

INTRODUCTION

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METRE AND ITS sister discipline, metrical grammar, are essential to the interpretation of Old English poetry and to its recitation.¹ In a language in which many pronouns, conjunctions, and adverbs have identical forms, it is metrics that often allows one to disambiguate and establish the correct relationship between the words of a clause in verse. Take *The Wanderer* line 12a, “þæt biþ in eorle,” for example: it is the scansion of the half-line that tells us that “þæt” is to be interpreted not as a pronoun anticipating the clause in lines 13–14, but as a conjunction at the head of the noun clause that functions as the object of *wāt*, in line 11b.² Similarly, it is only knowledge of metrical grammar that confirms that *The Seafarer* 19b, “hwīlum ylfete song,” is to be construed not with “dyde” in line 20a, but with “gehȳrde” in 18a.³ Proficiency in metre thus enables the teacher of Old English poetry to respond to basic questions about the meaning of the texts. It also helps with the recitation of verse (an area in which students approaching the subject

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1 For a full index of key technical terms used in this chapter and volume, readers should consult the Glossary of Metrical Terms in the Appendices.

2 Pronouns that anticipate subordinate noun clauses are of course very frequent in Old English verse: see, for example, Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, *A Guide to Old English* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 66–67. If “þæt” in line 12a of *The Wanderer* were a pronoun anticipating the noun clause “þæt hē his ferðlocan fæste binde” (line 13), however, then line 12 would break an important alliterative rule. Pronouns that appear outside the first drop of the verse clause (which is in this case in line 11b, “ic tō”) ought to be stressed, according to Kuhn’s first law. If “þæt” were stressed, then the alliteration of line 12 would fall on the second rather than the first lift of the on-verse. Useful summaries of Kuhn’s first law can be found in A. Campbell, “Verse Influences in Old English Prose,” in *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert Dean Meritt*, ed. James L. Rosier (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 93–98 at 94; Peter J. Lucas, “On the Role of Some Adverbs in Old English Verse Grammar,” in *Papers from the 5th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics*, ed. Sylvia M. Adamson, Vivien A. Law, Nigel Vincent, and Susan Wright (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1990), 293–312 at 294; Haruko Momma, *The Composition of Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 56–64; and Jun Terasawa, *Old English Metre: An Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 93–97.

3 If line 19b, “hwīlum ylfete song,” were the beginning of a new clause, as it is often interpreted, then the finite verb “dyde,” in line 20a, would have to be stressed for being outside the first drop of the clause (“hwīlum”), which would in turn result in an anomalous alliterative pattern (alliteration would fall on the second rather than the first lift, as in the example from *The Wanderer* discussed above). Line 19b is thus best taken as part of the previous clause, whose verb is “gehȳrde” in line 18a. See Peter R. Orton, “*The Seafarer* 6b–10a and 18–22,” *NM* 83 (1982): 255–59.

for the first time are naturally interested). Old English poetry is nowadays often recited as if it were prose, with little concern for its idiosyncratic rhythms.⁴ Old English poets, however, took good care to predicate their lines upon a rhythmical contrast across the caesura. If the on-verse has the rhythm of, say, a Type D, then the off-verse will as a rule feature one of the other four basic rhythmical types.⁵ The ability to read verses out loud according to their metrical contours, coupled with a noticeable pause at the caesura (the purpose of which is to enhance the contrast of rhythms within the line), makes the recitation of Old English poetry a more authentic experience, and also one that is more enjoyable and rewarding for the students.⁶

