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DAVID AND CHRIST SING THE PSALMS: THE PSALTER AS PROPHECY AND LITURGY

An intriguing image in at least three Byzantine Psalters is of David, dressed as a Byzantine Emperor, standing between the female personifications of Wisdom (Sophia) and Prophecy (Prophetia). David holds a text from Ps 71:1: 'Give the king your justice O God, and your righteousness to a king's son'. Above his head hovers a dove, symbolising the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through David as he composed the Psalms. To his left Prophetia is pointing to his text, indicating that this psalm is a prophecy in the process of being fulfilled — not in the life of David, but in the (Byzantine) Church, which is the guardian of the just and righteous Kingdom begun by David and completed by Christ. The earliest example of this image is most probably in the tenth-century Paris Psalter, and there are at least two other imitations of it: one was originally in the eleventh-century so-called Sinai Psalter, from Crete, and another dates from the late thirteenth century and is now in the Vatican Library.[1]

One reason this image is so striking is that a practice in both Jewish and Christian reception history has always been to read the Psalms as both wisdom and prophecy. The Psalms have continuously been seen as prayerful instructions about belief and practice, initially using the wisdom traditions of ancient Israel and later adapted by the Fathers of the early Church. They have similarly been understood as prophecies, like the classical prophets such as Isaiah and Amos, containing mysterious utterances about things to come: in Jewish tradition these concern Israel and the promised Messiah, and in Christian tradition they are applied to Jesus Christ and his Church.[2] Indeed, these discussions of the two ways of reading the Psalter

[1] The *Paris Psalter* is now Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Paris. gr*. 139, fol. 7v. The image that was removed from the Sinai Psalter (*Sinait. gr*. 38) is now National Library of Russia, St Petersburg, *Petrop. gr*. 269, fol. 2r. The image in the Vatican Library is in MS *Pal. gr*. 381, fol. 2r. For a discussion of these illustrations, see J. LOWDEN, *Manuscript Illumination in Byzantium, 1261-1557*, in *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261-1557)*, ed. by H. C. EVANS, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 2004, pp. 259-293, esp. pp. 265-266 and 273-274.

[2] See, for example, Eph 5:15-20 (the Psalms used for teaching) and Lk 24:44-45 (the Psalms read as prophecies alongside the classical prophets).

A Book of Psalms from Eleventh-Century Byzantium
Città del Vaticano 2016 (ST 000), pp. 241-259.

as a whole — as instruction and as prophecy — have become particularly prevalent over the last three decades in scholarly circles, in debates about the theological shaping of the Psalter as a whole.[3]

This paper will focus on the ways in which the Psalms have been understood as prophecy with particular reference to *Vat. gr.* 752. I shall first illustrate that its concern to read the ancient Psalms of David as prophecies about Jesus Christ makes *Vat. gr.* 752 a particularly prophetic Psalter. Secondly, in order to place *Vat. gr.* 752 in a broader context, I shall demonstrate that this mode of reading is part of a continuous stream of tradition in both Jewish and Christian reception. Finally, I shall make some observations about the theological implications of reading *Vat. gr.* 752 as a prophetic work.

Vaticanus graecus *752: a Prophetic Psalter?*

It is impossible to be certain that a Psalter designed for personal and liturgical monastic use would have reflected the more general political, social and religious climate of its day, although it is usual to assume that most prophetic readings of the Psalms have been influenced to some degree by the wider context of their time. If we accept the date and provenance for *Vat. gr.* 752, copied before 1059 in Constantinople,[4] it is more than likely that the internal revolts and aristocratic rivalry throughout the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055) and the ensuing difficulties in securing the continuation of the Macedonian dynasty after his death would have had some effect on the compilers. By 1059, with Byzantine imperial hegemony severely threatened, the emphasis in this Psalter on prophecies concerning the eternal rule of God's kingdom over transient powers was particularly relevant. The weakening of Byzantine military prowess, and the difficulty of funding its many hostilities, exacerbated by the increasing trading power of Italy, the growing instability in the Balkans, and Turkish incursions with the continual threat of Islamic rule, all required theological assurance that the rule of God surpassed the powers of the nations.

The prophetic elements in *Vat. gr.* 752 might also be seen in the light of contemporary religious concerns. Many of the images illustrate that the kingdom of the Jewish David is only made complete by the kingdom of Jesus Christ: this undoubtedly echoes the tensions in Jewish and Christian relations which were in part the result of the various iconoclastic crises in

[3] See S. E. GILLINGHAM, *New Wine and Old Wineskins: Three Approaches to Prophecy and Psalmody*, in *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel*, ed. by J. DAY, New York and London 2010, pp. 370-390.

[4] For a problematization of these data, see now F. D'Aiuto's paper in this volume.

Fig. 1 – *Vat. gr.* 752, fol. 1r (detail): Birth of David.

the preceding centuries. Furthermore, the profound theological disagreements, in 1054, between Patriarch Michael Keroularios of Constantinople and Cardinal Humbert, resulting in the excommunication of each side by the other, must have left a mark on a Psalter which so emphasizes the supreme authority of the Byzantine Church as the true inheritor of the promises given in the Psalms by David to Christ. A prophetic worldview becomes a powerful means of ratifying the identity of a community under threat from without and within, and both the images and the *catena* in this Psalter indicate this clearly.

