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The Time of Translation in Wauchier de Denain's *Histoire des moines d'Égypte*

Emma Campbell

Or vos retrairai je après les faiz et les ovres des sainz peres qui habiterent en la terre d'Égypte, si com Postumiens li moignes qui partot fut et les vit, les raconte.¹

Now I shall translate for you in what follows the deeds and works of the holy fathers who lived in the land of Egypt, just as Postumien the monk, who went everywhere and saw them, relates them.

These words, announcing the beginning of Wauchier de Denain's *Histoire des moines d'Égypte*, do not constitute an especially unusual opening: Wauchier reveals his subject matter and identifies the figure who, he claims, originally witnessed and recounted the lives of the desert fathers, which he proposes to retell in French. Despite the attribution of this work to Postumien, Wauchier's thirteenth-century text is in fact a translation of Rufinus of Aquileia's *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, a Latin work that, while drawing on Rufinus's experiences of travel in Egypt at the end of the fourth century, is based, in turn, on an earlier, fourth-century Greek account of a journey to visit the monks of the Egyptian desert. Presumably taking his cue from the Latin source he was translating, Wauchier attributes the text not to Rufinus but to Postumien, another monk known to have visited the anchorites of the Thebaid and to have written an

1 Wauchier de Denain, *L'Histoire des moines d'Égypte*, ed. Szkilnik, 49.3-6. References to Wauchier's *Histoire* are to Szkilnik's edition and are hereafter provided parenthetically by page and line number. Translations are my own.

account of his pilgrimage.² Quite apart from the issue of attribution, these opening lines raise the question of the temporality of translation as Wauchier presents it in this text. What is the time of the “now” in this sentence, the moment when the thirteenth-century translator announces his transmission of a first-hand account of the historically remote lives of the desert fathers? The act of translation that this “now” qualifies is articulated in the future tense; it will, Wauchier suggests, overlap with, but also extract and ventriloquize Postumien’s narration in the imminent future of the text which the translator proclaims. This raises another question: to what extent is the distinction between “now” and “then” implicit in Wauchier’s introduction of his historical subject matter maintained in his subsequent translation of what is presented as Postumien’s account? It should be noted that the use of the term “histoire” in the title of Wauchier’s text is a modern editorial choice that reflects Rufinus’s Latin title and is not a designation used by the medieval translator. Rather than describing his text as a history (with all the semantic baggage that the term carries in medieval French), Wauchier instead presents it in less temporally specific terms as a translation of the works that Postumien witnessed first hand. Such questions about translation in the *Histoire* intersect with considerations of narrative voice and textual reception. More broadly, as I argue here, exploring the temporality of translation in vernacular religious texts such as this one may combine theoretical concerns with an attentiveness to translation practice in ways that challenge some of the conceptual frameworks of current translation studies.

Though the *Histoire des moines d’Égypte* has received relatively little attention from medievalists, Wauchier de Denain is, thanks to the other works attributed to him, acknowledged as a key figure in medieval historiography. He is perhaps best known for his authorship of two other works: the second continuation of the *Conte du graal* and the *Histoire ancienne jusqu’à César*, a widely disseminated universal history covering the period from Creation to

2 The Latin manuscript which Wauchier was working from is likely to have attributed both the *Historia monachorum* and the *Verba seniorum* to Posthuanus. This is the case, for example, in Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 870 and MS 871, both of which are dated to the twelfth century.

57 B.C.E.³ Little is known of Wauchier himself, though he was almost certainly a cleric — possibly a secular cleric — and he worked for important aristocratic patrons at the court of Flanders.

The only complete version of Wauchier's *Histoire des moines d'Égypte* is found in Carpentras, Bibliothèque municipale 473 (fols. 85va-118ra);⁴ another, partial version appears in Paris, BnF, n. a. fr., 10128 (fols. 255r-267v). The Carpentras manuscript transmits the *Histoire* as part of a larger collection of French translations of the lives of the fathers probably also compiled and written by Wauchier, who names himself in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great.⁵ Written at the beginning of the thirteenth century (most probably before 1212), the *Histoire*, along with the larger collection in which it features, ranks among the earliest extant hagiographic texts in French prose and participates in a key moment in the development of prose as an idiom of vernacular translation and composition. In the twelfth century, the use of vernacular prose for religious works had already become more widespread in the east and northeast of France, largely under the influence of religious orders such as the Cistercians. The majority of extant examples of French prose produced prior to the late twelfth century are therefore associated with translation from Latin among the religious orders. However, in the later twelfth century, listening to the reading of works in prose increasingly became a lay pastime. Towards the end of the century, powerful lay patrons in northern France and Flanders contributed to the further expansion of prose to genres such as historiography and romance,

3 Though the attribution of the *Histoire ancienne* to Wauchier is far from certain, stylistic evidence supports the hypothesis of Wauchier's authorship. For a discussion of the arguments, see Szkilnik, "Écrire en vers, écrire en prose," 208-19, and de Visser-van Terwisga, ed., *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, 2:217-20.

