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# Introduction

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## Introduction

Dieter Gunkel and Olav Hackstein

The present volume unites fifteen studies on language and meter. For the most part, the articles began as lectures delivered during the interdisciplinary conference on "Language and Meter in Diachrony and Synchrony," which was hosted in Munich from September 2nd–4th, 2013 by the Department of Historical and Indo-European Linguistics at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. The study of language and meter has profited from numerous advances over the last several hundred years. Scholars have produced accurate editions of poetic texts, added linguistic theory to description, utilized quantitative methods to test hypotheses, and provided descriptions and analyses of a relatively broad range of metrical traditions. To quote an influential handbook article on meter (Brogan 1993: 781), "Linguistics, texts, theory, and data – these are the essential preliminaries. At the turn of the 21st c., pretty much everything still remains to be done." In our view, the contributions to this volume make a respectable amount of headway on numerous fronts. In the following overview, we intend to give a sense of the breadth of topics and traditions treated in the contributions as well as their relationship to previous scholarship.

Six studies treat the ancient Greek tradition prominently, with special attention paid to the Homeric epics and their vehicle, the dactylic hexameter. These include the contributions of the three keynote speakers who contributed to the volume. Paul Kiparsky argues that syncopation/anaclasis, a metrical device that licenses the equivalence of  $\sim -$  and  $- \sim$ , was a unique feature of Indo-European versification. He then proposes that a number of meters, including the Greek glyconic, ionic, and iambo-choriambic ones, developed from syncopated

realizations of the basic Indo-European line, an octosyllabic iambic dimeter, and that further meters, including the hexameter, developed from distichs consisting of two such lines. Along the way, Kiparsky introduces generative metrics, examines the use of syncope in the Vedic, Classical Sanskrit, Persian, and ancient Greek traditions, reviews previous proposals about the history of the hexameter (West 1973a, Nagy 1974, Berg 1978), and discusses the distinction between themes (in the sense of Watkins 1995) and formulae, arguing against the view that formulae could create meter (Nagy 1974). In an illuminating study, Alan J. Nussbaum identifies a particular set of Neo-Ionic forms that must have entered the repertory of the Homeric epics at a relatively recent date, examines the expressions in which they are employed, and accounts for how and why they made their way into the poems. Central to Nussbaum's account is the notion of the "formulary template," i.e. a line segment of a particular metrical shape, syntax, and semantics that serves as the model for a new segment with the same shape, syntax, and similar semantics. Interestingly, the model and derivative segments do not necessarily share lexical material. Nussbaum's study also includes a detailed treatment of the phonological development of proto-Greek sequences of the type \* -e(C)e(C)a/o- that builds on Nussbaum 1998. The late Martin L. West opens his contribution on Homeric versification with an informative typology of metrical irregularities that have a historical explanation, then closes with the discussion of a number of lines that require individual explanations, including several for which "the author of the Odyssey [...] must be convicted of occasional bad versification."

Continuing a sequence of studies on the sound patterns of archaic Greek incipits (Katz 2013a, 2013b), Joshua T. Katz proposes that the third word of the Iliad, the vocative θεῆ 'goddess', provides further evidence for the "hymnic long alpha," an ideophone that the poets employed to indicate that divine song was beginning. As Katz notes, the employment of the overlong vowel is similar to that of the sacred syllable *om* in (Vedic) Sanskrit, which is uttered before reciting mantras. Claire Le Feuvre argues on the basis of syntactic and morphological irregularities that the transitive use of κάμνω (*kámnō*) in the sense 'make, fashion' was an innovation restricted to Homeric diction. Le Feuvre suggests that the transitivization of the verb resulted from a syntactic reanalysis that was promoted by the exigencies of the meter in combination with the desire to employ a formulaic expression containing a singular form of the verb in the plural. Eva Tichy takes Nils Berg's theory of the history of the hexameter as a working hypothesis (Berg 1978,

Berg and Lindeman 1992, Berg and Haug 2000) and analyzes the text of the *Iliad*. Tichy finds a distinction between older material rooted in an Aeolic tradition of oral lyric, on the one hand, and Homer's own Ionic hexameters, on the other. Tichy's study bolsters an ongoing research program (Tichy 2010, 2012) that Martin West has referred to as sensational (West 2011) and that is invigorating scholarship on the history of the epics.