The study of metre also helps to make sense of the rhetoric and style of Old English poetry. The contrast between youth and age that is so central to the structure of *Beowulf*, for example, or the epistemological contrast between the poet and his audience, on the one hand, and the characters within the story, on the other, can be effectively compared to the contrast of rhythms upon which the poetic line is predicated.⁷ The implication of course is that a poet accustomed to structuring his lines around contrast would naturally replicate this technique at a macrostructural level. Similarly, the poets' fondness for rhythmical heterogeneity, manifested in the existence of five basic types and a very substantial number of subtypes, can be seen as the metrical equivalent of variation (which Frederick Klaeber defined as "the very soul of Old English poetical style").⁸ Variation consists, in the words of Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, of "a double or multiple statement of the same concept or idea in multiple words, with a more or less perceptible shift in stress."⁹ From a metrical point of view, Old English verse consists of a succession of multiple rhythms, most of which restate in multiple forms the same underlying conceptual pattern of four positions, with perceptible shift in stress. Both diction and metre are governed by the principles of repetition and variation, and so one can justifiably speak of metrical and lexical

⁴ See, for example, Mitchell and Robinson, *Guide*, 101–2. On the importance of metre for the belletristic recitation of Old English poetry, see A. J. Bliss, *An Introduction to Old English Metre* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 1, and Eric Weiskott, "A Plea for Pronunciation," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching* 22 (2015): 41–42.

⁵ A. J. Bliss, *The Metre of Beowulf*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), 135–38.

⁶ Speaking of Latin hexameter verse, G. B. Nussbaum said that, given that the Roman poets composed mainly for the ear, and not for the eye (even if of course they relied on writing as a memory-aid), "to read Vergil authentically is to read him aloud": see Nussbaum, *Vergil's Metre: A Practical Guide for Reading Latin Hexameter Poetry* (London: Bristol Classical, 1986), 1. The same applies to Old English poetry, which was likewise composed mainly for the ear.

⁷ This point was famously made by J. R. R. Tolkien, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 22 (1936): 245–95 at 273–74. See also R. D. Fulk, *Interpretations of Beowulf: A Critical Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), xi.

⁸ *Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. Frederick Klaeber (Boston: Heath, 1950), lxxv.

⁹ See his *The Art of Beowulf* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 40.

variation as two interrelated features of Old English poetic art.¹⁰ Students are often very responsive to associations of this kind, which demonstrate that metre and style can be taught in mutually illuminating ways.

First-hand acquaintance with metre is essential if one is to have informed opinions about such important topics as the history of Old English poetry and its textual criticism. The incidence of verses featuring non-parasiting and non-contraction in a given poem is a reliable indicator of its date of composition. The abundance in *Beowulf* of verses like 1136a, “wuldortorhtan weder,” and 1275b, “dēapwiċ sēon,” in which disyllabic “wuldor” and monosyllabic “sēon” scan according to their prehistoric values (monosyllabic **wuldr* and disyllabic **seohan*, respectively), indicates the earliness of *Beowulf* relative to, say, the works of Cynewulf, in which the incidence of such verses is substantially lower.¹¹ Little more than a basic understanding of the four-position principle suffices to identify instances of metrical non-parasiting and non-contraction in a poem—and yet, without that understanding, they inevitably escape the notice of the student of verse. A knowledge of metre is of the greatest service in the criticism of Old English verse texts.¹² Defective scansion corroborates beyond reasonable doubt that manuscript “hador” at *Beowulf* 414a, “under heofenes hador,” is to be interpreted not as the noun *hādor* (brightness), but as a scribal error for *haðor* (confinement).¹³ Metrics helps us not only to detect and emend corrupt verses, but also to rule out unwarranted emendation proposals. In *Beowulf* 985a, “steda nægla gehwylċ,” for example, metrical considerations discourage most editors from accepting emendation of resolved “steda” to unresolvable *stīðra*, as some have proposed.¹⁴ Thus, no matter whether one aligns oneself with the

10 On repetition and variation as organizing principles of Old English verse, see Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), 57–58. See also R. D. Fulk, “Rhetoric, Form, and Linguistic Structure in Early Germanic Verse: Toward a Synthesis,” *International Journal of Germanic Linguistics and Semiotic Analysis* 1 (1996): 63–88, especially 66–68.

11 R. D. Fulk, *A History of Old English Meter* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 66–121. In *Beowulf* 1136a, omission of *o* in “wuldor” produces a regular four-position Type E verse with resolution of “weder.” In 1275b, disyllabic scansion of “sēon” makes for a regular A2k (on which see Geoffrey Russom’s contribution to this volume).

