Hafs al-Quti’s Psalms in Arabic rajaz metre (9th Century): a Discussion of Translations from Three Psalms (ps. 50, 1 and 2)
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 HAFS AL-QUTI'S PSALMS IN ARABIC RAQAZ METRE
(9TH CENTURY):
A DISCUSSION OF TRANSLATIONS FROM THREE PSALMS
(Ps. 50, 1 AND 2)1

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The difficulty of translating the Psalms in a satisfactory manner without the loss of the poetic sense of the original Hebrew has been stressed by more than one medieval author. The famous medieval Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1266-1321) noticed in his Convivio that the original poetic qualities of the Psalms declined when they were translated from one language into another, and then again into another language2:

'And know therefore that nothing which is harmonised by musical ties can be transposed from one language into another without breaking its sweetness and harmony. And this is the reason that Homer's works have not been translated from Greek into Latin, like the other writings of the Greek that have come down to us. And this is the reason also that the verses of the Psalms are without music and harmony, because they have been translated from Hebrew into Greek and then from Greek into Latin, and in the first translation all that sweetness became less.'

Dante was not an isolated case. Before him Moses ibn Ezra (1055-1138) who lived in Spain and wrote there his famous treatises on Hebrew poetry in Judeo-Arabic, expressed himself in nearly the same way. In the chapter in his Book of Discussion and Memorization3 about the loss of the Hebrew language he remarks:

'The splendor [rawnaq] of the [Hebrew] language was lost because of neglect [igdal]. People considered it insufficient because of its small

2 È però sappia ciascuno che nulla cosa per legame musicale armonizzata si può de la sua loquela in altra transmutare sanza rompere tutta sua dolcezza e armonia. E questa è la cagione per che Omero non si mutò di greco in latino come l’altre scritture che avemo da loro. E questa è la cagione per che i versi del Salterio sono sanza dolcezza di musica e d’armonia; ché essi furono transmutati d’ebreo in greco e di greco in latino, e ne la prima transmutazione tanta quella dolcezza venne meno.' (Convivio I: VII; Milano, 1952, p. 41)
vocabulary⁴ and the scarcity of what was left in our hands. Then it was translated into both of the languages Arabic and Latin, and then into Aramaic [al-Suryānī]. In one language exist nouns and verbs which are missing in the other so that the translator is forced to borrow words with a figurative meaning and to use metonymies which are close to the meaning, although not representing it exactly, to convey the meanings so that the original beauty and the essence on which they are built disappears, for it is impossible that nouns, conjunctions and that sort of things are the same in all the languages.

About his reglo poem of the Psalms, Hafs al-Qūtī notes correctly that:

[75.] In one language there are things for which in another language there are no nouns;

[76.] Every saying translated into another language becomes different from its original form in poetry.

But someone to whom the meanings are clear must be on intimate terms with the most important nouns and have no disharmony with the way they are put together, because what is really sought for in the sciences is their meanings. And Galen says in the treatise called Af'dal al-Haya'at [The most eminent bodies]: “The discrepancy of the peoples in giving names is a thing that one cannot be reproached for, for everyone calls things as he wants to. We would be better to look at the conceptions we are discussing, not at the names themselves.” The same argument is repeated in many of his books and in the third treatise of his Al-'ilal wa-'l-a'rād [Diseases and Symptoms].

In the days of my youth in one of the places where I grew up, one of the outstanding lawyers of the Muslims, whose confident and trustworthy friend I was, asked me if I would be so kind as to recite the Ten Commandments in the Arabic language. I understood his intention: he wanted to show the inadequacy of its eloquence. Then I asked him to recite the opening chapter of his Koran (fāṭihat qur'an-i-hi) in the Latin language, because he belonged to those who spoke it and understood it. And when he prepared himself to transpose it into that language, its sound became disgusting and the way the words were placed together ugly. Then he understood my intention and asked me forgiveness for what he had asked me.'

