BLANK VERSE

The unrhymed iambic pentameter has customarily been considered the great staple measure of English verse; it therefore has quite naturally attracted considerable attention from literary critics and scholars ever since the seventeenth century, though interest ran highest in the form just at the turn of the present century, when English metrists were quarreling hotly over "elision" versus "trisyllabic substitution" (the real issue was actually scansion versus performance). Metrical studies of the blank-verse line of Shakespeare and Milton, among other, are cited below, whereas studies of Shakespeare's rhymed verse, for example, are cited in the following subsection of Couplet verse, and also in the section on R hyme in C hapter 4 on Sound. M ore general studies of the development of the pentameter line (as in the sonnets of W yatt and Surrey) appear in the preceding section on Accen- tual-Syllabic Verse. See also T hompson (E91).

A broader historical perspective, however, suggests that blank verse is in fact no staple meter at all but rather a limited transitional form in the history of English metric: it appears for only 300 years (say 1557-1855), 100 of which are a virtual interruption, and then largely falls into desuetude in the present century, having no recent examples of a great English poet to be its impelling force, as seems to have been the case ever since Shakespeare. And the pentameter line, whether blank or rhymed, has been largely buttressed in the past by the sonnet form, also now out of fashion. But, by comparison, the alliterative line can be found as early as 700 A. D. and not only essentially unchanged three centuries later but also recognizable intact as late as 1450, and, if Lewis is correct in arguing that it sloughed off its cumbersome armor of alliteration in order to travel lighter in the ballads and, later, in the hymn meters (minstrels hiding in churches?), then one may reasonably say it is still with us today. In any event its sphere of influence has been far wider than the pentameter's. The hybrid meter devised in M iddle English seems to be inherently unstable.

In nos. 58-63 Addison defines "false wit," which, as opposed to "true wit," which discerns a surprising resemblance of ideas or of similar features in otherwise-dissimilar objects (discordia concurs), produces a mere similarity of letters (anagrams, acrostics), syllables (doggerel rhymes, bouts-rimées), words (puns), or "whole sentences or poems, cast into the figures of eggs, axes, or altars."
In no. 285 (on perspicuity and sublimity of Milton's language), Milton is praised for the variety he achieves in his numbers by elisions. N o. 39 defends blank verse as the proper medium for tragedy.

The student lacking time for a discursive essay should read only section IV, where Alexander supports the view that Shakespeare was the sole author, by attacking the metrical tests of Spedding, Hickson, and the others, on the grounds that the stylistic characteristics claimed to be distinctly Fletcher's in fact occur often in the later Shakespeare. But no statistics are given in support.

A historical-statistical survey of metrical features, Spenser to Frost.

   It was used in a passage from the A enid in Calvin's Institute of the C hristian R eligion translated by N orton.

   Banks notes that since nearly half of Milton's sentences end in mid-line, and since he uses inversions of accent freely, we should recognize that the "sentence structure" in the verse is superordinate to the meter (line structure). R eply by Diekhoff (E1143); see also Treip (E1327).

   Two of the nine sections in the book (nos. 2 & 3) are on Shakespeare; the in-forming principle is that the style of each play (not isolated passages within the plays) is sufficiently distinct from all the rest to allow dating on such evidence.
   Section 2, however, gives mainly only long extracts from the plays; section 3 summarizes the general conclusions.

   This book draws on three earlier articles published in T LS, 23 May-13 June 1918, pp. 242, 265, 277, 290; discussed in subsequent correspondence by Simpson, W ilson, and O 'Neill, pp. 301, 313, 325, with a summary reply to all three by Bayfield on 1 August, pp. 361-62. See also W ilson (E411, N 136).

   Bayfield's theory has two principal features: he believes that metrical elisions were not intended by Shakespeare but were the result of house styling for the First Folio; they therefore should be "resolved" (i.e., expanded), resulting in many trisyllabic feet. (This theory is as queer as it sounds, but in fact Saintsbury too thought elisions "hideous.") Second, he believes that English verse is actually trochaic rather than iambic--it is only that poets regularly add an extra upbeat syllable and drop the requisite final syllable, for some reason or other. This view, which is nothing but eccentricity in the finest English tradition, is also propounded in E336 and in


   Some notes close to the end on Surrey and blank verse; see also pp. 145-52 on the medieval conception of "rhythm."

   Summary in E nglish and A merican Studies in G erman: A Supplement to A nglia, 1972, pp. 98-100.

The one sharp focus of proper perspective, we remember, is a resultant of fused twin perspectives: Beum offers here both (1) a lengthy and careful survey of the history of theories about Milton's verse-structure—from Henry John Todd and Dr. Johnson to James Whaler and F. T. Prince—emphasizing repeatedly that it is the line as a whole, not the foot ("Milton is not a foot prosodist") which is the metrical unit for Milton, a view for which he need not have gone to the Italians to learn; and also (2) a very full characterization of Milton's verse itself, in terms of rhymelessness (it offered sublimity, austerity, naturalness, plasticity, dramatic propriety), alliteration and assonance, enjambment (the lines nevertheless end on heavy syllables), hypermetrical lines, elision, mellifluousness, strictness, and sonority. Beum concludes that "we need not radically revise the traditional description of Milton's epic verse" but reasserts his central point: the Miltonic line is essentially decasyllabic but not iambic.

Finds that "rhythm tends to control the imagery."

Historically arranged, with examples mainly from Renaissance drama. Platitudeous.

Argues that the Elizabethan playwrights, and Milton after them, never cared at all for the perfect iambic decasyllable: "their practice was to distribute the accents almost at will...[in] absolute freedom." The correspondents, however, take up the Kalevala meter in Longfellow's "Hiawatha" and the possibility of Catullian hendecasyllabics in Browning's "One Word More."


A review of the various explanations for metrical irregularities in the dramatic texts, including Simpson and Van Dam's argument over the admission of alexandrines and anacrusis, the textual-corruption explanation, evidence of house-styling, and the theory allowing textual influence by theatrical promptbooks. The author denies categorically that metrical irregularities exist that are not resolvable by elision or expansion.

Extends the metrical-tests work begun by Fleay in order to try to corroborate or revise his findings about the shares of each of the three dramatists in the plays attributed publicly to the first two.

A stinging, tendentious denunciation of the methods and results of the whole school of verse-testers, German and English, such as Fleay, Schröer, Wilke,
and especially König, for whom Boyle reserves his highest contempt.

Adduces evidence from his own metrical tests to argue for three authors in the play, Shakespeare, Wilkins, and Rowley.

Bradley applies the Speech-Ending, Overflow, and Light and Weak Ending Tests to Macbeth and reaches the traditional conclusions that (1) it is the latest of the five tragedies, and that (2) it shows a distinct internal transition between the middle style and the style of the late plays.

In view of the extensive metrical confusion and variety shown in fifteenth-century texts, the high frequency and stability of Alexandrines in Ralph Roister Doister, Jacob and Esau, and Respublica suggest strongly that Udall is the author of all three.

Finds distinctive, prosodically motivated "speech-patterns" for each character in the play, patterns which reveal character and hence yield an interpretation of the play. Separate chapters on Isabella, Angelo, the Duke, Lucio, Claudio, Juliet and Mariana, and Escalus.


See pp. 396, 406-8 for metrical evidence for and against Marlowe's hand in various plays.

Marlowe first made the blank-verse line a truly native form and a supple formal instrument; Brooke analyzes the hallmarks of his metrical style in Tamburlaine: the single line as unit and the verse paragraph; octosyllabics, nonasyllabics, and Alexandrines; weak and hypermetrical line-ends; repetitions of phrasing and entire lines; and others. These features are then traced through Marlowe's later plays up to Edward II; his metrical style develops toward variety, even as the lines steadily lose their ornate rhetoric and diction.

Brown, a student of Bright's (E500), here applies Bright's theory of "pitch-accent" (normally unstressed syllables falling on a i ctus position in verse are marked by a rise in pitch instead of stress) to Milton. That theory to the side, this work is more immediately useful for providing a review of the major metrical theories about Miltonic verse and an analysis of syllable-division and stress-placement within the line.

A student's manual intending to teach a proper understanding of Shakespearean metrics by showing Elizabethan usages for caesura, accent, and contraction/expansion of syllables (phonetics). Draws on the work of Ellis, Sweet, Abbott, Mayor, and others, but some of the examples are quite fanciful. Two appendices: one reviews the published work on metrical tests, and the other notes works on metrics from Mitford (1804) to Schipper (1881).


E1115 Burris, Quincy G. "'Soft! Here Follows Prose'--Twelfth Night 2, 5, 154." Shakespeare Quarterly 2 (1951): 233-39. Looking for a criterion for Shakespeare's selections of prose and verse in his plays, Burris rejects three common assumptions— that prose is used for (1) the lower classes, (2) agitation or "abnormal state of mind," or (3) "buffoonery" or low sentiments—and concludes that no single criterion is evident.


E1117 Chambers, David L. The Metre of "Macbeth": Its Relation to Shakespeare's Earlier and Later Work. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1903. 70 pp. Though this little monograph does explicate the metrical structure of Macbeth exhaustively, it is also intent to place the play in the wider context of Shakespeare's developing craftsmanship; the reader will find here, therefore, an equally valuable treatment of Shakespeare's metrical skill across the whole canon. Summary table of statistics on p. 68.


E1119 Clark, Arthur Melville. "Milton and the Renaissance Revolt Against Rhytme." In his Studies in Literary Modes. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1946. pp. 105-41. The historical precedents and local contexts of Milton's renunciation: in Italy (sixteenth-century versi sciolti); in Spain (the versos sueltos); in France (almost nonexistent); in Germany (the Reimlosigkeit delayed by experiments in classical meters); and in England (Surrey and the quantitative experiments there as well). Concludes with a long analysis of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century opinions on the subject. Altogether, an excellent purview of the subject--throughout yet reasonably brief.

E1120 Clemen, Wolfgang, and Fritz Lichtenhahn. "Die dramatischen Impulse In Vers und Rhythmus." Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft 31, 1969, pp. 10-29. Clemen argues that though rhythm is one of the most powerful elements in drama, its effects are unconscious and its dramatic functions scarcely understood. Thus, ordinary naming, counting, and scanning of meter is useless. Be-
sides stress, pitch, tempo, tone-color, volume, and ease of articulation are important, as well as diction, register, rhetoric, and dramatic delivery. Lichtenhahn, an actor, adds that technical knowledge of Shakespeare's versification is crucial for the actor's interpretation, though beyond that point the sheer power in the lines can be harnessed only by rhythmic stylization. He cites three examples in Lear where verse-technique creates character.


E1122 -----. "A Type of Four-Stress Verse in Shakespeare." New Shakespeareana 10 (1910): 1-15. Cobb's argument that Shakespeare's lines are actually read (temporally speaking) as tetrameters even if they are called pentameters is an enthymeme, and his assumption that "a line is in no particular meter until it has been read" is simply false. Neither of these may be inferred from the fact that many pentameter lines have only four lexical stresses. Temporalist metrics: see E284 and E285.

E1123 Cobb, Thomas D. "Wordsworth's Style and Versification in The Prelude." DA 19 (1959): 2948A (Emory, 1954). Only 22% of the lines in The Prelude are regular pentameters; Wordsworth employed a number of metrical devices—inversions, heavy and light feet, shifts of caesura, occasional extra syllables, and monosyllables to slow down the rhythm—to achieve variety within the traditional constraints. In comparison the verse-paragraphing, syntax, and diction are relatively direct.

