Part II

EARLY ENGLISH VERSE

(to Skelton)
SECTION I

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OLD ENGLISH

The schema on the facing page in the print edition of this book is intended as an aid for quick reference in studying the various theories of Old English meter, a kind of rough map of the theoretical toponography. A short explanatory account will also be required.

The philological interest in Anglo-Saxon which first flowered in England in the early nineteenth century (even though Hickes's grammar had been written well over a century before) was soon taken over by the indefatigable Germans, who held the lead until well after the first World War despite the monumental efforts at establishing sound texts made by the EETS and the other researches sponsored by the London Philological Society.

Early on, the German theorizing about the nature of the Old Germanic verse (half-line) divided, some scholars following Lachmann in believing that it contained four stresses (the vierhebungstheorie), others, particularly after Rieger's crucial study, two. (Some of the theorists changed sides: it is said that Sievers--the central figure in all study of Old English verse--was a four-stress man very early in his career; and Trautmann, a very tendentious scholar in his later years, held the two-stress view in his two earliest publications before throwing it over.) Certainly there are many other points of agreement between these two schools, as well as other radical points of difference (all of which must be sacrificed for simplicity's sake here), but in general this diremption in theory holds true well into the twentieth century. At times the difference between the two schools seems glaringly slight--both sides admitted that two stresses in the verse were unquestionably superordinate, so the only real dispute was whether or not the other two were weaker stresses, hence stresses, or weak enough not to be stresses at all--but the edge is sharp enough to cut.

After Sievers' Five Types theory was verified, the terms of the dispute shifted, and in this century the distinction has come to be one of Meter versus Rhythm for the study of Old English meter as for Modern. Yet one of the original terms of dispute in 1880--sung verse versus recited verse--is intact in 1980. However, a recent study by Cable (J42)--Cable is one of the senior faculty of the Sievers school--on pitch patterns suggests that the gap is narrowing and may in fact eventually close (hence the convergence on the chart). We shall see.

Certain common misconceptions concerning Old English versification must be brushed aside at once. Old English verse is not, despite repeated statements in the histories and handbooks, stress-verse. It is not even clear that Old English verse was the predecessor of modern stress verse (see Rankin). In Old English versification, one does not simply count the stresses and let the slacks go free; there are constraints on both. Further, Old English meter pays attention to syllabic quantity as well. And though it is true that the half-line not the line is the unit in this meter, the concept of the metrical foot is also preserved, at least in the Sievers system (some later theories have dispensed with it). It is clear that Old English meter was elaborate, formal, powerful, yet capable of supple variation, and in these respects it is to be considered an artifact of high craftsmanship. (It is not a barbaric yawp; one has to wait until the modern era to find true primitivism.) But the precise account of what happened to this system early in the Middle English period, and therefore what relation obtains between Old and Modern English meter, has yet to be written. At present our understanding of Middle English versification and its sources is too rudimentary to allow firm conclusions.

In line with the principles followed in Part I, Part II includes studies of poetic syntax and prose rhythm, the latter being even more important for the Old English period than it is for the Modern. Other important studies of rhythmical prose, especially the cursus, will be
found in the Medieval Latin section of Appendix B, where Bede's De arte metrica is cited. As for oral-formulaic composition, I have cited the most important of the many recent studies, giving annotations however only for those devoting significant attention to metrics. In the verse itself any given formula must simultaneously satisfy three constraints--the lexical requirement of traditional collocation, the grammatical context, and the metrical frame--a situation naturally of interest to versification.

There is an excellent comparative synopsis of the three principal theories of OE meter (Sievers, Heusler, Pope) in Funke (96).


J2 Andrew, S. O. The Old English Alliterative Measure. Croyden: H. R. Grubb, Ltd., 1931. 82 pp. Rev. by M alone in JEGP 31 (1932): 639; in MP 29 (1932): 376–77; in Review of English Studies 9 (1933): 85–87; in Anglia 44 (1933): 71–73; in Archiv 161 (1932): 145–46. Calling the Five-Types system of Sievers "almost incredible . . . absurd . . . a false metrical theory," Andrew claims that Sievers' Type E is in fact B "with the first foot 'weighted,'" Type D is in fact A (for the same reason), and the C and "extended" D and E Types are varieties of the longer A Type. Thereupon he "reclassifies" a great many lines cited by Sievers. Also a chapter on word-stress in Old English.


J6 Ball, Evelyn R. "Music and English Poetry in the Middle Ages." DAI 36 (1976): 6666A (Missouri). Inter alia, Ball finds a correlation between certain types of verse and the three branches of medieval music--monody, antiphony, polyphony, speculates on the musical accompaniment to verse recitation, and discusses the metrical and stanzaic influences of the chanson de geste and the chante-fable on the ME metrical romances.

J8  Baum, P. F. "The Character of Anglo-Saxon Verse." MP 28 (1930): 143–56. Critical of Sievers for classifying the OE metrical types—an activity Baum considers both inherently "futile" (given the considerable range of variations) and also inferior to the truly important work of explanation (which Sievers of course did not attempt)—Baum undertakes "a fresh examination of the data" (very limited data, one must add); on the assumptions that the verse was (1) spoken not sung, (2) based on 2 stresses per verse, with (3) emphasis on the alliteration, he concludes that (1) the half-line is in every respect the unit of meter—the long line is not one line but a couplet; (2) the promotion and suppression of secondary accents is the very heart of the whole metrical system; (3) Sievers erred in confusing meter with rhythm—the Five Types are varieties of rhythm, not meter, meter being a much more simplified pattern; (4) the meter of OE is simply a verse of 2 stresses in up to 5 syllables, everything else being variable; and (5) the two most distinctive qualities of OE verse are "its freedom or elasticity and its heavy pounding."

J9  -----. "The Meter of the Beowulf." MP 46 (1948–49): 73–91, 145–62. A "brief survey" by one who believes that "detailed examination can properly be left to the scientists." Thus our modern-day Saintsbury gives here an analysis that like his others is based on representative samples and indeed goes that far only in order to satisfy "those who wish everything neat and tidy" (Sievers' typology is disparaged thus throughout.) Everything is really very simple. In Beowulf we find "not a rigid meter but a rather loose and easy manner"; "the basic pattern of the verse is generally two-stress trochaic," i.e. "verses with two stresses and a varying number of unstressed syllables." But there are many variations. It is unlikely that the scop "used his harp as a metronome," since Gregorian chant uses non-isochronic measures. Baum notes the common patterns of normal, double, triple, transverse, and plurilinear alliteration but rejects the rule (from Rieger) that it is the first stave of the second verse which determines the alliteration, citing fifty examples. Similarly he rejects the idea of resolution and behind it any attention to syllabic quantity in scansion. The hypermetrical lines he thinks vestiges of the oldest Proto-Germanic line of eight beats.

J10 Bazell, Charles E. "Notes on Old English Metre and Morphology." Wortbildung, Syntax und Morphologie. Ed. Herbert E. Bandrele and Leonhard Lipka. The Hague: Mouton, 1968. pp. 17–19. The first of these two notes suggests that in the Battle of Maldon the rule whereby $st$- and similar consonantal clusters are treated as single consonants is extended to all such clusters beginning with $s$.

J11 Beale, Walter H. "Rhetoric in the Old English Verse-Paragraph." Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 80 (1979): 133–42. Actually a study of rhythmic patterning—a demonstration of the process whereby rhetorical motifs or schemes are embedded or, mutatis mutandis, displayed in verse-paragraphs, especially through the use of metrical matching and contrast—e.g. a sequence of B-Type verses in second half-lines, for parallelism, or alternation of short A's with long E's for contrast. "Rhetoric" cannot coherently be explained in verse without reference to "Metric," and conversely, displays of metrical virtuosity are nearly always rhetorically intensified as well.


A ranging essay: poetic style and ornamentation are discussed on pp. 152–55, methods of playing the harp on 159–61, and the implications for metrical theory on 163.

The best available discussion of the nature of the reconstructed Anglo-Saxon harps, their possible uses, and the general nature of music in Anglo-Saxon England. Applications to prosody are treated on pp. 14–15, where Bessinger suggests that harp accompaniment to the chanting of the verse could have been a percussive, monotonal rhythmic base, a full melody or tune sung along with the words, or, more likely, some "vestigial melodic and rhythmic aid to the singer"; Cable (J42) has explored this last possibility the most fully.

Mainly on alliteration patterns.

On one of the most beguiling questions in English versification. Bliss, assuming that the difference between Old and Modern English meter lies in the fact that the former achieves variety "not in the more or less exact accommodation of the speech-material to the metrical pattern, but in the variation of the metrical pattern itself," that pattern being not an artificial, abstract form but a re-production of the pattern of actual speech itself [Bliss agrees with Daunt], proceeds to argue that, in fact, Old English and Modern English meters are not really dissimilar, since both rely on the natural rhythms of the language, which in this respect have not changed significantly since before the Conquest, and also, since many combinations of OE verse-types can be scanned as possible iambic pentameters and vice versa. After all, Chaucer can hardly have learned the regular alternation of stresses and slacks from French verse, where no such principle exists; a much more likely source is the regular alternation inherent in OE verse itself, as when resolution occurs in the C and D types.

This typewriter-print pamphlet in paper covers condenses the arguments of Bliss's major work (below): here he partitions then discusses rhythm (consisting of stress, both sentence-stress and word-stress, and quantity), Phrasing (breath-groups divided by caesuras, usually two groups to the verse (or half-line), and Alliteration. On metre, he takes as the rhythm Sievers' Five Types and as the Phrasing (one stress to each breath-group) three possibilities for placement of the caesura inside the verse. Of the fifteen possible combinations of these two systems, Bliss finds eight in actuality.

A "triumphant vindication" and revision of Sievers. Bliss reclassifies the verses (half-lines) in Beowulf as being comprised of 1, 2, or 3 principal stresses and terms them (respectively) Light, Normal, and Heavy. He also argues that the loss of a stress in Light verses entails an increase in the number of syllables in the verse "if the average interval between stresses is to remain constant." But in notation Bliss uses the vertical bar (oddly termed the "caesura," which is nothing but unhelpful) not to divide metrical units (Sievers called them "feet") but to mark the "breath-groups" (roughly corresponding to word-boundaries). He prefixes the numbers 1, 2, and 3 to the Five Types designations to indicate (respectively) that the first breath-group is shorter than, equal to, or longer than the second. This procedure yields eight major varieties: 1A, 2A, 2B, 3B, 2C, 1D, 2E, and 3E. For the hypermetrical verses, Bliss suggests that the final syllables of ordinary verses are replaced by a wide variety of extensions. The 2nd edition adds an Appendix (E) in which Bliss reaffirms that the base or norm of OE verse is the normal, falling-rhythm Type A, very common, and that the scop deliberately counterpoised it against the other types for the sake of variety, repeating the A type often enough to keep the norm visible.

J21 ------. "The Origin and Structure of the Old English Hypermetric Line." Notes & Queries 217 (1972): 242-48. Extending his earlier hypothesis (J22) of an Old Norse origin (the ljóðaháttr meter) for the single half-lines which occasionally appear in OE poetry, Bliss suggests further that "there is sufficient likeness between the Old English hypermetric long line and the Old Norse ljóðaháttr couplet to make it possible that both are derived from one and the same prehistoric Germanic metre," which Bliss reconstructs hypothetically as

\[ L \ (X) \ L \ | \ (X) \ L \ X \ | \ X \ ] \] \[ (X) \ L \ X \ L \ X \ ]

Since OE hypermetric alliteration is continued but that for the ON ljóðaháttr -couplet is double, two types must have been equally preferable in the proto-meter: three staves (one on the first stress of each section of the line) or four (two sets of pairs).

J22 ------. "Single Half-Lines in Old English Poetry." Notes & Queries 216 (1971): 442-49. In OE poetry short lines (i.e. single verses) are much more frequent than most editors recognize, Bliss argues; they are especially frequent in the Maxims. The source for this device may well be the Old Norse ljóðaháttr meter, where short lines are very common; the distribution of alliteration in the OE lines also matches that in the ON.


