The Strasbourg Psalter (1537/38): A “Missing Link” for European Hymnology?

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To describe the Strasbourg Psalter as a “missing link for European hymnology” is not entirely serious. After all, hymnologists are not paleoanthropologists classifying old bones. Nonetheless, there is no denying that traditional (German) hymnology still tends to approach its material genetically. No major research was performed on the Strasbourg Psalter between the work of Christian Meyer in the 1980s and the recent study by Daniel Trocmé-Latter (2015).¹ As a result, we decided to pay particular attention to that source in the course of a major research project on psalmody based at the Faculty of Theology (EA 4378) of the University of Strasbourg and the Gesangbucharchiv at the University of Mainz.²

Strasbourg played a key, if not central, role in the spread of psalm singing as a typical expression of Reformed identity in the first decades of the Reformation, from the early 1520s through to the end of the Augsburg Interim around 1560. In addition, the city was important as the producer of an independent hymn (and liturgical) tradition, and as a model for many churches and congregations, both within and beyond the German-speaking region.

- 1 Christian Meyer, *Les mélodies des églises protestantes de langue allemande. Catalogue descriptif des sources et édition critique des mélodies. Les mélodies publiées à Strasbourg (1524–1547)*, Collection d'études musicologiques 74 (Baden-Baden and Bouxwiller: Valentin Koerner, 1987); Daniel Trocmé-Latter, *The Singing of the Strasbourg Protestants, 1523–1541* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).
- 2 The project entailed developing an online *Hymnological Database (HDB)*. See also the *Verzeichnis deutscher Musikfrühdrukke* (vdm) <www.vdm.sbg.ac.at>, which has recovered several editions described as lost in Konrad Ameln, Marcus Jenny, and Walter Lipphardt (eds), *Das deutsche Kirchenlied: Kritische Gesamtausgabe der Melodien I.I. Verzeichnis der Drucke*, Répertoire International des Sources Musicales B/VIII/1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1975) (hereafter abbreviated as *DKL*).

Defining the Strasbourg Psalter: the two partial editions of 1537 and 1538

The difficulties in researching the Strasbourg Psalter start with defining the psalter itself. When the “Strasbourg Psalter” is mentioned in musicological literature, it is often not clear whether the author is referring to a specific printed edition, to a body of texts and/or melodies, or even to a practice.³ A similar situation is apparent with the more famous Genevan or Huguenot Psalter, although the first full edition, printed in 1562, was subsequently passed down through the centuries practically unchanged.

Let us start with the obvious: the Strasbourg Psalter as a printed edition. In 1537 and 1538 respectively, the Strasbourg printer Wolfgang Köpfel published two extensive, complementary songbooks in octavo format containing hymns and psalms.⁴ Together, these form what is now known as the “Strasbourg Psalter”.

Unfortunately, the only surviving copy of the first of these prints, from 1537, lacks its title page.⁵ Another edition appeared probably in the same year, though this edition is undated.⁶ A further edition appeared in 1538 or 1539, although the dating here is also uncertain.⁷ Two more editions were produced, in 1541 and 1543. The surviving editions have (more or less) the same title, and it can be assumed that the editions lacking titles had something very similar. The 1541 edition has the following title (see also Fig. 1):

*Psalmen/ | vnd Geystliche | lieder/ die man zů Straß- | burg/ vnd auch die man |
inn anderen Kirchen | pflägt zů singen. | Form vnd gebet zum einsegen | der Ee/
dem heiligen Tauff/ | Abentmal/ besůchung der | Krancken/ vnd begrebnůs | der
abgestorbnen.*⁸

3 See for example: Andreas Marti, “Die Rezeption des Genfer Psalters in der deutschsprachigen Schweiz und im rätoromanischen Gebiet”, in *Der Genfer Psalter und seine Rezeption in Deutschland, der Schweiz und den Niederlanden, 16.–18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Eckhard Grundwald, Henning P. Jürgens, and Jan R. Luth (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2004), 359–69.

4 *DKL* 1537/03 (vdm 439) and *DKL* 1538/06 (vdm 457).

5 Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, R.102.405.

6 *DKL* 1537/05 (vdm 441).

7 *DKL* 1538/02 (vdm 452). The Wrocław copy (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, shelfmark 457881) was described by RISM as lost, but was located by vdm.

8 “Psalms and sacred songs that are sung in Strasbourg and in other churches. Form and prayer to bless holy matrimony, baptism, the Eucharist, visits to the sick and burying the dead”. Title from *DKL* 1541/05 (vdm 1233). All editions—presumably excluding the first, the sole copy of which lacks a title page—bear the note: “Alles gemert vnd gebessert” (“Everything increased and improved”). From 1538 on (as in *DKL* 1538/02), the editions include the supplementary description: “Das Erst Teyl”.

