



**HAL**  
open science

# The Musical Instruments in the Early Vernacular Translations of the Psalms - Old English

Fabienne Toupin

► **To cite this version:**

Fabienne Toupin. The Musical Instruments in the Early Vernacular Translations of the Psalms - Old English. museIKON A Journal of Religious Art and Culture, 2021. halshs-03502277

**HAL Id: halshs-03502277**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03502277v1>**

Submitted on 24 Dec 2021

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# The Musical Instruments in the Early Vernacular Translations of the Psalms – Old English

Fabienne Toupin

This paper investigates the names of musical instruments found in translations of the psalms from Latin into late Old English, i.e. the state of the English language in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. More precisely, evidence from five psalters will be examined – the Paris, Vitellius, Stowe and Tiberius Psalters, and the OE gloss of the Eadwine Psalter. As the paper is a contribution to a collective research project based on comparative philological study of early Bible translations (*Museikon* 3, 67), our focus will be on translation choices, and more occasionally on morphological analysis of the nouns concerned.

The evidence we have of the existence and diversity of musical instruments in Anglo-Saxon England comes both from documentary sources (i.e. literary and historical records) and from archaeological finds that have uncovered "a remarkable diversity, from small, tinkling metal bells and shrill pipes made from bird-bones, to large stringed instruments of elaborate and sophisticated design." (Lapidge *et al.* 2001, 328). In other words, there is ample archaeological evidence that instrumental music was quite a popular activity in everyday life in Anglo-Saxon England, and translators can therefore be expected to have been familiar with a fairly wide array of musical instruments.

Examination of the three pages in the *Thesaurus of Old English* (Roberts *et al.* 2000) dedicated to music and musical instruments reveals that the latter fell into three main categories: i) percussion instruments such as cymbals, timbrels and drums; ii) wind instruments ranging from pipes and flutes to the more resonant trumpets; iii) stringed instruments, a category in which lyres, harps and zithers figured strongly, but which also included fiddles.

We could assume that the context of the early vernacular translations of the psalms would make it necessary for us to distinguish between that rich secular tradition and the sacred tradition, but "[t]he division between the religious and the popular is to some extent an arbitrary one for, as Bede's account of Cædmon illustrates, the evolution of Christian musical expression must from the outset have benefitted greatly from the vigour and diversity of indigenous popular music." (Lapidge *et al.* 2001, 327).

Let us now turn to the first of our documentary sources, the Paris Psalter.

## 1. The Paris Psalter. Linguistic Analysis

The Latin part of the Paris Psalter contains the names of four musical instruments and what appears to be a generic name for a whole category of instruments.

The latter is Lat. *organum*, occurring in Ps 136:2 in the phrase *organa nostra*, and translated into *ure organan*. The English word is obviously borrowed from Latin, and its nominative singular form is unclear, *organe* or *organa*. It is supposed to refer to any musical instrument, but the following passage quoted in Bosworth & Toller's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* suggests that it might have specifically designated stringed instruments: *Ða organa wæron getogene, and ða bīman geblāwene* (Th. Ap. 25, 15),<sup>1</sup> "The (stringed?) instruments were struck, and the trumpets blown."

The Latin names of the four musical instruments referred to are *cithara*, *psalterium*, *tuba* and *tympaniolum*.

*Cithara* occurs in seven psalms. In Ps 32:2, 56:9, 70:22 and 146:7, the translation is relatively straightforward, the corresponding English item being the feminine noun *hearpe*. *Hearpe* itself appears to have a somewhat generic meaning: "[...] many OE texts allude to stringed instruments of more formal, primarily household, indeed courtly character, both **under the generic title hearpe** and by means of such kennings as *gomen-wudu* (joy-wood) and *gleo-beam* (glee-beam)." (Lapidge *et al.* 2001, 329; emphasis ours). According to the *Thesaurus of Old English*, *hearpe* could refer to a harp or a lyre, although the triangular harp (imported shortly before 900) and the lyre are two distinct

---

<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Saxon version of the story of Apollonius of Tyre, edited by Thorpe.

instruments. So are the lyre and the zither. Further evidence of the generic meaning of *hearpe* is to be found in Ps 32:2, where OE *on þære tynstrengæan hearpan* ("on the ten-stringed harp") translates the Latin phrase *in psalterio decem cordarum*, while elsewhere, as will be seen below, the translator resorts to the loan word *psalterium*. In Ps 91:4, although the translator wanders away from and expands the Latin original, the *cithara–hearpe* correspondence still holds. Finally, Ps 42:4 and 107:3 present two forms of expansion, *cithara* being rendered respectively by *mid sang and mid heorpan*, "with singing and a harp", and by *on hleoðre hearpan swylce*, "with (*lit. in*) the sound of the harp that has been already described".