In his book Moses ibn Ezra quotes many lines of Arabic poetry as examples of versification in Andalusian Hebrew poetry. Most of these lines are quotations taken from Oriental Arabic Poetry, but three come from Andalusian Arabic poetry. Two of these three derive from Hafs al-Qūtī’s Christian Translation of the Psalms into Arabic reglo-verses, among which is the one mentioned above illustrating the difficulty of translating poetry.² The quotations by Moses ibn Ezra show how important this 9th century Translation was, one of the three Christian translations into Arabic known in this time.⁵ The sources give insight, on the one hand, into how rapidly Christians were arabized, i.e. in the 9th century, and, on the other hand, how long Latinity lasted, even in the 11th century.

Hafs al-Qūtī’s work was the fruit of an already firmly established arabization among the Christians in his time. In a Latin text named Indiculus Luminosus, reportedly written by his father or grandfather, Alvaro [Albar] showed how the Christians were attracted to Arabic poetry far more than to the Latin equivalent. Alvaro deplored how the Christians devoted themselves to Chaldaic [=Arabic] poetry and neglected Latin:

‘Alas! the Christians do not know their own law and the Latins pay no attention to their own tongue, so that in the whole community of Christ there can scarcely be found one man in a thousand who can send letters of greeting properly to his fellow. While there are found crowds of people who can produce learnedly Chaldaic [=Arabic] parades of words so that they adorn their final phrases with the bond of a single letter in metrical fashion…….’

⁴ For the other quotation, see Moses ibn Ezra, Kitāb al-Muhādara wa-l-Mīlakara 128r.; speaking about maqābala ‘antithesis’. Moses ibn Ezra indicates that this figure of speech occurs also in the Holy writ (wa-lat 1-nass min-hu kaṭir, wa-huwa: halayq mubahamah fi qin w-qerāh tilhah, etc. = Ps 54 [55]: 22), saying afterwards that this was also Hafs al-Qūtī’s intention in translating this verse, and he succeeded in combining paronomasia and antithesis, although he was neglectful in his other translations (‘alā‘aism saḥwihī fi qa‘iy-hī). Moses ibn Ezra’s judgement, however, did not take into consideration the changes text underwent due to poor transmission.


In this text, Alvaro exhibited a good acquaintance with Arabic poetry and metre. Ḥafs al-Qutṭī had devoted himself entirely to the Arabic raḡaz metre which true Arab poets considered to be inferior. He explained, however, why this was the best metre for rendering into Arabic the original poetic flavour of the Psalms.

His Psalm translation has two introductions in prose, as well as an introduction in raḡaz poetry in which he defends why the Psalms must be translated in poetry and not in prose:

17. They are psalms that are sung in the churches; the most delicate singing that can fall in your ears;
18. More touching than the melody of female singers and sweeter than the groaning of camels;
19. Or the complaint of the lute and the flute and every other kind of sound.
20. The Psalm book makes the insensible and cruel heart tender and makes praiseworthy tears flow;
21. They are all in a foreign language and the original version has an elaborate metre.
22. They are in a fine and regular measure perceived by an expert in melodies.
23. The original metre looks nearly like Arabic raḡaz and is subdivided in the same way.
24. Whosoever took the risk to translate it into prose would hurt its poetry and its interpretation.
25. It would make the style of its discourse absurd, and would take away the elegance of its versification.
26. If he tries to reproduce its verses in Arabic word after word, it will indeed make the impression of someone inexperienced.

Ḥafs al-Qutṭī’s discourse about the fitness of the raḡaz metre continues some twenty lines, comparing raḡaz metre to western metres like iambus. Then he expounds on the difficulties of translation:

73. Sometimes it is possible in a foreign tongue to put first what is not first.
74. In one language there are things for which in another language there are no nouns;
75. Every saying translated into another language becomes different from its original form in poetry.
76. The meanings of verbs and nouns are not like bodies and colours which have exclusive names, not possible to interprete otherwise.
77. I have translated every word conserving its place in the translation.

