

On ‘Translating’ the Old English *THE WANDERER* and Other Texts

Michael George Gibson



Picture courtesy of Chris Tribble

Michael Gibson is a poet who performs English poetry over its whole 1,300 year span. He does this so far as possible in the original tones, dialects and rhythms. He thinks that in poetry the form, sound and rhythm of a piece is as important as its ‘meaning’.

Michael translates and records Middle and Old English texts, performing them according to a simple and consistent ‘musicalistic’ theory concerning the rhythms of English poetry. He seeks to demonstrate what he calls the inherent ‘*songlikeness and even dancingness*’ of English verse.

He has translated and recorded the whole of the 14th century *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight* and the 13th century *Sir Orfeo*. As well as translating *The Wanderer* and *The Dream of the Rood*, Michael has begun work on *Beowulf*.

His approach in translation is to be as faithful as possible to the original in all respects, to re-present and imitate the form, rhythm and meaning of each line of a piece.

Michael performs at Arts and Literature Festivals, and in colleges and schools. In 2000 he presented a paper and performed with musicians at *The International Medieval Congress*. In recent years he has been doing work at Oxford, where his translation of *Sir Orfeo* was first presented at Regent’s Park College.

In this presentation for the Woruldhord Project, Michael Gibson introduces the new translation of *The Wanderer* that he is making, and a translation of *Cædmon’s Song*. Both pieces are also spoken in Old English in what Michael suggests is the original rhythmic mode of the verse.

Hwæt!

You can access the full presentation by clicking [here](#).