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van der Woude, Joanne

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Psalms in the Early Modern World

Edited by

LINDA PHYLLIS AUSTERN
Northwestern University, USA

KARI BOYD MCBRIDE
University of Arizona, USA

and

DAVID L. ORVIS
Appalachian State University, USA

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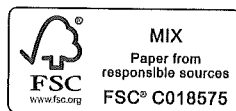
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Callon, 19. See also *ibid.*, xviii. For the 1600–1675, Volume 2: *British Library*

Chapter 4

“How Shall We Sing the Lord’s Song in a Strange Land?”: A Transatlantic Study of the *Bay Psalm Book*¹

Joanne van der Woude

As the study of literature in English becomes increasingly transnationally focused, and colonial New England writing is resituated in the context of a larger, transcultural Protestant ideology within British imperialism, the literature of immigration becomes particularly relevant. A process in which national identity is simultaneously disavowed and reclaimed, immigration appears as the seminal event in many early American writings. Many colonial cultural productions straddle the line between colonial and British self-definition. The publication of the *Bay Psalm Book* poses a clear example of this phenomenon: while the Massachusetts Bay Colony professed to be non-dissenting from the Anglican Church, it insisted on producing its own Psalter, newly translated from Hebrew, as the first book printed in America. The *Bay Psalm Book* quickly gained international ascendancy: published in 1640, it was received and reviewed in London by 1644, and locally defended by an American preacher two years later.² Several European reprintings would soon follow, marking the sudden and singular success of this translation in the latter half of the seventeenth century.³ In commissioning the *Bay Psalm Book*,

¹ I would like to thank Profs. Marion Rust, Stephen Cushman, and David Vander Meulen. My gratitude also goes out to all the members of Elizabeth Dillon’s seminar at the Outside American Studies Institute 2002, Dartmouth College, for their comments and suggestions.

² Nathaneal Homes, *Gospel musick, or, the singing of David’s Psalms & c. ... unto which is added the judgement of our worthy brethren of New England touching singing of Psalms* (London, 1644); John Cotton, *Singing of the Psalms: A Gospel-Ordinance* (London, 1647).

³ There would ultimately be seventy editions, nearly 30 in the first decades after its initial appearance. For a detailed investigation of when and where (London, Scotland, and Amsterdam) these editions were published, see Hugh Amory, “‘God’s Altar Needs Not our Pollishings’: Revisiting the *Bay Psalm Book*,” *Printing History* 12 (1990): 2–14 and “Printing and Bookselling in New England,” in *A History of the Book in America*, vol. 1 of *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, eds Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 106. B.J. McMullin provides an important addendum

the Puritan leaders of New England consciously chose to assert their particular theological beliefs to the world, and especially to Britain. The *Bay Psalm Book* should therefore be seen as an exemplary text of immigration: an instance of transatlantic self-fashioning, articulating a new, colonial identity within Anglo-American Protestantism.

The *Bay Psalm Book* not only embodies the reformation emphasis on congregational psalm-singing, it also features a response to Sidney's famous classification of "the holy King David's Psalms [as] a divine poem."⁴ Renaissance poets employed the Psalms in ways similar to Petrarch's *Rime sparse*: as a source for endless translation and imitation. The Book of Psalms was thought to be the most varied of poetic models, encompassing all metrical forms, genres, and modes. More importantly, Sidney's insistence on the translation of the Psalms as a spiritual exercise explicitly linked literary beauty to liturgical efficacy.⁵ The authors of the *Bay Psalm Book* also note the special status of the Psalms: "The Psalms are penned in such verses as are sutable to the poetry of the Hebrew language, and not in the common style of such other bookes of the Old Testament as are not poetically."⁶ In fact, one of the main reasons given for the new translation is that not all ministers, whose primary responsibility it is to interpret Scripture for the congregation, are equally poetically gifted and therefore able to aptly render the Psalms. "Poetry is not every good scholar's faculty," notes the Puritan preacher John Cotton: "nor the penning of holy Psalms the skill of every good minister."⁷ The *Bay Psalm Book* justifies its standardization of prayer by claiming that it might compensate for

to Amory's conclusions in "The Undated Editions of the Revised *Bay Psalm Book*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 95 (2001): 335–61.

⁴ Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry" in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith (Oxford: Clarendon, 1904), 154.

⁵ Ramie Targoff claims: "English metrical Psalters were regarded as texts of devotion and not also as poems throughout most of the sixteenth century." *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 72.

⁶ *Bay Psalm Book* (Boston, 1640) **3v. The identity of the authors of the *Bay Psalm Book* has long been a subject for debate. Cotton Mather, in *Magnalia Christi Americana* (London, 1702) notes: "the chief Divines in the Country, took each of them a Portion to be Translated: Among whom were Mr. Welds and Mr. Eliot of Roxbury, and Mr. Mather of Dorchester." Reprinted in George Parker Winship, *The Cambridge Press, 1638–1692: A Reëxamination concerning the Bay Psalm Book and the Eliot Indian Bible as well as other contemporary books and people* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 24. See also Zoltán Haraszti, *The Enigma of the Bay Psalm Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), chapter 2. For the fraught issue of whether there is poetry in Scripture, see James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1981; 1996), 69–85.

⁷ John Cotton, *A Modest and Cleare Answer to Mr. Balls Discourse Of Set Fromes of Prayer* (London, 1642), 31. Similarly, the Preface to the *Bay Psalm Book* notes: "because every good minister hath not a gift of spiritual poetry to compose extemporary psalmes as he hath of prayer" (*3v).

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⁸ Cotton, *Singing* "We conceive it ... to b worship of God, in the

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¹⁰ Targoff, *Comm* resistance" in Puritan p that their theological England readers." The in more length and de *Seventeenth-Century M* thank Prof. Morris for s

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Thus, it appears that the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony sought to incorporate art, in the shape of metrical Psalm translations, into their rituals of worship. Overcoming their strong aversion to the use of printed matter other than the Bible in church, the congregants made allowances for the *Bay Psalm Book* so that the "singing of Psalms [might be] accompanied and blessed of God (by his grace) with many gracious effects, above nature or art."⁸ Yet this move towards beautification is ambiguous at best, as the Preface to the *Bay Psalm Book* indicates its translators strove for "fidelity *rather than* poetry" (italics added). The compilers conspicuously refrain from calling their own productions poetry and claimed that they were occupied with "translating the Hebrew words into English language, and Davids poetry into English meetre."⁹ Focusing exclusively on the verbal content of the Psalms, the *Bay Psalm Book* constitutes a mere partial translation of the Psalms: consciously settling for "meetre" instead of "poetry." Therefore, despite recent arguments to the contrary, most notably by Ramie Targoff, the Puritans' attitude towards to artful intervention in liturgy remains fundamentally conflicted.¹⁰

I wish to suggest that the colonists' notions of devotional propriety bear little relation to the standards of beauty that are implicit in Reformation poetics, especially the formal experiments of Donne and Herbert. With its steady stream of monotonous poems, the *Bay Psalm Book* seems to offer an inadvertent, if not subversive, aesthetic statement. Aesthetics, in this sense, does not refer to any kind of conscious ornamentation, but rather designates the social construction of identity that takes place through performance or material expressions of culture.¹¹ Here, the Puritans' system of representational techniques—including choices of form, emphasis, style, and structure in early colonial texts—creates and makes

⁸ Cotton, *Singing of the Psalmes*, 4. In *A Modest and Cleare Answer*, Cotton declares: "We conceive it ... to be unlawful to bring in ordinarily any other Books, into the public worship of God, in the Church" (5).

