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THE LATE ANGLO-SAXON PSALTER: ANCESTOR OF THE BOOK OF HOURS?¹

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In the introduction to her book, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, Beryl Smalley remarks that the Bible was “the most studied book of the middle ages,” and that “the language and the content of Scripture permeate medieval thought” (xi). This concern with the basic text of the Christian faith was felt in early medieval England as much as anywhere else in Christendom. Bede, for instance, highly prized his own commentaries on the books of the Bible, and at the end of his life was translating the gospel of St John into the vernacular. The Codex Amiatinus, the Lindisfarne and Rushworth gospels are all de luxe manuscripts, are all produced in insular scriptoria, and are all beautifully laid out and gloriously illustrated copies of these biblical texts. Perhaps more important, the latter two of these codices were copiously glossed in the vernacular, a process which, to the modern eye at least, disturbs the visual splendour of the manuscript, but which proves that study and understanding of the text was of great importance to the Northumbrian monks who used the manuscripts. Similarly, many of the psalters of Anglo-Saxon England were glossed, illustrated, or otherwise laid out in such a way as to suggest careful study of the text.

Then, as now, the psalms were the principal teaching text for all Christians, explaining and exemplifying the praise and penitence that form the cornerstones of medieval piety and faith. The psalter was the book of the

Bible most likely to be copied and bound as a separate codex, both for purposes of private devotion, and for use in the liturgy — especially in the reading of the Offices, for which the psalter was the primary text. In the insular church before the Norman Conquest the psalter appears to have been widely available, being copied, glossed, illuminated according to several programs of illustration, and even translated into the vernacular. So far, according to Gneuss's "Preliminary List," which includes almost a thousand manuscripts produced or owned in England up to 1100, there are thirty-six extant psalter manuscripts. Of these, fourteen are wholly or partly glossed in Old English and one is a complete translation. In addition, any consideration of insular psalters should include those of Ireland — particularly that most famous of Hibernian manuscripts, the Cathach of St Columba — and those produced in the monastic establishments of Northern France and Germany, which are generally considered to have reflected insular approaches in their copying of manuscripts or to have had insular additions. The addition of this Irish and Continental material raises the total of insular psalter manuscripts to forty-eight codices. Although some were not Anglo-Saxon creations, all of these psalter manuscripts show signs of having been modified and used for devotional purposes. Furthermore, there are psalter commentaries, psalms in service books for the Offices, and psalm verses in prayers and other liturgical or devotional texts — to the extent that nearly one in ten Anglo-Saxon manuscripts has a direct connection to the psalter.

Psalters, even in the earlier Middle Ages, tended to be elegant manuscripts, often produced for royalty or the higher nobility. They were the most common books for private devotions, not supplanted by Books of Hours until the fourteenth century. Usually, they included the psalms, divided and ordered in one of a number of ways, and a set of canticles or a set of biblical passages for readings. They were often elaborately decorated books, with illuminated versals and illustrations following one of a number of programs. For instance, the Werden Psalter (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS Theol. lat. fol. 358), written in Caroline Minuscule at Werden ca. 1039, has six full-page miniatures, and 190 gold or silver initials. The Dagulf Psalter (Vienna, ONB MS lat. 1861), commissioned by Charlemagne as a gift for Hadrian at the end of the eighth century, has five ornamental pages on purple, and the whole text is written in gold letters. The ninth-century Athelstan Psalter (B.L. Cotton MS Galba A. xviii) is made more elaborate by the addition of miniatures at several strategic points in the manuscript after its arrival in England in the tenth century (see Keynes 193–96 for a discussion of how tenuous the link with Athelstan is, and Backhouse 20–24 for a description

of the manuscript). The Book of Cerne (C.U.L. Ll. 1. 10) is a ninth-century production including a breviary psalter, a manuscript often compared to the Lindisfarne Gospels (B.L. Cotton MS Nero D. iv) and the Book of Kells (Dublin, Trinity College MS 58) for its material, and to the Royal Bible (B.L. MS Royal 1 E. vi) and other Canterbury manuscripts for its illustration and iconography. All of these examples predate the beautiful psalter manuscripts of East Anglia in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries (Kauffman), and the later development of these manuscripts for private prayer and devotion—the spectacular Books of Hours produced in Flanders and northern France in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Some of these later medieval Books of Hours, incorporating full or breviary psalters, were meant for liturgical purposes, but the greater number of them were used by pious secular individuals. They chose to commission their own copies of this crucial text, and likewise chose to study or learn the psalms as a devotional exercise.

Those in the monastic way of life, on the other hand, were enjoined by the dicta of their orders to know the psalms. The Rule of St Benedict, for instance, requires that the full complement of one hundred and fifty psalms and canticles must be maintained every week, although they may be arranged according to choice (Fry 214–15). Benedict cites the early fathers as if they commonly recited the whole psalter in a single day, and imputes extreme indolence and lack of devotion to those who fail in the lesser task of repeating the psalter and customary canticles weekly:

Quia nimis inertem devotionis suae servitium ostendunt monachi qui minus a psalterio cum canticis consuetudinariis per septimanae circulum psallunt.
(*RB* Ch. 18.24, p. 214)

Oblates learned the psalter for two reasons: it taught the basic rules and methods of devotion to God, and it also provided the rudiments of Latin grammar and syntax. Since throughout the Middle Ages the psalter was perceived first of all as prophecy, as a prefiguration in the Old Testament of Christ's coming, it remained an allegorical text of the greatest significance, the great guide for correct living. Furthermore, the psalms were the work of a single author, David—the prophet king, psalmist, and direct ancestor of Christ—a fact that gave them great cumulative authority as words of praise and prophecy. In Anglo-Saxon England, this cumulative authority was especially significant, for the royal genealogies as a rule include Christ, and by implication his forefather David, as a direct ancestor to the present king (see Sisam 320–21; the direct source is Luke 3:23–38).

