

ABSTRACTS

CLAUDIO CATALDI

‘A study of the Alfredian verse prefaces and epilogues’, *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology 15* (2023), pp. 1-22.

This study takes into account the verse prefaces and epilogues associated with the translations of the Alfredian age, approaching them from a metrical standpoint. As I hope to demonstrate, both the *Metrical Preface* and the *Metrical Epilogue* to Alfred’s translation of Gregory’s *Pastoral Care* fit the style of classical Old English poetry. Their author – be it Alfred or one of the scholars that convened at his court – was well-acquainted with the rules governing the traditional alliterative verse. The same applies to the brief *Metrical Preface* to the Old English *Boethius*. On the other hand, the *Metrical Preface* to Wærferth’s translation of Gregory’s *Dialogues* displays features (such as lack of enjambement and anaphora) that are typical of late Old English poetry. These and other features suggest that this preface might be a late forgery, which was possibly inspired by similar Alfredian examples. This interpretation would fit with the date of the only manuscript where Wærferth’s translation of Gregory’s *Dialogues* is accompanied by a preface (the eleventh century). The *Metrical Epilogue* to the translation of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*, which is also preserved in a single, eleventh-century copy, is characterised by the presence of similar features. According to this understanding, the Alfredian prologues and epilogues can be read as examples of the development of Old English poetry from early to late versification.

IAN CORNELIUS

‘Some corrections to the notation of verse structure in two recent editions of Middle English alliterative poems’, *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology 15* (2023), pp. 23-41.

In Germanic alliterative verse the fundamental unit of meter and rhythm is the half-line. Editions of older Germanic alliterative poems now usually record this feature in their typographic design: the poetry is lineated and coordinate half-lines are separated with whitespace. For Middle English alliterative poems, the usual presentation has been in undivided long lines, but several recent editions separate half-lines with whitespace or punctuation marks. The present essay examines the half-line divisions in John Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre’s *Piers Plowman B* (2014/2018) and Ad Putter and Myra Stokes’s *Cleanness, Patience, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (2014). Burrow and Turville-Petre aim to reconstruct the metrical markings of the archetypal scribe, whereas Putter and Stokes divide on the basis of their understanding of meter. I offer corrections to both editions, beginning with several lines in which Burrow and Turville-Petre misreport evidence for scribal notation of verse structure. In the edition by Putter and Stokes I find no misdivisions in *Cleanness* or *Patience*, but several errors and difficult cases in *Gawain*. I propose new emendations to *Gawain* 1281 and 1884.

R.D. FULK

‘Metrical and formal considerations in the textual criticism of the Vercelli Book’, *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology 15* (2023), pp. 43-65.

For nearly a century Anglo-Saxonists have relied upon the edition of the poetry in the Vercelli Book compiled by George Phillip Krapp in the series *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* as the standard scholarly edition. The edition has many virtues, yet it evinces a number of regrettable peculiarities (see, e.g. the corrections offered by Daniel Donoghue in *Style in Old English Poetry. The Test of the Auxiliary* [1987], pp. 187-90). Not least among its oddities is a propensity to disregard metrical and formal considerations in determining when, and when not, to emend the poetic texts. In some instances, Krapp has altered the readings in the Vercelli Book to improve the sense or grammar in such a way as to render a verse unmetrical. An example is the verse *Ðær orcnāwe wearð* (*Andreas* 770b), where the editor has supplied the word *wearð*, which does not appear in the manuscript, and has thus rendered an otherwise metrical verse unmetrical. A better editorial choice would be to alter manuscript *þær* to *wæs*, a word that it resembles in insular scripts. In other instances, Krapp has declined to apply any emendation to an unmetrical verse. An example is the verse

*swā him sīo cwēn bēad* (*Elene* 378b), though comparison with *swā him sēo cwēn bebēad* in the same poem (715b) suggests the obvious solution in the form of a normal verse of Sievers' type B. This paper examines some instances in Krapp's edition in which appropriate attention to metrical matters would improve the standard text of the poems in the Vercelli Book.

NELSON GOERING

'*Atlakviða*, reversal, and theories of Germanic alliterative metre', *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology* 15 (2023), pp. 67-93.

