The Interconnected Ministry of Refugees in Geneva c. 1550-1560

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The reformation of religion, as it spread throughout 16th century Europe, brought conflict. One aspect of that was seen in the situation faced by those who had embraced the Gospel message but found themselves in states which had retained or returned to an allegiance to Roman Catholicism. Some of these Protestant believers were forced, or chose, to go into exile. They found themselves in communities, described in the words of one of them, as 'exiled from countries everywhere for having upheld the honour of God and His Gospel'.[1]

These religious refugees found a welcome in different places throughout Europe, and Geneva was just one of these. However, it was in that city that three strands of service interconnected in a notable way. The result was an accepted scheme for versifying Scripture; a new, and notable version of the Bible; and work towards a complete metrical translation of the Psalms. Aspects of these strands can be traced in different languages but the focus in this article is on English language material.

THE VERSIFICATION OF SCRIPTURE

The division of the text of the Bible into *chapters* was generally well established by the sixteenth century. (An exception being the book of Psalms where the Septuagint Greek differed from the Hebrew; this in turn influencing the Latin Vulgate.) However, no acceptable scheme for further dividing the text into *verses* had been found. This means that references to scripture passages were either limited to the book and chapter; or to the book, chapter and portion within the chapter indicated by A, B, C, etc. These letters were printed in the margin of the page opposite the portion of the chapter they referred to, the number of letters used varying with the length of the chapter. A somewhat similar system is also found within a number of theological works of this period. In these, the A, B, C, D, indicated the adjacent portion of the *page* and were also intended to assist readers find a location more accurately than a page number alone.

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[1] Cited and translated by Charles Garside, Jr., 'The Origins of Calvin's Theology of Music: 1536-1543', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 79 (1979), p. 18, from Alfred Erichson, *L'Eglise française de Strasbourg au seizième siècle d'après des documents inédits* (Strasbourg: Librairie C. F. Schmidt, 1886), pp. 21-22.

There had been an earlier attempt at a Bible versification scheme by the Italian Dominican friar Sacre Pagnini (1470–1541), however, this did not gain acceptance. That scheme had divided chapters into larger sections resulting in fewer verses in a chapter.[2]

This was how things stood when Robert Estienne (Latin, *Robertus Stephanus*), a member of the distinguished Estienne family of scholar-printers, fled to Geneva in 1550/1. In Paris, Robert (1503–1559) had been printer to the king of France, Francis I. He had already produced a significant list of titles but the third (of his four) editions of the Greek New Testament (1550)[3] was notable as the first to contain a critical apparatus. This title may well have been his last published in France. Certainly, the fourth edition (1551)[4] was almost certainly published in Geneva, though he seems to purposely omit any place of publication in titles from 1551 onwards. It is a work of over 1800 pages, printed and bound in two parts, and was the first to introduce Estienne's versification scheme.

The text is printed in five columns: at the inner margin of each page is the Latin text of what is described as the old (*veteris*) version, that is Jerome's; next (working towards the outer edge of the page) the Greek text; the verse number; the Latin text of Erasmus; and cross references to the Gospel harmony which is printed towards the end of the second part, and references to other parts of Scripture. Jerome's text is printed in a smaller type size than that in the three central columns. The text for each verse is printed as a separate paragraph within each column.

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2 His scheme is used in a Latin Bible of 1528, a digital copy of which is available from <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Bl3Of2R1cOYC> [accessed 25 September 2021].
To illustrate Pagnini's scheme the following comparison of final verse numbers in Mark 1-10 compared with the ESV is given: **chapter**, *Pagnini*, ESV; **1**, *15*, 45; **2**, *12*, 28; **3**, *9*, 35; **4**, *15*, 41; **5**, *13*, 43; **6**, *24*, 56; **7**, *11*, 37; **8**, *14*, 38; **9**, *25*, 50; **10**, *20*, 52.

3 *Της καινης διαθηκης απαντα. Novum JESU Christi D. N. Testamentum* (Lutetiae [Paris]: Ex officina Roberti Stephani, 1550). It is printed in two parts with separate pagination, though apparently bound as one volume. A digital copy is available at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=GI5UAAAAcAAJ> [accessed 1 December 2021]. Note, the use of u, v, i, j, and y, in this and the following titles has been modernised.

4 *Απαντα τα της καινης διαθηκης. Novum JESU Christi D. N. Testamentum. Cum duplici interpretatione, D. Erasmi et Veteris interpretis. Harmonia item Evangelica, & copioso Indece* (no place of publication: Ex officina Roberti Stephani, 1551). It is printed in two parts with separate pagination which are bound separately. Digital copies are available at (Part 1) <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=jYg8AAAAcAAJ> and (Part 2) <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=1og8AAAAcAAJ> [both parts accessed 1 December 2021].

