

IN DEFENCE OF EMENDATION. THE EDITING OF *VǪLUSPÁ*

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Introduction

THE EDITING OF EDDIC POETRY for a broad audience is a problem scholars have wrestled with since Resen's edition of *VǪluspá* and *Hávamál* in 1665. For the last half-century or so the general emphasis of scholars has been on reflecting the existing witnesses as faithfully as possible. The variation in the sources has been treated sympathetically with the view that different versions of the same verses,¹ stanzas or poems can reflect different but equally meaningful and authentic oral versions and medieval perspectives. In this climate, scholarly attempts to combat errors in the sources with conjectures and emendation of the text are often met with suspicion. This is not without reason, and we should certainly insist that any scholarly emendation is accompanied with careful arguments, based on an understanding of the transmission of the text and a respect for medieval textual variation.

Nevertheless, the use of traditional philological methods for identifying and correcting errors in the manuscripts is a valuable service that a good editor offers to readers. This is a statement I aim to defend in this article with detailed discussion of particular examples. I limit myself to the editing of *VǪluspá*, which is a particularly rich topic owing to the complicated preservation of the poem. There is more than one valid approach to creating a critical edition of the poem but I believe they will all have some things in common. I seek to defend the following statements:

(a) All manuscripts contain multiple scribal errors. A critical edition should in a number of cases correct the text by emendation, either by introducing text from another manuscript or by conjecture.

(b) No critical edition of *VǪluspá* should be based solely on a single manuscript.

(c) Metrics is a useful tool in identifying corrupt readings, in deciding between manuscript variants and in evaluating proposed conjectures.

As well as elaborating on and defending these statements, I present a survey of how several different editors have dealt with a selection of difficult verses in the Codex Regius text of *VǪluspá*. As will become apparent, the state of the art of

¹ Throughout this article 'verse' is used rather than 'line', as the latter allows potential ambiguity between 'full' and 'half' lines.

Eddic editing is certainly not a wholesale rejection of emendation. Mainstream editions contain many well-founded corrections but these corrections are often underdiscussed and invisible to readers. Discussing them explicitly gives an opportunity to bring out the qualities that a successful emendation should have.

Throughout this article I have found it useful to refer to the works of Judy Quinn (2001, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c) who has published in detail on editing theory as applied to the Eddic poems. I find much of value in Quinn's writings, but I will naturally focus most on cases where I would like to offer another perspective.

*The editing of *Vǫluspá* in light of its preservation*

Roughly speaking, *Vǫluspá* is preserved intact in two versions and partially in a third version. The complete versions are preserved in the Codex Regius of the Eddic poems (GKS 2365, 4to), traditionally dated to c.1270, and in Hauksbók (AM 544 4to), dating from the early fourteenth century. Furthermore, parts of the poem are preserved in the manuscripts of *Gylfaginning*, dating from c.1300 and later. The three versions differ in the number and order of stanzas as well as in individual verses and words. The differences between the versions are such that most scholars believe that we are dealing with three independent recordings from oral tradition (e.g. Quinn 2016c, 52). The possibility that the poem was learned by heart from a written version and then again written down from memory ('reoralisation') is intriguing but there do not appear to be any compelling arguments for it—unlike the case of *Hávamál*, where this is probably the best explanation for the two surviving versions (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2015).

There are good reasons to be wary of constructing a stemma to show oral transmission, but as long as the important differences between oral and scribal transmission are kept in mind I find that a diagram can be a helpful visual aid. With this caveat—and more caveats to follow—Figure 1 shows one way to visualise the oral transmission of *Vǫluspá*.

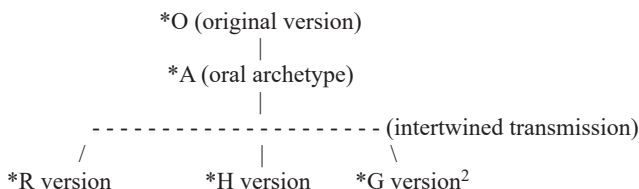


Figure 1. Oral transmission of *Vǫluspá*

² For the sake of simplicity I speak of one *G version, but I actually agree with Quinn (2001, 84) and Jón Helgason (1964, ix) that the manuscripts of *Gylfaginning*

The original version is the poem as composed and performed by its author, beginning the oral transmission of the poem. I conceive here of the poem as an authorial work, ‘from the beginning carefully thought out in content and polished in form’ (Jónas Kristjánsson 1990, 147; see also Tolley 2002; McKinnell 2013, 96). Of course it may well be the case that the author modified the poem, consciously or not, over the course of his or her lifetime and performed it with some differences from day to day. It is even conceivable, though I do not think it likely, that some of the variety we have in the preserved versions reflects this sort of original authorial variation.

It is unlikely that each of the three versions we have of the poem represents an independent line of transmission all the way back to the days of the author (Gísli Sigurðsson 2013, 53). It is more probable that they all have some changes in common. We can think of them as all deriving from an oral archetype at some remove from the original poem. This archetype could be quite concrete. It might be the case that all preserved versions of the poem are derived from one particular version known to a particular performer in, say, the twelfth century, and that all earlier variation has been lost. But the archetype can also be conceived of more abstractly as a version of the poem incorporating all changes from the original common to the surviving witnesses and no other changes. This might not correspond exactly to the poem as performed at any particular moment but can still be a useful abstraction to work with, analogous to the way linguists work with proto-languages. It was assuredly never the case at any point in time that there were no dialectal differences among the Germanic-speaking inhabitants of Scandinavia. But an abstraction like ‘common Scandinavian’ as ‘a variation-free reconstructed language’ (Barnes 1997, 34), can still be a valid and useful tool, as long as its limitations are kept in mind.

The diagram above should not be taken to imply that the three versions all derive independently from the archetype. The nature of oral transmission is that reticulation³ is pervasive and not necessarily systematic. Judy Quinn (2016c, 49) has described this phenomenon well and the reader is invited to imagine her ‘mass of intersecting, overlapping, and thickening

show signs that the scribes occasionally deviate from their exemplar and follow their own knowledge of a particular verse or stanza. This may even be true of the copy of Codex Wormianus in AM 756 4to (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2010).

