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TOO GOOD IS BAD: ON A FORGOTTEN TRANSLATION OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS FROM 1700

1. INTRODUCTION

I wish to devote this contribution to an English translation of the Book of Psalms which — despite the significant place it occupies in the history of translations of the Psalter from Latin into English — was relegated into the penumbra for reasons that had nothing to do with its literary quality, textual accuracy or even potential

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heterodoxy. It was, to be sure, never even evaluated in terms of the above, being rarely mentioned in the scholarly literature at all. This oversight ignited my interest in the translation. I wanted to examine the context in which this translation emerged, look at its language and compare it with its rival texts, and study its reception and circulation to understand why the text ceased to be printed and see for myself why it suffered such peculiar neglect.

2. *THE PSALMES OF DAVID, TRANSLATED FROM THE VULGAT*

2.1 THE CONTEXT

The translation was executed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye (Corp, 2004), where King James II Stuart set up his exiled court after the events of 1688, usually referred to as the Glorious Revolution. The translation was published anonymously under the title *The Psalmes of David, translated from the Vulgat* (henceforth the *Psalmes*). The only other information that appears on the title page is the date of the publication: M.DCC. There is no indication who printed it and where. These absences are significant in the context of the source text being the Vulgate, which unambiguously identifies the production as Catholic: at the time when the translation emerged only the Church of Rome relied on the Vulgate for vernacular translations. These, while generally not encouraged, were not equally problematic in all of Western Europe (cf. Julia, 2003). The English context was especially difficult on account of the association of vernacular scriptures with Wycliffe's late 14th-century endeavours, which led to the constitutions published by Archbishop Arundel of Canterbury. The constitutions, drafted in 1407 and published in 1409, (among other things) prohibited unlicensed production of vernacular books and scriptural translations (cf. Gillespie & Ghosh, 2011). This effectively thwarted any attempts to translate scriptures into English for a long time. And when they did emerge, their authors faced prosecution until England's breach with Rome ultimately led Henry VIII to require a Bible in English (Henry VIII's 1538 injunctions to the clergy). Clearly, however, the ensuing translations of the Bible were not Catholic productions.

In the face of the plethora of English Bibles available within the Church of England, representatives of the Catholic Church decided to issue an English rendition to refute "a calumnious suggestion of Lutherans" that "the Catholique Romane faith and doctrine, should be contrarie to Gods written word, & that the Scriptures were not suffered in vulgar languages, lest the people should see the truth, & vvithal these new maisters corruptly turning the Scriptures into diuerse tongues" (Preface to the first edition of the Douay Old Testament). This translation was prepared by

the divines of the English Catholic College set up by William Allen in Douay in 1568. The New Testament was first printed in 1582 (and reissued in 1600, 1621, 1633, and with some spelling changes in 1738)[1] and the Old Testament came out in two volumes in 1609 and 1610.[2] The Old Testament, i.e. the part including the Psalter, was only reissued once — in 1635. This was the only Biblical translation offered to English Catholics prior to the *Psalmes*. In effect, the English translation of the Psalms from the Vulgate printed in 1700 was one of two English Catholic translations of the Book of Psalms which emerged after the Middle Ages.[3] To be sure, there was no other English translation of the Psalms based on the Vulgate for many years to come. In effect, the anonymous *Psalmes of David* printed in 1700 represented the second Catholic translation of the complete Book of Psalms within several hundred years, preceded by the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter (1610) and followed by its revision executed by Richard Challoner in 1750. Certainly, this counts as an important rendition.

2.2 THE BOOK

The text of the translation is preceded by an anonymous Preface in English and three Latin approbations. As the power of the approbation lies in the recognised authority of its issuer, they are all signed. The first two of them are signed "in palatio

[1] These editions were brought out by the Catholic Church, but the Rheims New Testament was also printed by the Church of England with a view to discrediting the Rheimish translation. In particular, there were four editions of the Rheims New Testament printed in parallel columns with the Bishops' version, prepared by William Fulke (1589, 1601, 1617, 1633), which — paradoxically — were largely responsible for a better circulation of the Rheims text as well as for bringing it into the attention of the translators of the King James Bible (Daniell, 2003, pp. 366–367). Another edition of the Rheims New Testament came out in 1618 with a confutation prepared by Thomas Cartwright (Cotton, 1855, p. vii).

[2] As noted by Chambers (2018, p. 4), the College in Douay very quickly became central to the English Catholic mission but due to the ongoing conflict in Flanders, it had to be temporarily moved to Rheims in 1578, from where it returned to Douay in 1593. These relocations are responsible for the appellation *Douay-Rheims* Bible: the New Testament was printed in Rheims and the Old Testament in Douay. They also explain why the New Testament is often called the Rheims or Rhemish Testament. While it might seem much less cumbersome to refer to the psalms of this Bible as the Douay Psalter, it will become clear in the course of the paper that the translation of the Psalms *executed* at Douay is to be distinguished from the one *printed* in the complete Bible. Hence, I use the appellation the Douay-Rheims Bible psalms or the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter throughout the paper to distinguish this text from the Douay psalms, which appeared in Catholic primers.

[3] To be precise, there was one more prose translation of the Vulgate Psalter into English. It was the work of Miles Coverdale and came out in 1540 as a bilingual publication (STC (2nd ed.) / 2368) but it was *not* a Catholic book. Not only was it authored by Coverdale, the translator of the Bible sanctioned by Henry VIII, but it did not bear ecclesiastical approbations, unlike the Douay-Rheims Bible, whose approbation is signed on November 8, 1609 by three of the Douay divines.

Regio Sancti Germani die quinto Martii 1700": the first one (covering four pages) by "Johannes Betham, S. Th. Doctor Parisiensis & Serenissimi Principis walliæ Præceptor", the second one (barely over a page) by "Johannes Ingleton, S.T. Doctor Parisiensis, & Serenissimi Principis walliæ Subpræceptor". The third approbation (slightly above half a page) is signed by "Pirot" in "Sorbona die Martii 26. 1700". As is clear, the former two were the preceptor and subpreceptor of the Prince of Wales — James Francis Edward Stuart, the son of King James II, and Queen Mary of Modena, born in June 1688. The third approbation is really a verification of the preceding approbations ("Præcedentium Approbationum verificatio") but it was an important one: it was signed by Edme Pirot, the Sorbonne censor (Shelford, 2006, p. 161; Shelford, 2007, pp. 141, 144) as in France no work could be legally published without official approval (Goldzweig, 1980;[4] Shelford, 2006). So, while Pirot explicitly states that he does not speak English and hence relies in his approbation on the opinion of John Betham "cujus testimonio Tuto potest quisque credere" (whose testimony everyone can safely believe), the translation owes its legitimacy to Pirot's formal approval. Edme Pirot (1631–1713) was "traditionally Gallican and utterly opposed to novelty" (Shelford, 2006, p. 169). Shelford's study of one particularly difficult case involving Pirot and Pierre-Daniel Huet, a scholar and tutor to the French Dauphin, shows that French censorship was not a mere formality. The author describes the process as "neither bureaucratic nor bloodless" and speaks about it in terms of "a series of negotiations shaped by the different stakes, personalities, ambitions and status of the participants" (Shelford, 2006, p. 162). Pirot's contemporaries perceived his main talent as being "flexible and crawling; and ready to do anything to please the powerful" (Shelford, 2006, p. 169), and it is in this context that we should view his approbation, which he granted despite not knowing the language of the publication, so — in effect — not being able to examine it. The approbation, whether given out of Pirot's genuine reliance on Betham, or as an act of "pleasing the powerful", grants the *Psalmes* legal status in Catholic France, thereby confirming the orthodoxy of the publication.