⁹ *Bay Psalm Book*, **3v.

¹⁰ Targoff, *Common Prayer*, Conclusion. A.M.E. Morris has diagnosed an "aesthetic resistance" in Puritan poetry "as a means of warding off some of the associations of poetry that their theological context would have made particularly unwelcome to colonial New England readers." The relevant debates about proper Protestant poetics are discussed in more length and detail in her book *Popular Measures: Poetry and Church Order in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 20. I thank Prof. Morris for sharing her manuscript with me.

¹¹ For performance studies see Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds, *Performativity and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1995), and Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). One of the most insightful studies of material culture in early America is Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Object and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: Knopf, 2001).

explicit social and cultural difference. The analysis of formal, poetic change thus reveals a more fundamental transformation. The very acceptance and replication of stylistic innovation, in this case the formal similarity of the Psalms, creates a new kind of collectivity, an imagined community if you will, which defines itself by its use of aesthetics. In this way, colonial aesthetics extend above and beyond superficial variations of form to render the emergence of a new cultural consciousness in the contact zone of colonial North America.

This essay focuses on the internal function of the psalter in the North American colonies, examining issues of Scriptural translation and musical performance respectively. The Puritans' formal strategies conspicuously counter European theories of translation, which will be discussed in the first section. Through comparisons to other English psalters, I describe the formal decisions, both metrical and melodic, made during the development of the *Bay Psalm Book*, and how those decisions, initially imposed from above, but rapidly internalized by the community, pose an instance of a collectivizing aesthetic in early colonial America.

Translation

During the Renaissance, translation was conceived of as an activity not simply striving towards complete synonymy of source and target product, but rather as a creative act of cultural appropriation: claiming a text or resource as one's own. The Age of Exploration therefore witnessed an explosion of the technique of *translatio imperii*, which equated colonists with classical heroes, thereby canonically and historically justifying the seizure of territory and humans.¹² It is not surprising, then, that some of the earliest treatises on textual translation concern antique, rather than Scriptural, sources. Chapman, for example, in the Preface to his 1611 translation of the *Iliad*, argues that not just the verbal meaning, but also the rhetorical style of the original should be represented in a 'worthy' translation.¹³ "Generally," he writes:

Custome hath made even th'ablest Agents erre
In these translations: all so much apply
Their paines and cunnings, word for word to render

¹² See Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Luise von Flotow, and Daniel Russell, eds, *The Politics of Translation in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Ottawa, Canada: University of Ottawa Press, 2001), Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, eds, *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), and T.R. Steiner, *English Translation Theory, 1650–1800* (Assen/Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1975).

¹³ On seventeenth-century translation theory, see Rivkah Zim, *English Metrical Psalms: Poetry as Praise and Prayer, 1535–1601*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Hannibal Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

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¹⁶ Thomas Norton, *The*
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¹⁸ See Maxine Turner, "The
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perceived of as an activity not simply source and target product, but rather miming a text or resource as one's used an explosion of the technique of texts with classical heroes, thereby a measure of territory and humans.¹² It is best treatises on textual translation practices. Chapman, for example, in the cases that not just the verbal meaning, could be represented in a 'worthy'

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see Rivkah Zim, *English Metrical Psalms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12. See also *and Early Modern English Literature*

Their patient authors; when they may as well,
Make fish with fowle, Camels with Whales engender.¹⁴

Biologically illustrating the unnatural quality of literal translation, Chapman compares its aims to achieving reproduction (or by extension perhaps, synonymy) between wholly different species of animals. The Puritans, however, were largely uninterested in classical defenses of empire and turned, perhaps predictably, to Scripture instead. Biblical translation presented a proverbial can of worms, but even in that area, the artistic leeway of translators was generally acknowledged.¹⁵ "Is the kingdom of God," the preface to the *King James Version* (1611) rhetorically asks, "words or syllables?" Regardless of denominational affiliation, translators did not regard their craft to be limited to providing a mere literal rendition of a source text in another language. As Thomas Norton, who translated Calvin's *Institutes*, concluded, a fit translation shows "a certaine resembling and shadowing out of the forme of ... style and the maner of ... speaking in the imitation" of the original author.¹⁶

Renaissance translators also recognized that their labors served to (re)create a textual artifact in a different cultural context. Translators took pains to construct a product that fulfilled the same function as its source in a different signifying system by, for example, using contemporary idiom and style.¹⁷ Such an attempt at timeliness went famously awry in Isaac Watts's *Psalmes and Hymns* (1718). With perhaps overzealous attention to the geo-temporal markers of contemporaneity, Watts chose to translate the names of biblical plants and animals into native British flora and fauna, as well as consistently substituting "Britain" for "Canaan." In the American colonies, his efforts were met with outrage.¹⁸ The fact that Cotton Mather immediately undertook a counter-translation illustrates the irritation at

¹⁴ George Chapman, "To the Reader," *The Iliads of Homer; Prince of Poets, Neuer before in any languag truely translated, with a coment upon some of his chiefe places* (London, 1611), Ar.

¹⁵ Accusations of deliberate and harmful mistranslations of the Bible were most commonly made by the Puritans themselves. David Norton claims that the prevailing view in Renaissance England was that "biblical truth did not lie in any particular form of English words." *A History of the English Bible as Literature* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 38. For the opposing view see *Bay Psalm Book*, *2v.

¹⁶ Thomas Norton, *The Institution of Christian Religion, written in Latine by M. John Calvine, and translated into English according to the authors last editions* (London, 1578), *2v.

¹⁷ For examples of this in the work of Wyatt and North, see F.O. Matthiessen, *Translation, an Elizabethan Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931). Despite, or perhaps because of, a translator's best attempts at synonymy with his model, translations were generally regarded as new texts in the late sixteenth century. Zim, *English Metrical Psalms*, 12.

¹⁸ See Maxine Turner, "Three Eighteenth-Century Revisions of the Bay Psalm Book," *The New England Quarterly* 45 (1974): 270-277.

the perceived endeavor by the Church of England to assert ownership of the book of Psalms. Translations were often seen as "means of acquiring private rights over the common legacy of the past,"¹⁹ a strategy of which the Puritans were neither ignorant nor innocent, as the *Bay Psalm Book* itself similarly constitutes an overt effort at the appropriation of a text for the ideological purposes of a specific group.