³ The traditional term of art is ‘contamination’, but since this is sometimes taken to imply a value judgement I have chosen a more general word. I am grateful to Alaric Hall for pointing this out to me.

forms' for the transmission from the oral archetype to the three versions. For one given variant it might be the case that *R preserved the original and *H and *G had a common change, while for the next, *G might have the original and *R and *H might have a common change. And so on. But in the absence of a demonstrated pattern of common errors, the only heuristic we have—quite an imperfect one—is that when two versions agree they will be more likely than the dissenting witness to have the older reading.

The reader may be wondering why I have marked the *R, *H and *G versions with asterisks. Are these versions not in fact preserved? Not quite. The oral versions which the diagram refers to are lost to us. What we have are written versions at some remove, and for this it is useful to refer to another diagram.

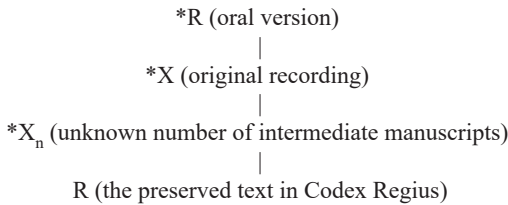


Figure 2. The written transmission of *Völuspá* into the Codex Regius

At some point there was a scribe who aimed to record the poem from its oral version *R. Perhaps the scribe recorded it from his own memory, or perhaps he did it from the recitation of a performer. This is not a trivial task. We lack direct information about how such things took place in medieval Iceland but a chance survival from the seventeenth century gives us some material for comparison.

The earliest known ballad collector in Iceland was Gissur Sveinsson (1604–83), who compiled a collection of ballads and other old poems preserved in oral tradition, including some Eddic fairy-tale poems (*sagnakvæði*, for which see Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 2013). Some of his notes happen to have survived, and they give us a bit of information on his method (Jón Helgason 1960, 51–54; the following is based on his analysis). Notes made in the recording of *Magna dans* and *Ásu dans* demonstrate that Gissur initially recorded the first few words of each stanza—probably in an effort to gather up all the stanzas and place them in the right order. When these initial notes are compared with the final versions, it turns out that there are some differences. The final versions have more stanzas and some differences in wording, even if we only have a few words of each stanza for comparison.

Presumably more stanzas came to light as Gissur continued working with his informant.

This example goes to show that recording a long poem—from oral tradition is a challenging task. The collector may even miss stanzas known to the informant but accidentally skipped over in a particular performance. It is possible that some of the differences between the recorded versions of *Vǫluspá* came about in this way. In any case, as soon as a poem is committed to writing it starts to accumulate scribal mistakes. Even the initial recording can have confusing misspellings as well as accidentally omitted words and letters. Each copyist will then add new errors by, for example, misreading or skipping over particular words and letters. All copies include some innovations and the task is all the more challenging when copying an old poem with many obscurities. We do not know how many intermediaries there were between the initial recording of *Vǫluspá* and the preserved Codex Regius, but the Codex Regius is not the initial recording (Lindblad 1954) so we can certainly expect copyist errors to be present.

With these considerations in mind, what should be the goal when *Vǫluspá* is edited? It is, of course, desirable that high-quality photographs and accurate transcriptions of every manuscript be accessible to scholars. But a transcription is not much of an edition, and the matter cannot be left there. A critical edition will seek to make sense of the text and make it accessible to a wide audience of scholars and students—and suitable for translation into other languages as well.

Different critical editions can have different but equally legitimate aims. The traditional goal of textual criticism is to get as close to the original text as possible. This was the goal of, for instance, Sigurður Nordal's edition of *Vǫluspá* (1952). It is sometimes implied that there is something wrong or unscientific about this goal, but this is not so. Of course the original text can never be fully recovered but this is no reason not to get as close to it as we can. Every day, scholars and scientists in various fields attempt to reconstruct things based on partial remains. An archaeologist will speculate on the original form of a sword based on a few fragments. A linguist attempts to reconstruct a proto-language based on its descendant languages spoken thousands of years later. A paleontologist attempts to reconstruct the form of an ancient creature based on fragmentary fossilised remains.

It might be objected that any reconstruction of *Vǫluspá* cannot reach back to the original and can at most approach the oral archetype in Figure 1. Is that not a *non plus ultra* for any reconstructive project? This is

largely but not entirely true. To resume the analogy with other fields, linguists attempt to reconstruct not only Proto-Indo-European, the common ancestor of all attested Indo-European languages, but also to get further back in time and reconstruct Pre-Proto-Indo-European—an earlier stage of the language. This is possible, to a limited extent, based on internal arguments. Similarly, a scholar can argue based on internal arguments that certain parts of *Völuspá* which are common to all preserved versions were not found in the original poem. The prime example of this is the list of dwarfs which Sigurður Nordal omitted from his reconstructed version. Like many other scholars he was convinced that it was not a part of the original poem. The arguments for this, even if they have not convinced everyone, are reasonable and by no means hubristic or unscientific (see e.g. McKinnell 2013, 94).

Attempting to get as close as possible to the original text is not the only legitimate goal of a critical edition. Another approach is to print the different attested versions separately. This has the virtue of giving every oral version its due, allowing each to be considered as a whole. How is this to be done? A first impulse might be to edit the text of R separately without any input from the other manuscripts, and then treat the text of H similarly. I will argue that this is not the best way to proceed, because every manuscript has many scribal errors which *can* and *should* be corrected, and a valuable tool for doing this is comparison with the other witnesses. Instead, the editor can aim to reconstruct something closer to *R and *H, the oral versions which are imperfectly represented by the surviving manuscripts.

There are several factors which come into play when considering whether to emend a reading X to a corrected version *X. The following are important:

(a) It is impossible or very difficult to construe a grammatical sentence out of X whereas *X makes for normal syntax.

(b) The meaning of X is gibberish or fits the context very poorly whereas *X makes sense and fits the context.

(c) It is easy to see how *X might have been turned into X by a scribal mistake, considering our knowledge of typical scribal errors. This includes such common errors as omitting or transposing words or letters, jumping from one instance of a word to the next (*saut du même au même*, see e.g. Haugen 2013, 105), replacing an unfamiliar word with a familiar word (*lectio difficilior potior*) and getting confused about sequences of characters consisting of minims (<i, u, n, m>).

(d) While X is metrically unique or abnormal in the poem, *X perfectly fits the metrical pattern.

In happy cases, multiple criteria come together to recommend *X over X. We may have a manuscript text that is ungrammatical, senseless and a metrical monstrosity and also have a strong theory of how it could have come about through a copyist mistake. When we only have one criterion, our footing is much less secure. On the other hand, we demand less of *X when it is a reading from another manuscript than when it is a conjectural emendation.

