

# Scriptural content of the English medieval Book of Hours: Tracing textual traditions of nine lessons from the Book of Job<sup>1\*</sup>

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**Abstract:** This contribution examines nine lessons from the Office of the Dead, found in a group of English translations of the Book of Hours. The text of the lessons comes from six chapters of the Book of Job and therefore constitutes scriptural content of this medieval prayer book. Selected for this analysis are four primers as well as the two vernacular versions of the Bible available at that time, namely the Early and Late Version of the Wycliffite Bible (cf. Dove 2007). As far as the primers are concerned, three of them have received an edition, while New Haven, Yale University Library, MS Beinecke 360, which is examined in this contribution, still remains to be edited and analyzed in depth. This study attempts to establish the textual tradition of its non-psalmic scriptural passages as well as that of other primers. This will be achieved by performing comparative analysis expressed by objective mathematical values, with the results presented in tabular form and illustrated with fragments of the actual text. The analysis performed in this paper will shed some light on the complicated history of scriptural content of the selected English primers.

**Keywords:** Book of Hours, Book of Job, English primers, text similarity measurement, Wycliffe's Bible

## 1. Introduction

The Book of Hours is recognized by many as the most glamorous and popular book owned by the laity in the Middle Ages. This medieval prayer book, often referred to as 'primer',<sup>2</sup> or known by its Latin name 'Horae' (Duffy 2006, 3), was essentially a collection of prayers meant for private devotion in the daily life of

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2 Throughout this text, the terms 'primer' and 'book of hours' will be used interchangeably.

an individual (Scott-Stokes 2006, 1). The origins of books of hours can be traced back to the thirteenth century, and though due to the cost of their production they were initially possessed only by the wealthy, the invention of print in the fifteenth century soon made them available to a wider public (Duffy 2006, 4).

The core of any book of hours were psalms, yet before their content became standardised, primers constituted diverse collections of texts, including scriptural ones, and even today they cannot be easily categorised (Morey 2000, 183; Kennedy 2014, 694). That is not to say, however, that there are no typical elements to be enumerated. On the contrary, at the beginning of most books of hours one can find a calendar noting annual saints' days and celebrations of the Church (Scott-Stokes 2006, 7). The foundation of those prayer books consisted of the Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the fifteen Gradual Psalms and the seven Penitential Psalms, Litany of the Saints, the Office of the Dead. The most complete books of hours also included the Psalms of Commendation, the Placebo and Dirige, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, the Ten Commandments, and the Seven Deadly Sins (Duffy 2006, 6; Scott-Stokes 2006, 7; Morey 2000, 182).

While the main focus of research on primers is usually put on the psalms,<sup>3</sup> this contribution is concerned with other scriptural content of those devotional books, namely the nine lessons from the Book of Job, embodying the anguish felt by those suffering in Purgatory. The lessons are to be found in the Office of the Dead.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Henry Hargreaves reignited interest in a group of manuscripts, English translations of the Book of Hours, by pointing out their connection (or lack thereof) to the later version of the Wycliffite Bible when it comes to the scriptural texts they contain (Hargreaves 1956, 215). Hargreaves (1956) notes the presence of passages from the Book of Job in the Office and mentions a few fragments of the fifth and ninth lesson from the editions of Maskell (1846) and Littlehales (1895). However, apart from one comment made by the author regarding their resemblances to, or divergences from the Wycliffite Bible, they have yet to be examined further (Hargreaves 1956, 216-217).

The aim of this contribution is to analyze the text of the nine lessons from the last manuscript of the English vernacular Books of Hours to have been

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3 Cf., for example, Hargreaves (1956), Kennedy (2014), Sutherland (2015), Charzyńska-Wójcik and Wójcik (in prep.).

discovered, i.e. Beinecke MS 360, which, as noted above, has not yet received a lot of scholarly attention. It has been compared here with three other vernacular primers and the text of the Book of Job from the two versions of the English Bible available at the time when the primers emerged. My choice of the primers fell on those whose texts received editions. When it comes to the available English translations of the Book of Job, these were parts of the first two English translations of the complete Bible associated with John Wycliffe (cf. Daniell 2003), referred to in the literature as the Early and Late Version (henceforth EV and LV respectively).

