

Is there a method in this... madness? On variance between two manuscript copies of a Middle English Psalter*

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Abstract

The objective of the paper is to determine the extent and the possible sources of the intertextual lexical variation between two manuscript copies of a single Middle English Psalter known, among other names, as the *Middle English Glossed Prose Psalter*. The purpose of the paper can be understood only if one approaches the variance from a medieval perspective on text with respect for the inherent features of manuscript culture and an understanding of the exceptional character of the text analysed in the study, which topics are briefly discussed within the paper. The extent of the variance is measured in relation to the nominal choices attested in the two copies of the text, the rationale behind the variation being sought separately in each case, taking into account the contextual intricacies of all the occurrences of the nouns under analysis.

Keywords: Middle English Glossed Prose Psalter, lexical variance, manuscript culture, medieval Psalter

1. Introduction

The purpose of the present paper is to determine the extent and the possible sources of the intertextual lexical variation between two manuscript copies of a single text known in the relevant literature under different names¹ but referred to within the confines of this paper as the *Middle English Glossed Prose Psalter*. Were it not for the presence of the word *manuscript* in the previous sentence, the objective of this study could seem to defy logic, which it, however, does not. It is, nevertheless, difficult to attain as it requires of one to adopt a medieval perspective on book with respect for the inherent features of manuscript culture and an understanding of the exceptional character of the text analysed in the study, both of which are discussed in some length in the body of the paper. It needs to be stated already at this

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¹ Cf. Charzyńska-Wójcik (2013: 77-84).

point that the nature of manuscript culture is a factor which created conducive conditions for the presence of the lexical variation between the copies of the text analysed here and thus shaped the ground for the present study.

That it is now difficult to imagine how *copies* of the same text can differ in their lexical layer, and to some extent syntactic one too, can – to resort to an enormous simplification – be ascribed to the invention and the subsequent influence of the printing press. However, before the introduction of the printing culture, things used to look very different and it is impossible to discuss lexical variance between manuscripts without a brief overlook of the pre-print situation (Section 2) as it is against this backdrop that one needs to set the texts discussed in this paper. A short presentation of the texts themselves follows in Section 3. Having discussed the background, I will proceed to the methodology of the research (Section 4), followed closely by the study itself (Section 5), whose results are discussed in the final section (Section 6).

2. Manuscript culture

The extent of the variation that can be observed between different manuscript copies of the same medieval text leads one to believe that at the very core of the manuscript culture lies acceptance of variation,² which seems to be in dissonance with the resistance shown in the Middle Ages to ‘change in and for itself’ (Nichols 2011: 1). Nichols (2011) argues for ‘mutable stability’ which would help to handle this paradox, not forcing one ‘to choose between a concept of the work “as somehow above or beyond any manifestation of it,” and “the work-that-has-its-being in a given manuscript version”’. For Gellrich (1985), the former approach conveys the concept of the necessity of idealising books which arose out of the material and individual nature of each manuscript: it needed to be seen as an imperfect reflection of an imagined perfect text it represented, as an ‘exemplar of a logocentric book-beyond-the-books’ (West 2006: 246). On the other hand, the variance between the manuscript copies testifies to each of them being an independent work (Nichols 2011). Thus, medieval manuscripts do represent the *same* text but the term *sameness* in the Middle Ages could not be equated with *exactness* (Nichols 2011: 3) and the procedure of establishing an authoritative critical edition is a consequence of applying the modern idea of the book to the products of the medieval reality, without taking the latter into consideration:³

² Cerquiglini (1999: 36, quoted after Nichols 2013: 2) proposes to view it in the following manner:

Medieval writing does not produce variants; it *is* variance. The endless rewriting to which medieval textuality is subjected, the joyful appropriation of which it is the object, invites us to make a daring hypothesis: the variant is never intermittent (*ponctuel*).

³ From such an approach stem all the critical remarks hurled at the scribes whose errors and whimsy resulted in the divergences between the texts (Nichols 2011: 20) and who have been accused by textual critics ‘of willful disobedience, or cheerful unconcern for the law charging that they should reproduce exactly what they saw in the exemplar (even if it looked like an error), or with plain stupidity’ (Greetham 1994: 49), their worst virtue being the ‘pernicious desire to do good’ (Willis 1992, quoted in Greetham 1994: 49). This is well illustrated in the description of the scribe of the London manuscript of the *Middle English Glossed Prose Psalter* provided by the first editor of the text:

the modern critical edition, however erudite and however useful, could not be a faithful representation of an original, but was, rather, a modern reconstruction of an ideal, that from our perspective, never existed. It might evoke the historical moment, but was in no sense of it.

Nichols (2009: 5)

For these reasons, ‘rather than seeing scribal literary transmission over time as adulterating the works they addressed’ (Nichols 2009: 5), the multiplicity of versions could be interpreted ‘as betokening an active milieu of reproduction that could only be called interventionist’ (Nichols 2009: 6). Leaving their mark upon the work a scribe was copying was unavoidable and it was not expected of the scribes to avoid it (Nichols 2014: 2). Thus, what is often perceived as negligence should rather be considered a reflection of the socio-cultural context in which the manuscripts were copied and of the care accorded to the work. ‘[T]echnologies of manuscript reproduction had a dynamic impact in shaping the nature of the work’ (Nichols 2009: 5-6). Liuzza (2000: 146-148) would see such scribes as performing an *aural transcription* and not copying the text *literatim*, which would result in reproducing the *original text* exactly as it was represented (*visual transcription*). An *aural transcription*, on the other hand, would be the copying of a text read and thus heard and kept in mind. It would transmit not the *shape* but the *sense*. Orthographical variation – as a consequence of phonological changes, orthographical innovations and dialectal differences – is not the only sort of variance that stems from this approach. A more conspicuous change can be observed in the area of syntax and of lexicon, the latter being the focus of the present research. As Liuzza (2000: 147) phrases it:

In more extreme cases, the aural transcriber may replace an obsolete word, correct a passage that he or she deems faulty, or change for better or worse a phrase that does not survive the translation from his or her mind to the page. In these cases the scribe is interpreting rather than transcribing; one might even call this work ‘editorial’.

