
An experimental way of rendering Old English alliterative verse into Ukrainian

Brosalina O. H.

National Academy of Arts of Ukraine, 20 Vorovskoho St., 01054 Kyiv, Ukraine,
fax: + 380 44 486 33 69, e-mail: amu@academia.gov.ua

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Abstract. The article deals with the form of Old English alliterative verse and the problem of its translatability into Ukrainian. The author argues that the four-beat accentual metre of this verse may be adopted without any hindrance, but a specific character of stress in Ukrainian keeps seeking a compromise to imitate alliteration. Therefore two alternative ways are offered: to fix consonance either on the initial consonant (the group of consonants) of a word, or on the pretonic consonant (the group of consonants). Only in the second case the alliteration discharges its intrinsic metrical function, because of congruence of verse accent with the alliterating sound (sounds). Therefore regular using of pretonic consonances (according to the traditional patterns of Old English verse) is the most reasonable way to imitate the alliterative verse in Ukrainian. The first full Ukrainian translation of *Beowulf* by Olena O'Lear, based on this principle, is presented and analysed.

Keywords: Old English alliterative verse, alliteration, accentual verse, *Beowulf*, translation from Old English into Ukrainian.

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1. Introduction

For the last decades one can observe only first steps in adoption of a majestic world of Old English poetry by Ukrainian literature. But in the times when this poetry was still alive, this world could have a contact with the Prince Court of Kyivan Rus, a great medieval empire, where ancestors of the modern Ukrainian people lived. What is meant here is the marriage between princess Gytha of Wessex, the daughters of Harold II, the last Anglo-Saxon king of England, and Volodymyr II Monomakh, one of the most famous rulers of Kyivan Rus (1074) [1, 2]. Maybe Gytha had one or few scopos (Anglo-Saxon court poets and singers) in her retinue.

Nevertheless it is only supposal and no traces of this presumable cultural contact are discernible. Only in the second half of the XX century Ukrainian writers and translators began to discover some heroic images of Old English poetry. First of all Igor Kaczurowskij (b. 1918), a remarkable poet, translator, literary historian and theorist of literature, who lives now in Munich, wrote the poem named *Beowulf*, where he retold one of three crucial episodes of the great Anglo-Saxon epic poem of the same name – the underwater battle of Beowulf with the monstrous Grendel's mother. This poem was included in his second collection of verse *In far haven* (Buenos Aires, 1956). Maybe to infuse his poem with epic breadth and solemnity, the poet renders the story in hexametres:

Озеро вкруг обступили мертві насуплені скелі.
Десь тут гніздяться вони – велетні в тайній оселі.
Дика місцевість довкола – похмура, глуха і потворна.
За водоспадом гримучим печера, глибока і чорна.

В озері темна вода, що ніколи не світить блакиттю.
А з глибини визирають хижі зелені страхіття.
Десь тут гніздяться вони – нащадки злочинного роду.
Меч свій бере Беовульф і відважно пірнає під воду.
Воїни стали і ждуть. Швидко минають хвилини.
Тільки ні брязкіт мечів, ані крик з-під води не прилине.
Раптом здригнулись усі. Хоробрі нахмурили брови:
В озері, повнім страхіть, вода закипіла від крові.
Сильним, безстрашним бійцям сльози набігли на очі –
Під водоспадом гримучим піна червона клекоче.
Знов випливають наверх зелені потвори підводні:
За Беовульфом король буде тужити сьогодні.
Данці відходять додому. Правди дружина не знає.
Та роздалася вода і враз Беовульф виринає.
Голову велетня воїн виносить з печери з собою,
Разом з руків'ям меча – здобиччю смертного бою [3, p. 13].

In literal translation one has

The lake was surrounded by the dead frowned rocks.
About here they nest, the giants in their secret dwelling.
Wilderness is around, sullen, deaf and ugly.
Beyond the waterfall thundering there is cave deep and black.
The lake has dark water, which never lights with azure.
And predatory green monsters peep out from depth.
About here they nest, the descendants of the maleficent race.
Beowulf takes his sword and bravely dives under water.
The warriors stand and wait. Minutes pass quickly.
But neither clang of swords, nor a scream would rush from under water.
Everybody gave start suddenly. The brave men frowned:
In the lake, full of monsters, water began to boil with blood.
Tears welled up in the eyes of the strong, fearless warriors –
Red foam seethed under the waterfall thundering.
The green underwater monsters swam out on the surface again.
The king would bewail the death of Beowulf today.
Danes depart home. The troop does not know the truth.
But water has given way and Beowulf resurfaces instantly.
The warrior takes away from the cave the giant's head
Together with the handle of a sword, a booty of mortal fight.

