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On Kuryłowicz's notion of metrical equivalences in the light of Late Old English versified prayers

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to revive certain aspects of Jerzy Kuryłowicz's studies on Old English meter. The analysis focuses on the notion of isomorphism between linguistic and metrical patterns, which was fundamental to his theory, and which became the cornerstone of modern metrical analysis. Special consideration is given to the problem of metrical equivalences and opacity in the light of late Old English versified prayers. Thus, this contribution to the analysis of Old English versification serves as a complement to some of Kuryłowicz's important work, combining theoretical inquiry with data analysis of the sources in the vein of the methodology adopted by the renowned Polish linguist.[1]

Keywords: Jerzy Kuryłowicz, late Old English verse, isomorphism, equivalences, opacity, manuscripts.

1. Introduction

Contemporary analysis of poetic meter hinges on the principle that linguistic and metrical phenomena are intertwined and coherent.[2] Naturally, the relation between the two systems is not of equal rank. It is the linguistic structures that constrain the metrical templates (not vice versa) and provide the rationale for different aspects of verse including accent, rhythm, metrical

[1] I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their comments and several corrections. Any remaining mistakes are my own.

[2] For the general exposition of the relation between language and literature see, for example, Fabb (1997) and Fabb (2015). Both studies include further references to the literature and offer a broad coverage of the sources.

variants, or metrical licensing. This is, essentially, a consequence of the fact that a poem's metrical framework is inherently rooted in the phonological system of the language in which it was composed. Metrical features are transpositions of linguistic features and poetry is, to some extent, constrained by the structure of the language the poet uses as his artistic medium. On the other hand, a metrical analysis may shed light on language development and provide evidence for reconstructed historical forms. Therefore, understanding the architecture of versified texts is an important prerequisite for comparative historical linguistic analysis especially in the traditions in which the earliest written sources were composed in meter. Although metrical continuity and structure preservation are, in general, characteristic of traditional models of poetry with a long history, metrical patterns may adapt to the emerging language patterns over time.

These fundamental principles of isomorphism between language and meter underlying, to some extent, most contemporary metrical studies were first laid down by Jerzy Kuryłowicz in his early article 'Związki metryki z językiem potocznym' (Relations between the meter and spoken language), published in 1930, and then explored and developed in successive studies over the years (e.g. Kuryłowicz 1947, 1949, 1950, 1976, 1979). Unlike most of his predecessors (and some of his successors) who focused on studying meter *per se*, Kuryłowicz adopted a structurally-based and comprehensive methodology that enabled him to look for parallel phenomena in different languages and versification systems.[3] His analysis of linguistic and metrical interface was extensive and included evidence from Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Old Irish, and Old Germanic. As regards the lattermost, Kuryłowicz's insightful contribution has been acknowledged by scholars working on Old English versification on the whole. All major studies on Anglo-Saxon alliterative tradition typically refer to *Die sprachlichen Grundlagen der altgermanischen Metrik* (1970) and *Metrik und Sprachgeschichte* (1975), less often to 'Linguistic fundamentals of the meter of *Beowulf*' (1976).[4] And yet, regardless of this general recognition, some non-trivial aspects of his analysis have passed largely unnoticed.[5] In part, this must have been due

[3] Roman Jakobson adopted the same fundamental approach in his pioneering study on Czech verse in which he distinguished between phonological and non-phonological components of verse (Jakobson 1923). Kuryłowicz refers to Jakobson's work in his later paper on Indo-European metrics (1963: 322).

[4] By way of example, see references to Kuryłowicz in Russom (1987, 1990, 2017), McCully and Anderson (1996), Hutcheson (1995), Fabb (1997), Terasawa (2011), Cornelius (2017).

[5] A critical appraisal of Kuryłowicz's contribution to Old Germanic metrics has been offered by Robert Fulk and Seiichi Suzuki in two short papers published in a memorial volume

to a language barrier: some of Kuryłowicz's papers on metrics are in Polish and, as such, they have a limited readership circulation. Another reason seems to be related to the fact that his research results were used primarily in a technical way lacking the original broad cross-linguistic perspective and universal validity. This paper aims to revisit some aspects of Kuryłowicz's analysis of meter and illustrate them with examples from late Old English versified prayers. As a minor contribution, it hardly unfolds all the different strands Kuryłowicz traced in his investigation of Germanic metrics. The discussion thus centres on resolution, archaisms, and Latin components in late alliterative verse as manifestations of the overarching notions of metrical equivalence and opacity.