In the light of the above, one should perceive the scribe to be a co-author of a text or a translation rather than a *transmitter* simply, an intermediary granted the right to participate in the creation of the work.

3. The Middle English Glossed Prose Psalter

Since it is a commonplace that all manuscript copies differ, the presence of the divergences between the copies of the *Middle English Glossed Prose Psalter* (MEGPP) does not surprise and does not prevent one from perceiving them as representing the same text. However, the

Judging from the mechanical manner in which he did his copying, he must have been a very ignorant man, who understood neither much Latin nor English, though we cannot blame him for excessive carelessness. In a certain way he has bestowed much attention on his original, and has apparently done his best to make an exact copy, writing letter by letter, so far as he could decipher the original before him, which very likely was difficult to read. He has very often produced most ridiculous results. In such cases he does not seem to have used his brains at all, but to have purposely abstained from making emendations. The blunders in the Latin text of the Psalter are legion.

Bülbring (1891: ix)

manner in which they differ, especially taking into account what (little) is known about them, provides a strong incentive to investigate the issue.

MEGPP is preserved in only four manuscript copies of which the first two are analysed here: London, British Library, MS Additional 17376 (MEGPP L); Dublin, Trinity College, MS 69 (MEGPP D); Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys Library 2498; and Princeton, Ms Scheide 143.⁴

The relationship between the different manuscript copies of MEGPP is not straightforward. It is stated by Black and St-Jacques (2012: lv, part 1) that although the London manuscript is the oldest by the date of its composition – 1330-1350 (Black and St-Jacques 2012: xxviii, part 1, after Hanna 2003: 144), it is the Cambridge copy that is most probably the closest to the English original. Since, as shall become clear, the texts are not copies of one another, Black and St-Jacques (2012) postulate the presence of now-lost archetypal text copies of which started to diverge creating as if two branches. The first of these is now represented by the Cambridge text, derived as if independently (Black and St-Jacques 2012: lii, part 1, after Hanna and Lawton 2003: lxxxvi), whereas the other underwent even further subdivision leading to the composition of the London manuscript on the one hand and the Dublin and Princeton copies on the other. Such a complex web of relationships between the text envisaged by Black and S-Jacques (2012) stems from the characteristics of each of the manuscript copies.

Despite the fact that relatively little is certain and agreed upon with respect to MEGPP, there is no doubt that its most characteristic feature are the glosses whose readings often replace the original Latin lemmata. In fact it is the nature of the glosses and their treatment in the four manuscripts that to a great extent enabled Black and St-Jacques among other scholars to draw the conclusions concerning the intertextual relations between the manuscripts. Both the Cambridge and London manuscripts incorporate the readings of the gloss into the translation without rendering the lemmata, whereas the usual practice for the Dublin and Princeton manuscripts is to translate both the lemma and the gloss. Based on the number of the glosses present in the London and the Cambridge manuscripts, Black and St-Jacques (2012) regard the two as closer to the original.

Moreover, a linguistic analysis of the texts also prompts one to consider the Dublin and Princeton manuscripts as further from the Latin exemplar due to their use of less learned language, which is ‘closer to everyday speech during a time when English became less influenced by Latin and French’ (Black and St-Jacques 2012: liii, part 1). What is especially important in the context of the present research is the fact that both these manuscript copies employ fewer Latinate words than the Cambridge and the London manuscripts do, which leads Black and St-Jacques (2012: liii, part 1) to believe that they are ‘from a later, truncated, and simplified version with fewer Latin and French words’.⁵

⁴ The study is limited to the analysis of only two manuscript copies of the text as these are the manuscripts edited by Bülbring (1891), whose work is generally trusted. The text of the Cambridge MS with variants from the remaining manuscript copies is available in Black and St-Jacques (2012) but since this edition diverges in many places from Bülbring’s (1891) edition it was decided to base the study exclusively on the latter (see Section 4).

⁵ For a discussion of the etymological make-up of the nominal layer of the first fifty Psalms in the London and Dublin copies of MEGPP, see Lis (in press).

Another factor which renders the situation still more complex is the presence of a French intermediary which the English translator had at their disposal and which to some extent influenced the shape of the English rendition.⁶ The treatment of the glosses in this translation mirrors the situation described for the London and the Cambridge manuscripts. The text of the French glossed Psalter is preserved in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS fonds français 6260 (a 15th-century copy of a 13th-century text according to Berger 1884) and, as reported by Sutherland (2015: 120-135), in London, British Library, MS Additional 44949 (14th century). It needs to be borne in mind throughout the paper that the time gap between the French extant manuscript copy/copies and the ME manuscripts of MEGPP (MEGPP L dates to the middle of the 14th century and MEGPP D to the close of that century) may distort the results obtained in the research.

