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The First Psalters in Old French and their 12th Century Context

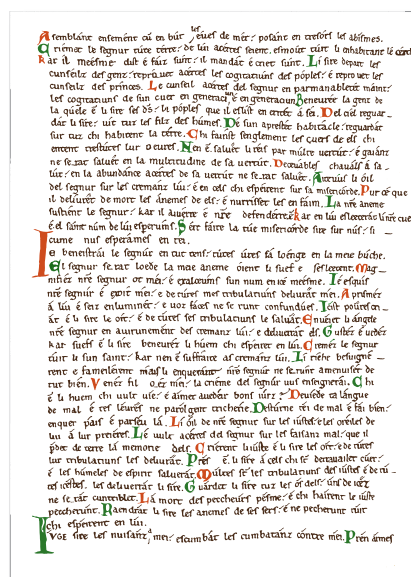
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There are two ways in which one may write the introduction to the history of medieval French literature. The first one – more common – starts with the *Song of Roland*. The second one – just as acceptable – starts with the *St Albans Psalter* (nowadays preserved in Hildesheim, Cathedral Library of Saint Mary, without a designated number). It was there, in this Psalter, that one of the most seminal texts of the Middle Ages was written – the *Song of St Alexis* –, but it was also from this Latin Psalter that the first translations of the sacred texts into French were ever made.

The *Oxford Psalter*, the very first French medieval translation of the Psalter and the most extensively copied,¹ is arguably one of the best word-by-word translations of the Psalms and Old Testament Canticles ever made, and it stems from that particular text. The autograph of this translation² is preserved in the Douce 320 manuscript of the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Completely different from the mise-en-page of the other French Psalters of the time, its avatars, the *Oxford Psalter*'s layout presents us with a monolingual codex. It dates back to the first half of the 12th century and it was written in England, in the Anglo-Norman dialect of the time. Nothing is known about the original context in which it was produced. The only thing known for certain is that the *Oxford Psalter* was part of the library of the Benedictine abbey of Montebourg, in Normandy, at the beginning of the 14th century, where it was bound with a copy of a French translation of the *Rule of Saint Benedict* – dating back to the beginning of the 13th century – in what is nowadays known as the composite manuscript Douce 320. This is why it was also called the *Montebourg Psalter* for quite some time. Its new name, the *Oxford Psalter*, refers only to the place where it is nowadays preserved.

Unlike the first manuscript of the *Song of Roland* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 23 – a pocketbook for a troubadour), the Douce 320 manuscript is a normal size codex, of 29 x 20 cm. Its text is written in a single block of text, on an average of forty lines per page, with little space left for the margins. The red and green initials and letrines were used in an



▲ Fig. 1. *Oxford Psalter*, f. 43^r.
End of Ps 32:7-22, Ps. 33 and beginning
of Ps 34:1-2.
Drawing after a photo of the author.

Notes

- 1 For the 12th and 13th century manuscripts presenting the *Oxford Psalter* version, see Dean, MacCann Boulton 1999, no. 445, 239-240.
- 2 For this notion, see Short, Careri, Ruby 2010.

citadine de la tue
la tue crieme. **S**ire

gardement la mei
chre aouranz e. li g
icels d's. **D**echeden

bute icels kar il ent
en parmanabletet
chi aiment le tuen
de la tue bone.

Sire ne me ar
d'un sire qua

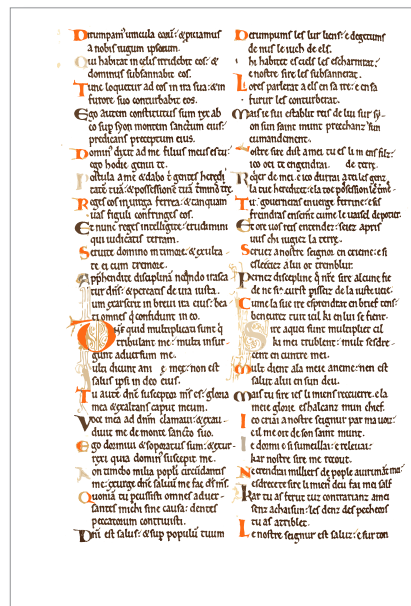
alternate manner. It contains the translation of the 150 Psalms of a mixed version of the *Gallicanum*, followed by the canticles of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Anna, Moses, Habakkuk, Moses again, and the children of Israel. It was written in prose, contrary to the general Anglo-Norman preference for verse translations, and its text was edited twice: first in the middle of the 19th century, and recently, in 2015.³

It has been often implied that the *Oxford Psalter* could be a copy of a bilingual codex, but newer hypotheses have recently showed that the *Oxford Psalter* is an original, that certain translation choices link it to the peculiar Latin version preserved in the *St Albans Psalter*, and that its scribe may have been one of the copyists working on the latter manuscript. But what is truly interesting is that the *Oxford Psalter* was copied in a countless number of manuscripts.