I. Kaczurowskij is known as a follower of the literary school of Kyiv neo-classics (1920th – early 1930th). The leader of the school Mykola Zerov called his colleagues and friends *ad fontes* – to the origins of European culture, so Kaczurowskij's ascent into Anglo-Saxon antiquity seems to be one of his responses to Zerov's appeal. Also Kaczurowskij has translated two famous beowulfian poems by Jorge Luis Borges [4]. Furthermore, I should add two translations from Old English by Ivan Luchuk (b. 1965): the elegy *Wulf and Eadwacer* and a short fragment from *Beowulf*, the episode of the first feast in Heorot, which will be quoted below [5], as well as the *The Anglo-*

Saxons, the short poem by William Ruleman with the motives of fight with a dragon and passion for gold, translated into Ukrainian by Yulia Dzhuhastrianska (b. 1983) [6]. Finally, the first full translation of *Beowulf* into Ukrainian by Olena O'Lear (b. 1976) was published in 2012 by the *Astrolabe Publishers* [7]. As far as I know, the above-mentioned original poem and translations are all that modern Ukrainian literature may offer to readers interested in Anglo-Saxon antiquity.

Meanwhile, the Russian literature had got a full translation of *Beowulf* much earlier, in 1975. It was accomplished by Vladimir Tikhomirov (1943–2011) [8]. His predecessors were Boris Yarkho (1889–1942), a luminous Russian mediaevalist (who had translated 33 lines from *Beowulf* [9] and the heroic cantilena *The fight at Brunanburh* [10]), and Maria Zamakhovskaya (1900–1985), a translator of three fragments from *Beowulf* [11]. Also V. Tikhomirov had translated some Anglo-Saxon minor poems [12]. Currently a full translation of *Beowulf* into Belorussian is being prepared for publishing by Anton Franciszak Bryl (b. 1982).

Since above mentioned “Olena O'Lear” is a pen-name of the author of this article, the latter may be accounted as an attempt to justify the Ukrainian translator's principles of rendering the Old English alliterative verse.

2. Old English alliterative verse at a glance

Mykhail Gasparov, an influential Russian theorist of verse and comparativist, marks in his *Essay on history of European verse* that Germanic accentual verse in general is still a puzzle for comparativistics: until now it has not been succeeded to reconstruct how this verse evolved from a hypothetical Indo-European syllabics. But passing to the stage of the fixed poetic reliquia, Gasparov made extraordinarily interesting comparative conclusions: “We find the Germanic verse about the IX century in the already prepared accentual form, and this form is approximately identical in all three natural habitats of Germanic literature: firstly, in Scandinavia and afterwards in Iceland, in Old and Icelandic Norse; secondly, in Britain, in Old English (Anglo-Saxon) language; thirdly, on the Continent, in Low German and High German. In Scandinavia its reliquia are Eddic poetry, in Britain – *Beowulf* and works contiguous with it, and in Germany – the fragment of *Das Hildebrandslied* (a mixture of High German and Low German), *Muspilli* (a High German poem about Doomsday), and *Heliand* (a Low German poem about Christ)” [13, p. 38].

A difference between the three national varieties of the German accentual verse marked above is that its Old English and German variants are non-strophic, but the Norse gravitates to strophic patterns. Gasparov assumes that in Germanic original source lyric poems were strophic, and epic ones non-strophic, therefore short northern songs inherited the first tradition, and long southern poems – the second one [13, p. 38].

From the standpoint of metrics, verse of Old English poetry is accentual. Each poetic line has two halves, divided by a sharp pause, or caesura. There are two beats to each half-line. Thus there are four beats to the line. The number of unstressed syllables is varying (in *Beowulf* two stresses one by one occur as well as the pentasyllabic anacrusis in the second half-line).