The roles of the psalter in medieval Europe, and especially England, were therefore many: teaching text for the elementary study of Latin; teaching text for the basic understanding of Christian doctrine and, particularly, exegesis; reading text for private devotional purposes, whether by a lay person or by one in orders; reading text for meditation and rumination upon each phrase of the sacred word; and liturgical text for use during the Mass and for service as the basis for the Offices marking the monastic hours. Some of the psalters extant from Anglo-Saxon England and Ireland could be used for most of these purposes, some for only a limited number. For these manuscripts, the treatment of the text, its *mise-en-page*, is of crucial importance. Study of the interaction of all the features which make up the insular psalter manuscripts — texts, glosses, decoration, layout, headings, and ancillary material — can perhaps illumine the purpose, provenance, and production techniques present in any one of these codices.

In particular, this paper will argue the somewhat contradictory thesis that the largest, most elaborately decorated, and the smallest, least decorated, manuscripts together provide the clearest clues to the origins of the Book of Hours, which developed in the following centuries and became the principal devotional aid for late medieval piety and spirituality. The manuscripts that are of medium size (the size of an ordinary modern book) or medium-large size serve a different, more public, purpose that involves teaching, chanting, and public recitation. After introducing this argument with a description of the Bosworth Psalter (B.L. Add. MS 37517), which will be regarded here as a kind of compendium for the most common uses of the psalter in Anglo-Saxon England, the paper will turn to three unusual manuscripts, two of them relatively neglected by scholars and one relatively well known. The neglected codices are small eleventh-century manuscripts of the Gallican psalter which fit easily in the hand (Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale MS A. 44 and Oxford, Bodleian Library Laud lat. 81); the well known one is the unusually-shaped Paris Psalter (Bibliothèque nationale MS lat. 8824), a large and narrow eleventh-century copy of the Roman psalter with a facing vernacular translation. I will suggest, somewhat tentatively, that these manuscripts were best suited for private study, in that the large manuscript would suit a lectern for an individual reader meditating on the bilingual psalter, and the small codices could be used for private and personal reading. Like the books of hours of the following centuries, these manuscripts were either very large or very small — and I will argue that the impulse toward private devotion led in the eleventh century to these two, apparently contradictory, impulses in manuscript production.

First, however, at the other end of the spectrum, large, multifaceted, and intended for many users rather than one at a time, is the Bosworth Psalter (B.L. Add. MS 37517). In this manuscript, the well known vernacular glosses are simply one feature of many that help the reader or listener to comprehend the psalter text. The manuscript was produced and very well used in the second half of the tenth century in south-eastern England, most likely at Canterbury, and possibly for use at Westminster Abbey (Korhammer). The principal text is a Roman psalter, but it is preceded by a calendar, and followed by Psalm 151, then a set of canticles, a hymnal, and a set of monastic canticles. The Bosworth Psalter appears to have been in constant use in the later Anglo-Saxon period and even into the thirteenth century. Written in the second half of the tenth century, with glosses added at the end of the century, the psalter itself was partially corrected to Gallican readings in the twelfth century, and again in the thirteenth, while a drawing was added in the twelfth century, probably at St Augustine's.

The Bosworth Psalter is a large manuscript, measuring 390 × 265 mm. Its original binding with oak boards and leather fastenings for hanging the codex is not intact, but the remnants of the thong in the central groove and the angle and depth of the other grooves make reconstruction of the arrangement possible. The boards extend a long way beyond the edges of the folia, and would protect the parchment from harm, and there is some suggestion of wear over the length of the boards that may point to an extra pair of leather strips used to hold the manuscript closed. The vellum itself was originally prepared with four vertical lines ruled from the top to the bottom of each folio, two on each side to mark the bounds of the written space and provide room for the versals. The manuscript was ruled throughout for twenty-five lines, with the top and bottom horizontal lines being dry-point ruled directly across the page from the gutter to the outer edge. Each psalm begins with an elaborate coloured initial, and each verse with a red versal in the left margin, and the copying is *per cola et commata*, with run-over to the line above being very rare (and becoming steadily more rare from the first to the third quires, after which run-over almost never occurs). The punctuation throughout is a *punctus elevatus* at the *metrum*, and at the verse either a lower (sub) or medial *distinctio*. Occasionally, at the *incisum* there occurs a high *distinctio*. The layout and punctuation of the Latin psalter therefore suggest a system based on legibility from the tradition of Cassiodorus, but with the addition of the liturgical *punctus elevatus* to make reading or chanting the psalter easier. The Latin psalter makes use of very

few abbreviations indeed, and is well spaced and elegantly laid out with a great deal of white space on the page.

However, the Latin psalter is joined in this manuscript by a very complex alternating system of glosses. On some folia there are sporadic Latin glosses, largely lexical in nature; on others, there are extensive interlinear and marginal glosses (appearing to derive from one or more complete commentaries) that fill every scrap of available white space around the Latin text. On yet other folia there appears a vernacular interlinear gloss; and on a very few folia there is an extraordinary mixture of Latin *scholia* with vernacular glosses. Given that the published editions of this manuscript invariably split up these texts, comprehending the careful mixture of materials for teaching and learning in this psalter is a difficult matter. There are some syntactic cues, and some markings to indicate the order in which a novice reader should construe the Latin; there are simple glosses for comprehension of difficult words and for a preliminary understanding of allegorical interpretations; and there are extended and coherent analyses of some verses deriving from several commentaries. The manuscript seems almost an all-purpose work, with some musical notation, some vernacular glosses, some (occasionally extensive) Latin glosses, and a text of the Latin psalter that is larger than usual for Caroline Minuscule. There are two spells of heavy Latin glossing, and several spells of Old English glossing in a neat, small hand centred over each Latin *lemma*. This is a manuscript in several different hands, with several layers of material included.