12 On this topic, see, for example, R. D. Fulk, “Textual Criticism,” in *A Beowulf Handbook*, ed. Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 35–54.

13 The unresolvable disyllable *hādor*, with a long root vowel, creates an aberrant metrical pattern of five positions: xx / x / x (prepositions like *under* are not as a rule found in anacrustic positions). The resolvable disyllable *haðor*, on the other hand, produces a regular Type B verse with both lifts resolved: xx / x / . If the manuscript reading were correct, moreover, this would be the only instance in which *hādor* is a noun rather than an adjective. See *Klaeber’s Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 141. Metrical considerations are often independently corroborated by linguistic evidence.

14 Unresolvable *stīðra* would produce a variety of Type D (/ x / xx \) which should feature double alliteration.

liberal or the conservative school of textual criticism, metre remains an invaluable tool for the scholar of Old English poetry.¹⁵

That metre can be relied upon as a text-critical tool is confirmed by the essential correctness of Eduard Sievers's system of scansion. Sievers's most penetrating insight into the workings of Old English versification is that a half-line is metrical, regardless of its number of syllables, if it consists of exactly four structural constituents, known as "positions" (*Glieder* in Sievers's original terminology). Verses of more than four syllables are adjusted to the four-position scheme by resolution, a process of syllabic equivalence according to which a short stressed syllable and its unstressed successor are metrically analogous to a single long stressed syllable. For example, *Beowulf* 1631a, "foldweġ mæton," and 76a, "folcstede frætwan", are both four-position Type A2a verses because disyllabic *-stede* undergoes resolution, thereby occupying, like monosyllabic *-weġ*, a single position. Sometimes, however, resolution must be suspended for the verse to comply with the four-position rule. In line 31a, "lēof landfruma", the potentially resolvable sequence *-fruma* must scan as a disyllable, as otherwise the half-line would consist of only three positions. Does this mean that Sievers's rule of resolution is arbitrary and his four-position principle therefore illusory? A few years after the publication of Sievers's work, Max Kaluza discovered a virtually perfect correlation in *Beowulf* between the operation of resolution and the etymological length of the endings involved.¹⁶ Resolution obtains if the ending was short in early Old English; if the ending was long, then resolution is suspended. That resolution correlates with a non-metrical entity which was not part of Sievers's original formulation is indicative of the correctness of his analysis.¹⁷

¹⁵ For favourable attitudes to a more liberal treatment of verse texts, see, for instance, Kenneth Sisam, "Notes on Old English Poetry," *RES* 22 (1946): 257–68; Michael Lapidge, "Textual Criticism and the Literature of Anglo-Saxon England," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of Manchester* 73 (1991): 17–46. For a more conservative approach, see E. G. Stanley, "Unideal Principles of Editing Old English Verse," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 70 (1984): 231–73. For a recent scholarly debate over the authenticity of a number of manuscript readings, see Eric Weiskott, "Three-position Verses in *Beowulf*," *N&Q* 60 (2013): 483–85; Seiichi Suzuki, "Three-position Verses in *Beowulf* and *Genesis A*: Syntagmatically-induced Exceptions to the Four-position Principle," *JGL* 29 (2017): 50–84; and Rafael J. Pascual, "Three-position Verses and the Metrical Practice of the *Beowulf* Poet," *Selim* 20 (2013–2014): 49–79; Rafael J. Pascual, "Manuscript Evidence and Metrical Authenticity: A Response to Seiichi Suzuki," *JGL* 29 (2017): 85–99.

¹⁶ Max Kaluza, "Zur Betonungs- und Verslehre des Altenglischen," in *Festschrift zum siebenzigsten Geburtstag Oskar Schade* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1896), 101–33.