In the introduction there is also a historical note which reveals how popular the poet’s undertaking was at the time:

104. All people have encouraged me and have exerted pressure on me;
105. Because they have seen a recompense and a salary; they thought it contained a treasure of rewards;
106. With the permission of the best bishop of the church, Valens, man of great qualities.
127. This is written in the era of Christ, the master of the souls which are on the path most right.
128. In the year 889 with the help of the Allmighty and Glorious Lord.
129. The servant of God Ḥafs has translated them and they are complete and their text is correct.
130. He hopes for the reward from the Creator and for the thanks and the prayers of the reader.

After these quotations and translations of theoretical and historical interest from Ḥafs al-Qutṭī’s work, we turn to an investigation of a small piece of Ḥafs al-Qutṭī’s Christian Psalm Translation into Arabic, comparing them with the Hebrew original on the one hand and the Jewish Psalm Translation by Sa‘ādīyah Ga‘on (892-942; born in Fāyūm, Egypt; lived in Bagdad) into Arabic on the other. It must be taken into consideration that Ḥafs’ translation is not directly based upon the Hebrew, but upon translations into Latin by Saint Jerome (347-420)

10 and possibly on a mixture of three of his translations, the Psalterium Romanum (composed 384), the Psalterium Gallicanum (composed in Palestine in 389-90) and Psalterium ex hebraico (composed from 390-91)

11. The latter was directly derived from the Hebrew and seems to dominate in Ḥafs’ rendering of the Psalms. We will try to determine how far his raḡaz text of one passage deviates from the original, as compared with the two other translations. The passage is chosen arbitrarily namely, the first four verses of Psalm 50 (Christian order) or 51 (Hebrew order), not considering the prose introduction, i.e., starting with verse 3 of the Hebrew version. According to the tradition, these verses were sung by king David when he asked forgiveness from God after the prophet Nathan reproached him his relation with Bath Šeḇa. After that we will proceed to the analysis of the translations of Psalms 1: 1-2 and 2: 1-3; 11-12.

10 In the Arabic preface of Ḥafs’ translation called Yarunim.
First, we will give the Hebrew followed by a traditional English rendering (based upon the King James version which is to be found in the translation of the American Bible Society 1856). After that, we will proceed to a comparison of the Arabic prose translation of Sa'adyah Ga'on which was translated directly from the Hebrew, with the metrical Arab translation of Hafs al-Qutl translated from the Hebrew via Saint Jerome's translation into Latin. The focus will be on two aspects: faithfulness and conciseness without adding and padding; and Semitism, i.e., the frequency of Arabic words which are from the same root as the Hebrew original.

Psalm 50 according to Hafs\(^\text{12}\) [=51 according to Sa'adyah Ga'on\(^\text{13}\)]:

3. Ḥonnē-ni elohim ke-ḥasde-kha/
Ke-robh rahame-kha mehe feSa ay.//

3. Have mercy upon me, o God, according to thy loving-kindness/
According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions//.

HQ 11. Lähumma fa-rham-nl bi-hasbi ruhmī-ka//-c-/c-c-c-//
wa-mhu dunubi bi-kaṯārī ḥānînī-ka//-cc-/-cc-/c-c-//

SG 3. allāhumma raf-nī bi-ihsānī-ka/
wā-ṣaḥīlī ḥaṭṭātī raḥmatī-ka//.

4. Ḥerebh kabbesē-ni me-'oni/
u-mē-ḥaṭṭatī taharē-nī.//

4. Thoroughly wash me from mine iniquity/
and from my sin cleanse me//.

HQ 2. Wa-gṣil ṣāḥīdā say'ātī wa-naqqī-nī//-c-/c-c-c-//
Min-ad-dunūbī kūllī-hā wa-naqūgī-nī//-cc-/-cc-/c-c-//

SG 4. Wa-asrī-naqqī-nī min dānbī/
Wa-tahhir-nī min ḥaṭṭātī//.

