# The Roots of Shakespeare's "Rhythmical Italics" and of Formulas in Literary Verse

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**Abstract.** The article deals with the origin of "rhythmical figures" serving as "rhythmical italics" to enhance meaning in English poetry from Chaucer to Frost (14th–20th centuries). In Surrey's translation of *The Aeneid* (the first decades of the 16th century) the rhythmical figures already resemble their use in the later 16th-century poetry by Sidney and Spenser who were aware of the role of rhythmical deviations from the meter and used them to emphasize meaning, i.e., as rhythmical italics. Shakespeare inherited this device and widened its scope. Eighteenth-century Classicists (Pope, Thomson) confirmed the link between the "deviations" from the meter and semantics, while 19th-century Romantics (Shelley, Byron) in spite of their critique of Classicism used the same rhythmical figures on syllabic positions WS(W), the same grammatical patterns ("verb plus object") and the same lexicon (the verbs "tremble, shake") as Surrey, Spenser, Shakespeare and Pope, turning them into formulas.

Keywords: English versification, iambic pentameter, "rhythmical deviations", "rhythmical italics", rhythmical figures

**1.** Shakespeare, the giant of English poetry of all ages, skillfully used rhythm to emphasize meaning. "Deviations" from the metrical scheme regularly occur in Shakespeare's poems, sonnets, and plays. The deviations regularly occur on syllabic positions WS and WSW, where instead of the expected iambic sequence of stresses *ta-TA ta-TA...* we find "stress-unstress" or even "stress-unstress-stress" *TA-ta ta-TA* or even ***TA-ta-TA**-TA-ta-TA…* instead of the expected "unstress-stress-unstress". The breach of iambic momentum is filled with expressive vocabulary, usually verbs of motion on syllabic position 1 if the verb is monosyllabic, or both on 1 and 2 if the verb is disyllabic. Deviations or "rhythmical figures" (Bailey 1975) used for semantic purposes are called *rhythmical italics* (a term used by Russian verse theorists). Here are nine examples of rhythmical italics from Shakespeare's poems and plays:

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"**Pluck the keen teeth** from the fierce tiger's jaws"
(*Shakespeare*, Sonnet 19, line 3)

"**Pluck the grave** wrinkled senate from the bench"
(Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, 4.1.5)

"**Claps her pale cheek**, till clapping makes it red"
(Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, line 468)

"**Stabbed by** the selfsame hand that made these wounds"
"**Stabbed in** my angry mood at Tewksbury"
"I'll have this crown of mine **cut from** my shoulders"
"**Wept like two** children at their deaths' sad story"
(Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1.2.11, 1.2.241, 3.2.43, 4.3.8)

"**Flatter** the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
**Kissing** with golden face the meadows green,
**Gilding pale** streams with heavenly alchemy"
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 33, lines 2–4)

The poet used rhythmical figures instead of something more "iambic" like *"And gilded streams with heavenly alchemy".

Shakespeare's skills of handling poetic rhythm did not spring out of nowhere: he learned from the earlier Renaissance poets' experience. And Renaissance poets' handling of poetic rhythm was gradually honed during the two previous centuries.

**2.** What was the origin of rhythmical italics? We begin with the late-14th-century rhymed poetry, the anonymous late Middle English poem *The Pearl*, probably composed in the West Midlands, and in particular the brilliant works of the late-14th-century poet, the Londoner Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400). *The Pearl*, obviously composed by a talented author, is modeled on the Medieval stereotype: the poet falls asleep, and in his dream has a vision of his late little daughter who is happy in Paradise, dressed as a bride to God, bidding her father to stop grieving. The form of the poem is also obsolete; it is written in a dolnik-like loose iambic tetrameter, close to pre-Chaucerian poetry of the 12th–13th centuries, with no stylistic innovations that we find in Chaucer's poetry, while Chaucer was the celebrated inventor of iambic pentameter, first in his poem *Troilus and Criseyde* (close to 1380) and then in the famous *Canterbury Tales* (from 1380 onwards to the end of his life, 1400). *The*

*Pearl* and *The Canterbury Tales* were composed at about the same time, but the rhetorical figure with an inversion ("**Strong was** their wyn") occurs only in Chaucer's text. The 15th century created a poetic hiatus: the rapid language changes and in particular the disappearance of the word-final *-e* knocked the ground out from under the poets' "feet": John Lydgate wrote his translation of Boccaccio's *Fall of Princes* in loose accentual verse. A revival of metrical poetry, mostly iambic pentameter, occurred in the early 16th century, in the poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–1542) and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1516/17–1547). We shall follow the origin of the stylistic device of rhythmical italics beginning with the 14th century, through Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare, ending with the poets of the 18th–20th centuries (Pope, Shelley and Frost).

The concept of *rhythmical italics* refers to the deviations from the metrical scheme that are used to emphasize meaning. They are part of the domain "verse form and meaning". "Verse form and meaning" in its turn bifurcates into two areas of research: "rhythm and meaning" and "meter and meaning". We shall enter the first area and follow the thematic gravitations of several verse meters and rhyming schemes: how various metrical and rhyming patterns have historically developed particular thematic and stylistic preferences. The thematic "halo" of the same meter may be quite unlike in different literatures. The subject "rhythm and meaning" applies specifically to English poetry. Only English metrical verse, particularly iambic pentameter and tetrameter, contains accentual deviations from the metrical scheme that are disallowed in many other literatures.

Remember that we differentiate the *abstract metrical scheme* ("meter") represented as a string of metrically weak and strong syllabic positions WSWSWSWSWS, and *stresses in actual lines* ("rhythm") where the abstract meter is fleshed out with actual language material (the word "rhythm" is used here in a terminological meaning: "the actual realization of a meter"). In English iambic verse of all periods, accentual deviations from the metrical scheme are a regular occurrence, they are part of the many centuries-long poetic tradition. "Deviations" are actually included in the metrical rules of English iamb.

Let us go deeper into the history of English versification and explore the origins of rhythmical italics, and give particular attention to the verse of Chaucer and Surrey. Surrey's translation of *The Aeneid* was done between 1538 and 1547 and published posthumously in 1553–1554. Most of what we now qualify as rhythmical italics have roots in Chaucer's iambic pentameter as a rhetorical figure of *hyperbaton* (Darren Freebury-Jones, personal exchanges): "Syngynge he was", "Strong was their wyn"; the segments combine a rhythmical figure with grammatical inversion. The origin of the figure is in Latin poetry. I discarded

words of French origin that were at Chaucer's time still end-stressed (*fortune*, *citee*), but even in native English words with heavy suffixes, such as *werkyng*, *gladness*, stressing, probably secondary, sometimes fell on the heavy suffix (Kökeritz 1953; Halle, Keyser 1971; cf. Minkova 1997, 2000, and 2005: 138–141).

Scholars came to these conclusions by analyzing Chaucer's rhymes. For example, Chaucer rhymed *thing* with *werkyng*. Helge Kökeritz, in her 1953 *Guide to Chaucer's Pronunciation*, emphasized that the heavy suffixes were probably stressed. Donka Minkova disagrees with this approach. In Minkova's essay "Chaucer's Language: Pronunciation, Morphology, Metre", she insists that Anglo-Saxon words, even with heavy suffixes, were stressed only on the first syllable, as in all Germanic languages. Minkova writes: "A common assertion to the effect that such words can retain their stress on the final syllable should be treated with care" (2005: 138). She also mistrusts rhyming as an indicator of stress, because, she says, unlike alliteration, rhyme was a "foreign" device, and that "illiterate masses" stressed Anglo-Saxon words on the first syllable. But Chaucer did not write "for the illiterate masses", and his poetic lingo differed from colloquial speech. Chaucer strongly opposed ordinary speech to poetic creations. In Minkova's opinion, Chaucer stressed Anglo-Saxon words on the first syllable, particularly simple words such as *somer* (summer):

> "The hot **somer** had maad his hewe al broun"
> (Chaucer, *The General Prologue*, 394).

Indeed, Chaucer's iambic pentameter might still have had some traces of the French decasyllabic versification model and the Italian hendecasyllable. Chaucer was a well-educated person who spent years abroad. But if we are guided by their placement on the "even-odd" syllabic positions of his line, it seems that Chaucer must have stressed the second syllable not only in the recent Romance borrowings, but also in Anglo-Saxon words with heavy suffixes "-ing," "-ness(e)" and "-ess(e)". The second syllable might have been stressed particularly often in tri-syllabic variants of these words, such as *glad-nes-se*, *wer-kyn-ge* (Halle, Keyser 1966, 1971), because when the final syllable is light, the stress goes onto the penultimate syllable (cf. Stockwell, Minkova 2001: 169). I trust rhyming more than Minkova does. She keeps insisting that "the illiterate masses" stressed the first syllable of even borrowed words. However, Chaucer did not write for "the illiterate masses" but for his educated readers who knew Latin and French. The tempo of reciting poetry was slower than speaking ordinary chit-chat, and in reciting poetry, attention was given to every syllable (Dobson 1968). Anyway, words with the "-ing" suffix regularly appeared in Chaucer's syllabic positions 1-2.

