NOTES ON THE STANZAIC DIVISION AND THE METRE OF "JUDAS"

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Child could not consult the MS which has "Judas" in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge (MS. 323; B. 14, 39), of the thirteenth century, and complained that he was unable to do a collation with the Wright-Halliwell text, as it had been stolen. It was not until 1896 that the MS was rediscovered. Kittredge was furnished a copy of "Judas" from the MS by Skeat and printed it in Child's fifth volume as an addition. In the Cambridge edition of the Child volumes, Kittredge gave a text according to his interpretation of Skeat's transcript and partly to Skeat's interpretation of the MS.

Thereafter various ballad anthologies were edited and most of them copied Child's text (Child No. 23). A recent anthology which is rather highly appreciated is MacEdward Leach's The Ballad Book (New York, 1955). In this volume Leach gave a text of "Judas" which, he says, "is taken" from the MS. But mainly he seems to have followed Child's text with small changes. As is rumoured, he might have

1 Reliquiae Antiquae, ed. by Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell (London, 1841), I, p. 144. In the Cambridge abridged edition of the Child volumes Kittredge says that "Judas" was for the first time printed in 1845 (English and Scottish Popular Ballads, ed. by H.C. Sargent and G. L. Kittredge, Boston, 1904, p. 41; see also English and Scottish Popular Ballads, ed. by F.J. Child, Boston and New York, 1882-1898, V, p. 403), but the first edition of Reliquiae Antiquae was undoubtedly published in 1841. The first volume referred to the present is the 1966 reprint made by AMS Press, Inc., New York.


4 Child, V, p. 288.

5 Sargent and Kittredge, pp. 41-2.

avoided infringement of the copyright by an ambiguous suggestion as to the source of the text. of (line 3), barn (l. 14), Solte (l. 23) and wold (l. 36) are misprints.\footnote{As for }\textit{yno }\textit{þi} (line 4), Kenneth Sisam also printed it the same way in his edited \textit{Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose} (Oxford, 1921), p. 168.

Louise Pound, in her \textit{Poetic Origins and the Ballad} (New York, 1921), referring to “The Twelfth Day”, which is in the same MS as that of “Judas”, mentioned that both are in the same handwriting.\footnote{\textit{Poetic Origins and the Ballad}, pp. 164, 180.} It seems, however, improbable that she actually saw the MS herself; she might have depended upon W. W. Greg’s article, “A Ballad of the Twelfth Day”, which introduces “The Twelfth Day” with its text from the MS. Therefore her quotation of a part of “Judas” is unreliable. Kittredge’s accuracy is notable. Skeat’s transcript was accepted by Kittredge, and Skeat was himself an excellent scholar. Thereupon, to use Skeat’s transcript as printed in the fifth volume of the Child collection as the text of the present study, without referring directly to the MS in the Library of Trinity College, might be agreeable.\footnote{\textit{Modern Language Review}, VIII (1913), pp. 64 ff.}

Recognizing the Wright-Halliwell text to be strophic, as is easily perceived, Child printed it with stanza division (the Wright-Halliwell transcript is quite accurate). Afterwards all the editors who printed

\footnote{Louise Pound, pp. 179–80.}

\footnote{Child revised \textit{s} of \textit{meist} (line 6), \textit{heiste} (l. 18), etc. into \textit{b} according to Mätzner’s \textit{All-englische Sprachproben} (Berlin, 1867), I, p. 114. Baum says that the scribe miswrote \textit{s} for \textit{z} (PMLA, XXXI, p. 181). W. W. Greg points out in the notes to “The Twelfth Day”, which is in the same hand-writing as “Judas,” that throughout the text -\textit{st} is usec for -\textit{st} (MLR, VIII, p. 66). Kenneth Sisam, who actually consulted the MS, gave an independent interpretation which is worth quoting: The whole system of ME. spelling was modelled on French . . . More commonly the copyist, accustomed to write both French and English, chose a French representation for an English sound. So \textit{st} for \textit{bt} appears regularly . . . in [“Judas”]. The explanation is that in French words like \textit{heste }’\textit{hete }’, \textit{gist }’\textit{git }’, \textit{s} became only a breathing before it disappeared; and \textit{b} in ME. \textit{bt} weakened to a similar sound . . . Hence the French spelling \textit{st} is occasionally substituted for English \textit{bt}. (Sisam, \textit{op. cit.} p. 728) Moreover, he commented that \textit{tunesmen} (line 6 of Skeat’s Transcript) is probably \textit{townsmen}—“as \textit{c} and \textit{t} are hard to distinguish in some ME. hands, and are often confused by copyists, this reading is more likely than \textit{tunesmen} of the editors—Wright-Halliwell, Mätzner, Child, Cook (and \textit{N.E.D. s. v. tunesman}).” And his three reasons follow. Sisam also notes that \textit{cop} (line 16) is \textit{top} in the MS.}
The Stanzaic Division and the Metre of "Judas"