4. Methodology and the data

MEGPP in the two manuscript copies analysed here is the focal point of the present study. Yet, as is already evident on the basis of the information provided in the preceding section, the research could not dispense with taking into account also the Latin and the French texts. Whereas the ME Psalters analysed here are taken from Charzyńska-Wójcik (2013), who used Bülbring's (1891) edition as the basis, and juxtaposed with Black and St-Jacques' (2012) edition, the French Psalter used in the process of the research came in the digitised manuscript form which was compared with its text presented in Black and St-Jacques (2012). Since no edition of the complete Latin text of the glossed Psalter is available, Black and St-Jacques (2012) providing only the glossed verses, it was necessary to use, for the purposes of the study, the text of the *standard* Gallican Psalter, also as available in Charzyńska-Wójcik (2013). This Latin text constituted the first step in the preparation of the database since using the underlying Latin as a point of departure allowed me to compare only the parallel lexical items in all the relevant Psalters and to determine which readings in the translations were non-standard despite the fact that they are not signposted as 'glossed' in Black and St-Jacques' (2012) edition.

The study concentrates exclusively on nouns in the first 50 Psalms, with occurrences of the same Latin lemma grouped under one headword, comparing only the parallel items in all four texts, i.e. the Latin, French and two ME Psalter copies.⁷ Since the shape of the Latin text determined the number of the lexical items analysed in the study, the complete database contains 2877 Latin nouns, with proper nouns excluded, and the items corresponding to them in the translations. As might be expected, not all 2877 Latin nouns find nominal equivalents in the renditions: gerunds, adjectives, nouns and whole phrases are used at times to convey the

⁶ Although Deanesly (1920: 143) states unhesitatingly that MEGPP 'was translated from a French original' and Reuter (1938: [1]) contends that 'the so called *Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter* [i.e. MEGPP - my addition] was mainly based on a French version', I would not venture to draw hasty conclusions in this respect. As proved in St-Jacques (1989), MEGPP might be greatly indebted to the French glossed Psalter but does not follow it blindly for instance as far as some issues related to word-order are concerned.

⁷ The following dictionaries have been employed for Latin, French and Middle English Psalters respectively: Whitaker's *WORDS: Latin-to-English & English-to-Latin Dictionary*, *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, the *Middle English Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

notions expressed by nouns in the Latin text. Additionally, there are also such Latin items which do not find corresponding lexical items in the renditions for a variety of reasons ranging from the manuscript being damaged, through scribal omission, to the heterodoxy of the translation. All such cases are duly recorded in the database. In the next stage of the research I limited my study area to the divergent cases, whose number equals 275. However, not all of the cases were subject to further analysis as only 145, representing 70 distinct Latin lemmata, met all the methodological criteria established for the purposes of the study, i.e.

- (i) they were nouns according to the labels provided in the *Middle English Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*,
- (ii) they were not the renderings of the Latin glosses: due to the divergences in the treatment of glosses between the manuscripts of the text and to the fact that I do not have at my disposal the original Latin text from which the *Middle English Glossed Prose Psalter* was rendered I could not analyse these cases.

Additionally, also divergences in the renderings of the nouns *Deus, Dei* and *dominus, domini* have been disregarded as due to the fact that the base Latin text is not available in any edition in its entirety and taking into account the variation between different copies of the Gallican Psalter as regards the use of the two nouns, it would be impossible for me to determine with any certainty the reasons for the divergence between the two manuscripts of MEGPP with respect to those lexical items.

Since any study which aims at determining the reasons for the intertextual divergences in lexical choices necessitates taking into consideration the context in which these occur, I needed to analyse the data I obtained from the perspective of the number of occurrences each Latin lemma has in the body of the first 50 Psalms as all of these had to be scrutinised. This procedure enabled me to further narrow the database as the analysis of low frequency items had to be limited to an observation of the formal similarities between the Latin, French and ME items: the presence of a formally similar item in either of the remaining texts might have encouraged the use of a given ME noun, either a cognate to the former or a borrowing. The study proper is discussed in the following section.

5. The study

5.1. All divergent cases

All the divergent pairs of items, along with the Latin lemmata and the nouns employed in the French Psalter, are presented in Table 1 below. The table provides the verse number (column 2) in which the diverging lexical choices occur, the Latin lemmata along with the number of the occurrences analysed, i.e. only those occurrences which fulfil the methodological criteria are taken into account here (column 3), the ME items employed in MEGPP L (column 4) and MEGPP D (column 5) as well as the renderings used in the French translation (column 6). The final column provides the information as regards the potential influence exerted either by the Latin original or the French Psalter on the lexical choices in MEGPP, focusing on the formal similarities between the nouns employed in these four texts. The items to which the

information relates are italicised. The nouns presented on the grey background (33 distinct Latin lemmata) are those whose low number of occurrences prohibits further context-sensitive analysis.⁸