One of the examples of a markedly prophetic slant is found in the first miniature, set alongside the Paschal Tables, on fol. 1r (fig. 1), where David's birth (unrecorded in the Hebrew Bible) is stylised so that it models the Nativity of Christ, with David's mother being a type of Mary, Mother

Fig. 2 – Vat. gr. 752, fol. 17v (detail): Nativity.

of Jesus.[5] In the first medallion of eight on this folio, David's mother is lying in bed, dressed in vermillion and blue robes, supported by a woman to her right who stands behind her bed. In the third medallion on the same folio, David's mother (still in blue and vermillion), is sitting on what seems to be a throne and is handing over her baby to a female attendant to be circumcised (again, an event not recorded in the accounts in Samuel). This scene prefigures the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. That this double connection was intended is evident later on fol. 17v (fig. 2), where the Virgin, aided by two midwives, gives birth to the Christ-Child and in fol. 18r (fig. 3), which depicts the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.[6] So, in

[5] See DE WALD, p. 3, and now also VARDEN in this volume.

[6] On this motif in Byzantine manuscripts, see M. MEYER, *Refracting Christian Truths through the Prism of the Biblical Female in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, in *Heritage of the Jews in Byzantium. Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*, ed. by R. BONFIL – O. IRSHAI – G. G. STROUMSA – R. TALGAM, Jerusalem 2010, pp. 971-1000. Allusions to the Gospel

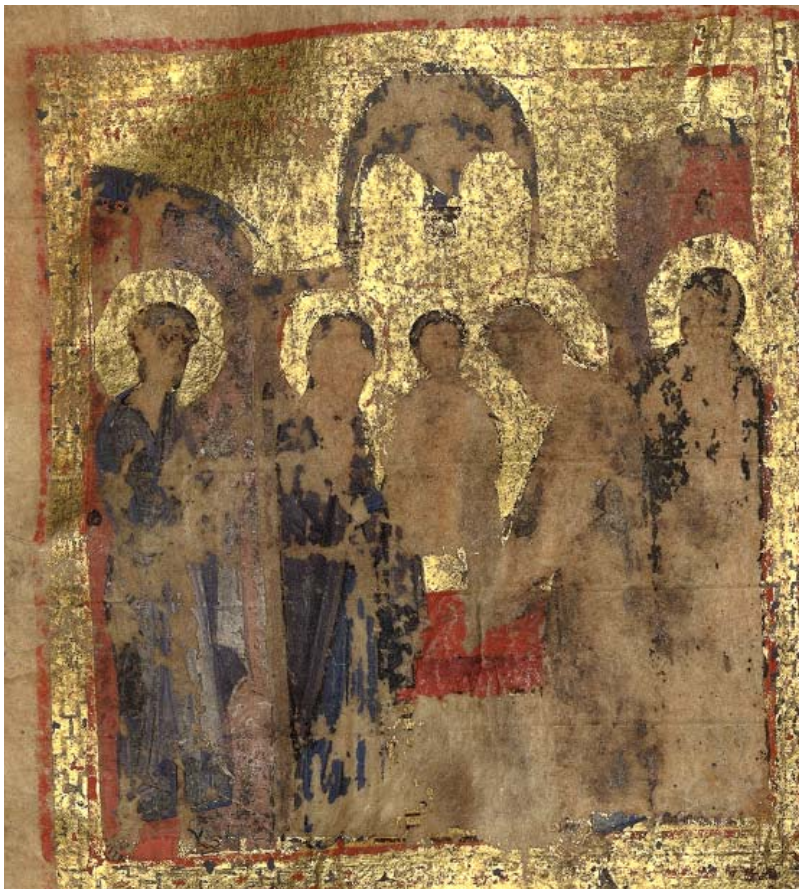

Fig. 3 – *Vat. gr*. 752, fol. 18r (detail): Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

prefiguring Christ, David's Psalms are shown as living prophecies pointing to their eventual fulfilment in the life of Christ.

Elsewhere, in the miniatures set alongside the *catena* for each Ps., David is also depicted as a Prophet. In Ps 4, fol. 23v (fig. 4), for example, David is crowned and holding a scroll, pointing to heaven from whence Jesus Christ is to come. In Ps 5, fol. 25r (fig. 5), David points to a domed church, the embodiment of the Incarnate Christ.[7] The prophetic view of David is

accounts are found in some twelve Psalms, and in five other Psalms David and Christ are placed together. See DE WALD, p. 47.

[7] Another memorable example is Ps 48 on fol. 156v where Christ is whispering into David's ear, with two prophetic figures, the sons of Korah, in the background, ready to transmit these words to posterity.

particularly evident in Ps 49 on fol. 159v (fig. 6), where Christ is seated at a table with David and four other prophetic figures, apparently the sons of Korah and Asaph. Furthermore, according to the commentary by Theodoret, which is in the *catena* below this Psalm, the references to the coming judgement on the wicked in the Psalms are now to be read as referring to the Last Judgement brought in by Christ: the two books on the table in the illustration may well be representations of the Old and New Testaments. So the Psalms of David are seen in this interpretative perspective as Psalms about Christ.

Not only the miniatures but also the *catena* confirm this way of finding Christ 'hidden' in the Psalms. At the beginning of the Psalter is a preface to the Psalms by pseudo-Chrysostom (fol. 3r; fig. 7) and a closer look at the image of Moses on that same folio reveals that in the caption even the young Moses is called 'a prophet'. This image draws from Deut 34:10, where Moses is called the greatest of all prophets: it indicates a note of warning and points to a future meaning of the Psalms, ratified by Moses as well as by David. Whilst the images accompanying both Pss 4 and 49 have correspondences with Theodoret's commentary on the Psalms, the image accompanying Ps 5 has correspondences with the *catena*, which, in part, seems to be from Hesychius.[8] Between fol. 3r and fol. 16v there are several references to commentaries on the Psalms, including Athanasius's *Letter to Marcellinus* (fols 12r-16v), whose main concern was that the Psalms were to be sung and prayed as once hidden prophecies about Jesus Christ and his kingdom, which is his Church.[9]