In other areas, however, the Puritans' views of translation are radically different from contemporary theories. Whereas Luther, in his *Circular Letter on Translation* (1530), described the purpose of translation as creating an accessible and aesthetically satisfying vernacular style, the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay seem to employ their texts as a vehicle for classifying and correcting errors in previous translations, as well as for the articulation of dogmatic tenets.²⁰ In reference to other translators, particularly those of the Ainsworth version that was used by the Pilgrims in neighboring Plymouth Colony, the compilers of the *Bay Psalm Book* argue: "their additions to the words, detractions from the words are not seldome and rare, but very frequent and many times needles, ... their variations of the sense, and alterations of the sacred text too frequently, may justly minister matter of offence to them that are able to compare the translation with the text."²¹ The Preface to the *Bay Psalm Book*, written in a question and answer format common to legal and theological tracts, expounds on why, in what format, and by whom David's psalms are to be sung and whether they should be sung "in their [the psalms'] owne words, or in such meter as english poetry is wont to run in?"²² The inherent tension between the poetical source text and the product in the target language leads the translators to favor a prosaic literal-mindedness, discarding Chapman's injunction to avoid word for word renderings: "wee have therefore done our indeavour to make a plaine and famliar translation of the psalmes and words of David into english metre, ... shunning all additions, *except such as even the best translators of them in prose supply*, avoiding all materiall detractions from words or sense" (italics added).²³ Paradoxically, the colonists justify the disjunction between the highly wrought Hebrew poetics of the Psalms and their own repeated ballad stanzas by claiming complete faithfulness to the original text. The *Bay Psalm Book* thus consciously rejects the metropolitan (or national) discourse of translation by asserting a colonial paradigm of literal correspondence. The Puritans choose not to avail themselves of Sidney's sophistication or any other metrical models, stating ideological objections to the practice of paraphrase and focusing on "fidelity rather than poetry." In fact, the text of the *Bay Psalm Book*

¹⁹ Zim, *English Metrical Psalms*, 20.

²⁰ Susan Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies, New Accents* (London and New York: Methuen, 1980), 49.

²¹ *Bay Psalm Book*, **2v.

²² *Ibid.*, *2r.

²³ *Ibid.*, **2v - **3v.

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and to assert ownership of the book means of acquiring private rights strategy of which the Puritans were *Bay Psalm Book* itself similarly constitutes for the ideological purposes of a

views of translation are radically as Luther, in his *Circular Letter on* translation as creating an accessible the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay classifying and correcting errors articulation of dogmatic tenets.²⁰ In e of the Ainsworth version that was Colony, the compilers of the *Bay* ds, detractions from the words are y times needles, ... their variations too frequently, may iustly minister are the translation with the text."²¹ in a question and answer format ds on why, in what format, and by ther they should be sung "in the English poetry is wont to run in?"²² ce text and the product in the target aic literal-mindedness, discarding l renderings: "wee have therefore iar translation of the psalmes and g all additions, *except such as even* iding all material detractions from the colonists justify the disjunction the Psalms and their own repeated ss to the original text. The *Bay* ropolitan (or national) discourse m of literal correspondence. The ney's sophistication or any other to the practice of paraphrase and t, the text of the *Bay Psalm Book*

es, *New Accents* (London and New

most resembles the prose translation of the *King James Version*.²⁴ The colonists thus self-consciously acknowledge that poetry is not their ultimate goal. It is their choice for "fidelity" that sets them apart even from other avowedly unadorned versions, such as Sternhold-Hopkins and Ainsworth, and that creates their unfashionable aesthetic.

The Puritan penchant for literalism may be ascribed to their logocentric view of the universe, in which the relationship between the signifier and the signified was not arbitrary, but rather an integral part of God's meticulous design. Poets such as Edward Taylor delighted in puns and developed a real fondness for anagrams, through which the divine intentions might be deciphered or decoded.²⁵ Although figures like anagrams call attention to the materiality and complexity of textuality, the *Bay Psalm Book* glosses over the intricacies involved in translation, insisting on simple faithfulness to the original as resolving such issues. A.M.E. Morris has observed that the stark presentation of the Psalms on the page, rendered in Figure 4.1, without the annotations of Ainsworth or the concordance of the King James Version, also seems intended to invoke an "impression of purity and transparency."²⁶ This method of printing, which leaves room for annotations, perhaps encouraging personal meditation and study, publicizes the policy of non-interference in scriptural translation, while creating the idea of an easy, pure text that is above reproach or debate.

Lastly, translation becomes relevant to this study because it is etymologically (a 'carrying across') a metaphor for immigration, as a carrying across or crossing over the ocean, and was used in this way by the first generations of transatlantic immigrants.²⁷ Theoretically, if the process of translation is taken to correspond to the colonists' plight, then America as a place, a geographical location, must be conceptualized as a medium of signification akin to language. A spatial removal of the human body is thus imagined as similar to a linguistic transformation:

²⁴ Haraszti, *The Enigma of the Bay Psalm Book*, 41-43 and Louise Russel Stallings, "The Unpolished Altar: The Place of the Bay Psalm Book in American Culture" (Diss., Texas A&M University, 1977), 157-8.

²⁵ For this Puritan tradition, see Ivy Schweitzer, *The Work of Self-Representation: Lyric Poetry in Colonial New England*, Gender and American Culture (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 50-53. These remarks go along with Jeffrey Hammond's claim that the "Puritan faith in the Word constitutes a near-deification of the symbolic and the verbal." *Sinful Self, Sainly Self: The Puritan Experience of Poetry* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 9.

²⁶ *Popular Measures*, 106.

²⁷ Hamlin, *Psalm Culture*, 11 See, for example, various accounts in George Selement and Bruce T. Woolley, eds, *Thomas Shepard's Confessions* (Boston: Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts v. 58, 1981). According to the *OED Online* (stable URL accessed 4 April 2005), the meaning of translation as a "transference; removal or conveyance from one person, place, or condition to another" is at least as old as the now more usual linguistic sense. The Puritans also used translation to signify spiritual transformation, as well as the passage from life into death.

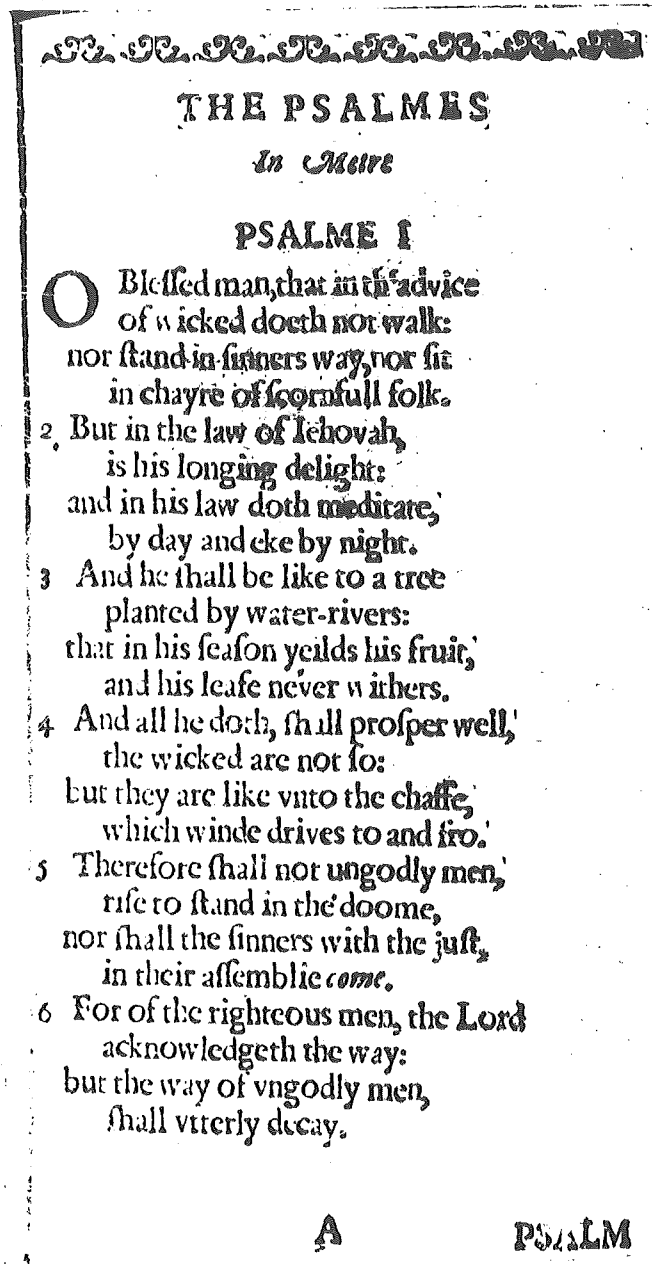


Fig. 4.1 *Bay Psalm Book* (1640), *Early American Imprints, Series I. Evans*.
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. 3 April 2005. <http://www.infoweb.newsbank.com>.