2. The sources and the data

In his search for linguistically relevant aspects of poetry, Kuryłowicz (1947) stressed the importance of non-individual poetical features constrained by formal rules consolidated within a given tradition. In other words, he was looking for generalizations resulting from long-term historical evolution. He argued that poetry in which the singular voice of the poet (*parole poétique*) yields to conventional forms and patterns perpetuated by professional corporate groups of singers (*langue poétique*) is the proper subject of analysis within the competence of a linguist.[6] Such conventional forms of poetry, practiced by the *filids* in Ireland, the *þurls* in Iceland, and the *scops* in Anglo-Saxon England, passed down orally from generation to generation, are distinguished by the choice of archaisms and formulaic expressions bound with a set of formal metrical patterns which evolved over time.

Although the metrical prayers examined in this paper were not composed by traditional *scops*, they too are products of an enduring Anglo-Saxon tradition, boosted by the Benedictine Revival in response to educational and religious needs. Intended as devotional meditations on familiar themes to be shared with community, court, or parish, but outside

edited by Smoczyński (1995). The authors focus on the best-known aspects of Kuryłowicz's interpretation of Old English alliterative meter, namely, verse types and rhythm (Suzuki 1995: 483-490) and resolution (Fulk 1995: 491-497). Fulk stresses that the issues raised by Kuryłowicz in his early studies played a significant role in the development of the discipline later but his 'precedence in exploring the subject has scarcely been acknowledged' (Fulk 1995: 492).

6 According to Kuryłowicz (1947: 300-301), individual poetic language, peculiar to a given poet, is the subject of stylistics.

of the daily Offices or regular church ritual, they may have been recited in a monastic refectory or sung on special occasions during social or regnal celebrations (cf. Keefer 2010: 102). The language and form of versified vernacular prayers, such as the *Pater noster*, *The Creed*, *Gloria Patri*, or the metrical psalms are close to those known from narrative biblical poems composed after the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England to Christianity. This affinity is manifested, among other things, in the use of formulaic language integrated with familiar metrical patterns.

Studies of late Old English meter typically involve *The Battle of Maldon*, *The Battle of Brunanburh*, and other *Chronicle* poems.[7] These compositions narrate recent historical events and employ traditional formulaic language characteristic of heroic Anglo-Saxon poetry. They also share significant features which reflect metrical alterations induced by language change, such as the prevalence of the A-type in the off-verse, levelled rhythmical contour, repetitiveness, and expanded dips, to name a few. These metrical developments are reflexes of changes at the morphophonological level in the transition period: the growth of analytic structures to the detriment of inflectional categories, phonological reduction, and morphological opacity. Similar features are discernible in a group of late religious verses linked to the Benedictine Reform and the post-Reform period, attested in several 11th-century codices: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 201, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Junius 121, and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS. Fonds. Lat. 8824 (also known as the Paris Psalter).[8]

And yet, the alliterative prayers have not been the prime candidates for metrical analysis. The main reasons are, presumably, their religious rather than strictly heroic diction and lexical stratum, on the one hand, and their overall repetitive, mechanical style, on the other. Historically, these prayers are secondary compositions, formed *per analogiam* to classic heroic songs and earlier religious poetry (see Greenfield and Calder 1986: 231-234). They use the traditional alliterative meter and the technique of variation as the vehicle for vocabulary. They also adopt some of the conventional phrases to express Christian notions even though they essentially apply them in an automatic rather than innovative way. On the whole, they form a relatively uniform

7 See, for example, Fulk (1992: 251-268) and the latest work by Russom (2017: 89-133).

8 All three manuscripts have been digitized. Full digital facsimiles can be found at: https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/44360db1-f67e-47c3-8136-6515a090d968/(Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Junius 121), https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/cr485km1781 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 201), https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8451636f (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS. Fonds. Lat. 8824), accessed July 2022.

body of texts owing to the shared lexicon and a long-established repertory of formulaic expressions associated with Christianity. A distinctive feature of this group of texts, especially the vernacular psalms, is a significant ratio of Latin and Latinate terms adopted from the liturgical sources which served as their basis.[9] Embedded within the alliterative lines they provide a testing ground for the operability of the metrical rules and metrical extensions. In short, the corpus of late metrical prayers offers tangible material for parsing metrical units in correlation to bilingual, transforming linguistic structures characteristic of the transition period.