Let us look at the content of the two approbations written by English-speaking authors. As noted above, Betham's approbation is four pages long and (apart from introductory matter which praises the value of the Psalter as such), we learn from it

[4] As noted by Goldzweig (1980), while we can talk about surveillance of manuscript production by the University of Paris from as early as 1275, the actual censorship emerged in France with the advent of printing. Originally, the sole responsibility for licensing a publication rested with the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris, but in the 17th century this exclusive right was withdrawn from the Faculty of Theology, yet "the crown still admitted a partial voice of the Faculty of Theology" (Goldzweig, 1980, p. 287).

both the general assessment of the translation and how it relates to the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter and to other available translations, which — in view of the absence of any other Catholic renditions of the Psalms — must indicate Protestant Psalters. It is worth quoting the relevant passage at length:[5]

> The author of this translation, therefore, is to be deservedly praised, who, considering the benefit of our countrymen, prepared this new translation of the Latin Vulgate. About a hundred years ago, there came forth, together with the rest of the parts of the Sacred Bible [the Douay-Rheims Bible], the English Edition of the Psalms, produced by certain very learned men, who at that time resided in Douay; but with the progress of time, as is the common fate of all vernacular languages, it happened that the above-mentioned translation, owing to the obsolete words in which it abounds, as well as to the word-for-word translation from the Latin Vulgate, which was perhaps necessary in those times, became at last so complicated that it is read with little profit today on account of its obscurity, and on account of the unusualness of the phrases it is read with great tedium. With the publication of this translation, there is no longer a reason for the faithful to complain of those flaws; for the elegance of the style, combined with a gravity worthy of the divine word, will attract the severest among critics to read it; and the clarity of the sense, as far as it is possible given the great number of very obscure issues and of great mysteries, seems appropriate for the grasp of the common people. I must admit that after careful examination, not only reading and rereading this translation, and comparing it with many others, I have hardly found any that adheres more religiously to the letter, and at the same time presents the sense of so many difficult passages in a less convoluted way. Therefore, I judge that this work will be most welcome and useful for our countrymen, both learned and unlearned, and therefore is most worthy of publication.

Ingleton's approbation is much shorter but it also praises the literary quality of the text and its orthodoxy, and stresses the diligence of the revision process:

> Therefore, we gladly accept and approve this translation of the Psalms into our idiom, long awaited by the wishes of all, after various points of criticism were corrected with great diligence by the author. I judge that there is nothing in it inconsistent with the translators of Sacred Scripture, nothing which does not nourish and strengthen piety. The author adheres closely to the letter but he does not deviate from sense. And if he departs from the strict sense of the Hebrew to some degree, this is generally required by the phrases of the English language, or by the obscurity of the text. God grant to the readers a docile heart, and a spirit of understanding, that they may understand what they read; and that what they understand is expressed in their life and behaviour.

As already mentioned, apart from the signed Approbations, the printed *Psalmes* also contained the Preface, which, although unsigned, throws light on the translation as such. Like Betham's approbation, it begins with general praise of the Psalter's merits despite the opening sentence, which announces that "[i]t would be superfluous to say anything in commendations of the Psalms of David". This lengthy paragraph

[5] In preparing the English translation of the Latin text of both approbations I have been assisted by Professor Hildegund Müller, to whom I am very grateful for her generous help. All remaining mistakes are mine.

leads its author to conclude that "[t]he more generally they [Psalms] are used the more necessary it seemes to be that they should be well understood" and goes on to say that the "Translater" of the psalms endeavoured to

> render them as clear and intelligible in our language, as the letter of the Texte will permitt: for in every Translation of sctipture [sic] ther is an obligation of sticking close to the Letter when ever it can be done without losing the sense of the Text; But so it is that in some places the Latine Text of the Psalms rigorously translated word for word would yeeld a scarse untelligible sense in the language, into which it is translated; and wher that happens, it seems reasonable that such a latitude and liberty should be allow'd, as is necessary to make the sense of the Text, as it is generally understood by the most approved Authors, intelligible to the Reader, espicially in a Translation intended only for the privat devotions of Lay persons. This Translater thought he could not chose a better guide to direct him in giving such passages their due sense, then the learned Card. Bellarmin in his excellent Treatise upon the Psalms…. I may also add that this work has been revised and corrected by some persons who are most propper judges of such writings.

Observe that the text quoted above succinctly conveys a whole set of ideas in a rhetorically efficient sequence, beginning with the unquestionably special place of the psalms in Christian devotional life, which justifies the need for a good translation of the Psalter. The author of the Preface takes this as his starting point to: (i) define a good translation as intelligible and orthodox, (ii) place the translation outside liturgical use and outside clerical circles, (iii) invoke the authority of Cardinal Robert Bellarmine[6] as the safeguard of orthodoxy, and (iv) imply the involvement and implicitly the approval of ecclesiastical authorities in the enterprise.

The three texts taken jointly show general agreement concerning the linguistic inadequacy of the 100-year-old text of the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter, which was the only translation of the psalms approved of for English Catholics. It is also clear from these approbations that the newly offered text contrasts very favourably with the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter. The names of John Betham and John Ingleton show both their association with the English king exiled for his Catholicism[7]

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[6] Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) was an Italian Jesuit and a well-known defender of Roman Catholic orthodoxy, whose commentary on the psalms *Explanatio in Psalmos*, first published in 1611 as *In omnes Psalmos dilucida*, was highly esteemed and widely read. His legacy and popularity among his Catholic contemporaries are best summarised by how he was described after his death: "'propugnaculum fortissimum' (the strong bulwark), 'the Sun of the Church of God' and 'haereticorum malleum' (the hammer of the heretics)" (De Chirico, 2022, p. 23).

[7] While some historians claim that the Glorious Revolution was a social movement which had nothing to do with James II's policy and Catholicism (cf. Pinkus, 2009), most scholars do see a connection between James II's decisions and his exile, although the exact interpretations as to the causality differ. Some posit that James II brought his own exile by overusing the royal dispensing powers against the interests of his subjects — a stance aptly summarised by Edie (1977, p. 434): "The Catholic king had granted dispensations freely, setting aside statutes to bring Catholics into his service and, presumably,

and their theological expertise, while the name of the Sorbonne censor Edme Pirot emphasises the legal character of the publication in France and its ecclesiastical approval. The orthodox character of the publication is further underscored by the authority of Bellarmine and reference to his widely popular (Latin) commentary on the psalms. Finally, the intended addressee and projected use of the *Psalmes* is in consonance with the Catholic Church's policy towards vernacular scriptures. All of that sounds like a list of predictors of a successful translation. And yet the translation is practically forgotten, to the extent that it has not even been truly evaluated in the scholarly literature.[8] I have only come across four authors who articulate any opinion on the *Psalmes*. The following section will show how scanty and superficial these assessments are.

2.3 THE PSALMES IN THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

The first scholar to have commented on the text of the *Psalmes* was — to the best of my knowledge — Alexander Geddes (1737–1802), a Catholic priest born in Scotland and educated in the Scots College in Paris (Drummond, 1966; Fuller, 1984; Goldie, 2010), who became a pioneer of modern biblical scholarship (Fuller, 1984). In his *Prospectus of a New translation of the Holy Bible* from 1786, Geddes briefly discusses the *Psalmes* and says that the translator, "taking Bellarmine for his guide,… has often expressed the meaning of the Vulgate, much better than the Douay translators" (Geddes, 1786, p. 110). Geddes's assessment is occasionally repeated in some of the very few 18th- and early 19th-century sources which touch upon the *Psalmes* at all (cf. for example Chalmers, 1813, vol. 8, pp. 348–349; Cotton, 1855, p. 31; Mombert, 1883, p. 326). As will become clear by the end of this section, Geddes was probably the only scholar to have actually read and assessed the *Psalmes*.

