the semantic spectrum of a word against another, it is appropriate to call it a pun; I feel more secure with homonyms. Translating line 23b as "the two are mates" may give something like the effect the line had on native speakers, and certainly the effect is not as strong as it is in

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sele sceal stondan} & \quad \text{yf} \quad \text{ealdian} \\
\text{licgende beam} & \quad \text{lœst gowerf} \\
\text{treo sceolon brædan} & \quad \text{ond treow weaxan} \\
\text{sio geond bilwitra} & \quad \text{breost arisef}
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{(Maxims I, 157-60)}\]

a hall shall stand; the same age—a prostrate trunk grows least. A tree ought to spread out, and a tree grow. Faith ought to spread out, and faith grow which arises in the breast of the innocent.

which wanders slightly from the paradigmatic form, but which still seems basically to have the same effect, probably because the first (and necessary) interpretation stands alone. (It is very unlikely that there was a difference in pronunciation between \text{treo} and \text{treow}, but the different spellings could be an indication that the scribe or one of
his predecessors heard the koinon as "A tree ought to spread out, and a tree grow. / A tree ought to spread out, and faith grow. . . ." Certainly a degree of semantic spread helps bring the koinon into being in the first example, but what is crucial there is that the two ideas being joined are so different. Here we have overkill—not only are the two ideas very different, but they are joined together in a startling way, which is the other way to produce a disjunct koinon. (It goes without saying, does it not, that it is also necessary that at least one of the two interpretations must be a complete sentence?) Disjunct koinons of the less-than-pure type, where only one of the two interpretations isolates the koinon as a complete sentence, can occasionally be found outside of Maxims I. Here is an example of one unsupported by anything resembling a pun. The devil says:

\[
\text{is his rice brad} \quad \text{ofer middangeard} \quad \text{min is geswifrod} \\
\text{ræd under roderum} \quad \text{(Elene, 916b-18a)}
\]

His kingdom is broad over earth. Mine is lessened. Is lessened my might under the sky.

No pun here, but the conjunction of ideas is made startling, first, by calling to mind the devil’s startling ambitions and consequent pretension (rice implies recognized, more-or-less legitimate power) and second, by forcing the listener or reader immediately afterwards to abandon the idea that rice is to be understood in line 917b. Of course,
by that time, the concealed message will already have done its work.

The only reasonable possibility I have discovered outside of Maxims I for candidacy as a disjunct koinon still has, to my mind, the problem of joining two ideas which are, perhaps, only barely different enough with a sentence which is, in connection with those ideas, only barely startling enough. I have discovered, in trying to produce such apo koinou constructions myself, that it is easy to fall into a pattern which comes across as a progression of ideas too natural to produce the effect of apo koinou, and perhaps the poet of the Homiletic Fragment II only just avoided the same pitfall.

Guard your treasure-closet; bind your thought firmly within your mind. Many a thing is uncertain. A true comrade fails sometimes; word-vows weaken.

Or perhaps he really did fall into that pit. Or perhaps this is best taken as another example of less-than-pure disjunct apo koinou, and the second overlapping constituent ought to be translated "Many a true comrade is uncertain." I leave it up to the reader; I myself change my mind almost every other time I look at it. At least, I think I've indicated the general area where one finds borderline cases.
Another pure disjunct apo koinou construction, about which I need say nothing except (along with many other critics) to remind the reader of its mysterious connection with The Seafarer, follows immediately upon a discussion of how to ensure that a child be properly "tamed":

\[
\text{by sceal on þeode geþeorn þæt he wæse pristhycgende styran sceal mon strongum mode storm of holm gebringep (Maxims I, 49-50)}
\]

...by that shall (he) thrive in the tribe in that he will be brave-minded. One must restrain a willful mind. One must steer with a firm mind. The sea often brings storms.

The second koinon in the following selection is disjunct:

\[
\text{bonne hy geþingad habbaþ gesittaþ him on gesundum pingum ond bonne mid gesibum healþdæ cene men gecynde rice cyning bip anwealdes georn laþ se be londes monaþ leof se be mare beodeþ (Maxims I, 56b-59)}
\]

...when they have made arrangements they sit themselves in firm agreements and then hold\[^{2}\] with comrades. And then with comrades hold brave men a natural kingdom, [but] a king is eager for dominion. Hated is he who claims land. Hated is he who demands land, beloved he who offers more.

Perhaps my political inclinations are coloring my interpretation here—but surely the passage at least calls to mind Beowulf 1845b-53a, where Hrothgar suggests that the Geats might do well to "choose" Beowulf as king. One is also reminded of I Samuel, chapter 8, in which the Israelites ask for a king, and God warns them that kings grab everything they can get their hands on.\[^{10}\]
Two other disjunct koinons in the poem are created by playing upon the audience's expectations of parallelism:

\[\text{eorl sceal on eos boge eored sceal getrume ridan fæste fæba stondan famme at hire bordan geriseg widgongel wif word gespringe}\]

\textit{(Maxims I. 62-64a)}

A man shall be on a horse, the cavalry shall ride in a host, the infantry stand firm. It suits a woman to be at her embroidery. A wandering woman spreads words.

\[\text{Meotud sceal in wuldre mon sceal on eorban geong ealdian god us ece bi}^1\]

\textit{(Maxims I. 7-8)}

God must be in glory, man must be on earth, the young age. The young age. God is eternal for us.

It is possible that in this last selection \textit{mon sceal on eorban} is a disjunct koinon created by taking advantage of our expectation of parallelism. The translation, in that case, would be:

God must be in glory. Man must be on earth. / Man, young, must age on earth. God is eternal for us.

It is also possible that this is one of those rare passages where we have triplopia instead of diplopia, and all three interpretations would have likely been understood by an Anglo-Saxon audience.

In the one spot in \textit{Maxims II} that approaches the quality found often in \textit{Maxims I} we also find play with the expected parallelism:

\[\text{ellen sceal on eorle ecg sceal wif hellme hilde gebidan hafuc sceal on glofe wilde gewunian wulf sceal on bearowe}\]

\textit{(Maxims II, 16-18)}

Courage must be in a man. An edge must endure war
with a helmet. A hawk shall be on a glove. A hawk shall on a glove remain wild. Dwell wild shall a wolf in a grove.

If Dobbie is right about the possibility of holly on a funeral pyre', then the second underlined half-line in this passage is a rather creepy disjunct koinon, and the final, boldface koinon is also disjunct in an unusual way.

weder eft cuman
sumor swegle hat sund unstille
depd deada wæg dyrne bif lengest
holen sceal inæled yrfe gedæled
deades monnes dom bif selest
(Maxims I, 76b-80)

...weather come back, summer hot with the sun, the ocean unquiet, the deep wave (wave?) of the dead. / The deep way of the dead is secret the longest; the hidden shall be burned. / Holly shall be burned, the heritage divided of a dead man. / A dead man's reputation is best. (A good) reputation is best.

The last koinon is, oddly, created in part by a sort of struggle between a basic item of folk-wisdom and what one feels must have been, at the time, an even more basic item of folk-wisdom. That people's reputations grow better after their deaths is, today, a well-known (and usually accurate) piece of popular cynicism and one doubts that it was not also a common observation among Anglo-Saxons. Thus, an excellent qualifier for dom is provided in the appropriate spot, and it is too much to imagine that its force would not have been felt. But that a good reputation is best was even more of a commonplace, and the association of the word with a good reputation so strong that a poet needed to say no more (as in Beowulf 1470b's ber he dome forleas). It is
likely, therefore, that when the line had gone by and a new subject been introduced (the next line is *cyning sceal mid ceape cwene gebicgan*—"a king shall buy a queen with property") some understanding like "a good reputation is best" also remained in the listener's mind.

Here, the two integral koinons are perhaps even more striking than two disjunct koinons. There are many such in this poem; *Maxims I* is a wonderful playground for the apo koinou fan, and I'm sorry I feel constrained to limit myself only to those of its koinons which fall within the subject matter of this chapter. But those koinons are good enough, I hope, to draw the reader back to the Exeter Book for the whole experience. Blanche Williams' conclusion that the *Maxims I* poet "... was performing an exercise in verse technic" is probably just as inevitable as she claims—but in the use of the technique of apo koinou, it is an amazing display.
Notes to Chapter V


4 In Beowulf, 205-28 and 1880b-1924 one may add the mirrors of journey down to and up from the shore. See Niles, p. 153.

5 Too late to do more than acknowledge it in a note, I read James W. Earl's "Maxims I, Part I," Neophilologus 67 (1983), pp. 277-83—a very perceptive essay (i.e., Earl agrees with me) which points out many of the same features in the first part of Maxims I (lines 1-70) that I point out. Where I would use the term "disjunct koinon" Earl speaks of "conceptual bridges."

6 Maxims I may with some justification be broken into three separate poems, and it is possible that there are three separate poets. I suspect there is only one poet because the same startling kind of apo koinou binding occurs in all three, and is very different from the gnomic passages found in other poems including Maxims II, where there are few koinons, and only one which approaches the quality found often in Maxims I. That apo koinou construction, by the way, is found near the end of this chapter.

7 The scribe may have been trying to show that there is a slow semantic shifting from building to tree in the passage. That slow shift, however, is only perceptible after the shock of the koinon, and although the intention I am positing for the scribe might be a good way of showing a likely reading after one achieves familiarity with the passage and reflects on it, my translation, I think, shows the most likely first impression.

8 It is not only through apo koinou that Old English poetry made use of the possibility of momentary, but corrected, but nevertheless lasting impressions. There is an interesting example of another type—what one might call a "false pun"—in Daniel Donoghue, Style in Old English Poetry: The Test of the Auxiliary (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987), p. 14.
That is, "keep on on-ing" with. See the Bosworth-Toller entry for healdan, number VI.

In the words of the Revised Standard Version, a king "will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your menservants and maidservants, and the best of your cattle and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day."

ASPR III, p. 306.

Preliminaries

In contrast to my system for dividing koinons according to their syntactical status (adverbial or integral) or their lack of any syntactical status at all (disjunct) I claim no special merit for my divisions according to purpose. These categories necessarily overlap—indeed, they all, I believe, have at least the potential of containing all the other categories as subsidiaries, and although I cannot think of a koinon that serves all five ends—rhetorical, conceptual, kinesthetic, emphatic, and mimetic—many koinons serve more than one end. Two—kinesthetic and emphatic koinons—are often closely associated and it is frequently difficult to say which effect is supposed to be primary (if, indeed, the poet really thought of one or the other as being primary) and this problem also crops up, although with less frequency, in the other three categories. What's more, it is in my opinion a virtual certainty that there are purposes for apo koinou which I have not discovered.
I hope the reader will receive this messiness in the same spirit of equanimity with which I present it. It is of some interest, I suppose, to try to determine when one purpose or another weighed more heavily on the poet's mind, or the audience's, and I do make the attempt, but the real aim of this chapter is simply to give the reader an idea of how apo koinou was most commonly used for ends beyond the inevitable one of serving verbal efficiency. Each individual example—and, I hope, the discussion thereof—is far more important than the scheme of classification, and in the chapter following this one I will again be serving the same aim of showing Anglo-Saxon poets using apo koinou; that chapter will move on to larger contexts and discuss the uses of apo koinou in two whole poems.

Rhetorical Apo Koinou

Rhetorical apo koinou is usually, but not always, found in direct speech. The reasons for the exceptions will become obvious shortly. It is also usually, with a very few exceptions, composed of adverbial koinons; the poets seem to be aiming at certain ends—usually, in one way or another, portraying trickiness—that are most easily accomplished with loose clauses. My first example should make abundantly clear how this works, but before getting to that example I should take time to say a few words about apo koinou chains—a few words being all there is to say, since the
most important point I can make about them is that they exist, and the reasons for their existence vary according to circumstances: rhetorical apo koinou chains serve rhetorical purposes, mimetic chains serve mimetic purposes, and so forth. Often chains have the effect of intensifying the individual apo koinou constructions that make up the chain, since the pivot is almost always itself a new koinon, but even this is not always true, especially when adverbial koinons are involved—and the only rhetorical chains are ones composed of adverbial and principal clauses. That may, however, be an advantage for the reader who is only beginning to become aware of apo koinou chains: chains composed of clauses are probably easier to apprehend. Rhetorical apo koinou seems to invite chains, since the chain can in itself be a rhetorical device. In the selection below, there is only one word—dolgilpe—that is unquestionably impolite (wlenco is quite positive in Beowulf 338), yet it gives the entire passage the character of a mocking accusation. The most important reason it can do so, I think, is because the entire passage is chained together.

Are you the Beowulf who competed against Brecca in
the wide sea contended concerning swimming, when you two for pride tried the water and because of foolish boasting in deep water ventured your lives no one could keep you two from the perilous journey, neither dear nor hostile when you two swam in the sea there you enfolded the sea-stream with your arms. . .

In most cases, my term "rhetorical" carries with it the everyday implication of sneakiness, as it does here. By stringing together two-faced clauses, Hunferth makes it impossible to tell when or if his speech stops being a question and turns into an accusation. I stopped where I did in my selection of a passage simply because that is the point where I stop hearing it as a question and start hearing it as an accusation--one might easily argue that the effect goes on to 517a. This technique is, I believe, used by lawyers even today.

One can also sneakily chain adverbials together for slightly more benevolent purposes:

\[
\text{ond pinum magum læf folc ond rice } \quad \text{bonne ðu forb scyle metodescealt seon } \quad \text{ic minne can glædne Hroðulf } \quad \text{þæt he pa gegeðe wile arum healdan } \quad \text{gyf þu mr bonne he wine scyldinga } \quad \text{worold oflætest wene ic þæt he mid gode } \quad \text{gyldan wille uncran eaferan } \quad \text{gif he þæt eal gemon (Beowulf 1178b-85)}
\]

. . . and leave (your rewards) to your kin, folk, and kingdom, when you must go forth to see the decree of fate I know, of my bright Hrothulf, that he will rule those young troops with honor if you earlier than he, friend of Scyldings, relinquish the world, I believe that he will repay our offspring with good (stuff) if he bears all that in mind. [i.e. how aunt and uncle gave him good stuff]

Wealhtheow needs to mention the possibility of Hrothgar's
death—not a good subject to bring up at any time, and least of all at a party. Tact is needed, and poetic euphemisms are possibly not enough for Hrothgar, and certainly not enough to show the audience that tact is at work, since they fit in too well with the style of the poem. The best strategy available, perhaps, is to bury the references to Hrothgar's death in doubly subordinated koinons, thus hurrying past those unpleasant thoughts and putting the emphasis on doubly principal clauses telling Hrothgar how well Hrothulf will do.

Andrew employs the same strategy of burying that which he'd rather his listener not think about too much in a subordinate koinon, in the following apo koinou construction discovered by Mitchell:

\[
\text{ic wille } \underline{\text{pe}} \\
\text{eorr unforcu}\underline{\text{s}} \quad \text{anre nu } \underline{\text{gena}} \\
\text{bene biddan } \underline{\text{beah ic be bega lyt}} \\
\text{sinwewearfunga } \underline{\text{svyllan mihte}} \\
\text{fætedsinges } \underline{\text{wolde ic freondscreipe}} \\
\text{þeoden þrymfæst } \underline{\text{þinne gif ic mehte}} \\
\text{begitan godne}
\]

(Andreas, 474b-80a)

I want now yet to ask a boon of you, hero of unstained renown, although I can give to you little money, few costly gifts of beaten gold, I would, if I could, glorious lord, get your good friendship.

Andreas wants free sailing lessons, and it's not a good idea to stress the fact that he can't pay (or can pay little). This example will serve to show the difference between a superkoinon and a chain. Here, instead of one apo koinou construction coming after another, one falls in the middle
of another. The internal apo koinou, incidentally, seems also to draw emphasis away from the the clausal koinon in this case. (This may not be true in all cases. I do not feel it, for what that's worth, in the superkoinon in Beowulf, 1714b-19a, coming up in the section on mimetic apo koinou.)