How does Estienne's versification scheme compare to that in common use today? To seek an answer to that question the *final verse number* in each chapter Estienne's 1551 Greek NT (from now on referred to as 1551NT) was compared to that in the ESV, taken as representative of today's usage. The details of verses within any chapter were only investigated when there was a difference between the final verse numbers. This means any differences *within* chapters which did not affect the final verse number were not identified.[5] In the 260 chapters of the NT the ESV has 7958 verses (including those noted as not found in (some) earliest manuscripts). In only nine instances do the final verse numbers in 1551NT vary from those of the ESV.

Of these, five are instances of simple misnumbering in 1551NT and are all corrected (that is, they are not repeated) in future Bible versions which use Estienne's scheme. The remaining four differences are as follows: In Acts 24, ESV verse 18 includes verse 18 and 19 in 1551NT. This results in 1551NT's final verse number being 28 (ESV 27). In 2 Corinthians 13, 1551NT's verse 12 (a short verse) corresponds to the ESV's verses 12 and 13 (even shorter verses). This results in 1551NT's final verse number being 13 (ESV 14). In 2 John, 1551NT's verse 11 combines ESV's verses 11 and 12. This results in 1551NT's final verse number being 14 (ESV 13). In Revelation 12, the last sentence of verse 17 of the ESV, 'And he stood on the sand of the sea' is marked verse 18 in 1551NT. Thus, with only four differences of this type in the NT, we are surely able to conclude that the versification scheme introduced by Estienne in 1551 remains the one closely followed today.

In introducing his scheme Estienne recognised that some transitional arrangement was needed to allow references to be made both to Bibles printed with his scheme and those printed earlier. (It is also likely that he must have been uncertain whether his scheme would gain acceptance. Thus, titles making use of his transitional scheme would maintain their usefulness, whether or not his versification scheme ultimately gained acceptance.) His solution was simply to add his verse number to the end of the previous reference format. This interim reference format is used for the cross references in 1551NT which we have been examining. For example, in Matthew 1:6 three references are given. Against the name of Jesse are 1 Samuel 16:1 and 17:12; and against the name of David is 2 Samuel 12:24. (These same cross references are also those given in the ESV.) Estienne gives these three references as '1. Reg. 16.a.1 & 17.b.12, 2 Reg. 12.f.24'. That is, the previous way of cross referencing (1 Reg. 16.a; 1 Reg. 17.b;

[5] For example, in Luke 9 there are two verses marked 54 but no verse marked 58. Whether corrected or uncorrected the final verse number remains 62.

2 Reg. 12.f) with the verse number from his versification scheme added at the end (1, 12, 24). The names of the biblical books are those used in the Latin.

Indeed, close examination of Estienne's 1551NT text shows that along with the verse numbers of his new scheme he has also included the previous system. In Matthew 1, B is marked in the margin opposite verse 7, C opposite verse 16, and D opposite verse 18. In Matthew 5, a longer chapter, B is marked opposite verse 11, and C v. 17, D v. 22, E v. 28, F v. 34, G v. 41, respectively. 'A', although not marked, is assumed since it identifies the first portion of any chapter.

This interim reference format is also found in several other Estienne-published volumes: a Latin edition of Calvin's *Institutes* published in 1553,[6] and a concordance published in 1555.[7]

Estienne's versification scheme was next used in a French Bible which he published in 1553 (referred to from now on as 1553Fr).[8] This was followed by a Latin Bible in 1555 (from now on referred to as 1555La).[9] And a further French Bible also in 1555 (from now on referred to as 1555Fr) which was published in Geneva by Rene Houdouyn.[10] 1553Fr is the first example of Estienne's versification scheme applied to the Old Testament. However, the marginal references found in 1551NT (which we have already noted) suggest this scheme was already prepared for the whole Bible by that date. 1553Fr has the text of each verse printed in separate paragraphs but in 1555La the text is continuous with verse numbers preceded by paraphs (¶). 1555Fr is also continuous text with verse numbers preceded (and followed) by a space rather than a paraph.

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6 J. Calvin, *Institutio christianae religionis* (no place of publication: Oliva Roberti Stephani, 1553). A digital copy is available at <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-9606>. Note, titles for this period available through e-rara are not searchable.

7 *Concordantiae bibliorum utriusque Testamenti, Veteris & Novi, novae & integrae* (no place of publication: Oliva Roberti Stephani, 1555). A digital copy is available at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=hMdtjDldG_kC> [accessed 28 September 2021].