E1124 Collins, John Churton. "The Text and Prosody of Shakespeare." In his Studies in Shakespeare. Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1904. pp. 297-331. A review of Van Dam and Stoffel (E1136) which takes up prosody only in the last five pages; Collins had acquitted himself better if he had said nothing at all. Shakespearean harmony, he says, can no more be found by reducing metrical variations to rule "than the secret of life by the scalpel of the anatomist."


E1127 Cook, Albert. "Milton's Abstract Music." University of Toronto Quarterly 29 (1960): 370-85; rpt in Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism. Ed. Arthur E. Barber. New York: Oxford U niversity Press, 1965. pp. 398-415. Rhythmically Milton's great accomplishment is PL was to create "a strong-ribbed structure of accents [which] constantly buoys up line by line the mighty periods... by assigning all [the] accents nearly equal value... each successively primary." This sustentation of an elevated voice is the exact opposite of the effect in PR, where the leveling of accents works as gradation ("the syllabic pattern keeps the accents from being pronounced, and the accents keep the syllabic pattern from being incantatory"), while in SA the equipoised accents create a "rhythmic indeterminacy" wherein every line has two or more possible readings (and scansion) simultaneously.

Copeland "examines prevalent theories of meter . . . and presents a Prosody" of PL and PR; what these might be, we are left to wonder from the abstract. But there are four Appendices: a list of compound-word stressings; "a list of lines containing metrical inversions created by disyllabic and polysyllabic words"; a list of words whose stressings vary; and a list of disyllabic and polysyllabic words showing "the strength of each syllable and its location in both the word and the line."


E1137 Daniels, Edgar F. "Climactic Rhymes in 'Lycidas.'" American Notes & Queries 6 (1968): 100-1. The meter of the two climactic lines, 82-171, is identical.

-- 362 --
A prize essay on Shakespeare's versecraft, arranged chronologically.

Defends the existence of the pyrrhic foot against Elze.


The description of later Miltonic blank verse given by Bridges in Milton's Prosody (E491) is here confirmed for Milton's early poetry as well: it is "regularly iambic and decasyllabic," and Milton definitely "scanned his verse in one way and read it in another." Thus, throughout all his pentameter verse, whether blank or rhymed, Milton scrupulously insures by the strategy of elision that his lines shall contain ten and only ten syllables. (The tetrameter verse however is frequently heptasyllabic.) There is a regular inverse correlation between date of composition and strictness of verse design in Milton; the latest verses are the freest, the earliest the tightest. Rhyming and stanza in Lycidas are also examined by Diekhoff.

Milton punctuated for three purposes—rhetorical/locutionary, grammatical, and rhythmical—and when, in the superimposition of verse pattern on syntactic pattern, he had to make a choice, pointing (or absence thereof) for the sake of versification was generally given preference.

A reply to Banks (E1091). "Milton considered the line as a more or less isolated unit of verse to be indicated as such by some sort of breath pause or lingering at the end." Diekhoff's view emphasizes the integrity of the line as opposed to the "verse-paragraph" or sentence—i.e. the meter as opposed to the syntax. See also Treip (E1327).

The interlocutors in Professor Dobrée's essay on dramatic poesie survey the whole tradition of blank verse, interpreting its development "histriophonically"—as a dramatic instrument, that is—rather than more "prosodically"—in terms of rules and permissible substitutions—though the essence of that interpretation is a theory of three principal stresses to the line and "breath-groups." More engaging still is the larger argument that blank verse (the dramatic effect of which is speed and fluidity) and dramatic prose (the effect of which is rhythmic deceleration and delay) were evolving, in the later Shakespeare, and could still evolve into a higher form of "stage-prose," more stylized than common speech, yet more supple than the blank-verse line, than even the dramatic medium of The Tempest, which was "too subtle... too fine for the stage."


Interested in the rhythmic effects of trivial monosyllabic function words, Donow sorts the 2,155 lines of the sonnets first by number of words, then also by function-word appearance. These 136 words represent only 4% of the total vocabulary used in the Sonnets (3,211 words) but account for a surprising 55% of the actual words used. Since the stressing of polysyllables is relatively rigid compared to that of monosyllables, lines heavy in the latter will show greater metrical variety. The author invites further analysis of the data presented in this typology. Based on the Rollins variorum text.

Woul a worldly-wise dramatist adapt his style to the interests of a new, language-conscious king? The evidence of meter, rhyme, and alliteration is discussed on pp. 38-40.

The author's tactic of working through the play citing statistics on metrical variation (syntactic and pausal) without a single illustration leaves the unfortunate impression that the statistics not the variations are the source of meaning in characterization, making the essay virtually useless to the reader and also unpleasant to read.

A critical text and notes for fifty-four poems, with discussion of musical settings, which Eckert believes the poems were intended for. "Surrey's prosody...is shown to be heavily influenced by the humanist reaction against rhyme, intricate stanza forms, and short line, and less regular than it has been believed to be."

The differentiation of characters is effected by means which are linguistic, of course, and to a much lesser extent prosodic, as in the alternation of prose, blank verse, and couplets.


Bibliographical-review essay.

Eliot's famous censure of Milton: his language is "artificial and conventional," his verse is nothing but "mazes of sound" detached from sense: "the inner meaning is separated from the surface." Eliot here explores the Miltonic branch of the "dissociation of sensibility" theory he had earlier proposed.


Eliot develops here the earliest part of his famous thesis that blank verse achieved its finest form in the Renaissance but withered after Milton--which is that Marlowe was the first great master of the form, achieving "the melody of Spenser" and "a new driving power by reinforcing the sentence period against the line period."

In constrast to those identifying Early, Middle, and Late styles, Eliot insists on the irrefragable unity of Shakespeare's development, most importantly in its elevation of the natural colloquial language into a more refined arena. A survey of Shakespeare's contemporaries reveals how crude their versification was in comparison; Shakespeare surpassed them in writing genuine dialogue and in putting great art even in the mouths of mean characters. But Shakespeare only became a great poet by finding solutions to his dramatic problems, and it is this "inner necessity" in the nature of drama which led to the development of his verse, early (King John) to late (Pericles). The late plays achieve a profundity and musicality of language within dream-worlds where play and ritual are fused.

Exemplifies Chapman's practices in syllabification (syncope, apocope, etc.), word-stressing, caesura-placement, trochaic substitutions, "ringing" and "gliding" (i.e. masculine and feminine) verse-endings, absent and extra syllables in the line, anomalous long and short line, lines split between two speakers (and the misprinting of such lines as prose), use of prose, rhyme, enjambement, and alliteration. Synopsis at the end. Texts used are the 1873 and 1874 editions (ed. R. H. Shepherd).

A response to the Metrical Tests reprinted by Fleay in C. M. Ingleby's Occasional Papers on Shakespeare, criticizing the working definition of Alexandrines: Fleay allowed such lines as

And leave you to your graver steps. Hermione

as full twelve-syllabled, six-foot verses, whereas Elze takes them to be blank verse lines with trisyllabic feminine endings,

\[ \text{x / |x x / |x} \]

i.e. Hermione metrically and Hermione in pronunciation. If we reduce the final syllable to a slack or elide the penultimate syllable then the number of Alexandrines in the two plays (Fleay found their number unexpectedly high) is very much reduced.

Miltonic and Shakespearean forms of the line are contrasted to Surrey's.

-- 365 --

A complete study of Surrey's translation of the Fourth Book of the Aeneid, including text, comparison of earlier translations, sources, style, meter, diction, syntax, etc. Blank verse and metrical variation are discussed on pp. 3-8, 40-45, and 91-94. See the critique by Immelmann (E1213).


A curious little book by a working translator on the line-structure, versification, and accidence of Shakespeare's plays. The main thesis seems to be that any supposed "irregularities" of meter or punctuation are actually intentional, semantically significant directives for stage-business (pauses, emphases). The argument rests virtually entirely on the Folio punctuation.

E1167 -----. "Some Instances of Line-Division in the First Folio." Shakespeare Jahrbuch 92 (1956): 184-96. Asserts more succinctly the author's theory that while some lines were halved or divided in the First Folio because they were too long for the frame (these broken lines will be restored as full long-lines by modern editors), other lines were divided in two which would have fitted as one. These must have been divided in manuscript, Flatter argues, and so the break in versification and white space on the page must be understood as denoting a silence on stage during some significant action or gesture. One wonders how verse-time could be so precisely equated with stage-time.

The first paper applies the metrical tests to Shakespeare, the second to Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger. Both include Notes, Tables, and extended discussion by other members present. In fact, the entire volume for 1874 (Series 1, Parts 1 and 2) is of interest, with many papers and convoluted discussions on the dating of the plays in the canon by means of linguistic and metrical evidence. Notice the extract from Roderick (E1288) and also Ingram's article (E1214). Fleay was the leader of the English scholars using Metrical Tests to order the Shakespearean plays. For further discussion of the validity of Fleay's and Furnivall's work on the meter and authorship of The Taming of the Shrew, see (E1326). The two papers cited are revised and rpt as Chapters 1 and 3 of Part II of Fleay's Shakespeare Manual. London: n.p., 1876; 2nd ed. 1878; rpt New York: AMS Press, 1970.
Since a convenient reprint exists, I may reasonably say that the entire volume merits a leisurely examination: Part II, "Original Investigations," offers much technical information (statistics based on the Globe edition) on Shakespeare and others, though one would not wish to take the precise statistics as accurate. Part I also includes a brief chapter (5) on "Pronunciation and Metre" (pp. 66-72) and an even briefer one (12, pp. 106-9) "On the Tests By which Chronology and Authorship can be Determined."

See now pp. 69-72, 108, 135, 153, and 239 ff. in Fleay's Man on the sequence of tests: Spedding, the first, tested for feminine endings. Fleay tests for that, prose, rhyme against blank verse, short lines. Ingram tested for weak and light endings. [König is 1888, over a decade later.]

The first of the two chief papers, on Shakespeare alone, is revised and rpt as "Metrical Tests Applied to Shakespeare" in Spedding, The Man and the Book. Ed. C. M. Ingleby. 2 vols. London: n.p., 1877, 2nd ed. 1881. Vol. 2, p. 50 ff. See also König (E1229), Browne (E1113), Bayfield (E1093), and Spedding (E1311).

Using Hopkins' terminology, Fletcher argues that the sources for the reversed stresses in Milton's verse--i.e., one rhythm counterpointed against another--were Greek, Latin, and Hebrew metrics.

This Master's thesis provides a succinct literary history of the form from Surrey's Aeneid to Middleton, paying special attention to caesura placement. Tables based on fifty-line samples from twenty major texts present the corroborating statistical evidence on caesuras, end-stopping, and several devices of metrical variation.

The "new arrangement" is to divide the pentameter lines into semantic units or phrases - Paradise Lost in free verse, as it were. How utterly odd, to obliterate all that grand metrical counterpoint on the grounds that "the difficulties arising from the complicated nature of the language, are increased by its distribution into Lines or Verses of ten syllables in each." Only unmitigated eccentricity--or ignorance--could hold that the great poem is "no more a succession of distinct portions of ten syllables, than if it were ordinary Prose." Forde identifies Metrical Verse with solely that which is rhymed. Sixty-two pages of introduction and thirty-six pages of sample text.