Last, the Bosworth Psalter has an extensive program of decoration. This includes four initial pages with lines of decorative capitals; capitals for each psalm in green, and from fol. 66^v also in blue and red; versals in red ink; and psalm headings written in Caroline Minuscule (not a display script), also in red ink. Green is particularly popular in the second half of the manuscript, and may have some special significance, being used for initials in several canticles, and for some of the names in the litany. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this manuscript, however, is its unfinished state: it was in constant use, to judge by the number of corrections and glosses, and yet was never properly completed. The text of the psalter was written, and several different levels and kinds of glossing were written in between the lines and in the margins, but the manuscript seems never to have been completely overhauled so as to present a finished work. Many of the canticles do not have headings, although space is left for *tituli*, Psalms 102 to 108 similarly have no headings, and the line drawing on fol. 1^r, at the beginning of the psalter, is only half complete. Unlike the three manuscripts that are the

focus of this study, this manuscript was left incomplete. By comparison to the other insular psalters discussed here, the Bosworth Psalter was first prepared relatively early in the Anglo-Saxon period, but unlike them it shows several layers of later, including post-Conquest, additions. This suggests that the insular psalter manuscripts could be very useful codices for over a century after the point at which one might have expected the Anglo-Saxon techniques of line drawing, and the Anglo-Saxon use of the Roman psalter, to have been completely eliminated from psalter usage. New manuscripts with these features were not really being produced, but that does not mean that available manuscripts did not continue to be used.

Like the Bosworth Psalter in the terms being discussed here are many of the other glossed psalters of Anglo-Saxon England. The Regius Psalter (B.L. MS Royal 2.B.v.) is the size of a reading book, measuring 270 × 185 mm, with generous and clear spacing for the psalter, its gloss, and (from the third quire) the additional *scholia*. The psalm headings in red, taken from the *Diuisiones* of Cassiodorus, are a scholarly choice for a scholarly manuscript. The decoration is modest but extremely well-organized, marking the three fifties of the psalms, and the text is copied in an unusual combination of *scriptio continua* and *per cola et commata* layouts, which would interfere with liturgical usage. On the other hand, the punctuation system is extremely coherent, and derived from the liturgical *positurae*. After some prefatory material, some of which the manuscript shares with B.L. MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii (see Ker 249 and 186), the manuscript includes only a psalter and a set of canticles. The prefatory quire begins with a prayer to the Virgin Mary for intercession, a feature that, as will be argued later, is typical of those later pre-Conquest manuscripts intended specifically for private study. More interestingly, the prayer is followed by a set of devotions to the Virgin, which turns somewhat strangely into a macaronic mixture of maxims. The Regius Psalter thus includes some of the features that in this paper are seen as leading to private devotion, but its clear and coherent layout, its system of glossing and explanations, and especially its connection to the psalter commentary of pseudo-Jerome surviving in part in B.L. MS Royal 4.A. xiv. suggest that its principal function was as a teaching manuscript, part of a package for the study and understanding of the psalms (see Ker 249) developed in the late tenth century in southern England.

Similarly, the Stowe Psalter has only a psalter and canticles, though each psalm is followed by a relevant collect from a complete set now known as the Stowe Collects for their appearance in this manuscript. Dated to the mid-eleventh century and often attributed to the New Minster at

Winchester, the manuscript has twenty widely-spaced lines to the page, and an interlinear gloss w ruled for from the second quire. The Gallican psalter is written *per cola et commata*, and its stately and relatively relaxed copying of the Latin text, with few abbreviations, suggests that the manuscript was to some extent available for public use. Although it lacks any liturgical divisions, or even internal psalm divisions in the longer psalms (unlike the smaller manuscripts discussed later), the manuscript shows signs of public use in the later Middle Ages, for the punctuation shows signs of correction and a late medieval scribe wrote antiphons in the margin from the first quire, and later more extensive material, including antiphons, versicles, and responds. Interestingly, this is the only surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the psalter to be glossed throughout, with no gaps anywhere. The remainder of the glossed manuscripts are either missing some psalms or the glossing is not complete, in that like the Bosworth Psalter the gloss is sometimes optional.

Other psalter manuscripts of Anglo-Saxon England remain in some way unfinished: in this category belong the unfinished decorative scheme of the Harley Psalter and the unfinished gloss of the Vespasian Psalter. Some have introductory material and extensive ancillary material after the psalter itself, including hymnals or extensive prayer collections. The most impressive compendium surviving is that known as the Portiforium of St Wulstan (Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 391). The manuscript begins with a copy of the Gallican psalter, and like the Rouen psalter to be discussed next, it is small enough to fit in the hand (225 × 135 mm), but unlike that manuscript it is very bulky and the material following the psalter is not just ancillary to it but amounts to a portable service-book. It includes not just a hymnal and private prayers, but a collectar and service materials so that the manuscript itself is generally called a breviary, though that also does not indicate its scope. The psalter ends on folio 201^v, but the manuscript totals 723 folia. Here, then, is a hand-held service book that began as a psalter, but whose principal purpose seems to be the organization of public devotion. Another Latin psalter, B.L. MS Harley 863, incorporates a prefatory calendar, a copy of the Gallican psalter, and following it a set of canticles, a litany, and prayers. In this manuscript, a number of the opening versicles are provided with musical notation, and each psalm verse is provided with a number of corrections, additions, or alternatives in the space left after the last word of the verse. Despite the musical notation, the psalms are not divided for liturgical usage. Some medieval glosses in the margins toward the beginning of the manuscript referring to Augustine, Jerome, and Cassiodorus suggest that the codex was used as a teaching text in the later

middle ages. The manuscript thus has some impulse toward public devotion, in that musical notation appears, but it also appears to have been used as a teaching text. There are twenty-five closely-written lines to the page and no space laid aside for a gloss (whether vernacular or one of the Latin precursors of the *Glossa Ordinaria*). Like Corpus 391, the decoration is limited to indications of the psalter divisions and versals (none in gold, which was perhaps reserved for display manuscripts, which these are not) to mark the beginning of a psalm verse, written *per cola et commata*. This manuscript corresponds most closely to the medium size of the Regius Psalter, measuring 286 × 197 mm, and through the Middle Ages the indications of wear suggest that it was a much-used and valued copy of the psalms. Its collection of texts, then, was not simply useful in the eyes of the compiler, but provided material useful for later generations.