8 *La Bible qui est toute la saincte escripture contenant le Vieil et Nouveau Testament, ou Alliance* (no place of publication: L'Olivier de Robert Estienne, 1553). A digital copy is available at <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-5731>.

9 *Biblia* (no place of publication: Oliva Roberti Stephani, 1555). A digital copy is available at <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-6074>.

10 *La Bible qui est toute la saincte escriture contenant le Vieil et Nouveau Testament, ou Alliance* (Geneve: Par Rene Houdouyn, 1555). A digital copy is available at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=59tmAAAAcAAJ> [accessed 26 September 2021].

How closely did these versions follow Estienne's scheme? Using the same final verse number comparison with the ESV as above we find that three of the differences identified in 1551NT (Acts 24, 2 Corinthians 13 and Revelation 12) are repeated in all, the remaining difference (2 John) only in 1553Fr and 1555La. Although further differences were introduced in these versions and often then copied into later versions these have, over time, been corrected. However, some of these differences have been retained in versions of the Latin Vulgate to this day.

Robert Estienne died in 1559 without seeing his scheme adopted outwith Geneva. However, the versification of scripture with which we are so familiar today can be traced, and credited, to his work.

THE GENEVA BIBLE

The translation, editing and publication of a new version of the Bible into English in 1560 not only happened in Geneva and made use of Robert Estienne's versification scheme but reflected the scholarly concern of Estienne and others to make the Bible accessible and understandable. And those who carried through this service to God and his church were English-speaking refugees.

Henry VIII of England had *adopted* the reformation of religion but it was his son Edward VI who first *endorsed* it. However, Edward's early death in 1553 resulted in Mary I, a daughter of Henry, becoming queen. She vigorously sought to reverse the reformation and earned the name Bloody Mary for her efforts. On Mary's death in 1558 another daughter of Henry became queen—Elizabeth I. Meanwhile in Scotland it was not until August 1560 that the Scottish parliament passed the legislation establishing the reformation there.

This background explains why there were English-speaking Protestants seeking religious refuge during Mary's reign. For at least some of those who later gathered in Geneva, Frankfurt had been their initial sanctuary. However, the 'Troubles' that arose in the strangers' church there led some to leave Frankfurt for Geneva.

The first portion of this new Bible to be published was a New Testament in 1557.[11] It gives evidence of a work in progress. Although it has the format of the Geneva Bible, both the biblical text and the marginal material show differences. Using Revelation 22 as a basis for comparison with 1560GB, there are differences in 11 out of the 21 verses. Often, however,

[11] *The Newe Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ. …* (Geneva: printed by Conrad Badius, 1557). A digital copy is available at <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-12660>.

these differences are single words: '*wood* of life' not '*tree* of life'; 'heal the *people*' not 'heal the *nations*'. Only 3 of the 16 marginal 'annotations' in the full Bible are included and only some of the marginal cross references, while the NT includes others. In addition, the format of cross references varies. Those included in the margin are in old format (for example, Deut. 4.a); indeed, the marginal place markers, A B C D, are retained. Those in 'The table of the Newe Testament' included at the end of the volume are in intermediate format (for example, Heb. 5 b 4).

However, this NT did include something significant and unique: an English translation of 'The Epistle declaring that Christ is the end of the Lawe, by John Calvin'. Calvin's French text had been included in a French NT in 1538[12] but without acknowledgement of Calvin's authorship. Five years later, however, it was published under his name together with a work of Pierre Viret.[13] There appears to be some confusion about this short work of Calvin. In 1848 Thomas Weedon produced, in black letter, an edition which he claimed was 'Now first rendered into English'. He also described Calvin's work as 'Being the preface to the Geneva Bible of 1550'.[14] However, neither of Weedon's claims are correct (I can find no reference to any edition of the Bible published in 1550 in Geneva). More recently Flavien Pardigon and David B. Garner have produced a new translation which they acknowledge to be based (in part) on Weedon's earlier work.[15] They say, 'Because of certain appreciable gaps in Weedon's translation, several sections of this preface are now provided in English for the very first time.' however, like Weedon's claims this is not correct. Nevertheless, their translation is much more accessible to a modern reader than that produced in 1557.

A second portion of the new Bible to be published was the book of Psalms in 1559.[16] Brief examination suggests this was close to the final

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12 'A tous amateurs de Jesus Christ, & de son Evangile, Salut' in *Le Nouveau Testament c'est a dire La nouvelle Alliance* (Geneva: Jehan Michel, 1538). A digital copy is available at <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-5692>.

13 'A tous amateurs de Iesus Christ, & de son Evangile, Salut' in J. Calvin and P. Viret, *Deux Epistres*, … (no place of publication: no publisher, 1543). A digital copy is available at <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-80701>.