3. Metrical equivalences

Among the linguistic-metrical correlatives, Kuryłowicz distinguished, in particular, elements of stress and rhythm, and variability or formal equivalence. He argued that the latter, being essentially an aesthetic category in poetry, is conditioned by phonological phenomena specific to a given language. Furthermore, he demonstrated that the equivalence of certain metrical components, or the order of *responsiones*, as he called it alternatively (Kuryłowicz 1930: 283), is a universal phenomenon and some types of equivalence are recurrent even in metrical systems of a substantially different nature.

One type of metrical equivalence to which Kuryłowicz returned in several works hinges on the parallelism between a long (i.e. heavy σ̄) syllable and a sequence of two short (i.e. light σ̆) syllables. In metrical terms, this means that a single heavy syllable can be resolved into two light ones which function as a unit or implement one metrical position. In Old Latin poetry this type of metrical equivalence stems from an iambic shortening rule. By this rule, unstressed heavy syllables which immediately follow light syllables in disyllabic words (i.e. σ̆σ̄) become light due to the shortening of the vowel in the second syllable. The result is a σ̆σ̆ template. In terms of phonology, this operation establishes symmetry within a string of syllables and repairs marked sequences by removing a mora (Baldi 2002: 264). From the artistic point of view, the variation helps to break prosodic monotony by changing the rhythmical pattern from iambic or spondaic to pyrrhic feet, as exemplified by numerous verses of Plautus and Terence (cf. Kuryłowicz 1949: 295).

[9] Some examples are given in section 4.2.

Kuryłowicz demonstrated that a parallel phenomenon occurred in Old Germanic metrics and, more importantly, that it was related to the phonological rule of syncope. Fulk (1999: 491) traces this idea back to his paper on 'Latin and Germanic Metre' published in 1949. However, already in 1930, Kuryłowicz suggested that vowel syncope/apocope and resolution are corresponding phenomena in Germanic. In the final section of the article 'Związki metryki z językiem potocznym', he uses an example from *Hildebrandslied* to illustrate the point. His argument is based on the observation that *prūt* (line 20a) and *fateres* (line 24a) implement the same position within a metrical template. On the surface then, the resulting metrical equivalence in Old High German (i.e. σ̄=σ̆σ̆) is identical to that found in Greek. Yet, he argues, at the underlying – linguistic – level they are different. In Germanic, resolution derives from vowel syncope, whereas in Greek, it stems from hiatus and contraction. Kuryłowicz defines the Germanic syncope (i.e. a short final or medial vowel is syncopated if preceded by a long stressed syllable; if the final vowel is deleted, the medial vowel stays intact) and quotes several forms that would become standard examples in later analyses of High Vowel Deletion[10]: word-finally WGmc **gasti* (guest) > OE *gast* vs. PGmc **wini* (friend) = OE *wini*[11]; WGmc **handu* (hand) > OE *hand* vs.**sunu* > (son) = OE *sunu*; word-internally: OHG *nerita* (saved) vs. *hôrta* (not: *hôrita*, I heard). Given that, he recapitulates, *gast-*, *hand-* and *hôr-* are long, whereas *win- sun-* and *ner-* are short syllables.[12]

In a later paper, Kuryłowicz (1949) elaborates on the analysis and presents further arguments. One of them follows from the fact that Northwest Germanic languages lack monosyllables ending in a short vowel and tend to repair syllable structure (i.e. weight) by contraction and lengthening (cf. PGmc **taihu* > OE *tā*, toe). He stresses that the lack of light monosyllabic fully-stressed words and the presence of geminates is characteristic of languages that make use of the metrical equivalence σ̄=σ̆σ̆. Thus, in Old English, Old Saxon, and Old High German a bisyllabic word may never carry two metrical stresses or implement two metrical positions unless its syllables are heavy, as in the compound *hring-nett* (mail-coat). By implication, then,

[10] For example, Kiparsky and O'Neill (1976), Keyser and O'Neill (1985), Dresher and Lahiri (1991), McCully (1992), Lass (1994: 98-102).