4 There are two, non-identical numbering systems in the manuscript. I give the manuscript's foliation in Roman numerals here, as the Arabic numbering misses two folios (a different hand corrects this by reinserting the last folio number, followed by "bis"). According to the Arabic numbering, these folios would be fols. 83v-116r.

5 The Carpentras collection contains translations of the Lives of St. Paul the Hermit, of St. Anthony, of St. Hilarion, of St. Malchus, and of St. Paul the Simple (the latter taken from the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*); it also includes French versions of Books I and III of the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, as well as Rufinus of Aquileia's *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* and *Verba seniorum*. The Lives of St. Paul the Hermit, St. Hilarion, and St. Malchus are based on the translations by St. Jerome. The Life of St. Anthony is based on the Latin version by Evagrius, who translated the Greek text composed by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. Meyer, "Versions en vers et en prose des *Vies des Pères*," 259.

using it as an idiom of translation and composition for works destined for lay audiences.⁶ Gabrielle Spiegel has connected this phenomenon — particularly as it concerned vernacular historiography — to the political legitimation of the Franco-Flemish aristocracy at a time when its social dominance was being contested by the growth of royal power.⁷ As Molly Lynde-Recchia suggests, it also enabled members of a social group with a limited, layperson's knowledge of Latin “to view themselves as lettered participants in the tradition of serious, truthful, historical and religious compositions” which were conventionally written in Latin.⁸ Wauchier was closely involved with this Franco-Flemish network, which included the patron he names in the prologue to the Carpentras compilation: Philip of Namur, youngest son of Baudoin VIII, count of Flanders.⁹ Even if one might point to earlier examples of prose written in French, Wauchier's use of prose in the *Histoire*, as elsewhere in his work, may thus be seen as innovative in the social and literary context in which it was deployed.¹⁰

Wauchier's consciousness of the requirements of his lay audience clearly influenced his translation technique. Unfortunately, the manuscript Wauchier used as the basis for his translation appears to be lost, and thus no direct comparison with that version of his Latin source is possible. John Jay Thompson's research on Wauchier's sources suggests that the manuscript of the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* which Wauchier consulted was probably part of the book collection housed at Saint-Amand, but the codex containing the relevant version of the *Vitae patrum* — and listed in the inventory — has not been found.¹¹ Nevertheless, comparison of Wauchier's text with the *Patrologia Latina* edition of Rufinus's *Historia monachorum* suggests that, although the French translator mostly conveys the contents of his source, his translation abridges

6 Woledge and Clive, *Répertoire des plus anciens textes en prose*, 24-27.

7 Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, esp. 11-54.

8 Lynde-Recchia, *Prose, Verse, and Truth-Telling*, 17-18, at 17.

9 See Meyer, “Wauchier de Denain,” 583, 585, and “Versions en vers et en prose des *Vies des Pères*,” 258-60. On the use of this reference for the dating of Wauchier's work, see Woledge and Clive, *Répertoire des plus anciens textes en prose*, 126.

10 On the “emergence” of prose in this period, see Godzich and Kittay, *The Emergence of Prose*, and Beer, *Early Prose in France*, 1-7.

11 Thompson's examination of Wauchier's translation technique in other works attributed to him argues for his adherence to the internal order of the works he translated, even when he abbreviated the original or rendered it loosely. The differences between the Latin and French versions in the ordering of articles may therefore have been a feature of the source Wauchier was using; see Thompson, “Finding a Literary Commonplace.”

and adapts the Latin text for a non-monastic audience, leaving out some of the quotations from Scripture and glossing Latin quotations or French technical vocabulary in terms which his audience would understand.¹²

While anchored in first-person testimony, the *Histoire* is composed of a series of interconnected narratives told about, and by, the inhabitants of the desert whom the narrator Postumien and his brethren meet on their journey. In a number of cases, the Latin contains lengthy passages of direct speech by monks encountered along the way, some of whom relate stories about other monks which similarly incorporate direct discourse.¹³ Wauchier's work usually renders these first-person narratives as such, yet, insofar as his text is already spoken by a narrator who is not Wauchier, the French translation adds a further layer of complexity to what is already a multilayered narrative. In a way that echoes the more general desire for pedagogical clarity in his translation, Wauchier reminds his public who is speaking at various moments and, in some cases, he also mentions who is being spoken to.¹⁴ As Michelle Szkilnik rightly notes, it is nonetheless not always easy to tell who is speaking at a given moment, especially when the story includes up to four layers of narration.¹⁵ As will be seen later, Wauchier also makes various interjections of his own, some of which appear in verse, rather than in the prose used in the rest of his translation.

The complexity of the narrative voice in the *Histoire* encourages reflection on the way in which translation may cultivate temporal as well as linguistic and cultural heterogeneity. In this respect, the text offers ways of conceptualizing the temporal dimension of translation differently from those which often inform

12 Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia monachorum*, in PL 21:387-462B. Schulz-Flügel also edited this work. I refer to the *Patrologia Latina* version partly because of its wider availability and partly because — being based on manuscripts from the ε (epsilon) branch — it is a closer approximation of Wauchier's source.