14 J. Calvin, *Christ the End of the Law, being the preface to the Geneva Bible of 1550. Now first rendered into English by Thomas Weedon, Esq.* (London: Henry George Collins, 1848). A digital copy is available at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=_OBUAAAAcAAJ> [accessed 14 December 2021].

15 See, <https://students.wts.edu/stayinformed/view.html?id=495> [accessed 6 July 2011].

16 *The Boke of Psalmes where in are conteined prayers, meditatio[n]s, praises & thankesgivi[n]g to God for his benefites toward his church* (Geneva: Rowland

version. It includes a dedication to the recently-crowned Elizabeth I, 'as a special token of our service and good will, till the rest of the Bible, which, praised be God, is in good readiness, may be accomplished and presented'. The writers continue, 'For we suppose in our judgement that no part of the whole Scriptures is more necessary for your grace than this little book of Psalms, if it be well weighed and practised.' They then suggest different ways in which that might be done and the benefits which they foresee would follow as these might apply to the monarch. They conclude by warning against admitting 'none as friends and counsellors, which have not the fear of God before their eyes,' commenting 'How dangerous a thing it is to cause religion to serve policy and not policy to serve religion.'[17]

The full Bible was published the following year, also by Rouland Hall and also in Geneva, hence the name—the Geneva Bible (referred to from now on as 1560GB).[18] A four-page dedication 'To the most virtuous and noble Queen Elisabeth, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, &c.' is followed by a 2-page 'To our beloved in the Lord the brethren of England, Scotland, Ireland, &c.' which is what the title page refers to as the 'Epistle to the Reader'. None of these pages are numbered. Following the text of the Bible and Apocrypha, there is 'A brief table of the interpretation of the proper names which are chiefly found in the old Testament' (more than seven pages of two-column text). Next, 'A table of the principal things that are contained in the Bible, after the order of the alphabet' (more than seventeen pages of three-column text). Finally, 'A perfect supputation [calculation] of the years and times from Adam unto Christ, proved by the Scriptures, after the collection of diverse authors'.

The translators (in the epistle to the reader) speaking of the response of God's people to his goodness write, 'it behoves us so to walk in his fear and love, that all the days of our life we may procure the glory of his holy name', and they continue, explaining the reason for their labours,

> Now for as much as this thing chiefly is attained by the knowledge and practising of the word of God (which is the light to our paths, the key of the

Hall, 1559). Note, quotations are given in a modern rendering, both here and subsequently.

17 The dedication takes up 14 pages but is not paginated.

18 *The Bible and Holy Scriptures conteined in the Olde and Newe Testament. Translated according to the Ebrue and Greke, and conferred with the best translations in divers langages. With moste profitable annotations upon all the hard places, and other things of great importance as may appeare in Epistle to the Reader* (Geneva: Rowland Hall, 1560). A digital copy is available at <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-6138>.

> kingdom of heaven, our comfort in affliction, our shield and sword against Satan, the school of all wisdom, the glass wherein we behold God's face, the testimony of his favour, and the only food and nourishment of our souls) we thought that we could bestow our labours & study in nothing which could be more acceptable to God and comfortable to his Church than in the translating of the holy Scriptures into our native tongue:

There are several ways in which this version broke new ground, for example, in consistently using an initial capital letter for the names of the persons of the Godhead. However, it is striking that the translators (in the epistle to the reader) do not draw attention to this. Rather, their emphasis is on their endeavours to produce a faithful and accurate translation, and on the helps they seek to provide to encourage the reading, learning and putting into practice of what is learned.

Regarding faithful accuracy, the title page claims, 'Translated according to the Hebrew and Greek, and conferred [compared] with the best translations in diverse languages', and the epistle to the reader adds,

> And this we may with good conscience protest, that we have in every point and word, according to the measure of that knowledge which it pleased almighty God to give us, faithfully rendered the text, and in all hard places most sincerely expounded the same. For God is our witness that we have by all means indevoured to set forth the purity of the word and right sense of the holy Ghost for the edifying of the brethren in faith and charity.

Regarding helps, the first thing that should be noticed is that the Geneva Bible was printed in Roman type rather than the then prevalent black letter. The first full Bible in English to be produced was that of William Coverdale in 1535. This was followed by what is called Matthew's in 1537, Taverner's in 1539 and the Great Bible also in 1539. All were printed in black letter (indeed so were the first editions of the Bishops' Bible in 1568 and of the King James version in 1611). In using Roman type the Geneva Bible stood out; it was immediately more 'readable'.

