

The recurring collocation of *vreiðr* and *vega* in Old Norse poetry

James Parkhouse
jamesparkhouse1@gmail.com

DOI: [10.56004/v2.2jp](https://doi.org/10.56004/v2.2jp)



Published under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 license.

Abstract: Poetry in early Germanic vernaculars exhibits variations on a metrical form predicated on a pattern of alliterating stressed syllables linking two halves of a line (in contrast to syllabic metres in which scansion requires a fixed number of syllables per line). This gave rise to the phenomenon of recurring alliterative collocations: the repeated combination of alliterating words or word-roots within a given poetic corpus. It is likely that such collocations originated, like formulae in oral-formulaic theory developed by Milman Parry and A.B. Lord, as building blocks for extempore composition during performance. However, there is strong evidence that Old Norse poetry was composed deliberately and memorized for performance. Recurring collocations in Old Norse verse therefore reflect conscious artistic design rather than compositional expediency. This article focuses on one such collocation—the adjective *vreiðr* (angry) and the verb *vega* (to fight, to strike)—as a case study of the way in which composers of Old Norse eddic verse exploited the traditional resonances of certain collocations to shape audience understanding of character and plot.

Keywords: Old Norse literature, eddic poetry, collocation, oral theory, traditional referentiality

Old Norse poetry, like other poetry in early Germanic vernaculars, was composed in alliterative metre, the scansion of which is predicated on a pattern of stressed alliterating syllables linking two halves of a full line.¹ The oral composition of alliterative verse gave rise to the phenomenon of recurring alliterative collocations—the repeated combination of certain alliterating word-roots. Alliterative collocations have been extensively studied in Old English poetry (e.g., Creed 1961; Quirk 1963; Lynch 1972; Kintgen 1977; Tyler 2006;

¹ See Fulk (2016) for an overview of eddic metres, and Suzuki (2014) for a more detailed analysis.

Szöke 2014), but they have only recently begun to receive attention in the context of Old Norse verse (Ruggerini 2016; McKinnell 2022). Ruggerini in particular has illustrated how the occurrence of a certain word may prompt expectation of a given collocate—expectation which could be satisfied or subverted for rhetorical effect. Through innovative substitution of homophones or near-homophones, established collocating pairs could be expanded into broader collocational sets. The following discussion takes a narrower focus than Ruggerini’s excellent analysis of several such sets, considering a single repeated alliterative coupling. The corpus of Old Norse eddic poetry features seven instances in which inflections of the adjective (*v*)*reiðr* (angry) are collocated with inflections of the verb *vega* (to fight, to strike). The recurrence of the collocation has long been noted (e.g., Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson 1931: 461–2; Schier 1986: 379; Fidjestøl 1999: 235; Thorvaldson 2016: 77–8; Haukur Þorgeirsson 2017: 35). However, little has been said concerning its function in the artistic design of the poets who employed it. This paper seeks to identify a network of traditional resonances evoked by the use of this collocation. The corpus of eddic poetry comprises verse on mythological and heroic subjects, mostly composed between the ninth and thirteenth centuries in Scandinavia and associated colonies—though the date and provenance of individual poems, and the criteria for establishing these, remain the subject of scholarly debate. The principal source is the Codex Regius (GKS 2365 4°), henceforth CR, an Icelandic anthology manuscript written around AD 1270; alongside the 29 compositions contained in CR, the corpus also includes stylistically similar poems, stanzas, and isolated verses preserved in medieval and early modern Icelandic prose sagas, historical texts, and poetical treatises. Eddic verse is conventionally distinguished from ‘skaldic’ verse on a number of grounds: eddic verse is typically composed in less intricate metres, and tends to deal with mythological-legendary subject matter, whereas skaldic verse deals predominantly with occasional topics such as encomia for the poet’s patron; skaldic verse is characterized by more complex and riddling diction including heavy use of *kennings*, a kind of compound periphrasis.² Eddic verse is generally anonymous, whilst skaldic poems and stanzas are often reliably attributed to named poets. However, all of these criteria admit of exceptions. The distinction remains useful for some critical purposes, though it is increasingly recognized as artificial and porous by modern scholarship (e.g., Haymes 2004: 54; Clunies Ross 2012: xiii–xviii; Schorn 2016a: 232–4). The poems with which this paper is concerned comprise three eddic poems preserved in CR, and one skaldic poem preserved in Snorri Sturluson’s *Edda*, a treatise on mythology and poetics written in Iceland in the thirteenth century. Before turning to the texts, it is important to estab-

² Easier to demonstrate than describe, a kenning describes a given referent in terms of a secondary referent and a determinant: a ship, for instance, can be called *marblakks* ([of the] sea-steed: Einarr Skúlason, *Elfarvísur* 1/2; Gade 2009: 566–7); the sea, in turn, may be referred to by the kenning ‘the path of seagulls’, so that a ship can be *hesti máva rasta* (horse of the path of seagulls: *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* 35/4; McTurk 2017: 692). ‘Horse’ could also be denoted periphrastically by the same method, which could in principle be extended indefinitely.

lish the appropriate framework within which to discuss repetitive diction in eddic poetry. The phenomenon of formulaic language in oral-derived poetry inevitably calls to mind the pioneering work of the Homeric scholars Milman Parry and A. B. Lord, whose fieldwork with prevalingly illiterate poets in the Balkans underpinned insights into the repetitive nature of the Homeric epics as the residue, or expression, of oral composition.³ Parry and Lord held that oral formulae functioned as expedients to composition during performance, by expressing essential ideas under different metrical conditions (e.g., Parry 1971 (1928); Lord 1960). A corollary of this view is that formulae have no rhetorical content: thus, for instance, common noun-epithet formulae such as γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (bright-eyed Athene) or πῶδας ὠκύς Ἀχιλλεύς (swift-footed Achilles) respectively denote simply 'Athena' and 'Achilles'. Few oralists today would adhere to this hard line; the concept of 'traditional referentiality' developed by John Miles Foley (1991: 7 and *passim*) articulates the way in which traditional expressions acquire rhetorical significance through invocation of previous occurrences within a given oral tradition, situating each occurrence of a formula within the totality of the story-world known to the audience (see, e.g., Dunkle 1997; Kelly 2010; Burgess 2010 for Homeric examples). Elsewhere, Foley has suggested that formulae in a given tradition will fall somewhere along a 'spectrum of rhetorical signification' (1995: 95–6), with some having greater rhetorical content than others. Metrical utility may only be one of numerous factors in the perpetuation of a given formula. Daniel Sävborg (2018) has recently applied traditional referentiality fruitfully to formulae in Icelandic prose sagas, which are also believed to be orally derived;⁴ as we shall see, it is equally constructive to examine eddic collocations through this lens. The Parry-Lord theory is of limited utility in the analysis of eddic poetry for an additional reason. Parry and Lord described a process of extemporized composition during performance; due to the groundbreaking nature of their work, this model of oral composition has often been applied uncritically to oral poetic traditions across the board (Foley 1996: 23). It is probable that some collocations attested in the eddic corpus, in particular those with cognates in other Germanic verse corpora, originally had a compositional function similar to that of formulae in the Parry-Lord sense (Ruggerini 2016: 310–12). A range of evidence, however, points to Old Norse poetry being of the kind dismissed somewhat reductively by Lord as 'written literature without writing' (Stolz and Shannon 1976: 176). Joseph Harris (1983: 191) has suggested the term 'deliberative composition' to denote this process of composition and memorization prior to performance,

³ Bernardo Ballesteros Petrella in the present volume raises important caveats regarding the implications of the term 'oral-derived'; it is retained as convenient here, since the Old Norse poetic tradition underpinning the extant works (whether or not these were themselves oral compositions) developed prior to the introduction of writing with Christianisation. Whilst the corpus of early Scandinavian runic inscriptions antedating the adoption of Latin literacy includes some verse, it is generally agreed that the runic script cannot have been the only or primary medium for the composition and transmission of poetry (e.g., Harris 1985: 112–14; cf. Clunies Ross 2016: 12).