History of the Reception of the Psalms as Prophecies

Even within the Hebrew Bible the Psalms are read as prophecies; the best example is in the books of Chronicles. In these books, written at least three centuries after the demise of the Davidic monarchy, four Psalms (Pss 104, 89 and 105 in 1 Chronicles 16; and Ps 131 in 2 Chronicles 6:41) are described as being used by David, apparently to illustrate how these 'older' Psalms legitimised the role of the Ark and the centrality of Jerusalem. In effect, what these four Psalms actually legitimised for the Chronicler was the centrality of Jerusalem during his own day. These four Psalms are thus

[8] The words cited by David: 'The church says these things to God: [I am] the Bride of Christ' are taken directly from Hesychius. (I am grateful to Barbara Crostini for this observation.)

[9] See G. K. PARPULOV, *Psalters and Personal Piety in Byzantium*, in *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. by P. MAGDALINO – R. NELSON, Washington, DC 2010), pp. 77-106, at p. 86. See also H. TANAKA, *Athanasius as Interpreter of the Psalms: His Letter to Marcellinus*, in *Pro Ecclesia* 21.4 (2012), pp. 422-447.

Fig. 7 – *Vat. gr.* 752, fol. 3r: Moses as Prophet.

read as prophetic texts, dating from David but in the process of fulfilment at the time of writing. This practice is clear in the Greek translation of the Psalms from around the second century BCE, a work undertaken when Jewish hopes for a cataclysmic redemption were high, thus influencing the future-orientated, eschatological bias in many of the titles to the Psalms.[10] The persona of David is heightened by adding Davidic headings to several more Psalms, to show that David was not only the pious hero of the past, but also a symbol of hope in a David-like Messianic figure, who would surely come again.[11]

This phenomenon is similarly evident in the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, where Psalms were also interpreted as being fulfilled in the light of contemporary events. Column 27 of 11QPs[a], which is entitled 'David's Compositions', speaks of how God gave David a wise and discerning spirit through the gift of prophecy: 'And he wrote 3,600 Psalms… All these he composed through prophecy which was given to him from before the Most High'.[12] Many scrolls evince a *pesher* type of exegesis, a running commentary on one biblical text or on a group of texts, and frequently the Psalms are read in a prophetic light. For example, in 4QFlorilegium (4Q174), Pss 1:1 to 2:1 are used, along with verses from 2 Samuel 7, Isaiah 8, Ezekiel 44 and Daniel 12, to speak about the fulfilment of prophecies concerning the future restoration of the Temple and the coming of one from the line of David, the interpreter of the law.[13]

It is not surprising that the Jewish Christians who wrote and compiled the New Testament should have taken up this Jewish prophecy/fulfilment

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[10] The frequent term לַמְנַצֵּחַ (in the NRSV 'for the choirmaster') is translated as εἰς τὸ τέλος ('for perpetuity' or 'for fulfilment'), a term which suggests a more future-orientated reading. On Augustine's use of the Latin translation of this term, see below. Another example is the translation of the musical term עַל־הַגִּתִּית (in the NRSV 'Gittith', or 'stringed instrument') in Pss 80 and 83 as ὑπὲρ τῶν ληνῶν ('for the wine-press'), a term which might denote use as a harvest-Psalm, but also could suggest harvesting on the day of final judgement.

[11] The way the translators deal with Ps 1, for example, is further evidence of this. In Ps 1:5, the Hebrew עַל־יָקֻמוּ רְשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט is translated as οὐκ ἀναστήσονται ἀσεβεῖς ἐν κρίσει. The Hebrew קום suggests the idea of the wicked not 'standing up' in the sense of 'enduring' the time when justice is meted out; but the use of ἀνίστημι, an intransitive verb in the future indicative, suggests more the idea of 'rising' (from the dead) when judgement comes. (The difference is perhaps easier to understand in German: the sense of the Hebrew is more akin to 'aufstehen', and the Greek, to 'auferstehen').

[12] We may note again here the relationship of David with both wisdom and prophecy: he is wise because he is a prophet, and he is a prophet because he is wise. See A. P. JASSEN, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Qumran Community*, in *Association of Jewish Studies Review* 32:2 (2008), pp. 299-334, esp. pp. 328-329.

[13] The same prophetic reading is evident in 11QMelchizedek: here Lev 25:9 and 13, Deut 15:2, Is 52:7, 61:1-3 and Dan 9:25 are used along with Pss 7:7-9 and 81:1-2 to describe the redemption that will be heralded by the heavenly Melchizedek.

interpretation in order to explain how that hoped-for future had now arrived. The emphasis is not so much on David, the anointed messianic figure who would return to the Temple, but on Jesus Christ, the Messiah who has entered our world. The accounts of Jesus's Passion are good examples of this. Take, for example, Ps 117, which originally seems to be about a royal figure riding victoriously into Jerusalem on some great festal day 'in the name of the Lord': in all four Gospels, this psalm is woven into an account of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem.[14]

Several times in the New Testament 'David the Psalmist' becomes 'David the prophet' who speaks about Jesus. Matthew, for example, at critical stages in Jesus's life indicates explicitly and implicitly how the words of the Psalms are being fulfilled. In Matt 3:17 and 17:5, in the accounts of Jesus's baptism and transfiguration, Ps 2:7, 'You are my Son; this day I have begotten you', is used both times: Jesus is described as a 'Beloved Son' in whom God the Father is 'well-pleased'. Matthew undoubtedly sees Jesus as a new David, fulfilling the words of the Psalms in his own birth and life and death. Pss 68 and 21, which both have titles 'A psalm of David' and refer to an innocent but vindicated sufferer, are particularly important here, because they are used in the passion narratives to interpret Jesus's death as foretold by David.[15]