The next author to have commented in any way upon the text of the *Psalmes* was Henry Cotton, who mentioned them in three works. In *A list of editions of the Bible and parts thereof in English, from the year MDV. to MDCCCXX* from 1821, Cotton describes the *Psalmes* saying that "[b]y the approbations prefixed, it appears that this version was intended to supersede that in the Douay Bible, which was now con-

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into his designs for absolutism". Others see James II's exile against the backdrop of strongly anti-Catholic sentiments in England (for example Seward, 2019), with anti-Catholicism seen as having "played a crucial role in the formation of English national identity" (Netzloff, 2007, p. 236). The latter position can be illustrated by Seward (2019, p. 18): "For all the talk of 'revolution principles' and 'liberty', the real reason why James lost his throne was England's neurotic terror of Catholicism, a terror exploited by ambitious politicians."

[8] This is not to say that no sources mention the *Psalmes* but that the mentions (though admittedly not numerous) are mostly purely bibliographical in nature.

sidered to be too antiquated for general use" (Cotton, 1821, p. 74). In 1852, Cotton issues another catalogue, which repeats the same opinion almost verbatim, but the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter in addition to being "too antiquated for general use" is also described as "too literal" (Cotton, 1852, p. xx). In 1855 Cotton brought out a monograph devoted to the Douay-Rheims Bible, in which he discusses the *Psalmes* in more detail. "The year 1700 presents us with an attempt commendably made by an individual, a layman the only instance of this, so far as I know to supply the deficiency long permitted to exist by the Authorities of his church" (Cotton, 1855, p. 30) and goes on to say that this is a prose version and was "made with care" (Cotton, 1855, p. 31). In sum, Cotton singles out the *Psalmes*, praises their quality and translator, and this assessment is shown in contrast to that of the Douay-Rheims Bible text.

Two decades later another author comments upon the *Psalmes*. In his critical survey of the English translations of the Bible, Eadie (1876) discusses the mistakes and deficiencies of the Douay-Rheims Bible, calling some of its renderings "so obscure as to be nearly unintelligible" (Eadie, 1876, p. 141). This assessment is followed with several illustrative examples, after which Eadie (1876, p. 144) refers to the *Psalmes* as a "revision" of the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter. Importantly, the claim is not substantiated with any arguments or examples. Eadie's classification of the *Psalmes* as a revision must have been based on a tacit assumption that since both enterprises are Catholic, the later one must be a continuation of the former. As will become clear upon the examination of a sample text (cf. Section 3), a person familiar with the stylistic deficiencies of the Douay-Rheims Bible could not have overlooked the non-derivative character of the *Psalmes* if he had read them.

The same opinion concerning the derivative character of the *Psalmes* with respect to the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter is expressed by Scott (2004, p. 275), who refers to the *Psalmes* as "an updated version of the Psalms found in the Douai Bible of 1609".[9] Importantly, Scott does not refer back to Eadie (1876) so the claim that the *Psalmes* do not contain an original text but a revision either represents his own assessment or — more probably — his own conviction not based on the examination of the text itself. It needs to be emphasised, however, that Scott's discussion centres around the Jesuit-Jansenist controversy and it is from this perspective that the author is looking at the *Psalmes*, therefore certainly not focusing on their text as such.

Summing up the discussion so far, the *Psalmes*, despite being one of the only two English Catholic translations of the whole Psalter executed between the Middle Ages

[9] As already noted, the Old Testament of the Douay-Rheims Bible was printed in two volumes. The first of them came out in 1609 and the second one, opening with the Book of Psalms was printed in 1610, so the exact date of the first printing of the complete Book of Psalms in the Douay-Rheims Bible is 1610.

and 1750, when Richard Challoner's version of the Book of Psalms was issued as part of the complete revision of the Douay-Rheims Bible, seem to have only been examined by Geddes and Cotton, with Eadie's and Scott's comments showing their lack of familiarity with the text of the *Psalmes*. In effect, the translation from 1700 has not been given any attention since the mid-19th century. It is interesting to see if the *Psalmes* fared better among those they were intended for.

2.4 CIRCULATION AND RECEPTION OF THE *PSALMES*

It is tempting to assume that the neglect of this translation in the scholarly literature was caused by its lack of popularity among the projected readership. In other words, that the translator(s) either misconstrued the projected readership or the execution of the enterprise was poor and did not, in effect, offer the contemporaries an alternative which overcame the deficiencies of the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter. Note that the flaws of the Douay-Rheims Bible psalms, i.e. their overly literal character and outdated language resulted in a text that was "scarse untelligible". It is worth reiterating at this point that English Catholics were not offered an improved text until the mid-18th century, when Richard Challoner published what he claimed to be revisions of the Douay-Rheims text. Moreover, there having been only two editions of the Old Testament (1609–10 and 1635), the copies of the Catholic Bible were hard to come by (Fuller, 1984, p. 12) and obviously too expensive to be affordable. To make matters worse, they were cumbersome, the whole Bible being printed in three large volumes. In contrast, the *Psalmes* were brought out in 12mo, i.e. a portable format and must have cost considerably less, though there is no indication as to their price range.

It seems, however, that the format of the *Psalmes* was not the only advantage they had over the Douay-Rheims text. They seem to have been quite popular, judging by the fact that they received a revised edition in 1704. And while there is no way of telling how large the print-runs of the two editions were, there are enough extant copies in the libraries in UK and US (with two exemplars in France as well) to assume that the *Psalmes* had good circulation.

Another very vivid proof of the *Psalmes*' popularity comes from a letter written by Bishop Thomas Nicolson to Thomas Innes (Prefect of Studies at the Scots College in Paris; cf. Halloran, 1997) on May 5, 1707 (SCA BL/2/145/4). The part of the letter which refers to the *Psalmes* is given below:[10]

[10] I present the text verbatim from the manuscript, preserving all spelling and orthographic conventions, including the absence of punctuation; only the abbreviations have been expanded (and italicised).

> pray god *and* give my humble dewty to my L*or*d Caryl to whom yow know I ___[owe?] great obligations of gratitude thank him for the psalters *and* if any mor be offered assure his Lo*rdshi*p they doo good heer *and* many pray for him.[11]

As is clear, the *Psalmes* were associated with "Lord Caryl", i.e. John, Lord Caryll, the secretary of the exiled Queen Mary of Modena and secretary of State to King James II (cf. Corp, 2018). And they were beneficial "heer", i.e. in Scotland, where Nicolson was Vicar Apostolic (Doran, 1988). The addressee of the letter, Thomas Innes was vice-principal of the Scots College in Paris. So, it is clear that the small *Psalmes* were transported from France, where they were translated and printed, to Scotland.

As a matter of fact, the *Psalmes* were not only transported to Scottish mountain seminaries, as transpires from Nicolson's letter, but they were produced with a much broader audience in mind. In particular, they were offered to the King James II and Queen Mary of Modena at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on Thursday October 14, 1700, presented to the King's confessor (father Francois Sanders) and members of aristocracy (for example, Earl of Perth). Moreover, some copies were delivered to the English Benedictine house in Dunkirk (where Caryll's sister was an abbess), or sent to England. We know quite a lot about their early circulation due to the unlikely survival of an extraordinary source — diary of David Nairne, a secretary of John Caryll (in both of the latter's capacities), who was a co-translator of the *Psalmes*, as we learn from the journal (National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, MS 14266).[12] Important evidence of the early (and later) circulation of the *Psalmes* also comes from the study of handwritten inscriptions with the names of the former owners.