From the standpoint of phonics, Old English verse is alliterative, i. e. based on regular and fixed using of alliterations. Two syllables alliterate when they begin with the same consonant (or the group of consonants); all vowels alliterate together. The alliteration of the line is determined by the first heavily stressed syllable of the second half-line. The third stress will alliterate with either or both of the two stresses in the first half-line. So the third stress is the key sound that locks the two half-lines together. The fourth stress does not usually alliterate [14, p. 29]. Hence there are three patterns of disposition of alliterations in the line, according to the following scheme (where *a* signifies alliterating sounds or groups of sounds):

1) **a** _ / **a** _

2) _ **a** / _ **a** _

3) **a** **a** / **a** _

Here is the example of the first pattern (bold letters signify alliterating sounds):

Þū eart **m**ægenes strang ond on **m**ōde frōd...

(In Howell D. Chickering, Jr.'s non-alliterative translation:

...great in you strength, nature in thought...)

(Line 1844) [15, p. 154–155]

The second pattern is

Þā wæs be **m**æste **m**ere-hrǣgla sum...

(The mast was rigged with the see-wind's cloak...)

(Line 1905) [15, p. 158–159]

And, finally, the third pattern, the most ordered phonically, is

...segl **s**āle fæst; **s**und-wudu þunede...

(...great sail in its ropes; the planking thundered.)

(Line 1906) [15, p. 158–159]

Since the stress in Old English falls on the root syllable of a word, the alliteration usually joins the initial syllables of two or three words in each line, except where the root is preceded by an unstressed prefix.

The above-mentioned rule that the fourth stress is not usually involved in the alliteration has its own aesthetical reasons. It is very likely that the principle of the Golden Section, or the Divine Proportion, acts here. For the main phonic load gravitates to the beginning of a word and, at the same time, to the beginning of the line.

As another point of view, J. R. R. Tolkien regarded the lines of alliterative verse as “founded on a balance; an opposition between two halves of roughly equivalent phonetic weight, and significant content, which are more often rhythmically contrasted than similar” (the essay *Beowulf: The monsters and the critics*) [16]. Anyway it is fair to say that the most important function of the alliteration is to join two independent and well-balanced half-lines into one poetical line. It may be named a metrical function of the alliteration.

Professor Tolkien is well-known as an eminent researcher of Old English and Old Norse poeties and has himself translated *Beowulf* into Modern English (though the translation is still not published). Also, he composed some original poems in the form of alliterative verse: *The home-coming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's son* inspired by the Old English poem *The Battle of Maldon*, and closely connected *The New Lay of the Völsungs* and *The New Lay of Gudrun* retelling the plot of Sigurd and Gudrun from *Poetic Edda* and *Völsunga saga*. Under the title *The legend of Sigurd and Gudrun*, the both lays were published by Christopher Tolkien. Here the alliterative verse assumes a strophic form of Eddic poetry named *fornyrðislag*, which means “old story metre” or “ancient lore metre”. This stanza consists of four lines of alliterative verse broken up graphically into eight half-lines [17, p. 53, 56], for example:

A **sh**ip came **sh**ining
to **sh**ores foaming,
gloomy **G**autland's
guarded havens.
Sigmund lordly,

sire and kindred,
to fair feasting
fearless journeyed [18, p. 100].

The both poems were translated into Ukrainian by Olena O'Lear [18].

The unfinished Tolkien's alliterative poem *The Children of Húrin* should be mentioned, too (its short fragments are quoted by Christopher Tolkien in his comments on the prose retelling of the story) [19, p. 276–278]. Moreover, Ch. Tolkien is now preparing for publishing his father's never-before-published poem *The Fall of Arthur*, which has been inspired by Geoffrey of Monmouth and Thomas Malory's tales of King Arthur and is also composed as the alliterative verse.

But Tolkien was not a discoverer of Modern English alliterative verse. In particular, Francis B. Gummere was among his predecessors. In Gummere's translation published in 1909, the beginning of the poem sounds as

Lo, **p**raise of the **p**rowess of **p**eople-kings
of **s**p~~e~~ar-armed **D**anes, in **d**ays long **s**ped,
we **h**ave **h**ear**d**, and what **h**onor the athelings won!
Oft **S**cyld the **S**cefing from **s**quadroned foes,
from **m**any a **t**ribe, the **m**ead-bench **t**ore,
awing the **e**arls. Since **e**rst he lay
friendless, a **f**oundling, **f**ate repaid him:
for he **w**axed under **w**elkin, in **w**ealth he thro**v**e,
till before him the **f**olk, both **f**ar and near,
who **h**ouse by the whale-path, **h**ear**d** his mandate,
gave him **g**ifts: a good king he!