This prophetic use of the Psalms continues into the early church. One of the most interesting early examples is Justin Martyr (*c*. 100-165), born in Palestine but mainly living in Rome. His *Dialogue with Trypho* also uses Ps 21 as a prediction of Christ's passion. Referring to Ps 21:16-18, 'My hands and feet have shriveled… they stare and gloat over me… they divide my clothes among themselves', Justin contends that 'David, the king and prophet, who says these words, has not suffered any of these things. But Jesus Christ had his hands stretched out'.[16] The subject of this psalm therefore cannot be David: it is Jesus Christ.[17]

We can trace this prophetic approach throughout Western Christen-

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[14] See Mk 11:9-10; Mt 21:9, 23:39; Lk 13:35, 19:38; and Jn 12:13.

[15] On the prophetic use of the Psalms in Matthew, see M. I. I. MENKEN, *The Psalms in Matthew's Gospel*, in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. by S. MOYISE – M. I. I. MENKEN, London 2004, pp. 61-82, and S. VAN TILBORG, *Language, Meaning, Sense and Reference: Matthew's Passion Narrative and Ps 22*, in *Hervormde teologiese studies* 44 (1988), pp. 883-908. 'Jesus the new David' is a theme also found in John's Gospel, which uses a selection of Psalms in this way, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which focuses especially on Pss 2, 8, 94 and 109.

[16] I *Apol.* 35.6: see http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.viii.iv.i.html (on *Dialogue with Trypho*).

[17] See O. SKARSAUNE, *Proof from Prophecy: a Study in Justin Martyr's Proof Text Tradition. Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile*, Leiden and Boston 1987 (Supplements to Novum Testamentum, 5).

dom. Examples include Irenaeus bishop of Lyons (*c*. 130-200),[18] Tertullian of Carthage (*c*. 160-220), Hippolytus of Rome (170-235), and the Psalms commentaries of Hilary of Poitiers (315-367), of Jerome (342-420) and of Augustine (354-430)[19]. In each case, the voice of David, the once revered model of piety, is subsumed under the voice of Christ. Indeed, for commentators like Augustine, it is ultimately Christ, not David, who sings the Psalms. Even the Greek superscriptions εἰς τὸ τέλος ('for fulfilment'), translated in the Latin text which Augustine used as *'in finem'*, are seen to refer to Jesus Christ, who is the 'fulfilment' of all that David wrote and sang.[20] Taking Ps 1 as an example, Augustine's comments in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* reveal how in the first verse he identifies Christ, not David, as the 'Blessed Man', so the voice of the human Christ — 'Christ the Body' — speaks the psalm for us and with us. However, the last verse of Ps. 1 is read by Augustine as about Christ risen and ascended, standing as our Judge — 'Christ the Head' —, working out our salvation. In the first three verses of Ps 2 Augustine identifies the enemies as the persecutors of the human Christ, not David; in verse 6 he sees this is 'Christ the Head', announcing Himself as King over Zion (which means his Church), whilst verse 7 speaks of how the only Son of God took upon himself our human nature.[21] This so-called 'prosopological' approach, seeing first Christ the (incarnate) Body and then Christ the (ascended) Head, is the hermeneutical key with which Augustine unlocks the entire Psalter. And so it is Christ, not David, who sings the Psalms with us and for us.

This tradition continues after the fall of Rome, in the various references to the Psalms by Cassiodorus (485-580), Gregory (540-604), Bede (673-735), and Alcuin (734-804). It persists in the 'Glosses' in Western Psalters, illustrated by those of Gilbert of Poitiers (*c*. 1080-1154) and Peter Lombard (1100-1160), whose *In Psalmos Davidicos Commentarii (Glossae Psalteri)* and *Laon Gloss* are the most pertinent examples. David may well be the

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[18] Irenaeus uses Pss 109 and 44 in a similar way to Justin, and as well as Ps 21 he reads Pss 67 and 68 to testify to Jesus's death, resurrection and ascension.

[19] See S. E. GILLINGHAM, *Psalms through the Centuries,* vol. 1, Oxford 2008, pp. 24-27 and 35-39.

[20] Augustine cites here Rom. 10:4: 'Finis legis est Christus', i.e. Christ is the fulfilment, the final point of reference, to all that has been written in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. See S. HEBGIN – F. CORRIGAN, *St Augustine on the Psalms,* vol. 1 *(Psalms 1-29)*, Westminster, MD 1960 (Ancient Christian Writers, 29), p. 10.

[21] See HEGBIN – CORRIGAN, *St Augustine on the Psalms*, pp. 21-29. For an online edition of Augustine's commentary on the Psalms, see http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf108.html. See also R. WILLIAMS, *Augustine and the Psalms*, in *Interpretation* 58 (2004), pp. 17-27, and, on Augustine's treatment of Psalms 1 and 2, S. E. GILLINGHAM, *A Journey of Two Psalms. Psalms 1 and 2 in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, Oxford 2013, pp. 59-61.

author of the Psalms and an exemplar of faith, but his greatest contribution is as the prophet of Christ and his Church.[22]

