the category of childhood to analyze a selection of Exeter Books *Riddles* that are not often grouped together. Luo provides excellent close readings of a number of *Riddles*, especially Porcupine (#15, sometimes “Badger”) and Iceberg (#33). Her creative contribution is to see many of the *Riddles* forming a group commenting on childhood relationships, including Sword (#20) and Inkhorn (#88), in order to argue that the *Riddles* show “a steady association of the earliest age of life with tenderness” (p. 94). The editors usefully summarize all of the essays to end their Introduction.

Despite the impressive generic range of all these texts, a glaring omission in the collection is an analysis of childhood in the Old English medical texts. Especially since childhood has an important physiological component, the collection should have addressed early medieval English perceptions of the child’s body and its differences from the bodies of adults. In the medical texts, are the bodies of children understood to have medical needs different from those of adults? If so, how? These questions are among the many that the collection leaves open for future inquiry.

Finally, I found the University of Toronto Press’s house style for footnotes infuriating: footnotes do not include the publication date of the cited work, forcing the reader to check the separate bibliography at the end of the volume for this crucial information. It was especially frustrating not to be able to check the timeliness of a discussion in a solid, interesting collection so aware of its place in a relatively new scholarly conversation.

MARY DOCKRAY-MILLER

Lesley University


Like many Festschrifts, this volume covers a diverse range of topics, so that few people besides a reviewer will be motivated to read it from beginning to end. Unlike many Festschrifts, however, it contains some outstanding scholarship, significantly advancing the current state of knowledge and pioneering important new methodologies. As Neidorf explains in the Introduction, the honorand’s own expertise extends to an unusually wide range of the technical disciplines that underpin philological research, and it is thus appropriate for a similar range to be reflected in the volume presented to him.

There is an internal logic to the order of the twenty essays, but readers are left to work it out for themselves, since the contributions are neither grouped into sections nor outlined within the Introduction. The first seven focus on metrical issues, while those following move on to syntax, semantics, etymology, lexis, authorship, palaeography, and textual criticism. Most deal with Old English poetry, but prose and later poetry are also skilfully handled, as in Stefan Jurasinski’s essay on the late Old English *Handbook for the Use of a Confessor* and Donka Minkova’s on the Middle English *Poema Morale*. The former highlights potential connections with Archbishop Wulfstan of York; the latter focuses on metrical resolution.

Like Minkova, a number of contributors take the honorand’s own work as their starting point. The opening essay by Rafael J. Pascual points out that the controversy surrounding the chronological implications of Fulk’s 1992 book *A History of Old English Meter* diverted attention from his views on metrical theory, including
his criticisms of A. J. Bliss’s system. Pascual makes a strenuous attempt to redress the situation by clarifying Fulk’s support for Eduard Sievers’s views as against the innovations proposed by Bliss. In the following essay, Thomas Cable takes up the baton by expanding on Fulk’s insights into the metrical role of syllable length, after which Leonard Neidorf tests Fulk’s view that unmetrical lines are a sign of scribal error. With characteristic thoroughness and rigor, he counters the argument that “some Old English poets might have deliberately composed unmetrical verses” (p. 53) by analyzing all unmetrical verses in poems extant in more than one copy. In each case, comparison with parallel texts shows the unmetrical readings to be inaccurate, providing a strong endorsement of Fulk’s conclusions.

Bliss’s approach to undisplaced finite verbs bearing alliterative stress is also critiqued by Mark Griffith, who proposes a new solution to this apparent violation of the metrical-grammatical system. Identifying a high proportion of particularly common verbs among the nonalliterating finites, he argues that poets distinguished according to register, with poetic verbs bearing alliteration in verse positions where ordinary verbs would not. The evidence is persuasive, not only appearing to solve one of the thorniest problems in Old English metrics, but also highlighting the contribution of stylistics to the rules of alliterative composition and indicating that the ranking system in Old English poetry originated with verbs rather than with nouns and adjectives. Later in the volume, Dennis Cronan too discusses poetic vocabulary, drawing on theories of semantics and semiotics to provide a rich and perceptive analysis of the “linguistic code for poetry” (p. 268).

Several contributions focus on Beowulf. Jun Terasawa identifies yet another exceptional feature of the poem, in that indicative forms appear in place of the subjunctive for metrical reasons only, whereas other poets utilize the same stratagem for a wider range of reasons. Rory Naismith provides a useful survey of research on the significance of treasure in the poem, drawing parallels between the concept of exchange and the language of Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas. Geoffrey Russom continues his previous work on the “word-foot theory of Old English meter” (p. 83) through analysis of a variety of verse types used by the Beowulf poet. There is an elegant simplicity to his theory that each verse has two metrical feet, with each foot having the pattern of a native word, and it helps to explain how the original audience would intuitively have recognized appropriate patterns. In the concluding essay, Tom Shippey outlines the direction of Beowulf scholarship since Tolkien’s influential lecture of 1936, culminating in the return to philological methods championed by Fulk.

Those methods are very much at the fore throughout the volume. An emphasis on quantitative data is nowhere more apparent than in Aaron Ecay and Susan Pintzuk’s essay on syntactic evidence for dating Old English poetry. The section on “Background” (pp. 146–59) is the best short introduction to Old English syntax that I am aware of, and it should become, in the words of the Introduction, “essential reading for students of Old English poetry” (p. 12). It provides the context for a study pioneering a new approach to dating Old English texts by using parsed corpora to track variation in word order. As with other contributions, the results support an early (pre-725) dating of Beowulf. However, the authors go beyond this to uncover some unexpected patterns within the wider canon that deserve further investigation. My only regret regarding this exciting essay is that it was not published as a book-length study.

