NEGOTIATING CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH AUTHORITIES

It is not always clear to which Christian sources Herbert was indebted, and how. Throughout the Psalterium he generally omits traditional Christian exegeses, often stating that these have already been sufficiently explained by the ecclesiastical authors. One example is Psalm 21 (22), “Deus meus Deus meus quare dereliquisti me (My God my God why have you forsaken me)”, where Herbert comments on verses 1-16: “the exegeses by the Christian authors about the king our Messiah are clear”. There is no doubt for him that this Psalm refers to Christ’s crucifixion. The only Church Fathers Herbert mentions by name are Origen and Augustine, who are referred to once in the commentary on Psalm 4, together with Jerome. Both sources are invoked for their interpretation of the term *sela/diapsalma*. Herbert quietly disagrees with Augustine and follows Jerome’s opinion that *sela* differs from *diapsalma* in connotation and frequency of use, the former being the “continuation of the Holy Spirit” (“continuacionem spiritus sancti”), the latter meaning “semper” (“forever”). Two types of Christian authors stand out when studying the Psalterium. First, there are Hebraist role models, such as Jerome and, to a minor extent, the anonymous glossators of the Hebrew-Latin-(vernacular) Bibles and reference works, whose influence is predominantly methodological and linguistic. The second category consists of those who shaped Bosham’s hermeneutics: the Victorines, Hugh in particular, who will be discussed in chapter five, and St. Paul, who is referred to as *magister* throughout the Psalterium and who lends a fascinating tropological dimension to Herbert’s programme of literal exegesis.

Since Herbert’s edition of Lombard’s Magna Glosatura includes not just the Psalms but also the Pauline Epistles, it is not surprising that in the Psalterium a strong link with Paul remains. In fact, Paul is the Christian source whose authority Herbert most frequently invokes. While he calls Jerome “modernus alumpnus synagoge”, Paul is for him “that great erstwhile pupil of the synagogue, most adamant emulator among Jewish scholars of the Law.” (“magnus ille synagoge alumpnus quondam inter litteratores

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1 Psalterium, fol. 25v: De rege nostro Messia ab ecclesiasticis exposita patent.
legis emulator vehementissimus”, fol. 48r). He is quoted more than fifty times over a total of thirty-nine psalms. Of those fifty-one references to Paul, over thirty originate from Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians. In order to analyse the relationship between Herbert’s translation of the Psalms and his use of Paul, and between Pauline theology and Jewish exegesis as reflected in the Psalterium, I will examine the function covered by references to the Epistles in a selection of passages.

1. Paul’s Neutralising Influence

In a number of instances Paul seems to provide Herbert with a justifiable means to integrate his borrowings from Jewish sources into the Christian domain. For example, he revises Psalm 14 (15): 3, which occurs in the Hebraica as:

Qui non est facilis in lingua sua neque fecit amico suo malum; et obprobrium non sustinuit super vicino suum

He who is not easy with his tongue; nor has done evil to his friend; nor taken up a reproach against his neighbour

to:

Qui non accusat in lingua sua neque fecit sodali suo malum; et obprobrium non sustinuit super proximum suum

He who does not accuse with his tongue, nor has done evil to his companion, nor taken up a reproach against his nearest/neighbour

Whereas the modifications of “amico” to “sodali” and of “vicino” to “proximum” have Christian precedents in the hebraized version of the Theodulf recension and in the Gallicana respectively, “accusat” does not. Herbert translated it from the Masoretic reading ragal/רָגַל (“slander”, “go about”). As we have seen before, since ragal/רָגַל occurs as “ankuza” in two of the thirteenth-century Hebrew-Hebraico-French glossaries on this psalm, it is possible that Herbert also used a similar Jewish aid to obtain his translation. In his commentary he interprets Psalm 14 (15): 3 as a warning against making easy and unfounded accusations against others (“de facili et ex lingue lubrico crimen improperare”) and supports his reading by relating it to 1 Corinthians 4: 5: 2

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2 Psalterium, fol. 16v: In lingua accusare: est de facili et ex lingue lubrico crimen improperare. Unde in edicione alia: Qui non est facilis in lingua sua scilicet ad accusandum. Idem sensus. Sunt quidam de quibus propter speciem vivendi non bonam non bene suspicamur.