Starting from a critique of Traditional prosody as "an extremely blunt instrument" for analyzing verse, Fowler examines very closely the metrical style--"texture"--of extracts from Tamburlaine, The Tempest, and The Prelude, so as to anatomize and discuss the immensely complex fabric of syntax-and-meter. "A distinctive verse texture or metrical style is created... where patterns of syntax and morphology are interwoven with patterns of minor metrical irregularities, and the scheme so established is repeated to give a cumulative effect." Fowler's exposition of "grammetrics" (i.e., syntacti-metrics) is provocative and, in a way, traditional.

Grammarian-turned-critic, Franz opines that the great attraction of the plays lies in their highly sophisticated rhythms of emotion, which create unconscious movements in our souls and an atmosphere of sympathy around the subject-matter. The iambic verse-movement helps to convey emotion, but in Lear the common meters were not enough, and we note the disappearance of the caesura, the appearance of long runs of stresses. It is oppressive to watch grammarians rhapsodizing.


Franz's monumental study of Shakespearean syntax (F66) led naturally to the consideration of the verse-frame across which the syntax is stretched; hence, this full-scale study was published separately though intended as ancillary to the larger work. But the whole study was thereafter added to the last revised edition of the grammar, retitled Die Sprache Shakespeares (F67). Along with Chambers (E1118), Franz is still an authority to be consulted on the mechanism of the meter. Also contains a good bibliography.


Very cautious detective work here to find out precisely what is known (on whose authority, against what external evidence) about Dryden's visit to Milton "to have leave to put his Paradise Lost into a Drama in Rhyme," in order to judge what inference may reasonably be drawn. See also:


"Dryden's Reported Reaction to Paradise Lost." Notes & Queries 203 (1958): 14-16.

Despite some anecdotal evidence to the contrary, Dryden seems not to have changed radically his views in favor of rhyme over the course of his career.


A suggestion that Milton's opinion of rhyme was intended to reconcile the contemporary dispute between Dryden (defending rhyme) and Sir Robert Howard (blank verse).


Analysis of meter and syntax in the four major plays. In Tamburlaine, for example, Marlowe strengthens the line as metrical unit by placing major syntactic (constituent) cuts at line-end, and by matching metrical with linguistic stress.


Furnivall, F. J. "The Succession of Shakespeare's Works and the use of the metrical tests in settling it, & . . . . London: Smith, Elder, 1874; rpt N ew Y ork: A M S Press, 1972. A useful review of the whole body of work on meter and chronology done by the members of the New Shakespeare Society.Originally appeared as the in-
Introduction to the English translation of Gervinus's Commentaries on Shakspere (1874).

Interested persons will find a photograph of Furnivall in Shakespeare Jahrbuch 47 (1911).


E1187 -----. "Some Suggestions on the Social Aspects of Changes in Dramatic Blank Verse in Elizabethan and Post Elizabethan Theatre." Cahiers Elisabethains, no. 12 (1977), pp. 59-64. Marxist explanation of the increasing prosiness of dramatic blank verse from Marlowe to Shirley; this tendency is "the result of the tendency of prose to replace poetry as the characteristic form of expression or capitalist society," prose being "the form most suitable for secular rational analysis" by the bourgeoisie.


E1190 Hall, William C. "Blank Verse." Manchester Quarterly 44 (1925): 151-66. Capsule history, Surrey to Tennyson, at the end: Hall emphasizes the flexibility of the form. The only opinion worthy of note is Hall's remark that Surrey's blank-verse line is only a rhymeless heroic; the true form originated, mightily, in Marlowe.


E1192 Halsey, Joan. "Quantitative Meter and the Development of Blank Verse." DAI 31 (1971): 6550 A (Claremont, 1968). Argues, curiously, that it was Marlowe, in his translation of Book I of Lacan's Pharsalia (ca. 1585), who first wrote the truly "mature" (i.e. flexible, rich, varied) English blank verse, under the influence of Sidney and the hexametrists (imitators of classical meters). The techniques learned from Latin were "enjambement, foot-substitution, syllaba anceps, variety of caesura, and avoidance of diaeresis."

A statistical analysis of pause in the Miltonic line, chiefly in Samson Agonistes. Extends the work of Oras (E1269) and Sprott (E1314). The conclusions discussed in the Abstract are quite complicated.


E1196 Harrison, J., J. Goodlet, and R. Boyle. "Report of the Tests Committee of the St. Petersburg Shakespeare Circle." Englische Studien 3 (1880): 473-504. Part I defines "run-on lines," gives copious examples of varieties, produces an analysis of Act 5 of The Tempest and one scene of Henry VIII, and rejects Furnivall's tallies. Part II adjusts the figures and principles of Ingram (E1214) on the "Light and Weak Endings" in the same manner, making very careful distinctions of varieties. The Committee concludes that verse-tests may never stand as primary arguments for chronology—only corroborative ones.

E1197 Hart, Alfred. "The Number of Lines in Shakespeare's Plays." Review of English Studies 8 (1857): 22-31. Hart complains about the statistics which Fleay compiled on verse and prose in Shakespeare based on the Globe edition and shows plainly that the "line" in prose varies widely with editions, making such statistics problematic at best. Hart's own tabulations on the canon show that Shakespeare consistently used about eight words to the blank-verse line, and Hart recommends this figure as a standard for prose "lines."


An immensely useful work: Havens surveys exhaustively the effects of Miltonic blank verse, themes, and forms on all the major English poetry from 1660-1837.

Hazlitt's encomium allows itself but a single restraint: "Milton's blank verse is the only blank verse in the language (except Shakespeare's) which is readable. . . there are more perfect examples in Milton . . . of an adaptation of the sound and movement of the verse to the meaning of the passage, than in all our other writers, whether of rhyme or blank verse, put together (with the exception already mentioned)."

E1202 Hensley, Don H. "Wordsworth and a New Mythology: A Stylistic Analysis of The Excursion." DAI 25 (1964): 1914A (Wisconsin). Though mainly on the processive rhythms of imagery, some attention is given to meter and syntax.

E1203 Herzberg, W. "Metrisches, Grammatisches, und Chronologisches zu Shakespeares Dramen." Shakespeare Jahrbuch 13 (1878): 248-66. Suggests analyzing (1) "lax" blank-verse lines, (2) feminine endings, and (3) Alexandrines for determining chronology.


E1205 Hickson, Samuel. "The Shares of Shakespeare and Fletcher in Two Noble Kinsmen." Westminster and Foreign Quarterly 47 (1847): 59-88; rpt in Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society Series 1, Part 1, 25 (1874): 25*-61*. See also his other brief article reprinted in this latter source on pp. 18*-20*. Both of these articles are suffixed by metrical confirmations by Fleay and Furnivall.

Hickson's view is that the "entire plan and general arrangement" of the play are Shakespeare's.

E1206 Hilgers, Theodor J. Der dramatische Verse Shakspeare's. Programm der Realschule erste Ordnung in Aachen, 1868-69. 45 pp. (in two parts). Professor Hilgers was the distinguished scholar who translated all of S's plays into Latin, doubtless to spare his students the pain of having to read a vulgar language. (There is a jeering review in Shakespeare Jahrbuch 7 (1872): 350-52.) The present essay discusses the nature of S's meter.


--- 371 ---


Ingram, John K. "On the 'Weak Endings' of Shakespeare, With Some Account of the Verse-Tests in General." Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society Series 1, Part 2, vol. 25 (1874): 442-64. The article commences with a short (and to us very useful) history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century work on metrical tests in Shakespeare; Ingram then presents his analysis of "light" and "weak" (lighter) endings: these bear secondary rather than primary stress. Table of results on p. 450.

Ingram, John K. "On the 'Weak Endings' of Shakespeare, With Some Account of the Verse-Tests in General." Transactions of the New Shakspere Society Series 1, Part 2, vol. 25 (1874): 442-64. The article commences with a short (and to us very useful) history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century work on metrical tests in Shakespeare; Ingram then presents his analysis of "light" and "weak" (lighter) endings: these bear secondary rather than primary stress. Table of results on p. 450.

Johnson, Dr. Samuel. The Rambler. Vols. 3, 4, and 5 of The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson. Ed. W. J. Bate and A. B. Straus. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969. Vol. 4, p. 87 ff. Three numbers -- 86, 88, and 90-- discuss Milton's versification, specifically inversions, elision, and pause-placement (the caesura after the sixth syllable produced in Dr. Johnson "strong emotions of delight or admiration"). Nos. 92 and 94 treat "representative meter" or sonal-metrical mimesis, which Dr. Johnson terms "imagery of sound" and generally depreciates, on the grounds "that on many occasions we make the music which we imagine ourselves to hear; that we modulate the poem by our own disposition, and ascribe to the numbers the effects of the sense... Sound can resemble nothing but sound, and time can measure nothing but motion and duration."

Jones, Frederick L. "An Experiment with Massinger's Verse." PMLA 47 (1932): 727-40. Notices Massinger's stylistic idiosyncrasy of frequently ending verse-lines with of or to, a practice which turns out to have been abhorrent to most of his contemporaries (172 plays by 33 playwrights are examined). These prepositions either end phrases or split phrases across the line-end. Detailed analysis of Massinger's plays.


Kahler, Riegobert. D as V erhältnis von Verse und Prosa in Shakespeares Schauspielen. Diss., Innsbruck. 1924.

ning of this circuitous route to the mind of the reader is an elaborate exercise in counterlogic." Why then eschew rhyme, the most counterlogical device of all? (1) Other devices were available, such as dislocation in syntax. (2) Milton does occasionally rhyme. (3) There is a kind of "pseudo-rhyme" as well--semantically contrasting word-pairs. Milton had "more refined ideas about the way to achieve musical delight; his counterlogic is a vastly more subtle affair than a mere tagging of verses."


E1225 Kirconnel, Watson. Awake the Courteous Echo: The Themes and Prosody of 'Comus,' 'Lycidas,' and 'Paradise Regained' in World Literature with Translations of the Major Analogues. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973. Rev: in Renaissance Quarterly 27 (1974): 601-2. Lists 166 Analogues for the three poems, with discussion for each and a translated sample text; references to prosody are intermittent throughout except for a two-page "Appendix A: On M etre" at the end, which unfortunately discusses not the character of the original meters of the analogues but rather the most suitable meters for translating the analogues.


E1227 Koehler, G. Stanley. "Milton on 'Numbers,' 'Quantity,' and Rime." SP 55 (1958): 201-17. A search of the recorded statements of Milton's contemporaries and the Elizabethan prosodists about "number" and "quantity" in verse; Koehler concludes (though without any clear consensus as support) that "apt Numbers" refers to the use of the metrical foot (not merely the count of syllables), and "fit quantity" to syllabic length, implying thereby Milton's awareness of the available resources of syllabic "weight" in the line, yet without implying that he intended to write in a quantitative metric. Since the final syllable in his lines is frequently "weighted," and since rhymes do occur in PL, Koehler judges that Milton objected not so much to the concept of rime as to the narrower, more tediously monotonous couplet rime.

E1228 Kökeritz, Helge. "Elizabethan Prosody and Historical Phonology." Annales Academiae Regiae Scientiarum Upsaliensis 5 (1961): 79-102. A stinging rebuke to Bayfield, Saintsbury, Omond, and all those others who upheld the dubious doctrine of "trisyllabic substitution": "those who have written most extensively on Shakespeare's versification have been linguistically least qualified to express their views on the subtle problems involved." Their
error was not to see that elision has been normal in both common speech and written prose as well as poetry since Middle English. K. cites extensive examples of "doublets" (alternative forms of a word used to normalize the meter). Cf. Sipe (E1304).


