

The Secrets of a Sixteenth-Century Psalter: In Praise of Circumstances¹

Magdalena Charzyńska-Wójcik
John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin

Abstract

The paper deals with the first English Psalter which appeared in print. It was published in the turbulent times of the early Reformation in 1530. The article discusses the details of the publication: the authors of the Latin translation and its English rendition, the printer's name and the place of the publication so carefully protected at the time of its production. It aims not only at presenting the genuine people and places hidden behind the fake information but also tries to uncover the motivations for the assumed pseudonyms.

Keywords: English Psalter, biblical translation, Latin Psalters, pseudonymity, Reformation

Abstrakt

Tematem artykułu jest pierwszy angielski Psalterz, który ukazał się drukiem. Opublikowany został w burzliwym okresie wczesnej Reformacji w 1530 roku. Dyskusja poświęcona jest szczegółom publikacji: autorom łacińskiego przekładu i jego angielskiego tłumaczenia, postaci drukarza i miejsca publikacji, których tożsamość była pieczołowicie chroniona. Ma na celu nie tylko ukazanie prawdziwych ludzi i miejsc ukrytych za fałszy-

¹ I would like to thank Dr Jerzy Wójcik for insightful comments on an earlier draft of this paper and Kinga Lis for helping me with historical French data.

wymi informacjami, ale także stara się odkryć motywacje, dla których wybrano takie a nie inne pseudonimy.

Słowa kluczowe: Psalterz angielski, tłumaczenia Biblii, łacińskie Psalterze, pseudonimowość, Reformacja

1. Introduction

It is a truism that a careful investigation into the cultural and historical context of any text is a prerequisite for a serious study of any of its aspects, but that the investigation can be fascinating in itself is perhaps not equally obvious though nonetheless true. Nowhere is the impression more accurate than in the case of texts in manuscript form, which invariably hold the modern reader in amazement at the collected effort of the generations of monks, private owners and careful users of these books thanks to which the books escaped floods and fires, acquired stains, lost pages, and received glosses and corrections, each with its own significance and a story to tell. Early printed books, though markedly less exotic, often prove no less mysterious. They are, in the first place, about 500 years old and they also must have escaped calamities and survived disasters because they were considered precious enough to have been carefully preserved and protected. Secondly, the material details of these early editions are surprisingly different from the modern standard and reflect the manuscript tradition to a much greater extent than they represent the culture of print.² Finally, their production coincides with a religious upheaval for which the newly introduced printing press was a powerful instrument. As such, they

² The most striking examples of the continuity between the manuscript culture and the early culture of print are the absence of title pages and pagination, and the continued use of vellum (rather than paper) on certain occasions. Early printers, in the same manner as scribes, did not identify themselves in their books and left blank spaces for the initials and rubrics to be filled in manually (Hotchkiss and Robinson 2008, 2). Moreover, the earliest printers cut different fonts for individual publications in an attempt to imitate the handwriting style typical of the books they were producing. As noted by Parkes (1993/2012, 50), “typefaces reflected the different scripts used for different kinds of books because that was what books looked like.”

often hold secrets deliberately planted there by the people engaged in the publication. And it is this aspect that I intend to focus on in this paper. In particular, I am going to concentrate on the first English-language Psalter translation that appeared in print. The date of the publication, as stated in the colophon at the end of the book, is “the yeare of oure lorde 1530, the 16 daye of January” and that is just about the only aspect of the publication that does not seem to raise suspicion.³ The remaining details presented there constitute attempts to confuse the trail.

The first page of the book tells us: “The Psalter of Daud in Englishe purely a[n]d faithfully tra[n]slated aftir the texte of feline: euery Psalme hauynge his argument before, declarynge breffly thentente [and] substance of the wholl Psalme”. As can be seen, this is more than just a title – it is in fact a description of the contents of the book, from which we learn that the Psalter is translated “aftir the texte of feline”. But what is the *feline* text? The translator introduces himself at the second page: “Johan Aleph greeteth the Englishe nacioun”, but this name is not associated with any other book, so, very likely, Johan Aleph never existed. And finally, in the colophon, next to the date of the printing, we find the printer’s name: Francis Foye (as reported in the eighteenth-century publications), a name not associated with any printing house, or with any printing concession. Besides, where would one expect to look for the records, considering that the place of the publication preceding the printer’s name is Argentine? The existence of records concerning the printing profession in early sixteenth-century Argentine would shake our view of the modern world.