*Psalterium* refers to a psaltery, a particular kind of zither. Although semantically much more specific, *psalterium* occurs as frequently as *hearpe* in the Paris Psalter. In four psalms (91:4, 107:3, 143:9 and 149:3) the Old English text has the loan word *psalterium*, and it is interesting to observe the actual scope of the borrowing process: in all four cases the prepositional phrase *on psalterio* is used, which can be analysed as the English preposition *on*, governing the dative case, followed by the loan word *psalterium* in its Latin dative form. In other words, a Latin inflectional pattern is borrowed alongside a Latin lexeme – this bears testimony to *psalterium* not being fully integrated in the English word stock by the mid-11th century. We have already underlined in the previous paragraph that in Ps 32:2 it is the rather generic term *hearpe* that translates Latin *psalterium*. Let us just note that in this very psalm the Old English noun is premodified by the compound adjective *tynstrengæ* translating the Latin postmodifier *decem cordarum*; the adjective represents the welding together of the numeral *tin* ("ten") and of the noun *strengæ* ("string of an instrument"). In Ps 56:9 we come across the heterogeneous compound *wynpsalterium*, "a joyous psaltery", which can be analysed into OE *wyn(n)*, "delight, pleasure", and Latin *psalterium*. In Ps 48:5 *in psalterio* is rendered by *on þys[sum] sealme*, "in these songs/psalms", a metonymic shift in meaning from the musical instrument to the song usually sung when playing the instrument in question.

*Tuba*, "trumpet", occurs twice in exactly the same morphosyntactic pattern, i.e. in its genitive form in a prepositional phrase: Ps 46:6 *in uoce tube* and Ps 150:3 *in sono tube*. The two Latin phrases appear to be mere variants of each other. Old English too had (at least) two lexemes expressing the idea of a sound, whether emitted by a human being or by another source, viz. *stemn* (and its variant *stefn*), a feminine noun, and *hleoðor*, a neuter one. The item designating a trumpet was the feminine noun *byme* (and its allomorph *bem*). Ps 46:6 reads *mid bymena stemne* in English, a straightforward translation of the Latin phrase, while Ps 150:3 offers the expanded translation *on hleoðre holdre beman* ("with (*lit. in*) the sound of a gracious trumpet").

*Tympaniolum* designates a kind of tambourine that could be held up in the hand. There are two references to that musical instrument in the Paris Psalter, in Ps 67:26 (*in medio iuuenum tympanistriarum*) and in Ps 149:3 (*in timpano & psalterio*). Only the second occurrence can be regarded as a direct reference to the instrument, despite what appears to be morphological compression of the word, *tympaniolum* > *tympanum*; here again the English translation is based on the use of a loan word, *on timpano ... and on psalterio*, in which both *timpanum* and *psalterium* appear in their Latin dative forms. By contrast, the first occurrence is a reference to players of the instrument, *iuuenum tympanistriarum*, "young female drummers or players on the tambourine"; the corresponding psalm in the King James Bible reads *in the midst of young damsels playing on timbrels*.

To conclude, we observed in the Paris Psalter several forms of expansion, which are found mostly in the verse part of the manuscript, and can therefore be related to metrical requirements. We also observed the use of three loan words from Latin, *psalterium*, *timpanum* and the dubious form *organe*. We hypothesize that borrowing from Latin, a very common practice in medieval England, was made easier in the case of musical instruments as there existed similar Roman precursors with which the Angles and the Saxons must have been familiar: "From similarities in instrument forms an element of continuity from earlier Roman and native popular traditions seems increasingly likely." (Lapidge *et al.* 2001, 327).

We will now turn to the Vitellius, Stowe and Tiberius Psalters.

## 2. Comparative Linguistic Analysis of the Vitellius, Stowe and Tiberius Psalters

The Latin and English texts of the three psalters are very similar, and for that reason we will treat them together, commenting on occasional divergences.

The three psalters contain more names of musical instruments, both in Latin and in English, than the Paris Psalter. Here again our starting point will be the Latin sections, which contain the names of six musical instruments (but only four in the Tiberius Psalter), and a generic name for a whole category of instruments.

