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# The Harley Trilingual Psalter, a Witness to Multilingualism at the Court Scriptorium of Roger II of Sicily

**Abstract:** Manuscript London, British Library, Harley 5786, an early twelfth-century Psalter from the circles around Roger II of Sicily, has parallel texts in Greek, Latin and Arabic. Detailed study of the arrangement of the manuscript, and the sequence of its composition, suggests close interaction between practitioners of the three languages in the scriptorium where it was made.

#### 1 Introduction: multilingual Greek manuscripts

Many medieval Greek manuscripts display evidence of cross-linguistic or cross-cultural interactions.<sup>1</sup> Decoration and illumination often provides evidence of regional affiliations, or of influence from northern Eastern Europe, or the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, annotations by owners and users of manuscripts let us see that Greek manuscripts were produced and read not only in the Byzantine sphere of influence but also in the distant West and the Middle East.<sup>3</sup>

Multilingual manuscripts proper, however, are less common in the Greek context. Aside from Carolingian copies of late antique *colloquia*, and manuscripts post-dating the beginnings of Greek migration to Italy in the late four-teenth and fifteenth centuries,<sup>4</sup> relatively few multilingual manuscripts

<sup>1</sup> All manuscripts mentioned in this chapter are kept at the British Library, unless indicated otherwise.

**<sup>2</sup>** For significant examples of manuscripts from this milieu see e.g. Add. 27860 (Diktyon 39058), a Gospel lectionary dating from *c*. 1100 CE, the illumination of which is distinctly Italian, or the miniatures of the eleventh-century Gospel book Harley 5647 (Diktyon 39607), which were added in the thirteenth century by a Syriac artist (see *British Library Summary Catalogue* 1999, 154–155). For a survey of Greek manuscripts of Italian origin in the British Library see Cataldi Palau 1992.

**<sup>3</sup>** For example: Add. 47674 (Diktyon 39238), a Greek-Latin psalter, was created in Paris probably in the 1220s (Branner 1977, 48–49, 206); Add. 39604 (Diktyon 39183), a twelfth-century Gospel lectionary, owned by various monasteries in and near Jerusalem, contains various marginalia in Arabic.

<sup>4</sup> See Herren 2015 and the editions of Dickey 2012–2015.

containing Greek survive.<sup>5</sup> Those that do exist from the high Byzantine period fall into two categories: biblical manuscripts on the one hand, scientific or philosophical on the other. The latter are overwhelmingly bilingual in Greek and Arabic.<sup>6</sup> The former can take the form of bilingual manuscripts (Greek-Arabic or Greek-Latin), trilingual (Greek-Latin-Arabic) and in a couple of rare cases, quadrilingual (Greek-Latin-Arabic-Hebrew). It should be noted at this point that *all* trilingual Greek manuscripts that can be localised with any degree of confidence have Italy or Sicily as their place of origin.<sup>7</sup>

# 2 Multilingualism in twelfth-century Sicily

The common origin of these trilingual manuscripts should not come as a surprise, given the multicultural character of southern Italy and Sicily in the high Middle Ages.<sup>8</sup> By the time of the twelfth century, Sicily had been ruled successively by Greeks, Saracens, and Normans, resulting in a widely diverse and multilingual community. Greek, Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, and Norman French were all spoken in twelfth-century Sicily, and it is clear that inhabitants of different linguistic communities lived side by side, both in Palermo and in smaller communities elsewhere on the island.9 As the Norman kings consolidated their hold over Sicily into the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, Latin grew in dominance as the primary language, while Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic diminished in importance. But in the early part of the twelfth century, and above all during the reign of Roger II, the charismatic leader who united and consolidated Norman rule in Italy, many languages co-existed in Sicily. It should be stressed that multilingualism does not imply religious tolerance, and that there is clear evidence that there was considerable discrimination against Muslims. 10 Arabicspeaking Christians, however, formed an important group in Norman Sicily.

<sup>5</sup> See Wilson 1992, 1–53 passim; for Bessarion's library as the key exception, ibidem, 57–67.

<sup>6</sup> For a good example see Pormann 2003.

**<sup>7</sup>** See especially Piemontese 2002, Pormann 2003, Cataldi Palau 2004. Degni 2018 discusses Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. Z. 11 (coll. 379) (Diktyon 69482), a slightly later trilingual copy of the Acts and Epistles, also likely of Sicilian origin.