This classic work devised metrical tests to apply to the verse as a tool for dating the plays, based on an assumption of orderly and discernible changes in versification. Conclusions on the chronology of the Shakespearean canon are given in Chapter 7, p. 130 ff.


In Russian; English summary at end. Statistical analysis of metrical style in both "classic" and "traditional" meters.


Berates the author of Mirandola for using "the vicious principles of metre patronized by Lord Byron," the versification of "Prose-poetry," i.e. blank verse. The first salvo had been fired in the previous number; see pp. 530-38, esp. 535 ff.


Here L. applies his method for assessing the relations of line to sentence (see E572) to the dating of the Shakespearean canon (earlier plays show congruence, later plays divergence), but even though he can show that the four commonest metrical tests are widely inconsistent, his own chronology for the canon is erratic too, placing Pericles too early and Macbeth too late, among other misses. Still, his analytic method is a useful tool for other purposes.


Despite the suggestive title, there is nothing of technical interest in this collection of essays except a section on the development of Shakespeare's versecraft, pp. 171-89. There we do find this author's equivalent of Metrical Tests being used to date the plays.


A long report on his paper read before the Philological Society, which explores the origin of the English iambic pentameter, finding it to be not the

-- 374 --
French décasyllable but the Italian endecasillabo.


E1239 (A response to Allen Tate's essay in The New Republic 21 (Oct. 1931, pp. 42-67.) Professor Leavis's famous piece of iconoclasm attacks not the myth but the meter of Paradise Lost, charging it with the ultimate and irredeemable fault, Monotony; he protests (too much) "against the routine gesture, the heavy fall of the verse . . . the foreseen thud that comes so inevitably, and, at last, irresistibly . . . in the end our resistance is worn down; we surrender at last to the inescapable monotony of the ritual."


E1241 Lloyd, W. Watkiss. "Miltoniana." Notes & Queries 12 (1891): 5. Argues that Milton used Greek (quantitative) accent for proper names in certain lines, so that we are to reproduce that pattern in stress accent. Very brief.


E1243 Marshall, Donald G. "The Development of Blank Verse Poetry from Milton to Wordsworth." DAI 32 (1971): 1480A (Yale). Blank verse poetry prefers Jakobson's "metaphoric" pole in language: its style is characterized "by repetition at varying intervals, by succession, and by continuity." So, in Milton, repetition provides cohesion over clauses, and enjambment "carries the reader strongly forward" into the next line. The result is "forward contiguous movement." Marshall examines all of the eighteenth-century writers of blank verse, showing in a striking manner how each fashioned a prosodic instrument in his verse for his themes and mood. Wordsworth "re-assimilates" the Miltonic style.

E1244 Masson, David. "Milton's Versification and His Place in the History of English Verse." In his edition of The Poetical Works of John Milton. 3 vols. London: Macmillan, 1874; 1877-1882; many times reprinted. Vol. 3, pp. 206-32. Adopting Latham's system of scansion (E573), Masson briefly reviews the versification of Milton's poems in their chronological order then takes up sequentially Milton's metrical craft and rhyme craft. The meter is of course iambic and decasyllabic, 5 x a, but variations are "equivalent," Masson says, to the ideal form, and he will allow "a Trochee, a Spondee, or a Pyrrhic, for the Lambus, in almost any place of the line." Trisyllabic substitutions in the meter are allowed too, in preference to any elision in pronunciation. Alexandrines, feminine endings, and caesura placement are also examined. On rhymes, the most novel conclusion is that Milton freely used imperfect (off, near) rhymes and dialectal forms. As perhaps the best statement of the traditional view of Milton's prosody (on the old principles of equivalence and substitution), Masson's essay still bears examination.

E1245 Maveety, Stanley R. "Versification in The Steele Glas." SP 60 (1963): 166-73. Gascoigne's long 1576 poem of social criticism, the first instance of non-dramatic blank verse, is medieval in meter as in matter, resembling very closely
the line of Piers Plowman in regard to: four major stresses, heavy medial caesura, heavy end-stopping, absence of rhyme (of course), and overt alliteration. The author gauges that fully 50% of Gascoigne's 1200 lines fit one of the eight alliterative patterns of Piers Plowman. It seems Gascoigne did not entirely know what he was doing, or the nature of his metric.

Short and incomplete lines in Shakespearean blank verse, particularly in "heroic" passages, seem to be modelled on a Vergilian practice in the Aeneid.

E1247 Mayor, Joseph B. "English Metre"; "Mr. Alexander J. Ellis's Remarks on Mr. Mayor's Two Papers on Rhythm"; "Appendix" [by Mayor]; "Additional Observations" [by Ellis]. Transactions of the Philological Society, 1875-76, pp. 397-469.

E1248 -----. "English Metre." Ibid., 1877-78, pp. 257-82.
The two principle essays, Mayor's studies of Blank verse in Shakespeare and Tennyson, along with his exchange with Ellis, are revised, expanded, and commented upon in retrospect in chapters 8-13 and 5 (respectively) of Mayor's Chapters on English Metre (E592).


Merely list examples of varieties of syllabification, word-stressing, and verse rhythm (caesura, trochaic substitutions, extra syllables, feminine endings, missing syllables, Alexandrines, tetrameters and short lines, rhyme, use of prose, broken lines, mislineation, diacritics, enjambement, and alliteration). Cf. Speerschneider (E1418).

E1251 Milton, John. "The Verse." Preface to Paradise Lost. London. 1668, 1674. Many modern editions. Milton's decision to employ blank verse for his Epic seems based in part on the example of "both Italian and Spanish Poets of prime note" (for discussion of possible candidates, see E1121), and in part on his own repugnance to rhyme, it being "no necessary Adjunct or Ornament of Poem or good Verse." The "true musical delight" consists only in "apt Numbers, fit Quantity of Syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one Verse into another," not in any "jingling sound of like endings." The tone of this brief Preface is more strident than one might have expected.

An argument that the rhythm of the "Epitaph" should be distinguished from that of the two later companion-pieces, as having its origin not in Shakespearean aestival songs but in Jonson, who showed that octosyllabics could be written in falling rhythm (Moloney thinks them iambic nevertheless) yet weighty and somber in effect, not light or tripping. The critical uncertainty about the meter of the "Epitaph's" tetrameters is natural since "Milton mingled octosyllables and heptasyllables with uncertain results."

Sections 2-4 of the textual introduction (pp. 94-156) treat matters of versifica-
tion, especially syncope and synizesis, caesura-placement, and the use of blank verse and rhyme by Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

E1254 Montgomery, Lyla L. "The Prosodic Techniques of Edward Young and John Keats in Heroic Couplets and Blank Verse." D.A. 28 (1967): 199A (Arkansas). Keats shows a clear pattern of technical growth into a "mature severity and sparseness of style," while Young shows none. Keats relies more heavily on enjambment and couplets, whereas Young uses caesural placement more effectively and often. Substituted feet are more common in Keats. Trisyllabic feet, entirely absent in Young, occur in the early Keats but not the later. "Keats's technical development was toward an increasing use of monosyllables." Alexandrines and triplets occur only in 'Lamia.' Conclusion: Young seems intent on restraining his verse, whereas Keats seems to enjoy rhythmic and melodic variety for its own sake.

E1255 Moore, Charles L. "The Lost Art of Blank Verse." The Dial 33 (1902): 317-19. "Measured motion and ordered repetition' being the basis for all metered verse, blank verse has suffered greatly the loss of classical quantity. Its advantages however are "freedom and fluidity within limits."


E1259 Munday, Mildred B. "The Influence of Shakespeare's Predecessors on his Early Blank Verse: A Study of Metrical Structure with Special Attention to Rhetoric and Syntax." Diss.; University of Wisconsin, 1953. Abstracted in Shakespeare Newsletter 6 (1956): 2. Munday denies that Shakespeare learned his metrical craft from Marlowe and denies that early Elizabethan dramatic blank verse is in any way wooden or stiff, claiming that even the earliest efforts were complex, supple, and sophisticated. Analyzes six Histories and two Tragedies of Shakespeare's.


as 7 in the Texas copy treat Chaucer and fifteenth-century versification; sections 7-11 and 17 treat Surrey and Blank Verse.

M s. N owottny faces squarely the difficulties of the plain style of L ear, and asks why and how "the language of Lear compensates for its apparent limitations?" The answer includes some incandescent remarks on prosody at the end (pp. 56-57).

R esponds to W alter T homas on M ilton's line (E1322), quarreling with his claim that every Miltonic line is a decasyllable. Omond will not allow extra syllables to be totally dropped in uttering the line--a position easily congenial with his prior one that only time-periods count in verse--nor will he allow them full weight: a light, rapid slurring is urged. H e questions the historical veracity of full elision.

A study of participles, metrical pauses, word-length, and feminine endings. Extensive tables and charts.

A ttacking Alexander (E1087), O ras argues for a Shakespeare-Fletcher collaboration in this play, based on the high incidence of heavy monosyllables in feminine endings. Shakespeare's own practice in the late plays was toward frequent use of feminine endings, but the last syllable was rarely a monosyllable. The argument is complex and minute.

E1258 -----. "Metre and Chronology in Milton's 'Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester,' 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso.'" Notes & Queries 198 (1953): 332-33. M etrical evidence from C omus, a closer scrutiny of the prosodic parallelisms between "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," and a wider perspective on their Ge-stalt than the statistical suggest that Sprott's (E1314) chronology for these three poems is erroneous. The "Epitaph" seems clearly earlier than, and separable from, the companion poems.

R ev: in Studia Neophilologica 33 (1962): 340-42. The first thirty-two pages summarize the results of the remaining tables and charts. O ras examines only a single metrical phenomenon--pauses denoted by some mark of punctuation in the line--over virtually the whole corpus of Renaissance drama, with selected additional authors for comparison. T he
graphs present the frequencies (in percentages) of occurrence of pause in each of the nine possible positions in the pentameter line; three types of pauses are distinguished: (A-pattern) all pauses marked by punctuation. (B-pattern) "strong pauses," marked by punctuation stronger than the comma; and (C-pattern) pauses created by a "line-split" between two characters.

"Upon the Circumcision" is perfectly regular in meter and rhyme.

The study of Shakespeare's meter is of course bound up with the reliability of the texts, printers' practices, authorial idiosyncrasies of style, and the pronunciation and orthographic conventions of the day. Chapters 9 through 11 here are devoted to these problems. "Shakespeare's Versification and the Editing of the First Folio," "Italian Prosodists and Types of Dramatic Elision in the English Drama," and "Syllabic Variation in the Quarto and Folio Texts of Shakespeare: Its Effects upon Prosody in Hamlet and Troilus and Cressida."

Examination of lexical and syntactic usages in the play, particularly contractions, corroborates the metrical evidence for a collaboration with Fletcher.

Shakespeare's rhythm, which Pasternack calls "irrepressible and gusty," is used (1) for characterization, (2) to "materialize in sound" various themes and moods, and (3) to soften, smooth out, and conjoin the weaker parts of the play to the stronger.


Traces the development of the dramatic line up through Shakespeare and notices the nondramatic line of Milton, Tennyson, and Browning thereafter.


A very vigorous and extended defense of the presence of metrical spelling in Elizabethan texts—chiefly Orlando Furioso and T. A. N. o matter what vagaries of compositor idiosyncrasy, textual corruption, or house-styling seem to have occurred, there is clear evidence of spelling variations intended to denote clipped (elided) or full pronunciation. Copious examples.

