"GRÆDIGNE GUDHAFOC AND DÆT GRÆGE DEOR": REVISITING BRUNANBURI'S BEASTS-OF BATTLE TOPOS (57-65ª) IN TRANSLATION[1]

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Abstract: The annal for the year 937 of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* narrates the events which took place with a poem that constitutes one of the main pieces of Anglo-Saxon heroic epic poetry: *The Battle of Brunanburh*. The verses contained in this annal are important because those lines fall into the rhythmical units of OE verse and have diction and imagery associated with heroic poetry. This poem, as many others in OE literature (Bueno 2003), uses history as a narrative device to build the inner story of the text experimenting with the topics (style, diction, imagery) of heroic poetry: alliterative style, formulaic vocabulary, the beasts-of-battle topos, phrases taken from the stock of the heroic corpus, etc. It seems most evident that a careful consideration of these topics has to be made when translating the text into other languages. In a previous work I revised three different groups of translations –and translators– that considered the poem a) in isolation, b) in the context of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* or c) as an excuse for poetic inspiration. In this article I want to concentrate only in texts from category a), and within them, I will exclusively revise the so-called beasts-of-battle topos (57-56a), a very interesting topic from the point of view of poetic translation studies. My aim will be then to revisit how this topos (57-65a) has been dealt with in several important English (Treharne 2004, Hamer 1970, Rodrigues 1996, Crossley-Holland 1982 as revised and edited by Barber 2008) and Spanish (Lerate & Lerate 2000, Bravo 1998, Bueno 2007) translations. As a complement, a version in Asturian (Santori 1999) will be briefly discussed.

Key Words: Old English poetry, *Battle of Brunanburh*, Beasts-of-Battle topos, Poetic translation.

Grædigne Gudhafoc and dæt Gr/ege Deor: Una revisión del tema de las Bestias de la Guerra (57-65h) en las traducciones de la Batalla de Brunanburi

Resumen: La entrada correspondiente al año 937 de la *Crónica Anglosajona* narra los hechos que tuvieron lugar en dicha fecha mediante una interpolación poética que constituye una de las piezas más importantes de la poesía heroica del inglés antiguo: *La Batalla de Brunanburh*. Los versos contenidos en esta entrada son importantes pues su condición y disposición poética nos permite clasificarlos como poesía heroica del inglés antiguo tanto en la forma (unidades métricas) como en el contenido (imaginería, dicción). Este poema, como tantos otros dentro de la literatura del inglés antiguo (Bueno 2003), usa los hechos históricos como mecanismo narrativo para construir la historia interna del poema experimentando cono los temas (estilo, dicción, imaginería) de la poesía heroica: estilo aliterativo, vocabulario formulaico, el tema de las "bestias de la guerra",

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frases sacadas del corpus heroico anglosajón, etc, etc. Parece evidente que estos temas se tendrán que tener en cuenta cuidadosamente cuando se traduzca el texto a otras lenguas. En un trabajo anterior revisé tres grupos diferentes de traducciones y de traductores que consideraron el poema a) de modo aislado, b) en el contexto de la *Crónica Anglosajona*, y c) como excusa para la creación poética. En este artículo quiero centrarme únicamente en textos de la categoría a) y dentro de ellos analizaré exclusivamente el llamado tema de las "bestias de la guerra" (57-65a), un asunto de gran interés desde el punto de vista de los estudios en traducción poética. Este artículo tiene como objetivo revisar el poema y ver cómo se ha analizado este tema en algunas traducciones importantes, tanto al inglés (Treharne 2004, Hamer 1970, Rodrigues 1996, Crossley-Holland 1982 as revised and edited by Barber 2008) como al español (Lerate & Lerate 2000, Bravo 1998, Bueno 2007). Como complemento se discutirá de modo breve una poco conocida versión del texto en asturiano (Santori 1999).

Palabras Clave: Poesía en Inglés Antiguo, *La Batalla de Brunanburh*, Las *Bestias de la Guerra*, Traducción Poética.