<sup>8</sup> The literature on what follows is vast, but see especially Wolf 2009, von Falkenhausen 2014, Metcalfe 2002 and 2009, Mallette 2003, Johns 2002, Houben 2014.

**<sup>9</sup>** See Metcalfe 2002, and for the broader context, the essays collected in Mersch and Ritzerfeld 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Note the careful comments of Loud 2002, 3-4.

Certainly, a large part of the ideology surrounding Roger II consists of his efforts to present himself as an integrated ruler of many linguistic groups. 11 The ways in which Roger presents himself as a Byzantine ruler, in particular, have been discussed at length over the years.<sup>12</sup> I shall return later to the ways in which the multilingual psalter that is the subject of this paper fits into the broader ideology of the court of Roger II. For the moment, however, it suffices to note that Roger's policy appears to have resulted in a marked increase in the importation and copying of luxury Greek manuscripts (the Madrid Scylitzes being the example par excellence), and in the importation of Arabic-speaking scribes from the  $d\bar{\imath}w\bar{a}n$  of North Africa.<sup>13</sup> Roger appears to have been eager to reach his subjects in multiple languages, and the official multilingual policy would seem to have inspired the similar multilingual tendencies of commemorative inscriptions erected by ranking officials of the court.<sup>14</sup> On a larger scale, we can see this policy in, for instance, the Capella Palatina, which incorporates elements from Byzantine, Norman, and Arabic architecture. <sup>15</sup> Or we could point to the famous Byzantine-style mosaic in the church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio, depicting Christ crowning Roger II in the form of a Byzantine monarch.16

It should be stressed that this multilingual approach adopted by Roger is not merely inward-looking and focused within the kingdom. It clearly has implications for how Roger wanted to be perceived outside of Sicily. The very practice of importing manuscripts and scribes would send a signal to others elsewhere in the Mediterranean basin. The wider religious and political context is significant too. As Herde has stressed, Roger II was initially warm and positive towards the Greek churches in Sicily. This resulted from a need to cement

<sup>11</sup> See Wolf 2009, 47–55 and Tronzo 1997a.

<sup>12</sup> See the classic treatment of Kitzinger 1950.

<sup>13</sup> On the Madrid Scylitzes see Wilson 1978 and Cavallo 2000, 151. Johns 2002 on the Arabic scribes of Norman Sicily is fundamental. Canart 1978, especially 118, believed that during the Norman period a certain rapprochement between the style of Italian Greek hands and those elsewhere in the Greek-speaking world can be identified. This view is doubted by Cavallo 2000. The problem is indicative of the striking general uniformity of Greek hands in comparison to the Latin hands of the same period, but a return to the Constantinopolitan norm would make sense in the wider context of greater influence of imported manuscripts at the court of Roger II.

<sup>14</sup> See the discussion of the funeral plaque to Anna, mother of Grisandus, later in this paper.

**<sup>15</sup>** See Tronzo 1993, 1997a, 1997b.

<sup>16</sup> For the ways in which this mosaic combines Byzantine and Western elements, see Kitzinger 1950.

<sup>17</sup> For what follows see Herde 2002, 218 and passim. See also von Falkenhausen 2002, 263 and 2014 on Roger's attitude towards the Greeks in Sicily.

his authority on the island, but was also related to his support of Anacletus II's claim to the papal throne in return for investiture as the king of Sicily. Roger's approach changed, however, after he had consolidated his hold on mainland Italy and had secured concessions from the papacy. With less need for political support from the Greek churches, Roger had no reason to maintain his positive approach. In other words, we should be mindful of viewing multilingualism, especially in relation to religion and religious texts, not merely as a neutral expression of tolerance, but rather in the context of broader debates about religion, politics, and the churches of twelfth-century Europe. Nonetheless Roger's multilingual and multicultural stance was clearly an important part of his self-presentation and ideology, and this had the knock-on effect of causing court officials to adopt similar stances of multilingualism in an effort to demonstrate their own loyalty to Roger and his policies.<sup>18</sup>

# 3 Harley 5786: its date and origin

My focus in this paper is Harley 5786, commonly known as the Harley Trilingual Psalter, a copy of the Psalms in parallel Greek, Latin, and Arabic translations. <sup>19</sup> I begin by establishing the date and origin of the psalter. The *terminus ante quem* is helpfully provided by a Latin inscription on the final flyleaf (fol. 173°), which reads '<Anno> I<ncar>nationis dominice m c liij Indictione <i> mensis Januarij die octauo die mercurij' (Fig. 1).

