Faculty Publications

2015

# Psalm 151 in Anglo-Saxon England

Brandon W. Hawk
*Rhode Island College*, bhawk@ric.edu

## Citation

PSALM 151 IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

BY BRANDON W. HAWK

The Psalms were a central aspect of Anglo-Saxon religious and biblical learning, and for this reason they have garnered much attention in recent scholarship. Yet the apocryphal, supernumerary Psalm 151 in particular would benefit from greater sustained attention. By focusing on this individual psalm, the present article situates the apocryphon within its intellectual, material, and literary contexts. In the first part of this essay, the surviving patristic and medieval evidence for learned attitudes toward the psalm in relation to the rest of the canonical Psalter are discussed, as well as the manuscript witnesses in Anglo-Saxon England. In the second part of this essay, focus is turned toward the two surviving Old English gloss translations of Psalm 151 in the Vespasian and Eadwine psalters. More specifically, it is suggested that the Vespasian gloss translation of Psalm 151 is yet another unidentified Old English poem.

In the last chapter of his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, commenting on Psalm 150, Augustine discusses the number, organization, and unity of the Psalter.[*] He writes: 'Hunc quinquagenarium triplum habet centesimus et quinquagesimus numerus, tamquam eum multiplicauerit trinitas. Vnde et hac causa non inconuenienter intellegimus istum numerum esse psalmorum' ('The number 150 contains this fifty three times, as if it were multiplied by the Trinity. Therefore, and

for this reason, we know that this number of the Psalms is not inappropriate').[1] Indeed, this understanding of the number, threefold organization, and unity of the book of Psalms continued through the medieval period.[2] But beyond this distinct structure, there was another psalm that circulated in the late antique and medieval periods: the apocryphal Psalm 151, attributed to David and relating his youthful rise to fame as the victor against Goliath.

The apocryphal and supernumerary character of Psalm 151 did not hinder its widespread transmission, which in many ways mirrors that of the canonical Psalms. This text was presumably composed in Hebrew (though it is not included in the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible) before the second century BCE, was translated into a shorter Greek version and incorporated into the Septuagint (LXX), and was later translated into Syriac and Arabic from the Greek.[3] The Septuagint provides the heading: ‘Οὗτος ὁ ψαλμὸς ἰδιόγραφος εἰς Δαυιδ καὶ ἔξωθεν τοῦἀριθμοῦ ὅτε ἐμονομάχησεν τῷ Γολιαδ’ (‘This psalm is written by David, and outside the number, when he fought Goliath in single combat’).[4] In its transmission to the West, the psalm was translated from Greek in Old Latin versions of the Bible, was taken over into the Roman

---

[1] Augustine, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini: Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ed. Eligius Dekkers and J. Fraipont, 3 vols, Corpus Christanorum Series Latina, 38-40 (Turnhout, 1956), 3:2192, lines 56-9; unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

[2] On the reception of Augustine's commentary in Anglo-Saxon England, see entries for Augustine ('AVG.') in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register* <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk> accessed April 2015; and Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Cambridge, 2006), esp. 288.

[3] See J. H. Charlesworth with J. A. Sanders, 'More Psalms of David', in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols (Garden City, NY, 1983-1985), 2:609-24, at 612-15; Hans Debel, 'Amalgamator or Faithful Translator? A Translation-Technical Assessment of Psalm 151', in Erich Zenger (ed.), *Composition of the Book of Psalms*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 238 (Leuven, 2010), 443-62; and idem, 'Greek "Variant Literary Editions" to the Hebrew Bible?', *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 41 (2010), 161-90.

[4] Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (eds), *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, 2nd edn, 2 vols in 1 (Stuttgart, 2006), 2:163.

Psalter, and was subsequently incorporated into manuscripts of the Vulgate.[5] Following the

Septuagint, the standard heading in the Latin Vulgate (from Old Latin) reads: 'Hic psalmus

proprie scriptus David et extra numerum cum pugnavit cum Goliad' ('This psalm is written by

David himself, and outside the number, when he fought with Goliath').[6] To this cluster of textual

versions of Psalm 151 may be added the various medieval translations into vernacular languages,

including Old English.[7]

While numerous studies have focused on the Psalter generally, and some on individual

psalms,[8] little scholarship (and no single study) has focused on Psalm 151, which stands out as a

singular case in the larger scope of Anglo-Saxon receptions of biblical materials.[9] What is

revealed through this examination is that Anglo-Saxon interactions with the apocryphal psalm

are found across a range of significant learned enterprises, including material culture,

commentary traditions, and vernacular translations. Presented first are the broad outlines of the

reception and circulation of the psalm, highlighting its presence in the intellectual landscape. The

---

[5] Pierre Sabatier (ed.), *Bibliorum sacrorum Latinae versiones antiquae, seu Vetus Italica*, 3 vols (Rheims, 1743; repr. Turnhout, 1976), 2:287-8; Robert Weber (ed.), *Le Psautier Romain et les autres anciens psautiers latins*, Collectanea Biblica Latina, 10 (Rome, 1953), 357-8; and Robert Weber (ed.), *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, 4th edn (Stuttgart, 2005), 1975.

[6] Weber, *Biblia sacra*, 1975; cf. Sabatier, *Bibliorum sacrorum*, 2:287. For Anglo-Saxon examples, see below.

[7] My use of the term 'cluster' to refer to variant versions of texts is indebted to Michael E. Stone, 'Multiform Transmission and Authorship', in *Ancient Judaism: New Visions and Views* (Grand Rapids, 2011), 151-71.

[8] Scholarship is vast, but see the most comprehensive and recent study, M. J. Toswell, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, Medieval Church Studies 10 (Turnhout, 2014), with further references there.

[9] To my knowledge, the most substantial scholarship on the subject are two brief discussions by Frederick M. Biggs, 'An Introduction and Overview of Recent Work', in Kathryn Powell and Donald G. Scragg (eds), *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England*, Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 2 (Cambridge, 2003), 1-25, at 7-8; and 'Psalm 151', in Frederick M. Biggs (ed.), *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture: The Apocrypha*, Instrumenta Anglistica Mediaevalia, 1 (Kalamazoo, 2006), 16-17. No entry for Psalm 151 appears in *Fontes*.

first  section examines attitudes toward Psalm 151 in commentaries, while the second section

presents the material evidence of manuscripts. The third section focuses on the two Old English

translations in the Vespasian and Eadwine psalters, which depict innovative intellectual and

literary engagements with the psalm. More specifically, evidence suggests that the glossator of

Psalm 151 in the Vespasian Psalter sought to create an Old English poem in translating into the

vernacular.


