Prosody and syntax in the earliest Germanic

George Walkden (invited speaker)
University of Konstanz
george.walkden@uni-konstanz.de

One account of the origin of the verb-second phenomenon in Germanic is that it started out as prosodically motivated, with the unstressed finite verb (like other clitics) moving to second position for metrical reasons, and was later reanalyzed as a syntactic phenomenon making reference primarily to verbs and constituency (Wackernagel 1892; Kuhn 1933; Dewey 2006). This stands in contrast to another type of account in which the factors crucial to the development of V2 were primarily syntactic and/or discourse-structural in nature (Kiparsky 1995; Hinterhölzl & Petrova 2010; Walkden 2014, 2017).

These two types of account have rarely been explicitly contrasted with one another, partly due to the different type of evidence employed: the prosodic account is usually based on evidence from poetic texts, while the discourse-syntactic account draws on evidence from prose. In order to establish whether the two types of account are really incompatible, and (if so) which is correct, more work needs to be done. In this talk I will take steps in this direction, focusing on the following two areas:

i) Theoretically, our understanding of the syntax-prosody interface has come a long way since the work of e.g. Sievers (1893). Is the traditional prosodic account statable in terms of (for instance) Match Theory (Selkirk 2011), and/or do these more recent approaches shed light on the phenomena?

ii) On the view that the patterns found in poetry are not purely artificial but reflect genuine intonational properties of Germanic (Sievers 1893: 23; Dewey 2006: 19), we might expect to see a residue of "prosodic" V2 in early prose texts, with light and/or auxiliary verbs showing more of a tendency towards V2 than full lexical verbs. Is there any evidence for this?

The findings should have implications for our understanding of the diachronic interrelationships between syntax, prosody and information structure.

References: • Dewey, T. K. 2006. *The origins and development of Germanic V2*. PhD dissertation, UC Berkeley. • Hinterhölzl, R. & S. Petrova. 2010. From V1 to V2 in West Germanic. *Lingua* 120. 315–328. • Kiparsky, P. 1995. Indo-European origins of Germanic syntax. In A. Battye & I. Roberts (eds.), *Clause structure and language change*, 140–169. Oxford: OUP. • Kuhn, H. 1933. Zur Wortstellung und -betonung im Altgermanischen. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 57. 1–109. • Selkirk, E. 2011. The syntax-phonology interface. In J. Goldsmith, J. Riggle & A. Yu (eds.), *Handbook of phonological theory*, 2nd edn, 435–484. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell. • Sievers, E. 1893. *Altgermanische Metrik*. Halle: Niemeyer. • Wackernagel, J. 1892. Über ein Gesetz der indogermanischen Wortstellung. *Indogermanische Forschungen* 1. 333–436. • Walkden, G. 2014. *Syntactic reconstruction and Proto-Germanic*. Oxford: OUP. • Walkden, G. 2017. Language contact and V3 in Germanic varieties new and old. *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 20. 49–81.