So far as I know, this is the only work ever to employ the scansion-system of...
Dr. Guest (E543) based on staves (hemistichs). Explanation, pp. 14-19; list of the twenty-two types, pp. 20-21.


The well-known demonstration of Milton's debt in diction and in prosody to the sonnets of Della Casa and the verse and dramas of Tasso, besides Spenser. For the versification of his great epic Milton learned to forge a weighty but seamless meld of diction, syntax, and meter from the sixteenth-century versioli, especially in Tasso. But Prince disagrees sharply with Bridges (E491) over the mechanism of the prosody, denying that Milton thought of his verses in feet at all. The whole concept of the metrical foot was a product of the late Renaissance Humanist revival of learning; Dante and Tasso, earlier, speak only of length of line and rhyme as the elements of verse. The rhyme-patterns of the choruses of Samson Agonistes take their origin, Prince concludes, in the dramas of Tasso, Guarini, and Andreini, the rhythms, in elaborations and extensions of analogues to the Italian hendecasyllable, in Spenser's November eclogue, and in the self-confidence and virtuosity Milton had gained in writing Paradise Lost. Altogether the prosody of PL is based on rhyme even though it dispenses with rhyme, in that Milton preserves in the final word in the line a gravity, a full measure, a weightiness which remains even through the sounds no longer jingle.


The information he reports is in one large table.


A thorough metrical analysis of the 2155 lines of the Sonnets produces useful generalizations about (1) trochaic substitutions [that is what metrical variation in Shakespeare comes down to, finally] and (2) rhyme and sound-patterning, these conclusions being weakened only by some arguable scansion and a notation system deserving one more sweep of Occam's Razor. Findings: trochees (5% of the 10,761 feet here) occur in all five feet in the pentameter line (under constraints set by fivemetrical rules which Ramsey stipulates), even split across the caesura; there are 56 "pyrrhic-spondee combinations" and 21 unmetrical feet in the Sonnets; 7-12% of the lines have feminine endings; both discrepancies in terminal consonants of rhyming syllables and also identical rhymes were quite acceptable to the age; many off-rhymes occur; and the sheer amount of internal rhymes and general sound patterning is astonishing. See also the Appendix (E1282) and Index (passim).


Had Robert Bridges written on Shakespeare instead of Milton (E491), he would have produced something like this study of pronunciation, meter, and elision in the pentameter line. The problem is extra syllables and three positions have been taken: (1) they count both for pronunciation and in the meter; (2) they should be pronounced but not counted metrically; and (3) they do not exist and deserve neither. Making some telling points against the prevalent second ("semielision") position, Ramsey concludes, from textual evidence,
remains by Puttenham and others, and doublets, that Shakespeare intended "a strict disyllabism" in his metrical feet.


E1284 Reeves, W. P. "The So-called Prose Version of Guy of Warwick." MLN 11 (1896): cols. 404-8. If such a version ever existed it would have a bearing on the early history of blank verse.

E1285 Reimer, Hans. Die Vers in Shakespeare's nichtdramatischen Werken. Diss., Bonn, 1908. 60 pp. Classification and illustration of syllabification, word-stressing, and versification in "Venus and Adonis," "Lucrece," "A Lover's Complaint," and the Sonnets, leading to a chronology. He follows Zitelmann (L661) in distinguishing the two or three essential stresses of the line a "higher rhythm." He finds single and double alliteration common but off-rhyme and assonance rare.

E1286 Reinhold, Heinz. "Die metrische Verzahnung als kriterium für Fragen der Chronologie und Authentizität im Drama Shakespeares und einiger Zeitgenossen und Nachfolger." Archiv 181 (1942): 83-96; 182 (1943): 7-24. Follows Conrad (E1125). R. suggests the better term "dove-tailing" for the line split between two dramatic characters, in preference to "broken verse" or "shared verse." He gives a critical review of the methods of earlier workers using this characteristic to date the plays: Conrad's original study simply counted occurrences; Pulling analyzed the types of breaking without specific attention to this type; König was interested only in where the end of the first speech fell in the line; Hereford misunderstood König; and Chambers treated only the pentameter. Reinhold's method is to set the total number of broken verses over the number of dovetailings (change-in-speaker), giving a percentage. Application to all the major Renaissance dramatists.


A study of the metrical characteristics (metrical treatment of syllables, word-stressing, and verse-rhythm) in the early Renaissance blank verse up to Marlowe (Surrey, Grimald, Sackville and Norton, T urberville, Spenser, Gascoigne, Rich, Lyly, Peele, Greene, and Hughes). Though Schröer's study appeared slightly before volume 1 of Schipper's monumental study (A9), he had been a student of Schipper's previously. Apparently he subsequently had an illustrious career, to judge by the memorial essay in Englishe Studien 62 (1927): 1-16 (includes a photograph). See also K 341.

Fleay's arguments for authorship (M arlowe) and dating on the basis of metrical evidence are taken up on pp. 24-49 and set against Schröer's own statistical analysis.


Not a strict metrical analysis but rather a broader approach to rhythmic play in the verse. Sedlak adopts some of the terminology of W olfgang Kayser and J ohn Draper in order to differentiate between an earlier "linear style" and a later "overflowing style" in "flowing" and "rushing" rhythms. He also treats of the relation of meter to syntax (or colon to line) and of the variations of meter against the iambic pentameter norm for rhythmic effect: hovering stresses, overweighing, and endstopping retard the tempo of the verse, while slurring, extra slacks, enjambements, feminine endings, and short cola accelerate its tempo.

The types are: rhetorical, witty, epic, lyric, and poetic, especially in K ing L ear and O thello.


The metrical relevance of this study of M ilton's spelling practices lies in its conclusion that Milton did not add an extra -e to such words as he, she (i.e. hee, shee) in order to mark them as stressed.


Sipe, Dorothy L. Shakespeare's Metrics. Yale Studies in English, vol. 166. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968. 266 pp. [Typescript]. Based on her dissertation, "Meter and Word-Choice in Shakespeare's Verse," directed by Kökeritz at Yale in 1963. Revised in Shakespeare Studies 6 (1972): 385-87; in Yearbook of English Studies 1 (1971): 241-43. A study somewhat narrow in scope but very, very rigorous in method, leading to one narrow but irrefragable conclusion and several others, by implication, much more important. Sipe, in an effort to discriminate purely lexical from metrically influenced lexical choices in Shakespeare's lines, searches the 74,817 lines of the canon for "syllabic variants" (i.e. doublets, words etymologically related or synonymous, varying only in number of syllables, e.g. against vs. 'gainst). Such variants appear in 12,814 lines, of these only 63% (.5%) show a usage in spite of the meter. Conclusion: "Shakespeare was in fact greatly concerned about preserving the regularity of his verse. . . . [and] chose particular word-forms with metrics in mind." Even neologism seem to have been formed partly so as to fit the meter. This study should be the complete antidote to those turn-of-the-century aberrations about Shakespearean trochaic meter, trisyllabic substitutions, and unreliable orthography. See also Kökeritz (E1228).


Smart, George K. "English Non-dramatic Blank Verse in the Sixteenth Century." Anglia 61 (1937): 370-97. In this careful historical and conceptual survey, Smart criticizes the treatments of blank verse by Alden and Courthope, approving Saintsbury, E. P. Morton, and Symonds. There are sections here on Surrey, Grimald, Turbervile, Spenser, Higgins, Gascoigne, Mundy, Rich, Peele, Greene, Lyly, and Marlowe. And he insists that "dramatic blank verse is quite different from non-dramatic, and the two ought not to be considered as one form."

Smith, J. C. "Feminine Endings in Milton's Blank Verse." T L S, 5 December 1936, p. 1016. Statistics from PL to SA, the incidence of feminine endings rises from 1 to 17%. Smith is seeking a correlation between feminine endings and particularly emotive passages.

Smith, Lewis W. "Chronology and Verse in Shakespeare." English Journal [College Edition] 21 (1932): 58-66. Identifies three types of blank-verse line: a "balanced" form (having primary stress in ictic positions 2, 4, and 5 of the regular iambic pentameter), a "lyrical" form (stresses in 1, 3, and 5), and a third form (3, 5), citing frequencies of occurrence in the first acts of eight plays selected at random (text not identified).
Unfortunately the results contradict the Chambers chronology, placing All's Well and Troilus fairly early, between Love's Labors and Romeo and Juliet.

In the course of this brief purview of the blank-verse line up to Shakespeare (note the novel quotation, top of p. 62), Smith distinguishes the "dramatic" from the "lyric" line in terms of stress-patterns.

E1310 Sonnenschein, E. A. "What is 'Blank Verse'?
Contemporary Review 126 (1924): 75-60.
Criticism of the term as being useless for revealing the nature of this verseform. Suggested replacement: "the five-foot iambic."

See also his letter in the latter location on pp. 21*-22* and his letter "On the Pause-Test" on pp. 26-31 (Text not Appendix). T his last-mentioned letter is a critique of the refinement of the pause-test and bears reading; the other essay argues for both hands in the play; the Table on p. 14* in TNSS shows his division of authorship attributions.

Spenser argues—against Wilson—that the irregular lining in the passage is the result of reductions for stage production rather than a manifestation of authorial revisions or additions.

Along with Bridges' 1921 Milton's Prosody (E491) (which Sprott cites in his Preface as the "archetype" of his work), Sprott is the standard source for Milton's metrics in his blank verse. A very extensive survey of the metrical devices available to Milton's hand for enriching his verse, including "supernumerary syllables and elision," "inversion of feet," "loss of speech accent," "paragraph fingering' and the break," and couplets. Also included are short sections on Milton's Sonnets and Stanzas.

After an extended metrical contrast of "Eros Turranos" and "The Unforgiven," Stevick argues that E. A. R.'s verse has been slighted because it has been misunderstood: his long blank-verse narratives have two metrical bases (norms, types) not one. One of these is the traditional foot-system; the other employs syntax, frequent feminine endings, and "bulk" (syllabicity?) as the elements of its metering.

Finds one dipodic long line in the prose, possibly a snatch of an old ballad, which perhaps ought to be set:
The Thane of Fife / Had a wife. / Where is she now?

E1318 Strachey, J. St. Loe. "The Vicissitudes of Blank Verse." London Mercury 6 (1922): 45-60. Correspondence follows, chiefly by T. S. Omond, pp. 190-92, 305-6, 423, 531. Noting that the greatest English measure has had only one form (the iambic pentameter) rather than many, Strachey looks briefly at the unsuccessful attempts to diversify: iambic blank verse lyrics, hexameters, dactylics, trochaics, and sapphics.

E1319 Stroheker, Friedrich. Doppelformer und Rhythmus bei Marlowe und Kyd. Diss., Heidelberg, 1913. Tübigen: H. Laupp, 1913. 105 pp. Review: Anglia Beiblatt 25 (1914): 135-37; in Shakespeare Jahrbuch 50 (1914): 235. "Doppelformen" ("doublets" in English) are words which are syllabically ambivalent and may be pronounced as either one syllable or two, or two or three, depending on what is required for the meter. Cf. Sipe (E1304) and Ziesenis (E1085). Stroheker also treats word-stress, metrical treatment of syllables, syntax, etc.

