

Chapter 14. Variation.

To read Old English poetry effectively, you must be able to recognize and decode variations. For each of the following short passages, highlight or circle the elements that are in variation and describe them as best you can (subject, object, etc.). Some passages may contain more than one variation.

1. Āhte ic lēofra lýt on þissum londstede
holdra frēonda (*Wife's Lament* 16–17)
2. Ne lāt þū þec sibþan sīþes ġetwāfan,
lāde ġelettan lifġendne monn.
(*Wife's Lament* 24–5)
3. hrīð hrēosende hrūsan bindeð,
wintres wōma (*Wanderer* 102–3)
4. ūs sceal ord and ecg ær ġesēman
grim ġūðplega ær wē gofol syllon
(*Battle of Maldon* 60–1)
5. Hwæt, mē þā ġeweorðode wuldres Ealdor
ofer holtwudu, heofonričes Weard
(*Dream of the Rood* 90–1)
6. Hēr ġē magon sweetole, siġerōfe hæleð,
lēoda rāswan, on ðæs lāðestan
hæðenes heaðorinces hēafod starian,
Hōlofernus unlyfġendes
(*Judith* 177–80)
7. Stōd¹ under linde, under lēohtum scylde
(*Charm Against a Sudden Stitch* 7)

1 The subject of *stōd* is unexpressed: understand 'I'

8. Swilce þær ēac se frōda mid flēame cōm
 on his cýþþe norð Costontinus
 (*Battle of Brunanburh* 37–8)
9. Hæfde² him tō gesiþþe³ sorge ond langop,
 wintercealde⁴ wræce⁵ (*Deor* 3–4)
10. Æfter ðām wordum wýrm yrre cwōm,
 atol inwitgæst,⁶ oðre siðe
 fýrwylmum⁷ fah fēonda nēosian,⁸
 lāðra manna; ligýðum⁹ fōr.
 (*Beowulf* 2669–73)

2 The unexpressed subject of *hæfde* is 'he'.

3 *gesiþþe*: dat. sg. of *gesiþþ* 'companionship'

4 *wintercealde*: look up *winter* and *cald*.

5 *wræce*: exile

6 *inwitgæst*: malevolent spirit

7 *fýrwylmum*: fiery surges

8 *nēosian*: weak class 2 variant of *nēosan*

9 *ligýðum*: waves of fire