A survey of the covers of the extant copies shows extensive use, while an examination of the contents of the books reveals handwritten notes, both with devotional instructions and textual corrections (in the first edition towards the text of the second edition), as well as reflections on individual psalms. All of that makes it clear that the *Psalms* were used extensively, both in monastic environment (certainly outside liturgy, though) and in lay households. They were also certainly an interesting purchase for bibliophiles and book collectors, as transpires from an examination of sales catalogues of book collectors. The first such mention I am aware of comes from as early as 1744, when it appeared in the catalogue of the library of the late Edward Harley (1689−1741), 2nd earl of Oxford and Mortimer (Osborne, 1744, vol. 4, p. 691; entry no. 15329).

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[11] Halloran (1997) gives a slightly different text of the letter.

[12] The first author to bring to light the existence of this diary in the context of the *Psalmes* is Edward Corp, who is also the first scholar to have attributed the co-authorship of the translation to Nairne (cf. Corp, 2004, 2018).

Were there any more editions of the whole *Psalmes*? To the best of my knowledge, *The Psalmes of David, translated from the Vulgat* were only printed twice: in 1700 and in 1704.[13] This, however, does not mean that they were only produced in these two versions. David Nairne writes in his diary about a manuscript copy of the *Psalmes* bound in two volumes for the Queen (May 10, 1697, May 16, 1697, May 20, 1697, and June 1, 1697). He also mentions a copy which was to be made "for printing" jointly by himself and two other clerks of the secretariat: Etienne du Mirail de Monnot and Nicholas Dempster (June 4, 1697).

The manuscript psalms (certainly the copy made "for printing") were corrected in December 1699, as we read in the diary (December 6–7, 1699). On December 8, 1699 Nairne "writt *the* preface to the last corected Translation of the Psalms & carryd the book to Dr Betham". This ties up with the information we find in the Preface that "this work has been revised and corrected by some persons who are most propper judges of such writings" and in Ingleton's Approbation, where we read of the "various corrections". It is very likely that Betham had read the manuscript *Psalmes* before and some of the corrections Nairne wrote on December 6 and 7 were his but even if this was not the case, Betham had plenty of time to propose his revisions before the book was printed in September 1700. This throws light on what Betham says in his approbation that he carefully examined the translation "not only reading and rereading this version, and comparing it with many others". It is, therefore, almost certain that Betham was among the "most propper judges".

What follows from the above is that the *Psalmes* were translated jointly by John Caryll and David Nairne, and their text was corrected at least twice. The first round of corrections preceded the first edition, i.e. between the manuscript versions made in mid-1697 and December 1699 (possibly also after that but the diary is silent about it). After the *Psalmes* were printed, Nairne made some corrections on the printed copies, but these corrections could not have been substantial as far as the text was concerned, judging from the fact that Nairne was able to correct "some copies" in one day (cf. October 25, 1700). These corrections could have amounted to imposing errata, which is present in some, but not all copies of the 1700 edition. The second round of corrections occurred before 1704, when *The Psalms of David, tanslated [sic] from the Vulgat* were reprinted "review'd and corrected", as the title page of the second edition from 1704 informs us. A comparison of the two editions shows the revision to have been quite extensive in some cases at least (cf. Section 3), which

[13] To be precise, one of the psalms from this rendition was reprinted in 1779 in a publication entitled *Sunday Evening's Entertainment: Consisting of an Explication of the Psalms which Occur in the Evening Office of the Church on Sundays and Festivals throughout the Year*. Pages 148–151 reprint the text of Psalm 148 in full (cf. also Cotton, 1855, p. 34).

indicates that the *Psalmes* resonated among its readers, and the translators decided not only to bring out another edition but also to improve it.

As we can appreciate the extent of the interventions differentiating the first edition from the second one, it would be extremely interesting to be able to compare the two printed editions with the manuscript copy and see what kind of corrections were introduced by the translators, either suggested by the "most propper judges" or by themselves upon a lengthy break away from the text of the *Psalmes* (between the completion of the work in March 1697 and the printing of the first edition in September 1700). But we have not heard of the manuscript copy of the *Psalmes* ever since Nairne's diary and while it might seem unlikely after over 300 years to locate the manuscript, paradoxically the neglect suffered by the translation justified my conviction that no effort was actually made to find it. This inspired me to search through the contents of the Library and Archives of the Scots College in Paris, where the King's and Queen's papers were ultimately deposed. Having examined their vicissitudes in the havoc of the French Revolution, I was hoping against hope to find two volumes of manuscript *Psalmes* bound for the Queen. And among the remnants that did survive described in Halloran (1997, p. 189), there indeed are "two volumes of 'The Psalms of David, Translated from the Vulgate' in manuscript, beautifully bound in red leather with gold tooling and gold edges". First moved to Columba House in Edinburgh, and subsequently relocated to Aberdeen, they are currently in the possession of Scottish Catholic Archives (SCA MM/2/7 and SCA MM/2/8). Upon careful examination of the manuscripts in the Wolfson Reading Room of the Sir Duncan Rice Library in Aberdeen, I am convinced that they are written in David Nairne's hand[14] and I present Psalm 1 of this version for the first time here in full. It is juxtaposed in a verse-by-verse fashion with Psalm 1 from the first and second edition (1700 and 1704). To illustrate the original character of this translation, I also present Psalm 1 of Douay-Rheims Bible and the 1750 revision prepared by Richard Challoner.

3. THE TEXTS

The five texts of Psalm 1 are juxtaposed in a chronological manner, starting with the Douay-Rheims Bible version (a), through Caryll and Nairne's *Psalmes* edited from the Aberdeen manuscript (b), its two printed editions (c and d), to Challoner's revision

[14] Professor Edward Corp confirms this impression (personal communication, June 10, 2023).

printed in 1750 (e).[15] All texts are represented exactly as they appear in the original editions (including the underlining), with abbreviations expanded and italicised.[16] Bold type has been added to draw the reader's attention to some lexical choices which pose several interesting questions concerning the observed (dis)continuities.

Psalm 1

Verse 1

a. **BLESSED** is the man, that hath not **gone** in the counsel of the **impious**, & hath not stoode in the **way** of sinners, and hath not sitte in the chayre of **pestilence**:
b. **Happy** is the man who has not **gone** along in counsel with *the* **wicked**, nor stood in the **rode** of sinners; Nor sat down in *the* **infections** chaire of scoffers.
c. **BLESSED** is the man who has not **walked** in the Counsel of the **Impious**, Nor has stood in the **Way** of sinners, Nor has sat down in the chaire of **Infection**.
d. **BLESSED** is the man who has not **walked** in the Counsel of the **Impious**, Nor has stood in the **Way** of sinners, Nor has sat down in the chaire of **Infection**.
e. **BLESSED** *is* the man who hath not **walked** in the counsel of the **ungodly**, nor stood in the **way** of sinners, nor sat in the chair of **pestilence**.

Verse 2

a. But his **wil** is in the **way** of our **Lord**, and in his **law** he wil meditate day and night.
b. But his **will** adheres to the **law** of **God**, And he meditates on **it** day and night.
c. But his **delight** is in the **law** of **God**, And he meditates on **it** day and night.
d. But his **delight** is in the **law** of our **Lord**; and on his **law** he will meditate day and night.
e. But his **will** *is* in the **law** of the **Lord**, and on his **law** he shall meditate day and night.

Verse 3

a. And he shal be as a tree, that is planted **nigh to the streames of waters**, which shal **geue** his fruite in his **time**:

[15] It was the first printing of the complete revision and came out in four 12mo volumes.

[16] Verse numbering of each text has been skipped as there are differences between the versions which do not bear on the issue at hand.

b. And he shall be like to the tree planted **upon the banks of a running stream**, That will not faile to **bear** fruit in the **season**.
c. And he shall be like the tree planted **upon the banks of a running stream**, That will not faile to **bear** fruit in the **season**.
d. And he shall be like the tree planted **near running waters**, that will not faile to **bear** fruit in its **season**.
e. And he shall be like a tree which is planted **near the running waters**, which shall **bring forth** its fruit, in due **season**.