There are several issues that could be raised in such study, but the focus here will be on situating the text of Beinecke 360 in the broader textual tradition of its non-psalmic scriptural passages. Attention will also be paid to classifying the textual tradition of the passages from the Book of Job as presented in the three other English primers which Beinecke 360 is compared with here. Moreover, the findings concerning the Book of Job will be analyzed in the light of the claims circulating in the literature as to the textual tradition of the psalms contained in English vernacular primers.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 enumerates particular chapters of the Book of Job from which the nine lessons are taken and provides the information on the texts selected for this study. Section 3 discusses the applied methodology, which relies on digital technologies and therefore enables comparative analysis expressed in terms of objective mathematical values. Section 4 presents the obtained similarity scores, displayed in tabular form and illustrated with examples from the actual text. As shown in the conclusions presented in Section 5, the study examination will hopefully prove helpful in tracing textual traditions of the Middle English primer.

## 2. The texts

As signalled above, the subject of analysis are nine lessons from the Book of Job found in six English translations: four in the Book of Hours for the use of Sarum and two from complete Bibles. The lessons come from the following chapters: vii. 16-21, x. 1-7, x. 8-12, xiii. 23-28, xiv. 1-6, xiv. 13-16, xvii.1-3 and 11-15, xix. 20-27, x. 18-22.

When it comes to the primers, the main interest lies in MS Beinecke 360 titled *Psalter and Hours*, created in England between 1400 and 1415. It has, to the best of

my knowledge, not been the focus of any in-depth study as far as its text is concerned. This may be due to it having been discovered last<sup>4</sup> and having received no editions. The texts of its lessons have been edited for the purpose of this study and compared with primers that have received editions (for the most part in the nineteenth century) and have, therefore, been an object of prior studies, albeit their complexity has so far made them a challenging subject for more detailed analysis. In effect, few scholars have so far been interested in exploring their scriptural content.

The text contained in MS Beinecke 360 is going to be compared with Cambridge, St. John's College (St. John's), MS G. 24, edited by Littlehales (1891), Cambridge, University Library (CUL), MS Dd. 11. 82 edited by Littlehales (1895), British Library, MS Additional 17,010 edited by Maskell (1846). The final two texts come from the Early and Late Wycliffite Version: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 369 and British Library, MS Royal I. C. VIII, respectively, edited by Forshall and Madden (1850). As Forshall and Madden's edition shows textual variants from several other manuscripts collated partly or throughout, these variants have been discarded for the sake of this study, which aims to compare the lessons of the primers with an actual text rather than a collation.

### 3. Methodology<sup>5</sup>

The texts had to undergo several processes in order to be suitable for digital analysis. The first step was to transcribe all the texts into a single Word file. As noted above, five of the six texts analyzed have received an edition and these editions have been relied on here. What required modification were the abbreviations found in the editions of St. John's G. 24 and CUL Dd. 11. 82, which were expanded and italicized for the purpose of this study. This intervention was not necessary in the case of BL Additional 17,010, as Maskell's (1846) edition does not preserve them. When it comes to Beinecke 360, as signalled above, there was no edition to rely on, so the transcript of its text was prepared by the author of this contribution from the manuscript available at <https://collections.>

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4 In the scholarly literature, the manuscript was classified among vernacular primers between the years 1980 and 2014 (Charzyńska-Wójcik and Wójcik in prep.).

5 The overall methodology applied to the data analyzed here is the one proposed by Charzyńska-Wójcik (2021) and further developed in Charzyńska-Wójcik and Wójcik (2022 and in prep.), Lis and Wójcik (in press), and Wójcik (in press).

[library.yale.edu/catalog/10269839](http://library.yale.edu/catalog/10269839). However, certain elements such as medieval punctuation marks could not be preserved, and their modern equivalents were established. Moreover, all abbreviations were expanded and italicized. The textual elements not considered relevant for the analysis were excluded from comparison. This applied to the titles of the lessons as well as liturgical instructions and additions such as ‘Responses’ and ‘Versicles’ – short sentences that are said or sung in worship, found in the four primer texts. These were all left out.