J25 Bohlen, Adolf. Zusammengehö rige W ortgruppen, getrennt durch C äs ur oder V erschluss, in der angelsächsischen Epik. Diss., Berlin, 1908. 56 pp. Rev: in Englische Studien 40 (1908–9): 90. A study of the connections--and diremptions--between meter and syntax, specifically the metrical caesura and syntactic juncture: Bohlen examines word-groups divided by the mid-line caesura and the end of the line and discovers two distinct types of usage; these serve as the basis for classifying the style of

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the various Anglo-Saxon epics as either secular (rarely separating closely related words or phrases) or religious (more frequently splitting cohesive constructions). He follows the metrical rules as defined by Rieger.


J28 -----. A Compendious Grammar of the Primitive English or Anglo-Saxon Language . . . being chiefly a Selection of What is Most Valuable and Practical in "The Elements of the Anglo-Saxon Grammar," with Some Additional Observations. London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1826. Here the "Prosody" selection covers pp. 69–73. Bosworth follows Rask in basing OE meter on stress rather than quantity (as did Hickes). He finds generally two stresses and a variable number of non-stresses in each verse, an intermittent anacrusis ("metrical complement"), and alliteration (the first stave of the second verse being the "Chief letter," the others the "Assistants").

J29 Bradshaw, Margaret R. "The Meter of The Christ." Diss., Yale University, 1902.


J32 Breitzer, Robert S. "A Stylistic Study of the Old English Metrical Psalms." DAI 31 (1970): 2867A (Iowa). Since the OE metrical psalms of the Paris Psalter represent a versified close translation of their Latin source, close attention to repeated passages and to alliteration (of b in 180 lines) should reveal the poet's characteristic process of verse composition. If a literal rendering of the Latin text did not yield an acceptable alliteration, the poet would search for an alliterant adjective or adverb which would not change the meaning significantly, or else a cognate synonym, compound, or phrase; he would then add the necessary additional alliterants, or stresses, to fill out the meter.


J35 See also "Versification" in Bright's Old English Grammar and Reader. Ed. Frederic G. Cassidy and Richard N. Ringler. 3rd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971. pp. 274–88. The most recent version gives a very useful and extensive account of Sievers' system (with copious examples) and a brief sketch of Pope's. By the way, it may be of interest to know that Professor Bright's large collection of German dissertations and other pamphlet publications on Old English
metrics was posthumously acquired by Duke University, where it is listed as Collection Monographs (408 C 697).

The first statement of Bright's theory of "pitch accent"—i.e., that ictus in English verse, when not created by normal word-stress, is created by increased duration (quantity) and sometimes also by pitch.

Textual and literary history; little on versification.

Cf. Bartlett (J7) and Bruce (J32).

Compilation of OED-style entries for 101 technical terms common to the field of Old English versification; the list should be of wider utility, though, since the OED was largely finished before the great flood of prosodic work appeared just at the turn of the century.

J40 Cable, Thomas. "Clashing Stress in the Meter of Beowulf." Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 72 (1971): 42–50; rpt in revised form as chapter 5 of his The Meter and M elody of "Beowulf" (J42), q.v.

J41 -----. "Constraints on Anacrusis in Old English Meter." MP 69 (1971): 97–104; rpt in revised form as chapter 3 of his The Meter and Melody of "Beowulf" (J42), q.v.

J42 -----.
The heir-apparent to Sievers' title, Cable reaffirms then extends the work of the master, accepting (initially) the Five Types theory as "real," but also accepting the older view of the viergliedrige [four-member] Vers (which Kaluza, Sievers, and other before them held). Cable presents a series of six preliminary, discrete arguments refining Sievers' Types to a final synthesis of them which attempts to explain what Sievers could only describe with his typology, through a single principle which will both (1) generate the Five Types and (2) exclude all other possibilities. This principle is the postulate that in a four-member verse the first of two clashing stresses must always be heavier. Cable is able to show, then, by this and by applying Jespersen's notation to the Five Types, that five and only five "contours" are produced:

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These contours are a refinement of the Five Types, which "are not the meter but the inevitable result of the meter, which is a four-unit pattern." Cable hypothesizes further that these gradations in the meter must have been signaled not by stress or timing or length but by pitch; the meter, that is, corre-
lates with melody rather than rhythm, and the five contours were in fact melodic formulae used by the scop as accompaniment to his words. This is an intrepid thesis, backed by an argument that is short in length but very incisive. The resolution of its focus is remarkable. For critique, however (the only one to appear so far), see Hoover (J131).

The six arguments which Cable executes in his first six chapters (respectively) as "minor surgery" to the Five-Types Theory are: (1) O.E. is not a simple stress-meter; the number of weak syllables is not unconstrained; (2) Every verse (half-line) must have at least two stresses (Bliss's "light" verses are rejected entirely); (3) The most crucial observation about O.E. meter, preceding even the formulation of the Five Types, is that the scop avoided utterly the pattern X _ X / X ; the meter must screen out this pattern, therefore, since it is very common in O.E. prose; (4) Secondary stress is metrically relevant, especially for a distinction between Type E and certain subtypes of Type A; (5) As a general rule, the first of two clashing stresses must always be the stronger, especially for Types C and D; and (6) Types D2 and E are metrically indistinguishable and should be combined, leading to the wider inference that the verse consists of four and only four glieder (members or positions, not syllables).

J43 -----. "Metric Simplicity and Sievers' Five Types." SP 69 (1972): 280–88; rpt in revised form as chapter 6 of his The Meter and Melody of "Beowulf" (J42), q.v.

J44 -----. "Parallels to the Melodic Formulas of Beowulf." MP 73 (1975): 1–14. An interim report from the site of excavation--the tomb of the boy-king?--where the search continues for the historical artifact, treatise, or statement which will serve as the linchpin, the unequivocal proof of the theory of melodic patterns which Cable has hypothesized for Old English verse. No harp has yet been found unshattered. But there are certain historical analogues to point to: Gregorian and Byzantine chant, Ancient Greek music, Vedic chant.

J45 -----. "Rules for Syntax and Metrics in Beowulf." JEGP 69 (1970): 81–88. Cable objects to the general principle that the metrical value of a word can always be determined by its grammatical category. More specifically, he quarrels with S. O. Andrew for believing that adverbs are always metrically stressed and with A. J. Bliss, on the other hand, for the converse assumption, which produces his "light" lines (also questioned here). As a medial corrective, Cable proposes two rules for syntactic structures containing the word þa as adverb and conjunction, such that the word may be metrically variable--either stressed or unstressed--according to its syntactic context. Thus the absolutism of each extreme is avoided, and the rules turn out to have greater conceptual elegance in terms of simplicity, consistency, and scope.


J48 Charitius, Franz. "über die angelsächsischen Gedichte vom heiligen Guthlac." Anglia 2 (1879): 265–308. Deriving his metrical typology from Horn (L400), Charitius examines the nature (simple or compound) and position of alliterants for evidence as to authorship. Criticized by Lefèvre (J159).
Chapter 3 discusses the metrical aspects of the variation-technique in word-pairing.

In his inaugural lecture the author touches upon the mirroring or enactment in rhythm of (1) inner truths, via "memorable synthesis," in the Dream of the Rood, (2) "outward pattern" or logical structure in Christ II, and (3) a fundamental principle of analogy (form to thought, human orderings to divine Order) in the prose of Ælfric and Wulfstan.

A metrical index, based on Bliss (J20), with some slight modifications of his procedure for placing the caesura, the result of which is reformulation of some of his subtypes. Discussion of problem scansion, tables of distribution of types.

Positing "the intonational contour and its metrical equivalent the cadence foot," as the basic unit of OE versification and a correlate to the lexical formula, Coffey analyzes "Cædmon's Hymn" and parts of Beowulf, Fates of the Apostles, The Battle of Maldon, Sir Gawain, and the Morte Athur both metrically and formulaically, concluding therefrom that the Parry-Lord thesis that features of both oral and literate composition cannot appear in the same text is disproved by these transitional, mixed texts in Old and Middle English.


The "filtering" effect (my term not Conner's) of the alliterative meter on the selection of lexical collocations is discussed on p. 215 ff.

The first three papers are reprinted from Archæologia; the last four are additions by the author's brother William. Conybeare's view is essentially that Old English verse is written in a meter based on emphasis rather than quantity, a meter which measures the line in feet which begin with stresses -i.e., a trochaic-dactylic meter. He also recognizes the importance of alliteration and parallelism as indispensable structural elements. The verse is set as hemistichs, though, rather than as the full lines familiar to us, Conybeare thinking the question merely one of typography. In the four essays added posthumously, William surveys Icelandic, Scandinavian, Germanic, and Celtic meters (this latter receives the fullest treatment), finding them congruent with Anglo-Saxon; he concludes with a chapter on Middle English alliterative verse up to Piers Plowman.

The practice of rhyming, both within and between lines, the Beowulf-poet
seems to have derived from contemporary Latin poetry, particularly Aldhelm's De Virginitate.

Old English meter, unlike Modern English, must be defined "in terms of other phonological levels than the phonetic," levels such as the syntactic and semantic, to be fully intelligible. Its "output," to speak in Cosmos's transformational terms, was simultaneously the formulae of oral composition and the stress-schema of the meter. Syllable-counting, which is so evident in Eddic and Scaldic verse, in Otfrid, and in the medieval Latin hymn-meters, is alien to the native Old English metrical system and only appears in the later OE poetic monuments under the influence of Latin.

A major re-assessment of the validity and adequacy of Kuhn's Law of Sentence Particles in the terms of modern linguistic theory shows convincingly that the problem of unstressed finite verbs is much more adequately accounted for in terms of utterance analysis and "communicative dynamism" [i.e., the extent to which a given word "propels" the sense of the sentence forward partly determines the phonological prominence of that word] than via the older grammatical (word-class) approach, which is finally not very helpful. Distinguishing between "lexical and nonlexical verb roots," Cosmos shows that "the finite forms of lexical verbs normally occur in positions of metrical ictus in Beowulf, that nonlexical verbs, on the other hand, occur in metrically stressed positions only under very specific circumstances, and finally that unstressed lexical verbs occur as a function of very general principles of utterance organization." An outstanding study.

On the formula for "answered (him)."

An anatomy of four lines from Beowulf reveals those components of the formulaic phrase which propel us forward, syntactically and semantically, as opposed to the other components, which fill the alliterative requirements. Comparison with similar formulae shows just how supple the system was for the scop.

Repeated attempts to find a metrical system sufficiently simple as to be workable for schoolroom use lead the author to devise a more (conceptually) elegant codification of Pope's obstreperous system (J242), in fact a model with only six types of measures:
- alpha: / X
- gamma: / \ X
- epsilon: (/) X
- beta: / X \ 
- delta: / (X) 
- alpha prime: / \ .

These correspond to the Sievers Types thus:
- Creed: alpha + alpha A1
- Sievers: epsilon + beta B
- epsilon + gamma C
- delta + gamma D a
- delta + beta D b

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Creed can give four relatively simple rules for finding the primary stresses and measure boundaries, and a fifth for resolution. Two measures make a verse. Notice that the delta type is actually an alpha with the weak syllable replaced by a rest or harpbeat; similarly, the epsilon is an alpha with a harpbeat for the stress. The six types may then be classed into two groups, beta and gamma comprising Group II and the other four Group I. The possibility of trisyllabic substitution in each position can then be shown to obtain in the measures of Group I, but not of Group II. A simple and efficient account of the conditions for anacrusis is also then possible. See also L744.

A prominent student of oral-formulaic composition in Old English verse confronts the ultimate question in such studies: how can "a tissue of formulas" be judged a great work of art? Or, better: "what kinds of excellence are possible in an art built on formulas?" The answer may lie in the fact that no two instances of use of the same formula are ever precisely the same: the real effect is one of similarity-within-difference, and we may expect that at the point where the audience recognized the appearance of a distinctive formula they set it, more or less instantaneously, within the context of all the other instances of the same theme in other stories, hearing the echoes, seeing the differentia.

Follows Frucht (J90) and Luick (J180) in extending the Sievers analysis to the remaining OE poems in order to affirm its validity. Cremer concludes on metrical grounds that Guthlac A and Phoenix are definitely not by Cynnewulf, and on linguistic grounds against Andreas also; Guthlac B he concludes is definitely Cynnewulf's work. See Mather (J201).

Foolish enough to describe the Sieversian Five Types typology as "complicated . . . not too clear . . . difficult to grasp . . . inconsistent," Cygan merely lauds the alternative formula devised by Jerzy Kuryłowicz (L451), the fully expanded form of the hemistich, denoted X / X / X. Neither alliteration nor secondary stresses is relevant to the metrical formula of the hemistich, Cygan argues, and Sievers "expanded" types may be eliminated if one additional type (F), having the formula X / / , is added to the typology; Kuryłowicz's fully expanded model produces six species of half-line.


