

238. London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian A. i

"Vespasian Psalter"

[Ker 203, Gneuss 381]

HISTORY: The Latin text of the Roman psalter dates to the 8c and the continuous OE interlinear gloss to the 9c. Canticles, hymns, and prayers (some glossed) were added in the 11c. Although Kuhn posits a Mercian origin for the manuscript, scholars generally favor a Canterbury provenance. Nothing in the manuscript, however, supports the localization, which rests primarily upon an identification, supposedly of this manuscript, made by Thomas of Elmham in his 15c catalogue of books at St. Augustine's:

Est etiam et aliud 'Psalterium' supra tabulam magni altaris positum; quod habet exterius imaginem Christi argenteam planam, cum quatuor Evangelistis. In hujus Psalterii primo folio incipit, 'Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata.' In tertio folio incipit, 'Epistola Damasi papæ ad Ieronymum,' et in fine Versus ejusdem Damasi; ac deinde 'Epistola Ieronimi ad Damasum,' cum Hieronymi versibus. Deinde in quarto folio, 'De Origine Psalmorum,' in cujus fine distinguit Psalterium in quinque libros..... In quinto folio ejusdem Psalterii sequitur expositio de Alleluia secundum Hebræos, Chaldæos, Syros, et Latinos. Item interpretatio 'Gloriæ' apud Chaldæos. Item interpretatio Psalmi cxviii. per singulas literas. In sexto folio sequitur quando psalli vel legi debeat, quomodo Hieronymus scribit; item 'Ordo Psalmorum per A, B, C, D.' In septimo folio de literis Hebræis, quæ in Psalterio scribuntur. In octavo folio, 'Interpretatio Psalmorum,' usque ad folium undecimum, ubi incipit, 'Textus Psalterii,' cum imagine Samuelis sacerdotis, et in fine ejusdem Psalterii sunt hymni de matutinis, de vesperis, et de Dominico die, sicut in alio Psalterio prænotatio habentur (Hardwick 1858: 98).

Nothing is known about the ownership of the manuscript with any certainty until it was acquired by Sir Robert Cotton by 1599 (cf. his notation on f. 12r: "Ro: Cotton Bruceus 1599") from William Cecil (Lord Burghley), into whose collection the manuscript came by 1566 (see British Library, Lansdowne 8, f. 190r, for Matthew Parker's letter to Cecil thanking him for the use of the psalter).

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: After trimming, leaves measure 235 x 180 mm., and are normally ruled for twenty-two lines of Latin text. The writing grid of the main text (including the nine canticles and three hymns) measures 172 x 145 mm., of the prefatory matter 199 x 149 mm., and of the 11c additions 177 x 132 mm. The arrangement of the leaves is generally HFFH or HFHF; vellum is of high quality and moderately suede-like. Pricking in outer margins. Gold is used in all decorated initials, silver for major incipits (except f. 21v). Pigments include green, blue, yellow, red, and violet; lead white is also occasionally used. The first leaf of quire VI (between present ff. 11 and 12) most likely contained a lost *Beatus vir* page. Stains on f. 142r (after the hymn *Pusillus eram*) suggest that a single leaf, perhaps a carpet page, prepared separately and with a blank recto, was originally inserted. F. 30v contains a full-page illustration of David. Ornamental lines occur at liturgical divisions (Pss. 26, 38, 52, 68, 80, 97, 109, and 118, with an additional display line at Ps. 17) along with two historiated initials at Pss. 26 and 52; the typical tripartite division found in many psalters does not appear here. Ff. 2–11 and 141v are written in rustic capitals; the psalter proper is written in rounded uncial script, with titles in rustic capitals. Toon (1991: 91) notes a series of letters added in drypoint that he interprets as intended to help a scribe plan the layout of the codex; the marks are found at ff. 12r (c ψ), 13r (e), 14r (f), 14v (g), 15v (h), 16r (i), 18r (k), 18v (l), 19r (m), 19v (n), 20r (o), 20v (p), 22r (r), 24v (s), 25v (t), 26r (u). Patches with monograms, probably added before the OE gloss was entered, are found on 18v, 19r, 19v, 22r, 91r, 121r, 121v, 128r, 128v; that on 153v is used to repair a hole. The monograms, some comprising one or two letters (e.g., ff. 18v, 19r, 19v, 91r, 128r, 128v), others having more elaborate combinations (e.g., ff. 121v, 153r, 153v), are difficult to interpret and may contain personal names or initials of saints' names. F. 11v contains a prayer added in the late 10c or early 11c. In the first half of the 11c, a gathering containing liturgical material was added (ff. 155–160). The last two leaves of the gathering were not written and were subsequently cut out; the first two leaves are mounted to paper stubs and bound to f. 154, itself attached to a stub. Cotton glued to f. 160v a cutting taken from a 15c French breviary. The hand of ff. 155r–160r has been identified as that of Eadui Basan (11c; Bishop 1971: 22).