A proper digital analysis required normalizing the texts so that differences in spelling of the same word, which were frequent before spelling became standardized, were not treated as meaningful. Spelling normalization followed the general principle of providing one stable modern spelling whenever a given word was listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. When it was not the case, the *Middle English Dictionary* headword was selected. In order to ensure the consistency of the process, it was performed with the use of software called VARD (cf. Baron 2008), a tool designed to aid digital analyses of Early Modern English texts, which contain a large amount of spelling variation (Baron and Rayson 2008). And while the texts analyzed here represent Middle English, the use of VARD is still justified as it allows the user full control over the normalization process. As such, it has already been shown to produce valid results for Middle English texts (cf. Charzyńska-Wójcik and Wójcik in prep.). Text similarity, using the cosine distance method,<sup>6</sup> was calculated with the use of R software (R Core Team 2020), freely available software environment (Magali and Gries 2020, 376). Similarity scores range from 0 to 1, with 1 representing most and 0 least similar texts.

#### 4. Results

As noted above, with psalms having constituted the main area of interest for researchers dealing with primers from the perspective of their vernacular text, few scholars have been interested in exploring the Book of Job and its textual tradition. In her Ph.D. dissertation, Allen (1970) claims that the lessons found in BL Additional 17,010 and CUL Dd. 11. 82 greatly resemble the text of LV, though the latter shows more variation from the LV rendering. The text of St. John’s G.

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6 This is a process in which similarity scores are obtained by calculating the cosine of the angle between texts represented as vectors. For more information about the method see, for example, Han, Jawei et al. (2012). As already mentioned, applying the method to analyses of historical texts has been proposed by Charzyńska-Wójcik (2021)

24, on the other hand, is said to bear no close connection to either EV or LV (Harris-Matthews 1980). Allen (1970) also remarks that as regards the ninth lesson, CUL Dd. 11. 82 seems to be more similar to the text of St. John’s G. 24 rather than BL Additional 17,010.

The lessons from Beinecke 360 and the remaining three primers will be analyzed against the above-mentioned findings on the Book of Job as well as the existing research on the psalms contained in the primers. According to Hargreaves (1956), Kennedy (2014) and Sutherland (2015), the psalms found in CUL Dd. 11. 82 and BL Additional 17,010 come from LV, whereas St. John’s G. 24 stands out and, according to Kennedy (2014) and Sutherland (2015) exhibits greater similarity to EV, while Hargreaves (1956) classifies it as an independent rendition. As far as the psalms in Beinecke 360 are concerned, they are not discussed by Hargreaves at all, while Kennedy (2014) and Sutherland (2015 and 2016) observe that they bear a close connection to LV. It is the purpose of the following analysis to verify the information provided by the researchers against the obtained similarity scores and to detect the source of the lessons in the analyzed texts.

For each lesson all six texts were compared, resulting in nine tables with 36 scores each. In total, 324 scores were obtained, ranging between 0.842 and 1. To make this discussion more concrete, let me present the obtained similarity scores for the first lesson, with bold type used to mark the highest score and underlining marking the lowest score, a convention which will be applied in the remaining lessons as well. The results will be illustrated with the actual text.

	J_1_EV	J_1_LV	J_1_B360	J_1_G.24	J _ 1 _ Dd,11.82	J_1_ Add.17,010
J_1_EV	1	0.946	0.937	<u>0.923</u>	0.934	0.943
J_1_LV	0.946	1	0.94	0.929	0.967	<b>0.984</b>
J_1_B360	0.937	0.94	1	0.978	0.956	0.954
J_1_G. 24	<u>0.923</u>	0.929	0.978	1	0.943	0.943
J_1_Dd,11. 82	0.934	0.967	0.956	0.943	1	0.972
J_1_Add.17,010	0.943	<b>0.984</b>	0.954	0.943	0.972	1