⁴ The word *saga*, the Old Norse term for such prose narratives, later borrowed from Icelandic into English, means 'utterance', and is cognate with, e.g., English *say*, German *sagen* 'to say', and Latin *inquam* 'I say' (all < PIE *sekʷ- 'to say, tell').

in contrast to the Parry-Lord model of extempore composition during performance. The formulaic density of eddic verse is far lower than that of the Homeric poems or of the Serbo-Croat poetry documented by Parry and Lord (Haymes 2004: 53);⁵ the terseness of the heroic poems likewise contrasts with the expansive narrative style characteristic of improvised compositions (Haymes 1976: 50–2); the Old Norse-Icelandic lexicon offers distinct terms for composition and performance of poetry (Harris 1985: 115); a much-discussed passage in *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* describes the deliberative oral composition of a (skaldic) poem (*Egils saga* 61; Sigurður Nordal 1933: 177–92).⁶ The cumulative force of these observations, alongside the documentation of comparable oral poetic traditions by modern anthropologists, notably in Somalia, strongly suggests that Old Norse poetry was deliberately composed and memorized for performance, producing relatively stable texts.⁷ The distinction between deliberative and improvised composition is an important one to set alongside that between oral and literary. Both may be considered spectra, rather than binaries.⁸ It is also crucial to realize that these two axes are not equivalent: oral poetry is not necessarily improvised, and deliberative poetry is not necessarily literary (Haymes 1976: 49). For present purposes, the distinction is of considerable significance in our evaluation of repetition. At face value, the deliberative composition of eddic verse invites comparison to strictly literary compositions, inasmuch as repeated phraseology may be assumed to be wholly the product of artistic design: as Bernt Øyvind Thorvaldsen notes (2008: 148): ‘Når en dikter velger å gjenta et uttrykk, ... så er det rimelig å anta at han eller hun har grunner til å gjøre nettopp det.’ (When a poet chooses to repeat an expression, ... it is reasonable to suppose that he or she has reasons to do just that.) Indeed, an essentially literary outlook underpins two influential perspectives on the study of eddic repetition. The first focuses on internal echoes as a structural principle within individual poems (e.g., Taylor 1963; Lehman 1963; Haymes 2004), the second on purported intertextual allusions indicating the direct dependence of one poem on another (e.g., de Vries 1928; Hallberg 1954; Andersson 1983; Jakobsen 1984; McKinnell 2014). The analysis given here seeks to situate at least some forms of repetition more firmly in the context of the eddic corpus’ background in oral tradition. Refinements to oral-formulaic theory have posed serious challenges to textual loan arguments (Acker 2014: 77–80; Thorvaldsen 2008), though such studies can offer fruitful readings of

⁵ In the field of early Germanic poetry, Benson (1966) and Haymes (1980) have shown that formulaic density *per se* is an unsound basis for asserting oral composition, though highly formulaic literary works composed in conscious imitation of oral works presuppose a tradition of oral-formulaic composition to emulate.

⁶ Harris (1985: 114–17); Acker (2014: 85–86); Haymes (2004: 48–49).

⁷ See Finnegan (1977: 73–75) on the Somali material; Haymes (2004: 48–49) draws the comparison to Old Norse poetry. Interestingly, classical Somali poetry is also bound by (rather different) rules concerning alliterating stresses (see Finnegan 1977: 91–5). Finnegan discusses Somali alliterative verse in conjunction with Old English and (more briefly) Old Norse, but does not bring the comparison directly to bear on the question of the composition of Germanic poetry.

⁸ As Harris (1983) has pointed out, the mode of composition of a given text may differ from its subsequent mode(s) of transmission. For challenges to the binary distinction between oral and literary, see Zumthor (1988; 1990: 25), and other papers in this volume which further address the question in a diverse range of temporal and cultural contexts.

certain poems. Analyses of internal repetition have provided an important corrective to conceptions of eddic poetry as rustic or primitive, demonstrating that they display considerable compositional sophistication (Lehman 1963: 14). Haymes (2004: 51–53) has shown how repeated verses are used to draw structural and thematic links between paired scenes in the eddic poem *Atlakviða* (Akv.). I provide a synopsis of the poem for the benefit of non-specialist readers:

The Hunnic king Atli (Attila the Hun) lures the Burgundian king Gunnarr and his brother Høgni, the brothers of his wife Guðrún, to his hall and captures them in an attempt to learn where their fabled wealth is hidden. When they refuse to surrender the treasure, he has them killed. To avenge her brothers, Guðrún kills her sons by Atli and feeds him their flesh and blood, revealing their fate before murdering Atli himself in their marriage bed and burning down his hall.

At the opening of the poem, Atli's messenger rides through Mirkwood to the Burgundian hall to deliver Atli's invitation (Akv. 1–5) and returns leading Gunnarr and Høgni to their fate (Akv. 13–16). Clusters of verbal echoes underscore the symmetry of the two journeys, emphasizing that Gunnarr and Høgni will not return to their home (Akv. 3/3–4 ≈ 13/3–4; 2/3 = 14/11; 3/7–8 ≈ 16/3–4). Later, Gunnarr refuses to divulge the location of his treasure hoard without proof of Høgni's death (Akv. 21). Atli cuts out the heart of a scullion, Hjalli, attempting to pass it off as Høgni's (Akv. 22–23), before cutting out Høgni's heart in earnest. Høgni laughs as he is butchered (Akv. 24), and Gunnarr triumphantly declares that the secret of the treasure can now die with him (Akv. 25). A further series of phraseological echoes between the two heart-cutting scenes serves to emphasize Høgni's heroic stature through contrast with Hjalli (Akv. 22/1 cf. 24/2; 22/3–4 = 24/5–6; 23/1–10 cf. 25/1–10). This example is significant because, as Haymes further notes, the repeated verses in *Atlakviða* do not appear to be traditional phraseology, since they do not recur elsewhere in the eddic corpus. The rhetorical effect of the repetition can be fully appreciated in literary terms. This is not the case, however, with the collocation of *vreiðr* and *vega* which is the subject of this article.