It is clear, then, that the Anglo-Saxon psalter drew to it other kinds of material; the distribution of that material in a given manuscript depended no doubt on many factors. Some of the accretions discussed above have to do with individual study of the psalter, others with collective discussion or chanting, and yet others with using the psalter as part of a complete service-book. The three manuscripts that form the principal focus of this argument all have accretions that suggest they are early progenitors of what later in the Middle Ages became the most popular book of private devotion—the Book of Hours. Further, their format and layout suggest the same concern with arranging the text and making it legible for a single reader. The first two of these manuscripts are the smallest surviving Anglo-Saxon psalters: Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale A. 44, and Bodleian, Laud lat. 81.

Both Latin psalters with ancillary texts before and after the copy of the psalms, both small—the latter could legitimately be called tiny—manuscripts, and both mid- or late-eleventh century copies from southern England: the Rouen manuscript and the Laud one bear remarkable similarities to each other. They are also equally ill served by students of the subject, in that aside from a brief catalogue entry for the Rouen manuscript, and even briefer references for the Laud manuscript, neither has been the subject of detailed consideration. At the same time, there are substantial differences between the two, which include the choice of texts, the rubrics, the decoration, the punctuation, and the layout. Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale MS A. 44 (sometimes wrongly referred to as MS 231 from its reference number in the national catalogue) is a hand-held psalter, a small, neat book measuring only 176 mm in height and 113 in width. It includes 210 folia of medieval material, with two post-medieval end-leaves at both the beginning

and end of the codex. The manuscript, copied at St Augustine's, Canterbury toward the end of the eleventh century, includes a copy of the Gallican psalter whose opening is missing in that the text starts at Psalm 9:8, a set of canticles, a litany, prayers, and a hymnal with canticles. Much of the original decoration of the manuscript is now lost, since the opening is missing with what was presumably an initial page or miniature for Psalm 1, and the decorated openings to Psalms 51 and 101 are also missing. However, a display initial, and gold for the whole first line, marks the beginning of Psalm 109, *Dixit dominus*, and a few gold and purple initials for other psalms marking the eight-fold Benedictine division of the psalter allow us to infer that the missing folia are likely to have been elegant initial pages.

The script is a very late Caroline Minuscule, with feet always finishing at a pronounced angle, and hooked *e* occurring throughout the manuscript. The writing space is in proportion with the size of the manuscript, although it commonly starts quite high on the page, covering 110 mm × 66 mm, including the versals. The space from the bottom line to the foot of the page is generally almost 50 mm. The scribe uses many abbreviations, but they are standard ones, and ligatures also save some space. Each Latin verse is written across the full page, and gets one or two, rarely as many as three, lines. There is no space wasted. The initial letters of each psalm are in plain gold and are two lines high, very occasionally with purple decoration, and the versals are plain but carefully placed one line high in the left-hand margin between the boundary lines, and are in blue, red, or green. Even the punctuation is very neat and clear, including only the *punctus elevatus* after the *membrum*, and the lower *distinctio* or period at the end of each psalm verse. The manuscript therefore has a clear and coherent combination of the *distinctiones* with the liturgical *positurae*, using signs from both systems in order most usefully to present the psalter text for, perhaps, both private and public reading purposes (Parkes 103-04 on psalter punctuation). The psalm headings, in red, fit in around the opening line of each psalm or even at the foot of the page and are, most unusually, written in Caroline Minuscule, not in a display script of any kind. Common on the page are *signes de renvoi* in blue or red ink, as the last word or words of a psalm verse are written in at the end of the line above.

The manuscript is pricked throughout, and ruled either in drypoint (more common in the psalter itself) or in plummet. There are two vertical boundary lines on each side of the written space, for the versals, and two horizontal boundary lines, marking the first and third lines of written space at the top of the page, and at the bottom of the page the last and

antepenultimate lines. All of the boundary lines are ruled right across the page, the rest of the lines being marked inside these boundaries only. The quires appear to have been ruled before folding on the hair sides of the sheets, and they are arranged hair-flesh-flesh-hair, as might be expected in a major monastery in the late eleventh century. The parchment is also of fairly good quality and well prepared, and the holes that exist do not unduly interfere with the text. There are twenty-one written lines on each page, and the first appears above the top line of the horizontal boundary line.

The Latin of the psalter text is a very good copy of the Gallican psalter. Also, it carefully divides longer psalms, using for instance at Psalm 20:19 a three-line initial *D* to mark the break in the reading. Similarly, on fol. 24^r, *Gloria* appears after Psalm 36:26 to mark the division of that psalm. On fol. 28^r, Psalm 41 begins with a gold and purple capital to show its importance as one of the eight-fold liturgical divisions of the psalter. The missing folio after fol. 35, which must have included an initial page for Psalm 51, may well have included a collect after Psalm 50, since fol. 35^v ends part-way through Psalm 50:21 *Tunc acceptabis sacrificium iusticie. abla[tiones]*. Fol. 36^r begins with the second phrase of Psalm 51:1. The missing page included only a few psalm verses, and, presumably, an initial page like that of several other Anglo-Saxon psalters, ornamenting the opening *Quid gloriaris in malitia* of the psalm. Further psalm divisions are marked on fol. 46^v at Psalm 67:20, and fol. 58^r before Psalm 77:36, and Psalm 89 opens with a three-line gold and purple initial pointing out another of the eight-fold divisions of the psalter.