E1320 Symonds, John Addington. Blank Verse. London: John C. Nimmo, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895; rpt Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Library Editions, 1969; rpt New York: AMS Press, 1970. From his Sketches and Studies in Italy (Appendix), and Fortnightly Review 22 (1874): 767-81. Contains three chapters: "Prefatory Note," "The History of Blank Verse," and "The Blank Verse of Milton." Symonds has been sometimes dismissed if not damned by later prosodists for adopting the "intuitive" approach, since prosodists, fanatical about precision of statement and detail, abhor anything that smacks of impressionism; Omond's virulent characterization of Symonds' methods as amounting, "practically, to a negation of prosody," is both spiteful and undeserved. In fact Symonds' slim little volume has been continuously quoted and approved, due mainly I think to the surprisingly fresh yet acute discussion of Accent and Quantity in the first chapter. His critics were foolish to believe that "non-technical" means "not accurate" or even "not useful." The historical survey of B. V. extends from Sackville & Norton to Tennyson. See Mayor (E592), Chapter 4; Omond (A5), p. 186, and Saintsbury (A8), vol. 3, pp. 446-47.


E1322 Thomas, Walter. "Milton's Heroic Line Viewed from an Historical Viewpoint." MLR 2 (1907): 289-315; 3 (1908): 16-39, 232-56. Attacking critics such as David Mason and Charles Wicomb for refusing elisions in the Miltonic line, Thomas frames an argument that Milton consistently wrote absolute decasyllabic lines on the foundations of that line in Old French, Italian, Middle English, and Renaissance versification and on known seventeenth-century conventions of pronunciation and stressing. Fixity of syllable-count, in short, Thomas claims to be the sole inviolable law of Milton's versification; Milton did not conceive of his decasyllable as an iambic one, since he often has more than five stresses, sometimes contiguous stresses, or frequently two inversions in a line, but it was a five-stress line, since Milton also followed "the law of a minimum quantity of accents." The third installment takes up variation in pause-placement both at mid- and end-of-line, and phonetic harmonies. See replies by Omond and others at E1265.
An informatively elegant summary, Surrey to Eliot. "Blank verse has no inherent tone. Except for free verse, it is the form closest to the form of our speech." The article is concluded by S. Lyngstad's "Blank Verse in Other Languages," pp. 79-81. Bibliographies.

E1325 Timberlake, Philip W. The Feminine Ending in English Blank Verse: A Study of Its Use by Early Writers in the Measure and Its Development in the Drama up to the Year 1595, with Full Tables of Percentages. Menasha, Wis.: Printed for the Author by the George Banta Publishing Co., 1931. 131 pp. Based on his dissertation at Princeton in 1926.


Rev: in English Studies 41 (1960): 270-72; in Anglia 78 (1960): 96-97. Worth being aware of, even though her interest is the distribution of verse-forms vis à vis the characters in ten selected plays.

E1329 Turner, Richard M. "A Study of Robert Browning's Blank Verse Technique." DA 28 (1968): 4650A (Colorado). Nondramatic blank verse in a random sample from Browning's whole canon is analyzed, with a method which is a "reconciliation of traditional metrical scansion and current linguistic techniques for analyzing prose." Conclusion: "available descriptions exaggerate the irregularities of Browning's metrics."


Instances of metrical mis-lineation, lines with one missing syllable, and lines with a double feminine ending (i.e. two extra syllables) resulting in apparent Alexandrines.

E1335 Wagner, Max. The English Dramatic Blank Verse before Marlowe. Programm Abhandlung der städtischen höhren burgerschule zur Oberode in Ostpreußen, no. 15. O stern, 1881. Rev: by Schipper in Englische Studien 5 (1882): 457-58. Wagner's study is inferior to that of Schröer (E1292) in that it is narrower in scope (he fails to recognize Chaucer's line behind that of Sackville and Norton) and takes no account of recent scholarship (Fleay, Furnivall, etc.). It was obsolete before it was published.


E1340 Webb, Daniel. Remarks on the Beauties of Poetry. London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1762; rpt New York: Garland, 1970. 123 pp. In Dialogue 1, Eugenio upholds the advantages of blank verse over rhyme, then turns to censure excessive sound-patterning in verse, stopping along the way to praise and illustrate Shakespeare's versification, the sweetness of which lies in its making high artifice seem nothing but natural; yet, Shakespeare "intended it to be nothing more than a measured or musical prose; except, when he meant to rise to his Subject, or give a distinction to a thought; and then we shall always trace in his numbers the influence of his feelings." Of sound: it is a fault "to suffer any one letter . . . to govern entirely" a passage of verse. it is equally a fault to believe too literally that the sound must seem an echo to the sense: "the sounds should be always in accord with the sense, but they should accompany, not mimic it." See also E696.

Distinguishes between the metrical styles of PL, and PR and SA.


E1345 Wentersdort, Karl. "Shakespearean Chronology and the M etrical Tests." Shakespeare-Studien: E ctschrift für Heinrich Mutschmann. Ed. Walther Fischer and Karl W. Wentersdort. Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1951. pp. 161-93. A detailed review of the evidence on dating uncovered since Chambers, followed by a review (beginning on p. 182) of the four major metrical tests and their reception by scholars. Individually they show little validity, but the author demonstrates that by totalling them (no. of variations against no. of possible variations), a "M etrical Index" can be devised which shows a reasonably steady and smoothly curved progression over Shakespeare's career, and which agrees with the other types of external evidence.


E1347 Whiteley, M. "Verse and Its Feet." Review of English Studies n.s. 9 (1958): 268-78. A critique of F. T. Prince's "Italian" scansion of Miltonic pentameters. Prince replies, pp. 278-79. The argument is then joined by Ernest Schanzler in 10 (1959): 292-93; M rs. Whiteley answers, in 11 (1960): 191-92; reply by Schanzler, p. 192. J. Buxton closes the exchange, 11 (1960): 305. The original sally by M rs. Whiteley is vigorous and cogent: she defends the concepts of the "foot" and "rising rhythm," and she rejects altogether Prince's two rules for the meter of the M iltonic line (which are derived from those for the Italian hendecasyllable), but only after examining all the arguments on both sides and many examples very closely. Prince demurs.

E1348 Whiting, George W. "M ilton's Rules for -ed." MLN 49 (1934): 166-68. M ilton spelled -ed to denote a metrically stressed suffix; if the syllable was metrically weak, he used 'd or d (without apostrophe) indiscriminately.


E1350 Wolff, Lucien. A n Essay on Keats's T reatment of the H eroic Rhythm and Blank V erse. -- 388 --
The Table of Contents page, with summary notes at the bottom, may well be the most useful part of the book. Wolff examines variations of the iambic pentameter norm in Keats's major poems vis-à-vis the influences of Hunt, Dryden, and Milton. But (in the German manner) over half the book is given over to tables of scansion.

Notices a metrical-stylistic idiosyncrasy of Lear's in a number of lines before his regeneration--four syllables at the beginning of the line, followed by a caesura, all of virtually equal weight (not quite spondaic but nearly so).


Yardi tries to improve upon the nineteenth-century work on metrical tests by a rigorous statistical analysis, but--astoundingly--he takes his data on feminine endings, split lines, and pauses directly from Fleay and Chambers (and thus their outdated editions). The conclusions confirm the accepted order. Such work generally fails because the researcher must be expert in (1) Elizabethan theatrical practice; (2) the textual history of the Folio; (3) statistics; and (4) metrics. Work based on faulty texts is worthless a priori.


COUPLET VERSE

Primarily Jacobean and Augustan, of course. See also the section on R rhyme in Chapter 4 on Sound. Given the fuzziness of the traditional categories and terms, it has been very difficult to preserve a distinction between studies of the metrical structure of couplet verse and its rhyme structure. Both are enmeshed, though not inextricably, but authors commonly treat them together or as one. Yet, given the obvious syntactic dislocations which are entailed by couplet rhyming, a very close comparative study of metrical structure ought to be very revealing: I suspect that blank and couplet verse differ far more than in syntax or the presence or absence of a rhyme. The place to go to would be a single writer familiar with both forms, such as Thomson. I believe that no such study has yet been made.

Comparing Johnson's actual prosodic practice in the poem to his stated opinion, Adler finds that the former is "more liberal than the more liberal side" of the latter. Dr. Johnson's pronouncements give the impression that he only valued Regularity in verse, but in fact Variety also counted: only 57% of the lines in this poem are perfectly regular pentameters, 8% have initial trochees, and 26% have only four prominent stresses. Other features analyzed: caesura-placement, end-of-line pauses and stops, "representative meter," monosyllabic lines, hiatus, alliteration, and rhyme.


-- 389 --
Compares Pope's actual practice in versification to (1) his statements on the matter (seven rules given in a 1710 letter to Henry Cromwell), concluding that the rules "cannot be accepted as anything like an accurate reflection of his own practice" and to (2) general eighteenth-century critical views, concluding that Pope's divergence from these views increased as his career advanced.


E1357 Allison, Alexander W. "The Reformation of Our Numbers." Toward an Augustan Poetic: Edmund W. A. Reformation of English Poetry. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1962. pp. 62-87. Waller adapted the resources of the old native "two by two" line with strong caesura, molding from it a pentameter line with a consistent, precise "formulary balance" of caesura after the fifth syllable (see Appendix A). He "strength and sweetness joined," molding the Donne-Jonson school of strong lines with the Spenser-Fairfax school of mellifluousness, by controlling his diction (speech cadences disrupt meter) and employing syntactic inversion.

E1358 Alls, Michael W. "Ryme the Usurper" and "Dryden's Versification." In his Dyrdyn's Rhyme in Poetry: A Critical Study of the Plays and of their Place in Dryden's Poetry. 2 vols. Salzburg Studies in English Literature, no. 7. Salzburg: Universität Salzburg Institut für englische Sprache und Literatur, 1974, Vol. 2, pp. 256-64, 315-54. Based on his dissertation at Syracuse University. In the first section Alls defends Dryden's use of rhyme in drama from the criticisms of Harley Granville-Barker by adapting a political analogy: rhyme, as monarch, gives order and law to the verse and rivets ("usurps") the attention of the audience, reminding them of the fictiveness of the aesthetic artifice. In the second he shows how Dryden derived, from the early nondramatic couplets of "Upon the Death of Lord Hastings," "Astrea Redux," and "Verses to her Highness the Duchess," a dramatic couplet that was (1) more varied in meter, (2) simplified in syntax and rhetoric, and (3) mitigated in repetitiveness by triplets, Alexandrines, etc. The three poems receive very close analysis.

E1359 Amis, George T. "The Structure of the Augustan Couplet." Genre 9 (1976): 37-58. Statistical analysis of features in over 13,000 lines allows more precise description (including frequencies of occurrence) of the structure of the "modules of sense" in Dryden and Pope, with The R ape of the Lock serving as model; summary on p. 46. Of particular interest is the correlation of caesura to weighting of stresses. The last half of the article turns to broader implications, and sections iii, vii, and viii discuss rhyme.


of structure and compression of statement which critics have found most striking about the poem.

Appendix table shows frequency of occurrence in poets, Grimald through Dr. Johnson. The device was used chiefly by Dryden; Pope employed it only about 75 times in 3000 lines.

Chapter 3 discusses meter.

Churchill's position as satirist of Classicism demanded that he imitate Pope's verses in order to parody them, yet his verses were considerably freer: their heavy enjambement in consecutive couplets and variation of pause influenced later pre-romantic poets considerably and also seemed to return to Dryden's ampler verse-structure, in preference to Pope's. Churchill's run-on couplet was further loosened by the influence of the rhythms of Shakespearean blank verse.