The distribution of *vreiðr* and *vega* in the eddic corpus

The collocation of *vreiðr* and *vega* occurs across three poems as conventionally edited: three times each in *Lokasenna* (15/4–5; 18/6; 27/6) and *Fáfnismál* (7/3; 17/3; 30/3), and once in *Sigrdrifumál* (28/3). The CR collection includes a total of 428 lines alliterating on *v-*, of which

the root *vreiðr* occurs in eight, and the root *vega* in 32.⁹ The collocation thus accounts for seven of the 32 instances in which the root *vega* bears alliterative stress (21.9%),¹⁰ and seven of eight (87.5%) for *vreiðr*.¹¹ The clear impression that the observed level of co-occurrence is not coincidental can be confirmed statistically. The data can be presented as follows in a two-by-two contingency table:

	V-alliterating lines containing <i>vega</i>	V-alliterating lines not containing <i>vega</i>	TOTAL
V-alliterating lines containing <i>vreiðr</i>	7	1	8
V-alliterating lines not containing <i>vreiðr</i>	25	395	420
TOTAL	32	396	428

Fisher's exact test is a statistical test used to evaluate the independence of two variables—in this case, occurrences of the *vreiðr* and *vega* roots. The test returns the hypergeometric probability of a given distribution of the two variables. From the distribution in the table above, the test finds that there is a statistically significant association between the occurrences of the two word-roots (one-tailed $p < 0.0001$). In other words, it is exceedingly unlikely that the two roots could have been combined seven times by chance.

In addition to being a deliberate poetic device, the distribution of the collocation in the CR corpus indicates its traditionality. It should be acknowledged that the poems traditionally called *Fáfnismál* and *Sigrdrífumál* are not clearly separate entities in CR but are sections of a continuous prosimetric sequence beginning with *Reginismál*. Nevertheless, the use of the collocation by at least two eddic poets indicates its nature as a traditional po-

⁹ There are thus 25 instances in which *vega* bears alliterative stress without collocating with *vreiðr*: *Völuspá* 53/3–4; *Hávamál* 125/8; *Grímnismál* 23/6; *Skírnismál* 24/6–7; *Hárbarðsljóð* 16/5–6; *Lokasenna* 42/6, 46/6, 64/6; *Helgakviða Hundingsbana I* 14/1–2; *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar* 36/5–6; *Helgakviða Hundingsbana II* 4/7–8; *Reginismál* 19/3–4; *Fáfnismál* 4/6; *Sigrdrífumál* in *skamma* 1/3–4, 3/5–6, 38/3–4; *Guðrúnarkviða II* 4/7–8, 17/11–12; *Oddrúnargrátr* 18/1–2; *Atlamál* in *Grœnlensku* 79/7–8, 85/1–2, 88/5–6, 98/5–6; *Guðrúnarhvöt* 10/3–4; *Hamðismál* 30/1–2. Likewise, *vreiðr* bears alliterative stress once outside of the collocation, at *Þrymskviða* 1/1–2. Verse counts are derived from Kellogg (1998), excluding verses from poetry not contained in CR.

¹⁰ The corpus features a further 16 verses in which the verb *vega* appears in a non-alliterating stressed position (*Völuspá* 32/8, 52/4, 54/4; *Hávamál* 71/3; *Skírnismál* 8/5, 9/5; *Lokasenna* 58/5; *Helgakviða Hundingsbana I* 10/6; *Gripisspá* 11/1; *Reginismál* 24/2; *Fáfnismál* 23/2, 30/5; *Atlamál* in *Grœnlensku* 52/1, 88/7; *Guðrúnarhvöt* 17/4; *Hamðismál* 28/4).

¹¹ The form *reiðr* (with loss of initial *v*– see below) occurs six times, bearing alliterative stress on *r*– three times (*Skírnismál* 33/1, 33/2; *Atlamál* in *Grœnlensku* 53/1–2).

etic expression—an impression corroborated by its further occurrence in a skaldic poem, *Þórsdrápa*, by the tenth-century poet Eilífr Goðrúnarson (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2017: 42–3). Aside from the unclear situation with *Fáfnismál* and *Sigrdrífumál*, there is nothing to suggest a stemmatic relationship between these poems (though it is not impossible that the recurrence of the collocation in the eddic compositions factored into the decision of the CR compiler to include them). The antiquity of the expression is further, and perhaps decisively, evinced by the observation that the alliterative metre in each of the verses in question demands the restoration of initial *v-* to the manuscript form *reiðr*. This indicates that the habitual collocation of these roots originated prior to the loss of this initial in West Norse dialects, seemingly by c. AD 1000 (Fidjestøl 1999: 245; Haukur Þorgeirsson 2017: 45).¹² As noted above, the deliberative nature of eddic composition means that the repetition of certain expressions is particularly likely to be governed essentially by stylistic concerns, since compositional expedience is not a factor. In the case of a demonstrably traditional expression such as the collocation of *vreiðr* and *vega*, we may therefore expect it to fall towards the rhetorically rich end of Foley’s spectrum (1995: 95–6), since much of its stylistic value consists in its rhetorical signification. Comparison of the narrative contexts in which the collocation occurs can elucidate the rhetorical resonances that it evoked in the minds of the poets and primary audiences of eddic poetry.

Let us now consider these contexts in the poems of CR. For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with the Old Norse sources, a summary of each poem with contextual background is followed by a survey of the occurrences of the collocation. The eddic poems are quoted from Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (2014); translations are my own (for stanzas not cited here, see Larrington 2014). To facilitate appreciation of the alliterative structure of the verses in question, I have underlined the alliterating initials in each verse containing the collocation and used italics for the collocating words in both quotation and translation.

Lokasenna (Ls.)

The gods are hosted by the sea-giant Ægir at a feast, to which the trickster-god Loki is not invited. Loki interrupts the feast and demands a seat, invoking oaths of blood-brotherhood sworn with Óðinn. He then insults each of the gods and goddesses in turn, until the late arrival of Þórr prompts Loki to withdraw. He is subsequently captured and imprisoned; other sources tell that he will escape to lead the enemies of the gods at the apocalyptic battle of Ragnarök.

(1) Our collocation first appears during Loki’s dispute with the god Bragi: after trying un-

¹² The antiquity of the collocation remains likely whether or not one accepts Haukur’s defence of alliterating *v-* in (*v*)*reiðr* and other words as a reliable dating criterion for eddic poems.

successfully to bar Loki from Ægir's feast (*Ls.* 8), Bragi offers conciliatory gifts (*Ls.* 12), prompting Loki to accuse him of cowardice (*Ls.* 13). Bragi responds with angry bluster (*Ls.* 14), threatening Loki with violence. Loki calls his bluff, retorting (*Ls.* 15/1–6):

Snjallr ertu í sessi
skalattu svá gora,
Bragi bekkskrautuðr;
vega þú gakk,
ef þú *vreiðr* sér,
hyggz vætr hvatr fyrir.

You're brave in your seat,
But you won't do as you say,
Bragi the bench-ornament!
Go and *fight*,
if you are *angry*—
a brave man would think nothing of it!

(2) Bragi's wife Iðunn intervenes on his behalf, making a show of diffusing the situation (*Ls.* 16/1–6):

Bið ek, Bragi,
barna sífjar duga
ok allra óskmaga,
at þú Loka
kveðira lastastofum
Ægis hǫllu í.

I ask you, Bragi,
to do a service to your blood-kin
and all the adoptive relatives,
that to Loki
you shouldn't speak insults
inside Ægir's hall.

In doing so, she draws Loki's invective upon herself, as he responds by calling her 'allra kvenna | vergjarnasta' (of all women the most man-crazed: *Ls.* 17/2–3). The collocation recurs as Iðunn insists on her role as a peacemaker between Loki and Bragi (*Ls.* 18/1–6):

Loka ek kveðka
 lastastöfum
 Ægis hǫllu í;
 Braga ek kyrri,
 bjórreifan,
 vilkat ek at it *vreiðir vegisk*.