Table 1: *Divergent cases*

N°	Verse	Latin and n° of valid occurrences	MEGPP L	MEGPP D	French	formal influence
1.	49.19	adulter, adulteri (1)	spōuse-brēker(e)	?*wanter(e)	avoutire	
2.	31.4	aerumna, aerumnae (1)	(!) ⁹ <i>caitiftē</i>	mischēf	chetiveté	French
3.	9.24	anima, animae (50)	soul(e)	herte	ame	
4.	13.5	aspis, aspid[i/o]s (1)	<i>aspide</i> , nāddre	nāddre	serpent	Latin
5.	21.19	auxilium, auxili(i) (3)	hēlth(e)	help	aide	
6.	38.3	bonum, boni (10)	gōd	gōdnes(se)	bien	
7.	13.11	captivitas, captivitatis (1)	<i>caitīfnes(se)</i>	thraldōm	chetiveté	French
8.	3.7 9.4	causa, causae (4)	enchēsōun	<i>cause</i>	cause	French and Latin
9.	19.8	currus, currus (1)	carre	cart	chariot	
10.	2.12 49.18	disciplina, disciplinae (4)	<i>discipline</i>	lōr(e)	discipline	French and Latin
11.	9.29 14.3 23.4 31.2 33.13 34.23 35.3 49.20	dolus, doli (8)	<i>trecheri(e)</i> gilerī(e) <i>trecheri(e)</i>	gile	tricherie deçoite decerte / deçoite barateur decerte(s) / deçoite tricherie	French French
12.	10.5	filius, fili (18)	chīld	sōne	enfant	
13.	18.4	finis, finis (14)	cōntrē(e)	ēnde	part	
14.	36.21	fumus, fumi (2)	smōke	smēk(e)	fumee \	
15.	36.8	furor, furoris (1)	wōdship(e)	wōdnes(se)	desverie	
16.	9.28 9.28	generatio, generationis (5)	kīnde	kin	generation -	
17.	3.3 7.5 8.6 16.17 18.1 20.5 20.5 23.9 23.10 25.8 28.2 28.2 28.8 29.15	gloria, gloriae (21)	<i>glōrie</i>	<i>joi(e)</i>	joie gloire	Latin (L) vs. French (D) French and Latin (L)

⁸ The low frequency items which were excluded are those represented by only one or two occurrences, which prohibits further analysis since it is not possible, in the case of these nouns, to draw any conclusions as regards the motivation behind the divergence.

⁹ The information is provided after Bülbring (1891), who indicates the scribal spelling errors in this way: (Bülbring 1891) London MS. *chaitiste* (with a long *s*).

	44.15				joie	Latin (L) vs. French (D)
	48.15					
	48.17				gloire	French and Latin (L)
	48.18					
18.	13.5	guttur, gutturis (2)	<i>gorġe</i>	thrōte	gorge	French
19.	28.2	hono[r/s], honoris (5)	<i>honōur</i>	worship(e)	honneur	French and Latin
20.	26.11	hostia, hostiae (1)	<i>offrende</i>	sacrifice	offrande	French
21.	37.7	illusio, illusionis/[inlusio, inlusionis] ¹⁰ (1)	<i>illūsiōun</i>	dēceit(e)	illusion	French and Latin
22.	38.9	imago, imaginis (1)	liknes(se)	<i>imāġe</i>	image	French and Latin
23.	5.12	impietas, impietatis (2)	ivel	wikkednes(se)	mal	
24.	29.5	indignatio, indignationis (1)	dignāciōun	<i>indignāciōun</i>	indignation	French and Latin
25.	7.17	iniquitas, iniquitatis (33) ¹¹	wikkenes ¹²	wikkednes(se)	mauvaiseté	
26.	33.9	inopia, inopiae (2)	<i>misēse</i>	nēd(e)	mesaise	French
27.	21.2	insipientia, insipientiae (1)	unwit	unwisdōm	non-savoir [v.]	
28.	26.14	ira, irae (12)	<i>īre</i>	wratthe	ire	French and Latin
29.	7.12	judex, judicis (2)	<i>jūġe</i>	dōmes-man	juge	French
30.	9.4	judicium, judici(i) (15)	<i>jūġement</i>	dōm	jugement	French
	9.8					
	9.17					
	9.27					
	16.3					
	17.25					
	18.10					
	24.10					
	32.5					
	34.26					
	35.6					
	36.6					
	36.29					
	36.32					
	47.10					
31.	48.12	jumentum, jumentis (4)	mēre	bēst(e)	jument	
	48.21					
	49.11			cōu		
32.	7.9	justitia, justitiae (32)	rightfulnes(se)	right-wīsnes(se)	droiture	
	16.1		right	rightfulnes(se)		
	44.9		rightfulnes(se)	right		
33.	24.7	juventus, juventutis (2)	yōngthe	yōuth	jeunesse	
	42.4					
34.	9.16	laque[us/um], laquei	gnāre	grīn(e)	-	

¹⁰ The shape of the Latin lemma presented here indicates that the different versions of the *Gallicanum* gathered in Charzyńska-Wójcik (2013) diverge at this point using different phonological forms of the noun.

¹¹ There is one more occurrence of this Latin noun, which has, however, been excluded from the study due to the fact that the shape in which its rendering is given in MEGPP D suggests that it translates both the lemma and the gloss, whereas there is no information in Black and St-Jacques (2012) about this verse being glossed in the Latin text.

¹² Bülbring (1891: 7) states that *wikkenes* is a result of a scribal mistake. However, since the word is listed in the *Middle English Dictionary*, it is treated independently of *wikkednes(se)* in this study.