5. Ki feṣā'ay ani ṣā'ā /
We-ḥaṭṭatī ṣagū tamīd.//

5. For my transgressions I acknowledge/
And my sin is before me ever//.

HQ 3. fa-innī mu'tarifun bi-zulmī//-c-c--c-c-//
wa-lā yāzālū 'aridān li ṣā'ātī/-c-c--c-c--c-//

Our first remark about Hafs al-Qutl's translation in metre concerns the metre itself; the basic foot ought to be mustafīlun (—c-/ or c-c-/ or -cc-), although we see some deviations at the end of the verse. The two half-verses rhyme with each other, the rhyme changing with each verse. This is usual. The effect is praiseworthy, because each verse in Hafs' translation closely corresponds with a verse in the Hebrew, which usually contains a parallelism. Each half-verse corresponds with the first or last half of that parallelism. Sa'adyah Ga'on's translation is also fairly true and respects the parallelism. With regard to the word for word faithfulness of the text as well to its Semitism, we see in both translations the use of the same roots in Arabic and in Hebrew.

To begin with line 1[3]; in both translations we find Elohim translated with Lädhumma respectively Allāhumma, words corresponding with the Semitic root 'L\(^\text{14}\) indicating 'God'. Both translations use the Arabic root MḤW for the Hebrew root equivalent MḤh ['blotting out, wiping out']. Hafs' translation has Arabic root equivalents -rham- and ruhm- for the Hebrew root rhām-. Both use dunūbī and dānūbī ['my sins', 'my sin'] in line 1[3] and 2[4], and naqqī-nī ['cleanse me'] in line 2[4] without having root equivalent in the Hebrew original.

Line 2[4]: in this line Sa'adya Ga'on uses the following root, reminiscent from the Hebrew: Arabic tahhir- corresponding with Hebrew tahārē- ['cleanse'] and Arabic ḥaṭṭātī corresponding with Hebrew ḥaṭṭātī ['my sin']. Both translators use dunūbī and ḏānbī ['my sins', 'my sin'] in line 1[3] and 2[4], and naqqī-nī ['cleanse me'] in line 2[4] without having root equivalent in the Hebrew original.

Line 3[5]: again Sa'adyah has ḥaṭṭātī, reminiscent of Hebrew ḥaṭṭātī. Both use mu'tarifun ['I recognise'] as a translation of ṣā'ā ['I know']. Line 4[6a]: Sa'adyah's translation ahṭṭaytu corresponds with the same Hebrew root ḥaṭṭātī.

\(^{12}\) M.-T. UrvoY, Le Psautier de Hafs le Goth, p. 87.

\(^{13}\) Tehillim 'in targum we-perad hag-ga'on rabbenu Sa'adyah ben Yosef Fasyumi, tr. into Hebrew, expl. and ed. by Y. Kafah, Jerusalem 1966 [5726], p. 138.

\(^{14}\) Semitic roots are represented with capitals.
Both translations are relatively concise and have a number of Semitic words in common with the Hebrew, although Hafs did not even know Hebrew. Hafs al-Qūṭī’s case proved that a metrical translation needs no excessive padding but can be faithful, word for word.

That sometimes a metrical translation turns out to be extended and free is shown by the translation of Psalm 50 into Italian *terzinas*, wrongly attributed to Dante Alighieri, which we will present here in conclusion. The numbers which precede the verses are our own, given to indicate which lines correspond with the Arabic translations and the original Hebrew; the underlined words are paddings; the italicized words are slightly odd renderings of the original Hebrew, perhaps because the Latin of the Vulgate served as an intermediary:

1. O Signor mio, o padre di concordia,
   io prego te per la tua gran pietate,
   ti degni aver di me misericordia.
   E pur per la infinita tua bontate
   prego, Signor,
   che tu da me discacci
   ogni peccato et ogni iniquitate.