just as a translated order to gain current personal history in c it differently: simila the colonists are, to sense, the Renaissan translations also appl constituents of ident or the body as a mut Woodbridge's elegy latter's corpse as a p In light of their un corporeality, it is pla psalter as self-repres of the *Bay Psalm B* spiritual ideologies a physicality. Extendi even further, the im paired with a loss o down printing of the

Texts and Tunes

The two most releva choices are the Br

²⁸ Hamlin notes describe the process of

²⁹ See, for exam spatial and temporal h *Pasts: Becoming Colo* University Press, 2000

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just as a translated text is divested of its meaning in one cultural context in order to gain currency in another, so an immigrant is stripped of national and personal history in order to assimilate into his or her new environment. To put it differently: similar to the Hebrew and classical texts that were "English'd," the colonists are, to a certain extent "un-English'd" by their relocation.²⁸ In this sense, the Renaissance awareness of the geographical and temporal specificity of translations also applies to human subjects, for whom such parameters are primary constituents of identity.²⁹ Underlying these comparisons is the notion of the self or the body as a mutable text, which was common in colonial America. Benjamin Woodbridge's elegy on Cotton, for example, propounds this image by figuring the latter's corpse as a perfected Bible now that he has been 'translated' into heaven.³⁰ In light of their unique understanding of the relation between textuality and corporeality, it is plausible the Puritans conceived of the enterprise of printing the psalter as self-representative on multiple levels. The unadorned, straight columns of the *Bay Psalm Book* (Figure 4.1) might symbolize the colonists' textual and spiritual ideologies as well as painting a wishful portrait of unencumbered, legible physicality. Extending the metaphorical correspondence between self and text even further, the immigrants' bodily translation over the ocean, which was often paired with a loss of property, can be seen as figurally rendered in the stripped-down printing of the Psalms.

Texts and Tunes

The two most relevant reference points for assessing the *Bay Psalm Book's* lyrical choices are the British Sternhold-Hopkins psalter (1562) and the Ainsworth

²⁸ Hamlin notes that "Englishing" was used interchangeably with other idioms to describe the process of translation or paraphrase. *Psalm Culture*, 8.

²⁹ See, for example, Michael Warner's definition of colonial culture as "a set of spatial and temporal hierarchies." "What's Colonial about Colonial America?" in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 63.

³⁰ Benjamin Woodbridge "Upon the Tomb of the most Reverend Mr. John Cotton," in *New Englands Memoriall*, ed. Nathaniel Morton (Cambridge, 1669). Woodbridge compares Cotton's "beautifi'd" (l. 28) body to

A living breathing Bible: Tables where
Both Covenants at large engraven were;

30 *Gospel* and *Law* in's Heart had each its Columbe
His Head an Index to the Sacred Volume.
His very Name a *Title Page*; and next,
His Life a *Commentary* on the Text.

O what a Monument of glorious worth,
35 When in a *New Edition* he comes forth
Without *Errata's*, may we think hee'll be,
In *Leaves* and *Covers* of Eternitie!

PSALM

version (Amsterdam, 1612). Viewed as a text of colonial self-definition, the *Bay Psalm Book* articulated its identity over and against a national or metropolitan paradigm, embodied in the Sternhold Hopkins version, while at the same time disavowing the provincial Separatist attitudes that were evident in the Ainsworth translation.

The *Bay Psalm Book* might be seen as an idiosyncratic or unrepresentative container of colonial culture in light of the Calvinist uneasiness with performance. Yet, contrary to common belief, the Calvinist church did not prohibit music: "In truth," wrote Calvin in the preface to his own metrical translation of the Psalms, "we know by experience that song has great force and vigor to move and inflame the hearts of men and praise God with more vehement and ardent zeal."³¹ This statement of condonement already reveals the dual purpose of the psalter in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, serving not just as an expression of devotion, but also as a tool for conversion.

It is difficult to overstate the popularity and presence of the Sternhold and Hopkins version in early modern England. Printed in over 700 editions, "Sternhold-Hopkins" as it came to be known, was, according to Hannibal Hamlin, "the most widely known volume of verse in English and made its way into the hands of English men and women of all social classes."³² Its poetic reputation, however, fared poorly, causing John Donne to wonder why the English Church should "more hoarse, more harsh than any other, sing."³³ Like Coverdale and most other early Psalm translators, Sternhold and Hopkins probably used a combination of other English and Latin translations as their source text. The Ainsworth psalter, on the other hand, was translated directly from Hebrew, had a much smaller audience, and a more scholarly appearance: presenting a prose and metrical translation of each Psalm side by side, followed by copious annotations as can be seen in Figure 4.2.³⁴

The *Bay Psalm Book* bears the same complete title as "Sternhold-Hopkins," and also figures the same scriptural epigraphs from Colossians and James, making it appear, at first sight, as simply an American reprinting.³⁵ It seems to take its

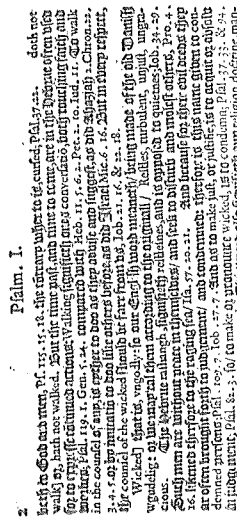
³¹ *The Geneva Psalter* (Geneva, 1542), translation by Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History: the Renaissance*, ed. Gary Tomlinson (New York: Norton, 1998), 87.

³² *Psalm Culture*, 38.

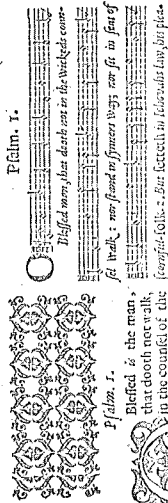
³³ "Upon the translation of the Psalmes by Sir Philip Sidney and the Countesse of Penbroke his Sister" in *The Poems of John Donne*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson. (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 1:349.

³⁴ Aside from Plymouth Colony, the psalter was also used by the church in Salem until 1667. See J.H. Dorenkamp, "The *Bay Psalm Book* and the Ainsworth Psalter," *Early American Literature* 7 (1972): 3–16. Two copies were present in the library of the Massachusetts Bay Company according to Herbert Tuttle, "The Libraries of the Mathers," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 20 (1910), 273. The Ainsworth version was reprinted at least two more times: in 1632 and 1644 in Amsterdam.