Verse 4

a. And his leafe shal not fal: and al thinges whatsoeuer he shal doe, shal prosper.
b. His leaf shall not fall, And all that he does shall prosper.
c. His leaf shall not fall; And all that he do's shall prosper.
d. His leaf shall not fall off; And all that he do's shall prosper.
e. And his leaf shall not fall off: and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.

Verse 5

a. The **impious** not so: but as dust, which the winde **driueth** from the face of the earth.
b. Not so, not so shall it be with the **wicked**; For they shall be like the dust which the wind **sweeps** from the face of the earth.
c. Not so, not so shall it be with the **wicked**, For they shall be like the dust **driven** by the wind from the face of the earth.
d. Not so, not so shall it be with the **wicked**, For they shall be like the dust **driven** by the wind from the face of the earth.
e. Not so the **wicked**, not so: but like the dust, which the wind **driveth** from the face of the earth.

Verse 6

a. Therfore the **impious** shal not rise **againe** in iudgement: nor sinners in the councel of the iust.
b. Therfor the **wicked** shall not rise in the judgement, Nor sinners in the counsel of the just.
c. Therfore the **wicked** shall not rise in the Judgement, Nor sinners in the Councill of the Just.

d. Therfore the **wicked** shall not rise in the Judgement, nor sinners in the assembly of the Just.
e. Therefore the **wicked** shall not rise **again** in judgment: nor sinners in the council of the just.

Verse 7

a. For our Lord knoweth the way of the iust, **and** the **way** of the **impious** shal perish.
b. For our Lord knows the way of the just, **But** the **way** of the **impious** shall perish.
c. For our Lord knows **and approuves** the way of the Just, **But** the **way** of the **Impious** will end in destruction.
d. For our Lord knows the way of the Just; **But** the **journy** of the **Impious** will end in destruction.
e. For the Lord knoweth the way of the just: **and** the **way** of the **wicked** shall perish.

Needless to say, the sample presented above serves only an illustrative function, as noted above. For any textual comparison to produce meaningful results a much larger sample of data is required. This, however, is not available now because the manuscript *Psalmes* have not been edited as yet — a deficiency which I am currently trying to remedy (cf. Charzyńska-Wójcik, in preparation). It is, however, worth noting, especially in the context of the discussion offered in Section 4 below, that the earliest text from the sample, i.e. the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalm 1 from 1610 uses *-th* to mark 3SG present tense verbs. And while "[i]n the earlier sixteenth century {-s} was probably informal, and {-th} neutral and/or elevated; by the 1580s {-s} was most likely the spoken norm, with {-eth} a metrical variant" (Lass, 1999, p. 164). Observe that the three versions of the *Psalmes*, which emerged over 100 years later, show *-s* as a marker of 3SG present tense,[17] which reflects the linguistic situation at the time when the translation was made. In this context, the retention of the *-th* ending in the 1750 text must be seen as a conscious element of what was perceived by English Catholics as the proper Biblical style, distinct from every-day speech.

[17] There are only very occasional verbs ending with *-th* in this translation.

4. DISCUSSION

It is now time to address the first question formulated at the outset of this paper (the question related to the neglect the *Psalmes* suffered in the scholarly literature will be addressed in Section 5). In particular, why the *Psalmes* ceased to be printed. Cotton (1855, p. 168) classifies the *Psalmes* among translations "made by Individuals according to their own conceptions" which "never obtained such a degree of general acceptance as to displace the others" and "never met with much favor among the Roman Catholic Clergy".

In trying to understand the causes of the discontinued circulation of the *Psalmes* it is impossible not to think of Nida (1994), who emphasises the value of traditional formulations over linguistic clarity when it comes to emotionally charged texts. "Anyone who retranslates a text is usually well aware of what one or two predecessors have done, but a Bible translator has some 2,000 years of translators looking over his or her shoulder. Even when an expression is almost totally incomprehensible to an audience, there is strong pressure to retain traditional formulations" (Nida, 1994, p. 199). It seems, however, that this situation does not obtain in the case of the Douay-Rheims Bible psalms, since, as noted above, they were not really in circulation, having only been printed twice. So, the familiarity effect should not pertain to them.[18] This, however, is not exactly correct. While the whole of the Old Testament, and hence the whole of the Psalter, was only printed twice, individual psalms representing the translation made in Douay circulated in Catholic primers from as early as 1599 (cf. Charzyńska-Wójcik, in preparation).

A search in Blom (1979, pp. 168–175), Clancy (1974, 1996), Blom et al. (1994), EEBO, ECCO, and ESTC reveals that since the introduction of the model Latin primer (first printed in Rome 1571 as *Officium B. Mariae Virginis nuper reformatum, & Pii V. Pont. Max iussu editum*), "from which later printers were not allowed to deviate" (Blom, 1979, p. 7), Catholic primers containing a large selection of psalms in English as part of the devotions were issued at least 27 times before the publication of the *Psalmes*. In the next century, i.e. between the publication of the *Psalmes* and 1800 another 16 editions of the primer came out. This means a new edition of the primer every three years before the publication of the *Psalmes* and a new primer every six years in the century after 1700, despite the fact that it was an offence in England to print or import Catholic primers (Blom, 1979, p. 34).[19] The fact that

[18] For a study of familiarity with the text of the psalms as a factor overriding linguistic accuracy and literary values, see Charzyńska-Wójcik (2021).

[19] Blom (1979, p. 34) observes that the prohibitions preventing primers from being printed (whether in England or abroad) or imported were caused by "a mixture of religious, political, and economic motives".

primers continued to be issued in successive editions, whether printed abroad and smuggled into the country, or printed secretly in England, testifies to a large demand for this type of publication.[20]

The first two primers based on the revised Latin text (and containing it in full side by side with its English translation) were issued in 1599 (STC [2nd ed.] / 16094) and in 1604 (STC [2nd ed.] / 16095), i.e. prior to the first publication of the whole Psalter in the Douay-Rheims Bible. In spite of that, they contained the Douay-Rheims psalms with only slight divergencies from the 1610 text. This was possible because the translation of the whole Bible had been completed long before the divines at Douay had secured the financial resources to publish it.[21] Gregory Martin, the major translator of the Bible, is known to have translated the entire text in 1578[22]–1582[23] (Blom, 1979, p. 16; Daniell, 2003, p. 358, cf. also Knox, 1878).[24]

These first two primers open with a Preface signed by R. V., i.e. Richard Verstegen, who "combined the function of translator, editor and publisher" (Blom, 1979, p. 16) with regard to these publications. There is abundant evidence that Verstegen was connected with Gregory Martin and other translators from Martin's

[20] Toleration of Catholics, and hence of their books, books did not become official until the end of the 18th century, although Blom (1979, p. 36) observes that already at the beginning of the century there was a marked relaxation with regard to the laws about English Catholic books. This, however, did not translate into legalisation of the import of Catholic books. It was still forbidden in the 18th century as part of a larger prohibition on imports imposed by the Copyright Act of 1709. That is why most primer editions from the 18th century were printed in England (Blom, 1979, p. 36).

[21] We read in the Second Douay Diary (covering the years 1575–1593) that William Allen was in constant financial difficulties. A particularly precious reference Allen makes to the cost of printing of the New Testament shows that "[t]he printing of the Testament which I thought would not have cost more than 1,000 crowns, will cost 500 crowns more; and the whole of those 1,000 crowns, with which we ought to have paid for the printing of the book, has been spent bona fide on meat and drink" (Knox, 1878, p. lxxv). The Preface to the first edition of the Old Testament also makes the financial difficulties of the college clear, explaining that "[a]s for the impediments, which hitherto haue hindered this vvorke, they al proceded (as manie do know) of one general cause, our poore estate in banishment".

