Translations of Judith: Analyses of selected English translations and a new version by the author

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TRANSLATIONS OF JUDITH:
ANALYSES OF SELECTED ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS
AND
A NEW VERSION BY THE AUTHOR

By
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Judith is an Old English poem based on chapters xii.10 to xvi.1 of the Apocryphal Book of Judith. Only a fragment of the poem exists, the last four sections of a probable twelve. In these verses Judith charms Holofernes, king of the Assyrians, slays him, and leads her people, the Hebrews, to victory. There is an heroic tone to the poem, the spirit of revelry and war being reminiscent of the character of Beowulf. Because religious elements are prominent among these heroic motifs some critics call it a religious epic. Others, however, choose to call it a religious poem in heroic style, a phrase perhaps more accurate considering the brevity of the work.

Judith's author, its date of composition, and the place in England where it was composed, are all alike unknown, and are subjects of varied conjecture and of conflicting theories. Some scholars attribute it to Caedmon, the monk of Whitby. Others, however, think that the poem, though not composed by Caedmon himself, belongs to the "Caedmon cycle." Professor A. S. Cook thinks it is likely the work of Cynewulf or one of his disciples. Professor B. J. Timmer thinks that the writer could read Latin and was probably familiar with the apocryphal version in the Latin

translation by St. Jerome of Stridon (c. 420). About the date Henry Morley writes:

It [the poem] has Cynewulfian peculiarities and therefore was probably written by some admirer of that poet. . . . it was certainly composed before 937, since it is imitated in the **Battle of Brunanburh**, which bears that date.  

Professor Timmer sets the date at approximately 930.  

The poem is written in alliterative verse, each line containing normally two half-lines, or hemistiches, separated by a caesura and joined by alliteration. There are 66-1/2 expanded lines in the text that have come down to us and these lines constitute nearly one-fifth of the poem. This expanded style evinces the late date of the poem.  

End rhyme and interlinear rhyme do occur in **Judith**, though rarely. Two typical unexpanded lines follow:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hi ďa fromlice fagum swyrdum} \\
\text{hæeled higerœfe herpāδ worhton (Judith, 11. 301-302)}
\end{align*}
\]

A literal translation is:

They then quickly with bloody swords,  
the valiant men, made a passage.

The first Old English hemistiches are linked by the alliteration of **f**,  

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6 This quote and all subsequent ones in Old English are from B. J. Timmer's edition, **Judith** (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1952).
the second set by h.

Judith is preserved in MS Cotton Vitellius A XV in the British Museum.

Scholars remain divided in their opinions about the literary merit of Judith, although, in the critiques that praise it, there has been a tendency for initial effusiveness to be modified. Professor Sweet in The Anglo-Saxon Reader (1876) called Judith "one of the noblest [works] in the whole range of Old English poetry." James Garnett in 1899 said that the poem was "a very torso of Hercules." He was echoed by Professor Hall in 1902, who claimed that "The poem moves me beyond expression." Professor Kennedy wrote in 1943 that Judith was a "poem of unusual spirit and excellence."

Even as enthusiasm among the poem's supporters may be said to have declined, so may it be said that criticism of the poem seems to have grown more severe among those critics who qualify Judith's worth. In 1888 Professor Cook was a little guarded in his expression of opinion, saying, "Judith, though it may not fully satisfy a taste formed upon the purest German models, displays an elevation characteristic of the

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8 James M. Garnett (trans.), "Introduction," Elene; Judith; Athelstan, or the Fight at Brunanburh; and Byrhtnoth, or the Fight at Maldon (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1889), p. xii.


noblest poetry." In 1899 Stopford A. Brooke followed Professor Cook with still less enthusiasm: "Judith is a good ringing piece of English verse, but I cannot agree with those who place it in the highest rank." In 1952 Professor Timmer wrote:

His [the poet's] style is stereotyped and conventional, there are none of the bold metaphors of the Wanderer, nor is there the deeply moving tone of the Dream of the Rood. Like Maldon, it is imitative in its art, but as in Maldon one feels behind it the strong character of the man who made it.

It seems best to call Judith a sound, interesting work, an example of the Bible stories and saints' legends probably popular in England's early Middle Ages.

Judith lends itself well to study by the student translator. Its brevity keeps it from being overwhelming while its relative obscurity allows for some originality. Unlike Beowulf, which has had many renderings into modern English, Judith has had only eight, well spaced over the years and varied in style and format, reflecting different theories of translation.

This paper studies selected English translations of Judith and presents a new version of the poem by the author. The study is modeled after one done by Professor Chauncey B. Tinker in 1902 in which he catalogued translations of Beowulf, printed excerpts, and analyzed

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12 Stopford A. Brooke, The History of Early English Literature, p. 47, quoted by J. Leslie Hall, p. 4.

their styles.  

It is hoped that this study will be of interest not only to students of Old English, but to the general reader as well, for it deals with theories of translation and discusses problems common to the translation of all foreign literatures. Moreover, it exposes the reader to the roots of English poetry, to its characteristic figures of speech and rhythm patterns.

The problems of the translator of an Old English text are the problems of the translator of any foreign language. Theodore Savory in The Art of Translation claims that a translator, caught as he is in the choice between literalism and freedom, must think of his audience. A student or scholar might prefer a literal rendering while the general reader might like a smooth translation, even one far removed from the original.

The advocates of literalism are few; however, they do exist, most claiming that faithfulness is more important than beauty. Professor J. P. Postgate compares a translation to the voice of a foreigner, and asserts that the reader, like the listener, enjoys the foreign accent, the halts, and the new meter. "Is not a touch of foreign flavor nice?" he asks.

To the translator of poetry the additional problem arises of


whether to translate in verse or prose. Professor Postgate confronts
the problem directly and states that verse cannot be translated into
prose successfully. Verse to verse is his principle. Most critics,
among them Professor Woodhouselee and R. A. Knox, agree with Postgate
that the preferred manner of translating verse is verse. Typical of
those who disagree, Savory points out that the classical Loeb transla-
tions are often in prose. Another member of this "school," Matthew
Arnold, makes an extensive list of claims, asserting that prose transla-
tions of verse originals can be highly poetic, that faithfulness is
always preferable to extreme freedom, and that although rhyme and meter,
chief attributes of verse, are sacrificed, the more important ones of
diction, tropes, and images are more faithfully preserved in prose
renderings.

The translator of Old English is faced with special problems.
Because Old English has only one past tense and Modern English many,
the translator must interpolate the forms for complex preterite tenses—a
simple job, except when the tense of the original is ambiguous. Thus
in Modern English, which frequently requires auxiliary verbs, translation
regularly produces longer lines and an attendant loss of the simplicity
and rhythm of the original.

Another problem about line length is that Old English is an
inflected (synthetic) language; its syntax is denoted by word suffixes,

16 R. A. Knox, On English Translation (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

17 Theodore Savory, The Art of Translation (Philadelphia: Dufour

18 Matthew Arnold, as quoted by Savory, p. 80.
with a resulting word order that is comparatively free. In Modern English, an analytic language, the relative words within phrases is rigidly fixed. The translator is thus compelled to rearrange and even add words, which often change the alliterative pattern of the original.