2. io prego ancora,
   che mondo mi faccia
   da ogni colpa mia et inguistizia,
   e poi che conosco ben la mia malizia:
   e sempre il mio peccato ho ne la mente,
   lo qual con me s ’e fin dalla puerizia.

The overwhelming baroqueness of this Italian translation, which in my view does not seem to be very medieval, remains in clear contrast to the sober and concise translations by Hafs and Sa’adyah Ga’on. Hafs’ translation does not seem to have suffered from the fact that it is not rendered from the Hebrew; rather, it has the same merits as Sa’adyah’s translation which did come directly from the Hebrew.

If we look at Ps. 1-2 however, we get a quite different impression than we got with Ps. 50[51], because the translation by Hafs al-Qūṭī this time is more prolix than the translation by Sa’adya Ga’on. And again, Hafs al-Qūṭī does not respect the original parallelism, whereas Sa’adya does so.

Although Hafs translates fairly literally in the first verse, the pieces underlined by us are superflous repetitions or additions, or only for metrical considerations. Except for the word *hältin* mentioned by SG there are no semitisms. SG renders Hebrew *lesim* [KJ ‘scornful ones’] by Arabic *duhdt* [‘cunning, shrewd or prudent ones’]. HQ uses two words to translate *lesim*, translating it with two abstract nouns: *izrd’* [IV] [‘contemning, scorning’] and *taddhl* [VI] [‘pretending to be smart and cunning’]. SG and HQ have in common that they use both a word of the root DHW / DHY. This gives another nuance of the meaning: ‘pretend to be wise’ instead of ‘scornful’.

2. Ki im-be-lorat Adonay liefso/
   U-be-torat yehgeh yomam wa-Iaylah//

2. But in the law of the LORD [is] his delight;
   and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

2. HQ; Lakin[nal hawa-hu fi kitabi 1-lahi//—c-/—c-/—//
   kana, wa-fi-hi taliyan muraddidan//-cc-/—c-/c-c-/
   nahara-hu wa-layla-hu mugtahidan//c-c/-c-c-/-cc-/

2. SG; Bal yakun fi šarāʾy’alLāh murādū-hu
   wa-fi tawrātī-hi yadrus al-nahār ma’a [I]-layl.

Here SG tries to stick to the original word order: in the phrase ‘But in the law of the LORD [is] his delight’ his translation of ‘his delight’
[murâdu-hu] stands in the right place. Instead, HQ changes the word order of the Hebrew original

SG translates God's Law in two different manners, first with šarā'î ['Laws'], and the second time with Tawrâti-hi ['His Book, called Torah']. He explains the difference in rendering of the Hebrew word Torâh in his comment, because in his view the Law itself is not studied day and night, but God's Book.

HQ gives only once a full translation of Torâh in the sense of Kitâb al-Ldh ['The Book of God']. The second time he refers to it whhâfi-hi ['in it']. For 'studying' HQ uses three synonymous participles [taliyan murâdiran...muqgahidân = 'reciting, repeating, working hard'] as against SG's more literal translation of the imperfect tense [Arabic yadrus for Hebrew yehgeh]. It appears clearly that HQ uses more space because he has to comply with the metre, but he still remains a faithful translator.

Psalm 2.
1. Lammah ragešu goyin/
   U-le'um mim yehgu riq//
   1 Why do rage the heathen,
      and the people imagine a vain thing?//

HQ 1. Mâdâ la-hu sa-tafza'u 1-aqwâmâ//—c-/c-c-/—//
   wa-tabsumu i-qâbâ'tulu i-tizâmâ/c-c-c-c//—//
SG 1. Li-mâ-tâ daqšât-l-milalu /
      wa-l-umam darasat al-muhâl//

In the translation of this verse Sa'adya Ga'on respects the parallelism, while HQ does not do so. This has of course to do with Arabic grammar, HQ being in the word order closer to Arabic grammar. The 'Gentiles' or 'Peoples' mentioned are rendered adequately by both, but differently. The verbs in the two parts of the verse are rendered more incorrectly by HQ with the Arabic tafza'u ['being scared'], and tabsum ['twisting, twining, shaping round'].

