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Between Translation and Paraphrase – An Analysis of Metrical Patterns in *The Paris Psalter* psalm 52

The Paris Psalter (Ms. Bibliothéque Nationale Fonds Latin 8824, Paris) is unique among the extant Anglo-Saxon psalters in that it presents the Old English psalm versions *vis-à-vis* their Latin counterparts.[1] Throughout the manuscript the text runs in two columns with the Latin on the left and the English on the right.[2] Thus, in contradistinction to the *Vespasian Psalter*, for instance, the vernacular *Paris Psalter* psalms exist as autonomous entities and not merely as interlinear glosses. While the first fifty psalms are rendered in Old English prose, the remaining represent Germanic alliterative metre. The title of Thorpe's 1835 edition – *Libri Psalmorum Versio Antiqua Latina cum paraphrase Anglo-Saxonica, partim solute oration, partim metrice composite* – suggests that the vernacular part is a paraphrase rather than a faithful translation of the psalms. Also Colgrave (1958: 15f) expresses a similar view in his critical commentary: 'For the first fifty psalms the right hand column gives a West-Saxon prose paraphrase, and for the rest of the Psalter it is filled by an Anglo-Saxon metrical version' and explains further that '[t]he method of rendering varies from pure translation to translation with explanatory comment (e.g. Ps. 44)'. Krapp (1932: vii-xxi) talks indiscriminately about 'prose and metrical translation' throughout his editorial notes. However, the critical commentaries in the 1932 edition are too general to decide whether he used the term in a rigidly defining sense or merely as a convenient descriptive label.

The difference in length and layout discernible between many Latin versicles and their Old English counterparts indeed implies that they are not textually parallel. On the first six folios the *Paris Psalter* artist filled the blank space following the shorter Latin text with pen drawings in order to maintain parallelism with the longer right-hand side Old English column. Having abandoned illumination at folio 6r for unknown reasons the scribe either left the redundant space on the Latin side unfilled, or tapered the Latin text modelling it into a triangular form (cf. for example, psalm 11 and 12, fol. 11r or psalm 13, fol. 12r).[3] The manuscript *mise-en-page* implies that '[…] the scribe had not foreseen the effect of a two-column arrangement for his bilingual text, rather than alternate paragraphs, and attempted to fill in with pictures the consequent gaps on the page' (Rumble 2009: 58).[4]

1 The manuscript facsimile was reproduced by Colgrave in 1958. The entire codex, including hymns, litany and prayers which occupy the last 11 folios, was edited by Benjamin Thorpe in 1835. The prose translations of psalms 1-50 were edited by Bright and Ramsay as *Liber Psalmorum: The West-Saxon Psalms* (1907), while the metrical psalms – by Krapp in the fifth volume of the *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (1932).

2 The Latin text is from the Roman psalter. The Old English is a translation of a different text, also Roman but with some readings from St. Jerome's Gallican version (cf. Colgrave p. 15ff).

3 Yet another way in which the scribe attempted to achieve a reasonable balance is by 'spacing the Latin rather widely and the Old English rather closely' (Colgrave p. 14).

4 In fact, the scribe may have intentionally arranged his text in two parallel columns, if his purpose was to provide a faithful rendition rather than a meditative paraphrase in the vernacular.

It has been argued that the length contrast in the prose section ensues from the translator's attempt to appropriately express Latin circumlocutions and stylistic traits in the target language. The unequal length is often a consequence of the systematic linguistic differences between the two languages. In some cases Old English grammatical equivalents of Latin words are simply more complex (cf. psalm 7:2 *þam þe min ehtað* for *persequentibus*, or 13:9 *þa þe wilniaþ fretan* for *qui devorant*), which leads to a mechanical extention of the vernacular text (cf. Stracke: http://www.aug.edu/augusta). Sometimes the translator departs from the literal meaning, but it seems that on such occasions he either attempts to elaborate on the signification attributed to a given psalm by the exegetical tradition or to stress the theme outlined in the *argumentum*.[5] According to Stracke: 'The crucial point is that the translator does not ignore individual words in his original, as a "paraphrast" would do. He does abandon the literal meaning of the Latin from time to time, but in these cases his purpose is consistently to guide the reader to one of the two kinds of meaning which he sees in the psalms'.[6] Such creative elaboration of *The Paris Psalter* prose psalms may have been exegetical and devotional in impulse.[7] Given this, the vernacular psalms approach the spirit underlying the Anglo-Saxon paraphrases of liturgical prayers. The analogy gains weight in the light of the metrical psalms from the second part of the *Psalter* which are formally parallel to the meditative poetical renditions of *Pater Noster*, *Credo* and *Gloria*, even though the former are more literal translations. Notably, fragments of the vernacular psalms co-occur with the liturgical poems in the so-called *Benedictine Office* from Ms. 121 Bodleian Library, Oxford.[8]