¹⁷ See R. D. Fulk, "Early Middle English Evidence for Old English Meter: Resolution in *Poema morale*," *JGL* 14 (2002): 331–55; Rafael J. Pascual, "Bliss's Rule and Old English Metrics," *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews* 32 (2019): 209–13. Old English metrical theory and its dependability have been the subject of considerable scholarly debate in recent decades. Of all the alternatives to Sieversian metrics that have been proposed, the most well-known probably is Geoffrey Russom's word-foot theory, a model informed by modern linguistics. See Geoffrey Russom, *Old English Meter and Linguistic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). In 2005, Thomas A. Bredehoft proposed his own and purportedly more flexible

The study of metrics also allows us to distinguish convention from stylistic embellishment and poetic licence. Both *Beowulf* 440a, “lāð wið lāpum,” and 841a, “lāþes lāstas” have double alliteration, but metrical considerations suggest that only the double alliteration of 841a can be considered a non-structural ornament, since in 440a it is a formal requirement demanded by the system of versification.¹⁸ Likewise, the absence of double alliteration from a verse like 665a, “cwēn tō ġebeddan,” which has the same metrical structure as 440a, makes this half-line stand out as a poetically meaningful licence.¹⁹ The past plural form of *āleġdan* is stressed in 34, “ālēdon þā | lēofne þēoden” (“then they laid the beloved lord,”) but in 3141, “āleġdon ðā tōmidde | mārne þēoden” (“then they laid the renowned lord in the midst,”) it fails to receive stress, despite the strong similarity of context.²⁰ The poet thus signalled metrically the contrast between a ship burial and a barrow burial with cremation.²¹ The name element *-wulf* is almost

version of Russom’s model, but it has been shown that Bredehoft’s theory suffers from important structural flaws. See Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Early English Meter* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); and for negative assessments of his theory, see Mark Griffith, “Review of *Early English Metre*, by Thomas A. Bredehoft,” *N&Q* 56 (2009): 98–99; Eric Weiskott, *English Alliterative Verse: Poetic Tradition and Literary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 72; Rafael J. Pascual, “Ælfric’s Rhythmical Prose and the Study of Old English Metre,” *ES* 95 (2014): 803–23. More recently, a new theory has been propounded, according to which morphology is more central to metrical behaviour than stress. See Nicolay Yakovlev, “The Development of Alliterative Metre from Old to Middle English” (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 2008). Yakovlev’s theory has been applauded as an improvement on Sievers by some: see, for example, Weiskott, *English Alliterative Verse*; Ian Cornelius, *Reconstructing Alliterative Verse: The Pursuit of a Medieval Meter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). The notion that the main factor behind Old English metre is morphology, however, is problematic: see Rafael J. Pascual, “Alliterative Metre and Medieval English Literary History,” *Atlantis: Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 40 (2018): 221–30; Leonard Neidorf and Rafael J. Pascual, “Nicolay Yakovlev’s Theory of Old English Meter: A Reassessment,” *Neophilologus* 104 (2020): 245–53.

18 In 440a, Bliss’s caesura falls in position 1, whereas in 841a it falls in position 2. On double and ornamental patterns of alliteration in Old English verse, see Andy Orchard, “Artful Alliteration in Anglo-Saxon Song and Story,” *Anglia* 113 (1995): 429–63; and, more recently, Mark Griffith, “Extra Alliteration on Stressed Syllables in Old English Poetry: Types, Uses and Evolution,” *ASE* 47 (2018): 69–176.

19 See Mark Griffith, “Verses Quite like *cwen to gebeddan* in *The Metres of Boethius*,” *ASE* 34 (2005): 145–67.

20 Both verses, 34a and 3141a, occur in the context of a funeral (Scyld’s and Beowulf’s, respectively). Also, “ālēdon”/“āleġdon” is in the clause-initial drop in both of them, and so it should be unstressed, but in 34a the finite verb receives a rhythmical stress because the poet has not included any stress-word in that half-line (i.e. it is a particle verse). On the aesthetic potential of particle verses, see R. D. Fulk, “Particle Verses in Old English and Eddic Poetry,” in *Early English Poetic Culture and Meter: The Influence of G. R. Russom*, ed. M. J. Toswell and Lindy Brady (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2016), 21–37. Notice that the alliteration in 3141a is on *m*.