In 858 lines of *The General Prologue*, I found 34 instances that, from the point of view of Modern English, can be interpreted as "shifts of stress" from the second onto the first syllable. Five of these are disyllabic words, one noun and four verbs that end in the heavy suffix "-ing(e)". All five might have had some stress on the second syllables:

"**Lordinges**, quod he..." (790),
"**Souninge** alway...," "**Souninge** in moral vertu..." (275, 309),
"**Livinge** in pees and parfit charitee" (532),

and, remarkably, in mid-phrase:

"Of cloth **making** she haddé swiche an haunt" (449).[1]

The remaining words involve three nouns, *seven verbs*, ten adjectives, and nine adverbs. Chaucer's obvious preference was given to adjectives and adverbs on syllabic positions "odd-even" (WS), not verbs yet, as in most Early Modern English poetry. Notice again the recurrence of verbs with the heavy suffix "-ing" on syllabic positions "odd-even". These will recur on WS in all English iambic verse, from Surrey to Tennyson. They will become rhythmical italics in the works of 16th-century poets. Thus, disyllabic "-ing" words on positions "one-two" are *at the root of the later "rhythmical italics"*.

Chaucer's monosyllabic adjectives and adverbs are frequently used on syllabic position one, followed by a grammatical word on syllabic position two, generating grammatical inversions. These also create *hyperbata* (see above). More examples:

"**Short was** his goune..." (93),
"**Whyt was** his berd..." (332),
"**Bold was** his face, and fair..." (460),
"**Strong was** the wyn..." (750).

This is where Modern English iamb inherited the rhythmical-grammatical structure, as in the line "**Fair is** my love..." (Shakespeare, *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 7.1) and Robert Herrick's "**Fair was** the dawn..." (*Fair Days: Or, Dawns Deceitful*, line 1). This rhetorical device may have already existed, borrowed

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[1]   *Cloth making* might have been a compound word, and in that case "making" might have been an enclitic, like in *a club-footed child*.

from Latin and French. To conclude about Chaucer's decasyllabic verse: in English words *lordinges*, *soundinge*, *syngynge* and *livinge*, even if the primary stress fell on the first syllable, there must have been a secondary stress on the suffix. Stress placement was still vacillating; French borrowings were regularly stressed on the second syllable (*enVY*, *alTAR*). Appearing on positions 1-2 they became precursors of rhythmical italics. Chaucer and his readers did not belong to the "illiterate masses"; Chaucer, as noted above, was well educated, and had lived in Italy and France following the King's assignments. According to Dobson (1968), a slow tempo of recitation, with special attention to each separate syllable, prevailed throughout the 17th century. Chaucer's two monosyllables on positions 1-2, lexical and grammatical, also resemble rhythmical italics, compare "**Whyt was** his berd", or "**Strong was** the wyn" with Shakespeare's "**Fair is** my love". Thomas Wyatt's clumsy iambic pentameter resembles syllabic verse, particularly in his early translations from Petrarch. Yet even there we find "-ing" verbs at the beginning of the line: "**Covering** his gladness...", "**Crying** I am..." (Wyatt, Sonnets 1.3, 13.12).

In Surrey's *Aeneid* the poet handles iambic pentameter with more confidence. We found there multiple "-ing" verbs of motion on syllabic positions 1-2-(3) or WS(W). Did Surrey handle them as rhythmical italics, or do they occur in his verse fortuitously? The "-ing" verbs (present participles) often begin a new phrase, and phrases often begin a line, so participle verbs might have appeared on positions 1-2 by default. Verbs with the "-ing" suffix are not usually preceded in speech by a grammatical word, while verbal nouns are; therefore Surrey's verbal nouns by tour de force occur on syllabic positions SW ("even-odd"), and verbs occupy syllabic positions WS ("odd-even"). Thus, we might assume that Surrey's "-ing" verb forms on syllabic positions 1-2 were fortuitous rhythmical italics. However, the lines "And we afraid, **trembling** for dredfull fere" (904) or "Lo! in my gate my spouse, **clasping** my feet" (888) look even more like rhythmical italics fifty years later, in Spenser and Marlowe's texts. The "-ing" verbs in Surrey's verse are usually placed at the beginning of phrases, just like in all later poetry. Thus, rhythmical italics gradually developed from Chaucer's verse through Wyatt and Surrey to Spenser and Marlowe and then to Shakespeare.

**3.** Let us return to the word placement in Surrey's translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book II (1068 lines).[2] Surrey followed the example of Wyatt's later poetry that had finally severed its umbilical cord with the Italian syllabic mode: Wyatt had finally "found his feet". Surrey clearly had in mind the alternating rhythm

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2    Sections 3–5 expand on Tarlinskaja 2014: 278–286.

of iambic pentameter: look at the stress profile of *Aeneid* and the difference between the mean stressing on even (S) syllabic positions minus the mean stressing on odd (W) positions is 75 percent: an iambic difference (Tarlinskaja 2014: Table 1B). The text of *The Aeneid* is on the whole iambic, however it was some time ago believed to be syllabic. Because Surrey has so many "-ing" verb forms on positions "odd-even" we analyze his *Aeneid* with particularly close attention to detail. Surrey used the end-stressed variant of numerous disyllabic words when they fell on positions "odd-even" regardless of their etymology or morphology. In suffixed words such as *lordinges*, *goddesse*, the primary stress probably fell on the first heavy syllable from the right edge of the word, thus, *GODdess* but *godDESse*. Manfred Markus (1994), supporting Karl Luick's (1921) and Halle-Keyser's (1969) hypothesis, explains the system of variable placement of stress by the *changed stressing mode in Middle English*: under the influence of French borrowings English stress rule departed from the Germanic mode and began to fall on the last heavy syllable of a word; moving backwards "to the left of that syllable", English stressing developed an alternating rhythm. We must again recall that the tempo of declamation differed from everyday colloquial speech: it must have been slower, and separate syllables were enunciated with some emphasis (Dobson 1968).

Two variants of stressing existed first and foremost in words of French origin (*poison*, *citee*), but also in borrowed words with English suffixes (*terembling(e)*), Anglo-Saxon words with French suffixes (*goddess(e)*), native English words with English suffixes (*baleful*, *goodnesse*) and probably also in simple native English words with a heavy last syllable,[3] such as "-ow(e)", as in *furrow.* In the opinion of E. J. Dobson (1968, 2: 445), a system of secondary stresses "seems to have remained in educated speech until 1600"; the system of a single stress only gradually replaced double stressing "even in educated speech during the seventeenth century". Judged by their placement in verse, Surrey's stressing of French borrowings *fortune*, *altars*, *furie* and *palace* varied: on the second syllable on positions "odd-even", and on the first syllable on positions "even-odd" (let us call them, conditionally, WS and SW). The noun *altar*, for example, occurs six times on positions WS (thus, stressed on the last syllable) and only four times on positions SW (stressed on the first syllable); the end-stressed variant was preferred. For example:

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[3]   A heavy syllable contains a long vowel ("a bee" [ə biː]), a diphthong ("a bow" [ə baw]) or a short vowel plus a consonant or two ("a rib" [ə rɪb], "to lisp" [tu lɪsp]). A light syllable contains a short vowel and does not end in a consonant, as in "a **ci**-ty" [ə sɪti] (i.e., a light syllable consists of a short vowel in an open syllable).

"At the **altar** him trembling gan to draw" (716) and
"Their **altares** eke are left both wast and voyd" (450)

(cf. Padelford 1928, p. 50). This is still very similar to Chaucer's practice a hundred and fifty years previously. Anglo-Saxon words with heavy suffixes "-less", "-ful", "-hood", "-ship", "-nesse" (*manhood*, *hateful*, *gladnesse*), Anglo-Saxon words with the French suffix "-esse", as in *goddesse*, or French borrowings with an English suffix (*trembling*) also had two accentual variants, but the SW placement is preferred: these words were more often stressed on the first than on the second syllable. Words with a heavy ending, such as the diphthong "-ow(e)" also seem to have a variant with a possible stress on the second syllable: they appear in mid-phrase on syllabic positions WS.

To go deeper into *morphological and phonetic structure* of Anglo-Saxon and hybrid polysyllabic vocabulary that Surrey used both on positions SW and WS, I wrote out (1) all adjectives with suffixes "-ful" and "-less(e)"; (2) all words with the suffix "-ing;" (3)Anglo -Saxon nouns with the French suffix "-esse" (*goddesse*, *richesse*) (4) simple words *father*, *mother*, *children*, *water*, and (5) nouns, adjectives and verbs ending in "-ow(e)", such as *shadow* (noun), *yellow* (adjective) and *follow* (verb).

Let us begin with adjectives ending with the suffixes "-full" and "-less". There are altogether 39. Most of them, 34, occur on positions "even-odd," as expected, 87 percent, but 11, or 23 percent, were placed on positions "odd-even", e.g.:

"The town **restlesse** with furie as I sought" (1025),
"**Giltlesse**, by wrongfull dome, for that he dyd" (104),
"**Hateful** she sate beside the altars hid" (753).

Five of the "odd-even" cases occur at the beginning of the line, but six were found in the middle of the line. A possible stress, even if secondary, fell on the suffix.

The simple words *father* and *mother* occur both on SW and WS. Out of the 8 cases on positions WS, four are appellatives that probably required a special intonation:

"**Father**! thoughtst thow that I may ones remoue" (864).

In two lines, *father* is used as a post-positional clitic, an address:

"Graunt eke thine <u>ayd, **father**</u>, confirm this thing" (911).

Even when the noun *father* is used in mid-phrase, it sometimes occurs on positions WS ("odd-even"):

"An-chi-ses, thy **father**, fordone with age" (786).