Ten problematic readings in the Codex Regius: a survey of editions

After these theoretical considerations it is time to look at some actual manuscript text and examine how editors go about their business in practice. For this exploration I have selected ten problematic readings from the Codex Regius text of *Völuspá* and six editions of the poem. I include four editions from the scholarly mainstream, namely Kuhn (1962), Jón Helgason (1964), Gísli Sigurðsson (1998) and Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólafsson (2014). I also include two lesser-known editions, by Ólafur M. Ólafsson (1965) and Þráinn Löve (2000). These are especially interesting for their attempts to interpret the manuscript text as preserved in cases where other editors employ emendation. Löve goes as far as to say that his edition rejects all ‘corrections’ of the manuscript (*öllum „leiðréttingum“ á handritinu hafnað*, Löve 2000, 5), but as we shall see, this is no simple matter.

The six editions under study have different goals but they all base their text principally on the Codex Regius. When they deviate from R with an emendation I keep track of whether or not this is visible to the reader. I should note at the outset that I think silent correction of obvious scribal errors is no great sin, especially in an edition geared towards the public.

Reading 1: <meins vara>

In the description of the wicked wading heavy currents,⁴ the Codex Regius mentions <meins vara> (2r, 16)⁵ which, if taken at face value, would have to be translated as something like ‘of the harm of wariness’, which makes

⁴ The best interpretation of this scene may be Kure 2013.

⁵ For transcriptions of the Codex Regius text I mostly follow Vésteinn Ólafsson and Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 2001, but my diplomatic transcript does not use all the special characters of that edition.

little sense in the context. Every editor I am aware of has undertaken an emendation to **meinsvara* ‘perjurers’, which is also the text in Hauksbók and the manuscripts of *Gylfaginning*. The error is understandable; mistakes in word division are frequent and the word *meinsvari* might not have been familiar to the scribe. This is the only attestation in poetry and *ONP* has only three in prose. Of the editions under study, Ólafur M. Ólafsson (1965, 90) explicitly mentions the emendation and it is also visible in Kuhn (1962, 9) but silent in the other four editions (Löve 2000, 80–81; Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason 2014, 301; Gísli Sigurðsson 1998, 12; Jón Helgason 1964, 9—though see p. xi).

Reading 2: <borð uegr>

In the description of the war between the Æsir and the Vanir the Codex Regius tells us that <brotiN var borð uegr borgar asa> (1v, 18), which would seem to mean that ‘the plank-road of the fortress of the Æsir was broken’. This is rather surprising: a road is not typically something you break and not typically made of planks. But everything falls into place if we emend to **borðveggr* (the text in Hauksbók), meaning ‘plank wall’, a word also occurring in *Glælognskviða*. This is a solution favoured by all editors, and it is a good one. Scribes frequently make the minor mistake of not making a distinction between a single and a double consonant. The emendation is carried out visibly by Jón Helgason (1964, 6) and Löve (2000, 54–55) and silently by the other editors (Kuhn 1962, 6; Gísli Sigurðsson 1998, 8; Ólafur M. Ólafsson 1965, 102; Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason 2014, 297).

Reading 3: <or log folgin>

The *vǫlva* begins her account of Baldr’s death with these words: <Ec sa baldri blodgom tivor odins barni or log folgin> (2r, 2–3). This could be translated as follows: ‘I saw for Baldr, the bloody god, Óðinn’s child—out of a lake, hidden.’ The last verse comes out of the blue. It is also metrically defective; the unstressed preposition *ór* carries the alliteration, something found nowhere else in the poem. The adjective <folgin> has a masculine singular form and its referent is unclear. Alternatively, we could take *ór lög* to mean ‘our laws’ rather than ‘out of a lake’. This is metrically better, but even harder to parse syntactically. This stanza is only preserved in the Codex Regius so there is no alternative text to help us out. We are left with conjectural emendation. As in the case of <meins vara> we can surmise that the scribe infelicitously divided the word **ørlog*.

However, we need another emendation, since the masculine singular in <folgin> is left hanging. If it is emended to neuter plural *fólgin every-thing falls into place: The *vǫlva* saw Baldr's fate sealed. Here we have two emendations in one verse, based on conjecture and no support from other manuscripts. Yet scholars have found these corrections so trivial and obvious that they are carried out silently in all the editions under study, apart from the emendation of <folgin> to *fólgin which is visible in Löve (2000, 68–69) and noted by Jón Helgason (1962, xiv) in his preface. As Jón points out, the Codex Regius scribe sometimes fails to distinguish between a single and a double *n*. And while *ørlog* is written as one word elsewhere in R, various compound words are written in two parts, so it is not impossible that this was the word intended by the scribe when he wrote <or log>. With these considerations in mind, we have a case which straddles the boundaries between emendation and mere normalisation of spelling.

Reading 4: <vullu hęri>

Continuing her discussion of Baldr's death, the *vǫlva* describes the mistletoe as follows: <stóð vm vaxin vullu hęri mior oc mioc fagr mistiltein> (2r, 3–4). The words <vullu hęri> are difficult, and the first word is usually emended to *vǫllum. This is a conjectural emendation—the stanza is not preserved elsewhere. The stanza as emended can be translated thus: 'It stood grown, taller than the fields, slender and very beautiful, the mistletoe.' The emendation to *vǫllum is carried out silently by Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (2014, 299) and visibly by Jón Helgason (1962, 8), Gísli Sigurðsson (1998, 10) and Kuhn (1962, 7). Löve (2000, 69) does not emend the text but also does not make explicit how he parses it. He takes *vǫllu* to mean 'field', perhaps construing it as dative singular of an otherwise unattested *valla, taken to be synonymous with *vǫllr*.

Ólafur M. Ólafsson (1965, 105) attempts to make sense of the text as preserved. He takes <vullu> to be what it appears, the accusative plural of *vǫllr*. But he takes *hęri* to be the optative of the verb *hęra* meaning 'to shear' or 'to mow'. The words *vǫllu hęri* then mean 'may the fields be mown'. This he takes, in the context at hand, to be a wish that mistletoe be destroyed. This solution is ingenious but ultimately less than convincing. The syntax is strained, the sense is far-fetched and the verb *hęra* is not attested until much later. The conjectural emendation to *vǫllum is more likely to represent the sense and text as recited. A final *m* is often represented with a nasal stroke over the preceding vowel, something which is easy to omit by mistake.