SG translates Hebrew ragešu ['raged, were excited'] more or less correctly ['were noisy'], and renders yehgu in accordance with his rendition of yehgeh in Ps. 1:2 namely darasat 'learned, studied'. He translates riq ['vainly'] with al-muhâl, ['absurd, impossible']. HQ does not translate the word riq as such, but tries to include its notion in his verbal rendition. SG's rendering of [le']um mim by umam takes into account the Semitic root 'MM.

With respect to this verse it is immediately clear that HQ needs twice more space in order to render the biblical meaning. Again SG is more concise and respects the parallelism. The verbal tenses in both translations are different. SG translates with the Perfect and HQ with the Future. In his Arabic rendering SG tries to approach the original Hebrew sound by translating Hebrew yityâšebu with Arabic intâšabâl - 'tasabu. HQ adds to the last part of the verse ['against the LORD, and against his anointed']: masâhihi-l-muqaddasi 1-lmasbûhi ['The Messiah of the Praiseworthy Holy Place'].

3. Nenatqâq et-moserotemo/
   We-našîkhkham mimnenu 'abotemo//
3 Let us break their bands asunder,/
   And cast away their cords from us,//

HQ 3. Iqâta' bi-nâ ḥâla-hâ fa-yanqaqâ/ill-c-c-c-c-c//
   rayqu-hâ 'an-nâ ma'an fa-yandaftu u-ll-c-c-c-c-c//
SG 3. Yaqâluna nabtûr 'an-nâ asarbû-himâ/ /
   Wa-naṭrû ṭi-nâta-humâ,
   Ya'nûna amra-humâ wa naḥya-humâ

17 For metrical reason I vocalised this word in another manner than M.T. Urvoy in her edition. The asterics (*) in the texts indicate metrical problems.
Both translations of verse 3 are concise. SG has a line extra, saying: 'They mean with it: their orders and their prohibitions.' His first word *Yaqūlāna* ['They said'] explains who are the speakers. SG has this kind of explanatory additions in more than one place. SG's translation of the archaic Hebrew [Plural] suffix -emo with an Arabic dual i.e. -humā [referring to God and his Messiah] tries to connect both sounds. HQ's translation fa-yanqatū'ī etc. ['So that the falsehood is broken from us'] is a description rather than a literal translation.

11. 'Ibudu et-Adonay be-yir'ah/
We-gilu bi-r'adah//

HQ 11 .......... fa-'budū
rabba-kum bi-hawfi-hi wa-mağgidū/-c-c/-c-c-/
Murta'idlna .............//cc-jc-c-//—/

SG 11. U'budu-l-Lah bi-hawf/
wa-rhabū-hu bi-ra'dah //

It is clear that HQ has enjambements: in the middle of a verse he continues with the next verse. In this verse we have in both Arabic translations Semitisms i.e. the rendition of Hebrew 'ibdu with [u]'budu and Hebrew re'adah with Arabic ra'dah [SG] and mutrad'ina [HQ]. Interesting is the remark of SG's comment about his translation Wa-rhabū ['And be frightened'] of Hebrew We-gilū ['Rejoice']. As in the case of the Arabic verb tarība, he supposes for Hebrew gil an "Überbegriff" which means 'to be moved with joy, grief or fear'. One has to say, the traditional rendering 'rejoice with trembling' is somewhat contradictory.