The name *An-chi-ses* was considered trisyllabic. The word *father* was probably still stressed on the first syllable. Other simple words ending in "-er" are *water*, *somer* and *winter*. They were hesitantly assumed to bear primary stress on the first syllable, both on positions SW and WS as part of the syllabic mode, e.g.:

"Whom cold **winter** all bolne hid vnder ground" (609),
"And with **water** gan quench the sacred flame" (905).

Compare also:

"To have liued after the citee **taken**" (845), but
"The cloudy night gan **thicken** from the sea" (317).

However, a secondary stress on the second syllable *in verse* still seems possible: versification, until the epoch of Baroque, was a register separate from ordinary speech, though both registers rely on the general rules of their language. The tempo of delivery, as mentioned above, might have been different too: slower in reciting poetry, pronouncing each syllable separately, as Dobson suggested. During certain later epochs, versification tends to approach everyday speech, while during others it opposes itself to speech. In Surrey's *Aeneid*, the heroic and historical nature of its theme seems to oppose itself to ordinary speech. During Jacobean times, versification tended to approach everyday speech, though poets used dissimilar ways to do so, e.g. later Shakespeare vs. Fletcher and Middleton (Tarlinskaja 2014).

The noun *children* occurs in the *Aeneid* three times on positions SW, e.g.:

"My **children** dere, nor long desired sire" (175),

but twice on WS, at the beginning, on positions 1-2, and, what is more important, *at the end of the line, on positions 9-10*:

"**Children** and maides, that holly carolles sang" (300) and
"Home to her spouse, her parents, and **children**" (760).

The last case might be an indication of a syllabic verse mode, though this seems unlikely: because on the whole the poem was definitely composed as iambic pentameter, the words at the end of the line might have had some stress on the second syllable: compounds like *moonelight* – for sure, Anglo-Saxon words with French suffixes, such as *goddesse* – very likely, native English words, simple or with English suffixes such as *father*, *summer*, *children* and *taken* – arguably.

Nouns with "-ess(e)" such as *goddesse*, *richess* occur 9 times, 7 times on positions SW and twice on WS, both times the noun *goddess(e)*, and both times at the end of the line. It is unlikely that the word was tri-syllabic, because Surrey's *Aeneid* has *only masculine* endings, so probably the suffix "-ess(e)" bore some stress on position 10. The suffix "-ess(e)" is French, so it might still have carried some stress as do all French borrowings. Here are examples of nouns with the suffix "-ess(e)" that appear on positions SW:

"Sighing he sayd: Flee, flee, O **goddesse** son" (367),
"Disclosing her in forme a **goddesse** like" (777);

and the two instances on positions "odd-even" (WS):

"Worship was done to Ceres the **goddesse**" (944)[4] and
"Unto the sonne of Uenus, the **goddesse**" (1046).

I assume a second stress on the suffix.

The largest and most remarkable group is the lexicon with the suffix "-ing". Fifty-seven cases occur on positions SW, indicating a primary stress on the first syllable. They include 22 verbs, 32 attributive participles (probably already adjectives), and three nouns. The attributive participles are particularly frequent on positions SW, accounting for 56.1 percent of all "-ing" words on SW: "with **glittring** armes", "the **rushing** sound", "the **burning** town". The twenty-two verbs constitute 38.6 percent of the total, e.g.:

"All **wondring** at the hugenesse of the horse" (44),
"At the altar him **trembling** gan to draw" (715),
"Dame Helen, **lurking** in a secret place" (745).

However, we found 29 cases on positions WS; 28 of these are verbs and one is a verbal noun preceded by a preposition:

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4    Notice also a possible stress on the suffix *-**ship*** in *worship*.

"The din resounded, with **rattling** of armes" (283).

Here, *rattling* is not at the beginning of a hemistich or phrase. Verbs constitute 96.6 percent of the "-ing" words on WS. Seventeen of them occur on positions 1-2, ten on positions 5-6 and one on 7-8. Examples:

"**Raging** in furie, with three forked mace" (535),
"**Sighing**, he sayd: Flee, flee, O godesse son" (367),
"Rered for wrath, **swelling** her speckled neck" (488),
"**Trembling** for age, his curace long disusede..." (659),
"The frayd **mothers**, **wandring** through the wide house" (640),
"And hackt beneath **trembling** doth bend his top" (826),
"And we afraid, **trembling** for dredfull fere" (903),
"Lo! in my gate my spouse, **clasping** my feet" (888).

Let us compare the two groups of "-ing" verbs, on positions SW and WS. The "-ing" verbs on the expected syllabic positions SW ("even-odd") occur, as cited above, 22 times, while on positions WS ("odd-even") 28 times, or more than half of all "-ing" verbs. Surrey seemed to prefer his "-ing" verbs on positions WS, with a possible stress on the suffix. Even if all these verbs had some stress on the suffix, Surrey used them in the way all the later poets did, from Marlowe to Shelley. However, this pattern might have occurred fortuitously: verbal nouns and attributive participles modifying a noun are usually preceded by a grammatical word, such as a preposition, a pronoun or an article, so they by default occurred on positions SW, as in the phrases "by **sliding** seas, the **burning** town, a **blasting** sterre, each **whispering** wind, with **stedying** of my bloud", while present participles are not preceded by a grammatical word and occur at the beginning of a phrase: "**Trembling** for age", "**Sprinkling** with blood", "**Yelding** the ghost". The result, even if fortuitous, is obvious: Surrey's "-ing" verbs overwhelmingly occurred on positions WS, usually on 1-2, less often on 5-6, once on 7-8, at the beginning of the first hemistich and/or of a phrase. They denoted action, emphasizing it by their position in the line. So they became *de-facto rhythmical italics*, even if not designed as such by Surrey, but playing the same role and interpreted as such by later poets.

**4.** The next interesting area is the use of words ending in "-ow(e)". These are simple words: "-ow(e)" is not a suffix, but it is a heavy syllable. Seventeen times such words occur on the expected syllabic positions SW. Out of these seventeen, (1) six are adjectives (*yellow*, *hollow*, *narrow*), (2) nine are nouns (*fellowe*, *shadowe*, *sorrow*) and (3) three are verbs, two times *followe*:

"Victor to Arge, to **followe** my reuenge" (118).

Conversely, *on positions WS, only verbs* occur – *follow* and *furrow*, five times –, and *no other part of speech*. Once the verbs *follow* appears in a trisyllabic, inflected form where the stress probably fell on the penultimate heavy syllable (cf. Stockwell and Minkova 2001):

"**FolLOwed** with a traine of Troyan maids" (761).

But in the remaining four lines *follow* and *furrow* are disyllabic. Thus, only two disyllabic verbs appear on SW as expected, while five occur on positions WS, for example:

"**Folow** I shall where ye me guide at hand" (954),
"And my wife shall **follow** far of my steppes" (940),
"Long to **furrow** large space of stormy seas" (1036).

In the last two lines the verbs do not begin a phrase; did the diphthong carry at least some stress? Verbs of French origin often carried a stress on the second syllable, e.g., the verb *to enVIE* vs. the noun *ENvie*. But the "-owe" verbs are Anglo-Saxon. Even if these verbs had at Surrey's time a secondary stress on "-ow", they created de-facto rhythmical italics for later poets. Notice that they are verbs of motion.

Thus, here is a tentative conclusion: Surrey used verbs of action in the way all later poets did, from Shakespeare to Tennyson. He probably did not plan them as rhythmical italics. However, they looked like rhythmical italics and functioned like rhythmical italics, so this is how later 16th-century poets such as Spenser and Sidney interpreted Wyatt and Surrey. They followed Surrey's example and used as rhythmical italics all these numerous recurring disyllabic *trembling*, *shaking*, *stumbling*, *striking*, *falling* and *stabbing* on positions 1-2, or a monosyllabic verb followed by a grammatical word again on positions 1-2: "**Shakes** with..., **shakes** from..., **strikes** with..., **choked** with..., **fell** from..., **treads** on..., **stabbed** by...", or "**leaps** from..." Here are two examples from Spenser's *The Teares of The Muses*, disyllabic verbs:

"**Rolling** in rymes of shameless ribaudrie"
(*Thalia*, 213)

"**Pierce the dull** heavens and fill the ayer wide"
(*Melpomene*, 118)

And here are two more examples, the "deviation" on syllabic positions 1-2 composed of monosyllables:

"**Strove with** a Spider his unequall peare"
(Spenser, *Visions of the Worlds Vanitie*, 75)

Or on positions 1-2-3:

"**Throwing out** thousand throbs in her owne soyle"
(Spenser, *The Visions of Bellay*, 83).

To study Surrey's part of speech classification of the tentative rhythmical italics, I first wrote out from *The Aeneid* Book II all disyllabic words that according to Modern English pronunciation ought to have stress on the first syllable. Words of Latin and French origin (*fortune*, *altar*, *palace* and *citee*) were excluded. I also wrote out cases when "inversions of stress" on positions 1-2 contain a lexical monosyllable on position one and a grammatical word on position two, as in:

"**Tredes on** the adder with his rechlesse foote" (487),
"**Strake me** with thonder and with leuening blast" (853),
"**Fell to** the ground; and whatso that with flame" (652).

The two groups were broken down by parts of speech: Noun, Verb, Adjective, and Adverb. Table 1 shows their breakdown by parts of speech (absolute numbers and percent of the total).