A metrical index, based on Bliss (J20), and Clemon's (J51) modifications of Bliss, along with discussion and tables showing the distribution of verse-types.

Of all the theories about OE meter Daunt's—that it isn't meter—is the most radical. Her claim is that "Old English verse is really conditioned prose," so that Sievers' Five Types are "language patterns, not metrical patterns." That is, the types correspond to natural OE phrasal-stress patterns and, in fact, to Modern English ones as well; the types can be found easily in OE prose, in Shakespeare, in Modern English speech, and in jingles. [But to say that OE poetry "was made with pieces of language" is one thing, and to say that such making is therefore not metering is quite another. It would be strange if a meter were not intimately engaged with--embedded in--its language. No meter the order or elements of which is alien to the language survives for long.]

Some observations in sections 3 and 4 worthy of further research: the distinction between verse and prose (their ends, uses) was radically different for the Anglo-Saxons from what it is for us; we ought to pay attention to the sense-group not the half-line or line; if we classify verse-types and then note their distribution in sense-groups, significant patterns appear; different OE poems show idiosyncratic preferences in alliteration; there is a tendency to continue alliteration into groups longer than the line; the Anglian characteristics of Beowulf merit further study; the last non-alliterating stress in a line sometimes "picks up" the alliteration in the next full line; and sometimes the non-alliterating stresses of two lines also happen to alliterate. Preliminary statistics for most of these features.

Includes a discussion of rhyme (also alliteration) in Aldhelm, Aethewald, and Cynewulf (pp. 98-103).

Halle: Ehrhardt Karras, 1902. 42 pp. of text + 10 pp. of Appendix and 17 pp. of Tables.
A student of Luick's, Deutschbein determines to follow his views "in every particular." His analysis of prosodic patterns is designed to prove the essential continuity of the alliterative tradition from early OE into ME even despite significant changes in structure.
He identifies several principles of metrical style in AV, e.g. a close connection between meter and sound (enjambment and plurilinear alliteration (Sievers' "hakenstil")) and a "Crescendo-Des crescendo" pattern of sound over the line. A long Appendix gives statistical tables showing the distribution of Sievers' Types in the first and second verses of four representative alliterative poems.

Discriminates nine varieties of alliterative patterning (repeated, alternating, enjambed, and six others, including "rhythmic linking") and four stylistic functions (structure marking, theme marking, rhetorical heightening and poetic heightening). And five specific features of sound-patterning which create a distinctive style in Genesis A are noted.

Frese. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975. pp. 301–11. A very salient and emphatic reminder that the study of formulaic diction has legitimacy only when it gives "scrupulous attention to metrics" as well. Such a joint analysis, brought to bear on the question of the authorship of Christ, produces evidence for believing that Cynewulf wrote the second part but not parts one and three.


J75 Ehrstine, John W. "Patterns of Sound in Anglo-Saxon Poetry." Research Studies of the State College of Washington 33 (1965): 151–62. It is astounding to realize how little work has been done on sonal patterning other than structural alliteration in Old English poetry. Clearly such patterns are significant. Ehrstine identifies (not very clearly) six varieties of "sub-alliteration": (1) repetition of weak prefixes, and "crossed alliteration"; (2) assonantal and consonantal repetition within the line; (3) a minor sound is patterned then (noticed? and) picked up as the main alliteration; (4) larger patterns; (5) very similar sounds (e.g. m-n) in adjacent lines; and (6) ornamental clustering of a non-structural alliteration within a half-line. Cf. Conner (J54).

J76 Einenkel, Eugen. "Sermo Lupi ad Anglos: Ein Gedicht." Anglia Anzeiger 7 (1884): 200–3. Also:

J77 -----. "Die metrische Frage." Anglia 17 (1894–95): 407–8. See J317. Einenkel, a follower of Trautmann, argues in these essays that Wulfstan's work is in Otfrid's verseform--four-beat half-line couplets.

J78 Emerson, Oliver F. "Transverse Alliteration in Teutonic Poetry." Journal of Germanic Philology [after 1902, JEGP] 3 (1900): 127–37. Criticized by C. M. Lewis (J170). The received opinion that transverse alliteration (abab rather than the usual aax) was not an intentional device in OE verse composition was promulgated by Sievers, who took it from Frucht, who based his rejection on analysis of the mathematical probabilities. But Emerson shows that analysis to be not only incorrectly done but in fact wholly inapplicable by its nature to the problem at hand.


J80 Fakundiny, Lydia. "The Art of Old English Verse Composition." Review of English Studies n.s. 21 (1970): 129–43, 257–66. When Sievers set about to give a general account of the relation of metrical stressing to syntax in OE verse he sorted the various parts of speech into three classes - always-stressed (substantives, etc.), variable (verbs, adverbs), and rarely-stressed (prolities, pronouns, etc.). Kuhn's Law of Sentence Particles also treated these latter two classes. But a much more systematic and detailed ex-
amination of Class III-forms than that given by either Sievers or Kuhn reveals that their rules are not only unreasonably rigid but also "in part erroneous and genuinely misleading." These lesser sentential elements "offer so much range in position and metrical value as to impart that variety and liveliness of expression which raise mere versification to compositional art." Cf. Stanley (J300).


J82 -----, "The Cursus in Old English Poetry." Anglia 38 (1914): 377–404. Opposing the views of Shelly (D260) and Clark (D206), the author undertakes to show that the medieval cursus exerted a distinct influence on the rhythmical groupings of Old English poetry.

J83 Foley, John M. "A Computer Analysis of Metrical Patterns in Beowulf." Computers and the Humanities 12 (1978): 71–80. A revised and expanded version of J84. Foley and Creed's programmed search for metrical formulas underlying lexical formulas produces a set of three Paradigms which account for 94% of the lines in Beowulf and represent only "simple variations on a single metrical idea." The scansion is based on Creed's (J61) system of six metrical types, four measures to the line:

All the Paradigms are reversible. The first one alone accounts for 52% of the lines in Beowulf. The analysis also suggests strongly that the line not the half-line was the unit of metrical composition for the Beowulf-poet.

J84 -----, "Formula and Theme in Old English Poetry." Oral Literature and the Formula. Ed. Benjamin A. Stolz and R. S. Shannon. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies, 1976. pp. 207–32. Response and discussion follow, pp. 233–38. Adopting the scansion-system of Creed (J61) -- three degrees of stress, seven types of measure, four measures to the line -- Foley formulates three general Paradigms for line-construction. Computer analysis shows high frequencies of one or the other of these in certain passages. Similar analysis applies to thematic structures. But more important is Foley's argument that the metrical frame precedes, both logically and empirically, the formulaic-phrase linking the construction of the narrative. Note Kuhn's metrical criticisms, p. 233.

J85 Foster, T[homas] Gregory. "Judith": Studies in Metre, Language and Style, With a View to Determining the Date of the Old English Fragment and the Home of Its Author. Quellen Und Forschungen, no. 71. Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1892. 103 pp. Pages 13–48 of Part I treat (1) alliteration, (2) rhyme, (3) hypermetrical verses, and (4) miscellaneous metrical matters (caesura-placement, stress-shifts, defective lines), giving analysis of varieties, frequencies of occurrence, comparison with most of the other major OE poems, and general discussion.

J86 Fowler, Roger. "The Rhythm of Beowulf -- A Review." In Fowler (A12), pp. 178–83. A very incisive critique of Pope (J242): his musical notation is not a system available to a harp-player, so the appended hypothesis of the harp should be ignored as "speculation" in evaluating the theory; Pope also fails to distinguish verse design from verse instance--his system of types is far too "delicate." However, "it would be possible now to overhaul the whole theory and make
it more powerful without destroying the spirit of the original reading."


J88 Frey, Charles. "Lyric in Epic: Hrothgar's Depiction of the Haunted Mere (Beowulf 1357b-76a)." English Studies 58 (1977): 296-303. To show significant connections between meter and syntax, and sound and sense, Frey (1) scans the entire passage by Pope's system, which reveals the startling existence of four C-A-C type patterns (off-verse / on-verse / off-verse) marking the four descents into the water, and (2) discerns a kind of semantic end-rhyme, some alliterative intensification, and sonal mimesis in the passage. Translation follows.


J91 Fry, Donald K. "Old English Formulas and Systems." English Studies 48 (1967): 193-204. Milman Parry's classic definition of the oral formula has come under considerable fire for vagueness, and Fry, after a careful review of the scholarship, proposes that the crucial concept be shifted from formula to system (of formulae), which he defines as "a group of half-lines, usually related metrically and semantically, which are related in form by the identical relative placement of two elements, one a variable word or element of a compound usually supplying the alliteration, and the other a constant word or element of a compound, with approximately the same distribution of non-stressed elements." The revised definition, one sees, isolates the imprecision of the original more precisely.


J96 -----. "Zur Rhythmik des altenglischen Alliterationsverses: Eine kurze Betrachtung." Anglia 76 (1958): 60-63. A concise and convenient comparison of the three principal modern theories of OE meter, Sievers, Heusler, and Pope. Funke notes that though Heusler accepted Sievers' view that the poetry was recited not sung, there are differences
between them, especially concerning "contractions." The differences between Heusler's system and Pope's modification of it is that Heusler considers the anacrusis extrametrical, while Pope includes it in the meter. This slight shift has enormous consequences rhythmically.


The proper verseform for translating Old English is a four-stress line, with free variation in unstressed syllables and the alliteration preserved wherever possible without wrenching of the sense. Garnett supports the zweihebungstheorie.


Regardless of whether or not the verses of Beowulf show formulaic (lexical) structure, they conform to a simpler underlying paradigm of syntactic identity containing 29 syntactic verse-formulae. The scop's formulaic lexicon, it seems, is derived from a formulaic syntax/verse-structure. Five of these 29 syntactic patterns, all of which are based on the syntactic relation of the two words in the verse bearing primary stress, occur over 400 times each (in 3500 verses) in Beowulf.


T Rautmann's view (see J317) is censured in "Metre," pp. 11-15.


Attempts to show that Sievers' Five Types were recognized--though not very clearly--by Lachmann a half-century earlier.


Reply by Fry on pp. 164-66.

On early English laws, wills, and charters commonly set in verse.


A better system than Sievers' Five Types of verses (half-lines) would be a treatment which takes the whole line as the unit, the "feet" of which "form rhythmical patterns essentially the same as those which form the basis of Modern English verse." Nine such patterns are isolated, mainly trochaic-dactylic, which is also the rhythm of Elene.


Simply applies the metrical system of his director Kaluza, listing examples of the 90 metrical subtypes, then discussing the alliteration and the question of authorship.
Describes in detail a computerized study of about half the extant corpus of Old English poetry in search of a workably small number of syntactic (not semantic) formulas used to compose half-lines of verse. Earlier studies (Magoun, Creed, C. Diamond) had shown no strong case for oral composition by semantic formulas, but the small size of Sievers' metrical formulas (five) suggested to other researchers (O'Neil, Gattiker) that a similar set of syntactic formulas might exist. Green finds that only six syntactic types will account for about 60% of the verses, a conclusion which significantly confirms the hypothesis.

Criticism of the oral-formulaic approach.


A discursive "handbook" of expressive effects attainable in OE verse; chapter 5 treat the relation of syntax to meaning (verseform is mentioned only briefly), chapter 2 formulae and diction, chapter 3 variation, and chapter 4 ambiguity and the various relations of phonology to semantics.

An elementary account of meter, lexical collocations, and oral formulae.

Analyzes one sentence in The Wanderer.

Not a rejection but a reformulation of Sievers' Five Types so as to show all the "abstractly possible mutations of a two-stressed group," a complete typology being the first step toward explaining why the types that appear appear and those that don't don't. Greg wants to show that these particular types, and these particular five types, are not simply arbitrary, or even the descendant species of an earlier Germanic genus of verseform, but simply the natural varieties which would be expected to occur, given the linguistic conditions. See the supplementary observations by E. V. Gordon in The Year's Work in English Studies, vol. 6 (1925), pp. 75–77.

J113  Grissemann, Anna. Metrisch-stilistische Untersuchungen zum "Beowulf". Diss., Innsbruck, 1922.

