

Problem #2 (20 points). The following are four excerpts from Old Norse poems composed around 900 C.E. All of them are written using the meter named *dróttkvætt* (lit. ‘court meter’):

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| <p>I</p> <p>1 ók at ísarnleiki</p> <p>2 Jarðar sunr, en dundi ...</p> <p>II</p> <p>1 þekkiligr með þegnum</p> <p>2 þrymseilar hval deila.</p> <p>3 en af breiðu bjóði</p> <p>4 bragðvís at þat lagði</p> <p>5 ósvífrandi ása</p> <p>6 upp þjórhloti fjóra.</p> | <p>III</p> <p>1 áðr gnapsólar Gripnis</p> <p>2 gnýstærandi fœri</p> <p>3 rausnarsamr til rimmu</p> <p>4 ríðviggs lagar skíðum.</p> <p>IV</p> <p>1 háði gramr, þars gnúðu,</p> <p>2 geira hregg við seggi,</p> <p>3 (rauð fnýsti ben blóði)</p> <p>4 bryngogl í dyn Skoglar,</p> <p>5 þás á rausn fyr ræsi</p> <p>6 (réð egglituðr) seggir ...</p> |
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One of the main principles of *dróttkvætt* is alliteration. The first line of each distich (pair of lines) contains two words beginning with the same sound, and the first word of the second line begins with this sound, too: e. g., **rausnarsamr**, **rimmu** and **ríðviggs** (III:3–4). All vowels are considered to alliterate with one another and with **j**: e. g., **ók**, **ísarnleiki** and **Jarðar** (I:1–2). But this is not the only rule.

The texts given above have been handed down in more than one manuscript. Sometimes different words are found in corresponding parts of the text, and the scholars have to decide which of the variants is original. Different considerations may motivate the conclusion. Sometimes the rules of versification help to recognize some of the variants as false. For example, in line I:2 we find not only **dundi**, but also **dulði** and **djarfi**. **dulði** can be rejected because of the structure of the verse, but both **dundi** and **djarfi** fit into the line, and one needs other reasons to choose between these words. In line III:1 **Gripnis** and **Grímnis** occur in the manuscripts, but **Grímnis** doesn’t fulfill the requirements of the verse.

- (a) Describe the rules which are observed in a distich of *dróttkvætt*.

- (b) Given is a stanza in which 13 words are omitted:

- V**
- | | | |
|---|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | a | (þreifsk reiddra øxa |
| 2 | b | ; knóttu spjór c) |
| 3 | d | bitu seggi |
| 4 | e | þjóðkonungs ferðar, |
| 5 | þás (| f hǫlða) |
| 6 | g | h i |
| 7 | (hór vas | j of k) |
| 8 | l | (flugbeiddra m). |

The following list contains (in alphabetical order) all 13 omitted words and two words which do not belong in stanza V:

andskoti, Gauta, glymja, hlaut,
hugfyldra, hœgra, ríks, rymr,
sigr, smíði, svartskyggð, sverð,
svírum, sǫngr, vigra

Fill in the gaps in stanza V.

NB: Old Norse is a North Germanic language which was in use approximately between 700 and 1100 C.E.

æ ≈ English *a* in *cat*, œ = French *eu* or German *ö* (these letters stand for long vowels). ø is read as a short œ; y = French *u* or German *ü*, ø is an open *o*. **au** and **ei** are pronounced as a single syllable. ð and þ = English *th* in *this* and *thin* respectively. **x** = **k**+**s**. The mark ´ denotes vowel length. All samples of poetry in the problem are given in a normalized orthography and conform to the rules of the genre.

—Alexander Piperski