The "essence" of Judith is discoverable not only in the alliteration, but in the simplicity of thought and images evoked by the words. Often this simplicity is found in the kennings, the compounded metaphors used often in Old English in place of common nouns, such as burhsittend (town-sitter) for citizen, goldwine (gold-friend) for lord, and daegred (day-red) for dawn. In Modern English some of these kennings are striking, some strained, and some even unintelligible. And if, as Professor Cook believes, that many kennings had become cliches by the time Judith was written and had lost their metaphoric sense, an additional act of judgment is required of a translator, that of deciding whether to select a synonym for the compound or leave it in its primitive form.¹⁹ In changing it, the translator achieves a smoothness that is natural, colloquial, and pleasing, but loses the simple strength and ingenuousness of the original kenning.

Another problem entailed in the Old English is the regular use of negative constructions to express positive meaning (litotes). In Judith, for example, the first line is "She doubted [not] in His gifts"; in other words, "She trusted in His gifts." Herbert Tolman contends that the translator should not change negative constructions to positive lest he change the tone of the sentence, a liberty he considers

impermissible. Whatever its theoretical merits, this notion is a most difficult one in practice. Besides the difficulty of retaining it, there is a good case to make against the use of litotes. In Modern English the positive statement is both more dramatic and concise than the negative, as in, e.g., "She had faith." Moreover, it permits retention of the original line length, [heo ne] tweode. Occasionally such a change will fortuitously allow new alliterative combinations in a line. In these cases litotes, it is true, is lost, but to the benefit of other qualities.

The theoretical problems of revision include a fundamental question of value: is it right to improve upon the author? This question is particularly important to the translator of Judith, a poem whose repeated and perhaps archaic formulaic epithets such as "prudent maiden," "wise Judith," invite alteration. Professor Tolman is of the party that believes that a translator should not change the original in the name of improvement: "Be faithful to the imperfections as well as the beauties of the author." The extreme position of this school of thought holds that a translator should repeat a word when the author does, and use a synonym only when the author does.

Another problem in Old English translation lies in the use of "borrowings" or words in Modern English taken from Old English roots. Ezra Pound used "keel" for ceol (boat) in his translation of The Seafarer and kept the original alliteration. John Hollander approves

21 Tolman, p. 30.
the use of borrowings, feeling they are superior to Latin words. The principle of borrowing is also easier to follow in theory than in practice, for too often the shift of meaning has made the borrowing useless to the modern translator. Professor Hall points out that maegd maegd, a word used frequently to refer to Judith and often translated "maiden," was applied alike to married and unmarried women in the Old English period, and meant "woman" or "lady" rather than "maiden." But too close an attempt at borrowing makes the translator sacrifice accuracy and creativity to a slavish retention of sound. A close translator would not translate eorl as "earl," but "man" or "retainer."

Yet another problem for the translator of Old English is to decide when the adjective ðaet has demonstrative force and when it serves as an article, as in the difference between "that man" and "the man."

A problem specific to the translation of Judith is the matter of format. Some translators choose to divide the poem into cantos of fits which correspond roughly to some of the apocryphal chapters of Judith. These divisions correspond to numerals that appear in the Cotton Vitellius manuscript: X at line 15, XI at line 122, and XII at line 236. Cook argues that in spite of the numbers, the poem is virtually complete as it is and translators may choose to ignore the numbers.

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23 Hall, Judith, p. 6, n. 3.
24 Cook, cited by Timmer, Judith, p. 17, n. 1.
He and others prefer to arrange the lines as one long poem.

Reproduced below are the opening twelve lines of eight Modern English translations of Judith. For the purpose of translation another section would have done as well, except that Emily Hickey's and Oliver Elton's translations are incomplete. An additional reason for selecting these lines was to see how each translator handled the fragmentary first line. The style, the aim, and scholarship of each translation are considered. The excerpts are arranged, as they are in Professor Tinker's work, according to the date of publication, going from earliest to most recent.

The final translation presented is by the author, and is complete.
CHAPTER II

ANALYSES OF SELECTED ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF JUDITH

Morley's Translation


Nature of the Translation.

In the general introduction the editors state:

It will be seen that the book does not represent any particular theory of translation to the exclusion of others. Indeed, in view of the fact that opinions of the best medium for the translation of poetry are so divergent, the attempt has been made to exhibit a variety of media. Hence the latter range from prose to ballad measures, from blank verse to verse roughly imitative of the original. . . . The book should be used as illustration of the different methods of translating our older poetry.

The editors continue:

[We] have taken minor liberties with the extracts as respects punctuation, paragraph division, etc., and at times the spelling of a word. They are also, in general, responsible for the headings of various sections and even the divisions into sections of poems like Judith and the Phoenix.

Though Professor Morley writes a paragraph of introduction to Judith which discusses its source, date, and author, there is no mention of the style of the translation, degree of literalness, or text used.
Aim of the Translation.

The editors write that the book is addressed to "those intelligent students of English literature." Morley, however, furnishes no scholarly introduction, notes, or bibliography, and seems to address the general reader as much as the student.

Indebtedness to Preceding Scholars.

Morley mentions the work of Cook and Forster. He cites some critical opinion in his introduction and bases his own opinion of Judith on Sweet's evaluation.

The art and vigor of the poem are equally remarkable; though apparently only a fragment, one scarcely misses the part which is lost. According to Sweet, it combines the 'Highest dramatic and constructive power with the utmost brilliance of language and metre.'

Form of the Translation.

Different captions mark the divisions of the poem, such as "The Feast," "The Slaying of Holofernes," "The Return to Bethulia," and "The Praise." These, the editors tell the reader, were added by them. They correspond generally to the chapter divisions in the Bible.

EXTRACT.

I. THE FEAST

She doubted not the glorious Maker's gifts
In this wide earth; from the great Lord to find
Ready protection when she needed most
Grace from the highest Judge; that He, whose power
Is over all beginnings, with His peace
Would strengthen her against the highest terror.
Therefore the Heavenly Father, bright of mood,
Gave her her wish, because she ever had
Firm faith in the Almighty.
Then heard I Holoferenes bade prepare
Wine quickly, with all wonders gloriously
Prepare a feast, to which the chief of men
Bade all his foremost thanes, and with great haste
Shield-warriors obeyed, came journeying
To the rich lord, the leader of the people

Criticism of the Translation.

The line-/-line translation is in blank verse, with some lines catalectic. Morley makes only slight attempts at alliteration. The translation is close, though not word-for-word. Sometimes the translator tries to imitate the word order of the original rather than rearrange it into modern syntax: "Then heard I Holoferenes" (1.8) and "Great glory Judith then had gained in strife." (1.121) are inverted and sound like the "translatorese" to which, among others, John Ciardi objects vehemently. Some lines are inaccurately rendered: for example, in lines 2-4 the main verb is omitted, making the poem sound fragmented and foreign: the original Heo ðæer ða gearwe funde/mundbyrd (she there then truly found/protection) is rendered "from the great Lord to find ready protection." Diction is occasionally strained: "Then Holoferenes, the gold-friend of man, Joyed in the pouring out" (11. 22-23). Joyed used as a verb seems unnatural to the modern ear. Later in the poem (11. 96-98) occur the lines "Her mood/Then became unoppressed, and renovate/with holy hope," renovate is archaic and holy

25 John Ciardi, quoted by Tolman, p. 30.
hope is artificial. Alliteration is retained in "glorious . . .
gifts" (1.1), "firm faith" (1.9), and "heard . . . Holoferenes" (1.10).
It should be noted that the numeration in the margins of Morley's
translation corresponds to the original poem, not to his own.

