Rhyme in *dróttkvætt*, from Old Germanic Inheritance to Contemporary Poetic Ecology III: The Old Norse Poetic Ecology

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Abstract: This paper is the third in a three-part series that develops a model for the background of rhyme in Old Norse *dróttkvætt* poetry as a formalization of the same form of rhyme found across Old Germanic poetries. The first paper in this series outlined the argument and its background. The second paper explored rhyme in Old Germanic poetries outside of Old Norse. The present paper introduces rhyme in Old Norse eddic poetries in relation to what was found in other Old Germanic traditions. It then turns to *dróttkvætt*, discussed in relation to the broader poetic ecology in which it emerged and developed, and considers how *dróttkvætt* impacted that ecology and uses of rhyme in eddic poetry. Although the ultimate origin of *dróttkvætt* remains obscure, the discussion of rhyme in *dróttkvætt* requires a discussion of the history of the meter, here situated in relation to other developments in the poetic ecology that point to greater attention to cadence and rhyme under conditions conducive to formalizing a stanzaic structure. However, this exploration of the history of the poetic form highlights that rhyme may have been a secondary development of the basic meter, formalizing what began as an optional added feature that may have had only a marginal metrical role.

Keywords: rhyme, alliterative poetry, oral meter, Germanic, eddic, skaldic

The first portrait of this triptych revealed the over-arching argument and its background, introducing the reader to the Old Germanic verse form and *dróttkvætt* poetry. The second displayed rhyme in Old Germanic poetries other than Old Norse. Rhyme was shown to have very deep historical roots as an integrated feature of the inherited poetic system, where it appeared mainly as an added feature, but could also have metrical functions and, at least in Old English, seemed also to be metrically governed. This third and final scene reveals *dróttkvætt* and the evolution of rhyme in the poetic ecology, which is first introduced as a concept with relevant illustrations. Building on the

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preceding discussions, rhyme in Old Norse eddic poetry is then reviewed and set in relation to what was found for other Old Germanic poetries. *Dróttkvætt* is subsequently introduced in relation to the poetic ecology that included eddic poetries, bringing into focus how *dróttkvætt* impacted that ecology. This ecology-centered approach moves backward through time to consider evidence for the ecology in which *dróttkvætt* initially developed and the conditions that facilitated it. The inherited verse form in North Germanic is portrayed as undergoing innovations to become a short epic form with changes in syntax that reinforced the boundary between long lines and also the cohesion of the short line couplet as a compositional unit, which in turn paved the way for stanzaic structures. During or after significant syncope in the language and no later than the early nineth century, *dróttkvætt* is shown to have emerged in an ecology where other variations on the Old Germanic meter also appeared. Across these poetic forms are indications of changing attention to the cadence and also, albeit in contrasting directions, usage of rhyme. The similarity of *dróttkvætt*'s structure to Old Germanic hypermetric lines and use of alliteration in them is considered to have been a model for the metrical form, whatever the background of the meter's near-isosyllabism. The metricalization of rhyme in the *dróttkvætt* meter is argued to be a formalization of Old Germanic short-line internal rhyme in its use to buoy otherwise burdened lines. In contrast to theories of a foreign origin of rhyme connected to borrowing or adapting a poetic form, rhyme's metricalization is argued to have been an innovation to the basic meter, formalizing an inherited feature of the poetic system, possibly close to the time of the first named *dróttkvætt* poets. The valorization of *dróttkvætt* with its emblematic features as court poetry then reciprocally impacted the poetic ecology, significantly impacting eddic poetry.

Poetic Ecology

The term *poetic ecology* is here used on analogy to the concept of *tradition ecology* developed in folklore research (esp. Honko 1981; 1985),[1] augmented with perspectives from semiotics (e.g. Lotman 1995; Gal, Irvine 2019). The concept overlaps with what Derek Attridge (1982: 152–157) describes as a *metrical set*, which Kristján Árnason (1991: 25–26) has introduced to discuss Old Norse poetries, and which offers a useful point of reference for discussion.

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[1]   On the history of the concept and term *tradition ecology*, see Kamppinen 1989: 37–46; on biological metaphors in folklore research, see Hafstein 2001.

Attridge uses metrical set, and the complementary concept of rhythmic set, for the principles or 'rules' governing poetry and that a person internalizes and reciprocally uses to predict and interpret poetry when it is read or heard, whether at the level of a particular meter or of all poetry in a particular language. Poetic ecology differs in three key respects. First, it refers only to the level of a milieu (however delimited). Second, it includes not only all poetic devices and poetic forms, but also produced texts, which is relevant since these may impact on the valorization and usage or avoidance of poetic features or forms as well as shape their social significance. Third, and most significantly, the metaphor of an ecology is used to described the distribution of poetic features and forms across contexts and practices. The distribution shapes both the associations and connotations of different poetic resources, as well as the degrees to which different oral-poetic systems or genres may or may not interact. When applying this approach to traditions that are centrally oral, meter and rhythm are not treated as isolated from registers of language through which they are internalized, even if these may be separated in analysis (Frog 2015; 2021a). Meter and rhythm are instead seen as in a symbiotic relationship with the language through which they are inevitably realized (e.g. Foley 1996), while socially circulating poems may also be direct resources in the production of new poetry (e.g. Patria 2020). When relevant, however, the *metrical ecology* may be specified within the poetic ecology in order to refer to both meters proper and other poetic organizing principles and devices.

The concept of a poetic ecology can be briefly illustrated through Old Norse traditions in the thirteenth century, which is the central period when these poetries were documented. This illustration offers the opportunity to introduce some features of the poetries relevant to later discussion. How Old Norse poetry tends to be approached in scholarship is introduced first as a frame of reference. This type of approach is then pulled apart to consider the traditions more dynamically in terms of an ecology.

Research conventionally divides Old Norse poetry into two categories: 'eddic' and 'skaldic' (see e.g. Leslie-Jacobsen 2017). *Eddic* refers centrally to longer anonymous poems on non-Christian heroic and mythological subjects, which were earlier imagined to be parts of a work called *Edda* (on which, see Haukur Þorgeirsson, Teresa Dröfn Njarðvík 2017: 154–165). *Skaldic* refers centrally to poems, often preserved only through fragmentary quotations, composed by usually a named *skáld* ['poet'] in connection with royal courts or other contexts. Both categories are then extended through the preserved poetry as a practical way to discuss the corpus. Thus, eddic poetry refers generally to any poetry in the meters *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr,* as well as the less attested *málaháttr,* that appears to belong to an anonymous collective 'folk' tradition, as

well as some compositions based on the style and form, such as *Hugsvinnsmál*, which is a medieval translation of the *Disticha Catonis* (Wills, Groper 2007). Skaldic poetry tends to be imagined through compositions using an ideal form of the *dróttkvætt* meter, characterized by complex syntax and a high density of the complex nominal circumlocutions called kennings, features that are considered emblematic of poetry directly or indirectly linked to courts and patrons. The category then extends to the broad range of variations on the *dróttkvætt* meter and the plethora of more recently devised meters (i.e. since ca. 1000 CE) associated with skaldic poets.[2] It also more generally encompasses any poetry that is linked to a particular person and social or historical situation rather than being considered inherited from a shadowy collective tradition.

Old Norse poetries tend to be approached through a two-dimensional lens of literary genre as a combination of form and content, with a general tendency to blur genre with the eddic and skaldic categories. Consequently, it is common discuss eddic poetry and skaldic poetry separately and as though each is a relatively homogeneous category contrasted with the other. Eddic poetry tends to be divided into mythological and heroic poetry, or according to terms used in rubrics and references to the poems, treated like titles of modern literary works (e.g. Bampi et al. 2020). Studies of formulaic language have normally treated the eddic corpus as a unified whole (e.g. Thorvaldsen 2006; Mellor 2008), despite the research being rooted in Classic Oral-Formulaic Theory, which originally defined formulaic language as bound to meter (Lord 1960: 4; see also Frog, Lamb 2021). Both *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr* as well as *málaháttr* are rooted in the common Germanic alliterative meter (see Russom 2009; Suzuki 2014a; 2014b). *Fornyrðislag* has the basic stichic structure of long lines, each constituted of two short lines systematically linked by alliteration between one or both strong positions in the a-line with the first but not normally the second in the b-line. *Ljóðaháttr* also has lines of this basic structure but they alternate with a distinctive line type called in German a *Vollzeile*. Rather than a caesura dividing it into two short lines, a *Vollzeile* has a catalectic rhythm with two or three strong positions among which alliteration occurs, and it has a preferred cadence of a final strong position formed by a heavy monosyllable or light disyllable that undergoes resolution. Moreover, *ljóðaháttr* compositions exhibit less use of the poetic nominal circumlocutions called kennings and their syntax is generally closer to non-poetic speech – with the exception

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[2]   The diversity of meters and their variations are illustrated by the poem *Háttalykill* 'Key to Poetic Forms' and the section of Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* called *Háttatal* 'Account of Poetic forms'.