(Lines 1–11) [20]

In lines 2 and 5, the much-discussed phenomenon of transverse alliteration occurs (of the orders *abba* and *abab*), of which over a hundred instances can be traced in the original text, according to Fr. Klaeber's calculations [21]. In fact, the *abab* pattern comes under notice as early as in the first line:

Hwæt! We **G**ardena in **g**eardagum...

Tolkien has also his followers, among whom Seamus Heaney is the most prominent figure. In 1999 a Nobel Prize winning Irish poet had made his own contribution to revival of the alliterative verse: his translation of *Beowulf* is remarkable for "Northern Irish diction and turns of phrase" [22], as well as a distinct clang of Anglo-Saxon alliterations, which sometimes is heard in the fourth beat, too. For example:

In off the **m**oors, down through the **m**ist bands
God-cursed **G**rendel came **g**reedily loping.
The bane of the **r**ace of men **r**oamed forth,
hunting for a prey in the **h**igh **h**all.

(Lines 710–713) [23]

So, thanks to F. B. Gummere, J. R. R. Tolkien, S. Heaney and other poets and translators with consonance hearing, the alliteration ceased to be only some museum piece in English poetry, but became a living poetical agent. The whole structure of Modern English, especially abundance of words stressed on the first syllable (which often is the root syllable of a word), supported this

poetical invention. But a poet who would try to reconstruct alliteration using a language with different structure (for example, Ukrainian) may come off a loser.

3. Two alternative ways of rendering the alliteration into Ukrainian

If J. R. R. Tolkien compared the lines of the alliterative verse with masonry [16], then the alliteration itself may be compared with cement. In Old English poetry, the alliteration discharged the same function as the rhyme took upon itself in the Norman times. On the contrary, the Ukrainian poetry from its earliest times (i. e., from the middle of the 16th century) knew only rhyme as a regular phonic attribute of verse. It has strong linguistic reasons: in Ukrainian the stress is free and often falls not on word roots, as in Old English, but on prefixes (e.g., *ро́зповідь* – “tale, story”; *ві́дповідь* – “response, answer”), suffixes (*розповідáти* – “to tell”; *розповідáч* – “narrator, storyteller”), or flexions (*життя́* – “life”; *земля́* – “land”), where acute accents denote stressed syllables. Furthermore, there are a great number of words with a second syllable of the root stressed or with a shifted stress, which is replaced in the process of inflecting. So congruence of the verse accent with the alliterating sound (or sounds) and word’s beginning, which is the main principle of Old English alliterative verse, can be possible in very short Ukrainian poetical texts only, not in the translation of such a long epic poem as *Beowulf*.

The stress features of Russian language are similar to those of Ukrainian. Therefore one should pay attention to the conclusion by Russian philologists A. Volkov and Z. Volkova: “the specificity of Germanic versification, and especially the alliterative verse, makes it impossible to reconstruct this form in Russian translation” [24]. However, as one can see below, Russian translators tried in different ways to ‘imitate’ the Beowulfian verse, and so their works have shattered this rigorous statement. Here the ‘imitation’ means partial reconstruction of the main features of the verse. Thus, it is the art of compromise. The structure of Ukrainian (as well as the other East Slavic languages) not only hinders rendering alliterative verse but also offers some relevant advantage factors.

First of all, Ukrainian poetry domesticated throughout its history a few kinds of accentual verse (with different amplitudes of oscillation of the number of unstressed syllables between the beats). These kinds are “dolnyk” (with the number of unstressed syllables oscillating within the range of two variants, namely from one to two or, more rarely, from zero to one), “taktovyk” (the number of unstressed syllables oscillating within the ranges of three variants), and an accentual verse as such, with four and more variants of the number of unstressed syllables [25, p. 101]. From the standpoint of metrics the Old English verse is therefore translatable.

Secondly, two compromise variants are practicable from the standpoint of phonics: to fix consonance either on the initial consonant (the group of consonants) of a word, or on the pretonic consonant (the group of consonants). One will get alliteration as merely a phonic ornament in the first case and alliteration in its intrinsic metrical function in the second case.

It is possible to imitate alliteration of vowels too, but in this case assonance of the initial vowels is needed. Otherwise the assonance will not be perceived well against the background of consonances.

4. *Beowulf* in Russian translations: aspect of versification

As Russian translators were the pioneers in adoption of Old English poetry among their East Slavic colleagues, it is useful to see how they approached to rendering the alliterative verse.