I would like to confine this category to what its name implies--direct speech--but when one is categorizing purposes, overlapping categories seem inevitable. Sometimes poets use similar kinds of trickery for their own ends and it seems silly to leave such passages out of this category. My hundred consecutive lines of Meters of Boethius contained two examples of this (lines 6b-7 and 28b-30a) and the riddles may also contain examples of this sort of apo koinou.

If they do, they do not do so very often. One would think that any sort of apo koinou might be unfairly confusing in a riddle--after all, the ideal audience for the Exeter Book riddles is ignorant, presumably, of what it is the poet is talking about, and in many cases cannot, therefore, assume that what follows a potential koinon is not a pivot just because it doesn't sound as though it goes as well with the middle element as the first element does. However, it turns out that those riddles that do contain the construction usually manage to use it in a way that does not unfairly interfere with an attempt to solve it. For
example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þæw} & \hspace{1em} \text{be} \hspace{1em} \text{hrycge} \hspace{1em} \text{sceal} & \hspace{1em} \text{brusan} \hspace{1em} \text{secan} \\
\text{gif} & \hspace{1em} \text{he} \hspace{1em} \text{unrædes} & \hspace{1em} \text{ér} \hspace{1em} \text{ne} \hspace{1em} \text{geswicef} \\
\text{strengæ} & \hspace{1em} \text{bistolen} & \hspace{1em} \text{stræng} \hspace{1em} \text{on} \hspace{1em} \text{spremce} \\
\text{mægene} & \hspace{1em} \text{biniumen} & \hspace{1em} \text{nah} \hspace{1em} \text{his} \hspace{1em} \text{modes} \hspace{1em} \text{geweald}
\end{align*}
\]

(Riddle 27, 11-14)

...that he must seek the ground with his back if
unadvisedly he doesn't desist earlier, strength
stolen, strong in speech, might taken away, he will
not have rule of his mind.

where the answer is "mead". The riddle-poets are so
generally fair that on those occasions where there might be
an intentionally misleading koinon, I am inclined to wonder
whether—if the construction is not purely an accident—the
fairness is concealed from me by my own ignorance. In the
web-and-loom riddle, for instance,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{hyre} & \hspace{1em} \text{fota} \hspace{1em} \text{wæs} \\
\text{biidfæst} & \hspace{1em} \text{oper} & \hspace{1em} \text{oper} \hspace{1em} \text{bisgo} \hspace{1em} \text{dreag} \\
\text{leolc} & \hspace{1em} \text{on} \hspace{1em} \text{lyfte} & \hspace{1em} \text{hwilum} \hspace{1em} \text{londc} \hspace{1em} \text{neah} \\
\text{trepw} & \hspace{1em} \text{wæs} \hspace{1em} \text{geten} & \hspace{1em} \text{þam} \hspace{1em} \text{þær} \hspace{1em} \text{torhtan} \hspace{1em} \text{stod} \\
\text{leafum} & \hspace{1em} \text{bihongen}
\end{align*}
\]

(Riddle 56, 6b-10a)

One of its feet was firm, the other endured labor,
swung in the air, sometimes near the ground the
wood was near what stood there hung with bright
leaves.

whether or not the koinon is unfair depends on the
construction of the loom.3

One example of a potentially misleading koinon, whether
intentional or not, is

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þam} & \hspace{1em} \text{se} \hspace{1em} \text{grimma} \hspace{1em} \text{ne} \hspace{1em} \text{mœg} \\
\text{hungor} & \hspace{1em} \text{scéfSan} & \hspace{1em} \text{ne} \hspace{1em} \text{se} \hspace{1em} \text{hata} \hspace{1em} \text{þurst} \\
\text{yldo} & \hspace{1em} \text{ne} \hspace{1em} \text{adle} & \hspace{1em} \text{gif} \hspace{1em} \text{him} \hspace{1em} \text{arluc} \\
\text{esne} & \hspace{1em} \text{benað} & \hspace{1em} \text{se} \hspace{1em} \text{be} \hspace{1em} \text{a} \hspace{1em} \text{gan} \hspace{1em} \text{sceal} \\
\text{on} & \hspace{1em} \text{þam} \hspace{1em} \text{sìffate} & \hspace{1em} \text{hy} \hspace{1em} \text{gesunde} \hspace{1em} \text{at} \hspace{1em} \text{ham} \\
\text{findað} & \hspace{1em} \text{witode} \hspace{1em} \text{him} & \hspace{1em} \text{wiste} \hspace{1em} \text{ond} \hspace{1em} \text{blisse}
\end{align*}
\]

(Riddle 43 2b-7)
... whom grim hunger cannot harm, nor hot thirst, age nor disease, if the servant who ever must go on that journey serves him honorably they, safe at home find assured for themselves food and bliss

where the koinon really only goes with the last clause: the solution is "soul and body", and the soul will not be harmed by hunger, thirst, or disease no matter what its servant, the body, does. Someone reading the riddle and attempting to solve it does not yet know the solution, of course, and reading (either privately or publicly) may be the main or sole means of transmission of this poem—the riddle is an awfully "literary" form. One factor that inclines me towards the view that this is intentionally misleading apo koinou is that riddle-solvers have reason to expect paradoxes in their riddles, and the first clause will make the solver tend to take wiste in the pivot as meaning simply "food", thus further encouraging an apo koinou interpretation, when a meaning like "well-being" works much better with the actual solution.

There are a few cases where riddle-poets use apo koinou to mislead in a way I consider fair. These, too are rhetorical apo koinou:

ic me wenan ne þearf
þæt me bearn wræce on bonan feore
gif me gromra hwylc  gube gengegef
ne weorpeþ siþ magburg gemicledu
eaforan MINUM þæ ic AFTER WOC
nymbe ic hlafordleas hwecorfan motæ
from bam healdende be me bringæs geaf
me bið forð witod  gif ic frean hyre
gube fremme swa ic gien dyde
minum þeodne on ponc þæt ic þolian sceal
bearngestreona
(Riddle 20, 17b-27a)

I need not expect that a child will avenge me on the life of a slayer if any of the fierce approaches me with war the hometown will not become greater by descendants of mine from whom I after was born unless I am permitted to turn lordless from the protector who gave me rings it is certain for me in the future, if I obey (my) lord, advance war as I yet did in pleasure to my ruler, that I must forego procreation.

By my boldface and capitals I am attempting to show that the nature of the listener's understanding of the central koinon changes halfway through; the construction—or, in this case, deconstruction—shares some qualities with conceptual apo koinou. It is the cruelty of this riddle, I believe, to make the stooge sure he has the right answer (and he does—it's a sword) and then to make him unsure of himself in the middle of the clause beginning ne weorpeð sic mæg burg, which sounds, even halfway through, like the boast of a sword, but then suddenly becomes mysterious and paradoxical. The paradox, incidentally, most likely involves the sword being sent to the armory and being reforged.*

Aside from the very doubtful example from Riddle 56, all of my examples have been clausal; here is one which, although adverbial, is not clausal:

Hu mæg ic þæt findan þæt swa fyrn geweorð wintra gangum is nu worn sceacen CC of þæt ma geteled rime

(Elene, 632-34)

How can I find that which so long ago came about in years' goings there is now a lot gone by—200 or more numbered by count.

Judas, the speaker, is still at this point in the poem one
of those mysteriously recalcitrant, grace-rejecting Jews, and the strategy is similar to Hunferth's. An evasive question (he does not want to reveal the likely location of the Cross) becomes even more evasive when it turns into an innocent statement about a span of time.

The following integral koinon, in a more subtle example of rhetorical apo koinou than usual, helps characterize Joseph's state of mind concerning Mary's pregnancy. His somewhat confused speech begins by placing the hurt in himself and then pushes it outside to others—to avoid making Mary feel bad, I assume. Here, ḫāḇḇē is the main verb for the first element, and the auxilliary for the pivot.

\[
\text{ic lungre eam} \\
\text{deope gedrefed dome bereafod} \\
\text{forSon ic worn for pe worde ḫāḇḇē} \\
\text{sidra sorga and sarcwida} \\
\text{hearmes gehyred ond me hosp sprecaʃ} \\
\text{tornworda fela}
\]

\[(\text{Christ 1, 169-72a})\]

Right now I am deeply troubled, deprived of judgment because I have in word because of you much wide sorrow and pain-speech, harm, heard, and many anger-words speak reproach to me. The audience begins by believing that it is Joseph who has the pain-speech in him, and that he is about to let it out, but it is not for nothing that Joseph is considered a saint.

Conceptual Apo Koinou

Here, just as in most of the cases of disjunct apo koinou, there is a switch in our conceptual understanding of
the koinon; however, there is also the usual change in our syntactic understanding. Often, conceptual koinons serve ends discussed elsewhere in this chapter, but I consider conceptual apo koinou, like the pun, to be an end in itself. Often, as a matter of fact, in conceptual apo koinou play with the sense-extensions of a word is combined with syntax-play, and I see no point in considering that sort of "pun" separately. For that matter, the only koinon pun that strikes me as any good and that is at the same time a "real" pun—a play on homonyms—is the "treo" pun in Maxims I, line 159, discussed in the last chapter. I am certain there are more good ones to be found, but it is hard for a non-native speaker to find them, and I must admit that the only other "real" koinon pun I have found strikes me as annoyingly stupid. Here it is, nevertheless:

fyrdwic aras
wyrpton hie werige wiste genægdon
modige metepegnas hyra mægon beton
braeddon æfter beorgum sifgan byme sang
flotan feldhusum

(Exodus, 129b-33a)

A camp arose. They, weary, recovered. The brave meat-thanes assaulted food, increased their strength, cooked behind the defenses. / Spread out among the hills after the trumpet sang, the sailors with tents."

This is the work of a poet from whom we expect much better, but even so, it's hard to believe that the pun and its consequent koinon are unintentional.

It will no doubt help in giving the reader a more precise idea of what I mean by "conceptual" to make my next
example a koinon which contains nothing like a pun. Here is an exceptionally powerful and spooky one:

```
fand þa ðær inne  mælinga gedriht
swefan æfter symble  sorge ne cuþon
wonsceafaÐ wera  wiht unþelo
grim ond grædig  geæo sona wæs
reoc ond reþe  one on raþe genam
þritig þegna
```

(Beowulf, 118-23a)

(Grendel) found them therein: a troop of nobles sleeping after feast-day. They didn't know sorrow, the misery of men. / The misery of men, the unwholesome creature, fierce and greedy, was soon ready, savage and fierce, and took, in rest, thirty of the thanes.

Incremental variation is undoubtedly one of the factors that makes this so effective, and the increments are made more effective by the similarity between wonsceafa and wonsceafhta (the name of a disease), with its suggestion of the unþelo. The whole construction reflects back on sorge in such a way as to associate Grendel with that descriptive term, too, so that while the audience is experiencing the effect of the conceptual apo koinon, it is also, I think, feeling the force of an unstated idea something like "they didn't know about Grendel." Similar in construction, if not quite so powerful, is this Beowulf passage:

```
hafde þa gefrunen  hwænan sið fæþ ðaras
bealondiþ biorna  him to bearme cwom
maþumfæt mære
```

(Beowulf, 2403-05a)

(Beowulf) had then learned whence the feud arose, the evil-hatred of men. The evil-hatred of men to his lap came. To his lap came the famous treasure-vessel.

Whether what I have marked as the first koinon will be
perceived as such at its pivot (the second koinon) depends on the memory of the audience. This section of the poem reintroduces the story of the dragon and the cup after a long digressive passage, and bealónís biorna might seem to be in apposition to faðeh until maðumfæt reminds the audience that the feud is centered in the vessel, in which case it is possible that the pivot at 2405a could create both koinons. The reminder would be effective because of the placement of both bealónís biorna and maðumfæt mare in succeeding a-lines, in a manner typical of a lot of other variation.

Here is another "pun-less" conceptual koinon— one from Guthlac B. After reflecting on the inevitability of death in general and of Guthlac's death in particular, the narrator says:

\[
\text{ingong geopenað ne mœg amig þam}
\text{flæsce bifongen feore wiðstondan}
\text{ricra ne heannra ac hine raðst on}
\text{gifrum grapum swa wæs guðlace}
\text{enge anhoga ætryhte þa}
\text{æfter nihtscuan neah geþyded}
\text{wiga wælgifre hine wunade mid}
\text{an obehtbegn se hine æghwylce}
\text{daga neósade ongan ða deophydig}
\text{gleawmod gongan to godes temple}
\text{þær he ðeþelbodan inne wiste}
\]

(Guthlac B, 993-1003)

The entrance opens--nor can any surrounded by flesh withstand that (death) by the spirit, rich or poor, but (death) rushes on him with greedy grabs. Thus the oppressive solitary one was then, after night-shades, joined closely near Guthlac; the slaughter-greedy warrior lived with him, a sole attendant. A sole attendant lived with him, who visited him each day. Then began the deep-thinking wise-mind to go to God's temple, where he knew the homeland-preacher (to be) within...
Again, it would be possible, in this case, to avoid the feeling of apo koinou by a long pause between half-lines, but it is hard to believe that a poem based so closely on Chapter 50 of Felix's Latin Life of Saint Guthlac was orally composed or transmitted, and without an oral tradition of such a pause, lines 999b-1000a (possibly 999b-1001a) must be taken as a koinon. This is our introduction to Beccel—the fact Guthlac had an attendant has never been mentioned before.

Why would the poet wish to make us believe, if only temporarily, that when he is speaking of Beccel he is speaking of death? Well, Beccel is Guthlac's foil, so depressed by the idea of Guthlac's death that he is himself Guthlac's only cause for rue. (The poet goes to great lengths to assure us that the prospect of death only makes Guthlac the cheerier.) As far as Guthlac is concerned, there are ways in which Beccel is worse than death—his disease and mortality afflicts his body and Beccel afflicts his soul. He must continually cheer Beccel up (1007-96, 1114-33, and 1156-1269) and the only sign of weakness Guthlac displays in this poem occurs right after he has had one of his talks with Beccel. Thus, this apo koinou construction provides the audience with a spooky bit of foreshadowing.

The idea of conceptual apo koinou may help to clear up one much fuzzed-over passage in Beowulf; the key is the
obbe/ob be distinction around which much of the debate has raged. One might make a case that I have a real homonym-pun here, but I take obbe and ob be to be basically the same word, and the effect on an audience to be unlike that created by homonyms. Perhaps I am overly influenced by etymological considerations. Fortunately, it makes no difference to my point.

wiste þæm ahlaecan
to þæm heahsele hilde gehinged
sippan hie sunnan leocht geseon meahton
obbe/ob be nipende niht ofer ealle
scaduhelma gescapu scrifan cwomon
wan under wolcnum werod eall aras

(Beowulf, 646b-51)

Any attempt to provide guidance in the Old English through italics, boldface, and the like, will probably only create confusion. My point will become clearer, I think, if in this case I provide three translations, indicating only one koinon in each of the first two, so that the reader may more easily notice them disappear:

(Hrothgar) believed battle arranged for the monster at the high hall after they could see the sunlight, or else the darkening night over all, the shapes of shadow-coverings, came to glide dark under the sky.

This first interpretation, making the most probable use of sippan, must be abandoned at this point, and most likely would have been abandoned even earlier—if cwomon were the infinitive this construction anticipates, the interpretation would make a certain amount of sense, but the audience would probably find it hard to believe that the poet wanted to tell them that Hrothgar thought the battle would either be
after day or after night. In either case—whether the above reading is abandoned almost as soon as it is perceived, or else is abandoned at line 650b—the koinon automatically shrinks and becomes a conceptual koinon, and the interpretation of syppan changes to the second-likeliest meaning:

(Hrothgar) believed battle arranged for the monster at the high hall. Afterwards they could see the sunlight, or else the darkening night over all, the shapes of shadow-helmets. / The shapes of shadow-helmets came to glide dark under the sky. The troop all arose.

But if the troop all arose they must have arisen in the middle of the night, which is not the way things are done. We have here an extremely rare case of an apo koinou construction that works like a garden-path sentence. (And that might be taken as an indication that the poet has lost control.) The far more usual meaning of obbe forces the above interpretation until line 651b forces the audience to reconstruct what they have heard, eliminating the koinon at 650a and reconstructing the syntax from 648a to 651a:

(Hrothgar) believed battle arranged for the monster at the high hall from the time when they could see the sunlight until the darkening night over all, the shapes of shadow-helmets, came to glide dark under the sky. The troop all arose.