In contrast to the date of publication, which is the only neutral aspect of the religious publication in Reformation Europe, the remaining details, i.e. the indication as to the original text, the name of the translator and the identity of the printer conveyed jointly by the place of the publication and the name, carried important information concerning the target readership of the production and at the same time clearly identified the religious sympathies of the people involved in the publication. It is, therefore, not surprising that these particulars were often carefully protected in the interest of wider book circulation (no clear indication as to which party it sided with) and in an attempt to protect the safety of its producers and readers. Interestingly, the protection more often

³ It has been pointed out to me by Jerzy Wójcik (p.c.) that the information concerning the year of the publication should in fact be interpreted carefully as it needs to be remembered that the year was reckoned from different dates in England and on the Continent. Consequently, some publication dates (those falling between December and March) should be viewed with caution.

took the form of false information than no information at all: “[t]here is a noticeable increase in the use of pseudonyms as a form of name suppression at the end of the [sixteenth] century, which perhaps indicates that false information was growing more popular than missing information” (North 2003, 65). It is therefore not surprising that “the use of false standards became a standard in itself” (North 2003, 64). Of course, false information concerning the author (a concept dangerous in itself in the medieval and early modern period) was not an innovation introduced by the print culture – the use of pseudonyms and Latinized forms of names was also a familiar attribution technique in the culture of manuscripts (North 1994, 146; 2003, 66) but with the rise of new religious oppositions, they acquired new importance.

The false information which protected the identity of the people whose names it concealed was not only a promise of safety (however fallacious) but also the locus of word-play, which in some cases has kept the researches in suspense to this very day and in others has gone completely unnoticed. So, while most of the false information has been correctly decoded by now, it is not always clear what inspired the particular choices of the false information. And this, as I intend to show, offers ground for truly captivating investigations. In the remaining part of the paper I will, therefore, not only unveil the secrets of the publication details of the first English-language Psalter that appeared in print but will also try to identify the inspirations behind the individual choices. I will start from the original underlying the English translation, described on the title page as “the text of feline”. What it denoted and why will be discussed in detail in Section 2. The identity of the translator who introduces himself to the reader as “Johan Aleph” will be disclosed in Section 3, together with the review of the accompanying controversy. Section 4 will reveal the true identity of the printer. And finally, Section 5 will be devoted to interpreting Argentine as the place of publication. The conclusions following from the discussion will follow in Section 6.

2. *Feline* Latin

Before going on to the details of the *feline* text of the Psalter, I need to place it in a broader context of the Psalter text in medieval and early modern England, which, for that matter, was more or less the same for the whole Christian Europe.

The history of the Psalter, which, ever since its compilation, has been the most popular book of the Old Testament and one of the very few (if not the single) unifying element of the Jewish and Christian praying practices (cf. for example Taft 1986 and Schaper

2014), is a history of its transmission, translation,⁴ and reception. As early as in the 3 r.-2nd century BC it was translated into Greek, as part of the Greek translation of the Bible known as the Septuagint (cf. for example Roberts 1970/2008, Wasserstein and Wasserstein 2009, Schaper 2014). This Greek text was translated into Latin about the 2nd century AD.⁵

The Latin translation circulated in a variety of manuscripts which differed so substantially from each other that by the 4th century a revision was felt necessary that would bring them into line. The task was entrusted by the Pope to Jerome. Comparing the circulating manuscripts against the Septuagint, Jerome produced a quick and, naturally, cursory, revision of the Psalter text and the resulting version is known as the *Romanum* or the Roman Psalter.⁶ Realizing the little textual value of this version, Jerome undertook an effort to improve it: soon after producing the *Romanum*, when in Bethlehem, he had access to Origen's Hexapla,⁷ which was available in a nearby library of Caesarea in Palestine (Rebenich 1993, 52). The version produced there is known as the *Gallicanum* or the Gallican Psalter. Still dissatisfied with the quality of the text and the fact that it represented two steps away from the original (as most other books of the Old Testament), Jerome devoted himself to a study of Hebrew, which allowed him to produce his final version of the Psalter. This time it was not a revision of the existing text but a genuine original translation of the Hebrew Psalter from a pre-Masoretic text, thus circumventing the Septuagint Psalter and the early Latin translations. This Psalter is known

⁴ In this paper I will focus exclusively on the line of translations leading from the Hebrew original to its English renditions, disregarding important early translations into other languages.

⁵ Cf. Charzyńska-Wójcik (2013) for a detailed discussion on these translations and the relevant nomenclature.

⁶ The correctness of identifying the *Romanum* with the first revision performed by Jerome has been questioned in the literature. In particular, de Bruyne (1930) first argues against identifying the *Romanum* with Jerome's first revision. However, as noted by Sutcliffe (1969, 84–85), and I agree with him, the evidence presented by de Bruyne is not compelling. Interestingly, none of the authors challenging the identification of Jerome with the *Romanum* (cf. for example Jellicoe 1968, 252 and Rebenich 1993, 52) offers any evidence in favour of their opinion, referring the reader to de Bruyne instead.