This inscription is badly faded, but was copied in the eighteenth century by Thomas Birch and William Watson.<sup>20</sup> Multi-spectral imaging undertaken at the

**<sup>18</sup>** Further treatment of the wider translation contexts of Sicily at this time can be found in Piemontese 2002 (treating Harley 5786 on p. 459); see also Haskins 1927, 155–193.

<sup>19</sup> Diktyon 39681. For basic information about the manuscript, see the current descriptions on the British Library Digitised Manuscripts page, with high-resolution images <a href="https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley\_MS\_5786">https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley\_MS\_5786</a> (accessed on 26 Aug. 2020) and the Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts <a href="https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8087&CollID=8&NStart=5786">https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8087&CollID=8&NStart=5786</a> (accessed on 26 Aug. 2020), drawing on the descriptions in *Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts* 1808–1812 and *British Library Summary Catalogue* 1999.

**<sup>20</sup>** The transcription (on fol. 174') is signed 'Tho. Birch / W Watson'. The former is certainly Thomas Birch (b. 1705, d. 1766), secretary of the Royal Society between 1752 and 1765, who was involved in the early organization of the British Museum Library and in the preparation of the Harleian catalogue of 1759. The latter is William Watson (b. 1715, d. 1787), physician and natural historian, also a member of the Royal Society and made a trustee of the British Museum

British Library in May 2015 by Christina Duffy has enabled a much clearer picture of the original inscription and confirms the transcription of Birch and Watson (see Fig. 2).

It should be noted that the hand is not the same as any of the six Latin hands identifiable in the manuscript, and it should further be noted that the 8th of January 1153 was, in fact, a Thursday, not a Wednesday. 21 Consequently, we can only say that the manuscript predates 1153 on the evidence of this inscription. Further evidence as to date and location relies on palaeography. According to Jeremy Johns, the Arabic script is characteristic of the dīwāni style, which was only brought to Sicily by Roger on or shortly after his accession in 1130.22 Thus we have a date range of 1130-1153. A Sicilian origin is confirmed by the Greek and Latin hands. The Greek script is of a south Italian style, as has frequently been noted.<sup>23</sup> The Latin script, the work of six hands, is also consistent with an Italian origin.<sup>24</sup> While such a manuscript could, in theory, have been produced in a range of places in southern Italy or Sicily, the scale of the manuscript and the number of hands involved (at least eight) surely points to a large urban setting, most likely the imperial scriptorium at Palermo itself.25 The clear evidence that scribes from different linguistic traditions worked together, which I

when it was founded in 1756 (see Schaffer 2004). Watson and Birch were close friends, and Watson was with Birch when he died (see Miller 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Such minor errors in colophons are not totally unknown, and do not indicate, for instance, that the colophon was added later than the date marked. See e.g. Add. 20003, fol. 57<sup>r</sup>, for a similar type of mistake, with the comments of Evangelatou-Notara 1982, 156.

<sup>22</sup> Johns 1995, 141.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. Wilson 1967; Canart and Leroy 1977, 256–258. Degni 2018, 194 suggests the Greek scribe may be one Georgios, associated with the monastery of S. Salvatore in lingua phari at Messina; though she too inclines towards a Palermo origin. Comparable scripts include Grottaferrata, Biblioteca Statale del Monumento Nazionale, Δ.α.XIV (Diktyon 17658); Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 2290 (Diktyon 68921) (viewable online at <a href="https://digi.vatlib.it/">https://digi.vatlib.it/</a> mss/detail/Vat.gr.2290>, accessed on 26 Aug. 2020); and Vatican City, BAV, Vat. gr. 395 (Diktyon 67026), all found in Canart and Lucà 2000, nos. 39, 34, and 31 respectively. The Madrid Scylitzes (Madrid, BNE, Vitr. 26-2, Diktyon 40403) and the Vatican Medical Codex (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 300, Diktyon 66931, viewable online at <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/j.j.gov/">https://doi.org/10.1007/j.j.gov/</a> //digi.vatlib.it/mss/detail/Vat.gr.300>, accessed on 26 Aug. 2020) are also closely similar, and may even derive from the same writing workshop.