Table 1. Surrey, *The Aeneid*, Book II. Vocabulary on syllabic positions 1-2

| Parts of speech | Disyllabic word | Two monosyllables |
|---|---|---|
| Nouns | 25 (24.3%) | 11 (14.1%) |
| Verbs | **59 (57.3%)** | **46 (59.0%)** |
| Adjectives | 13 (12.6%) | 2 (2.6%) |
| Adverbs | 6 (5.8%) | 19 (24.4%) |
| Total | 103 | 78 |

The correlation between the four parts of speech in both columns *favors the verbs*. Most of the 59 disyllabic verbs on positions 1-2 have the suffix "-ing": 28 or 47.5 percent; next come verbs with the suffix "-ed". The rest of the disyllabic

verbs are few. Next, I studied disyllabic verbs stressed on the first syllable occurring in the text *outside rhythmical figures* in the first 400 lines of Book II. These are not frequent, only 76: disyllabic verbs are more often stressed on the second syllable. The "-ing" forms outside the tentative rhythmical italics constitute only 27.6 percent (21), while the "-ed" verbs are in the majority: 53.9 percent (41). Lines frequently open with the beginning of a phrase, so the "-ing" verbs at the beginning of a line were probably expected:

> "Which in those dayes at Troye did arriue,
> **Burning** with rage of dame Cassandraes loue"
> (Surrey, *The Aeneid*, Book II, 437–438)

Surrey clearly gave preference to "-ing" verbs in his rhythmical figures: they are almost two times more frequent in rhythmical figures than in the text outside. It is also remarkable that *expressive verbs* (mostly *verbs of action*) are particularly frequent in Surrey's rhythmical figures: they comprise 60.9 percent of all verbs stressed on the first syllable placed on syllabic positions 1-2, almost two-thirds of all cases: *trembling* and *striking* (3 times each), *rattling*, *clasping*, *lifting*, *sprinkling* (with blood), *raging*, *swelling* (about a snake), and *dragging*.

When monosyllables appear on positions 1-2 or 5-6, rhythmical italics seem even more likely, e.g.:

> "**Fell to** the ground, all ouerspred with flash" (396),
> "**Fell to** the ground, and whatso that with flame" (652),
> "Nep-tu-nes there **shakes with** his mace the walls" (800),
> "The swaruing axe when he **shakes from** his neck" (283),
> "**Strake me** with thunder and with leuening blast" (853),
> "**Tredes on** the adder..." (487), and "...**lift to** the sterres" (906).

A few lines could be reworded in such a way that the "inversion of stress" is avoided. Look at the following two lines:

> "His tale with vs did purchace credit; some,
> **Trapt by** deceit; some, forcèd by his teres..."
> (Surrey, *The Aeneid*, Book II, 248–249)

Line 249, reworded, could become something like "Some, trapt by his deceit and by his teres..." The rhythmical deviation in line 249 seems avoidable; did it play a semantic, or at least a stylistic role? Compare, again, Shakespeare's "**Fair is** my love" and Herrick's "**Fair was** the dawn..."

As we have seen above, most of Surrey's presumed rhythmical italics are formed by disyllabic "-ing" verbs, however, some verbs with the Past Tense suffix "-ed" also occur: "**Mingled** with Grekes, for no good luck to vs" (506), "**Murdred**, alas! the one in th'others blood..." (878). These are, in addition, verbs of vigorous motion. In the text outside the rhythmical figures we find a prevalence of *semantically neutral* verbs on positions "even-odd" (SW):

"And **harkning** stood I: like as when the flame" (387),
"It was the time when, **graunted** from the godds" (340),
"He **answeard** nought..." (365), and
"As furie **guided** me..." (431).

Can all these cases be nothing but accidents? Are we justified in calling action verbs occupying positions "odd-even" rhythmical italics? *The Aeneid* is a poem about action, and Book II describes the destruction of Troy. No wonder that the text is filled with expressive verbs of action. But the poet uses a lexicon of particular semantics in what we tentatively call "rhythmical italics". We hesitantly conclude: it was Henry Howard Earl of Surrey who actually pioneered the use of rhythmical figures to support meaning, who fortuitously or consciously *introduced massive rhythmical italics* into English iambic pentameter. It was not his predecessor Sir Thomas Wyatt; Wyatt's verse is still close to syllabic. It was the talented thirty-year-old poet Henry Howard Earl of Surrey, beheaded by King Henry VIII, who pioneered rhythmical italics. The king could not have executed a more talented poet, the pride of Early Modern English literature. Already Marlowe used his "robust verbs" on syllabic positions 1-2, and Shakespeare became particularly skilled in the device, especially in *Richard III* and the later plays.

**5.** Let us now look at the first English tragedy *Gorboduc* composed in iambic pentameter by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville and written in 1561, twenty years after Surrey's *The Aeneid*. This was the first English tragedy composed in blank iambic pentameter. Following Surrey's example, Norton and Sackville employed blank iambic pentameter in their heroic and "historical" tragedy. Influenced by *The Aeneid*, blank iambic pentameter became associated with historical and heroic subjects and began to accompany historical tragedies, though it later spread into plays of all genres. Norton wrote Acts 1–3, 973 lines, Sackville – Acts 4–5, 815 lines. Both poets have ambiguous instances: they (in particular, Sackville) use the adjectives *aweless*, *careless*, *hopeless*, *bootless*, *dreadless*, *careful*, or nouns *kingdom*, *thralldom* on positions "odd-even". At the time of *Gorboduc*, syllabic positions "odd-even" can be with

more confidence called WS. Do the words *aweless*, *careless*, *hopeless*, *bootless*, *careful*, *kingdom* and *thralldom* generate actual "inversions of stress" and, thus, rhythmical figures, or did the poets still stress heavy suffixes?

Table 2. Part of speech classification of rhythmical italics created by a disyllabic word or by two monosyllables in the 16th–19th cc. iambic pentameter

|            | Surrey | Norton | Sackville | Pope | Shelley |
|------------|--------|--------|-----------|------|---------|
| Nouns      | 19.9   | 28.3   | 25.3      | 22.7 | 19.6    |
| Verbs      | 58.0   | 30.1   | 53.2      | 36.4 | 59.5    |
| Adjectives | 8.3    | 37.8   | 6.3       | 8.0  | 11.9    |
| Adverbs    | 13.8   | 3.8    | 15.2      | 33.0 | 8.9     |
| Total      | 181    | 53     | 90        | 88   | 494     |

The table presents the breakdown of rhythmical italics by parts of speech, comparing Norton and Sackville (adjectives with the suffixes "-less" and "-full" were excluded) to Surrey on the one hand, and Pope (18th century) and Shelley (19th century) on the positions WS only on the other hand. Norton, not unlike Chaucer, prefers adjectives, while the talented Sackville, similar to Surrey and the 19th-century Shelley four hundred years later, prefers verbs. But even Norton was probably thinking of rhythmically emphasizing words with expressive connotations: on positions WS, nine nouns out of fifteen and nine verbs out of sixteen have expressive connotations: *murder* (3 times), *flowing* (about blood), *ruins*, *wisdom*, *threaten*, *woe to*, *die with*, and *yield to*.

**6.** We had followed the birth of rhythmical italics in the iambic pentameter of Renaissance poets, the sixteenth century. The later poets of Restoration, Classicism, Romanticism and post-Romanticism all used rhythmical italics with confidence. The Classicist Alexander Pope parodied rhythmical italics, fully aware that they had become formulaic. Below are examples from his satirical poem *The Rape of the Lock*:

"**Trembling**, begins the sacred Rites of Pride" (I.128),
"**Trembling**, and conscious of the rich brocade" (II.116),
"**Spreads his black** Wings and slowly mounts to Day" (IV.88),
"**Clapp'd his** glad Wings and sate to view the Fight" (V.53).

Pope had a full command of rhythmical italics, as did Robert Frost 250 years later. The inventor of rhythmical italics, consciously or fortuitously, seems to have been Surrey.

Shakespeare used rhythmical italics skillfully, hesitantly at first as in *The Comedy of Errors*, and with more and more confidence and skill in his later plays, beginning with *Richard III* and through *The Tempest*. Rhythmical italics was an acquired skill.

Thomas Wyatt, struggling with the meter of iambic pentameter in his sonnets, has cases of an Anglo-Saxon disyllabic word on syllabic positions 1-2, as in "**Covering** his gladness..." (1.3) or "**Crying** I am..." (13.12). Both verbs are of French origin, but by the 16th century the main stress probably fell on the first syllable. In the second example there is grammatical inversion. The figure reminds us of Chaucer's *hyperbata*. Thus, through Wyatt to Surrey rhythmical italics gradually came into existence. Shakespeare became a great master of rhythmical italics, who used verse form to convey and emphasize meaning.

Let us recapitulate what we have found about the "deviations" that appeared in the late Middle English iambic pentameter by Geoffrey Chaucer, but not in his contemporary poem *The Pearl*. Word stresses were still vacillating; French borrowings had two stressing variants in both *The Pearl* and Chaucer's verse (*ALtar – alTAR*: stressed syllables are again in capitals), and Anglo-Saxon words with heavy suffixes, as far as we can see in *The Canterbury Tales*, might have had a stressing variant with at least a secondary stress on the suffix.

In the *General Prologue* to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* we find lines beginning with an Anglo-Saxon disyllabic verb in the form of present participle (the "-ing" form) on syllabic positions 1-2, often coupled with grammatical inversion:

"**Syngynge** he was or floytynge all the day (91) [singing]
"**Sownynge** in mortal verty was his speche (307) [singing]
"**Lyvynge** in pees and parfit charitee" (532) [living], also:
"**Lyned** with taffeta and with sendal" (442) [lined; silk], and also
"**Lordynges**, quath he..." (788).