⁷ The *Hexapla* is a third-century edition of the Old Testament, containing six parallel versions of the whole Old Testament and for some books (including the Psalms) three additional versions. The entire work filled 7000 pages and was textually very well informed, hence it was consulted by many eminent scholars. The 1875 edition of the relevant part of the *Hexapla* is available in full at <https://archive.org/details/origenhexapla02unknuoft>.

as the *Hebraicum*, *Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos* or, somewhat confusingly, as the Hebrew Psalter, although it is also a Latin text.⁸

All three versions of Jerome's Latin Psalters have survived to the present day but each enjoyed different popularity, in fact not reflecting its textual value.⁹ The version that was most widely accepted and further popularized due to the Benedictine reform of the tenth century and ultimately became the Psalter of the Vulgate (at the Council of Trent in 1546) was the *Gallicanum*. So, in the Middle Ages the denotation *Latin Psalter*, though not completely unequivocal, with great probability points the Gallican Psalter. Therefore, medieval attempts at Psalter translations into the vernacular (intended and allowed exclusively for non-liturgical purposes) are based on Jerome's Latin Psalter, predominantly the *Gallicanum*.¹⁰

The situation changes in the early modern period, with the movement *ad fontes*, which affects both religious and secular texts, to the effect that the "intervening" medieval texts are sidestepped (Fergusson 2007, 45). Consequently, the Hebrew text of the Psalter (the whole Old Testament in fact) is "rediscovered" by European hebraists who produce new translations of the text into Latin – the language of scholarly discourse. The new Latin translations of the Psalter¹¹ are, naturally, part of the Reformation movement, since the only Bible of the Catholic Church is the Latin Vulgate (for the most part due to the efforts of Jerome), a fact so obvious that it only received official recognition in 1546 in reaction to the religious turmoil experienced by Europe in the sixteenth century.

In effect, while the term *medieval Latin Psalter* was practically synonymous with the *Gallicanum*,¹² this identification disappears in the early modern period: now there is an explosion in publications of Latin Psalters and these represent both Jerome's Latin text and new Latin translations. And, since one of the defining features of the Reformation

⁸ In contrast to the general view, Allgeier (1940) believes the *Hebraicum* to be Jerome's first version of the Psalter and the *Gallicanum* to represent the last Psalter associated with Jerome.

⁹ For details, see Charzyńska-Wójcik (2013).

¹⁰ A notable exception is the Paris Psalter – the first translation (as opposed to gloss) of the Psalter into English. Performed by king Alfred the Great in the 9th century, it is (predominantly) based on the text of the *Romanum*. For an extensive discussion of the Latin text underlying the translation, see O'Neill (2001).

¹¹ For example, important new Latin translations of the Psalter are those prepared by Felix Pratensis (1515), Sanctes Pagninus (1527–1528) and Johannes Campensis (1532).

¹² It has to be added, though, that the *Romanum* enjoyed popularity in Rome and its environs and was retained there for much longer than elsewhere.

movement is offering the Biblical text in vernacular languages, so the new Latin translations of the Hebrew Psalter immediately start to be translated into various European languages. And it is against this background that we need to interpret “the *texte of feline*”.

It is clear that the *feline* text is not the text of Jerome, as publications of Jerome’s Latin Psalter, produced by the commission of the Catholic Church, had no additional information concerning the Latin text because there was no variety allowed in this respect. Therefore, the description *feline* points to a new Latin text.

The text has for a long time been correctly identified with Martin Bucer, who published a new Latin translation of the Hebrew Masoretic text of the Psalter¹³ with a commentary in 1529.¹⁴ This identification can already be found in the relevant literature in the eighteenth century, as testified by Ames, Gifford, and Ducarel (1778, 43), who provide the entry for the 1530 Psalter discussed here in the following form: “Psalter translated from the Latin Version of Feline, i.e. Martin Bucer”. And, while the identification of the author of the Latin translation leaves no doubt, there are some associated questions that call for an answer. First of all, why should Martin Bucer’s Psalter be referred to as *feline* text?

Martin Bucer, a German theologian, lectured extensively on the Psalms in the academic year 1528/1529 and in the autumn of 1529 published the aforementioned translation. Due to the presence of the commentary, it was a huge in-quatro volume of 400 leaves. The book came out just in time to be introduced during the Frankfurt September book fair at the stall of Georg Ulricher of Andlau, a Strasbourg printer (Hobbs 1984a). It bore the name of Aretius Felinus,¹⁵ the information that it was completed in Lyons and was

¹³ As noted by Hobbs (1994, 165), “Bucer was a student of Hebrew of significant ability [...] with the firm conviction that the Masoretic text of the Hebrew was of utmost reliability, in contrast with the abysmal state of the transmission of the Greek Septuagint”.

¹⁴ In this respect it should perhaps be mentioned that Lewis (1739, 87), discussing the Psalter, mistakenly gives the publication date as 1526. That this is a mistake rather than a deliberate divergence is best testified by the fact that the author offers no further comment on the matter. In effect, the mistaken date is repeated in subsequent editions.

