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**On Rhythm in Poetry Translation
– A New Swedish Translation of
Shakespeare's Sonnets**

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Contents

1. On rhythm in poetry – original and translation	3
2. The corpora of sonnets selected for analysis	5
3. The sonnet and the iambic pentameter – use and formal description	6
4. Rhythmic variation patterns in the Shakespearean sonnet	7
5. On the use of A2-lines in corpus B	10
6. General characteristics of rhythm in the Corpus A sonnets	13
7. Interaction between regular and irregular elements – some aesthetically relevant examples	16
8. Conclusion	20
Bibliography	21

1. On rhythm in poetry – original and translation

Rhythm is one out of several significant objects of study within prosody understood as the study of metres and forms of versification in poetry. It goes without saying that rhythm is an important aspect of a text in prose as well – and still more so in ordinary speech. Now, however, I will strictly stick to poetry based on metre, since in regular verse – unlike free verse – there are certain specific constraints set on verse lines, the effect of which I should like to examine in a translation context. But for lack of space, I shall have to refrain from discussing a number of other relevant aspects of poetical form such as patterns of rhyming, assonance, alliteration, and so on. (Cf. Heldner, forthcoming). Nor will I say anything here on textual qualities of a purely semantic and linguistic character, however important they may be for the reception of a text in translation.

What I would like to do is start from a close analysis of rhythmic patterns in some source text, and then go on to study the corresponding patterns in a translation of the same text. Considering the importance of rhythm both for the articulation of meaning in general and for conveying information – be it indirectly – on for instance mental or psychological states in the poet or narrator, states which may furthermore be changing as a poem or collection of poems progresses, I would like to claim that an adequate rendering of rhythm in the translation of a work of poetry is an important quality in the poetic target text – although, admittedly, not quite as important as rendering its conceptual contents.

Given this background, with its focus on rhythm, a natural further step will consist in trying to match observed patterns of rhythm in the work under study with significant aspects of its local meaning or interpretation. Such a procedure, I believe, may both contribute to a better understanding of the function of rhythmical variation in poetry and to shedding some light on the way emotive responses are evoked in readers.

My justification for adopting this particular line of research lies in my experience from an inquiry into the style of the Italian poet and scholar Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), which allowed me to establish in great detail the poetic mastery of this most eminent poet of the Middle Ages (*cf.* Heldner 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010). Subsequently, the results obtained were used in the construction of a model for translation quality assessment, involving close analyses of a number of previously identified parameters in seven Swedish translations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (*ibid.*

2008). As an overall outcome of this research, great differences showed up in the performance of the translators, whether connected with varying linguistic or poetic capacity or varying sensitivity to different kinds of poetic means of expression.

Considering the status of William Shakespeare as one of the major geniuses in the history of Western literature – comparable in importance to Dante – I felt like testing my theory on some Shakespearean text, when late in 2010 the talented poet, critic, and translator Eva Ström published a new translation of Shakespeare's famous collection of sonnets. The present article is the result of a preliminary investigation into the problematics of poetic form in translations, as applied to Shakespeare's Sonnets and Eva Ström's translation of these poems. My focus will be on poetic rhythm.

Ultimately the article should be expanded, by taking into account other existing translations of Shakespeare's suite of 154 sonnets and by comparing them both among themselves and with the source text. A number of other parameters than poetic rhythm would also have to be examined¹.

¹ Among existing translations at least the following could be mentioned: C.R. Nyblom (1871), K.A. Svensson (1964), Sven Christer Swahn (1981), Lena R. Nilsson (2006), and Martin Tegen (2007).

2. *The corpora of sonnets selected for analysis*

In order to complete my investigation within reasonable time, I have chosen to make do with a restricted corpus consisting of three groups of sonnets, each of which is characterized by a certain thematic unity and therefore belonging to an easily distinguishable subset of Shakespeare's collection. In each thematic group, four or five sonnets have been selected for analysis, my hypothesis being that, at least in good poetry, feelings, moods, and states of mind are being reflected not just in the verbal flow but also in the rhythmic variations of the verse. In poetry of minor quality a tendency can be observed of sticking too faithfully to the metrical scheme, a procedure that may lead to an impression of monotony and lack of life.