As in the Paris Psalter, the generic name in question is Lat. *organum*, occurring in Ps 136:2 in the phrase *organa nostra*. It is translated into *dreamas ure* in the Stowe Psalter (henceforth SP), and not translated in the Vitellius Psalter (VP) nor in the Tiberius Psalter (TP), but for different reasons that we will briefly go into. TP is an incomplete or acaudate manuscript, whose last psalm containing a reference to a musical instrument is Ps 107:3. This is why other segments of the English text of TP will be mentioned below as missing. Corresponding to *suspendimus organa nostra*, VP has the nonsensical passage *we ahengon oððe ahoð [...] ure*. The noun of interest to us, determined by the possessive *ure*, is missing, perhaps because of the damage suffered by the manuscript in the 1731 Cottonian fire, and the verbal form *ahoð* has no justification. Compared with OE *aho*, "suspendo", *ahoð* looks like a variant of the third person singular form of *ahon* in the present tense (*ahēþ*), but it lacks a syntactic subject, its present tense is not adequate, and it is made semantically redundant by the preceding *ahengon* (the right verb form corresponding to the perfect *suspendimus*). We could conclude that the scribe who translated the Latin text in VP had only superficial knowledge of Latin, like the translator who produced the English gloss in SP.

To go back to *dreamas ure* ("our instruments of music") in SP, we observe that the translator chose a generic item to render Lat. *organum*: *dream* is a polysemic masculine noun meaning i) "joy, pleasure, gladness, mirth", and with metonymic shift ii) "what causes mirth; an instrument of music, music, rapturous music, harmony, melody, song" (Bosworth & Toller 1954, s.v. *dream*). Lat. *organum* also occurs in Ps 150:4 (in VP and SP) in the phrase *in cordis et organo*. In both instances *organum* is translated into OE *organadream*, a heterogeneous compound that seems heavily redundant (< Latin loan *organe* or *organa*, "instrument of music" + OE *dream*, "instrument of music"). Unlike the authors of *A Thesaurus of Old English*, we cannot interpret OE *organadream* as meaning "the sound of a musical instrument" in the context of Ps 136:2 (the corresponding psalm in the King James Bible reads *On the willows in the midst thereof we hung up our instruments*).

The Latin names of the six musical instruments referred to in the three psalters are *cymbalum*, *c(h)orda*, *cithara*, *psalterium*, *tuba* and *tympanum* (see *tympaniolum* in section 1), but the first two are missing in acaudate TP. By comparison with the Paris Psalter, only the first two nouns are new, and we will therefore deal with the others first. As in the Paris Psalter, these items do not have the same frequency at all.

Latin *cithara* is the most frequent item – there are ten instances of it in VP and SP, and eight in TP. On all occasions (32:2, 42:4, 56:9, 70:22, 80:3, 91:4, 97:5, 107:3, 146:7, 150:3), *cithara* is rendered by OE *hearpe*, a high-frequency item with a rather generic meaning ("a stringed instrument", cf. previous section). The noun occasionally misses an <r> (Ps 32:2 in TS) or an <h> (Ps 70:22 in SP), but is almost always part of the prepositional phrase *on hearpan*, which thus seems to have a formulaic status in the Psalters considered. Latin *in cythara* is once (Ps 91:4 in VP) expanded into *on hearpan on citran*, in which we identify the feminine Old English noun *cit(e)re*, "a harp, lyre"; given the semantic overlapping, and given the absence of any metrical requirements, it is almost impossible to account for this singular translation choice.

*Psalterium*, also a high-frequency item, occurs nine times in VP and SP, and six times in TP. By contrast with the Paris Psalter, not once is the loan word *psalterium* used. The Old English glosses always have *saltere*, a masculine noun whose written form is evidence that the consonant cluster /ps/ was already impossible word-initially in Old English. In Ps 32:2 *in psalterio decem chordarum* is rendered by *on salte(re) tynstrenga*,<sup>2</sup> where *saltere* is postmodified by a phrase in the genitive plural, *lit.* "a psaltery of ten strings" (by contrast, a compound adjective is used in the Paris Psalter, which has *on þære tynstrengēan hearpan*, *lit.* "a ten-stringed psaltery", cf. section 1).<sup>3</sup> A quite unexpected translation of *psalterium* is found in Ps 56:9, where VP and TP both have *sealmleoð*, another semantically redundant compound (< *sealm*, "a psalm, a song" + *leoð* "a song, a poem"). *Sealmleoð*, "a

<sup>2</sup> Except in TP, where the noun *psaltere* is altogether omitted.