In his translation Boris Yarkho stitches with sound repetitions every line of the episode of Sigmund the Dragon Slayer from *Beowulf*. Consonances of the initial consonants prevail. Their number ranges from two to four in each line. In other words, Yarkho does not adhere to the rule of non-alliterating fourth beat.

In M. Zamakhovskaya's fragmental translation of *Beowulf* the phonic ornamentation is sporadic, gravitating to consonances of the initial consonants. The translator ignores the rule of the fourth beat, but gives some interesting coups in the 'widening' of consonance to the nearby sounds.

Vladimir Tikhomirov in his full translation of *Beowulf* uses different kinds of sound repetitions: consonances of the initial or pretonic consonants and assonances. Too often the both half-lines in lines have their own inner consonances. So the translator does not take into account the metrical function of the alliteration as well as the rule of the non-alliterating fourth beat. At the same time, there are a lot of lines in the Tikhomirov's translation with a direct correspondence to the principles of Old English versification.

In relation to metre, Yarkho decides upon the four-beat accentual verse as such, with caesuras in the middle of the lines (occasionally he uses three accents in the half-line, maybe to imitate the secondary accents of the original text). Tikhomirov chooses a more strict accentual metre, which may be qualified as a double two-beat "dolnyk" (it does not correspond to the scheme of four-beat "dolnyk" because of the number of unstressed syllables on both sides of the caesura, which may add up more than two). Occasionally a line of the accentual verse as such breaks the dominant metre. As for M. Zamakhovskaya, a syllabic-accentual measure is used rather than accentual one: she renders "barbaric" original verse... with classic amphibrachic tetrametre.

5. The choices of Ukrainian and Belorussian translators

Ivan Luchuk, the first Ukrainian translator who has treated the Old English poetry turns out to be the most close to Yarkho's metrical principles, for in his translation of a fragment from *Beowulf* he dares to use an accentual verse as such, with a variable number of beats: each half-line has two (more rarely one or three) stresses:

Жона благородна чашу подала
спершу стражу Данів Східних,
привітала його на пивному святі,
улюбленця люду; він радо прийняв
бенкетну чашу, відважний князь.
Обійшла відтак Гельмінгів усіх,
старих і молодих дружинників усіх,
дивочашу подавала, до урочого часу,
коли Беовульф перстенна жона,
духом висока, медову чашу подала;
привітала вождя Геатів, дяку Господу вознесла,
премудрослівна, що щастя їй випало
на будь-кого з вождів покладатися,
не сподіватися злодіянь. Він ту чашу прийняв...

(Lines 615–628) [5, p. 116]

In the Howell D. Chickering, Jr.'s translation the same lines are as follows:

615 The noble lady gave the first cup,
filled to the brim, to the king of the Danes,
bade him rejoice in his mead-serving,
beloved by his people; he took it happily,
victory-famed king, the hall-cup and feast.
620 The lady of the Helmings walked through the hall,
offered the jeweled cup to veterans and youths,
until the time came that the courteous queen,
splendid in rings, excellent in virtues,
came to Beowulf, brought him the mead.
625 She greeted him well, gave thanks to God,
wise in her words, that her wish came to pass,
that she might expect help against crimes
from any man. He accepted the cup... [15, p. 85]

Phonic regulation is as sporadic as the metre: sometimes consonances of the initial consonants (“...привітала його на пивному святі...” or those of the pretonic consonants occur („улюбленця люду”, „дивочашу... часу”, „вождя... дяку”), but one could not notice any attempt to join two half-lines by means of these sound repetitions.

In the meanwhile, Olena O’Lear following V. Tikhomirov chose double two-beat “dolnyk”, but with no inserts of accentual verse as such. It is a radical enough adaptation of the traditional Old English accentual verse – the verse that would be perceived by a modern reader still as a verse and not already as a prose.

Concerning to a choice between two alternative ways of rendering alliteration, the translator tried to apply consistently the second one, i.e. fixing consonance on the pretonic consonant (or the group of consonants) or using assonance of the stressed initial vowels, for thus alliteration appears in its metrical function, which is the very specificity of the Old English versification. Irrespective of O’Lear, Anton Franciszak Bryl in his translation of *Beowulf* upholds similar metric and phonic principles on the Belorussian language material [26].