Cook's Translation

Judith: An Old English Epic Fragment, edited, with introduction,
facsimile, translation, complete glossary, and various indexes, by

Aim of the Translation.

In the Preface to the First Edition Cook writes:

I have endeavored to edit the Old English Poem of
Judith in a manner which, while not acceptable to
the scholar, should enable the general reader to
form an intelligent opinion concerning its merits,
and furnish the academic student with a helpful
introduction to the study of the poem.

Contents.

The Old English text is set opposite the translation and the
letters that alliterate in each line are printed in heavy type. Lines
are numbered in the Old English version but not in Cook's translation.
Variant Old English readings are given at the bottom of the page of the
original text.

A glossary is included, as are lists of kennings, expanded lines,
rhyming words (divided according to masculine and feminine), and
alliterated letters. An index of repeated phrases is given along with
a list of verbal correspondences showing phrases that occur in other
poems and which might be borrowings. Most of the correspondences noted occur in religious poems of the Caedmon school; many are from *Andros*, *Elene*, and *Genesis A*. Certain phrases peculiar to *Judith* are listed. Cook lists twenty-three half-lines which are not found elsewhere. Those kennings unique to this poem are marked by an asterisk.

The lists show that about one-fifth of *Judith* is borrowed from other Old English literature, and that much of *Judith* is repetitious. The indexes also point out that original elements do exist. To the translator the tables are invaluable. The rhymed lines are listed, so that the translator can locate them easily and imitate them if he wishes. The introduction is useful to scholars, because Cook analyzes carefully the various types of rhythm and the rules for alliteration. Cook helpfully points out that the metrical rule observed in the poem is that any vowel can alliterate with any other vowel, but that any consonant can alliterate only with itself.

Besides his extensive technical discussion of the poem, Cook offers his criticism of the poem, plus a catalogue of the poet's additions to the Biblical story.*

**Nature of the Translation.**

Though Cook speaks knowledgeably of the poem, its meter, literary worth, and peculiarities, he supplies no rationale for his own faithful and alliterative translation. The most notable of his minor alterations is the substituting of initial consonants in the alliterative phrases of the poem; for example, in line 2 of Cook's translation, the original alliteration *i in ginnan grunde* (wide realm) is not retained but a new
pattern substituted in "realm . . . readily."

Indebtedness to Preceding Scholars.

The edition includes an extensive bibliography, most of which is in German. The compendium of texts at the bottom of the pages of the Old English text reveals a knowledge of German editions. Cook's familiarity with the original manuscript seems evident in the introduction, for he refers to the Cotton Vitellius A XV manuscript: "The scribe has not avoided errors, chiefly omissions, and these render it difficult in some instances to resolve the meter."

He states that the poem was composed in honor of Judith, Queen of England in 856, in gratitude for the deliverance of Wessex from the Norsemen. His reasons for holding this opinion are not presented; it may be his own idea, or may have been a notion current in German criticism.

No text is given, though his familiarity with many transcriptions in addition to the original is made clear by the abundance of his scholarly notes and the authority manifest in his discussion of the manuscript.

EXTRACT.

She doubted not His gifts
In this spacious realm; readily then she found
Favor from the famed Prince, when she felt the most need
Of grace from the greatest Judge,— that God the Creator
Might free her from fear. To her the Father in Heaven,
Glorious one, granted this boon, because of her great faith
Aye in the Highest. Holofernes (so heard I)
A wine-bidding wrought well, with wonders uncounted
Made ready a banquet; to this the bold captain
Summoned all his chief servants; with speed they obeyed,
The bearers of bucklers; came to the brave Lord
The fighting folk-leaders.

Criticism of the Translation.

The translation is thorough, readable, and faithful, though archaisms such as "aye," "erst," and "wrought well" are strange to the modern ear. Phrases like "bearers of bucklers," "bold byrnie-warrior," and "bumpers deep," though they retain alliteration, seem strained. Thus, the translation is tarnished somewhat with age and is not sufficiently colloquial to be pleasing; however, his extensive and expert analysis of the poem is unsurpassed in modern editions.

Hickey's Translation


Aim of the Translation.

Though nothing is said of the audience to which the translation is directed, it may be assumed that it is for educators or students, for the translation appears in an education journal between articles discussing girls' education in New England and "Foreign Notes" about institutions in Germany.

Nature of the Translation.

The poem is rendered into verse with end-rhyme, generally in an aabbcc pattern. The number of feet and type of rhythm vary within a
line; often there are iambs and dactylics in pentameter or hexameter lines. The lines, though not in stanzas, are grouped into units of five to eighteen lines each, according to their narrative content. Alliteration is often retained, and sometimes double alliteration occurs.

No introduction, notes, or comment by the translator is given, and no mention of that text is made.

EXTRACT.

The Prince of glory gave her the shield of His hand in the place
Where she stood in her uttermost need of the highest Doomer's grace
To save her in peril extreme: and the Ruler of all things made,
The glorious Father in heaven, He granted the prayer she prayed,
And, because of the might of her faith, He gave her His help and His aid.

I have heard how his word went forth, how Holofernes had
His men to the drinking of wine and the splendid feast he had;
The prince he called his thanes and the shields warriors best,
And the folk-leaders came to the mighty, all fain for the doing his hest.

Criticism of the Text.

The translation is rhythmic and flowing, and the variety of feet keeps the lines from being monotonous. The freedom of the translation is seen in "splendid feast he had," a condensation of eallum wundrum Wright/girwan up swaesendo, (all wonders magnificent, ordered up delicacies - ll. 9b-10a), and in "And the folk-leaders came to the
mighty, all fain for the doing his hest," which is translated from Hie
Saet ofstum miclum/raefndon rondwiggende, comon to ðam rican ðeodne/
feran, folces raeswan, (The shield-warriors performed that in much
haste, they came to the rich lord, the leader of the people - 11.
10b-12a). Though shortened, this version retains the spirit and idea
of the original.

The diction is occasionally archaic, as in "Doomer," "fain," and
"hest," and the word order as in "peril extreme" and "the prince he
called," is not natural.

The translation of mundbyrd (handshield - 1.2) as "shield of His
hand" is faithful to the original, for it retains the metaphorical
quality of the compound, as a loose translation such as "protection"
would not. Elsewhere in the translation compounds are retained or new
ones coined in an attempt to give the poem an authentic flavor, as in
"benchmen," "guest-hall," "womenfolk," and "death-doomed."

Garnett's Translation

Elene; Judith; Athelstan, or the Fight at Brunanburh; and
Byrhtnoth, or the Fight at Maldon, translated by James M. Garnett

Aim of the Translation.