Reading 5: <þar sǫg nǫphavgr>

In the description of the punishment of the wicked, the *vǫlva* says the following: <þar sǫg nǫphavgr nái fram gengna> (2r, 16–17). This is quite a challenge to parse as preserved. Our best option for <sǫg> is to take it as the accusative singular of *súgr* ‘a draught of wind’—certainly something which can be produced by large winged creatures. But we would like to have a verb, which must then be *nái* and we must take it to be the optative of *ná*, with *Níðhoggr* as subject. The adjective *framgengna* could be taken as accusative masculine singular and must then stand with *súg*—though we would have expected strong rather than weak inflection. We are left with something like this: ‘There may *Níðhoggr* get the departed draught of wind’. Unfortunately, this makes no sense and the syntax is very strained. Furthermore, the metrics do not match up. A noun in *fornyrðislag* must alliterate unless some previous word in the verse carries the alliteration. Since *súg* is a noun and *þar* does not alliterate, *súg* must alliterate—but does not.

Fortunately, we can get a perfectly rational text by consulting *Hauksbók*. If we emend <sǫg> to **saug*, the meaning becomes: ‘There *Níðhoggr* sucked the corpses of the departed.’ Now we have a text which has a natural word order, makes good sense and has no metrical problems. Four of the editions under study make this emendation; it is visible in Kuhn (1962, 9), Jón Helgason (1964, 9) and Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (2014, 301), but silent in Gísli Sigurðsson (1998, 12). Löve (2000, 81) does not emend and seems to take *súg* to be an alternative form of *saug*. This is quite unsatisfactory—strong verbs never have *ú* in the preterite.

Ólafur M. Ólafsson (1965, 108) emends to *só*, an alternative form of *saug*. In a later article (1966, 178) he came to the conclusion that <sǫg> is not a random error after all but has a numerological explanation.

Reading 6: <at en galla>

In describing the end of the world, the *vǫlva* mentions *Gjallarhorn*. The text is as follows: <at en galla giallar horni> (2r:32–3r1). Most scholars emend *en* to **enu*, supported by the text in *Hauksbók*. This yields the sense: ‘at the sharp *Gjallarhorn*’. This emendation is visible in Kuhn (1962, 11) and Jón Helgason (1964, 11) and silent in Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (2014, 302) and Gísli Sigurðsson (1998, 13).

Ólafur M. Ólafsson (1965, 112–13) has a different interpretation, construing the text as follows: *at—enn gall ó—Gjallarhorni*. Here

enn gall *ó* is taken to mean ‘still the river resounded’. Little seems to be gained here. The syntax is strained, as we do not expect an aside to be inserted into a prepositional phrase. The metrics are strained as well, since we would expect *enn* to alliterate, rather than *gall*. Finally, this still involves emending the manuscript text and it is not clear that emending *en* to **enn* and *galla* to **gall* **á* is cumulatively a lesser emendation than *en* to **enu*, which is also supported by the Hauksbók text.

Löve has a different take, normalising the first five verses of the stanza as follows. For comparison, Gísli Sigurðsson’s text is to the right:

Þráinn Löve (2000, 95)	Gísli Sigurðsson (1998, 13–14)
Leika Míms synir	Leika Míms synir
en mjötuður kyndist að	en mjötuður kyndist
en galla	að inu galla
Gjallarhorn í	Gjallarhorni,
hátt blæs Heimdallur	hátt blæs Heimdallur

This is a clever way to read the text, as preserved: *en* simply becomes a conjunction. But ultimately it is not convincing. The syntax is strained and verses 2–4 all become unmetrical. The standard emendation is a much better choice.

Reading 7: <havlþa at hiarar>

The *völva* mentions the rooster of the gods: <Gól um asom gullincambi sa uecr havlþa at hiarar at heriafavdrs> (2r, 23–24). The words <at hiarar> are normally regarded as a scribal error—an initial misreading of <at heria> which the scribe has failed to mark for deletion. Five of the editions under study omit the words; the emendation is visible in Kuhn (1962, 10), Jón Helgason (1964, 10) and Ólafur M. Ólafsson (1965, 88), but silent in Gísli Sigurðsson (1998, 13) and Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (2014, 302).

Þráinn Löve (2000, 89) reads the text as follows:

Gól um ásum
Gullinkambi
sá vekur hölda athjarar
að Herjaföðurs

Þráinn takes *athjarar* to be the genitive of an otherwise unattested **athjorr* ‘sword’, formed analogously to *atgeirr*. There are no overwhelming semantic or syntactic problems here, but what sinks this reading is that the verse is unmetrical and it is very easy to see how

it would arise by scribal error. We are better off with the emendation than the manuscript text.

Reading 8: <allar kindir>

The beginning of the poem in R is as follows: <Hljóðs bið ec allar kindir> (1r, 1). There are no syntactic or semantic difficulties with this; it means: ‘I ask silence of all creatures’—a perfectly reasonable beginning to a poem. But metrically this is a very difficult text. It is sometimes printed as follows:

Hljóðs bið eg
allar kindir
(Gísli Sigurðsson 1998, 3; Löve 2000, 9)

The implication here is that *ek* alliterates with *allar*. But the structure of the first verse is highly abnormal—we would have to take it as an example of type A3- with a disyllabic initial drop. There are no other examples of this in *Vǫluspá*, and Suzuki (2014, 82–85) knows only two examples in his entire corpus, one of which (*Oddrúnargrátr* 4.1) is suspicious for independent reasons. This would already be enough to make the verse suspect, but there is an even more serious problem in that we are required to see *ek*, a pronoun at the end of the verse, as carrying the alliteration in preference to a noun (*hljóðs*) at the beginning of the verse. This is essentially unparalleled and a strong indicator of textual corruption. Fortunately, a much more plausible text is preserved in Hauksbók:

Hljóðs bið ek allar
helgar kindir

This is metrically perfect and was most likely also the form which the verses had in the oral *R version. The omission of *helgar* from the preserved text in R is easily explained as a *saut du même au même*—two words in a row end with *-ar* and a scribe’s eyes jumped from the first to the second.

The text is emended to follow the Hauksbók version by Kuhn (1962, 1), Jón Helgason (1964, 1), Ólafur M. Ólafsson (1965, 88) and Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (2014, 291). In all cases the emendation is explicitly indicated.