1. PRELIMINARY WORDS. WHAT THE TEXT SAYS: *937 HER ÆTHELSTAN CYNING...*

With his characteristic and widely acknowledged sense of humour, Umberto Eco (2004: 137) began a long epigraph on poetic translation with the following statement that recalled the first line of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*:

It is universally acknowledged that in translating poetry one should render as much as possible the effect produced by the sounds of the original text, even though in the change of language a lot of variations are unavoidable. One can miss the real *body* of a discourse, but try at least to preserve, let us say, rhythm and rhyme. So in these kinds of translations we have a process of this kind:

$$LS_1ES_1 \rightarrow C_1 \; LS_{1a} \; ES_{1a} \, / \, C_{1a}$$

where not only Linguistic Substance$_1$ but also many Extra-Linguistic substances$_1$ conveying a Content$_1$ are transformed into a Linguistic Substance$_{1a}$ and Extra-Linguistic Substances$_{1a}$ supposed to be aesthetically equivalent to the source ones, and conveying a Content$_{1a}$ aesthetically equivalent to the source one.

If in any given poetic text understanding variation, taking into account linguistic substance and bearing in mind a coherent idea of the discursive body of the poem, are important features to obtain a successful rendering, in Old English poetry these aforementioned features are vital to produce such a successful translation. This assumption is even more relevant when translating a text whose understanding depends more on a having a clear idea of the overall structural organization of its elements than on obtaining a clear equivalent meaning of its words in isolation. Such is the case of the poem contained in the annal for the year 937 of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. In this entry the events which took place are narrated by means of a poem that constitutes one of the main pieces of Anglo-Saxon heroic epic poetry: *The Battle of Brunanburh*. The verses contained in this annal are important because those lines fall into the rhythmical units of Old English verse and have diction and imagery

associated with heroic poetry. This poem, as many others in Old English literature –e.g. the case of *Deor* (Bueno 2003)–, uses history as a narrative device to build the inner story of the text experimenting with the topics (style, diction, imagery) of heroic poetry: alliterative style, formulaic vocabulary, the beasts-of-battle topos, phrases taken from the stock of the heroic corpus, etc. It seems most evident that a careful consideration of these topics has to be made when translating the text into other languages.

In a previous work (Bueno 2007b)[3] I took into account how that careful consideration had been accomplished in a corpus of English and Spanish translations and recreations, those which were the most frequently used *Brunanburh* texts in both languages. The corpus I selected, though reduced, was useful enough to establish a translation taxonomy in which to fit in the future the rest of translated texts. So I revised and analyzed three different groups of translations –and translators– that considered the poem a) in isolation, b) in the context of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* or c) as an excuse for poetic inspiration. In this article I want to concentrate only in texts from category a), and within them, I will exclusively revise the so-called beasts-of-battle topos (57-56a), something I did not discuss in my previous research and that constitutes a very interesting topic from the point of view of poetic translation studies. If, as Susan Bassnett said (2002: 98), "any translator must first decide what constitutes the total structure and then decide on what to do when translating a type of poetry which relies on a series of rules that are non-existent in the Target Language", the detailed revision of this topic is a very appropriate example of such a twofold translatorial decision.

My aim will be then to revisit how this topos (57-65a) has been dealt with in the aforementioned corpus of English (Treharne 2004, Hamer 1970, Rodrigues 1996, Crossley-Holland 1982 as revised and edited by Barber 2008) and Spanish (Lerate & Lerate 2000, Bravo 1998, Bueno 2007a) translations. As an interesting complement, a not very known version in Asturian (Santori 1999) will be briefly discussed. The poetic recreations I discussed in my previous research –i.e. the cases of Tenysson and Borges– will not be dealt with in this article as they present a kind of text that deserves a study of its own to be fully analyzed.

2. THE NATURE OF THE BEASTS: WHAT THE TRANSLATIONS SAY

From the stock of the heroic corpus the beasts-of-battle topos is by no means a familiar and highly interesting stylistic motif. In the case of *Brunanburh* its appearance is connected with the realistic terms in which the slaughter of the warriors is described. As Elizabeth Solopova & Stuart Lee (2007: 90) have very recently noted, "to accentuate this carnage the poet uses the common 'beasts of battle' type-scene in which carrion creatures (commonly a raven, eagle and wolf) are listed to either report the forthcoming slaughter, or in this case, highlight the bloodshed". The placing of this scene almost at the very end of the poem, as Louis Rodrigues (1996: 20) has also noted in the introduction to his own rendering, constitutes also a relevant fact as it "both precludes dramatic tension and diminishes the sinister associations of the motif itself; these beasts who emerge only after the battle has been won share some of the cowardice of the fugitives". In *Brunanburh*, then, the scene appears between lines 57 and 65a with the following structure:

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[3]   This paper was only a preliminary presentation of the topic for a conference audience. A much revised and longer version is due to appear as an article in *Babel: International Journal of Translation* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins).