³⁵ Respectively *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre* and Coll. 3 "Let the word of God dwell pleasantly in you, in all wisdome, teaching and exhorting one another in Psalmes, Himnes, and spirituall Songs, singing to the Lord with



THE BOOK OF PSALMES:
or Hymnes.



of colonial self-definition, the Bay Psalm Book against a national or metropolitan version, while at the same time those versions that were evident in the Ainsworth

an idiosyncratic or unrepresentative Calvinist uneasiness with performance. The church did not prohibit music: "In the metrical translation of the Psalms, we have the force and vigor to move and inflame the soul with vehement and ardent zeal."³¹ This is the dual purpose of the psalter in the 17th century as an expression of devotion, but also

and presence of the Sternhold and Hopkins version, printed in over 700 editions, "Sternhold and Hopkins according to Hannibal Hamlin, "the most popular and made its way into the hands of the people."³² Its poetic reputation, however, was why the English Church should "more than any like Coverdale and most other early versions probably used a combination of other texts. The Ainsworth psalter, on the other hand, had a much smaller audience, and its idiosyncratic and metrical translation of each psalm as can be seen in Figure 4.2.³⁴ The complete title as "Sternhold-Hopkins," was given by Thomas Tymoczko from Colossians and James, making it an early reprinting.³⁵ It seems to take its

origin in the translation by Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Early American Music* (New York: Norton, 1998), 87.

Sir Philip Sidney and the Countesse of Devonshire, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson. (London: Methuen, 1909), 115.

was also used by the church in Salem. The *Sternhold and Hopkins Psalm Book* and the Ainsworth Psalter," copies were present in the library of the Rev. John Tattle, "The Libraries of the Mathers," *Massachusetts Historical Society* 20 (1910), 273. The Ainsworth version was printed in 1644 in Amsterdam.

Faithfully Translated into English Metre for the use of the church in you, in all wisdome, teaching and doctrine, and spirituall Songs, singing to the Lord with

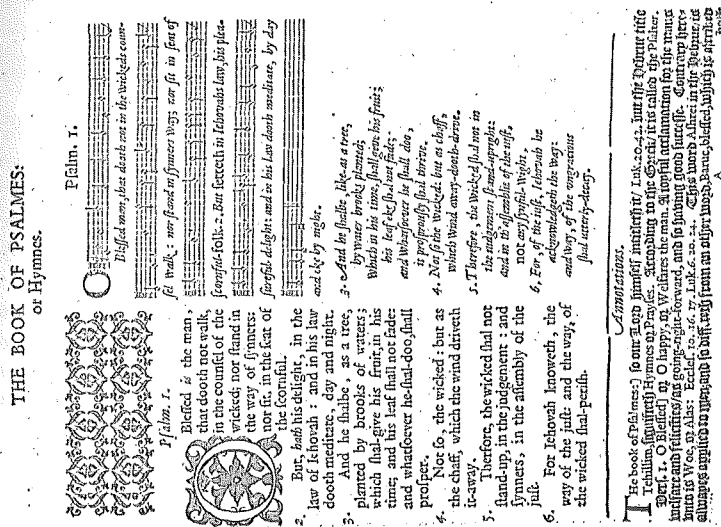


Fig 4.2 Henry Ainsworth, *The Booke of Psalmes: Englished both in prose and metre with annotations* (Amsterdam, 1612), *Early English Books Online*. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. 3 April 2005. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>.

Psalm. I.
 Blessed is the man that doth not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers: but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and he shall meditate therein day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the water side, which bringeth forth his fruit in season; and his leaf shall not wither: and whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.
 Not so the wicked: but as the chaff, which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand up in the judgement: nor shall sinners in the assembly of the just. For Jehovah knoweth the way of the just, and the way of the wicked shall perish.

Annotations.
 The book of Psalmes is one of the most ancient in the Bible. It is divided into 150 psalms, which were composed by David and other prophets. The psalms are arranged in five books, and each psalm is accompanied by a title and sometimes by a melody. The psalms are a valuable source of information about the life and thought of the Hebrew people, and they are also a source of inspiration and comfort for Christians of all ages. The annotations in this edition are intended to help the reader understand the meaning and context of each psalm, and to provide a guide to the various references and allusions contained therein.

textual cues from the Ainsworth version, however, which also presents concerns with textual synonymy as outweighing those of aesthetic beauty: "yet rather than I would stray from the text," writes Ainsworth: "I streyn now and then, with the rules of our English poesie in the just ending alike of both verses, & sometime in the quatitie [*sic*] of a syllable."³⁶ Despite their similar ethos of translation, the Ainsworth version and the *Bay Psalm Book* present significant differences. An overview of the psalters' metrics illustrates their divergent poetical and political strategies.

The appeal of "Sternhold-Hopkins" is evident in its use of the simple metrical scheme of the ballad stanza, which came to be known as common meter.³⁷ This design renders every verse as a quatrain with alternating iambic tetra- and trimeter lines rhymed /abab/. The "Sternhold-Hopkins" psalter employs this scheme *ad nauseum*, casting a vast majority (app. 140) of 150 Psalms in common meter. The Ainsworth version presents a more varied and balanced selection, using common meter 48 times, long meter (4 x tetrameter) in 34 cases, and short meter (6.6.8.6. syllables/line) for three Psalms. Ainsworth chose to translate the remaining 56 Psalms in unconventional ten-syllable lines or pentameter, which he claimed "fell out better."³⁸ In comparison, the *Bay Psalm Book* seems to regress to old monotonous ways. Initially, it cast 115 Psalms in common meter, offering three other possibilities for 41 Psalms (including metrical variants). The third edition of 1651, revised by Harvard president Henry Dunster and Richard Lyon, made matters worse. An astonishing 125 Psalms were now in common meter, while a mere 15 in short meter allowed no escape from metrical drudgery.³⁹

grace in your hearts;" James 4 "If any be afflicted, let him pray, and if any be merry let him sing psalmes." Observation in Hamlin, *Psalm Culture*, 80.

³⁶ Henry Ainsworth, *The booke of Psalmes: Englished both in Prose and Metre* (Amsterdam, 1612), **2r. Dorenkamp states confidently: "whatever the reason was for not adopting the Ainsworth psalms, it is clear that this version exerted a discernible influence upon those who set out to prepare a new translation." "The *Bay Psalm Book* and the Ainsworth Psalter," 8. Conversely, Hamlin claims the *Bay Psalm Book*'s "roots were firmly in the 'Sternhold and Hopkins' tradition." *Psalm Culture*, 80.

³⁷ The debate on which came first, common meter or the ballad stanza, is of the chicken or egg category. Hamlin notes: "Some assume Sternhold borrowed the ballad stanza from secular songs as part of their attempt to supplant 'love ditties and wanton songs.' Yet relatively few ballad texts predate the sixteenth century, and the ballad meter was also known as 'Sternhold's Meter,' leading some scholars to suggest that 'ballad meter' was first popularized by metrical psalms." *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁸ Ainsworth, *The booke of Psalmes*, **2r. Waldo Selden Pratt speculates: "Ainsworth's notably abundant use of these long pentameter forms is plainly due to his desire to avail himself of the many fine French melodies at hand." *The Music of the Pilgrims: A Description of the Psalm-book brought to Plymouth in 1620* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1921), 15.