The fullest discussion and description of the psalter is given by Wright (1967). The entire psalter was edited by Kuhn (1965).

COLLATION: The collation added on a paste-in at the front of the manuscript was made in April 1954, before repair of the binding. The text was recollated for the facsimile edition published in 1967.

I⁽¹⁺¹⁾ (ff. 2–3; two single leaves), II⁸ (ff. 4–11), III⁶ (wants¹) (ff. 12–15; lost leaf before f. 12, originally forming a bifolium with f. 16 which is now bound with IV), IV⁶ (ff. 16–22; f. 16 properly belongs to quire III, but is wrongly bound as the first leaf here, the stub showing after f. 22), V⁶ (ff. 23–28), VI⁶⁺¹ (ff. 29–35; f. 30 is an inserted leaf, the stub showing after f. 34), VII⁶ (ff. 42–47), VIII⁶ (ff. 48–53), IX⁶ (ff. 54–59), X⁶ (ff. 60–65), XI⁸ (ff. 66–73), XII⁸ (ff. 74–81), XIII⁸ ff. (82–89), XIV⁶⁺¹ (ff. 90–96; f. 95 is an inserted leaf, the stub showing after f. 90), XV⁸ (ff. 97–104), XVI⁸⁺¹ (ff. 105–113; f. 109 is inserted leaf at the center of the quire), XVII⁸ (ff. 114–121), XVIII⁸ (ff. 122–129), XIX⁸ (ff. 130–137), XX⁶⁺³ (ff. 138–146; ff. 139, 141, and 145 are inserted leaves, with stubs after ff. 144, 143, and 138, respectively; a carpet page comprising a single leaf was likely lost after f. 141), XXI⁸ (ff. 147–154; ff. 147 and 154 originally formed a bifolium, but are now non-conjugate), XXII⁸ (ff. 155–160; wanting two leaves after f. 160, originally conjugate with ff. 155 and 156, respectively). Gathering I is preceded by a blank, unnumbered bifolium; gathering XXII is followed by a bifolium and a single-ten, both blank and unnumbered.

CONTENTS:

1. Prefaces to the psalms:

- ff. 2v/1–3v/14 'Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata. utilis est ad docendum)... sed uideamus tandem quid etiam psalmi indicentur initia'.
 f. 3v/15–29 'Psalmi omnimodan institutionem spiritalis disciplinae habent.... et ibi in alleluia | consummatur psalterium'.
 f. 4r/1–17 Incipit epistola damasi papae ad hieronium presbiterum | 'Damasus episcopus fratri et compresbitero kieronimo in christo ora pro nobis in domino missa .v. kl. nouembris. hierosolyma'.
 f. 4r/18–30 Incipunt uersus papae damasi 'Nunc damasi monitis aures prebete benignas Mactauit saxo teretri truncumque reliquit'.
 f. 4r/31–4v/17 Incipit epistola hieronimi praesb(iteri) ad damasum papam || 'Beatissimo papae damaso sedis apostolicae urbis romae hieronimus oret pro nobis beatitudo tua beatissimae papa'.
 f. 4v/17–29 Incipiunt uersus hieronimi praesb(iteri) | 'Psallere qui