**Patristic and Early Medieval Attitudes toward Psalm 151**

Major indications for attitudes toward Psalm 151 are found in the commentary tradition

stretching from patristic through the medieval period. As already hinted at in the beginning of

this article, a number of patristic commentaries on the psalms circulated in Anglo-Saxon

England, chiefly those by or attributed to Hilary of Poitiers, Augustine, Jerome, Cassiodorus, and

Theodore of Mopsuestia.[10] Although Psalm 151 does not appear in these major commentaries,

other general remarks on the poetry of the Psalter may be brought to bear here. Jerome

recognized the poetic quality of the Psalms and sought to capture it in his own translations,[11] of

which Anglo-Saxons were not ignorant.[12] It was also Jerome who founded the spurious but

widely held belief that the psalms were composed using conventions of classical meter, and that

---

[10] See Patrick P. O'Neill (ed.), *King Alfred's Old English Prose Translation of the First Fifty Psalms*, Medieval Academy Books, 104 (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 34-40; and Stephen J. Harris, 'Happiness and the Psalms', in Michael Fox and Manish Sharma (eds), *Old English Literature and the Old Testament* (Toronto, 2012), 292-314. For a list of early medieval commentaries on the Psalms, see Robert E. McNally, *The Bible in the Early Middle Ages* (Westminster, MD, 1959; repr. Eugene, OR, 2005), 100-1.

[11] See James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven, 1981; repr. Baltimore, 1998), 149-56.

[12] See Mechthild Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 25 (Cambridge, 1999), 58-9, with further references there.

they are thus worthy of intellectual study akin to that of the great authors of antiquity.[13] In

Anglo-Saxon England, the main schoolroom sources of information about Latin poetry were

Isidore's *Etymologiae* and Bede's *De arte metrica* and *De schematibus et tropis*, which carried

over Roman and early Christian knowledge of Latin verse as well as examples from classical and

biblical poetry.[14] For a learned monastic author, the poetic characteristics of the Psalter would be

hardly dismissible; as will be seen, these notions also played a part in traditions associated with

the supernumerary psalm.

Despite the scant discussion of Psalm 151 by patristic authors, it does receive treatment

in early medieval commentaries that originated in Britain and Ireland: the Hiberno-Latin

*Reference Bible*[15] and *Glossa in Psalmos*,[16] both produced in the eighth century; and the ninth-

century *Old Irish Treatise on the Psalter*.[17] Particularly worth noting is the Hiberno-Latin *Glossa*

*in Psalmos* (Vatican, Vatican Library, Pal. lat. 68; s. viii), since it plausibly originated in a

---

[13] See Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 149-56.

[14] Wallace M. Lindsay (ed.), *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911); and Calvin B. Kendall (ed.), *Libri II De arte metrica et De schematibus et tropis: The Art of Poetry and Rhetoric*, Bibliotheca Germanica, Series Nova, 2 (Saarbrücken, 1991).

[15] See Martin McNamara, 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church (600-1200 CE)', in *The Psalms in the Early Irish Church*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 165 (Sheffield, 2000), 19-142, at 52-4 and 132-42; relevant comments on Psalm 151 are edited at p. 140.

[16] N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957; repr. with supplement, 1990) [hereafter NRK, cited by no.]; and Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, 15 (Toronto, 2014), [hereafter *ASM*, by item no.], 909. See Martin McNamara, *Glossa in psalmos: The Hiberno-Latin Gloss on the Psalms of Codex Palatinus Latinus 68 (Psalms 39:11-151:7)*, Studie testi, 310 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1986); McNamara's updated 'Introduction to *Glossa in Psalmos*: The Hiberno-Latin Gloss on the Psalms of Codex Palatinus Latinus 68', *Psalms in the Early Irish Church*, 165-238; and description and digital facsimile at *Bibliotheca Laureshamensis digital* <http://bibliotheca-laureshamensis-digital.de/bav/bav_pal_lat_68> accessed April 2015.

[17] See McNamara, 'Psalter Text', 54-7. Extant versions of this commentary are fragmentary, comprising only an introduction and comments on Psalm 1.1.

Northumbrian centre. In addition to valuable commentary in Old Irish, this gloss also includes

Old English notes on several psalms, demonstrating its circulation among Anglo-Saxons.

Summarising knowledge about the origin of the *Glossa* and its sole surviving manuscript, Martin

McNamara observes, 'What we have in Cod. Pal. lat. 68, then, seems to be a work originally

compiled c. 700 CE, and transcribed by Edilberict early in the eighth century.'[18] Most of the

comments on Psalm 151 provide historical glosses related to the events of David's life in 1

Samuel, as well as the broader events of Israelite history in the Old Testament[19]—in line with the

general character of the *Glossa*.[20] The gloss on the heading of the apocryphal psalm indicates its

status outside of the numbered Psalms, but also its role as part of the traditionally circulating

canticles: 'Vox Christi saeculum exhortantis. Hic salmus secundum Ebreos primus. In cantico

uictoriam indicat cum Goliath et ideo in fine ponitur quia alia sequentia in hoc salmo puerilia

sunt cantica' ('The voice of Christ exhorts the world. A psalm first according to the Hebrews.

The canticle indicates the victory against Goliath and therefore is placed at the end of the other

sequence, with the psalm that is the Canticle of the Youths').[21]

      The *Glossa in Psalmos*, in fact, shares a verbal parallel with the extended 'Vox Christi'

heading in the Codex Amiatinus.[22] Both the *Glossa* and Amiatinus tituli share similarities with

the St. Columba Series of psalm headings, since parallels also exist in the Psalter of

Charlemagne (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 13159; c. 795-800) and Karlsruhe,

Codex Augiensis CVII (s. x), both major witnesses for the tituli.[23] It is important to note here that

---

[18] 'Introduction to *Glossa in Psalmos*', 233.

[19] McNamara, *Glossa in Psalmos*, 310-11.

[20] See McNamara, 'Introduction to *Glossa in Psalmos*'.

[21] McNamara, *Glossa in Psalmos*, 310.

[22] McNamara noted this parallel in his apparatus, but offered no discussion; ibid., 310.

[23] Ibid.; and 'Introduction to *Glossa in Psalmos*', 203-5. Further on these headings, see
McNamara, *Psalms in the Early Irish Church*, *passim*.

Northumbrian biblical study flourished at the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth

centuries, as evident by the creation of three great Bible pandects under the direction of Abbot

Ceolfrith—projects in which Bede had a hand. Amiatinus is one of these products.[24] A few

propositions may be inferred from this parallel. First, the presence of the 'Vox Christi' heading

in Amiatinus strengthens the plausibility that the *Glossa* was compiled in a Northumbrian centre

with Irish connections, possibly even at Wearmouth-Jarrow. Second, since Bede helped with the

production of Amiatinus, the heading in that pandect raises tantalizing (though ultimately

speculative) possibilities about his knowledge of the same traditions as the *Glossa*, as well as

about his attitudes toward apocrypha.[25] To follow these questions further, however, would lead

only to speculation. In any case, these headings and the Hiberno-Latin glosses suggest that

attention to Psalm 151 was not stagnant during the early medieval period.