**<sup>24</sup>** Watson 1979, no. 838.

<sup>25</sup> Some have asserted that it was produced in Rossano or Patir: see e.g. Lucà and Venezia 2010, 87, contra see Piemontese 2002, 459 amongst others. Leaving aside the fact that the Reggio style cannot be so carefully localised, the fact that Roger brought in scribes and materials from outside Sicily could easily point to the recruitment of scribes based on the Italian mainland for his Greek writing workshop.

will outline in further detail below, also restricts the number of potential locations in which this manuscript could have been copied. Moreover, the similarity between the Indian numerals in Harley 5786 and a manuscript (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 1371) containing a Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, made in Palermo, also points to an origin in this context. <sup>26</sup> Finally, it is worth reiterating the point that all trilingual manuscripts containing Greek with clear indications of provenance can be placed in Italy or Sicily. <sup>27</sup>

# 4 The layout of Harley 5786

The Psalter is laid out in three columns: the Greek on the left, the Latin in the centre, and the Arabic on the right. It contains the text of the Psalms in three translations: that of the Septuagint in Greek, that of the Vulgate in Latin, and that of Abū l-Fatḥ 'Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl ibn 'Abdallāh al-muṭrān al-Anṭākī, deacon of the Melkite church of Antioch, in the Arabic.<sup>28</sup> This last translation was relatively recent, having been originally made in the middle of the previous century. Different inks appear to have been used by the scribes of each language. The initials in the Latin and Greek texts are rubricated at the beginning of each verse, while the initials at the beginning of each Psalm are decorated and titles are in red (see Fig. 3).

As is customary for Greek psalters, headpieces are found at the beginning of Psalms 1 (fol. 1<sup>r</sup>) and 77 (fol. 99<sup>v</sup>).<sup>29</sup> Some pen-flourishes in red occur at the end of individual verses in the Arabic text, but this is otherwise unadorned. The Psalms are numbered in each column according to the numbering convention of that language, i.e. in Roman numerals for the Latin, Greek numerals for the Greek, and Indian Arabic numerals for the Arabic text.<sup>30</sup>

**<sup>26</sup>** For this see Burnett 2002, 244–245. Roger II was the first ruler (either European or Arabic) to put Indian numerals on his coins, as Burnett notes (2002, 244–245). Such significance provides added weight for seeing the Trilingual Psalter as a product of his royal scriptorium.

<sup>27</sup> Piemontese 2002 (treating Harley 5786 on p. 459); Pormann 2003.

**<sup>28</sup>** For Ibn al-Faḍl and Arabic translations of the psalms, see Graf 1944–1953, vol. 1, 116–120; vol. 2, 52–64. Arabic translations of the Hebrew and Christian bibles remain understudied; see Vollandt 2018 for a recent overview of the *status quaestionis*.

<sup>29</sup> See Parpulov 2014, 66, and references cited there, for the decoration of Greek psalters.

**<sup>30</sup>** For the numerals in this manuscript, see Burnett 2002, 243–244, 258, and 2005, 41–45, 47, figs 1–5. Note that Burnett 2002, 258 thinks that some of the Arabic numerals were added after the initial production of the manuscript, possibly at the same time as the marginalia were added.

There is relatively little by way of marginalia in the manuscript - but what does exist is particularly noteworthy. Aside from some later annotations in Latin and Italian, this material is exclusively in Arabic, and relates to lection notes: as I discuss below, this would appear to point to usage in liturgical settings according to the Latin rite. Some typical paratextual markers survive, such as marginal notes indicating to the rubricator which decorated letters to include, as discussed below. The style of decoration of the Greek and Latin initials is for the most part characteristic of the respective languages at this place and time – but this is not consistent throughout, as we shall see. The manuscript is in twentyfive quires of eight, numbered a-v (in Latin letters). Its present binding is a typical Elliott Harleian binding.<sup>31</sup> On the final flyleaf (fol. 173°), along with the dating inscription discussed above, is a list of Greek books, and some Latin and Italian notes in a fifteenth-century hand. There is relatively little illumination, aside from a small face in a historiated initial on fol. 158<sup>r</sup>. The manuscript shows clear signs of considerable use, especially in the form of finger smudges along the bottom right corner and in the centre of the outer margin. Some water damage remains on the opening folios, and there are some instances of candlewax stains (for example, on the lower margin of fol. 24<sup>r</sup>).