Three articles deal with the Italic tradition and its Indo-European relatives and antecedents. Emmanuel Dupraz studies the Iguvine Tables from a stylistic standpoint and argues that several sections, which contain sets of parallel instructions, exhibit a syntactic stylistic device that qualifies them as artistic prose. Vincent Martzloff tackles the meters of the earliest Latin and Sabellic poetry. Building on Angelo Mercado's influential work on Italic meter (Mercado 2012), Martzloff argues that strong metrical positions are preferentially realized by word-level stress in a way that reflects the relative stress principle. In his own contribution to the volume, Angelo Mercado provides an account of how the quantitative-syllabic meters reconstructed for Indo-European developed into the accent-based meters of proto-Italic. Mercado's contribution includes a concise overview of diachronic work on Indo-European metrics (Meillet 1923, Jakobson 1952, Watkins 1963, West 1973b) as well as thoughtful considerations of theory and method, including the utility of generative metrics for synchronic analysis (Kiparsky 1977, this volume) and ways in which historical syntax can contribute to diachronic metrics.

Two articles are dedicated to Indo-Iranian poetry. Continuing previous work on Ṛgvedic poetics (Gunkel and Ryan 2011), Dieter Gunkel and Kevin M. Ryan present new phonological evidence that the distich/couplet was a compositional unit for the poets of the Ṛgveda: the poets avoid vowel hiatus more within couplets than between them; they also avoid  $\check{V}C\#V$  junctures more within couplets than between them. The evidence also suggests that the poets treated distichs consisting of octosyllabic dimeter verses as tighter units than those of the longer trimeter verses. As noted above, the dimeter distich plays a prominent role in current accounts of the history of the dactylic hexameter, including those of Kiparsky and Tichy (this volume). According to Gunkel and Ryan, the dimeter distich is securely attested in the oldest Indic poetry. Martin Kümmel takes a fresh approach to Old Avestan meter. Bringing previous work on Iranian

phonology to bear (Kümmel 2014), Kümmel first marshals evidence that syllable weight in Old Avestan may well have been calculated much as it was in Sogdian, rather than as in Vedic, as is usually assumed. Taking that as a working hypothesis, he revisits quantity distribution in the meters of the Old Avestan corpus. The picture that emerges under Sogdian-style scansion, which Kümmel compares with Vedic-style scansion throughout, is new in several respects, e.g. an iambic rhythm emerges in the opening of the most common meter of the Gathas. In closing, Kümmel points out that the traditional reconstruction of Indo-European meter on the basis of the Vedic and Greek traditions may well be problematic.

Tocharian is likewise treated in two contributions. Melanie Malzahn examines a number of (morpho)phonological processes that are characteristic of Tocharian B metrical texts, including sandhi, vowel syncope, and the distribution of “mobile o,” and argues for a Tocharian B *Kunstsprache*. Building on earlier work (Malzahn 2010, 2012a, 2012b), Malzahn concludes that the poets chose between more formal/archaic linguistic forms and less formal/innovative ones for metrical convenience and stylistic variation. Malzahn compares this with Homeric diction as treated in Hackstein 2002. Michaël Peyrot addresses the relationship between the Tocharian A and B metrical traditions. Comparing the metrical schemes, on the one hand, and the names of tunes, on the other, he concludes that Tocharian A borrowed, and then elaborated on, the metrical tradition of Tocharian B. This supports his view that the Tocharian A language was significantly influenced by B (Peyrot 2008, 2010). Peyrot’s contribution includes an appendix of Tocharian tune names and metrical schemes, which supersedes previous lists and will no doubt be useful for editors and metricians alike.

Two studies treat Germanic alliterative verse. Rosemarie Lühr argues that the Germanic alliterative tradition should be analyzed following Sievers (1893), with some modification, rather than Heusler (1925). She then goes on to analyze passages from the *Muspilli* and the *Hildebrandlied*. Building on previous work (Lühr 1982), she argues that there is no need to assume gaps in the text of the *Hildebrandlied*. Central to Lühr’s analysis is the notion that the poet used departures from the normal alliterative scheme to mark the beginning and end of direct speech. Paul Widmer explores the relationship between North Germanic and Insular Celtic court

poetry. He argues that the North Germanic, Irish, and Brythonic traditions underwent convergent developments that were driven by the desire of the local elite to emulate the *Leitkultur* of the Roman world.

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