**The Material Transmission of Psalm 151 in Anglo-Saxon England**

Support for the pervasiveness of Psalm 151 in Anglo-Saxon culture is evident primarily

in surviving material evidence. Of some thirty-seven surviving psalters and psalter fragments

dated from the eighth to the twelfth century (seventeen containing Old English glosses), eighteen

---

[24] On Bede and Amiatinus, see Richard Marsden, *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 15 (Cambridge, 1995), 202-19; Paul Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus, and the Codex Amiatinus', *Speculum*, 71 (1996), 827-83; Richard Marsden, '*Manus Bedae*: Bede's Contribution to Ceolfrith's Bibles', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 27 (1998), 65-85; Elizabeth Bailey, 'The Tabernacle as an Allegory of Faith in Anglo-Saxon England: The *Codex Amiatinus* and the Venerable Bede', *Medieval Perspectives*, 17 (2003), 2-22; Michael Gorman, 'The Codex Amiatinus: A Guide to the Legends and Bibliography', *Studi medievali*, 44 (2003), 863-910; Paul Meyvaert, 'The Date of Bede's *In Ezram* and His Image of Ezra in the Codex Amiatinus', *Speculum*, 80 (2005), 1087-133; and idem, 'Dissension in Bede's Community Shown by a Quire of Codex Amiatinus', *Revue bénédictine*, 116 (2006), 295-309.
[25] On Bede's attitude toward apocrypha, see Biggs, 'Introduction and Overview', 12-16.

include the Latin Psalm 151.[26] In other words, about half of the extant psalter manuscripts from

Anglo-Saxon England contain the apocryphal psalm, amounting to significant evidence for its

circulation. Since no complete list has appeared elsewhere,[27] the following indicates the

surviving manuscripts, including, usenames (where applicable) and shelfmarks, with known

dates, places of origin, and relevant provenances; the type of psalter, indicated as Romanum,

Gallicanum, or Hebraicum; as well as references to N. R. Ker's *Catalogue of Manuscripts*

*Containing Anglo-Saxon* (NRK) and Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge's *Anglo-Saxon*

*Manuscripts* (*ASM*);[28] for some manuscripts, information was also gleaned from *The Production*

*and Use of English Manuscripts 1060-1220,* compiled by Orietta Da Rold, Takako Kato, Mary

Swan, and Elaine Treharne.[29]

> 1. Archadeus Psalter: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 272 (883x884, Rheims, prov.
>
> England s. xi); Gallicanum; *ASM* 77.
>
> 2. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 391 (s. $xi^{3/4}$, Worcester); Gallicanum; *ASM* 104.
>
> 3. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 411 (s. $x^2$, Canterbury, or s. $x^1$, W France, prov.
>
> Abingdon?); Gallicanum; *ASM* 106.

---

[26] On psalters generally, see Helmut Gneuss, 'Liturgical Books in Anglo-Saxon England and Their Old English Terminology', in Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (eds), *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday* (Cambridge, 1985), 91-141, at 114-16; Phillip Pulsiano, 'Psalters', in Richard W. Pfaff (ed.), *The Liturgical Books of Anglo-Saxon England*, Old English Newsletter Subsidia, 23 (Kalamazoo, 1995), 60-85; and Toswell, *Anglo-Saxon Psalter*.

[27] Pulsiano indicates only thirteen manuscripts in 'Psalters', 83 (although he lists all extant psalters at 61-70); Biggs lists only fourteen in 'Psalm 151' (since manuscripts dated post-1100 generally fall outside the scope of *SASLC*); and Gneuss and Lapidge list only eleven in the 'Index of Authors and Texts' in *ASM*, at 928.

[28] See references above, n. 16.

[29] Orietta Da Rold, Takako Kato, Mary Swan, and Elaine Treharne, *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060-1220*, University of Leicester (pubd online 2010) <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.P.BN.Lat.8846.htm> accessed April 2015.

4. Eadwine Psalter: Cambridge, Trinity College R.17.1 (c.1155x1160, Canterbury, Christ Church); Romanum, Gallicanum, and Hebraicum (triple psalter); NRK 91.

5. Bosworth Psalter: London, BL, Additional 37517 (s. $x^{3/4}$, x/xi, and $xi^{in}$, Canterbury, Christ Church?); Romanum; NRK 129; *ASM* 291.

6. London, BL, Arundel 60 (s. $xi^2$, prob. 1073, Winchester); Gallicanum; NRK 134; *ASM* 304.

7. Æthelstan Psalter: London, BL, Cotton Galba A. xviii (s. $ix^1$, NE France; in England s. $ix^2$ or $x^{in}$); Gallicanum; *ASM* 334.

8. Vespasian Psalter: London, BL, Cotton Vespasian A. i (s. $viii^{2/4}$, prob. Canterbury, St. Augustine's); Romanum; NRK 203; *ASM* 381.

9. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius E. xviii (s. $xi^{med}$ or $xi^{3/4}$, Winchester); Gallicanum; NRK 224; *ASM* 407.

10. London, BL, Harley 863, fols. 8-125 (1046x1072, Exeter); Gallicanum; *ASM* 425.

11. Ramsey Psalter: London, BL Harley 2904 (s. $x^{3/3}$ or $x^{ex}$, Winchester? or Ramsey?); Gallicanum; *ASM* 430.

12. Royal Bible: London, BL, Royal 1. E. vii + viii (s. x/xi; prov. Canterbury, Christ Church); Gallicanum (part of pandect); *ASM* 449.

13. London, Lambeth Palace Library 427, fols. 1-202 (s. $xi^1$, SW England; prov. Lanthony); Gallicanum; NRK 280; *ASM* 517.

14. Salisbury Psalter: Salisbury, Cathedral Library 150, fols. 1-151 (s. $x^2$, SW England); Gallicanum; NRK 379; *ASM* 740.

15. Salisbury, Cathedral Library 180 (s. ix/x, N France or Brittany; prov. England $x^1$); Gallicanum and Hebraicum (double psalter); *ASM* 754.

16. Codex Amiatinus: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatino 1 (s. vii^ex or viii^in [before 716], Monkwearmouth-Jarrow; Continent s. viii); Hebracium (part of pandect); *ASM* 825.

17. Rome, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 12 (s. xi^{2/4}, prob. Canterbury, Christ Church; prov. Bury St. Edmunds); Gallicanum; *ASM* 912.

18. Utrecht Psalter: Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek 32, fols. 1-91 (c.816x840, Hautvillers or Rheims; prov. Canterbury, Christ Church by s. x^ex or xi^in); Gallicanum; *ASM* 939.