Table 1. Similarity scores for the first lesson from the Book of Job

As transpires from the above, the six texts exhibit similarities ranging from 0.923-0.984. The score 1 appears six times and is the result of comparing a given text with itself. Moreover, half of the scores repeat, as comparing A with B produces

the same outcome as comparing B with A. Out of the six texts, LV and BL Additional 17,010 are most similar (0.984), while EV and St. John's G. 24 exhibit most differences (0.923). As far as Beinecke 360 is concerned, it is most similar to St. John's G.24 (0.978) and most distinct from EV (0.937). In (1) below I present the text of the first lesson, with bold type used to mark elements that differ across the texts. It has to be noted, however, that this does not mean that one should expect each text to exhibit divergences with respect to all the marked elements. Rather, bold type should be treated as an indicator that a given word or phrase is different (or not present) in at least one version.

(1)<sup>7</sup>

a. J\_1\_EV

**I despeirede, now I shal no morliue**; spare to me, Lord, **nothing forsothe** ben my dazes.

What is a man, **for** thou **magnefiest** hym? **or what** thou settis to **a3en** hym thin herte?

Thou visitist hym the **morutid**, and **feerli** thou prouest hym.

Hou longe thou sparist not to me, **ne letist** me, that I swolewe my spotele?

I haue synned; what shal I don to thee, O! kepere of men? Whi hast thou **put** me contrarie to thee, and am maad to myself **heuy**?

Whi **takist** thou not awei my synne, and **whi dost** thou not awei my wickidnesse? Lo! nowe in **pouder** I slepe, and if erli thou seche me, I shal not **stonde stille**.

b. J\_1\_LV

**Y dispeiride, now Y schal no more lyue**; Lord, spare thou me, **for** my daies ben **nou3t**.

What is a man, **for** thou **magnifiest** hym? **ether what** settist thou thin herte **to-ward** hym?

Thou visitisthym **eerly**, and **sudeynli** thou preuest hym.

Hou long sparist thou not me, **nether suffrist** me, that Y swolowe my spotele?

Y haue synned; A! thou kepere of men, what schal Y do to thee? Whi hast thou **set** me contrarie to thee, and Y am maad **greuouse** to my silf?

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7 The continuous texts of St. John's G. 24, BL Additional 17,010 and Beinecke 360 were split into verses according to the other three, with all the texts being adjusted to the division made in EV. The original spelling is preserved in all the texts quoted in this paper.



Whi **doist** thou not awei my sinne, and **whi takist** thou not awei my wickidnesse? Lo! now Y schal slepe in **dust**, and if thou sekist me eerli, Y schal not **abide**.

c. J\_1\_Bnck

Spare me lord **forsoþe** my daies ben **nouȝte**.

what is man þat þou **magnefiest**: or **wher** to settist þou þin herte **agens** hym?

þou visitist hym in þe **daweuyng**: and **sodeynli** þou prouest hym

hou longe sparist þou not me **and suffrist** þat I swolewe my spotil.

I haue synned. what schal I do to þee? O þou keper of men: whi hast þou **sette** me contrarie to þee? and I am made **heuy** to my silf.

whi **takist** þou not away my synne. and **wher for berist** þou not away my wickidnesse: lo now I slepe in **powdir** and if þou sechist me eerli: I schal not **wipstonde**

d. J\_1\_L1891

Spare me lord; **forsothe** my days been **nouȝt**.

What is man **that** thou **makest gret**. or **wer** to settest thou thyn herte **toward** hym.

Thou uisitest hym in the **dawynge**; and **sodeynliche** thou prouest hym.

How longe sparest thou nouȝt me. **ne suffrest** that y swolwe my spotel;

I haue synned. What schal y do to thee thou *kepere* of men; Whi hast thou **sett** me contrarie to the and y am maad **heuy** to myself;

Why **takest** thou nouȝt a wey my synne; and **wherefore berest** thou nouȝt a wey my wickednesse; Lo now y slepe in **poudre** and; zif thou seche me erly; y schal nouȝt **withstonde**.

e. J\_1\_L1895

Lord, spare þou me, **for** my daies ben **not**!

what is man, **for** þou **magnefiest** him?