Understandably, commentators from the East play the greatest part in *Vat. gr.* 752. The Alexandrian, Athanasius (296-373), is significant because of the many allusions to and citations of his *Letter to Marcellinus* in the *catena*, whose subject matter is how to interpret the Psalms.[23] Athanasius sees the '*skopos*' of all Scripture to be the person and work of Christ, to whom the Psalms bear witness, taking us through the voice of David to the person of Christ, whilst at the same time enabling us to recognize in them our own voice: the Psalms are like a garden, containing everything necessary for our salvation. Athanasius outlines two categories of Psalms: those which echo the movements of the soul, which are the voice of David himself (for example, Pss 3; 10; 11; 50; 53; 55; 56; 141), and those which announce the coming of Christ, and so bear witness to David as a prophet (Pss 2; 21; 23; 44; 46; 68; 71; 86; 87; 109; 137).[24]

The Psalms commentary of an Antiochene, Theodoret of Cyrrhus (393-460), bishop in Syria, is a prominent source in *Vat. gr.* 752. Theodoret's prologue illustrates an unusual approach for Christian commentators, for he argues that the Psalms must not be interpreted as a case against the Jews, but rather that they are prayers and prophecies for the whole household of faith, and this includes Jews as well as Christians.[25] Theodoret is cautious about viewing every Psalm in the light of Christ's divinity, also preferring to read many through the prism of his humanity. Hence only Pss 2, 8, 44, 71 and 109 are to be read as prophecies about Jesus as God; others are to be read as prophecies fulfilled in the incarnate and suffering figure of Jesus.[26] So the connection between David-as-Prophet and Christ-as-Fulfiller-of-Prophecy is still evident, but the emphasis is different.

Although several citations from the Cappadocian Fathers are also used in some of the catena of *Vat. gr.* 752 — for example, Basil of Caesarea

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[22] See GILLINGHAM, *Psalms through the Centuries*, pp. 56-62 and 87-91.

[23] This text was, by a strange sequence of events, included as a preface to the Psalter in the Codex Alexandrinus, and this popularised the work more than might have been expected.

[24] *Letter to Marcellinus*, cc. 2, 10, 11, 12 and 27. For the text of the letter, see http://www.athanasius.com/Psalms/aletterm.htm. See also J. M. AUWERS, *L'organisation du psautier chez les Pères grecs*, in *Le Psautier chez les Pères*, ed. by P. MARAVAL, Strasbourg 1994 (Cahiers de Biblia Patristica, 4), pp. 37-54.

[25] This may in part explain why *Vat. gr.* 752 has a less strident anti-Jewish polemic than that which is evident in several earlier Byzantine manuscripts. See K. CORRIGAN, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters*, Cambridge 1992, pp. 43-61 (discussing polemic against the Jews).

[26] See J. N. GUINOT, *L'*In Psalmos *de Théodoret: une relecture critique du commentaire de Diodore de Tarse*, in *Le Psautier chez les Pères*, ed. MARAVAL, pp. 97-135.

(330-379) and Gregory of Nyssa (335-395) — Antiochene commentators, despite their caution about the Christianising of the Psalms, occur more often. John Chrysostom (347-407), bishop of Constantinople, is frequently cited or alluded to. Although his commentary on Ps 109 has a profound Christological approach, mostly Chrysostom adopts a more pastoral reading of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Psalms: Christ is not only divine, but he is also the one who, being even greater than David, accommodated himself to our human weakness.

Another influence in the catena is that of the scholia of Hesychius of Jerusalem. This work, from the early fifth century, is essentially a mystical commentary, showing the mystery of Christian dogma hidden behind the words of David in the Psalms: for example, the 'tree by the waters' in Ps 1:3 is seen as a prophecy about the cross of Christ and the 'voice of God' in Ps 28:3 is the one heard at Jesus's baptism. The scholia use several sources, to expand this mystical reading and give authority to it. Although it is difficult to be certain as to how many of the so-called writings of Hesychius originate from the presbyter himself,[27] of the three works on the Psalms attributed to him, it is mainly the short scholia (TitPs) that are used in *Vat. gr.* 752. The use of the work here could be seen as one of the first stages in the formation of a Greek 'Gloss'.[28]

The same theme of 'David as Prophet and Christ as the Fulfilment of the Prophecies' is evident in the illuminations in early Psalters. The Stuttgart Psalter, dating from about 830, probably from St Germain-des-Prés near Paris, has multi-coloured miniatures for each Psalm.[29] In Ps 1, for example, the illustration of verse 3, which reads 'they [the righteous] are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in due season' is of a tree, but now drawn as the cross of Christ.[30] Ps 2 is also explicitly Christian. The first image of vv. 1-2 uses an interpretation in early Christian com-

[27] On the question of authorship and attribution, see further below the essay by Sever Voicu.

[28] Hesychius may well be the same writer referred to frequently by those who compiled the more extensive (Latin) Gloss in the Middle Ages: see *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, ed. M. AUBINEAU, 2 vols, Brussels 1978-1980 (Subsidia Hagiographica, 59), I, pp. xii-lxxvi and II, pp. 601-627.

[29] The Psalter is now kept in Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, MS *Bibl. F.* 23. See http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/digitale-sammlungen/seitenansicht/?no_cache=1&tx_dlf%5Bid%5D=1517&tx_dlf%5Bpage%5D=7&Seite=&cHash=0dfb44ea09c3f543d75f-7ce80c109344. See also the essay by Diane Reilly in this volume.

[30] We noted this reading of Ps. 1:3 by Hesychius. This tradition goes as far back as Justin Martyr. For a further discussion of prophetic elements in Psalms 1 and 2 in this and the other Psalters noted in this paper, see GILLINGHAM, *A Journey of Two Psalms*, pp. 163-181, which discusses the visual reception of Pss 1 and 2 between the ninth and fifteenth centuries, and includes colour plates of all the psalters cited.

mentaries whereby the enemy nations are depicted as Pilate and Herod, representing both Romans and Jews. The second image for Ps 2 depicts Christ after his resurrection (illustrating vv. 6-7 and 8-12), ruling over all those who had betrayed and opposed him. Many of the images tell us more about Christ than David.