<sup>3</sup> But this adjective is used in Ps 91:4 in all three Psalters, with an additional participial suffix <-end> in VP and TP, suggesting scribal confusion between the noun *streng*, "string", and the verb *strengan*, "to make strong".

psalm", is premodified by the noun *wuldor*, "glory", in TP – where *psalterium* is thus translated into a phrase meaning "glorious psalm". This translation choice is somewhat reminiscent of Ps 48:5 in the Paris Psalter, where *in psalterio* is rendered by *on bys[sum] sealme*, "in these songs/psalms". The same metonymic shift in meaning from the musical instrument to the song usually sung when playing the instrument in question is attested in VP and TP. (Incidentally, the shift is also at work in the verb *sealmian* (not used in the psalters), one of the seven OE verbs meaning "to play a harp".)

The nouns *tuba* and *tympanum* are less frequent. There are four occurrences of *tuba* in VP and SP, against three in TP. The prepositional phrases already encountered in the Paris Psalter, viz. *in uoce tubae* and *in sono tubae*, are also present in Ps 46:6 and Ps 150:3 (the latter missing in TP); they are rendered straightforwardly by OE *on stefne byman* and *on swege byman* respectively. *Stefn*, a variant form of *stemn*, has already been described (cf. section 1); *swege* is a masculine noun referring here to the kind of regulated sound made by means of a musical instrument. In Ps 80:4 *tuba* translates into *of byman* in the three psalters, the preposition *of* being required by the preceding verbs *bymian* (VP) and *blawan* (SP), "to blow, make a sound with a trumpet", but as there is no verb at all in TP, that part of the English psalm becomes nonsensical. Finally, let us observe the translations of the more complex *in tubis ductilibus et uoce tube corneae* (Ps 97:6), where two wind instruments are designated: *tuba ductilis* is taken to be the Latin expression for *trombone* (Herbert *et al.* 1997, 70), while *tuba corna* refers to a wind instrument made of horn or resembling a horn ("a cornet", but not in the present sense of the word). The latter part of the Latin segment is unsurprisingly translated into *stefne byman hyrnen(d)re* in the three psalters ("in the sound of trumpets made of horn"), but one scribe was apparently less successful in rendering the former part, *in tubis ductilibus*, into English. The adjective *ductilis* means "that may be led, guided, or conducted", hence, with reference to a brass instrument, "that may be hammered out thin". That segment in SP reads *on byman aslagenum*; since *aslagen* is the past participle of *aslean*, "to strike, beat, hammer", this option can be regarded as a perfectly acceptable semantic calque of Latin. So can the translation choice in VP, *on bymun geglædendlicum*, based on the equivalence between Latin *ducere* and OE *lædan*. But quite obviously, *on bymun geglædendlicum*, found in TP, can be attributed to a misreading of *gelædendlicum* in VP: *gelædendlic* means "what is easily led or beaten out", whereas *geglædendlic* is probably a neologism derived from *geglædian*, "to make glad, to gladden, to appease". Such misreading must have been favoured by the kind of metonymic shift already observed with OE *dream* ("mirth" > "what causes mirth; an instrument of music, music"), and which can be further exemplified by OE *glīw* ("glee, joy, mirth" > "music"). *Glīw* gives rise to a whole lexical field – *glīwbeam*, "a musical instrument", *glīwcraft* "art of playing an instrument", *glīwian*, "to play an instrument", *glīwmæden*, "a female instrumentalist", etc. – and we find it hard not to analyse the misreading *geglædendlic* in TP in the light of the pervasiveness of the theme of joy and mirth.