of post-positional use of monosyllabic prepositions[3] and the separation of the possessive pronoun from the noun it governs (Noreen 1926: 41–42; Gunnell 1995: 193). Metrically, Geoffrey Russom observes that the formal types of lines characteristic of the Old Germanic meter exhibit a complementary distribution across *fornyrðislag*, *ljóðaháttr* and *málaháttr*: although the historically underlying metrical framework is the same, the meters exhibit markedly different tendencies in rhythm (2009). Alliteration in *ljóðaháttr* also exhibits slightly different principles than in *fornyrðislag* (Noreen 1926: 41; Hollmérus 1936). The rhythms and poetics of poems in each meter are actually quite different. It is thus unsurprising that formulaic language is not uniform between them, and remarkable that this has not received more attention in formula studies. The deep-rooted convention of viewing eddic poetry as a collective category has interfered with research.[4]

Viewed within the poetic ecology, the *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr* meters exhibit different patterns of usage. In longer poems and quotations from them, *fornyrðislag* is commonly used for third-person narration, including associated direct speech, whereas *ljóðaháttr* is used more or less exclusively for representing direct speech.[5] Although there are examples of poems that mix meters, within the poetic ecology, the conventions of *ljóðaháttr*'s use lead it to index or 'point to' direct speech (Quinn 1992). The eddic *ljóðaháttr* compositions – it might be misleading to call them 'poems' – also include comments and explications of the action amid turns of dialogue and longer speeches, but these are in prose rather than verse.[6] Terry Gunnell has argued that these texts most probably reflect some form of dramatized performance; alongside differences in their language and syntax, he highlights the use of

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[3]   On this syntactic feature and its relation to meter, see Kristján Árnason 2004: 218–220, 227, and cf. 222–224.

[4]   Whereas the systematic formal metrical differences of *ljóðaháttr*'s *Vollzeilen* and *málaháttr*'s five-position lines are not paralleled in other Old Germanic poetries, differences comparable to those between *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr* long lines could have counterparts. Old Germanic verbal charms appear to be distinguished by style and metrical difference (Stanley 1984; Roper 2011; Griffith 2018: 148–150), which might come into a different focus if approached on its own terms rather than through deviations from the metrical ideals of another genre.

[5]   *Ljóðaháttr* also seems to have been used for riddles, which appear as direct speech in *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*, but versified riddles seem to have also circulated outside of saga contexts.

[6]   One passage of third person narration appears in the poem *Vafþrúðnismál*, which I have elsewhere proposed is a non-traditional product of a dictation situation (Frog 2021a: 71; see also Gunnell 1995: 186).

marginal notations to indicate the change of speaker as found in manuscripts of some medieval plays (1995; see also Philpotts 1920). When an approach to genre accounts for performed practice (Frog 2016a), the gap between these dialogic and monologic texts on the one hand and third person narrative poems on the other comes into sharp relief. Gunnell's argument suggests that the conventional ways of categorizing eddic poetry may be analogous to treating Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* as representing the same genre because both are long stories in relatively simple verse. If the practices behind these texts were largely unrelated, the rhythms of the respective poems *known by ear rather than by metrical analysis* may not have been perceived as belonging to the same category.

The Old Norse poetic ecology exhibits what seem to be correlations between genre and poetic form, but also the potential for mixing meters or adapting them across practices. For example, *fornyrðislag* was used, albeit infrequently, by skaldic poets, yet skaldic uses of eddic meters tend toward syllabic rhythms (Turville-Petre 1976: xvii), which points to differences in how these were articulated in performance relative to the narrative poems. The relative valorization of poetic forms is also reflected in various ways in the sources. For example, a saga presents a situational composition in the *fornyrðislag* meter that is evaluated as a poor verse, leading the same person to compose verses in *dróttkvætt* in its place (Leslie-Jacobsen 2017: 133).[7] Although there were no courts in Iceland, the abundance of skaldic poetry documented there shows that Icelanders actively recited the poetry that had been produced in courts and by poets that had gained a reputation in courts abroad. The courts were centers of the poetic tradition in the sense that they were key sites of interactions that had historically maintained the ideal standards for the commodification of individual poems and the patronage of poets. Snorri Sturluson's *Edda*, composed in 1220 or shortly thereafter, is built around the praise poem *Háttatal* directed to the young Norwegian king and his ward.[8] This work is a testament to the centrality, for Icelandic poets, of royal courts abroad, even as the vernacular genres were being displaced by other entertainments arriving from the continent (Wanner 2008). The skills implied by skaldic verbal art also offered foundations for additional roles, such as ambassadorial assignments (e.g. Morawiec 2013). Skaldic poetry further

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[7]   On an example of women's lament being represented by a *dróttkvætt* stanza as the valorized mode of expression in sagas, see Frog, Stepanova 2024.

[8]   In English, Snorri Sturluson 1987; in Old Norse, Snorri Sturluson 1998; 1999; 2005; on the *ars poetica*, see Nordal 2001; Clunies Ross 2005; Wanner 2008; Males 2020.

provided authoritative mooring posts for knowledge of history, which was another commodity on which Icelanders could capitalize abroad, and that also reinforced the image of poets as prominent actors in major historical events (Nordal 2001: ch. 4). The prominence of *dróttkvætt* and skaldic poetry in Iceland was deeply entangled with the value it accrued through practices linked to courts that might be seen as a climax in a poet's career. This social construction of value simultaneously constructed difference (Gal, Irvine 2019) relative to other poetic forms, as in the anecdote above and returned to below.

When traditions are approached within a poetic ecology, their distributions across practices can be brought into better focus. It becomes possible to consider their networks of relations, contrasts and what might be described as their 'distribution of labour' (cf. Honko 1981: 53) as well as the meanings and relative valuations these may produce in society. Of course, a perspective on Old Norse poetries is limited to the sources available, augmented by what can be inferred from comparative perspectives.[9] Nevertheless, despite these limitations, viewing meters, poetic features and verse forms within a poetic ecology provides a framework for considering their structural relations also in diachronic change.

Rhyme in Old Norse Eddic Poetry

Prior to Matyushina's work (1986; 1994), it seems that only full end rhyme has been subject to extensive surveys through the main corpus of eddic poems (Sijmons, Gering 1906: ccxviii–ccxix, ccxlv–ccxlvii). These earlier studies also

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[9]   For example, both sagas and eddic poetry point to traditions of verbal charms and curses, although the texts that these present are better described as *para-charms* and *para-curses*, which are received as supernaturally empowered within a narrative world but not as affecting the empirical world of the narrative's audience (on *para-charms*, see Frog 2022d: 183–186). Similarly, women's ritual lament and situational prophetic speech is only known through references and the filtering lens of other genres that erase the form of the women's verbal art (Clover 1986; Mundal 2012; Frog 2022d: 199–200; Frog, Stepanova 2024). Other genres were likely uninteresting or unsuited for documentation, although the post-medieval Icelandic *sagnakvæði* suggest a genre of fairytales told in the *fornyrðislag* meter and formulaic idiom (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2010; 2013; 2023). This genre either emerged as (*a*) the epic status of mythological and heroic poetry collapsed (Frog 2016a: 69–70) and the genre underwent a shift as the respective *fornyrðislag* poems became viewed as fantastic tales of humour and adventure; or (*b*) the same poetic system was also used for a parallel genre of fairytales already by the thirteenth century, in which case the eddic genre or genres for mythological and heroic narratives may have shifted into or converged with *sagnakvæði* (*ibid.*: 67; cf. *Þrymskviða*).

generally treated rhyme in a narrow sense of end rhyme involving the stressed syllable and all subsequent syllables while varying the onset consonant or consonant cluster. As in her work on Old English, Matyushina includes a variety of phonic and lexical repetition types under the umbrella of rhyme. Without access to her dissertation (1986) or repeating her analysis, her data is challenging to sort through because, in English, she presents her findings on eddic poetry as extensions of an analysis of rhyme in skaldic poetry (1994). Comparing this work with her findings for Old English presents the additional challenge that the relevant data is scattered in footnotes (2011).[10]

In eddic poetry, Matyushina finds that stem-syllable rhymes within a short line occur in b-lines in ca. 70% of her data, with only 30% in a-lines, and that among rhymes in a-lines almost none include the vowel (1994: 129–130). The statistical approaches to oral-poetic meters that developed in Russian scholarship allow deviation from the metrical ideal in up to 20% of lines (Bailey 1993; 1995: 483), and some scholars allow deviation in up to 25% of lines (Skulacheva 2012: 53). If this feature is viewed through that lens, the avoidance of paired stem-syllable rhymes including the vowel within odd / a-lines, limiting their occurrence to even / b-lines, qualifies as a metrical feature of eddic verse. This principle can be stated as:

> Within a long line, rhymes including the stressed vowel are not completed before the first strong position of the b-line.

This principle is in alignment with the metricalization of rhymes with the vowel in *dróttkvætt* even / b-lines and the later metricalization of rhymes without the vowel in odd / a-lines. However, the principle for eddic verse governs the placement of rhymes through *exclusion* rather than metricalizing their placement.