The majority of these manuscripts are liturgical psalters containing canticles (Gneuss records twenty-seven total liturgical manuscripts from the period),[30] where Psalm 151 is normally placed. Notable exceptions are the Royal Bible (no. 12) and Codex Amiatinus (no. 16), what Richard Marsden has deemed 'two apparent peaks of achievement' in the production of Anglo-Saxon bibles.[31] Furthermore, Amiatinus is the only extant copy of the Hebraicum Psalter to incorporate Psalm 151. This inclusion of Psalm 151 in two of the most important Anglo-Saxon bibles indicates its prominence in learned circles of biblical study.

As Frederick M. Biggs points out, Psalm 151 was singled out in psalters for standing outside the canonical numbering in headings.[32] Even variant tituli show attention to the place of the psalm in relation to the canonical psalter. For instance, the Eadwine (no. 4), Æthelstan (no. 7), Salisbury (no. 14), and Utrecht (no. 18) psalters all provide an expanded form of the standard heading, adding 'hic psalmus in ebreis codicibus non habetur sed nec a .lxx. quidem interpretibus. additus est. et idcirco repudiandus' ('This psalm is not included in Hebrew codices,

---

[30] See 'Liturgical Books', 114-16.
[31] *Text*, 3 (see also pp. 40-1).
[32] 'Introduction and Overview', 8.

but indeed is added as translated from the Septuagint, and therefore it is to be rejected).[33]

Additionally, Codex Amiatinus (no. 16) provides another form of the heading with a different

expansion: 'psalmus dauid proprie extra numerum uox christi ad saeculum exoperantis' ('A

psalm of David outside the number, the voice of Christ to the world from his work').[34] Despite

such caveats, the compilers of these manuscripts still saw fit to include Psalm 151 for its status

among the canticles.

Attention should also be drawn to visual representations of Psalm 151 that circulated in

Anglo-Saxon England. The first and earliest appears in the Utrecht Psalter (no. 18), which

includes an illustration on folio 91v.[35] Compiled between about 816 and 840 in Hautvillers or

Rheims, the Utrecht Psalter travelled to Canterbury (perhaps Christ Church) around the turn of

the eleventh century; while there, it was used as an exemplar for the eleventh-century Harley

---

[33] This transcription is based on the digital facsimile at 'Cotton MS Galba A XVIII', *British Library: Digitised Manuscripts* <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Galba_A_XVIII> accessed April 2015; cf. Fred Harsley (ed.), *Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter, Part II: Text and Notes*, EETS, o.s. 92 (London, 1889; repr. 1973), 268; and Celia Sisam and Kenneth Sisam (eds), *The Salisbury Psalter*, EETS, o.s. 242 (London, 1959), 284, which contain some variants.

[34] This transcription is based on the digital facsimile, Luigi G. G. Ricci, Lucia Castaldi, and Rosanna Miriello (eds), *La Bibbia Amiatina: Riproduzione integrale su CD-ROM del manoscritto / The Codex Amiatinus: Complete Reproduction on CD-ROM of the Manuscript* (Florence, 2000); cf. Weber, *Biblia sacra*, though it does not include the expansion. On Amiatinus, see Marsden, *Text*, *passim*; and Lucia Castaldi, Simone Nencioni, and Melania Ceccanti, 'Amiatino 1', in Laura Alidori et al. (eds), *Bibbie miniate della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze*, Biblioteche e archivi, 12 (Florence, 2003), 3-58. I will address this heading again below.

[35] For description and digital facsimile, see *Utrecht Psalter*, Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht (pubd online October 2013), <http://bc.library.uu.nl/node/599> accessed April 2015. See also Koert van der Horst, William Noel, and Wilhelmina C. M. Wüstefeld (ed.), *The Utrecht Psalter in Medieval Art: Picturing the Psalms of David* (Utrecht, 1996); the illustration of Psalm 151 from the Utrecht Psalter is included in Koert van der Horst, 'The Utrecht Psalter: Picturing the Psalms of David', 23-84, at 74 (fig. 55).

Psalter (London, British Library, Harley 603),[36] and later influenced the Eadwine Psalter (no. 4)

and Paris (Anglo-Catalan) Psalter (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 8846; s. xii²).[37]

Nonetheless, neither the Harley Psalter nor Paris (Anglo-Catalan) Psalter contains Psalm 151;

both manuscripts end imperfectly (at Psalm 143:11 and 98:6), and we cannot know now whether

the extra psalm was ever meant to be included in the project. The Eadwine Psalter presents a

special case, since an illustrator copied the Utrecht images on folio 281r, at the head of the

apocryphal psalm.[38] The image sequences in both Utrecht and Eadwine depict four scenes from

David's life, all but one representing a portion of the psalm. From right to left, the images

portray: David crowned as king, seated on a throne with a sword in his right hand and royal

sceptre in his left, surrounded by retainers; David playing the *organum*, here depicted as a pipe

organ (v. 2); David among his sheep in the field being anointed by an angel of the Lord (v. 4);

and David standing on top of the defeated Goliath, holding a sword in his right hand and the

giant's head in his left (v. 7). This sequence, then, highlights David's major roles, as shepherd

---

[36] *ASM*, 422; see description and images at 'Detailed record for Harley 603', *British Library: Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts* <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=18402> accessed April 2015; and William Noel, *The Harley Psalter*, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology, 4 (Cambridge, 1995).

[37] N. R. Ker, 'A Supplement to *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 121-31, no. 419; see also Orietta Da Rold, 'Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 8846', in Da Rold et al., *Production and Use of English Manuscripts* <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.P.BN.Lat.8846.htm> accessed April 2015. For discussion of the Utrecht Psalter's influence, see van der Horst, Noel, and Wüstefeld, *Utrecht Psalter*.

[38] See Harsley, *Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter*, esp. 268-9; M. R. James, *The Canterbury Psalter* (London, 1935); and description and digital facsimile at 'R.17.1 Tripartium Psalterium Eadwini', *Trinity College Library, Cambridge* (pubd online 2005) <http://sites.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/show.php?index=1229> accessed April 2015. See also Christopher Tracy and Elaine Treharne, 'Cambridge, Trinity College, R. 17. 1', in Da Rold et al., *Production and Use of English Manuscripts* <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.CTC.R.17.1.htm> accessed April 2015; and Elaine Treharne, *Living Through Conquest: The Politics of Early English, 1020-1220* (Oxford, 2012), 167-87.

and psalmist in the centre, symmetrically framed by warrior and king on either side of the page. Furthermore, the sequence emphasizes David's royal status, first reminding viewers of his iconic kingship before depicting the sequence relating his rise to this role. By focusing on David, the illustrations in the Utrecht Psalter and Eadwine Psalter align with historical exegesis rather than typological interpretations in some tituli emphasizing a Christological reading of the psalmist's words.