Igor Kaczurowskij in his coursebook *Phonics* noticed some instances of irregular imitation of Germanic alliteration (*Stabreim*) in the Ukrainian poetry, “where *Stabreim* does not replace end rhyme, but only assists it in the sound ornamentation of verse to heighten the coefficient of sound arrangement” [27, p. 108]. For example, in Dmytro Zahul’s lyric one sees the following:

Краще вже **вихор і вир!**
Хай **бурі** та **бурні** потоки...

(in the literal translation

Whirlwind and whirlpool are better!
Let storms and rapid streams be...)

The similar is seen in a poem by Oleksa Stefanovych:

Сталі не **стало**. Зостався кришталь...

(in the literal translation

Steel has disappeared. Crystal has remained...)

Such phonic experiments gave O’Lear a footing for translation of *Beowulf*. Moreover, in view of longer average length of words in Ukrainian as against Old English it was quite difficult for the translator to get over temptation to involve in the consonance of the pretonic consonants nearby sounds or the whole syllables. For example, in the passage about the last coming of Grendel into Heorot, where Beowulf was waiting for him, one reads

Наближався муж, **блаженства** позбавлений,
до зали знадвору. **Двері** сахнулися,
залізом окуті, **заледве** торкнув їх...

(Lines 720–722) [7, p. 40]

The same passage in the Howell D. Chickering, Jr.’s translation is as follows:

The evil warrior, deprived of joys,
came up to the building; the door burst open,
though bound with iron, as soon as he touched it...

[15, p. 91]

All the more so, as the anonymous author of *Beowulf* himself sometimes employed widening of the alliteration on the post-tonic consonants or two:

Swā se **secg** hwata **secgende** wæs
lāðra spella; hē ne lēag fela
wyrda nē **worda**. **Weorod** eall āras...

In the Howell D. Chickering, Jr.’s translation this reads as

Thus the brave man told grievous news,
was hardly wrong in his words or prophecies.
The company rose...

(Lines 3028–3030) [15, p. 232–233]

Finally, an attentive reader may fall under the impression that the language itself sometimes helps the translator to bring together in the alliterating words the main images of the original text: *криця* (“steel”) and *кров* (“blood”), *хороми* (“hall, palace”) and *хоробрі ратники* (“brave warriors”), *Гроттар* (“Hrothgar”, king of the Danes), his *зриди* (“thanes, warriors”) and *зривни* (“precious neck rings”) – without any wrenches.

For wider illustration of the described way of rendering alliteration let me quote the last song of *Beowulf* (XLIII):

На мисі тім геати багаття погребне
воздвигли для нього неабияке,
шоломами й тарчами оторочили,
3140 блискучими бронями, як сказано ним.
Нагорі возложили герої, голосячи,
володаря славного, велителя любого.
Там, на гребені кручі, погребний вогонь вони
розвели найвеличніший, – повалив древодим,
3145 чорний над пломенем, з плачем змішався
стогін вогню, стих буй-вітер,

аж поки племінь плоть пожер,
до серця пропикши. Свій сум виливали
усі, засмучені смертю владики;
3150 тужіння й одна жінка-геатка
з волоссям підв'язаним завела за Беовульфом,
пісню скорботну. Без упину провадила,
що страшать її вельми навали полчищ,
кровопролиття, кривди загарбницькі,
3155 глум і полон. Поглинуло небо
дим розвіяний. На узвишші ведери
звели курган, – великий він був,
мореплавцям помітний здалеку, –
за десять днів доблесному
3160 поставили пам'ятник, останки його
обнісши стінами настільки розкішними,
що спроможні на це лиш премудрі мужі.
Самоцвіти і гривни в погребнім кургані
сокрили вони – всі прикраси, що винесли
3165 зі скарбниці допіру, повні тривоги, –
повернули в землю золото воїнське,
клейноди – в надра, де й нині лежать вони,
як і спершу – без жодного пожитку для смертних.
Круг кургану вершники відважні об'їхали,
3170 сини старійшин, разом дванадцять, –
воліли звеличити володаря в пісні,
свій розпач виливши, й у розповідях:
його подвиги ратні й благородство підносили,
його доблесть славили. Так і слід чоловікові
3175 велителя-друга возхваляти, любити
усім своїм серцем, як оселю тілесну
той покине й останню переступить межу.
Так плем'я геатське оплакувало
владику – соратники, рівні при вогнищі, –
3180 вони свідчили: був він з сьогосвітніх властителів
найдобросердечніший, до підданців найм'якший,
незрівнянний у милості й найревніший до слави.