The last quinquagene has similar divisions in psalms 103, 105, and 106, and a lost initial page for Psalm 101 that must have included only the last verse of Psalm 100 and the opening clause *Domine exaudi orationem meam et clamor meus* — part of that presumably in a display script matching that for the end of the verse at the top of fol. 76^r *ad te veniat*. Each of the sections of Psalm 118, the abecedarium psalm, is distinguished not only with the transliteration of the relevant Hebrew alphabetic letter, but also with gold initials and blue headings for the explications. For reasons that are not clear, the psalms are numbered from 120 (fol. 99^v) to the end. Finally, psalms 138 and 143 are also divided into two sections. This psalter, then, is extremely well organized and carefully laid out for a Benedictine well acquainted with the psalm divisions habitually used for the recitation of the psalter during the Offices. The text of the psalter is the most important feature of the manuscript, and it is laid out so as not to waste space in any way but also to be clear and easy to follow. There are very few glosses

in the text, all of them appearing to have been added by readers and students of the material.

After the psalter itself occurs a group of three prayers to be offered after study or recitation of the psalter; a set of fifteen canticles; a litany with eighty-five names of apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins; a lengthy group of prayers for private devotion (fols. 134^r-148^v); and a Hymnal with canticles (fols. 149^r-208^v). The prayers after the psalter, beginning immediately after the last verse of Psalm 150 and continuing onto the verso of fol. 114, are short penitential ones, requesting the help of God for the *famulus tuus* and hoping that the psalms might do the singer some heavenly benefit. On fols. 115^r-125^v appear the canticles, which are a standard set including the Gloria, the Pater Noster, the Credo, and the Athanasian Creed. The Litany contains few surprises, although Martial is securely placed as the second of the confessors (suggesting that his brief spell as an apostle had come to an end by the time this manuscript was prepared), and several of the martyrs are specifically listed as being invoked *cum sociis tuis* (Dionisius, Mauricius, Nicasius, Eustachius). The English martyrs are three: Alban, Eadmund, and the martyred archbishop of Canterbury, Ælphege. Among the confessors Augustine is the only one remembered with his confrères, and a number of Frankish saints appear: Remigius, Maurus, Wandregisilus, and Philibertus. The virgins are a standard group, including Æltheldryth and Mildryth from England, as well as, more unusually, Euphemia.

Immediately following the litany begins a long series of prayers, the first of which are pleas for guidance and help from God *super famulos tuos & super cunctas congregationes*, and later for *famulis & famulabus tuis*. Unlike the prayers immediately after the psalter itself, these are prayers for the whole community, asking for consideration of the group rather than the individual. However, on fol. 132^r the prayers revert to an individual focus, proclaiming *Te adoro*, and later requesting intercession from the Virgin Mary: *Tibi commendo animam meam corpus quoque cogitationes ac uerba*. The prayers almost work through the litany, including one each to the archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, one to all the angels, one each to John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, Andrew, St John the Evangelist, one to all those *dilecta dei*, one to Stephen, one to all the militant martyrs, one each to Benedict and Augustine (the latter including the mention of Peter and Paul, which places the manuscript at St Augustine's, Canterbury), and one each to all the confessors, virgins, and the cherubim and seraphim. After this group of short prayers occurs the well-known longer one beginning *Domine deus omnipotens qui es trinus et unus*; often found as a prayer after the psalter, this is

nowadays known as the prayer of St Benedict. Last in this group appears a group of eight prayers to the cross, culminating with the extended *Tuam crucem adoramus domine*.

The manuscript ends with a hymnal, including its own set of canticles (briefly mentioned in Gneuss *Hymnar*, 82n18). It begins with an ornamented *O*, decorated in blue, gold, purple, and red, to begin *O Lux beata trinitas*, and ends with a canticle for the dedication of a church. Fols. 208–210 contain homiletic material. Except for the last two folia, which may well have been left blank originally and added to later, the manuscript is an extremely well organized one, with each text placed in the most appropriate place. It fits easily in the hand, and would have been an excellent text for an individual following the services and contributing to the recitation of psalms and canticles. There is no musical notation and no liturgical marking other than the divisions of some psalms for reading, particularly monastic reading. In addition, the codex provides all the materials necessary for individual devotion, and the system of decoration is both functional and impressive. It would have well served a high-born cleric, or even a layperson who wished to be apprised of what the monastic Offices included. Rouen MS A. 44 is a manuscript produced when the main accretions to a psalter text had been settled, when what sorts of material belonged as adjunct to the psalter itself had been determined, and when very good texts of all the relevant additions were available. Even with the now-missing decorative pages, it would not have been a manuscript of particular importance in the history of art or of the psalter, but it provides us with a clear sense of what the monks of a major scriptorium saw as necessary texts for private and public devotion.¹

Bodleian Library MS Laud lat. 81 is another Latin psalter manuscript, and takes the tendency toward the small-scale evident in the Rouen codex to an extreme: the manuscript folia measure only 83 × 60 mm, just about three and a quarter inches in height and two inches in width. This is a compact and tightly packed manuscript, with few concessions to decoration and a writing space (65 × 41 mm) that is proportionately more of the manuscript page than that in any of the other manuscripts considered here. The manuscript has eighteen quires of eight folia and a final quire of six folia, including 150 leaves, with two medieval endleaves added at the beginning. (The pencil foliation begins at the first endleaf.) The script is an Anglo-Caroline Minuscule, and near the end the late features of the script are particularly pronounced. There are nineteen lines of writing on each page of the manuscript, and many abbreviations are used to save space in order

to permit the copying of a psalter, a set of canticles, a litany, and thirty-two prayers in this short manuscript.

Like the Rouen manuscript, then, this eleventh-century codex includes a psalter, canticles, a litany, and an extensive selection of prayers; it does not include a hymnal, nor was it extensively decorated with *incipit* pages or facing miniatures at the beginning of each section of the psalter. Neither manuscript includes a psalter preface, and neither leaves space for glossing, either marginal or interlinear. Neither wastes space: each psalm verse is here written *per cola et commata* across the full page, taking one or two lines, with extensive but logical abbreviations used to shorten the space needed. Where the Rouen manuscript has *signes de renvoi* in blue or red ink, this one has them in the ink of the main text, and written on the line above immediately after its last word rather than toward the end.