13 This notably concerns Copres (and Patermuthius) and Apelles (and John).

14 E.g., "Mais encore furent plusors autres sainz peres en l'ermitage devant nos, fait li sainz prestres, qui Coprés estoit apelez par non, a Postumien et a ses compaignons cui il racontoit ces choses, qui si sainz homes furent qu'il firent celestiels signes don li mondes ne fu mie dignes de l'oïr ne de l'entendre" (*Histoire* 114.1-6, emphasis mine: But there were several other holy fathers in the hermitage before us, said the holy priest who went by the name of Copres to Postumien and his companions, to whom he was telling these things, and they were such holy men that they performed heavenly miracles which the world was not worthy either to hear or to understand).

15 Szkilnik, "Vies des Pères et romans en prose, une filiation," 219.

current translation studies. Broadly speaking, the tendency within translation studies has been to approach the issue of temporality from the perspective of the translated text's permanence (or impermanence). For some, the activity of translation is inherently transient, resulting in a text that will eventually need to be updated for new audiences.¹⁶ As Lawrence Venuti has indicated, this view of translation is, in modernity, often associated with a romantic conception of authorship that sees the original as an eternal, unchanging expression of genius and translation as a copy that will ultimately be superseded by subsequent reiterations of the authorial text.¹⁷ The poststructuralist translation theory that informs Venuti's thinking also insists that the very fact that the work can be translated implies that it is not definitive — a view that unsettles the temporal fixity of the original as well as its status as an independent expression of authorial genius. From this poststructuralist perspective, rather than creating an ephemeral copy of a more enduring source, translation serves both to establish the original and to enable it to develop into the future. As Jacques Derrida suggests, the original is thus, to a large degree, reliant on translation for its continued existence or "afterlife."¹⁸ In contrast to the view that the original is eternal and translation a transient copy, the poststructuralist position therefore insists on the interdependence of original and translation as derivative, heterogeneous, and incomplete texts.

The elliptical relationships among different temporal moments which poststructuralist translation theory posits provide a useful starting point for thinking about the time of translation in Wauchier's text. Yet whereas thinkers like Venuti and Derrida focus on relationships between texts, Wauchier's translation has an important intersubjective and pedagogical dimension which colours its participation in the textual afterlife of its source — something that translation theory has, to date, left largely unexplored. Carolyn Dinshaw's recent work on the queer temporalities of medieval texts, though not concerned with translation, offers suggestive ways of thinking about connections between time, narrative, and intersubjectivity and can be productively brought into dialogue with the ideas just mentioned. Her focus in *How Soon is Now?* is on the non-sequential,

16 See, for example, Rabassa, "No Two Snowflakes are Alike," 8.

17 Venuti, "Introduction," 3-4.

18 Derrida, "Des tours de Babel," 213-15. See also Derrida's essay (published originally in English translation), "Living On / Border Lines."

multiple nature of time as this manifests itself both within medieval literature and through engagements with it by non-medieval readers.¹⁹ “Asynchrony” is the term Dinshaw uses to encapsulate this plural notion of time, which is characterized by “different time frames or temporal systems colliding in a single moment of *now*.”²⁰ Dinshaw’s exploration of the queer temporalities associated with the consumption of medieval cultural objects and texts can be usefully extended to a consideration of translation in order to explore how, in Wauchier’s *Histoire*, the notions of temporality that inform contemporary discussions of translation may intersect with asynchronous relationships and forms of community such as those Dinshaw describes.

In what follows, I begin by examining how Wauchier signals his presence in the text as translator and how this translating voice is related to those of the various narrators represented in the work. Having explored some of the ways in which the “now” of the translator’s voice is asynchronous, I consider how Wauchier’s techniques — especially his use of Latin quotation and his mixing of prose and verse — provide examples of the connection between temporal heterogeneity and a heterogeneous translating discourse that reflects the pedagogical aims of the work. Finally, I examine the conclusion to the *Histoire* in the Carpentras manuscript and the beginning of the work that follows it as further illustrations of the relationship between translation, pedagogy, and time.

The Beginning of the *Histoire*

The opening lines of the *Histoire* in the Carpentras manuscript — quoted briefly as the epigraph to this article — may be used to introduce some of the issues relating to temporality and translation which affect Wauchier’s presentation of himself as the work’s translator. The text prefacing the *Histoire* — undoubtedly by Wauchier himself rather than a scribe, as it also appears in the other manuscript transmitting the work²¹ — involves a first-person address to

19 Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now?* This project develops the idea of queer community as a form of touching across time explored in Dinshaw’s earlier work, notably *Getting Medieval*.

20 Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now*, 5.