In the midst of an argument that the only adequate form for translating Anglo-Saxon verse is a direct imitation of the features of the alliterative meter (blank verse is too modern, intellectual, and literary, and ballad-meter and simple stress-meter are alien), appears an altogether extraordinary digression (pp. 53-70), in which Gummere broaches the whole question of the early evolution of English verse. Following the map laid down by Schipper, he undertakes to show that English verse-structure "is simply the result of forcing the iambic pentameter movement (influence of foreign models played its part here) upon some late form of our old four-stress verse." The older four beats, in short, can still be heard under the more recent five. Recent research has suggested that this view is wrong, possibly entirely wrong, and if so, one is led to confront head-on the huge question of what the history (nature) of our verse really was (is). Gummere also gives close attention to Spenser’s Shepheardes Calendar.


   An elaboration of Creed’s theory of hypermetrical verses (J61), which is a refinement of Pope’s (J242), with application to the expanded verses in The Dream of the Rood.

   Analyzes the distribution of word-classes and types of clauses within the sentence. The results show a distinct stylistic difference between Juliana and the other Cynewulfian poems.

   Argues for a justification of the 44 fits of manuscript division, based on fit-groups in regular multiples of 330 and 290 lines.

   An exposition of the theory of (his former teacher) T en Brink. Therein, the verse consists of four beats, each of two "mores" of the form x / . The "Fundamental Type" for the full verse then is
   
   (x) // x / (x) // x /.

   with four Variations
   
   (x) / x / x / x /

   (x) / x / x / x /

   (x) // x / x / x /

   (x) // x / x / x /

   and adjustments for catalexis and anacrusis. His view of the latter is curious: he seems to think that the extrametrical member is appended to the end of the a-verse but to the beginning of the b-verse.


----  Heusler, Andreas. Deutsche Versgeschichte. See L387.
Doubts the objectivity of the melodic patterns Sievers finds in verse (L604).


The eighteen chapters in the first edition of Hickes' Anglo-Saxon grammar are expanded to twenty-four in Part One of the second, i.e.:

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Linguarum vett. septentrionalium Thesaurus Grammatico-Criticus et Archaeologicus... Oxford: Sheldonian Theater, 1705.

Two (sometimes three) very large folio volumes. See chapters 23 and 24, "De Poetica Anglo-Saxonum" and "De Poetica Semi-Saxonica," pp. 177–235. A redaction of Hickes' work was subsequently written by William Wotton:

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*Linguarum vett. septentrionalium Thesauri grammatico-critici et archaeologici, auctore G. Hickesio, conspectus Brevis*. London, 1708, which was thereafter translated from the Latin into English by Maurice Shelton as:

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Hickes' *opus* is the first full grammar of Old English published in English. His view of OE meter, unfortunately, was that it was determined by quantities as in the classical languages.


A recalculation of the incidence of transverse, double, and triple alliteration in the hypermetric lines of the six OE poems where they appear most prominently reveals that "more than ten times as many verses as those Pope lists show crossed or transverse alliteration." Single alliteration is rare. But to treat these lines as Pope and Bliss do--i.e., as having regular measures supplemented by a longer "opening" or "close"--will wreck the alliteration when these outer members are removed.

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Creed and Pope's treatment of hypermetric verses as "double time" measures leads to several kinds of unsatisfactory results, such as overweighting. But if we treat them as having three stresses (and measures) instead of two in each half-line, these difficulties will be removed and certain other regular features will become evident: (1) there are no more than four syllables in any measure; (2) double alliteration is frequent in the on-verse; (3) the first stress in the off-verse is regularly non-alliterative; and (4) the effect on tempo is to quicken the opening of the verse but weight its end. In any event there does seem to be a distinct rhythmical shift in the hypermetrical passages. That such lines are in fact clustered is some additional support for distinguishing them.

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Praxis: it is easier to teach OE meter to students by moving from Creed through Pope to Sievers than vice versa. She also suggests that the hypermetrical lines be read as in triple rhythm rather than duple, three measures to the verse; such measures could then be scanned normally.

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The theory criticized is that by Sievers. Though Hirt stands mainly within the vierhebungstheorie school, he believes that each verse has three stresses rather than four, three being obligatory in the b-verse but sometimes alternating with four in the a-verse.

That is, compounds and idiomatic phrases formed by rhyme-reduplication in Old English speech and verse, with a lesser catalogue of forms appearing in Old Saxon, Old Frisian, and OHG.


A full critique of Cable (J42), which, while admitting that the notion of melodic contours, or pitch patterns, is an attractive one, nevertheless concludes that they are (like some other systems) altogether too "loose and inclusive," failing to screen out unmetrical patterns as Cable claims. In general, Cable's refinements on Sievers are judged much less radical or effective than Cable would have us believe. Hoover accepts the argument that the verse contains four members, but rejects the three arguments for the "clashing-stress principle" (i.e. duration, compounds, and alliteration), and rejects the conflation of types D2 and E.

Indexes all the words in the poem under 41 basic metrical types (of words).

His dissertation posthumously accepted at Johns Hopkins University, 1901. 
Like Miller (E596), Melton (E1018), and Brown (E1112) in that he is a student of Bright's (E500), Huguenin extends Bright's theory of secondary stresses to Old English, analyzing the stressing of compound words in order to show that whenever a secondary accent falls between two arses (i.e. syllables outside of the ictic positions), or between an arsis and a pause at the verse-end, the secondary accent on that syllable is metrical demoted or suppressed. (The corollary, promotion of such syllables when they are in ictic positions, he does not demonstrate explicitly.) Bright's theory of "pitch-accent" is acquiesced to.


Offers ten "amendments" to the current views on scanning Old English verse, followed by six pages giving a careful but approving review of Creed (J61) and nearly a dozen quarreling with Pope (J242). The ten: (1) syllabic (quantitative) length "may be discounted in rhythmic analysis"; (2) the metrical unit is the
line not the verse; (3) the line forms around the alliterating pair of syllables; (4) formulaic evidence is sometimes admissible to settle ambiguities; (5) syllables are resolved when they can be, if they must be; (6) allowance for anacrusis indicates the failure of a metrical system; (7) A3 verses may contain initial rests; (8) an E3 verse may be postulated as an analogue to the A3; (9) syncopation is essential to the rhythm; and (10) initial exclamatory Hwaet is totally extraneous to the meter.

J136 Jambeck, Thomas J. "The Syntax of Petition in Beowulf and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." Style 7 (1973): 21–29. The convolution of Beowulf's supplication to Hrothgar is purposeful and should not be removed in translation, as is confirmed by Gawain's parallel request to Arthur.

J137 Jones, Frederick G. "The Hypermetric Lines of the Rune Poem." Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 74 (1973): 224–31. Finds the motivation for the four hypermetrical lines in the poem to be thematic and symbolic; their central position gives a cruciform shape to the poem and also emphasizes the potently symbolic PASTE IN (nied) rune.

J138 Joynes, Mary L. "Structural Analysis of Old English Metrics." D A 19 (1958): 1076A (Texas). A simpler and more coherent account of OE meter than the two current theories is one based on a description/explanation of OE suprasegmentals: metrical ictus correlates with primary stresses, alliteration correlates with pitch-peak, and syntactic boundaries correlate with juncture. Evidence for the nature of OE suprasegmentals may be found in the MS marks.

J139 Kaluza, Max. Der altenglische Vers: Eine metrische Untersuchung. Studien zur germanischen alliterationsvers, no. 1. Berlin: Emil Felber, 1894. Part I: "Kritik der Bisherigen Theorien." 96 pp. Part 2: "Die Metrik des Beowulfliedes." 102 pp. Rev: in Anglia Beiblatt 5 (1894): 131–36, 198; in Englische Studien 20 (1895): 293–96; in Z D P 27 (1895): 539–43; in Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum 21 (1895): 313–17. Both Pope and Cable have acknowledged that Kaluza's work is considerably more important than it may at first seem. Publishing his work soon after Sievers', Kaluza intends to reconcile the Five Types description of stress-patterns, which he considered irrefragable, with the older vierhebungstheorie by adjusting the emphasis of the latter somewhat to call for four members in the verse rather than four beats. But in order to do so he is forced to construct a typology of 90 subtypes, which later scholars have understandably found too unwieldy to use. The full theory is revised and expanded in A3 and can be most conveniently consulted in A4, the English translation.

The success of Kaluza's synthesis, however, is open to question even aside from the ponderous bulk of his own system. The dispute between the vierhebungstheorie and zweihbungstheorie schools had arisen precisely over the issue of whether the Old Germanic line consisted of four stresses (two major and two minor) or only two (major). In this the dispute may seem nearly tautological and synthesis easy. But Kaluza, with a gesture toward the old Indo-Germanic ur-meter x / | x / | x / | x / | as the fullest form, being reduced and corrupted over time, trivializes the whole issue and only effects his synthesis by what looks very much like a lexical feint, in claiming that the term member (German glied--the word originally referred to the members of the human body) should be substituted for the term beat (hebung). That substitution
enables Kaluza to speak of the OE verse as a four-member verse, regardless of stresses, a formulation that has been much approved of later. But it is one thing to speak of members, in the sense of abstract metrical positions, and quite another to speak of linguistic stresses, particularly in metrics. Calling oranges apples will not change their taste. Kaluza is right to deplore quibbling about terms but wrong to duck the questions of whether the bar (measure, foot) consists of one syllable or two and whether the stresses of the alternate bars alternate dipolically. Takt does not equal glied. And after all, Kaluza's own paradigm for the verse consists of four members divided into two feet (Fusse), each foot beginning with a stress. Does, then, takt = fuss? A difference, it has been said, ought to make a difference.

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anallogues all contribute to larger complexes or "echoic sets."

Quirk (J243) might also have realized that lexical collocations fixed and "foregrounded" by alliteration in OE verse may come to constitute a larger integral set of elements available for purposes of cohesion, codification of traditional elements, and phonological intensification.


See "Tone, Style, and Meter," pp. lvi–lxxvi, and Appendix III B for remarks on expressive metrical variations, abstracts of Sievers' and Heusler's systems of scansion, and notes on metrical features bearing on textual criticism. There is also an excellent bibliography of versification studies on pp. clxxii–clxxvi.

Notes the ease with which a memorable phrase may be given alliterative form. In such a way seemingly unversified texts may be deceptive.


Approbation for, addenda to, and commentary on Flasdieck (L342).

An edition with textual apparatus and commentary. Metrics discussed on pp. 4–10; Krämer follows Trautmann (see J317).


Agrees with Fijn van Draat (J82) that the cursus in OE prose is "nothing more than a part of the natural rhythm of the language."

A combination of Bliss's (J20) conceptions of double-hypermetric (normal) verses and single-hypermetric light verses (resolution of the first stress) will account for all the expanded verses which Pope listed as problematic and will further confirm that anacrusis, far from being erratic, was a carefully controlled phenomenon, limited to only one or two syllables of the a-verse.

(The data was analyzed according to Bliss's metrical system). Known poems by Cynewulf—Elene, Juliana, Christ II, and Fates of the Apostles—show marked differentiation from a control group of poems—The Wanderer, The Seafarer, and The Battle of Maldon—and marked similarities to the three poems formerly attributed to Cynewulf—Christ I, Christ III, and Andreas, but the only conclusion warranted by this analysis is that though there is no clear proof of Cynewulf's authorship of these last three poems there was almost certainly a "Cynewulfian school" of poets, at the very least.

J156 Lawrence, John. Chapters on Alliterative Verse. London: Henry Frowde, 1893. 113 pp. His dissertation at the University of London, 1892. Rev: in Anglia Beiblatt 4 (1893): 193–201. From an examination of the metrical pointing in the manuscript Codex Junius XI, Lawrence takes the position (following Möller [L505] explicitly) that the alliterative line is divided twice (into quarters), rather than once (into half-lines), each section being comprised of four Mo rens (a M ore = the duration of one short syllable) and a primary and a secondary stress:

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/ x \ x | / x \ x | / x \ x | / x \ x |
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If syllables are absent, the time is filled by rests.

Chapter One is a useful introduction to the state of the controversy among philologists of the time. Subsequent chapters treat Crossed Alliteration and Vowel Alliteration (Middle English poems compared to Beowulf).