Reading 9: <Baldr mun koma>

The *vǫlva* sees that Baldr will return: <baldr mvn. coma>; *Baldr mun koma* ‘Baldr will come’ (2v, 28–29). A fine sentence, grammatically and

semantically. But it is metrically unique in the poem, and the type is rare elsewhere.⁶ The text in Hauksbók, however, is metrically perfect: *man Baldr koma*. The Hauksbók text was preferred by Sievers (1885, 29), but an emendation is not undertaken in any of the six editions in this survey (Kuhn 1962, 14; Jón Helgason 1964, 14; Ólafur M. Ólafsson 1965, 119; Gísli Sigurðsson 1998, 17; Löve 2000, 122–23; Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason 2014, 306).

Since the meaning is identical either way, this is not a problem which has attracted debate. But I would like to call attention to the dot after <mvn>. There is also a dot above the word <baldr>, which has been taken to be punctuation indicating the end of a stanza—but if that is the case, it is more distant than is typical from the preceding word. We could alternatively take the dot above <baldr> and the dot after <mvn> to be transposition dots, indicating that the words should be read in reverse order. This is a method employed by the scribe of R, e.g. on 2r, 14–15 and 9r, 4–5. To be sure, the dot is normally placed above the word, but there was no room above <mvn>, so the scribe might have settled for placing the dot after the word. If this is true, which I concede is far from certain, it would mean that the scribe of R intended to indicate the same word order as we have in H. This would be one of numerous scribal corrections in the text of *Völuspá*—by Ursula Dronke’s count there are 27 (Dronke 1997, 88–90; see also Katrín Axelsdóttir 2003, Boulhosa 2015).

Reading 10: <oc a fimbvltys>

Describing the world after *ragnarøk*, the *völva* has a stanza which has this text in the Codex Regius: <Finaz ęsir aiþa velli oc vm mold þinvr matkan dōma oc a fimbvltys fornar rvnar.> (2v, 24–26). This is difficult to interpret as preserved. We have the phrasal verb *dæma um* in verses 3–4, and this is unproblematic. But verse 5 starts with *á* rather than *um*, and *dæma á* is unexpected and abnormal. We might suspect that some text has gone missing, and this suspicion is strengthened by the fact that the stanza is only six verses long—it is much more common to have eight verses in a stanza. The solution is clear once the text in Hauksbók is taken into account:

⁶ Suzuki’s (2014, 36–40) discussion of this is marred by his conflation of verses like Grp 12.5 *leið at huga* with relatively normal verses like HH II 11.6 *hildings synir*. Suzuki operates on the assumption that affixes never carry secondary stress but this is hardly valid for the Norse corpus.

Codex Regius

Finaz æsir
 aþa velli
 oc vm mold þinur
 matkan dōma

oc a fimbvltys
 fornar rvnar.

Hauksbók

Hittaz æser
 a iða uelli
 ok um molland þinur
 matkan dema
 ok minnaz þar
 a megin doma
 ok a fimbultys
 fornar runar.

(2v, 24–26)

The text in Hauksbók has a stanza of the typical eight verses. The text is lucid and unproblematic—the problematic *á* is here revealed to be part of the phrasal verb *minnask á*. Furthermore, we have a ready-made explanation for why the missing verses were left out in R. With three verses in a row beginning with *oc*, it is easy to jump accidentally over one (*saut du même au même*). Finally, a paraphrase of this stanza in *Gylfaginning* further backs up the text in Hauksbók: <ok minaz arvnar sinar> (Finnur Jónsson 1931, 75).

Every editor in this survey has made it clear that the verses are left out in R through mere scribal error and should be restored (thus, the emendation is visible in Kuhn 1962, 14; Jón Helgason 1964, 14; Gísli Sigurðsson 1998, 17; Löve 2000, 5, 119; Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason 2014, 306), except for Ólafur M. Ólafsson (1965, 118–19) who has an ingenious solution for parsing the text in R, which he prints as follows without emendation:

Finnask æsir
 á Íðavelli⁷
 ok of moldþinur
 máttkan dœma
 ok ó fimbultýs,
 fornar rúnar.

Ólafur takes *ó fimbultýs* ‘the river of Óðinn’ to mean ‘tear’, based on the previous reference in the poem to *ó af veði Valføðrs* ‘a river from the forfeit of Óðinn’, i.e. a river from his eye. This is clever, and if we absolutely had to parse the R text as preserved, this would be the way to do it. It is, however, impossible for metrical reasons (*á* cannot be a noun here), and the cumulative evidence makes a very strong case that the text in R is defective.

⁷ The reading *Íðavelli* has little to recommend it; the metre shows that *Iðavelli* is the correct form.

Judy Quinn (2016b, 135–36) has criticised the editorial incorporation of the lines from H into a text based on R. In a review of the edition by Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason she explains:

A reappraisal of philological conventions has also been underway, leading to a more nuanced understanding of medieval manuscript culture . . . As a result, the integrity of each manuscript text has come to be regarded as having independent value as unique testimony to the textual tradition of a particular time and place.

In light of this she is critical that ‘portions of one text are imported into the edition of the other—for example two verses from the Hauksbók text into the Regius text of stanza 58’, taking this as evidence that the editors have resisted a shift towards modern methods of editing. By contrast, I see the restoration of the omitted verses in stanza 58 as a good example of the usefulness of traditional philological methods. We have the agreement of a plurality of witnesses (H and G), we have a good account of how the scribal error arose (*saut du même au même*) and we have the fact that the preserved text in R is metrically suspicious (with a stanza of six verses) and difficult to make sense of. There is a constellation of matching evidence to show that the omission in R is a mere scribal mistake, and fixing it is consistent with respect for the different versions of the poem.

Metrics

Knowledge of the structure of poetry is one of the traditional tools of philologists in evaluating manuscript readings. Like all tools, it needs to be used with judgement and care, but any scholars who refuse to work with metrics will deprive themselves of a powerful and useful method. Many scholars of Old Norse, however, harbour a deep-seated scepticism of metrical arguments. Quinn (2016a, 65) comments in a way which exemplifies this point of view:

Moreover, across the eddic corpus, a significant number of lines do not fit with the versification ‘rules’ derived by Eduard Sievers for early Germanic poetry, a situation which should at least give us pause before semantic interventions are made.