#### 5 Scribal collaboration across languages

The Psalter sheds significant light on one particular area of linguistic interdependence and cross-language collaboration in Sicily: namely, the matter of scribal collaboration. It is clear that the manuscript is the product of a scriptorium in which scribes of different languages worked together: a scriptorium, in other words, on the model known to us from the famous illumination in the 1196 manuscript of Peter of Eboli's panegyric in honour of Henry VI (Fig. 4).32 In this illumination, a scriptorium contains Greek, Latin, and Arabic scribes, all individually identified, depicted as working in the same location, before presenting a completed work to the king (in a lower illumination on the same folio). The Harley Trilingual Psalter gives us an example of the sort of manuscript produced in such a scriptorium.

This is clear from the fact that individual quires were written by scribes in different sequences. For instance, in the seventh quire it is evident that the Arabic

<sup>31</sup> Nixon 1975, 170, 189 n. 40.

**<sup>32</sup>** For this image see Kölzer and Stähli 1994, 58–59.

was written first, then the Latin, then the Greek. That the Arabic was written before the Latin can be demonstrated by the fact that in those few cases where the two columns encroach onto one another, it is clear that the Latin scribe makes efforts to avoid the Arabic script, for instance at fol. 51<sup>r</sup> (see Fig. 5). On those occasions where the Latin scribe could not find room to avoid writing over the Arabic script, it is clear from the ink that the Latin overlays the Arabic (see Figs 6a and 6b). In most quires, the main Latin text adapts to accommodate Greek text that encroaches into the middle column, for example on fol. 23<sup>v</sup> in the third quire (see Fig. 7). However, in this seventh quire, the Latin always hangs very close to the vertical column ruling on the left (see Fig. 8).

Note that here the rubrication is a little squashed, but this is because the Greek scribe still continues to write right up against the edge of his column. These examples indicate that different quires were taken up first by scribes of different languages. In some quires, the Arabic was the first column written, while in others, the Greek was written first. This is surely indicative of a scriptorium in which scribes of different languages were all working at the same time, since for the sake of efficiency Arabic and Greek scribes could be working simultaneously on different quires of the same manuscript.<sup>33</sup>

The foregoing is good evidence of the manuscript having been produced in a multilingual environment, but does not rule out the possibility that there were distinct scriptoria for each language group, and that quires were ferried between them as needed. There is, however, further evidence that, taken all together, seems to clinch the case for the manuscript being created in a multilingual environment. First, note that on fol. 60°, in the eighth quire, the Latin was clearly written before the Greek, as the regularity of the Latin column and the relatively squashed nature of the Greek column would indicate (Fig. 9).

However, the rubricator of Latin initials appears to have omitted to add the initial A of *astitit* in the sixth line. This A is written in the same ink as the Greek text and was presumably added by the Greek scribe after the rubrication of the Latin initials had taken place, raising more widely the question of whether the rubricators for both Greek and Latin added their text immediately after their respective columns were completed, before handing the manuscript on to the scribe of the next language.

Additionally, the occasional marginal notes to rubricators, identifying which letter to add, here take on an additional interesting cross-linguistic quality, as on several occasions the Greek letter-name is written out in full in Latin, for the rubricator to add to the manuscript (Figs 10a, 10b and 10c). Elsewhere,

<sup>33</sup> There are no quires in which the Latin text can be said definitely to have been written first.

the rubrication between both Greek and Latin appears to have undergone mutual influence, as for example with the initials on fols 71<sup>r</sup>, 76<sup>r</sup>, and 80<sup>v</sup> (see Figs 11a, 11b, 11c).

#### 6 Audience and use

What were the purpose and the intended audience of this manuscript? All signs appear to point to use by Arabic-speakers. In particular, the lection notes found throughout the manuscript suggest Arabic Christians unfamiliar with the Latin rite. So, for example, the marginal Arabic note on fol. 87<sup>r</sup> says 'Reading for Thursday night' (Fig. 12).