21 In BnF, n. a. fr., 10128, the *Histoire* is not preceded by Wauchier’s translation of the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, and as a result the prologue makes little sense; see Meyer, “Versions en vers et en prose des *Vies des Pères*,” 272.

the audience which recapitulates the preceding text and anticipates that which is to come:

Or vos ai je conté et dit une partie des faiz et vies des sainz peres qui habiterent en la contree de Lonbardie si com sainz Gregoires meismes lo tesmoigne. Or vos retrairai je après les faiz et les ovres des sainz peres qui habiterent en la terre d'Egypte, si com Postumiens li moignes qui partot fut et les vit, les raconte, et si dist qu'il avoit veü tant de prodomes et de si sainte vie, qu'il avoit veü a ses propres elz lo tresor Jhesu Crist repost es humains cors, ne n'estoit mie droiz qu'il cest tresor, ce est les bones ovres d'elx, vosist celer ne repondre si com envielz, ainz lo voloit demonstrer en la communauté de cex qui bien voloient faire, quar bien estoit sers que de tant com plus de gent en seroient enrichi, de tant en aquerroit il plus grant proffit et plus grant loange. (*Histoire* 49.1-14)

[Now I have recounted a portion of the deeds and lives of the holy fathers who lived in the Lombardy region, just as St. Gregory himself attests. Now I shall translate for you in what follows the deeds and works of the holy fathers who lived in the land of Egypt, just as Postumien the monk, who went everywhere and saw them, relates them; and he says that he had seen so many worthy men leading such holy lives that he had seen with his own eyes the treasure of Jesus Christ in human form, and it would have been wholly wrong if he had wanted to hide this treasure, that is, the good works of these men, or to keep it jealously for himself, which explains why he wanted to reveal it to the community of those who sought to do good, for he was convinced that the more people were enriched by this, the more he would derive benefit and praise from it.]

The work that precedes the *Histoire* in the Carpentras manuscript — and to which Wauchier refers in this quotation — is a translation of Books I and III of the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great. Nestled between Gregory's *Dialogues* and Postumien's account of the desert fathers, the “now” of the translator's voice — emphasized by the repetition of “Or” (now) in the first two lines — encompasses not only the present in which Wauchier addresses his audience, but also the past and future of his collection. Just as time, as Augustine observes, involves the distension (*distentio*) of the mind over three different

presents identified with memory, attention, and expectation, so the “now” of Wauchier’s translation stretches the present across the past and the future of his audience’s experiences of the text.²² This “now” links and separates contiguous parts of the collection and, with them, the figures who speak through the French translation. What is emphasized here alongside the transition from one work to another is the way in which Wauchier’s narrative anchors the testimony of the authorities on whose behalf he speaks: Gregory the Great, whose account has just been related, and Postumien, whose eyewitness testimony the audience is about to hear.

The illuminated initial that begins the *Histoire* offers an additional, visual comment on the complexity of the translating voice presented here. In this image (Fig. 1), a male figure stands in the centre of the capital O of the first “Or” of the passage quoted above, pointing with his left hand at the text to the right of the decorated initial. Though the text which he points to is spoken by Wauchier’s narrating voice, the figure depicted — with his pilgrim’s staff and halo — is clearly intended to represent Postumien, rather than Wauchier.²³ On one level, this image underlines the switch in narrator that these opening lines announce, replacing Gregory (depicted on fol. 43rb) with Postumien. Like the accompanying text, this initial thus re-emphasizes the connections between the translator’s voice and the figures who speak through him, as well as marking a transitional moment that looks forward to the text to come. Yet, unlike the earlier image of Gregory, this opening portrait underlines the symbiotic relationship between Postumien and the translator’s voice. Postumien is both contiguous with the text and, quite literally, at the centre of the “now” in which Wauchier speaks. Moreover, unlike other figures, Postumien gestures towards the written text, introducing the voice that will speak on his behalf. Narrative time here is circular rather than linear: as Wauchier’s text presents

22 Augustine, *Confessions*, 11.31.41, cited in Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now*, 15, 176 n. 54. In his chapter “What is Time,” Gurevich discusses Augustine’s view that the soul alone can measure time; Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, 113-14.

23 The medieval annotator who appended a comment to this illumination identifies it with Postumien’s narrating voice rather than Wauchier’s: “Ci commence a conter postemiens li sayns moynes les vies des autres sayns quis vit en son vivant” (fol. 85vb, top margin: Here Postumien the holy monk begins to recount the lives of the other saints whom he saw in his own lifetime).

Postumien to the reader, the painted figure of Postumien introduces the text in which Wauchier speaks.

A further example of the interrelationship between the different voices in the *Histoire* appears a little later in the prologue, at the point where Postumien's introductory description leads into the account of his visit to John of Lycopolis. After outlining the virtuous way of life of the desert fathers, the text continues in what is presented as Postumien's voice:

Por ce fait Postumiens, que Nostre Sire me dona que je veïsse si sainz homes et que fuse avec ex por esgarder plusors choses de lor ovres, conterai de chascun qui me revenra a memoire par la volenté Nostre Seigneur, aucune chose, si que cil qui ne les virent mie poissent entendre et oïr les ovres, si qu'il i praignent exemple d'aquerre gloire parmenable.

Tut a comencement, fait Postumiens, ferons nos lo fondement de nostre ovre, por ce que li bon exemple i prengnent, de Johan qui asez devroit toz sels soffire des religieuses pensees faire entendre par ses saintes ovres au venir au comble de totes vertuz et a la perfection de hautesce. Quar tant ot en lui bien, si com vos orez conter et retraire, si vos atalante, qu'il n'est nus, por qu'il a Nostre Seigneur vuelle ne petit ne grant entendre, quil n'i deüst de bien exemple prendre. (*Histoire* 51.4-19)

[Because, says Postumien, Our Lord granted that I might see such holy men and be with them to observe various aspects of their works, I shall recount something about each of them which I shall remember by the grace of Our Lord, so that whoever has not seen them may understand and hear about the works, and, taking example from them, acquire eternal glory.