While working on the metrical psalms the anonymous author must have counterbalanced the formal requirements of Anglo-Saxon versification and the logic of the Latin exemplar. Predictably then, he would have been much more constrained in his translation work than either the prose psalm master or the author of the poetical paraphrases of liturgical prayers. The metrical psalms are relatively late compositions and so their form and structure inevitably departs from the traditional versification patterns of earlier Old English poetry.[9] Nevertheless, the attempts to set the verses within the boundaries of a long-standing 'Cædmonian tradition' are clearly discernible.

Although stylistic and metrical decline of late liturgical poetry and the psalm verses is almost universally acknowledged, relatively few comprehensive analyses of the data have been presented

5 Nearly all psalms are preceded by an *argumentum* – an introduction in rhetorical English prose paraphrased from a Latin source and a heading in Latin written in rustic capitals. Its purpose is to contextualise King David's composition of a psalm and explain its use for those who sing it.

6 Stracke claims that 'The most significant single influence upon the translation is the set of "Arguments" which introduce the fifty psalms, except 1, 21, and 26. The theme which the Argument finds in a psalm is almost invariably the same theme that the translator will emphasize, sometimes by expanding his translation of the most pertinent verses, and sometimes by frankly adding concepts which are not in the original.'

7 Cf. Sisam's remark in Colgrave (p. 15): 'The whole book is suitable for private reading and devotion.'

8 Comparative analysis of the psalm fragments from *The Benedictine Office* and *The Paris Psalter* suggest that both versions are derived from the same source. Moreover, many of the Old English psalm passages in the *Office* are from the first fifty psalms and these are also in the metrical version, unlike the corresponding *Paris Psalter* psalms. Therefore, it seems likely that there must have existed a complete metrical psalter. The complete text of *The Benedictine Office* including the psalm fragments was edited by Feiler (1901) and Ure (1975).

9 *The Paris Psalter* is traditionally dated to the middle of the 11th century (see Fulk 1992: 410-414). The metrical psalms are tentatively assumed to be 'late compositions', but it seems impossible to determine an exact date (cf. Fulk p. 414); for some evidence concerning the relative chronology of the metrical version see Colgrave (p. 16).

hitherto.[10] Early editors usually mention the downturn of the metrical framework *passim*, as Ure (1975: 79):

> The Psalm verses are remarkable not only for their metrical irregularity, but also for the number of end-stopped lines which is no doubt brought about by the fact that the translator was narrowly confined by his Latin original. Doubtless, too, it was this lack of freedom which rendered it impossible for him to achieve more than a very general approximation to the rules of metre and alliteration.

Scholars are also critical about the compositional mode: 'The style has no poetic quality; rather, a distinctive flatness. Common adjectives, and especially common adverbs […], are overworked, and their weakness is emphasised by their prominence in alliteration.' (Colgrave p. 17). Many descriptions are limited to general remarks lacking the analytical rigour. Such a loose outline is given in Krapp (1932: xvii):

> The very general metrical irregularity of the verse translation may be taken as indicating a relatively late time of origin, perhaps the early ninth or early tenth century. It should be remembered, however, that metrical variations are just as easily explainable on personal as on chronological grounds. It is notworthy, moreover, that the style of the metrical translation was made by a person not well acquianted with or not interested in the traditions of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

A more detailed discussion of the metrical psalms is to be found in a study by Diamond (1963) which scrutinizes the oral-formulaic diction in fragments of selected items from *The Paris Psalter*. Diamon's analytical method hinges on comparative reading of consecutive Latin versicles from the Roman psalter and their Old English textual counterparts. Unfortunately, the author ignores the fact that the Anglo-Saxon translation may be also partly indebted to the Gallican and Hebrew versions or even to some Old English glossed psalters, which may account for at least some of the apparently inaccurate renditions he finds in the vernacular passages.[11] Another weakness of

10 The metrical peculiarities are presented in some detail in an early dissertation by Tschischwitz (1908). Stylistic and translational issues are also discussed in Bruce (1894) and Bartlett (1896), and more recently, for instance, in Breitzer (1970) and Toswell (1994).