Fig. 1. *Psalmen und geistliche Lieder* (Strasbourg: Georg Messerschmidt and Wolfgang Köpffel, 1541) [vdm 1233], title page. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Liturg. 1123-1

This first part of the Strasbourg Psalter contains seventy sacred songs arranged according to liturgical use, followed by sixty psalms in Biblical order (including nine settings of the same psalm).

In 1538 Köpfel published a complementary edition, with the following title:

*Psalter. | Das seindt alle | Psalmen Davids/ mit | jren Melodeiē/ sampt | vil
Schönen Christli- | chen liedern/ vnnd | Kyrchē ũbungē/ | mitt seynem |
Register. | An. M.D.XXXVIII.*⁹

Despite the title, the publication includes only 128 psalms. However, these cover all those not included in the earlier, first part of 1537, as the publication itself specifies: “Folgen die ũbrigen Psalmen/ so im letsten theyl des Psalmenbüchlin nit begriffen sint”.¹⁰ In addition to the psalms, which make up the majority of the book, the publication includes eight Biblical canticles and twelve hymns. This second part of the Strasbourg Psalter was reprinted once, in 1544.

The heterogeneous character of the Strasbourg Psalter is thus due to the fact that it combines two different kinds of sources. The first part, published in 1537, is essentially a Lutheran hymnal, with its contents in liturgical order (beginning with the *proprium temporum*), followed by selected psalms. The second part, from 1538, is a Reformed psalter, the main section of which consists of many (though not all) of the Psalms, followed by a few hymns not arranged by any liturgical principle. As a result, we can assume that the collection was not planned from the beginning as a complete psalter in two parts. A full edition of all the psalms in a single edition was realized only once, in 1539, by Wolfgang Köpfel.¹¹ However, this edition includes the texts only, without music, a manner of presentation that is highly unusual for Strasbourg editions.

The religious situation in Strasbourg changed rapidly with the forced acceptance of the Augsburg Interim in 1548. When negotiations for the re-introduction of the Catholic mass had been concluded, the leader of the Strasbourg preachers, Martin Bucer, was sent into exile in England. As a result, there was no longer any place for vernacular psalm singing. During the years in which the Interim was in force, Strasbourg Protestantism fell into line with the Lutheran faith. Accordingly, at the end of

9 “Psalter. That is, all the Psalms of David with their melodies, together with many beautiful Christian hymns and liturgical services, with an index”. DKL 1538/06 (vdm 457).

10 “The remaining psalms follow which are not included in the last part of the Book of Psalms”, fol. 1r (b1r).

11 There is one exception, Martin Luther’s translation of Ps. 130, *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir*.
*Psal- | ter mit al- | ler Kirchenüb- | die man bey der Christlichen Gemein zu Straß- | burg vnd anders | wa
pflagt zū | singen. | Mit seinem orden | lichen Register. | Straßburg bey | Wolff Köphl.* This edition does not have DKL or vdm sigla because it does not contain music.

the 1550s, when the city became officially Protestant again, it became firmly Lutheran, rather than Reformed. The Catholic mass was again banned, and the Catholic priests once again had to leave the city.

The origin of the Strasbourg psalms

We now turn to the content of the two parts of the Psalter. Taken together, these include 188 *Psalmlieder* (hymns based directly on psalms). The number of Biblical canticles cannot be precisely determined, as these are difficult to distinguish from other sacred hymns in functional (and sometimes also in textual) terms.

The two parts of the Psalter are clearly organised in different ways. As already mentioned, the first part, from 1537, starts with liturgical hymns: first those of the *ordinarium missae*, then those of the *proprium missae*, in the order of the church year. This section is based largely on the 1524 *Teutsch Kirchen ampt*, and is dominated by the songs of Luther and of others from Wittenberg.¹² The next section, containing *Psalmlieder*, is introduced with the subtitle: “Volgen nun die Psalmen der ordnung nach, so vil hat sein mögen, gesetzet” (“Now the psalms follow, set in order, as much as was possible”; fol. P5). Most of these psalms were taken over from an earlier Strasbourg publication, first printed in 1526 and reprinted several times thereafter.¹³ Of the sixty psalms included in the 1537 edition, twenty-four were written by authors working in Strasbourg. Strasbourg authors also contributed five of the canticles. These Strasbourg authors are as follows (see also Table 1): Matthias Greiter, cantor in the cathedral (seven psalms, one cantic); Wolfgang Dachstein, organist at St Thomas (three psalms); -Ludwig Oeler, Strasbourg preacher (eight psalms); Heinrich Vogtherr, a lens grinder from Dillingen (three psalms); Hans Schweintzer, a printer and author close to Schwenckfeld (two psalms); Konrad Hubert, preacher and later cantor at St Thomas (one psalm); Johannes Englisch, Bucer’s helper (two canticles); Symphorianus Pollio, vicar at the cathedral and associate of Bucer (two canticles). The

12 *Teütsch | Kirchen ampt/ | mit lobgesengen/ vñgölich | en psalmen/ wie es die ge | mein zû Straßburg | singt vnhalt/ gantz | Christlich* (Strasbourg: Wolfgang Köpfel, 1524) [DKL 1524/15; vdm 182].