The Norse poem *Atlakviða* shows an irregular metre which is difficult to classify. This makes it a useful test case for comparing the explanatory abilities of two major theoretical frameworks of Germanic alliterative verse: the positional theory and the word-foot theory. I argue that the word-foot theory is more successful, especially in deriving the "E\*" pattern (such as *róg-malmi skatna* 'strife-metal of princes', 27.6) from the D\* pattern that is unusually frequent in this poem. This exemplifies the utility of the word-foot theory's principle of "reversal", which holds that longer metrical feet should come later in the verse, and that when they occur earlier, this is a marked reversal of the norm. The marked nature of reversed verses can further be supported by the linguistic behaviour of compounds in Norse prose. The word-foot theory is also able to accommodate the shorter verses of the poem as long as they avoid entirely overlapping with full verse patterns. Although this investigation can hardly be the last word in Germanic metrical theory, it suggests that the word-foot theory is more promising as an explanatory framework for the full range of Germanic alliterative metres.

NORIKO INOUE

'Eurhythmic dips in Middle English alliterative verse', *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology* 15 (2023), pp. 95-119.

The structure of the a-verse in Middle English alliterative meter remains unclear. One of the most controversial issues concerns the a-verse end, more specifically, the number of syllables in the final dip. Scholars such as Judith Jefferson and Ad Putter, and Noriko Inoue and Myra Stokes argued that while the second half-line (the b-verse) must not end with a long dip, the first half-line (the a-verse) can. But Nicolay Yakovlev argued that final long dips are prohibited in a-verses as well. In this essay, therefore, I will reconsider the "final dip" and see whether the a-verse can indeed end with a long dip. I shall show two things. Firstly, the long final dip is an essential part of the rhythmic structure of the two-beat a-verse and serves to generate "eurhythmic" verses with dips of two or three syllables. Secondly, Yakovlev's three-lift a-verse theory and his principles of scansion based on grammatical categories would unnecessarily *eliminate* a long final dip that, in my opinion, is rhythmically essential in terms of eurhythmy.

MIKAEL MALES

'The earliest Old Norse metrics', *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology* 15 (2023), pp. 121-144.

This article explores Old Norse metrical developments in the ninth century, focusing on the only securely datable evidence we have: the Rök stanza and Bragi's poetry. It reveals a greater degree of continuity between the two than scholars have previously assumed, and it clarifies fundamental dynamics in the emergence of *dróttkvætt* that have hitherto been impeded by an unwarranted analytical dichotomy. It also presents the first detailed metrical analysis of the Rök stanza, specifying how far its form has proceeded from the shared Germanic one towards later, specifically Old Norse forms. While Bragi's metrical practices are usually grouped together with those of other early poets, this article also clarifies how he differs from these in ways that are most plausibly explained by the fact that he represents the earliest attested stage of *dróttkvætt* poetry.

NICHOLAS MYKLEBUST

'Counting time in Old English meter', *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology* 15 (2023), pp. 145-170.

Since 1885, when Eduard Sievers formalized its paradigm with his five Types, the template of Old English meter has been simple to describe but difficult to explain. Because they lie at an intermediate level of representation – too abstract to map meaningfully to prosodic constituents but too concrete to capture principles of a metrical system – the Types are convenient as a practical tool but incomplete as a theoretical

model. Indeed, their most enduring contribution, the notion of four positions or *Glieder* per hemistich, despite its indispensable taxonomy of variants, leaves serious questions about Old English meter unanswered. Does each position in a Type comprise a metrical beat? Do only lifts comprise a beat? How many beats underlie the half-line? What motivates parametrical schema such as alliteration and word order to intervene in and affect a metrical grammar? Such questions presently lie outside a purview that adopts *Glieder* exclusively as metrical units. As a descriptive exemplar, the Types hypothesize Old English meter as a static, conceptual script. This script may benefit from a complementary perspective that explores meter as an embodied process that counts beats in time. For instance, recent research in cognitive science posits a salience cue, or point of maximal contrast, precisely where Old English meter deploys a dip. This “closure positive shift” reflects active restructuring of the phrasing schemata that shape perception of a hemistich, with dips rather than lifts stipulating the number and distribution of beats and confirming a constraint not on strong but on weak units. This approach to Old English meter offers a functional explanation for the four-position architecture of the hemistich and confirms that each position in the Old English metrical line acts as a beat-bearing unit or its equivalent, bolstering a Sieversian framework by modeling not just the outputs of the metrical grammar but also that grammar’s internal logic.

DAVID O’NEIL

‘Syntax and metrical evolution in the medieval English alliterative tradition’, *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology* 15 (2023), pp. 171-191.

