indicates a form of baptism that anticipates her ascension into heaven with Christ (pp. 198–99). Many of his points are nevertheless worthy of further consideration.

The final part of the volume is made up of two short essays that deal with the Hólar image, the exhibition of which gave occasion for the conference from which this collection of essays is derived. The first is Guðrún Harðardóttir’s ‘A View on the Preservation History of the Last Judgement Panels from Bjarnastaðahlið, and Some Speculation on the Medieval Cathedrals at Hólar’, which attempts to chart as much of the history of this particular Doomsday image as can be pieced together. The final essay is ‘A Nocturnal Wake at Hólar: The Judgement Day Panels as a Possible Explanation for a Miracle Legend’ by Þóra Kristjánsdóttir, which suggests that the image may have been the source of two quasi-supernatural visions described in Jóns saga: an appealing idea, although such a suggestion can never be more than conjecture. Both essays are admirable on their own terms, but suffer from their placement in the greater context of the volume as a seemingly irrelevant postscript to a book otherwise exclusively dealing with Volsápá.

The individual essays in this volume are of high quality, but its form raises some problems. As a natural consequence of the fact that ten of the essays engage exclusively with the same poem, a great deal of repetition is evident. This is not the fault of any individual writer, but it becomes apparent in a cover-to-cover reading of the book, and although the constituent essays do occasionally cite each other there is nevertheless little sense that they fit together cohesively. The connection between Volsápá and the Hólar image, furthermore, is at best tenuous despite Pétur Pétursson’s eloquent attempts to justify it, and in the end I must agree with Vésteinn Ólason that, whilst pictorial art may well have influenced medieval Scandinavian writers, ‘individual cases are nonetheless obviously controversial and difficult to prove’ (p. 27). On the whole, however, this is a useful and important book: it provides an examination of the ‘state of the art’ of Volsápá, drawing on the recent work of many major scholars. It is essential reading for anyone writing on Volsápá, and makes a significant contribution to the study of Old Norse mythology as a whole.

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In the past decades Old Norse metrists have concentrated their efforts on the intricate dróttkvætt form and the other skaldic metres, while the plainer metres of Eddic poetry have suffered comparative neglect. Seiichi Suzuki’s weighty tome goes a long way towards restoring balance to the field. One of the principal strengths of Suzuki’s work, drawing on his previous detailed studies of the metres of Beowulf
and the *Heliand*, is the comparative Germanic perspective. Other strengths include the author’s fluency in statistical reasoning and his exceptional thoroughness within his chosen domain.

Suzuki divides his book into three parts: on *fornyrðislag*, *málaháttr* and *ljóðaháttr*. Topics discussed include alliteration, anacrusis, catalexis, Craige’s law, resolution (and its suspension) and stanza construction. A central thread of the book is the classification of verses into metrical types, culminating in the 227-page *Index of scansion*, containing Suzuki’s classification of every verse in his corpus. A short appendix deals with the question of structural parallelism between *dróttkvætt* and the Eddic metres.

Suzuki’s work is firmly situated in the tradition of Sievers’s five-type system and engages with the ideas of scholars such as Hugo Gering and Hans Kuhn. Suzuki accepts and defends Hans Kuhn’s bifurcation of *fornyrðislag* poetry into foreign and domestic poems, where the foreign group is characterised by ‘subject matter of south German origin’ (p. 6). But Suzuki is by no means a slavish follower of Kuhn and criticises him for taking an overly broad view of *fornyrðislag*. Suzuki argues, I think rightly, that *málaháttr* should not be conflated with *fornyrðislag*. He further considers *Atlakvida*, *Hamðismál* and *Hárbarðsljóð* to be metrically distinctive enough for each poem to be dealt with in a separate chapter. This, too, seems sensible.

Suzuki is refreshingly forthright in his approach and presents his arguments and conclusions with confidence and vigour. His text is mercifully free from buzzwords and attempts to pander to or associate with the latest scholarly fashions. While I respect this, I sometimes wish that Suzuki had spent more time engaging with Eddic scholarship of the last fifty years or so.