Although he apparently translated Judith while teaching, the
translation is aimed at a wider audience than students, for Garnett
writes:
In presenting to the public the following translation of the Old English poems, Elene, Judith, Athelstan and Byrhtnoth, it is desirable to prefix a brief account of them for the information of the general reader. . . . The translations of the Judith and the Byrhtnoth were made in a regular course of reading with under-graduate classes, the former in 1886 and the latter in 1887.

Nature of the Translation.

Although Garnett appends no explanatory remarks to his translation of Judith, he remarks of Elene in the preface to the entire edition:

The line-for-line form has been employed, as in my translation of Beowulf, for it has been approved by high authority, and is unquestionably more serviceable to the student, even if I have not been able to attain the correctness of rhythm.

This line-for-line approach is used in Judith, and a faithful, though not word-for-word, translation is the result.

Of the poem he writes:

The Judith is a fragment, but a very torso of Hercules. . . . This poem reminds the reader more of the vigor and fire of Beowulf than does any other Old English poem.

Indebtedness to Preceding Scholars.

With Sweet's An Anglo-Saxon Reader, Grein's edition, Körner's edition, and Cook's Judith: An Epic Fragment, Garnett is familiar. He is partial to critics favorable to the poem, in one instance remarking:

Sweet regards it [Judith] as belonging "to the culminating point of Old Northumbrian literature, combining as it does the highest dramatic and constructive power with the utmost brilliance of
language and metre."

And in another:

Professor Cook has given testimonies of scholars as to the worth of this poem. To these the attention of the reader is especially called.

In footnotes to his translation Garnett gives variants of Cook, Körner (K. Körner, Einleitung in das Studium des Angelsächsischen, Part II, 1880, and Grein (C. W. M. Grein, Biblioteck der Angelsächsischen Poesie, 2nd edition, 1857), and Henry Sweet (An Anglo-Saxon Reader, 1887). The reader finds the variants confusing, though, because the variants are rendered into Modern English rather than the accepted Old English.

Text Used.

Garnett used Henry Sweet's "Judith" in An Anglo-Saxon Reader, 1887, which he compared with the "Judith" in Grein and Körner.

EXTRACT.

IX.

* * * * * * *

[The glorious Creator's] gifts doubted she [not]
Upon this wide earth; then found she there ready
Help from the mighty Prince, when she most need did have
Of grace from the highest Judge, that her 'gainst the greatest terror
The Lord of Creation should shield. That Father in heaven to her
The Glorious-in-mind did grant, for that firm faith she had
In the Almighty ever. Then heard I that Holofernes
Wine-summons eagerly wrought, and bade with all wonders a glorious
Banquet had he prepared; to that bade the prince of men
All his noblest thanes. That with mickle haste
Did the warriors-with-shields perform; came to the mighty chief
The people's leaders going.

Criticism of the Translation.

Garnett observes the convention of indicating emendations with brackets and in addition suggests the fragmentary nature of Judith by indicating an initial ellipsis with asterisks. Accent marks are placed over some a's, e's, i's, and o's. Generally they are acute accents but an occasional grave accent is used. Garnett makes no explanation of them, but a reasonable surmise is that they represent some metrical scheme of his own devising.

Word order, though not identical to the original, is stylized, as in "gifts doubted she not" and "she most need did have," and the knotted syntax makes the translation seem word-for-word. Diction is sometimes archaic, as in "wrought," "'gainst," and "mickle."

Alliteration is often used to unite the lines, such as the repetition of g in "glorious . . . gifts" (l.1) and t in "this . . . the . . . there" (l.3). Frequently, however, the alliterated words are articles, prepositions, and pronouns, words of secondary importance in the sentence. The elevation of lessor words to undeserved prominence relegates to obscurity nouns and verbs.

In his introduction Professor Garnett seeks not only to encourage the reading of Old English but to popularize it:

This brief Introduction will, it is hoped, be sufficient to interest the reader in the accompanying translations of some of the finest pieces of Old English poetry that remain to us from the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. . . . We should treasure all that remains, and the Old English language should
be at least as well known as Latin is now, and
should occupy as predominant a position in
education and general culture. Until that millennial
period arrives, translation of Old English poems
may not be out of service.

Elton's Translation

"Judith, ll. 1-121," translated by Oliver Elton, An English
Miscellaneus Presented to Dr. F. J. Furnivall, edited by W. P. Ker,

Circumstances of Publication.

Elton's Judith appears in a Festschrift honoring his colleague
at Oxford University, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, on his seventy-fifth
birthday.

Aim of the Translation.

There is no introduction, nor any explanation as to the aim of
the translation. It can only be assumed that Elton's audience was
Furnivall, his fellow scholars, and the general reader, and that his
intent was to please, and render a portion of Judith into poetry by
means of a free translation that would capture the spirit and the
"essence" of the poem.

Nature of the Translation.

Elton's verse is rhythmic, retaining the swing of the original.
This effect is brought about by a predominance of dactylic and
anapestic feet.

The lines of the poem are not numbered, perhaps because they do not correspond to the originals, or perhaps because Elton wanted his version to be considered on its own merits. Though he does not divide the poem into the customary cantos, Elton uniquely reproduces the format of the original by imitating expanded and unexpanded lines, a technique which creates the appearance of stanzaic units. The expanded lines each contain six beats with variable numbers of intervening unaccented syllables. For example, the first line can be scanned: Large is the face of our world, but she loosed not trust in His gifts. Alliterative links occurring in the line are "Large" with "loosed" and the sibilants of "face," "she," "loosed," "trust," and "gifts." The caesura break characteristic in Old English verse is marked here by a comma. In unexpanded lines there are four accented syllables with a varying number of unaccented ones, as in:

And fourth was the day since the fairly-radiant
Damsel had sought him, the deep-souled Judith.

Because he creates a complete plot through exploring the theme of revenge and celebrating Judith's victory, Elton omits her return to the city of Bethulia and the final confrontation of the Hebrew and Assyrian armies.

Indebtedness to Preceding Scholars

Though he mentions no critics or scholars, Elton is obviously acquainted with them. His translation incorporates, as it were, Cook's analysis of Old English poesy and style. He seems to have studied other translations of Judith and improved upon them. Two facts suggest
he is following the precedent of Hickey. He has rendered only the first 121 lines, suggesting a familiarity with her format, and his line, "Sure was the sheltering grace of His hand," is similar in rhythm and style to Hickey's, "The Prince of glory gave her the shield of His hand."

Text Used.

The text is not mentioned.

EXTRACT.

Large is the face of our world, but she loosed not trust in His gifts,
And sure was the sheltering grace of His hand, in her sharpest call
To the Prince, who presides, far-famed, in the height, to protect her now
From the worst of the Fear; and the Lord of His creatures willed her the boon
For her fullness of faith in the glorious omnipotent Father enskied.
And the heart grew fain, as I heard, within Holofernes the king,
And he sent forth a bidding to wine, a banquet of bravery measureless,
For all the eldest of thanes in the orders of shielded fighters,
And the chiefs of the folk came quickly to that mighty captain of theirs.

Criticism of the Translation.

The meter of Elton's lines is strong, poetic, and clear. The lines describing rivalry and battle are quick-paced and short, suggesting rapid action and high emotion. Elton's diction is precise, simple, monosyllabic, Anglo-Saxon, and withal forcible.