the text of "Judas" gave the divisions also. But the problem lies in the three triplets found in the MS. In the MS (Skeat's transcript) at the end of lines 8, 25 and 30, we find a sign, " ii. " Kittredge gave an interpretation that "this appears to indicate that this line is to be repeated ",¹ and printed it so.² Child also gave a repetition, though it is only at line 30 (Wright and Halliwell did not copy the sign). But did they not, especially Kittredge, wonder that the repetition of the second line of a couplet as the first line of the following couplet, without any variation, is quite unnatural as a ballad device?³ The suspicion also arises within all the students of balladry, particularly those who are familiar with its music.

The present writer's interpretation is that " ii. " means that the melody which accompanies the second line of a triplet is repeated as the third line. Of three triplets the signs are all at the end of the second line. An example follows, taken from lines 7-9:

imette wid is soster þe swikele wimon.
  judas þou were wrþe me stende the wid ston. .ii.
  for the false prophete þat tou bileuest upon.

In all the rhyming couplets and three rhyming triplets the first lines stick out a few letters to the left of the margin. This scribal device shows that these couplets are of a slightly different nature from usual rhyming couplets seen in literary verse. Definitely a couplet is a unit in general, but the priority of the first line is more clearly shown than that of a literary couplet, whose heads are written evenly. This fact, and the consistency of the syntactical break in the middle of each line, might indicate that the couplet is sung to a tune, its second line being sung to the latter half of the tune. Possibly, we can infer that the text of "Judas" in the MS was taken from actual singing, or it was sung anyhow, although the literariness of the vocabulary suggests that it was written down by some monk.⁴

¹ Sargent and Kittredge, p. 644.
² Ibid., pp. 41-42.
⁴ "It was probably its religious theme that recommended the ballad to the monastic scribe " (Friedman, p. 56).
Skeat's note on this sign was printed by Kittredge in Child's fifth volume—"This means that there are here two second lines, i.e., that three lines rime together." It is quite doubtful whether the sign "means" such a thing, since with a mere glance at the text it is clear as daylight "that there are here two second lines, i.e., that three lines rime together". Then the sign is unnecessary. The reason why the sign is expressly attached may be that the scribe wanted to note that the melody at this line is repeated. Judging by his note, Skeat is, nevertheless, more understandable than Kittredge in that he took a triplet as a triplet, although the musical aspect seems to have been beyond his recognition. One of the reasons behind Kittredge's interpretation in spite of Skeat's note might be due to the influence of Child's text. At any rate, the interpretation seems to be generally accepted.2

Kenneth Sisam printed these triplets in question as triplets with "(bis)" at the end of each second line.3 This differs a little from Kittredge's interpretation in the stanzaic divisions. What is worth notice is that in the notes to the text, Sisam mentioned that "(.if.)" is "the regular sign for bis".4 Sisam must have taken it as a sign for repetition of words, while the thirteenth century scribe possibly intended it as a sign for repetition of music.

Such suggestions as that the language of "Judas" is Southern,5 that "the language shows no sign of being earlier than the manuscript,"6 and that "[Judas] shows no signs of debasement either in language or rhyme,"7 do not help us much in investigating the pronunciation, as the language is ME. It was a good notion by which A. J. Ellis attempted to deduce ME pronunciation from songs which have musical notation, such as the famous "Cuckoo Song".8 It is, however, quite uncertain how natural a pronunciation "Cuckoo Song" or "Angelus and Virginem", sung by "hende Nicholas" in

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4 Ibid., p. 257.
5 Baum, op. cit., p. 181 n.
6 Ibid., p. 182.
"The Miller’s Tale”,¹ shows us. The value of the vowel e and the
accent of each word particularly matter for the present study. But
we can do nothing but to follow the general opinion that they were
pronounced with considerable flexibility.