(Lines 3137–3182) [7, p. 145–146]

The same fragment in the Howell D. Chickering, Jr.'s translation is as follows:

The Geatish people then built a pyre
on that high ground, no mean thing,
hung with helmets, strong battle-boards,
3140 bright coats of mail, as he had requested,
and then they laid high in the center
their famous king, their beloved lord,

the warriors weeping. Then on that headland
the great fire was wakened. The wood-smoke climbed up,
3145 black above flames; the roaring one danced,
encircled by wailing; the wind died away
until the fire had broken that bone-house,
had burned to the heart. Sad and despairing,
the warriors grieved for the death of their lord.
3150 In the same fashion a Geatish woman,
her hair bound up, [wove] a grief-song,
the lament [for Beowulf.] Over and over
[she said] that she feared [the attacks of raiders],
many slaughters, the terror of troops,
3155 shame and captivity. Heaven swallowed the smoke.
Then the men of the Weders built on that cliff
a memorial barrow that was high and broad,
to be seen far off by ocean travelers,
and it took ten days to build that monument
3160 to the famous man. The remains of the pyre
they buried in walls as splendidly worked
as men wise in skill knew how to fashion.
Within this barrow they placed jeweled rings,
all the ornaments the brave-minded men
3165 had early taken away from the hoard;
they gave to the earth for its final keeping
the treasure of princes, gold in the ground,
where it lies even now, as useless to men
as it was before. Then round the barrow
3170 twelve nobles rode, war-brave princes.
They wanted to mourn their king in their [grief],
to weave a lay and speak about the man:
they honored his nobility and deeds of courage,
their friend's great prowess. So it is [fitting]
3175 that a man speak praise of his beloved lord,
love him in spirit, when he must be [led]
forth from his life, the body's home.
Thus did the Weders mourn in words
the fall of their lord, his hearth-companions.
3180 They said that he was, of the kings in this world,
the kindest to his men, the most courteous man,
the best to his people, and most eager for fame.

[15, p. 239, 241, 243]

In the same way the Modern English alliterative verse could be rendered.

6. Conclusions

Summarizing my analysis, I conclude the following:

- (i) A complete reconstruction of the Old English alliterative verse in Ukrainian is impossible, but imitation of it is quite thinkable.
- (ii) The four-beat accentual metre with caesura in the middle of the line may be adopted without any hindrance, since the Ukrainian poetry has domesticated throughout its history several kinds of the accentual verse (“dolnyk”, “taktovyk”, and accentual verse as such). Nonetheless,
- (iii) The specific character of stress in Ukrainian (being free rather than fixed on the root syllable of a word, as in Old English) keeps seeking a compromise to imitate the alliteration.
- (iv) Hence, the two alternative ways are practicable from the standpoint of phonics: to fix consonance either on the initial consonant (or the group of consonants) of a word, or on the pretonic consonant (or the group of consonants). Only in the second case the alliteration will discharge its intrinsic metrical function, because of congruence of the verse accent with the alliterating sound (or sounds).
- (v) As a consequence, regular using of pretonic consonances (according to the traditional patterns of the Old English verse) is the most reasonable way of rendering the alliterative verse, as it has been tested in the Olena O’Lear’s full translation of *Beowulf*.

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Анотація. У статті розглядається форма давньоанглійського алітераційного вірша та проблема її перекладності українською мовою. Авторка доводить, що чотирирічний тонічний розмір цього вірша можна відтворити без жодних перешкод, проте специфіка українського наголосу змушує шукати певний компроміс, аби імітувати германську алітерацію. Тому запропоновано два альтернативні способи – закріпити співзвуччя або за початковим приголосним (чи групою приголосних) слова, або ж за переднаголошеним приголосним (чи групою приголосних). Саме у другому випадку германська алітерація постає у своїй питомій метричній функції завдяки збігові віршового ікту з алітерованим звуком (чи звуками). Отже, регулярне застосування переднаголошеного консонансу (згідно з традиційними моделями давньоанглійського вірша) – це найбільш прийнятний спосіб імітації алітераційного вірша українською мовою. Репрезентовано перший повний український переклад англосаксонської героїчної епопеї "Беовульф", виконаний Оленою О'Лір із застосуванням цього способу.