The unwary reader may take some unfortunate ideas away from these words. The first is the implication that Sievers’s metrics are a Procrustean bed, derived from musings on Germanic poetry in general and failing to actually fit the Eddic poems. But in reality, Sievers (1893) handled each tradition separately, dealing with the peculiarities of

Nordic metres in detail, while taking note of commonalities with West Germanic poetry.

The second implication is to link Sievers and his theories with heavy-handed emendation of the text. But a look at Sievers's 1885 booklet, where he presents his analysis of Eddic metrics, reveals a different picture. The text presented is very much in the scholarly mainstream—though it is true that many pronouns are placed in brackets, with some uncertainty on whether to count them for metrical purposes. The footnotes to *Vǫluspá* are revealing in that Sievers shows that the contemporary edition by Guðbrandur Vigfússon and F. York Powell (1883, 621–30) is full of adventurous conjectures that fail to fit the metre of the poem. Indeed, Sievers's discoveries serve to restrict scholarly conjectures at least as much as they do to support them.

The third impression the reader may get from Quinn's article is that Eddic metrics is an antiquated relic of nineteenth-century German thought.⁸ But there has been significant progress in the field since then—evidenced not least by the monumental *The Meters of Old Norse Eddic Poetry* by Seiichi Suzuki (2014) which incorporates a number of insights from the study of West Germanic poetry into the Eddic field. The analytic tradition begun by Sievers is constantly being refined and developed, but as noted by R. D. Fulk (2016, 270), 'the past thirty years have seen a thoroughgoing rehabilitation of Sievers's initial views, which now dominate metrical scholarship'.

Scholars who champion an oral perspective on the Eddic poems should particularly strive to make use of the power of metrics. The metrical structure of poetry is not a mere intellectual exercise of dusty professors. It was the lifeblood of the oral tradition. For as long as the poems were known and recited aloud their structure was felt by the performer and the audience. The rhythm was integral to the aesthetic effect and it aided the memory—forming a partial barrier against arbitrary innovation. But when the poems were committed to writing they became subject to slips of the pen and all manner of random changes.⁹

⁸ A similar dismissal of the usefulness of metrics for textual criticism is delivered by Lars Lönnroth (2016, 366) in a review of *A Handbook to Eddic Poetry*:

Den förutsättningen kan i dag inte accepteras. Allt tyder i stället på att såväl de ursprungliga skalderna som senare traditionsbärare känt sig ganska fria i behandlingen av versläran. De har knappast känt sig tvungna att låta sina versfötter taktfast marschera i vare sig Snorres, Heuslers eller Sievers fotspår.

⁹ A reviewer points out that oral performers can also produce various odd innovations. I do not deny this, but my claim is that scribal and oral innovations

An objection to the use of metrics to identify corrupt readings is that it entails a paradox, as eloquently phrased by A. E. Housman (1921, 80): ‘The MSS. are the material upon which we base our rule, and then, when we have got our rule, we turn round upon the MSS. and say that the rule, based upon them, convicts them of error.’ But the paradox is only apparent, and Housman answers it himself: ‘It is quite possible to elicit from the general testimony of MSS. a rule of sufficient certainty to convict of falsehood their exceptional testimony.’ This applies very much to the text of *Vǫluspá*. The general patterns are clear enough for the exceptional verses to stick out like a sore thumb. To see an example, we can compare variants in different manuscripts:

af veiði Valfǫðrs (Codex Regius of the *Prose Edda*; more on this variant below)
af veði Valfǫðrs (the other manuscripts)

The text with *veiði* is of a common metrical type, dubbed C2 by Sievers, which consists of one or more unstressed syllables followed by a short stressed syllable, an unstressed syllable, a long stressed syllable and a syllable without stress or with secondary stress. There are some fifty-five other instances of this pattern in the poem (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2016, 133). But the text with *veiði* represents a metrical pattern found nowhere else in the poem, except for scribal errors in other manuscripts such as *fyrir Gnúpahelli* (Hauksbók) or *en bjáni Belja* (Codex Trajectinus) (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2012, 4–5). In no case do the manuscripts agree on a reading with this pattern—a clear hint that they represent secondary scribal variation, in other words, errors.

A single change from one vowel to another can easily cause a verse to become unmetrical: to move from a type abundantly attested by all manuscripts to a type which only occurs in isolated readings, all but certain to be corrupt. This is an important qualification to the widespread perception of the poem as ‘metrically loose’ (Quinn 2016c, 72).¹⁰

Scribal mistakes in the manuscripts of Gylfaginning

When the versions of *Vǫluspá* in R, H and G are compared, it is apparent that many of the differences between them are best explained by

have different characteristic patterns. While scribal transmission is more likely to produce metrical errors, oral transmission is more likely to confuse the order of stanzas.

¹⁰ This is not to deny that some poetry genuinely is metrically loose; *Hárbarðsljóð* could reasonably be described as free verse, and *ljóðaháttur* allows for more variation than *fornyrðislag*.

variation in the oral tradition. This is true for the order of the stanzas, but it is also true for some individual readings. Take the beginning of stanza 62:

Sal sá hon standa (R) Sal sér hon standa (H) Sal veit ek standa (G)

All three texts make good sense and all are metrical. The variation they represent is typical of oral tradition. Much of the variation in the manuscripts is of this kind, but there is also another type of variation, arising from various types of scribal mistakes. The manuscripts of *Gylfaginning* are a rich trove of such readings and I would like to demonstrate some of my favourites.

The least well known medieval manuscript of the *Prose Edda* is the fragmentary AM 756 4to—little known because it is a copy of the extant Codex Wormianus and so mostly deprived of textual value. Like all manuscripts, it has its share of scribal errors. Here is one, in the first refrain of *Völuspá* where an extra <c> has been inserted:

<þa gengu regin aull áá rockstola> (AM 756 4to, 1r) ‘then all the gods went to their spinning-wheel chairs’.

We must here take <rock> to represent the root of the word *rokkr* ‘spinning wheel’ rather than of the word *rök* ‘argument’, giving us the sense ‘then all the gods went to their spinning-wheel chairs’. Perhaps *rokkstóll* was a word known to the scribe, though it is not attested until later.