13 *Psalmengebet und Kirchenübung*, 1526 [DKL 1526/08; vdm 307]; reprinted several times: DKL 1526/09 (vdm 308); 1526/10 (vdm 309); 1530/06 (vdm 375); 1533/01 (vdm 383); and 1536/03 (vdm 424). These different editions have different contents.

remainder of the psalms in the 1537 edition were written by Johann Agricola, Johann Frosch, Erhard Hegenwald, Ludwig Hetzer, Justus Jonas, Leo Jud, Andreas Knöpken, Johannes Kolroß, Martin Luther, Wolfgang Musculus, Hans Sachs, Michael Stifel, and Johannes Zwick—authors working in other cities in Protestant Germany and Switzerland: Wittenberg, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Constance, Zurich, and Basel.

Table 1. Strasbourg Psalter, first part: texts by Strasbourg authors

Item	Incipit	Author
Ps. 1	<i>Wohl dem Menschen, der wandelt nit</i>	Ludwig Oeler
Ps. 2	<i>Warum tobet der Heiden Hauf</i>	Ludwig Oeler
Ps. 3	<i>Ach Herr, wie seind meiner Feind so viel</i>	Ludwig Oeler
Ps. 4	<i>Erhör mich, wann ich ruf zu dir</i>	Ludwig Oeler
Ps. 5	<i>Erhör mein Wort, mein Red vernimm</i>	Ludwig Oeler
Ps. 6	<i>Ach Herr, straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn</i>	Ludwig Oeler
Ps. 7	<i>Auf dich, Herr, ist mein Trauen steif</i>	Ludwig Oeler
Ps. 8	<i>Herr, unser Herr, wie herrlich ist</i>	Ludwig Oeler
Ps. 13	<i>Ach Gott, wie lang vergisdest mein</i>	Matthias Greiter
Ps. 14	<i>Der Töricht spricht: Es ist kein Gott</i>	Wolfgang Dachstein
Ps. 15	<i>O Herr, wer wird Wohnungen han</i>	Wolfgang Dachstein
Ps. 41	<i>Glücklich ist der Mann</i>	Hans Schweintzer
Ps. 51	<i>O Herre Gott, begnade mich</i>	Matthias Greiter
Ps. 71	<i>Herr Gott, ich trau' allein auf dich</i>	Heinrich Vogtherr
Ps. 73	<i>Gott ist so gut dem Israel</i>	Heinrich Vogtherr
Ps. 114	<i>Da Israel aus Ägypten zog</i>	Matthias Greiter
Ps. 115	<i>Nicht uns, nicht uns, o ewiger Herr</i>	Matthias Greiter
Ps. 118	<i>Dass Gott der Herr so freundlich ist</i>	Hans Schweintzer
Ps. 119:1–16	<i>Es sind doch selig alle, die</i>	Matthias Greiter
Ps. 119:17–32	<i>Hilf, Herre Gott, dem deinen Knecht</i>	Matthias Greiter
Ps. 125	<i>Nun welche hie ihr Hoffnung gar</i>	Matthias Greiter
Ps. 133	<i>Nun sieh, wie fein und lieblich ist</i>	Konrad Hubert
Ps. 137	<i>An Wasserflüssen Babylon</i>	Wolfgang Dachstein
Ps. 139	<i>Herr Gott, der du erforschest mich</i>	Heinrich Vogtherr
Magnificat	<i>Mein Seel erhebt den Herren mein</i>	Symphorianus Pollio
Canticle of Zechariah	<i>Gebenedeit sei Gott, der Herr</i>	Johannes Englisch
Canticle of Simeon	<i>Im Frieden dein, o Herre mein</i>	Johannes Englisch

Lord's Prayer	<i>Vater unser, wir bitten dich</i> <i>Ich glaub' in Gott Vater, den</i>	Symphorianus Pollio
Credo	<i>Allmächtigen</i>	Matthias Greiter