Lines 91, 307 and 442 contain grammatical inversions combined with a rhythmical figure on syllabic positions 1-2; a direct word order would be "He was syngynge all the day..." or "His speche was sownynge in mortal verty". Chaucer is using a rhetorical figure of *hyperbaton*: wasn't it "rhythmical italics" in the bud? The "deviations" on syllables 1-2 from Chaucer's perfectly iambic meter, and his grammatical inversions emphasizing the verbs were at the root of what was to become "rhythmical italics". Interestingly, the author of the masterful

poem *The Pearl* does not have a single case of a disyllabic verb in the "-ing" form or in the form of past tense at the beginning of his lines. We may assume that this was Chaucer's stylistic innovation.

There are, in addition, several lines in the *Prologue* with a stressed monosyllable on syllabic position one and a grammatical word on position two, some of them again with grammatical inversion:" "**Short was** his gown..." (93), "**Whit was** his berd..." (332), or "**Bold was** his face..." (458). These turns of phrase remind us of the later "**Dark is** the world..." (Spenser, *Amoretti*, 8.1), "**Fair is** my love" (Shakespeare, *The Passionate Pilgrim*) and "**Fair was** the dawn" (Robert Herrick). There are also numerous cases in the *Prologue* formed by two monosyllables on positions 1-2 with no inversion:

"**Girt with** a ceint of silk" [belted with a silken sash] (329),
"**Heng at** his girdle..." (358),
"**Reed as** the brustles..." [red as the bristles] (556).

**7.** A century later Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–1542) struggling to "find his feet" (Peter Groves' witty phrase) mixed a crude iambic meter with a syllabic mode, particularly in his translations from Petrarch's sonnets originally penned in the Italian syllabic mode. Wyatt, not unlike Surrey, sometimes used disyllabic verbs of Anglo-Saxon origin on syllabic positions 1-2:

"**Covering** his gladness..." (Wyatt, Sonnet 1, line 3),
"**Crying** I am in a **lovely** desire" (Wyatt, Sonnet 13, line 12),
"**Proffered** you mine heart..." (Wyatt, Sonnet 17, line 3),

as well as creating several instances of monosyllabic words "stressed-unstressed" fitted into positions 1-2:

"**Love to** conspire..." (Wyatt, Sonnet 16, line 1).

Thus, Wyatt's verse form is a mix of iambic and syllabic; Wyatt's translation of Petrarch's famous Sonnet 140 ("Amor, che nel penser mio vive et regna...") was commonly attested as syllabic verse. Surrey re-translated the same sonnet; it makes good exercise to compare both translations.

|  Wyatt  |  Surrey  |
|---|---|

The long love that in **my thought**
          doth **harbor**,
And in mine heart doth keep his
          residence,
Into my face **presseth** with bold
          pretense
And therein campeth, spreading his
          **banner**.

She that me learnèth **to love and**
          **suffer**
And wills that **my trust and lust's**
          negligence
Be reined by reason, shame, and
          reverence
With his **hardiness** taketh
          **displeasure**.

Wherewithal unto the heart's **forest**
          he fleeth,
**Leaving** his enterprise with pain
          and cry,
And there him hideth, and not
          **appeareth.**

What may I do, when **my master**
          **feareth**,
But in the field with him to live and
          die?
For good is **the life** ending
          faithfully.

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**Love, that** doth reign and live within
          my thought,
And built his seat within my captive
          breast,
**Clad in** the arms wherein with me he
          fought,
**Oft in** my face he doth his banner
          rest.

But she that taught me love and
          suffer pain,
My doubtful hope and eke my hot
          desire
With shamefast look to shadow and
          refrain,
Her smiling grace converteth straight
          to ire.

And coward Love, then, to the heart
          apace
**Taketh** his flight, where he doth lurk
          and plain,
His purpose lost, and dare not show
          his face.

For my lord's guilt, thus faultless bide
          I pain,
Yet from my lord shall not my foot
          remove:
**Sweet is** the death that taketh end by
          love.

Wyatt's translation is a mixture of syllabic and iambic; emphasized are rhythmical deviations from the budding iambic meter. Many deviations are created by French borrowings and might have been still pronounced, at least in a poetic lingo, in the French way: *harBOR*, *banNER*, *foREST*, *displeSURE*. Surrey's variant corrects all of Wyatt's mishaps. Interestingly, there is a line in Wyatt's translation in perfect iambic pentameter with a sort of "rhythmical italics" created by a participle "-ing" form of a verb of motion *to leave*: "**Leaving** his enterprise with pain and cry". Such lines will become a model for all later Renaissance poets. Surrey's translation looks like all later poetry, with rhythmical italics at the beginning of his lines.

Surrey's translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* includes multiple lines with a disyllabic verb in the "-ing" form on syllabic positions 1-2:

"**Burning** with rage of Dame Cassandras love" (Book II, 408),
"**Sprinkling** with blood his flame of sacrifice" (Book II, 642),
"**Going** for councell on the entrails warme" (Book IV, 802).

Surrey even used disyllabic "-ing" verbs at the beginning of the second hemistich, beginning of a new phrase, on syllabic positions 5-6:

"And were afraid, **trembling** for dreadful fere" [fear] (Book II, 904).

We find similar lines with unquestionable rhythmical italics in Shakespeare. Rhythmical italics as a stylistic device used to highlight meaning apparently began to be confidently employed closer to the end of the sixteenth century in the poetry of Sidney and Spenser.

Surrey, in his translation of *The Aeneid*, used both Virgil's Latin original and its then-recent translation into Italian. The Classical Latin phonological opposition of long/short syllables was lost in Medieval times, and Virgil's original was interpreted as syllabic verse. The Italian translation was naturally done in the syllabic mode. Some scholars have argued that Surrey's own translation was also composed in fully syllabic verse (Hardison 1989: 127). However, the deviations, even in multiple adjacent syllabic positions, all *occur within a foot, not across the feet boundary*. Something like "The frayed **mothers** within the altars hid" was allowed, but there is not a single line like *"Cassandra **exclaimed** loudly, Troy will fall" or *"The **reduced** Trojan army choked in blood". These observations prove that *Surrey's verse was meant to be iambic* (see Gasparov 1973, "Russian Iamb and English Iamb"). Indeed, Surrey's re-translation of Petrarch's sonnet 140 shows that he had mastered the meter of iambic pentameter. All later sixteenth century poets, such as Sidney and Spenser, Kyd and Marlowe, began to associate rhythmical deviations with meaning. They had mastered the stylistic device of rhythmical italics, and Shakespeare learned from his predecessors and became a great master of using rhythm to emphasize meaning. In Spenser's love sonnets *Amoretti* (89 poems) there are 14 lines that begin with a disyllabic verb on positions 1-2, for example (original spelling preserved; the sonnet number and the line number are in brackets):

"**Kindled** above vnto the maker neere" (8.2),
"**Trading** down earth as loathsome and forlorne" (13.11),
"**Darting** their deadly arrowès fly bright" (16.7),

"**Burning** in flames of pure and chaste desire" (22.12),
"**Breaking** his prison forth to you doth fly" (83.4).

Marlowe's plays are filled with "robust verbs" on positions 1-2, "-ing" forms and others. Below are examples from *Tamburlaine*, Part 1:

"**Ringing** with joy their superstitious bells" (3.3.315)
"**Sailing** along the oriental sea" (3.3.332)
"**Shaking** their swords, their spears and iron bills" (4.1.29)
"**Batter** our walls, and beat our turrets down" (5.1.2)
"**Smother** the earth with never-ending mists" (5.2.280)

**8.** All deviations in the 16th–19th centuries iambic pentameter occur in adjacent syllabic positions, with a maximum of three in a single phrase. They often contain a verb of motion. Deviations across the feet boundaries, on positions SW particularly realized by a polysyllabic word, are extremely rare. Deviations on SW are usually filled with two monosyllables, a grammatical word on S and a lexical word on W. The lexical monosyllable on W is as a rule an attribute whose phrasal accent is lower than that of the modified noun in the oncoming phrase , as in "...from **the fierce** tiger's jaws" (Shakespeare, Sonnet 19, line 3). A monosyllabic subject on W and a predicate in the oncoming S is a rare pattern clearly used for emphasis. The most frequent deviations in classical English iambic pentameter occur on syllabic positions WS and WSW, not on SWS; e.g.:

"**Beat on** the regions with his boisterous blows"
(Marlowe, 2 *Tamburlaine*, 1.2.71);

"**Crams his rich** thievery up, he knows not how"
(Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 4.4.43);

"**Sigh'd in low** Whispers, that abstract the Soul"
(Thomson, *Winter*, 78).

The 20th-century American poet Robert Frost (1874–1963), a talented follower of the iambic tradition, stretched the rhythmical figures to four, five, or even six syllables, deviating from the metrical scheme:

"And **to hear her quaint** phrases – so removed"
(Frost, *The Black Cottage*, 62).