The epithets which describe Judith, Holofernes, and God are
frequently the inventions of Elton. Judith is "deep-souled" and "Judith, of judgement deep." Holoferenes is "the fear and friend of Men" and "giver of gold." More than "Almighty" and "Lord," God is "Glory-alloter to men" and "Awarder of fame," the latter an idea only suggested in the Old English by Gýrmes Hyrde, 1.60 (guardian of glories). It may even be argued that Elton often improves on the original.

Not soft was the fortune here
hot with his lust
the leader . . . was stirred to laughter of heart
the sword of the maiden . . . bit into his neck-bone
tall-arched tent

Litotes is imitated in the first example. The other phrases are composed of short words like "hot," "heart," "neck-bone," and metaphors are suggested in "stirred" and "bit." "Tall-arched tent" is a simple rendering of traef, 1.43 (pavilion). Even the occasional archaisms, such as "enskied," "fain," and "doughty," are selected from the Anglo-Saxon stock.

**Hall's Translation**

*Judith, Phoenix, and Other Anglo-Saxon Poems,* translated from the Grein-Wülker text, by J. Leslie Hall, Ph.D. Professor of English Language and Literature in the College of William and Mary, Translator of *Beowulf.* New York: Silver, Burdette and Co., 1902.

**Aim of the Translation.**

Although the author does not directly say for whom the translation is intended, he seems to have the general reader in mind. In the
Preface Hall writes:

I have omitted the vowel qualities in the footnotes for only scholars would care for them. . . . the different kinds of marks used in our college text-books is a serious drawback to the student of Anglo-Saxon, and we gladly dispense with all whenever it is possible to do so.

Nature of the Translation.

Of the style of translation the author writes in the general introduction:

The present writer does not claim to have settled the question of how Anglo-Saxon poetry should be translated. . . . Of prose translation, Stopford Brooke says: "Of all possible translations of poetry, a merely prose translation is most inaccurate. . . . Prose no more represents poetry than architecture does music."

Hall agrees with Brooke and refers the reader to the preface in his own Beowulf in which he describes his attempts to retain the four beats per line common to Old English verse and to keep alliteration wherever possible:

The measure used in the present translation is believed to be as near a reproduction of the original as modern English affords . . . the four stresses of the Anglo-Saxon verse are retained. Alliteration has been used to a large extent; but it was thought that modern ears would hardly tolerate it in every line. What Gummere calls the "rime giver" has been studiously kept; viz., the first accented syllable in the second half-verse always carries the alliteration; and the last accented syllable alliterates only sporadically. . . ." Preface, vii-ix, Beowulf, an Anglo-Saxon Epic Poem. Boston: Heath and Co., 1897.

In the main Hall retains the alliterative consonants of the original, but he is less successful in retaining the four-beat line.
Indebtedness to Preceding Scholars.

Professor Hall is familiar with English and German editions of the poem. He cites Sweet, Cook, Garnett, and passages from Brooke's History of Early English Literature. He agrees with Morley and Sweet who praise the poem, and less with Cook and Brooke whose judgments are more guarded. Hall writes, "The poem moves me beyond expression."

Text Used.

The text followed was the Grein-Wülker Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie, according to Hall a text "less accessible" than Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader and Cook's critical edition.

EXTRACT.

IX.

* * * * She has gifts doubted [not]  
On this broad-stretching earth; early found she, then  
Defence from the famous King, when she felt most need of  
The Almighty Judge's favor, that from terror the greatest  
God the Creator would free her: the Father in heaven  
Glorious did grant her this boon, since the greatest faith she  
Ever reposed in the Lord almighty. Olofernes, 'tis told me,  
A wine-feast gladly proclaimed, and a wondrously sumptuous  
Banquet he bade to be spread; all the best of his thanemen  
The leader of armies did summon. They early anon  
Did as he bade, shield-bearing men; to the mighty war-captain  
The chiefs of the folk came flocking.
Criticism of the Translation.

The translation is very close; the original 349 lines of the poem are almost identically retained in Hall's 350. Inversions are frequent: 

\[ \text{wic geaes hehstan brogan} \]  
ッとで against the greatest terror) becomes "from terror the greatest," and \[ \text{Faeder on roderum/torhtmod} \]  
（the glorious Father in heaven) becomes "Father in heaven/Glorious." Sometimes the verbal convolutions are due to imitation of the original syntax, as in the latter example, sometimes they result from Hall's own attempts at alliteration or his stylistic idiosyncrasies, as in the former.

Hall seems to be imitating Cook when he translates \text{gearwe} \ (\text{ready}) as an adverb (early, 1.2) rather than have it modify \text{mundbyrd}, "protection."

One of the special features of the translation is the marginal paraphrases, such as "Judith trusts in the God of her fathers" and "Holofernes, the Assyrian leader, invites his thanes to a great wine-feast." Notes accompany the translation, such as "Judith is a typical A.S. lady, and many of the stock phrases of the primal poetry are applied to her throughout" and "The wonderful beauty of this young widow plays an important part in the plot of the Hebrew story." These annotations are elementary and sometimes superfluous, but might be of interest to students.

Diction is sometimes archaic, as \text{reposed} in "Ever reposed in the Lord almighty," "early anon," and later in the poem, "deep bumpers" for \text{bollan steape} (deep bowls - 1.17), "shield-warriors doughty" for
bealde byrnwigen(de) (bold shield-warriors - 1.17), and "ween" for se rica ne wende (the ruler did not know - 1.20).

Gordon's Translation


Aim of the Translation.

Though Gordon writes nothing in his introduction about his intended audience, it seems to be the general reader. He introduces the poem with a short history of early English verse:

English poetry before the conquest may be roughly divided into two classes, heroic and Christian. The heroic poems deal for the most part with Germanic legend and history. About these poems there is nothing distinctively English except the language. The stories they tell . . . were well known to all Germanic peoples, not merely the tribes which came over to Britain. But the break between religious poetry and the earlier work is not complete. The old devices of style are carried on and adapted to new subjects.

Gordon writes of alliteration and Old English versification in Judith:

Unfortunately only the closing sections of this poem have survived. It is a work of remarkable power and beauty. The exultation with which the poet describes the overthrow of Holofernes and his host may have been inspired by the struggle of the English against the Danes.

Nature of the Translation.

Without explaining his rationale for doing so, Gordon renders Judith into prose. Although he does not attempt to retain alliteration,
it sometimes occurs naturally, as in "she found protection there in the famous Prince." The paragraphs are divided into chapters corresponding to those in the Apocrypha and are marked by Roman numerals.

Indebtedness to Preceding Scholars.

Although Gordon does not mention critics, he seems thoroughly familiar with preceding scholarship. He mentions Cook's theory that Judith was written to inspire the English to fight the Danes. In his introduction he provides abundantly useful information about early English poetry.

Text Used.

No mention of the working text is made.

EXTRACT.

... She did not lose faith in His gifts on this far-spreading earth; then truly she found protection there in the famous Prince when she most needed the favour of the highest Judge, that He, the Lord of creation, should guard against the greatest danger. The glorious Father in heaven bestowed that boon on her because she never failed in firm faith in the Almighty. Then Holofernes, as I heard, eagerly sent forth a bidding to wine, and dressed up dainties wondrously sumptuous. The prince of men bade all the eldest thanes come; the shield-bearing warriors attended in great haste; the chiefs of the people came to the mighty leader.