The preparations above make what the present writer recently felt
after reading the text of “Judas” less unsteady. The metre seems
to be that of most versions of “Lamkin” (Child No. 93), that is, the
triple metre, as is shown below:

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
& \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
\hline
& \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
\hline
& \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
\hline
& \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
\end{array}
\]

This might be the fundamental metre of “Judas”, with such variations
as, for example, | \, \, \, |, which is often seen in the “Lamkin” versions.
Couplet divisions, not quatrain, are sometimes found in the “Lamkin”
versions. The fact indicates that musically the pausal division is less
easily felt in the middle of a half-tune, although verbally the syntactical
break at the same place is fixed,² than in such a quadruple metre as the
commonest CM (the hymn term is used for convenience’s sake). At
the first stanza one may immediately become supicious of the triple
metre reading, but if he is familiar with ballads, he will soon recall
that in many traditional ballads the opening stanza is metrically some-
what more irregular than the following stanzas.

After Child printed a text of “Judas,” some comments were made
on its metre, yet no one pointed out that it is in CM. As we read the
text with CM in mind, naturally dividing a line at the syntactical break
which is consistent throughout, anyone can notice that there are many
lines which lack proper stresses. When we take each half of a line
divided with a syntactical break as a unit, we find that nearly one third
of the text does not yield to the CM metre interpretation. The objec-
tion to the triple metre interpretation might be the “six-beat” line
interpretation which Gerould offered with uncertainty³ and Hendren

² Saintsbury divides a line with a vertical bar at the syntactical break in *A History of Eng-
agreed upon.\(^1\)

As for the "six-beat" line itself, we naturally take it as unusual when we find it, at least, among British and Anglo-American folksongs. Gerould pointed out that Greig's version of "Lizzie Lindsay" (No. 226)\(^2\) and that of "Crafty Farmer" (No. 283) are in "six-beat" line couplets. In both of them, rather, the rhythm \(\text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash }\) (Greig's \(\text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash }\)) can be eventually reduced to this rhythm), predominates throughout, sometimes accompanying the rhythm \(\text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash }\) they are in a triple metre. Therefore, even if we take them to be of "six-beat" lines (musically, eight-stressed), they are of a different nature from "Judas", in which the rhythm \(\text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash }\) is merely sporadic, when we try to give the "six-beat" line scansion. As for Sharp's version of "The Baffled Knight" (No. 112),\(^3\) which Gerould took to be in six-stressed couplets, he seems to have merely given a cursory glance at the text, for only the first stanza is in such a couplet, excepting the refrain.\(^4\)

The difficulty lies in the metre of the "Laird of Wariston" (No. 194) versions. Version C is apparently in CM, and the A, which was taken from the recitation of Sir Walter Scott's mother by Scott himself, may be regarded as the "Lamkin" type metre, since the latter half of stanza 6 and the fourth line of stanza 10 are clearly in triple metre;


\(^2\) Greig's tune is as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
\frac{3}{4} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} \\
\text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} & \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash} \\
\end{array}
\]

(Gavin Greig and Alexander Keith (eds.)*, Last Leaves of Traditional Ballad Airs*, Aberdeen, 1925, p. 164)

It is questionable whether the singer actually sang with this metre. If we take a notation which shows relative length, the third and the ninth bars should be \(\text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash }\) or \(\text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash }\), and the sixth and the twelfth bars, \(\text{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash }\). These seem much more natural, and the other versions of "Lizzie Lindsay" and the "Crafty Farmer" versions help one to understand this revision.


\(^4\) It may also be justifiable to slight such a literary text as the first stanza of "The Lowlands of Holland" (No. 92 Appendix), Bronson, II, p. 424.
but the six-stressed line scansion also seems probable, as version B seems to be possibly in six-stressed lines. It may be no wonder that "The Laird of Wariston" helped Gerould to scan "Judas" as six-stressed verse.

Suppose its two versions are in six-stressed lines: the syntactical break is certainly consistent throughout them. It means that the six-stressed line is not merely a six-stressed line in the sense that the seven-stressed line of the CM of traditional ballads, which has a wave,

\[ \times|/ \times \times |/ \times \times \ \times |/ \times \times |/ \times \times \]

is different in its nature from a seven-stressed line such as that in Pope's verse,

\[ \times / \times / \times / \times / \times / \times / \times / \times / \times / \times / \times \]

in which the stress relation is unstable, the syntactical break is not in a given place, and the sentence often runs on to the following line. Moreover, Westerners naturally expect the line to be eight-stressed musically when it is sung. In that sense Hendren's representation of the "Judas" metre is quite reasonable⁠—SM, a quadruple metre variation. This is the conception of the six-stressed line.