That, of course, makes 648a-51a a conceptual koinon. The effect—assuming the audience was not too irritated to feel it—would have been to suggest, for a moment, the possibility that the folks at Heorot were all going to die, through the force of the "or else". (That is, "Afterwards,
they could see the sunlight, or else it would be curtains."

In the following example, the word-play involves the change in an idiomatic phrase from its usual meaning to a more literal meaning:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{fret se famman þegn & fore fæder dædum} \\
\text{after billes bite & blodfag swefes} \\
\text{ealdres scylidig & him se ofer þonan} \\
\text{losaf lifigende}
\end{align*}
\]

(\textit{Beowulf} 2059-62a)

"...that the woman's thane, for his father's deeds, sleeps blood-stained on account of a blade's bite, having forfeited his life. / Owing a life, the other [the killer] escapes from there alive."

The implication is strong that the other has also forfeited his (right to) life, and the situation he finds himself in is likely to give members of the audience a case of triplopia, the final construction being elegant and semi-paradoxical: "Having forfeited his life, the other escapes from there alive."

My final example of conceptual apo koinou shows, I think, that if we keep the possibility of apo koinou in mind, what used to appear obscure and complicated can turn out to be fairly simple. Making lines 4-6 of \textit{Exodus} parenthetical, as the ASPR does, or doing the same with 4-5, as Cosijn does\(^9\), seems to do nothing to make the opening of that poem less confusing, but a diplopic understanding of the passage enables us to make instant sense out of everything.\(^9\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hwaet we fæor & neah gefrigen habaf} \\
\text{ofor middangeard moyse domas} \\
\text{wræclico wordriht & wera cneorissum}
\end{align*}
\]
What! We far and near have heard proclaimed to men [7a] over earth Moses' laws, wonderful 'word-
justice for generations of men, for each of the blessed in heaven after the death-journey /, along
the path of death a remedy of life for each of the living a long-lasting counsel.

Obeying Moses' laws gets you to heaven. It's wonderful
after you die (assuming you've obeyed), and wonderful
counsel on the way to death.

Kinesthetic Koinons

All apo koinou constructions have kinesthetic effects
(always at least the effect of a jolt as the understanding
of a stretch of language switches) and in a poetic tradition
in which there is always a slow, repetitive beat, half-line
by half-line, those effects were probably always gratifying.
Yet it is hard to be sure when a koinon is being used
primarily for some kinesthetic end, and even when I am
convinced, it is very difficult to make the case with such a
koinon. For instance, I am convinced that the Beowulf-poet
associated apo koinou--in connection with Wealhtheow, at
least--with elegance of movement, but if the only examples I
could give were like

eode Wealhpeow forp
cwen brobgares cynna gemyn dig
grette goldbroden guman on healle
(Exod. 1-7a)
Vealh'theow went forth, Hrothgar's queen, mindful of rank. Hrothgar's queen, mindful of rank, gold-bedecked, greeted the men in the hall.

one might, while acknowledging a certain stateliness in the construction, wonder whether I wasn't making too much of the general kinesthetic effects of such koinons. The case seems more convincing if I cite the passage six lines further on, where our understanding ymbeode the dugube ond geogobe along with Wealhtheow:

ymbeode þa ídes Helminga
dugube ond geogobe dað agbwylcne
(Beowulf 620-21)

Then the lady of the Helmings went around the tried and the green troop.

...went around each part of the tried and the green troop.

This mimesis makes the kinesthetic effect seem stronger.

Unfortunately, the poetry offers us few supports this strong for theories about specific kinesthetic purposes. I can say that a reading of a mass of Old English poetry, where the reader keeps an eye out for koinons that seem to make a stronger-than-usual kinesthetic impression, will probably convince the reader that koinons are often used to slow down the beat at the end of a speech, or, for that matter, at the end of any line of thought, but it ought to take a lot of examples to convince a skeptical reader—more than I can provide here. I will give a few to convince that reader that I might be right. First, a single koinon at the end of a speech, helped along by interrupting modifiers:
[After I, Beowulf, have finished with Grendel] He who may will go afterwards to mead high-spirited after another day's dawn over the sons of men, another day's sun, bright-clothed, shines from the south.

At the conclusion of a long line of thought, right before the almost gnomic conclusion, we have:

\[
\text{æglæca ehtende wres deorc deapescu }
\text{dugube ond georgbe seomade ond syrede sinnihte heold mistige moras men ne cunnon hwyder helrunan hwyrfum scripaf}
\]

(\textit{Beowulf, 159-63})

... but the monster was attacking, the dark death-shadow, the tried and the green troop lay in wait for and entrapped, in perpetual night held the misty swamps. Men don't know where hell-confidants glide in circuits to.

These koinons—especially the last—also seem mimetic with the \textit{hwyrfum} in line 163b. Is Grendel holding the men or the swamps in perpetual night? Well, men don't know...

At the end of a poem, without mimesis:

\[
eahhtodan eorliscipe and his ellenweorc
duguðum demdon swa hit gedefe bif bet mon his winedryhten wordum herge PERHDUM freoge bonne he forð scile of lichaman [læded] weordan swa begno.nodon geata leode hlaforðes [hr]yre heorðgeneatas cwædon þat he wære wyruldcyninga manna mildust ond mon[ðw]warust leodum lifost ond lofgeornost
\]

(\textit{Beowulf, 3173-82})

They praised his manhood and his courage-work to the troops commended in the way that it is fitting that one his friend-lord with words praise
WITH HIS SPIRIT love when he must be led forth from the body, in that way lamented the Geatish people their lord's fall, the hearth-companions. The hearth-companions said that he was, of world-kings, the mildest of men and the kindest, to people the gentlest, and most eager for praise.

It would probably be more accurate, although even less susceptible of demonstration, to say that Old English poetry tended to use koinons for more purely kinesthetic reasons when the poets wanted to apply the brakes at points where it would be good to sound especially impressive. The ends of obvious sections just happen to be the most easily identifiable of those kinds of places. I can, however, point to at least one passage in Old English poetry where, in the middle of a line of thought the poet seems to me to be opting for a primarily kinesthetic effect with koinons in order to sound impressive. Beginning with relatively mild effects, it builds to a point at lines 174b-75a (so complex that once again there's no point in attempting to mark the koinons) where every word is getting the same weight every half-line used to, and then proceeding to a koinon for which not even a paraphrase will do--I must include something like psychological description.

```
him pær segncyning wið bone segn foran
manna þengel mearcbreat e rad
guþweard gumena grimhelm gespeon
cyning cinberge cumbol lixtōn
wiges on wenum wælhlencan sceoc
het his hereciste healdan georne
fæst fyrdgetrum

(Exodus, 172-78a)
```

From mearcbreat e to cyning there are five more koinons: line
173b, 174a, 174b, gespeon separately, and cyning— and I have yet to take into account the effect of wiges on wenum, which I am also compelled to call a koinon, although it is admittedly a very odd example of the species. It must be understood in relation to four verbs—a fact which is only revealed by the appearance of welhencan sceoc—and, eventually, in relation to yet another verb. Here is the paraphrase plus psychological description:

The banner-king himself there by the banner in front the leader of men with the border-troop rode the war-lord of men. The war-lord of men the helmet fastened. The helmet (OBJ) fastened the king. Fastened the king the chin-guard. The banners (Did he fasten the banners?) gleamed (Well, I guess that's the end of that stuff for a while.) in expectation of war, shock the byrnie (Wait! What shook the byrnie? Cumbol lixton is plural! The king) shock the byrnie in expectation of war. . . and the banners gleamed in expectation of war. . . all these things happened in expectation of war!), ordered his picked troops (also in expectation of war) to eagerly hold firm in battle-lines.

Here one could also argue that mimesis is important; the ideas pull back as the horse pulls back, as the troops are pulled back to hold their lines. But here, the kinesthetic effects are so strong that I feel safe in calling them primary. The two "disjunctive" variations that make up 175a (cyning—a slightly incremental variation on 173a and 174a—and cinberge—a highly incremental variation of grimhelm) work in perfect synchronization with the shock of apo koinou, and the beat of the lines is jerked back hard. There are very few other poetic passages in or out of Old
English poetry where the rhythm is fastened so firmly to the ideas. (One other candidate is the opening of *The Seafarer*, for which see Chapter VII.)

**Emphatic Apo Koinon**

The problems that arise in trying to identify emphatic koinons are similar to those arising in identifying kinesthetic koinons. All koinons are emphatic to some degree, since they are understood twice, and it is hard to be sure when a koinon is being used primarily for emphasis; there are few "pure" cases. In the example below, for instance (where parallelism of phrase structure forces the first syntactical understanding), there seems little doubt that the poet, whom I imagine to be a preacher, wanted to emphasize the idea of coming to church in winter, but the apo koinon construction is also conceptual and rhetorical.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pa man mæg mid fastenum} \\
\text{and forhæfndnessem beonon adrifan} \\
\text{ond mid cyricscnum cealdum wederum} \\
\text{eadmodlice callunoga biddan} \\
\text{heofena drihten } \text{bæt he } \text{be hal gife}
\end{align*}
\]

(Exhortation to Christian Living, 46-50)

Those (drunkenness, adultery, and gluttony) one can drive hence by fasting and abstinence, and by attending church in cold weather, and by praying to the Lord of the heavens that he give you salvation.

There are—as seen previously in the fourth poem of the *Meters of Boethius*—koinons which are primarily emphatic, but there seems to be no formal way of defining where such
spots occur. One only discovers them in context. The koinon at 7b-8a seems especially emphatic because God's might is the common denominator of the sunlight that washes away the night and the moonlight that washes away the stars.

\begin{verbatim}
swylice seo sunne sweartra nihta
fiostro adwesce\$ furh \$ine meht
blacum lechte beorhte steorran
mona gemetga\$
\end{verbatim}

(Meters 4, 6-9a)

...just as the sun erases the dark nights' darkness through your might with shiny light the moon controls the bright stars.

The apo koinou construction around 38a seems especially emphatic because it creates something like a political cartoon of an evil king.

\begin{verbatim}
sit\$a\$ yfele men giond eor\$ricu
on heahsetlum halige pricca\$
under heora fotum
\end{verbatim}

(Meters 4, 37-39a)

Evil men sit throughout the earth-kingdoms on thrones (they) crush the holy under their feet.

The example from Exhortation to Christian Living above, insofar as it is emphatic, seems to create that effect by equating attending church in cold weather with mortification. I have discovered only one formal means whereby a poet might guarantee himself at least an increased likelihood of creating an emphatic koinon.

Often, although the apo koinou construction is emphatic, the emphasis is thrown on the pivot. (In the example below, the effect is helped along by correlation between two \textit{bets}.)

\begin{verbatim}
onsend higelace gif mec hild ni\$e
beaduscruda bet\$t bet mine breost were\$
\end{verbatim}
Thus, if a poet chains two integral koinons together, the second often becomes primarily emphatic because it is weighted both by being a pivot and by being a koinon:

```
Send Hygelac, if battle takes me, the best war-shirt that my breast wears, best of clothing. What my breast wears—best of clothing— that is Hrethel’s legacy, Weland’s work.
```

```
The "music" mounted up, abundantly new. The "music" mounted up, abundantly new to the North-Danes (it) issued. To the North-Danes issued a horrible fear to each one. . . .
```

But even here, the audience is presumably contrasting the Danes with the Geats—or, at least, with Beowulf—and were it not for that circumstance, we would still not be inclined to call the second koinon above emphatic. If there were no immediately apparent reason for the emphasis, the effect would seem primarily kinesthetic.

If such a chain is long, the kinesthetic effects may in themselves produce an additional effect of emphasis, solely through the effect of throwing weight over to the new pivots:

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Ecgtheow's son, the Geatish warrior, would then have passed away within the yawning abyss if to him his battle-byrne hadn't advanced help the hard war-net, and holy God. / and holy God ruled war-victory the wise Lord, the heavens' Ruler. / The wise Lord, the heavens' Ruler decided it justly, easily, after he had stood up.

The longer the chains, and the more of them there are in close proximity to each other, the more strongly this effect is felt. The best example of this is the opening to The Seafarer, discussed in Chapter VII.

Mimetic Apo Koinou

I have saved a discussion of mimesis for last in this chapter because mimetic effects are, I believe, the most easily apprehended by modern audiences and, thus, are probably the most impressive. Whether this was so for the Anglo-Saxons is a question for which I can find no reasonable way of determining an answer, but I do feel safe in saying that if mimetic apo koinou was not felt more strongly than the other types listed in this chapter, it was because the other types made a bigger impact—not because mimetic apo koinou was less strongly felt. I occasionally detect a certain sense of fun connected with mimetic apo koinou which assures me that the poets shared our feeling for mimesis. This is, of course, horribly subjective, but I suspect that the reader will come away with the same strong subjective impression after reading the following selection:

nis nu ofer eorfan  moegu gesceait
pe ne hwearfges  swa swa hweol deo
There is not now on earth any creature that doesn't turn just as a wheel does on itself, because it so turns that it comes back where it earlier was when it is first turned from outside, when it is wholly revolved from outside it must do again what it earlier did and also be what it earlier was.

The dizzying effect of this passage is promoted by our initial insecurity over whether *forson* modifies the *swa* clause or all of what precedes it, by the echo between lines 76b and 80b, by the echo and near-rhyme of 77b and 78b, and by the suggestion of correlation between the two *bonne* clauses, but without the apo koinou in the middle the effect would be considerably less, if it survived at all. The koinon binds the whole thing into one big whirling sentence, and the mental flip-flop we go through when we feel the effect of apo koinou is made even more violent when the poet forces us to decide that the two *bonne* clauses really aren't correlative, and the second *bonne*, which begins the pivot, is forced out of association with the first.

That flip-flop effect is always of potential use when a poet wants to present some idea associated with circularity. A less mind-boggling, but in some ways more spectacular example can be found in a clausal chain of apo koinou constructions from *The Phoenix*:
Before paraphrasing this passage (loosely, in such a way as to emphasize what's syntactically important), I suppose I should first point out that once one is shown the stars rushing westward to hide in line 97, one will naturally think of the *degred* in the west—i.e. the reddening of the sky at dusk—until one hears *gewiteg* in line 99, at which point apo koinou turns *degred* into dawn. I'll try to show this in my paraphrase, but the word is probably best translated simply as "day-red".

It must watch carefully for when the noblest star comes up, shining from the east. Whenever the noblest star comes up, the stars are hidden, gone under the waves in the west, secreted in the dusk and the dark night (on the other side of the earth). The stars are hidden, gone under the waves in the west, secreted at dawn, and the dark night, dim, departs when the bird looks eagerly at the horizon (i.e. "under sky, over water") for whenever, gliding from the east, up shall come the sky's light over the wide sea!

By force of the circularity of apo koinou, the poet has in effect whipped the sky around the earth, and the most important pivot is *gewiteg*, which puts the *degred* back in
the east by abolishing the night. Notice that this is yet another pivot which comes in the middle of a form of ring-composition. Notice also that the apo koinou around *tungol becohp ahyped* eliminates (as it often does) the problem of a sudden and seemingly arbitrary topic-switch.

The gyration of apo koinou lends itself to more than just the imitation of strict circularity. It can be found at work providing a sort of motive force in passages involving any sort of change of position or of state or, in the cases below, both:

- of *byrgenne beorna wuldor*
- of *dæðe ærms dryhten ealra*
- *hælfe æna cynnes*

(Elene, 186-188a)

... from burial men’s Glory from death arose the Lord of all of heroes’ kin.