Previous Bibles had some chapter summaries and some marginal notes/references, but the Geneva Bible with its five-fold reference system in the margin, as well as in the other points described below, included much to help the reader get into and benefit from God's word.

A series of points are made by the translators in the epistle to the reader:

1. **Variant translations.** They speak of the Apostles writing in Greek constraining their words 'to the lively phrase of the Hebrew' and so 'for this and other causes we have in many places reserved the

Hebrew phrases'. They go on, 'Yet lest either the simple should be discouraged, or the malicious have any occasion of just cavillation, seeing some translations read after one sort, and some after another, whereas all may serve to good purpose and edification, we have in the margin noted that diversity of speech or reading which may also seem agreeable to the mind of the holy Ghost and proper for our language with this mark ″.' For example, in Genesis 1:6, against 'a ″ firmament' is '″ *Or, spreading over, & ayre*.'

2. **Hebrew idiom.** They add, 'Again where as the Hebrew speech seemed hardly to agree with ours, we have noted it in the margin after this sort ", using that which was more intelligible.' For example, in Genesis 1:20, against 'creeping thing that hath " life' is '" *Heb. the soul of life*.'

3. **Hebrew names.** They note that the Hebrew names have been 'restored to the true writing' yet say they have retained the common names little changed 'for fear of troubling the simple readers'.

4. **Words supplied to clarify the sense.** When the translation requires additional words, not found in the Greek or Hebrew, in order to make the meaning clear, these words have been added 'with another kind of letter', that is in italics.

5. **Hebrew structure.** Concerning versification they write, 'As touching the division of the verses, we have followed the Hebrew examples, which have so even from the beginning distinct [distinguished] them.' The suggestion seems to be that the division of the verses was inherent in the text. Although this might conceivably be offered as an explanation of divisions within Hebrew poetry, it surely does not cover either Hebrew prose or indeed the Greek text of the New Testament.

6. **Scripture cross references.** They refer to 'the quotations which we have diligently herein perused and set forth by this star *.' That is, to the cross references to other parts of the Bible. For example, in Genesis 1:3, against 'Then God said, * Let' is '*Ebr. 11, 3.*'

7. **Principal points.** The 'principal matters are noted and distincted [distinguished] by this mark ¶.', though this mark was changed in actual use. So, for example, in the margin of Genesis 1 the different days of creation are marked: '|| The 1. day.' '|| The 2. day.', with the

same mark in the text at the appropriate places. (Paraphs [¶] were in fact used in the text of the Bible to indicate paragraph breaks.)

8. **Introductions to books and chapters.** There are 'the arguments both for the book and for the chapters with the number of the verse are added, that by all means the reader might be holpen [helped].' Each book of the Bible has an 'argument' preceding it, and also each chapter, with the part of the chapter described identified by verse number.

9. **Page running titles.** They have set 'over the head of every page some notable word or sentence which may greatly further as well for memory, as for the chief point of the page.'

10. **Explanatory and applicatory notes.** They 'have also endeavoured both by the diligent reading of the best commentaries, and also by the conference with the godly and learned brethren, to gather brief annotations upon all the hard places, as well for the understanding of such words as are obscure, and for the declaration of the text, as for the application of the same as may most appertain to God's glory and the edification of his Church.' For example, in Genesis 1 there are 21 such annotations, marked a-x, (j, v, and w are not used).

11. **Explanatory diagrams.** They note that 'whereas certain places in the books of Moses, of the Kings and Ezekiel seemed so dark that by no description they could be made easy to the simple reader,' a picture has been supplied with a, b, c, giving the explanation. In Genesis 6 such an explanatory diagram is given of Noah's ark with different letters marking dimensions and features. For example, 'A. B. The length three hundred cubits.' 'F. The door.'

12. **Geographic maps.** There are 'certain maps of Cosmography which necessarily serve for the perfect understanding and memory of diverse places and countries'. For example, between Genesis 2 and 3 is such a map of 'The situation of the Garden of Eden.' Mountains, rivers, seas and cities are pictured, with all except mountains named. There follows an explanatory paragraph of text. Since some place-names are in French, translations are given adjacent to the map.

13. **Tables of names and contents.** 'Finally that nothing might lack which might be bought by labours, for the increase of knowledge

> and furtherance of God's glory, we have adjoined two most profitable tables, the one serving for the interpretation of the Hebrew names: and the other containing all the chief and principal matters of the whole Bible'.

Why did the translators not draw particular attention to the uniqueness of many of these features? And why is there no acknowledgement whatsoever of Robert Estienne and his versification scheme? That scheme is used throughout, with no inclusion of the A, B, C, portion markers in the margin, and no use of the old or intermediate format of references. It was adopted in a fuller and more comprehensive way than Estienne himself felt able to do in his own publications, as we have seen.