At the very beginning, says Postumien, so that people may learn from his example, we make John the foundation of our work, who would alone suffice to make religious thoughts manifest through his holy works, in achieving the pinnacle of all virtues and the perfection of spiritual exaltation. For there was such great good in him, as you will hear recounted and translated, if it please you, that there is nobody, unless he wishes to understand neither more nor less about Our Lord, who should not take example from it.]

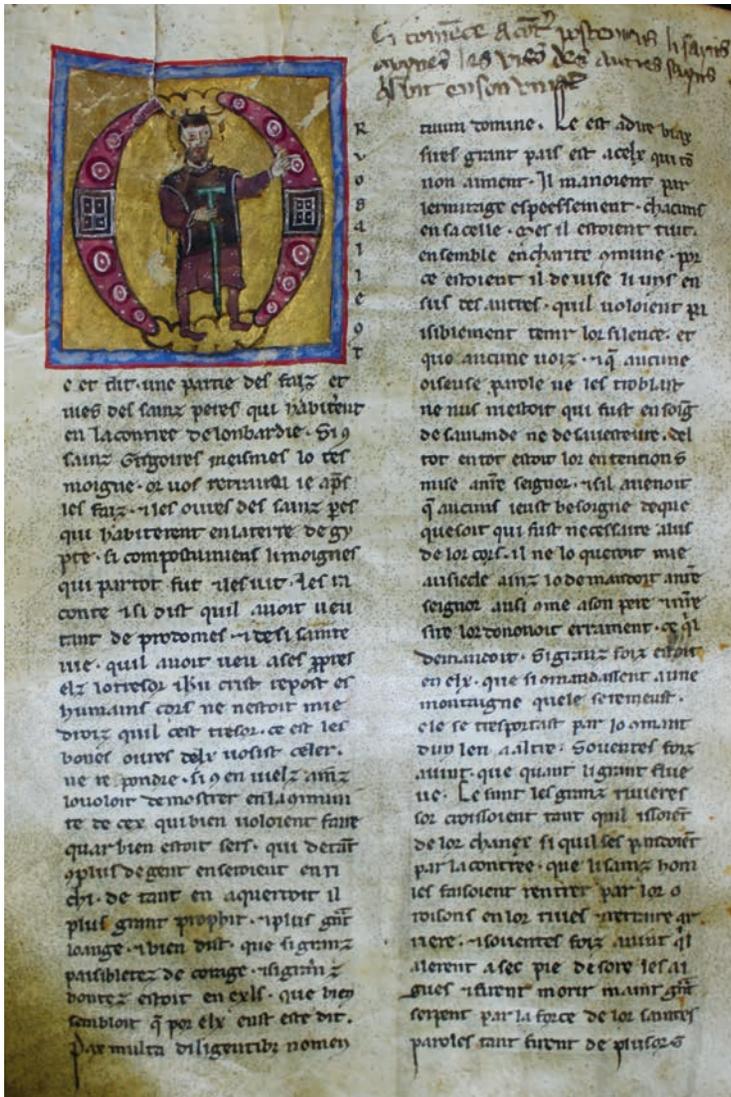


Figure 1. Carpentras, Bibliothèque municipale 473, fol. 85va. Postumien in the opening initial of the *Histoire des moines d'Égypte*. Reproduced with permission of the Carpentras bibliothèque-musée Ingimbertine. All rights reserved.



Figure 2. Carpentras, Bibliothèque municipale 473, fols. 117v-118r. Ending of the *Histoire des moines d'Égypte*. Reproduced with permission of the Carpentras bibliothèque-musée Inguimbertaine. All rights reserved.



Figure 3. Carpentras, Bibliothèque municipale 473, fol. 118rb. Postumien teaching. Reproduced with permission of the Carpentras bibliothèque-musée Inguimbertaine. All rights reserved.



Figure 4. Carpentras, Bibliothèque municipale 473, fol. 103ra. Postumien and his monks in the desert. Reproduced with permission of the Carpentras bibliothèque-musée Inguimbertaine. All rights reserved.

The first part of this quotation, spoken in the present first person singular of the narrator's voice ("Por ce fait Postumiens"), again draws together past, present, and future moments. Describing in the past tense the act of divine grace that has enabled him to see and speak with the desert fathers ("que Nostre Sire me dona que je veisse si sainz homes et que fuse avec ex por esgarder plusors choses de lor ovres"), Postumien proceeds to situate the acts of recalling and recounting his experiences in the future ("conterai de chascun qui me revenra a memoire"), anticipating that this will in turn give rise to virtuous emulation on the part of those who have not been there in person. The future tense is picked up again in Postumien's announcement of the first subject of the work, an announcement that marks a shift to the first person plural as Postumien alludes to the written account that will transmit the monks' exemplary behaviour ("Tut a comencement, fait Postumiens, ferons nos lo fondement de nostre ovre"). This first person plural seems to include the voices of Postumien and Wauchier without entirely separating them. In a manner characteristic of Wauchier's interventions as translator in both this and other works, the audience is addressed directly, being told what to anticipate in the story to come. The phrasing of this address — "si com vos orez conter et retraire" (as you will hear recounted and translated) — also leaves open the question whether the text referred to is Postumien's account or Wauchier's translation, "retraire" being a term that can encompass the act of translating as well as that of recounting.