*Swilce þa **gebroþer** begen **ætsamne**,*
cyning ond æþeling, cyþþe sohton,   *Introductory lines: Fraternal heroic bond*
Wesseaxena land, wiges hremige.
Letan him behindan **hræw** bryttian
saluwigpadan, þone sweartan **hræfn**,
hyrnednebban, & þane hasewanpadan,   *The Beasts themselves: Deep in the woods of*
earn æftan hwit, **æses** brucan,   *sentence organization.*
grædigne guðhafoc ond þæt græge
deor,
wulf on wealde.
(OE text as edited by Treharne 2004: 32)

Let's revise then how the different translators have dealt with the content and structure of these lines.

2.1. The beginning: Brothers in Arms? The fraternal heroic bond

Before the beasts-of-battle topos in itself, the selected extract begins with some lines that emphasize what Jayne Carroll (2007: 330) defines as "fraternal bond between the poem's two heroes". Perhaps this fraternal bond functions as a contrast with the aforesaid cowardice symbolized by the forthcoming beasts of battle (Rodrigues 1996: 20). Be that as it may, these heroic brothers in arms come back home after victory. So, the key thematic issue here is connected to their fraternal bond ("Gebroþer ætsamne"), their going back home and the term given to name that home ("cyþþe sohton", "Wesseaxena land") and their attitude towards victory ("wiges hremige"). As it is seen in the following table the English versions offer different solutions:

Table 1: English translations (57-59)

Brunanburh	Hamer (H)	Rodrigues (R)	Treharne (TH)	Crossley-Holland (CH)
Gebroþer ætsamne	Brothers both together	Together both the brothers	Both brothers together	Both brothers together
cyþþe sohton	went home together / returned to their own country	sought their home	sought their native land	returned to () their own country
Wesseaxena land	The land of Wessex	The land of Wessex	The country of the West-Saxons	Wessex
wiges hremige	Triumphing in war	joying in war	exultant in battle	Exulting in war

The fraternal bond is very easily solved, since we have "both brothers together", a perfect alliterative line in contemporary English, in different valid layouts. Their going back home and its name present two main options: to keep the etymological "sought" (R, T) combined with "home" or "native land", which render "cyþ" very appropriately, or to use as an alternative "returned/went". With some variation, the name given to that native land is always the same. It is their attitude towards victory the item that presents more variation: "triumph", "joy", "exult", "glad" combined with "war", "battle". Different degrees of intensity that are more related to the style of the translated text than to the understanding of the meaning of the items in isolation.

The Spanish/Asturian versions offer something similar, as it could be seen in the following table:

Table 2: Spanish/Ast translations (57-59)

Brunanburh	Lerate & Lerate (LL)	Bravo (BR)	Bueno (B)	Santori (S)
Gebroþer ætsam- ne	Los hermanos también/juntos /dos	Dos hermanos juntos	Asimismo ambos hermanos	hermanos /dambos xuntos
cyþþe sohton	volvieron a casa	Regresaron a su	partieron a su patria	tornaron al llugar de so
Wesseaxena land	tierras de Wessex	reino de Inglaterra	el solar de los sajones del oeste	El llar anglosaxon
wiges hremige	en Guerra gloriosos	felices por aquella batalla	contentos y colmados de combates	trunfantes na guerra

The fraternal bond shows very little variation again. The concepts are all there in every rendering. It is their incorporation into the general layout what changes from one rendering to the next: rigid verse pattern (L), prosaic transliteration (BR), alliterative verse structure (B) rhythmic prose (S). Their going back home and its name –if we leave aside the somewhat extravagant "reino de Inglaterra" (BR)– present the same variation arguments in the four translators, as it is also the case with the attitude towards victory.