This paper presents a study of fourteen medieval English alliterative poems ranging in date from the seventh to the fourteenth century. Passages from these poems were analyzed for syntactic structure, and individual words were coded for part of speech and classified as either lexemes (nouns, adjectives, etc.) or functors (prepositions, determiners, etc.). Results show that the increasing line length of alliterative poems during the Middle Ages correlates with, and potentially could have been caused by, the increase in functors that occurred as part of the transition of English from synthetic to analytic syntax. This paper also examines the growing bifurcation of the long line (a result of the a-verse increasing in length at a greater rate than the b-verse) and the shift of the locus of metricality from the half-line to the long line. It is shown that these effects of syntactic change correlated with the decline of the alliterative tradition and the nativization of a new tradition of syllabic-accentual verse. It is plausible to conclude that the new tradition was a better “fit” for the emergent structure of English. Findings from this study corroborate recent claims that the English alliterative tradition was active even during the centuries preceding the fourteenth-century Alliterative Revival.

BIANCA PATRIA

‘The many virtues of the strange type Eε. Metre, semantics and intertextuality in *dróttkvætt*’, *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology* 15 (2023), pp. 193-221.

The pattern which Eduard Sievers defined as “Eε” is the only line-type in *dróttkvætt* to have a trisyllabic word in the final metrical positions 4-6, thus deviating from the otherwise ubiquitous disyllabic closing (positions 5-6). This entails prosodic peculiarities that have the effect of emphasizing the compound occurring at the end of the line, which in early *dróttkvætt* happens often to be a proper name. When this is the case, Eε-lines can also violate the rule, also known as Craigie’s Law, according to which only short-stemmed nouns should occupy position 4. Despite their prosodical oddity, Eε-lines are relatively frequent throughout the corpus. In fact, arguably because of their exceptional features, these lines were used since the earliest known skaldic poems in rhetorically charged functions, such as the celebration of the skald’s patron or in the poem’s refrain (*stef*). Another conspicuous characteristic of Eε-lines is their tendency to recur as formulaic tags, echoes and in deliberate intertextual games across the skaldic canon. Metrical exceptions and licenses appear indeed to have attracted the skalds’ attention and to have played a key role in skaldic referentiality. The present article will explore the interface between metre, semantics and intertextuality in Eε-lines, with an eye to the occurrence of identical lines poem-internally (refrain-technique) as well as across the corpus of early poetry in *dróttkvætt*.

MICHAEL SCHULTE

‘*Runica metrica*. Die metrische Gestalt der älteren Runeninschriften und ihre Grundeinheit der Proto-langzeile’, *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology* 15 (2023), pp. 223-248.

This article on early runic metrics takes a minimalist standpoint by first taking the position of the *Advocatus Diaboli*. This means that metrical criteria of the older runic inscriptions until *c.* AD 500 should speak for themselves without being directly derived from or equated with later language stages with their elaborated metrical systems. In other words, the present approach attempts to avoid constrictions and direct comparisons with the Old Germanic literary languages, especially Old Norse, Old English and Old High German. This is so because the language typology of Ancient Nordic cannot directly be equated with Old Norse or Old English in terms of syllabic metrics. Sievers' typology (Sievers 1893) is also rejected here as a straightforward tool for analysis, since it is oriented towards the Old Germanic literary languages. This raises the basic question of scientifically verifiable regularities of early runic metrics that meet criteria of validity and reliability. The leitmotif of the following analysis is the fusion and interaction of language, sentence rhythm and alliterative metrics. Not entirely unexpectedly, the Germanic long line, or more precisely the proto-long line, emerges as the basic unit of Ancient Nordic metrics, since it can be relatively reliably verified in a small group of older runic inscriptions.

GJERTRUD F. STENBRENDEN

'The emergence of affricates in English: alliterative and other verse evidence', *Filologia germanica – Germanic Philology* 15 (2023), pp. 249-278.

This paper addresses the emergence and development of palato-alveolar affricates /tʃ dʒ/ in English, using spelling evidence, metrical and otherwise, from OE and ME. The affricates developed from the reflexes of Gmc velars in palatal contexts. From the earliest records, the scribes indicate a distinction between velar and palatal reflexes, but there is no certain evidence of phonetic affricates until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in the form of <t-> and <d->. The velar and palatalised reflexes continue to alliterate until the late-tenth century for Gmc \*g, and well into ME for Gmc \*k. As alliteration is based on identity of sound, such alliterations suggest that these reflexes were allophones and that they were not affricates. Verse evidence is also exploited for its clues as to the metrical weight of the pre-affricates; it is also indicative of non-affricates for OE and early ME. For the reflexes of Gmc \*g, a few ME scribes maintain a graphemic contrast between the voiced plosive and pre-affricate on the one hand, and fricative and approximant realisations on the other. Structural sequences (phonetic affricates) may have developed in ME, as the pre-affricates block open syllable lengthening and induce shortening of the preceding vowel. Full-blown phonemic affricates (or contour segments) seem to have developed in late ME and were influenced by the fact that a number of French loans had phonemic affricates without distributional limitations. The voiced affricate developed later than its voiceless counterpart.