I do not speak
 insults to Loki
 inside Ægir's hall;
 I quietened Bragi,
 made talkative with beer;
 I do not want you *angry men to fight*.

(3) Finally, when Loki accuses Óðinn's wife Frigg of lust and adultery (Ls. 26), she angrily replies that he would pay for his insults if her son Baldr were present (Ls. 27/1–6):

Veiztu, ef ek inni ættak
 Ægis hǫllum í
 Baldri líkan bur,
 út þú né kvomir
 frá ása sonum
 ok væri þá at þér *vreiðum vegit*.

You know, if I had
 inside Ægir's hall
 a boy like Baldr,
 you wouldn't get away
 from the sons of the Æsir,
 and there would be *furious fighting* against you.

Fáfnismál (Fm.)

Fáfnismál is part of a prosimetric narrative sequence concerning the youthful exploits of Sigurðr. As noted above, it follows on from *Reginismál* and is not separately titled in CR. The précis given here incorporates key background from *Reginismál*.

Hreiðmarr receives a gold-hoard from the gods as a wergild for his son. One of his sons, Fáfnir, murders Hreiðmarr and seizes the treasure, subsequently adopting the form of a dragon to guard it.

Fáfnir's brother Reginn fosters Sigurðr after the death of his father Sigmundr, and urges Sigurðr to help him take vengeance against Fáfnir for the murder of their father and the seizure of his inheritance. Reginn forges the sword Gramr for Sigurðr from the shards of Sigmundr's sword. Sigurðr fatally wounds Fáfnir in an ambush; Fáfnismál itself begins after the fight, as Sigurðr engages in a contest of wits with Fáfnir before the dragon dies.

Reginn instructs Sigurðr to roast the dragon's heart for him to eat. In the process Sigurðr accidentally tastes some of the blood and gains the ability to understand birds. From some nearby nuthatches, he learns that Reginn intends to betray him, and preemptively kills him, claiming the dragon-hoard for himself.

As noted, the poem includes a further three instances of collocation of *vreiðr* and *vega*:

(4) After discovering Sigurðr's lineage, the dying Fáfnir asks him who urged him to attack (*Fm.* 5); Sigurðr declares, 'Hugr mik hvatti' (Courage whetted me: *Fm.* 6/1), to which Fáfnir responds (*Fm.* 7/1–6):

Veit ek, ef þú vaxa næðir
fyr þinna vina brjósti,
sæi maðr þik *vreiðan vega*;
nú ertu haptr
ok hernuminn,
æ kveða bandingja bifask.

I know, if you had managed to grow up
in the bosom of your friends,
a man would see you *fight furiously*;
but now you are a captive,
and a prisoner of war;
they say the bound man is always trembling.

(5) During their discussion, Fáfnir boasts to Sigurðr and claims to have been pre-eminent over his adversaries (*Fm.* 16/1–6):

Ægishjálms
bar ek um alda sonum,
meðan ek um menjum lak;
einn rammari

hugðumk ǫllum vera,
fannka ek marga mögu.

The helm of terror
I wore among the sons of men,
while I lay upon the necklaces;
more powerful than all
I thought myself to be,
I didn't encounter many enemies.

Sigurðr replies (*Fm.* 17/1–6):

Ægishjálmr
bergr einugi,
hvars skulu *vreiðir vega*;
þá þat finnr
er með fleirum kœmr
at engi er einna hvatastr.

The helm of terror
protects nobody,
whenever *angry men* must *fight*;
a man finds out,
when he comes among the throng,
that nobody is bravest of all.

(6) With Fáfnir dead, Regin approaches from his hiding place and attempts to claim credit for the victory, since he forged the sword Gramr with which Sigurðr accomplished the feat (*Fm.* 25). Sigurðr repeats the collocation in a near-verbatim formulation (*Fm.* 30/1–6):

Hugr er betri
en sé hjǫrs megin,
hvars *vreiðir* skulu *vega*
þvíat ek hvatan mann
ek sé harðliga vega
með slævu sverði sigr.

Courage is better
than the might of a sword,

whenever *angry men* must *fight*;
 for I have seen a brave man,
 fighting strongly,
 win victory with a blunt sword.

Sigrdrífumál (Sd.)

Like *Fáfnismál*, *Sigrdrífumál* is not demarcated as a separate composition in the CR manuscript, and continues the narrative after a linking prose passage.

On further advice from the nuthatches, Sigurðr rides to Hindarfjall, where a valkyrie is imprisoned in an enchanted sleep. Woken by Sigurðr, the valkyrie identifies herself as Sigrdrífa, and explains she was imprisoned as punishment after causing the death of a warrior favoured by Óðinn, to whom he had promised victory. Óðinn decreed that she would never again be victorious in battle, and additionally that she would be married; she swore an oath never to marry a man who felt fear. At Sigurðr's request, Sigrdrífa imparts gnomic and runic wisdom on him.

(7) The single instance of the collocation in *Sigrdrífumál* is a further repetition of the formulation used in *Fm.* 17/3 ≈ 30/3, as Sigrdrífa advises Sigurðr (*Sd.* 28/1–3):

Fornjósnar augu
 þurfu fira synir,
 hvars skulu vreiðir vega

Foreseeing eyes
 the sons of men need,
 whenever *angry men* must *fight*

The text of *Sigrdrífumál* is interrupted by a lacuna in the CR manuscript, but we can trace the missing section of the narrative using *Völsunga saga*, a fourteenth-century prose text whose author drew on older poetic sources including those preserved in CR.

Sigurðr and the valkyrie pledge themselves to each other, and Sigurðr departs. He stays at the home of Heimir, where he exchanges (or reaffirms) vows with Brynhildr, Heimir's sister-in-law. Eventually, he comes to the court of the Burgundian king Gjúki, where he swears blood-brotherhood to Gjúki's sons, Gunnarr and Högni. Gjúki's wife Grímhildr wishes Sigurðr to marry their daughter, Guðrún, and gives him a potion which causes him to forget his prior betrothal.

Gunnarr resolves to marry Brynhildr, but she is imprisoned behind a wall of fire; Sigurðr alone is able to cross the flames and reach her, and he assists in a ruse to win her hand on Gunnarr's behalf. During an altercation with Guðrún, Brynhildr learns of the deception, which has vitiated her oath to marry only a man without fear. She thus resolves to destroy Sigurðr in revenge, coercing Gunnarr into arranging his death. In order to preserve their oaths, Gunnarr and Högni enlist their brother Guþormr to murder Sigurðr. With Sigurðr dead, Brynhildr ends her own life by climbing onto his funeral pyre.

Guðrún is married to Atli, king of the Huns and Brynhildr's brother, in appeasement for his sister's death. Atli kills Gunnarr and Högni in an attempt to seize their wealth; in revenge for her brothers, Guðrún murders her children by Atli and feeds their flesh to him, before murdering Atli himself and burning down his hall.