So, if they all keep in similar ways all the lexical meanings, where is the difference in their being successful or unsuccessful as translations? Let's say for the time being that the more competent ones are those which, apart from correctly identify the lexical meaning, have been able to incorporate that meaning into a given rhythmic structure, those which have taken into account the overall poetic layout of the verse. That is to say: they saw the trees of the units to be translated but also seeing the woods of their syntactic organization. As the set out the content quite simply, maybe these introductory lines are not very interesting to see any major structural difference, but even so, just a quick glance is enough to notice some details:

<div align="center">TARGET LANGUAGE: ENGLISH</div>

The brothers also both went home together, The king and prince returned to their own country, the land of Wessex, triumphing in war. *(Hamer 1970: 43)*	So together both the brothers, king and *Ætheling*, sought their home, the land of Wessex, joying in war. *(Rodrigues 1996: 29)*
Likewise, both brothers together, the king and the prince, sought their native land, the country of the West Saxons, exultant in battle. *(Treharne 2004: 31)*	Likewise both brothers together, king and prince, returned to Wessex, their own country, exulting in war. *(Crossley-Holland 1982 as revised and edited by Barber 2008: 45, 47)*

<div align="center">TARGET LANGUAGE: SPANISH/AST</div>

Los hermanos también, el rey el príncipe, juntos a casa, a tierras de Wessex, los dos volvieron, en guerra gloriosos. *(Lerate & Lerate 2000: 141)*	Del mismo modo los dos hermanos juntos, el rey y el príncipe regresaron a su reino de Inglaterra felices por aquella batalla. *(Bravo 1998: 254)*
Asimismo ambos hermanos, rey y príncipe, partieron a su patria, el solar de los sajones del oeste, contentos y colmados de combates. *(Bueno 2007: 132)*	Los hermanos tamién dambos xuntos, el rei y el caballeru tornaron al llugar de so el llar Anglo-Saxon trunfantes na guerra. *(Santori 1999: 143)*

As far as the English language versions are concerned, Hamer and Treharne clearly favour a more prosaic and explanatory, almost literal, organization (somewhat expansive in Hamer's case with the unnecessary repetition of "cyþþe sohton"), whereas Rodrigues and Crossley-Holland opt for a poetic organization of the OE half-lines using a verse layout that renders both structure and content in a much more poetic and rhythmic way than that present in Hamer's and Treharne's texts.

The Spanish versions produce something similar and they follow the aforementioned outline: Lerate & Lerate's rigid verse pattern reproduces so tightly the OE half-line that it isolates the parts in such a restricted Spanish discourse that it exterminates the natural flow of the language. Bravo offers a prosaic transliteration of the content that, apart from the verse-like array of the lines, is pure 100% prose. Santori uses a kind of rhythmic prose that, like in Bravo's case (more natural, though), seems like poetry only because its lines present a verse-like layout. My own text adapts a poetic alliterative pattern that is more natural with Spanish and its rhythm, offering thus lexical fidelity that abides by some formal poetic regulations that work in Spanish much better than other rhythmical experiments such as the one offered by Lerate and Lerate.

To define this idea more accurately, let us go deeper in this structural wood and focus on how the beasts have been rendered. It will show with more detail how relevant it is to take into account the structure when translating the text as a whole.

2.2. The Beasts themselves: Deep in the woods of sentence organization

2.2.1. Translation Units: Lexical items

In our extract there are four items involved in the structural organization of lines 60-65a: the food for the beasts and the beasts themselves. "Hræw", that is commonly defined as "corpse, carrion, dead or living body", and "Æs", which is also "food, meat, dead carcase, carrion", are two very interesting terms structurally speaking, as they frame the appearance of the beasts of battle. The brothers leave behind the beasts to feed on the corpses of their enemies. So, the arrangement of these lines spins around the appearance of the beasts ("Hræfn", "Earn", "Wulf"), their portrayal ("sweartan", "saluwigpadan", "hyrnednebban", "æftan hwit", "hasewanpadan", "grædigne guðhafoc", "græge deor") and their eating-activities ("hræw bryttian" and "æses brucan").

As the following tables reveal, translating the plain meaning do not present a high range of choices. Broadly speaking a first main level of meaning is considerably well rendered into both target languages.

Table 3: English translations (60-65a)

Brunanburh	Hamer (H)	Rodrigues (R)	Treharne (TH)	Crossley-Holland (CH)
hræw	Corpses	Corpses	Corpses	Corpses
bryttian	--------	Sharing out	To Enjoy	To devour
æses	-------	Carrion	Carrion	Carrion
brucan	To enjoy	Eating	To Enjoy	Relish
hræfn	**Raven**	**Raven**	**Raven**	**Raven**
sweartan	Dark	Swart	Black	-------
saluwigpadan	Black-coated	Dusk-dressed	Dark-coated	Garbed in black
hyrnednebban	Horny-beaked	Horn-beaked	Horny-beaked	Horny-beaked
earn	**Eagle**	**Eagle**	**Eagle**	**Eagle**
æftan hwit	White-backed	White-backed	White from behind	With its white tail
hasewanpadan	Dun-coated	Greay-coated	Dun-coated	Grey-coated
grædigne guðhafoc	Greedy war-hawk	Greedy war-hawk	Greedy bird of war	greedy war-hawk
wulf (weald)	**Forest wolf**	**Weald wolf**	**Wolf in the wood**	**Wolf in the wood**
græge deor	Grey wild beast	Grey beast	Grey animal	Grey beast