Frost's deviations occupy positions SWSW, a bold innovation compared to iambic verse of the previous epochs. The poets in the examples above used the deviations instead of something more regular, as in "They sighed in whispers…" or "They heard her phrases…" to emphasize what is being expressed in the micro-situation.[5]

British and American students of poetry did not research deviations from the meter for several reasons. The first reason was a mistrust of calculations. The second, and the most important reason was confusing the meter, an abstract template, with the rhythmical structure of actual lines. The persisting concept of "feet substitution" prevented the scholars from fruitful analyses of "deviations". The erroneous idea of feet substitution blurred the borderline between iambic meters and accentual and syllabic verse. Take, as an example, Shakespeare's line 3 from Sonnet 19 "Blunt the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws". Broken down into feet, the line will look as follows: "Blunt the | keen teeth | from the | fierce ti | ger's jaws". The line becomes a succession of the following feet: trochee, spondee, pyrrhic, spondee, iamb. But the line does not become syllabic verse; it is an acceptable variant of the iambic meter. Paul Kiparsky in his article on "inversions" in Finnish verse (2006) gives the following arguments against the theory of a trochaic foot substituting for iambic. Kiparsky calculated the frequency of a disyllabic initially-stressed word vs. two monosyllables, stressed and unstressed, on syllabic positions WS (1-2). The frequency of two monosyllables is about five times greater than that of a disyllabic initially stressed word. In actual trochee (Longfellow's *Hiawatha*) no such preference was found: the rate of a disyllabic word and of two monosyllables was about the same. Thus, the occurrence of "stress-no stress" on syllabic positions 1-2 in iambic verse is a *rhythmical variant of the iambic meter* that just *happens to resemble trochee*. In classical English iambic verse deviations may occur within a foot, not across the feet boundary; thus, Surrey's line "Lo! In my gate my spouse, **clasping** my feet" is perfectly iambic, while the constructed lines below do not occur in Surrey's *Aeneid*:

> *"She **exclaimed** loudly to confuse the Greeks" or
> *"They **recalled** Hectors fine heroic deeds"

These lines are not metrical. Thus, Surrey's translation *is* iambic pentameter and not syllabic verse. Surrey's older friend and colleague Thomas Wyatt "found his feet" years before Surrey, and Surrey learned from Wyatt's

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5    The rest of this section and sections 9 and 10 expand on Tarlinskaja 2012 and 2014: 269–278.

experience. Five hundred years later, Robert Frost constructed unique lines for semantic purposes. Lines with strings of deviations relatively frequently occur in Robert Frost's iambic pentameter, all of them for semantic purposes: Frost, who had a good ear for the rhythms of English poetry, played with the rhythms expanding the rules of the iambic meter.

When the two levels of a poetic text are recognized, then the deviations from the metrical scheme in actual verse lines can be spotted, their grammatical patterns classified, their frequency calculated, and their semantic role understood. When *rhythmical deviations* are used to emphasize meaning, they become *rhythmical italics*. We may notice the scope of their semantic gravitation: rhythmical italics most often accompany situations dealing with *action* and containing verbs of energetic, sometimes vibrating motion, such as *shake*, *fly*, *fall*, *tremble*, *quiver*, emotions and their physical display, such as *sigh, weep, sob, laugh*, causing or experiencing pain and death (*clap*, *stab*, *wound*, *choke*), or natural phenomena (*waves*, *tides*, *rain*, *wind*). Shakespeare became a great master of rhythmical italics.

**9.** Rhythmical italics act not unlike onomatopoeia; they may emphasize sounds, but most frequently they mimic an action. Semantic and grammatical features of "italics" are more than just our impressions; they can be classified and quantified. Their morphological (parts of speech) and syntactic patterns and lexical components can be explored. We will see such classifications and calculations below.

Why had rhythmical italics begun to be coupled with the theme of "motion"? A possible explanation might be as follows: the early poets, such as Surrey, created deviations from the meter probably fortuitously, using verbs, say, in the form of present participle at the beginning of the line, because participles frequently begin a phrase, and phrases often begin a line. These verb forms are disyllabic and stressed on the first syllable, thus breaking the iambic rhythm. The breach of iambic rhythm was experienced as motion, say, stumbling or falling, and began to be deliberately coupled with verbs of motion.

The use of rhythmical deviations for semantic purposes might have begun with Surrey in his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Book II of *The Aeneid* is a story about the Greek-Trojan war and the destruction of Troy, so Surrey's lines, probably fortuitously, began with phrases containing a present participle of a verb of motion. We may only guess if Surrey indeed used the disyllabic forms of verbs as rhythmical italics: he has cases of "inverted stress order" in the middle and even in the last foot of the line: in Book IV the form *dancing*, for example, occupies the final foot of the line. But Surrey's verbs were expressive words denoting motion, as Surrey's *Aeneid* is all about "motion":

fighting, attacking, wounding, killing, destroying the walls. The readers noticed rhythmical deviations as breaches of the iambic momentum, and remembered in what semantic contexts they had appeared. In this way rhythmical italics gradually acquired conscious associations with swift, forceful, uneven or interrupted actions, such as "jumping", "falling", "breaking", "stumbling", "shaking", "clasping" and "choking".

In the above line "Lo! In the gate my spouse, **clasping** my knees" is a line that could have occurred in Kyd or Marlowe. We can only speculate if Surrey consciously meant his deviations to be semantic helpers, but the next generation of poets, Spenser and Sidney, assumed he did. Kyd and particularly Marlowe clearly realized the semantic potential of rhythmical italics. and began to use this device consciously. Here is one more example from Marlowe's early tragedy *Tamburlaine the Great*:

> "Than he that darted mountains at thy head,
> **Shaking** the burden mighty Atlas bears"
> (Marlowe, 2 *Tamburlaine*, 4.1.131).

How often does "action" accompany the "trochaic" italics? We have seen some examples above, but the classification and quantification of rhythmical italics will be presented below.

Iambic pentameter is the most widely used meter in English poetry from the 14th to the 20th centuries, from Chaucer to Frost. It had six centuries to work out a tradition. The few poets invented a new meter. During all periods, an author had first to master "the rules" of the existing verse form (e.g., a sonnet), and then to compose his own poetry and become, or not become, innovative.

A question may arise: how much does composing poetry involve inspiration, and how much is a conscious process of creating meaningful deviations from the meter? To put it in another way: which parts of composing poetry are unconscious, and which parts come from the poet's conscious application of his *craft as a versifier*? Shakespeare, the greatest English poet, created poetic works full of inspiration and imagination. This is well known. But his consistent use of rhythmical italics *was* part of his craft as a versifier. Do we think that line three of his Sonnet 19, "**Pluck the keen** teeth from **the fierce** tiger's jaws", with rhythmical deviations on syllabic positions WSW and SW is a mere product of inspiration? No! It is a sign of Shakespeare's craft as a versifier. He had read many poetical works by other authors, studied the products of their crafts, and constructed his own rhythmical italics following the newly established tradition.

Deviations in iambic verse within the same phrase usually involve two or three syllables, and occur on positions WS, WSW and, less often, SW. The deviations on syllabic positions. SWS are rare and occur in looser iambic verse, e.g., Philip Massinger's plays. Deviations on syllabic positions SWS interrupt the iambic rhythm. The figure SWS is usually created by monosyllables, e.g.: "You answer well. You **have heard of** Bertoldo" (Massinger, *The Maid of Honour*, 3.3.192). Polysyllabic words creating a deviation on positions SWS are unmetrical for the 16th–19th centuries. English iambic pentameter: segments like *"You **inspired** Bertoldo" do not occur. Robert Frost constructed lines like this for semantic reasons.

Rhythmical deviations from the meter, as we have seen, typically occur at the beginning of the line, less often at the beginning of the second hemistich. Normally they correspond to the beginning of a phrase. Deviations in mid-phrase are rare, and at the end of a phrase practically non-existent. Some examples have been found in Shelley's tragedy *The Cenci*:

"Retire to your **chamber,** insolent girl!"
(Shelley, *The Cenci*, Act 1.3.145).

The word "chamber", part of an order, probably required a specific intonation.

Compare the two lines below, the first one is actual, the second is a construct:

"And peace proclaims **olives** of endless age"
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 107, line 8)

*"And peace proclaimed **olives**. Then all rejoiced."

The second "line" is impossible for Shakespeare. In the verse of romantic poets, however, instances resembling the second "line" do occur, though rarely. More examples from *The Cenci*:

"If thou hast done **murders**, made thy life's path"
"Who yet remain **stubborn**. – I overrule"
(Shelley, *The Cenci*, 5.2.134, 185).

Robert Frost, the 20th-century heir to the English iambic pentameter tradition, composed varied and longer rhythmical figures: SWS, WSWS and even SWSWSW. Frost knew exactly what he was doing:

"**Regular** verse **springs from** the strain of rhythm
Upon a meter, strict and loose iambic"
(Frost, *How Hard It Is To Keep From Being King*, 213–214).

As I already mentioned, Frost composed verse lines with four to six adjacent deviations:

"**Once she found for** a bookmark in the Bible [WSWS]
A maple leaf she thought must have been laid
In wait for her **there. She read** every word
Of **the two** pages it was pressed between,
But **forgot to put the leaf** back in closing [SWSWSW]
And lost the place **never** to read again."
(Frost, *Maple*, 62–68)

The rhythmical (accentual) deviations occur on syllabic positions WSWS (line 62) and SWSWSW (line 67): six deviating syllables. Frost learned his skills from the previous generations of English poets-versifiers, and out-skilled them all. The situation in the above extract is this: a girl is trying to find out the meaning of her unusual name, *Maple*. She is leafing through her deceased mother's Bible and finds a dried maple leaf pressed between two pages; she reads the two pages trying to figure out her mother's thought processes, but in closing the book she loses the pages "never to find again". The rhythm created by the poet imitates leafing through a book, and maybe even the frustration of losing the needed pages. Frost used these deviations to emphasize, italicize, and mimic what is said in the text. Robert Frost is not my favorite poet, but my favorite versifier.