21 Insertion of the stress-word “tōmidde” (in the middle) prevents “ālēdon” from receiving metrical stress. Of course, in the case of a cremation, it is important to place the corpse in the middle of the pyre, so that no leg or other limb is left behind, while the location of the corpse in a funeral ship is not as important.

always unstressed in the poem, as the rules of prosody demand, but on a very few special occasions it has been accorded rhetorical stress: 343b, “Bēowulf is mīn nama,” and 1024b, “Bēowulf ġepāh.”²² The former verse contains the first occurrence of the name in the poem and is uttered by the protagonist when he introduces himself to Wulfgar. In line 1024b, stress on *-wulf* suggests that the poet wanted to emphasize Beowulf’s ursine nature precisely at a moment in which he is portrayed as drinking mead, the honey-based liquor *par excellence*.²³

Knowledge of metre enables close reading of the sort that is so highly valued in the realm of literary hermenutics, and so metrics considerably enhances any reading of Old English poetry. It is thus only natural for CLASP to undertake initiatives such as the present volume, *Tradition and Innovation in Old English Metre*, which is intended as an invitation to this rich field of study. Scholars already working in the area will no doubt find it serviceable; the collection, however, has been assembled with a particular reader in mind: the advanced student of Old English literature with little or no knowledge of versification, but with an interest in developing research proficiency in the subject. Such students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the basics of metre as laid out, for example, in John C. Pope and R. D. Fulk’s *Eight Old English Poems* or Jun Terasawa’s *Old English Metre: An Introduction* before proceeding to read those essays in the volume that most call their attention. The glossary of metrical terms and the select bibliography at the end of the collection should also prove useful. The reader will notice that some of the chapters are contributed by some of the most eminent living Old English metrists, but it should not be judged from the title that generational differences among the contributors correlate in any significant way with differences in methodology or approach. All the essays in the collection introduce innovations in metrical study by building on scholarly tradition, and each of them does so in a manner that is reflective of the author’s particular interests and style.

The collection opens with R. D. Fulk’s essay, “Metre as an Editorial Concern in The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, with Particular Reference to the Old English *Soul and Body* Poems,” in which Fulk elaborates on a point that he made in his plenary address to the Oxford Medieval English Research Seminar in October 2019. In this essay, Fulk first discusses a number of editorial readings in the *ASPR* that contravene well-known and widely acknowledged principles of verse construction. Fulk’s discussion shows

²² If *-wulf* is unstressed, then these two verses would feature a three-position pattern: lift, drop, lift. A half-stress on *-wulf* makes for a four-position Type E verse (in the case of 343b, with resolution of *nama*).

²³ The assumption here is that giving prosodic emphasis to *-wulf* during recitation would have made audiences construe the hero’s name as the kenning “bee-wulf,” i.e. “bear.” As has been argued, however, the hero’s name is probably theophoric and does not contain the element “bee” in it: see, for example, R. D. Fulk, “The Etymology and Significance of Beowulf’s Name,” *Anglo-Saxon* 1 (2007): 109–36. It might be that the poet did not know the etymology of the hero’s name, or that he simply construed the name in a non-etymological way on a few occasions. Another verse in which *-wulf* receives stress is 1310b, “Bēowulf fetod”, although here there appears to be no motivation for stress on the deutertheme beyond the introduction of metrical variety.

that an insufficient grasp of the principles of Old English poetic metre can only lead to infelicitous editorial choices. He then focuses on the reading of *Soul and Body II* line 5a in the *ASPR*: “lic ond sawle,” emended from manuscript “lic ond sawl.” Fulk shows this emendation to be unnecessary in the light of recent developments in our understanding of Old English apocope and syncope. The monosyllabic form “sāwl” is—contrary to the standard account—a relatively late development, probably of the ninth century. The seemingly surprising scribal substitution of monosyllabic “sāwl” for disyllabic “sāwul” (the likely authorial form) then confirms rather than contradicts our traditional assumptions about metrics and poetic chronology.