þou visitist him **eerli**; and **sodeynli** þou preuest him

hou longe sparest þou not me, **neþer suffrest** þat y swolewe my spotele?

y haue synned, o þou keper of men, what shal y do to þee? Whi hast þou **set** me contrarie to þee? and y am maad **greuouse** to my silf?

whi **doist** þou not away my synne? and **whi takest** þou not a-wey my wickidnesse? Lo, now, y slepe in **poudur**; and if þou sekest me eerli, y schal not **abide**.

f. J\_1\_M

LORD, spare thou me **for** my daies ben **nouȝt**:

what is a man **that** thou **magnyfiest** him, **ethir what** settist thou thin herte **toward** him



Thou visitist him **eerli**: and **sudenli** thou preuyst him.  
 How longe sparist thou not to me **nether suffrist** me: that I swolewe my spotele.  
 I haue synned. A, thou kepere of men, what shal I do to thee: whi hast thou **sett**  
 me contrarie to thee, and I am made **greuous** to my silf.  
 Why **doist** thou not awei my synne: and **whi takist** thou not awei my wickid-  
 nesse. Lo, now I shal slepe in **dust**: and if thou sekist me eerli, I shal not **abide**.

As is clear, although the quoted fragments generally show more similarities than divergences, they differ in respect of several elements. The texts of Beinecke 360 and St. John's G. 24 exhibit four differences, which concern lexical items: *magnefiest* vs. *makest gret*, *azens* vs. *toward*, *and* vs. *ne*, and the exclamation *O* present in Beinecke 360, but not in St. John's G. 24. Those four points of divergence resulted in the score 0.978. When it comes to the texts of Beinecke 360 and EV, however, the number of differences is four times greater. For instance, the text of EV begins with the words *I despeirede*, *now I shal no morliue*, which are not present in Beinecke 360. In terms of lexical divergences, verbs are most varied (for instance *lettist* vs. *suffrist*), with single cases of differing nouns (*morutid* vs. *daweuyng*) and adverbs (*feerli* vs. *sodeynli*). All the differences resulted in the similarity score of 0.937.

The rest of this section will present the similarity scores obtained for the other lessons, followed by a discussion in the context of the textual traditions of the analyzed texts.

	J_2_EV	J_2_LV	J_2_B360	J_2_G. 24	J_2_Dd,11. 82	J_2_ Add.17,010
J_2_EV	1	0.942	0.912	<u>0.903</u>	0.944	0.934
J_2_LV	0.942	1	0.921	0.91	<b>1</b>	0.991
J_2_B360	0.912	0.921	1	0.928	0.922	0.922
J_2_G. 24	<u>0.903</u>	0.91	0.928	1	0.911	0.903
J_2_Dd,11. 82	0.944	<b>1</b>	0.922	0.911	1	0.992
J_2_Add.17,010	0.934	0.991	0.922	0.903	0.992	1

Table 2. Similarity scores for the second lesson from the Book of Job

	J_3_EV	J_3_LV	J_3_B360	J_3_G. 24	J_3_Dd,11. 82	J_3_Add.17,010
J_3_EV	1	0.973	0.948	0.945	0.969	0.974
J_3_LV	0.973	1	0.938	<u>0.932</u>	0.983	<b>0.997</b>
J_3_B360	0.948	0.938	1	0.987	0.953	0.941
J_3_G. 24	0.945	<u>0.932</u>	0.987	1	0.944	0.934
J_3_Dd,11. 82	0.969	0.983	0.953	0.944	1	0.98
J_3_Add.17,010	0.974	<b>0.997</b>	0.941	0.934	0.98	1

Table 3. Similarity scores for the third lesson from the Book of Job

	J_4_EV	J_4_LV	J_4_B360	J_4_G. 24	J_4_Dd,11. 82	J_4_Add.17,010
J_4_EV	1	0.948	0.947	0.939	0.947	0.946
J_4_LV	0.948	1	0.922	0.923	0.99	<b>0.992</b>
J_4_B360	0.947	0.922	1	0.974	0.919	<u>0.911</u>
J_4_G. 24	0.939	0.923	0.974	1	0.919	<u>0.911</u>
J_4_Dd,11. 82	0.947	0.99	0.919	0.919	1	0.981
J_4_Add.17,010	0.946	<b>0.992</b>	0.911	0.911	0.981	1