¹⁵ Lee (1892, 219) in the *Dictionary of National Biography* in the entry for George Joye presents Bucer’s pseudonym as *Aretinus Felinus* rather than *Aretius Felinus*, a mistake explicitly pointed out in Hopf (1946, 208). The form *Aretinus Felinus* frequently repeats in the literature on the topic, see, for example, Peabody and Richardson (1898, 138) or Daiches (1968, 48) but the perpetuation of the mistake cannot be (fully) ascribed to its appearance in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The name *Aretinus* (not *Aretius*) *Felinus* is quoted with reference to Bucer long before the publication of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, see, for example, Starowolski (1625), de Murga (1684) and Chambers’s *Encyclopædia* of 1868.

dedicated to the Dolphin of Lyons. The text enjoyed immense popularity, hence three more editions came out in 1532, 1547 and 1554.¹⁶

The identification of Aretius Felinus with Martin Bucer is so clear since in the summer of 1529 Bucer wrote a letter to Huldrych Zwingli, where he explained his decision to publish the Psalm translation with commentary pseudonymously:

I am employed in an exposition of the Psalms, which, at the urgent request of our brethren in France and Lower Germany, I propose to publish under a foreign name, that the work may be bought by their bookseller. For it is a capital crime to import into these countries the books which bear our names (translated by M’Crie, 1827, 36).

As explained in Hobbs,

Bucer had been deeply embroiled in the eucharistic controversy among evangelicals. He was determined not to foreclose any potential readership of this distinctive new interpretation by its association with one side of the party strife. He was of course also aware that in certain regions of Europe, possession of books bearing his name was *prima facie* evidence of heresy. [...] [T]he commentary sold widely in solidly Catholic lands as well as among evangelicals (1994, 166).

The decision to publish the book under a pseudonym first resulted in widespread popularity of Bucer’s work but when the truth came out, which was still in his lifetime, “the condemnation was heaped upon him for the strategem by many, including no less a person than Erasmus” (Winston 2006, 69, based on Eells 1931, 129–130). Naturally, Bucer’s text soon appeared on the Index of Prohibited Books of the Catholic Church (Burnett 2012, 243).

Now the motives for the anonymous publication of Bucer’s Latin translation of the Psalter are clear and they encompass both reasons mentioned in the Introduction. It was both a quest for safety (including that of the readers, owners, sellers and importers of the book) and an attempt to broaden the circulation of the book. And while the choice

¹⁶ The first of these, i.e. the 1532 text, is in fact a revision, since the original translation was characterised by “such paraphrastic liberty that it required some justification and a few retractions in the second edition” (Hobbs 1984a, 485). And it was the revised edition that enjoyed two more printings: in 1547 and 1554 (Charzyńska-Wójcik 2013, 99).

of a pseudonym does not seem a relevant question in this respect, on closer inspection it appears to be worth further consideration; first of all, because Bucer himself in the aforementioned letter to Zwingli declares that:

I therefore pretend that I am a Frenchman, and, if I do not change my mind, will send forth the book as the production of Aretius Felinus, which indeed, is my name and surname, the former in Greek and the latter in Latin (translated by M’Crie, 1827, 36).

A slightly different translation appears in Hobbs (1984b).

Moved by the brothers and sisters of France and Lower Germany, I decided to issue a commentary on the Psalms, using a different name so that the work may be purchased by booksellers there. For it is a capital offence to import volumes bearing our names into those regions. So I pretend to be a Frenchman, and take pains to put across the truth in the various commonplaces under the authority of the Fathers – admittedly stuffing in a good deal out of context. Unless I change my mind, I will make it the work of one “Aretius Felinus,” which is, for that matter, my name in Greek and surname in Latin (Hobbs 1984b, 91).

Most scholars dealing with Bucer’s Latin Psalms approach this production from a theological perspective and, therefore, do not focus on the linguistic significance of Bucer’s choice of the pseudonym. They limit themselves to commenting upon the reasons for the pseudonymous character of the publication rather than investigating the linguistic nature of the relationship between Martin Bucer and Aretius Felinus. But many authors address this issue, as indicated by the fact that both translations given above have been re-quoted with an amazing frequency. It has to be admitted, though, that the interest is, in most cases superficial, as most authors taking up the topic limit themselves to re-quoting the passage from either translation, starting from the words “Aretius Felinus” and do not offer any further comment. Some scholars, however, exhibit intense interest in the riddle and quite rightly so, because while the relationship between *Martin* and *Aretius* seems obvious – mediated via the Latin-Greek *Mars-Ares* paradigm, how it can be extended to explain the case of *Bucer* and *Felinus* is not clear at all.

In effect, it seems that while the relevant passage from Bucer’s letter explains the choice of the name in a straightforward manner, the surname continues to puzzle successive generations of scholars. From the quotes provided above it follows that *felinus* is a Latin word meaning ‘pertaining/belonging to; connected with; derived/coming from

a cat; marten/ferret/polecat/wild cat'. But how does *feline* relate to *Bucer*? In the following, I will briefly review the different solutions to the puzzle which I encountered in the literature.