- *hwæt eac scylide men*
- gesegon to soðe þy sylfan dæge
- þe helo^1^ on prowde þecdwundor micel
- þætte eorðe ageaf þa hyre on lægun
- eft lifgende up astodan
- þa þe hæo ær fæste bifen hæfde
- deade býrygde þe dryhtnes biðod
- heoldon on hrepere

(Christ III, 1152b-59a)

What! Also guilty men saw in truth that very day on which He suffered a great miracle: that the earth gave up those who lay in it. / Those who lay in it again living stood up. / Again living stood up those whom it had held fast, the buried dead who held the Lord’s command in the heart.

They do not merely rise from their graves--apo koinou seems to pop them out of their graves. Of course, the subject need not necessarily ascend, but can go head over heels
Then our Creator thrust and cleaved the haughty kin of angels from heaven the faithless troop the Ruler sent the hateful army on a long trip... Since a change of position is often a metaphor for a change of state, the apo koinou can be mimetic of both at once, as in the following passage, where vegetable growth is a metaphor for the spread of sin after the Fall:

I doubt that it's safe to say that a change of position never involves a change of state, but I can at least say that apo koinou constructions exist where a change of position is primary. Here is a passage in which a more-or-less "conceptual" change of reference strengthens the effect:

He grabbed glory's joy-wood with his hands and with strength raised (it) from the earth-trench. / From the earth-trench the travellers went the nobles in within the city.
Less common are apo koinou constructions mimetic only with a change of state, but that is perhaps to be expected in a poetry that tends to concentrate more on the concrete. At any rate, such constructions can be found, and here is one which emphasizes the edwenden from joy to depression:

hwæt me þæs on eþle  edwenden cwom
gyrn æfter gomene  seofan Grendel weard
sælgewinna ingenga min
ic þære scone singales wæg
modceare micle.

(Beowulf, 1774-78a)

What! A reversal came to me after in the homeland, affliction after joy, when Grendel, the old adversary, became my invader I continually carried great mind-care because of that visitation.

More reminiscent of the apo koinou which is mimetic of outright circularity are the apo koinou constructions that participate in exchanges, such as the exchange of grips in Beowulf 745b-749 (which I hope the reader by now regards as likely),

forð near ætstop
nam þa mid handa  higebibtigne
rinc on ræste  rahte ongean
feónd mid fólme  he onfeng hræpe
inwitpancum ond wif earm gesæt

(Beowulf, 745b-49)

(Grendel) forward nearer stepped-forth, took then with hand the mind-strong one, the man ( NOM or ACC) in bed reached against the enemy with hand he received quickly with hostile intent and against (Grendel's) arm positioned (himself).

and in bestowal, such as this one:

ða wæs gylden hilt  gamelum rince
harum hildfruman on hand gyfen
enta ærgeweorc

(Beowulf, 1677-79a)
Then was the golden hilt to the old warrior, to the hoary battle-leader into the hand given the ancient work of giants.

More impressive is this bestowal from Guthlac B:

\begin{verbatim}
feond byrlade
mærest þare idese and heo adame
byre swæsum were sippan sceucte
bitter bæde-weg þees þa byre sippan
grimme onguldon gafuhrædenne
\end{verbatim}

(Guthlac B, 982b-86)

The devil served first to the woman, and she to Adam, her dear man. And she to Adam, her dear man then poured out a bitter cup for which the children since have grimly paid the required tax.

As the metaphorical liquid gets passed, so does our understanding of which verb goes with the koinon.

The principle whereby apo koinou can be mimetic of some change of position or state seems to apply by extension to changes in point of view; in other words, those places in Old English poetry where the koinon seems to be primarily a segue are all, in some vague way, mimetic. The more extreme the change, the more strongly the effect is felt, and the more clearly the mimetic quality—the importance to the construction of the flip-flop effect—can be seen, as in the third koinon below, which carries us from one event to another quite different.

\begin{verbatim}
grendles modor
ides aglæcwif yrmbe gemunde
se þe wâteregesan wunian scolde
cælde streamas sipcan cain weard

to ecgbanan angan breber
fæderenmæge he þa fag gewat
morþre gemearcod mandream fleon
westen warode
\end{verbatim}

(Beowulf, 1258b-65a)
Grendel's mother, lady monster-woman, kept her misery in mind she who the water-terror had to occupy the cold streams since Cain became as an edge-slayer to his only brother, paternal kinsman. After Cain became as an edge-slayer to his only brother, paternal kinsman, he then went spotted, marked with murder, to flee the joys of men, "guarded" the wasteland.

The apo koinou is still mimetic of movement, and when we move this far away in both time and space, the jolt is especially violent.

I would also call another more-or-less formal use of apo koinou mimetic--its employment in the middle of ring-composition. As I pointed out at the beginning of Chapter V, it is not unusual to find apo koinou in the middle of such passages, reinforcing their circularity, and this reinforcement, of course, also grows out of apo koinou's flip-flop effect. My example in Chapter V (Battle of Maldon, 25-28) shows a place in Old English poetry where the construction seems to be used purely for that end. There are other examples in this chapter where reinforcing the circularity of ring-composition is a subordinate end. They include Elene, 632-43, where Judas' entire speech is an envelope pattern; Beowulf, 118-23a, where 115-23 is an envelope pattern; Phoenix 90-103, which selection is in itself a sort of ring-composition; and perhaps Elene, 186-88a, where the ring extends from line 172 to line 197 and seems likely to be somewhere near the limit of length where apo koinou in the middle can have this effect even slightly.
Occasionally one comes across mimetic apo koinou constructions that operate by some completely different principle. For instance, where the poet speaks of sobbing in lines 4b-5a of my hundred lines of Meters of Boethius

\[ \text{me pios siccetung hafaf agæled pes geocsa} \]

Me this sighing has hindered this sobbing. . . the interruption of the koinon by the line-break imitates the effect of sobbing on speech. And although there is a certain circularity to lines 51b-54 of the same hundred--

\[ \text{þu þæm treowum selest sufan and westan norfan and eastan benumen hæfde leafa gehwelces þurh þone laðran wind} \]

You give to those trees from the south and west what earlier the dark storm from the north and east had robbed. / Those (the trees) earlier the dark storm from the north and east had robbed of every leaf through that hateful wind.

--what makes the passage especially striking is that the apo koinou takes away the understanding of 54a, the referent of which is what is being taken away by the storm in the poem, and then gives it back, as the first element of the construction says. In the example below, the Beowulf poet takes advantage of adverbial koinons in much the way speakers use adverbial koinons in rhetorical apo koinou.

This time, however, the effect of rushing past the subordinate clause and, especially, the adverbial phrase, is simply mimetic of rushing:

\[ \text{duru sona onarn fyrbendum faest syþfan he hire folmum æþran} \]
onbræd þa bealohyðig  þa he gebolgen wæs
recedes muen  rage after bon
on fagne flor  feond treddode
eode yrremod

(Beowulf, 721b-26a)

The door, firm with fire-bars, immediately gave in
after he moved it with his hands drew open, then,
the evil-minded one, when he was enraged, the
building's mouth quickly after that on the
decorated floor the enemy trod, went angry.

We are rushed from outside to inside as Grendel rushes
through the door.

Summary

In this chapter an the next the individual examples
themselves are what is most important, and readers are
invited to examine them if they haven't already. The
distinctions between the most common poetic uses of apo
koinou made in this chapter, however, do make a summary
appropriate, even though these uses overlap and there are
probably uses I have not discovered.

Rhetorical apo koinou is usually found in direct speech,
and usually involves some sort of trickery; it either
attempts to mislead characters in poems into going,
mentally, where other characters want them to go or,
sometimes, misleads audiences into going where poets want
them to go. Sometimes, even in riddles, this procedure
seems fair.

In conceptual apo koinou, there is a switch in our
conceptual understanding of the koinon. Koinons which use
puns and near-puns are included in this category, but often it is the referent of the koinon which changes.

Although all apo koinou has some kinesthetic effect, some koinons seem especially made for that purpose: the poet is applying the brakes at points where it is a good idea to sound especially impressive.

All koinons also involve emphasis to some degree, and there is an especially high amount of overlap between emphatic and kinesthetic apo koinou. Nevertheless, one can discover, in individual passages, reasons drawn from the specific context which make some koinons seem primarily emphatic.

Probably the most easy type to apprehend, and the most striking to modern ears, is mimetic apo koinou, which usually in some way or another takes advantage of the psychological flip-flop effect of the construction to imitate either physical or metaphorical motion—very often circular motion. This circularity, by the way, is of some formal advantage when apo koinou is used to make a transition or is placed in the middle of ring-composition.
Notes to Chapter VI

1 It's hard to imagine how that could ever not be the case, but there are a few exceptions, several of which can be found in this chapter. This can happen in at least two ways. In Exodus, 1-7a, for instance, bote lifes is part of the pivot for the construction that after bealum is the koinon for, but is the first element of the second construction and is never a koinon at all. In Beowulf, 159-63, on the other hand, the half-line between dugube ond geogobe and sinnihte heold is itself a complete pivot, but no koinon. It is the first element of a new apo koinon construction where the koinon is taken at first to be simply another verb which gives us new information about how Grendel treats the dugube ond geogobe. One encounters this situation less often in rhetorical apo koinon; I do not know of any case where a chain consisting only of adverbial koinons alternating with principal clauses violates the rule that each pivot becomes a koinon, nor do I believe at this time that such a violation is possible. But language is full of surprises.

2 Bruce Mitchell, "Five Notes on Old English Syntax", Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 70, pp. 78-80. (The blame for pointing out the internal koinon is mine.)

3 Erika von Erhardt-Siebold, in "The Old English Loom Riddles", Philologica: The Malone Anniversary Studies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1949) pp. 9-17, makes a convincing case that the two feet in the riddle are the weights at the ends of the warp-threads, one of every two of which alternately swings up or down in preparation for each pass of the shuttle. The problem lies with the treow, which might be almost anything. It is easy enough to imagine weaving customs in the area where the riddle was composed that might make the potential koinon fair. If, for instance, the threads were weighted with, say, wooden rods, the referent is the same and the potential koinon is probably fair, since the weights would sometimes have been near the bar which pulled the alternate warp-threads out before every other pass (leafum having the sense of "whatever grows from a branch"). But it is equally easy to imagine situations where the potential koinon would be unfairly misleading. If the treow is itself the bar which pulls the warp-threads out, it was probably no nearer the ground when pulled out then when pushed in. Were it not for the generally fair use of potential adverbial koinons in these riddles, I would be willing to argue that this bar is the most likely referent of treow.

4 See Craig Williamson's introduction to his edition of The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book (Chapel Hill: U.
of North Carolina P., 1977) pp. 23-28. This implies that there was no oral transmission of long pauses or tricks of intonation to eliminate the unfair apo koinou construction.

- See Williamson, 193-98, where in addition to a discussion of reforging being a part of the solution, there is a discussion of the possibility that the rings on the hilt of a sword were a symbol of a liege-lord relationship.

- At least, it is hard to believe it was orally composed in the Parry-Lord sense of oral composition, since the process would have to have begun with careful memorization of the order of events in Felix's chapter. But the lack of spontaneity is accounted for most easily by assuming that it was written out in the first place, and thus was "orally transmitted" only in the sense of being read aloud. In such circumstances, the probability that the poet intended apo koinou increases greatly.

7 At 1094-96a. It makes the most sense, by the way, to take reenigmodum as a dative of interest and to translate 1095b-96a as "he needed rest from the gloomy-minded one."

- A road into the dispute can be found in ASFR IV, pp. 148-49. I translate þæm hælcan the way I do because, as Kemp Malone pointed out in "Three Notes on Beowulf", JEGP XXIX, p. 234, ". . .Hrothgar had every reason to think that Grendel would expect no fighting. The English poet tells us, indeed, that for twelve years the hall had stood empty at night (138 ff.; cf. 411 ff.)." Moreover, Beowulf's resistance, when it comes, does seem to come as a surprise to Grendel. The monster eats Hondsocie, then moves on to Beowulf's bed as if proceeding normally, and the poet also informs us that Grendel is going about his usual business at lines 716b-717.

- "Anglosaxonica", Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur XIX, 457.

10 Except the odd (to us) postponement of line 7a, which no editorial punctuation can make easy and which we must simply accept.

11 I take it that there is some sort of scribal confusion going on between the letters t and c.

12 It is uncertain whether "day-red" represents the true etymology of the word; however, that Anglo-Saxons understood the word to mean "day-red" is shown, I think, by the first entry in Toller's Supplement to Bosworth's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, where the word is used to translate both crepusculem and aurora.

The Beowulf poet too often refers to Grendel's mother with masculine pronouns. Nobody, to my knowledge, has offered a satisfactory explanation for this, and I have none to offer either.

Such passages as Beowulf, 159-63, where the ring which encompasses it (extending from line 144 to line 171b) is probably too long for any mimetic effect to be felt, are excluded.
CHAPTER VII
TWO MASTERS OF APO KOINOU

Aside from the poet who created (or assembled, like a composer of "found" music) the striking technical display we call Maxims I, there are two other poets who seem to me to make especially impressive use of apo koinou constructions, and since the most important aim of this dissertation is to show how apo koinou could be used in poetry, a full discussion of its use in their two poems is a natural consequence of that aim: it is incumbent on me to show how far Anglo-Saxon poets could go. This is a pleasant duty, for it gives me a chance to discuss at some length two Old English poems which are among my favorites: The Wanderer and The Seafarer.

It is suggestive that these two "elegies" are among the most read, beloved, and studied of all Old English poems outside of Beowulf; perhaps apo koinou has an effect on modern readers beneath the level of their awareness, or perhaps the skill poets need to make full use of apo koinou carries over to the awareness of modern readers. But on the surface, editors and critics of the two poems, faced with impossible decisions, have been forced to expend a good deal
of ingenuity trying to choose between syntactic alternatives in some of the places where apo koinou is thickest. These passages, more than anything else, account for the length of my discussion.

I propose to cover all likely uses of the construction in what follows, including the mildest, but I will not be discussing many of the other problems which have plagued students of the poems over the past century or so. I will occasionally remind the reader, in the course of discussing my passages, of some possible interpretations which are not usually stressed in translations and critical discussions of the two poems; often, differing interpretations seem to help make the poet's larger point even when they are to some extent contradictory—in other words, there is a certain diplopic element in them that seems to work well with the apo koinou. Once in a while, I will even offer a comment on the text which has nothing to do with apo koinou. More often, however, I will ignore such critical questions or, when they can't be totally ignored, will make my paraphrases and translations as sneakily noncommittal as possible. I wish to write a chapter, not another book, and a glance at Dunning and Bliss' edition of The Wanderer shows how many thousands of words it takes to display even the tip of the critical iceberg.

Some potential koinons I have dismissed as unlikely on a wide variety of grounds, but enumerating them would only be
padding; it is no good pretending that the procedure of
dismissal is not intuitive. I can, however, give the reader
some idea of how my intuition works, and the limits of my
cautions, by discussing here two very different possible
koinons among those which I dismissed most reluctantly. The
first is found in *The Wanderer* 29b-32:

```
wat se þe cunnaþ
hu slipen biþ þorg to geferan
þam þe him lyt hafaþ leofra geholena
waraþ hine wæmclast nales wunden gold
```

He who tests (it) knows how cruel care is as a
comrade for him who has few valued confidants the
exile-track holds him, not at all wound gold.

The potential koinon certainly, whether it is understood
twice or not, provides a remarkable logical link: one who
has few comrades does have a cruel one called care, and one
who has few comrades is almost by definition an exile (at
least in the world of Old English poetry). The sentence
made by the koinon and pivot might not have seemed all that
odd, tautologous pronouns being as common as they are in Old
English, but I have excluded this passage anyway. I have
not done so because of any supposed anacoluthia in the
sentence made by the koinon and pivot (sometimes, in order
to sound more general, people put an indefinite adjective
clause in the dative, and if you chose to put such an
adjective clause first, how else would you say it?) but
because I am worried that the form—adjective clause with a
dative head plus a principal clause where the referent of
the dative head is the direct object of waraþ—would have
been unusual enough that the audience would naturally have
taken the potential koinon with the first clause. The idea
that such a form might have been "unusual enough" is, of
course, ultimately indefensible; it is only a feeling, but
it is a feeling which I—equally vaguely—feel that most Old
English scholars will probably agree with.