**Old English Translations**

Of the eighteen extant psalters from Anglo-Saxon England containing the Latin Psalm 151, only the Vespasian and Eadwine psalters (nos. 8 and 4, respectively) contain Old English glosses on this particular psalm.[39] Despite the importance of these two Psalter manuscripts, few scholars have noted the Old English glosses on Psalm 151, which are revealing for their places among Old English glossed psalters generally.[40] While Stephen J. Harris observes 'surprising consistency in Old English translations of the psalms',[41] differences between the Old English versions of Psalm 151 present an exception. The common provenance (and probably common

---

[39] NRK, 203 and 91; and *ASM*, 381. For description and digital facsimile of the Vespasian Psalter, see 'Cotton MS Vespasian A I', *British Library: Digitised Manuscripts* <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Vespasian_A_I> accessed April 2015; see also Sherman M. Kuhn (ed.), *The Vespasian Psalter* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1965), esp. 146-7; and David H. Wright (ed.), *The Vespasian Psalter: British Museum Cotton Vespasian A. I*, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile, 14 (Copenhagen, 1967).

[40] For example, these Old English versions—*PsCaA 1* (C11.6.1) and *PsCaE* (C11.2.16)—are not listed in the headnote to Biggs, 'Psalm 151'. Here and throughout, short titles for Old English texts conform to Bruce Mitchell, Christopher Ball, and Angus Cameron, 'Short Titles of Old English Texts', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 4 (1975), 207-21; and 'Short Titles of Old English Texts: Addenda and Corrigenda', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 8 (1979), 331-33; and reference numbers conform to Angus Cameron, 'A List of Old English Texts', in Roberta Frank and Angus Cameron (eds), *A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English* (Toronto, 1973), 25-306. Unless otherwise noted, references to the Old English poetic corpus by lines are to George Philip Krapp and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, 6 vols (New York, 1931-1953).

[41] 'Happiness and the Psalms', 297.

origin) of these two manuscripts lies in Canterbury, at St. Augustine's and Christ Church,

respectively; but the versions of Psalm 151 in the two manuscripts are not textually related.[42] The

two Latin texts contain some comparable variations, and the glosses include even more

divergences. On the level of linguistic dialects, the Vespasian gloss is consistently Mercian,[43]

while the Eadwine gloss reflects contemporary changes to the English language at the time of

composition in the twelfth century.[44]

One feature common to both manuscripts is the fact that Psalm 151 is clearly set apart

from the rest of the psalms. In the Vespasian Psalter, on folio 141r, the material arrangement is

most glaring: the psalm was not part of the original manuscript plan, but was added to the end of

the Psalter on an inserted leaf in the ninth century, probably by the glossator.[45] Despite the

differences, the scribe who inserted the extra psalm did strive to align it with the full Psalter

previous pages. Like the other psalms, Psalm 151 is written in English uncial, lineated in parallel

with the preceding page (folio 140v), and observing similar written areas and margins. Even the

*P* of *Pusillus* at the start of the psalm is a drawn as an enlarged initial, set into the left margin

beside the main text, and decorated with ink dots around the form—all features comparable, for

example, in the *L* of the *Laudate* at the start of Psalm 150. Additionally, the *titulus* heading is

written in red ink, as are the headings of the Psalter proper. In all of this, the addition in

---

[42] O'Neill, 'English Version', 130; and Phillip Pulsiano, 'The Old English Gloss of the Eadwine Psalter', in Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne (eds), *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 30 (Cambridge, 2000), 166-94.

[43] Kuhn, *Vespasian Psalter*, v-vi and xi-xii; Alistair Campbell, 'The Glosses', in Wright, *Vespasian Psalter*, 81-92; NRK, 203.

[44] NRK, 91; O'Neill, 'English Version', 130; and Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 184-6.

[45] See NRK, 203; Wright, *Vespasian Psalter*, 29-30; and Phillip Pulsiano, 'The Originality of the Gloss of the Vespasian Psalter and Its Relation to the Gloss of the Junius Psalter', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 25 (1996), 37-62.

Vespasian is not only an afterthought (a century later) but also an attempt to place Psalm 151 in its context alongside the full Psalter.

Elaine Treharne has called the Eadwine Psalter 'an important witness to a flourishing multilingual, multivisual, and multimedia culture of literacies',[46] with a deluxe three-column format of the Hebraicum version with Anglo-Latin gloss, Romanum version with Old English gloss, and Gallican version with *Glossa ordinaria* commentary. Yet the layout for Psalm 151 in Eadwine starkly contrasts that of the first 150 psalms, since it is formally detached from the psalter proper, following the canticles on folios 281r-v, and presented as a single text in dual columns with Anglo-Norman and Old English glosses together. Unlike the rest of the glossed psalms in Eadwine, the Old English gloss on Psalm 151 is written in Caroline minuscule (not insular minuscule) with Anglo-Norman orthography—characteristics contemporary with the creation of the psalter, rather than derived from the exemplar.[47] Like the Vespasian manuscript, then, Eadwine exhibits a primary attitude of exclusion and later interventions that seek to associate Psalm 151 more closely with the Psalter as a collection.

As demonstrated recently, glosses are productive sites for examining Anglo-Saxon intellectual culture. For example, Mechthild Gretsch's examination of interpretational, lexical, and stylistic elements in Old English glosses has demonstrated that close attention to glosses can substantially illuminate our knowledge.[48] Similarly, Robert Stanton's work has highlighted the hermeneutic nature of glosses as authoritative, ideological texts to be carefully considered within

---

[46] Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 168.

[47] See various essays in Margaret T. Gibson, T. A. Heslop, and Richard W. Pfaff (eds), *The Eadwine Psalter: Text, Image, and Monastic Culture in Twelfth-Century Canterbury*, Publications of the Modern Humanities Research Association, 14 (London, 1992), esp. Patrick P. O'Neill, 'The English Version', 123-38, at 130-1.

[48] *Intellectual Foundations*.

the wider intellectual landscape of the Anglo-Saxon 'culture of translation'.[49] The innovations

that may be culled from the two vernacular translations of Psalm 151 should thus be understood

in conversation with such groundwork for studying glosses beyond lexicography. Indeed, as

Mark Griffith has recently demonstrated, glosses reveal significant details about how Anglo-

Saxon glossators could engage with poetic diction and intellectual pursuits simultaneously.[50] The

following, then, serves as an extension of such examinations. In order to focus on the two Old

English translations of Psalm 151, it is useful to place them together for comparison.[51]

| Vespasian Psalter, fol. 141r | Eadwine Psalter, fols. 281r-v |
|---|---|
| [No Old English gloss exists for the heading; Vespasian does not contain the extended version.] | Þes ilca psalm is iwriten bi seoluan Dauide ond is wiðutan ðere tale of dan hundred ond fifti psalman ond ðeosne ilcan he machede ða he feath wið Goliam þes psalm nis nawiht on hebreisse bocan hach ða hundseouenti biqueðeres othðe latimeres hine habbað idon to þan heoðran ond forþi he is to ascunianne. |
| Lytel ic wes betwih broður mine, | Ic wes lest imong mine broððran, |
| ond iugra in huse feadur mines; | ond alra gugest in mines feader huse; |

___

[49] *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 2002), 9-54.