In the 1990s, Matyushina interpreted these patterns diachronically: she considered the usage of rhyme in eddic poetry as a proto-form of that in skaldic poetry (1994). The problems with this interpretation are twofold. First, it requires the movement toward a metricalization of rhyme to occur in eddic meters without clear motivation, and then subsequently to manifest in *dróttkvætt*, which seems highly improbable unless *dróttkvætt* is considered directly derivative of eddic poetry. Secondly, it implicitly addresses eddic poetics as static, denying their potential to evolve since the advent of the *dróttkvætt* meter.

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[10]   I have not been able to access her two-volume dissertation for this study, which I assume includes a detailed survey of the data.

Matyushina also observes marked differences in the relative frequency of rhymes in certain poems. *Hymiskviða* stands out in the corpus with such rhymes appearing on average in three out of every four passages or stanzas, which she interprets as reflecting direct influence from skaldic versification (1994: 132).[11] This interpretation is supported by the poem's diction, which has also been seen as influenced by skaldic versification (Reichardt 1933; von See et al. 1997: ch.5). *Hymiskviða* can be viewed as reflecting the equivalence of linguistic interference on the scope of a poetic form and its register. Viewed within a poetic ecology, Snorri Sturluson's *Edda*, which is a treatise on skaldic poetics, indicates that eddic poems presented authoritative knowledge that was considered relevant to skaldic pedagogy. Snorri's work seems to have been a driving factor in the writing out of whole eddic poems, which may itself have been linked to a vernacular pedagogical project (Frog 2022b: 206–207). The manuscript AM 748 I a 4to exhibits an exchange of the section of Snorri's *Edda* devoted to mythography (*Gylfaginning*) for a collection of mythological eddic poems. This manuscript points to a redactor preferring the full texts of poems to Snorri's summaries and quotations before presenting the section on poetic diction (*Skáldskaparmál*). Early research sometimes seems to treat eddic and skaldic poetries as though they were analogous to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century contrast of folk tradition and authored literary works, which became polarized as mutually exclusive categories through ideologies of modernity (cf. Gal, Irvine 2019). However, Snorri's *Edda* suggests that competence in eddic poetry was integral to competence in skaldic poetry. His extensive quotations from eddic poems, like his hundreds of quotations of skaldic poems, seems to have been from personal knowledge.[12] Consequently, it should be assumed that eddic poems and skaldic poems were known and probably performed by the same people and that at least the documented genres were connected through people in society. Although *Hymiskviða* may

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[11]   *Hymiskviða* thus highlights the potential for individual sources to weight data on Old Germanic poetics. This possibility was discussed in Part II of this series with regard to increasing the token frequency through a preferred formula or collocation and as a major caveat of the Old Saxon corpus, which is mainly constituted of a single epic poem (Frog 2023b: 34–35, 44–45). *Hymiskviða* illustrates the potential for poems to generally weight certain poetic devices rather than only the token frequency of particular formulae.

[12]   It is widely accepted that most, if not all, mythological eddic poems were adapted into writing only after Snorri wrote his *Edda*, with only a possibility that the three main poems he quoted and adapted in his mythography were written down earlier (Lindblad 1954). Of these three, Snorri's quotations of the poem *Vǫluspá* are clearly not dependent on copying from a written exemplar (Lindblad 1978), while the proposal that he quoted the written versions of the poems *Vafþrúðnismál* and *Grímnismál* breaks down under scrutiny (Frog 2021b: 66–67, 78).

stand out in the quantity of features that appear more characteristic of skaldic composition, it underscores the potential for interference across poetic systems. Even if such interference remained minimal for the majority of poets and performers, impacts on eddic genres would presumably accrue across centuries, at least in Iceland where skaldic poetry seems to have thrived.[13] The distribution of rhymes including or excluding the vowel in eddic poetry thus appears more likely to be linked to a long history of interference from *dróttkvætt* rather than reflecting an earlier historical stage of rhyme.

Not including names, and leaving aside compound words in which the two components rhyme with one another,[14] Sijmons and Gering (1906: ccvii) find only seven examples of end rhyme within a short line.[15] These uses of rhyme complement alliteration. There are also two late examples of rhyme within a *ljóðaháttr Vollzeile* that can be interpreted as compensating for absent alliteration, one in one of the four main manuscripts of Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* (Upsaliensis) and the other in a runic inscription (Frog 2022c: 85–86). In contrast to both Old English and Old Saxon, none of these pairs of words are found rhymed more than once in eddic verse – none can be considered conventional collocations or formulae used across contexts.

Half of the end rhymes linking *fornyrðislag* short lines identified by Sijmons and Gering appear to reflect a structural paradigm for semantically parallel short lines. The parallelism of an a-line and b-line is complemented by the rhyme on either a short disyllable, such as *hrutu : þutu* ['snored : echoed'], or, in one example, a heavy monosyllable, *ymr : glymr* ['splash : ring'] (Frog 2022c: 81–82).[16] Although a heavy monosyllable and a light disyllable may

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[13]   Cf. impacts of kalevalaic poetry on the register of laments in the region of Ingria (Nenola-Kallio 1982: ch.C).

[14]   Matyushina identifies 20 compound words and names in which the stressed syllables rhyme includes the vowel, alongside 62 in Old English (2011: 34n.7).

[15]   These are more or less evenly distributed across poems in *fornyrðislag* (*Sg* 66.2; *Br* 14.5, *Grt* 4.1) and *ljóðaháttr* (*Háv* 62.1, *Skm* 29.1, *Sd* 20.4), and I would scan their seventh example, which is in *ljóðaháttr,* as a rhyme linking short lines (*Sd* 19.5–6; Frog 2022c: 79–80). In contrast to Matyushina's data, which covers all stressed-syllable rhymes rather than only end rhymes, most examples are in a-lines (*Háv* 62.1, *Skm* 29.1, *Sd* 20.4; *Br* 14.5, *Grt* 4.1), with one example in a *fornyrðislag* b-line (*Sg* 66.2; and cf. in *ljóðaháttr Sd* 19.5–6). Eddic poems are cited from Neckel, Kuhn 1964.

[16]   The additional examples with light disyllables are *Vsp* 52.5–6, *Háv* 85.1–2 and *Br* 4.1–2, and cf. a rhyme between a b-line and following a-line in an extended series of parallelism in *Háv* 87.2–3 that is likely a variation of this construction; rhymes on heavy monosyllables are not otherwise found between an a-line and a b-line but are found in parallel *Vollzeilen* in *Háv* 134.11–12 and *Skm* 28.3–4.

function as metrically equivalent, they are used in different rhythms in these lines. The heavy monosyllable fills a single strong position in short lines with parallel wSw|S rhythms:

> *Varð ára ymr   oc iárna glymr* (*HHI* 27.1–2)
> There was the sound of oars   and ring of iron

All four light disyllables are used in an Sw cadence. Two of these have an Ss|Sw / wS|Sw rhythm:

> *grjótbjǫrg gnata   enn gífr rata* (*Vsp* 52.5–6)
> rocky cliffs clash   and witches travel

> *Hreingálkn hrutu   enn hǫlkn þutu* (*Hym* A24.1–2)
> The rein-monster snored   and the stony field echoed

One has a parallel SwSw rhythm (with two light syllables in the first weak position):

> *Brestanda boga   brennanda loga* (*Háv* 85.1–2)
> A stretching bow   a burning flame

The fifth example has a parallel wS|Sw rhythm. The parallelism includes the repetition of the two-syllable pronoun *sumir* ['some'] in the first weak position.[17] The example stands apart because end rhyme is combined with cross-alliteration (*sv-* : *sn-*) in an **A Br** / **A Br** structure.

> *Sumir úlf sviðu   sumir orm sniðu* (*Br* 4.1–2)
> some wolf roasted   some serpent sliced up

That half the examples of end rhyme linking short lines cooccur with parallelism suggests that such rhymes were produced within a structural schema related to verse parallelism and yet was *not* bound to a particular rhythm in the meter. The number of examples is extremely limited, yet this interpretation is supported by: (*a*) such rhymes only being found with monosyllables and light disyllables; (*b*) all examples having additional alliteration, whether double

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[17]   Suzuki (2014: 456) treats *sumir* in these lines as having a short syllable that carries primary stress but that has been metrically treated as unstressed. However, reading *sumir* as carrying a stress seems inconsistent for *fornyrðislag* (cf. Gering 1924: 187; Lehmann, Dillard 1954: 132)

alliteration in the a-line or cross alliteration; and (*c*) four out of five have rhymes on finite verbs (*ymr* : *glymr*; *gnata* : *rata*; *hrutu* : *þutu*; *sviðu* : *sniðu*). The rhythms of the meter were organized through phrasal stress, in which verbs were generally lighter than nouns and adjectives (in detail, see Kristján Árnason 2002). The prominence of verbs invites interpreting the schema as having a functional role of adding 'weight' to otherwise very light words in strong positions.