Hence, one group consists of the first four of the so-called "Procreation sonnets" (1-17), the theme of which is to strongly advise the handsome young nobleman they are addressing to "procreate", in other words to stop directing his love only toward himself and instead get married and have children, thereby gaining a form of eternity for his remarkable beauty. The second group (sonnets 18-33) could be described as a sort of "honeymoon" between the same young man and the poet who now seem to be on exceptionally good affectional terms. Harmony reigns in the relationship and eternity is supposed to be bestowed on the young man through the immortal writing of the poet. Sonnets 18-22 have been selected from this group. In the third group, however, the reader is confronted with an open crisis in the relationship. The young nobleman has taken over "the Black lady", *i.e.* the mistress of the poet who, consequently, has lost both his female love and – which seems to be worse in his eyes – his male friend, benefactor, and lover. The poet's mental equilibrium is seriously affected by this double loss. From this group, which consists of sonnets 34-43, I have selected sonnets 40-43. *Corpus A*, as I will be calling it, consists all in all of 182 verse lines corresponding to these 13 sonnets.

However, I have also examined a larger corpus ("B") ranging from sonnets 1 to 70 in a somewhat more superficial way in order to establish a point of comparison for the statistics obtained for the previously mentioned three smaller groups. In this corpus, sonnets 44-70 could be said to represent a period devoted to the poet's trying to overcome the loss encountered.

3. *The sonnet and the iambic pentameter – use and formal description*

Shakespeare is probably one of the best-known sonnet writers of all times. However, the sonnet seems to have originated in 13th century Sicily, from where it was soon brought to Tuscany and used by poets like Guittone d'Arezzo, Dante Alighieri and his friend Guido Cavalcanti – and, first and foremost, Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374).

The Petrarchan sonnet was slightly modified after being imported to England. It is true that the Shakespearean sonnet, too, is a verse form consisting of 14 lines, but it has a different structure and rhyme scheme. What we find in Shakespeare is the rhyme scheme *a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f, g-g*, while the Italian sonnet shows a lot of variation, a common form being *a-b-b-a, a-b-b-a, c-d-e, e-d-c*. This means that whereas Shakespeare's sonnets ended with a single couplet, Italian sonnets closed with a sextet (*i.e.* a group of two tercets of three lines each) after a preceding octet of eight lines. The octet was supposed to introduce a theme or problem of some kind, while an ideal sextet was supposed to solve it². The Shakespearean couplet can hardly make room for more than a brief final comment, a fact involving a significant structural difference between the two types of sonnet under discussion.

In the standard case, a verse in an English sonnet consists of ten syllables. But there does exist a variant form with eleven syllables, thus meeting the requirements for the Italian sonnet. In both cases a line in complete conformity with the metric scheme consists of five pairs of syllables, where each pair consists of one unstressed and one stressed syllable, giving the same rhythmic impression as the sequence *de DUM, de DUM, de DUM, de DUM, de DUM*. (The eleventh syllable, if there is one, is always unstressed – in English as well as Italian). In the Shakespearean context such a line is called an *iambic pentameter*, because it is made up of five *iamb*s, *penta* meaning 'five' in Greek and *iamb* a metrical foot of the form *de DUM* (as in, for instance, "of me") As a consequence, the Shakespearean sonnet line has usually got a *masculine* rhyme. In other words, it ends with a rhyme where stress is being placed upon the last (and possibly only) syllable of the rhyme word (as in *uphold* or *cold*). In the case of the eleven-syllable line, the rhyme is *feminine* (as in *painted – acquainted*)³.

² The turning point between the two parts of the poem is called *volta*.

³ In the Italian context, such an eleven-syllable line is called a *hendecasyllable*, where *hendeca* means 'eleven' in Greek.

4. Rhythmic variation patterns in the Shakespearean sonnet

In reality, a considerable number of verse lines in Shakespeare's sonnets do not strictly conform to the scheme of the iambic pentameter as previously defined. However, when such deviations do occur, I suggest they should not be seen as an easy way out for the poet having run into a metric problem. Instead there are many things indicating that they should rather be considered as completely intentional moves on the part of the poet.

One of the reasons for my saying so is that, when it comes to "breaking the rules", it is not just any of the rules regulating the form of the sonnet that tend to be broken. In fact, what we find are not, for instance, lines of nine or twelve syllables, nor occasional absences of one rhyme or all, nor a couple of extra lines, etc. With very few exceptions, deviations from the metric scheme concern the iambic rhythm.