Most of these manuscripts are double-columned. It is the case of the *Winchester Psalter*, also known as the *Psalter of Henry of Blois*, a manuscript dating back to ca. 1160 (London, British Library, Cotton Nero c iv). It contains the *Oxford Psalter* French translation of the Psalms and the Latin text of the *Gallicanum*, copied on separate parallel columns, folio by folio. This manuscript also has a calendar and a famous Christological image cycle with legends in French. The picture cycle is inserted between the calendar and the French-Latin text of the Psalms.⁴ It was probably painted at the Saint Swithun priory, close to Winchester, and it was intended for Henry of Blois, the bishop of Winchester (1096-1171, bishop 1126-1171), whence its second name. The fact that such a richly illustrated Psalter contains a French version of the Psalms testifies perhaps to the usefulness of translation. It must have been copied at the request of the bishop, although the bishop knew Latin very well and did not really need a translation. The French text had both a pedagogical and an esthetical value.

These double psalters, also referred to as ‘parallel’ or ‘bilingual’ Psalters,⁵ contain the two main texts (Latin and French) written on two separate columns: the Latin text often occupies the more prestigious place, on the left, and the French text occupies the right column, but this is not always so. Changes may take place according to a logic that nowadays eludes us. All the double Psalters are avatars of the translation transcribed in the *Oxford* Douce manuscript and one of the best examples is the manuscript from Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France n. acq. lat. 1670. It is not necessarily the most ancient of them all, for it dates back only to the end of the 12th century, but its layout is somehow ‘classical’. We may find the same layout in many other manuscripts, with minor changes. The symmetry of the two columns structures the manuscript in a perfect manner: each Latin verse is followed, in the right column, by a French verse which occupies the same number of lines. Identical ornate initial letters introduce the various segments of the two text; they were written by the same copyist. It has been said that the “text editing comes before the text itself.”⁶

Text editing became a general rule for the double Psalters. However, another manuscript, dating from the last quarter of the 12th century, introduced a slightly compositional variation. It is a Paris codex preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (lat. 768), once called the *Corbie Psalter*, although it probably originated in Canterbury. When reading it, one is again face to face with a version derived from that of the *Oxford Psalter*. The French was erased on the first pages of the psalms, until Ps 68 (f. 10^r-58^v), and it occupies the second place, on the right column. Some-



◀ Fig. 2. *Oxford Psalter* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 320), f. 37^r. Detail. The high number of erasures and emendations in this manuscript, some of whom are visible in the photo, is proof of its autograph nature.

Photo of the author, courtesy of The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

▲ Fig. 3. *Psalter of Henry of Blois*, f. 46^r. End of Ps 2:3-13 and beginning of Ps 3:2-9. Drawing after the online facsimile available at bl.uk.

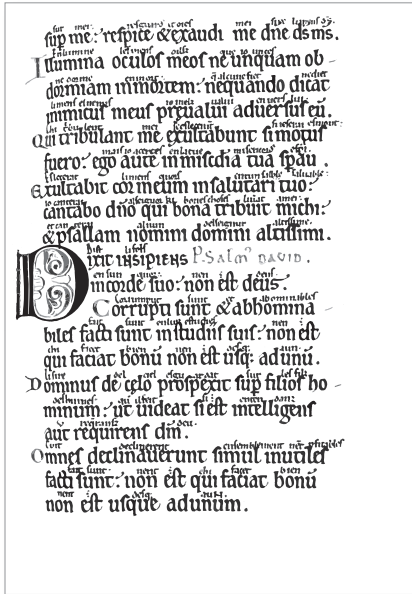
Notes

³ Short 2015. For the very first edition of this text, see Michel 1876.

⁴ For this image cycle, see Witzling 1984.