A complicated crux concerns the identity of the valkyrie to whom Sigurðr is betrothed on Hindarfjall. In CR, she identifies herself as Sigrdrífa, whilst in *Vǫlsunga saga* she is Brynhildr, who is later deceived into marrying Gunnarr. The narrative in CR evidently included a broken pledge between Sigurðr and Brynhildr, since in another CR poem, *Sigurðarkviða in skamma* 39–41, Brynhildr cites this as her motivation for orchestrating his death; what is unclear is whether this is the same or a separate event from his betrothal to Sigrdrífa. The difference in names may be plausibly explained by interpreting Sigrdrífa ('victory-driver') as an epithet for a valkyrie, rather than a proper noun (Bellows 1936: 386–8).

Andersson (1980: 82–4) believes Sigurðr's betrothals or love affairs with Sigrdrífa and Brynhildr were originally separate, but if this is the case, they must have been conflated prior to the composition of both *Vǫlsunga saga* and the approximately contemporary *Norna-gests þáttur*, since both these sources treat them as identical. The thirteenth-century mythographer Snorri Sturluson likewise explicitly identifies the first valkyrie as Brynhildr (*Skáldskaparmál* 41),¹³ though Andersson detects a note of uncertainty on Snorri's part. Contrary to Andersson's claims, however, the prose inserts in *Sigrdrifumál* provide no sure indication either way. *Sigurðarkviða in skamma* notes Sigurðr's knowledge of Brynhildr's home, which is consistent with his visit there in *Vǫlsunga saga*. However, Brynhildr's presence when Sigurðr visits her home in *Vǫlsunga saga* sits ill with her prior and subsequent imprisonment. Both women swear the same oath to marry only a man who knows no fear, which may suggest initial identity (Larrington 2014: 303). Conceivably, an original betrothal to a single valkyrie was duplicated in some versions of the legend, with the two then imperfectly merged by the compiler of *Vǫlsunga saga*. However one accounts for the contradictions in the literary record, it is important for present purposes to note that Sigurðr's betrayal of his pledge(s) to Sigrdrífa/Brynhildr is presupposed in all accounts by his later marriage to

¹³ The text for Snorri's *Edda* is Faulkes (2005) (*Gylfaginning*), and Faulkes (1998) (*Skáldskaparmál*). For translations, see Faulkes (1995).

Guðrún.

The stylistic use of the collocation *vreiðr* and *vega*

We are now in a position to examine possible stylistic reasons for the reuse of the collocation in the instances surveyed above. As already suggested, the rhetorical significations of the collocation can be inferred by identifying common elements in the narrative situations in which it is deployed. The most obvious point of continuity in the recurrence of the collocation is that it consistently appears in the context of a hostile or insulting address. It first appears during Loki's dispute with Bragi, with Loki goading Bragi to follow through with his threatened violence. The third occurrence is also clear-cut, as Frigg angrily rebukes Loki for his insults against her.

This connection is less immediately apparent in the second instance. As we have seen, Iðunn uses the collocation as she plays peacemaker between Loki and Bragi. However, despite her ostensibly conciliatory tone in her first stanza (*Ls.* 16), McKinnell (2014: 179) notes that Iðunn's mention of *óskmegir* (adoptive relatives: *Ls.* 16/3) makes for an implied slight against Loki's presence and status amongst the Æsir, since he is part-giant by patrilineal descent, and is only counted amongst the Æsir because of his blood-brotherhood with Óðinn (cf. *Ls.* 9). Iðunn's second stanza (*Ls.* 18), containing the collocation, underscores this veiled hostility towards Loki through close verbal echoes:

'... at þú **Loka** | **kveðira lastastofum** | **Ægis hǫllu í**
 (... that you shouldn't **speak insults to Loki inside Ægir's hall**: *Ls.* 16/4–6).

'**Loka** ek **kveðka** | **lastastofum** | **Ægis hǫllu í**
 (I do not **speak insults to Loki inside Ægir's hall**: *Ls.* 18/1–3).

These verses in turn recall Óðinn's grudging acquiescence to Loki's demand of a seat at the feast (*Ls.* 10/1–6):

Rístu þá, Víðarr,
 ok lát úlfs fǫður
 sitja sumbli at,
 síðr oss **Loki**
kveði lastastofum
Ægis hǫllu í

Stand up then, Víðarr,
 and let the wolf's father
 sit at the feast,
 so that **Loki** will not
speak insults to us
inside Ægir's hall

The kenning *úlfs fǫður* (wolf's father) for Loki emphasizes Óðinn's animosity towards him by pointedly alluding to his future role as the enemy of the Æsir at Ragnarök. Thus, by having Iðunn echo Óðinn twice, the poet encourages the audience to hear the same antagonism also in her words. Additionally, the collocation may convey Iðunn's resentment towards her husband, whose posturing machismo has compelled her to intervene on his behalf. Notably, this instance exemplifies how the collocation functions rhetorically even in the context of an apparent negation of hostility and violence: '*vilkat ek at it vreiðir vegisk*' (I do not want you two *angry men to fight*: *Ls.* 18/6).

These three instances in *Lokasenna* could very well be understood as a pattern of internal repetition, particularly since, as we have seen, this is a stylistic strategy employed by the poet in other instances. However, the uses of the collocation in *Fáfnismál* also cohere with this pattern, indicating a traditional resonance. The first two instances come during the verbal sparring between Sigurðr and Fáfnir, with Fáfnir first taunting Sigurðr for his lack of inheritance (*Fm.* 7), and Sigurðr mocking Fáfnir in turn for thinking himself invincible (*Fm.* 17). The third instance comes during Sigurðr's dispute with Reginn, as he rejects the latter's attempt to share in his glory for the dragon-slaying (*Fm.* 30).

The single instance of the collocation in *Sigrdrífumál* may seem to be an outlier in this pattern of traditional referentiality. However, it can be seen as prefiguring future antagonism: as we have seen, Sigurðr's betrayal of his pledge to the valkyrie is presupposed by the subsequent events of the legend. The use of a collocation connoting hostility may therefore draw on the audience's familiarity with the narrative to hint at Sigrdrífa's future resentment at Sigurðr's faithlessness. If we consider the possibility that the poet and audience identified Sigrdrífa with Brynhildr, this foreshadowing becomes particularly momentous, since Brynhildr's anger at Sigurðr's betrayal is the catalyst for a tragic cycle of revenge which encompasses Sigurðr's murder and (indirectly) the extinction of the Burgundian and Hunnic royal lines.

In view of the semantics of the collocates in question, the collocation's association with hostility and insult is perhaps unsurprising, though we have seen that it can be deployed in unexpected ways, for instance in revealing the veiled hostility of Iðunn or presaging the

strife between Sigurðr and Brynhildr. Moreover, within this general context, the collocation further appears specifically to connote an indictment of the addressee's courage or martial prowess. In *Lokasenna*, Loki first exposes Bragi's cowardice by inviting him to make good on his threats of violence. In the second instance, Iðunn's attempt to shield her husband from Loki's accusation of cowardice has the unintended consequence of reinforcing its validity, by creating the impression that Bragi needs rescuing by his wife (McKinnell 2014: 179); the repetition of the collocation contributes to emphasizing this dynamic. Similarly, Frigg uses the collocation to impugn Loki's courage and strength in comparison to Baldr, who she suggests would quickly put a stop to Loki's abuse if he were present: 'ok væri þá at þér *vreiðum vegit*' (and there would be *furious fighting* against you: *Ls.* 27/6). This attack is unsuccessful, however, since it allows Loki to flaunt his responsibility for Baldr's absence (*Ls.* 28). As implied by CR's opening poem *Völuspá* (31–2, 34) and detailed in Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* (*Gylfaginning* 49), it was Loki who engineered Baldr's death by a fatal dart of mistletoe. By repeating the collocation, the *Lokasenna* poet foregrounds the contrast between Frigg's failed rebuke of Loki and Loki's effective rebuke of Bragi.