[11] In fact, Kuryłowicz (1930: 293) is not entirely correct when he says that PGmc **wini* 'retains the final *i* unchanged' ('[…] *wini* utrzymuje końcowe *i* pozostając bez zmiany'). By virtue of another rule, the non-syncopated high vowels were lowered in Old English, hence EOE *wini* > OE *wine*. The data are tacitly corrected in Kuryłowicz (1949: 296).

[12] In contemporary studies on Old English prosody, the opposition is conveyed in terms of syllable weight rather than syllable length: heavy vs. light syllables.

a compound such as *sigor-rēadig* (blessed with victory) cannot constitute a verse by itself even though it has four syllables (i.e. the default metrical verse template), because its first syllable *si-* is light and must be resolved to carry the metrical stress. At the metrical level, then, *sigor* implements one and not two metrical positions.

One final point raised by Kuryłowicz in his early paper – 'Związki metryki z językiem potocznym' – is worth mentioning. Namely, in the concluding paragraph, Kuryłowicz (1930: 293) says that there is an important difference between the prosodic equivalence as instantiated in Greek and Germanic. In the former, light bisyllabic forms and heavy monosyllables are co-occurring variants (e.g. ἔτι-μαέ∼ἔτι-μα), whereas in the latter, they become morphologically conditioned mutually exclusive variants (i.e. OE *gast*:*wini*, *hand*:*sunu*). While Kuryłowicz's assertion complies with the examples he gives, later studies have shown that there is, in fact, variation with regard to the implementation of the syllable/foot parameters in the same word forms. In Old English, the variation concerns words, such as *fugol*, *heafod*, *wæter*, *werod*, *worold*, *wundor*, etc., in which the syncopated vowels vacillated and were often analogically restored in inflectional forms (Campbell 1959: 226-227; Hogg 2000).[13]

Excellent examples illustrating this type of variation come from a vernacular paraphrase of the Latin prayer *Gloria Patri* copied by different scribes in two late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 201, pp. 169-170 and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Junius 121, fols. 43v-44v.[14] This is a rare case since most Old English texts have survived in single copies. The witnesses are both dated to the first half of the 11th century but it is hardly possible to specify the date more accurately. What is clear, however, is the fact that each scribe was consistent in the choice of the forms he used: the Corpus Christi scribe used the syncopated variants, whereas the Bodleian scribe – the resolved ones in the same poetical lines, which implies compatibility at the phonological and metrical level. Whether the variants had exactly the same status linguistically is another matter. Both

[13] In contradistinction to Campbell (1959: 159-160), Hickey (2011: 360-361) claims that in some forms the second vowel comes from epenthesis, and its later loss 'cannot be interpreted as syncope, but simply as the reversal of epenthesis with the relaxation in English phonotactics.' From the metrical point of view, however, the source of the vowel is of minor significance. What matters is the prosodic template and rhythmical pattern that change depending on the presence/absence of the vowel.

[14] The examples from Old English texts are quoted after Krapp and Dobbie's *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (1931-1953), unless stated otherwise. Reference to the manuscript data and folios is given when necessary.

may have been in use at the time, though one might have been regarded as a more conservative variant. Other extragrammatical factors, for instance, sociolinguistic or regional variables, cannot be precluded as possible determinants of the variation, either. Metrically, the forms are equivalent (non-contrastive), but the choice of a given variant – syncopated vs. resolved – engenders a difference in rhythm between $\bar{\sigma}$ = ˈS(x) in (1a) and $\breve{\sigma}\breve{\sigma}$ = ˈsx(x) in (1b).[15]

(1) Syncopated vs. resolved sequences in the Old English paraphrase of *Gloria Patri*

	a. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 201, pp. 169-170	b. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Junius 121, fols. 43v-44v
Line 2b	wide ge**opnod**	wide ge**openod**
Line 18a	earle **worlde**	earle **worulde**
Line 38a	ofer ealre **world**	ofer ealre **woruld**
Line 46a	and on **worlda world**	and on **worulda woruld**
Line 61b	**orð** and sawle	**oruð** and sawle