⁵ Ruby 2010, who speaks of “bilingual parallel Psalters” (p. 173); and Careri, Ruby, Short 2011, who consider them as “parallel Psalters”.

⁶ « La mise en texte [...] semble primer sur le texte ». Careri, Ruby, Short 2011, p. 200 (for the quotation).



▲ Fig. 4. *Arundel Psalter*, f. 16r: End of Ps 12:4-6 and beginning of Ps 13:1-3. Drawing after a microfilm facsimile.

Notes

⁷ “Un souci d’équilibre entre les deux colonnes”; Careri, Ruby, Short 2011, p. 170 (for the quotation and for the description). Cf. Ruby 2010, p. 174, 176; Avril, Stirnemann 1987, no. 75; Brayer, Bouly de Lesdain 1968, p. 74.

⁸ For the French version, see Skårup 1977, p. 90-94. For the modern Icelandic translation of the Psalms, see Kirby 1986, p. 127 et seqq. Cf. Ruby 2010, p. 178; Careri, Ruby, Short 2011, p. 40.

⁹ For the two fragments, see Kerr 1954. Cf. Ruby 2010, p. 178, 180; Careri, Ruby, Short 2011, p. 67, who also edit the French fragments.

¹⁰ Talbot 1952, p. 272.

¹¹ Careri, Ruby, Short 2011, p. 108.

¹² Ch. Ruby 2010, p. 180 (for the quotation).

¹³ For an edition of this fragmentary text, see Samaran 1929.

¹⁴ Cf. Beyer 1887; Beyer 1888. A. Beyer also edited the Latin text.

¹⁵ Careri, Ruby, Short 2011, p. 68. Cf. Short, Careri, Ruby 2010, p. 39.

¹⁶ For a different opinion, see Rector 2009, p. 201, who considers it an independent version, without providing further arguments. For the study of the language of the manuscript, see Pignatelli 2015.

times there is a balance problem between the two columns.⁷ The copyist therefore had problems with the disparities created by the different sizes (and number of words) in the two texts.

The same layout, with the French text on the second column, opposite the Latin text, is to be found in the *Copenhagen Psalter* (Universitetsbiblioteket Arnemagnasanske Samling 618 4o). It dates back to the last third of the 12th century and it was written somewhere in England. The French text, transcribed by the same copyist who copied the first column, that of the Latin *Gallicanum*, is irretrievably lost. It was erased so that the second column encloses an Icelandic translation of the Psalms, dated 1586.⁸ Another Psalter is preserved in a fragmentary manner, in the parchment leaves included in the binding of a book of 1593: Oxford, Saint John’s College, HB4 / 4.a.4.21 (I.subt.1.47).⁹ There is the Additional 35283 manuscript in the British Library. It dates back to the last quarter of the 12th century, or – more likely – from the first part of the next century.¹⁰ And there are many more manuscripts like these. But there is also proof of a certain evolution in this long line of Latin-French double Psalters.

The three folios of a bilingual Psalter, preserved today at Maidstone, in the Kent County Archives, in the file Fa Z 1, contain only the verses Ps 55: 7-Ps 59: 10, and Ps 68: 15-70, but these fragments are enough to identify the French text with an avatar of the *Oxford Psalter*.¹¹ With regard to their layout, it gives the impression of being similar to that of the double Psalters. The text has been transcribed on two columns, except that it no longer presents two autonomous texts. Latin and French verses alternate within each column. There is only one text, of a composite nature, and the hierarchy of languages dictates only that the *Gallicanum* should be copied first. This witness marks the passage to another group or category of bilingual (and even trilingual) Psalters, where the French language occupies the place reserved for glosses. This transformation would seem natural after the strict symmetry of the two-column Psalters. It is “of the greatest convenience in reading, in order to establish the linguistic correspondences.”¹²

This other tradition starts with the *Orne Psalter* (Paris, Archives nationales, AB XIX 1734, Orne dossier), a mid-12th century manuscript fragment preserving an intercalary translation.¹³ This bifolio leaf was also part of a book binding. It contains two fragments of an interlinear translation of Ps 77:40-62 and Ps 87:10-Ps 87:14, similar in aspect to a Medieval Latin gloss. This layout dictated that the translation choices be very close to the structure Latin text, so much so that it is difficult to say whether it is a different translation or a very free adaptation of the Oxford version.