The Utrecht Psalter, dating somewhere between 820 and 835, was also originally from northern France. The draughtsmen illustrated each psalm with dark-brown pen and ink drawings, verse by verse, sometimes with a literal and pastoral emphasis, sometimes with a more Christological one.[31] The artist for Ps 1 used the Ps. as a 'narrative' about the 'blessed man': he is seated and reading at the top left of the illustration, outside a circular *tempietto*, and an angel stands behind him in order to inspire his prayers. In the top right the ungodly man sits on a 'chair of pestilence', surrounded by soldiers and demons. The middle of the illustration is taken up with the tree and the waters, and the wind is personified so that it blows about the wicked as chaff (vv. 3-4); they are propelled downstream, their eventual destiny being the pit in the bottom right (vv. 5-6).

Ps 2 has a more obvious prophetic emphasis. The figure in the centre of the image is distinguished by a halo: this is Jesus Christ. He is standing on Mount Zion (v. 6), ruling over a group of people who stand to his right, ready for war. In the top right corner the hand of God is raised in blessing, announcing Christ is God's 'Son' (v. 7). On the left the Gentiles rage whilst the angels laugh at their audacity; and on the right is a tree, with all its Christian overtones of crucifixion, which reminds us of the one through whom God brings about salvation.[32]

Illuminated Psalters from eastern Christendom sometimes use a prophecy/fulfilment approach with an anti-Jewish emphasis; this is in part the consequence of assumed Jewish support of iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries. One example is the ninth-century Khludov Psalter from Constantinople. In Ps 1, the blessed man in the right hand margin is probably David, studying the law; two wicked men, also apparently studying the law, are to his right; a haloed Christ, close to the words of the Psalm, observes their fates. The rest of the margin depicts the effects of the wind as it blows figures across the surface of the page (and the earth). And those

[31] The Psalter is now in Utrecht University Library, MS *Bibl. Rhenotraiectinae* 1 Nr 32. See *The Utrecht Psalter in Medieval Art. Picturing the Psalms of David*, ed. by K. VAN DER HORST – K. W. NOEL – W. C. M. WUSTEFELD, London 1996, pp. 56-57 and 85. See also the essay by Diane Reilly in this volume.

[32] The presence of an angel in both Psalms is also found in the images accompanying Pss 1 and 2 in *Vat. gr.* 752, and the reign of Christ is also depicted in the image of Ps 2 in *Vat. gr.* 752 (fol. 20r).

who suffer most, driven into the pit, are no longer armed soldiers, or even peasants: they are three Jews, evidenced by their (tenth-century) attire, which matches that of the figures studying the law in the image at the top of the page.[33]

Ps 2 is more explicitly Messianic. The image next to v. 7 is of the Nativity, and continues to the bottom of the page, where a stable, with an ox and ass, illustrate that the one pronounced Son of God is the incarnate Christ. But the image goes one stage further: the inscription across the top of the folio reads 'woe to the sinful nation', taken from Isaiah 1:4, and is clearly an allusion from this verse to the ox and ass 'who know the master's crib', implying that, as written in Isaiah, the Jewish people are the sinful nation. So the three figures in conversation at the top of the page may well be the prophet Isaiah (with raised hand) speaking to a Jew, who has his hand on his chest as if to indicate disbelief that this prophecy could be applied to him. The two figures at the very bottom also may well suggest another two Jews who (like the rebellious nations in the Psalm) do not know Christ, as Isaiah prophesied.

One other example is the Theodore Psalter: it was completed in 1066 by the scribe Theodore for the monastery of Stoudios near Constantinople and so is likely to be a close relation of *Vat. gr.* 752.[34] To the left of Ps 1 is a faded image of Christ and the Virgin Mary facing each other, with their arms creating the letter 'M' for 'Makarios', referring to the 'blessed man'. At the bottom of the folio is an image of three figures in debate: this has some associations with the Khludov Psalter, except that the central figure is seated on a throne. To the right of this is another image, of Christ handing a book to a figure who bows before him, who is labelled 'makarios': this might well be Abbot Michael of Stoudios. Above and to the right is Christ, with white hair, in a mandorla, with a book on his knee: he is the ideal 'blessed man'. The next page (fol. 1v) continues the text of Ps. 1 and the tree of life dominates the left margin. Under this is the wind, personified as a figure with a cape: it blows some sort of pipe so that, as in the Khudov Psalter, the three figures on the ground are blown away. In the very bottom right three other figures are sitting and two standing, all in some debate. The two standing are dressed as Jews, and are gesturing as if disputing what is being said about the perishing of the ungodly.

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[33] The Psalter is now kept in the Moscow History Museum (MS *Mosq. gr. D.* 129). This 'narrative' reading of Ps 1 has several affinities with the Utrecht Psalter. See CORRIGAN, *Visual Polemics*, pp. 8 and 14.

[34] The Psalter is now British Library MS *Addit.* 19.352. For online images of the Theodore Psalter with a brief description and further bibliography, see http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/theopsalter.html.