The second part of the Strasbourg Psalter, printed in 1538, includes 128 psalms, all written by three Augsburg Baptists (or crypto-Baptists): Sigmund Salminger, Jakob Dachser, and Joachim Aberlin. All these psalms were taken from a complete rhymed psalter first published at Augsburg in 1537.¹⁴ This Augsburg psalter included all 150 Biblical Psalms (with very few doubles) and several Biblical canticles. It was thus one of the first complete rhymed psalters. It does not contain music. This Augsburg psalter itself had been published in a less complete form some years earlier, by Jakob Dachser in 1529 and 1531.¹⁵ Dachser had drawn on a Strasbourg print of 1526, the *Psalmen gebett und Kirchen übung wie sie zû Straßburg gehalten werden*, to which he had added his own poems and a few from other authors.¹⁶ When Salminger and Aberlin reissued Dachser's psalter in 1537, they added their own psalms in order to make the publication complete. The editors of the Strasbourg Psalter borrowed these new additions when they were preparing their second volume in 1538. This volume also includes fourteen psalms not included in the Augsburg psalter, probably to avoid doubles.

We can thus summarize the development of the Strasbourg Psalter as follows: the earliest sources, from 1524 (*Teutsch Kirchen ampt*), contain psalms from Luther, as well as some of the first Strasbourg psalms, by authors such as Greiter and Pollio. In the *Straßburger Kirchenampt* of 1525, this basic stock is supplemented by the first eight

14 *Der gantz Psalter, das ist alle Psalmen Davids, an der zal 150* ([Augsburg]: [Philip Ulhart the Elder], 1537) [VD16 A 32] ("The entire psalter, that is all of the Psalms of David, 150 in number"); reprinted as *DEr New gesang psalter darinn alle psalmen Davids an der Zal 150. in gsangweiß gestelt/ mit verzaychntis in was Melodeye ein yeder gehe/ sampt der Letaney/ vnnd allen Geystlichenn Liedern/ so yetzûweil an vil orten gesungen/ merteils itz hin zû thon werden/ darbey anzaigt die Authores* ([Augsburg]: [Philipp Ulhart the Elder], 1538) [VD16 A 33] ("New song psalter including all of the Psalms of David, 150 in number, set in music, with a table of contents showing all the melodies to which they are to be sung, and also the litany and many sacred hymns that are now sung in many places. In addition, the authors' names are stated"). Neither edition contains musical notation.

15 *Form vnd ordnung Gaystlicher Gesang vnd Psalmen* ([Augsburg]: [Philipp Ulhart the Elder], 1529) [VD16 D 1]; additional, expanded editions in 1530 or 1531, as well as 1533. None of these editions contain musical notation. See August Kamp, "Die Psalmendichtungen des Jakob Dachser" (Ph.D. diss., Greifswald, 1931), 8–9.

16 *Psalmē | gebett. vnd Kir | chen übüg wie sie zû Straß | burg gehalten werden* (Strasbourg: Wolf Köpfel, 1526) [DKL 1526/08; vdm 307].

psalms penned by Ludwig Oeler.¹⁷ The *Psalmen gebett und Kirchen übung* of 1526 sets out the repertoire of the church in Strasbourg more fully. It includes an initial group of liturgical congregational hymns for the Kyrie, Gloria, and Magnificat, thirteen psalms in Biblical sequence, three additional psalms, Oeler's psalms 1 to 8, Psalm 119 (in two versions), Psalm 10, and the Lord's Prayer. As a result, various contradictory ordering principles, both liturgical and Biblical, are juxtaposed. This stock and ordering was taken over in the *Psalmen und geistliche Lieder* in 1537. In parallel, this repertoire of psalms was taken over by the Augsburg editors from 1529, and expanded to the full 150 psalms in 1537. These new additions to the Augsburg psalter were immediately included in the second Strasbourg volume, issued in 1538. In this sense, we ought to restrict the term "Strasbourg Psalter" narrowly to those psalms that were included in the 1537 Strasbourg edition, since the second part, issued in 1538, contains elements borrowed from the repertoire of Augsburg.

The literary and theological profile of the Strasbourg psalms

Let us look more closely at the Strasbourg repertoire. In his eight rhymed psalms from 1525, Oeler takes a very schematic approach. As a rule, two Bible verses correspond to one of Oeler's stanzas (three verses in Psalm 3). Oeler only departs from this scheme if the psalm consists of an uneven number of verses. Without exception, Oeler uses the same verse structure, a *Barform* with the following syllable and rhyme patterns: 8 7 8 7.8 8 7 and A b A b.C C d. All of these psalms were intended to be sung to the melody of Luther's Psalm 12, *Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein*, a melody that appears for the first time in a Strasbourg source.¹⁸