The *Arundel Psalter*, sometimes called the *London Psalter* (British Library, Arundel 230), is the second best example in the category of interlinear translations of Psalms.¹⁴ It dates back to the end of the 12th century.¹⁵ Nonetheless, it has nothing in common with the *Orne Psalter*, except for the use of an intermediate gloss. The *Arundel Psalter* better integrates the series of double Psalters. In most cases, its interlinear gloss is servile to the *Oxford Psalter*’s translation choices. That is why it used to be considered a redesign of the latter,¹⁶ but the question is much too complicated and it may well also be that the Arundel translator had to make the same translation choices because of his idiolect or sociolect.

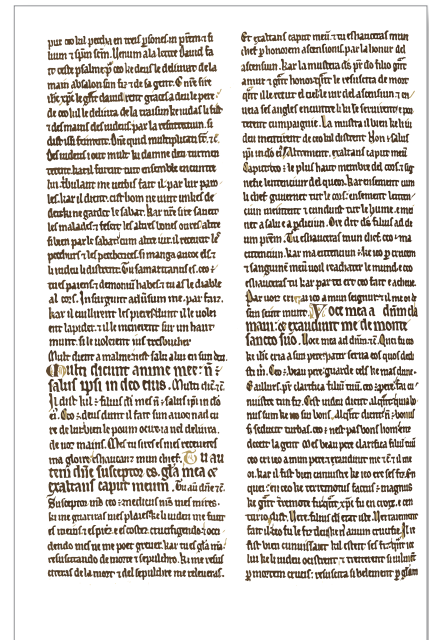
The usage of these French Psalters is debated, and it should perhaps still remain mysterious. No one can really argue that they have been used in liturgy, for it was forbidden to hold mass in another language than Latin.

Several other interpretations have been proposed, most of them speaking of the private reading of these manuscripts, but these hypotheses are conjectural and resemble other hypotheses proposed for the early Psalters in Czech, Hungarian, English, or even in Romanian for that matter. The private use of these Psalm translations can be ascertained only for a third category of manuscripts: the Psalm commentaries in French, among which many are accompanied by a French interlinear translation of the Latin text. I do not intend to present here the three versions (nor the five or six rewritings) of these commentaries on the Psalms. On the merits of the case, however, some general notes are essential to be made.

Only the first *Commentary to the Psalms*, continental in its origin (and not British), will be mentioned here, because some of its copies are the only ones preserving an interlinear translation of the *Gallicanum*. This first French *Commentary*, written for Laurette of Alsace in the second half of the 12th century, was copied with the *Gallicanum* in three of its manuscript witnesses.¹⁷ The Latin text, transcribed in large letters, is accompanied by a French interlinear translation which doesn't seem to be clearly related to the *Oxford Psalter* version, to the *Arundel*, to the *Orne*, nor to the *Eadwine Psalter* (which will be immediately discussed). The most important manuscript of this *Commentary*, preserved in New York (Pierpont Morgan Library, codex 338), has the Latin text copied on the interior side of the folio, on a tight column, with a small vernacular gloss following it word by word. The bulk of the French commentary – itself translated from an avatar of the *Media Glossatura* – is arranged in a much wider lateral margin and continues on the following lines, covering the whole width of the page. The Latin text is therefore interrupted by the French commentary, the *Gallicanum* verses are isolated from each other, they do not form an autonomous text, but it is just as obvious that this layout follows in fact the *cum textu* disposition of the Medieval Latin commentaries.

A slightly different, word-by-word, translation was copied in another manuscript of the same *Commentary*, nowadays in Hereford (Cathedral Library, o III 15). It dates back to the end of the 12th century, the Latin *Gallicanum* is written on the entire width of the folio, as in the *Orne Psalter*, but the disposition of the interlinear gloss and the commentary copied after it remains more or less the same. It is thought that this codex, clearly produced in England, must have adapted its continental model – such as one may see in the Morgan 338 manuscript – to a slightly different insular practice where intercalary glosses had reached a certain stability. Finally, a book in Durham (Cathedral Library, A II 11), the first of a series of three codices containing a complete copy of the *Commentary*, lacks this interlinear translation. The editor of the first version of the *Commentary* (Ps 1-50), argued that other similar aspects to those of the *Oxford Psalter* may be found in the Morgan manuscript, at least in the parts written by a certain scribe, whom he names “h3”. It is therefore possible to imagine that a local interlinear translation, made in England, might have influenced the one transcribed in the continental *Commentary on the Psalms*, that the interlinear gloss in Morgan 338 may simply perpetuate a local fashion. Nevertheless, the same editor argued that the links with the *Oxford Psalter* cannot be proven, and that the translation copied in the three manuscripts of the first *French Commentary to the Psalms* must have been independent, done directly on the basis of the Latin text copied in these manuscripts.¹⁸