³⁹ Compiled from Dorenkamp, "The *Bay Psalm Book* and the Ainsworth Psalter," Richard G. Appel, *The Music of the Bay Psalm Book 9th edition (1698)*, Institute for Studies in American Music Monographs, nr. 5. (Brooklyn, New York: I.S.A.M., 1975), 3;

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A brief glance at
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dependent in its use of the simple metrical form known as common meter.³⁷ This alternating iambic tetra- and trimeter psalter employs this scheme *ad libitum* in 150 Psalms in common meter. The editor's balanced selection, using common meter in 34 cases, and short meter (6.6.8.6) in the remaining 56 cases, which he claimed as pentameter, which he claimed the *Bay Psalm Book* seems to regress to old forms in common meter, offering three metrical variants). The third edition by Dunster and Richard Lyon, made in 1698, were now in common meter, while a fourth edition metrical drudgery.³⁹

let him pray, and if any be merry let him sing, 80.

Englished both in Prose and Metre (1698): "whatever the reason was for not being used, the version exerted a discernible influence on the *Bay Psalm Book* and the *Bay Psalm Book's* "roots were firmly planted in the culture, 80.

in meter or the ballad stanza, is of the ballad form. Sternhold borrowed the ballad form to supplant 'love ditties and wanton songs' of the sixteenth century, and the ballad meter was used by scholars to suggest that 'ballad meter' was used.

do Selden Pratt speculates: "Ainsworth's use of ballad meter is plainly due to his desire to avail himself of the *The Music of the Pilgrims: A Description* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1921), 15. "The *Bay Psalm Book* and the Ainsworth Psalter," *The Bay Psalm Book 9th edition (1698)*, Institute for the Study of the Book, New York: I.S.A.M., 1975), 3;

What is the significance of such statistics? Morris has claimed the *Bay Psalm Book* evinces a "conscious simplification"⁴⁰ of the existing psalters: a striving for simplicity and mnemonics. The first edition of "Sternhold-Hopkins" features a translation by Thomas Sternhold himself (indicated by the marker TS) and titled in Latin.

A brief glance at Psalm 23 in the various versions immediately shows the colonists' choice for simplicity and mnemonics. The first edition of "Sternhold-Hopkins" features a translation by Thomas Sternhold himself (indicated by the marker TS) and titled in Latin.

1. My shepherd is the living Lorde,
Nothing therefore I need:
In pastors fayre, with waters calme
He let me for to fead.
2. He did convert and glad my soule,
And brought my minde in frame:
To walke in pathes of righteousness,
For his most holy name.

This classic ballad stanza form requires the extension of every verse to an entire quatrain, which causes a misnumbering: verse 2 should start at the third line, instead of the fifth. The governing metaphor of the Psalm is simply stated, with an apparent preference for alliteration leading to the unscriptural adjective "living." Two inversions in line 3 avoid the trochaic rhythm of 'in fayre pastors, with calme waters,' while the nonstandard spelling in line 4 ("let" instead of "led") occasions the ambiguity of allowing as well as leading. The second verse juxtaposes "soule" and "minde," with a line that must have sprung entirely from the translator's imagination, "And broughte my mind in frame," (l. 6) figuring a process of intellectual convincing in this Psalm of unquestioning faith and reassurance. The repetitive rhythm is reinforced by emphatic monosyllabic stresses. In comparison, Ainsworth's pentameter line appears almost intricately Elizabethan:

1. Jehovah feedeth me, I shal not lack.
2. In grassy folds He down dooth make me lye;
he gently-leads me quiet waters by.
3. He dooth return my soule: for his name sake
in paths of justice leads-me-quietly.

and Morris, *Popular Measures*, chapter 2. Ironically, the revisions by Dunster and Lyon were apparently prompted by the opinion "that a little more of Art was to be employ'd upon them [the Psalms]," which confirms the Puritan's peculiar sense of regularization and standardization as 'Art'. Mather, *Magnalia*, III, 100.

⁴⁰ Morris, *Popular Measures*, 98.

The unusual rhyme scheme, /abbab/, and unnatural word order collaborate to make this stanza feel convoluted. Faithfulness to the Hebrew is exceptionally strict, particularly in the attempts to render the verbs. Ainsworth annotates "gently-leads" as "easily-leadeth or comfortably-guideth me; it noteth a soft and gentle leading, with sustenting of infirmity." Unlike Sternhold, he distinguishes between lying in the grass and walking by the water, and leaves out feeding entirely (which does not appear in the original Hebrew). The abnormally translated "return" (l. 4) is glossed "or, will return or restore it."⁴¹ Compared to Sternhold's thumping, Ainsworth's longer line features fewer instances of alliteration but allows for more gradations in stress, especially on endings like "leads-me-quietly" (l. 5). Presenting correct contents in a well-crafted form, Ainsworth's translation linguistically and stylistically approximates the Hebrew original.

The *Bay Psalm Book* pales in comparison. Identified as "A Psalm of David" (as in the *King James Version*), the 1651 revision gives:

- The Lord to mee a shepheard is,
Want therefore shall not I.
2. Hee in the folds of tendergrass,
doth make me down to ly:
To waters calme me gently leads
 3. Restore my soul doth hee :
In paths of righteousness, he will
for his names sake lead mee.

Oddly, the psalter's favorite metrical scheme is truncated here, with each verse receiving only three lines or less. The rhyme scheme works against the scriptural divisions, permitting a satisfactory simultaneous resolution of stanza and verse only once every eight lines. Enjambment between lines 5 and 6 obscures the originally separate sentences, as well as postponing the subject almost indefinitely. Rhythmically, the Psalm espouses the same binary quality as Sternhold's version, forcing even trochees "hee in" (l. 3) into an iambic march. Syntactic inversions are multiple, and at times, exceptionally awkward (l. 2, 4). Also, what was past tense in "Sternhold-Hopkins" and present tense to Ainsworth takes on the quality of a promise in the *Bay Psalm Book*: "in paths of righteousness, he will / for his names sake lead mee" (l. 7-8).⁴² Besides its unfortunate formal execution, the verbal laxity of the Psalm Book is surprising, not only in the case of tense, but also in the "folds of tendergrasse" (l. 3), which cannot be found in the Hebrew and has been attributed to George Herbert's version in common meter.⁴³ Ultimately, the rigid rhythm and rhyme scheme contribute to an undeniably mnemonic effect.

⁴¹ *The booke of Psalmes*, 66.

⁴² Hebrew verbs have no tense and these shifts therefore simply represent translators' preferences.

⁴³ Hamlin, *Psalm Culture*, 151 referring to *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), 172.

The fragment above metrical regularity, to target language, and, on compilers' focus on "fid either. Although the sim be seen to guarantee the distance the reader from elements recur in all the are part of an overarching clumsiness. Precisely b by repeatedly violating conception of what com and repeated in contem of and identification v important to note that are also capable of sha immigrant communitie definition not just beca but mainly through the sense of how these tex briefly consider perform

In America, the *Bay Psalm Book* edition in 1698.⁴⁵ Early for musical settings, common tunes" were a the Psalms.⁴⁶ The 9th e are provided on unmar offering guidelines on their town of origin, w *of Music* (1654), as w

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⁴⁵ Irving Lowens c England "between the yo York: W.W. Norton, 196

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The Works of George Herbert, ed. F.E.
 11), 172.