Viewed as a device to add weight to light words, rhyme can be interpreted as having the same function in some other examples, although Hugo Gering (1924: 29) considered the following rhyme accidental:

> *nío báro þann   náðgǫfgan mann* (*Hdl* 35.5–6)
> nine bore him   stud-glorious man

The schema linking rhyme to parallelism is matched by a correspondingly prominent use of cross-alliteration in conjunction with short-line parallelism (e.g. Hollmérus 1936: 87; Suzuki 2014a: 340).[18] Cross alliteration is also not specific to parallelism, and yet, in a number of *fornyrðislag* examples, it is used in a particular structural type of parallelism, in which lexical variation is limited to the final word, as in the following example:[19]

> *Þriá vissa ec elda,   þriá vissa ec arna* (*Ghv* 10.1–2)
> Three fire's I've known   three hearths I've known

As with rhyme, the lexical repetition of a short line with an alternate but alliterating final word appears to be a schema for verse parallelism. In both cases, the schema entails a poetic feature that is otherwise unusual for contemporary verse, although the schema itself appears established in the poetic system. The cross-alliteration schema is also found with the alternation of two syntagms (*Hndl* 4.1–2), which I would consider a variation on the basic schema. The example above that involves both end rhyme and cross alliteration as well as lexical repetition may be considered a hybrid of both schemata. However, that both rhyme and cross alliteration exhibit pronounced

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[18]   For a surveys of examples of cross alliteration as well as chiastic alliteration and rhyme with occasional comments, see Gering 1924: 6–7, 11, 15–16, 23, 28, 35, 39, 43, 48, 182, 187, 191, 197, 205, 208, 213, 216, 220. Gering's interpretations sometimes seem dated and sometimes intuitive; Suzuki is sceptical of a larger number of these examples owing to his stricter principles of scansion (2014a: 340–341, but see also below).

[19]   See also e.g. *Vsp* 48.1–2; *Þkv* 7.5–6, 23.5–6; *Gðr I* 8.1–2; *Ghv* 10.1–2; *Hndl* 37.1–2.

use in connection with short-line parallelism makes it less clear that rhyme was *employed* in thirteenth-century versification to add weight to otherwise light words when cross-alliteration was not.

When schemata involving end rhyme and cross alliteration with verse parallelism are viewed together, the possibility emerges that verse parallelism became linked to adding a feature of phonic patterning. In eddic poetry, end rhyme including the stressed vowel is generally much more rare than in Old English, and the prominence of the eddic rhyme paradigm indicates a formal device that people reproduced (Frog 2022c: 82). End rhyme excluding the stressed syllable is more common and morphological rhymes and near rhymes appear as a device salient in parallelism, as in *Vǫluspá* 7.3–8, in the series *timbruðu* : *lǫgðu* : *smiðuðu* : *skópu* : *gorðu* ['timbered : set : worked : wrought : made'] (Frog 2022c):

> *Hittuz æsir   á Iðavelli*
> *þeir er hǫrg ok hof   há timbruðu*
> *afla lǫgðu   auð smiðuðu*
> *tangir skópu   ok tól gorðu* (*Vsp* 7.3–8)

> The gods met   on *Iðavǫllr*
> they who shrines and temples   high timbered
> forges set   ore worked
> tongs wrought   and tools made

The schema linking end rhyme and verse parallelism may be viewed as part of a more general practice of types of phonic patterning becoming conventionally used in conjunction with particular types of verse parallelism.

Rhyme including the stressed syllable's vowel only exhibits predictable density in lists of names, both within a short line, as in the example below, and sometimes also linking short lines (Frog 2022c: 86–87).[20] Lists of names tend to be characterized by complementing metrical alliteration with additional poetic devices. They also sometimes run low on their syllable count, like the *ljóðaháttr* short lines *Slíð ok Hríð / Sylgr ok Ylgr* (*Gm* 28.6–7) ['Slíð and Hríð / Sylgr and Ylgr'], which each have only three syllables. Although lines below the ideal four-syllable structure are another site where rhyme might supplement the weight of a verse, its occurrence seems only to correlate with the lists rather than to regularly co-occur with lines that run low on syllables. Most important here is that the use of stressed-syllable rhymes in lists of names shows that

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20   E.g. *Vǫluspá's Nár ok Náinn / Nipingr Dáinn* (H13.5–6) ['Nár and Náinn / Nipingr, Dáinn'].

rhyme had established uses in Old Norse eddic poetry, which supports the view that it was avoided in other contexts as a saliently perceivable poetic feature.

Detailed information on Matyushina's findings concerning stem-syllable rhymes in eddic verse is unfortunately unavailable. Because she includes the repetition of full syllables,[21] elements of compounds,[22] and repeating words,[23] without differentiating rhymes with contrasting onsets, it is challenging to interpret what of her data is available.[24] However, the appearance of short-line internal rhymes occurring almost exclusively in even / b-lines (1994: 129–130) indicates that these have varied onsets so as not to produce additional alliteration in the final strong position. She also discusses only 'odd lines' (a-lines) and 'even lines' (b-lines), which leaves unclear how she is handling *Vollzeilen* in the *ljóðaháttr* meter.[25] She follows the general practice of not distinguishing between poems and passages in *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr*, although formulaic phraseology and devices like rhyme function differently in each.[26] My general impression is that, within a long line, rhyme on stressed syllables including the vowel but with contrasting onsets is generally rare to the point of being avoided, reciprocally making such rhymes marked, as

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[21]   E.g. *þær lǫg lǫgðo* (*Vsp* 20.9) ['they laws laid'].

[22]   E.g. *Sigurðr ok Sigmundr* (*Gðr II* 28.7) ['Sigurðr and Sigmundr'].

[23]   E.g. *bróðir á bróður* (*Vkv* 23.3) ['brother to brother'].

[24]   E.g. under "binary" formulae, illustrated as syndetic formulae (i.e. with a conjunction), she reports a total of 30 "formulas with fully rhymed components [i.e. including the vowel]" (2011: 39n.14). She elsewhere identifies 10 such of personal names (*ibid.*: 37n.11), and, in a separate note, another 9 personal names with a repeating component (*ibid.*: 37n.10). Seven examples identified by Sijmons and Gering are mentioned above, to which Elena A. Gurevič's (1986) survey of syndetic formulae adds one with stem-syllable rhyme (*Háv* 63.1) and two that repeat the second element of a compound (*Háv* 15.1, 41.4; Gurevič also lists a second with a repeating element that spreads across a long line: *Rþ* 43.3–4); Matyushina has identified one in addition to these.

[25]   Line numbering does not necessarily correlate with line type in *ljóðaháttr* verse. *Ljóðaháttr* is often composed in three-part structures of an a-line, a b-line and a *Vollzeile*, and then the following a-line is often the fourth and its b-line the fifth line, but this structure is variable: long lines may also follow long lines and *Vollzeilen* often follow *Vollzeilen*. The problem is exemplified by Matyushina's accidental use of *Sd* 26.6 to illustrate a rhyme in an 'even' line with a *Vollzeile* (1994: 130).

[26]   Some potential rhymes are difficult to evaluate, like *halir* : *allir* in *munu halir allir* (*Vsp* 56.7) ['will men all'], which may have been received as a combination of assonance and morphological rhyme since /l/ and /ll/ were not commonly rhymed: the contrast between the minimal pair was morphologically significant for certain words (Matyushina 1994: 108–109 and cf. 119). Matyushina finds that 74% of rhymes between a short and geminated consonant appear in odd lines / a-lines (1994: 130), so the appearance of *halir* : *allir* in an a-line might be interpreted as /l/ : /ll/ not being considered to rhyme.

seems also to be the case with end rhyme. Examples can be found, such as an exceptional series of stressed-syllable rhymes in *Vǫluspá* that runs across two long lines, including *Óðinn : óð : Lóðurr : góða* ['Odin : spirit : Lóðurr : good'] (Frog 2022c):

> *ǫnd gaf Óðinn   óð gaf Hœnir*
> *lá gaf Lóðurr   oc lito góða* (*Vsp* 18.5–8)

> breath gave Óðinn   spirit gave Hœnir
> form gave Lóðurr   and good appearance

This example, however, involves both personal names, which are commonly rhymed in lists, and a parallel line structure with lexical repetition of an 'a-line + b-line + long line' type, like that seen in the Merseburg Charms in Part II of this series (Frog 2023b: 46–48).

In contrast to rhymes including the vowel, those excluding the vowel seem commonplace, as in the following rhyme of *Bǫðvildr : brúðar : bíðka : rauða*:

> *nú berr Bǫðvildr   brúðar minnar*
> *bíðca ec þess bót   bauga rauða* (*Vkv* 19)

> now Bǫðvildr wears   my bride's
> – I don't expect compensation for this –   red rings

In overview, end rhyme appears generally exceptional, and yet a significant portion of examples appear in *fornyrðislag* within a recurrent structural paradigm for parallelism. Rhymes including the stressed vowel within a short line seem rare, and when they do occur it is in even / b-lines but not in odd / a-lines. Rhymes on the stressed syllable with contrasting vowels seem widespread, often spanning the caesura,[27] and they seem to easily be used in the final strong position.