Another separate interlinear French translation is found in the *Eadwine*



▲ Fig. 5. Durham manuscript A II 11 of the *Psalm Commentary for Laurette of Alsace*, f. 7^r (without interlinear translation). From the end of Ps 3:2 to the beginning of Ps 3:5. Drawing after the online facsimile available at <https://iiif.durham.ac.uk>.

Notes

¹⁷ For an edition of the first version of this text (Ps 1-50), see Gregory 1990.

¹⁸ For all these date, and for other notions mentioned below, see Gregory 1990, vol. 1, p. 6-10. For the presentation of the manuscripts, see also Careri, Ruby, Short 2011 (who do not deal with the manuscript from Durham).



Passio pro tunc. I. hinc sol. paulatim
 Assumit donec usque clarescat. sic xps.
 hic q' orat' assumpcio. p' q' p'mittitur
 passio. ex p'te. q' si sit hystoria nox
 p'bra. p' id qd' sequitur. i. passio
 uone. notat' qd' pcedit. i. passio.
 & into q' passio sal' mundi. i.

*Expi. subp'sona ueris hois. na uer' ho
 ni' conhrus et cruci cu' illo. a
 Infimem p'assumpcione matucina ps' dauid.*

*Qu' iste ps' sufficere
 inestimoniu' passiois:
 neq' sit' alieu' excusatio.
 sequunt' & Alii. n'm. de
 eadem re ap're sc'pti.
 xxxim. l'm. lxxviii.
 eum.*

*Infimē p'st'ceptore
 matucina ps' d'
 de passione.*

*Uicora p'ciu' matuc
 eno. canē uba x'
 cum paterecur.*

Primū congnitio de derelictione.
 ne non & oratio sicut monib'
 psalmis de passione. **De** gemi
 nar' ex affectu. l' d's omnium. m's
 p'p'ie.

Deus meus respice
 me. quare
 longē a salute mea uerba delictorum
 meorum. **D**eus meus clama
 bo p' diem & non exaudies: &
 nocte & non ad insipientiam
 michi. **T**u autem in scō habitas.

Deus cu' eo.

si p' nob' d'it' eo corp' ei.

me dereliquisti. longe a

salute mea uerba delictorum

meorum. Deus meus clama

bo p' diem & non exaudies: &

nocte & non ad insipientiam

michi. Tu autem in scō habitas.

Pheli. s' heli.
DEVS deus

*meus respice
 & lamazapam.*
 me. quare

longe et a salute. quia longe est a peccatoribus sal.

ecce.

me dereliquisti. longe a

salute mea uerba delictorum

meorum. Deus meus clama

bo p' diem & non exaudies: &

nocte & non ad insipientiam

michi. Tu autem in scō habitas.

*Qu' h' in cruce d'it'.
 psalmu' istu' de se sc'ptu
 indicant.*

Deus meus clama
 bo p' diem & non exaudies: &
 nocte & non ad insipientiam
 michi. **T**u autem in scō habitas.

*on me.
 p'pan
 quare*

*me dereliquisti longe a
 salute mea.*

*Verba delictorum
 meorum deus
 meus clama*

*bo p' diem nec
 exaudies: &*

*nocte & non
 ad insipientiam
 michi. Tu autem
 in scō habitas.*

Deus meus clama
 bo p' diem & non exaudies: &
 nocte & non ad insipientiam
 michi. **T**u autem in scō habitas.

*u
 parqua
 quare*

*me dereliquisti longe a
 salute mea.*

*Verba delictorum
 meorum deus
 meus clama*

*bo p' diem & non
 exaudies: &*

*nocte & non
 ad insipientiam
 michi. Tu autem
 in scō habitas.*

Non p' die. quia mille meo tenebre.
 & tu n' audietur ad salutem.

si m'rb.

nocte & non ad insipientiam

michi. Tu autem in scō habitas.

si non audis.

si non audis uerba delict.