In the Codex Regius of the *Prose Edda* (R_s) we have the following verses (in bold are the words which are unique to this manuscript):

dreckr **mōð** Mimir (other manuscripts: *mjóð*)
 morgvñ hverian
 af **veipi** Valfavðrs (other manuscripts: *veði*)
 (Finnur Jónsson 1931, 22)

This is syntactically unproblematic, but the meaning is surprising: ‘Mimir drinks **leftover hay**, every morning, from the **hunt** of Valföðr.’ Are these interesting oral variants? Almost certainly not—they have every appearance of being scribal errors. The scribe has left out an <i> in the word *mjóð* and inserted an extra <i> in the word *veði*. As with so many scribal errors, the second one here makes the verse it is in unmetrical.

Another eccentricity in the *Völuspá* text of R_s is found in the description of *ragnarök*, where we read *ormr kýr unnir* (Finnur Jónsson 1931, 73) which we would have to translate as ‘the still worm loves’. A surprising sentiment in this context. Every other manuscript has *ormr knýr unnir*

‘the worm propells the waves’, and we can safely assume that the scribe of R_S made a mistake. Other mistakes in R_S include <Ár var halda> (Finnur Jónsson 1931, 11), where an extra <h> makes the text senseless, and <horn er a lopt mey Öþin> (Finnur Jónsson 1931, 73) which is unmetrical gibberish. The errors in R_S are by no means unusual; every medieval manuscript of more than trivial length has its share of scribal errors. The Codex Regius of the *Poetic Edda* also has many errors, most clearly seen in cases like *Völuspá* where we have other manuscripts to compare with. Quinn (2001, 83) speaks of the Codex Regius scribe as if there were a scholarly consensus that he was ‘so careful’, but I am not aware of any attempt to demonstrate that the R text has an uncommonly low rate of scribal mistakes.

The text of the Codex Upsaliensis (U) has rather more than its fair share of eccentricities. Quinn (2001, 84–85) interprets some readings from its text of *Völuspá*:

The Upsaliensis text is significantly different, its mythological perspective scattered among footnotes, or ignored altogether not only in translations of the poem but also in editions. The nurturing woman is not old, but is poor, or wretched (‘armr’), and a certain one of her charges, an ‘ima’, will become the sun’s griever (‘tregari’) (Grape et al. 1977 II: 7) . . . What is particularly interesting here is that she is described as the one who will grieve for the sun, not the one who will destroy it. Giants too will perish at *ragnarök*, and this quoted verse seems to empathise briefly with the perspective of the wretched woman whose role it is to rear the creatures who are not only destined to kill the gods but doomed to destroy their own kind as well. For a moment, we glimpse one of the ‘enemy’ grieving for the sun which gives life not just to gods but also to giants.

Careful consideration of the readings of individual manuscripts is valuable, but it can be risky to read mythological interpretation into variants which are likely to be the result of scribal happenstance rather than a strong tradition.¹¹ The verse *tungls tregari* is unmetrical and unlikely to thrive in oral transmission—there are no verses in *Völuspá* with this rhythmical structure. What we have is most likely a scribal variant, either a simple misreading or an erratic attempt at correcting the text into something intelligible. The *hapax legomenon* *tjúgari* (the text of

¹¹ A reviewer points out that under the banner of reception studies there is nothing illegitimate about studying how a reader of an error-laden manuscript might have understood the text. I agree. My first philological publication (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2008) was exactly this sort of study, looking at how an error in the Codex Upsaliensis gave rise to new kennings.

the other manuscripts) will not have been familiar to the scribe, but is seemingly formed from a verb **tjúga*. By replacing this, consciously or unconsciously, with the familiar verb *trega* ‘to grieve’, the scribe of U or its exemplar arrived at the intelligible *tregari*. To read into this some particular ‘mythological perspective’ runs the risk of attributing meaning and structure to what is most likely a random change, undertaken without any larger goal in mind.

Quinn (2001, 87) treats another variant from U with similar enthusiasm:

Another possible kenning occurs in the text of the Upsaliensis quotation of *Völuspá* 57: ‘the sun, triumph of the earth, turns black; bright stars turn from the sky’ (‘Sol mvin sortna sigrfoldinnar. hverfa af himni heiðar stiorrn’ Grape et al. 1977 II: 34). Syntactically, the kenning ‘sigrfoldinnar’ appears to be in apposition with *sól*, the sun described as ‘the triumph of the earth.’ Poetically, this description reinforces the tragedy of *ragnarök*—when the glorious earth is put out like the sun’s brightness.

A serious problem with this interpretation, pointed out by Bäckvall (2007, 42), is that *foldinnar* does not actually mean ‘of the earth’; that would be *foldarinnar*. Furthermore, there is no precedent for any such kenning for the sun and it remains unclear to me how the sun could be seen as the victory of the earth. Nevertheless, in the 2012 edition of *Codex Upsaliensis* by Heimir Pálsson (2012, 82), Quinn’s interpretation is accepted and the text is emended to **sigrfold<ar>innar*—a verse with a metrical structure found nowhere else in the poem. Heimir comments that <sigrfoldinnar> ‘is hardly a misreading or scribal error for *sigr fold í mar*’ (2012, 82) but does not explain how he came to that conclusion.

Bäckvall (2007, 43) offers another suggestion for parsing <sigrfoldinnar>, namely *sigrfoldin ár*, where **foldin* is to be an otherwise unattested variant of *faldin* ‘covered’. But surely the most straightforward way to read this sequence of letters, if we allow ourselves the insertion of spaces, is as *sigr fold innar* ‘the land sinks further in’. This is how Eysteinn Björnsson normalises the text of U in his online edition.

Quinn (2001, 87) ultimately concedes that <sigrfoldinnar> may be an error:

This kenning is not preserved in other manuscripts; in fact they all preserve a clause that makes the Uppsala text look suspiciously like a mishearing of dictated or recited words: ‘sigr fold í mar’, the earth sinks into the sea. Nonetheless, to make of this phrase a kenning for the sun is a valiant semantic gesture by the Upsaliensis scribe or his forerunner, and it would be a pity if the editorial apparatus worked to write off or play down such an effect.

Here too, Quinn emphasises the oral nature of the text by suggesting a mishearing. But *sigr* ‘victory’ and *sígr* ‘sinks’ have vowels which are distinct in pronunciation but are written alike. Furthermore, *imar* does not sound particularly like *innar*. It is more likely that we are dealing with a misreading than a mishearing. The word *innar* is common enough; it occurs e.g. on p. 25, line 7 in U while <*sigrfollinnar*> occurs on p. 34, line 10. In Old Norse manuscripts, a preposition is often written attached to the noun it precedes, and an unfamiliar sequence like <*imar*> could easily be misread as the familiar sequence <*innar*>. A misreading of a sequence of characters composed of minims (m, n, u, i) is a very common type of scribal error (as noted also by Bäckvall 2013, 165, who cites Derolez 2003, xxi), amply represented in the manuscripts of the *Prose Edda*. In his edition of *Grottasöngur*, based on the Codex Regius of the *Prose Edda* and the Codex Trajectinus, Clive Tolley (2002, 35) notes that ‘a common source of misreadings in both manuscripts has been minim confusion’, and cites seven examples in this relatively short poem.