Using quantitative data from the Dictionary of Old English Corpus, Christopher M. Cain demonstrates that the use of e-caudata by scribes writing Old English
correlates significantly with Latin contexts. Again this is a superb essay, with an original and replicable methodology and new findings. It is also a model of clarity, guiding the reader through some complex but robust analyses to a convincing conclusion.

Rather less successful are the etymological and semantic studies contributed by Anatoly Liberman and George Clark. Liberman investigates potential etymological links between Old English *gelōme* ‘often’ and various meanings of Modern English *loom*. Scathing criticism of previous research (not always accurately quoted, and some of it long superseded) makes for uncomfortable reading, while the author’s own argument is far from watertight. Clark explores the semantic field of pride through the strategies employed by Anglo-Saxons to represent Latin *superbia*, a term with no direct equivalent in Old English. The problem here is that although the essay contains some good material, it is not fully up-to-date. For instance, post-1979 discussions of Byrhtnoth’s *ofermōd* in *The Battle of Maldon* are ignored (p. 184), and entries for *proud* and *pride* are quoted from the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (p. 186) despite having been substantially revised for the third edition in 2007. As an admirer of Clark’s generally formidable scholarship, I regret to say that this is not up to his usual standard.

A more compelling lexical study is Haruko Momma’s fine-grained examination of the polysemous word *wyrm* in the *Beowulf* Manuscript. Her innovative approach to “cultural geography” (p. 203) reveals an unexpected cohesion between apparently disparate uses in different texts, and the essay is a masterpiece of critical analysis. Turning to one of the other poetic codices, Andy Orchard’s discussion of *Andreas* also identifies internal consistency in “what looks like a chain of borrowings that is restricted to the poems of the Vercelli Book” (p. 338). The main thrust of his argument, though, is to re-examine the relationship between *Andreas* and other poems, including *Beowulf* and the Cynewulfian canon. Supported by extensive appendices, this too is a stunning contribution, revealing the “playful originality” (p. 348) of the *Andreas* poet in reusing phrases from his own and other compositions while adapting them to a different purpose.

Several authors focus on individual poems, passages, or cruxes. Daniel Donoghue argues that the much-discussed word *engel* in *Dream of the Rood* line 9b refers to the cross in its role as messenger. As he acknowledges, the suggestion is not new, but he brings some interesting points to bear. Charles D. Wright examines the eschatological motif in the *Genesis A* poet’s rendering of the story of Lot’s wife, tracing it to one of the Canterbury glosses attributed to Theodore of Tarsus. This has implications for the date of both this poem and *Beowulf*, and Wright concludes by briefly reviewing the evidence that the two poems are broadly contemporary and likely to date from the early eighth century or before. Megan E. Hartman provides a magisterial analysis of the different types of metrical patterning within *The Fortunes of Men*. Her essay has the potential to transform scholarly appreciation of this gnomic poem, and indeed of the relationship between meter and genre in Old English poetry. An important insight relating to *Beowulf* appears toward the beginning, where comparison between the two poems is used to show that the gnomic passages within *Beowulf* do “not typically replicate gnomic patterning” (p. 317) but instead maintain a narrative discourse strategy consistent with the rest of the epic.

In short, this is a high quality collection of essays, including a number of really exceptional contributions. The volume is also very well produced, with a sturdy
binding, attractive cover, legible font, and remarkably few typos. The single manuscript illustration would have benefitted from color reproduction to correspond with the accompanying discussion (pp. 226–28), but figures and tables are clearly set out. The editors and publisher are to be congratulated on a fine achievement.

Carole Hough

University of Glasgow


Eduard Sievers’s study of Old English meter had two distinct components. One sorted verses with acceptable linguistic patterns into categories called verse types. This practical, taxonomic component has been widely used in textual criticism as a guide to the metrical facts. The other component was more theoretical. It attempted to identify general principles that distinguished acceptable verses from unacceptable ones. Sievers did not claim to have a proper theory. What he offered was a rule of thumb with exceptions that he could not explain. Most (but not all) of the acceptable verse types seemed to have four metrical positions: two strong positions, called “lifts,” and two weak positions, called “dips.” A strong position contained a stressed syllable or an equivalent “resolvable” sequence of a short stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable. A weak position contained one or more syllables with weak stress or no stress.

In Reconstructing Alliterative Verse, Ian Cornelius views the English alliterative tradition from the perspective of a 2008 doctoral thesis by Nikolay Yakovlev. Yakovlev’s main concern was to show that differences between Old and Middle English alliterative poetry were the expected results of language change. He offered a comprehensive analysis of metrical change in formulaic traditions, drawing on research by Eastern European linguists. He also applied statistical methods to good effect, showing that Laȝman’s verses had characteristics we would expect to find in an evolving meter of the early Middle English period. Among Yakovlev’s contributions to late Middle English metrics was his “schwa rule,” a requirement that certain monosyllabic dips should be filled by the kinds of weak, centralized vowels found in inflectional syllables.

In historical metrics, as R. D. Fulk has observed, one theory sometimes serves as well as another, provided that there is good agreement about the metrical facts. Yakovlev accepts Fulk’s dating methodology (thesis, p. 3), and his results can be understood from more than one theoretical perspective. To keep his project within manageable limits, Yakovlev committed to a single theory, his own modified version of Sievers’s four-position theory.

Cornelius’s original contributions are concentrated within the Middle English period, a very active site of metrical research (Chapters 3 through 5 and Epilogue). His special concern is with “plain style” poems, which are metrically less strict than “high style” poems like Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Particularly interesting is a detailed comparison of Piers Plowman (B version) with Pierce the Plowman’s Creed. Metrical differences between these texts are attributed to a gradual process of metrical change that might have continued indefinitely, were it not for active hostility from the literary establishment. Comments by Early Modern observers are brought forward to illustrate this hostility. Cornelius’s comparative observations