The potential koinon in lines 12-16 of The Wanderer is
followed in the manuscript by a point and a small capital
letter. If it were followed only by a point, I would feel
no qualms about including it—the only sense we can make of
the pointing in the Exeter Book is to see that in some
cases it means that the scribe wanted to mark some sort of
syntactic juncture. The point plus capital, however (where
the capital is not I, used to diminish confusion as we use a
dot over an i to diminish confusion), gives me pause—it at
least means that the scribe wanted to mark a division that
he found in some way more impressive than usual: often a
correlation, parallelism, or the beginning of what we would
call a sentence. The potential koinon in lines 12-16 does
not strike me as quite impressive enough to justify this
sort of punctuation; it's possible, of course, to claim that
some scribe in the chain of transmission failed to
understand what he was copying, but I do not feel secure in
making that claim in this case, although the passage
certainly sounds like apo koinou:

\begin{verbatim}
pat bip in eorle indryhten peaw
pat he his ferflocan fæste binde
\end{verbatim}
healde his hordcofan  bycge swa he wille 
ne mæg werg mod  wyrde wiðstöndan 
ne se hreo hyge  helpe gefremman 

(12-16)

It is a noble custom in a man that he bind fast his mind-enclosure, guard his hoard-closet, think as he will a weary mind cannot withstand events, nor rough thought advance help.

It is a close call. If mod were masculine, I would be certain that the scribe capitalized the ne in line 15 in reaction to apo koinou—either in an unsuccessful attempt to bring it out or in reaction against a koinon so obvious that even a late scribe, who was trained to copy prose, could see it. And even as the passage stands, understanding "his weary mind" comes so easily in line 15 that I am made very nervous by my decision against the potential koinon.

I have no argument for those who think I am being over-cautious. Some arguments for those who think I am not cautious enough can be found in my discussion of the two poems, which I am now, at last, actually ready to begin.

The Wanderer begins with a relatively mild effect:

Oft him anhaga  are gebidef 
metudes miltse  beah be he modcæarig 
geond lagulade  longe sceolde 
breran mid hondum  hrimcealde sæ 
wadan wraclastæs  wyrd bið ful aræd 

(1-5)

Often a loner for himself awaits grace, Providence's mercy [by grace obtains Providence's mercy?], though he mind-sad throughout the waterway long should have had to stir with (his) hands the frost-cold sea travel exile-paths, events are fully determined.

The adverbial clause is odd: what is the concessive beah be
a concession to? One gropes for a logical connection between awaiting or getting God’s grace or mercy and travelling exiled through the sea. Are sad exiles ordinarily exempt from divine grace? Is it unusual for them to want it?

A connection can be provided at a level slightly above the literal: even though he suffers, a better spiritual state may be in store for him. No worse a connection can be provided for the similarly disconnected following clause: even though he suffers, (he can’t do anything about it because) events are fully determined. This second way of using a concessive clause is something I believe I am more accustomed to hearing in Modern English—compare "Although I want a good marriage, my wife doesn’t understand me," and "Although our laws daily grow more oppressive, you can’t fight City Hall." If the situation in spoken Old English was similar, then the adverbial clause was heard as a koinon through its attraction to the final clause, but I prefer to think that, in this case, a milder apo koinou effect was achieved by virtue of the audience’s not knowing precisely how to connect it with either the first or last clause, but feeling the obvious suggestion of a connection with both. The clause floats there, waiting for help.

Incidentally, if events are fully determined, one might argue that the anhaga does not become snottor on mode (111) by any experience of his own, and that if the ability to
reflect with wisdom on his experience is a manifestation of God's mercy, it is obtained by grace. My bracketed translation of lb has a lot to recommend it, I think, but it could be that both meanings were intended, since the wanderer, at the beginning of the poem, either hasn't yet become wise or is speaking of a time when he hadn't yet become wise.

Lines 6-7 is itself a nearly disjunct koinon (or possibly an adverbial koinon--but not both) if the wanderer is speaking on both sides of it.

Oft him anhaga are gebidef
metudes miltsæ þeah þe he modcearig
gedeg lagulade longe sceolde
hreran mid honum b rimcealde sæ
wadan wærclastas wyrd bif ful arœð
swa cwæf eardstapa earfsæ gemyndig
wæabra wælsleahta winemaga bryre
oft ic sceolde ana uhtna gehwylce
mine ceare cwipan

There is, of course, a serious objection to the idea that the poem begins with direct speech. Although the wanderer refers to himself (or people like himself) in the third person later in the poem, it would have been confusing to an audience to begin the poem with such a passage. If it was the poet's intention to do so, how might he have fulfilled that intention in performance? Ordinary tricks of stress and intonation will not show with which lines the swa clause is to be taken; without the possibility of apo koinou, it seems the thing could only have been done by mimicry or by explaining the course of the poem beforehand.
Either of those methods is possible for the original poet, but what of the poor reader of the poem in the Exeter Book?

A consideration of the problems of that reader shows us not only how they probably dealt with the problem, but shows us another way the original poet might have handled it.

Swa refers to previous speeches so much more often than it introduces speeches that a reader encountering the poem for the first time would undoubtedly have felt that the clause does refer backwards once that reader had read line 6a. If reading to themselves aloud or subvocally (I am not certain that this was impossible for all Anglo-Saxons), such readers, on encountering the first-person speech which follows the clause, would have adjusted in their own minds, and experienced the psychological effect of apo koinou. (In other words, it would have been apo koinou for that reader.) If reading aloud to an audience, such readers would have been forced either to go on and pretend that the clause refers only forward, start over, or else—what seems most likely to me—to take advantage of the fact that ordinary tricks of stress and intonation will not distinguish which way the swa-clause points and thus to present it to the audience as a koinon.

The poet might well have done likewise in the first place if the poem was originally oral, and, if the poem was composed in writing, the probability is high that the common practice of apo koinou led him to feel—probably correctly—
that contemporary readers would have few problems with the clause. Lines 6-7 comprise a likely koinon.® In any case, those lines contain two other koinons. Here they are translated, along with the rest of the untranslated portion of the passage above:

swa cwmfe eardstapa earfeba gemyndig
wræþra wælslehta winemaga hryre
oft ic sceolde ana uhtna gehwylce
mine ceare cwipan

(6-9a)

So said the earth-stepper, of sorrows mindful of angry slaughters of friend-kinsmen / in respect to the fall of friend-kinsmen: "Often I had to [have had to?], alone, each dawn, speak my woes. . . ."

Both are relatively mild. The first koinon might almost be said to be created by the increased specificity of the referent, but it does seem to make the variation more effective. The second is kinesthetic, slowing down the beat as a preliminary to the speech of the wanderer, complicating the syntax as the audience’s expectation of the genitive hryres is defeated.

The adverbial apo koinou construction in lines 23b-25a is strengthened by the parallelism between wod wintercearig and sohte seledreorig, if seledreorig is what was intended. Krapp does not think so, and if the ASPR is right, the effect is very mild:

ond ic hean ūnonan
wod wintercearig ofer wæbema gebind
sohte sele dreorig

. . . and I, lowly, from there went year-sorrowful over the binding of waves sought, sad, for a hall.
The next likely example from The Wanderer contains one of those rare koinons consisting of a line-final auxiliary. As I pointed out in Chapter III, there is an exception to the rule that one may dismiss potential verbal koinons constituting less than a half-line and found at the end of a line when surrounded by obvious variation: because of the close association of auxiliaries and infinitives, when a verb in this situation is an auxiliary surrounded by infinitives the effect of apo koinou is felt. This happens in The Wanderer in the following passage:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pone be in meoduhealle} & \quad \text{mine wisse}\^* \\
\text{oppe mec freondleasne} & \quad \text{frefor wolde} \\
\text{weman mid wynnum} & \quad (27-29a)
\end{align*}
\]

... the one who in the mead-hall would know of (what is) mine, or else me friendless comfort would entice with joys.

Weman "needs" wolde as much as frefor does. The effect is similar to that in line 6b, where the koinon seems to strengthen the variation, which increases in specificity.

None of the apo koinou passages in The Wanderer already discussed are especially striking. One of their most important functions, I believe, is to provide the audience with an apo koinou milieu—to keep their awareness of the construction alive for what is to follow: an astonishing passage where loneliness builds to delirium, where a chain of adverbial koinons builds in intensity until they are replaced by even more intense, integral koinons.
Because the passage is long and infamously complex, I have divided it into two parts. In the first, clausal apo koinou either predominates or is exclusive, depending on what we make of wegas in line 46b.

```
win eai gedreæ
forþon wat se þe sceal his winedryhtnes
leofes larcwidum længe forþolian
ðonne sorg ond slép somod ætgodre
earmæ anhogan oft gebindaþ
þinceþ him on mode þæt he his mondryhten
clyppe ond cyse ond on cneol lecgæ
hondæ ond beafod swa he hwilum ær
in geardagum giefstolæ breac
ponsæ onnæsæ eft wineleas gumæ
gesibæ him biforan fealwe wægas
bæþæn brimfuglas þrædan feþra
hreðeæn hræm ond swæ hagle gemengæ
ponsæ beof þy hefigran heortan benne
(36b-49)
```

What is going on here is complicated enough to justify both an attempt at a translation and a very general sort of paraphrase, and it may be more helpful to paraphrase first:

> The wanderer's joy is gone, and this is the reason why: he whose lord is gone knows that even if sorrow and sleep conspire to give him pleasant dreams of the old days, he'll only wake up to the cold world again and then his pain will only be worse.

Most readers would agree, I think, that this is the gist of the above lines. An apo koinou reading of the passage provides a more plausible, connected syntax than editors faced with deciding among unrealistically exclusive alternatives have been able to provide, and, what is more, provides a syntax which actually goes about the job of expressing that meaning. Here is a translation in which I ignore, for the time being, the problems raised by wegas:
Joy has all fallen because he who must long forego his friend-lord’s dear gnomes knows whenever sorrow and sleep both together often bind the poor loner, whenever continued, at the pivot it seems to him in his mind that he would embrace and kiss his liege-lord and on (his) knee lay hand and head as he sometimes earlier in the old days enjoyed the gift-seat. At those times (whenever at the pivot) the friendless man wakes back up, sees before him the fallow ways, sea-birds bathe, spread wings, sees frost and snow fall mingled with hail, then are the heavier heart’s wounds.

Lines 41-44, seeming at first like the principal clause for 39-40, turn into a continuation of 39-40, in asyndetic coordination ( whenever it seems to him ...) after we understand that 45-48 are speaking of what follows upon the wanderer’s dreams of the good old days, which lines in turn become a koinon after we understand that line 49 is the result of the contrast between lines 41-44 and 45-48. One thought follows naturally as the consequence of the preceding one, its consequentiality making it a pivot, producing the effect of apo koinou in the preceding clause.

If wegas is the long-vowelled word for "waves" then babian may be taken as transitive and we have two integral koinons -- fealwe wegas because of the pause at the end of the line, and brimfuglas, switching from accusative to nominative through its suitability as a subject for bredan febra. Lines 46-47 might be translated "...sees before him the fallow waves bathe sea-birds spread wings."

Although we ought to be cautious about making emendations on the basis of metrical arguments alone, here no emendation is
necessary. The reader who is displeased by the image of low-flying birds splashed by the waves and spreading their wings to fly higher (it doesn’t bother me) is reminded that the bird may be a boat and the wings sails. Metaphors are, of course, diplopic: the poet hopes the audience will see both bird and boat.

Lines 50-55a bring in more short integral koinones, including what may be Bruce Mitchell’s favorite example:*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sare after swæsne} & \quad \text{sorg bið geniwad} \\
\text{bonne mæga gemynd} & \quad \text{mod geondhweorfeð} \\
\text{greteð gliwstafum} & \quad \text{georne geondscenawaf} \\
\text{SECGA GESELLAN} & \quad \text{swæmef eft on weg} \\
\text{fleotrendra ferð} & \quad \text{no þær fela bringsð} \\
\text{cūfā cwiðegiedda} & \quad \text{gæmmellmend} \\
\end{align*}
\]

A more precise paraphrase than that given for the first part of the passage may helpful here:

(Heart’s wounds are the heavier) with pain because of the dear one. With pain because of the dear one, sorrow is renewed. Sorrow is renewed whenever memory eagerly looks upon men’s comrades. Whenever memory looks upon men’s comrades, men’s comrades swim back away [a superkoinon]. The sailors’ souls swim back away. The sailors’ souls do not bring many familiar tunes there.

The transition between adverbial and integral koinones is made easier for the audience to apprehend because of the heavy beat that naturally falls on sorg (contrasting it with sare), which in turn makes it easier to understand the adverbial apo koinou which follows.

Here the wanderer or his stand-in is literally fevered, I think. The visitation of the ghosts suggests a delirium beyond what loneliness usually brings on, and perhaps being
snowed and hailed on is at least partly responsible for the vision. At any rate, the picture the poet paints is not supposed to be pretty, and one reason the syntax is poetically effective is that it, equally unpretty, mimics the effects of delirium. In this case, the translation may be better for capturing the real effect than the paraphrase:

with pain because of the dear one sorrow is renewed whenever the memory of kinsmen turns through (his) mind, greets (him) with song-words, eagerly looks upon MEN'S COMRADES swim back away the sailors' souls do not bring many familiar tunes there.

Hu geestlic bǐg! The whole passage is summed up in the following apo koinouless two-and-a-half lines, reassuring the audience that it understands what it has experienced correctly and returning it to more normal, less intense poetry:

cearo bǐg geniwad
bam þe sendan sceal swipe geneahhe
ofer wapema gebind werigne sefan
(55b-57)

Grief is renewed for him who must often enough send his weary spirit over the binding of waves.

From here to line 75 the poem will become less concerned with the wanderer’s awful experiences and will become more gnomic—presumably drawing wisdom from those awful experiences—and will as a result be smoother. But there are a couple of apo koinou passages between here and line 75.

In lines 60-62 we find a verb in the middle of two objects, the first of which is a noun and the second of
which is a dependent question. This construction is too common to make much of an impression, nor does the second koinon in the selection below amount to much, either. I include them merely because it is my policy to disclose all koinons in The Wanderer and The Seafarer that I consider likely.

\[\text{bonne ic eorla lif eal geondbence} \]
\[\text{hu hi fœrlîce flet ofgeafon} \]
\[\text{modern maguþegnas} \]
\[\text{(60-62a)} \]

\[\ldots \text{when I the life of men wholly think over how they suddenly gave up the floor the brave kin-}\]
\[\ldots \text{retainers.} \ldots \]

The koinon in the following passage does have a rather preachy emphatic effect, in addition to serving as a segue and a syntactic convenience:

\[\text{ne nœfre gielpes to georn ar he geare cunne} \]
\[\text{beorn sceal gebidan ponne he bent sprice]\]
\[\text{oppæt collenfer]\ cunne gearwe} \]
\[\text{hwider hreþra gehygd hweorfan wille} \]
\[\text{(69-72)} \]

\[\text{(A wise man must avoid various states of mind, the last of which is that he must) never (be) too eager to boast before he fully knows, a man must wait when he speaks a vow, until, proud (though he be), he fully knows where the hearts' thought (of others) will tend.} \]

The last two apo koinou passages are found in the post-holocaust world of lines 75-110. Here is the first of them:

\[\text{weallas stondap} \]
\[\text{hrime bihorene bryʃge þa ederas} \]
\[\text{woriß þa winsalo waldend licga]\]
\[\text{dreame bidrorene} \]
\[\text{(76b-79a)} \]

\[\ldots \text{walls stand with frost covered [shaken, ergo leafless? feverish? snow-swept?] the hedges} \]
wander/crumble the wine-halls

The first koinon simply covers both walls and hedges with frost and, perhaps, snow, and it may extend beyond the half-line. We may not know what hrygge means, precisely, but it's fairly certain that it's an adjective of negative affect that certainly applies to the hedges and possibly to the walls as well. The second koinon is actually more doubtful than the first. If worian is indeed the correct word, it is a koinon, but only because winsalo needs a verb. Although Krapp, Gollancz, and other editors too, no doubt, couple it with winsalo, it actually goes best with ederas, which are at least capable of roaming. The word almost always means something like "roam, wander, move around," and we only take that roaming as implying the walls have shifted (and, therefore, have crumbled) after we see there's no other verb for winsalo. Of course, the verb might be warian, in which case winsalo is an object and there is no second koinon at all.