Images for Ps 2 continue on the following page (fol. 2r). In the top right margin are two groups: one of two kings (again presumably Herod and Pilate) addressed by a Jew, who points to the other group of three figures below, who appear to be Annas, Caiaphas and Christ. At the bottom right is another depiction of the Nativity. Mary is on a bed, with Joseph next to her, and two protecting angels are hovering above. The empty manger is bathed in light, and close to it are a donkey and an ox: to the left, the baby Jesus is being bathed by two midwives. Further left is another angel announcing this birth to two shepherds. Ps 2 was especially popular in Orthodox liturgy at Christmas: hence the development of the themes here.[35]

Jewish readings of the Psalms as prophecies are mainly evident in translations, paraphrases and commentaries. For example, the Targum on the Psalms, dating from about the sixth century, is a paraphrase of the Hebrew into the Aramaic vernacular.[36] By looking at the expansions in *Targum Psalms*, we can see the same interest in prophecy as in the Qumran scrolls and in the Septuagint translation: for example, again using Pss 1 and 2 as examples, references to the 'assembly of Israel' and the 'anointed one' were applied to the present and the future. For example, in Ps 1:5, the definite article in the Hebrew בַּמִּשְׁפָּט ('in the judgement'), is paraphrased in the Aramaic as לא יזכון יקומון רשיעי ביומא דינא רבא and so is a reference to a heavenly court: the translation runs 'the wicked will not be acquitted *in the great day of judgement*' (i.e. at the end of time).[37]

Another example is the *Midrash Tehillim*, a Jewish commentary on the Psalms probably compiled between the second and sixth centuries CE. Although it is primarily didactic in purpose, with David as the ideal model for prayer, it too has a prophetic interest. It searches frequently for the 'hidden meaning' of each Psalm, usually found through the Torah of Moses that confirms the witness of David.[38] This approach has parallels with Christian writers who find the hidden meaning by way of reference not to Moses, but 'Christwards'.

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[35] See G. P. SCHIEMENZ, *The Painted Psalms of Athos*, in *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism*, ed. by A. BRYER – M. CUNNINGHAM, London 1996, pp. 223-236; also J. C. ANDERSON, *On the Nature of the Theodore Psalter*, in *Art Bulletin* 70 (1988), pp. 550-568.

[36] On the Targums, see especially D. M. STEC, *The Targum of Psalms translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, Collegeville, MN 2004 (The Aramaic Bible, 16); also E. M. COOK, *The Psalms Targum: Introduction to a New Translation, with Sample Texts*, in *Targum and Scripture: Studies in Aramaic Translations and Interpretation in Memory of Ernest G. Clarke*, ed. P. V. M. FLETCHER, Leiden and Boston 2002 (Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture, 2), pp. 186-201, also accessible at http://www.targum.org.

[37] See STEC, *The Targum of Psalms*, p. 29.

[38] See W. G. BRAUDE, *The Midrash on Psalms*, 2 vols, New Haven 1959, I, pp. 3-34 (on Ps 1), and pp. 35-48 (on Ps 2).

A few Jewish commentators from the eighth century onwards also show an interest in the prophetic aspects of Psalmody. Saadiah Gaon (882-942) actually rejects the Psalms as contemporary prophecies, but for a specific reason. Born in Egypt but as a scholar travelling around the Middle East, he frequently came into contact with Jewish Karaite communities who, in rejecting the legal requirements of the Torah, used the Psalms as their alternative authority. Saadiah read the Psalms primarily as a polemical response to this Jewish sect. Affirming that Psalms were indeed prophecies but that they were given *to David*, he focuses on their historical setting and their practical teaching, thus excluding the possibility of any immediate and contemporary prophetic appropriation of the Psalms in his generation.[39] His commentary, by its negative stance, tells us, by implication, just how much the Karaites viewed the Psalms as prophetic prayers, relevant for all ages, especially their own, when there would be a new Messianic future in Jerusalem where they would play a central role.[40]

Abraham ibn Ezra (?1089-1164), originally from Spain, was another Psalms commentator opposed to the Karaite heresies which he encountered on his travels throughout Europe. Influenced by Saadiah's writings, including his Psalms commentary, Abraham also opposed the Karaites' interpretations of the Psalms. He did this by reading them more grammatically and as inspired religious poems; in this way he claimed that both literary and theological superiority belonged to the monotheistic creativity of orthodox Jews.[41]

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the polemical writing about the Psalms as prophecies was not only between Jew and Jew, but also between Jews and Christians. Rabbinical writers such as Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, 1040-1105) contributed to these debates. Partly because of his provenance from Troyes, and hence his proximity to the Christian schools of exegesis in northern France, Rashi used much anti-Christian polemic in his commentaries on the Psalms. This is particularly evident in his reading of Ps 2, mainly because of its prominent use in Christian discourse by this time: Rashi explicitly uses it to refute the claims of Christians.[42] So the Psalm is about the historical David and historical Israel, and its context is 1

[39] See U. SIMON, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms from Saadiah Gaon to Abraham ibn Ezra*, New York 1991, pp. 1-58.

[40] Although little has been written on this issue to date, it would be interesting to see how far the prophetic reading of the Psalms by the Karaites had any influence on Christian prophetic interpretations in the Byzantine Psalters.

[41] Abraham ibn Ezra's commentary was used to accompany the illustrations in the Parma Psalter, as will be seen below.

[42] See M. I. GRUBER, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, Leiden and Boston 2004, pp. 127-135, and, on Ps 2, pp. 177-182.

Samuel 5:17-25, when the Philistines heard that David has been made king over all Israel, and they came up to attack him.[43] Hence Ps 2:6 is about the anointing of David as king by Nathan the prophet. Only verse 7 is not only about David: here Rashi too reads the verse as about a coming Messiah chosen by Israel and for Israel. So even Rashi supplements a historical reading with a prophetic emphasis as well.