Matthias Greiter, whose version of Psalm 13 appeared in Strasbourg in 1524 as one of the earliest known rhymed psalms, allows himself greater latitude, and sometimes spread one Bible verse over two stanzas. Greiter also experimented with verse schemes different from those of his Lutheran models. His paraphrase of the much-loved penitential Psalm 51, for example, has a highly original form: a thirteen-line *Barform*, with

17 DKL 1525/18 (vdm 248).

18 DKL 1524/16 (vdm 183). Melody: *Das deutsche Kirchenlied* (Kassel, etc.: Bärenreiter, 1975–2010), Eb6 (hereafter abbreviated as *DdK*).

syllable-scheme 8 8 7 7 8 8 7 7.8 8 8 8 7 and rhyme A A b b C C d d. E E F F g. It is assumed that Greiter, himself a musician, wrote this melody.¹⁹

Like Oeler, Wolfgang Dachstein's three psalms, all from 1525, also transfer the Bible text into sung poetry in a very schematic manner. Dachstein devised an original form for his well-known Psalm 137, *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*: a ten-line *Barform* with two two-line *Stollen* and a six-line *Abgesang*, patterned 8 7 8 7.8 8 7 8 8 7 and A b A b.C C d E E d; this psalm is also set to a unique melody (*DdK* Eb17).

The Strasbourg psalms all follow a strict Biblical hermeneutics. In contrast to Luther's exceptionally free psalm paraphrases, such as his versification of Psalm 46 as *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, the Strasbourg psalms add neither Christological, ecclesiological, nor contemporary elements. As a result, the Strasbourg psalms are true to the literal-historical sense of the text—*sola scriptura*.

In the liturgy, the Strasbourg psalms were used during vespers. According to the *Teutsch Kirchen ampt* of 1524, vespers began with the congregation singing "which-ever [psalm] one wants" ("welchen man will").²⁰ This was then followed by Luther's Psalm 67 and Psalm 12 and Greiter's Psalm 13. After the reading, Pollio's version of the Magnificat was sung, and the collect brought the service to a close. Psalms were also included at several junctures in the main communion service (see, for example the *Ordnung des Herren Nachtmahl*).²¹ The Strasbourg psalms mostly have a closing doxology, sung as a separate stanza.²²

This liturgical order of the Eucharistic celebration was maintained without any notable changes through to the end of the 1530s. According to the 1537 *Psalmen und geistlichen Lieder*, a psalm was sung as an introit in the communion service, another psalm was sung before the gospel reading, another after the sermon, and yet another after the words of institution. A typical Strasbourg feature is the fact that the psalms

19 *DdK* Eb11. See Markus Jenny, *Geschichte des deutschschweizerischen evangelischen Gesangbuches im 16. Jahrhundert* (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1962).

20 *DKL* 1524/16 (vdm 183), B7v.

21 *Ordnung des Herren Nachtmahl: so man die messz nennet/ sampt der Tauff vñ Insegung der Ee/ Wie yetzt die diener des wort gots zū Straßburg/ Erneüwert/ vnd nach götlicher gschriftt gebes/ sert habē vß vrsach jn nachgender Epistel gemeldet* [*DKL* 1525/19; vdm 247].

22 The doxology was initially attached directly to the end of the respective psalm. In later hymnals the various doxologies were put into a separate section of the hymnal.

are not allocated to specific holy days: they have a liturgical place in the services, but as part of the ordinary, not of the proper.

In summary, we can ascertain the following points:

1. The Strasbourg Psalter is a repertoire in movement rather than a precisely defined body of pieces. Around two dozen psalm-based hymns can clearly be allocated to it, and several others are believed to form part of it.
2. The Strasbourg Psalter offers a hermeneutic model for psalm paraphrases. In this regard, adherence to the Bible is key, as is the allocation of several Bible verses to each stanza. The Strasbourg paraphrases are not simply based on the Biblical text as a source of inspiration, but aim to reproduce the Biblical text.
3. The Strasbourg Psalter is a model of a liturgical practice that regards the psalm as a central sung element in the service. This results from the inspiration of David, the supposed author of the Psalms.
4. The basic stock of Strasbourg psalms, dating from 1524/25, comprises the earliest evidence of the liturgical singing of psalm paraphrases in the Protestant churches. The Strasbourg corpus only became a full psalter with all 150 psalms with the addition of the Augsburg psalms (around three-fifths of the total stock). Thus, the Augsburg psalter forms part of the Strasbourg Psalter as part of its reception history.

