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Early Middle English morphology: morphological innovations and archaisations in the Old English gloss to the *Eadwine Canterbury Psalter*

The Old English gloss to the *Eadwine Psalter* is the last complete example of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of vernacularizing the Bible. Produced in mid-twelfth century, it has been long beyond the scope of historical linguistic research, as the Old English gloss has been usually treated as a corrupted Middle English version of Old English (O'Neill 1992: 123), and thus has been deemed quite useless for investigating Old English psalter glosses. On the other hand, Gibson (1992: 3) defends the gloss, claiming that "[t]]he *Eadwine Psalter* is a manuscript at once splendid, academic, and written for a public who could read languages other than Latin". The reason behind such varying opinions are the numerous alternations it contains; there are over two thousands changes introduced to the Old English gloss in the first fifty psalms, which include erasures, additions, over-writings, and coordinated glosses. The changes concern lexicon, phonetics, spelling, morphology and syntax.

The aim of the study is to analyse the morphological corrections to the gloss, which account for about 20% of all the corrections found in the first fifty psalms. These corrections involve changes in morphological forms of verbs (tense, number, person), nouns (case, number, person) and adjectives. The changes, paradoxically, on the one hand suggest the scribal attempts at introducing linguistic innovation by modernizing the language, and on the other the opposite attempts at conscious, possibly stylistic, archaisation. The study investigates the nature and reasoning behind these corrections in order to provide an insight into the dynamically changing twelfth-century English language, as well as into the role and status of Old English in post-Conquest England.

Word count: 282 words

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