Some minute particulars of the Wallerian Style, mainly negative: his pauses at couplet-end represent no new device in English poetry; he uses aureate diction and polysyllables but has monosyllabic lines as well, though never in clusters so as to be conspicuous; the line never exceeds five accents; he matches sense pauses to breath points, often ends with strong verbs, adopts the "epithetic" style of giving every noun an adjective; he allows himself an "uncompensated, unemphatic accent" at times in the third foot (otherwise termed "pyrrhic" by some; he rarely elides vowels, and he frequently uses the modal do.

Merely repeats the opinions of Dryden on heroic verse as the most suitable medium for drama.

Concentrates on inter-linear more than intra-linear devices, mainly syntactic and structural.

E1368 ------. "Gay's Mastery of the Heroic Couplet." PMLA 61 (1946): 114-25; rpt as chapter 2 of his The Triumph of Form (below).
One of the most underrated poets in the English language, John Gay was second only to Pope in the correctness of his meter, use of expressive sound, balance and antithesis, verbal rhymes, verse paragraphing, and satire.

Stemming from the author's earlier studies, this work studies both (1) technical mastery of versecraft and (2) "synthesis of style and content" in Gay, Johnson,
Cowper, Young, Churchill, Goldsmith, and Crabbe.

E1370 Carruth, Hayden. "Three Notes on the Versewriting of Alexander Pope." Michigan Quarterly Review 15 (1976): 371-81. Iconoclasm: Carruth argues that Pope "did everything he could, within the strict couplet, to relieve the jig-jog of standard pentameter"—i.e. (1) he used the apostrophe for all sorts of stylistic effects, and quite inconsistently, but never for mere metrical elision, because hiatus does occur in Pope's verse; (2) he used weak syllables in ictic position and, later, runs of up to three stresses followed by three slacks to break the iambic drone; and (3) he considered the couplet not as an "artificial" verseform but as "nearest prose," hence exhibiting, more than anything else, naturalness and "freedom from padding." In the early Pope, as Carruth shows in a brilliant demonstration, pentameters can be easily "translated" into tetrameters, but in the mature Pope no padding is allowed at all: every word pulls its weight.

E1371 Catlett, Larue S. "An Odde Promiscuous Tone: A Study of the Prosody of Hudibras." DAI 32 (1971): 3244A (Wisconsin). Butler's satiric intent is undercut by his own metrical incompetence. He apparently accepted "the restrictions of conservative theories" of prosody for his own verse-making, while he "repeatedly and violently" attacked them through his narrator. There are clear prosodic indications that Butler was "pretending to metrical regularity," yet his counterpointing of the metrical and rhythmic stresses is consistently incompetent. The result is "a prosodic situation that is awkward, grotesque, and bathetic." And thus the polarizing of readers' responses to Hudibras is explained: readers who recognize the stumbling rhythm find it "jolting"; those who cannot, but hear only the metrical norm underneath, find it "jogging."


E1374 Dickinson-Brown, Roger M. "The Art of Edmund Waller: A Technical and Prosodic Analysis." DAI 38 (1977): 2802A (Syracuse). Metrical analysis shows what we expected— that Waller's regularity in meter increases over time. But it also shows that he assimilated and perfected a number of other prosodic techniques besides meter, especially alliteration (having "accidental, musical, emphatic, and grammatical" functions), off-rhyme, grammatical figuration, and enjambment. His metrical range was wider than we assume.


E1376 Dixon, Peter. "Talking Upon Paper" Pope and Eighteenth Century Conversa-
tion." English Studies 46 (1965): 36-44.

The first two pages admire Pope's remarkable skill at capturing the cadences of common contemporary speech in his meters, mainly by employment of elision and elimination of modals (do) as metrical fillers.


The "Epistle Dedicatory of The Rival Ladies" [1664] defends the use of rhyme, taking Waller as authority and precedent (see vol. 1, pp. 5-8). This was answered by Sir Robert Howard, in the Preface to his Plays [1665]; Dryden countered with the indomitable Of Dramatick Poesie, an Essay [1668] (see vol. 1, pp. 89-107); Howard tried to rally in the Preface to his The Great Favorite, or, The Duke of Lerma [1668]; Dryden fired the final volley in "A Defense of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy," prefixed to the second edition of his The Indian Emperor [1668] (vol. 2, pp. 113-18). AURENG-ZEBE [1676]; by the way, was the last play Dryden wrote in rhyme (couplets).

From the Rival Ladies preface comes the famous remark that the verse must serve as the "clogs" for the "high-ranging Spaniel" of the imagination. "The great easiness of blank verse renders the poet too luxuriant; he is tempted to say many things, which might better be omitted, or at least shut up in fewer words; but when the difficulty of artful rhyming is interposed . . . the fancy then gives leisure to the judgment to come in, which, seeing so heavy a tax imposed, is ready to cut off all unnecessary expense." This is Dryden's reply to those who think rhyme "only an embroidery of sense."

In the Essay of Dramatick Poesie, Crites attacks the use of rhyme in plays (though he will allow them in poetry) on the grounds that the drama follows Nature, and of course there is no natural rhyming in Speech. Neander (Dryden) replies on a variety of fronts: dramatic language, he observes, is heightened over that of everyday speech, so rhyme is appropriate to the stage. And the pressure of the formal constraints forces the verse-making poet to think ahead, thereby sharpening his wits. Rhyme is equally proper for plays as for poetry; it "might be made as natural as blank verse by the well placing of the words, etc. All the difference between them when they are both correct, is, the sound in one, which the other wants."

From the Preface to Albion and Albanius [1685]: while the recitative part of opera "requires a more masculine beauty of expression and sound," the music "must abound in the softness and variety of numbers." "And yet there are rules . . . and as great a certainty of quantity in our syllables, as either in the Greek or Latin . . . ." Double rhymes and a syntax especially formed "for the sweetness of the voice" are the "main hinges" on which opera turns.

The 1697 Dedication of Aeneis (vol. 2, esp. pp. 214-34) defends the use of triplets and Alexandrines, on the authority of Spenser and Cowley, mentioning also diction in translations. The great difficulty for the imitator of Virgil is "his numbers, his choice of words, and his placing them for the sweetness of the sound." Dryden recommends avoidance of caesura (needed in Latin to temper the lusciousness of over-abundant vowels), hiatus, and monosyllabic lines. More vexingly: "I have long had by me the materials of an English Prospodia, containing all the mechnical rules of versification, wherein I have treated, with some exactness, of the feet, the quantities, and the pauses." Yet, "the evil of false quantities is difficult to be cured in any modern language" (pp. 217-18).

In the Preface to Fables Ancient & Modern [1700] (vol. 2, esp. pp. 258-59), Dryden compares Homer to Virgil, then asserts (mistakenly) that Chaucer's meter is often rugged: his verse "is not harmonious to us" (though Dryden recognizes that it was not found so in Chaucer's own age).
See also Dryden's poem "To the Earl of Roscorno," 11. 5-25.


The authors think that Pope's cryptic marginal symbols refer to aspects of Dryden's versification particularly worthy of note, though they have no proof and indeed account for several of the symbols on other grounds. In fact, the article appeals for a study of the matter.


Not broad or statistical characterization of prosodic style but rather close explanation of prosodic expressiveness in four poems.


A study of the distortion which the rhyme in couplet verse wreaks upon the syntax, especially in the Restoration dramas of Dryden, Lee, Otway, and Crowne. Since rhyme words are frequently verbs, and since the most useful form of the verb is the infinitive, present- and past-tense verbs are often supplanted by do/did + infinitive. The rhyme may also necessitate splitting an otherwise-integral phrase, dropping syllables, adding proclitics or enclitics to fill out the line, or dumping excess material into the beginning of the following line ("bad enjambement").


The considerable variation in the content of the five complex editions of "Dryden's Miscellany" from 1684 to 1727 furnishes valuable and reliable information on the hegemony of the couplet over other metrical forms, and the nine editions of "Dodsley's Miscellany" between 1748 and 1758 show striking contrast. See pp. 504-7 and 522-25.


Pages 320-22 offer some useful facts on the number of non-couplets being written in the Age of the Couplet.


Lists the couplets in each of the plays (Globe Edition) with some discussion. Criticized by Ness (C260).


On the complexity scale established by the Halle-Keyser theory of generative metrics, this eighteenth-century American poet scores rather low. Only about 85% of her rhymes are phonetically exact. And (transformational) syntactic analysis shows most of her sentences to be declarative.

E1387 Holzhausen, P. "Dryden's heroisches Drama." Englische Studien 16 (1892): 201-29.
See the section on "Metrik" in this concluding installment of H's serial study, pp. 221-26.

There are observations on pp. 1011-15 on Pope's smoothing of the "harshness" of Donne's meters when he came to imitate his Satires. Cf. Chatman (E709).

Admitting the well-known metrical, syntactic, and rhetorical accomplishments of the closed couplet, Jones suggests, radically, that in the larger context of the poem the couplet form accentually impoverishes the coherence of the whole, by the attenuations of elaboration and by reliance on only a single effective mode of development--logic. The "play of sensibility" in the verse is thus constrained. Comparing Donne's version of his Satires to Pope's reveals how Donne was able to create an "interplay of verse and prose structure," the prose syntax having maximum play within the metrical form, whereas in Pope the verse-structure (pace Matthew Arnold) entirely subsumes and compels the prose statement. Extraordinary insight here.

E1390 Jones, John A. Pope's Couplet Art.
A stylish non-technical study of Pope's handling of his in eight representative, major poems. Over the course of Pope's career his verse decreased slightly its reliance on balance for structure, increased slightly its use of the open couplet, and shifted from an early tendency to compose in terms of the line to a late tendency to compose by the sentence. In many respects the most distinguished example of Pope's verselcraft is The Rape of the Lock. But balance and closure are primary concerns in his verse-architecture throughout.

E1391 Kaul, R. K. "Rhyme and Blank Verse in Drama: A Note on Eliot."
Contrasts the opinions of Johnson (disapproving) and Eliot (approving) on the suitability of rhymed verse as the medium of drama.

Marvell found a model for the meter of "The Mower Against Gardens" (pentameter/tetrameter couplets) in Randolph, and there are instances also in Johnson (Epode II), the ultimate source of the meter being Horace's Epodes rather than the Latin elegiac.

Section 4, "Rhyme" discusses Dryden's context and technique; compare this with p. 126 ff on his later shift to blank verse.


E1395 Krischel, Violet. "Prosodic Similarities to Pope in Five of Byron's Satires.
"Swift's octosyllabics are to be Hudibrastic tradition as the blank verse of Tamburlaine was to Gorboduc."

This is the device of the "extended couplet"--a couplet "relatively separate from what goes before, [followed by] an extra half-line, divided by a caesura from [the other half-line that] follows." That is, the sense-group is two-and-a-half lines long. The effect is one either of unexpected expansion or of unnatural incompleteness.

Donne's couplets do not show the symmetrical, balanced, antithetical style of the Augustans; he allows himself considerable freedom in caesura-placement, enjambement, feminine endings, and chiastic and punning rhymes. Perhaps the "looser structure and softly focused endings" of his verse were influenced by the looser Baroque prose.