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[27]   Matyushina reports a total of only 24 short-line formulae that do not include the vowel (2011: 39n.15), of which 6 are names (2011: 37n.10).

Comparison between Old Norse Eddic, Old English and Old Saxon Verse

The metricalization principle governing rhymes including the stressed vowel within an eddic long line differs markedly from the distribution of such rhymes in Old English. If only the recurrent rhyme pairs surveyed by Bredehoft are considered, which are narrowly defined as including the stressed vowel and having contrasting onsets as well as exhibiting social use across contexts or poems, only 60% of tokens appear in b-lines in Old English and two thirds or 66.6% in Old Saxon (2005: 225–229). In her broader data, Matyushina finds that, in Old English verse, 78% of 286 examples of non-alliterating rhymed syndetic phrases occur in b-lines (2011: 41–42). Both Old English and Old Saxon exhibit tendencies for rhymes to be used in b-lines, but not their avoidance in a-lines. Indeed, Bredehoft's survey reveals that rhymed formulae may have conventional use in a-lines or b-lines rather than gravitating uniformly to the latter (2005b: 225–228; cf. Smirnitskaya 1994 [forthcoming]). Rather than the avoidance of rhymes with contrasting onsets in the a-line, the tendency for their use in Old English b-lines may be at least in part bound up with the prominence of double alliteration in a-lines. Double alliteration largely excludes such rhymes from a-lines with only two primary strong positions, while the metrical exclusion of double alliteration from b-lines also promotes the preference of such rhymes as a device to buoy verbally heavy b-lines. Seiichi Suzuki finds double alliteration in more than 53% of the a-lines in *Beowulf* (2014a: 364), which makes Bredehoft's data placing 40% in a-lines seem more substantial, although it includes rhymes on a primary and a secondary stressed position (2005: 225–228). These observations place in sharper contrast the metricalized exclusion of rhymes including the vowel from eddic a-lines, especially noting that Suzuki calculates double alliteration as below 39% in *fornyrðislag* (2014a: 364).

Taken together, Matyushina's interpretations of rhyme in Old English and Old Norse are difficult to reconcile. She relates the position of rhymes and full-syllable repetitions in Old English to the typological dating of poems within a broader theory of the breakdown of the alliterative verse form through the rise of rhyme (2018). In Old Norse, she correlates rhyme usage in eddic poems as an embryonic form of rhyme in *dróttkvætt* (1994: 132). However, the parallel developments are too specific for these to be independent in historically related meters: both exhibit pronounced patterned use of stressed-syllable rhymes including the vowel on strong positions especially inside a short line and especially in b-lines. These rhyme patterns must be historically related, in

which case the metricalized principle of the avoidance of such rhymes in eddic a-lines appears as a formalization of a tendency observed in Old English. The use of rhyme in Old English may indeed have increased through contacts with the rise of rhyme elsewhere in Europe (Matyushina 2018). However, insofar as it seems improbable that eddic rhyme has been impacted at an earlier stage by a counterpart in Old English, stressed-syllable rhymes including the vowel and within a short line must have been sufficiently prominent and integrated at a shared phase of the Old Germanic alliterative verse form to evolve on each trajectory. The data of Old Norse eddic poetry thus supports the argument in Part II of this series for this type of rhyme as an integrated feature of the Old Germanic verse form (Frog 2023b).

In Old Norse poetries, the salience of the distinction between whether or not stressed syllable rhymes include or contrast the vowels is easily taken for granted. This distinction was metricalized in *dróttkvætt*, establishing it as the metrical equivalent of a minimal pair in phonology. In other words, the distinction was salient and meaningful to people with native-like fluency, even if it might remain invisible to an outsider. Although other Old Germanic poetries exhibit stressed-syllable rhymes both with and without the vowel, nothing points to the difference being a binary and polarized distinction like a minimal pair. Consequently, rhyme including the vowel may have been an ideal after which alternative vowels were preferred on a hierarchy of similarity. Such a hierarchy of preference is found in the Finnic tetrameter, although this was only recently discovered by Arvo Krikmann (2015). Finnic alliteration was previously also considered in binary terms of either matching the stressed vowel ('strong' alliteration) or having different vowels ('weak' alliteration). Krikmann demonstrated through a statistical analysis that the role of vowels operates on a spectrum of preference (2015). The Finnic tetrameter is a creolization of the Old Germanic alliterative verse form, which makes it possible that the perception of vowels on a hierarchy could have been adapted from North Germanic (Frog 2019). However, Finnic languages are characterized by vowel harmony, which may have had a levelling effect on certain minimal pairs as phonologically distinct but poetically equivalent, especially /a/ ~ /ä/ and /o/ ~ /ö/, which alternated in affixes according to the word stem. Equivalence in vowel harmony, which is commonplace in forms of rhyme produced through this poetry's characteristic parallelism (Frog 2022c: 89–94), may have led non-identity to be perceived on a preferential hierarchy of similarity. Nevertheless, without a detailed statistical analysis, the polarized contrast of inclusion and exclusion of vowels in rhyme appears to be a development in Old Norse or North Germanic, where it became metrically meaningful.

Old English and Old Saxon rhyme collocations crystallized into formulae, and rhymed syndetic formulae are prominent. Rhyme collocations are an integrated part of the register of *dróttkvætt* (Frog 2016b), yet corresponding collocations and crystallized formulae are lacking from eddic registers. Eddic poetry's formal developments led it to be reperformed in stanza-like 'chunks' of text with a lower density of formulae used across different stanzas and poems (Thorvaldsen 2006; Mellor 2008; Frog 2022a). However, non-rhymed collocations are found as recurrent syndetic formulae (Gurevič 1986), so the lower density of formulaic language can only be considered a factor, not a cause of the absence of rhymed formulae.

In Old English, Matyushina argues that added phonic patterning such as alliteration and rhyme was regularly used to support especially lexically burdened lines (2018). Bredehoft brought into focus the metrical requirement of additional alliteration in certain types of a-lines, showing that the meter allowed this requirement to be compensated for by rhyme within an a-line as well as by cross alliteration (Bredehoft 2005a: 60–62; Frog 2023b: 36–40). He argued that the same principle likely held for Old Saxon, although examples are lacking (Bredehoft 2005b: 223; Frog 2023b: 44–46). Mark Griffith found that end rhymes in metrically more strict Old English poems regularly co-occur with double alliteration in the a-line (2018: 78–81). I set the usage of rhyme in relation to the contrast between the usage of cross alliteration (**A B A B**) and avoidance of chiastic alliteration (**A B B A**) as well as the corresponding scheme of rhyme (**r A A r**) in Old English poetry (Griffith 2018: 132, 137–142). I interpreted the avoidance of the chiastic patterns as owing to its non-linear progression in the temporality of performance: it produces a connection to the first strong position on the final strong position after the metrically required alliteration had been perceived as completed; it thereby creates ambiguity concerning which alliteration was primary by bringing into focus the earlier, preferred position for metrical alliteration in what is received as a secondary pattern. I argued that the use of rhyme was metrically governed so that it would support the sequential progression of phonic patterning in a long line and its metrically required alliteration without competing with it (in the metrically more strict poems). I proposed that at least one member of a rhyme pair must also participate in the metrically required alliteration and the rhyme must either be concluded before the b-line's metrically required alliteration or begin after the first alliteration in an a-line (Frog 2023b: 140–143). The principles that govern rhyme in Old English do not hold for Old Norse.

Before continuing with the use of rhyme in eddic poetry relative to that in Old English and Old Saxon, it is necessary to outline some differences in how alliteration functions in eddic verse. As noted above, alliteration operated in

relation to the *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr* meters differently (e.g. Hollmérus 1936), of which the latter will here be left aside. Alliteration in *fornyrðislag* has been systematically surveyed by Gering (1924; cf. also Lehmann and Dillard 1954) and analyzed in detail by Suzuki (2014), whose scansion impacts on a number of Gering's examples by re-evaluating whether proposed alliterations occur on strong positions. The question of how alliteration operates in eddic poetry is too complex to unravel here. For example, Gering identifies 23 examples of chiastic alliteration,[28] which would be more than twice the number in the whole (and larger) Old English corpus (Griffith 2018: 132), but Suzuki rejects all of these. Although Suzuki's rejection may be valid in some cases, his argumentation moves into circularity by validating it through a rule governing alliteration that he has proposed (2014: 341).[29] The same rule is also violated by examples of alliteration on the second rather than the first position in a b-line, which is not common, but does occur (Gering 1924), but Suzuki only acknowledges examples of double alliteration in even / b-lines (2014: 339–340). When considering the use of additional alliteration in *fornyrðislag*, it is important to acknowledge that the Old Norse meter does not allow so-called hypermetric lines, which are characterized by an additional foot and corresponding requirement of additional alliteration. Suzuki shows that double alliteration in eddic odd lines / a-lines is markedly less frequent than in *Beowulf* or *Heliand* as representatives of Old English and Old Saxon poetry, respectively (2014: 341–371). He finds that, as in those poems, double alliteration is used in connection with lexically burdened lines, albeit identifying a loss of prominence through catalexis in lines as a factor that limits the occurrences of double alliteration (2014: 360).[30] Suzuki also finds that secondary stress is not a determinant on double alliteration, and argues instead that a weak onset and a final strong final position are "independent

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[28]   In one case, Gering states that there are two examples but only presents one (1924: 6–7, 11, 15–16, 23, 28, 35, 39, 43, 48, 182, 187, 191, 197, 205, 208, 213, 216, 220).