Furthermore, such "deviations" tend to obey certain principles. According to my own observations of both Dante's and Shakespeare's styles, they either have the overall function of creating variation in the verse in order to avoid monotony, or, perhaps more importantly, they may also have what might be called a mimetic function in locally adapting the rhythm to imitate or reinforce some aspect of what is going on in the poem on the semantic level. Such a principle, of course, should be considered as having an aesthetic motivation.

Before showing how Eva Ström's translation compares with Shakespeare's original in this respect, I would like to describe the Shakespearean sonnets in more detail as for their patterns of rhythmic variation. At the same time I will have the opportunity to introduce some more of the terminology required for the subsequent analysis.

My classification involves seven simple categories the first of which corresponds to the entirely regular iambic pentameter consisting of either five iambs (A1) or five iambs followed by an extra, unstressed syllable (A2). The following examples from sonnets 1 and 42 illustrate this category:

Syllable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
A1	From	fai-	rest	crea-	tures	we	de-	sire	in-	crease	
1:1	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	
A2	And	yet	it	may	be	said	I	loved	her	dear-	ly
42:2	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○

A frequent variant of the regular type involves a modification in the first foot. It consists in a *trochee* being substituted for the iamb, which means an inversion of the pattern *de DUM* into *DUM de* (types *A1a*, *A2a*). Again, the examples are from sonnets 1 and 42:

<i>Syllable</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<i>A1a</i>	Pi-	ty	the	world,	or	else	this	glut-	ton	be	
1:13	•	◦	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	
<i>A2a</i>	Suff'	ring	my	friend	for	my	sake	to	ap-	prove	her
42:8	•	◦	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦

But trochaic inversions may also occur verse internally in any of the feet 2, 3 or 4 (types *A1b*, *A2b*), as in syllables 5 and 6 of sonnet 1:14:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<i>A1b</i>	To	eat	the	world's	due	by	the	grave	and	thee	
1:14	◦	•	◦	•	•	◦	◦	•	◦	•	

The contiguity of the two stressed syllables 4 and 5 – resulting from an inversion in foot 5/6 – creates a pause between syllables 5 and 6 equivalent to a *caesura*. When the verse changes pace and returns to iambic from syllable 7 and onwards, the result is a new unit in the verse line starting from syllable 6.

In a second variant involving the first foot, the iamb is replaced by a *spondee* – a metrical foot consisting of two successive syllables, both of which are stressed (types *A1c*, *A2c*). The following example is from sonnet 40:4:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<i>A1c</i>	All	mine	was	thine,	be-	fore	thou	hast	this	more.	
40:4	•	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	

Spondees, too, may occur inside the verse as in foot 5/6 of line 11 in sonnet 1. Again, a caesura appears after two stressed syllables – 4 and 5 – and a new unit is created from syllable 6 and onwards, as in the case of sonnet 1:11 (types *A1d*, *A2d*):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<i>A1d</i>	With-	in	thine	own	bud	bur-	iest	thy	con-	tent	
1:11	◦	•	◦	•	•	•	◦	•	◦	•	

There also exists a less frequent variant in which the first foot consists of two short unstressed syllables (types *A1e*, *A2e*). It is called a *pyrrhic*. In my limited corpus there is no example of an initial pyrrhic. However, there are several cases of

verse internal ones (types *A1f*, *A2f*), but only in combination with other deviations from the basic metric scheme.

In the following, I will make a distinction between lines characterized by a deviation from the iambic pattern in the first foot only, and such as display modifications either in an internal foot, or in two feet or more. The former, denoted *A*, will be categorized as *simple* and the latter as *complex*. Lines of the complex rhythmic type will be denoted *B* and have one of the “internal” labels *b*, *d*, *f* or else two or more of the labels *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, *f* added in accordance with the description given above. Let us look at an example of a complex verse line (from sonnet 19:3) with some modification or other intervening in four consecutive feet.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<i>B1adfd</i>	Pluck	the	keen	teeth	from	the	fierce	ti-	ger's	jaws.	
19:3	•	◦	•	•	◦	◦	•	•	◦	•	

As can be seen above, the line is labelled *B1adfd*, meaning that it has got ten syllables and starts out with a trochee followed by a spondee and a pyrrhic and, finally, another spondee before the final iamb. A kind of caesura appears between syllables 4 and 5.