*Tympanum* occurs four times in VP and SP, and only once in TP (Ps 67:26). By contrast with the Paris Psalter, where the translator simply borrows the word from Latin (see section 1), in the three psalters examined here the native compound *glīwbeam* (and its variant *glīgbeam*) is systematically used.<sup>4</sup> The term is presented as having the generic meaning "a musical instrument" by Roberts *et al.* (2000), but according to Bosworth & Toller (1954) it specifically designates a timbrel: the evidence gathered in VP, SP and TP tends to prove Bosworth & Toller right. As in the Paris Psalter, we find a passage in Ps 67:26 indirectly referring to the instrument by way of those who play it: the Latin phrase *in medio iuuenularum tympanistiarum* ("in the midst of young female players on the tambourine"), which is formed with the two nouns *iuuencula*, "maiden", and *tympanistria*, "a female drummer", translates into the quite precise but clumsy *on midlene gingrena timpana hearpigendra plegendra* in VT, and into the more effective but vaguer *on middele mædena glywiendra* in ST and *on middele glīwmædena* in TP (both probably meaning "in the midst of young female instrumentalists").<sup>5</sup>

The two nouns we are left with, *cymbalum* and *c(h)orda*, are not found in the Paris Psalter nor in acaudate TP. They are low-frequency items in VP and SP: *cymbalum* occurs twice in the same psalm

<sup>4</sup> In VT, Ps 149: 6, Latin *in tempano et psalterio* is rendered by the corrupted form *on glībe [...] and saltere*.

<sup>5</sup> - *on midlene gingrena*<sub>NOUN-GENITIVE PLURAL</sub> *timpana*<sub>NOUN-ACCUSATIVE PLURAL</sub> *hearpigendra*<sub>PRESENT PARTICIPLE-GENITIVE.PLURAL</sub>  
*plegendra*<sub>PRESENT PARTICIPLE-GENITIVE.PLURAL</sub>  
 - *on middele mædena*<sub>NOUN-GENITIVE PLURAL</sub> *glywiendra*<sub>PRESENT PARTICIPLE-GENITIVE.PLURAL</sub>  
 - *on middele glīwmædena*<sub>COMPOUND NOUN-GENITIVE PLURAL</sub>



(Ps 150:5), while *c(h)orda* occurs once only (Ps 150:4). The Latin phrase *in cymbalis* is straightforwardly rendered by *on cymballum*, thanks to the borrowing of the Latin term (but the dative plural inflection *-um* is native). There seems to have existed two forms of the Old English noun designating a cimbal, viz. *cimbal*, *-es* (masculine) and *cimbala*, *-an* (masculine). We come across Latin *c(h)orda* in Ps 150:4, which in isolation means "a string of an instrument of music", but whose meaning in context could sometimes be interpreted as "a lyre", if Gaffiot (1934, s.v. *chorda*) is to be trusted. The equivalent of Latin *in c(h)ordis et organo* reads *on strengum and orgenadream* in SP (with OE *streng* "a string of an instrument of music"), but *on heortan and organadream* in VP – a translation that can only be accounted for by scribal confusion between feminine *corda*, *-ae* ("a string") and neuter *cor*, *cordis* ("the heart"). Here again we have to conclude that the scribe who translated the Latin text in VP knew little Latin and had insufficient proficiency in that language for the task he had engaged in.

To briefly conclude, the texts of VP, SP and TP are strikingly close to one another. They contain more names of musical instruments, both in Latin and in English, than the Paris Psalter. And yet, not all the instruments depicted in TP's prefatory cycle of images (f. 16v-18r) are represented linguistically in the three psalters: the nabulum, the tintinabulum (bell), the sabuca, the pennola, the corus (bagpipe), the bumbulum are, regrettably, absent from the texts, and as a consequence the early English names designating them cannot be commented on.

We will now comment on the names of musical instruments found in our last documentary source.

### 3. The OE Gloss of the Eadwine Psalter. Linguistic Analysis

Unlike the Old English gloss in the three psalters just examined, the Eadwine gloss is not the work of one man – it was copied by at least five different scribes out of the thirteen scribal hands identified in the entire manuscript. But it contains the same names of musical instruments, both in Latin and in English, as VP and SP. In terms of frequency, a comparison with these psalters and with the Paris Psalter is also adequate, *cithara* and *psalterium* being clearly the commonest items.

The Latin section of the Eadwine Psalter thus contains the names of six musical instruments, *cymbalum*, *corda*, *cithara*, *psalterium*, *tuba* and *tympanum*, plus a generic name for a whole category of instruments, *organum*.

*Organum* shows up in Ps 136:2 as part of the sentence *suspendimus organa nostra*, which translates into *we hengen swegas ure* (where SP has *dreamas ure*). Here yet another generic name is used, the masculine noun *sweg*. We have already come across *sweg* in section 2 (*on swege byman*, Ps 150:3) with the meaning of "sound made by a musical instrument"; but the noun refers here to any musical instrument (Roberts *et al.* 2000, 718). Lat. *organum* also occurs in Ps 150:4 in the phrase *in cordis et organo*, glossed as *on heortan and orgænum*, where we identify the same scribal confusion as in VP between *corda*, *-ae* ("a string") and *cor*, *cordis* ("the heart").