Thus, the use of deviations to emphasize meaning seems to have become deliberate probably already in Surrey's works, and certainly in the later 16th-century poetry and plays. My aim here was to find out exactly when rhythmical italics had come into existence. Surrey might have done it at first fortuitously, placing the "-ing" verb forms on syllabic positions "odd-even" at the beginning of a phrase that coincided with the beginning of the line, while verbal nouns and attributive participles are usually preceded by a grammatical word, so they occur on positions "even-odd" in mid-phrase; cf. "**Holding** in hand..." vs. "... their **hissing** mouthes" in *The Aeneid*, Book II, 224, 266). In Surrey's *Aeneid* there are, naturally, many verbs of action. Word stress was still fluctuating, but became more stable by the end of the 16th century. Marlowe, however, still used the Anglo-Saxon adjective "shortly" on positions 9-10, in the last foot of the line in his *Doctor Faustus*: "I think my master means to die **shortly**"

(Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, 5.1.1). The later poets possibly interpreted Surrey's "-ing" verbs on positions 1-2 as emphasis, italicizing actions expressed by the verbs themselves: rhythmical italics. Below are examples from texts by Surrey through Shakespeare.

"**Shrouding** themselues vnder the desert shore",
"**Burning** with rage of dame Cassandraes loue"
(Surrey, *The Aeneid*, Book II, 33, 438);

"**Playinge** on yvorie harp with silver strong",
"**Fought with** the bloudie Lapithaes at bord"
(Spenser, *Virgils Gnat*, 16, 42);

"**Beating** in heaps against their argosies"
"**Beats on** the regions with his boisterous blows"
(Marlowe, 2 *Tamburlaine*, 1.2.41, 70)

"**Stopped in** my soul, and would not let it forth"
"**Dabbled** in blood, and he shrieked out aloud"
(Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1.4. 38, 54)

"**Clapped his light** Wings, and sate to view the Fight"
(Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, Canto V, 54)

We notice recurring rhythmical, syntactic and lexical patterns in the rhythmical italics. The lexicon is limited to a narrow scope of words of similar semantics: the rhythmical pattern tends to become formulaic.

In the two lines by Frost below, multiple deviations emphasize their contents. In order to illustrate the mechanism, stresses and metrical positions are marked.

  x **x X**   X **X x**   **x** X   x X
And **a cold** chill **shivered** across the lake
 W **S W**   S   **W S**   W S   W S

  x  x X   **x x**   **x** X   **X** x X
And **accommodate her young** life to his
 W  S **W**   **S W**  S   **W**  S W S
(Frost, *A Servant to Servant*, 31, 128)

The examples and the discussion above illustrate several points.

(1) Rhythmical italics seem to have first appeared in the 16th c., in the first half or in the last quarter of the sixteenth century (Surrey; Spenser), though we may still argue when exactly they first became a conscious stylistic device.

(2) Rhythmical figures longer than three syllables were not used in English iambic verse prior to the 20th c. Frost.

(3) Figures on positions WSW are less disruptive than on SWS; "deviations" on WSW appear in all English poetry from Surrey to Frost; three good examples:

"**Stuft with armed** men; about the which there ran"
(Surrey, *The Aeneid*, Book II, 99);

"**Wept like two** children on their deaths' sad story"
(Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 4.3.8);

"**Spreads his black** Wings, and slowly mounts to Day"
(Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, Canto IV, 87).

Deviations on syllabic positions SWS occur only in loose poetry, such as in the Jacobean Massinger:

"Of **the world as** myself. I would it were..."
(Massinger, *The Maid of Honour*, 3.1.110),

or Frost:

"With **a swish in** the grass. What if the others..."
(Frost, *The Generation of Men*, 23).

Deviations on SWS realized by a polysyllable are outside English iambic meter of the 16th–19th centuries. Here is a construct impossible in actual verse:

*"And **withdrawing** her hand she ran away".

(4) Authors of disyllabic and tri-syllabic deviations had a firm command of literary iamb, they manipulated iambic rhythm with confidence and counted on their readers'/listeners' habit of reading iambic poetry and hearing it from stage. The poets obviously counted on the audience to keep the iambic rhythm in their minds, so they could identify the deviations. Otherwise why did poets and

playwrights bother to construct rhythmical deviations that emphasized meaning? Sometimes we figure out the meter after some juggling a line in our mind. Is the segment "There were three in the meadow by the brook" iambic, or is it accentual verse stressed xxXxxXxxxX? The line *is* iambic pentameter, it appears in Frost's iambic poem *The Code*. The line makes "iambic sense" in an iambic context:

> "There **were three in** the meadow by the brook
> **Gathering up** windrows, piling cocks of hay,
> With **an eye** always lifted towards the west
> Where an irregular sun-bordered cloud
> Darkly advanced with a perpetual dagger
> Flickering across its bosom. Suddenly"
> (Frost, *The Code*, 1–6)

(5) When rhythmical figures are used for emphasis, they become a stylistic device called *rhythmical italics*. They are not unlike onomatopoeia, but they more often imitate action rather than sound. Rhythmical italics are the product of five centuries of English poetic tradition.

(6) Rhythmical italics accompany a narrow range of micro-contexts, and particularly often emphasize *action*. They tend to contain recurring syntactic patterns and recurring vocabulary: rhythmical italics have become *formulaic* (see below). Verbs like *shake*, *fall* and the noun *wings* keep recurring in the works of numerous poets.

**10.** As pointed out above, the ability of rhythmical italics to emphasize action stems from the iconic potential of irregularities, that is, the perceived breach of the prevailing iambic rhythm. The line "The Woods support the Plain, the Parts unite "(Pope, *Epistle IV: To Richard Boyle*, line 81) fully complies with the iambic rhythm. And here is a line whose syllables 1-2-3 deviate from the meter in a way that had become traditional, as in the following lines:

> "**Clap her pale** cheek, till clapping made it red"
> (Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, 469);

> "**Clapp'd his glad** Wings, and sate to view the fight"
> (Pope, The Rape of The Lock, Canto V, 54).

In the two lines, "stressed-unstressed-stressed" syllables create the string *TA ta TA TA ta-TA ta-TA ta-TA*. Such a deviation, permissible and metrical, gets noticed, experienced as vigorous motion, and in the context of Shakespeare's

and Pope's lines, emphasizes "clapping cheeks", "clapping wings". The stylistic device of rhythmical italics began to be regularly paired with situations dealing with motion, particularly uneven (*shake*, *tremble*, *clap*, *quiver*), directed downward (*kneel*, *bow*, *bend*), aggressive, violent, and hurtful (*stab*, *pierce*; *batter*, *shatter*), and an interrupted or discontinued act (*cease*, *stop*, *choke*). The following examples of rhythmical italics on positions WS and WSW, all from Shakespeare, all accompany violent and aggressive action, a hurtful act, or an interrupted, fitful motion, a succession of short vigorous acts, or a situation dealing with a powerful action:

"**Clap her pale** <u>cheek</u>, till clapping makes it red"
(Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, 469);

"**Swills your warm** <u>blood</u> like wash, and makes his trough"
(*Richard III*, 5.2.9);

"**Shore his old** <u>thread</u> in twain. Did he live now"
(Shakespeare, *Othello*, 5.2.209);

"**Bids the wind** <u>blow</u> the earth into the air"
(Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 3.1.5).

Do the figures WS and WSW contain more verbs, and more verbs of action than does the verse text outside rhythmical figures? To solve these puzzles, I took a long poem (4,518 iambic lines) by the 19th-century romantic poet Shelley *The Revolt of Islam*. The tradition of iambic pentameter had been well established and the romantic poets had mastered its expressive potential. The hexameter iambic lines terminating its stanzas were also examined.

I wrote out all rhythmical figures, possibly not all of them rhythmical italics, on positions WS and WSW, 514 altogether that occur in *The Revolt of Islam* in all its 4,518 iambic lines. Rhythmical figures occur in 11.4 percent of the lines. This is frequent enough to be felt consistently and to draw attention to the interrupted iambic momentum. Let us look at the part-of-speech composition of rhythmical figures in *The Revolt of Islam*. I differentiated "nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs," and "other". "Other" were so few that I discarded them from further analysis. I then differentiated the verbs into "verbs of action" and "other", including the static position of the body or a mental state (*rest*, *slumber*; *know*, *feel*). Verbs of action fell into "verbs of violent action", such as *strike*, *shake*, *tremble*, *quiver*, *choke*, and "non-violent action", such as *go*, *walk*, *look*, *listen*, *promise*. Then I took, at random, Canto IV and wrote out all nouns, verbs, adjectives and

adverbs that occurred in the text outside rhythmical figures. I again differentiated verbs into "verbs of action" and "other." Table 1 below presents the results of a part-of-speech analysis (in percent of the total) in *The Revolt in Islam* in rhythmical figures and in the text outside the rhythmical figures.