J157 Lawrence, R. F. "Formula and Rhythm in The W ars of Alexander." English Studies 51 (1970): 97–112. Of all the studies of oral formulae in OE and ME verse, this one focuses the most directly on the metrical function of the formula. While preserving the connotation and the grammar of the formula essentially unchanged, the poet could adapt slight variations in morphology and word-order in order to meet the metrical requirements of the context. In WA the preferred metrical pattern for the on-verse is / x x / ; for the off-verse, either / / x or / x x / x.


J159 Lefèvre, P. "Das altenglische Gedicht vom heiligen Guthlac." Anglia 6 (1883): 181–240. See "Metrik," pp. 185–88, and the Appendix "Der Reim bei Cynewulf," pp. 233–40. Lefèvre mainly discusses the shortcomings of his predecessors in the attribution of authorship (to Cynewulf) on metrical grounds. The Appendix catalogues eight types of alliteration and end-rhyme proper within and between successive lines in the two most sensitive linear positions, caesural and final, sorting the examples by number of syllables.

J160 Lehmann, Ruth. "Broken Cadences in Beowulf." English Studies 56 (1975): 1–13. Analysis of the positioning of modifiers (before vs. after the noun) and the verse-types used to begin sentences reinforces the accepted view that the Beowulf-poet consciously strived for variety wherever possible. In this respect—deliberate avoidance of establishing a metrical paradigm for the line which would then be repeated and so "fixed"—Old English poetry is quite contrary to Old Irish.
The metrical form of the poem (summarized on p. 152) is unique, but it seems to have more affinity with other English verse than with Norse, as has been suggested.

The evidence suggests a reduction from secondary stress and long quantity to weak stress and short quantity in the final syllable of bisyllabic compounds, especially proper names, such as W iglaf. Such an assumption will eliminate nearly all the aberrant "extended" lines in Beowulf.

Word-final resonants present a familiar problem in methodology for metrical research: almost the only available evidence for early stages of the language lies in poetic texts, and we do not know a priori if forms therein represent the standard language or artificial convention, or even (given the MSS) if the poet and scribe were ever consistent in usage. Therefore, the linguistic evidence must be assessed before any metrical evidence is considered. On this basis Lehmann concludes that l, m, n, and r possessed full syllabic value for metrical purposes after heavy syllables, but not after light ones. This will lead to a reassessment of the metrical status of a considerable number of lines in Beowulf.

An alphabetical index of alliterants, preceded by a thirteen-page Introduction.

An alphabetical index of the alliterations.

Leonard's later articles (K215 and L461) and Stewart's article (E379) and book (E333). There is a criticism of his position in the second edition of Pope (J242), pp. 15–20.
Statistical analysis of double and crossed alliteration and "stress-links" (consecutive lines repeating the alliteration) in order to assess the degree of intentionality behind these phenomena by screening out the chances for their random occurrence. It turns out that both Cynewulf and the Beowulf-poet consciously avoided these devices, the latter more than the former, revealing thereby his superior artistry.

Based on his dissertation at the University of Birmingham in 1952, "Studies in Old English Prosody."
A critique of Pope (J241) and his theory of isochronous bars in meter always beginning with a stress, fixed in number, invariable in time-signature, and marked with the vexing musical notation. The Sievers system is, on further reflection, approved, with the qualifications that "unusual patterns of alliteration are in fact more common than Sievers allowed" and that the "foot-divisions of the five-type theory are rhythmically meaningless," since the unit of rhythm is the line not the half-line.

His dissertation at Yale, 1897. Around the turn of the century, interest ran high in philological circles on the question of the primitive origins of poetry (F. B. Gummere published an important book). Lewis is interested not in the earliest (Hebrew) syllabic versification nor in the (later) classical quantitative system (Greek, then taken over into Latin), but in the origin of the modern accentual versification. Several theories had been proposed for this major shift in verse-technique in the early Middle Ages, for it was not immediately obvious how an accentual system could evolve from a quantitative one, if at all; some believed the two systems had no connection at all, the accentual system deriving from another foreign source or from vernacular Latin poetry (which was accentual). Lewis examines the crude Commodian verse of the mid third century, the Latin hymns of Ambrose and the later high-medieval Church music, and Old French syllabic verse in order to demonstrate the genealogy of the native, Old English verseform (that is, before the French modification of the native form after the Norman Conquest). The disintegration of classical Latin quantitative verse into a looser, accentually rhythmical form often remains obscure at points, and we can see that medieval music is still not entirely understood, but Lewis manages to establish his line of descent from the high Latin forms through to the sophisticated and complex artistic form of the Old English line.

O. F. Emerson's (J78) rejection of Frucht's conclusions (J90) on the intentionality of transverse alliteration does not accord with simple laws of probability. In fact, quite the contrary: Frucht understated his case considerably by using unreasonably low percentages. Lewis concludes that Old English poets avoided transverse alliteration consciously yet occasionally allowed it as an ornament.


A suggestion that modern poets revive the old native meter by writing hemistichs of Sievers' T types with alliteration, strong caesura and manifest attention to both quantity (he gives rules) and accent. Any accentual-analogue meter which disregards quantity will only produce "rubbish"--verse that is "thin." Specimen verses adjoined. It is more than meiosis to say that "a good deal of re-education is here necessary."

J172 Lewis, Richard A. "Alliteration and Old English Metre." Medium Ævum 42 (1973): 119–30. Randolph Quirk's suggestion (J243) that lexical collocations tend to appear as alliterants in OE meter can be restated as a general rule--"linguistic connection complements metrical connection"--that will permit a superior account of certain lines than that given by the nine types of "light verses" distinguished by Bliss (J20). The fact is, traditional metrical analyses such as his tend to assign stress to syllables on the basis of relatively rigid phonetic and syntactic laws, such as Kuhn's Law for particles. But, arguably, the context--the specific linguistic and metrical environment--is also very influential. The grammatical rules are not inviolable; they interact with prosodic conventions such as alliteration, lexical collocations, and formulae. Bliss's light verses can be accounted for by such factors as these latter, since itself "alliteration is a signal of correspondence between items considered metrically and linguistically."

J173 ------. "Literary Correspondence of Alliterating Items in Old English Poetry." DAI 32 (1971): 3258A (Wisconsin). In the earliest, oral stages of OE poetry, alliteration served primarily metrical ends, whereas later, in the literate stage, it served to conjoin grammatically and thematically important items. These latter functions were served even further by extending the (originally linear) alliteration into "plurilinear" units, thereby sustaining the theme or mood over a greater expanse.

J174 ------. "Old English Poetry: Alliteration and Structural Interlace." Language and Style 6 (1973): 196–205. Thin: amounts to the unremarkable assertion that alliteration "foregrounds" and links important semantic elements, alliteration being the manifestation, in verbal art, of the general OE aesthetic principle of "interlace."

J175 ------. "Plurilinear Alliteration in Old English Poetry." Texas Studies in Literature and Language 16 (1975): 589–602. Following Malone (J198) [without citing him], Lewis proceeds to identify four varieties of alliteration within a two-line span--enjambed, reverse-enjambed or "envelope," a free-position type, and something very close to end-rhyme. But he dismisses out of hand the probabilities for occurrence of these phenomena based on random chance, a matter which C. M. Lewis (J170) and Emerson (J78) have shown to be highly relevant. Stronger proof is required that this is not mere fortuitous, residual, or morphologically-determined ornamentation.


Taking the position that the meter of Old English poetry is "a pattern of four members having two phrase stresses and making up a short, phrasal line-unit called a verse," Luecke proceeds through a detailed (though misleading) history of Old English metrical studies to her thesis, the argument that the Heusler-Pope school of "musical" metrists applies its theory--or analogy--of isochronous barring to Old English verse erroneously, since, historically speaking, music was not notated in equal measures until the twelfth century, whereas even in the Anglo-Saxon age there existed a tradition of unequal-measure notation for the Gregorian Chant. Luecke's purpose is to demonstrate the similarity of the Chant rhythms (mixed binary and ternary measures) to the rhythm (not meter, she insists) of Beowulf. In her system the verse (half-line) consists of four members, each of which is constituted minimally by a syllable but which may be constituted maximally by a syllable flanked by two "word-boundary pulses," producing a fully-expanded abstract pattern of twelve pulses (a pattern not found in Beowulf). "Member" = "measure." The two phrasal stresses may fall on any of the four members to produce six possible patterns of stressing. C.f. Silver-Beck (J289).

A short version of the principles and conclusions more fully elaborated in her book. In this metric the OE verse consists of two pitch-accents augmented by one to two word-stresses. Summary of her research on Gregorian chant.

Extends the Sievers system to Judith. Luick and Sievers maintained a strong relationship both privately and in print for a number of years even despite certain disagreements over matters of theory. There is a photograph of Luick in the Festschrift honoring him in Englische Studien 70 (1935). A minor note: his term "crossed alliteration" (p. 478) for the pattern abab has not been adopted; Emerson termed it "transverse."

J181 -----. "Zur altenglischen und altsächsischen Metrik: (Schwellvers und Normalvers, Alliteration und Versrhythmus.)" PBB 15 (1891): 441-54.
In reply to Kauffmann (J142), Luick shows that the endings of hypermetric verses are not all identical, nor are they the endings of D-Types. He then discusses the notions he had broached earlier, the idea of a symmetrical principle in Germanic verse (stress in the on-verse inclines toward the beginning, while that in the off-verse toward the end) and an idea of "counterbalancing" or overweighting (only a limited number of syllables may follow the main stress in foot or else their combined "weight" overbalances it).

Luick had been inclined originally to accept Sievers' first published view, which was that the hypermetric verses were formed by affixing anacrusis to the head of an otherwise-normal verse, but the fact that one of the primary stresses in the anacrusis participated in the alliteration made the anacrusis-theory very unlikely, so Luick proposes here an alternate view (accepted by Sievers in 1893) that these verse are formed by a medial fusion of two verses, an imperfect first one to a regular second. Out of all the possible permutations of the
Types only eleven will actually work, five being Sievers' Five and the other six variations. There seems to be some difficulty with the B-forms, and Luick thinks perhaps they should be eliminated. His account is generally very close and ingenious, and it is entirely organic and autonomous: he wishes to account for the origin of these verses entirely on the basis of phonetic law; authorial purpose never enters the discussion at all.


J185 Mackie, W. S. "The Old English Rhymed Poem." JEGP 21 (1922): 507–19. Text, translation, and discussion of "the first resolute metrical experiment in English literature... a metrical tour de force."

J186 McRae, Michael H. "The Syntactic Base of Anglo-Saxon Poetry." DAI 35 (1975): 5381A (Wisconsin). A broadly synthesizing effort aimed at promoting the neglected study of syntax to an equal rank with those of meter and formula in order to construe a unified account of all three simultaneously within the theory of transformational grammar. Alliteration, metrical types, and formular frames can all be accounted for more adequately than is presently believed by introducing a separate stylistic level (component, filter) into the normal hierarchy of grammatical rules. Separate chapters examine each of the three stylistic aspects in Beowulf.

J187 Madden, John F. "A Frequency Word-Count of Anglo-Saxon Poetry." Mediaeval Studies 15 (1953): 221–25. Based on his dissertation at Harvard in 1953. The author describes the one he produced for Magoun as his thesis, but it was never formally published, nor is it reproduced in whole or in part here.


J190 -----. "Strophische überreste in den altenglischen Zaubsprüchen." Englische Studien 72 (1937): 1–6. Lindquist in his study of Old Norse incantations was able to show that there existed a common Germanic tripartite stanza-like form (termed the galder-form) having three distinctive rhyme criteria for identification, and he was further able to show that the remnants of this grundform appear in several OE charms. Magoun adduces five further examples, with discussion. Cf. Schneider (J267).


Application of the transformational apparatus to the problem of assigning stress to the alliterants in the half-lines of Old English verse produces the conclusion that "most of the alliterative patterns of Beowulf are correctly predicted if we allow the COMPOUND [NOUN] RULE to cycle on the nodes NP, VP, and S after all transformations affecting word order internal to the NP and S, with the exceptions of verb-movement transformation(s)." I.e., in broader terms, OE meter cannot be accounted for by any theory which assigns stress to alliterants on the basis of grammatical category (word stress); grammatical connection, or syntax (sentential stress), is the proper approach. Maling rewrites Rieger's (J253) alliteration rule in the newer terminology: "in any half-line, a word bearing 1 stress must alliterate; in initial half-lines, a word bearing 2 stress may also alliterate, and will do so approximately 70% of the time. Words bearing less than 2 stress never alliterate.