The Constance hymnal and the Swiss-German hymnals

While singing psalms became less important in Strasbourg under the influence of -Lutheran orthodoxy during the Interim, it gained ground in Reformed areas of Switzerland. The basic stock of Strasbourg psalms was incorporated into a hymnal produced in Zurich by Christoph Froschauer in 1538.²³ This is the predecessor of the so-called Constance hymnal of 1540, likewise printed by Froschauer in Zurich.²⁴ The Constance hymnal gave birth to a range of hymnals used in German-speaking Switzerland, including Basel, Schaffhausen, St Gallen, and Engadin. Although the Constance

23 The title page is missing from the only copy, DKL 1538/01 (vdm 451); Jenny, *Geschichte*, 17, describes it in detail, but dates it to 1536 or 1537.

24 *Niſw gsangbüchle | von vil schönen Psalmen vnd | geistlichen liedern/ durch ettliche | diener | der kirchen zu Costentz vn anderstwo merck- | lichen gemeert/ gebessert vnd in gschick- | te ordnung zesamen gstellt/ zu übung | vnnd bruch jrer ouch anderer | Christlichen kirchen.* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1540) [DKL 1540/06; vdm 472].

hymnal was printed at Zurich, it was not used there, since liturgical singing in that city had ceased under Zwingli, and would only begin again in the seventeenth century.²⁵ In 1598, Egli in Zurich published the first Swiss edition of the Lutheran theologian Ambrosius Lobwasser's German versification of all 150 psalms, following the French model of the Geneva Psalter. As the most important psalter for German-speaking Reformed churches, the Lobwasser Psalter quickly took the place of psalms in the Strasbourg tradition in Switzerland.²⁶

The Bonn hymnal

During the reign of Herrmann von Wied as archbishop of Cologne (1515–47), a -hymnal was issued on which Melancthon and Bucer had worked. The Bonn-based reformer Johann Stammel may also have been involved. The first edition, dated to 1544 (vdm 1376), has not survived. The second edition, dated 1550, is entitled:

Gsangbüch | lein Geistlicher Psalmē / | hymnen / leider vñgebet / Durch | etliche
Diener der Kirchen zů Bonn / | fleissig zůsamen getragen / mercklich ge | meret /
vnd in geschickte ordnung | zůsamen gestelt / zů übung | brauch der
Christē | lichen gemeine.²⁷

This Bonn hymnal also has its roots in the Strasbourg editions. However, as the Reformation in the Lower Rhine region did not last long, this hymnal disappeared, and with it also the tradition of Strasbourg psalms in the Lower Rhine region.

Translation of the Strasbourg model into French

The Strasbourg Psalter was most successful, and in historical terms most influential, in French translation. The singing of psalms in Calvinist churches is generally believed to have started with Clément Marot's psalm paraphrases from the 1530s, independently

25 See Jenny, *Geschichte*.

26 *Kirchengesang | Der gemeinen vnd ge- | breüchlichen Psalmen / Fest | gesungen / vnd Geistlichen Lie- | deren / nach der Teütschen Melo- | dey für die Kirchen Zürich | zůsamen getruckt* (Zurich: Johann Wolff, 1598) [VD16 K 930]. Lobwasser's psalter had first appeared in 1583.

27 "Little hymnal of sacred psalms, hymns, songs, and prayers. Diligently compiled by many servers of the church in Bonn, notably increased and put together in a proper order for practice by the Christian congregation". *DKL* 1550/05 (vdm 1354); the only surviving copy made it to the Vatican Library as part of the spoils of the Thirty Years' War: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Stamp.Pal.VI.167(int.1). A third edition appeared in 1561: *DKL* 1561/01. The 1550 edition has been edited and commentaried in Ernst Klusen, *Das Bonner Gesangbuch von 1550*, Quellen und Studien zur Volkskunde 6 (Kamp-Lintfort: Staufén-Verlag, 1965).

of Strasbourg. However, this view cannot be maintained. Marot's rhymed psalms were courtly poems without any liturgical role, intended rather as a kind of *specula principum*, a code of conduct for royalty. Moreover, they were probably not originally intended to be sung.

Calvin must have met Marot in 1536 in Ferrara and came to know his rhymed psalms at that time. When Calvin reformed church services during his first stay in Geneva from 1536–38, he clearly intended to include the singing of psalms from the very beginning. The practical results, however, were unsatisfactory.²⁸

Calvin's ideas about singing psalms became more defined in Strasbourg. Calvin started to work in Strasbourg in September 1538 as the pastor of the French-speaking congregation of refugees. He was the first pastor to receive permission from the municipal authorities to celebrate the Eucharist in French.²⁹ He must have created a French liturgy in great haste, as Johannes Zwick wrote to Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor in Zurich, in November of the same year: "There is a church for the French in Strasbourg, where they hear Calvin preach four times a week, and where they also celebrate the Eucharist and sing psalms in their language."³⁰ The small hymnal that Calvin issued in 1539 with Johannes Knobloch the Younger, *Aulcuns pseaulmes et cantiques mys en chant* ("Some psalms and hymns with music"), includes twenty-two hymns: nineteen psalms, the Canticle of Simeon, the Decalogue, and the Credo, all with music.³¹ Thirteen of the psalms are by Marot. Calvin can be firmly identified as the author of the versions of Psalms 25 and 46, and he probably also translated four further psalms and three other poems.³² The nine poems attributable with more or less

28 See Beat A. Föllmi, "Calvin und das Psalmsingen. Die Vorgeschichte des Genfer Psalters", *Zwingliana* 36 (2009): 59–84.

