

MS. 208

Psalter, in Greek

England; s. xv

Contents [*note that most accents will probably not display correctly*]

1. (fols. 3-166v) Psalms; Pss. 1-150 followed by the supernumerary psalm. [\[Image\]](#)
[\[Image\]](#)
2. (fols. 166v-185r) Nine Odes, followed by the Prayer of Manasses (cf. Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (9th edn., 2 vols., Stuttgart), pp. 164-78, 180-1, nos. 1-4, 6-9, 12); fols. 185v-186r blank. [\[Image\]](#)
3. (fol. 186v) The Greek alphabet, with some letters in both upper- and lower-case forms, added apparently as a practice exercise by someone unfamiliar with writing Greek. [\[Image\]](#)
4. (fols. 186v-188r) The 'Ave Maria' in Greek, with an added heading in Latin. At the end has been added an inscription by Lionel Gardiner (see under Provenance) and, by another hand with a poor knowledge of Greek, a note of abbreviations used in the main text: '[In this book *effaced but still legible*] ... θ'ς [for *crossed through*] θεος ΙΗΛ ιςραηλ'. [\[Image\]](#)
5. (fols. 188v-190r) Added incipits of Psalms in alphabetical order in Greek, usually with their Latin equivalents alongside (e.g. fol. 189r has seven incipits of psalms beginning with 'ε': Pss. 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 19, 28; fol. 189v has nine incipits beginning with 'χ': Pss. 3, 6, 7, 8, 14, 20, 22, 25, 26; etc.) [\[Image\]](#)
6. (lower pastedown) An added (17th-century, perhaps first half) dialogue between an unnamed person and the father of a person called John, who is in danger of death for his misdeeds (John is 40 years old, but regarded as a child on account of his behaviour), perhaps an exercise in composition, emulating the general style of an Aristophanic comedy. Written below, and apparently after, two Greek inscriptions (which translate as 'I trust to see the goods of the Lord in the land of the living' [Psalm 26:13], and 'The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord' [Psalm 110:10]). [\[Image\]](#)

Physical Description

Paper, with parchment for the innermost and usually also the outermost bifolia of each quire; c.210 x c.145 mm.; the watermark is not easily visible, but seems to be the head of a cow (the ears extending sideways, rather than horns upwards) with a line rising from the head crossed with an 'X'.

ff. iii (old parchment) + 188 + i (old parchment); foliated 1, 2a, 2b, 3-191, in modern pencil except for a few leaves near the end, which are foliated in 19th-century ink.

Quires of 12 or 16 leaves each: 1-5¹² (fols. 3-62), 6-13¹⁶ (fols. 63-190); preceding these quires is a pastedown (unfoliated), a bifolium (ff. 1-2a) and a wide stub conjoint with the pastedown (f. 2b); following these quires is a bifolium, of which the second leaf is the pastedown; catchwords survive sporadically.

Ruled in blind for 18 lines of text per page, written in a typical minuscule script of the period, with cursive features; the first letter of each verse in red; spaces left for two-line initials.

Secundo folio: '[᾿]απο]λεισθε ᾿εζ' [Ps. 2:12]

Binding

15th-century English (Oxford?) binding. Sewn on four slit thongs, and laced into oak boards covered with white (now dirty) skin; the front pastedown and conjoint stub are part of a re-used 15th-century English account roll in Latin relating to land, mentioning 'Westoxon[...]'(?); with two clasps at the fore-edge, fastening from top to bottom; the straps missing. [\[Image\]](#)

Provenance

1. Inscribed in the 15th century 'Maphe(us) Vegi(us)' above an inscription which appears to read: 'Si te gallicum dico, non ergo sabellu(m). | Accentu(m) cu(m) no(n) gallica lingua (sic) colat' next to which is 'quod barbar. | sat' [sunt?] galli' (fol. 2av; similar inscriptions on 2bv). [\[Image\]](#)
2. Lionel Gardiner, 16th century: inscribed 'lionellus gardinerus' (f. 2bv), 'Lyonell gardiner ys ryghtwys Awn(er) of thys boke' (fol. 188r). [\[Image\]](#)
3. Signed(?) with a cipher composed of astrological symbols, the first three representing Libra, Leo, and Mars, the next two uncertain, the following one also uncertain but probably Capricorn, and ending Sun, Venus, Venus, Leo, Mars, Scorpio (fol. 190v); perhaps representing a five-letter forename and seven-letter surname (converted to numerals they can be represented as 12345 6788239); below 'ο θεος ο θεος' (sic) [\[Image\]](#), which also occurs on fol. 191v. [\[Image\]](#)
4. ? John Covel (/Covell/Colvill) (1638-1722) (on whom see *DNB*): perhaps responsible the numbering in arabic numerals in the margin next to each Psalm, and for inserting 'Τέλος των ψάλμων τς Δαβιδ' at the end of Ps. 150, and 'ψάλμός αυ'τόγραφος Δ'αβιδ' next to the supernumerary psalm.
5. Inscribed between 1678 and 1706 with a note referring to Thomas Gale's Latin and Greek edition (Oxford, 1678) of the Psalms from the Codex Alexandrinus: 'Hæc Versio Gr. Psalmorum est | ex Cod. Alexandrino Antiquijs | Bibliothec. Reg^æ. quj pridem | (n. A.D. 1678) Oxonijs editus est | quam Edit. hæc Versio sequitur κατὰ ποδᾶ'(fol. 2v); 'Psalterium Grecum:.' (fol. 3r). [\[Image\]](#)
6. Dr. Hugh Todd (1658?-1728) (on whom see *DNB*; cf. MSS. 210 and 282).
7. Queen's College: not included in Langbaine's mid 17th-century catalogue, but acquired by 1706, since it is mentioned on 19 November of that year by Hearne: 'In Queen's College Library is an old *Greek MS*^t (as Dr Hudson tells me) containing the *Psalms*, given by D^f Todd. At y^e beginning is a *memorandum* by some one y^t he thought it to be transcr[i]bed from the *Alexandrian* copy; w^{ch} D^f Hudson much doubts ...' (C. E. Doble, *Remarks and collections of Thomas Hearne*, I, OHS II (Oxford, 1885), pp. 308 and 392); inscribed with the former shelfmark 'P. 9' (upper pastedown; cf. spine). The name 'H. Topping' is formed on fol. 181v by a series of perforations in the paper; the College Archivist kindly informs me that he can find no record of a Queen's student of this name. [\[Image\]](#)

I am grateful to Scot McKendrick for considerable help with this MS.

Status: Draft