The same overtones accompany the occurrences of the collocation in *Fáfnismál*. First, Fáfñir uses it whilst mocking Sigurðr for his upbringing: if he had grown up with his family, 'sæi maðr þik *vreiðan vega*' (a man would see you *fight furiously*: *Fm.* 7/3); yet his fosterage by Reginn allows Fáfñir to vilify him as 'haptr | ok hernuminn' (a captive and a prisoner of war: *Fm.* 7/4–5) and therefore as a coward. To be sure, Fáfñir has already acknowledged his slayer's courage whilst inquiring about Sigurðr's lineage (*Fm.* 1, 3 and 5), so his comment here should be understood 'in erster Linie als Beleidigung ... deren Wahrheitsgehalt unerheblich ist' (primarily as an insult ... the truth of which is irrelevant: von See, La Farge, et al. 1997–2019: 5: 415). However, the fact that Sigurðr ambushed Fáfñir rather than confronting him openly may well be pertinent to the insult (cf. Larrington 1993: 82).¹⁴ The collocation recurs after Fáfñir boasts of his preeminent strength: 'einn rammari | hugðomk ǫllum vera' (more powerful than all I believed myself to be: *Fm.* 16/4–5). Sigurðr ripostes: 'Ægishjálmr | berg einugi, | hvars skulu *vreiðir vega*' (The helm of terror protects nobody, whenever *angry men* must *fight*: *Fm.* 17/1–3). The context of challenging professed strength and courage is further emphasized as Sigurðr continues: 'þá þat finnr, | er með fleirom kǫmr, | at engi er einna hvatastr' (a man discovers, when he comes into the throng, that nobody is bravest of all: *Fm.* 17/4–6). Finally, the collocation punctuates Sigurðr's retort to Reginn as they dispute the credit for Fáfñir's death. Sigurðr first highlights Reginn's cowardice (*Fm.* 28), noting that he made sure to keep a safe distance from the action. Then, when Reginn asserts his role in arming Sigurðr for the fight (*Fm.* 29), Sigurðr uses the collocation as he pointedly assigns greater value to courage (which Reginn lacks) than to fancy

¹⁴ The context of a slight against the addressee's lineage in this instance is also present in Iðunn's exchange with Loki (*Ls.* 16–18), but connotations to this effect are not in evidence in the other occurrences of the collocation.

wargear (Reginn's sole contribution to the victory): 'Hugr er betri | en sé hjǫrs megin, | hvars *vreiðir* skulu *vega*' (Courage is better than the might of a sword, whenever angry men must fight: *Fm.* 30/1–3).

It is also worth noting that the collocation as it is used near-verbatim at *Fm.* 17/3 ≈ 30/3, 'hvars *vreiðir* skulu *vega*' (whenever *angry men* must *fight*), has a pronounced gnomic character, an impression strengthened by its further use at *Sigrdrífumál* 28/3. The two occurrences of the collocation in this form in *Fáfnismál* may therefore be invoking a background of wisdom poetry, giving Sigurðr's words in each instance a weight of gnomic authority—in other words, the resonance of the traditional expression signifies to the audience that Sigurðr's rebuke in each case should be considered successful because it is expressed through the diction of transmitted wisdom.

Furthermore, an association of the collocation with an act of treachery or deceit on the part of the addressee, which we have seen in *Sigrdrífumál*, is also present in several other occurrences. In *Lokasenna*, Iðunn's use of the collocation points to the duplicity underlying her placatory intervention between Bragi and Loki. Frigg's use of it while rebuking Loki invokes Baldr's death, which Loki brought about through deception: in disguise, he tricked Frigg into divulging her son's vulnerability to mistletoe; then, he tricked Baldr's blind brother Hǫðr into shooting Baldr with a mistletoe arrow (*Gylfaginning* 49). In *Fáfnismál*, Fáfnir uses the collocation while addressing Sigurðr, who has just fatally wounded him in a stealth-attack, rather than an open confrontation. The collocation is then echoed by Sigurðr in response to Fáfnir's boast of pre-eminence, in which Fáfnir makes reference to 'arfi ... miklum mins föður' (the great inheritance of my father: *Fm.* 18/2–3). This recalls to us (and presumably to primary audiences conversant with both the poetic language and the legendary background) that Fáfnir treacherously murdered his father Hreiðmarr—while he slept, a prose insert at *Reginismál* 9 reports—and stole his treasure. The verse containing the collocation then recurs nearly verbatim when Sigurðr rebukes Reginn's attempt to claim responsibility for Fáfnir's death. This in turn foreshadows the revelation of Reginn's intention to betray Sigurðr now that Fáfnir has been dealt with.

A skaldic example

It has been briefly mentioned above that the *vreiðir/vega* collocation also appears once in the extant skaldic corpus, in a verse of Eilífr Goðrúnarson's *Þórsdrápa*. The poem is partially preserved in the *Skáldskaparmál* section of Snorri Sturluson's *Edda*. It tells how the giant Geirrǫðr contrived to have Þórr brought to his hall without the protection of his hammer Mjǫlnir. Although he is unarmed, Þórr and his servant Þjálfi manage to defeat the giants who attack them, and Þórr himself dispatches Geirrǫðr. Eilífr alludes to the final

confrontation (*Þórsdrápa* 22/1–4):¹⁵

Vreiðr stóð *Vrǫsku* bróðir;
vá gagn faðir Magna.
 Skelfra Þórs né Þjálfá
 Þróttar steinn við ótta.

Enraged stood (V)*Rǫskva*'s brother [Þjálfí]; Magni's father [Þórr]
 struck victoriously.
 Neither Þórr's nor Þjálfí's
 Power-stone [heart] shook with terror.

The courage of Þórr and Þjálfí is emphasized in implied contrast to that of the giants they have vanquished earlier in the poem (e.g., at *Þórsdrápa* 13). Additionally, if (as seems likely) the 'victorious strike' in verse 2 is a specific reference to Þórr killing Geirrøðr with an iron ingot, it is worth noting that in Snorri's account of the episode a similar contrast is drawn between Þórr and Geirrøðr: as Þórr prepared to hurl the ingot, 'Geirrøðr hljóp undir járnúlu at forða sér' (Geirrøðr leapt behind an iron pillar to avoid it: *Skáldskaparmál* 18). We should also note that Þórr's battle with Geirrøðr is the result of a treacherous plan to lure him to Geirrøðr's hall unarmed (*Skáldskaparmál* 18; cf. *Þórsdrápa* 1/1–6, 3/1–4). Whilst skaldic diction is beyond our immediate concern here, it is significant that the collocation evokes the same rhetorical overtones here as in its eddic occurrences: hostility and implications of cowardice and treachery. The *Þórsdrápa* occurrence thus corroborates the case for identifying these as aspects of its traditional resonance.