The oldest source dealing with the issue that I managed to identify comes from 1735, so it predates M'Crée's translation. It is Bayle's *Dictionary Historical and Critical*, where page 177 of the second volume explains that "*Martin Bucer*, being very desirous to have his Commentaries on the *Psalms* read by the Catholics, published them under the Name of *Aretius*, which is the *Greek Word* answering to *Martin*, and *Felinus*, a *German Word* expressing the Signification of *Bucer* in *Latin*".¹⁷

Before assessing the linguistic correctness of this proposal let us first consider the plausibility of Bucer, a German theologian, selecting a pseudonym pointing to a German origin. As has already been mentioned, Bucer wanted to pass as a Frenchman so he dedicated the book to the Dolphin of Lyons. Moreover, according to Winston (2006, 69), "[t]hroughout the commentary, Bucer judiciously sprinkled French proverbs and sayings thus reinforcing the impression that this was the work of a Frenchman". The whole elaborate camouflage would have immediately been destroyed by the choice of a German surname. Besides, it is not consonant with what we learn about the choice of the pseudonym from Bucer's letter. As for the linguistic correctness of Bayle's claim, it has to be noted, first of all, that it is not clear what is meant by "the Signification of *Bucer* in *Latin*", as *Bucer* is not a Latin word. And, secondly, the historical dictionaries of German (cf. Benecke, Müller and Zarncke 1854–1866, Diefenbach and Wülcker 1885) do not contain an entry with the headword FELINUS. In effect, the proposed interpretation of the riddle has to be viewed as incorrect.

An attempt at solving Bucer's riddle that follows a completely different line of reasoning comes from the nineteenth century. It is an entry in the Edinburgh and London edition of Chambers's Encyclopaedia of 1868, in the second volume under Bucer (on page 394), which provides the following information: "[h]is real name was *Kuhhorn* (cow-horn), but in accordance with the fashion of his time among scholars, he changed it into its Greek equivalent, Bucer being derived from *bous*, an ox, and *keras*, a horn". Because Bucer's biographical details are relatively well-documented, it is possible to verify this claim. Eells (1931, 1) and Greschat (2004, 11), examining the material and social status of Bucer's family home, mention the fact that Martin Bucer's grandfather and fa-

¹⁷ All capitalizations used in the original have been retained here, both as far as capitalizations and italicizations are concerned.

ther, either both coopers by trade (Greschat 2004) or a cooper and a shoemaker respectively (Eells 1931), were called Claus Butzer (Sr.) and Claus Butzer (Jr.).¹⁸ This certainly excludes the possibility that Bucer was not Martin's real surname. The explanation from Chambers's Encyclopaedia, however, is neither useless, nor totally inaccurate: it does provide the correct etymology of the Latin word *bucerus* 'ox-horned; horned' as being derived from Greek (Valpy 1828). It is important to note at this point that Bucer (indeed following the fashion of the day) latinized his name in Latin publications. In effect, he signed himself there as Martinus Bucerus. That the resulting form of his surname is identical with an existing Latin word *bucerus*, is, however, purely accidental.

What still remains to be done is to establish the relationship between *bucer(us)* and *felinus*, starting from determining what languages we are dealing with in the first place. While *bucerus* is a Latin word, we may just as well be dealing with *Bucer*, i.e. a German word, as has in fact been suggested by Roussel (1989, 163):

En 1529 et 1532, Martin Bucer commente le Psautier sous le nom de «Aretius Felinus». La séquence pourrait être celle-ci: «Martin / Mars / grec : Arès / latin : Aretius» : «Bucer / en dialecte : Butzer/Putzer/Putzen / association de l'idée de 'nettoyage' au 'chat' / latin Felinus (de chat)» – Élémentaire mon cher Watson! (Roussel 1989, 163).

The above suggestion relies on a line of associations which starts from *bucer* and through a phonetic similarity takes us to *putzen* 'to clean', which, in turn, invokes the idea of a cat, from where there is a single step to Latin *feline*. Naturally, it has to be treated with a pinch of salt, as the items juxtaposed above do not represent linguistic equivalents. Interestingly, Roussel is not the first researcher to have proposed this line of associations: Bunsen (1859) and Eells (1931, 68–69)¹⁹ both suggest the same, but since neither of the two sources is acknowledged by Roussel, it seems that his proposal arose independently.

In effect, we have seen three different suggestions concerning the interpretation of the relationship between *Felinus* and *Bucer*, each based on a different assumption: with *felinus* representing a German word (Bayle 1735), *bucerus* being a latinized, translated

¹⁸ This is the older form of Bucer's surname, which he actually used himself in some German publications. It may be of interest to note that some modern researchers also use this older form of Bucer's surname in discussing his works (cf. for example Torrance 1956/1996).

¹⁹ Eells's assertion is further repeated in Tinsley (2001, 394).

surname (Chambers's Encyclopaedia of 1868), and *bucer* being a German word (Roussel 1989). Each assumption has been shown to be fallacious, which leaves the puzzle unsolved.