	10.7	(7) ¹³	dröpe		lacs	
	17.6		trappe			
	24.16		gnäre			
	30.5					
	34.9					
	34.9			(!) ¹⁴ gnäre		-
35.	1.2	lex, legis (8)	wil(le	laue	loi	
36.	23.3	loc[us/um], loci (8)	stēde	plāce	lieu	
37.	37.7	lumbus, lumbi (1)	(!) ¹⁵ ? bak	lënd(e	rein	
38.	17.46	lutum, luti (1)	lōm	clei	boue	
39.	14.2	macula, maculae (1)	wem	sinne	tache	
40.	44.6	mansuetudo, mansuetudini (1)	softnes(se	mēknesse	debonnaireté	
41.	38.4	meditatio, meditationis	thought	mīnd(e	pensee	
	48.3	(3)				
42.	25.7	mirabile, mirabilis (3)	<i>merveille</i>	wōnder	merveille	French
43.	50.2	miseratio, miserationis (3)	pitē	<i>mercī</i>	merci	French
44.	11.5	miseria, miseriae (1)	<i>caitiftē</i>	wrecchednes(se	chetiveté	French
45.	23.3	mons, montis (12)	<i>mōuntain(e</i>	hil(le	montagne	French
46.	9.25	multitudo, multitudinis (9)	muchelhēd(e	muchelnes(se	multitude	
	32.16		grētnes(se			
	48.6		muchelnes(se			
	50.2					
47.	17.53	natio, nationis (1)	cōntrē(e	<i>nāciōun</i>	nation	French and Latin
48.	30.14	obprobrium, obprobri(i)/	<i>reprōche</i>	reprēve	reproche	French
	38.12	<obprobrium, obprobri(i)				
	43.15	> ¹⁶ (3)	(!) ¹⁷ <i>reprōche</i>			
49.	48.4	parabola, parabolae (1)	<i>parāble</i>	ensaumple	parole	Latin
50.	15.5	pars, partis (2)	<i>part</i>	<i>pārti(e</i>	part	French and Latin
51.	9.19	patientia, patientiae (1)	sufferaunce	<i>pāciēce</i>	patience	French and Latin
52.	14.6	pecunia, pecuniae (1)	trēsōur	monei(e	avoir	
53.	23.1	plenitudo, plenitudinis	plentē	plentēvōusnes(se	-	
	49.13	(2)	fulnes(se			
54.	46.3	populus, populi (23)	folk	nāciōun	peuple	
55.	2.6	praeceptum, praecepti	<i>commaundement</i>	hēst(e	commandement	French
	18.9	(3)				
56.	17.3	salus, salutis (15)	hēlth(e	help	force	
	26.1		help	hēlth(e	salut	
	32.17		hēlth(e	help	santé	
57.	23.5	salutare, salutaris /[salvator, salvatoris] ¹⁸ (15)	help	hēlth(e	sanctité	

¹³ There is one occurrence of this item which, although glossed in Latin, does not preserve glossing in the translation so I have decided not to exclude it from the study.

¹⁴ (Bülbring 1891) London MS. *graue*.

¹⁵ (Bülbring 1891) London MS. *uaches*.

¹⁶ The alteration between the different versions of the Gallican Psalters indicated here obtains for all occurrences of this Latin lemma. Interestingly, there are two more verses in the Psalter in which this noun is employed but in those the form *obprobrium, obprobri(i)* is the dominant reading and what is more, both those occurrences are rendered by means of a gerund in MEGPP L, whereas in MEGPP D only one of them is.

¹⁷ London MS *depruse*.

¹⁸ This alteration between the different versions of the Gallican Psalter obtains for two occurrences of this Latin lemma: this one – verse 23.1 and the one in verse 26.15.

58.	46.8	sedes, sedis (3)	<i>sēgġe</i>	<i>sēte</i>	siege	French
59.	8.8	semita, semitae (7)	bī-stī	pāth	sente	
	16.6					
	22.3					
	24.4					
	26.17					
	43.20					
60.	5.11	sepulcrum, sepulcri/<[sepulchrum, sepulchri]> ¹⁹ (3)	grāve	biriēl(s)	cercueil	
61.	10.7	spiritus, spiritus (9)	gōst	<i>spirit</i>	esprit	French and Latin
62.	48.11	terra, terrae (51) ²⁰	ērthe	lōnd	terre	
63.	5.8	timor, timoris (9)	dōut(e)	drēd(e)	crainte	
	18.10				peur	
64.	17.5	torrens, torrentis (2)	wel(le)	rivēr(e)	foiffaiz ²¹ / fontaine	
65.	14.6	usura, usurae (1)	oker	<i>ūsūre</i>	usure	French and Latin
66.	44.11	varietas, varietatis (1)	selcōuthnesse	<i>diversenēs</i>	diversité	French
67.	14.3	veritas, veritatis (16)	sōthnes(se)	sōthfastnes(se)	verité	
	24.11					
	30.6					
68.	37.12	vis, vis (1)	<i>fōrce</i>	strength(e)	force	French
69.	21.26	votum, voti (2)	<i>vōu(e)</i>	wōn(e)	voeu	French
	49.15					
70.	10.8	vultus, vultus (9)	semblaunce	<i>fāce</i>	face	French
	20.6			chēre	vue	
	20.12			face		
	44.14					
	33.16	vultus, vultus/[facies, faciei] ²²		fāce	voult	

It is evident on inspection of the data presented above that the formal similarities between Romance lexical items used in the Latin and French texts and the nouns available for the speakers of English could undoubtedly have played a vital role in the process of vocabulary selection. Since, as reported by Black and St-Jacques (2012: liii-liv, part 1), the Dublin manuscript shows ‘a preference for OE over Latin and French words’, it comes as no surprise that also fewer Romance items are employed there in the cases where the two manuscript copies diverge as regards lexical choices. Table 2 presents the relevant numerical data concerning the number of lexical items employed in MEGPP L and MEGPP D which exhibit formal similarity to the nouns employed in the Latin and French texts and whose presence in the renditions might, therefore, have been motivated by this resemblance. The number given after a forward slash corresponds to the total number of Romance borrowings among the diverging items in each manuscript copy.