As far as English renderings are concerned, and taking into account the aforementioned four items, the following aspects could be noticed:

a) *Eating-activities:* practically no variation at all, although there are three options: joining both categories (nouns and verbs) into one (H); repeating the same meaning twice (T); or specifying four items individually (R, CH). As it will be seen these options are very much related to the general structural idea of lines 60-65a as a whole in each translation.

b) *Hræfn: Adjectivizing the raven.* As expected, agreement in the beast, and minor variations in the adjectives. The only question seems to be whether to keep OE *variatio* or not, and that's again a structurally-based selection: the poetic style of Rodrigues is very appropriate and structurally coherent, whereas (CH) mixes two adjectives into one.

c) *Earn: Describing the war-hawk eagle.* Something of the sort takes place here. The name of the beast is kept, the adjectives are rendered either poetically, apart or all together (CH). Structure and rhythm are crucial.

d) *Wulf, se græga: Whose wolf it is?*: In this case the beast goes with the place ("wood", "forest", "weald") and its description ranges from beast to animal, wild or not. The translators follow a given preconception, as we shall see, so lexical options are rendered accordingly.

Table 4: Spanish/Ast translations (60-65a)

Brunanburh	Lerate & Lerate (LL)	Bravo (BR)	Bueno (B)	Santori (S)
Hræw	Cuerpos de muertos	Carroña	Cadáveres	Zalego
Bryttian	Gozara	Disfrutara	Disfrute	Esfrutar
Æses	Carroña	Cadáveres	Carroña	Festín de carne
Brucan	Ofrecida	Cebarse	------	Curiando??
Hræfn	**Cuervo**	**cuervo**	**Cuervo**	**Cuervo**
Sweartan	Negro	Negro	Negro	Negru
saluwigpadan	--------	Oscuro plumaje	Negra cubierta	Vistíu de solombra
hyrnednebban	Duro el pico	Pico corvo	Compacto pico	Picu combu
Earn	**Águila**	**Águila**	**Águila**	**Aigla**
æftan hwit	La blanca a la cola	Cola blanca	Blanca rabadilla	Blanca cola
hasewanpadan	Parda	De plumas grises	Pardo plumaje	Marrón
Grædigne guðhafoc	Halcón de la guerra	Ávido halcón de la Guerra	Belicosa ave	Falcón de guerra
wulf (weald)	**Lobo del bosque**	**Lobo del bosque**	**Lobo en los bosques**	**El llobu la viesca**
græge deor	Gris alimaña	Fiera de pelo gris	Bestia gris de la guerra	Pelleya buxa

In Spanish/Asturian the situation is somewhat similar although some changes are worth noticing:

a) *Eating-activities*: no variation, similar to what happened in the English renderings: either you keep the four items or you blend some of them. The chosen structure will be the key, as we shall see. Perhaps the most divergent semantic option is found in Santori: "festin de carne" could gather both corpse and carrion. But, if it is so, why do we have "zalego", a term which by the way is not semantically correct? In Asturian "zalego" means the remains of a cow that are left after being devoured by some beasts, and I think that will be a far too metaphorical use for "hræw". "Curiar" means to tend animals, to look after them, to watch, to haunt" so I cannot imagine any metaphorical rendering of "brucan" with such a range of meanings. Something along the lines of "taking care of the corpses" would be possible, but even so the meanings offered by "brucan" would not be properly represented by "curiar".

b) *Hræfn: Adjectivizing the raven:* As expected, agreement in the beast, and minor variations in some adjectives. Structure seems to be the governing key.

c) *Earn: Describing the war-hawk eagle*: A similar thing takes place here. The beast is agreed on, the adjectives are semantically correct and structurally-driven, and in some occasions (LL) with a far too crooked syntax. Whether the eagle is more connected with hawks, war or its being greedy is again a matter of rhythm or structure, as it happens to be the case in the OE original text.

d) *Wulf, se græga: Whose wolf it is?*: For these translators the beast and its place is clear, it's in the description where they turn either poetic (B, LL) or descriptively prosaic (BR, S).