12. Naššequ-bar pen ye'anef/
We-tobedu derekh/
Kī-yib'ar ki-m'āt appo/
Ašrē kōl-ḥosē bo/.//

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,
And ye perish [from] the way,
When his wrath is kindled but a little,
Blessed [are] all they that put their trust in him.//

HQ 12 .......... wa-'budū amhādan//cc-jc-jc-j-c—//
kay lā yakūnā sāḥitan i'rādan//—c-jc-jc-j-c—//
fa-tahlikū 'an il-sirātī ḍulālan//c-c-jc-jc-jc-jc//

SG 12. Tasallahu niqā'an li-ṣa'āti-hi/
kay-lā yağidu 'alay-kum fa-taḇīdu aḥwālu-kum./
iḏa-ṣṭā'ālān qališin ḡaṣbu-hu fi-kum/
fa-tūbā kullī man istakannā ilay-hi./

This line is interesting especially in view of the rendering of the first words, which are in Hebrew: *naššequ bar*, translated in KV with: 'Kiss the Son'. But in both medieval translations, SG as well as HQ, the word bar in translated not as 'Son', but in its meaning of 'clean, pure'. The rendering of SG and HQ's translations in English would be: 'arm yourselves purely' [SG], and 'worship as pure ones' [HQ]. From verse 7 ['I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me. Thou [art] my Son; this day have I begotten thee'] already appeared, that SG does not like a literal translation of 'My son', since God cannot have a son in the literal sense.

SG translation tabīdu aḥwālu-kum ['your situations will perish'] tries to represent the sound of the Hebrew tobedu, although the verbal tabīdu is not related to the same Semitic as its Hebrew counterpart.

In the next part of the verse, HQ's translation does not render Hebrew ki-m'āt ['but a little']. The last part ['Blessed [are] all they that put their trust in him'] is rendered by both in different words but with the same meaning. HQ has an addition which is not in the original Hebrew Psalm: 'His trust will be but in him'.

Conclusion.

We would like to characterize both translators as follows. Generally HQ translates reasonably accurate, but sometimes he allows himself a greater space, extending the text with synonyms and additions, probably by the constraint of the metre. Psalm 50[51] does not offer a representative image about his manner of translating. Apparently due to this Psalm's subject (guilt and confession), the verses of his translation of it parallel more or less exactly the Hebrew original. However, in our partial analysis of the Psalms 1 and 2, we come to the conclusion that here the situation is slightly different, there are less Semitisms in his translation than in Psalm 50[51], and in the Psalms 1 and 2 there are even enjambements so that HQ's lines do not correspond precisely with the lines of the Hebrew original.
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SG’s translations offer another case: his translation usually pursues the literal meaning and sequence of the Hebrew words, even in his rendering of the antithetic parallelisms or chiasmus. However, he sometimes adds to the texts references to the speaking personae (e.g. God or the Heathen, the Gentiles), saying ‘He said’ or ‘they said’. In his comments he explains sometimes translations which are too free, specially when anthromoromisms of God are concerned (cf. Psalm 2:7). As far as Semitisms are concerned, he uses some in his translations, sometimes he chooses an Arabic word whose sound is a reminiscent of the Hebrew original, even when the Semitic origin of the word is not the same. Usually he does not add additional words or sentences in his translations.

A remark about both medieval translations with regard to Psalm 2:12 in which the Christian as well as the Jewish translation of the Hebrew word bar (HQ as well as SG) have the same purport, amhâdan (HQ) and niqâ’an (SG) both meaning ‘as pure ones’ as against later traditions who render bar with ‘Son’. Instead of the modern translations [‘Kiss the Son, lest he be angry’], both medieval traditions have a translation which means more or less ‘Arm your selves with a pure [heart], lest he be anger’. This may indicate that the two medieval translations, in a way, are offsprings of one tradition.

18 Cf. also Ps. 18:12. SG translates ḥaym al-ṣawâḥiq, and thus retains the flavour of the original wordings: ‘abī ṣâdiq, although the Semitic roots and meanings are different. In Ps. 146:9 SG has the Arabic translation yâ’idū. He tries to imitate the original yeʾoděd.