Finally, in lines 102-107, there is a dense passage of apo koinou building to an effect mimetic of the ultimate change of state:

hrið hreosedende hrusan bindeþ
wintres woma bonne won cyngef
nipes nihtscua norban onsendef
breo hæglfare hælepum on andan
eall is earfoðlic eorban rice
unwendeþ wyrda gesceafþ weorulþ under heofonum

The snowstorm falling, winter's howling, binds the earth whenever dark (adj.) comes, obscures the night-shadow from the north sends out rough hail-
storms to the anger of men, all the realm of earth is full of hardship. The realm of earth (rice accusative) the appointment of events changes. The appointment of events changes the world under the heavens.

The poet of The Wanderer uses mild koinons to prepare for the intense, dense apo koinou passage making up lines 36b-55a, and, with a few koinons dropped in here and there, gives us one more dense and mimetic apo koinou passage near the end of the wanderer's speech. Mimesis is where the poet shines, and he uses it where convenient; he has no overall plan for the use of the apo koinou construction itself except, perhaps, to wake the audience up to apo koinou by including a few koinons from the beginning.

I believe I detect a larger plan for the use of apo koinou in The Seafarer. The poem begins with one of the strongest assemblages of integral apo koinou in Old English poetry. Like a later seafarer, the speaker begins by grabbing the listener, but does not let go as quickly. He shakes the audience by their cloaks, whipping them back and forth, jerking them around in showing them how he has been jerked around:

```
Mag ic be me sylfum sobgied wrecan
sibas secgan hu ic geswincdagum
earfswile oft prowade
bitre breostceare gebiden hæbbe
gecunnad in ceole cearselda fela
atol yba gewealc þær mec oft bigeat
nearo nihtwaco at nacan stefnan
bonne be be clifum cnossaf calde geprungen
waron mine fet første gebunden
caldum clommum þær þa ceare seofedun
hat ymb heortan hungor innan slat
merewerges mod þat se mon ne wat
```
I can tell a true story about myself, journeys relate how I workdays, in hardship-time / hardship-time often suffered bitter breast-care have endured, sought out in a ship, many care-halls: horrible waves' rollings there me often poured over [befell?] the oppressive night-wakefulness at the ship's prow when it tossed by the cliffs with cold pinched were my feet with frost bound in cold fetters where those cares sighed hot around (my) heart hunger within slit the sea-weary (one's) mind—that the man doesn't know to whom on earth the fairest befalls how I poor-sorrowful on the ice-cold sea the winter lived in the outcast's tracks, deprived of friend-kinsmen!

The most important effects here are kinesthetic and emphatic. I have tried to leave the translation condensed enough to capture some of the effect of the Old English, but in doing so, have made a bit of explanation necessary.

The first koinon, secgan, is the verb of one of those extremely mild (because so common) noun-verb-dependent question constructions, and I might not have marked it at all except for the fact that the poet ends the passage with another dependent-question pivot (hu ic earmcearig... ...) and he may have been concerned with smoothing the way in and out of such a dense clump of apo koinou. At any rate, the shaking doesn't really start until line 3a.

Since the audience hears 3a before 3b there must be at least a short space of time during which they are inclined to take earfoghwile as a dative/instrumental of "time when" because of the likelihood that it is a variation of
geswincdagum. Another interpretation of earfoChwile, in fact, only really becomes possible at 4b, which turns bitre breostceare into a koinon along with oft browade; gebiden hæbbe must, in turn, be understood both as the verb for bitre breostceare and as a variant of gecunnad.

This chain creates a certain impetus that makes it easier for the listener to understand the pun at line six— to mentally change begéotan (the natural thing for atol yba gewealc to do) to begietan (the natural thing for editors to assume, even though the scribe marked the vowel long) when he or she hears line seven. But there might be no pun at all if the Anglo-Saxons were capable of thinking of weakness as something that could pour over a person.¹² (In that case, bær mec oft bigeat would not be a conceptual koinon, but just another koinon in the series contributing to the kinesthetic effect.)

The bonne clause would be a typical adverbial koinon but for the fact that calde ge^rungen is first a part of it, referring to the effects of ice and cold on the joints of the ship, and then is a complement for waron mine fet, which also becomes a koinon in a chain continuing to the pivot caldum clommum. The bær clause at line 10 is not a koinon because hat ymb heortan is, at first seeming to finish the adverbial clause, then seeming to modify hungor.

The seafarer is not quite yet done shaking us. Shortly after this passage is a shorter one chaining together four
apo koinou constructions:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{par ic ne gehyrde} & \quad \text{butan hlimman se} \\
\text{iscaldne wæg} & \quad \text{hwilum ylifete song} \\
\text{dyde ic me to gumene} & \quad \text{ganetes hlœbor} \\
\text{ond huilpan wæg} & \quad \text{fore hleahtor wera} \\
\text{mew singende} & \quad \text{fore medodrine} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\( (18-22) \)

... where I heard nothing but the sea resounding, the ice-cold wave, sometimes a swan's song I took for myself as sport the gannet's voice and the curlew's song in place of the laughter of men a mew singing in place of a drink of mead.

The effect, again, is most importantly kinesthetic, slowing down the beat before the swaying, half-hypermetric lines that follow it. (Line 23a is hypermetric and line 24b arguably so.) And this tactic is part of a general strategy. After beginning with this verbal earthquake, the poem will eventually turn into wisdom poetry where one sententious thought follows another in loose connection with no apo koinou whatever. To get from one place to another, the poet uses clausal koinons and an odd sort of larger apo koinou organization, based on the series of six forbons, as a way of expanding the quick shakes into a slow rocking.

Those forbons have meaning. They are not merely loose connectives, as Mackie\(^1\) and Krapp\(^2\) would have it— not even the first one in line 27, although that one does not have much to do with causality. But the others do. By the end of the series of forbons (the one at line 103 is not part of the series) the causal connections would have been quite clear to an Anglo-Saxon audience, I believe. Modern
problems derive from the purposely paradoxical forbon at 33b, and perhaps partly from our unfamiliarity with apo koinou.

Lines 30-80 contain two adverbial koinons with forbon, the second of which repeats the pattern of the first and thus helps to organize that entire stretch of verse. The best way to show what’s going on here is to produce a shamefully imprecise paraphrase of the whole fifty lines, the imprecision being compensated for by the virtue of shortness and the fact that the basic logic of the causal progression is preserved:

I shall go to sea because I fear the Lord I desire the sea (30-57). I think of the sea because I love the Lord I don't believe this life is eternal (58-71).

Or, to be a little fuller and a little less imprecise:

Life at sea is hard (30-33a), therefore (33b) I shall go to sea (33b-38) because (39a) no man is so wonderful that he has no reason to fear his Lord (39-43), he has no mind for anything but the sea (44-57). Therefore (58a) my thoughts turn to the sea (58-64a) because (64b) I love the joys of the Lord better than this life (64b-66a), I don't believe this life is eternal (66b-71). Therefore (72a), it's best to fight the devil and get praise in heaven (72-80a).

For the first forbon, at line 27, we would do well to return to a more primitive, two-word meaning for the word and translate this way:

forbon him gelyfef lyt se pe ah lifes wyn
gebiden in burgum bealosipa hwon
wlonc ond wingal bu ic wering oft
in brimlade bidan sceolde.

(27-30)
In the face of that\(^*\) (bon referring to all the stuff the seafarer has been complaining about), he who has life's joy, (has) dwelled in towns, (has) few evil-journeys, proud and wine-wanton, believes little how I weary often had to remain on the sea-way.

There is little causality in either direction between the hard life at sea previously described in the poem and a city-slicker's disbelief in it. Neither can be a reason for the other. There is even less chance of a causal connection if we look to the immediately preceding clause.

The second forbon, at line 33b, could also be translated "in the face of that," but by force of the surrounding material it has essentially, against all our soft landlubber logic, the force of "therefore." If the seafarer is Dorothy Whitelock's sort of peregrinus\(^*\) (obviously, I believe he is) then he is just the sort of person to conclude that the place where he suffered is the very place to return. The logic is the logic of asceticism, played for its shock value.

Here is the first forbon koinon in fairly full context:

\[
\text{bon cnyssað nu}
\]
\[
\text{heortan geþohtas þat ic hean streamas}
\]
\[
\text{sealtypa gelac sylf cunnige}
\]
\[
\text{mónað modes lust mæla gehwylce}
\]
\[
\text{ferð to feran þat ic feor heonan}
\]
\[
\text{elpeodigra eard gesece}
\]
\[
\text{forbon his þæs modwilcnc mon ofer eorpan}
\]
\[
\text{ne his gifena þæs god ne in geægube to þæs hwæt}
\]
\[
\text{ne in his dædum to þæs deor ne him his dryhten to}
\]
\[
\text{þæs hold}
\]
\[
\text{þat be a his saforæ sorge næbbe}
\]
\[
\text{to hwon hine dryhten gedon wille}
\]
\[
\text{ne bis him to hearpan hyge ne to hringpege}
\]
\[
\text{ne to wife wyn ne to worulde hyht}
\]
\[
\text{ne ymbe owiht elles nefne ymb yða gewealc}
\]
ac a hafaŋ longunγe se ̣ pe on laγu fundaŋ
(33b-4?)

Therefore (my) heart's thoughts press now that I myself explore the high streams, the salt-waves' play. Heart's desire urges on every occasion (my) spirit to travel so that I far hence should visit a foreigners' land because there is no man on earth so mind-proud, nor so good in his gifts, nor so keen in youth, nor in his deeds so brave, nor with a lord so loyal to him that he never has anxiety in his seafaring about what the Lord wants to make him, he has no thought for the harp, nor of ring-taking, nor pleasure in a woman, nor joy in the world, nor anything else except the rolling of waves, but ever has longing he who strives towards the sea.

Although line 36 breaks easily into a new sentence and might be perceived by some as the first element of the apo koinou construction, it seems to me that 33b-35 and 36-38 are in a close asyndetic relation and that the forbon stretches back to the previous forbon.

There are a few other koinons within lines 30-80a, the first of which we see here, at line 47a. It is a very mild one which, if it is perceived, hooks together more firmly the ascetic who strives towards the sea and all the rest of humanity—that group which has no members so good that they are not afraid—and thus suggests, perhaps, that asceticism is the solution for all of us.

In a somewhat similar way, the second such non-forbon koinon, at 62a, ties together the soul and the lone flier (probably the cuckoo at line 53) and so helps to suggest that the seafarer's mind goes back to the sea only an instant after it comes home. It also, by binding the two
clauses into one inseparable line of thought, provides syntactic impetus for the "because" forbon at line 64b.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{min modsefa mid mereflo} \text{de} & \\
\text{ofer hwales epel hweorfe} \text{f} \text{e wide} & \\
\text{eorpan sceatas cyme} \text{f eft to me} & \\
\text{gifre ond gradig gielle} \text{f anfloga} & \\
\text{hwete} \text{f on hwælweg hreper unwearnum} & \\
\text{ofer holma gelagu forbon me hatran sind} & \\
\text{dryhtnes dreamas bonne bis deade lif} & \\
\text{lame on londe ic gelyfe no} & \\
\text{pmat him eor} \text{f welan ece stondas} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(59-67)

my heart with the sea-flood over the whale's homeland wanders wide the corners of the earth, comes back to me rapacious and greedy the lone flier yells, incites my heart irresistably onto the whale-way over the surface of seas because the Lord's joys are hotter to me than this dead life, loaned on land, I don't believe that for it (the life) earth-wealth stands eternally.

Finally, there are two emphatic integral koinons surrounding the last forbon of the series:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{simle preora sum } \text{þinga gehwylce} & \\
\text{ær his tid aga to tweon weorpe} & \\
\text{adl obbe vido obbe ecgbete} & \\
\text{fagum fromweardum feorc ofspringe} & \\
\text{forbon pæt bip eorla gehwam aftercwependra} & \\
\text{lof lifgendra lastworda betst} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(68-73)

Always one of three things in every case before his life depart becomes (for him) an uncertainty: disease or age or edge-hate drives out life from the doomed dying. Therefore, it is for each man, of the after-speaking praise of the living, best of trace-words (that he fight the devil and get praise in heaven).

And that one-word koinon is the end of it; I can detect no more apo koinou of any likelihood at all thereafter.

Immediately after line 80a comes the ubi sunt passage, followed by out-and-out gnomic poetry, and we have, after
beginning with all the violence of real-world experience, arrived at the calm of meditation which dwells less and less on the worthless­ness of the world and more and more on the desirability of heaven. Amen.
Notes to Chapter VII

For an admirably straightforward and clear discussion of the connection between the so-called "elegies" and wisdom poetry in general, see Chapter 3 of T. A. Shippey's Old English Verse (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1972). It is equally suggestive that all three of these poets (assuming the composer of Maxims I was a single poet) produced wisdom poetry—the Maxims I poet devoting himself only to gnomic, generalizing conclusions, and the other two working their way through experience to gnomic conclusions. Perhaps something is at work here that I do not understand—possibly a convention, or a poetic school.


See Dunning and Bliss, pp. 4-11, although some of their conclusions, drawn strictly from a study of punctuation in The Wanderer, might have been less firm if they had considered more fully the scribe's practice throughout the Exeter Book. The more widely one looks at the unsystematic pointing throughout the Exeter Book, the confused one becomes trying to determine why the scribe decided to point at any particular place. See also ASPR III, xxxi-xxxiv.

Or perhaps, some other voice is speaking of a not-yet-wise wanderer. As I point out shortly in the text, there are reasons that I consider good enough to reject that interpretation and hear the same voice on both sides of lines 6-7—a possibility pointed out in John C. Pope's "Dramatic Voices in The Wanderer and The Seafarer", reprinted in Essential Articles for the Study of Old English Poetry, ed. Jess B. Bessinger, Jr. and Stanley J. Kahrl (Hamden, Ct.: Archon Books, 1968), p. 536. Although the dialogue theory central to the essay is unlikely, Dunning and Bliss' edition of The Wanderer, which assumes only one speaker, also present lines 1-5 and 112-15 as direct speech on pp. 106 and 123. It is also possible to make the argument that lines 6-7 refer only to what came before! W. S. Mackie, in "Notes on Old English Poetry", Modern Language Notes 40 (1925), p. 92, argued that since cwef is in the past tense, it "must refer to what precedes. . . . Contrast acwif, present tense, referring to what follows, in line 91." Reasons not to take this argument seriously may be found in Dunning and Bliss, pp. 30-32.

The situation is almost the reverse with the **swa** clause at line 111. The clause follows a long first-person speech and there is no good reason to believe that **swa** does not refer backwards, as it usually does with speeches. Moreover, the lines that follow are all hypermetric, reinforcing the tendency to assume that what finishes the poem is another voice.

Or "winter-sorrowful." Both, I think, are implied.

I cannot resist the opportunity to point out that the manuscript reading, given here, makes perfect sense, and that to solve this well-known crux without emending, we need not assume Pope's problematic meaning of "know of my people" ([Seven Old English Poems (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966) pp. 82-83] to make **he** vowel long. I am not making any claims about whether this helps us with Beowulf 168-69.


Dunning and Bliss, p. 61.

ASPR III, p. 136. Israel Gollancz, ed., The Exeter Book Part I: Poems I-VIII, EETS O.S. 104, (London: Oxford U. P., 1895), p. 291. In a note on page 290, Gollancz gives the MS reading as **woniæg** (while **woriæg** is shown as an emendation in the text). That is not the MS reading, but I suspect Gollancz intended to emend **woriæg** to **woniæg** and that the two words got switched some time during the process of producing the book. Dunning and Bliss (also?) emend to **woniæg**. If the verb in line 78a is most appropriate for the noun in the same line, then we have a usual syntactical unit for the half-line and we can imagine that **stondæb** is understood with **ederas**, and the emendation works fairly well. If we must change the word, however, a better one might be to **wariaæ**, making **ederas** subject and **winsalo** object—there is a space between thewynn and the **g** in **woriæg** (and, if Gollancz is right, an erasure), so, if the word was giving the scribe trouble, most likely it was the first vowel that was the cause of the trouble.