Mead, William Edward. The Versification of Pope in its Relation to the Seventeenth Century. Diss., Leipzig. Leipzig: Frankenstein and Wagner, 1889. 143pp. Old, but still very useful: the study surveys the 15,000 lines of Pope's verse (excluding translations from Homer) and concludes that (1) Pope exercised care in matching verse-ictus with word-stress; (2) he was unsurpassed in use of (mainly end-of-line) pauses; (3) he learned from Waller what devices to avoid; (4) he surpassed Dryden in artistic self-control and craftsmanship in satire; (5) he repeated rhymes monotonously, used false rhymes, avoided polysyllables, and relied on conventionalized seventeenth-century rhymes too heavily, availing himself of the further convenience of the newer eighteenth-century changes in pronunciation.

Part 1 on verse-structure covers forty pages, Part 2 on rhymes, the remaining hundred.


Versification on pp. 523-26. This "most flexible poem of an eminently flexible poet" does indeed employ three distinct styles (respectively, high, plain, and mixed/familiar) for its three parts. Metrically, the first part is high in medial caesuras and enjambement, while caesuras are more scattered and run-ons less frequent in the other two parts; the number of Alexandrine, triplets, complexes of both these, and "pyrrhic substitutions" declines steadily as the poem progresses. Sample passages of a dozen or so lines from each part are scanned and compared.

Analysis of meter and language shows that Jonson owed less to the Classics than to the contemporary "plain style" tradition. "With Jonson the tension between speech and verse-rhythm is unusually strong and the pattern of emphasis very varied. . . the total result is that our attention is directed less to the line or couplet than to particular words or phrases emphasized at various points within these units."
A thick packet of remarks on nearly all the familiarly-known features of the Augustan "refinement of language" in poetry, including purification of syntax in couplets, strategic placement and weighting of verbs, appropriate and urbane diction, restraint in figures, parallelism, and metrical elision and modulation. Versification, pp. 140-46.

Part 1 gives the history and structure of the form; Part 2 provides forty-eight short summaries of the style of specific authors, Chaucer to Keats.

A study of the two forces which led to the rise of the couplet form in the Renaissance--the standard iambic pentameter line with caesura which was "the staple of English versification by the time the history of the English closed couplet began," and the Renaissance interest in translating and imitating the Latin elegaic distich. Close study of Marlowe's translations of Ovid and Jonson's of Martial show their efforts to refine devices of pausing, balance and antithesis, a dynamics between meter and speech rhythm,zeugma and other figures, and a conversational tone, all of which they found in their Latin sources.


Should one speak of expressive metrical modulations when the tone created is one of "brash, bawdy burlesquerie"? Close prosodic analysis of a long and obscure poem.

On the whole Crabbe's prosodic practice was conventional, conforming closely to Bysshe's rules, and it was liberalized only modestly over the course of his career.

At various times Rymer both defended (pp. 3-7, 76, 77) and castigated (p. 118) the use of Ryme (couplets). He used that meter for his 1677 tragedy Edgar--on the grounds that the play ended happily--but by the 1692 Short View of Tragedy could reject it as entirely inappropriate for T tragedy: "Our Ear shou'd not be hankering after the Ryme, when the business should wholly take us up, and fill our Head. The words must be all free, independant, and disengag'd, no entanglement of Ryme to be in our way."

A review of the uses of the couplet in each of Jonson's plays, in chronological
order. Even more than for epigrams or for scene-ending in plays Jonson's use of rhyme is significant for consecutive runs of couplets in the speeches of serious plays, as Dryden recognized.

E1411 Schelling, Felix E. "Ben Jonson and the Classical School." PMLA 13 (1898): 221-49; also published as an offprint with an Index. See pp. 234-40. It was Jonson who first established the precise form of the couplet (strictly hemistichic and stopped) which, through Waller, Dryden, and Pope, was to dominate English poetry for the next century and a half, as can be seen by a statistical comparison of the metrical features of the couplets of the major Augustan poets. Those poets using the form before Jonson, together with Sandys, all adhere to the somewhat different model established by Spenser.

E1412 Sentimental Fables. translated from the French with the original and notes. To which is prefixed, an essay on English versification by a country curate. Brentford: P. Norbury for the Author, 1775. The Preface (pp. iii-xx) defends the use of heroic measure for Fables, examines Pope's letter to Walsh on rhyming, criticizes imperfect rhymes and the same rhyme sound used (in different words) too frequently too close together, approves of variety in caesura-placement, defends Dryden from Pope's criticism concerning elision, and emphasizes the virtue of making the sound "seem an echo to the sense."

E1413 Shannon, George P. "The Heroic Couplet in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries, with Special Reference to the Influence of Ovid and the Latin Elegaic Distich." Leland Stanford University Abstracts of Dissertations 2 (1926-27): 127-34. The argument for the Latin elegaic couplet as the source for the "classical" English closed couplet rests on a high degree of similarity between the two in end-stopping, metrical regularity, and balance/antithesis. A full survey of the couplets written from Chaucer to the 1630's shows that the major development began with Tottel (1557) in translations of Ovid and reached its zenith, in 1590-1610, in satire and the epigram; after 1610 the incidence of the open couplet increases under the influence of the Tribe of Ben and John Donne.

E1414 -----. "Nicholas Grimald's Heroic Couplet and the Latin Elegaic Distich." PMLA 45 (1930): 532-42. Based on his dissertation (above), Shannon proposes Grimald as the pioneer in the use of the couplet in the early Renaissance. Survey of his works shows that Grimald's couplets--his favorite meter--are used mainly for epigrams, elegies, and occasional verse, maintain good continuity, show a high degree of closure, employ balance and antithesis, and were generally scrupulous about correct rhymes, metrical regularity, and aureate diction. Similar statistical surveying shows these neoclassical features to be very close to those of Latin elegaic verse (Martial and Ovid).

E1415 Shipley, Joseph T. "Spenserian Prosody: The Couplet Forms." SP 21 (1924): 594-615. Rejecting the view that Spenser's couplets reveal his ignorance or misunderstanding of the function of final -e in the Chaucerian pentameter, Shipley argues from detailed phonological evidence that in fact Spenser must have known it; the mistake derives from an assumption that the Chaucerian pentameter rather than the tetrameter was Spenser's model for the couplets of the February, May, and September eclogues.

Metrically Cowper was not influenced by Churchill. His position in terms of metrical style lies midway between Dryden and Pope on the one hand and Churchill and Keats on the other. He varies caesura-placement more than Pope but his end-stopping, rhymes, and stress-variations are more conservative than Pope's.


E1419 Stein, Arnold. "Donne and the Couplet." PMLA 57 (1942): 676-96. On Donne's "chief prosodic innovation," the rhyming of words with feminine and masculine endings, also other devices for facilitating smooth enjambement: stress-shifts, late caesura, line-end polysyllables, following-line anacrusis. Beyond, there are the wider reaches of register and voice--Donne's austere music of monosyllables and consonants, his preferences for strength over smoothness and sense over sound.


E1423 Thompson, Elbert N. S. "The Octosyllabic Couplet." PQ 18 (1939): 257-68. History of the modulations of the form in a number of English poets from Chaucer to Milton and Waller. Oddly, though, Thompson derives the octosyllabic couplet from the four-stress Old English line, and "possibly" from the French, whereas he derives the heroic couplet from the Latin elegaic meter.

E1424 Tillotson, Geoffrey. "Correctness IV. Versification: 'Certain Niceties.'" In his On the Poetry of Pope. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938, 2nd ed. 1950, 1959. pp. 105-40. In comparison with Pope, Dryden was laxer, easier, allowing himself the expansiveness of a triplet or Alexandrine whenever it was convenient; Pope however adopted the rule making "difficulties overcome more admirable than difficulties accommodated." The great advantage of the couplet as a form is its greater control of the reader's attention, since the reader knows the poet is responsible for each one of the twenty syllables in every line. The early Pope concerned himself (in the letter to Walsh) with mimetic sound and modal verbs; the mature Pope preferred monosyllables--usually one of them a verb--as rhymes, emphasized the importance of balance as a structural principle, and

-- 399 --
perfected the disposition of the weighty and unexpected polysyllable within the line.

E1425 Wallerstein, Ruth. "The Development of the Rhetoric and metre of the Heroic Couplet, Especially in 1625-1645." PMLA 50 (1935): 166-209. Cf. Williamison (E1437); both studies were published in the same year. The present one is a monograph on the metrical development of the couplet in Drayton, Fairfax, Jonson, the occasional verse of Sandys and his circle, Falkland, Waller, and Denham. (Waller's "rhetorical and musical patterns are the perfection and systematization of the basically simple and formal units created by Fairfax and Sandys.") This is a study much richer in scope and discernment than its companion.


E1427 -----. "The Return of the Emjambed Couplet." ELH 7 (1940): 239-52. The tide of resistance to the Popean closed couplet after the midpoint of the eighteenth century turned primarily to blank verse, of course, taking Milton as its model, but there were some vestiges of interest in the run-on couplet perfected by Dryden--chiefly in the poems and essays of Churchill, William J. Mickle, William Belsham, Joseph Weston, Richard Mant, William Lisle Bowles, and Samuel Rogers.

E1428 Westcott, Allan F. "Traces of Classical Style in Poetry of the Early Seventeenth Century." Sewanee Review 16 (1908): 257-76. Metrical analysis of the earlier seventeenth-century satirists--Donne, Rowlands, Marston, Wither, and Hall, as well as Beaumont, Drummond, and Jonson--against the later couplet-writers Dryden and Pope. The "classical" design of the heroic couplet restricted the sense quite rigidly to the distich, strived for internal "smoothness" (absence of stops and pauses), and achieved a "lightness and swiftness" of tempo (frequent pyrrhics). The influence of King James I's Revels and Cautelis (E560) is also surveyed.


E1430 W eygant, Peter S. "O Idham's V ersification and the Literary Style of the English Enlightenment." Enlightenment Essays 3 (1972): 120-25. O Idham's major work, the Satyrs, is admittedly rough in meter but it is uncharacteristic of his work as a whole: he could vary metrical style with genre when he wished, and his work is in general quite conventionally regular. [In fact, the meter of the Satyrs is much less rough than even W eygant believes.]


Pope's use of the word was ironic; in fact, his verse-making was nothing except dilligently laborious.


A classic study in the development of the couplet form, which resulted from a confluence of a metrical tradition (running from Puttenham to Byssche) favoring rhyme and a rhetorical-syntactic tradition encouraging parallelism, balance, and antithesis. The great linchpin in the line is Ben Jonson; beside him, Waller is a "consolidator" rather than an innovator, whose main achievement was to shift the matter of the couplet from the paradox of (metaphysical) wit to the sharp bite of out-and-out antithesis. It was the joint effort of these two men to weld the proper rhetorical form to its proper metrical frame in the couplet. Cf. Wallerstein (E1425).


See p. 73 ff. It was Sandys rather than Waller who was the first English poet to write the new French-style stopped couplets. Wood compares the degree of stopping in these two poets particularly but also in Pope, Drummond, and Beaumont.


A demonstration of the nearly infinite variation of pacing or speed in Pope's lines by the use of consecutive weak syllables, the employment of half-stresses both singly and in combination with the weaks, and of course the disposition of the caesural pause. Wyld also examines the hypothesized retardation of the line by consonants and monosyllables, concluding that (1) short consonants either singly or in groups do not impair speed, whereas (2) long consonants singly or in pairs, groups of three or more consonants, and any consonantal clusters where rapid shifting of the tongue is required do retard the line, though (3) two monosyllables are not a priori any harder (slower) to pronounce than a disyllable--slowness depends not on word-boundaries but on phonetic patterns.

See also: B212, C231, C236, C249, C260, C378, E709, E787, E1254, F155, F181-83, F213, K76.