How, then, have all those rhythmical patterns been used by Shakespeare himself and by Eva Ström? In the following, we will both be looking at frequency data and distributional data and then comment on the poetic functions of these variational features.

5. On the use of A2-lines in corpus B

Starting with the distinction A1-A2, we can see in the following table from *Corpus B* that, while Shakespeare uses iambic pentameters of the A1-type in as many as 92 % of his verse lines, Eva Ström only uses them in 72 % of hers. As a result there are about 28 % of A2-lines of different varieties in the target text and only 8 % in the source text. So using lines of the A2-type cannot be seen as one of Shakespeare's favourite methods for introducing rhythmic variation in his sonnets.

Table 1: Frequency of A1-lines and A2-lines in Corpus B:

<i>Corpus B:</i>	<i>A1-lines, number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>A2-lines, number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Total number</i>
Shakespeare	902	92 %	78	8 %	980
Eva Ström	710	72 %	270	28 %	980

On the other hand, if we look at the distributional details, we observe that apart from being infrequent in Shakespeare's sonnets generally, the A2-type is at the same time quite unevenly distributed – a circumstance liable to indicate, on the part of the poet, an intentionally aesthetic use of this rhythmic pattern, since random-generated uses tend to unfold less extreme distributional patterns.

But let me make the discussion more concrete. At one extreme, there is an example from the “Honeymoon” sequence entirely composed of this type of verse – Sonnet 20. Here is the first quartet, whose rhymes are all feminine just as they are in the rest of the poem, which is unique in this respect:

A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false woman's fashion;

In this sonnet, the poet seems to be in a great mood, wittily feminizing by an exclusive use of feminine rhymes the somewhat androgynous young man who has roused his passion. Besides, the impression conveyed by this poem is very harmonious owing to that light, tripping feel of the regular iambic pentameters consistently finished off with an extra little unstressed syllable. Monotony is overcome and a certain liveliness achieved by an extensive use of trochees or spondees in the first foot.

On the whole, there are significantly more of A2-lines in this particular part of the corpus than elsewhere, as can be seen from the following table showing the frequency of A2-lines in the “Honeymoon” part as well as in the rest of *Corpus B*.

Table 2: Distribution of A2-lines in Corpus B

<i>William Shakespeare:</i>	<i>All A2-lines</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Total number of lines</i>
The Procreation Sonnets (1-17)	20	8 %	(17x14) 238
The «Honeymoon» (18-33)	34	15 %	(16x14) 224
Open crisis: the black lady (34-43)	12	9 %	(10x14) 140
Trying to get over the loss (44-70)	12	3 %	(25x14) 378
TOTAL:	78	8 %	(70x14) 980

What this table also shows, at the other extreme, is that the use of A2-lines is quite rare in the last one of our type B sub-corpora (consisting of sonnets 44-70). In all, it has only got about 3 % of A2-verses, to be compared with the 15 % of the “Honeymoon” sonnets (18-33). The fact that there are five times as many verse lines with a feminine rhyme in that part of the corpus as in the part devoted to getting over the loss of a beloved person might have some connection with that harmonious tripping pace of the A2-type of verse which suits the atmosphere of relative optimism and enthusiasm reigning here.

What about Eva Ström, then? Let us note to begin with that, resorting to A2-lines may afford a convenient way of resolving specific rhyme problems. In fact, having a choice at the end of the verse between a word ending with a masculine rhyme and one ending with a feminine rhyme should be of a certain importance to the translator, considering the difficult task he or she is faced with. But first, some statistics:

Table 3: Distribution of A2-lines in Corpus B

<i>Eva Ström:</i>	<i>All A2-lines</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Total number of lines</i>
The Procreation Sonnets (1-17)	68	29 %	(17x14) 238
The «Honeymoon» (18-33)	76	34 %	(16x14) 224
Open crisis: the black lady (34-43)	40	29 %	(10x14) 140
Trying to get over the loss (44-70)	86	23 %	(25x14) 378
TOTAL:	270	28 %	(70x14) 980

As can be seen here, the distribution of A2-lines is not nearly as uneven as it is in the source text, although in the target text, too, there are slightly more lines with a feminine rhyme in the “Honeymoon” sub-corpus than elsewhere, and somewhat less in the one covering Sonnets 44-70. But the relatively constant percentage of A2-lines in the target text, ranging from 23 % to 34 %, does not seem to indicate the use of A2-lines as a means for achieving stylistic effects.