Whether both versions of "Laird of Wariston" are in six-stressed line or not, we notice that they are written in quatrains. Although quatrain writing can be a convention, it suggests that in both the versions a pausal division at the syntactical break was evidently felt when taken from the singing (Sharp's transcription of the version of "The Baffled Knight" might be due to the structure of the tune—the double-strain). "Lizzie Lindsay" versions and "The Crafty Farmer" versions are also mostly written in quatrain. "Judas", on the other hand, in spite of the definite consistency of the syntactical break in the middle of each line, is written in couplets in succession. Does it not indicate that the pausal division is rather not clear musically? The metre might be that of "Lamkin". Of the "Lamkin" versions the quatrains predominate over the couplets, but the quatrain division seems to be more or less conventional.

A close examination of the text proves the six-stressed line interpretation to be more improper. (Child's text is also referred to, since it

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⁠¹ Hendren, op. cit., p. 97.
must have been the text of Gerould and Hendren.)Applying the six stresses to each line, we often stumble, and inevitably notice its unnaturalness, even if we admit the irregulars. The verbal weights do not often coincide with the stresses which the six-stressed line interpretation requires. Here is an example:

Ful milde were the wordes he spec to Judas.
(Child’s text, 12)

It is really unnatural to stress he and to; spec must be stressed. The latter half of the line is read, “he spéc to Judás” (the rhyming requires an accent on the second syllable of Judas). Moreover we find such unnatural stresses as those on the relative pronoun, that, in lines 10, 11 and 12 (Child’s text), and the word comes at the head of the last half of each line. And of all the lines almost one third of their latter halves begin without any anacrusis—for example:

“Nay, bote hit be for the platen that he habben wolde.”
(12)

Anyone knows that the natural rhythm of English is iambic, and the folksongs clearly prove it. Thus the “Lamkin” rhythm felt in “Judas” might become acknowledgeable. We, however, still have some room for consideration—it is concerning the musical rhythm. Among “Lamkin” versions and their variants we have a few tunes which are in quadruple rhythm; we find them too among those of “The Cherry-Tree Carol” (No. 54), which are analogous to “Lamkin” in their metric quality. It is not impossible that the music of our text of “Judas” is in quadruple rhythm. (Generally speaking, the quadruple rhythm in question is for the most part merely a variation of the general triple rhythm.)

Examining the versions musically in duple and quadruple time,—Nos. 4, 14, 21, 29 and 30 of “The Cherry-Tree Carol,” and Nos. 8, 15 and 30 of “Lamkin”1—we find that text No. 4 of the former ballad resembles the text of “Judas” in that the trisyllabic periods (musically bars) and four-syllabic periods are approximately half and half in both the texts, when we count the syllables in the odd periods (1, 3, 5 and 7)

1 Bronson’s second volume (The Traditional Tunes, II) is consulted. The numbers indicate those in the volume.
of each stanza, which can be used as a criterion.\(^1\) We have a supposition that the extant version of "Judas" was sung in triple time. Likewise, although the similarity with No. 4 of "The Cherry-Tree Carol" should not be stressed much, it may be possible to infer that it is in quadruple time musically.\(^2\) If so, we can say that the sole version we have is not a typical version (at least metrically), since it is for certain a variation of the common triple time version, as we admit at all events, judging from version No. 4 of "The Cherry-Tree Carol"—the melody definitely belongs to the Group Aa of this ballad,\(^3\) and the 4/4 timing is simply a variation of 3/4 time, though this timing has influence upon the quantity of the syllables in the odd periods.\(^4\)

The text of "Judas" with stress marks is given below. The syntactical breaks make the text easily divided into quatrains, and such a division is surely convenient for the present. For spelling and punctua-

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\(^1\) No. 30 of "Lamkin," whose tune is double strain in 4/4, shows that the rate of trisyllabic periods and four-syllabic periods among the odd periods is roughly 1:5; that is, the metre, we might say, tends to be SM. It seems possible that the Child A version of "Lamkin" accompanied a tune in a like rhythm. Moreover, we may infer that the metre of "Laird of Wariston" might have been a variation of a like rhythm, that is, it seems to have been developed from the triple metre.