Criticism of the Translation.

The translation is faithful and readable. Often the compounds are rendered by phrases, as in "bidding to wine" for winhathan (wine-call,
1.8) and "overcome by mead" for medowerig (mead-wear, - l. 229). Occasionally the original compounds are kept as in "gold-friend." A few new ones are coined, as in "far-spreading" for ginnan (wide, 1.2).

Gordon provides no excerpt to suggest the poem's original form or note about the alliterative nature of Judith. Because he does not number the sentences to his poem, comparison to the original is difficult.

Though the language of the translation is generally colloquial, a few phrases are strained, as in "dressed up dainties," "valorous virgin," "fiendish wanton," and "wondrously sumptuous."

Raffel's Translation


Aim of the Translation.

The aim of the translation is to make Old English verse appealing to the general reader by offering an imaginative, free translation that is rhythmic and smooth. Raffel believes that faithful translations are dull and unappealing and that even scholars find literal renderings unappealing and unintelligible. He feels translations can best suggest the life of the original by poems in their own right: "Translations, as well as original poetry must be." In his foreward Raffel's editor, Robert Creed, amplifies Raffel's opinion on the necessary independence of translations and implies that Raffel's translation can be appreciated
by a reader without any knowledge of Old English poetry, its content, or versification:

The translations which appear in this volume are poems. They are in varying degrees and in various ways faithful to the letter of Old English. . . . These poems can be read and judged for themselves.

The purpose of the volume, he notes, is to entertain, to present the poems anew.

Nature of the Translation.

Raffel believes that the best way to do justice to the original is to create a new poem. He discusses the difficulty of translation:

Brevity in one language becomes sheer torture in another, and delicate images become heavy-handed and ponderous. . . . The translator's only hope is to re-create something roughly equivalent in the new language, something that is itself good poetry and that at the same time carries a reasonable measure of the force and flavor of the original. In this sense a recreation can only be a creation.

Both Raffel and Creed condemn the practice of translating literally, which Creed claims produces "a torn and meaningless text." Without specifying where he employs them, Creed asserts that Hopkin's "sprung rhythms" could be used successfully in modern renderings of Old English.

Of his translation Professor Raffel writes:

I have added images. I have used verse . . . a free four beat line, without regard to the usual accent patterns of English verse.

He provides a technical note:

Observe the very high frequency of hypermetrical lines--i.e., those with 6 rather than 4 beats. Only a single Old English poem, according to Professor Dobbie, has a higher proportion of such expanded lines, and no English poem--other than
that tour de force, "The Rimming Poem"--
contains more frequent rhymes and near-rhymes
than "Judith."

Indebtedness to Preceding Scholars.

It is difficult to tell how knowledgeable Raffel is regarding Old
English scholarship since, in his concern with invention, he has
generally ignored critical and textual authorities.

EXTRACT.

... and was sure of
Grace, here in this wide-reaching world. His help
was waiting,
Heaven's Glorious King, Lord of Creation, His
kindness
And protection; when she needed Him most, danger
closest and most real,
5 He alone was her guard, the exalted Ruler of the
world,
Extending His hand to defend her, rewarding the
unshaken faith
She had always shown Him. And then, it is told,
Holofernes
Commanded his people to lay out a feast, with wine
and magnificent
Dishes, strange and wonderfully made. And the
Assyrian lord
10 Ordered his noblest lieutenants to attend him; they
hurried to obey,
The best of his warriors, came when their mighty
leader called them.
To his side.

Criticism of the Text

In his introduction Raffel notes that he sometimes uses "disguised
alliteration," that is to say internal sounds, such as the repitition of
the nasal, rd, and the oblique alliteration of sh-st in 1.4: "And
protection; when she needed Him most, danger closest and most real."

His technique results in a softer form of consonantal repetition which lacks the force of initial alliteration.

Though Raffel mentions rhyme in Judith, he does not retain it in his poem. Among the liberties he takes are revision and addition of items; the negative, "she doubted not," is, for example, changed to "was sure of." Lines not in the original are: "he had never seen the wise/and radiant virgin, but that day he sent for her," (ll. 13-14) and "Precious treasure that arrogant master of men had plundered/from across the world, every golden cup and shining Jewel, once hidden in his family vaults" (ll. 337-339), all of which he takes from the Apocrypha.

The rendering of "thanes" as "lieutenants" is anachronistic. Raffel's preference for retaining repetitions occasionally makes the translation hard to read, as in "His help was waiting, Heaven's Glorious King, Lord of Creation, His kindness and protection."
CHAPTER III

MY TRANSLATION


Aim of the Translation.

I believe that the virtues of Judith, inaccessible as they are to the modern reader unskilled in Old English, have been only partly disclosed in modern translations. Good as many of these translations are, each allows one or more aspects of the original to remain in obscurity through the conscious choice of the translator to retain intact or create a simulacrum of some features appertaining either to the earlier poem or the earlier language. What I have attempted to do is produce a modern equivalent of the original. This is, after all, the procedure followed by the Old English translator of the apocryphal Judith.

Nature of the Translation.

I have translated line-by-line into free verse in the belief that a literal and yet smooth rendering might be achieved. Whenever I could retain a compound without creating an awkwardness, I have done so. I have rejected such terms as "byrnie," "bill," and "buckler" for the modern and more intelligible "mail-shirt," "sword," and "shield."
I have revised some lines, though not many, re-arranging words to avoid a slavish observance of the original lines wherever doing so would have impeded readability.

The Norman Conquest made it impossible for subsequent English translators to retain all the qualities of Old English verses for the syntax and diction were radically altered by this event. In place of the consonant clusters so distinctive of the Germanic languages, the invaders brought with them the assonant vowels and glides of the Romance language group. Consequently any translator uniformly attempting to reproduce the alliterative verse of Old English has been forced to revise not just phrases but often lines and whole passages in order to suggest one feature of the original. Clearly to adopt such a procedure is to sacrifice the arm for a hand.

Indebtedness to Preceding Scholars

I have at all times been guided by the hope that I could render Judith in a manner similar to Professor Cook's translation—a model for all translators in matters of grammar, smoothness, and faithfulness—while modernizing its diction.

The complete poem is translated. Line numbers are based on the original and the present translation contains the same number of lines as the original. The caesura of each line is indicated by a white space break, and emendations are placed in brackets.
JUDITH

. . . She doubted [not]

Of His gifts in this wide world She found there then

Ready protection from that famous Prince when she had most need,

Grace of the highest Judge, that He would protect her against

the greatest terror,

The Lord of creation. To her the glorious Father in

heaven

Granted a boon because she had strong faith

Always in the Almighty. I have heard, then, that Holofernes

eagerly

Made a wine-call, ordered up delicacies,

All wonders magnificent. The lord of men called to him,

10 All the oldest thanes. The shield-warriors performed that

In much haste; they came to the rich lord,

To the leader of the peo. That was on the fourth day

Since Judith, wise in thought,

Woman of elfin beauty, first sought them.