Mihtwaco may mean "night-weakness"—see the Bosworth-Toller entry under *wund-wacu*.

Indeed, something like this is usually done with the for bon at line 103, which might be translated something like "on account of that."

The Old English poetry that we find in the few manuscripts left to us contains enough examples of carefully controlled uses of apo koinou for striking artistic purposes to convince me that the possibility of making something beautiful with apo koinou was— at least at the time the poetry was being produced— the most important factor encouraging its continued use. Far from being merely a verbal efficiency, in much poetry (such as The Seafarer and The Wanderer) apo koinou is positively inefficient, artificial, and intellectually demanding for the poet. It is no problem to determine how such a state of affairs might have come into being: take an intelligent poet, put him in a culture where apo koinou is an acceptable poetic device, and sophisticated uses of the construction are virtually assured.

But how did the construction come to be an acceptable poetic device in the first place?

In discussing the possibility of the growth of apo koinou in Anglo-Saxon oral poetic practice, it needs to be said yet again that we have no records of Anglo-Saxon oral
poetry. We do have written poetry which contains evidence which makes us believe that that poetry has some connection with oral poetry—but what the oral poetry itself was like seems less and less certain as the evidence mounts against those who would attempt to fit all oral poetry into the Parry-Lord mold. It still seems reasonable to believe that pre-literate Anglo Saxons made use of formulaic systems, but both those systems and the way in which they were used must have been quite different from what is attested in Yugoslavia and often postulated for Homer. Moreover, just what the connection was between any particular Anglo-Saxon written poem and oral poetry may be dependent on the particular poem. Much Old English poetry is learned and polished in a way that shows either that some oral practice depended far more on pre-composition and memorization (like South Pacific oral poetry) than most scholars (including myself) find believable, or else that some poets composed in writing, perhaps merely borrowing from the formulaic tradition, rather than relying on it by necessity to cope with the demands of alliteration in a line. It seems unlikely that the poets who made poems like Guthlac B or The Phoenix first memorized their Latin sources in great detail and then chanted extempore, and certainly many Old English riddles carefully mislead in a way that would easily be spoiled by the approximations of oral transmission. Old English poetry ranges all the way from poems which seem to
be composed in writing for private, devotional reading to the arguably on-the-spot production of Caedmon's Hymn to what is almost certainly a fairly close record of real oral poetry—but oral poetry of the sort, unfortunately, which seems to have been made to be memorized: the thulas in Widsith, which are of no use to me in this study, and not much use to researchers interested in the use of formulaic systems.

In short, it seems riskier than ever to make guesses at the nature of pre-literate Old English poetry, and anything I say here should undoubtedly be taken with a box of salt. We find surprisingly frequent use of apo koinou in Old English written poetry; it is natural to assume that genuinely oral poetry also made use of the construction. It is not inconceivable, however, that the use of apo koinou in the written poetry was heavier than usual—the result, say, of a literary fad.

There is nothing in the nature of oral-formulaic poetry per se that would require apo koinou; the only solid datum with which to refute theorizing such as that in the paragraph above is the existence of the construction in the poetry of other old Germanic languages—and even this datum does not work perfectly, since it is possible that our hypothetical literary fad spread from England to other nations that composed poetry using basically the same system. As usual, we can only reason on the basis of
probabilities.

Most probably, then, the evidence of apo koinou in other old Germanic poetry indicates that the use of the construction in poetry is quite ancient. If so, what encouraged it?

That question can be answered fairly satisfactorily, I think, without resorting to wild speculation as to the origins of the construction, but if I were to avoid the issue of origins entirely, I would have the feeling of cheating the reader, who might be justified in feeling that some discussion is to be expected, and that if wild speculation is the best I can do, then so be it.

In the case of nominal and adjectival integral koinons, the most likely answer seems to me to be Meritt's guess that they originated in the asyndeton of everyday speech—and since Old English poetry is so extremely conservative in style, tradition alone would seem sufficient to account for the retention of such koinons. Verbal koinons may have arisen by similar means, although it would be less usual, in a paratactic environment where SVx and SxV are the most common orders, for verbs to fall in the middle of two likely subjects or objects. In fact—although I am sure examples exist somewhere—I have no record of a koinon verb from Old English prose.

The environment in poetry is so much more conducive to the production of verbal koinons that it is at least
imaginable that such apo koinou originated in verse, by a means Meritt proposed--by poets producing appositives around verbs, which led audiences and poets to sometimes feel the pull of the noun phrases on either side of them.

Most verbal koinons found outside of chains or superkoinons are relatively unimpressive, and this would be expected if they originated as incidental effects of variation. Some, however, are fairly striking. In the example below, for example, the retardation of the beat promoted by apo koinou mimics the slowing of the currents, and because of a slight suggestion of diplopia in the second word of the pivot (yba gebware would likely have been taken as a unit, but the audience, I think, would have felt more faintly the possibility that gebware might be predicative), the pivot manages to describe the final state without being offensively redundant.

hwa mec bregde of brimes fægmum
þonne streamas eft stille weorbmå
yba gebware þe mec þr wrugon
(Riddle l, 28-30)

. . . who drew me from the sea's embraces when the currents again become still the peaceful waves that once covered me.

Others, which would have little or no effect alone, are sometimes given extra impetus by nearby or surrounding nominal or adverbial koinons.

fæs ælfred us ealdspell reahhte
cyning westseaxna cræft MELDODE
leoþwyrhta list
(Poem, Meters, 1-3a).
Thus Alfred for us an old story interpreted. An old story interpreted the king of the West-Saxons. The king of the West-Saxons announced (his) art. The poet ANNOUNCED (his) art. The poet ANNOUNCED (his) cleverness.

Such examples lead me to think that the origin of verbal koinons in poetry may be more complicated than the origin of nominal koinons—that they originated not only from mere variation, but also by analogy with nominal koinons and in the course of poetic play with apo koinou in passages containing variation.

It is easy to imagine that adverbial koinons originated in the same easy way as nominal integral koinons may have: by arising naturally between two elements with which they can easily be taken in common. Unfortunately, at least in the case of clausal adverbial koinons, there is little evidence that this is so.

It is surprisingly difficult to find examples of this sort of koinon in original Old English prose that do not violate common sense. (Not that they are that common in translations from Latin, either—it's just that they are less uncommon. Note the one likely and two unlikely clausal adverbial koinons in the excerpt from the prose Boethius translation.) The Chronicle usually prevents any possibility of taking such clauses apo koinou by the constant use of the and-symbol, and this is only to a slightly lesser extent true of charters and laws. Even in those passages where absence of the symbol allows one to
imagine apo koinou, the conventions of word-order and common sense work against apo koinou interpretations:

992. Her Oswald se eadiga arceb forlet þis lif. 7 ge ferde þe hеofonlice. 7 Æfelwine ealdorman gefor on þam ilcan geare. a ge rædde se cyng 7 ealle his witan b man ge gaderode ba scipu b ahtes warnon to Lundenbyrig. 7 se cyng ba betæhte ba fyrdæ to lædene Ealfricæ ealdorman. 7 oðro eorl. 7 Ælftane b. 7 Æscwige b. 7 sceoldon cunnian gif hi muhton bone here ahwer utene betræppen. a sende se ealdorman Ælfric. 7 het warnian bone here. (Laud MS Chronicle)

Here I translate the selection as if I took the underlined passage seriously as a koinon.

992. Here Oswald the blessed archbishop abandoned this life and passed on to the heavenly, and aldorman Æthelwine passed on in that same year when the king and all his advisors advised that the ships that were of any value be gathered at London and the king then entrusted the leadership of the army to aldorman Ealfric and earl Thorod and bishop Ælfstan and bishop Æscwig and they had to test whether they could entrap the army anywhere outside then the aldorman Ælfric sent and ordered (someone) to warn the army.

Is such Old English prose reflective of the usual state of spoken Old English, or do the constant conjunctions show the attempts of writers to achieve greater-than-usual clarity? If we believe in the first alternative, we must assume that clausal adverbial koinons, like verbal koinons, probably originated in poetry.

Of course, it is also possible that the writing imitated an unusual, careful paratactic spoken style. I prefer not to try to decide between any of these alternatives—my guessing has become wild enough to my taste already—but merely to speak of what encouraged the use of
clausal adverbial apo koinou in the poetry, which is necessarily to speak of what generally encouraged all koinons.

The most obvious factor, as I pointed out at the end of Chapter Two, is sheer convenience. If you are generating a poem aloud, half-line by half-line, it is reassuring to know that in many situations, a word, phrase, or clause can be two-sided. (I am reminded, here, of the demands of oral traditions other than Germanic.) If you can think of a new half-line which, meeting the demands of the formal rules, will start a new syntactic unit, that's fine. If you can't, that's fine, too; you can use what you've already produced as the beginning of a new syntactic unit. It is easy enough to imagine that the pre-literate poets might have produced something like this snatch of Cynewulf's poetry when they found themselves in the situation described above:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{hie sona } & \text{par} \\
\text{purb } & \text{pa halgan gescæft } \text{helpe findap} \\
\text{godcunde gife } & \text{swylice Judas onfeng} \\
\text{after fyrestmearce } & \text{fulwintes baæ} \\
\text{(Elene, 1030b-33)}
\end{align*}
\]

They straightway there through that holy dispensation find help, a Godly gift such as Judas took. / Likewise Judas took after an interval baptism's bath.

Koinons like the one in the above Elene selection may also be inspired by the desire, evident in many freshman papers and in the sometimes annoying habit of classical Latin writers of prefacing even modest topic-switches with nam, quare, ita, etc., of avoiding the appearance of what
Givon' calls "chain initial topics." A newly-introduced or newly-returned topic is almost a priori, as Givon says, a discontinuous topic, and people do not need to be linguists to see that a discontinuity may be hard for an audience to process. Many people, therefore, have an almost instinctive tendency to try to ease their audiences into such topics. Apo koinou is perhaps the slickest way available to do so—the ending of one thought is the beginning of another.

Apo koinou can also buy you time by giving you extra opportunities to adjust to the demands of form. If your poem is going like this:

ond bine Cyriacus
þurh snyttro gepeaht syðsan nemde
niwan stefne

(Elene, 1058b-60a)

and (Eusebius) through wisdom's contrivance afterwards named him Cyriacus with a new summons

the looseness of niwan stefne gives you an extra option. If you can't figure out a way to say right away in accordance with alliterative rules that you think the name "Cyriacus" means "law of the Savior", you can create a pivot and take another stab at showing your etymology:

niwan stefne nama was gecyrred
bearnos in burgum on þet betere forð
æ hælendes

(Elene, 1060b-62a)

with a new summons the name was changed of the man in dwellings into that better henceforth: "law of the Savior".

In such cases, it might be most accurate to say that apo koinou has created variation. This, of course, is not
always the case. Perhaps the simplest and most obvious
convenience of apo koinou is where a poet finds that a half-
line he has already produced suggests a formula which will
set up the alliteration for his next thought.

crist heo afirde
dreamum bedelde  hæfdan dryhtnes liht
for oferhygdum  ufan forleton
(Christ and Satan, 67b-69)

Christ them expelled from joys sundered. The Lord's
light they had abandoned above because of pride.

Some word like dreamum is demanded by afirde, and once the
poet, already knowing he wants to talk about the dryhten in
the following half-line, has decided on dreamum, the formula
dreamum plus verb ensures apo koinou. (The -um be- formula
almost ensures apo koinou even if the poet doesn't know what
he wants to do next—the only other likely alternative for
the half-line that I can think of is dreamum and X.) Apo
koinou makes otiose variation easier, and the acceptability
of otiose variation makes apo koinou easier. It is
impossible to say which is primary in such uninteresting
examples; it might be most accurate to say that neither is
important—that what is important is getting to the next
half-line.

And, as already discussed in the second chapter, there
are those occasions where variation seems to create otiose
apo koinou—koinons that are probably not worth calling such
since they seem to serve no real purpose, but are just
accidents of the arrangement of half-lines. As I explained
in Chapter III, the lack of a literary explanation for such koinons is, however inadequate, our only hope of identifying such spots, and thus any example we cite may merely be an illustration of our lack of perception. This makes me unwilling to stick my neck out any further than it is already stuck out, and I will, for purposes of illustration, simply repeat an example already given in Chapter II—one with which I feel more than usually secure (although, even here, it must be admitted an apo koinou interpretation is probably defensible until we get to peoden marne):

ic þæs wine Deniga
fream Scildinga frinan wille
beaga bryttan swa þu bene eart
peoden mærne ymb pinne sif

(Beowulf, 350b-53)

I about that the Friend of the Danes, the Leader of the Scyldings, intend to ask the Distributor of Treasures—as you are a petitioner—the Great Prince, concerning your journey.

On the other hand, poets may after all have been seeking after apo koinou in many apparent examples of such cases, and when discussing these, it may be more accurate, or at least safer, to think more broadly and to say simply that the recursive nature of much Germanic poetry (in all senses—from variation to ring-composition) encouraged the use of apo koinou in that poetry. Here is a final example of such a passage, taken, for a change, not from the ASPR, but from Doane's edition of Genesis A.' Here the increased specificity of the variations might almost be characterized as conclusions drawn from the original conditions, so that
the mimetic, kinesthetic, and emphatic effects of the koinons are strengthened enough to make us wonder whether the variation and the apo koinou were not planned together in support of each other:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pu scealt wideferhs} & \text{ werg pinum breostum} \\
\text{bearme tredan} & \text{ brade eorfan} \\
\text{faran feæleas} & \text{ benden be feorh wunaf} \\
\text{gast on} & \text{ in} \quad \text{pu scealt gret etan}
\end{align*}
\]

\text{(Genesis, 9:6-9)}

You must forever, accursed, by means of your breast, your lap, walk the broad earth travel footless while for you life dwells, the spirit within, you must eat dirt... .

Summary

There are good reasons for doubting the degree to which we really understand the nature of oral Old English poetry, and we can only speculate about why so much apo koinou is found in the written verse records. My own speculation is that nominal and adjectival integral koinons originated in the asyndeton of everyday speech and were preserved in the poetry through conservatism, and that verbal koinons originated not only through surrounding variation, but by analogy with nominal koinons and by poetic play with apo koinou in association with variation. On other kinds of koinons I refuse to speculate, although it can be said that the evidence of Old English prose does not support the idea that adverbial koinons originated by arising naturally between two elements with which they could easily have been taken in common.
It is possible to name a few factors which probably generally encouraged apo koinou. The reassurance of knowing, if you are generating a poem aloud, half-line by half-line, that a word, phrase, or clause can be two-sided, is the most obvious such factor. Others are the desire to avoid the appearance of chain initial topics, the potential of apo koinou to buy poets time by giving them extra opportunities to adjust to the demands of form, and the potential of apo koinou to work together with variation to help poets get to the next half-line. As for those cases where apo koinou seems to merely be an accident of variation (the lack of a literary explanation is the only hope of identifying such spots)—while there are no doubt many such cases, it is possible that some are merely apparent and that they are symptoms of the general tendency of Germanic poets to be recursive.
Notes to Chapter VIII

1 Ruth Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) pp. 86-122, sums up research on South Pacific oral poetry, which is carefully composed prior to its performance and which is fixed through careful, word-for-word memorization. She also points to cases where literature is first composed orally then circulated in written form, where it is first composed in writing and then transmitted orally, and where both of the above kinds are then taught in schools via writing.


3 See Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* IV, 24, where in both the Latin and Old English versions the story is told that after the abbess asked Caedmon to turn scripture into verse, he returned with the verse the next morning. What did Caedmon do in the intervening time?