¹⁹ This alteration between the different versions of the Gallican Psalter obtains only in the case of this occurrence of the Latin lemma.

²⁰ There is one occurrence of this item which, although glossed in Latin, does not preserve the glossing in the translation, so I decided not to exclude it from the study.

²¹ This is not a dictionary lemma since the word form given in the manuscript is a result of a scribal mistake and cannot be lemmatised to any noun listed in the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*.

²² This alteration between the different versions of the Gallican Psalter obtains for two occurrences of this Latin lemma: this one (verse 33.16) and the one in verse 43.5.

Table 2: Nouns exhibiting formal similarity to the items employed in the French and Latin texts

Type of influence	MEGPP L	MEGPP D
French	36	6
Latin	5	0
French and Latin	18	9
sum	59 / 84	15 / 56

5.2. Divergent cases - further analysis

As regards other factors that might have contributed to the divergent lexical choices between the different copies of MEGPP, the situation is not so straightforward. For many among the Latin lemmata showing divergent lexical items in the two manuscripts of MEGPP listed in Table 1 I cannot point to a principle governing the divergence. Let me note that only 37 items listed in Table 1 can be taken into consideration due to the low number of occurrences of the remaining 33 Latin nouns. An analysis of all the occurrences of these items does not reveal any contextual justification for the divergent choices in the case of as many as 33 (out of 37) Latin lemmata. Table 3 below lists these 33 Latin nouns presented above for whose corresponding divergent items in the relevant verses in MEGPP L and MEGPP D I cannot account.

Table 3: Divergent lexical choices which cannot be accounted for

N°	Latin lemma	comment
1.	auxilium, auxili(i) (3)	no contextual motivation: <i>auxilium</i> , <i>auxili(i)</i> ‘help, assistance’ with the meaning of ‘God’s help’ is also used in one of the other verses
2.	bonum, boni (10)	no contextual motivation: semantic context is the same
3.	causa, causae (4)	no contextual motivation: 3 out of 4 occurrences are employed with the same meaning
4.	disciplina, disciplinae (4)	no certain contextual motivation for the divergence although it cannot be dismissed altogether: two occurrences (both in verse 17.39) render the explicit concept of God’s teachings; in the remaining two verses, i.e. the divergent cases (2.12 and 49.18), this is only implied, which could suggest that the scribe of MEGPP D attempted to differentiate between the two
5.	dolus, doli	the reason for the intertextual divergence cannot be given since MEGPP L and MEGPP D use different items in all the cases; the intratextual variation in MEGPP L, on the other hand, seems to be contextually motivated
6.	filius, fili	no certain contextual motivation for the divergence: it is not number-sensitive, does not correspond exactly to the data from French, nor is, as far as can be glimpsed from the data, context-sensitive; however, the scarcity of the data does not allow to draw decisive conclusions
7.	finis, finis	no contextual motivation
8.	generatio, generationis	no contextual motivation; there is no consistency in the choices of the scribe of MEGPP D: both <i>kin</i> and <i>kīnde</i> are employed in exactly the same semantic contexts in different verses
9.	gloria, gloriae	no contextual motivation: both <i>glōrie</i> and <i>joi(e)</i> appear in MEGPP D to render the <i>rex glorie</i> ‘the king of glory’ phrase and in all the remaining contexts MEGPP D always chooses <i>joi(e)</i> over <i>glōrie</i> ; the latter noun, however, is employed consistently throughout in MEGPP L
10.	iniquitas, iniquitatis (33)	no contextual motivation

- | | |
|---|---|
| 11. ira, irae | no contextual motivation |
| 12. iudicium, iudici(i) (15) | it is impossible to point to a reason – apart from MEGPP L’s adherence to the formally similar item employed in the French Psalter – since both texts employ the variant English equivalents consistently throughout |
| 13. jumentum, jument(i) (4) | no contextual motivation: taking into account the fact that the meaning of this Latin lemma is limited to ‘mule; beast of burden’, which prevents a broader interpretation of any of the relevant verses, the divergences between the manuscripts cannot be accounted for; it might be that the scribes took into consideration slightly altering shades of meaning but in doing so acted on different principles |
| 14. iustitia, iustitiae | no contextual motivation: there appears to be no guiding principle behind the scribe’s choices, the manuscripts agreeing in the majority of cases (29) in semantically analogous contexts though employing the three nouns freely |
| 15. laque[us/um], laquei | although I cannot account for the divergences between the two texts as regards the <i>gnāre-grīn(e)</i> opposition, the alteration in the noun choices in MEGPP L seems to have been context-motivated: MEGPP L employs <i>gnāre</i> for a snare used by one’s enemies to one’s detriment, <i>drōpe</i> to refer to the punishment sent by God, and <i>trappe</i> for ‘snares of death’ |
| 16. lex, legis (8) | no contextual motivation: the concept of <i>lex Dei</i> , <i>lex domini</i> ‘God’s law’ in all the remaining cases is rendered by <i>laue</i> not <i>wil(le)</i> |
| 17. loc[us/um], loci | no contextual motivation: <i>locus</i> , <i>loci</i> ‘place, territory/locality/neighborhood/region’ is employed with the sense of ‘God’s dwelling place’ also in two other verses |
| 18. meditatio, meditationis | no contextual motivation: phrase <i>meditacio cordis mei</i> ‘my heart’s meditation’ appears both in verse 18.5 and in verse 48.3 and is treated differently in MEGPP D in each case, rendered both by <i>thought</i> and <i>mīnd(e)</i> |
| 19. mirabile, mirabilis | no contextual motivation: all the occurrences of <i>mirabile</i> , <i>mirabilis</i> ‘miracle, wondrous deed’ refer to the works of God |
| 20. mons, montis | no contextual motivation: both <i>hil(le)</i> and <i>mōuntain(e)</i> are used in the two manuscripts to render the concept of <i>mons sanctus</i> ‘holy mountain/hill’ as a dwelling place of God, which is also the context in verse 23.3 |
| 21. multitudo, multitudinis | although it is not possible to posit a guiding principle behind the divergent choices, a tendency in MEGPP D to employ <i>grētnes(se)</i> in the context of positive qualities, features may be observed, which, however, is not always respected (<i>grētnes(se)</i> could also be employed in verse 5.7) |
| 22. obprobrium, obprobri(i) / <opprobrium, opprobri(i)> | no contextual motivation can be postulated: too little data and exclusively analogous contexts |
| 23. populus, populi | no contextual motivation: the Latin noun <i>populus</i> , <i>populi</i> ‘people, nation’ is employed with reference to nations in multiple cases (e.g. 17.48, 17.51, 43.3, 43.14, 44.7), and only once it is rendered by <i>nāciōun</i> in MEGPP D |
| 24. praeceptum, praecepti | no contextual motivation: all instances of <i>praeceptum</i> , <i>praecepti</i> ‘teaching, lesson, precept; order, command’ refer to God’s commandments/precepts |
| 25. salus, salutis | no apparent contextual motivation |
| 26. salutare, salutaris / [salvator, salvatoris] | no apparent contextual motivation |
| 27. sedes, sedis | no contextual motivation: all three occurrences refer to the place of God’s habitation |
| 28. semita, semitae | no contextual motivation between the manuscripts and the single other occurrence of <i>semita</i> , <i>semitae</i> ‘path’, whose rendering is congruent between the two texts, appears in an altogether different context |