¹⁵ The text for *Þórsdrápa* is Marold (2017: 68–124). The alliteration of verses 22/1–2 requires restoration of initial *v*- also for the mythological name *Rǫskva*, possibly cognate with Gothic *ga-wrisqan* 'to bear fruit' [< Proto-Germanic **wreskwanaq* 'to mature, grow']; cf. Marold (2017): 123. Liberman (2009: 104–5) challenges this connection, yet acknowledges that the name must have an initial *v*- in this stanza of *Þórsdrápa*. The metre used (*dróttkvætt*) requires each even line to have two alliterating stresses, which alliterate with the first syllable of the following even line. Here, *vá* ('struck') in line 2 thus establishes *v*-alliteration for lines 1–2.

Conclusion

A full appreciation of the stylistic possibilities generated by traditional referentiality requires an intimate knowledge of the tradition in question. Even with a far more extensive corpus than we possess, much of great significance to the original audiences of the eddic poems would doubtless remain opaque to us as *spectatores ab extra*. However, a comparison of the contexts in which the collocation of *vreiðr* and *vega* occurs in eddic poetry indicates a series of traditional resonances, which poets could exploit in addition to internal structural repetitions to inform their audiences' understanding of particular kinds of character interactions in the characteristically terse and allusive narrative style of eddic poetry (Schorn 2016b: 271). Specifically, the traditional referentiality of the collocation includes associations with hostile speech acts, accusations of cowardice, and acts of betrayal. Aside from contributing to our critical appraisal of individual compositions, this conclusion emphasizes the need for extreme caution in the construction of stemmatic relationships between eddic poems. It is widely recognized that verbal echoes alone are insufficient to establish borrowing from one poem by another (Andersson 1983: 250; Acker 2014: 77–8). Typically, therefore, a case for borrowing is bolstered by the identification of parallel phrasing in comparable narrative contexts (e.g., Andersson 1983: 253–5; von See, La Farge, et al. 1997–2019: 4: 156–7). However, if the traditional resonances of a given expression render it particularly appropriate to certain scenarios, we should expect poets drawing on the same traditional diction to deploy this expression in similar contexts independently (cf. Thorvaldsen 2016: 80–7).

The rhetorical resonances of this collocation highlight the artificiality of a distinction between the oral and the written in the context of Old Norse literature. The CR manuscript is a decidedly literary artefact, displaying meticulous selection and arrangements of its contents on the part of its compiler (Harris 1985: 77; Lindow 2001: 13–14; Clunies Ross 2016: 22–5), and attempts to date the compositions it contains or to reconstruct their preliterate forms are in most cases fraught with uncertainty (Thorvaldsen 2016). Nevertheless, it is likely that even in the literate era in which CR was compiled, the reception of eddic poetry was predominantly aural, with primary audiences highly attuned to the rhetorical resonances of traditional phraseology. With the exception of *Þórsdrápa* (composed prior to the introduction of literacy to Scandinavia), we cannot know whether the poems discussed here are themselves oral or written compositions; yet, as this case study of a single alliterative collocation has shown, the potency of such expressions was augmented by the ability of hearers and readers to recall occurrences beyond the confines of the immediate performance or manuscript context. This is not to deny the importance of internal repetitions as a stylistic tool in the arsenal of Old Norse poets; indeed, as has been noted in the cases of both *Lokasenna* and *Fáfnismál*, the recurrent use of our collocation can be understood

within either poem as a closed unit. However, whilst repetition was used by eddic poets in ways that superficially resemble written poetry, given the evident traditionality of the combination of *vreiðr* and *vega* and its distribution across multiple unrelated poems, our aesthetic appreciation of eddic poetry is diminished by a conception of recurring phrases which disregards additional layers of signification.

Works cited

- Acker, P. 2014: *Revising oral theory: formulaic composition in Old English and Old Icelandic verse*. Abingdon: Routledge. DOI: [10.4324/9781315861081](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315861081).
- Andersson, T.M. 1980: *The legend of Brynhildr*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- 1983: 'Did the poet of *Atlaqviða* know *Atlamálf*?' In R.J. Glendinging and Haraldur Bessason (eds), *Edda: a collection of essays*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 243–57. DOI: [10.1515/9780887553196-013](https://doi.org/10.1515/9780887553196-013).
- Bellows, H.A. 1936: *The poetic Edda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Benson, L.D. 1966: 'The literary character of Anglo-Saxon formulaic poetry'. *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 81: 334–41. DOI: [10.2307/460821](https://doi.org/10.2307/460821).
- Burgess, J. 2010: 'The hypertext of *Astyanax*'. *Trends in Classics* 2: 211–24. DOI: [10.1515/tcs.2010.011](https://doi.org/10.1515/tcs.2010.011).
- Clunies Ross, M. 2012: 'Defining the corpus'. In D. Whaley (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' sagas I: from mythical times to c. 1035*. Skaldic poetry of the Scandinavian middle ages 1. Turnhout: Brepols, xiii–xxvii.
- 2016: 'The transmission and preservation of eddic poetry'. In C. Larrington et al. (eds), *A handbook to eddic poetry: myths and legends of early Scandinavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 12–32. DOI: [10.1017/CBO9781316471685.002](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316471685.002).
- Creed, R.P. 1961: 'On the possibility of criticizing Old English poetry'. *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 3: 97–106.
- de Vries, J. 1928: 'Over de dateering der *Þrymskviða*'. *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 47: 251–322.
- Dunkle, R. 1997: 'Swift-footed Achilles'. *The Classical World* 90, no. 4: 227–34. DOI: [10.2307/4351934](https://doi.org/10.2307/4351934).
- Faulkes, A. 1995: *Snorri Sturluson Edda*. London: J.M. Dent.
- (ed.) 1998: *Snorri Sturluson Edda: Skáldskaparmál*. London: Viking Society for Northern Research.
- (ed.) 2005: *Snorri Sturluson Edda: prologue and Gylfaginning*, 2nd edn. London: Viking Society for Northern Research.
- Fidjestøl, B. 1999: *The dating of eddic poetry*, ed. O.E. Haugen. Bibliotheca Arnarnagæana 41. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel.