Later studies have indicated that resolution may be suspended in Old English meter under secondary stress. This breach has led some scholars to believe that there is actually no symmetry between the prosodic and metrical phenomena and, therefore, resolution should be analysed in metrical terms only. However, there are several arguments to the contrary. First, the suspension of resolution in Old English verse may be triggered by several factors, including relative stress, position in verse, the weight of both resolving syllables (cf. Fulk 1995: 491-492). Second, the phonological processes of Northwest Germanic lengthening and High Vowel Deletion can be sensitive to stress grading and suspended, as well (Fulk 1995; Hogg 2000). Given that the phonological rules may oscillate, it is only to be expected that their metrical extensions can exhibit differential application, too. Despite the inconsistencies, the equivalence between ¯ and ˘˘ has been recognized as a fundamental property of Old English (or Germanic) prosody manifested via

[15] For the sake of this presentation, I adopt the following notation: ˈS = stressed metrical position (or a heavy stressed syllable), ˈs = resolved stressed metrical position (or a light stressed syllable), and x = unstressed but metrically relevant syllable. Parentheses indicate an optional unstressed syllable. The relevant forms in each half-line have been emboldened.

several weight-sensitive processes in phonology and via resolution in meter. Viewing all of these phenomena as operations conspiring to ensure prosodic optimization helps to provide a simple and unified explanation for a range of facts related to Old English stress and meter (Dresher – Lahiri 1991: 264).

4. Metrical opacity and ambiguity

Kuryłowicz recognized the problem that the relation between linguistic and metrical phenomena is not always transparent. However, he sought to give a principled explanation at the interface of linguistics and metrics, rather than to postulate an autonomous set of rules for each of the domains.16 In general, he viewed opacity as a corollary to the fact that poetical language evolves at a slower pace than spoken language or, to put it differently, that the poetic language tends to retain older linguistic features longer. One of two historically equivalent forms may acquire the status of a secondary, colloquial, or conservative variant in speech but persevere in poetry as a legitimate metrical variant. Archaisms that fall out of use in spoken language are often retained in poetry as convenient long-established metrical variants or metrical fillers. Using examples from Latin and Middle Persian, inter alia, Kuryłowicz (1930: 284ff) shows that poets may even generate inorganic or historically unattested forms by analogy to phonological patterns that used to be productive at a certain stage of language development.

4.1 Archaisms

In late Old English, one source of archaisms in verse comes from stems with h∼ø alternation, such as *hēah∼hēa* (high, nom./acc. sg.), *feoh∼fēos* (cattle, nom./gen. sg.), *nēah∼nēara* (near, adj./comp.), etc. The deletion of the voiceless velar fricative word-internally started circa the 8th/9th century and coincided with contraction and vowel lengthening in the case of light roots (Lutz 1988; Fox 2000: 69ff; Opalińska 2004). Intervocalic *h* is occasionally rendered in the earliest texts (e.g. *thohae*, clay, in Epinal Glossary, cf. Pheifer 1974: 3), but in later records forms with ø are the standard representation. In verse, such contracted forms fill one metrical position and along with

16 This is implied in many places and stated explicitly in e.g. Kuryłowicz (1949: 294).

the remaining components typically carry out a regular prosodic pattern, as exemplified by the data in (2a-c). Occasionally, however, poetical lines which include such lexical components are ambiguous and elude transparent classification. By way of example, consider the half-lines in (2d-f). These verses seem deficient either because they violate the requirement on the minimal number of metrical positions (2d-e: three instead of four syllables) or because they implement an inadequate metrical contour (2f: no dip after the second stress).

(2) Contracted forms in Old English verse

a. *Beowulf*, line 713b: in sele þam **hēan (**Sievers' type B)
b. Paris Psalter, *Psalm* 72, line 18a: on **hēan** hūse (Sievers' type C)
c. Paris Psalter *Psalm* 76, line 30a: þara **hēan** handa (Sievers' type C)
d. *Beowulf*, line 116a: *hēan **hūses**
e. *Beowulf*, line 1275b: *dēaþwīc **sēon**
f. *Beowulf*, line 839b: *feorran ond **nēan**

One way to account for the deficiency is to assume that the contracted forms are metrically bisyllabic and thus generate two metrical positions instead of one: /hē.an/, /sē.on/, /nē.an/ (cf. Amos 1980: 40-63; Russom 1997: 40). Phonologically, however, this solution is unsatisfactory because it produces hiatus which was a strongly marked category in Germanic languages. Hence, the bisyllabic hypothesis entails hiatus resolution, presumably implemented via *h*-epenthesis. In Old English phonology, segment insertion as a strategy of hiatus resolution was ranked low and could be activated when other, more optimal mechanisms (i.e. diphthongization, segment deletion, gliding) were blocked by higher-ranked constraints. In verse, however, poetical licence warrants nonstandard solutions. In this case, epenthesis is tantamount to re-establishing historically proper forms designated as metrical archaisms. Technically, the operation reverses the phonological processes of *h*-deletion and diphthongization. In practice, it simply reinstates obsolete variants of words for the sake of metrical coherence.