From what has been said so far, it seems that there still are some promising directions of the investigation which are worth pursuing. First of all, note that with all the effort Bucer undertook to pass himself on as a Frenchman, it is perhaps reasonable to assume that *felinus* represents a Latinised form of a French name. However, the relevant historical dictionaries of French (Godefroy's *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle*, *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, Huguet's *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle* and *Le Grand Robert de la langue française*) do not offer an immediate solution to the puzzle. The headword *felin*, although listed in Godefroy's and Huguet's dictionaries, appears there with the meanings which do not correspond to the sense of Latin *bucerus* in any way,²⁰ whereas the word is not present in *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*. However, an almost identical word, only with the initial consonant being voiced, i.e. *velin*, which can be found in the dictionaries of the period with the sense 'bovine', very probably underlay Bucer's charade, mediated by the reversed German <f> – [v] paradigm.

Another interesting line of investigation would be to return to the original Latin letter of Bucer to Zwingli and see what is really said there, without relying on second-hand translations. The text is available in an edition of Zwingli's correspondence (1842, volume VIII, 316): "Aretii Felini, quod meum nomen et cognomen est; sed illud Graece, hoc Latine; librum, nisi mutavero, faciam". In effect, while it is perfectly legitimate to interpret the explanation along the lines presented above after M'Crie (1827) and Hobbs (1984b), it is also possible to interpret Bucer's intention in a different way. In particular, that by referring to the name and surname, one being in Greek and the other in Latin, Bucer has in mind the etymology of the pseudonym only, and not the fact that one represents his real name (*Martin*, or its latinized version *Martinus*) in Greek and his real surname (*Bucer* or *Bucerus*) in Latin. It is easy to think so, since the relationship between *Martin* and *Aretius* seems to confirm this interpretation. Note, however, that it is equally likely that both elements of the pseudonym correspond to Bucer's real name, *Martin(us)*, with one (*Aretius*) being a Greek-derived item and the other (*Felinus*) – a Latin item. An examina-

²⁰ Godefroy (1881) defines the word *felin* as '(of) iron' and informs that it could also represent *ferlin* 'small weight used by silver- and goldsmiths and people working in mints', whereas in Huguet's (1925–1967) dictionary *felin* is explained to mean 'the twentieth part of an ounce' (the sense 'feline' is first recorded only in 1792, cf. *Le Grand Robert de la langue française*).

tion of the entry *MARTINUS* in Latham's dictionary of Medieval Latin from British and Irish sources shows that the word could denote 'a marten' or 'marten-fur', which would accord very well with the sense of Latin *felinus* 'of a marten'. There is, however, as in all explanations proposed so far, one minor problem. In particular, *Martinus* had the presented signification in English medieval Latin but in view of the lack of a comprehensive dictionary of German medieval Latin, I have no way of verifying whether it could denote the same there. And while it is true that Bucer spent some time in England, so he had an opportunity to learn that, the choice of the pseudonym preceded his stay in England by several years.²¹

An argument in favour of this interpretation, despite its obvious flaw, might be that as a skilled linguist, with a good knowledge of Hebrew and Latin, and an ability to fake French medieval Latin in his commentary to the Psalms, he is very likely to have been familiar the meaning of the latinized form of his name in British medieval Latin, even if the sense were not available in German medieval Latin. At this point, let us leave the matter open for further investigations.²²

3. Johan Aleph

In contrast to the *feline* controversy, when it comes to the author of the English translation of Bucer's Latin text, there has long been a consensus in the literature as to the identity of the translator, who introduces himself at the top of the second page as Johan Aleph. "This was apparently only the first of a number of pseudonyms that George Joye would

²¹ As noted by Dellar (1992) and Greschat (2004), Bucer went to live in England in 1549, where he stayed as Cranmer's guest, with whom he had been in correspondence for several years. He died in March 1551.

²² Chamberlin (1991, 268) implies yet another connection between Feline Latin and Bucer. He describes the Psalter as "[t]ranslated from the Latin of Friar Felix (Martin Bucer), an Augustinian Monk; printed in 1515". This implies that *Feline* is due to the fact that Bucer's monastic name was *Felix*. This is clearly a mistake since the only Friar Felix associated with the translation of the Psalter published in 1515 is Friar Felix Pratensis. Felix Pratensis and Martin Bucer were two different people, with completely different biographies whose details are relatively well known to us. Suffice it to say that Felix Pratensis was a Christian Jew, a celebrated editor of the Hebrew text of the Bible, who died 1539. In contrast, Martin Bucer was a German theologian and died in 1551. The former was an Augustinian, the latter (for some time) a Dominican. Each translated the Psalter from Hebrew into English: the former in 1515 and the latter in 1529.

employ during his career as clandestine evangelical propagandist” (Hobbs 1994, 163). Nowadays, as noted by Hobbs (1994, 163), there is no need “to rehearse the evidence demonstrating that Aleph was in fact Joye”.²³ However, the identity of George Joye as the author of the translation has caused quite a lot of confusion for more than one reason.

