Fig. 10. Beowulf, ll. 2341b-44.
Variation. Coordination, and Ellipsis (II)

Variation within the sentence pictured in Fig. 10 is limited to a pair of NP_{gen} constructions lēn-daga and wurulde lifes; both are dependents of ende, which in turn is the complement (object) of sceolde .. gebidan 'was to experience the end of transitory-days, (end of) this world’s life.'

Coordination is clearly marked by and .. samod 'and .. together with,' or simply 'and .. also.' Because the only overt coordinate construction is se wyrm 'the serpent,' it could be taken as a subject coordinate with æpeling ær-gōd 'the prince good-from-times-past'; these adversaries will soon in fact kill each other. However, the following clause (þēah þe ..) is related to se wyrm alone, as is clear from the deletion of the subject: deletion of the subject would not occur unless the referent was unchanged from the one immediately preceding, in this case in its superordinate clause. Besides, the singular verb heolde 'held' precludes the clause having had a coordinate (hence plural) subject deleted. From the context—even from general knowledge of the world—we know, too, that it was the dragon only that long had held the treasure: ‘although a long had held that treasure.’

So the coordination is best taken at the level of the principal (and initial) sentences. In the first of these the predication is full, with a two-part verb, a direct object (NP_{acc}), and variant dependents on that object. In the second the same full predicate is apposite and its omission artful, for the extended recursion it calls for: ‘and the serpent also [had to experience ...].’

Try to imagine the concessive clause preceding the second principal clause (following conjunction and). It would require an overt grammatical subject (since the topical subject has changed), and the second principal clause would need a pro-verb of some sort, and maybe an ‘additive’ adverb such as ēac. The concession would change from leaving an ‘although’ reminder to explaining ‘somehow it still happened.’

2341  sceolde 7 ( )dā / ( )þend*lēn-3-daga 5
2342  æpeling 3 ær-3-gōd 3  ende 7 ge- / -bēdan 4
2343  wurulde 4 lifes 4  se 7  se wyrm 3  so2mod 3
2344  þēah 1 þe 3 hord-4-welan 5  heolde 3 lange /