The manuscript probably has even less decoration than the Rouen one had (before pages were taken from it); the opening of the psalter merits a full-page border in gold, drawn onto the page before the words were copied in, since it is scraped off near the foot to allow the word *sedet* from *et in cathedra pestilentie non sedet* to appear. The scribe clearly saw the words as more important than any decorative feature of the manuscript. The opening *B* is a 10-line gold initial, and a display script is used for the first ten lines of the text; for the openings of Psalms 51, 101, and 109—the four-fold division of the psalter—similar eight- or nine-line initials in gold appear, with some use of display script and some rudimentary acanthus leaf decoration in the bowls. For the rest of the psalms a single two-line gold initial and one word in display script introduce the text, which only once has a rubric or introduction of any kind—*Psalmus David*, written in gold at the opening of Psalm 51. The absence of these *argumenta* suggests that the text alone was the focus of the compiler of this manuscript.

Further, the manuscript uses only one display script of modified rustic capitals and the Anglo-Caroline Minuscule that is the main hand of the text. The punctuation is similarly pragmatic: the *membrum* is almost always marked with a medial *distinctio*, and the verse by either another medial *distinctio* or by an arrangement of three dots in a triangle or an inverted triangle (with occasionally the base of the triangle being a comma). This latter arrangement, developed in Ireland, was relatively common in later insular manuscripts. The versals, in gold, are set somewhat erratically in the margin since the dry-point ruling marks only the written space with vertical lines, and does not provide a guide for initials. Nevertheless, the manuscript is both neat and rather elegant, providing as it does

a good copy of the Gallican psalter, followed by a set of well-prepared ancillary texts.

The psalter ends on fol. 131^v, and is followed immediately by the first of thirteen canticles, which include the Gloria, the Pater Noster, and the Nicene Creed. After the canticles is a litany invoking eighty names, among which, interestingly, twenty-seven are of virgins (including Faith, Hope, and Charity). From fol. 147^r to the end, at fol. 152^r, the manuscript includes thirty-two prayers of penitence and devotion. Like the series in the Rouen manuscript, this group begins with relatively short prayers for intercession written in the first person plural, many of them developing from petitions in the litany, including (as in the Rouen manuscript) the Virgin Mary, John, Peter and Paul, Stephen, Laurence, Vincent, Benedict, Gregory, Augustine, and Nicholas. The next group of prayers, also in the plural, consists of short confessional and penitential expressions of remorse and petitions for mercy. On fol. 149^v, for example, the prayers request clemency for *seruorum tuorum*, identify the petitioners as the *famulos tuos* and even, in the nominative plural, as *cenobii* requesting the help of the Virgin Mary. Occasionally there is some confusion: on fol. 150^r the twenty-fourth prayer begins *Da famulo tuo* but continues in the plural, while the next prayer requests mercy for the *famulis & famulabus*, and one on the verso of the same folio asks on behalf of *famulas & famulabus tuis*. Two prayers (26 and 27) are written in the singular, and references in others ask for help for the *fratribus & sororibus nostris*, which may suggest a generalized sense of praying for all Christians, not just those in orders. The final three prayers are slightly longer and appear more carefully constructed, the first of these an intercessory prayer invoking the Virgin Mary on behalf first of kings and popes, working through to all faithful Christians. The penultimate prayer in the manuscript, written in the singular, requests *karitas in corde*, and in a series of parallel clauses invokes the allegorical virtues. The final prayer, also in the singular, invokes the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and John the Evangelist to help protect the petitioner. The prayers, and especially the ones in the singular occurring toward the end of the selection, respond to the images and concerns of the psalter, presenting devotional opportunities for the pious reader. This psalter manuscript thus provides a good copy of the psalter for private reading or individual study, buttressed by a collection of associated texts, the most revealing of which are the litany and the prayers.

Although its *mise-en-page* is quite different, the same could be argued for the Paris Psalter, a much larger and more imposing manuscript. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale MS lat. 8824 is a de luxe manuscript, measuring

526 × 186 mm, with a bilingual copy of the psalter in two narrow columns, Latin on the left of each folio, and a vernacular translation, in prose and with introductions for the first fifty psalms, and in verse thereafter (see the descriptions and reproductions in Bruce, Colgrave, Ker 367, Krapp vii-xix, Ohlgren, Temple, Toswell "Studies"). The Roman psalter, as is standard in many late Anglo-Saxon copies of the Latin psalter, has three-line capitals at the beginning of each psalm, and the first line of the psalm is written in rustic capitals. The translation of the psalter that faces the Latin psalter, in a parallel column of the same size, was effected from a version of the Roman psalter similar to, but by no means identical with, the version here. The only disturbance of the parity between these texts is the lack of a capital and opening line of display script at the beginning of each psalm in the vernacular version; it is easier, however, to have the capital where there is more space, and a capital at the head of the vernacular version would encroach upon the Latin column beside it. Also, the tradition of copying the Latin psalter may come into play here. Before each psalm, running across both columns in red rustic capitals, is a psalm heading drawn from the pseudo-Bede *argumenta*. This is a complete set named by Salmon as I, the psalm headings of St Columba, because they appeared first in the Cathach associated with St Columba, written in Ireland in the early seventh century (Salmon 47-74). The set is not an uncommon one in Anglo-Saxon England, being the most widely circulated and most frequent in medieval European manuscripts. The same series appears in at least two other Anglo-Saxon psalters, the Blickling Psalter and the Vitellius Psalter, and quite possibly in several more. It tends to provide literal and historical explanations of the psalm, eschewing the more standard allegorical interpretation. The scribe compiling this manuscript seems to choose the most allegorical part of the heading, presumably in an effort to make the text more orthodox.