Table 4. Similarity scores for the fourth lesson from the Book of Job

	J_5_EV	J_5_LV	J_5_B360	J_5_G. 24	J_5_Dd,11. 82	J_5_Add.17,010
J_5_EV	1	0.906	0.906	0.913	0.942	<u>0.892</u>
J_5_LV	0.906	1	0.896	0.908	0.975	<b>0.976</b>
J_5_B360	0.906	0.896	1	0.944	0.931	0.894
J_5_G. 24	0.913	0.908	0.944	1	0.938	0.895
J_5_Dd,11. 82	0.942	0.975	0.931	0.938	1	0.967
J_5_Add.17,010	<u>0.892</u>	<b>0.976</b>	0.894	0.895	0.967	1

Table 5. Similarity scores for the fifth lesson from the Book of Job

	J_6_EV	J_6_LV	J_6_B360	J_6_G. 24	J_6_Dd,11. 82	J_6_Add.17,010
J_6_EV	1	0.862	0.905	0.899	<u>0.842</u>	0.869
J_6_LV	0.862	1	0.914	0.918	0.946	<b>0.991</b>
J_6_B360	0.905	0.914	1	0.941	0.896	0.905
J_6_G. 24	0.899	0.918	0.941	1	0.917	0.922
J_6_Dd,11. 82	<u>0.842</u>	0.946	0.896	0.917	1	0.951
J_6_Add.17,010	0.869	<b>0.991</b>	0.905	0.922	0.951	1

Table 6. Similarity scores for the sixth lesson from the Book of Job

	J_7_EV	J_7_LV	J_7_B360	J_7_G. 24	J_7_Dd,11. 82	J_7_Add.17,010
J_7_EV	1	0.934	0.961	0.954	<u>0.933</u>	<u>0.933</u>
J_7_LV	0.934	1	0.943	0.939	0.976	0.979
J_7_B360	0.961	0.943	1	<b>0.984</b>	0.96	0.963
J_7_G. 24	0.954	0.939	<b>0.984</b>	1	0.956	0.959
J_7_Dd,11. 82	<u>0.933</u>	0.976	0.96	0.956	1	<b>0.984</b>
J_7_Add.17,010	<u>0.933</u>	0.979	0.963	0.959	<b>0.984</b>	1

Table 7. Similarity scores for the seventh lesson from the Book of Job

	J_8_EV	J_8_LV	J_8_B360	J_8_G. 24	J_8_Dd,11. 82	J_8_Add.17,010
J_8_EV	1	0.922	0.969	0.902	0.907	0.927
J_8_LV	0.922	1	0.939	0.918	0.975	<b>0.997</b>
J_8_B360	0.969	0.939	1	0.958	0.919	0.943
J_8_G. 24	0.902	0.918	0.958	1	<u>0.901</u>	0.921
J_8_Dd,11. 82	0.907	0.975	0.919	<u>0.901</u>	1	0.975
J_8_Add.17,010	0.927	<b>0.997</b>	0.943	0.921	0.975	1

Table 8. Similarity scores for the eighth lesson from the Book of Job

	J_9_EV	J_9_LV	J_9_B360	J_9_G. 24	J_9_Dd,11. 82	J_9_Add.17,010
J_9_EV	1	0.9	0.906	0.882	0.903	0.893
J_9_LV	0.9	1	0.876	<u>0.854</u>	0.873	<b>0.995</b>
J_9_B360	0.906	0.876	1	0.923	0.939	0.874
J_9_G. 24	0.882	<u>0.854</u>	0.923	1	0.897	0.858
J_9_Dd,11. 82	0.903	0.873	0.939	0.897	1	0.867
J_9_Add.17,010	0.893	<b>0.995</b>	0.874	0.858	0.867	1