Supposing Shakespeare's choice of using feminine rhymes throughout Sonnet 20 to be of a stylistic character, a translator might be expected to try rendering this point of style. But we can see no sign of any attention being paid to this in the target text. As a matter of fact, the utterly exceptional Sonnet 20 has, in Eva Ström's version, got eight verse lines of the *A1*-type and six of the *A2*-type.

6. General characteristics of rhythm in the Corpus A sonnets

What, then, are the proportions in *Corpus A* of the various rhythmical patterns presented above? As can be seen from tables 4 and 5 below there is slightly more of regularity in the target text than in the source text, when you consider the number of all *A1/A2*-lines (90 % in Shakespeare and 95 % in Ström) as compared with the number of more or less irregular lines (*B1/B2* with 10 % in Shakespeare and 5 % in Ström).

Table 4: Number of *A1/A2* lines versus *B1/B2*-lines in *Corpus A*

<i>Corpus A:</i>	<i>All A1</i>	<i>All A2</i>	<i>A1 + A2</i>	<i>All B1</i>	<i>All B2</i>	<i>B1 + B2</i>	<i>A + B, total</i>
Shakespeare	136	28	164	14	4	18	182
Ström	117	56	173	6	3	9	182

Table 5: Percentage of *A1/A2* lines versus *B1/B2*-lines in *Corpus A*

<i>Corpus A:</i>	<i>All A1</i>	<i>All A2</i>	<i>A1 + A2</i>	<i>All B1</i>	<i>All B2</i>	<i>B1 + B2</i>	<i>A + B, total</i>
Shakespeare	75 %	15 %	90 %	8 %	2 %	10 %	100 %
Ström	64 %	31 %	95 %	3 %	2 %	5 %	100 %

The difference increases if we concentrate on the entirely regular *A1/A2*-lines. Then we can see that, whereas in the original they constitute almost half of the totality of verse lines (48 %), they represent nearly 60 % in the translation. As for the various kinds of irregular lines there are twice as many of them in Shakespeare's text (19 %) as in that of Eva Ström (9 %):

Table 6: Number of regular versus irregular verse lines in *Corpus A: Shakespeare*

WS	1	2	3	4	18	19	20	21	22	40	41	42	43	Sum	%
<i>A1</i>	7	5	7	7	6	6	-	8	7	3	6	5	4	71	48
<i>A2</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-	8	-	-	3	-	3	2	17	
<i>A1/A2 a,c</i>	4	5	5	5	7	3	6	3	3	3	7	2	6	59	32
<i>irregular</i>	3	4	1	2	1	5	-	3	4	5	1	4	2	35	19

Table 7: Number of regular versus irregular verse lines in *Corpus A: Ström*

ES	1	2	3	4	18	19	20	21	22	40	41	42	43	Sum	%
<i>A1</i>	7	7	4	6	7	7	5	5	6	6	4	5	6	75	58
<i>A2</i>	4	4	2	3	1	-	4	3	3	1	1	3	2	31	
<i>A1/A2 a,c</i>	3	2	6	5	5	5	5	4	2	6	6	6	5	60	33
<i>irregular</i>	-	1	2	-	1	2	-	2	3	1	3	-	1	35	9

However, when we turn to verses showing some initial modification (the *A1/A2 a,c* type) we find, interestingly, that Eva Ström and Shakespeare have got the same proportion of that type: around 33%. In other words, if we were to define

acceptable rhythmic variation in terms of a modified stress pattern intervening only in the first foot – which implies, of course, that any other type of modification will be considered a kind of metric failure – then the conclusion would have to be that source text and target text are equal in this respect.

Before commenting further on this particular definition in the next section, I would like to point out a curious analogy between the metrical statistics above and the ones reported in Heldner (2008) on rhythmic variation in Dante's *Divine Comedy* and its Swedish translations.