[29]   The rule in question is that "The first lift takes precedence over the second in alliteration: the first lift must alliterate in each verse" (Suzuki 2014a: 335). Although this rule is accompanied by a second that allows the second strong position in an a-line to alliterate, the formulation of the rule seems to require that a-lines either have alliteration on the first of two strong positions or only have one strong position, rather than allowing for a lighter first strong position with alliteration on the second. Even allowing a first strong position that does not carry metrical alliteration, the rule's requirement that the first strong position be given priority would be violated by chiastic alliteration: whether the pattern is viewed as **A B B A** or **B A A B**, the first position in one short line carries secondary rather than primary alliteration (see also note 31 below).

[30]   The role of this principle may, however, be overestimated: see notes 29 and 31.

structural conditions for favouring single alliteration" (2014: 362–365, quotation on 365). That conditions reduce rather than motivate an added phonic feature is curiously parallel to the metricalized exclusion of certain types of rhymes from a-lines.

Without conditions that more or less systematically require double alliteration in an eddic a-line, the usage of cross alliteration in metrical compensation for double alliteration is compromised. The same must be assumed for the less attested use of rhyme as metrical compensation for double alliteration. Alongside the general decrease in double alliteration in a-lines and its occasional use in b-lines, uses of cross alliteration outside of the particular schema for parallelism above variously seem to be ornamental (e.g. *Vsp* 10.3–4) or to augment alliterations on otherwise light words (*Þkv* 18.7–8).[31] Even if the metrical governance of rhyme proposed for Old English mapped onto eddic poetry and eddic poetry allowed relevant rhymes in odd / a-lines, eddic rhyme could not have the role of metrical compensation found in Old English because eddic poetry lacks conditions under which double alliteration is metrically required. However, the eddic schema linking rhyme to short line parallelism stands out in the comparison with Old English. This schema consistently exhibits double alliteration in a-lines with the exception of the last example, which has cross alliteration. These examples are in alignment with the rules governing rhyme in Old English, which requires double alliteration to accompany such rhymes, with an exception in which double alliteration is compensated for by cross alliteration. The alignment with Old English is more striking because, leaving aside the lists of names as governed by separate principles (Frog 2022c: 86–87), I find no other examples of end rhyme in *fornyrðislag* with double alliteration in the a-line: end rhyme otherwise appears simply as an added feature. Although Suzuki asserts that "*fornyrðislag* […] conforms to the traditional rule that double alliteration is a privilege of relatively prominent (long or weighty) verses" (2014: 360), it does not seem to be reciprocally characterized by the regular addition of poetic features to support verbally burdened lines as in Old English (Matushina 2018).

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[31]   Suzuki's analysis is built around a principle of scansion that reduces many short lines to a single strong position (see note 29 above), which is significant in Suzuki's re-evaluation of Gering's examples of chiastic alliteration. Restoring the first strong position and its alliteration through an alternate scansion does not situate these examples in a role of metrical compensation for double alliteration in a-lines, because restoring the corresponding lines that lack chiastic alliteration would not give these double alliterations. However, the examples of end rhymes in parallelism discussed above presents the possibility that chiastic alliteration could have supported the relative prominence of words such as verbs as filling a first strong position in the a-line (e.g. *Hym* 7.1–2).

Both the schema linking rhyme to parallel lines and the use of rhyme in lists of names are consistent with uses of rhyme especially in Old English as well as in Old Saxon while simultaneously contrasting with the broader eddic corpus. The use in parallelism is comparable to the Old English open-slot formula completed by a rhyme pair identified by Bredehoft (2005b: 213–214), and which is found in more examples than many repeated Old English rhyme collocations (*ibid.*: 225–228). Although the eddic schema lacks regular lexical material, its use across different poems independent of regular formulaic lines indicates that it had an established position in the poetic system. Furthermore, it can be assumed to have had an enduring position as a generative schema for new lines. Its usage had to be sufficiently encountered in both its token frequency and realized through diverse verbal forms for people to *abstract and reuse the schema*, despite its irregularities relative to the broader poetic system. The example with rhyme on a heavy monosyllable is noteworthy in this respect: although it seems to stand apart from the examples with light disyllables, it has double alliteration like those examples, despite a cadence on a strong position preferring single alliteration in *fornyrðislag* (Suzuki 2014a: 362–365). Comparison with Old English suggests that the schema structure preserves earlier principles for the operation of rhyme in North Germanic while the poetic system evolved around it. The same appears to hold for the use of rhyme in lists of names. The preservation of rhyme in such lists can be accounted for in that it is not simply a poetic device linking words and forming the phonic texture, which could then be eliminated by rephrasing. Instead, it was a principle for generating and remembering names in the lists (Frog 2022c: 86–87, 92–94), making the poetic principle more resilient because it was integrated into the information being organized. The continuities in these uses are connected to the recurrent and repetitive structures of parallelism, where rhyme may have once been more significant, or perhaps was later reinforced by end rhymes and near end rhymes not involving stressed syllables in parallel series of short lines (e.g. *Háv* 85.1–2ff.). On this backdrop, the avoidance of rhyme involving the stressed vowel in a-lines shows up clearly as a development in North Germanic traditions, and the lack of rhyme pairs in the registers of eddic poetry must be attributable to loss, and a general depreciation of rhyme as a poetic principle for connecting collocated words outside of *dróttkvætt* and court poetry more generally.

The maintenance of rhyme in very limited contexts in eddic poetry points to a significant restructuring of the roles of phonic patterning in the poetic system. Although the lower frequency of rhyme in eddic poetry relative to Old English could be linked to a rise in the use of rhyme in the latter (Matyushina 2018), the preceding discussion suggests that North Germanic poetry earlier

maintained principles governing rhyme closer to those in Old English. Of course, the Old Germanic poetic system evolved on different trajectories in different language areas (Suzuki 2014b). There was doubtless diversity even within the Old Norse language area, although this remains largely invisible owing to the overwhelming majority of the sources being recorded in Iceland.

Old Norse *dróttkvætt* and the Poetic Ecology

The perspective on rhyme in eddic poetry has significant implications when considered in relation to its metricalized usage in *dróttkvætt*. First, it suggests that the metricalization of rhyme in *dróttkvætt* made rhyme involving stressed vowels salient in a new way, which impacted the whole poetic system. Second, the shifts in the eddic poetic system must have occurred centuries before the documentation of eddic poetry for its idiom to completely lack the sort of rhyme collocations observed in Old English and Old Saxon. Eddic poetry exhibits many collocations and syndetic formulae used across contexts and poems (e.g. Gurevič 1986), but *none of these* are based on rhyme with a stressed vowel, although such rhymes seem not to have been metrical violations *per se*. Hence, the changes impacting the usage of rhyme must have been sufficiently distant that such collocations became either peripheral to the degree that they are only attested once in the corpus or they completely dropped out of use.

Eddic poetry's movement away from the inherited Old Germanic poetic form appears to correlate directly with the usage of rhyme in *dróttkvætt*. It was proposed above that the metricalization of rhyme in *dróttkvætt* impacted on the use of rhyme in eddic meters in the manner of linguistic interference. The metricalization of a constraint against stressed-syllable rhymes within an eddic odd / a-line supports the view that eddic poetry was a purview of poets who were active users of the *dróttkvætt* meter, rather than eddic and skaldic poetry simply co-existing in parallel within the same societies. By the time the poetry was documented, this type of rhyme had become a device indexing 'court' poetry. It can thus be assumed to have simultaneously produced contrasts with other poetic forms. The outcome implies that, as line-internal rhyme came into focus as indexing court poetry, difference from other poetic forms was maximized by reducing uses of rhyme elsewhere. *Fornyrðislag*'s exclusion of rhymes from a-lines would only polarize the preferred use of rhyme pairs in b-lines observed in Old English; it does not account for the general absence of regularly collocated rhyme pairs, which would require more general impacts on the poetic form. The semiotics of difference (Gal, Irvine 2019) seem to have

driven the breakdown of such rhyme collocations and rhymed syndetic formulae. The metricalization of stem-syllable rhyme in *dróttkvætt* thus appears to have impacted the Old Norse or North Germanic poetic ecology.