Table 9. Similarity scores for the ninth lesson from the Book of Job

As transpires from the data presented in Table 1-9, there are several detailed observations to be made. I am going to focus on tracing the textual affinities of the primers with respect to the EV and LV, but first let me make some general remarks. Especially worth noting are the similarity scores for the third lesson, which exhibit the smallest range of divergences (0.932-0.997), as well as the scores obtained for the sixth lesson, which exhibit the greatest range (0.842-0.991). Interestingly enough, it is the third lesson that presents the highest score between the texts of EV and LV (0.973), while in the sixth lesson the two versions of the Wycliffite Bible exhibit greatest differences (0.862).

According to the data presented above, while the lessons mostly conform to the textual tradition established for the psalms, with Beinecke 360, BL Additional 17,010, and CUL Dd. 11.82 resembling LV and St. John's G. 24 showing similarity to both EV and LV, each lesson contains at least one instance where particular texts do not conform to the pattern. In particular, although the texts of CUL Dd. 11. 82 and BL Additional 17,010 follow the tradition of LV for eight lessons (with the scores ranging from 0.946-1 for CUL Dd. 11.82 and 0.976-0.997 for BL Additional 17,010), in the final lesson only BL Additional 17,010 shows greater similarity to the text of LV (0.995) than that of EV (0.893), whereas CUL Dd. 11. 82 exhibits greater similarity to EV (0.903) than LV (0.873). More frequent discrepancies can be observed with regard to Beinecke 360 and St. John's G. 24. What is interesting, although based on prior research on the psalms contained in these primers, the texts might be expected to represent two different textual traditions, LV for Beinecke 360 and EV for St. John's G. 24, they appear to mostly come from the same source: LV for the first, second, and sixth lesson and EV for the third, fourth, fifth, seventh and ninth lesson. This means that where one conforms to the tradition established for the psalms, the other does not. It is only in the eighth lesson that each text follows a different tradition, but not the one proposed in the literature so far. As regards the textual traditions for the Book of Job proposed in the existing literature, they appear to be confirmed, for the most part, by the data obtained in the present study, with a few discrepancies. It transpires from the above that the text of St. John's G. 24 follows the tradition of both EV and LV, thus contradicting the claim that the lessons bear no connection to either version of the Wycliffite Bible. Moreover, while BL Additional 17,010 and CUL Dd. 11.82 exhibit great similarity to LV, it is not always the latter that shows more variation from the text of the Bible, contrary to the claim made by Allen (1970).

In sum, out of the nine lessons, the tradition of LV is followed three times by the text of Beinecke 360 (in the first, second and sixth lesson, with the scores ranging from 0.921-0.940), four times by the text of St. John's G. 24 (in the first, second, sixth and eighth lesson, with the scores ranging from 0.910-0.929), eight times by the texts CUL Dd. 11. 82 (with the scores ranging from 0.946-1) and in all analyzed lessons in BL Additional 17,010 (with the scores ranging from 0.976-0.997).

## 5. Conclusion

It appears then that the textual traditions established by the researchers for the psalms are not necessarily uniform in the case of the text of Job and represent a general tendency rather than classification applicable to the entire scriptural content of the primers. Moreover, it might suggest that upon closer examination, the offered textual traditions of the psalms could turn out to be much more diverse for particular instances. It follows that the content of English primers should not be treated as a homogeneous whole, but each text should be examined and classified individually. The results obtained in my study for the textual tradition of the lessons from the Book of Job behind the text of Beinecke 360, St. John's G. 24, CUL Dd. 11. 82 and BL Additional 17,010 tie up in this respect with the results obtained by Charzyńska-Wójcik and Wójcik (in prep.) for the Seven Penitential Psalms contained in the primers.

It is hoped that the present study will encourage further interest in tracing connections between different versions of medieval books of hours as well as contribute to spreading the use of text similarity measurements to analyze historical texts. Not only does the proposed methodology offer a sensitive and reliable tool for comparative analysis, but it can be applied to an unlimited number of texts, enabling research on a scale that has not been possible before.

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