GALL.

ROM.

HEBR.

Psalter, the most famous codex of our corpus, but this other *Psalter* contains a translation that has nothing to do with all the previous translations. The *Eadwine* represents a completely different tradition. This other translation is preserved in two manuscripts only. The first is one is now preserved in Cambridge (Trinity College R.17.1) and was written in ca. 1155-1160 at the priory of Christ Church, in other words in the cultural context of Canterbury Cathedral.¹⁹ The main scribe's portrait (*Eadwinus*) at the end of the codex gave its modern name. The second codex, a copy of the first,²⁰ is nowadays preserved in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 8846), but is of a later date and it contains only the translation of Ps 1-97. Both of these manuscripts are rich in miniatures and they belong to the tradition of the *Utrecht Psalter*, a Carolingian manuscript, from an iconographic point of view.²¹

The *Eadwine Psalter* contains the complete text of the French inter-linear translation.²² Its layout is simply stunning. The manuscript contains, on three columns, the three Latin versions of the *Psalter*. The *Gallicanum* gets the lion's share: its column occupies about half of the written space on the folios. The other two versions (*Romanum* and *Hebraicum*), transcribed on smaller columns, occupy the rest of the space. One should also pay attention to the miniatures in this manuscript, covering the entire width of the folios, and located at the beginning of each psalm. And that is not all; the manuscript has a critical apparatus. The copyists have transcribed a modified version of the *Parva Glossatura*, with additions, on

Notes

¹⁹ Gibson 1992b, p. 209-210. Cf. De Poerck, Van Deyck 1970, p. 27, who date it back to 1120.

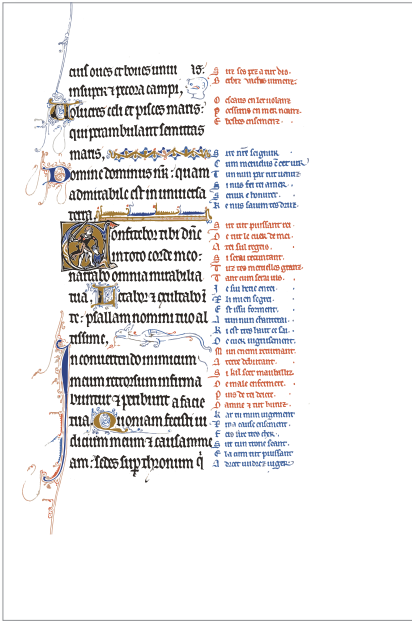
²⁰ Stirnemann 1992. Cf. Avril, Stirnemann 1987, no. 76 ; Dodwell 1990.

²¹ The *Utrecht Psalter* arrived in Canterbury in ca. 1000.

²² For an edition of this text, see the PhD thesis of Markey 1989, who also edited the Latin text of the *Hebraicum* version from this manuscript. For the very first edition of this text, see Michel 1876.

◀ Fig. 6-7. Entire folio and detail of the French and English gloss of the *Eadwine Psalter* (ms. Cambridge, Trinity College R.17.1), f. 36^v. Ps 21:2-4.
© Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge.





▲ Fig. 8. *Oscott Psalter* (Additional 50000 ms of the British Library), f. 25^r. End of Ps 8:8-10 and beginning of Ps 9:2-5. Drawing after the online facsimile available at bl.uk.

▲ Fig. 9. *Harley 4070 ms* of the British Library, f. 28^r-29^r. End of Ps 8:8-10 and beginning of Ps 9:2-5. Drawing after the online facsimile available at bl.uk.

the margins of the *Gallicanum*.²³ Finally, two vernacular translations gloss over each Latin word, in between the lines of the non-liturgical versions. The interline of the *Romanum* version has Old English glosses. The one of the *Hebraicum* has an Anglo-Norman translation copied in small letters above the Latin words. This French translation is a fairly faithful translation of the Latin text and does not have any clear link with the *Oxford Psalter* either, simply because it was grafted on another Hieronymian text, the *Hebraicum*.²⁴

This other group of Psalters is even more puzzling from the point of view of their use. Nobody can really tell what these manuscripts were really used for. The only clue that may point towards their probable usage is the lavish nature of their images and the encyclopaedically structured layout. If they were used, they were supposed to impress their readers with their beauty as well as with their multi-layered contexts. Perhaps the same may be said about the last category of this short presentation: the verse translations of the Psalms.