[50] 'Old English Poetic Diction Not in Old English Verse or Prose—and the Curious Case of Aldhelm's Five Athletes', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 43 (2014), 99-131; as well as his earlier 'Poetic Language and the Paris Psalter: The Decay of the Old English Tradition', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 20 (1991), 161-86.

[51] These texts are based on my own examination of facsimiles cited above; for comparison I have consulted Kuhn, *Vespasian Psalter*, 146-7; and Harsley, *Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter*, 268-9. I have silently expanded abbreviations, including the tironian sign for *and/ond*, and I have modernized punctuation and capitalization; lineation follows the Latin text in the Vespasian Psalter (cf. Weber, *Biblia sacra*, 1975); I discuss lineation at more length below.

| | |
|---|---|
| ic foedde scep feadur mines. | ic wes sceapheorda mines feader. |
| Honda mine dydun organan; | Heondan mine warhten organan, |
| fingras mine wysctun hearpan. | ond fingras mine gearcaden *psalterium*. |
| Ond hwelc segde Dryhtne minum? | Ond wha talde mine Lauerde off me? |
| He Dryhten, he allra geherde mec. | Himseolf þa Lauerd himseolf off allan hiheret. |
| He sende engel his | Himseolf ansente his engel |
| ond nom mec of scepum feadur mines | ond nom me from mines feader sceapan |
| ond smirede mec in mildheartnisse smirenisse his. | ond smirædæ me on þere miltse his smirælease. |
| Broður mine gode ond micle, | Mine broððre gode ond michelæ, |
| ond ne wes wel gelicad in him Dryhtne. | ond ne wes on heom godwillendæ þe Lauerd. |
| Ic uteode ongegn fremðes cynnes men | Ic heodæ ongean anan uncuððan |
| ond wergcweodelade mec in hergum heara. | ond he me cursadæ on his godes anlicnesse. |
| Ic soðlice gebrogdnum from him his agnum sweorde; | Ic soðliches atæh from him his hagen sword |
| ic acearf heafud his, | ond achearf his heauod off |
| ond on weg afirde edwit of bearnum Israela. | ond binom þet ædwit off Israheles sunan. |

In what follows, the approach to these translations seeks to avoids binaries that have long plagued discussions of translation, particularly anxieties about the theory versus practice of translation; 'word for word' versus 'sense for sense' renderings; the fidelity versus infidelity of translations to sources; the importance of form versus content; the relevance versus irrelevance

of translations for intended readers; and, overall, 'good' versus 'bad' translation.[52] Thus, the

Vespasian and Eadwine translations of Psalm 151 allow us to see these texts as distinct products

of an intellectual culture within which choices, differences, and innovations of translators may be

appreciated. With this in mind, the following discussion focuses on Vespasian.

The main assertion is that the Vespasian Psalm 151 gloss is a previously unidentified Old

English poem. Evidence for this claim rests primarily on metrical and lexical characteristics,

while close formal analysis reveals a number of ancillary poetic features. As scholars have

continued to expand knowledge about Anglo-Saxon poetic techniques, they have also revealed a

number of previously unidentified Old English poems. These explorations have often invoked

passages categorized, for example, as 'debased verse', 'rhythmical prose', and 'prose passages

with rhetorical heightening'.[53] Yet, over the past several decades, Anglo-Saxonists have

questioned the binary of 'poetry' and 'prose' in various ways, finding versified passages in texts

traditionally identified as 'prose' and leading to a slow expansion of notions about Old English

poetics.[54] Recently, Thomas A. Bredehoft in particular has championed this work, identifying

late Old English poetry in texts like the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the works of Ælfric of

---

[52] For an overview of translation theories, see Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, 3rd edn (London, 2002); for a selection of primary sources, see Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edn (New York, 2012).

[53] On these terms, see Griffith, 'Old English Poetic Diction', with further references there. For an overview of a 'hierarchy of verse-likeness' in the Old English corpus, see H. Momma, *The Composition of Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 20 (Cambridge, 1997), 7-27.

[54] Of the many studies, see Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Early English Meter*, Toronto Old English Series, 15 (Toronto, 2005), esp. 81-109; Joseph B. Trahern, Jr., 'Working the Boundary or Walking the Line? Late Old English Rhythmical Alliteration', in Virginia Blanton and Helene Scheck (eds), *Intertexts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Paul E. Szarmach* (Tempe, AZ, 2008), 33-44; Jonathan T. Randle, 'The "Homiletics" of the Vercelli Book Poems: The Case of *Homiletic Fragment I*', in Samantha Zacher and Andy Orchard (eds), *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, 4 (Toronto, 2009), 185-224; and Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse*, Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, 5 (Toronto, 2009), 171-98, with further references there.

Eynsham, as well as two poetic prayers now known as *Min Drihten Leof* and the Bodley 180

Prayer.[55] The present examination of the Vespasian Psalm 151 translation extends such

reassessments, further pointing toward paying attention to Old English poetics not only in so-

called verse and prose but also in glosses.

Lineation provides the first key to the claim. Despite the notorious lack of lineation for

Old English poetry in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, the Vespasian Psalm 151 may be most simply

lineated based on the physical layout of the text on the manuscript page. Each independent line

of the Old English thus corresponds to the lineation of the Latin as laid out by the scribe, *per*

*cola et commata*, as promoted for biblical texts by Jerome.[56] Such lineation hints at a poetic basis

for the translation, from which may be gleaned further metrical, alliterative, and lexical features

to support my argument. Basic metrical scansion is possible throughout the Vespasian translation

of Psalm 151, despite the absence of alliteration in every line. For example, many of these lines

scan generally as type A verses, with some anacrusis; aside from some aberrations, most lines

contain four stresses that may be separated into two distinct verses. Additionally, as in classical

Old English poetry, syntactic boundaries generally align with a- and b-verse divisions.

It is true that not all lines conform to strict classical conventions of Old English poetry,[57]

especially in their lack of alliteration, but the translation shows significant internal consistency.

Notable in this regard is the fact that meter—and, in some cases, alliteration—is often apparent

---

[55] See *Early English Meter*; and *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse*, with some of his earlier studies cited there.

