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Edited by C. B. McCully and J. J. Anderson
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This volume identifies historical metrics as an important discipline within English studies, with significant questions about the composition and transmission of both alliterative and nonalliterative verse. The chronological range – Old English to the pre-Renaissance – covers a period of great linguistic and poetic change, at the end of which the formal foundations for English verse had been established.

Historical metrics and current issues within it are discussed from several distinctive perspectives, ranging from linguistics and generative metrics, through philological studies of individual texts and metrical problems, to the relationship between metrics and scholarly editing. That metrics involves interdisciplinary study gives the field an exciting breadth as well as a potential for controversy.

Issues in Old English are found in the chapters by Cable, Russom, McCully, and Obst, with a summary conspectus given by Stockwell. For early Middle English, Minkova's work on the *Ormulum* is of special importance to theories both of language and verseform, while alliterative texts are covered by Borroff, Matonis, and Osberg. Editorial practice, and its relationship to metrics, is discussed by Bunt and Duggan; and theories of Chaucerian metrics, including the origin of Chaucer's long line, are analysed by Youmans and Duffell. Cable's keynote introductory chapter outlines some of the main topics of this field of enquiry and indicates some of the ways in which significant questions may be asked, and may develop, within the discipline.

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Edited by C. B. McCully and J. J. Anderson
Frontmatter
More information

Contents

List of contributors *page* ix
Acknowledgements xi

1 Introduction 1
C. B. McCully and J. J. Anderson

2 Clashing stress in the metres of Old, Middle, and Renaissance English 7
Thomas Cable

3 Purely metrical replacements for Kuhn's laws 30
Geoffrey Russom

4 Domain-end phenomena and metrical templates in Old English verse 42
C. B. McCully

5 Can Old English rhythm be reconstructed? 59
Wolfgang Obst

6 On recent theories of metrics and rhythm in *Beowulf* 73
Robert P. Stockwell

7 Nonprimary stress in early Middle English accentual-syllabic verse 95
Donka Minkova

8 Systematic sound symbolism in the long alliterative line in *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain* 120
Marie Borroff

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Edited by C. B. McCully and J. J. Anderson
Frontmatter
More information

9 Non-*aa*/*ax* patterns in Middle English alliterative long-line verse 134
A. T. E. Matonis

10 The prosody of Middle English *Pearl* and the alliterative lyric tradition 150
Richard Osberg

11 Alliterative patterning and the editing of Middle English poetry 175
Gerrit H. V. Bunt

12 Reconsidering Chaucer's prosody 185
Gilbert Youmans

13 Chaucer, Gower, and the history of the hendecasyllable 210
Martin J. Duffell

14 Libertine scribes and maidenly editors: meditations on textual criticism and metrics 219
Hoyt N. Duggan

References 238
Index 256

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