J194 -----, "Lift Patterns in Old English Verse." *ELH* 8 (1941): 74-80. In Malone's simplified scansion system the "lifts" (hebungen) or prominent (stressed) syllables are classed as primary (marked by alliteration), secondary (prominent but not bearing alliteration), and tertiary (less prominent but still common), these being denoted (respectively) by the numerals 1, 2, and 3. The essay gives examples of the various patterns which appear in the OE long line; the most common are the four-life patterns 11-12, 12-12, and 21-12, with 11-11, 11-21, 12-11, and 21-11 less common, but three-, five-, six-, and seven-life patterns also occur occasionally with either single or double alliteration.

J195 -----, "A Metrical Note on Widsith." *Anglia Beiblatt* 48 (1937): 351-52. Certain lines in Widsith force a slight revision in the common rule that in Type C verses "the syllable under the second of the two primary stresses does not alliterate alone." There are actually two sorts of C verses those where the second stress is subordinate to the first, and those where both are equal. In this latter variety of Type C, in the on-verse, the poet felt free to use the first, the second, or both arsis syllables alliteratively. See J173 above.

J196 -----, "A Note on Beowulf 1. 1379." *MLR* 25 (1930): 191. Only two alliterating staves in this line will suffice, as in 11. 445 and 2220.

J197 -----, "The Old Tradition: Poetic Form." A Literary History of England. Ed. A. C. Baugh. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948. pp. 20-31. Professor Malone's simplified account of the technical features of the Anglo-Saxon verseform gives equal space to Sievers and Heusler/Pope, perhaps inclining somewhat to the former; he also reminds us of the frailty of written records, since the originals were only spoken, and MS texts undoubtedly reflect the interests of the clergy. Variation and kennings also discussed.

J198 -----, "Plurilinear Units in Old English Poetry." *Review of English Studies* 19 (1943): 201-4. Two types of syntacti-metrical style appear in Old English poetry: the earliest, "pre-classical" verse is exclusively end-stopped and inclined toward the epigrammatic, giving it a highly linear character; the classical poetic monuments however are plurilinear, their lines being enjambed either with or without a...
syntactic pause. The plurilinear style exhibits three stages, depending on degree of consistency in bondings. Cf. Lewis (J175).


J200  March, Francis A. "Prosody." A Comparative Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Language in which Its Forms are Illustrated by Those of the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Gothic, Old Saxon, Old Frisic, Old Norse, and Old High-German. New York, 1869, 1873, 1888, etc. pp. 222–28. This American treatment of Old English grammar is curious: the account given of the prosody is actually whittled to fit modern verse then rounded on a few edges so as to fit another shape of hole: March defines the long line as consisting of two sections, each section containing four feet. An arsis "falls on every prose accent and the last syllable of every section."

J201  Mather, Frank J. "The Cynewulf Question from a Metrical Point of View." MLN 7 (1892): cols. 193–213. Reviews the course of the nineteenth-century German philological work on the question of the authorship of the extant Old English poems, then gives a close critique of the methods and conclusions of Cremer (J63). Mather himself accepts as legitimate only the evidence of (1) distribution of verse-types in both half-lines, (2) double alliteration, and (3) hypermetrical verses; he concludes that only Juliana, Elene, Christ (in its entirety), and the Vercelli fragment are definitely by Cynewulf.


J203  Menthel, E. "Zur Geschichte des Otfridischen Verses im Englischen." Anglia Anzeiger 8 (1885): 49–86; 10 (1888): 105–26, 186. See J317. Menthel was a student of Trautmann's, and hence believed that the Old and Middle English alliterative line was written in four-beat half-line couples—this form from Otfrid in Germany. This essay is the fullest application of that erroneous theory by any of Trautmann's school.


J211  M öller, H ans. D as altenglischen V olksepos in der ursprünglichen strophischen Form. Kiel, 1883. Cited by both Schipper and Leonard, but unlocated; not in N U C or B M C.

J212  Monnin, Pierre. "The M aking of the M eters of Boethius: Studies in Traditional A rt and A esthetics." D A I 36 (1976): 6117A (M assachusetts). Lexical irregularities in the versified version of the C onsolation of Philosophy, as compared with the prose source, may be attributed to (1) prosodic necessity and (2) the poet's imperfect memory of his source, either as he had read it or had heard it read to him. An Appendix gives a full scansion of the M eters using the C reed-F oley approach, with analysis of metrical variation. Cf. M yrvaagnes (J217).

J213  Morgan, Bayard Q. Z ur L ehre von der Alliteration in der westgermanischen Dichtung. Diss., Leipzig, 1907; rpt in P B B 33 (1908): 95–181. Sievers regarded crossed alliteration as a result of higher pitch on stressed syllables: "stresses with a high pitch can alliterate; others cannot"; sentence-accent alone would not suffice. M organ, Sievers' pupil, takes up this theory, distinguishing three grades of pitch-height: (1) the alliterating syllables bear "leading tones," which need not be the highest pitches in the line; these are "isotonic"; (2) then there are "near tones," as well as (3) "remote (far) tones" which appear in two subtypes, overtones and undertones. T he remote tones a listener will perceive as contrastive to the lead tones. T here are also "deflected tones" which are separated from the lead tone by some lesser but recognizable distance. (All these positions are relative not absolute.) T herefore: (1) stresses with lead tones must alliterate; (2) those with near tones may alliterate; and (3) those with far tones never alliterate with syllables of a different pitch. Alliteration, then, binds both by connection and by contrast. W hy for example do T ypes B and C have so much less double alliteration? T he second stress has a deflected tone. Symbols for pitches are given on p. 101.


J215  M üller, (?). D er syntaktische Gebrauch des V erbums in dem angelsächsischen G edichte vom "Judith". D iss., Leipzig, 1892.


| J219 | "The Native Meter." Schipper (All), Book I, Part 1. pp. 15–125. Includes four chapters: "General Introduction to the Science of Metre and the Structure of Verse" (see E539); "The Alliterative Verse in Old English"; "The Further Development of the Freer Form of the Alliterative Line in Late Old English and Early Middle English"; and "The Alliterative Line in its Conserva-
| J222 | Nicholson, Lewis E. "Oral Techniques in the Composition of Expanded Anglo-Saxon Verses." PMLA 78 (1963): 287–92. Based on his dissertation at Harvard in 1957. Adopting the treatment of hypermetrical lines given by Pope (J241), Nicholson is able to show that in formulaic terms, such verses may be constructed by adding additional material to the base formula at the beginning (first measure), end (final measure), or middle of the verse, or even by splitting the formula between an off-verse and the following on-verse by enjambment (a novel suggestion). The purpose or function of hypermetric verses? The sheer aesthetic pleasure the Anglo-Saxons so evidently took in complex pattern qua pattern.
| J224 | -----. "The Metrics of Beowulf." In his The Structure and Texture of "Beowulf". Universidade de São Paulo Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras Boletim no. 229, Língua e Literatura, no. 1. Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1959. pp. 89–110; revised as "Metrical Uses of the Harp in Beowulf in Old English Poetry:

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Based on his dissertation at Indiana in 1953. Nist's position on OE meter represents an enthusiastic approval of that of W. E. Leonard (J166), combined with the scansion of Stewart (E333)--i.e., he accepts the four-beat, rhythmical theory, yet he is disinclined to follow Pope, preferring instead to work out the idea that OE verse is dipodic. The half-line contains two isochronous measures, which, if unequal, may be restored to balance by "compensation." Sixteen basic measure-types or "cadences" are possible. Metrical rests or pauses are specified as "Harpbeats"; these may fill pauses, replace missing secondary stresses, or separate contiguous primary stresses. The effect of these Harpbeats is to heighten the emotional level of a passage; the wider effect of the verseform as a whole is "overstressing," or promotion of every degree of natural speech stress one degree higher. Hypermetric lines Nist redefines as normal lines by grading down primary stresses to secondaries, thus effectually defining the problem out of existence, at least verbally.

Reply to Campbell (J46).

The nine principal elegies are "heavily" formulaic (50% of their verses are formulas).

Economizing of rule-systems in English Stress (E777): adding the Latin Stress Rule for OE and deleting the Germanic Stress Rule for ME. Also notes the weakness of relying solely on metrical evidence (in the absence of solid orthoepic evidence) in OE and ME.

Denies any metrical grounds for emendation of this line. Responses by Pope (J238) and Stevick (J301).

According to Charles Fillmore's case grammar system. Compounds appear in two types: normal-order and reverse-order.

A critique of Pope's musical-scansion-sigla: "while Professor Pope's notation is easier to read and, doubtless, more convenient to write, it no more determines the tempo of the reading than does H eusler's."

A high incidence of verbal repetition at all levels--lexical, syntactic, metrical, and alliterative--suggests that repetition for repetition's sake was believed to enhance the efficacy of the incantation.

J233 Petheram, John. An Historical Sketch of the Progress and Present State of Anglo-Saxon

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Besides being a delight to read, Petheram's history of the rise of Old English scholarship offers very interesting details on the lives and work of early grammarians such as Hickes, Rask, and Conybeare—even Guest.

Analysis of the syntactic patterns of the verses in Beowulf shows that syntactic constraints were of equal rank with metrical, and that it is the syntactic frame which underlies the (lexical frame or) oral formula. Comparison with selected smaller texts.

Illustrations of the necessity of a thorough grounding in Old English syntax for the proper interpretation of its verse.


A response to Orrick (J229); see also Stevick (J301). Pope defends the traditional emendation of this line primarily on the basis of the standard rules for alliteration laid down by Rieger and Sievers, as well as on the basis of superior sense.

A convenient abstract of Pope's system, long enough to be full for the beginning student, yet not unduly detailed.

The most substantial treatise on Old English versification published in this century, and the chief rival to Sievers. Pope accepts the typology of stress-patterns demonstrated by Sievers, the Five Types, as legitimate, but takes an opposing position, maintaining that these abstract patterns tell us nothing valuable about the actual recitation or delivery of the line; that is, Rhythm is more crucial than Meter. (But as counter to the antagonism shown in the text, note Pope's free admission of his indebtedness to and admiration for Sievers in the...
preface to the 2nd ed.) In emphasizing Rhythm, Pope is following Heusler (L387)--who viewed the verse (half-line) as comprised of two compound measures, each having four members or positions--as opposed to Kaluza (J139)--who viewed the verse as set in four duple measures. But Pope elaborates his system much further than Heusler did, using musical notation to denote the rhythm rather than Heusler's symbols, disagreeing about the tempo of delivery (he prefers a 4/8 signature to Heusler's 4/4), and adding the crucial feature of initial rests in the measures, a feature not found in Heusler. (Pope found it in Kaluza, although there it was not established as fundamental to the metrical scheme, as it is in his own system.) It is these initial rests that Pope employs to account for Sievers' troublesome Types B and C verses, thus solidifying the whole structure of musical scansion. Then, late in the book, after the feature has been supported at length on purely theoretical grounds, Pope introduces as external evidence the use of the harp as accompaniment to recitation, on the grounds that an initial pause at the beginning of the line preceding the first stress cannot be heard by an audience unless a harp-note is sounded to denote it. The whole argument is shrewdly deployed.

The rhythmical pattern in Pope, then, is a verse of two compound quadruple measures, preceded by an indeterminate anacrusis, with stresses alternating within the measures, and each member representing the time required for one grammatically short syllable, or one eighth-note in 4/8 time.

Schematically: . . . | / x\ x | | / x\ x |.

The difficulty with Pope's system, however, is its extension. In order to account for every variety of rhythmic actualization, and as a result of his evident obsession for total inclusiveness and formality in the theory, Pope is forced away from a few simple, conceptually elegant patterns to a very detailed, complicated, and cumbersome descriptive typology of over 286 rhythmic subtypes for the a-verse alone (the number of varieties for each of Sievers' Five Types is: A, 107; B, 58; C, 39; D, 58; E, 17; with 7 more undetermined or corrupt). As Bliss put it, "a classification which is too detailed ceases to be a classification and becomes a description." And though Pope dismisses all these subtypes as not crucially important, he devotes one-half of his very large book to an exhaustive catalogue and statistical analysis of them. Worse still is the criticism levelled by other scholars that Pope's fundamental assumption of isochronous measures for OE verse is both historically and theoretically a total misapplication of the musical analogy to metrics (Pope does confess his approval of Lanier), since isochronous barring only appeared in the West as a convention for notating music in the thirteenth century and was totally unknown to the Anglo-Saxons. There are critiques by Past (J231), Cable (J42), Fowler (J86), Silver-Beck (J288 and J289), and Luecke (J178). Creed (J61) has produced a valuable simplification of Pope's system.