One of the book’s main weaknesses is its inattention to philology, in particular its nearly complete lack of interest in the preservation of the poetry which it deals with. Suzuki accepts the text of the Neckel–Kuhn edition as an authoritative basis for determining the metrical competence of the poets. The possibilities of modification in transmission, lapses in performance and recording and copyist errors are almost entirely ignored. An illustrative example is chapter 1.4 where Suzuki shows that in the b-verse of his *fornyrðislag* corpus, there are, by his analysis, 2989 examples of single alliteration and eight examples of double alliteration. Suzuki argues that the eight instances of double alliteration ‘cannot be explained away as occurrences by pure chance’ (p. 17). His argument is as follows. If double alliteration in the b-verse was categorically forbidden we would expect 0 out of 2997 verses to have it. If we use Fisher’s exact test to compare 0 vs 2997 to 8 vs 2989 we get a *p*-value of 0.008 and Suzuki feels this justifies his conclusion. I have never seen statistical reasoning like this before. Surely, as soon as you have even one example of double alliteration, the hypothesis that double alliteration doesn’t occur is disproved with *p* = 0. But this is a red herring. The real issue is whether the tiny number of instances could be due to slips of the pen and other errors. This philological question is not addressed, and unfortunately this is characteristic of the book as a whole.

The book’s other main weakness is the narrow restriction of the corpus. Old Norse poetry outside of the Neckel–Kuhn edition of the *Poetic Edda* is ignored.
While it is reasonable enough to focus on the *Poetic Edda*, Suzuki’s treatment of many problems would surely have benefitted from comparison with other sources. Suzuki is concerned with the historical development of the Norse metres and he argues that *ljóðaháttr* is a relatively young phenomenon developing, to some degree, out of *málaháttr* (pp. 792–98). In this connection a discussion of Haraldskvæði, Hákonarmál and Eiríksmál would have been to the point. These archaic poems are composed in a mixture of *málaháttr* and *ljóðaháttr* and seem to provide some support for Suzuki’s idea. But they go unmentioned.

Also ignored is court poetry in fornrydislag, such as *Erfikvæði* by Gísli Illugason and Sigurðarbalkr by Ívarr Ingimundarson. These poems are composed in a highly regular fornrydislag where each verse has four positions. In contrast, most of the fornrydislag poems in the *Poetic Edda* have occasional instances of verses with three or five positions. Suzuki departs from tradition in analysing verses like Hymiskviða 13.5 ‘Fram gengi þeir’ or Hymiskviða 31.1 ‘Harðr reis á kné’ as three-position verses (A1-) rather than as four-position verses (of type D or E). But is it not troubling for this analysis that such verses also occur in the skaldic poems (e.g. Erfikvæði 1.1 ‘Ungr framði sik’ and Sigurðarbalkr 20.3 ‘vargr goin of val’)?

Catalectic (three-position) verses are a feature of Old Norse poetry with no cousin in West Germanic poetry, and Suzuki, to his credit, gives them a good deal of room in his Eddic analysis. But he never refers to *kvíðuháttur*, where catalectic verses are used systematically. Archaic *kvíðuháttur* poems, like Ynglingatal and Arinbjarnarkviða, are never mentioned. The stanza on the Rök stone, which starts with a catalectic verse, is also absent. In the face of constant comparison with *Beowulf* and the *Heliand*, the decision not to make use of any Norse comparative material is puzzling.

Despite these limitations, Suzuki’s book is a useful resource for any scholar seeking detailed knowledge of the metrical structure of Eddic poetry. I expect to continue to refer to it for years to come.

Haukur Porgeirsson

Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum

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In Ursula Dronke’s original plan for her editions of Eddic poems her intention, after the editing of four heroic poems in Volume I and five mythological poems in Volume II, was for Volume III to cover the Helgi poems and the Sigurðr cycle, while Volume IV would complete the collection with editions of all the remaining mythological poems in the Codex Regius, together with Grottasongr. Her actual third volume, however, begins with a Preface which announces a change of plan: ‘After the group of major mythological poems edited and presented in Volume II, the most pressing immediate task, it seemed to me, was to complement this group by the four most complex—and in my view most outstanding—among the