11 Diamond takes the Old English text from Krapp's 1932 edition. Since the Latin text from the *Psalter* has not been included in this edition he quotes the relevant passages after the *Romanum Psalterium* in *Liber Psalmorum* from Migne's *Patrologie*. The author also refers to Bruce (1894) and Ramsey (1920) who discuss the source of the Latin text attested in *The Paris Psalter*. He seems to be quite unaware of the objections to Ramsey's conclusion stated in Colgrave (p. 15). He also takes no notice of the fact that Krapp (p. xviii), following Bruce (pp. 161-164), rejects any direct relation between the Latin and the Old English texts in the *Psalter*: 'The three separate parts of the manuscript, the Latin text, the Anglo-Saxon prose translation and the Anglo-Saxon metrical translation appear to have had separate and independent origins. The Latin text which occupies the left hand column on the pages of the manuscript was not the text used by the translator either of the prose or of the metrical translations of the manuscript' (Krapp p. xviii; see also references given there). Other editors and critics share this opinion and stress the element of translational licence which may in part result from the scholarly reference to complementary sources, cf. Sisam and Sisam in Colgrave (p. 16): 'The text translated is that of the Roman psalter, though occassionaly the rendering agrees with Jerome's Gallican or Hebrew versions, as might be expected where there is an element of learned commentary'.

his comparative method is its limited outlook. Critical evaluation of the correspondence between individual words and phrases might be appropriate for interlinear glosses, but it seems inadequate for the autonomous metrical psalm renditions from *The Paris Psalter*. Clearly, Diamond (p. 6) has a very narrow view of the metrical psalms' composition: 'Since the Anglo-Saxon poet translated his source word-by-word, if we compare the wording of the Roman Psalter with the wording of the Anglo-Saxon poetic version, we may gain a great deal of insight into how the poet composed'. Such procedure seems to falsify the methodology of the Anglo-Saxon master. It is incompatible with the opinion that the *Psalter* renditions display the translator's critical reading of the Biblical passages.[12] It also diverts the attention from the overall structure of poetical composition and rules out the possibility of creative translation free from the bonds of imitative and uninspired conversion typical of most glosses.[13]

While examining the diction and formulaic composition of the vernacular verse psalms, Diamond also refers to their metrical organization although in a rather unsystematic and occasionally erratic way. Thus, his conclusion concerning the metrical side of the vernacular compositions is rather staggering: 'Although it is usually assumed that this poetic translation is very corrupt metrically, the samples analyzed are in surprisingly regular verses. It is certainly not the skilful performance that one finds in *Beowulf*, but the percentage of incorrect verses in the samples is not high' (Diamond p. 9). This statement is also contradictory to the prevailing scholarly opinion which describes the metrical psalms as irregular, slack and degenerate (cf. for example, Krapp p. xvii, Colgrave p. 17, Fulk pp. 410-414, Minkova 2003: 74, ft. 13).

Beside general introductory works to *The Paris Psalter* psalms there are some case studies concerned with individual items from the metrical part of the manuscript. In a critical examination of the Old English psalm 136 Toswell (1994: p. 404) presents some assumptions concerning the translation techniques worked out by the Anglo-Saxon poet.[14] Some of them are indisputable, for example, the assertion that psalm verses constitute discrete units and therefore the translation of one verse never carries over into the next. This internal structuring is supported by palaeographical evidence: in the manuscript independent constituents are marked by the use of capital letters, which occur at the beginning of psalm verses. According to Toswell, similar discreteness is also discernible within verses: '[…] inside each psalm verse it is rare for the psalter poet to run over from one membrum to the second; generally the translation of the first membrum finishes either at a caesura or, more

12 According to Sisam and Sisam (see Colgrave p. 15): 'The translator shows a considerable knowledge of Biblical Latin: there were few aids available, and he does not seem to have used an interlinear English gloss, though he probably consulted a Latin verbal commentary.' For a different view on the problem of possible subsidiary use of the Anglo-Saxon glossed psalters see Keefer (1979); cf. also ft. 13 below.