29. spiritus, spiritus	no contextual motivation
30. terra, terrae	no contextual motivation: the noun <i>lōnd</i> is employed twice to render <i>terra, terrae</i> ‘earth, land, ground; country, region’: once in the verse in question (48.11) and once – in both manuscripts – in verse 15.2; the semantic contexts are disparate: in the former it is God’s land that is referred to and in the latter the land as a property of men; in the majority of cases in such contexts the noun <i>ērthe</i> is employed invariably
31. timor, timoris	no contextual motivation: in the majority of occurrences (6 out of 9, among which are the two divergent cases) <i>timor, timoris</i> ‘fear; dread’ is an expression of reverence to God, due to God; in the remaining three cases it is a dread or fear whose source is different
32. veritas, veritatis	no contextual motivation: the ‘truth’ as applied to man and the ‘truth’ as a virtue of God are always rendered by the same noun (<i>sōthnes(se)</i> in MEGPP L and indiscriminately by two different nouns, <i>sōthnes(se)</i> and <i>sōthfastnes(se)</i> , in MEGPP D
33. vultus, vultus	no contextual motivation; neither is there correspondence between the lexical choices in the French text and either of the ME manuscripts

There are, however, four Latin lemmata, the divergences between whose renderings in MEGPP L and MEGPP D appear to have some motivation.

5.2.1. Divergences in the renderings of *anima, animae*

The first noun whose divergent renderings between MEGPP L and MEGPP D appear to have been motivated by contextual differences among the occurrences is *anima, animae* ‘soul, spirit, vital principle; life; breathing; wind, breeze; air’. The expected translation of this Latin noun into English is the word *soul*, whereas in verse 9.24 MEGPP D uses the noun *heart*, despite the fact that what is referred to is invariably a human soul. Having no access to the original Latin text, the verse in question being not edited in Black and St-Jacques (2012), I can posit only the following motivation behind the divergence. Among the 50 occurrences of *anima, animae* only one appears in a noun-noun construction, where it is a Possessor:²³

- (1) 9.24: *Quoniam laudatur peccator in desideriiis [ABL] anime /<animæ[ae]> [GEN] / sue /<suæ[ae]>/: & iniquus benedicitur.*
 ‘Because a sinner is praised *in his soul’s desires*, the treacherous is blessed.’²⁴

There are, however, eight such occurrences of the noun *cor, cordis* ‘heart; mind/soul/spirit; intellect’, all of which are listed in Table 4.

Interestingly, in verse 20.2, which is not given in Black and St-Jacques (2012) either, there are divergent readings in different copies of the Gallican Psalter, some of them exhibiting *anima, animae* rather than *cor, cordis*. This gives one the grounds to suspect that the structural and semantic similarities between the occurrences of *cor, cordis* listed above and the occurrence of *anima, animae* in question led the scribe of MEGPP D to connect them and as

²³ In fact there is one more context where *anima, animae* appears in noun-noun construction (34.14) but there it is used in the dative case and is a Goal.

²⁴ The English translation provided here and in the following examples is given after Cunyus (2009).

Table 4: Noun-noun structures with *cor*, *cordis*

N°	verse	Latin text
1.	18.15	meditacio (NOM) cordis (GEN)
2.	20.2	<i>desiderium</i> (NOM) <i>cordis</i> [animae] (GEN)
3.	24.18	tribulaciones (NOM) cordis (GEN)
4.	32.11	cogitaciones (NOM) cordis (GEN)
5.	36.4	peticiones (ACC) cordis (GEN)
6.	37.8	a gemitu (ABL) cordis (GEN)
7.	43.23	abscondita (ACC) cordis (GEN)
8.	48.3	meditacio (NOM) cordis (GEN)

they were copying the text they replaced the *soul* with *heart*, unless it was already the reading present in their exemplar.