It appears, then, that the manuscript was used in liturgical services held according to the Latin rite. Yet the manuscript cannot have had such a straightforward purpose – after all, if it had been aimed specifically at Arabic-speakers to help them follow the Latin rite, why was the text of the Septuagint also included? Practical concerns alone do not explain the purpose of this manuscript.

One possible explanation may be the fact that Latin-speakers were still, in the mid-twelfth century, in the minority in Sicily, far outnumbered by Greekspeakers and Arabic-speakers. An attempt to appeal to the majority on the island by promoting a policy of tolerance and multilingualism was a cornerstone of Roger II's reign.<sup>34</sup> In practice, however, this multilingualism was probably not reflective of the wider society. While some ordinary citizens may have been comfortable speaking in more than one language, for instance members of the Greek and Arabic communities outside of Palermo, who had lived in close proximity for centuries, in general most communities would have remained largely monolingual. This is reflected in official documents, such as charters, which are almost never multilingual, but are instead issued in multiple editions in different languages.<sup>35</sup> The use of multilingual documents and inscriptions, by contrast, may have been largely the domain of members of the imperial court, useful for exemplary purposes to the community at large, but even more useful as a means of distinguishing oneself at the court.

To attempt to answer the question of who commissioned the manuscript will always be somewhat speculative. However, I think it unlikely that Roger II himself commissioned the manuscript: though of good quality, it is by no means

<sup>34</sup> See further Metcalfe 2009, 115, and Houben 2014.

<sup>35</sup> See von Falkhausen 2002.

lavish or luxurious, and stands in particular contrast to the Madrid Scylitzes, not to mention the imperial Gospel books and psalters known to us from other contexts in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, I suspect this is the work of a member of Roger's imperial court. A useful point of comparison is a multilingual funerary epitaph dating from 1148 (now in the Museo d'arte islamica in Palermo), which contains text in three languages: Greek, Latin, and twice in Arabic, once in Arabic script and once in Hebrew script.<sup>37</sup> It memorialises Anna, the mother of Grisandus, a cleric. As Barbara Zeitler has shown in her study of this monument, it serves a political as well as a personal purpose, in its effort to represent Sicily as a 'trilingual people', *populus trilinguis*, as the Latin inscription states.<sup>38</sup>

Zeitler stresses that the multi-cultural monument conveys an emphatically Christian message, and locates the monument, along with the Harley Trilingual Psalter, in the context of efforts to emphasise the accommodations being made for Arabic-speaking converts to Christianity. The Greek Orthodox church played a particularly significant role in encouraging the conversion of Muslims to Christianity in twelfth-century Sicily, and it is in this context that we should view the Psalter.<sup>39</sup> It may have been commissioned by a Mozarab Christian, eager to stress his loyalty to Roger's multi-lingual project, and to Christianity. Or it could have been commissioned by a Greek official who had played an important role in encouraging the conversion of Muslims to Christianity. But here we are firmly in the realm of speculation.

#### 7 Conclusion

To sum up, all indications are that the place of origin of this manuscript was in the court scriptorium of Roger II of Palermo, some time between 1130 and 1153. The manuscript makes it clear that the institution of the multilingual court scriptorium, in a form resembling that known to us from the later illumination in Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 120.II (see Fig. 4), was already in existence in the first half of the twelfth century. And it fits into the wider context of twelfth-century Sicilian culture, exemplified in other contexts by the funerary monument

**<sup>36</sup>** For an excellent example see the in-depth treatment of Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 54 (Diktyon 49615) in Maxwell 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Most recently edited by Johns 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Zeitler 1996.