13 This assumption does not contradict Keefer's (1979) premise that the metrical portion of *The Paris Psalter* may have been versified from interlinear psalter glosses; cf. also Gretch (1999) who arrives at similar conclusions. Even though the metrical Psalter author may have used some glossed psalters for reference he must have employed quite different translational procedures, adjusting the translational schemes to the metrical framework. It might be the case that the 'pedestrian' character of the metrical renditions which, according to Gretch (p. 80ff.), contrasts sharply with the 'more flamboyant' Royal glosses, ensues partly from this structural constraining.

14 Toswell (p. 404, ft. 37) refers to her 1991 doctoral dissertation in which a more detailed consideration of the translation method may be found.

preferably, at the end of a line (usually the second), and the second membrum is rendered to the end of a third or fourth line.' Such internal cohesion might suggest that filler half-lines are most likely to turn up half-way through each verse or at the end of the verse, while single filler words 'occur to provide alliteration in the verses where the translation is actually taking place'. Given this, it seems possible to discriminate between the points at which the *Psalter* poet may have provided an involved interpretation of the original and such where he merely expanded the text for metrical reasons.

Much as it sounds attractive, this generalisation gives an oversimplified picture of the metrical psalms' compositional framework. In particular, Toswell's conviction that 'each half-line is carefully constructed, for translation if it centers on a noun from Latin, for filler or expansion from the text if not' is often inconsistent with textual data. In many lines there is no congruity between the syntactic and metrical structure, and the boundaries between hemistiches are often transgressed. Furthermore, focusing on the lexical implementation of individual half-lines rather than on the structure of larger syntactic units, Toswell ignores the principles of Old English vernacular poetry in which the basic poetic unit consisted of the verse paragraph. Also, the claim that the poet 'approached each verse in the same way, choosing appropriate alliteration with care to avoid much repetition' inappropriately stresses only the perceptual aspect of the metrical system. Although alliteration was a salient trait of Anglo-Saxon metre, it did not exist by itself, but was part of a hierachical structure formed by related and interdependent constituents. To summarize briefly, Toswell's analysis of verse internal organization is centered on the lexical and semantic equivalence to the original rather than on the emerging language structure and its relation to the metrical framework. While this approach may be adequate for establishing possible correspondences between various psalm renditions, it is too limited for a comprehensive analysis of the metrical compositions from the second part of *The Paris Psalter*. This one-sided analytical procedure does not provide an exhaustive account of the versification patterns and therefore many questions concerning the translational scheme remain open.

The following analysis attempts to survey some formal metrical devices used by the Anglo-Saxon poet in the Old English versified adaptation of psalm 52, reproduced below in the bilingual rendition based on Colgrave's manuscript facsimile.

Latin	Old English
Increpat Iudeos incredulos, negantes Deum.	
1. Dixit insipiens in corde suo: Non est Deus. Corrupti sunt et abominabiles facti sunt in voluntatibus suis	1. On his heortan cwæð unhydig sum, ungleawlice, þætte god nære; heo onsceoniendlice syndon gewordene and heora willan wraðe besmitene.
2. Non est qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum.	2. Næs þa goddoend se þe god wiste, ne an furðum ealra wære.
3. Dominus de cælo prospexit super filios hominum; ut videat si est intelligens, aut requirens Deum.	3. þa of heofenum beseah halig drihten ofer manna bearn, hwæðer his mihta ða andgyt ænig ealra hæfde, oððe god wolde georne secan.
4. Omnes declinaverunt simul inutiles facti sunt; Non est qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum.	4. Ealle heo on ane idelnesse symle besegan; þa wæs soð nan mann þe god wolde georne wyrcan; ne an furþum ealra wære.
5. Nonne cognoscent omnes qui operantur iniquitatem qui devorant plebem meam sicurt escam panis? Deum non invocaverunt; illic trepidaverunt timore, ubi non erat timor.	5. Ac ge þæs ealle ne magon andgyt habban þe unrihtes elne wyrceað and min folc fretað swa fælne hlaf, ne hio god wyllað georne ciegan; þær hio forhtigað, frecnes egesan æniges ne þurfon.
6. Quoniam Deus dissipat ossa hominum sibi placentium; confusi sunt, quoniam Deus sprecavit eos.	6. Forþam manna ban mihtig drihten liste tosceadeð, þa him liciað; beoð þa gehyrwede þe forhycggeað god.
7. Quis dabit ex Sion salutare Israel? dum converterit Dominus captivitatem plebis suæ	7. Hwylc Israela ece hælu syleð of Sione nymðe sylfa god, þonne he his folc fægere alyseð of hæftnyde, halig drihten?
8. Exultabit Iacob, et lætabitur Israel.	8. þonne Iacob byð on glædum sælum and Israelas ealle bliðe.