(3) *h*-epenthesis as hiatus resolution in metrically deficient contracted forms

a. hēan > *hē.an > hē.han
b. sēon > *sē.on > sē.hon
c. nēan > *nē.an > nē.han

The rationale for the scenario outlined above stems from synchronic alternations and metrical coherence grounded in diachronic facts. It hinges on the assumption that prosodic structures are part of the poet's (= native speaker's) internalized grammar and are recoverable from phonological alternations despite surface opacity. Theoretical reasoning underlying the mechanism of phonological and metrical structure optimization via *h*-epenthesis is substantiated by scribal evidence from Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. 121 Junius and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Ms. 201, given in (4). In the former, the copyist renders *hēan* as a bisyllabic form with an intervocalic *h* – *hēahan* – to provide an additional syllable and generate the B-type pattern (cf. 4a). In the latter, the scribe must have originally rendered the word in the same way, but at some point, the intervocalic *h* was erased with the resulting gap in the script (cf. 4b).[17]

(4) Old English metrical paraphrase of *Gloria Patri*, line 30a

a. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. 121 Junius, fol. 44r: þone **hēahan** dæg
b. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 201, p. 169: þone **hēa an** dæg

Both witnesses depart from the standard representation of the word current at the time, which implies that it was a deliberate strategy driven by metrical constraints.

4.2 Hybrid verses

A conspicuous feature of late metrical prayers is a noticeable proportion of Latin words or partially assimilated Latinate forms. Hybrid verses which contain such non-native lexical elements are another potential source of metrical opacity or ambiguity. The ambiguity may arise from the

[17] Cf. Opalińska (2018: 181) for the respective details from manuscript images.

difference in prosodic parameters between the two languages (differences in stress assignment[18]) or phonological discrepancies (e.g. language-specific constraints, hiatus). In Old English verse, the stressed syllable, or the metrical ictus, often coincides with alliteration, which constrains metrical flexibility and makes the adjustment more difficult, though not unattainable. The following examples from the metrical psalms and *The Creed* in (5) and (6) demonstrate that Anglo-Saxon poets were capable of generating metrically coherent hybrid lines by actuating adjustment mechanisms – stress shift, gliding, resolution, or segment deletion – where necessary.

In some verses the changes are minimal. For instance, in (5), the correct implementation of the metrical contour rests on vowel gliding in *Iacob*, *Ioseph* and *Marian* (V.V- > jV-), which eliminates hiatus and produces an optimal ˈCVCV/trochaic structure.

(5) Hybrid verses with Latin lexical components

a. Paris Psalter, *Psalm* 134, line 9b: Iacob drihten (Type A)
b. Bodleian Library, MS. Junius 121, *The Creed*, line 32b: Ioseph byrigde (Type A)
c. Bodleian Library, MS. Junius 121, *The Creed*, line 15a: Sanctan Marian (Type A)

Not all verses, however, are equally transparent. Some forms require a major adjustment to fit into an established template. In (6a) alliteration helps to identify the metrical pattern in both half-lines. Thus, relying on this cue (i.e. alliterating voiceless bilabial stop in *pontisca* and *Pilatus*), it is possible to analyse the string in the on-verse as Sievers' C-type with the secondary stress carried by *-isc-*. The off-verse is more opaque. The alliterative curve implies that ictus falls on the first syllable, while the second syllable retains a weaker, secondary stress (Lat. Pī$_{|}$lātus > ˈPī$_{|}$lātus). Given that the second major metrical stress is carried by *weold*, the entire verse can be tentatively analysed as the low-ranked E-type verse. The hybrid compound in (6b) is subject to even more complex changes: in the second compound component – *psalterium* (originally stressed on the antepenultimate syllable: Lat. psal.ˈtē.