- docuit dulci modulamine s(anc)tos Inueniet latices serbant qui dulcia mella’.
- ff. 4v/30–5r/29 *Incipit origo psalmodum* ‘Dauid filius iesse cum esset in regno suo iiii elegit qui psalmos facerent id est unctus. FINIT’.
- f. 5r/30–5v ‘Nunc exposiuimus originem psalmodum.... Quintus liber finit a psalmo cl qui sic habet omnis sp(iritu)s laudet d(omi)n(u)m’.
- f. 6r/1–2 ‘Dispsalma est semper quod est fiat....fiat hoc est semper’.
- f. 6r/3–12 *Incipit expositio alleluia apud ebreos* | ‘Alleluia est laus tibi soli.... A[lleluia] est laus tibi benedict’.
- f. 6r/13–18 *Incipit expositio alleluia apud khaldeos* | ‘Al[leluia] est laus tibi benedictus [Allelu]ia est laus tibi inluminatio lucis qui nec tempore finiris nec at re noctis nubilo tegeris rex aeternae glorię’.
- f. 6r/19–23 *Incipit interpretatio alleluia apud syros* | ‘Alleluia dicitur canta illa qui est [Alleu]ia dicitur qui est chr(istu)s’.
- f. 6r/24–31 *Incipit interpretatio alleluia apud latinos* | ‘Alleluia dicitur laudate d(omi)n(u)m....sicut ipse abyssus licet in libro geneleos non est sic | reuelatus factus’.
- f. 6r/31–6v/6 *Inc(i)p(it) interpre(tatio) glorię apud khaldeos* || ‘Gloria est terra laudat creatorem g[loria] est terra’.
- f. 6v/7–29 *Incipit interpretatio psalmi .cxviii. per singulas litteras* | ‘A Alleluia aleph d(eu)s χ ψ ω’.
- ff. 6v/30–7v/15 *Psalmi quando psalli vel legi debeant hic kieronimus | scripsit* ‘QUIA me dulcissime.... oratio ad altare xxxiii’.
- f. 7v/16 *Incipit ordo psalmodum per a b c d* | ‘uui a xii b ui u’.
- ff. 7v/17–8v *Incipit de litteris kebreis quę in psalterio scriptę sunt* | ‘Nudus tertius cum centesimum et xiiii psalmum tibi insinuare conarer.... ut d(omi)n(u)s ie(su)s conterat satanan sub pedib(us) nostris volociter’.
- ff. 9r–11v/19 *Incipit interpretatio psalmodum* | ‘Psalmus ad chr(ist)i personam pertinet ipse est enim perfectus et ipse ad nihilum rediget tribulantes nos | AMEN’.
2. f. 11v/20–26 added prayer (11c): ‘[S]uscip(er)e digneris d(omi)ne d(eu)s et ad uitam ęternam amen’.
3. ff. 12r–140v Roman version of the psalms (Ps. 2.4–150.6) with continuous interlinear OE gloss. Explicit: *Explicvnt psalmi david nvmero centvm qvinqvacinta*. [F. 109rv is an inserted leaf, the recto containing an unglossed Latin text, the verso blank; contemporaneous with the psalter proper: ‘Tribus modis psalmi loquuntur.... regni svi ado-

randa mysteria. pivs redemptor insinvat'. See PL 70.17–18.]