Thus far, eddic poetries have been approached collectively, albeit with a tendency to emphasize *fornyrðislag*. However, Russom's study of variation between *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr* as well as *málaháttr* shows contrasts in the distribution of their preferred rhythms in relation to the inherited Old Germanic system (2009). He argues that the three eddic meters formed "a tripartite system that maintains both old and new verse types in a changed linguistic environment" (2009: 83). The impact of *dróttkvætt* on rhyme in these meters requires viewing it within the same system. The absence of hypermetric lines in *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr* can be contrasted with *dróttkvætt*'s line structure as equivalent to an Old Germanic four-position short line with an additional trochaic foot (e.g. Gade 1995), which corresponds to the Old Germanic hypermetric line type that augments a short line with one strong and one weak position (see also Simms 2003). The diversification that Russom identifies for eddic meters may thus also be related to the emergence of *dróttkvætt* as poets began to develop the Old Germanic form into multiple contrasted forms, of which changes in rhyme were only one part.

The formal type of rhyme in *dróttkvætt* can be considered with confidence to be rooted in a common Old Germanic poetic system and appears to trace back to Northwest Germanic and seems likely to be part of the Proto-Germanic heritage. Whatever the background of *dróttkvætt*'s syllabic-based rhythm, its alliteration pattern of two positions in the odd / a-line connecting with the first (stressed) position of the even / b-line is consistent with use of alliteration in hypermetric lines (see also Simms 2003: ch.4). Use of rhyme within even / b-lines and its gradual formalization in odd / a-lines is consistent with uses of alliteration within short lines in Old English to support 'burdened' lines (Bredehoft 2005; Matyushina 2018). That the use of these devices was not uniform in Old English is consistent with rhyme not being fully metricalized among nineth-century Old Norse poets (Simms 2003: 163–165). The metricalization of stressed-syllable rhymes in b-lines in Old Norse is consistent with the picture from data on rhyme pairs with contrasting onsets in both Old English and Old Saxon, advancing from a tendency to a metricalized contrast.

The metricalization of the final strong position in *dróttkvætt* lines can be viewed in relation to multiple factors. The first is practical. The metricalization of rhyme requires attaching it to the metrical template in one of three strong positions. This development took place first with b-lines and was then extended to a-lines. Metricalization on the first strong position in a b-line would make the position that regularly carries alliteration also regularly carry

rhyme, significantly reducing flexibility. Fixing rhyme on the second strong position would potentially seem arbitrary as the least prominent part of the line; it would also likely affect the flexibility of the distribution of syllables through the whole line. Metrical regularity tends to increase toward the end of a line with greater flexibility at the beginning. Fixing rhyme at the end of a b-line would be the most practical. The most common rhythm in Old Germanic poetries is the alternation of strong and weak positions of an SxSx type (e.g. Sievers 1893). Imposed on a syllabic rhythm, this becomes trochaic, making *dróttkvætt*'s trochaic cadence a potentially organic development.

The emergence of *ljóðaháttr* also reflects metrical innovation with the formalization of non-tetrametric rhythm in its 2–3 strong-position *Vollzeile*. *Ljóðaháttr*'s relationship to the Common Germanic meter is transparent, yet, the (preferred) cadence of the *Vollzeile* is formalized as a metrically strong position formed by a light disyllable or a heavy monosyllable. This cadence is also prominent although less regular in b-lines. Suzuki shows that *fornyrðislag* is also characterized by "a privileged cadence for the b-verse" (2014: 333) as a distinctive innovation from the inherited Germanic verse form (*ibid.*: ch.5). Formalizing the cadence in *Vollzeilen* and developing distinct and contrasting preferences for *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr* b-lines could have emerged through impacts of *dróttkvætt* on the poetic ecology. The end-rhymed *fornyrðislag* structural paradigm also points to attention to the cadence. Although this foregrounding of the cadence seems likely to antedate *dróttkvætt*'s impacts on uses of rhyme in the poetic ecology, it is noteworthy that the *fornyrðislag* schema's rhythmic structure contrasts with that of *dróttkvætt*. The *dróttkvætt* cadence requires a heavy disyllable, whereas the examples of the rhyme paradigm exhibit either a heavy monosyllable or a light disyllable. The *dróttkvætt* cadence excludes finite verbs in independent clauses owing to phrasal stress (see Kristján Árnason 2002), whereas the rhyme schema is predominantly used with finite verbs in independent clauses, arguably to add to their weight. The *fornyrðislag* paradigm appears to reflect a formalization of rhyme in the cadence in an earlier poetic ecology, and the form in which it survives shows a contrast with the cadence of *dróttkvætt*. Among the earliest poets using *dróttkvætt*, the role of rhyme was still somewhat flexible in even / b-lines and handled as an added feature in odd / a-lines. The metricalization of the cadence of *dróttkvætt* seems to have taken shape in an environment of metrical experimentation and diversification. This environment included changing attention to cadence and rhyme, of which *dróttkvætt* is at least as much a product as a cause.

Finally, the regular stanzaic structure of *dróttkvætt* seems to have a background in the same poetic ecology (cf. Kristján Árnason 2006).

Ljóðaháttr's line structure, pairing a long line and *Vollzeile*, is found as a regular half-stanza unit in dialogic poetry, comparable to a long line couplet with a catalectic cadence (i.e. with three strong positions rather than four, no caesura, and regularly ending on a strong position filled by a single word). However, the same meter could also be used in extended monologues with units of much more variable duration. Also, in dialogic texts, it seems not to have been a violation to add a long line or *Vollzeile* to a passage here or there. The modern convention of discussing *fornyrðislag* poems as composed in stanzas or strophes of uneven length is largely an illusion rooted in a lack of independently documented examples and reading the poems through the lens of written literature rather than as an oral performance tradition.[32] Nevertheless, the shift in *fornyrðislag* to a short epic form and a corresponding change in the placement of syntactic breaks between clauses greater than a short line point to developments that altered central public performance genres. That the shift to a short epic form also occurs in North Russian epic may be attributable to the significance, in the Viking Age, of Scandinavians on the Eastern Route and among the Rus' during the spread of Slavic language through these regions (cf. Ahola 2014: 377–383). The corresponding shift also observed in Finnic poetries must have happened earlier: Scandinavian impacts were not at all uniform across Finnic language areas in this prominent period of Finnic language diversification (Kallio 2014), which was preceded by significant cultural diversification (Frog 2013). Short epics shared across Finnic cultural areas (e.g. Kouvola 2019) indicate the shorter form must have been established centuries before the Viking Age. Insofar as the cultural changes motivating a short epic form more likely spread from Germanic to Finnic than the reverse, the North Germanic poetic form would also have become shorter by that time. The massive North Germanic impacts on Proto-Finnic language and the creolization of the Old Germanic alliterative verse form are dateable to around the first century of the present era.[33] The shortening of the poetic

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[32]   This illusion is produced by the terse narrative style and syntactic development of requiring breaks between independent clauses longer than a short line between long lines, which correlates units of narration with a group of long lines. In poems where such passages vary in length, for instance between two and ten long lines, they should be assumed to have been variable in length comparable to Finno-Karelian kalevalaic epic or North Russian *bylina* epics. Some poems may have been more regular in the rhythm of groups of lines under skaldic influence, and others might appear more regular as a reflection of a performer's style, perhaps exaggerated by an interruptive dictation situation (see also Kristján Árnason 2006; Frog 2022a; forthcoming).

[33]   This is adjusted slightly from Frog 2019 in relation to the archaeological findings of Valter Lang (2018) in combination with the sophisticated language chronology of Johan Schalin (2018).

form can then be seen as facilitating the movement toward stanzaic rhythms. In *ljóðaháttr*, such a rhythm is directly linked to the meter in combination with poems of a particular type, so there is no reason to presume that it has resulted from the influence of *dróttkvætt*'s rhythm. Instead, *dróttkvætt*'s stanzaic rhythm may be seen as a formalization of developments occurring in the poetic ecology more generally, and as most likely contingent on earlier changes in the North Germanic poetic form and its syntax that reinforced the long line's inner cohesion as a couplet and its distinction from other long lines.