The vernacular translation is two-fold. The first fifty psalms are a prose translation now convincingly ascribed to King Alfred and the last hundred psalms are from a complete metrical version (Bright, Ramsay, Grat-tan). Furthermore, each psalm of the first quinquagene is accompanied by a prose introduction, which apparently derives from Irish exegetical traditions, but can be proven to have been written at the same time and by the same person or persons as the translation itself. The Irish tradition in question is that involving a two-fold historical explanation rather than the standard Augustinian historico-literal, allegorical, anagogical, and tropological exegesis. This two-fold historical analysis is a feature of the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the fourth-century Antiochene exegete whose

approach was condemned as heretical by the Second Council of Constantinople (Mayr-Harting, Toswell "Studies," 38–47, Ramsay, McNamara, Dempsey). Fragments of the psalter commentary survived under the accidental auspices of Bede, and were known until recently as the pseudo-Bede *argumenta*. As Patrick O'Neill explained some time ago and as Luc de Coninck has further amplified the question, the Mopsuestian approach lies behind many of the prose introductions. Luc de Coninck has more recently proven that for the first sixteen psalm introductions the translator (or adaptor, which might be the better term) used not Theodore but Julian of Eclanum, a point that may give further credence to the theory of an Irish influence upon the prose translation. At the same time, the arrival of these ideas may result from the appointment of Theodore as archbishop of Canterbury (see Stevenson, Lapidge *Archbishop*), and the Greek exegete may well be responsible for these unorthodox interpretations.

The verse translation — and this is true to a lesser degree of the prose version — could not replace the Latin, nor could it easily serve as an aid to comprehension for someone whose Latin was very weak (Toswell "Translation"). It can, however, serve as a parallel text, a kind of meditation in the vernacular upon the meaning of the Roman psalter. The careful parity of the Latin and the Old English in this manuscript reflects this balance. Following the psalter is a set of canticles that, except for the lack of the Pater Noster and the Gloria, are a standard group — even the order in which they appear has a number of manuscript parallels in late Anglo-Saxon psalters (Mearns; the exact order is Mearns 1–7, 11, 8, 16, 10; the Laud manuscript, for example, has Mearns 1–7, 11, 13, 12, 15, 10, 16. Both have the Nunc dimittis and the Athanasian Creed last, although in different orders, while the Paris Psalter includes the Canticle of Zachariah [*Benedictus dominus deus israhel*, number 8 in Mearns], but not the Gloria and the Pater Noster). Completing the 186 surviving folia of the codex are a litany and a group of nine Latin prayers. Except for the lack of a psalter preface (possibly lost) and the appearance of the vernacular in such a prominent position, the compilation of the manuscript is fairly typical of extant psalters from Anglo-Saxon England and from northern Europe.

The most intriguing feature of this psalter manuscript is the size, and the consequences for the layout that result from the length and narrowness of the manuscript. Written in two narrow columns, which together include only 35% of the writing space (where the Laud manuscript, for example, uses over 53% of the available space), the Roman psalter and its translation appear in a neat but rather thin and surprisingly unassertive Anglo-Caroline

hand of the mid-eleventh century. The hand is not legible from an angle, nor could the open manuscript be held flat in such a way as to make it easy to read from any point other than directly in front of the opening. There were twelve full-page illustrations marking the Benedictine divisions of the psalter, and the first quire also includes nine ink drawings, inserted between the verses of the Latin psalter (with one appearing in the vernacular column). In the style deriving from the Utrecht Psalter, these drawings too are mostly very personal and direct depictions of the psalmist praying and sacrificing to God. They too would be invisible, given the lightness and deftness of the touch, anywhere save to the individual opening the manuscript. All these features of the manuscript suggest that, despite its size and elegance, it was intended for the delectation and spiritual development of one person at a time — and may even have been a commissioned manuscript for the use of one aristocratic patron. As such, it was clearly a precursor of the later medieval devotional books of hours.

These psalter manuscripts suggest the ways in which the medieval mind studied the psalms. The reading of the psalter was clearly associated with prayer and with praise. In particular, the frequency with which the psalter manuscript in the later Anglo-Saxon period concludes with a set of prayers and a litany, itself a formalized prayer, suggests the notion of a short reading (a psalm, easily identified in these manuscripts and clearly punctuated for reading aloud or silently) followed by a prayer. This, of course, is the process underlying the development of private devotional texts, whether in Latin or in the vernacular. Of the manuscripts discussed at length here, two are exclusively Latin, one is glossed extensively in several ways, and one is bilingual. The layout of the texts remains, however, essentially the same in all four manuscripts. The latter three, however, provide the closest parallels in texts, in size, and in layout to what was in the following centuries the principal book of devotion, the successor to the psalter in this period. More work is needed on the range of insular psalter manuscripts, placed if possible into the wider context of medieval copies of the psalter in order to determine the extent to which these manuscripts are typical models of early medieval approaches to the psalter, or an insular development of a tradition of private piety.

Leroquais's analysis in three volumes of psalter manuscripts in French libraries stands as an example of how much can be accomplished by studying

a particular genre of manuscript from as many points of view as possible. In France, the early medieval psalter has been analyzed in some detail for what the text itself and its accretions reveal about the society in which and for which a particular manuscript was created. However, for England, this kind of study has to date largely concentrated on specific manuscripts and on specific aspects of those manuscripts, rather than on determining what kinds of psalter texts were being copied and in what sort of manuscript context they could expect to find themselves (preliminary surveys of the psalters as a group are now Pulsiano and Toswell "Anglo-Saxon Psalter"). Thus, R.M. Harris studied the miniatures of the Bury Psalter, Vatican reg. lat. 12; the other psalters deriving from the Utrecht Psalter illustrations have been much studied in various places. More recently, Kathleen Openshaw has considered the prefatory cycle and context of the Tiberius Psalter, B.L. Cotton Tiberius C.vi. Neil Ker, as part of his larger project, listed and described all those psalters from England that contained Anglo-Saxon, and went on to list all the psalters from medieval libraries in England. Martin McNamara, Kuno Meyer, and Luc de Coninck have elucidated and edited, where relevant, much of the psalter material—including glosses and commentary—that is clearly Irish. However, attempts to determine the extent of Irish influence on insular psalter-copying have only just begun, nor has the wider question of how the Anglo-Saxon psalter fits into a Continental context been considered to any great extent. For instance, the Southampton Psalter contains a rich collection of Irish Latin glosses of the psalms, as well as material from Anglo-Saxon sources. The interconnections between this codex and the ones that influenced it would well repay study.