Latin *cithara* is almost always found in the prepositional phrase *in cythara*, corresponding to *on hearpan*. Unsurprisingly in such a late text (second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century), the dative inflexion <-an> is more often spelt <-æn>, which we interpret as a sign of a merger to come – the two Old English short vowels /æ/ and /a/ were to fall together in Middle English. *In cythara* is once translated into *on eærpungum* (Ps 32:2), where it is not so much the dative plural inflexion <-um> that attracts our attention as the preceding derivational suffix <-ung>. Indeed *hearpung* does not refer to a harp but to the act/activity of playing the harp; absent any metrical requirements, we find it difficult to account for the metonymic shift "on/with the harp" > "in (the) acts of playing the harp". Another translation choice involving metonymic modulation is found in Ps 56:9, where *exurge psalterium & cythara* is rendered by *aris saltere and hearperas*: the second noun, *hearper*, does not designate the harp but the harpist. This is all the more unsettling as it can be compared to Ps 107:3, where the translation *arise saltere and hearpæn* is quite straightforward. We assume that the agentive suffix <-er> in *hearperas* is due to contamination, i.e. "the blending of forms, words, or phrases of similar meaning or use so as to produce a form, word, or phrase of a new type" (OED, s.v. *contamination*). The preceding noun *saltere* ("psalter") must have been wrongly interpreted as ending with the agentive suffix <-er>, thus bringing the similar *hearper* to the mind of the glossator. If contamination is indeed at work, it should be noted that it is a particular form of contamination which does not produce a novelty in terms of form, *hearper* ("a harpist") being already available in the Old English word stock.

As regards the translation of *psalterium*, we observe here again the use of the noun *saltere*, the loan word *psalterium* being absent. In Ps 32:2, 48:5 and 150:3 the native word is spelt with the initial <sp> cluster, a characteristic that hadn't been noted in the other texts, and metathesis can be observed in the form *on spaltere* in Ps 48:5. Corresponding to the phrase *in psalterio*, the Old English text alternates between a singular form (Ps 48:5, *on spaltere*.) and a occasional plural one (Ps 32:2, *on psalterum*), as already observed with *in cythara*. To refer to the ten-stringed psaltery, two translation strategies are used: postmodification by a phrase in the genitive plural, (*on psalterum*) *tyen strenga*, in Ps 32:2, or by a compound adjective, *on saltre tien strengan* in Ps 143:9, as evidenced by the dative singular inflectional suffix <-an> (<-ean> in the Paris Psalter).

Let us now turn to Latin *tuba*, corresponding to OE *byme*. The prepositional phrases present in the four psalters examined so far, viz. *in uoce tubae* and *in sono tubae*, are also to be found here; they are rendered by OE *on stefne byman* (Ps 46:6) and *on swege byman* (Ps 150:3) respectively, which are carbon-copy translations of the gloss in VP and SP. The translation of the more complex *in tubis ductilibus et uoce tube corneae* (Ps 97:6), as we have seen, involves reference to the trombone and to a wind instrument made of horn or resembling a horn ("a cornet", but not in the present sense of the word, cf. section 2): the result is OE *on byman and stefne byme horn*. Whoever glossed the former part of the Latin segment has shunned difficulty thanks to omission, i.e. by simply not translating *ductilis* into English. The latter part, to be compared with *stefne byman hyrnen(d)re* in VP, SP and TP, is rendered by *stefne byme horn*, an ungrammatical sequence due to *byme* lacking a genitive inflection and to *horn* lacking an adjectival suffix (*lit.* "in [the] sound trumpet horn"). This strongly suggests that here, maybe to a greater extent than in other parts of the Eadwine Psalter, the English text was viewed not so much as a translation properly speaking as a gloss with essentially a mnemonic function. This is reminiscent of much of Ælfric's grammatical terminology.