4. f. 141r Psalm 151 Hic psalmus proprie scribtus dauid | extra numerum cum pugnavit cum golia | 'Pusillus eram inter frater meos' [gloss:] 'lytel ic wes betwih broður mine'.
5. f. 141v 'TU d(omi)ne uerus doctor et praestitor aduocatus et iudex largitor qui de of[fensione nostra semper exultat'. [In a hand contemporaneous with that of the main scribe.]
6. ff. 141r–154r Canticles and hymns with continuous OE gloss:
- f. 142r/1–7 Canticum esaiae prof(etae) ii. feria | 'CONfitebor tibi d(omi)ne' [gloss:] 'ic ondettu ðe dryht(en)'.
 ff. 142r/18–143r/12 Canticum ezechiae iii. feria | 'Ego dixi in dimedio' [gloss:] 'ic cweð in midu(m)'.
 ff. 143r/13–144r/2 Canticum annae uiduae iii. feria | 'EXultauit cor meum' [gloss:] 'gefaeh heorte min'.
 ff. 144r/3–145r/18 Canticum exodii quinta feria | 'CANtemus d(omi)no gloriose' [gloss:] 'singen we dryht(ne) wuldurlice'.
 ff. 145r/19–146v Canticum abbacu pro(fetae) sexta feria | 'D(OMI)NE audiui auditum tuum' [gloss:] 'dryht(en) ic geherde gehernisse ðine'.
 ff. 147r–150r/9 Canticum deuteronomii in die sabba() | 'ADtende caelum et loquar' [gloss:] 'bihald heofen ⁊ spreocu'.
 ff. 150r/10–151r/2 Hymnum trium puerorum | 'Benedicite omnia opera d(omi)ni' [gloss:] 'bledsiað all werc dryhtnes'.
 f. 151r/3–151v/7 Canticum zachariae sacerdotis | 'Benedictus d(omi)n(u)s d(eu)s israhel' [gloss:] 'gebledsad dryht(en) god isra(el)'.
 ff. 151v/8–152r/6 Canticum s(an)c(t)ae mariae | 'MAGnificat anima mea d(omi)n(u)m.' [gloss:] 'miclað sawul min dryht(en)'.
 f. 152r/7–152v/8 Hymnum ad matutinos | 'SPendor paternae gloriae' [gloss:] 'birhtu federlices wuldres'.
 ff. 152v/9–153r/10 Hymnum uespertinum | 'D(eu)s creator omnium' [gloss:] 'god sceppend alra'.
 ff. 153r/11–154r Hymnum diebus dominicis | 'REx aeternae d(omi)ne' [gloss:] 'cýning ece dryht(en)'. [F. 154v blank.]
7. ff. 155r–160v Texts added in the 11c, the first two items with continuous OE gloss:
- f. 155r/1–20 Hymnus ad matutinum diebus dominici | 'Te deum laudamus' [gloss:] 'þe god we heriað'.

- ff. 155r/21–156r/10 I(n)cipit fides catholica | ‘Quicumque uult’ [gloss:]
 ‘swa hwa swa wyle’.
- f. 156r/11–28 oratio eugenii toletani ep(iscop)i | ‘Rex d(eu)s immensi’.
- ff. 156v/29–157v/12 confessio ad d(omi)n(u)m siue oratio || ‘Deus
 inaestimabilis misaricordiae’.
- ff. 157v/13–158r/6 ‘O s(an)c(ta)m et ue[ne]rabile n(ost)ri redemptoris’.
- f. 158r/7–158v/15 ‘[O] i(es)u chr(ist)e crucifixe d(omi)ne qui p(ro) no-
 b(is)’.
- ff. 158v/16–159r/25 ‘Salve crux s(an)c(t)a et ueneranda’.
- ff. 159r/26–160r/26 ‘[A]ue s(an)c(t)a crux omnium arborum gloriosis-
 sima’.
- f. 160r/27–160v/8 ‘Te s(an)c(t)a d(e)i crux humiliter adoro’.

PHOTO NOTES: Following fol. 160v on fiche no. 8 are two ornamental pages (not from this psalter), the full-page illustration of David (f. 30v), and an enlargement of the display line at Ps. 26. Fiche no. 9 contains enlargements of display lines at Pss. 38, 52, 68, 80, 97, 109, and 118.

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