A glimpse at the structure of psalm 52 suggests an apparently repetitive arrangement. One of its salient features is the iteration of three basic verse patterns, namely Sievers' (1893) A, B and C types, to the exclusion of D and E-type verses which represent more complex metrical contours. Another peculiar trait of the psalm is a remarkable number of C-type verses, which seems to be a general tendency in the metrical *Psalter*. Out of 57 half-lines which make the psalm twenty can be classified as

unambiguous A-types (6b, 7b, 9a, 9b, 10b, 11a, 12a, 13b, 14b, 15b, 16b, 18b, 19b, 20a, 21b, 22b, 25a, 26b, 27b, 29b), nine – as B-types (1a, 1b, 7a, 8a, 12b, 17b, 21a, 23b, 25b), and ten – as C-types (2b, 5a, 5b, 6a, 10a, 13a, 14a, 17a, 18a, 27a). A few verses represent subtype A_3 (4a, 8b, 26a), which, although not entirely regular, is recognised as a legitimate pattern in Sieversian framework. Given the distributional array above with the prevailing A pattern, complemented by B and C-type verses, one might comply with the aforementioned opinion that the analysed sample is 'surprisingly regular' (cf. Diamond p. 9). Indeed, leaving aside the ambiguous cases (i.e. 2a, 3a, 28b) and the problematic verses (i.e. 3b, 4b, 16a, 19a, 22b, 23a, 24a, 29a), the number of allegedly standard metrical types is predominant. Nevertheless, a close examination of the verse-internal metrical structure uncovers certain irregularities unacceptable in the standard model established by Sievers.

Many of the favoured A-type verses appear in the closing part of a line, which might suggest that they serve as empty fillers – metrically significant but without substantial contribution to the translation proper. This is only partly true, however, for none of the filler verses is an entirely external adjunct. Rather, they represent semantic extentions of the basic structures and ideas encoded in the original. Despite its outwardly unsophisticated form the architecture of many lines is fairly complex. Not all of the formulas implement the metrical types in the regular way or represent self-contained units; in others the underlying idea is developed in adjacent verses and embedded in rhetorical figures of variation.

There are some clear cases, for instance, *unhȳdig sum* (1b), *hālig dryhten* (7b, 27b), *georne sēcan* (10b), *mihtig dryhten* (21b) or *ealle blīþe* (29b), which function as closed idioms. Some of them act as translation groups, others serve metrical purposes. Thus, *unhydig sum* from the first line renders Latin *insipiens* in a rather faithful manner. Verses such as *hālig dryhten* (lit. 'holy Lord'; 7b, 27b) or *mihtig dryhten* (lit. 'mighty Lord'; 21b) – both well grounded in the vernacular religious poetry – turn the plain Latin *dominus* and *deus* into adjectival phrases. Both locutions are used interchangeably with Old English *god* ('God'; cf. 2b: OE *þætte god nære* for Latin *non est Deus*), which means that the adnominals are conventional metrical extensions. Yet, stylistically the vernacular renditions depart from the direct mode of their Latin counterparts. Similar semantic extensions, the by-products of metrical requirements, are manifested in [*wolde*] *georne sēcan* (lit. '[would wish to] seek eagerly'; 10b), [*wolde*] *georne wyrcan* (lit. [would wish to] 'work eagerly'; 13b) or [*wyllað*] *georne cīegan* (lit. '[are willing to] call eagerly'; 18b) for Latin *requirens*, *faciat*, *invocaverunt* (or related terms), respectively.