From the very beginning of the *Histoire*, the translator's voice therefore speaks in a "now" that is asynchronous. In the first lines of the work, this voice draws together different narratives and temporalities while also allowing them to be distinguished from one another. In the second example, where Postumien appears to speak both for Wauchier and on his own account, the translator's voice appears more subtly alongside that of his narrator. The question whether the translator's voice detaches itself from the other voices that speak through him — and of the temporality of this discourse — is further complicated by Wauchier's use of Latin and by his mixing of prose and verse.

Latin Quotation

The use of Latin in the *Histoire* provides an example of the way in which the inscription of interlingual translation within the text is associated with a

discourse that layers different voices and temporalities. While reducing the quantity of scriptural quotation in his source, Wauchier often renders the quotations he does include in Latin rather than in French, usually following up with a French gloss that paraphrases the meaning for a general audience. Wauchier's practice of quoting Scripture in Latin is reminiscent of the use which vernacular sermons made of Latin authority;²⁴ it also reflects a practice more broadly applicable in vernacular texts, where Latin quotations are usually translated into the target language and assimilated into their new context.²⁵ Though there are important differences between the use of such techniques in a narrative format and in sermon literature, sermons would have been one of the relatively few genres using French prose on which a writer could have drawn in this period. Of the twelve instances of Latin quotation in Wauchier's text, only three are untranslated: a brief quotation from Psalm 67 and two verses from Psalm 68 appear only in Latin (*Histoire* 96.8, 145.3-5), as does a three-verse quotation from Psalm 1 which Wauchier appears to have added to his source (*Histoire* 108.9-13).²⁶ With one or two exceptions,²⁷ Latin quotations are usually spoken by the monastic narrators inscribed in the work, including

24 For an analysis of the relationship between Latin and French in vernacular sermons, see Zink, *La Prédication en langue romane*, 85-113, 305-40.

25 Kay, "La seconde main et les secondes langues," esp. 463, 470-78.

26 The quotation from Psalm 67:32 — "Etyopa preveniet manus eius Deo" (Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God) — appears in Postumien's account of his encounter with an Ethiopian monk. The quotation from Psalm 68:2-3 corresponds to the words Postumien claims to have pronounced with his monks during one of the perils they endured: "Salvum me fac Deus quoniam intraverunt aque usque ad animam meam. Infixus sum in limo profundi et non est sustancia" (Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul. I stick fast in the mire of the deep and there is no sure standing). The verses from Psalm 1:1-3 are those which the priests give to Mucius: "Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum et in via peccatorum non stetit. Set in lege Domini voluntas eius et in lege eius meditabitur die ac nocte. Et erit tamquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum, quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo" (Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners. But his will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit, in due season).

27 The first instance of Latin quotation occurs in the prologue, in a section of the text spoken by Wauchier, though it appears in a context which suggests that he may be quoting Postumien (*Histoire* 49.14-18). The monk Paphnutius later hears the angels chanting as they bear the soul of a virtuous man to heaven; this chanting is, in the French version, rendered in Latin (*Histoire* 81.17-26).

Postumien, and are sometimes attributed to a particular source.²⁸ However, the recourse to Latin in Wauchier's text is not simply a matter of who is speaking — God, angels, and holy men mostly speak in French — but rather of underlining a citational mode of discourse that implicitly or explicitly references scriptural authority. Latin in Wauchier's translation thus designates a form of discourse that is not reducible to the work he is translating and that, in its association with Scripture, is marked out as requiring a different kind of translation from the rest of his source.

If the use of Latin indicates a discourse that participates in the universality of divine enunciation as well as in the moment of its repetition in the narrative present, the glossing of this discourse in French adds a further layer of discursive complexity. An example from the chapter on John of Lycopolis illustrates how this works:

Ceste chose vos ai je dite, mi bel fil, fait sainz Jhohan a Postumien et ses compaignons por ce que je vos voil faire a savoir com grant chose est d'umilité et com ferme, et com granz tribulations il a en orguel qui le maintient en fait et en pensee. Por ce nos ensigna Nostre Sire que la premeraine boneürtez si estoit humilitez quant il dist : "Beati pauperes spiritu quoniam ipsorum est regnum celorum." C'est a dire : bon heüros sunt cil qui sunt povres de malvais espir, ce est d'orguel, ce sunt li humle, quar li regne des cielx est lor. Par ces exemples devez vos estre sage si que vos ne soiez soduit en pensees orgueilleuses par lo diable. (*Histoire* 70.19-71.3)

[I told you this thing, my sons, said St. John to Postumien and his companions, because I want you to know how great and how steadfast a thing is humility, and how great tribulations await the man who fosters pride in thought and in deed. For this reason Our Lord taught us that the first blessing was humility when he said: "Beati pauperes spiritu quoniam ipsorum est regnum celorum." That is to say: blessed are those who are poor in evil spirit, that is, in pride, that is, the humble, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Through these examples you should be wise, so you may not be seduced into prideful thoughts by the devil.]