\(^2\) Cf. The first stanza of No. 4 of "The Cherry-Tree Carol" with music:

\[ \text{\footnotesize \begin{align*}
0, \ & \text{Jo-seph was an old man, and an old man was he!} \\
\text{And he court-ed sweet Ma-ry, In the town of Ga-li-lee. }
\end{align*} } \]

\(^3\) Bronson, op. cit., II, 4-7.

\(^4\) We also have a rhythm like

\[ \text{\footnotesize 2/4} \]

one mor-nin', one mor-nin', one mor-nin' in May....

("Across the Blue Mountain" in George Foss's article, "The Transcription and Analysis of Folk Music", Folksong and Folksong Scholarship, Dallas, Texas, 1964, ed. by R. D. Abrahams, pp. 68-69.) In this song (not a ballad) the trisyllabic periods predominate only slightly over the four-syllabic ones. The tune is possibly a variation of a 6/8 tune, and a stanza consists of two rhyming couplets. But, as far as we examine the extant text of "Judas", it can not be divided in the same stanzaic divisions; it seems improbable that "Judas" is in 2/4 musically, or 6/8, originally.
tion marks, Skeat’s transcript, which Kittredge printed in Child’s fifth volume, is followed (except for “cunesmen”, which Sisam has pointed out).

Hit wes upón a scerepórsday
pat vre Ióuerd arós.
ful milde were pe wórdes
he spéc to judás.

judas póu most to júrselem
oure méte for to búgge.
pritti pláten of séluer
pou bére up opi rúgge.

pou comest fér ipe brode strét
fér ipe brode stréte.
Súmme of pine cúnesmen
per póu meist i méte.

imétte wid is sóster
pe swíkele wimón.
judas póu were wיפe
me sténde the wid stón. "ff.
for the fálse prophéte
pat tou biléuest upón.

Be stille leue sóster
pin hérte pe to bréke.
Wiste min louerd crist
ful wél he wolde be wréke.

Iudas gó póu on pe róc
hei úp on pe stón.
lei pin héued i my bárnm
slep póu pe anón.

Sóne so júdas
of slépe was awáke.
pritti pláten of séluer
from hým weren itáke.

He dróu hym selue bí pe cop
pat ál it lauced ablóde.
pe iéwes out of iúrselem
awénden he were wóde.

Foret hým com pe riche ieu
pat hétiste pilátus.
Wolte súlle pi lóuerd
pat hétte iesús.

I nul súlle my lóuerd
for nónes cuñnes éiste.
. bote hit bé for pe pritti pláten.
pat hé me bi táiste.

Wolte súlle pi lord críst
for énes cuñnes góldé.
Nay bote hit bé for pe pláten.
pat hé habben wólde.

In hím com ur lórd gon
as is póstles seten at méte.
Wóu sitte ye póstles
ant wí nule ye éte.
ic am ibóust ant isóld
to día for oure méte.

Vp stod him iúdas
lord ám i pat.
I nas néuer ope stúde
per mé pe euel spéc.

Vp him stod péter
ant spéc wid al is míste.
þau pilátus him cóme
wid tén hundred cnistes.
yet ic wolde lóuerd
for þi loue fiste.

Stíll pou be péter.
Wel í pe i cnówe.
þou wolt fur sáke me þrien.
ar þe cóc him crówe.

Recognizing the swift and dramatic way of telling a story as a unique characteristic of ballads, general readers have accepted "Judas" as a
genuine ballad. To this reason of acceptance, we might add the triple metre, which is a metric tradition\textsuperscript{1} common to round twenty ballads apart from the most common CM tradition.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} If what they call common metre was really "not introduced into English verse (from the French verse) until the fourteenth century" (John Speirs, "The Scottish Ballads" in \textit{The Critics and the Ballad}, Carbondale, Ill., 1961, ed. by MacEdward Leach and T. P. Coffin, p. 283 n), this triple metre tradition seems to have appeared not later than the quadruple tradition.

\textsuperscript{2} Cf. The present writer's "Another Ballad Metre", \textit{Literary Symposium [Bungaku-Ronsō]} (Aichi University, Toyohashi), XXIX, pp. 164–196, originally written in 1963.