A Temporal Window for the Emergence of the Basic *dróttkvætt* Meter

Dróttkvætt's emergence can be situated within a historical window. The basic meter's *terminus post quem* is commonly recognized as roughly the mid-sixth century because its structure is dependent on North Germanic syncope.[34] The earliest examples of *dróttkvætt* from the nineth century exhibit a fully developed metrical form and verbal idiom, although the role of rhyme was still more flexible than it would gradually become. The level of development is reflected in the regularity of the basic metrical form of six-position lines joined by alliteration, of which the rhythms were markedly different from the Common Germanic verse form (e.g. Kristján Árnason 1991; Smirnitskaya 1994 [forthcoming]). It is equally reflected in the poetry's linguistic register. The register's highly flexible yet rule-governed syntax already appears established (e.g. Gade 1995), its richly developed circumlocution system exhibits a fully developed repertoire of basic alternative vocabulary (so-called *heiti*), predictable paradigms for producing kennings in central semantic fields, and principles for generating and interpreting kennings beyond those fields (e.g. Meissner 1920; Marold 1983; Fidjestøl 1997; Sverdlov 2015; Clunies Ross et al. 2012). Experimentation seems to be in pushing the limits of the existing system and its potentials for complexity. More subtly, the register seems already to have developed conventions for placing kennings in the meter and formulaic usage of kennings with particular referents in certain metrical positions as opposed to others (Frog 2016b). What became *dróttkvætt* court poetry was clearly an established *social* form of oral discourse that was *evolving* through the usage of the earliest named poets. At an absolute minimum, the named

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34   "[T]he rhythm of all extant poetry presupposes post-syncope syllabic structure" (Kristján Árnason 1991: 105).

poets must represent the second generation using the poetic form, while the combination of factors above makes more probable that it had already largely stabilized and developed across multiple generations, especially noting that the poetic form and its idiom have not been directly adapted from a fully-developed tradition in another language. If the earliest named poet, Bragi Boddason, was active already ca. 850 CE (Clunies Ross 2017), the basic meter must have already taken shape in the first quarter of the nineth century, which would give an extreme *terminus ante quem* of around 825 CE although a more probable *terminus ante quem* of ca. 800 CE. If this is correct, *dróttkvætt* would have taken shape in the Merovingian / Vendel Period. However, these observations do not exclude metrical innovation in Bragi's time. The metricalization of rhyme as required rather than as an added and supporting feature may have been an innovation to a less complex poetic form.[35]

Toward a Model of *dróttkvætt's* Rhyme

Compelling non-Germanic parallels of which *dróttkvætt* might be a borrowing are generally lacking. The long-standing comparisons of these rhymes with the complex patterns of repeating sounds in Irish (and Welsh) poetries were advanced to explain *dróttkvætt* rhyme as the result of Viking Age contacts, as discussed in the first instalment of this series (Frog 2023a: 24). Stressed-syllable and word-stem rhymes including the vowel appear as an integrated part of Old Germanic poetries, which cannot be accounted for by Viking Age contacts. Germanic rhyme is especially observable within a short line, and rhymes including the vowel and with contrasting onsets within a short line tend to be used in b-lines. Kristján Árnason shows that, in Old Norse, rhyme is organized on the same phonological principles of correspondence as alliteration, which, in the light of rhyme across Old Germanic poetries, supports viewing rhyme as an established feature of the poetic ecology already at the earliest phases of the meter. Although rhyme appears to have been predominantly an added stylistic feature, it was used in Old English to buoy verbally cumbersome lines and it could also be used, albeit rarely, with metrical functions.

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[35]   Snorri Sturluson's thirteenth-century vernacular treatise on skaldic poetics may be taken as a point of comparison. This work highlights that what tend to be called 'meters' today were poetic forms, and these were often distinguished from one another by formalizing variations of form or language use of a basic meter. In this light, the emergence of what became called *dróttkvætt* may have been a variation of an established poetic form by pushing its limits of complexity in syntax, circumlocutions and also meter by fully integrating rhyme.

Furthermore, although rhyme was not metricalized, uses of rhyme within a long line were metrically governed, and the rhyme paradigm in *fornyrðislag*, which must be considered an archaism maintained within the poetic form, appears to be built on the same principles. *Dróttkvætt*'s six-position lines with three strong positions are consistent with the hypermetric lines of poetries in other Old Germanic languages, although *dróttkvætt* lines are highly formalized and tended toward syllable-based rhythms, whereas Old Germanic hypermetric lines were much more flexible and remained accentual. Despite their differences, the diversification of the Old Germanic poetic form into different complementary and contrastive poetic forms discussed above supports viewing a relationship between *dróttkvætt* and hypermetric lines, whatever the origins of *dróttkvætt*'s distinctive rhythm. This parallel is relevant because Old Germanic hypermetric lines required double alliteration in a-lines, as in *dróttkvætt*, and these were one of the types of burdened lines that rhyme could help support. The role of rhyme in *dróttkvætt* appears to be a direct extension of this role of supporting a burdened line structure and making its rhythm salient. Fully metricalizing an otherwise added phonic device correlates with making the burdened six-position line structure regular and periodic. Both the formal type of rhyme and its line-internal use appear directly developed from the Old Germanic poetic system.

The differences between usage of rhyme in Old Norse eddic and other Old Germanic poetries is argued here to have a two-fold basis, reflecting developments within the poetic ecology that advanced to an environment in which *dróttkvætt* could emerge, followed by the impacts of *dróttkvætt* on that ecology. The Common Germanic verse form underwent changes to a short epic form with associated syntax, which seems to have provided conditions for the movement toward stanzaic rhythms (see also Kristján Árnason 2006). Sometime within the window of roughly 550 to 800 or 825 CE, the inherited poetic form was subject to innovation, experimentation and diversification. The *terminus post quem* has a linguistic basis that is generally recognized, while the *terminus ante quem* has a sociolinguistic basis, which requires generational distancing from the earliest *dróttkvætt* poets. The poetic ecology, however, included the emergence of *ljóðaháttr*, with its long-line couplet-type structure and attention to cadence, and also a *fornyrðislag* paradigm incorporating end rhyme, reflecting both attention to cadence and rhyme. The basic *dróttkvætt* meter seems to have emerged in this milieu, adapting a hypermetric line. However, the meter, as it took shape in the initial metrical diversification, may have first produced a proto-*dróttkvætt* as still an accentual meter of hypermetric lines with three strong positions and requiring double alliteration in odd / a-lines (cf. *Guta saga*, ch. 1). The shift in structure to an isosyllabic model, focus on the

cadence, metricalization of rhyme, and increased verbal complexity of court poetry may have been secondary. However, hypermetric line structures would most likely have already been linked to elevated discourse (Simms 2003). The emergence of early *dróttkvætt* with its distinctive metrical and linguistic complexity appears directly linked to court culture, which reciprocally made it a valorized mode of discourse. This in relation valorization inevitably involved constructing difference relative to other poetic forms, impacting the poetic ecology both through contrasts and interference.

The metricalization of rhyme in *dróttkvætt* impacted uses of rhyme in these other meters, significantly reducing end rhyme, breaking down rhyme collocations and associated formulae, and also leading rhymes with the stressed vowel to be largely restricted to even / b-lines. The absence of hypermetric lines from *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttr* can be attributed to systematic contrasts with the *dróttkvætt* or proto-*dróttkvætt* line structure. Furthermore, the marked differences in uses of double alliteration in *fornyrðislag* relative to Old English and Old Saxon meters may be viewed in the same light. That double alliteration is both greatly reduced and certain structural principles in *fornyrðislag* resist rather require double alliteration presents the possibility that these developments are impacts from the metricalization of double alliteration in *dróttkvætt* and emerging contrasts between the poetic forms. However, if the initial diversification of the Old Germanic poetic form produced only a proto-*dróttkvætt*, the rhyme may have initially remained an added and supporting feature as in Old English and Old Saxon. The metricalization of rhyme may then have been nearer the beginning of the Viking Age, closer to the time of Bragi Boddason, in which case *dróttkvætt* proper may have emerged as part of Scandinavian court culture amid the changes of that period and become increasingly systematic, as seen in the compositions attributed to the nineth and early tenth century poets. Following that period, the forms of court poetry underwent further waves of innovation especially in the North Atlantic diaspora, where court poetry was a skill-based commodity for foreign economic exchange that could create connections with the aristocracy abroad and build reputations at home. These developments culminated in displays of remarkable inventories of meters and treatises on poetics that climax in Iceland even as interest began turning away from court poetry in mainland Scandinavia (see e.g. Clunies Ross 2005; Wanner 2008; Kristján Árnason 2016).

The purpose here has not been to argue for an origin of the *dróttkvætt* meter, but rather to shed light on the background of rhyme within that meter, although it is not possible to address the latter without considering the former. The model or impetus for the *dróttkvætt* meter's rhythm remains unknown. It could originate through western contacts with Irish poets at the beginning of

the Viking Age, but it might also be linked to the multilingualism and cultural creolization east of the Baltic Sea during the Vendel Period. However, the rhyme used in *dróttkvætt* appears to have direct continuity from the integrated position of rhyme in the Old Germanic verse form. Contacts during the Viking Age cannot account for Old Germanic rhyme, and any historical relationship between the Old Germanic and Old Celtic uses of rhyme would have to trace back to a much earlier period of contacts (cf. Russom 1998; Mees 2008; Stifter 2016). In addition, the development of *dróttkvætt* was very possibly stadial. Rather than emerging with a near-isosyllabic rhythm and metricalized rhyme, it may have initially formed as a proto-*dróttkvætt* of paired six-position hypermetric-type lines with the Old Germanic requirement of double alliteration in a-lines and added phonic devices probably used in buoying these burdensome lines. Whatever the background of *dróttkvætt*'s near-isosyllabic rhythm, its short-line internal rhyme may only be a secondary development, having advanced from something that *could* be used to buoy such lines to a phonic feature that was metrically *required*.

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