Studies of the metrical requirements of the OE alliterative system and of composition by traditional formulae should avoid being unduly narrow or else they blind us to the crucial fact that "the whole metrical tradition [had] established a tradition of lexical connexion" beyond the merely formulaic. That is, the alliteration, through contiguity, "marked" or "endorsed" an expectation of lexical and syntactic complementarity--i.e. collocation--as well. The range of connotative subtlety and power established by alliterative collocations was enormous, and the study of their functions and effects must be entirely synthetic, keeping metrical, lexical, and rhetorical strategies simultaneously in view. Identification of verse-types, figures, or formulae is a mere preliminary. An influential study;
see Lewis (J172).

Suggests that "in the hypermetrical passages of Judith, the scop uses two basic techniques, in one of which the rhetoric inflates and the rhythm delays, in the other of which the rhetoric goes taut and the rhythm drives ahead," the latter technique being altogether the more effective.

The belief that rhyme came into English poetry in the ME period is erroneous because it ignores an entire gamut of popular songs, chants, spells, and rhymes in the OE period not in the classical Five-Types meter. These verses were not preserved because they were not the sort of thing monks thought worthy of preservation, but they unquestionably existed, as did an entire tradition of classical and medieval Latin accentual rhymed verse behind them. Indeed rhythmus had come to denote rime as early as the eighth century. See response by Routh (J258).

They predominate even in Old English verse (9-, 10-, and 11-syllable lines comprise 81% of Beowulf, for example) as compared to Old Norse (heavier consonantally, shorter in line) and Old Germanic (weaker in consonants, longer in line). Conjectural reason for this particular number: the number of human fingers. [Saxon sign-language??]

Though Professor Rask's conception of the alliterative structure of OE meter is substantially the correct one, his perspective seems odd to us now since he can view Old English only within the framework of the older Northern verse-forms, especially Icelandic (Skaldic). Thus he categorizes the OE poetic genres in forms of the Icelandic ones, namely Narrative Verse, Heroic Verse, and Popular Verse, the latter two being comparatively absent in OE. In the Narrative (i.e. Alliterative) Verse Rask recognizes the structural function of the alliteration as well as the ornamentation of occasional internal- and end-rhymes, and he censures Hickes for not recognizing accent as the basis of the meter. "The characteristics of this species of verse are a) the alliteration . . . and b) the number of emphatic syllables. The length of each line of Narrative Verse is not so accurately determined as in Latin, by feet. All that here has influence upon the measure seems, as in Icelandic, to be the long or accented syllables, which have an emphasis in the context, of which there are two in a line, each of which is usually followed by one, two, or even more, syllables . . . but these long and short syllables do not seem to be arranged according to other rules than those prescribed by the ear, and the cadence of the verse . . . ." Notice too Rask's insistence on setting the half-lines of OE verse separately rather than as long-lines.

Undertakes to establish correlations between specific metrical forms (Sievers' five types) and certain stylistic and semantic features (such as register or recurrent thematic devices) in an effort to demonstrate "a system of rhetoric which was based on rhythm rather than on figures" and which "involved different levels of style... Shifts from one style to another were indicated by shifts in rhythm."

The general theme of "battle" is analyzed for syntactic distribution in 28 poems by a computer program; a significant variation in distributions for "battle" vs. "non-battle" passages is very tentatively affirmed.

The first few sections give the canonical literary history; sections 5, 6, and 7 treat (respectively) alliteration, rhyme, and rhythm; sections 13, 14, 15, and 16 treat syntax, parallelism, and diction.

J251 Remly, Lynn L. "Ars Praedicandi: Poetic Devices in the Prose Homily Vercelli X."
Not only in manifest borrowings but also in original composition the homilist sought to reproduce the doublings and alliteration characteristic of OE verse in order to create a "dichterisch gehobene Sprache."


Historically, Rieger's work is second in importance only to Sievers', a fact which Sievers readily admitted, for his Five Types typology would never have been possible had Rieger not made the analysis identifying the rules for permissible alliteration in Old English verse.

J254 Roberts, Jane. "A Metrical Examination of the Poems Guthlac A and Guthlac B."
Employs the system of Bliss (J20) to examine differences in meter, alliteration, and rhyme in the two poems. Conclusions, pp. 116–20.

J255 Rogers, H. L. "R hymes in the Epilogue to Elene: A R econsideration."
An aggressive but detailed and orderly piece of forensics rebutting the traditional view (stated by Sievers) that Cynewulf was an Anglian, based on the evidence of his rhymes.

J256 Rosier, James L. "The Two Closings of Beowulf."
Close attention to texture.

J257 Ross, Alan S. C. "Philological Probability Problems."
Complaining that "the numerical data used in philology have received no mathematical treatment... consequently, the conclusions drawn have almost always been invalid," Ross outlines statistically-valid approaches to various
kinds of problems in philology, including "the detection of abnormal frequency of occurrence of 'extra-alliterative' features in Anglo-Saxon verse." See the second part of section 4, pp. 31–36.

A response to Rankin (J245): Sievers' Five Types are neither arbitrary nor erudite metrical forms; they are "a simple, rudimentary, instinctive, and even primitive form of musical, or at least rhythmical, expression." Old English verse preserves the syntax of prose and "a singing type of meter." That is, the verse was sung to music. The standard metrical form of the verse (half-line) was $x / x / x$, and if the $x$'s are replaced by one and two syllables, the permutations will be discovered to be nothing other than the Five Types. And the rule that each verse must have at least two unstressed syllables will prevent varieties other than the Five Types from appearing. This is the direction taken by Pope (J241).

Instead of formulaic composition being a convenience, it probably complicated verse-making by adding a requirement prohibiting repetition of the same alliterants in the same order; i.e., one of its principles was Variety.

See especially pp. 31–38: poetry inclines toward a paratactic style for several reasons, one of which is metrical. End-stopping encourages parataxis, whereas enjambment encourages hypotaxis.

Since this material did not appear in the History of English Prosody (A8), it is naturally of some interest. As expected, Saintsbury scarcely deigns to be specific; he has read Sievers and others but to characterize Old English meter will only go so far as to suggest that the rhythm of the standard line, normal and hypermetric indiscriminately, is

$$\text{tum-ti-ti + ti-tum-ti} > \text{tum-ti | tum-ti tum-ti;}$$

such verse he calls "curiously non-metrical, or hardly more than half-metrical."
All the verse after 1200, including the revived (?) alliterative form, Saintsbury sees as falling under the hegemony of syllable-counting, the Romance constraint which altered English verse irrevocably. But to believe this within his larger views he is forced to claim that the one constraint the native tradition never relinquished was trisyllabic substitution. Better Theory Than Facts, the Scotchman thinks.

Metrical criticism begins on p. 228. Of interest in this passage of verse is the "unusual and doubtful" Type A line in the Sievers system, which Schabram argues should not be emended, against the opinions of Holthausen, Trautmann, Graz, and Heusler.

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J276 ----- "Old English Notes." MLR 18 (1923): 471–72. The first note: twelve rhyme pairs in a passage of verse in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 1086 show what is apparently a much earlier instance of the lengthening of short vowels in an open syllable than has hitherto been known.


J279 Sheets, Louis A. "Wulfstan’s Prose: A Reconsideration." DA 25 (1965): 6611A (Ohio State). McIntosh’s view of Wulfstan’s prose rhythm (J184) is "an oversimplification of an exceedingly complex matter" because it ignores the punctuation in the MSS, which was expressly intended, Sheet argues, to denote the contours of "rhythmic rise and fall."


J282 ----- "Zur Rhythmik des germanischen Alliterationsverses, III: Der angelsächsische Schwellvers." PBB 12 (1887): 454–84. Offprints of the first two articles were published at Halle in 1885 and in Tübingen in 1887, and by G. E. Stechert in New York in 1909 (240 pp.). Sievers then revised and expanded these articles into his


J284 This should be considered the standard text. In the same year Sievers contributed a summary of his theory to the first (1893) edition of Paul's

J285 Grundriss der germanischen Philologie (L531). The same article was later prepared for the second (1905) edition of Paul by Kaufmann and Gering, though no substantive changes were made at all. The 1905 edition of Altagermanische Metrik is simply an offprint of the article in
the second edition of Paul. Two sections of the standard text have been translated by G. D. Luster as:


There is a biographical essay with photograph of Sievers by Karl Breul in Modern Quarterly of Language and Literature (later MLQ), vol. 1, no. 3 (1898): 173–75; another photograph appears as the frontispiece to PBB 57 (1933); and yet another will be found in PBB 79 (1957): 321.

The work of Eduard Sievers rises out of the great mass of nineteenth-century German philology as a model of scholarship, in industry, in method, in conceptual elegance, in results. Setting out to find some simple, discernible, metrical pattern amid the welter of verses in the Beowulf, his catalogue of stress-patterns yielded up not one base meter but rather a small typology of five simple types of verses (half-lines). These are:

- A / X | /
- B X / | X /
- C X / | X /
- D1 / X | /
- D2 / X | /
- E / X | /

Each Type covers a range of subtypes which are extended in various ways though still recognizable of the type. Sievers' work came to be called the Five Types theory, then, but it is important to recognize that what he produced is not a theory at all—it is not an explanation, but simply a description of what occurs (and does not occur), a typology, an empirical catalogue. Only recently have scholars begun to tackle the more formidable problem of explaining what Sievers showed beyond question was there. After Sievers' results were published in 1885, his Types were quickly verified, and it is a measure of the incisiveness of Sievers' analysis that every subsequent theorist of OE meter has been compelled to frame his thesis at least partly in terms of the Five Types.

No matter what aspect of OE verse may be the subject of inquiry—timing, pitch patterns, syntax, performance—the account of stressing accepted is likely to be Sievers' (there are voices from the wilderness; see J2, J64, and J67). Sievers himself scanned OE verse with two stresses to the half-line, and the opposing view, the vierhebungstheorie, was dealt crippling blows both by the success of Sievers' account and by the intransigent improbability of Trautmann's theory; consequently, subsequent four-stress theorists such as Kaluza (J139) were forced to attempt compromises of various sorts.

On the hypermetric verses, Sievers' views shifted. In 1887 he considered that such verses were formed generally by the prefixing of an "anacrusis" of / x (x) or sometimes x / (x) to an otherwise-normal verse. But in 1893, based on arguments made by Luick in the interim, he changed his mind, adopting the view that they were formed by the overlap and merger of two verses with a common interval portion; schematically,

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+-------------------|-------|
= ------------------|-------|-------------------
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For a critique of this theory see Pope (J242, pp. 105–15). On vowel alliteration Sievers accepted the "glottal catch" theory.
no adequate translation; "pitch-idioid analysis" seems awkward), whereby personal intonation curves can be recovered from texts. This was much criticized (see Ipsen and Karg [L403] and Nowack [L523]), but Scripture approved of it and Berry's work (C35) is a clear echo. Sievers insists on "continuous beat" as essential to verse, procured by "hovering stress," on normalization of texts into their original dialects, and on three-stress OE lines in 2/4-time.


The essential preliminaries: a distinction between Meter and Rhythm; a recognition that what is currently considered Theory is mere Description; a survey of the two principal approaches so far, the Isochronous and the Non-Isochronous; and a realization that while the latter of these is the only legitimate approach it merely provides, in its schemata of Stress Types, a description of "inevitable" patterns. The correct theory of Old English Meter: "two basic, simple rules": alliteration and two stresses per half-line.


The case rests on the simple but very powerful fact that the concept of isochrony is an anachronism, a modern concept that does not apply to primitive music (in several geographical regions) or to medieval Gregorian chant. Cf. Luecke (J178).


Convinced that accent is the principle of English verse, Skeat complains of the terminology of prosody, proposing loud and soft for long and short, and Tonic, Retum, and D ominant for Trochaic, Iambic, and Dactylic. For OE alliterative verse he adduces a set of rules, but unfortunately he mistakens the OE stress-meter for a syllable-counting meter, leading him to scan it by feet; this explains the statement that the Tonic foot is the basis of OE verse while the Dominant is the basis of the ME (alliterative) poems. Skeat lists all the ME alliterative MSS known to him and concludes with remarks on OE prose rhythms.