[56] NRK, 203. For this reason, the lineation of Psalm 151 in the Vespasian Psalter corresponds to lineation of the psalm in Weber, *Biblia sacra*, 1975. On the system of writing *per cola et commata* in Anglo-Saxon bibles, see Marsden, *Text*, 32-5.

[57] For overviews and summaries of scholarship, see Geoffrey Russom, *Old English Meter and Linguistic Theory* (Cambridge, 1987); R. D. Fulk, *A History of Old English Meter* (Philadelphia, 1992); Momma, *Composition of Old English Poetry*; Bredehoft, *Early English Meter*; and Jun Terasawa, *Old English Meter: An Introduction*, Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, 7 (Toronto, 2011).

only by recognizing stress on pronouns like *mine*, *mines*, *minum*, and *mec*; these instances are not without precedent in classical verse, since parallels appear, for example, in *Guthlac B* and *Elene* (see below) as well as *Juliana* and *Widsith*.[58] As H. Momma comments, 'Emphatic stress is regularly placed on the declinable possessives *min*, *þin*, *sin*, *ure*, *eower*, *uncer* and *incer*', offering cases where metrical and syntactic stress meet.[59] In the Vespasian translation, instances consistently occur in the second foot position of a verse, and often at the ends of whole lines.

In these cases of the first-person singular pronoun, the glossator uses post-positional stress in order to align the translation with an expected type A verse scheme. The glossator's choices for metrical reasons are bolstered by the corresponding syntactic choices, since, as Bruce Mitchell notes about dependent possessive pronouns, 'Post-position is rare in the prose' but 'more common in the poetry'.[60] These patterns, and the syntactic-metrical choices of the Vespasian glossator, are made all the clearer in the contrasts between the Vespasian and Eadwine glosses; post-positional syntax and stress are regularly used in the former, but only rarely in the latter (only in lines 4-5, *Heondan mine* and *fingras mine*). Here we observe one of the flexibilities of meter that Bredehoft suggests: that stressed positions are sometimes occupied by words with lower semantic content than traditionally expected.[61] Also metrically remarkable are lines 8 and 16, both standing as single half-lines, although the corpus of Old English poetry also includes precedents for this feature.[62]

---

[58] *Jul* 480b (*mine cræftum*) and *Wid* 71b (*mine gefræge*); see Momma, *Composition of Old English Poetry*, 162 and 165.

[59] Ibid., 165.

[60] See Bruce Mitchell, *Old English Syntax*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1985), 1:120-1.

[61] *Early English Meter*, 26.

[62] See A. J. Bliss, 'Single Half-Lines in Old English Poetry', *Notes and Queries*, 216 (1971), 442-9; and, more recently, Charles D. Wright, 'More Old English Poetry in Vercelli Homily XXI', in Elaine Treharne and Susan Rosser (eds), *Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and

As already noted, traditional conventions of alliteration are not strictly followed, but some instances stand out. Alliteration across half-lines exists in lines 1 (*betwih... broður*), 3 (*foedde... feadur*), 9 (*mec... mines*), 10 (*smirede... smirenisse* and *mec... mildheartnisse*), 11 (*mine... micle*), and 15 (*soðlice... sweorde*). Line 14b presents an instance of two-stress alliteration within a single half-line (*hergum heara*). Alliteration from one line to the next is also recognizable in lines 3-4 (*mines... mine*), 5-6 (*hearpan... hwelc*), 6-7 (*Dryhten... Dryhten*), and 13-14 (*men... mec*)—a few of these instances admittedly occurring because of word repetition. In this generally atypical approach to alliteration, the Vespasian translation shows certain similarities to late Old English poems such as *Homiletic Fragment I* and *The Rewards of Piety*.[63]

Vocabulary used for the Vespasian translation also reveals some distinctive poetic characteristics. In this respect, parallel lexical phrases in the corpus of Old English verse are revealing.[64] A variety of examples are given below to demonstrate the range of ways in which Anglo-Saxon poets used formulaic phrases and vocabulary but also made distinct poetic choices as suited their needs. The following examples, therefore, are not meant to provide exact verbal correspondences but to demonstrate how similar lexical collocates travelled in different poetic texts. The import of these phrases will be discussed below.

1: Lytel ic wes             *Rid 72* 1: Ic wæs lytel

                            *ChristC* 1424: Lytel þuhte ic

---

Studies, 252 (Tempe, AZ, 2002), 245-62, at 254-5; Samantha Zacher, 'The Rewards of Poetry: "Homiletic" Verse in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201', *Selim*, 12 (2003-2004), 83-108, at 96-8; Bredehoft, *Early English Meter*, 23; Randle, ' "Homiletics" of the Vercelli Book Poems', 185-224, at 212; and Bredehoft, *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse*, 58, n. 43.

[63] See Zacher, 'Rewards of Poetry', 95-6; and Randle, '"Homiletics" of the Vercelli Book Poems'.

[64] These and similar results of lexical parallels throughout this article have been obtained by searching the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, University of Toronto <http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/> accessed April 2015.

*Beo* 2150: ic lyt hafo

*Met* 20.181: ic lytle ær

*PPs* 115:1: ic lyt sprece

*Pr* 61: ic eom se litla

*Rid 60* 7: Lyt ic wende

*Wif* 16: ic leofra lyt

| | |
|---|---|
| 2: feadur mines | *GuthB* 1236: fæder mines |
| | *El* 438, 454: fæder minum |
| | *El* 528: fæder min |
| | *ChristC* 1344; *GenA* 2697; *Soul I* 137; *Wid* 96: mines fæder |
| | *Jul* 436: minne fæder |
| | *Beo* 2429: minum fæder |
| | *Beo* 262: min fæder |
| 4-5: Honda mine... fingras mine | *PPs* 143:1: mine handa... mine fingras |
| | *GuthA* 322: hond mine |
| | *Beo* 558; *Exo* 262; *Jud* 198; *PPs* 62:5, 72:11, 87:9, 118:48: mine handa |
| 6: hwelc segde | *GenB* 570: sægst hwylce |
| | *GenB* 617: Sæge Adam hwilce |
| 6: Dryhtne minum | *And* 73; *GenA* 2227; *PPs* 58:11: drihten min |
| | *PPs* 121:9: minum drihtne |
| | *Met* 20.1; *PPs* 85:14, 108:21; *PsFr* 50:11: min drihten |
| 8: sende engel | *MSol* 482: engel onsendeð dryhten |

| | |
|---|---|
| 12: wel gelicad | *PPs* 113:17: wel gelice |
| | *PPs* 127:3: welan gelice |
| 16: Ic acearf heafud his | *Beo* 1590: ond hine þa heafde becearf |
| | *Beo* 2138: ond ic heafde becearf |
| 17: bearnum Israela | *KtHy* 26; *Dan* 358; *PPs* 67:24: bearn Israela |
| | *Dan* 73; *PPs* 76:12: Isra(h)ela bearn |
| | *PPs* 113:21: bearn Israeles |