The stylistic richness of the vernacular rendition, enforced by metrical requirements, is manifested in the use of synonimical expressions which often introduce a new alliterative sequence. This is the case in line 2 in which the adverb *unglēawlīce* (ignorantly, foolishly, unwisely) develops further the idea introduced by the phrase *unhȳdig sum* in the previous line. The complementary lexical element contributes to the stylistic ornateness of the metrical rendition which contrasts sharply with the prose translation of the parallel *membrum* in psalm 14: *Se unrihtwīsa cwyð on his mōde nīs nān god* […] (The unrighteous says in his heart: there is no God). Similar alliterative 'padding' is found in traditional Anglo-Saxon poetry, including such artistic masterpieces as *Beowulf*, but the pslam poet combines this practice with other unconventional metrical devices.

The opening lines of the psalm seem to be formally correct and faithful to the original. Indeed, in the light of the initial verses the portrait of the psalter poet, outlined by Toswell (p. 394) – a 'non-adventurous soul', who '[…] produced a vernacular version of the Roman psalter as nearly as possible word by word to create a slavish equivalent to the sacred original' sounds legitimate.

The impression of a certain flatness and workmanlike effect of the whole composition ensues in part from the author's endeavours to accomodate *par force* semantically preferred lexical forms within a narrow range of metrical patterns. At times, these efforts reveal deliberate decisions of a native speaker choosing the most appropriate forms from the range of possible variants, but more often they lead to the formation of marginal and disputable patterns or even formally defective sequences.

Alliteration is one of the areas in which the *Psalter* master trespasses conventional metrical grounds. In the first two lines the forms *unhȳdig* and *ungleawlīce,* which appear in metrically functional positions, are stressed on the lexical roots to provide the required alliterative elements *h-* and *g-*, respectively. A few lines below, however, a parallel form *unrihtes*, is stressed on the prefix in order to furnish the first half-line with a vocalic element to match the alliterating vowel of *elne* from the b-verse. The prefix, normally unstressed, exhibits some degree of prosodic flexibility (cf. Campbell 1959: 31f.). The poet seems to have exploited this limited variation in creative structuring of the alliterative contour. Other metrical deviations in the same field concern the *sc-*/*s-* alliteration in line 3 and a similar suspension of the identity condition between the initial consonants in *Iacob* and *glædum* in line 28. Lack of agreement among velars and palatals is attested in traditional Old English poems, but its scale in late biblical compositions is unparalleled.

Another violation of the versification principles concerns the implementation of the accepted metrical types. To begin with a regular case, verse 27a represents the stress-clash type C (x / / x) in which the strong metrical positions fall on the adjacent root syllables of the compound's lexical constituents: *of 'hæft-'nȳde*. Notably, parallel metrical patterns are discernible in verses 2a and 11b filled by morphologically complex words *ungleawlīce* and *īdelnesse* which, in contradistinction to *hæftnȳde*, are not true compounds but quasi-compounds. Some metrists draw a distinction between these two morphological categories assigning secondary stress to true compounds and tertiary stress to pseudo-compounds. The distinction is debatable as there is no agreement on the functional and psychological reality of the weaker degree of stress. All things considered, verses 2a and 11b instantiate metrical extentions of the default C-pattern.

A similar extention occurs in verse 3a, which may be interpreted as Sievers' type A with anacrusis (x x / x / x) on condition that the initial syllable of the derivational suffix *-līce* fills the second metrical lift: heo on'scēoniend'līce. An alternative reading with a single strong position on the adverbial root produces an entirely irregular verse ending in three unstressed syllables. Comparable structures emerge only in the closing passage where each of two nearly identical verses 24a and 29a – *hwylc Israela* and *and Israela*, respectively, ends in an expanded dip covering three, presumably unstressed syllables of the non-native proper noun *Israela* (/ x x x). Less extreme, but still largely illicit pattern occurs in lines 3b, 4b, 19a and 23a. These verses seem to represent type A or its subtype A_3, but end in a sequence of two unstressed syllables. Such an extension of the second dip in the A-type is strictly forbidden unless the preceding stressed syllable is light and may therefore constitute one metrical position with the adjacent unstressed syllable. Metrical resolution is respected in *Beowulf* (cf. l. 728: *geseah hē in recede/sinca manige*) as well as in less regular poems like *The Ruin* (cf. verse 5b: *scorene gedrorene* and 7b: *forweorone geleorone*). However, in the case of the psalm verses above the principle does not operate, because the weight parameters are not proper: the stressed syllables are heavy and so count as autonomous metrical positions.