[22] A marginal note in the Douay Diary dated to around October 16, 1578 informs us that Gregory Marin began his English translation of the Bible "with the object of healthfully counteracting the corruptions whereby the heretics have so long lamentably deluded almost the whole of our countrymen" (translated by Carleton, 1902, p. 16; Knox, 1878, p. 145).

[23] According to Arnovick and Kelly (2015, p. 698), Martin completed the translation project by July 1580.

[24] Martin lived long enough to see the publication of the New Testament, whose preparation was completed in March 1582 ("Hoc ipso mense extrema manus Novo Testamento anglice edito imposita est" – Knox, 1878, p. 186). He died several months later, on October 28 (Knox, 1878, p. 191).

Interestingly, the publication of the Old Testament is not recorded in the Douay Diaries (Burton & Williams, 1911). The years of its publication, i.e. 1609 and 1610 are covered in The Third Diary: 1593–1633 (pp. 95–106) and there is no reference to the printing, which is surprising in view of the mention of plans to publish the Lives of Saints (October 18, 1609).

team (Blom, 1979, p. 16),[25] which accounts for his access to the Douay Psalter prior to the first edition of the Old Testament. In a brief Preface, Verstegen, apart from praising the merits of the Office, defines the addressee and comments on the translation technique.[26]

> FOR the more vtilitie of such of the English nation [(*and* others vsing our language)] as vnderstand not the Latin tounge, it hath bin thought conuenient to publish in Latin *and* English, the Primer, or Office of the blessed virgin Marie: conteyning nothing but matter of prayer and deuotion, and therefore not offensyue to any…
>
> In the translation of the Psalmes, and of partes of holy scripture, the direct sence (as is most requisite) hath more bin sought to be obserued then any phrases in our language more affected and pleasing.

Observe that the bilingual character of the publication serves two purposes: it offers a text in English to those not familiar with Latin and makes it a safely orthodox devotional aid, which should not be "offensyue to any". The literal character of the translation is shown to be "most requisite" and hence is prioritised over the "pleasing" phrasing.

Bearing in mind that there are 60 different psalms in the primer,[27] which in time started to be printed in English alone, making the publication cheaper and more portable, the primer and the English psalms it contained was — in contrast to the Douay-Rheims Bible — available in a range of formats agreeing with its clandestine character. The first two editions came out in 12mo, the third one in 32mo, the fourth in 18mo. The subsequent editions came out mostly in the comfortable 12mo, but some were smaller: 16mo and 24mo. The first and only larger edition — an 8vo — came out in 1687, i.e. during the reign of the Catholic king — James II. The remaining primers

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[25] Verstegen was certainly acquainted with Allen, as testified by the extant correspondence (cf. Petti, 1959).

[26] I am quoting the Preface exactly as it is printed in the 1599 edition, preserving all spelling conventions. The 1604 Preface differs from the 1599 one only with respect to the spelling of some items and adds the words presented in the quotes in the square brackets.

[27] The psalms appearing in the primer are: 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 22, 23, 24, 26, 31, 37, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 50, 53, 62, 64, 66, 69, 78, 84, 86, 87, 90, 92, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 101, 109, 112, 114, 116, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 137, 142, 145, 147, 148, 149, 150. It has to be borne in mind, however, that the primer was not the only type of publication which printed selected psalms for English Catholics. There were also manuals of prayers, which still await my detailed examination. To give a rough idea of their varying contents and hence also of number of psalms they contained, let me say that there are 57 different psalms in *A manual of prayers and other Christian devotions* printed in 1686 (ESTC R30045) and they mostly coincide with the ones featuring in the primer (with the exception of Psalm 69, 87, 112, and 131, which are missing from the manual, and Psalm 19, which is present in the manual but absent from the primer). In contrast, *A manual of devout prayers* printed by the same printer in 1688 (ESTC R29481) contains only 7 psalms.

were all printed in 12mo. Yet, before drawing any conclusions as to the familiarity of Catholics with the psalms in the Douay translation, it is important to assess the actual availability of copies of the primer.

Blom (1979, p. 44) estimates that an average print-run of an edition of a primer "must at least have been 1500 copies". Twenty-seven editions of the primer meant 40,500 copies of the primer printed over the span of a century. But as the primer was a forbidden book, many of them were confiscated and destroyed. Also, considering the heavy use which primers were exposed to (even taking into account extra care involved in handling a book which was hard to acquire), the average life of a primer was around 30 years (Blom, 1979, p. 44). This leads Blom (1979) to conclude that "at any given time during the 17th and 18th centuries there were in between 9000 to 10,000 copies of the English *primer*" (Blom, 1979, p. 44).[28] Assuming after Arnovick and Kelly (2015, p. 719) that in 1700 there were "something more than 60,000 souls in the English Catholic community,"[29] Blom's estimate leaves no doubt as to the wide accessibility of primers for those Catholics who wanted to use them,[30] even though many primers were confiscated and destroyed, and many were lost and read to pieces.

[28] As noted above, manuals also contained psalms. Blom (1979) lists 53 editions of manuals before the publication of the *Psalmes*, and a further 30 in the following century, and estimates that the primer and the manual must have been available in as many as 30,000 copies at any given time in the pertinent period. As I have not conducted a systematic examination of the manuals as far as the psalms are concerned, I cannot consider this estimate to be applicable when it comes to assessing psalm circulation. It is clear, however, that if we think of the psalms' circulation only in terms of the number of copies of the primers, these are certainly underestimations.

[29] Glickman (2009, p. 25) claims that this number included as many as "ten per cent of the English gentry and peerage, and these elites had held the recusant world together, with their marriages, common sociability, and education in continental religious houses".

[30] While the primer was a book of private devotion, "the impossibility of getting as many copies as were required might point in the direction of more than one user" (Bossy, 1979, p. 45). We then need to look at primers' availability in terms of the number of Catholic households rather than individuals. This requires dividing the estimated number of available copies by an average household size — a perspective from which the availability of the English post-Tridentine primer becomes even more apparent.

Laslett's (1969, p. 200) seminal study of mean household size in England and Wales in the period 1574–1911 argues for a constant of "4.75 or a little under". The data provided in Laslett's paper is detailed enough to allow performing the calculations for the pertinent period. These give the average household size at 4.78. And while Laslett's methodology did receive critical comments as early as 1970 (cf. for example Nixon, 1970 and Goose, 1980), with Arkell and Whiteman (1998) additionally warning that mean household size is itself a dangerous concept, let me emphasise that I am applying Laslett's 4.75 here as a cautious estimate without any major consequences for the point I am making. In view of the fact that household sizes tended to vary across social classes and locations, Laslett's estimate, even if not accurate, offers "a useful average" (Goose, 1980, p. 347) and helps to assess access to the primers. If we only looked at London, with around 20,000 Catholics there at the end of the 17th century, it is clear that an average household size in London was larger than that in the countryside and is estimated at around 7 at that time (https://archives.history.ac.uk/people-in-place/pip.html).