In fact, it turns out that while Dante and Shakespeare use almost the same proportion of completely regular lines (around 50%) in their poetry, their translators tend to overuse the regular type to an extent ranging from 60-69 % (Eva Ström and Ingvar Björkeson⁴) to 80-95 % in the rest of the Dante interpreters. As for regular lines with a change of stress in the first foot, they were used in 25 % of the lines by Dante, to be compared with Shakespeare's 32 %. A frequent type of "irregular" verse in Dante obtains 19 %, which is equal to the figure obtained by Shakespeare for the *B1/B2*-type of lines.

These parallels seem too striking to be simply interpreted as a result of chance. Could there exist in great artists some kind of intuitive feeling for balance in the distribution of harmonious properties and more disruptive features in poetry, in order to achieve variation and a sense of life?⁵ Furthermore, it should be noted that in the translations, as a rule, there is nothing of this kind to be observed. The overall proportions of regularity, semi-regularity, and irregularity look quite different.

Viewing Eva Ström's excellent translation in this light we find that instead of roughly demonstrating regularity, semi-regularity and irregularity in the proportions 50-to-30-to-20 as we have seen in the source texts, her target text will be more like 60-to-30-to-10. Quite a good performance considering the difficulty of the task! When comparing her regularity proportions with those of Ingvar Björkeson, she has done a little better, since he would be attributed something like 70-to-25-to-5.

But looking back a little it seems that the older a translation is, the closer we can expect it to keep to the abstract metric scheme, and the less we will find of efforts towards rhythmic variation. In any case this holds true for the Dante translations where the regularity factor is often higher than 90, and it might also hold for Shakespeare. A quick check on the translations of Sonnet 18 by Carl Rupert Nyblom

⁴ The latest translation in Swedish was published in 1983 by Ingvar Björkeson, whose translation also comes out as the most successful among those examined.

⁵ At this point, one might recall Jurij Lotman's "law of the third fourth" (*cf.* Lotman 1974:67, 74 or Heldner 2008: 110).

(1871) and Erik Blomberg (1965) seems to confirm such a suspicion. So it could be that we are facing here some kind of culturally determined strategy on its way to change.

7. Interaction between regular and irregular elements – some aesthetically relevant examples

Going back to the tentative definition given in section 6 of rhythmic variation as only admitting a modified stress pattern in the first foot, the time has come to definitely dismiss any such proposal. It is important, after all, for the overall impression of the sonnet and the conceptual content it conveys, to be able to allow the presence of one or more rhythmical deviations in the remaining four feet of the verse – in a suitable proportion of the total number of verses. Such lines cannot simply be explained away as cases of metrical failure.

What I should like to do here in order to substantiate my claim is to discuss a few concrete examples liable to show the interest in associating metrically deviant form with dramatic or striking features on the narrative level of the poem. I will be discussing two examples of sonnets selected solely on formal grounds. What they have in common is a larger proportion of irregular lines than many other units in *Corpus A*. The two sonnets farthest apart from the iambic metre, rhythmically, are number 19 from the “Honeymoon” sequence and number 40 from the “Open crisis” sequence.

What, then, is going on in Sonnet 19? Even though this poem is part of the “Honeymoon” sequence, it is characterized by a desperate tone connected with the poet’s horror at the thought of his young lover’s exquisite beauty being impaired by Time as it passes. Or, as Eva Ström puts it in her comment: the reader is given a picture of Chronos, the cruel god who eats his own children as the earth “devours her own sweet brood”. Shakespeare’s conclusion in the final couplet is that no immortality is possible except through the work of art:

Yet do thy worst, old Time; despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

As I interpret the situation, the poet’s feeling of despair at the ravages of Time is being transferred to the poem, not only by the words themselves, but also by a number of abrupt deviations from the regular pace of the iambic pentameter. The effect achieved is an extraordinary significance conferred to certain parallel key formulations, like “blunt thou the lion’s paws” and “Pluck the keen teeth”. This can easily be seen in the table below showing my rhythmical analysis of this sonnet. (A black circle marks each stress maximum and the caesura resulting from the rhythm being broken is

indicated by means of a slash.) A significant contrast is also obtained – by rhythmical means again – in the final couplet between “Yet do thy worst, old Time” and the very last words of the poem “ever live young”.