As we began to notice in the introductory lines, once the lexicon has been rendered, the organization of the content and its layout constitute the key concepts to evaluate the success of the rendering. The underlying philosophy of every translation and its way of understanding the lines are responsible for giving us the degree of adequacy of the text as a whole. Apart from considering how the items have been rendered, it is also capital to analyze their structural placement. Let's proceed with that, then.

2.2.2. Sentence Organization: Structural Arrangement of the Translation Units

The translators of our first target language, English, have presented the structure of the beasts-of-battle verses in the following arrangement:

<div align="center">TARGET LANGUAGE: ENGLISH</div>

They left behind them corpses for the dark Black-coated raven, horny-beaked to enjoy, And for the eagle, white-backed and dun-coated, The greedy war-hawk, and that grey wild beast, the forest wolf. *(Hamer 1970: 43)*	They left behind them, sharing out corpses, the swart, dusk-dressed, horn-beaked raven, the grey-coated, white-backed eagle, eating carrion, the greedy war-hawk, and that grey beast, the weald-wolf. *(Rodrigues 1996: 29)*
They left behind them to enjoy the corpses the dark-coated one, the black raven, the horny-beaked one, and the dun-coated one. the eagle, white from behind, to enjoy the car- rion, the greedy bird of war, and the gray animal, the wolf in the wood. *(Treharne 2004: 31)*	They left behind them to devour the corp- ses, relish the carrion, the horny-beaked raven garbed in black, and the grey-coated eagle (a greedy war-hawk) with its white tail, and that grey beast, the wolf in the wood. *(Crossley-Holland 1982 as revised and edi- ted by Barber 2008: 45, 47)*

Hamer and Treharne, as it was the case in the introductory lines, opt for a more prosaic and explanatory way of organizing the content. The former, where he used repetition and expansion, now abbreviates eliminating the frame marked by "hræw" y "æs" and organises the adjectives around the beasts quite randomly. The latter, keeps the frame with a very appropriate rendering of the content but excessively prosaic and not poetic, abusing in my opinion of combinations with "one", which is a burden for the poem's rhythm. Rodrigues and Crossley-Holland preferred poetic translation, although they abandon any attempt of offering a metrical adaptation of the Old English system. Rodrigues keeps the structural elements of the extract –i.e. the "hræw" and "æs" frame, the beasts and their qualities– and organizes them in something similar to half-lines that provide the whole text with a quite clear rhythmical poetic shape. Crossley-Holland produces a very interesting text as he keeps the items of the frame but moving them to a frontal position, which gives them more thematic relevance. By fronting the elements of the frame he is able to focus at the end of the text on a very efficient, clear and poetic organization of the beasts and their description.

The Spanish/Asturian renderings present the following array:

<div align="center">TARGET LANGUAGE: SPANISH/AST</div>

Tras ellos dejaban cuerpos de muertos que el cuervo gozara, para el pájaro ne- gro con duro el pico, para el águila parda, la blanca a la cola –carroña ofrecida al halcón de la guerra–, y la gris alima- ña, el lobo del bosque. *(Lerate & Lerate 2000: 141)*	Dejaron tras ellos al negro cuervo de oscuro plumaje y pico corvo para que disfrutara con la carroña, y el águila de plumas grises y cola blanca para cebarse con los cadáveres, al ávido halcón de la guerra, y a la fiera de pelo gris, el lobo del bosque. *(Bravo 1998: 254)*

Cadáveres y carroña para el cuervo ne-
gro,
dejaron detrás, para que disfrute
el del compacto pico y negra cubierta,
también para el águila de pardo plumaje
y blanca rabadilla, belicosa ave, y para
el lobo en los bosques, bestia gris de la
guerra.
(Bueno 2007: 132)

Curiando los zalegos dexaron detrás
vistíu de solombra al cuervo negru
col so picu combu y l'aigla marrón
de blanca cola falcón de guerra
a escrutar del festín de carne y tamién al de pelleya
buxa
el llobu la viesca.
(Santori 1999: 143)