The answer may perhaps be found in the plea with which the epistle to the reader closes, that, 'you would willingly receive the word of God, earnestly study it and in all your life practise it'. Their expressed desire was to help God's people to grasp God's word, and they did not want to say or do anything that might work against that. The same motivation may have led Estienne himself to omit (or suppress?) the place of publication in his Geneva productions. Some people then (and now) were too ready to say, 'It's foreign', 'It's new', 'It's different', or anything else that would justify their rejection, and thus their neglect, of what had been intended for their spiritual good. The translators have already referred to steps they took to avoid 'the malicious' having 'any occasion of just cavillation'. And if, as a consequence of this concern, Robert Estienne failed to get proper acknowledgement for his labours, then apparently they were willing for that to be the case.

The Geneva Bible was prepared and published in Geneva, but its use was never intended to be limited to the English-speaking refugees there. Rather the dedication to Elizabeth and the greeting to 'brethren of England, Scotland, Ireland' suggest the hope that this new translation would be used throughout the English-speaking world, as it then was. Yet the very fact that this hope was so fully realised may well also have led to the adoption of Estienne's scheme, as we see it in use today.

WORK TOWARDS A METRICAL PSALTER

The first complete metrical Psalter in English was prepared and published by Robert Crowley in 1549.[19] It is printed in black letter and each Psalm is given in Common Metre together with one tune in four parts which

[19] Robert Crowley, *The Psalter of Dauid newely translated into English metre in such sort that it maye the more decently, and with more delite of the minde, be reade and songe of al men* (London: Robert Crowley, 1549).

'serveth for all the Psalms thereof'. Crowley writes, 'This have I done, to move thee to delight in the reading and hearing of these Psalms, wherein lieth hid the most precious treasure of the christian religion.'[20] However, the work does not seem to have found any wide acceptance since it was never reprinted.

Some years earlier Thomas Sternhold had produced *Certaine Psalmes chosen out of the psalter of David & drawen into English metre*. At least two editions were published but neither are dated. Sternhold identifies himself as 'Grome of his majesties Roobes' and opens with a dedication to his king, Edward VI. In it he commends the book of Psalms 'which by the opinion of many learned men comprehendeth the effect of the whole Bible', and notes the encouragement the king had given him to labour in the psalms, and that the king 'taketh pleasure to hear them sung some times of me'.

Nineteen psalms, printed in black letter, are included and all are given in the same format. First, the opening words of the psalm from the Latin Vulgate translation; this detail was first introduced in the then current English version of the Bible (the 'Great Bible' of 1539). Next, a four-line rhyming verse summarises the content of the psalm, before the words of the psalm itself are given.

In closing his dedication Sternhold expresses his intention, if the king should 'favour so this my beginning' that his labour might 'be acceptable in performing the residue'. It appears that Sternhold made some progress in this aim since, following his death in 1549, John Hopkins was able to produce *All suche psalmes of David as Thomas Sterneholde, late grome of the Kinges Majesties robes, did in his life time drawe into Englishe metre* (spelling varies). This included thirty-seven psalms by Sternhold and the format is the same as the earlier work even including the dedication to Edward VI. At the end of the psalms of Sternhold, Hopkins, in a 'To the Reader', notes that a further seven psalms produced by Hopkins himself have been added. Although he stresses that the intention is not that 'they should be fathered on the dead man, and so through his estimation, be the more highly esteemed'. At least eight editions of this work were published between 1549 and 1553 when the accession of Mary I brought an end, albeit temporarily, to the work of reformation.

One other development of this time should be noted. In 1549, under the auspices of Edward VI, *The booke of the common prayer and administracion of the sacramentes, and other rites and ceremonies of the Churche* was produced, with a second edition in 1552. These enacted that, 'The Psalter shall be read through, once every Month'. Thus those worship-

[20] In 'To the Christian reader'. The work is not paginated.

ping in the Church of England at that time regularly made use of the psalms in this way. Whether this had an impact on the development of metrical psalmody is unclear. However, it is the case that no psalms were published, expressly to advance Sternhold's beginning, beyond those produced by Hopkins in 1549, until 1556.