This list contains a number of instructive comparisons. First, the preponderance of similarities with metrical psalms is noteworthy, though not surprising given the common vocabulary of psalms that must have circulated in both Latin and Old English. The importance of such lexical parallels is that they demonstrate shared cultural currents with a wide range of metrical psalm translations in the ninth and tenth centuries Beyond parallels with metrical psalms, the above list demonstrates intertextual overlaps with poems of various types—those often viewed as rooted in vernacular ('oral') Germanic traditions (such as *Beowulf* and the *Wife's Lament*) as well as those rooted in Latin ('literate') Christian traditions (such as Cynewulf's poems, *Andreas*, *Christ III*, *Daniel*, and *Genesis A* and *B*). As scholars like Andy Orchard, Janie Steen, and Bredehoft have demonstrated, poetic formulas—as well as divergence from formulas as suitable to individual authors—often complicate such binary categories.[65] Anglo-Saxon

---

[65] See various essays by Andy Orchard, e.g. 'Both Style and Substance: The Case for Cynewulf', in Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Styles* (Albany, NY, 2003), 271-305; 'Looking for an Echo: The Oral Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Literature', *Oral Tradition*, 18 (2003), 225-7; 'Computing Cynewulf: The *Judith*-Connection', in Jill Mann and Maura Nolan (eds), *The Text in the Community: Essays on Medieval Works, Manuscripts, Authors, and Readers* (Notre Dame, IN, 2006), 75-106; and 'The Word Made Flesh: Christianity and Oral Culture in Anglo-Saxon Verse', *Oral Tradition*, 24 (2009), 293-318; as well as Janie Steen, *Verse and Cirtuosity: The Adaptation of Latin Rhetoric in Old English Poetry*, Toronto

authors read, appropriated, and played with formulas, acknowledging conventions as well as finding innovative ways of adapting them as they participated in the 'literate-formulaic composition' of their poetry.[66] The glossator of Psalm 151 took part in this textual community of Anglo-Saxon poets.

The Vespasian translation also shares some significant lexical formulas with recognized Old English verse beyond metrical psalms. Most pronounced of these lexical parallels is the rendering of the Vespasian translation in line 16, 'Ic acearf heafud his', similar to *Beowulf* 1590 and 2138. This formula in the Vespasian translation is further emphasized by the fact that it occurs as a single half-line, functioning as a stark poetic moment of violent resolution to David's conflict before the final comment about Israel's freedom in the last line. This half-line functions similarly to what Bredehoft observes in the last line of *Wulf and Eadwacer* (19, 'uncer giedd geador'), that 'the formal use of the lone verse here seems to provide a perfectly appropriate parallel to the sense'.[67] In the Vespasian Psalm 151, the line itself is 'cut off', leaving only the head verse. There is also a thematic connection with another biblical beheading in Old English poetry, that of Holofernes by the eponymous hero of *Judith*. As Orchard has pointed out about Anglo-Saxon poetry, 'aside from formulaic phrasing, the presence of (for example) shared and characteristic patterns of alliteration, themes, and type-scenes are widespread.'[68] Old English verse techniques are to be found in not only meters and formulas but also general, shared knowledge of poetry inherited from vernacular Germanic authors as well as biblical, patristic, and Anglo-Latin authors. It is not surprising that a learned scribe like the Vespasian glossator

---

Old English Series, 18 (Toronto, 2008); and Bredehoft, *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse*.

[66] I have adopted this phrase from Bredehoft, ibid.

[67] Bredehoft, *Early English Verse*, 23.

[68] Orchard, 'Looking for an Echo', 226.

would have knowledge of both traditions and participated in the general culture of poetic community.

Single lexical units in the Vespasian translation and their occurrences elsewhere in the Old English corpus also reveal affinities in the case of compounds. The word *mildheartnisse* (line 10) is widespread throughout the Old English corpus, commonly used to render Latin *misericordia* in translations of the gospels, glosses on religious prose, prayers, hymns, and canticles, as well as the verse *Fragments of Psalms* and *Metrical Psalms*. Outside of metrical psalms, the only instance in the poetic corpus is in *Instructions for Christians*, line 192.[69] The compound verb *weargcwedolian* (line 14, *wergcweodelade*) occurs five other times in the corpus, glossing Latin *maledico* in Vespasian Psalter 54:10, 61:4, 108:27, 151:6, and Junius Psalter 54:13;[70] similarly, *yfelcwedolian* glosses Latin *maledicere* in Royal Psalter 36:22.[71] Again, recognizing the place of these lexical items in the wider corpus helps to recognize the vocabulary of Vespasian Old English Psalm 151 among cultural currents related to the canonical Psalms. Beyond comparison with the rest of the corpus, focus on vocabulary also reveals discernible paronomastic wordplay in verse 3, where the phrase *geherde mec* evokes related words *he(o)rd* for herd or flock and *hierde* for shepherd, both relevant for Jewish and Christian metaphors of livestock as well as salvation.[72]

In all of this, the Vespasian translation of Psalm 151 may be seen as a striking instance of glossing that tests the boundaries of Old English poetry. Indeed, these elements suggest that the

---

[69] James L. Rosier, '"Instructions for Christians," a Poem in Old English', *Anglia*, 82 (1964), 4-22; and 'Addenda to "Instructions for Christians"', *Anglia*, 84 (1966), 74.

[70] Cf. the nouns *weargcweodol* and *weargcweodolness* for *maledictio* in Eadwine Psalter 118.21, Vespasian Psalter 108.17, and Vitellius Psalter 9.28.

[71] See Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 60.

[72] On paronomasia in Old English, see Roberta Frank, 'Some Uses of Paronomasia in Old English Scriptural Verse', *Speculum*, 47 (1972), 207-26; repr. in Roy M. Liuzza (ed.), *The Poems of MS Junius 11: Basic Readings* (New York, 2002), 69-98.

Vespasian gloss contains verse characteristics because the glossator aimed to carry over poetic qualities from the Latin into the vernacular. Given the prominence of poetry in important educational texts by Isidore and Bede, this is not a surprising connection for a learned scribe working with the Psalms. Like poetic instances identified in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Ælfric's works, anonymous homilies, and Anglo-Saxon prayers, this gloss nuances assumptions about Anglo-Saxon verse. It also demonstrates a substantial intellectual engagement with Psalm 151. In this sense, the Vespasian translation is akin to the exegetical pursuits found, for example, in the *Glossa in Psalmos*. Both Latin and Old English versions of Psalm151 in the Vespasian Psalter represent a type of meeting of attitudes and ideas about this apocryphon, simultaneously reconciling it with the canonical Psalter and working at the interface of Latin and Old English verse.

*Rhode Island College*