CHAPTER FIVE
THE EXAMPLE OF PSALM 4

In order to find out what exactly Marot was doing when he made verse translations of the biblical Psalms, we performed a close reading of one Psalm paraphrase in all its versions and with an eye to all its aspects. We selected Psalm 4 as a suitable example (pars pro toto) for two reasons: (1) the text of this biblical Psalm forces the translator to make some translation choices which are not only linguistically interesting, but will at the same time reveal a hermeneutic view on the Psalms in general; (2) we possess three consecutive versions of Marot’s translation of this Psalm that differ considerably, a state of affairs which enables us to follow what Marot did. In order to track down—as far as possible—how he worked and why he did what he did, we analysed the different versions of this Psalm chronologically, focussing on translation choices and especially attentive to changes he made on the way (differences between the three versions). All this together might not only reveal his outlook on this Psalm, but also provide us with some key insights into Marot’s Psalm hermeneutics in general, which in turn might help us to situate his Psalm translation theologically.

5.1 The first version of Psalm 4 (AN41)

AN41 represents the first version (Group I). In the texts below we have placed non-orthographical differences with other members of the same group in a ‘critical apparatus’ below the text. To trace the particularities in this translation we juxtaposed it with the ‘standard text’ of this Psalm, the Gallicanum (PG), and added the Hebraicum (PH) only if it differed from PG (to have a simple indication of the PH-value of Marot’s translation). When Marot’s translation intrinsically differs from both, we will draw attention to it and mention the translation options of our reference group in a footnote. This might point to the PHH-value of Marot’s translation. What at first sight seems crucial phrasing is italicised, and a succinct comment is added after each verse pointing out the differences. Numbering and punctuation have not been touched, and in Marot’s text the orthography is original (only the
abbreviations have been resolved), thus giving an impression of some typical features of AN41.¹

Quincuplex Psalterium—PG [PH] Psalms de David AN41

In finem Psalmus cantici David. Psalme. IIII. CL.M.

1 Cum invocarem exaudivit me deus iustitiae meae: in tribulatione dilatasti michi.
1 Quand je t’invoque helas escoute o Dieu de mon droict & raison?²
   mon coeur serré au large boute:
2 Miserere mei et exaudi orationem meam.
   de ta pitié ne me deboute,
   mais exaulse mon orayson.

Lefèvre’s numbering accentuates the fact that in PG/PH verse 1 is conceived as an introduction that looks back on what has happened (perfect tense), the actual prayer beginning in verse 2. Marot does not make this difference. He has four presentic invocations in succession.

3 Filii hominum usquequò gravi corde: ut quid diligitis vanitatem, & quae rerit mendacium. Semper.³
   Jusques à quand, ô gens humaines, ma gloire abatre tacherez?
   jusques à quand lés choses vaines,
   & de mensonges toutes plaines aymerez vous & cercherez?

2,1: Marot does nothing with the change between PG and PH: ‘filii hominum’ > ‘filii viri’ (‘men as human beings’ > ‘manly (virile) men’).
2,2: The translation ‘ma gloire’ clearly suggests PH (non–PG).
The enigmatic Hebrew sign ‘sela’ is not translated or even mentioned. The same goes for the ‘tituli’ above this (and other) Psalms.

4 Et scitote quoniam mirificavit dominus sanctum suum:
   Cognoiestre devriez sans le dire,
   qu’entre *nous le seigneur treshault
   car quand à luy crie & souspire
   jamais à m’exaulcer ne fault.

¹ Based on the copy of AN41 in the library of the SHPF in Paris. AN41 can also be reconstructed using the notes in Defaux’s Cinquante pseaumes. In the transcription I have standardised the use of ‘i/j’ and ‘u/v.’
² AN41 has a question mark. Defaux transcribes this as an exclamation mark (Cinquante pseaumes, p. 1). All other texts of Group I have a comma.
³ The difference is based on another reading of one character in the Hebrew text. Olivétan explains this in margine of his French Bible. We find ‘Gloire/Gloria’ with Olivéatan, Felix, Pagninus.