In that year *The forme of prayers and ministration of the sacraments, &c. used in the Englishe Congregation at Geneva* … was printed by John Crespin in Geneva.[21] It included *One and fiftie Psalmes of David in Englishe metre, whereof. 37. were made by Thomas Sterneholde: and the rest by others. Conferred with the hebrewe, and in certein places corrected as the text, and sens of the Prophete required*. In the preface (of 22 pages) different parts of the work are explained and defended, and this includes, 'why we altered the rhyme in certain places', namely, 'we thought it better to frame the rhyme to the Hebrew sense, than to bind that sense to the English meter and so either altered for the better in such places as he had not attained unto, or else where he had escaped part of the verse, or some times the whole, we added the same'.[22] A comparison of a random selection of psalms (1, 11, 21, 32, 41, 63, 73, 103) in 1556 with those in *All suche* shows around two in three of the 440 lines are substantially the same. Those psalms of Hopkins (random selection 30, 42, 52, 146) fair better with around five in six of the 184 lines substantially the same. It is worthy of note that following this initial revision no further changes seem to have been made in later, or indeed the final editions.

The format in which the psalms are presented is similar to that noted in the earlier editions published in England. The opening words of the Vulgate translation are retained but the summary of the contents of the psalm is in prose and similar to the chapter summaries in the English Bible published in 1560 (1560GB). There is considerable variation in these summaries. Some are exact copies of those that would be published in 1560, others are completely different, others show varying degrees of correspondence. When we remember that work on the Bible translation was progressing in the same place and involving many of the same people as that on the metrical psalms it would not be surprising if the psalms produced at an earlier stage reflected earlier drafts of the biblical material. However, again it should be noted that the first wording of the summaries was retained in later versions, in nearly all cases, regardless of any changes which appear in 1560GB. A further edition of *The forme of prayers* was printed in 1558 by James Poullain and Antonie Rebul. In this edition the wording of the title-page of the psalms adds *In this second edi-*

[21] A digital copy is available at <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-547>.

[22] See, 'Preface', p. 21.

tion are added eleven mo[re], newly composed. The format is the same as in 1556 but without the opening words from the Vulgate or the marginal notes and references included in 1556.

The psalms in 1556 also include biblical verse numbers. Indeed, these psalms are the very first portion of Scripture in English to be published with verse numbers! However, there is a greater variation in that versification from today's usage than might have been expected. We noted earlier that a comparison of final verse numbers in the New Testament identified very few differences between Estienne's versification scheme and today's usage. A similar comparison in the book of Psalms between 1560GB and today's usage shows the same close correspondence. However, this masks a significant difference introduced in 1560GB. By 1560 three whole Bibles had been published using Estienne's scheme: 1553Fr, 1555La, and 1555Fr. In each of these editions, when a psalm had a title (for example, the frequent 'A Psalm of David') then that title was numbered as, or included in, the first verse(s). This was not done in 1560GB; the title was included, but not given a verse number, and that example has been followed in all subsequent English Bibles up to today.

No explanation was given for this change, but the close connection between the work of Bible translation and work of metrical psalmody may give a clue. Is it possible that the concern to see the psalms as material to be *sung* led to allocating verse numbers only to material that *would be sung*? Possible confirmation might be seen in the treatment of verse 20 of Psalm 72 ('The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.' [ESV]) 1560GB includes a version of this wording but without any verse number. Was this done because these words, like the psalm titles, would not be sung in the metrical version?

It is not clear when the decision was made not to allocate verse numbers to the psalm titles. It is possible therefore that the greater than expected variation in verse numbers in the earliest-produced metrical psalms may be due to individual revisers, in some cases at least, following Estienne's scheme from the French or the Latin rather than that which would be adopted in 1560GB.

No further additions were published in Geneva to the 51 psalms of 1556 and the 62 of 1558. However, the work continued, and in 1562 (in England) and 1564 (in Scotland) the full 150 metrical psalms were finally completed.

A RELATED ASIDE

Two other publications may be briefly noted as possibly shedding further light upon the work of Bible translation and metrical psalmody. Nei-

ther are dated; neither are complete; and neither give publisher or place of publication, so any conclusions drawn from them must be tentative. The first contains material similar to the 1556 *Forme of Prayers* (hereafter 1556 *Forme*). The first portion of what remains[23] is a selection of metrical psalms. This covers the same psalms included in 1556 *Forme* with one extra—a version of Psalm 95 (numbered 94) which appears again in one later collection but not in either the English or Scottish final versions. This extra psalm is followed by an 8-line Gloria Patri in both instances.

However, in the psalms common to 1556 *Forme* there are differences. Most noticeably those which earlier appeared in *All Suche* are the same as in that collection. The remaining psalms are similar to those additions found in 1556 *Forme*.[24] However, the music, verse numbers and marginal notes/references of 1556 *Forme* are all missing.