- Finnegan, R. 1977: *Oral poetry: its nature, significance and social context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foley, J.M. 1991: *Immanent art: from structure to meaning in traditional oral epic*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- 1995: *The singer of tales in performance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- 1996: 'Signs, texts and oral tradition'. *Journal of Folklore Research* 33, no. 1: 21–29.
- Fulk, R.D. 2016: 'Eddic metres'. In C. Larrington et al. (eds), *A handbook to eddic poetry: myths and legends of early Scandinavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 252–70. DOI: [10.1017/CBO9781316471685.014](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316471685.014).
- Gade, K.E. (ed.) 2009: 'Einarr Skúlason, *Elfarvísur*'. In *Poetry from the Kings' sagas II: from c. 1035 to c. 1300*. Skaldic poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2. Turnhout: Brepols, 565–67.
- Hallberg, P. 1954: 'Om Þrymskviða'. *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 69: 51–77.
- Harris, J. 1983: 'Eddic poetry as oral poetry: the evidence of parallel passages in the Helgi poems for questions of composition and performance'. In R.J. Glendingning and Haraldur Bessason (eds), *Edda: a collection of essays*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 210–42. DOI: [10.1515/9780887553196-012](https://doi.org/10.1515/9780887553196-012).
- 1985: 'Eddic poetry'. In C.J. Clover and J. Lindow (eds), *Old Norse-Icelandic literature: a critical guide*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 68–156. DOI: [10.7591/9781501741654-004](https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501741654-004).
- Haukur Þorgeirsson 2017: 'The dating of eddic poetry—the evidence from alliteration'. In Kristján Arnason (ed.), *Approaches to Nordic and Germanic poetry*. Reykjavík: Háskolaútgáfan, 33–61.
- Haymes, E.R. 1976: 'Oral poetry and the Germanic *Heldenlied*'. *Rice University Studies* 82, no. 2: 47–54.
- 1980: 'Formulaic density and Bishop Njegoš'. *Comparative Literature* 32, no. 4: 390–401. DOI: [10.2307/1770888](https://doi.org/10.2307/1770888).
- 2004: 'The Germanic *Heldenlied* and the poetic *Edda*: speculations on preliterate history'. *Oral Tradition* 19, no. 1: 43–62. DOI: [10.1353/ort.2004.0091](https://doi.org/10.1353/ort.2004.0091).
- Jakobsen, A. 1984: 'Þrymskviða som allusjonsdikt'. *Edda* 84: 75–80.
- Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (eds) 2014: *Eddukvæði*. Íslensk fornrit 36. Reykjavík: Íslenska Fornritfélag.
- Kellogg, R.L. 1998: *A concordance to eddic poetry*. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer.
- Kelly, A. 2010: 'Hypertexting with Homer: Tlepolemos and Sarpedon on Herakles (*Iliad* 5.628–98)'. *Trends in Classics* 2: 259–76. DOI: [10.1515/tcs.2010.014](https://doi.org/10.1515/tcs.2010.014).
- Kintgen, E.R. 1977: "'Lif, lof, leof, lufu" and "geleafa" in Old English poetry'. *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 78, no. 4: 309–16.
- Larrington, C. 1993: *A store of common sense: gnomic theme and wisdom in Old Icelandic and Old English wisdom poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. DOI:

- [10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198119821.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198119821.001.0001).
- 2014: *The poetic Edda*. Revised. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lehman, W.P. 1963: 'The composition of eddic verse'. In E. Hofacker and L. Dieckman (eds), *Studies in Germanic languages and literatures in memory of Fred O. Nolte*. St. Louis: Washington University Press, 7–14.
- Lieberman, A. 2009: 'Þjalfi'. *Scandinavistica Vilniensis* 2: 95–116. DOI: [10.15388/ScandinavisticaVilnensis.2009.2.6](https://doi.org/10.15388/ScandinavisticaVilnensis.2009.2.6).
- Lindow, J. 2001: *Norse mythology: A guide to the gods, heroes, rituals, and beliefs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: [10.1093/oso/9780195153828.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195153828.001.0001).
- Lord, A.B. 1960: *The singer of tales*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lynch, D. 1972: 'A statistical study of the collocations in Beowulf'. PhD, University of Massachusetts.
- Marold, E. 2017: 'Eilífr Goðrúnarson, Þórsdrápa'. In K.E. Gade and E. Marold (eds), *Poetry from treatises on poetics. Skaldic poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 3*. Turnhout: Brepols, 75–124.
- McKinnell, J. 2014: 'Motivation and meaning in *Lokasenna*'. In D. Kick and J.D. Shafer (eds), *Essays on eddic poetry*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 172–99. DOI: [10.3138/9781442669260-009](https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442669260-009).
- 2022: 'Eddic poetry and the uses of anonymity'. In B. McMahon and A. Ferreira (eds), *Old Norse poetry in performance*. London: Routledge, 111–33.
- McTurk, R. 2017: 'Ragnars saga loðbrókar'. In M.C. Ross (ed.), *Poetry in fornaldarsögur. Skaldic poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 8*. Turnhout: Brepols, 626–705.
- Parry, M. 1971 (1928): 'The traditional epithet in Homer'. In A. Parry (ed.), *The making of Homeric verse: the collected papers of Milman Parry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–191.
- Quirk, R. 1963: 'Poetic language and Old English metre'. In A.B. Brown and P. Foote (eds), *Early English and Norse studies presented to Hugh Smith in honour of his sixtieth birthday*. London: Methuen, 150–71.
- Ruggerini, M.E. 2016: 'Alliterative lexical collocations in eddic poetry'. In C. Larrington et al. (eds), *A handbook to eddic poetry: myths and legends of early Scandinavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 310–30. DOI: [10.1017/CBO9781316471685.017](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316471685.017).
- Sävborg, D. 2018: 'The formula in Icelandic saga prose'. *Saga-Book* 42: 51–86.
- Schier, K. 1986: 'Edda, Ältere'. In H. Beck et al. (eds), *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, 2nd edn. Berlin: de Gruyter, vol. 37, 355–94.
- Schorn, B. 2016a: 'Eddic modes and genres'. In C. Larrington et al. (eds), *A handbook to eddic poetry: myths and legends of early Scandinavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 231–51. DOI: [10.1017/CBO9781316471685.013](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316471685.013).
- 2016b: 'Eddic style'. In C. Larrington et al. (eds), *A handbook to eddic poetry: myths and legends of early Scandinavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 271–87. DOI:

[10.1017/CBO9781316471685.015](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316471685.015).

- Sigurður Nordal (ed.) 1933: *Egils saga*. Íslensk fornrit 2. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag.
- Stolz, B. and Shannon, R.S. (eds) 1976: *Oral literature and the formula*. Ann Arbor: Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies.
- Suzuki, S. 2014: *The meters of Old Norse eddic poetry: common Germanic inheritance and North Germanic innovation*. Berlin: De Gruyter. DOI: [10.1515/9783110336771](https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110336771).
- Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson 1931: *Lexicon poeticum antiquae linguae septentrionalis*, 2nd edn. Copenhagen: Lyngé & Søn.
- Szöke, V. 2014: 'Nearu and its collocations in Old English verse'. *Linguistica e Filologia* 34: 53–93.
- Taylor, P.B. 1963: 'The structure of *Völundarkviða*'. *Neophilologus* 47, no. 3: 228–36. DOI: [10.1007/BF01514967](https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01514967).
- Thorvaldsen, B.Ø. 2008: 'Om Þrymskviða, tekstlån og tradisjon'. *Maal og Minne* 2: 142–66.
- 2016: 'The dating of eddic poetry'. In C. Larrington et al. (eds), *A handbook to eddic poetry: myths and legends of early Scandinavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 72–91. DOI: [10.1017/CBO9781316471685.005](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316471685.005).
- Tyler, E.M. 2006: *Old English poetics: the aesthetics of the familiar in Anglo-Saxon England*. York: York Medieval Press.
- von See, K., La Farge, B., et al. (eds) 1997–2019: *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda*, 8 vols. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.
- Zumthor, P. 1988: 'The vocalization of the text: the medieval "poetic effect"', translators N. Rose and P. Haidu. *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19: 273–82. DOI: [10.1484/J.VIATOR.2.301372](https://doi.org/10.1484/J.VIATOR.2.301372).
- 1990: *Oral poetry: an introduction*, trans. K. Murphy-Judy, vol. 70. Theory and History of Literature. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.