In the first place, Lewis (1739, 86) presents the translation as the work of Johan Aleph, not questioning the declared identity of the translator. Townley (1821, vol. II, 393) discussing the translation, gives the name of the translator in inverted commas and does not comment upon his identity. Yet, in the following text concerning George Joye there is no indication as to the possibility of there being one and the same person behind these two surnames. The same can be observed in Cotton (1821, 157). Next, it was suggested by Scholtz (1841, 64) that Johan Aleph might have been the real name of the translator: “it is *possible* that this was the real name of a translator; a Sir Johan Aileph was one of the sheriffs of London not many years subsequent to this period, and this may have been edited by one and the same family” (emphasis original). Bastow (1859, 37) says “the translator, who rendered from the Latin, calls himself Johan Aleph”. Then he goes on to discussing the works of George Joye, again not mentioning the possibility that the two names denote one person.

Joye’s ploy to conceal his identity was inadvertently enhanced by a series of circumstances which gave rise to some confusion concerning his 1530 work. In particular, Joye made another translation of the Psalter, which was published in 1534, and the two English texts differed so significantly that it led some researchers to excluding the possibility of the common authorship of the two English texts (Lee 1892, 219–220). Since the 1534 translation (published in Antwerp) bears Joye’s name (given on the first page and repeated at the end of the text), while the 1530 does not, the identity of Johan Aleph was naturally subject to question. Matters were made even more complex by the publication of the 1530 version in London in 1534, by the printer Thomas Godfray. This time, in contrast to the 1530 printing, the edition is anonymous.

As noted above, it has been clarified beyond any doubt that Joye is the author of both translations. The observed textual differences reflect the differences in the underlying text: the 1530 translation was based on Bucer’s Latin translation, but in the 1534 version Joye translated Zwingli’s Latin Psalter (Butterworth 1953, 96, Juhász 2002, 109), though over the centuries researchers pointed to other new Latin translations as the source

²³ It seems, however, that the evidence in favour of Joye’s authorship is generally not known and all it would be more than interesting to see it “rehearsed”. It is, to the best of my knowledge, going to be presented in Wójcik (in prep.).

of the 1534 text. For example Lewis (1739, 88), Townley (1821, vol. II, 393), and Watson (1974, column 1897) suggest that the 1534 text is based on the Latin of Felix Pratensis,²⁴ while Lee (1892, 219–220) points to Bucer’s Latin as the underlying text of both the 1530 and 1534 translations. And while no scholarly doubt remains any longer as to the authorship of the 1530 version signed by Johan Aleph, some present-day publications refer to this translation as *probably* made by Joye.

4. Printer

When it comes to the printer who released the 1530 Psalter, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century publications present his name as “Francis Foye” (cf. Lewis 1739, 86, Ames, Gifford and Ducarel 1778, 43, Ames and Herbert 1790, 1538, Beloe 1807, 319, Timperley 1838, 130). That this is a misreading of the printer’s surname is obvious upon an examination of the letter shapes used by the printer: the letter misread as <y> (hence “Foye”) represents <x> beyond any doubt, so the surname should be read as “Foxe”.

However, as is clear by now, the colophon is more likely to contain a pseudonym than to reveal the genuine identity of the printer. This is indeed true, as pointed out by Butterworth (1953), Hobbs, (1994), Juhász (2002) and Fudge (2007), who all identify the printer as Martyne Emperowr. Interestingly, Emperowr also printed Joye’s next translation of 1534, which, in contrast to the 1530 publication, both Joye and the printer signed with their real names.

It is important to emphasize at this point that although the name “Martyne Emperowr” presents the genuine identity of the printer, a native of France, he is not to be permanently associated with this form of name and surname. His genuine surname was slightly different: we hear of the printer in 1525, when he prints his first book in Antwerp (where he worked until his death in 1536) – *Psautier de David* and he signs his name there as “Martin Lempereur” (Vervliet 1968, 23). His name appears in Latin books as “Martinus Caesar”, while in volumes printed in Dutch he introduces himself as “Marten” or “Merten de Keyser”. Finally, in English publications his name appears as “Martyne²⁵ Emperowr”.

²⁴ It is perhaps this suggestion in conjunction with the overall confusion around the publication details that might have prompted Chamberlin (1991) to interpret *feline* Latin as the Latin of Felix (Pratensis).

²⁵ It is a quirk of history that Joye’s 1534 Psalter’s bibliographical record (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A13409.0001.001?view=toc>) represents his name as “Maryne”, instead of “Martyne”, which is clearly visible in the original publication.

This strategy, although perfectly transparent at the time, seems to cause some confusion nowadays, as some sources point to “Martin” or “Merten de Keyser” as the person whose identity was concealed under the pseudonym of Francis Foxe, at the same time showing Martyne Emperowr as the printer of the 1534 translation, as if the two books were issued by two different printers (Zim 1987, 213–214, Chamberlin 1991, 268).