As it could be noticed the results are quite similar to those previously stated. Lerate & Lerate as we all know tried to transfer into Spanish a kind of half-line rhythm similar to that of Old English, abandoning alliteration as a distinctive feature. Although it is a very interesting experiment, and it maintains the frame and the beasts, it presents the reader with a very unnatural reading, which excessively restricts the narrative progress. The rhythmic effect is interesting and praiseworthy but it is all form and heavily hinders the appreciation of the content of the poem. Spanish syntax is extremely twisted in some lines and forced to offer a somewhat distorted order, which is not poetic anyway. Bravo (1998), on the other hand, brings about just the opposite by offering a totally explanatory text, almost in prose. In fact, if we rearrange the final lines without their apparent verse structure, the resulting text has the appearance of mere prose. Santori provides a kind of rhythmic prose that, like Bravo's text, constitutes much more a formal structure that a poetic layout, although it offers a more natural rhythm. My rendering offers a poetic alliterative structure (as explained in Bueno 2007a & b) that achieves a more natural poetic and rhythmic standard in Spanish language poetry. It respects at the same time the structure and the semantic content of the source text with the same technique Crossley-Holland used: fronting and highlighting the frames, which in my case alliterate with "Raven", and leaving the beasts at the end. This text abides by some formal poetic regulations than work in Spanish much better than other rhythmical experiments such as the one offered by Lerate and Lerate.

3. FINAL WORDS: "THE FEAST OF THE CROW AND THE EAGLE"

In this article, which served to complete the analysis previously offered (Bueno 2007b), I have just wanted to present a brief revision of the treatment the beasts-of-battle topos have received in different translations of *The Battle of Brunanburh* as a means of highlighting the importance of understanding not only both the words and their meaning but also their structure and relationships within a given poetic structure assumed beforehand.

When discussing the issues facing translators of OE poetry into contemporary English, Carole Hough and John Corbett (2007: 122) used the aforementioned statement by Susan Basnett (2002: 98) to insist on the important decisions you have to make when translating and Old English text on several key questions: possible structure, range of meanings, poetic form, constraints, and so long and so forth. The words and their meaning are crucial, but style, abiding by a general structural/poetical idea, is capital. As Renée R. Trilling (2008: 475) has very properly stated: "The peculiar beauty of Old English poetic aesthetics, however, makes translation difficult; translators often opt for prose paraphrase rather than

verse translation, focusing on content rather than form". Verse translation containing both content and form: that's the option that always works.

In the final chapter of his aforementioned monograph on translation Umberto Eco (2004: 192) stated the following:

> [Translation] will be a matter of negotiation between the translator, the reader and the author, whose unique voice should remain in the text (…) Faithfulness is not a method which results in an acceptable translation. It is the decision to believe that translation is possible, it is our engagement in isolating what it is for us the deep sense of a text, and it is the goodwill that prods us to negotiate the best solution for every line. Among the synonyms of *faithfulness* the word *exactitude* does not exist. Instead there is loyalty, devotion, allegiance, piety.

In the examples revised in this article the renderings that offer better results are those which have taken into account the organization of the content –not only the content itself–, those which have gone deeper into the woods of syntactic organization, those which have kept the voice of the text through a successful negotiation of the best solution possible according to some poetic formal regulations –as it happened in Old English poetry– but not strictly governed by them. The lack of such formal regulations produces prose or prose with the appearance of poetry (B, T, S, H). The tight restrictions of an excessive formality produce exotic failures like Lerate & Lerate. I defend a rendering that at all times a) presents some degree of structural flexibility, b) holds a certain pattern from the original rhythmical structure, c) possesses a poetical language that avoids prosaic explanations and d) tries to translate poetry into poetry. Rodrigues, Crossley-Holland and I offered such renderings.

In "To a Saxon Poet" –"A un poeta sajón", published in *El otro, el mismo (1964)"* – Borges (1989: 284) referred to this saxon *scop* as follows:

> tú que con júbilo feroz cantaste
> la humillación del viking
> el festín del cuervo y del águila,
> tú que en un tiempo sin historia
> viste en el ahora el ayer
> y en el sudor y sangre de Brunanburh
> un cristal de antiguas auroras,

Perhaps that is precisely the function of poetic translators: trying to see the present moment in yester texts, to bring the past into sympathy with the present. When it comes to uncovering and exposing the emotional essentials of human interaction, there is no "then" –only "now". When a great number of readers do not have direct access to a given source language, translations constitute then the only possibility to savour a given literature, to see those ancient dawns through the poetic crystal of the text. The light reflected on our target

language text has to burn with the same brightness it had on the source poem. To polish that poetic crystal is our duty as translators.[4]

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