In effect, English Catholics, both home and abroad,[31] had at their disposal a devotional aid which contained as many as 60 different psalms (some repeated several times), in a publication containing a comprehensive set of devotions, guiding a believer through the day, as well as through the liturgical year, with special prayers to accompany important acts (for example confession and communion), events (journey) and experiences (afflictions, tribulations), etc. complete with the litanies, reflections and the Office for the Dead (cf. Blom, 1979). This poses the question about the actual need for the *Psalmes* as a devotional aid.As is clear, thanks to the circulation of primers, the lay were very well equipped with publications containing those psalms in English which were prescribed for their private devotional life by the Church of Rome and offered in a compact book together with a comprehensive set of related texts. Consequently, an average lay Catholic did not, in fact, need the whole Book of Psalms. However, a comprehensible and orthodox translation of the whole Psalter was still desired by the more sophisticated Catholics, not satisfied with a selection of psalms, as well as required among the religious, who prayed the *whole* cycle of the Latin Psalter on a weekly basis, while only some of them were available in the English translations circulating in primers. It is interesting to note in this context that in both editions of the *Psalmes* each psalm was preceded with its Latin incipit, which uniquely links the English text to the Latin Psalter. And while Latin incipits in vernacular Psalters were not an extraordinary element of the mise-en-page, they were absent from the Douay-Rheims Bible (in its both 17th-century editions, i.e. 1610 and 1635). Interestingly, they appear in the first edition of Challoner's text in 1750, therefore serving the function which was previously performed only by the *Psalmes*.

If we now return to the original question concerning the discontinued circulation of the *Psalmes* despite their undeniable linguistic superiority over the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter, we see interrelated factors at work here. The wide accessibility of primers containing 60 English psalms both contributed to the familiarity effect of the Douay psalms and saturated the need for publications containing English psalms. In other words, the *Psalmes* were discontinued not only because Catholics had access to other publications containing psalms in English but also because the text of the *Psalmes*, although comprehensible, was not familiar to the reader. As observed by

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I purposefully refrain from presenting exact calculations as to the actual number of publications with English Catholics psalms per household as the estimates given above require a lot more work before that can be done (cf. Charzyńska-Wójcik, in preparation).

[31] Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries there were always Catholic communities in exile, mostly comprising of "the noble and cultural classes, who went abroad for conscience' [sic] sake" (Guilday, 1914, p. xix) and their number "never exceeded at any given time the round figure of three thousand" (Guilday, 1914, p. xx).

Webb (1984, p. 73) "an established translation … acquires social meaning, i.e. specific phrases, address forms, reference terms, etc. are felt to be particularly appropriate in religious contexts, and they can thus be perceived as symbolic of people's religious experiences. (Since religion is for many people largely an emotional experience, they can become so convinced of the religious significance of particular forms that they find it difficult to accept alternative phrases and terms in a new translation.)"

As a matter of fact, the *Psalmes*' comprehensibility, which we view as an asset from our modern perspective, may have additionally contributed to their discontinued circulation. Nida (1994) argues that comprehensibility may adversely affect the reception of a translation. "In some instances people reject intelligible content since the aura of mystery, so typical of religious experience, seems to be lost" (Nida, 1994, p. 200). It may give rise to a related effect: preference for literal renditions of the Bible among those who are only acquainted with scriptural translations which are more or less literal, "and therefore these represent an implicit norm" (Nida, 1994, p. 203). This accurately describes the Biblical experience of orthodox English-speaking Catholics in the 17th and 18th centuries.[32] Additional support for the argumentation presented above comes from an analysis of the fate of other translatorial endeavours of a similar type, executed in the same sociolinguistic context.

4.1 TWO EARLY-EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CATHOLIC NEW TESTAMENTS IN ENGLISH

While there was only one alternative to the Douay-Rheims Bible Psalter, i.e. *Psalmes*, two new Catholic translations of the New Testament into English emerged in the early 18th century. The first of them was the work of Cornelius Nary (1658–1738), printed in 1719 in one volume 8vo, the second was the translation of Robert Witham (1667–1738), which came out in 1730, also in 8vo but in two volumes (cf. Daniell, 2003, pp. 501–503, 505; Arnovick & Kellly, 2015).

The arguments in Nary's Preface justifying the need for a new rendition sound familiar to anybody acquainted with the Preface to the *Psalmes*:

> the Language whereof [The Douay-Rheims Bible] is so old, the Words in many Places so obsolete, the Orthography so bad, and the Translation so very literal, that in a number of Places it is unintelligible, and all over so grating to the Ears of such as are accustomed to speak, in a manner, another Language, that most People will not be at the Pains of reading them. Besides, they are so bulky that they cannot be conveniently carried about for publick Devotion, and so scarce and dear, that the Generality of the People neither have, nor can procure them for their private Use.

[32] Observe that the *comprehensible* text of the revised Douay-Rheims Bible prepared by Richard Challoner bore elements of familiarity and retained archaic morphological forms.

> To supply all these Defects, I have endeavoured to make this New Testament speak the *English* [emphasis original] Tongue now used.… I have taken all the Care imaginable to keep as close to the Letter as the *English* will permit…

Similarly, Robert Witham, a principal of Douay, who — opening with a praise of the Rheims New Testament — proceeds to say that the translators:

> perhaps follow'd too scrupulously the Latin, even as to the placing of the words, but what chiefly makes that Edition seem so obscure at present, and scarce intelligible, is, the difference of the English tongue, as it was spoken at that time, and as it is now chang'd, and refin'd : so that many words and Expressions, both in the Translation, and Annotations, by length of time, are become obsolete, and no longer in use.

Witham ends his preface with a disclaimer (which makes the translation explicitly orthodox[33]) and an admonition to all who want to read the scripture that they do it with the right spirit:

> I shall only add, that I have not publish'd this translation, and Notes, that every one, tho' never so ignorant, might read, and put his own construction on the sense of these sacred writings.

As is clear, both translators were motivated by the obscurity of the existing Catholic New Testament (i.e. the Rheims text) and its incomprehensibility. Both offered an alternative which did not suffer from what they perceived to be the major deficiencies of the version they wanted to replace. The same was done by John Caryll and David Nairne in 1700. Interestingly, Geddes (1786), who was appreciative of Caryll and Nairne's translation of the psalms (cf. Section 2.3), despite his disapproving approach for renditions from the Vulgate, expresses his appreciation of these two translations, saying that "[t]here are many good renderings in both these versions" (1786, p. 111).

What was the reception of these two works? Nary's New Testament failed to achieve acceptance. As a matter of fact, it was fiercely criticised by Robert Witham in a pamphlet published in 1727 (Ohlhausen, 2008, p. 30, cf. also Daniell, 2003, p. 504) and withdrawn but spared the disgrace of being put on the Index of prohibited books. Clancy (2000, p. 265) notes that Nary's translation was "roundly attacked by Catholic critics for his inaccuracies". Ohlhausen (2008) alludes to its perceived heterodoxy. Daniell (2003, p. 504) states that Nary's work did not succeed because it "clearly offended the English College at Douai". Ironically, as noted by Ohlhausen (2008, p. 30), Witham's own translation adopted "many of the changes Nary made from the original Rheims".

[33] As noted by Julia (2003, p. 243), the church authorities in Rome explicitly specified "the conditions of access to the sacred texts and, even more, of their translation".

"Witham's prestige as President of Douay and his orthodox annotations ensured a better reception for his New Testament than that given Nary's" (Ohlhausen, 2008, p. 32). According to Ohlhausen (2008), Witham's New Testament enjoyed two editions in 1730, another one in 1733, and a posthumous edition in 1740, which the author was not able to locate, nor is it listed in Blom et al. (1994). Daniell (2003, p. 504) notes that "Witham attempted to make something fresh and up to date, as well as, like Nary, more portable". Despite its initial popularity, Witham's translation was discontinued when Richard Challoner's revision of the Douay-Rheims Bible was brought out. In effect, both of these efforts ultimately shared the fate of the *Psalmes*: they were ousted by Challoner's revision of the Douay-Rheims Bible.