Jane Roberts and Peter Lucas provide insightful examinations of the metre of, respectively, *The Dream of the Rood* and *Exodus*. They both rely on Bliss’s scansional system to characterize the metrical styles of these two poems and to assess in what ways they differ from that of *Beowulf*. In “*The Dream of the Rood*: ‘not on the whole metrically deficient’?,” Roberts focuses on three features: A3 half-lines, hypermetric lines, and what she describes as “obstreperous verses” (i.e. verses with unusual metrical contours). She invites scholars to see deviations from the metrical practice of *Beowulf* as manifestations of *The Dream of the Rood* poet’s artistry rather than as signs of technical inferiority. Lucas, in his “On the Metre of *Exodus*,” gives a comprehensive and vivid account of the poem’s prosody, verse grammar, and alliteration. He also observes that the metrical style of passages of direct speech differs significantly from that of descriptive and narrative passages. The compositional technique of the poem, he concludes, is far more sophisticated than has generally been recognized. Both Roberts and Lucas offer tables of scansion at the end of their contributions. These materials should prove useful to scholars who wish to pursue the interesting lines of inquiry opened by the authors of these two chapters.

The Battle of Maldon is served by two of the essays in the volume. In “*The Battle of Maldon* and the Vengeance of Offa,” Mark Griffith puts forward a new and ingenious solution to the apparent lack of narrative and stylistic coherence of lines 285–86 (a long-standing problem in the criticism of the poem, about which a consensus has never been reached). Griffith’s explanation not only manages to make sense of the perplexing reference to Offa and “þone sælidan” at this juncture in the poem; it also demonstrates that the *Maldon* poet was ready to deviate from well-established metrical rules in order to achieve particular narrative effects. The poet’s stylistic practice is also the focus of Mark Atherton’s “Rhyme and Reason in *The Battle of Maldon*.” Here, Atherton systematically identifies patterns of rhyme in the poem and analyses them in the larger context of the Old English verse corpus. He reaches the conclusion that the poet consciously relied on chains of half-rhymes in order to highlight moments of considerable narrative significance, such as the arrival of the English on the battlefield and Byrhtnoth’s preparation for combat. This distinctive feature, Atherton argues, sets *The Battle of Maldon* apart from other well-known and stylistically more conservative works like *Beowulf* and *The Wanderer*.

A thorough study of Old English metrics should address the issue of hypermetric lines, and hypermetricity is at the core of contributions by Megan E. Hartman and

Matthew D. Coker. In "Hypermetric Narrative in the Old English *Daniel*," Hartman sees individual artistry where others have seen stylistic deficiency or evidence for composite authorship. She demonstrates that the fluctuation between normal and hypermetric lines in the middle section of *Daniel* is the means by which the poet was able to develop the central theme of his work: Nebuchadnezzar's shift from pride to humility. Along similar methodological lines, Coker, in his "*Elene* 582–89: Hypermetrics, Revelation, and Judgement," contends that it is no coincidence that the poem's greatest moment of revelation occurs in its only set of hypermetric lines. Rather, Coker maintains, the shift from normal to hypermetric lines that takes place toward the middle of the poem reflects Cynewulf's conscious attempt to signal the theme of movement from concealment to revelation that is so central to his text. Both Hartman and Coker discern a close connection between poetic form and narrative theme in Old English verse, thereby showing that metrical studies are of crucial importance to the literary criticism of the poetry (a belief that is also at the heart of Griffith's and Atherton's contributions).

