Verb seconding in Old English: verb movement to Infl[1]

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1. Introduction

Recent studies of Old English syntax have proposed that the position of the finite verb in main clauses is derived by verb seconding, while the position of the verb in subordinate clauses is derived by other processes. Van Kemenade (1987) and Kiparsky (1990), for example, claim that Old English is a verb second language like Modern German and Modern Dutch, with verb seconding moving finite verbs leftward to Comp in main clauses only. Under these analyses, the Old English main clause in (1) is a verb second clause, while the subordinate clauses in (2) through (4) are not,[2] even though the finite verb is in second position in all four clauses: (2) is derived by verb raising, (3) by verb projection raising, and (4) by postposition of the NP, all well-attested processes in Germanic languages that move constituents rightward over the finite verb.[3,4]

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1. This paper is based in part on chapter 3 of my doctoral dissertation. Thanks are due to Beatrice Santorini and to two anonymous reviewers for *The Linguistic Review* for detailed suggestions on earlier versions. All mistakes and shortcomings are of course my own.
2. The possibility of CP-recursion for (2) through (4) does not arise, since these three clauses are not complements of bridge verbs. See section 1.1 for further discussion.
3. For verb raising and verb projection raising, see, for example, den Besten and Edmondson (1983), Bresnan, Kaplan, Peters, and Zaenen (1982), Evers (1975, 1981), Haegeman (1988), Haegeman and van Riemsdijk (1986), Kroch and Santorini (1991), Reuland (1980). For postposition of NPs and PPs in the Early Old English of *Beowulf,* see Pintzuk and Kroch (1989). For postposition in Middle Dutch, see Gerritsen (1987).
4. As shown in (1) through (4), most analyses of Old English assume that the VP is head-final; but see note 9. See the Appendix for a list of the abbreviated forms of titles cited in the examples.