28 For example, in two instances, Postumien attributes quotations to Isaiah: "ce fu selonc la prophete Ysaye qui dist [...]" (*Histoire* 87.7-8: this was according to the prophet Isaiah, who says [...]); "Et semble bien que la prophetie Ysaye fu en lui acomplie qui dist [...]" (*Histoire* 95.22-23: And it would appear that in him was accomplished the prophesy of Isaiah, who says [...]).

The Latin quotation here — taken from Matthew 5:3 — appears as part of John’s teaching of Postumien and his monks and is explicitly presented as the word of God. This practice echoes Rufinus’s Latin, which similarly presents this reference to Matthew’s Gospel as the Saviour’s teaching.²⁹ The French contains up to four narrative layers: Wauchier’s translation reproduces (in Latin) Postumien’s account of John’s quotation of a biblical text. The glossing of this quotation is, as one would expect, an addition made by Wauchier to clarify the meaning of the Latin for his audience. Indeed, his desire for clarity leads to an explanatory paraphrase that both translates the Latin and elucidates some of its more complex elements. The “spirit” referred to in the Latin is rendered as “malvais espir” and further glossed as “orguel”; finally, so as not to lose the overall meaning of “the poor in evil spirit,” Wauchier explains that the people concerned are “li humle.” This explanatory gloss is clearly aimed at the non-monastic audience of the French text but is presented as part of John’s discourse; the gloss seamlessly enlarges upon the holy man’s advice to Postumien and his monks and folds Wauchier’s contemporary lay audience into that community of listeners instead of addressing them separately.

In this passage, translation stretches in non-linear fashion across different moments in time. The present of John’s discourse is at once the historical moment of his address, later recalled and supposedly written down by Postumien, and the moment of Wauchier’s translation of his words into French for consumption by contemporary medieval listeners. At the same time, the inclusion of untranslated Latin quotations underlines the relationship of this discourse to the eternity of God’s word, repeated both in the present of Postumien’s narration and in that of the medieval audience addressed by Wauchier’s text. In this respect, the juxtaposition of Latin quotation and French gloss spans the temporal extremities of Wauchier’s translation more generally, reaching from the eternal to the radically new. Wauchier’s use of Latin quotation thus demonstrates how linguistic heterogeneity may accompany temporal heterogeneity in his translation. Latin here is not only the marker of linguistic and cultural difference but also designates a form of speech that belongs to a different order of discourse as well as an alternative time.

29 “Ideo denique et Salvator noster primam beatitudinem de humilitate nos docuit, dicens: *Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum coelorum*” (For this reason, our Saviour teaches us the first beatitude of humility, saying: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*); Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia monachorum*, in PL 21:403D.

Prose and Verse

A second feature of the *Histoire* with a bearing on the questions raised above is its use of verse alongside prose. As mentioned earlier, Wauchier's period of activity as a writer coincides with an important moment in the development of prose in French, a development associated with the Franco-Flemish aristocracy. It is often noted that, within this cultural setting, prose was associated with more reliable forms of written, implicitly Latinate authority; verse was, by contrast, sometimes seen as less truthful both in its association with non-written traditions and in its adherence to strictures of metre and rhyme, which were felt to prioritize form over meaning.³⁰ A characteristic of works attributed to Wauchier is nonetheless the tendency to incorporate passages of verse into the prose of the main text. It has often been remarked that Wauchier's use of verse in his best-known work, the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, does not appear to play on its associations with a lesser degree of truthfulness: indeed, far from detracting from the seriousness of the work, the moments where the audience is addressed in rhyme usually serve to highlight and reaffirm the text's message. The connection of verse with oral performance is, however, often seen as more relevant to Wauchier's occasional deployment of it. Lynde-Recchia suggests that "The author's choice of verse here supports the idea that verse was a form more associated with a subjective presence";³¹ other scholars have been similarly inclined to see the use of verse in the *Histoire ancienne* as a means of highlighting the subjective voice of the author-narrator.³²

In the Carpentras collection, there are six passages of verse in total, two of which appear in the *Histoire*. Szkilnik observes that these six passages share a number of features.³³ First, all but one of these passages include the "je" (I) of the translator and the "vous" (you) addressing his public; in one of these passages, Wauchier names himself as the translator.³⁴ The use of verse thus appears to emphasize the fact that this is Wauchier speaking, not the Latin

30 Lynde-Recchia, *Prose, Verse, and Truth-Telling*, 18-20.

31 Lynde-Recchia, *Prose, Verse, and Truth-Telling*, 26. See also Godzich and Kittay, *The Emergence of Prose*, 34-35.

32 See, for example, de Visser-van Terwisga, ed., *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, 2:228; and Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Moralization and History," 45-46.