Of course a verse translation had no practical purpose. Long before the Reformation, these verse translations could not be sung during the church service. But still, such French Psalters did indeed exist.²⁵ One of them, the very first one in verse, was copied in two manuscripts and it was written in stanzas of six verses, rhymed AAB CCB. This translation dates from the end of the 12th century or from the beginning of the next and each Latin verse of the Psalter is paraphrased in three up to six verses in French. The long poem is still unedited²⁶ and it was copied in two 13th century manuscripts preserved nowadays in the British Library.

The Additional 50000 manuscript (*Oscott Psalter*, richly illuminated) gives the impression of the most important manuscript because of its size and layout. However, the other manuscript (*Harley 4070*) appears to be much closer from a textual point of view to the lost autograph source. Its text favours the French version, carefully copied as the principal text, with Latin lemmas in the margins for references, most of them abbreviated; while the version copied in the Additional manuscript sacrifices sometimes entire verses of the French text, because the vernacular text

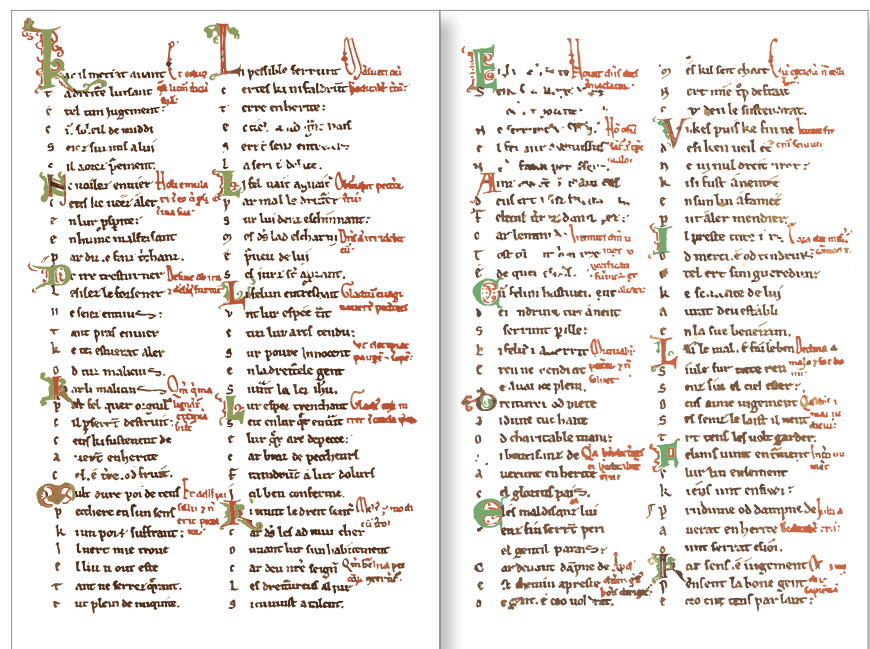
Notes

23 Gibson 1992a, p. 108-110.

24 Margarete Förster considers that the various similar translation choices between the Oxford and Eadwine Psalter translations may be explained by the derivation of the latter from the first (a hypothesis that does not hold), but also because certain biblical words could have already been present in Old French (an idea that deserves to be highlighted). Cf. Förster 1914.

25 Agrigoroaei 2017.

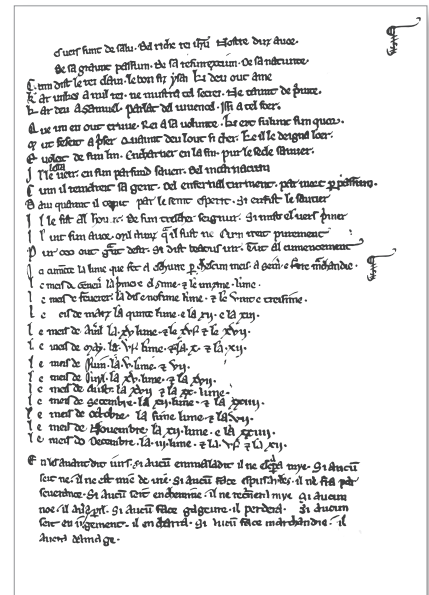
26 Three passages (two stanzas of the prologue, the translation of Ps 41, and two stanzas of the Ps 44) have been published by Bonnard 1884, p. 130-132. The poem has been briefly analysed by Goedicke 1910, who quoted other short passages; and Meyer 1866 edited the prologue from the Arundel 230 manuscript version.