29 See Alfred Erichson, *Die calvinische und die altstrassburgische Gottesdienstordnung. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Liturgie in der evangelischen Kirche* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1894), 6.

30 "Gallis Argentorati ecclesia data est in qua a Calvino quater in septimana conciones audiunt, sed et -coenam agunt et psalmos sua lingua cantunt". Quote from Pierre Pidoux, *Le psautier huguenot du xvi^e siècle*, 2 vols (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1962), vol. 2: 2.

31 vdm 903. Psalm 115 has no music of its own, and was probably to be sung to the melody of Psalm 114; see also Pierre Pidoux, *Le psautier huguenot du xvi^e siècle*, vol. 1: 106. A facsimile copy of this edition with commentary and transcription of the melodies is in Richard R. Terry, *Calvin's First Psalter* (London: Benn, 1932).

32 See the letter from Calvin to Guillaume Farel dated 19 December 1539: "Ita psalmi duo, XLVI et XXV, prima sunt mea tirocinia. Alios postea attexui". Calvin, *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Johann Wilhelm Baum et al., 59 vols (Braunschweig: Schwetschke, 1863–1900), vol. 6: xxi.

confidence to Calvin were assigned melodies from the Strasbourg tradition, probably written by the musicians Greiter and Dachstein.³³ However, Calvin never used the relevant German psalm melody for the corresponding French counterpart, except for the Decalogue and the Credo. The syllable and rhyme patterns of the German versions were changed in the French versions, and the melodies were also adjusted to the French prosody. As his source, Calvin almost certainly used the 1537 edition of *Psalmen und geistlichen Lieder*, which contained the basic stock of the Strasbourg Psalter, as we saw above. Calvin's entire literary and musical project to promote psalm singing was thus inspired by his experience of this practice at Strasbourg. We can summarise Calvin's approach as follows:

1. The psalms are strict Biblical paraphrases, without any Christological or ecclesiological additions; the text of the psalm was translated in full.
2. The psalms were intended to be sung during the liturgy, and make up part of the ordinary (there is no proper in Calvinist liturgies).
3. The psalms are to be sung in unison by the entire congregation without any instrumental accompaniment; a boys' choir from the school led and supported the congregation in practicing the hymns. While some Strasbourg clerics sometimes used unison organ accompaniment to teach the melodies and to provide support, Calvin himself did not.
4. The rhymed psalms all have music; while the German editions used *Hufnagel* notation (with some use of *cantus fractus* notation; see Fig. 2) for most melodies, except for those imported from other repertoires, such as Luther's *Ein feste Burg*, which are notated in white mensural notation, Calvin's Strasbourg hymnal uses white mensural notation throughout (see Fig. 3).

However, when Calvin left Strasbourg in 1542, he was still missing one element in his intended implementation of French psalmody: a complete fully rhymed psalter. He saw to this lack after returning to Geneva in the autumn of 1541. Marot, who had fled to Geneva in the meantime, supported Calvin's project until he died in 1544. Completion of the psalter was then taken over by the Lausanne-based theologian Theodore

33 As is the case in practically all the hymnology of this early period, we have hardly any secure information on the composers of the melodies. I believe that, as a rule, attributions using stylistic criteria are problematic.

CCCVII
 lens dein/biß an dz end bestendig sein/
 diewelt laß immer murzen.

Der CXXV. psalm.
 Qui confidunt in domino.

Nun welche hie jr hoffnung
 Die bleiben stets unwankel
 gar/auff Gott dē Heren le gen/
 bar/vnd lond sich nit be we gen/
 Ir glaub ist sat/kein māgel hat / vō Gots
 hater die ster cke/Darüb spricht man/
 Vñ

Fig. 2. Nun welche hie jr hoffnung gar (Psalm 125), from *Psalmen und geistliche Lieder* (Strasbourg: Georg Messerschmidt and Wolfgang Köpfel, 1541) [vdm 1233], fol. V2r. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Liturg. 1123-1.

Psalme XXV.