To sum up, there is every reason to believe that the sequence <*sigrfollinnar*> arose from a mundane misreading and represents no mythological insight or poetic creativity.

Falsifying the witness?

The final textual problem I will discuss is from the description of Óðinn’s meeting with the *völva*. The verses in question are only preserved in the Codex Regius and the text is as follows: <Valþi henne herfavðr hringa oc men fe spjöll spaclig oc spa ganda> (1v, 29). In Quinn’s article (2016a, 65) this is normalised as follows (I have added line breaks after verses 1 and 3):

Valði henni Herföðr
hringa ok men,
fê, spjöll spaklig
ok spáganda

Quinn translates: ‘War-father [a heiti for Óðinn] chose for her rings and necklaces, treasure, wise words and prophecy-wands.’

The text of the manuscript is printed unemended in some critical editions (including Jón Helgason 1964, 7) but, as Quinn notes, it has seemed unsatisfactory to many scholars and editors, beginning with Ettmüller in 1861 and continuing up to the *Íslenzk fornrit* edition in 2014 where Ettmüller’s conjectural emendation of <fe> to **fekk* is employed (Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, 298):

Valði henni Herfðör
 hringa ok men,
fekk spjöll spaklig
 ok spá ganda

Quinn (2016a, 66) notes: ‘This is a ritual moment of some importance, the emended text treated as a source in studies of religion and mythology.’ I certainly agree that it is not without problems to use text with a conjectural emendation as the basis for conclusions. But Quinn goes further: ‘The emendation of *fé* to *fekk* falsifies the witness, changes the nature of the transaction between Óðinn and the *vǫlva*, and alters our understanding of the mythological dynamic between them.’

There is no need to refer to a good-faith attempt to remove an error from the text in these terms. The proponents of the emendation believe that the text makes better sense with it than without it, meaning something like this: ‘Herfðör [Óðinn] selected her for her rings and necklaces; he received wise news and a prophecy by *gandar*’ (see further Heide 2006, 101, 194–96). This is, then, in accordance with the first stanza of the poem which also has Óðinn (*Valfðör*) receiving news (*spjöll*) from the *vǫlva*. To be sure, this semantic argument would not be strong enough on its own to justify a conjectural emendation.

The verse *fé, spjöll spaklig* is a stylistic oddity, but the principal objection is that it is unmetrical. A nomen (noun or adjective) must alliterate unless something earlier in the verse already alliterates. There are four exceptions to this rule in the Codex Regius text of *Vǫluspá*. Four exceptions! Does that not mean that this rule is no rule at all and nothing to worry about? Not at all, when we look at these exceptions in context. I have highlighted the offending nouns in R:

R	H	G
a) hljóðs bið ek allar kindir	hljóðs bið ek allar helgar kindir	<not in G>
b) fé spjöll spaklig ok spá ganda	<not in H>	<not in G>
c) þar súg Niðhoggr nái framgengna	þar saug Niðhoggr nái framgengna	þar kvefr Niðhoggr nái framgengna
d) ok um Moldþinur máttkan dæma ok á Fimbultýs, fornar rúnar.	ok minnask þar á megindóma ok á Fimbultýs fornar rúnar	(paraphrase) ok minnask á rúnar

In three cases, already discussed above, the rule is broken in R while H has a better text. And in the only remaining case we have no H or

G text to compare with. If the rules of alliteration were imaginary then it would be highly unexpected that H and G should fail to back up this sort of text in R in four out of four cases. The explanation is that the rule is very real and any violation of it is a strong indication of a scribal error.

It is likely that R has a scribal error in the verse <fe spioll spaelig>. Etmüller's emendation to *fekk* is a good guess. The word is repeatedly written <feç> in R, so this is an omission of one letter, much like <svg> for **saug*, <en> for **enu* or <vollu> for **vøllum*. A case can also be made for an emendation to *fyr*, which would entail that an abbreviation was misread. Semantically, this would give a very similar result with the stanza describing an exchange between Óðinn and the *vølva*.

Using an emended text as a source is to be done with caution but using a manuscript text which is highly likely to be corrupt is to be done with no less caution.

Conclusions

It is my contention that there are numerous scribal errors in the manuscripts of *Völuspá* and other Eddic poems and that critical editors should do their best to identify and correct these errors. For comparison we can look at *Hymiskviða*, which is preserved in Codex Regius (R) as well as in AM 748 I a 4to (A). In Jón Helgason's edition (1965, 40–46), some eighty-seven textual differences are noted between these two manuscripts for this poem of thirty-nine stanzas—a bit more than two differences per stanza. Yet R and A are closely related manuscripts deriving from the same written archetype. With this comparison in mind we should expect that a great many of the differences between the R and H texts of *Völuspá* are of scribal rather than oral origin.

The emphasis on oral tradition over the last decades has brought a welcome perspective to the study of Eddic poems. We expect that different oral variants of the same verse, stanza or poem can each have interest and legitimacy and that it is typically difficult or impossible to determine which is older or more authoritative. But this perspective should not obscure the hard-won insights of traditional philology into scribal variation, which typically arises through unintentional errors of predictable patterns as well as through conscious, but often poorly informed, efforts to correct the text.

One important tool to aid us in distinguishing oral variants from scribal errors is an understanding of the structure and rhythm of

poetry. Unfortunately, the field of metrics has acquired a reputation among many Eddic scholars as, at best, an abstruse and useless intellectual exercise and, at worst, an active impediment to an authentic understanding of the texts. This is regrettable, and to some extent we metrists have ourselves to blame. There is a lack of accessible up-to-date material to communicate the validity and usefulness of the discipline—something which goes beyond handbook chapters like Fulk 2016, good though it is, but stops short of a 1000-page expert-oriented tome like Suzuki 2014. A day when we had something similar to Jun Terasawa’s brilliant *Old English Metre: An Introduction* would be a happy day.

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