was supposed to accompany the Latin text on its margins, in red and blue ink, meaning that the French text had to adapt to the Latin one.²⁷ The Harley manuscript also contains a short prologue of seven stanzas which was copied as an introduction to the *Arundel Psalter* prose translation at a later date. On the contrary, the Additional seems to be a normal Latin psalter (with a calendar, with an image cycle, with canticles) on whose margins the French poem plays a marginal if not ornamental role.²⁸

Nevertheless, even in the early verse translations, at a time when the notion of ‘translation’ was not at all definite, when it meant what best suited its author, from adaptation and paraphrase to literary translation or to a word by word translation, these verse translations were not very different from the prose translations like the Oxford Psalter. It may have been that the authors were sharing a common language, maybe even a common sociolect, and that most of them had to appeal to the same words in their translations. This happened because the French language was not ready, from a cultural linguistic point of view, to adapt and interpret such complicated grammatical and lexical structures such as those from Latin. And it was not ready even after two more centuries, because the translator of the *Lorraine Psalter*, also known as the *Metz Psalter* (1370) confessed these problems in the prologue of his work:²⁹

Quar pour tant que laingue romance et especiaulment de Lorene est imperfaite, et plus asseiz que nulle aultre entre les langaiges perfaiz, il n'est nulz, tant soit boin clerz ne bien parlans romans, qui lou latin puisse translateir n romans quant a plusour mos dou latin; mais couvient que, per corruption et per diseite des mos françois, que en disse lou romans selonc lou latin, si com : iniquitas ‘iniquiteit’, redemptio ‘redemption’, misericordia ‘misericorde’; et ainsi de mains et plusours aultres telz mos, que il couvient ainsi dire en romans comme on dit en latin. Aucune fois li latins ait plusours mos que en romans nous ne poions exprimeir ne dire proprement, tant est imperfaite nostre laingue, si com on dit on latin : erue, eripe, libera me, pour les quelz .iii. mos en latin nous disons un soul mot en romans : ‘delivre moi’; et ainsi de maint et plusours aultres telz mos, des quelz je me coise quant a present pour cause de briesteit. Aucune fois li latin warde ses rigles de gramaire et ses congruiteiz et ordenances en figures, en qualiteiz, en comparison, en persones, en nombres, en temps, en declinesons, en causes, en muef, et en perfection : que en romans ne en françois on ne puet proprement wardeit, pour les varieteiz et diversiteiz des lainguaiges et lou deffault d’entendement de maint et plusour, qui plus souvent forment lour mos et lour parler a lour volenteit et a lour guise que a veriteit et au commun entendement. Et pour ceu que nulz ne tient en son parlier ne rigle certenne, mesure ne raison, est laingue romance si corrupue qu’a poinne li uns entent l’aultre, et a poinne puet on trouver a jour d’ieu persone qui saiche escrire, anteir ne prononclieir en une meismes semblant meniere; mais escript, ante et prononce il uns en une guise et li aultre en une aultre.



▲ Fig. 10. *Arundel Psalter*, f. 6r. The verse prologue added at a later date.

Drawing after a microfilm facsimile.

Notes

²⁷ See for this De Fonblanque 1994, who deals with this subject from the point of view of an art historian.

²⁸ The manuscript was mainly studied by art historians. See for this Neiswander 1979, who studied the image cycle; but also Morgan 1988, p. 139; Brown, Meredith-Owens, Turner 1961; and Turner 1969. From the point of view of the style and execution of the paintings, the *Oscott Psalter* has been compared to the *Salvin Horae* (ms Additional 48985 of the British Library). See e. g. Brown 1957.

²⁹ Bonnardot 1884, p. 1-2.

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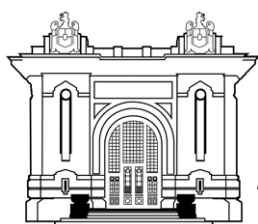
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*Vernacular Psalters and the
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The Romanian Case*



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Proceedings of the conference edited by
Vladimir Agrigoroaei and Ileana Sasu

Exhibition and presentation texts by
Ana Dumitran and Vladimir Agrigoroaei

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