They went forth, then, to sit at the banquet,

Prideful at the wine-drinking, all his companions in misery,

Bold corseleted warriors. There were deep bowls

Borne along the bench frequently, also, vessels, full cups

For the pleasure of the hall-sitters. The strong shield-warriors,

20 Fated to die, received the bowls, though of this doom the powerful one,

The terrible lord of men, was not aware. Then, Holofernes,
The gold-friend of man, was happy in the outpourings of wine.

He laughed loudly, shouted and holloed
So that the sons of men might hear from afar
How the one fierce in spirit shouted and yelled,
Proud and excited by mead, He frequently admonished
The bench-sitters, that they bear themselves well.
So the wicked one throughout the day
Drenched his retainers with wine,

Arrogant giver of treasure, until they lay in a swoon,
He intoxicated all his host as if they were slain by death,
Deprived of all goods. So the prince of men ordered
The hall-sitters to be served, until to the children of men
Gloomy night approached. He commanded then, the men
Confused by evils, that the blessed nations in haste take him
To his bed, adorned with bracelets,
Adorned with rings, The retainers quickly did
As their prince bade them,
The ruler of mailed warriors. With tumult they marched

To the guest-house where they found
Judith, wise in spirit. Then, promptly
The shield-warriors began to lead
The illustrious maiden to the high-arched tent
Where the powerful one, Holofernes, rested on the bed
At night, hateful to the Savior.
There was an all-gold flynet
Hung around the folkleader's
Bed so that the evil-filled one,

The prince of men, might look through
50

At anyone of the children of men

Who came in there, but no one of mankind

Could look at him unless the proud one,

Brave in war, called near him,

A warrior going to council. They quickly brought to the bed,

Then, the prudent woman. The resolute men

Went to tell their lord that the holy maiden was

Brought to his tent. Then was the famous one blithe,

The prince of towns. He thought to defile the fair maiden

With foulness and sin. The Judge of glory would not

Allow that, the Guardian of fame. The King, the Lord of hosts,

Kept him from these things. The diabolical one went, then,

wicked, with the band of men

To seek his bed, where he was to lose his life

Forthwith, within one night. He attained, then,

His violent end on earth, such as he before had been heading

after,

Severe ruler of men, while he in this world

Dwelled under the roof of the sky. The mighty one fell

On the middle of the bed so drunk that

He seemed bereft of his senses. Then the warriors marched

Out of the chamber in great haste.

The wine-sated men had led

The troth-breaker, the hateful tyrant to bed
For the last time.
Glorious handmaiden
How she might most easily
Of life
Unclean and foul.
Miaden of the Lord
Hard in the storm of battle
With her right hand.
The Ward of the skies,
World-dwellers
"God of creations
I ask
For me in need,
Glory of the Trinity.
My heart inflamed
Stirred with sorrows.
Victory and true faith,
Cut down this giver of torment. Grant my salvation,
Stern spirited Lord;
Grace had greater need.
Glorious Distributor of grace, I who am thus bitter in spirit,
Not in brest."
Forthwith inspired her with courage as He does each of the earth-dwellers who seeks His help
With reason and true faith. Then she felt a great relief,
She renewed her holy faith. She seized the disbeliever
Fast by his hair,
Shamefully, The sinful, So that she might Control the miserable one. Slew the fiend Hostile, The neck Drunken and wounded. Utterly lifeless. The heathen hound Vehemently, so that Onto the floor. Dead behind, Under a deep cliff, By torment, fettered Bound by tortures, Firmly imprisoned After death. In darkness wrapped, From that serpent-cell, Always forever In the dark home Judith gained By fighting at war, The prince of the skies, Then the wise woman and cunningly led hateful man most easily The one with braided locks with the shining sword, so that she half cut through and he lay in a swoon, He was not yet dead, The courageous woman struck another time, his head rolled The foul trunk lay the spirit departed elsewhere and there was brought low ever after, surrounded by serpents, in hell fire Nor need he hope at all, that he might hence but there have to dwell without end without joy of hope. illustrious glory as to her, God, granted victory. quickly placed
The warrior's head so bloody
In the sack in which her attendant,
A woman with fair cheeks, accomplished in virtues,
Had brought their food, and thoughtful Judith
Gave it so gory
To her servant to bear home.
The two courageous women
Triumphant of womankind went straightaway
Out of that army so that they
Clearly might see the walls
Of their beautiful city Bethulia
Glittering.
Then, ring-adorned
They hastened forth on a course
140 Until they came, glad at heart,
To the rampart gate. Warriors sat,
Men watching, keeping guard
In the stronghold as Judith had commanded
Them to do, the sorrowful folk, before,
When she went on the journey, wise woman,
Dear to the people. Then, forthwith, the shrewd woman
Called one of the men
Of that wide town to come toward her
150 And to let them in forthwith
Through the gate, and she shouted these words
To the victorious people: "I may tell you
A thank-worthy event, that you no longer need
To mourn in your heart. To you is God graciously-minded,
Glory of Kings. That fact became manifest
Throughout the wide world. To you glorious success
Is approaching and glory granted
For the wrongs which we have long suffered."
Then the town-dwellers became happy

10 When they heard how the holy one spoke
Over the high wall. The army was joyful;
People flocked toward the city-gate
Men and women together, in multitudes and crowds,
In troops and hosts they pressed
By thousands, old and young
Toward the maiden of the Lord. In each man
Of the mead-city was the heart cheered,
After he realized that Judith had come
To the city again, and forthwith

170 They let them in with reverence.
Then the wise one, gold adorned, commanded
Her handmaiden, clever in mind
To unwrap the head of the warrior
And to show it bloody to the people
In proof of how she had availed herself in battle.
Then the noble one spoke to all the people:
"Here you may clearly see, victorious people,
Chiefs of nations, the hateful
Heathen warrior's lifeless
180  Head,  Who, the most of men,  Holofernes,  dealt us out wrongs,  
Sore sorrows  and who would yet do so,  
But that God  did not grant him  
Longer life,  so that he with afflictions  
Could trouble us.  I deprived him of life  
Through God's help.  Now I command  
All men  of this town,  
All shield-warriors,  that you immediately  
Prepare yourself to fight  since God of creations,  
190  The glorious King,  has sent from the east  
The bright light.  Bear the shields forth,  
Put them against your breast  and get your mail shirts and  
Gleaming helmets.  Kill the leaders  
In the troop of the enemy  with bloody swords,  
Death-doomed war leaders.  Your enemy  
Will be condemned to death  and you shall have fame,  
Glory at battle,  so mighty God  
Has shown you  through my hand."  
Then the brave band was  quickly prepared,  
200  Keen for battle,  The courageous race marched,  
Warriors and retainers.  They bore triumphant banners  
Soldiers under helmets  marched quickly to battle  
From the holy town  at dawn.  
Shields dinned,  loudly resounded.  
At this  the lean-one rejoiced,  
The wolf in the wild,  and the black raven
Slaughter-greedy bird. Both knew
That the other intended to make
A feast on the fated. And after them flew
The eagle desirous for food, dewy-winged
With dark feathers: he sang the war-song,
210 The horny-beaked one. The warriors marched,
Men to battle, protected by shields
By hollow rounds, those who before
Endured insolence from foreigners,
Taunt from heathens. All that
Was sorely repaid to the Assyrians
At spear-play after the Hebrews
Under the war banners had gone