The Psalms were occasionally illustrated as prophecies in Jewish manuscripts. Although few such Psalters exist, mainly because of the ban on making graven images, the late thirteenth-century Parma Psalter is an exception, and is interesting for the way it uses part of the Psalms commentary of Abraham ibn Ezra, following the same practice as the catena in *Vat. gr.* 752. Its use of various motifs in its iconography (such as snakes, devouring beasts, depictions of David, the Jews and Jerusalem) would suggest that it was partly influenced by the Greek manuscript tradition.[44] The first word of each Psalm is illuminated (there being no capital letters in the Hebrew script, historiated initials are less common), and, as in early Byzantine Psalters, the margins are frequently decorated. Given the place of the Jews in Italian society at this time, living with the consequences of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, with forced conversions and burning of Jewish books, the production of such a lavish manuscript marked an act of defiance against its patron's Christian persecutors. Ps 137 is a good example of a prophetic type of illustration: we see two figures, weeping, and compelled to draw the waters from the river that would eventually, according to a tradition in *Midrash Tehillim*, poison them. Willow leaves frame the text, upon which are hung the lyres. The words of the Psalmist David, prophesying the future sufferings of the exiles, have been fulfilled — now, in the present generation.

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[43] See M. SIGNER, *King/Messiah: Rashi's Exegesis of Ps 2*, in *Prooftexts* 3 (1983), pp. 273-284, especially pp. 274-275; see also GRUBER, *Rashi's Commentary*, p. 177. The fact that nowhere in the Psalms is this setting explicitly indicated, and nowhere in 2 Samuel 5 is there any evidence of the Philistines doing battle with David, does not seem to create a problem for Rashi here.

[44] The manuscript (Ms. *Parm.* 1870 *olim De Rossi* 510) is kept in the Palatina Library, Parma, Italy: see *Hebrew Manuscripts on the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma. Catalogue with Palaeographical and Codicological Descriptions by Malachi Beit-Arié*, ed. by B. RICHLER, Jerusalem 2001, cat. no. 371, pp. 75-76. Some images can be seen online at www.facsimile-editions.com. For a discussion of the Greek influence in the iconography, see T. T. METZGER, *A History and Analysis of the Manuscript*, in *The Companion Volume to the Facsimile Edition of the Parma Psalter*, ed. by M. BEIT-ARIÉ – T. T. METZGER – E. SILVER, London 1996, pp. 29-148, at pp. 105-106.

Vaticanus graecus *752 in its Cultural Context*

Thus *Vat. gr.* 752 belongs to a large family of both Jewish and Christian interpretations which, in different ways, understands the Psalms not only as liturgical songs and prayers, but also as prophetic texts. The family is even larger than might be imagined, although some of the relatives hardly recognise each other, and others indeed constantly squabble over their inheritance. Yet just like its family relations, the *catena* and illustrations in *Vat. gr.* 752 are concerned with the 'hidden meanings' found in these ancient texts, affirming with Jewish family members the authority of David as both composer of the Psalms and bearer of these meanings. Like Christian members of the family, it also affirms that what David once sung is now fulfilled in Jesus Christ. And like other Christian family members in the East, its readings have been influenced by contemporary theological and political controversies.

So, once more using Pss 1 and 2 as key examples, we see the centrality of David as composer and key participant. In fol. 19r (fig. 8), there is a three-sided headpiece to Ps 1: David is clearly present, and, unusually for this psalm, so too is the archangel Michael, 'prince of the people of Israel', who (very like the presence of an angel behind the 'blessed man' in the Utrecht Psalter) affirms David as the 'blessed man' who keeps the Law. And in fol. 20r (fig. 9), the miniature above the *catena* to Ps 2 shows David again: here is he receiving blessings from one who is seated above him on a throne, as in vv. 6-7 of the Psalm.

Nevertheless, several clues suggest these words are also seen as prophecies pointing to Christ. If we look more closely at the image accompanying Ps 1, we see not only David and Michael, but also the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. So the ideal model of piety is no longer only David, but also Jesus Christ. He, even more than David, is that 'blessed man'. Furthermore, if we look in more detail at the image for Ps 2, we see that the figure on the throne is not in fact Yahweh Elohim, but Jesus Christ, whose hand is raised to bless David as he bows before his throne.[45] This image is not about the Davidic kings and earthly nations, but about Christ and the Day of Judgement; the archangel Michael — with all the Byzantine connotations of his being the angelic defender in battle — is sponsor for David before Christ, who is now the means of salvation.

Finally, these images help us to understand a little about the theological and political controversies in eleventh-century Byzantium. In Ps 1, we realise that, through Christ, the Church receives not the Jewish Torah, but

[45] The motifs of the heavenly throne and of the hand raised in blessing are again reminscent of the Utrecht and related Psalters.

Fig. 9 – *Vat. gr.* 752, fol. 20r (detail): David receiving blessings.

a new (Christian) Canon of Faith to guard it in times of persecution. The Byzantine Church thus incarnates, as it were, 'the Blessed Man', who is obedient in faith and will not keep company with infidels. In the image for Ps 2, we realise that this depiction of the Kingly rule of Christ shows a Kingdom whose dominion is in heaven, as well as on earth: there will come a day when that Kingdom will break in to reveal its authority over all human thrones and powers.[46]

The images, alongside the *catena* to these two Psalms that use the works of Hesychius and Theodoret, demonstrate that images and words together illustrate and teach how these two Psalms, placed at the entrance to the Psalter, announce the key themes to be found in the songs and prayers that follow them. They invite the church to sing Psalms whose authority is from antiquity, for they are songs once sung by David; they challenge the church to ponder the once-hidden mysteries of Jesus Christ; and they serve to protect those in eastern Christendom who, in singing these Psalms, resolve to stay firm in the faith of their fathers.

[46] The motif of Christ as *Pantokrator* — King over all the nations, with David at his feet — is one repeated several times in this Psalter: see DE WALD, p. 48.