[18] English stress is maximally binary and left-headed and the head must dominate two moras (cf. Dresher – Lahiri 1991; Fikkert et al. 2008), whereas Latin stress is right-headed and falls on the antepenultimate syllable or the penultimate syllable if it is heavy, see Baldi (2002: 268-270); Roca (1999: 659f).

ri.um) – the primary stress is shifted to the initial syllable and the secondary stress is assigned to the second syllable (as predicted by the Germanic Stress Rule proposed by Dresher – Lahiri 1991), the initial stop is deleted to satisfy the language-specific constraint on **ps*-onsets, and the high vowel is subject to gliding. The resulting output is a trisyllabic nativized form /ˈsal.ˌter.jum/, which, along with the Germanic component *wyn*, implements a D-type verse.

(6) Metrically ambiguous hybrid verses

a. Bodleian Library, MS. Junius 121, *The Creed*, line 28:
Da se pontisca Pilatus weold (on-verse: Type C; off-verse: Type E)
b. Paris Psalter, *Psalm* 56, line 32b: wyn-psalterium (Type D)

Although both lines in (6) correspond to regular Sieversian templates, the entire scheme is artificial not only because it involves complex adjustment mechanisms. The major problem is the lack of transparency between the morphological/lexical versus metrical tiers. In traditional Old English verse, the 'fit' principle warranted transparency between the two levels of representation in the output forms (i.e. 'parameters of the poetic meter should be set so the core vocabulary of the language can be used as fully as possible', cf. Hanson – Kiparsky 1996: 294). By virtue of this constraint, contour metrical templates – D and E – were typically implemented by compounds and phrases with a transparent morphological structure correlated with stress grades, as in, for instance, *Beowulf*, line 164b *feond mann-cynnes* (Type D) or *Deor*, line 40a *leod-cræftig mon* (Type E). Hybrid verses implemented by polysyllabic Latin words with a complex stress pattern and different vowel length are at variance with this constraint.

Anglo-Saxon poets tried to minimize metrical ambiguity by generating simple metrical templates built of two bisyllabic lexical words like *sanctan Marian*, quoted in (5c) above. This tendency is particularly conspicuous in macaronic poetry in which the off-verses are implemented by lexical units that mimic the default trochaic template: *factor cosmi*, *omnes sancti*, *salus mundi*.[19] Yet, even there the result is not entirely satisfactory since the same adjustment mechanisms are activated or suspended in an *ad hoc* manner. For instance, in the macaronic section of *The Rewards of Piety*, gliding is applied

[19] The examples come from *The Rewards of Piety* (lines 86-112), cf. Robinson (1994: 192).

to generate the A-type in line 89b *summi filius* (Lat. fī.li.us > fīl.jus), whereas, in line 95b *clēmens deus*, it is blocked to warrant the correct number of metrically relevant positions (hence: ˈde.us). By the same token, resolution is suspended on the light syllable in *salus* in line 87b of the same poem (hence *salus mundi* implements Type A), even though the ¯ = ˘˘ equivalence was functional in Latin as well as in Germanic (see Kuryłowicz 1949).

5. Concluding remarks

The idea that verse patterns are grounded in patterns of ordinary language underlies Kuryłowicz's analysis of meter. He returned to this notion in different studies over the years and explored it by investigating data from various languages and versification systems. In this way, he was able to demonstrate that the same or similar patterns discernible in diverse metrical systems may be triggered by language-specific rules. By tracing these rules and their metrical extensions he paved the way for a unified and coherent account of different phenomena operating at the linguistic-metrical interface. Kuryłowicz's studies are technically complex but they are not abstract. His theoretical considerations are supported by linguistic and metrical data and amply illustrated with examples. Following the same trajectory, this paper focuses on Kuryłowicz's original concepts of metrical equivalences and opacity, and explores their effects in the corpus of late Old English metrical prayers. A noticeable feature of these understudied texts is their metrical ambiguity. Levelled rhythmical contour, repetitiveness, and schematization, the amplification of overheavy verses with expanded dips, and the overflow of extrametrical syllables obscure the scansion and often make it difficult to establish the metrical pattern. Most of the anomalies are reflexes of changes in language structure, involving the growth of analytic formations, phonological and morphological reduction, and the ensuing shifts in stress or the prosodic contour. Some result from their complex bilingual lexical input. Owing to this inherent complexity, late versified prayers provide substantial material for an analysis of metrical extensions and metrical flexibility vis-à-vis the changing language structure.

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