<i>Syllable</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	<i>type</i>	<i>Sonnet 19</i>
1	◦	●	◦	●	●	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1d	Devouring Time, / <u>blunt</u> thou the lion’s paws,
2	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	And make the earth devour her own sweet brood,
3	●	◦	●	●	◦	◦	●	◦	◦	●	-	B1adfd	Pluck the keen teeth / from the fierce tiger’s jaws,
4	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	And burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood,
5	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet’st,
6	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	And do whate’er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
7	◦	◦	●	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	B1ed	To the wide world / and all her fading sweets:
8	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	But I forbid thee one most heinous crime,
9	●	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1c	O carve not with thy hours my love’s fair brow,
10	◦	●	◦	●	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	●	-	A1b	Nor draw no lines there /with thine antique pen;
11	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1a	Him in thy course untainted do allow,
12	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	For beauty’s pattern to succeeding men.
13	●	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1c	Yet do thy worst, old Time; despite the wrong,
14	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	●	◦	◦	●	-	A1b	My love shall in my verse / ever live young.

What happens to these effects in the target text? Here is a rhythmical analysis to begin with showing, seemingly, more of regularity than the source text does, since it contains three instances of verse internal deviations compared to five in the original:

<i>Syllable</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	<i>type</i>	<i>Sonett 19</i>
1	◦	●	◦	●	●	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1d	Du glupska tid, / gör lejonassen slö,
2	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Låt jorden sluka grymt sin ljuva brodd,
3	●	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1c	Dra tand ur tigers käke, / låt den dö
4	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1a	Bränn Fågel Fenix / i sitt eget blod!
5	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Du skapar dystert höst och yster vår
6	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	●	●	◦	●	-	A1b	Du gör ju som du vill, / kvickbenta Tid,
7	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Med vissnad fågling som ur världen går,
8	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	●	●	◦	●	-	A1d	Men jag förbjuder dig / en skändlig strid;
9	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	A2a	Skär inga rynkor / i min älsklings panna,
10	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1a	Dra inga linjer / med din penna än,
11	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	A2a	Nej, låt hans skönhet / ofördärvad stanna,
12	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Som skönhetsmall åt sena tiders män.
13	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Så gör ditt värsta, Tid, och trots din plikt
14	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Min älskling lever evigt i min dikt.

In spite of this fact, however, more or less the same effects of emphasis are created either by means of successive initial inversions, as in “Skär inga rynkor”, “dra inga linjer”, and “Nej, låt hans skönhet”, or by internal ones as in “gör lejonassen slö” and “en skändlig strid”. It is clear that a caesura may be brought about by an initial rhythmical unit as well as by an internal break caused by an inversion or a spondee. Another nice example of the latter is “kvickbenta Tid”, a classical invocation singled out by a compulsory stress falling on the two consecutive syllables: “kvick-” and “bent-”. Thus, restraining my judgment to rhythm, I would say that Eva Ström’s rendering of this sonnet has excellent qualities.

Let us finally have a look at Sonnet 40, which takes us right into the heart of the crisis. It is one of the very last poems in the sequence devoted to the poet's reactions to losing his mistress, who is taken over by his lover (and benefactor), the handsome young nobleman: a double loss! In a way, it may be said to represent the culmination of the crisis, the poet's despair reaching its climax. But at the same time he is wittily playing with the ambiguity of the expression "my love", which is being repeated five times, while the word "love" appears ten times altogether in variable senses.

Syllable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	type	Sonnet 40
1	•	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	-	A1c	Take all my loves, / my love, yea take them all;
2	◦	•	◦	•	•	◦	◦	•	◦	•	-	A1d	What hast thou then / more than thou hadst before?
3	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	-	A1	No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call,
4	•	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	-	A1c	All mine was thine, / before thou hadst this more.
5	◦	•	◦	◦	•	◦	•	◦	◦	•	◦	B2fbb	Then if for my love / thou my love receivest,
6	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	A2	I cannot blame thee for my love thou usest;
7	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	A2	But yet be blamed, if thou thyself deceivest
8	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	A2	By wilful taste of what thyself refusest.
9	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	-	A1	I do forgive thy robb'ry, gentle thief,
10	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	-	A1a	Although thou steal thee all my poverty;
11	◦	•	•	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	-	A1d	And yet love knows / it is a greater grief
12	◦	•	•	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	-	A1d	To bear love's wrong / than hate's known injury
13	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	•	•	◦	•	-	A1d	Lascivious grace, in whom / all ill well shows,
14	•	◦	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	◦	•	-	A1a	Kill me with spites, /yet we must not be foes.