5 Each individual thula is, in fact, an excellent illustration of a different formulaic system. The problem is, first, that the systems are untypical in that, since they are lists, there is no need to repeat what would under ordinary circumstances be the crucial word or words (weold, for instance, in the first thula) and, second, that the thulas are so straightforward and unproblematic in their construction that there is almost nothing to think about.

6 See Herbert Dean Meritt's *The Construction of apo koinou in the Germanic Languages*, Stanford University Series in Language and Literature, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1938) for many examples of apo koinou from Old Saxon, Old High German, and Old Norse poetry.

7 Meritt, 111-12.

8 Meritt, 112. He is speaking, in accordance with his own system of classification, of apo koinou where "... the koinon stands more closely connected to the second part. . . ."

9 Charles Plummer, ed. *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel with Supplementary Extracts from the Others* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 127. I insert the selection only to give the reader a feel for what I'm talking about; the quantity of negative evidence necessary
to actually convince a skeptical reader is too large to make an attempt here. The best I can do is urge such a reader to read (or re-read) a lot of original Old English prose. If my own reading patterns when making a search for clausal adverbial koinons are not peculiar, such experimenters are most likely to find examples where I least expected to find them—in Ælfric. Think of his repeated use of such clauses as *swa we ær sædon* where they might equally well apply to what is on either side. These may be purposeful, but their use is quite limited, unlike the creative use in poetry.)

Grabbing The Speeches of Cicero: Pro Lege Manilia, Pro Caecina, Pro Cluentio, Pro Rabirio, Perduellionis tr. H. Grose Hodge (London: William Heinemann, 1927) and turning to a page at random in Pro Rabirio (page 454), I find, after a typically long discussion of the imminent destruction of the state that is the real motive for the charges brought against his client, the following:

Quam ob rem si est boni consulis, cum cuncta auxilia rei publicae labefactari convellique videat, ferre opem patriae. . . .

Hodge translates this way:

Wherefore if it is the duty of a good consul, when he sees everything on which the state depends being shaken and uprooted, to come to the rescue of the country. . . .


*Genesis A: A New Edition*, ed A. N. Doane (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1978). The manuscript has *wer{g} binum breostum bearm tredan brade eorban*, and the metrical problems raised thereby can be solved either by changing *wer{g}* to *werg* or *bærm* to *bearme*. The most likely explanation for the missing syllable seems to me to be that the scribe thought the passage meant that the snake would have to walk the "lap of the earth." Thus, *wer{g}* would be original and *bærm* would not, and the caesurae would be distributed as Doane has them.
CHAPTER IX
IMPLICATIONS FOR EDITORS

I have heard of letting the world be, of leaving it alone; I have never heard of governing the world. You let it be for fear of corrupting the inborn nature of the world; you leave it alone for fear of distracting the Virtue of the world. If the nature of the world is not corrupted, if the Virtue of the world is not distracted, why should there be any governing of the world? —Chuang Tzu

If the previous chapters have accomplished nothing else, they have at least, I hope, shown that there is throughout Old English poetry a construction which often serves important artistic purposes but which the usual editorial punctuation hinders us from perceiving. To quote Bruce Mitchell's "The Dangers of Disguise":

I am beginning to think that the worst enemy of those trying to appreciate OE prose and poetry is the unmodified use by editors of a system of punctuation designed for an entirely different language, either modern German (as in Klaeber's Beowulf) or modern English (as in Dobbie's Beowulf). I am increasingly coming to believe that the use of modern punctuation—the function of which is syntactical—is forcing editors into unnecessary decisions and is distorting the flow of OE passages in both prose and poetry.

The problems of editing prose are quite different from those of poetry, and I will not consider prose here, save to remark that Mitchell's six "contexts where different
interpretations were or may have been available to the
scope can also pose serious problems for prose editors,
too, with the possible exception of the second and the last.
Those six punctuation problem areas are:

- ambiguous adverb/conjunctions;
- ambiguous principal/subordinate clauses with initial verb but no conjunction;
- ambiguous demonstrative/relatives;
- possible parentheses;
- apo koinou constructions;
- examples of what I will for want of a better term call "enjambment of sense".

Of these, apo koinou is, for the poetry, by far the most important and pervasive problem, one reason being that the first three categories can help to create apo koinou, and a possible parenthesis sometimes turns out really to be a case of it. All six taken together seem to make a hydra that would discourage any editor.

These problems need not be as nightmarish as they at first seem. Indeed, editors who pay attention to these possibilities are relieved of the burden of being forced to make decisions which cannot be justified, and where apo koinou is concerned they are helped, in many cases, in nudging the reader towards a likelier and more connected syntax. The real nightmare does not begin until one tries to decide how to go about indicating these possibilities.

The only writer I know to wrestle with the problem is Mitchell, in the article just repeatedly referred to, where he proposes special marks of punctuation to indicate his six problem areas: a double comma for the first three, a sign like a dash in typescript for possible parentheses, a
downward-bending curve for enjambment of sense (for use in texts for beginners, only), and, as a tentative suggestion, arrows for apo koinou. Here is Mitchell's sample of the latter (and, for the sake of consistency, my own translation):

\[\text{a Byrhtnoth bræd bill of scefe}
\text{bræd and brunecg and on þa byrnan sloh,}
\text{to rape hine gelette lidmanna sum}
\text{<-- þa he þæs eorles earm amyrde -->}
\text{feoll þa to foldan fealchilte swurd -->}
\text{ne mihte he gehealdan heordne mece, wæpnes wældan.}
\]

(Battle of Maldon, 161b-68a)

Then (When?) Byrhtnoth drew blade from sheath, wide and shiny-edged, and struck into the corslet. [, too. . .?] Too soon one of the sailors hindered him when he marred that warrior's arm. [WHEN, at the pivot] FELL THEN TO EARTH THE YELLOW-HILTED SWORD he could not hold the hard sword, control the weapon.

I'd like to urge that editors eschew this scheme for displaying apo koinou. It is confusing, unwieldy, and, I think, defeats the very purpose for which it was invented. (By implication, I suppose, I will also be urging that the double comma and typescript dash be avoided; however, there is one possible use for all of Mitchell's punctuation marks, including the arrows, and I'll be getting to that later on in this chapter.)

Mitchell assumes that Anglo-Saxon literature has three types of readers: scholars, ordinary readers, and beginners. There might possibly be some justification for giving a reader who took a couple Old English courses in college and who wants, at some later time, to read for
pleasure, some occasional and inconsistent indications of apo koinou just to make sure that the possibility of the construction is not forgotten; but in this country, at least, I very much doubt whether there is more than a handful of this or any other kind of "ordinary reader", nor will there be until the Old English requirement in graduate schools is reinstated. The vast majority of those who study Old English aspire to be professional scholars; once they fulfill that aspiration, they can hardly be called ordinary readers—the nature of one's reading changes when it is even marginally a part of one's job. Those who do not become professional scholars, and the few who take Old English purely for fun, will forget the rules of the language after a few years through disuse.

The requirements for ordinary readership are strict. One must, without being a scholar, either possess one of those few brains with a remarkable ability to retain languages without practice, or be one of the few who keep up their Old English out of love. The total is an audience too small for even the most altruistically motivated and subsidized publishing. This is a horribly depressing thought, and one which I would love to see refuted, but I do not really believe that anyone can show the situation to be much better than I imagine, either here or in the rest of the English-speaking world. Too few people are exposed to the Old English language to create more than a
microscopically small fandom for its literature outside of the academic world.

It can be argued—and argued correctly, I think—that a refusal to take the needs of ordinary readers into account in editions of Old English literature is an important factor (even if not the most important) in keeping the fandom small, and that, therefore, to advance an argument against a possible editorial practice based on the size of such a readership is to help ensure that the situation will not change. I do have a partial solution to that problem, but for the time being let us proceed with an analysis based on the current realities.

We have, then, an audience composed of professional scholars and beginners most of whom plan to become professional scholars. Put yourself in the place of either one reading the following selection:

\[
\text{manna pengel} \quad \langle-\text{mearcpreate rad}-\rangle \\
\langle-\text{gu\\'weard gumena}-\rangle \quad \langle-\text{grimhelm}-\text{gespeon}-\rangle \\
\langle-\text{cyning}-\rangle \text{cinberge} \\
\text{(Exodus, 173-75a)}
\]

The passage is cluttered, confusing for beginners and for the experienced as well, but there is a worse problem: it distracts the reader from seeing the overlapping syntax, because it simply isolates koinons, and, indeed, makes them seem more isolated from each other than they in fact are. It seems to me that an editor has a far better chance of getting the idea across by simply presenting the reader with the following arrangement:
If editors want to be more specific—very likely they do—the only way they can be sure of getting across their idea of how the apo koinou constructions work is to provide some sort of syntactic analysis—paraphrase or translation being, it seems to me, the least troublesome for the reader—and such analysis is best confined to the commentary or the notes. It might be even better to put all discussion in the commentary, including the observation that the editor thinks the passage is rich in apo koinou, for it is this very habit of forcing syntactical understandings upon the reader that led to the problems we are trying to solve. Does it make sense to try to correct the mistakes created by forced syntax by forcing a new syntax? Only if this dissertation is not only the very latest, but the last word on Old English poetic syntax—a highly doubtful proposition. The lesson to be learned from the past century of concealment through punctuation ought to be—to quote the chapter title for the Chuang Tzu that opens this chapter—to let it be, leave it alone! If we do not, we’ll simply postpone the next discovery with our new, improved forms of interference.

The most important cause of this postponement, I think, would be hard-to-break habits of closedmindedness about
syntax created early in the training of the next generation of scholars. Since even unskilled readers will inevitably make their own readings, isn't it preferable that beginners are made aware fairly early in their studies that such readings are often justifiable? Those who have a hope of justifying their readings will often go to the trouble of making the attempt, and will learn much in the process—not only about oral practice, metrics, grammar, and whatever other bodies of knowledge we use to justify our readings, but about the limits of our knowledge and the importance of trying to keep one's readings from hardening into unbreakable concrete. But the punctuation of the authority who edited the text intimidates beginners and discourages them (and has, to a smaller degree, the same effect even on the experienced).

As for the audience composed of professional Old English scholars, the real question, it seems to me, is whether an editor is necessary at all. If we take the primary job of editorship to be "to make a text available to the public in an accurate and comprehensible form"? then ideally the answer is "no." In a perfect world all Old English scholars specializing in literature, at least, would feel obliged to train themselves to read the manuscripts with as little trouble as they read the printed page.

Of course, this ideal is unachievable. Handwriting will always slow us down in the age of print, we necessarily
fumble with ambiguous caesurae and compounds, scribes make mistakes, and the pages can contain erasures, blotches, and holes. But most ideals are unachievable; that is no reason not to try to come as close as possible. Although scholarship needs printed editions, it ought to be the aim of editors to avoid editing wherever editing is unreasonable.

What is unreasonable? In editions aimed at professional scholars who are presumably capable of forming their own opinions as to syntax and grammar, punctuation and normalization of forms is unreasonable, merely slowing the working scholar down. Although there is some general agreement about the meter of Old English verse—there are few scholars who would not be bothered, for instance, by a three-syllable half-line—the area of disagreement is wider, and any attempt to show metrics beyond the indication of caesurae is unreasonable when there is nothing resembling unanimity on what the metrical rules are (and even the indication of caesurae is unreasonable where there is any doubt where these occur). One should only incorporate an emendation into the text where no sense can be made of the passage without it—and not always then. When an editor is dealing with something like folio 179r in Beowulf, where the amount of missing text is great enough that no emendation can be more than a wild guess, it is unreasonable to do anything more than indicate the empty spaces.
This is a hard attitude to maintain. Although Leslie's edition of The Wanderer has taken quite a beating, he will always have my admiration merely for having retained oft in line 53 instead of going with the usual emendation to eft. Eft is considerably more elegant and makes better sense. The urge to show this in the text is almost irresistible—but such reconstruction is better left for the commentary.

The best argument for extreme editorial conservatism is a practical one. One avoids punctuation, unnecessary emendation, etc. for the same reason one would avoid printing the text with green ink on red paper: it is only a distraction. The working scholar is going to have to look in the notes or commentary to find out what the manuscript says anyway—why not provide it in the most convenient place?

This is not to say that there is no room for making such arguments as the argument for eft. Indeed, if the editor feels that eft is the most likely representation of the author's intention, it is incumbent upon him to make the case as strongly as possible—in the commentary. My point is simply that the centerpiece of an edition should be an uncluttered text designed to be worked with, not against.

Here there is an obvious difference between the needs of professional scholars and the needs of beginners. I don't want to be sidetracked into a discussion of a theory of pedagogy, but without pronouncing judgment on whether or not
such a practice is advisable, I can still say that many
teachers will always want texts with normalized spelling, at
least, and there may be some justification for consistent
indication of caesurae, whether they are doubtful or not,
and for emendation with an eye to ease of reading. Even
modern punctuation is probably advisable in the earliest
stages of an Old English language class. But there is a way
to provide for the needs of beginners, scholars, and
ordinary readers, too, all in the same edition.

Everything I have said so far has been predicated on the
practicalities—mechanical and economic—of printing a book,
but the day is not far away, I think, when scholars who are
handy with desktop publishing software will begin to produce
electronic editions, and many of the problems which plague
them as editors will disappear as if by magic. The basis of
such editions will still be—I hope—my uncluttered and
extremely conservative basic texts, and they can be made
even more uncluttered, in the case of the few Old English
poems we have in multiple manuscripts, by providing the same
treatment for each manuscript. (There are no printing
costs, remember.) Editors can center the manuscripts they
believe to be in some sense the best, and can even chain
manuscripts together in stemmata, where they can find
genealogies they can believe in, but readers will be able to
hop from one clear presentation of a manuscript to another
with ease, look at any two (or more, if we get bigger
screens) in parallel, and have a chance of intelligently forming their own opinions.

Of course, having multiple versions of the same work is all too rarely a problem in the field of Old English poetry (and in Middle English, too, for that matter) but the same principles can be employed to deal with the other problems I've treated above. Starting with the basic, to-be-worked-upon text for scholars, the user could press a button and turn up a text with normalized spelling, metrical guides, conjectural emendations, or any combination of the above, and the same applies to both traditional punctuation (for the very early beginner who will also, I insist, be provided with a caveat) and Mitchell-punctuation, or something like it, as an indication of those syntactical oddities for which twentieth-century readers might not be prepared. Obviously, it will also be possible to key between one and the other, and the manuscript punctuation—if we can make font characters appear and disappear by pushing a button, there is no reason why we cannot do the same thing with punctuation. One could flash through all these different treatments of the text and learn a lot more a lot quicker than one presently can with unwieldy and singleminded books. Obviously, commentary can be tied directly to the passage on the screen, so that the user could call it up and send it away at will—if we can make a stretch of text of any length disappear and return by pushing buttons... but the reader
no doubt gets the idea. And daily the scholarly community as a whole becomes more adept with keyboards. Most of the editorial problems raised by apo koinou and other Old English syntactical oddities are only temporary.


ibid. p. 399.

ibid. By "enjambment of sense", Mitchell explains on page 409, he means "the sort of separation seen in Beowulf, etc. ofer þeoda gehwylce, . . ."

Bliðd is aræd
geond widwegas, wine min Beowulf,
þin ofer þeoda gehwylce, . . ."

where the audience is presumably surprised, a little, by the appearance of þin, thus giving "dramatic emphasis" to bliðd.

ibid. p. 386.

I admit that there are good reasons to believe that the Old English poetic tradition was weakening at the time the manuscripts were produced. Nevertheless, they are the only evidence we have and, what's more, however ignorant and careless they may have been, the scribes did have at least the advantage of being ignorant and careless Anglo-Saxons.


This is reminiscent of the conclusion reached--by a very different line of reasoning--by scholars like Eugene Vinaver. In "Principles of Textual Emendation", Studies in French Language and Mediaeval Literature Presented to Professor Mildred K. Pope (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1939) p. 366, he argues that emendations ought never to be made where "...it is possible that the author, not the scribe, is to blame. . ." for the text. Two people can reach the same conclusion for different reasons and both can be wrong, but even so, I hope the reader will allow that such a coincidence suggests a likelihood that the conclusion is worth thinking about.

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