The fragment above evinces the *Bay Psalm Book's* categorical choice for metrical regularity, to which textual correspondence between the source and target language, and, one might argue, verbal elegance, have been sacrificed. The compilers' focus on "fidelity rather than poetry" appears to result in not much of either. Although the simplicity and similarity of the Psalms in this version could be seen to guarantee their accessibility, the tortured syntax and unnatural rhythms distance the reader from the text and hamper comprehension. The fact that these elements recur in all the poems (there are no happy exceptions), suggests that they are part of an overarching aesthetic paradigm rather than instances of haphazard clumsiness. Precisely by forcing all the Psalms into the same formal scheme and by repeatedly violating English grammar, the *Bay Psalm Book* articulates its own conception of what constitutes devotional poetics. That this idea was recognized and repeated in contemporary spiritual poetry shows the community's acceptance of and identification with the aesthetic model put forth in the psalter.⁴⁴ It is important to note that aesthetics do not just express attitudes and beliefs; they are also capable of shaping subjects and producing collectivity within fractured immigrant communities. The *Bay Psalm Book* became a text of colonial self-definition not just because of its material presence in the Atlantic public sphere, but mainly through the replication and internalization of its aesthetic. To get a sense of how these texts would have functioned in early colonial culture, I will briefly consider performance practices in Massachusetts Bay.

In America, the *Bay Psalm Book* was not printed with tunes until the ninth edition in 1698.⁴⁵ Earlier editions refer to Thomas Ravenscroft's *Psalmes* (1621) for musical settings, though it is highly unlikely that his "very neere forty common tunes" were all actually used, as most did not fit the metrical format of the Psalms.⁴⁶ The 9th edition reduced Ravenscroft's 40 to a mere 13 tunes, which are provided on unmarked pages in the back of the book in addition to an appendix offering guidelines on how the Psalms were to be sung. The 13 tunes, named after their town of origin, were all drawn from Playford's *Brief Introduction to the Skill of Music* (1654), as was the notation of sol-fa letters, which will be illustrated

⁴⁴ For example, the use of common meter for devotional texts was replicated and reinforced by Michael Wigglesworth's tremendously successful *Day of Doom* (Cambridge, 1662). Composed in double ballad stanzas, this often-maligned poem sold eighteen hundred copies in a single year and was assigned for memorization along with the catechism. Roger Williams's verse in *A Key into the Language of America* (London, 1643) criticizes the colonists' ideology and intentions, while formally mocking the community's aesthetic. See *American Poetry of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Harrison T. Meserole (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985).

⁴⁵ Irving Lowens claims editions of the *Bay Psalm Book* were published with tunes in England "between the years 1689 and 1691." *Music and Musicians in Early America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964), 36.

⁴⁶ *Bay Psalm Book*, L13v. Lowens casts the citations of Ravenscroft as "a bibliographical footnote, rather than a factual report of just what common-meter psalm tunes were being sung by Massachusetts Puritans in 1640." *Music and Musicians*, 28.

shortly. The music appears to be carelessly copied from Playford's volume. For example, the *Bay Psalm Book* assigns the Litchfield tune to Psalm 69 (when it should be 96), perpetuating an obvious misprint in Playford, which partially corrects itself by printing the first verse of Psalm 96 alongside the score. Due to the repeated performance of Psalm 69 to the Litchfield tune, however, the two came to be inextricably associated with another in the New England tradition. The *erratum* of appointing the tune of Psalm 113 to Psalm 115, which was actually more metrically successful than the originally intended text, caused a similar connection in the public mind (or mouth).⁴⁷ Evidently, the Puritans sung what was printed, not what felt right, displaying an unquestioning acceptance of authority as embodied by the printed text and chanting community. Contradicting British traditions and instituting misprints as standard practice, the above cases prove the power of the psalter and its imperfections in shaping ideas of propriety with regards to Psalm performance in colonial America.

Unlike "Sternhold-Hopkins" and the Ainsworth version, the *Bay Psalm Book* chose not to pioneer any tunes. Only proven successful strains were selected and implemented, presumably to ensure longevity of the version, but also in keeping with Protestant practice of using popular English ballad tunes to get the congregations singing heartily at difficult times.⁴⁸ The reduction from 40 tunes to a mere 13, as opposed to 48 in the Ainsworth translation, is in keeping with the trend towards simplification and homogenization discussed above.⁴⁹ Although music seems to have been an afterthought, and, literally, an appendix, to the text for the Puritans, J.C. Dorenkamp suggests the translations were actually shaped "to fit tunes familiar to the users of the book," suggesting another possible explanation for the metrical monotony.⁵⁰

The tunes in the *Bay Psalm Book* appear roughly hewn and on a miniscule scale, which indeed seems to presuppose familiarity. In comparison to the finely engraved music in the Ainsworth version in Figure 4.2, the Massachusetts psalter (Figure 4.3) is considerably harder to read.

Whereas Ainsworth supplies the tune above the first verse of the metrical translation and even takes care to vertically line out notes and syllables, the *Bay Psalm Book* provides tunes approximately 300 pages after the text, forcing the singer to flip back in order to read words and music simultaneously.⁵¹ Thus, the psalter hardly allows for singing while reading and seems to have included

⁴⁷ Appel, *The Music of the Bay Psalm Book*, 5.

⁴⁸ *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn, s.v. "Psalms, metrical, §III, 1: The Church of England." <http://www.grovemusic.com/data/articles/music/> (accessed November 30, 2001).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, and Pratt, *The Music of the Pilgrims*, 14.

⁵⁰ "The *Bay Psalm Book* and the Ainsworth Psalter," 9.

⁵¹ This effort is more obvious in the 1632 printing of the Ainsworth, durable URL: http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:24944.

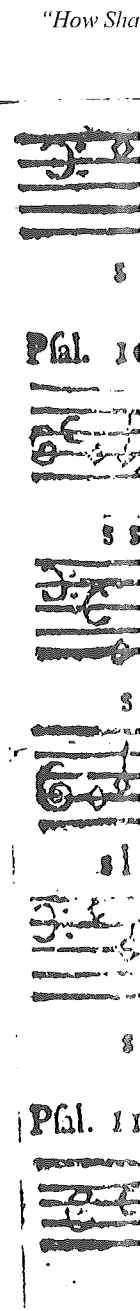


Fig. 4.3

Bay Psalm Book
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copied from Playford's volume. For the Litchfield tune to Psalm 69 (when it is misprinted in Playford, which partially misprints Psalm 96 alongside the score. Due to the Litchfield tune, however, the two are together in the New England tradition. The shift from Psalm 69 to Psalm 115, which was actually originally intended text, caused a similar problem. Evidently, the Puritans sang what was an unquestioning acceptance of authority within the singing community. Contradicting British standard practice, the above cases prove the Puritans' influence in shaping ideas of propriety with America.