*Tympanum*, rendered in the Paris Psalter by a loan word from Latin, and by the native compound *gliwbeam* in VP, SP and TP, translates here in three different ways: i) in Ps 67:26 the loan word *timpanum* is resorted to; ii) in Ps 150:4 the noun *hylsong* ("a timbrel") is used, a newcomer in this description; iii) in Ps 80:3 and 149:3 the noun *sweg* is used, which we have already come across. From a semantic perspective, the latter is an instance of underspecification, in so far as *sweg* refers either to unregulated, confused sound ("noise, din, crash") or to "regulated, modulated or articulate sound" as uttered by a human being or as emitted by an instrument of music (Bosworth & Toller 1954, s.v. *sweg*). Finally, as in the four psalters examined so far, we find a passage in Ps 67:26 indirectly referring to the instrument by way of those who play it: the Latin phrase *in medio iuuenum timpanistriarum* corresponds to the precise but awkward *on midle gingra gliewmedene plegiendra mid timpanan*, which is somewhat reminiscent of *on midlene gingrena timpana hearpigendra plegendra* found in VT. From a syntactic point of view, the sequence in the Eadwine Psalter is clearer and involves a participial clause, *plegiendra mid timpanan*.<sup>6</sup> (For the noun *gliewmæden*, "(young) female instrumentalist" cf. section 2 on TP.)

As in VP and SP, *cymbalum* occurs twice in the same psalm (Ps 150:5), while *corda* occurs once only (Ps 150:4). The Latin phrase *in cymbalis* is straightforwardly rendered by *on cymballum*, thanks to the borrowing of the Latin term (but here again the dative plural inflection *-um* is native). With respect to the translation of *corda*, we note the very same scribal confusion between feminine *corda*, *-ae* ("a string") and neuter *cor*, *cordis* ("the heart") as in VP – Latin *in cordis et organo* corresponds to OE *on heortan and orgænum*.

## General conclusion

Logically enough, the evidence gathered from the five psalters shows that not all the names of instruments of music attested in Old English are used. Only those corresponding to Latin names found in the Biblical text are. This is why, for instance, pipes and flutes are missing in the category of wind instruments, or fiddles in that of stringed instruments.

The English texts examined here differ in terms of idiomaticity. Undeniably, the English version of the Paris Psalter, whether the prose translation known as "King Alfred's Prose Translation of the First

<sup>6</sup> *on midle gingra*<sub>ADJECTIVE-GENITIVE PLURAL</sub> *gliewmedene*<sub>NOUN-GENITIVE PLURAL</sub> *plegiendra*<sub>PRESENT PARTICIPLE-GENITIVE.PLURAL</sub> *mid timpanan*<sub>NOUN-DATIVE SINGULAR</sub>

Fifty Psalms" or the verse translation that follows, tends to be more idiomatic than the other four texts, which are glosses.<sup>7</sup> We don't think this is any coincidence. Alfred's prose translation and the metrical translation that follows are audience-oriented texts (Alfred's prose was meant to educate, and the verse was meant to be listened to), while glosses are not. This is why we would like in conclusion to relate the differences observed in terms of idiomaticity to the notions of formal and dynamic equivalence as outlined by Eugene Nida (1964). Dynamic equivalence is defined as a translation that has the same effect on its audience as the original text had on its audience, and the Paris Psalter belongs to that category. But formal equivalence implies a correspondence of linguistic units: word, phrase, clause, and sentence. Word-by-word glossing represents the logical extreme of formal equivalence, and its result can be unidiomatic Old English as we have observed.

## References

- BOSWORTH** Joseph & **TOLLER** T. Northcote, 1954 [1898]. *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. Glasgow, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press.,
- GAFFIOT** Félix, 1934. *Dictionnaire illustré latin français*. Paris: Hachette
- HALL** J.R. Clark & **MERITT** D., 1960 [1894], *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press.
- HERBERT** Trevor, John **WALLACE** & Jonathan **CROSS**, 1997. *The Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- LAPIDGE** Michael *et al.* (eds.), 2001 [1999]. *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*. Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell.
- NIDA** Eugene, 1964. *Toward a Science of Translating, with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*. Leiden: Brill.
- ROBERTS** Jane, **KAY** Christian & **GRUNDY** Lynne, 2000 [1995]. *A Thesaurus of Old English* (2 vols.) (King's College London Medieval Studies 11). Amsterdam & Atlanta: Editions Rodopi B.V.
- Latin Vulgate Bible with Douay-Rheims and King James Version side by side (<http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=0&b=21>)
- The Oxford English Dictionary (<https://www-oed-com.proxy.scd.univ-tours.fr/>)

---

<sup>7</sup> As we went along, we occasionally pointed out translations whose result was unidiomatic English. See also the verbless sentences in the Tiberius Psalter, among others.