5.2.2. Divergences in the renderings of *hono[r/s]*, *honoris*

The case of *hono[r/s]*, *honoris* ‘honor; esteem, regard; dignity, grace’ also appears to enable one to draw some tentative conclusions as to the motivation behind the divergence between MEGPP L and MEGPP D. Verse 28.2 is the only one in which *hono[r/s]*, *honoris* appears with the meaning of the reverence due to God:

- (2) 28.2: *Afferte [adferte] domino gloriam & honorem: afferte [adferte] domino gloriam nomini eius /ejus/, adore dominum in atrio sancto eius /ejus/.*
 ‘Bring to the Lord glory and honor! Bring to the Lord His name’s glory. Adore the Lord in His holy palace’s courtyard!’

The different treatment of this particular occurrence of *hono[r/s]*, *honoris* in MEGPP D may, therefore, indicate an effort on the part of the scribe to emphasise its distinct character.

5.2.3. Divergences in the renderings of *miseratio*, *miserationis*

The divergence as far as the occurrences of *miseratio*, *miserationis* ‘pity, compassion’ are concerned may have been caused by the influence of the French text upon the scribe of MEGPP D. In the French Psalter the word *pitié* is used only once, precisely in the context where both manuscripts of MEGPP employ the word *pitē*. In the remaining two cases *merci* is opted for and this is also what happens in MEGPP D – the word *mercī* is selected. MEGPP L’s choice of *pitē* in verse 50.2 does not seem to have been contextually motivated and may reflect scribe’s or translator’s independent choice.

It might also be of interest to observe that any other contextual considerations do not appear to have caused the divergence. Although it could seem that the noun *pitē* in verse 24.6 was opted for due to the fact that *mercī* was employed in the same verse to render *miserordia*, *miserordiae* ‘pity, sympathy; compassion, mercy; pathos’(cf. 3), the two co-

occur also in verse 39.15, where *mercī* is used by both manuscripts to translate the two Latin nouns (cf. 4).

- (3) 24.6: *Reminiscere miseracionum* /<[miserationum]>/ *tuarum domine*: & mise|recordiarum /<[misericiordiarum]>/ *tuarum que* /<quæ>/ [quia] *a seculo* /<sæ[ae]culo>/ *sunt*.
‘Remember *Your compassion*, Lord, and *Your mercy*, because they are from the age!’
- (4) 39.15: *Tu autem domine ne longe facias miseraciones* /<[miserationes]>/ *tuas a me*: *miserecordia* /<[misericiordia]>/ *tua & veritas tua semper susceperunt me*.
‘But You, Lord, do not make *Your compassion* far from me! *Your mercy* and *Your truth* have always sustained me.’

5.2.4. Divergences in the renderings of *sepulcrum*, *sepulcri*

The most probable reason for the divergence between the two manuscripts of MEGPP in the case of *sepulcrum*, *sepulcri* ‘grave, tomb’ is the influence of the French text. The noun *cercueil* ‘sarcophagus, a box into which the corpse of the deceased is put to be buried’ appears in the French Psalter exclusively in verse 5.11. The remaining occurrences of the Latin noun in question are rendered by *sepulcre* ‘tomb, sepulchre’. Most probably, the scribe of MEGPP L endeavoured to reflect this shift.

As far as the contextual motivation for the divergence is concerned, there appears to be none in the case of the occurrences of *sepulcrum*, *sepulcri*. The noun appears twice in the same phrase, i.e. *sepulcrum patens est guttur eorum* ‘their throat is an open grave’, in verses 5.11 and 13.5. In the latter it is rendered by *biriel(s)* in both manuscripts, whereas in the former, as presented in Table 1, by *grāve* and *biriel(s)* in MEGPP L and MEGPP D respectively.

6. Conclusions

The objective of this paper was to examine lexical *variance* in all its complexity between two medieval manuscript copies of a single work. Among the 2877 nouns (in each text), 275, roughly 10%, diverge between MEGPP L and MEGPP D, which means that every tenth noun employed in the two text versions is different from the one employed in the other manuscript. This is a surprising finding from the modern perspective but one which well illustrates Nichols’ (2011) postulate to regard medieval manuscripts as exhibiting ‘mutable stability’. It forces the modern reader to consider each medieval manuscript text both a reflection of a perfect text, an ‘exemplar of a logocentric book-beyond-the-books’ (West 2006: 246) and a separate entity at the same time.

Out of the 275 pairs of items mentioned above, 145, representing renderings of 70 distinct Latin lemmata, have been further analysed since they were congruent with the methodology adopted in the research. The conclusions that I have arrived at appear to be consistent with the very nature of the manuscript texts. Variance is as if inherent in them and one cannot account for the majority of the divergences: variation in the renderings of 33 Latin lemmata could not be scrutinised as there were too few occurrences of these nouns. Divergences between the translations of the another 33 nouns do not appear to have been caused by any

guiding principle, although in the case of one of among those nouns, i.e. *disciplina, disciplinae*, it cannot be excluded. The variant lexical choices in the case of the renderings of the remaining four Latin lemmata may be tentatively postulated to have been governed by some principles but even these need to be approached with caution.

In sum, thus, the variance between the manuscript copies of MEGPP is extraordinary but there does not appear to be much logic behind their divergent lexical choices. There, after all, seems to be no method in this madness. Manuscript culture is... a world of its own.

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