Table 3. Parts of speech inside and outside rhythmical figures in Shelley's *The Revolt in Islam*

| Parts of speech | In figures WS, WSW in the whole poem | Outside the figures in Canto IV |
|---|---|---|
| Nouns | 19.6 | **50.8** |
| Verbs | **59.5** | 22.7 |
| Adjectives | 11.9 | 19.9 |
| Adverbs | 8.9 | 6.6 |
| Total | 494 | 1,222 |

In the rhythmical figures, *the most frequent* part of speech is the *verb*. Verbs are two and a half times more frequent in the rhythmical figures than in the text outside the figures. *Nouns* are the most frequent part of speech in the text *outside* the rhythmical figures, while within the rhythmical figures, nouns are two and a half times less frequent than verbs. The correlation between nouns and verbs in the figures and outside the figures is the reverse. Adjectives are also preferred outside rhythmical figures, where they are one and a half times more numerous than in the figures. Adverbs are scarce everywhere, but prevail in the rhythmical figures: lines often begin with the adverb "Sudden..." (i.e., "suddenly"): "**Sudden** he stops...". Thus, the first test has shown that *rhythmical figures prefer verbs* to other parts of speech. Verbs play a leading role in rhythmical italics.

What are the semantic features of these verbs? Table 4 below shows the proportion of "verbs of action" and "other" (in percent of the total number of verbs) within the rhythmical figures and outside them in Shelley's *The Revolt in Islam*.

Table 4. Semantic features of verbs inside and outside rhythmical figures in Shelley's *The Revolt in Islam*

| Parts of speech | In figures WS, WSW in the whole poem | Outside the figures in Canto IV |
|---|---|---|
| Verbs of action | **87.1** | **62.7** |
| Other verbs | 12.9 | **37.3** |
| Total | 294 | 277 |

As the title of the romantic poem suggests, *The Revolt in Islam* is a poem about action. Thus, it is not surprising that "verbs of action" prevail over "other verbs" both in the figures and in the text outside them; however, their correlation is different. In the rhythmical figures, *verbs of action* are almost *seven times more frequent* than "other verbs", while outside the figures they are only one and a half times as frequent. Also, "other verbs" are almost three times less frequent in the figures than outside. If we differentiate "verbs of action" further, we could see that "tremble, shake, quiver, fall, strike" are more frequent within the rhythmical figures, while "go, walk, look, know" are more frequent outside the figures. We see also that syntactic features of verbs recur in the rhythmical figures, but outside the figures the syntactic functions of verbs are versatile. The tests have shown how exactly the poet used his rhythmical figures on two-three adjacent syllabic positions, and why certain semantic classes of words were selected as rhythmical italics. All the examples below come from *The Revolt of Islam*. The numbers of lines are in brackets.

> ***Fell to*** *the sea* (249), ***Fell like bright*** *Spring* (56), ***Fell on*** *the pale oppressors* (114),
> ***Fell o'er*** *the snowy child* (4655), *...****fell on*** *the fields like rain* (2388),
> ***Falling*** *in pauses* (2087), ***Fell like*** *a shaft* ***loosed by*** *the bowman's error* (4020);

> ***Bursts like one*** *sound* (4532, ***Burst through*** *their ranks* (4518),
> ***Burst from*** *her looks* (4266), ***Burst o'er*** *the golden isles* (1298),
> ***Bursts on*** *that awful silence* (4510);

> ***Borne by*** *the ready slaves* (4483), ***Borne on*** *the storm* (1070),
> ***Borne on*** *the winds* (2727), ***Borne like*** *a cloud* (4744), ***Bear ye*** *the earnings* (3356);

> ***Knelt for*** *his mercy* (4527), *...****kneel in*** *the public way* (3585);

> ***Sunk in*** *a gulf* (1998), ***Sunk on*** *my heart* (4282), ***Sinking*** *upon their breasts* (638);

> ***Strike with*** *her shadow* (2693), ***Smote on*** *the beach* (1415),
> ***Stabbed in*** *their sleep* (1772),
> and so on.

The most frequent recurring verb is *fall*, next come *bear*, *burst*, *sink* and *kneel*. As we see, preference is given to verbs denoting a movement downwards.

I gave the list above to prove several points. The first thing that emerges is the narrow range of semantic groups and recurrence of the same words: the verb *fall* recurs 7 times, *burst* and *bear* recur 5 times each, *sink* and

*kneel* – three times each, and most of the others recur at least twice. The semantic spectrum of the verbs is narrow; often they are synonyms or members of a narrow semantic group: "fall-drop-dip-kneel-bend-sink-tumble", "strike-stab-choke-hit-pierce-smite-slay", "tremble-shake-quiver-flutter-totter".

Recurrences and self-repetitions are typical of all English poetry beginning with the early Elizabethans through Classicism to Romanticism, to say nothing of oral traditions and archaic poetries. The results of the research illustrate how rhythmical deviations became rhythmical italics. Rhythmical italics of identical grammatical structures contain recurring lexicon that keeps appearing in the works of dissimilar poets writing in different genres and divided by time. Here is a short list of rhythmical italics containing the verb *tremble*:

> "**Trembling** for age, his curace long disused"
> (Surrey, *Aeneid*, Book II, 659);
>
> "**Trembling** their forces, sound their praises lowd"
> (Spenser, *Virgils Gnat*, 615);
>
> "**Trembling** upon his breast…"
> (Marlowe, 1 *Tamburlaine*, 2.1.242);
>
> "**Trembled** and shook …"
> (Shakespeare, *The Taming of The Shrew*, 3.2.166);
>
> "**Tremble** and start …"
> (Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 3.5.7);
>
> "**Trembling** begins the sacred Rites of Pride",
> "**Trembling**, and conscious…"
> (Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, 1.128, 3.116);
>
> "**Trembles** before her look…", "**Trembled**, as with a zone…"
> (Shelley, *The Revolt in Islam*, 1598, 3827);
>
> "**Trembling** beneath the scourge …"
> (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* 2.74.8);
>
> "(…my frame) **Trembles**; my forehead's veins swell out",
> "**Trembling** so much…"
> (Browning, *Paracelsus*, 633, 385);

"...**trembling** with rage "(Arnold, *Sohrab and Rustum*, 449);

"**Trembled** and stirred" (Frost, *I Will Sing You One-O*, 63).

Such recurrent rhythmical italics containing recurrent lexicon and syntactic features are called *formulas in literary verse* (Tarlinskaja 1989; Gasparov 1999).
   Another group of recurring formulas contains the verb *shake*:

"The swarming axe when he **shakes from** his neck"
(Surrey, *The Aeneid*, Book II, 283);

"**Shakt his long** locke..."
(Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book II, 5.15.8);

"**Shaking** the burden", "**Shaking** their swords",
"**Shaking** her silver tresses", "**Shake with** their weight,"
"**Shaking** and quivering..."
(Marlowe, 2 *Tamburlaine*, 4.1.131, 4.2.26, 5.2.78, 288, 5.3.68);

"**Shaking** her wings", "**Shaking** the bloody darts"
(Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, 57; 2 *Henry VI,* 3.1.366);

"**Shak'd with** this ague"
(Donne, *The Storm*, 54);

"**Shook from** the midnight-slumber..."
(Thomson, *Winter*, 346);

"**Shake his red** shadow", "**Shake the red** cloak..."
(Byron, *The Curse of Minerva*, 306;
*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 1.64: 6);

"**Shakes with** the sleepless surge", "**Shook with** the sullen thunder"
(Shelley, *The Revolt in Islam*, 2907, 2735);

"**Shook as** he stumbled", "**Shaking** a fist at him..."
(Browning, *Sordello*, 752; *Fra Lippo Lippi*, 154).

All these examples are just the tips of an iceberg. As confirmed by exten-
sive calculations of word frequency through four centuries of English verse

(1540–1940) carried out by Josephine Miles, these verbs have never been frequent in the poetic lexicon (Miles 1951: Table B). And yet recurrences of lexicon in rhythmical italics permeate the entire English poetic tradition. Rhythmical italics get arranged around a key word, for example, the verb "shake" or the noun "wings" (Tarlinskaja 2012: 74–75; 2014: 277–278).

**11.** We have, thus, discovered one tool that poets use to connect "sound" and "sense": the use of rhythmical italics that are filled with a narrow set of vocabulary and recurring syntactic patterns. The rhythmical-syntactic-lexical recurrences have become formulaic. Formulas do not denigrate inspiration or compromise the individuality of a poet, but rather show that creating poetry requires both inspiration and the skills of a craftsman. The grammatical composition of these recurrences, particularly noticeable in the figures on WSW, is almost uniform: it typically consists of a verb followed by a direct object modified by an adjective. Formulaic rhythmical italics cluster around a relatively narrow range of key words. One may consider the idea of compiling a dictionary of formulas in English literary verse, not unlike what Otto Schumann (1979–1983) did for recurring formulas in Latin hexameters.

The recurrence of formulas once again proves that literature is a continuous process and the product of many hands. Recurring rhythmical italics also confirm that the creative process is not all inspiration, but also a craft, a puzzle that needs to be put together. Those of us who ever wrote or translated poetry can attest to the process of very deliberately looking for a rhythmical form of word that will fit the meter, or a good rhyme. The frequency and expressiveness of rhythmical italics is one countable indicator of a poet's skill and maturity as a versifier. Compare the skills of early Elizabethans and later Jacobeans: Greene, *Alfonso, King of Aragon* 27.6 rhythmical italics per 1000 lines vs. Ford, *Perkin Warbeck* 162.1 per 1000 lines. The difference is seven times: versification skills had grown. It is much harder to quantify the expressive quality of rhythmical italics than analyzing their structures, but our research gives us some working ideas.

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