Fig. 3. *A toy seigneur je leveray* (Psalm 25), from *Aulcuns pseaulmes et cantiques mys en chant* (Strasbourg: Johann Knobloch the Younger, 1539) [vdm 903], p. 16. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Rar. 107.

Beza. After several incomplete editions, the full psalter finally appeared in 1562.³⁴ This edition no longer contains any doubles, and the canticles were restricted to the Decalogue and the Canticle of Simeon. Calvin had thus followed the Strasbourg psalm model in every respect, and even perfected it.

However, as Calvin's Geneva Psalter was completed, the Strasbourg Psalter that lay behind it faded into the background. In terms of text, only the model was copied. The adjustments to the French prosody were already substantial in the *Aulcuns*

34 *Les pseavmes mis en rime françoise. Par Clement Marot, & Theodore de Beze* (Geneva: Michel Blanchier, 1562).

Pseaulmes. In the Geneva editions, Calvin replaced all his own poems with ones by Marot: Psalm 113 and the Credo in the first Geneva edition (1542); and Psalms 25, 36, 46, 91, 138, and the Decalogue in the 1551 edition. The Strasbourg melodies were either retained in reworked versions (Psalms 25, 36, 91, and 114³⁵) or replaced (Psalms 46, 51, 113, 115, 138, Decalogue, and Credo). The much-loved melody to Greiter's Psalm 119, *Es sind doch selig alle die*, was used not only for the French Psalm 36 (as already done by Calvin in Strasbourg), but also for Theodore Beza's new version of Psalm 68, *Que Dieu se montre seulement*, which later became known as the "Psaume des batailles", as the French Protestants sang it on the battlefield during religious wars.

By 1562, the Geneva Psalter had thus replaced all of Calvin's rhymed psalms, and retained only four of the Strasbourg melodies, changed to a greater or lesser extent. However, Calvin's rhymed psalms and the Strasbourg melodies were retained in the French psalters that appeared in Strasbourg after Calvin's departure, up to 1553.³⁶ As a result, the French and Flemish refugees in Strasbourg—the city council required even the Flemish refugees to use French—absorbed this repertoire in the 1540s and 1550s. However, the exact extent to which they assimilated it remains unknown.

Conclusion

The Strasbourg Psalter thus proves to be a central element in the establishment of psalm singing as a defining feature of Reformed identity. Key aspects of Reformed psalm singing, already present in the Strasbourg Psalter, include the following: unconditional adherence to the literal-historical sense of the Bible; translation of the complete Biblical psalm and not simply a selection of verses; the rejection of Christological or ecclesiological interpolations; and unison melodies, usually unaccompanied, to be sung by the congregation.

35 Psalm 25 with *DdK* Eb16; Psalm 36 with *DdK* Eb14; Psalm 91 with *DdK* Eb11; Psalm 114 with *DdK* Eb12.

36 *La manyere de faire prieres* ([Strasbourg]: [Johann Knobloch the Younger], 1542) [VD16 M 581; vdm 1507; ST 42]; *La forme des prieres et chantz ecclesiastiques* (Strasbourg: Johann Knobloch the Younger, 1545) [VD16 F 1870; vdm 1508; ST 45]; *Pseaumes de David traduictz en rithme francoise par Clement Marot* (Strasbourg: Remigius Guedon, 1548) [VD16 ZV 10409; vdm 1509; ST 48]; *Pseaumes de David, mis en rime Francoyse, par C. Marot* (Strasbourg: Wolfgang Köpfel, 1553) [VD16 M 1065; ST 53]. The "ST" ("Strasbourg") sigla come from Pidoux, *Le psautier huguenot*, vol. 1: xxii.

The core of psalms in the Strasbourg Psalter gave rise to other repertoires: the Augsburg psalter, the three editions of the Bonn hymnal, and most of the sixteenth-century Swiss-German hymnals. Strasbourg's psalm singing inspired Calvin to create his own French psalters, which, from 1562 onward, not only dominated French Protestantism, but also spread throughout the whole of Europe and beyond when translated into other languages. Though the Geneva Psalter only includes traces of the Strasbourg melodies and replaced Calvin's original poems with versions by Marot, the Strasbourg editions of the French psalms kept Calvin's versions with their melodies until 1553, and passed these on to the French and Flemish-speaking exiles in the city. Marot's Psalm 68, sung to the Strasbourg melody of Greiter's Psalm 125, accompanied battles between Catholics and Protestants through to the end of the sixteenth century. A (peaceful) Strasbourg melody, sung by Protestant warriors, aimed to cause those of the old faith to flee. When the Strasbourg Psalter itself disappeared after the Augsburg Interim, some of its melodies remained in German hymnals and in the Huguenot Psalter.