Two contributions deal with poems composed in untraditional styles. Kazutomo Karasawa focuses on the two most prominent stylistic anomalies of *Maxims I*: its unpaired half-lines and its unusually heavy hypermetrics. These two phenomena are genuine features of the poet's style, according to Karasawa, and should therefore be treated as such by future editors of *Maxims I*. He also provides an explanation for various aspects of the use of single half-lines and heavy hypermetrics in the poem by modifying Bliss's theory about the origin of its metre. Caroline R. Batten, in her "Anaphora and Stylistic Flexibility in the Metrical Charms," identifies a correlation between metrical irregularities and anaphoric structures in the charms. This correlation, she suggests, indicates that the irregularities of these texts are not blunders of taste, as they have all too often been defined; they are rather functional features that direct the audiences' attention to the magical language contained in the charms' anaphoric structures. Karasawa's and Batten's essays thus approach the metres of *Maxims I* and the charms on their own terms, and in so doing they demonstrate that the poetic landscape of Anglo-Saxon England was more heterogeneous than an exclusive focus on the metre of *Beowulf* would make us believe.

S. C. Thomson and Rachel A. Burns are concerned with interactions between scribal practice and metrical prosody. Thomson, in "Struggling to find the point: The scratched metrical pointing of *Guthlac A* in the Exeter Book," examines metrical marks scratched in dry-point in the Exeter Book and, more particularly, in the text of *Guthlac A*. These marks, which reflect a late reader's desire to engage with the rhythm of Old English poetry, were not always correctly introduced. Instances of erroneous marking are interpreted by Thomson as evidence of the evolution of alliterative verse (i.e. the dry-pointer was sometimes unable to mark the metre of *Guthlac A* because of this poem's relatively early date of composition). In "Mind the Gap: Inter-word Spacing and Metrical Organization in Old English Verse," Burns provides a detailed statistical analysis of the degree of blank spacing between words in a sample of several folios from the *Beowulf* manuscript. She finds the data suggestive of the sort of scribal sensitivity to metrical structure that Thomson identifies in the Exeter Book. In the absence of an Anglo-Saxon *ars poetica*,

Burns vindicates the value of scribal evidence to our understanding of Old English rhythmical structure. These two contributors show that the disciplines of manuscript, linguistic, and literary studies are more intimately related than is often assumed.

The last two essays in the collection deal with aspects of metrical theory. John C. Pope is nowadays remembered mainly for his EETS edition of the *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, but in his own day he was well-known for his musical theory of Old English poetry. Haruko Momma's contribution, "Metre vs. Rhythm: John C. Pope reads Sievers," presents and discusses so far unpublished materials from the John Collins Pope Papers housed at Yale University Library (including Pope's neo-Old English poem, "The Lay of Humptig, Son of Dumpt," and his transcription of a letter from Eduard Sievers to Albert S. Cook, dated 1891). In the light of the evidence furnished by the Pope Papers, which afford valuable insights into the opinions of one of the most eminent scholars in the history of the discipline, Momma argues that Pope's and Sievers's theories should be understood as complementary rather than mutually exclusive interpretations, and invites scholars to give renewed attention to Pope's findings. In the final essay in the collection, "The Mystery of Type A2k," Geoffrey Russom first argues that Sieversian metrics is unable to offer a coherent account for verses like *Beowulf* 1731b, "hlēoburh wera," with suspension of resolution in the second lift, and that such inability is an indication that Sievers's theory is in need of update. He then provides an explanation for that verse type's existence and distribution within the context of the word-foot theory of Old English metre.

As a sign of respect to the tradition of Old English metrical scholarship, this CLASP volume is dedicated to the memory of A. J. Bliss, the medievalist and metre specialist whose monograph on *Beowulf*, first published in 1958, contributed fundamentally to our understanding of the composition of that poem. The collection thus closes with two appendices that are concerned with the figure of Bliss and his work: Peter Lucas's personal memoir and Mark Griffith's "Some Corrections to Alan Bliss's Indices to *The Metre of Beowulf*, together with his last known views on the Metre of the Poem." The third appendix contains the glossary of metrical terms referred to above. Bliss memorably stated that "the appreciation of Old English metre cannot be learned in a day, but it can be learned without great difficulty, provided it is approached in the right spirit."²⁴ We hope to make it easier for those interested in Old English poetry to approach the study of its metre in the right spirit, namely with an awareness that without metre there is no poetry.