5. Place of publication

It is now time to discuss the final issue – the place of the publication. As already said, the last page of the book states that it was printed in Argentine. Two things become immediately obvious upon viewing the colophon. First of all, Argentine was not a possible place of publication in the sixteenth century. Secondly, in view of the fact that all the remaining information presented in the book was meant to protect the identity of the people involved, the place of the publication must have been false as well since it was likely to disclose the printer. But if it was meant to confuse the trail, the colophon had to present a possible publication place – an openly false colophon was out of the question. So Argentine must have been a possible publication place in the sixteenth century to play its function. And, as it turns out, Argentine was a very frequent publication place declared in the sixteenth-century colophons. Moreover, even a cursory investigation into the history of printing shows that Argentine printers are credited with having greatly contributed to developing the art of printers’ marks (cf. Roberts 1893/2008).

All this puzzling information is immediately explained by the fact that Argentine is nothing else but a Latin name of Strasbourg, as shown in *Modern Equivalents of Latin Place-names in Early Printed Books*,²⁶ where under the entries ARGENTINA and ARGENTORATUM we find equivalence with Strasbourg. But why do the two names differ so markedly? The first record of Argentoratum comes from 12 BC in reference to a Roman military outpost established near a Celtic village. In the late fourth century it was captured by the Alemani, who lost it in 496 to the Franks. The Franks gave it a Germanic name which best described it: *Strate-burgum*, i.e. ‘the city of the roads/at the crossroads’, with roads to Milan, Trier, and Leiden crossing there (cf. Addison 1839, 161).

The original Latin name continued to be used, often side by side with Strasbourg, see for example a woodcut picture presenting a city view of Strasbourg printed in 1493

²⁶ The correctness of this equivalence is confirmed by Graesse (1909).

by Hartmann Schedel (available at <http://www.vintage-maps.com/en/Antique-Maps/Europe/France/Schedel-France-Strasbourg-Budapest-1493::385.html>) or a street map of the city from the sixteenth century (available at: <http://www.bnu.fr/images/strasbourg-au-xvie-siecle-argenteratum---strassburg>). Both of these present the Latin and the Germanic name of the city on one and the same picture. In effect, at the time of the publication of Joye's Psalter the original name and its Germanic counterpart were perfectly interchangeable. This bilingual tradition, though not transparent nowadays, is cultivated, as evidenced by a postage stamp produced to commemorate the 2000 years of the city in 1988 (cf. <http://heindorffhus.motivsamlar.dk/worldheritage/frame-FranceStrasbourg.htm>). The stamp presents the city seal with both the Latin and the Germanic name, very much like the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century productions mentioned above.

But the place of publication given in the colophon was, as has already been implied, false. The choice of Strasbourg vel Argentine as the false identification of the place might have been caused by the fact that the original edition of Bucer's Latin text underlying the English translation was published there. The real place of the publication of Joye's 1530 Psalter was Antwerp. This becomes clear as soon as the name of the printer is correctly identified. Martin Lempereur's career in printing began in 1517, when he took over his father-in-law's printing house in Paris. In 1525, as a result of the turmoil brought about by Bible translations and printings, he moved to Antwerp, where he established his new printing house and worked till his death in 1536.

6. Conclusion

The objective of the paper was to show that the quest for the circumstances and people that stand behind the emergence of a text can be a fascinating preliminary for an in-depth investigation of the text itself but it also offers an invaluable insight into the textual analyses that follow it. The awareness of Bucer's intention to pass as a Frenchman may have important consequences for the study of his medieval Latin. As is now obvious, the linguistic features of the Latin commentary accompanying the Psalter translation should be interpreted as characteristic of French rather than German medieval Latin, though the text was produced by a German author. Likewise, it is important to know that Bucer's 1529 Latin text of the Psalter was brought more into line with the Hebrew original and appeared in a revised version in subsequent editions in 1532, 1547 and 1554. This knowledge is crucial when one wants to focus on the linguistic features of Joye's

translation. These, as is now clear, need to be related to the 1529 text rather than to its revised versions, which are readily available in digitized form. Joye's linguistic choices and his translation strategy can, in turn, be compared in an insightful way with those made by Joye in his 1534 translation of Zwingli's Latin text, provided we know that the two translations were executed by the same person but were based on a different text, rather than the other way around, as was believed for some time.²⁷

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that while the false information presented in the 1530 Psalter has now been correctly decoded,²⁸ the actual motives behind the charades devised almost 500 years ago still hold some secrets. These, as has been shown, continue to fascinate (and confuse) researchers. At this place, I would like to pose one more question that has so far remained unasked: is Aleph, as the choice of Joye's pseudonym, unrelated to Bucer's word-game or is it meaningful? Does the fact that Aleph is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and its original pictograph represents an 'ox' indicate that Joye actually knew the inside of Bucer's charade, thus pointing to the correctness of the French *veline*-connection suggested in this paper? And, finally, how does the choice of the printer's pseudonym – Foxe – fit in in this respect?

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²⁷ An analysis along these lines, based on a careful edition of Joye's Psalters, is available in Wójcik (in prep.).

²⁸ That 1530 may not have been the actual publication date is argued for in Wójcik (in prep.).

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