Some starting points for a detailed analysis of the early medieval psalter manuscripts are available. Helmut Gneuss's handlist indicates all those manuscripts produced or present in England before 1100, from which the psalters and ancillary texts can be gleaned, and a number of catalogues supplement this list so that a more complete list of insular psalters, psalter commentaries, and psalter prefaces can be developed. Furthermore, Francis Wormald did begin a more synthetic analysis, producing a taxonomy of the decoration of a number of psalter manuscripts, and editing the litanies from many English manuscripts. Few, however, have followed his lead until very recently. In the past three decades, the trend has been to consider the decoration, or indeed the details of the decoration, of a single manuscript, or the vernacular gloss to a particular Latin text in a manuscript, rather than trying to consider what the wider manuscript context tells us about each Anglo-Saxon psalter. Only in the last few years, in the work of Michael

Lapidge, Patrick O'Neill, and R.W. Pfaff, has a more coherent approach to the texts and contexts—as well as the decoration and iconography—of the insular psalter in the Anglo-Saxon period begun. I cannot redress this balance in one short study, but would like to suggest nevertheless that three of these psalter manuscripts, the very large and unusual Paris Psalter, the miniature Laud manuscript, and the hand-held Rouen codex, were produced for private devotion. The other manuscripts discussed here, the Bosworth Psalter, Harley 863, Regius Psalter, Corpus 391, and the Stowe Psalter, were copied with multiple uses in mind, but one of those uses was without question private devotion, the individual study of one of the most important texts of the Christian faith. In many ways, therefore, these manuscripts function as forerunners of the devotional texts of the mid-thirteenth century and later.

This kind of private collection of devotional texts became common later in the Middle Ages in the form of Books of Hours (Backhouse, Harthan, Wieck). Although these manuscripts varied in size and decoration, they were almost always commissioned by one person for his, or usually her, own use. They included shortened versions of the Offices for private use, personal prayers and meditations, and selected didactic texts for enlightenment. The texts were often a mixture of Latin and the vernacular. The prayers, meditations, and sermons were generally couched in fairly simple terms, and were lavishly illustrated as a further aid to comprehension and for glory. These manuscripts were treasured objects, specially chosen and arranged for the individual's delectation, and by the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, they became the chosen manuscripts for copious and skilled illumination by the great Continental masters of the art. The greatest medieval patron of these texts was the duc de Berry, whose acquisition of the Paris Psalter in the fourteenth century might perhaps be explained in part by his recognition of this manuscript as a progenitor of those elegant and individualized manuscripts he so frequently and so avidly commissioned. In some ways, then, although the size and layout of these later volumes is quite different, the Paris Psalter, the Rouen psalter, and the Laud psalter are the forerunners of this later tradition.

Perhaps the most logical line of development, which has been somewhat obscured by the tendency to divide English eleventh-century manuscripts into the simplistic categories of pre-Conquest and post-Conquest and to ascribe any innovations or developments in the latter part of the century to Norman influence, would be to consider these late eleventh-century psalters as a template for a more individualized approach to Christian devotion. The Bosworth Psalter, on the other hand, was clearly a public document, laid

out and copied for the use of many people, available for liturgical purposes and public readings and also available for study in small groups and alone. Where that manuscript could serve many purposes, including private devotion, the psalter manuscripts conceived and developed in the mid or late eleventh century show a more focussed tendency toward the use of the pious individual. That tendency was borne out in the early twelfth century with, for example, the St Albans Psalter, apparently made for the use of Christina of Markyate and including an extensive cycle of miniatures to illustrate the life of Christ and other devotional subjects (Pächt). This was a relatively large manuscript (276 × 184 mm) compared to later developments in this tradition, but it compares well with the proportions and purposes of the mid-thirteenth century de Brailes Hours, which according to Claire Donovan is one of the earliest manuscripts that could be described as a proper Book of Hours (23). By the fourteenth century the size foreshadowed by the Rouen psalter, and particularly by the Laud manuscript, became the standard for private devotional texts, and Books of Hours were most commonly as tiny as the one commissioned by Charles IV of France for his wife, and named for her: the *Heures de Jeanne d'Evreux*, incorporating 209 folia, with miniatures on 48 pages, and measuring only 92 × 60 mm. Where the eleventh-century psalter manuscripts could still be used for liturgical readings as well as for private devotions, by the fourteenth century manuscripts for the pious individual could no longer be used as church service books, and enjoyed a freedom of layout and text not available three centuries earlier. They nevertheless contained a surprisingly similar mixture of individual prayers, psalms, litanies, and calendars, along with the breviary offices and excerpted gospel readings. Their salient characteristics are a small (or very large) format, large and legible script and many images, and a concentration on the Virgin — all features that are in their embryonic state in the late Anglo-Saxon psalter manuscripts for private devotion examined here. Like their successors, these were manuscripts for the pious Christian, manuals of prayer and praise.²

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NOTES

¹ For a detailed consideration of the political and private role of another Canterbury monastery, see Brooks; the importance of Canterbury as the organizing principle behind all insular copying of manuscripts in the late Anglo-Saxon period is also propounded in Dumville. The place of the Anglo-Saxon church in the wider world of European

ecclesiastical history is also being reconsidered (Ortenburg; the book does not focus on manuscript exchanges or influences in England, but does have an implicit argument about the centrality of Canterbury in the insular context).

² The manuscripts discussed in detail I have examined and my discussion here derives from my own conclusions. I am very grateful to the librarians of the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the British Library, London; the Bibliothèque municipale, Rouen; the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris; Cambridge University Library; and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge for permission to examine the manuscripts in their keeping.

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