Increases in unstressed syllables, triple alliteration, three-stress half-lines, absence of caesura, and (chiefly) rhyme as evidence for the influence of the popular tradition on Old English verse.


Catalogues words into three categories--nominals, verbs and adverbs, and connectives--in order to show how the stress-patterns of the words are fitted systematically into the metrical patterns of the line.


The seemingly free changes of rhythm in the alliterative long line which Sievers noticed have not been explained. Cremer's explanation has so far been the best, but he could only hold that the poet preferred joining half-lines of different types simply for the sake of variety. But in fact many lines appear with both verse-types identical. Kaufmann's notion of a "balancing" system is not much better. It is true that any type verse can be matched with any other, and true also that the type chosen for the off-verse does not seem to control that for the on-verse. But we can perceive certain evident preferential groupings of types, as B with C in Beowulf. Sokoll offers five categories: (1) both verses begin with prepositions; (2) both are mainly verb phrases; (3) both begin with coordinating conjunctions; (4) or with attributive pronouns; or (5) both are sentences or main or subordinate clauses.


Mainly a compilation of all the lines, with their syntactic position identified by symbols; not much can be gleaned for certain beyond the previously-known generalization that the A3 lines (which almost invariably occur in the first half-line) seem to announce or introduce a particularly important line soon to follow. Editorial punctuation offers little help. Stanley also tries to show that "transverse alliteration" is accidental rather than intentional.


Micrometrical analysis of two specific problems: the alliterating finite verb in the second half-line (the paradigm case is Beowulf 2717b), and the metrically unstressed infinitive in the initial dip of the verse (either verse). Cf. Fakundiny (J80).


An attempt to assess the validity and weight of the arguments and their assumptions presented by Orrick (J229) and Pope (J238) in their dispute over emendation in this line and the principles behind such an action. Stevick supports Pope on the evidence of MS status, alliteration, rhetoric, and meter.


A summary exposition of the principles and methods of his monograph. Stevick treats each of the hypermetric lines of this poem and Genesio B as if it were two normal lines.

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J304 -----, Suprasegmentals, Meter, and the Manuscript of "Beowulf". Janua Linguarum, Series Practica, no. 71. The Hague: Mouton, 1968. 88 pp. Rev: in Linguistics 62 (1971): 110–17; in English Studies 52 (1971): 157–59. Stevick presents here his formal argument that the spacing between morphological units in the MS of Beowulf was very precisely regulated by the scribes so as to indicate timing features, specifically the internal open and terminal junctures, which Stevick terms the "phonological phrasing." The scribes gave scant attention to word-boundaries, and the occasional accent marks in the MSS seem to have only a very limited function, so the speech-rhythm could only be dented by spacing. Stevick believes that the intervals between stresses in Beowulf were isochronic, so that identification of junctures and hence recovery of the suprasegmental phonemes of the text may be used, as Joynes has shown (J138), to determine the metrical stressing.


J308 Sweet, Henry. An Anglo-Saxon Reader. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1876; many subsequent editions. Sections 356–92 concern meter, but these are discontinued in all editions past the tenth. Sweet gives a simplified traditional account of the line, verse, stave, lift, dip, extended verses, and the Five Types.

J309 Taglicht, Josef. "Beowulf and Old English Verse Rhythm." Review of English Studies n.s. 12 (1961): 341–51. A general survey and summary of the two competing theories of Old English meter, the "musical" and the "nonmusical," with specific observations and criticisms on the work of each principal theorist--Sievers and Bliss, on the one side, and Kaluza, Haeuser, and Pope on the other. Taglicht concludes that the "chronometric" element in the verse cannot be dispensed with in a metrical analysis, yet long and short syllables cannot be considered temporally equal (i.e. isochronism does not obtain); hence, the verse should be scanned in unequal measures having relative proportions of 1, 1.5, 2, and 2.5 in duration.


introducing and concluding both speeches and whole poems, and also retarding the tempo of a passage for expressive effect, usually solemnity. Timmer gives a closer look to the lines in Beowulf.


J313 Tolman, Albert H. "The Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry." PMLA 3 (1887): 17–47. Rpt in his The Views About Hamlet and Other Essays. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904. pp. 339–82.Mainly on style, repetition, and metaphor, but Tolman declares himself a supporter of the zweihebungstheorie and claims that the Anglo-Saxon meter is not a cause of but merely connected to the style of Anglo-Saxon verse; the two are interdependent.

J314 Touster, Eva K. "Formal Aspects of the Meter of Beowulf." DA 12 (1952): 623A (Vanderbilt). The author formulates a more simplified account of OE meter than the traditional ones. Conclusions: hypermetrical lines are more important in the first part of Beowulf than in the second; the dragon-episode is an interpolation. The dissertation is summarized in her article "Metrical Variation as a Poetic Device in Beowulf," Anglia 73 (1955): 115–26.

J315 ------. "Phonological Aspects of the Meter of Beowulf." Essays in Honor of Walter Clyde Curry. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1954. pp. 27–38. An argument that traditional metrical analysis has been remiss in its treatment of diphthongs as monosyllabic; there is some (ambiguous) phonetic and MS evidence that they were disyllabic, or at least that some were so and thus should be distinguished from the monosyllabic variety.

J316 Tow, Richard. "Old English Prosody and Descriptive Linguistics." The Second LACUS [Linguistic Association of Canada and the United States] Forum, 1975. Ed. Peter A. Reich. Columbia, South Carolina: Hornbeam Press, 1976. pp. 605–12. An exposition of Henry Lee Smith's structural-linguistic approach to OE metrics, which Tow claims is much more adequate than Keyser's theory (E789), especially in accounting for unusually heavy verses. In Smith's system, (1) there must be at least two primary stresses in every verse (half-line), (2) at least one syllable in the verse must bear pitch level 3 or higher and alliterate, and (3) the verse may contain no more than eight syllables.


Trautmann's work on Old English versification (cited here in chronological order) was both preceded and followed by a number of articles on Middle English versification, especially on Layamon (see K404), not to speak of the many other articles he produced on philology and phonetics. His students (in Old English: Kuhnke, Einenkel, Menthel, and Schmitz) also published several long articles applying Trautmann's theories to the whole corpus of Old German, Old English and Middle English verse. But all of their work is derivative so I treat the entire body of it together here as being almost literally a single-minded effort. Trautmann's work is significant not in terms of its accuracy or its legitimacy but in terms of its sheer bulk. His own publications and the publications of his students are quite extensive, and though his theory has not been followed by later scholars—indeed it is hardly ever cited at all anymore—still Trautmann was the last and probably the most vigorous proponent of the old vierhebungstheorie in Germany (the theory which Kaluza described as "the-good-old-much-despised-and-often-pronounced-dead-but-on-this-account-only-so-much-the-more-tenaciously-clinging-to-life-Lachmannian-four-accent-theory"), and for that reason merits notice. But even in Germany the theory was not widely accepted, and in fact after it had been rejected by both Sievers and Schipper in the '80s, Trautmann was responsible for palpitating the corpse of the system for several decades thereafter so as to make it give feeble signs of life.

In Trautmann's view, Old and Middle English verse consisted not of one long line divided into two hemistichs but of a couplet of two short lines (verses), an extension of the (rhyming) short-couplet form first introduced into Germany by Otfrid in the ninth century. And, in contrast to Sievers, he considered the Germanic line to be sung verse not recited verse (sprechvers). More specifically, he scanned each short line or verse as having four bars (takte) and strict measurement of time (Zeitmass), each takt being composed of two parts, a lift and a dip, each of which was equivalent to one short syllable, two short equaling one long, the whole system producing sixteen types of verses (as opposed to Kaluza's ninety), eight of them in disyllabic and eight in monosyllabic bars. Within these sixteen there were twelve "seemingly three-bar" types (Trautmann thought they had been two-bar types in an older stage of the language) of four disyllabic and eight monosyllabic bars. This Viertakte or four-bar

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theory Trautmann applied rigorously to Old English verse, but when it came to Middle English verse he recognized that the second half-line or off-verse was weaker and adjusted his theory from an eight-bar to a seven-bar. The difficulty with the whole theory is that it requires a considerable distortion of the linguistic material to find four beats or four bars in one half-line of Old English verse when frequently there are only four syllables in that verse. Further, Trautmann insisted, against all the other four-stress theorists, that all four stresses were equal. The traditional four-stress view had argued for only two primary stresses, accompanied by two secondary stresses, and even some of Trautmann's own students quailed before the extremity of his position on this matter.

Following the publication of Einenkel's and Menthel's papers in 1884 and 1885, Schipper made an effort to combat Trautmann's views in print in 1886 (see J263). Schipper's position in support of two stresses per half-line has been the one borne out by history.


J332  Webster, A. Blyth. "Translation from Old English: A Note and an Experiment." Essays and Studies 5 (1914): 153-71. William Morris's mistake in translating Beowulf into alliterative stress-verse was to take the rhythmic form too literally: "Instead of writing a modern form of the measure based on the same principles as the old, he ignored the changes in the structure and character of the language and tried to write again the actual form of the original verse itself." Sample.

J333  Westlake, J. S. "The Old English Sung, or Ballad, Metre." The Cambridge History of English Literature. Ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller. 14 vols. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907-16. Vol. 1, pp. 461-68. (Appendix to Chapter VIII.) The popular verse, Westlake argues, was in a dipodic meter having four stresses to the verse instead of the two of the epic meter. Of these four two were full and two half stresses, with a slack or resolved pair of slacks interca-
lated optionally between each stress, i.e.:
(X) / (X) \ (X) / (X) /
Such a view mediates between the two-beat and four-beat theories.

A claim that much Old English verse was composed by the "primitive" technique of merely adding semantically weak or redundant words to straightforward prose so as to fill out the alliterative requirements of the line.

The meaning of "formulaic" as applied to the composition of verse may be sharpened considerably if we recognize it as a twofold process, entailing first the translation of crucial Latin phrases rather literally and second the addition of semantically empty or redundant words to meet the alliterative requirements of the meter. That is, what is "formulaic" about a phrase is not the fixity of its essential idea or head noun but the actual variation of its exterior members. These appendages do not detract from the sense of the kernel, but they do not add to it either, and it is they who perform the critical work of fitting the kernel idea into the metrical context.

A micrometrical rule to be added to the standard descriptive system: in those specific environments where one of the above three adverbs (sometimes conjunctions) begins the verse, "the Beowulf poet followed a consistent rule governing how many unstressed syllables might precede the first stress (þa / þær / or stem + 1 for 'standard' verses; þa / þær / or stem + 2 for 'light' verses) and only departed from this rule in a limited number of specific contexts."


They anatomize Bliss's light verses syntactically and metrically but only quarrel with certain lesser matters of sigla and treatment. Generally approbatory.

Part of the explanation for the distribution of verse-types within the lines of Beowulf lies in the fact that certain types either do or do not conveniently begin or conclude syntactic phrases. But Type A verses, more flexible, appear in pairs less frequently than they might, which suggests that Bliss was partly right to claim that the Beowulf-poet preferred to have one a-verse in every line but not two.

Two experiments to show that "the language itself is the chief formative element of Old English prosody irrespective of theories of rhythm." In the first, the author composes 1833 lines of OE verse to see if he can duplicate its rhythm. In the second, he attempts to reproduce in Old English verses the metrical systems of Latin quantitative verse, the medieval Latin cursus, and the
Old Norse skaldic verse; success in each case is in direct proportion to the closeness of the language to Old English.

J341 Woolf, Henry B. "The Naming of Women in Old English Times." M P 36 (1938): 113-20. Alliteration and variation were used in the naming of women as well as men.


J343 Wrenn, C. L. "Form and Style in Anglo-Saxon Literature." In his A Study of Old English Literature. London: George G. Harrap, 1967; rpt 1975. pp. 35-56. This third chapter provides an admirably succinct account of Old English meter (the Five Types system), formulaic diction, kennings, and rhythmic/alliterative prose. But the third chapter also treats the continuity of meter and language from Old English forward, and there are other references to meter throughout this useful book; see the Index s.v. "Meter." The Anglo-Latin works, Bede's De Arte Metrica and Aldhelm's Epistola ad Auricum are discussed early in chapter 4.