220 To the war-abode. They then keenly
Let fly showers of arrows
Battle adders from horn-bows,
Strong arrows. They shouted loudly
To the hostile warriors. They sent spears
Into the press of brave men. The soldiers were angry,
The land-dwellers, at the hated race.
They marched, stern of spirit, stout of heart;
They cruelly awoke the ancient enemy,
Mead-weary. With their hands they drew

230 From the sheaths their finely-adorned swords
With trusty edges. They vehemently slew
Assyria's warriors,
Contrivers of evil. They spared none
Of the army, neither the mean nor the mighty
Of living men whom they might overcome.
So the retainers at morning-tide
Pursued the foreigners continuously
Until they learned, those who were angry,
The army's chief guardians,

That the Hebrew men had violently shown them
The stroke of the sword. They went
To announce that to the oldest
Thanes, awoke the warriors,
Drunk with wine and told them in fear
The dreadful tidings, the morning terror,
Dire edge-play. Then, I have heard the soldiers
Doomed to perish, speedily cast off sleep
And to the tent of the evil one
With heart-throngs pressed forward in a crowd

To Holofernes. They intended at once
To announce the battle to their lord
Before the terror came down on him,
The armed force of the Hebrews. They all thought
That the prince of men and the bright maiden
Were together in the beautiful tent,
Judith the noble and the wanton one,
Terrible and fierce. None of the retainers,
None of the warriors, however, dared to awaken
Or inquire how the warrior

Had fared with the holy maiden,
The handmaid of God. The armed force approached,
The Hebrew people; they fought with
Sharp swords, Violently they requited
Their old strife, old grudges,
With shining swords. The glory of the Assyrians
In that day's work was destroyed,
Their pride humbled. The men stood
Around their king's tent very troubled,
Sad in spirit. They all, then, together

270 Began to make a noise, to cry out loudly
And to gnash their teeth, with their teeth endure grief,
Destitute of God. Then were their glory,
Their successes, and deeds of courage at an end, the men intended
To awaken their lord. They did not succeed.
Late and impatient one of the warriors
Grew so bold that he ventured
Into the tent as need impelled him.
He found, then, his gold-giver lying pale
On the bed, deprived of spirit

280 Reft of life. Immediately he fell
Cold to the earth and began to tear his hair
And his clothing, furious in spirit,
And he spoke these words to the warriors
Who waited, sad in spirit, outside:
"Here is revealed our own destruction,
Shown to be at hand; near is a time that is
Thronged with evil. We shall now lose,
Perish together in battle. And beheaded."

Threw down their weapons, Hastened in flight. The mighty folk Of the army lay On that field, A pleasure to the wolf Greedy for slaughter. From the hostile shield; The Hebrew troop, Glorified with fame.

The Almighty, Hastily Made a passage With bloody swords, Cleaved the shield-wall. Angered by war, Eagerly wanted With spears. The greatest part The Assyrian Hated race.

here lies our leader, cut by a sword

They, despairing, departed,

Behind them fought until the greatest part felled in battle cut down by swords, and also to the raven, They fled, those who lived, behind them marched honored with victory,

Then God, truly helped them. the valiant men through the hated throng cut down the shields, The Hebrew men at the time battle There on the earth fell of the leaders, chieftains,

Few arrived living Brave ones turned back, amid carnage,
Reeking corpses. The defenders of the land
could seize gory loot
From the most hated, their old enemies,
Lifeless men: beautiful armor,
Shield and broadsword, shining helmets,
Precious treasures. The guardians of the country
Had gloriously conquered the enemy

320 On the battlefield, old enemies
Put to sleep by the sword. They rested on the pathway,
Who in life were most hateful
Of living people. Then all the tribe,
The most famous race, proud and curly-haired
Brought in a month

To the fair town of Bethulia
Helmets and hip swords, gray shirts of mail,
The war-trappings of men, adorned with gold,
More beautiful treasure than any man

330 Could say, who is wise.
The warriors, keen under the banners,
Gained all that by courage on the battlefield
Through Judith, wise in learning,
A woman brave. To reward her
For that journey the warriors
Brought Holofernes'
Sword and gory helmet, likewise the wide corselet
Adorned with red-gold, and all of the stern treasures
Or private inheritance, bracelets and bright treasures
That the prince of men had and gave them to the fair one,
The ready-witted maiden. For all this Judith ascribed
Glory to God of the hosts, who gave her honor,
Fame in the kingdom of earth, likewise reward in heaven,
Mead of victory in the splendor of the skies, because she had true faith
Ever in the Almighty. Verily at the end she did not doubt in
The rewards that she long yearned for. Therefore,
Glory forever and ever be to the Lord who created wind and sky,
The heavens and spacious earth, and also the raging seas
And joys of heaven through His kindness.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This paper analyzes selected English translations of Judith and presents a new version by the author. In the Introduction I discuss the difficulties of translation and consider problems specific to Old English.

The styles of the passages examined may be described as:

- Prose, printed in paragraphs: Gordon 1926
- Free verse, prose printed in verse lines: Haugen 1971
- Blank Verse: Morley 1887
- Verse, alliteration retained without metrical stress: Cook 1888, Garnett 1889, Hall 1902, Raffel 1960
- Verse, alliteration retained with metrical stress: Hickey 1889, Elton 1901

In any one period no style of translation seems to predominate among the translators; rather, the style seems to depend upon the translator. Thus, in the 1880's Cook's translation is literal and Hickey's is free; in 1926 Gordon's is rendered in literal prose, and in
1960 Raffel's in free verse.

Hickey is noteworthy for her end-rhyme and heroic style. Cook excels in scholarship and faithfulness. Elton has rendered the poem into six-beat lines, shaped it, shortened it, and preserved the main elements while changing details. My translation is a literal one that strives for a smooth and readable modern version.

The value of this study to the reader consists in recognizing that many different kinds of translations can demonstrate strong virtues. It became apparent to me in my efforts to translate the poem that a dogmatic allegiance to any special notion of translation can hamper a translator. I think I learned it is best to apply rules when they are valid and ignore them when they are not.

To say that "beautiful or faithful" are the mutually exclusive choices for the translator is to promote a falsehood. There are examples of translations rich in both beauty and faithfulness, proving that the achievement in full measure of both is not beyond the resources of a language as flexible as Modern English. Cook's and Gordon's translations, for example, achieve both, not one at the expense of the other. Both renderings capture the spirit of the original and elegantly imitate the tensions and turns of the original. The reader enjoys the smooth readability of the Modern English versions and the mood of the ancient religious poem so expertly recaptured in the translations. What is beautiful in Old English Gordon and Cook manage to preserve in the Modern, while adding virtues of their own devising.
Cervantes' dictum, "Translation from one language into another... is like gazing at a Flemish tapestry with the wrong side out,"\textsuperscript{26} seems true of Old English as any language. But Professor Savory judiciously tempers this notion, saying, "Do not overstress the so-called impossibility of translation"; surely it is not claiming too much to say that a good translation can give a pleasing and valid facsimile of the original.\textsuperscript{27}


\textsuperscript{27} Savory, p. 88.
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