One possible explanation of the aberrant pattern hinges on the assumption that the unstressed syllables had been reduced due to inflectional levelling and vowel deletion. Given this, one might tentatively assume that in words such as *gewordene* (3b), *besmītene* (4b) or *gehwyrwede* (23a) the final vowel is not pronounced and therefore the number of metrical positions in the relevant verses – reduced by one. Had this been the case, however, similar reductions were to be expected elsewhere in comparable morphophonological context, for instance, in *idelnesse* (11b) or *georne* (10b, 13b, 18b). However, these verses represent regular metrical patterns providing that the final unstressed vowels are phonetically real segments and not mere scribal graphemes. Segment deletion as a strategy of metrical adjustment is even less plausible in the case of the verb *forhtigað* from 19a which also violates the ban on two unstressed positions at the A-type verse edge. The palatal glide /j/, represented in the manuscript by <ʒ>, inserted at the stem-suffix boundary to resolve the hiatus sequence, implies a trisyllabic structure of the verb. This means that the suffixal vowel, albeit reduced, must have been pronounced.

An excessive number of unstressed syllables and extended dips is in general a salient trait of the metrical psalms. Such sequences fill the regular weak positions in verse but often occur at other unpredictable places. In effect, this relative laxity masks the degree of verse internal coherence and the relevance of metrical equivalences. In view of the psalm contradictory evidence, one can hardly decide whether resolution applies to *heofenum* in line 7a, for instance, or whether it is suspended. If the latter is true, the metrical dip is more extended but still falls within an acceptable limit. This ambiguity may partly be the result of late Old English language changes, and partly – a manifestation of the poet's individual style. In psalm 52 the author seems to make use of marginal solutions and ambiguous arrangements in a deliberate way. Thus, verse 28b, *on glædum sǣlum*, can be interpreted as an A-type pattern with anacrusis, if resolution be suspended (i.e. x / x / x), or as the clash-stress type C – if the first strong position on the light syllable of *glædum* be resolved (i.e. x / / x). Both solutions conform to the overall metrical framework and the typology of verse patterns favoured by the author.

Despite many inconsistencies and divergence from the standard versification patterns, the *Psalter* master endeavoured to adjust the language he used to the metrical norms. These attempts are discernible in the use of archaizing forms and alternative lexical variants. For example, negative particles may appear as autonomous elements (cf. 6a, 14a: *ne* (*ān*)) or as different contracted forms (cf. 2a: *nǣre*, 5a: *nǣs*) depending on the required metrical pattern. The relevance of this variation becomes prominent when compared to the prose translation of the parallel passages from psalm 14 where the same Latin phrase *non est* is rendered as *nīs* (*nān*). Also, the choice of an early form of a nominal compound *gōddoend* 'benefactor' seems to have been dictated by metrical criteria. This trisyllabic variant of the more regular bisyllabic forms *gōddōnd~gōddēnd* supplies three metrical positions required to complete a C-type verse; crucially, the third syllable acts as the final dip closing the metrical contour. These and other examples imply that the metrical *Psalter* master was a conscious native speaker struggling to counterweigh the language matter and metrical constraints. At times he drew the metrical rules to the limits applying unconventional techniques and generating peripheral versification patterns. Nonetheless, his *modus operandi*, though far from the classic schemes, betrays a craftsman well-versed in Latin and familiar with the vernacular poetical tradition.

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STRESZCZENIE: Artykuł przedstawia wybrane aspekty struktury wersyfikacyjnej psalmu 52 z rękopisu staroangielskiego, znanego pod nazwą *The Paris Psalter* (Psałterz Paryski). Zapisane w psałterzu przekłady psalmów były wcześniej badane pod kątem zgodności z oryginałem łacińskim, jednorodności stylistycznej i związków z pokrewnymi tekstami religijnymi. Ocena warsztatu translatorskiego anglosaskiego autora wymaga jednak również analizy form metrycznych i układów wersyfikacyjnych, które są podstawą kompozycyjną części psalmów. Podjęta w artykule próba oceny formalnych aspektów wierszowanego przekładu psalmu 52 ujawnia obok cech nieregularnych ślady celowej stylizacji i świadomego tworzenia szablonu wzorców metrycznych.