**<sup>39</sup>** Zeitler 1996, 132–139.

of Anna and the Cappella Palatina. To conclude, the comments of Mallette on the gold coins (tari) of Norman Sicily are relevant here:

We tend to think of translation as an importing of content, typically (in the medieval context) of scientific documents. What the Normans generated in the taris was something more like the exporting of content. The Normans cobbled together fragments of languages and symbols, translating the same content - the message of the strength of the Sicilian state and of Norman kingship in Sicily - into the dominant languages of the medieval Mediterranean.40

The Harley Trilingual Psalter, like other cultural artefacts from the reign of Roger II, served a dual purpose: to stress linguistic tolerance within the kingdom of Sicily, and to emphasise its internal unity to the outside world.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I thank the editors for their extensive feedback on this chapter, and Caroline Macé for saving me from myself in several places. I am further grateful to the other participants at the Cambridge workshop in 2015 where this research was first presented, and to my former colleagues at the British Library, especially Dr Christina Duffy. All images from Harley 5786 are © The British Library Board and reproduced by permission, except figures 1 and 2, reproduced by permission of The British Library Board and Dr Christina Duffy. The image of Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 120.II, fol. 101<sup>r</sup> (Fig. 4), was photographed by Codices Electronici AG, <www.e-codices.ch>, and is reproduced with the permission of the Burgerbibliothek.

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Fig. 1: British Library, Harley 5786, fol. 173° (detail); inscription dated to 8 January 1153.

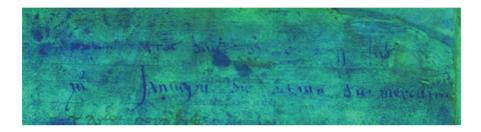


Fig. 2: Multispectral imaging of text on Fig. 1.

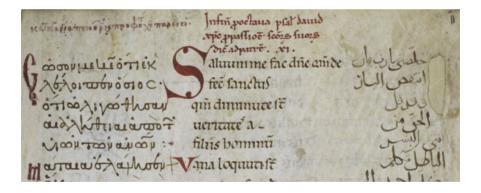


Fig. 3: British Library, Harley 5786, fol. 12<sup>v</sup> (detail); decorated initials at the beginning of Psalm 11.



Fig. 4: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 120.II, fol. 101'; a multilingual scriptorium. Photograph: Codices Electronici AG, <a href="https://www.e-codices.ch/en/list/one/bbb/0120-2">https://www.e-codices.ch/en/list/one/bbb/0120-2</a>, accessed on 26 August 2020.

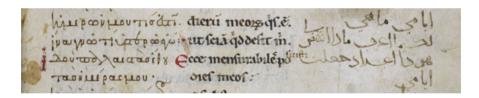


Fig. 5: British Library, Harley 5786, fol. 51<sup>r</sup> (detail).



Figs 6a and 6b: British Library, Harley 5786, fols 51<sup>v</sup> and 56<sup>v</sup> (details).

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Fig. 7: British Library, Harley 5786, fol. 23<sup>v</sup> (detail).

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Fig. 8: British Library, Harley 5786, fol. 56<sup>r</sup> (detail).

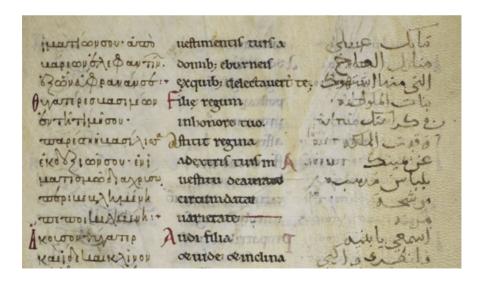
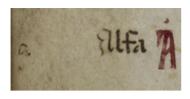


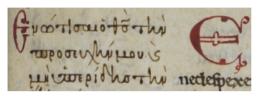
Fig. 9: British Library, Harley 5786, fol. 60<sup>r</sup> (detail).

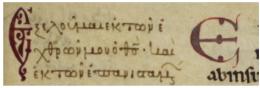


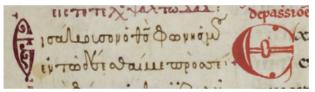




Figs 10a, 10b, 10c: British Library, Harley 5786, fols 4<sup>v</sup>, 11<sup>r</sup>, 35<sup>r</sup> (details).







**Figs 11a, 11b, 11c:** British Library, Harley 5786, fols 71<sup>r</sup>, 76<sup>r</sup>, 80<sup>v</sup> (details).

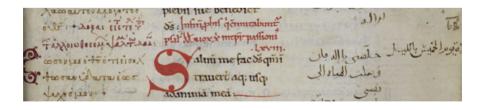


Fig. 12: British Library, Harley 5786, fol. 87<sup>r</sup> (detail).