In the Ainsworth version, the *Bay Psalm Book* even chosen successful strains were selected for the longevity of the version, but also in the use of popular English ballad tunes to get the tunes.⁴⁸ The reduction from 40 tunes to a smaller number, is in keeping with the trend discussed above.⁴⁹ Although music is generally, an appendix, to the text for the translations were actually shaped "to fit suggesting another possible explanation

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Psalmists, 14.
 in *Psalter*," 9.
 printing of the Ainsworth, durable URL: <http://www.earlymusic.com/data/articles/music/> (accessed 10/10/05)

s f s l m m l l l a l m s
Psal. 100. First Meeter.
 s s f l s s l m m m l f m l
 s s a l m l s s s s s f s s
 s l m l s l f s s m s l f m l s
 s s s s m f s s s s f s f s s s
Psal. 115. First Meeter.
 w l m m m f s s f m l s m l s

Fig. 4.3

Bay Psalm Book (1698), *Early American Imprints, Series I, Evans*. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. 3 April 2005. <http://www.infoweb.newsbank.com>.

tunes more out of a desire for completeness.⁵² The diamond-shaped notes, a contemporary convention, are faded and difficult to make out, which is in part caused by the printing from the raised surfaces of woodblocks. The sol-fa letters indicate the placement of the notes on the traditional singing scale of do-re-mi to aid those less schooled in musical notation. For this edition, however, the printer appears to have had access only to the letters f, l, s, and m, which largely negates their usefulness as there is no perceivable correspondence between the letters and the tune printed above.⁵³ These letters were meant to facilitate the practice of "lining out" the Psalm, whereby the minister or an appointed lay person sings it slowly verse by verse with the congregation repeating every "line" (verse) after him. This custom constitutes a shift in psalmodic practice from singing to hearing: the initial confrontation with the Psalm is now no longer governed by a script, as it was in the British and Separatist churches, but relies on orality instead. By parroting the clergyman or authorized congregants, the churchgoers double (or underline) his utterance while replacing his voice and stance of authority with their own. The system of repetition also ensures the doctrinal correctness of the congregation's speech, enabling a vocal osmosis of ideology in the guise of a singing lesson. Lastly, "lining out" poses a perfect example of how formal change could be imposed upon and internalized by the colonial community. Regulating devotional performance thus leads not only to religious homogeneity, but also succeeds in bringing about a normative spiritual identity that is culturally separate from Britain and Plymouth, embodied in the collective ritual of belting out ballad stanzas.

The model set by "lining out" the Psalm was in turn controlled by the stern directions in the Appendix: "First, Observe of how many *Notes* compass the *Tune* is. Next, the place of your first *Note*; and how many *Notes* above & below that: so as you may begin the *Tune* of your first *Note* as the rest may be Sung in the compass of your and the peoples *Voices*, without *Squeaking* above, or *Grumbling* below."⁵⁴ There were no musical instruments available for accompaniment in American churches until the mid-eighteenth century. Nor were there tuning forks, apparently, and things could get very out of hand. Cotton Mather noted in his diary: "The Psalmody is but poorly carried on in my Flock, and in a Variety and Regularity inferior to some other; I would see about it ... I must of Necessity do

⁵² D.W. Krummel speculates that "Its [the *Bay Psalm Book*'s] inclusion of music may not have been meant as a guide for the congregation in which the majority was not expected to be able to read notes much less sight sing them. The musical notes may have been put in to give the book an air of authority and guide congregation leaders." "The *Bay Psalm Book* tercentenary, 1698–1998," *Notes* 55 (1998), 281–2.

⁵³ Krummel adds: "Whoever took care of the imposition probably used makeshift furniture and was likely musically illiterate." *Ibid.*, 282.

⁵⁴ *Bay Psalm Book*, first page in unnumbered Appendix. Although these lines have often been cited as evidence of the Puritans' poor singing, they are in fact "quoted, verbatim and literatim, from either the 1666 ... of Playford's *Brief Introduction*, a work written with no reference to the American practice of psalmody." Lowens, *Music and Musicians*, 34.

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⁵⁵ *Diary of Cotton Mather*, *Journal of the American Society*, 1911–1912, 2:37.

⁵⁶ *The Diary of Samuel* Strauss, and Giroux, 1973.

⁵⁷ John Tufts, *An In* Ola Elizabeth Winslow, chapter 10.

⁵⁸ *Diary of Cotton M*

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something, that the Exercise of *Singing* the scared *Psalms* in the Flock, may be made more beautiful, and especially have the *Beauties of Holiness* more upon it."⁵⁵ Dejected, Samuel Sewall observed: "Mr Willard ... spoke to me to set the Tune; I intended Windsor and fell into High-Dutch, and then essaying the set another Tune went into a key much too high ... In the morning I set York Tune [but] the Gallery carried irresistibly to St David's which discouraged me very much."⁵⁶ Although the voiced dissatisfaction and striving toward an unattainable ideal might be seen as a permanent Puritan predicament, these complaints nevertheless illustrate the importance of Psalmody and the grief and anxiety that accompanied improper performance.

Ultimately, such concerns culminated in the large-scale musical reform of the 1720s. Inspired by a booklet called *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm-Tunes*, proponents of the New Way of singing advocated systematic methodologies of musical notation and performance that resembled the traditions of the Anglican Church.⁵⁷ Unsurprisingly, the acrimony surrounding these innovations was intense. Mather, an early supporter, notes: "Tho' in the more polite City of Boston, this Design [singing reform] mett with a General Acceptance, in the Countrey ... some Numbers of Elder and Angry people, bore zealous Testimonies against these wicked Innivations, and this bringing in of Popery. Their zeal transported them so far ... that they would not only ... call the Singing of these Christians, a Worshipping of the Devil, but they would also run out of the Meetinghouse at the Beginning of the Exercise."⁵⁸ Clearly, supporters of the Old Way perceived the reforms as an attack on their religious identity, initially accusing their more progressive congregants of Roman Catholicism and later, bringing up that old New England favorite, witchcraft. What is perhaps most striking about this passage is not the constitutive relationship between psalmody and spiritual selfhood, but rather the threat of dissolution of the community made by the scorned conservatives. The same rhetoric surfaces in the following entry from Mather's diary: "Very Lately, a Little Crue at a Town Ten miles from the City of Boston, were so sett upon their old Howling in the public Psalmody, that being rebuked for the Disturbance they made, by the more Numerous Regular Singers, they declared They would be for the Ch. Of E. [Church of England] and would form a Little Assembly for that purpose."⁵⁸ Here, the debate seems to have become unmoored from its original religious reference-points, as Anglicanism (apparently unbeknownst to the little crew) would entail practices far more similar to the new singing style than to

⁵⁵ *Diary of Cotton Mather*, ed. Dr. W.C. Ford (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1911–1912), 2:373, 2:624.

⁵⁶ *The Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674–1729*, ed. M. Halsey Thomas (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1973), 1:538; 2:881.

⁵⁷ John Tufts, *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm-Tunes* (Boston, 1721). See Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill, 1630-1783* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), chapter 10.

⁵⁸ *Diary of Cotton Mather*, 2:693.

“their old howling.” Being denied their customary conventions of worship, the followers of the old school are aggravated to the extent that they blindly select another denomination, preferring difference by default over improvements at home. Although these cases convincingly illustrate the tremendous success of the standardization of worship in Massachusetts Bay, they also indicate the more serious threat of social strife over religious ritual.⁵⁹ A change of protocol imperils the cultural cohesion of the community, which proves again that performance practices made up the heart of the colony’s conception of self.

In conclusion, the international importance of the publication of the *Bay Psalm Book*, which countered English liturgy by instituting colonial practices of worship, is easily recognizable. As a text of immigration, the psalter constitutes the Puritans’ first conscious self-articulation within the transcultural structure of British imperialism. This essay has also shown how the *Bay Psalm Book*, by controlling the outward, public forms of prayer, shaped the form of inward faith and the collective aesthetic of the colony. Thus, this publicized devotional deviation served to create and make explicit devotional difference between Britain and the American colonies.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:797.