There are two possible explanations: the metrical psalms in this version were taken from 1556 *Forme* and this work was therefore published subsequently; or this work preceded 1556 *Forme* and obtained the additional psalms in some other way. Since the earlier psalms are not in their (1556) edited form and the additional psalms are missing their verse numbers and marginal notes/references it seems copying from 1556 *Forme* is unlikely. That leaves the suggestion that these additional psalms were prepared earlier, probably in Frankfurt, and copies found their way to Wesel allowing them to be included in this publication. If this is accepted it would also serve to confirm that the final versions of both the earlier and additional psalms were prepared at Geneva.

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[23] The work is printed in black letter and starts with Psalm 1 on the first extant page, preceded by the heading, 'Psalmes of David in Metre' which is thereby used as a title for the work. Proquest's EEBO suggests Wesel as the place of publication and H. Singleton as the publisher and they identify twenty distinct works in this way. An examination of these shows that where a work begins with signature A, the titlepage is never marked A.i, rather the recto of the following page is marked A.ii. However, this work does have A.i. on the first page, which (together with the absence of a titlepage) suggests that earlier pages are missing.

[24] Comparing the additional psalms in 1556 *Forme* with this edition shows three changes. In Psalm 130 (1556) 'unto this prayer mine' is 'unto this prayer *of* mine', but the musical notes printed in 1556 *Forme* do not allow for this extra syllable; a scripture reference included (in 1556 *Forme*) at the end of the summary of Psalm 133 is missing; and in Psalm 137, 1556's 'our loving god' is rendered 'our living god'.

The second publication is a prose version of the book of Psalms.[25] The extant portion of the reverse of the titlepage contains 'An Admonition to the Reader', starting, 'Let no man be troubled with the titles of the Psalms though they be dark and not plainly explicated [explained] by us or any other writers.' This is followed by a two page preface, which illustrates that 'This whole book of Psalms may be divided into five sorts.' Then follows 'The Psalms of David'. Each psalm is prefaced by a summary similar to that found in 1556 *Forme* and 1560GB; the text of the psalm, preceded by the title, is printed in somewhat larger type and is divided into verses with verse numbers given; there is a three-fold system of marginal notes/references, with the references given in intermediate format (for example, *Esa*. 8.*c*.).

First impressions are that this is largely the text of the 'Great Bible' accompanied by some of introductory and marginal material introduced at Geneva. A comparison of a few psalms shows that the introductory summaries are similar to those in 1556 *Forme* and 1560GB; there are more annotations than in 1556 *Forme* but fewer or the same as in 1560GB; there are, however, more marginal references than both 1556 *Forme* and 1560GB. The text of the psalms seems to be that of the 'Great Bible', in some cases corrected with wording found in the Geneva Bible. To describe the changes as corrections accords with the title of the work: 'translated according to the verity and truth of the Hebrew'. Also, the context in which this work was done is that of the availability of an improved Greek text for New Testament translation and the restoration of the Hebrew (rather than the Greek of the Septuagint) as the primary text for the Old Testament.

What are we to make of this book of Psalms? The use of Roman type points to a Geneva origin, as does the similarity to the Geneva-produced material described in this article, not least with the inclusion of verse numbers. But why would anyone produce such a book? We know that work on a new English translation of the New Testament was ongoing, but a new translation of the Old Testament would be quite a different undertaking. Could it be this was a trial run to see whether a simpler revision of the 'Great Bible' text against the Hebrew, would be possible or acceptable, instead of a fuller new translation? And why choose the book of Psalms out of all the Old Testament books for such a trial? We have already noticed that many, if not all, those involved in this translation were simultaneously at work on a metrical translation of the Psalms. That

[25] The top portion of the titlepage exists, with the beginning of the title reading, 'The Psalmes of David translated according to the veritie and truth of the Ebrue, with annotacions moste ...'. The work is printed in Roman type.

too is described as 'Conferred [compared] with the Hebrew, and in certain places corrected as the text, and sense of the Prophet required'. Thus their labours on the Hebrew text could be made use of in both ventures.

This is speculation of course, but it does offer an explanation for this work that fits with the wider context we have been considering.

CONCLUSION

It can be tempting to ask, 'What if?' What if Robert Estienne had never sought refuge in Geneva? What if the English-speaking refugees had never needed to flee, or had remained in Frankfurt? Yet for a number of years they all did gather in Geneva and there, in an unplanned but profound way, three strands of service for God and his church interconnected. The effects, and the benefits, were not limited to Geneva. Today we might take for granted the versification of scripture; the many helpful features of a well-presented Bible translation; and the ability to sing together, and to God, using the book God himself has provided for that purpose. But, in the providence of God, rejection of him and his ways by two monarchs, served to bring together refugees whose distinct ministries were to interconnect with such long-lasting significance.