Cotton (1855, p. 49) aptly contrasts the efforts of Nary and Witham with those of "the Editors" of a 1738 self-proclaimed "fifth edition" of the Rheims New Testament saying that they "cast aside all the reasons assigned by Nary and Witham for introducing an *improved* and *modernized* translation; and have given us the *genuine old* Rhemish version" [emphasis added].[34] It seems, then, that *improvements* and *modernisations* are overrated when it comes to scriptural translations: believers want their *old* and *genuine* text. Interestingly, while *old* can be taken to mean 'familiar' and 'not modern' and both meanings seem equally relevant in the assessment quoted above, the term *genuine* has come to encompass a new version, paralleling the acquisition of canonicity by the Septuagint and the Vulgate.[35] In particular, even though the revisions proposed by Challoner for the New Testament amount to 15% of new text[36] (Arnovick & Kelly, 2015),[37] the appellations such as "genuine Douay-Rheims Bible", as well as "authentic" and "original" continue to be used today with reference to Challoner's revision, *not* the work of Gregory Martin and his associates in Douay.

[34] Arnovick and Kelly (2015, p. 704) note that Challoner may have been involved in producing this edition.

[35] Nida (1994, p. 195) observes that occasionally canonicity may be acquired almost overnight and offers a striking example of a translator from West Africa who, upon completing the translation of the Bible, took up courses in linguistics. Having realised how many mistakes he had made in the rendition, he wanted to correct the text. He was not allowed to proceed, however, being told that "he had no right to change the Word of the Lord" (Nida, 1994, p. 195).

[36] What I mean by *new* is text that was not present in the original edition because "most of his [Challoner's] improvements consist in substituting not more modern English, but rather an even older English, that of William Tyndale, via the King James Version" (Arnovick & Kelly, 2015, p. 704).

[37] To the best of my knowledge, no parallel study has been conducted on the Old Testament.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the discontinued circulation of the *Psalmes* is to be accounted for by a combination of pragmatic and "emotion-laden sociolinguistic factors involved in the translation of the basic revelatory documents of a religious movement" (Nida, 1994, p. 196). What remains to be discussed now is the issue that originally sparked my interest in the *Psalmes*, i.e. their neglect in the scholarly literature. It can certainly not be attributed solely to the strong anti-Catholic bias, although it must be an important contributing factor. In her review of the English Bibles in early modern studies, Bagley (2011) notes that Catholic Bibles deserve more recognition than they have enjoyed in the scholarly literature, while Cheely (2015, p. 366) observes that the only Catholic version of the Bible which is found in historical surveys of the English Bible is the Rheims New Testament. Bagley (2011) is slightly less positive in her assessment of the presence of the Rheims New Testament in the literature, noting that despite a *revival* of interest in "the often overlooked Rheims New Testament" (p. 304), "[t]he Rheims-Douai Bible is still commonly ignored (De Hamel, 2001, pp. 244–269; McGrath, 2001), or when mentioned at all, judged a complete failure (Daniell, 2003, p. 368), 'a retrograde version' (Price and Caldwell, 2004, p. 109), or considered only in relation to the minor influence it had on the KJB (Crystal, 2010)" (Bagley, 2011, p. 309). So, even though the Douay-Rheims Bible is mentioned in most recent surveys of English versions of the Bible, it seems fair to note that it is usually only the New Testament that receives more than a mere bibliographic entry, as is the case with the *Psalmes*, if they ever get mentioned at all.

It needs to be underscored at this point, however, that while the Douay-Rheims Bible was *just* Catholic, the *Psalmes* in addition to that were also inextricably associated with the *deposed* Stuart monarch and hence had strong political implications. Although, as noted above, the 18th century brought a relaxation of penal laws imposed on Catholics, "[i]n the earliest part of the eighteenth century Catholic books were occasionally subject to legal proceedings, but this was only the case when the books in question had clear political implications" (Blom, 1979, p. 36). The *Psalmes* certainly did meet this criterion. Interestingly, the deposition of James II is an issue which continues to colour modern research and surfaces as emotional comments in what are otherwise scholarly publications. While a study of the representation of James II in English historiography falls outside the scope of this paper, let me quote Campbell's (1994, p. 160) succinct observation on this topic.

> The contemporaries of James II had good reason to portray him as a religious bigot and cruel tyrant who would attempt to impose Catholicism on England, by force if necessary. But it had more to do with their own political interests and cultural biases than with James's own personal beliefs or even his actions. Their negative portrayal of James has left a lasting mark on English

historiography. No less influential has been the Whig interpretation of James II and the Glorious Revolution. Treating James in much the same manner as had his contemporaries, and propounded so eloquently by Thomas Babbington Macaulay, this interpretation has continued to dominate the general perception of James among English historians in spite of the efforts of some historians (Henry Kamen, John Miller, and J. P. Kenyon, for example) to provide a more balanced treatment of James and his brief reign.

Could this be responsible for the scholarly neglect for 300 years? While I have no definitive answer to this question, I am resolved to fill in this lacuna in the history of Biblical translations of the Psalter. In partial fulfilment of this resolution, I have presented in this paper for the first time the edited text of the newly discovered manuscript version of Psalm 1 from the translation made by John Caryll and David Nairne in Saint-Germain-en-Laye between December 31, 1696 and March 14, 1697. And while this is only a glimpse of what can be learned if more systematic study is devoted to this unique translation, it promises a rewarding research adventure, which I am determined to pursue.

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TOO GOOD IS BAD: ON A FORGOTTEN TRANSLATION OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS FROM 1700

Summary

This contribution is devoted to an English translation of the Book of Psalms made by John Caryll and David Nairne at the exiled court of James II in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. *The Psalmes of David, translated from the Vulgat* first printed in 1700, received a corrected and revised edition brought out in 1704. Despite the significant place it occupies in the history of translations of the Psalter from the Vulgate into English, it has hardly received any scholarly attention. The paper examines the circumstances in which this translation emerged, looks at its language and compares it with its rival texts, examines its reception, circulation, and sociolinguistic context with a view to determining why the text ceased to be printed and why it has suffered neglect in the literature dealing with biblical translations. The contribution also presents for the first time the text of Psalm 1 from the newly discovered manuscript version of the *Psalmes* preserved in SCA in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Keywords: translation; psalms; David Nairne; John Caryll; sociolinguistics; court in exile; Stuarts; Douay-Rheims; Bible.

LEPSZE JEST WROGIEM ZNANEGO. O ZAPOMNIANYM TŁUMACZENIU KSIĘGI PSALMÓW Z 1700 ROKU

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest angielskiemu przekładowi Księgi Psalmów, dokonanemu przez Johna Carylla i Davida Nairne'a na dworze Jakuba II Stuarta na wygnaniu w Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Przekład, zatytułowany *The Psalmes of David, translated from the Vulgat* [Psalmy Dawida przełożone z Wulgaty], ukazał się po raz pierwszy drukiem w 1700 roku, zaś wydanie poprawione i uzupełnione opublikowano w roku 1704. Pomimo ważnego miejsca, jakie tłumaczenie to zajmuje w historii przekładów Psałterza z Wulgaty na język angielski, jest ono bardzo rzadko wzmiankowane w literaturze przedmiotu i nie powstało żadne naukowe opracowanie poświęcone tej pozycji. Artykuł przedstawia okoliczności powstania przekładu, analizuje jego warstwę językową i porównuje go z tekstami wobec niego konkurencyjnymi, bada jego recepcję, obieg i kontekst socjolingwistyczny. Celem analiz jest wyjaśnienie, dlaczego tekst przestał być drukowany oraz z czego wynika brak zainteresowania tym przekładem w literaturze fachowej poświęconej przekładom biblijnym. W artykule po raz pierwszy zaprezentowano również tekst Psalmu 1 z nowo odkrytej rękopiśmiennej wersji Psalmes, zachowanej w SCA w Aberdeen w Szkocji.

Słowa kluczowe: tłumaczenie; Psalmy; David Nairne; John Caryll; socjolingwistyka; dwór na wygnaniu; Stuartowie; Biblia Douay-Rheims.

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