Looking for irregularity again, after the poet's resentful outcry "Take all my loves, my love" we meet in line 2 with a clash of two stressed syllables (4 and 5), provoking a caesura just before the plaintive uttering of "more than thou hadst before" so as to make it stand out. And in line 5, the rhythm imposed by the reading in which stress is carried by "love" in both instances of "my love" leads to a pace so quick that it seems to be flying. It provides an effective contrast to the steady argumentative discourse of the rest of the quatrain. A final remark concerns lines 11-12 where three consecutive stresses slow down the delivery so as to produce a great insistence on the highly significant expressions "And yet love knows" and "To bear love's wrongs". It is followed up in line 13 by another clash of three stressed syllables, creating a new standstill after "all ill well shows", which in its turn is broken by the violent opening of line 14 with an initial inversion: "Kill me with spites". The final words of the poem turn back to the regular iambic pattern when the poet realizes he cannot afford to lose his benefactor: "yet we must not be foes". The considerable number of rhythmical contrasts produced by the constant changes of pace in this poem contribute to giving it an air of passionate liveliness.

Now let us compare with the Swedish translation. Judging from the table, it looks a great deal more regular. While as many as seven lines are composed of perfectly regular iambic pentameters, only one of the verses is rhythmically deviant. On

the other hand a certain amount of variation and liveliness is brought about by a frequent use of modifications in the first foot, a salient feature in Eva Ström's translations, as we have already seen.

<i>Syllable</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>type</i>	<i>Sonett 40 Eva Ström</i>
1	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	A2a	Ta allt jag har av kärlek, allt och alla,
2	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Vad har du då du inte hade förr?
3	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	A2a	Inte en kärlek du kan trogen kalla,
4	●	●	◦	●	◦	●	●	◦	◦	●	-	B1cb	Allt mitt var redan ditt, / lagt vid din dörr.
5	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1a	Om du för kärleks skull min kära tar.
6	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1a	Kan jag för missbruk inte klandra dig,
7	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Men klagar om du själv dig då bedrar
8	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Med det ditt bättre jag vill vägra dig.
9	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	A2	Du vackre tjuv, jag visst din stöld förlåter,
10	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1a	Fastän det var min fattigdom du stal,
11	●	◦	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	A2a	Och fast du vet att bittrare man gråter
12	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Av kärleks fel än utav hatets kval.
13	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	En nåd av lusta byggd, där ont blir gott,
14	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	◦	●	-	A1	Du dödar mig, och jag, jag älskar blott.

Maybe it would not have been a bad idea here to focus a little more on rendering some of the tensions and emotional vivacity inherent in Shakespeare's text by allowing a little more of rhythmical audacity, such as the expressivity realized in line 4 through consecutive stressed syllables and a caesura after "Allt mitt var redan ditt".

8. Conclusion

The time has come for a few concluding remarks. By this preliminary study I first set out to make my case on the overall importance of rhythm in poetry, and I believe to have given at least a hint of the importance of rhythm in Shakespeare's sonnets – both aesthetically and as a means for realizing mimetic effects. As Eva Ström so rightly notes in her preface (p. 11, my translation): “By means of questions, images and metaphors, [Shakespeare] creates a sense of unease and dynamics in his iambic pentameter”. What I should like to emphasize here is that such effects – and others – are often enhanced by means of Shakespeare's use of rhythmical devices.

At the same time I have provided statistics for various features connected with rhythm both in the Shakespearean poems and Eva Ström's translations. The observations made possible by my analyses of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (in combination with those of Dante's *Divine Comedy*) seem to allow two or three conclusions concerning the feasibility of rendering sophisticated rhythmical effects in the translation of works of poetry. One is that, considering the large number of distinct features to handle in this type of translation – semantical as well as metrical – the task must be regarded as extremely delicate and be entrusted to a highly skilled translator, preferably a poet in his/her own right. However, another conclusion is that it does seem to be a possible task, at least for translations between languages as close as English and Swedish. This has been made sufficiently clear by Eva Ström's translations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (in contrast to most translations of, say, *The Divine Comedy*). A third and final point to be emphasized is that, as for rendering rhythmical effects, there may be an increasing awareness under way of the necessity of taking seriously into account the aspect of rhythm in the translation of poetry.

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