33 Szkilnik, "Écrire en vers, écrire en prose," 210-13.

34 This is the second passage of verse in the collection, which appears in the *Dialogues of Gregory the Great*. See Szkilnik's edition in "Écrire en vers, écrire en prose," 221-22.

narrator. Second, all passages bar one share a common thematic concern: they attack the rich. Szkilnik therefore suggests that verse is a means for Wauchier to make his own voice heard, both reinforcing the moralizations of Latin authors and showcasing his talents as a writer at a time when verse had a prestige that the emerging vernacular prose did not.³⁵

Like other scholars analysing the mixing of verse and prose in Wauchier's works, Szkilnik foregrounds the separation of Wauchier's voice from that of his subject. However, Wauchier's use of verse and prose in the *Histoire* troubles that distinction, even as it draws attention to a voice that is clearly that of the translator. As illustrated by the passages of the *Histoire* cited earlier, Wauchier's interventions occur in prose as well as verse; as will be seen in a moment, he also sometimes combines the two. Thus, if verse highlights the French translator's voice at various points, that voice also speaks in more or less obvious ways in prose.

Furthermore, some of the techniques Szkilnik identifies with the choice of verse in this compilation are also found in prose passages where it is less obvious that the speaker is Wauchier, an example of this being the prologue, where Postumien appears to speak about "nostre ovre" (our work) and addresses the audience directly. In this regard, Wauchier's verse may usefully be considered in the broader context of a capacious translating voice which is continuously present throughout the text. As seen already, the *Histoire* both combines and separates the voices that speak through the text in a way that might be described as polyphonic or even contrapuntal.³⁶ Wauchier's use of verse is less a marker of an independent speaking voice than a means of reconfiguring the relationship between voices already present in his translation. If in some cases the use of verse lends itself to a virtuoso solo performance in which Wauchier takes centre stage, in other instances it is associated with a duet or choral harmony, in which different voices are combined.

The two passages in verse in the *Histoire* illustrate this point. The first passage occurs during the visit by Postumien and his monks to John of Lycopolis, who tells them the story of a monk in a nearby hermitage who received a miraculous gift of white loaves from heaven in recognition of his piety but who then

35 Szkilnik, "Écrire en vers, écrire en prose," 218-19.

36 In music, counterpoint is the relationship between voices that are harmonically interdependent (as in polyphony) but independent in rhythm and contour.

became complacent and was tempted by the devil. At this point a brief verse passage appears in the text:

Ensi aloit il de mal em pis quar ses pensees estoient ravies par divers
trebuchemenz et tot ce estoit par lo diable qui toz cex agaite qui bien
font por sorprendre.

Cex quil mal font n'agaite il mie
Quar il sunt tuit a sa partie,
Si ne li covient pas gaitier.
Mais il se paigne d'enginier
Cex qui s'esloignent de ses ovres
Que il a son voloir recuevrent
As malfaisanz dont il est mult.
Por ce se paine il tot debot
Do remanant traire a sa corde.
Ja n'i avra pais ni acorde.
Alsi n'avoit il vers cestui,
Si li fist soffrir maint anui.
Quar dedenz lui estoit ja nee
Une escommenie pensee³⁷

Et laide qui dedenz lo cuer li estoit entree. Car il li sambloit qu'il ert
en l'estat ou il avoit devant esté ausi com la nés qui estoit el cors de
l'aigue sanz gouvernement d'aviron, et encor va ele par lo premier
debotement qu'ele a eü a l'esmuevre. (*Histoire* 66.24-67.18)

[Thus, he went from bad to worse, for his thoughts were seized by
various missteps, and all this was the doing of the devil, who lies in
wait for all those who do good in order to take them by surprise.

He does not lie in wait for those who behave wickedly
Because they are all already on his side
So he has no need to lie in wait.
But he goes to great pains to trick
Those who distance themselves from his works
So that, according to his wishes, they rally

37 I have altered the formatting of the lines here, presenting Szkilnik's first line of the subsequent prose as the final two lines of verse.

To the wicked, of whom there are many.
 To this end he soon goes to great pains
 To bring the remainder into line.
 Never will he make peace in this matter.
 And so he did not in this man's case:
 He made him suffer many torments.
 For already within him was born
 a damnable thought,

an ugly [thought], which had entered his heart. For it seemed to him that he remained in his previous state, just like a rudderless ship in the middle of the water, which continues to be propelled by the force of the first push that set it off.]

Whereas Szkilnik identifies twelve lines of verse in this passage, I suggest that “*Quar dedenz lui estoit ja nee / Une escommenie pensee*” should also be read as an octosyllabic couplet, bringing the total number of lines of verse to fourteen.³⁸ The difficulty in determining where prose and verse begin and end here arises partly from the manuscript's presentation of the verse as prose; although some lines are end-stopped, others are not. There is also no clear distinction between the voice of John of Lycopolis, the story's internal narrator, and that of Wauchier. Unlike the other instances of verse in the compilation, this passage does not involve a direct address to the audience or a reflection on the rich. Although the shift to the present tense suggests a change in narrative mode, there is no other discernible break with John's narrating voice, and the imperfect tense resurfaces in the final four lines of verse, anticipating the shift back to the past tenses favoured in the prose. This brief verse passage thus interprets and expands upon John's discourse without quite interrupting it. If the use of verse potentially signals the voice of the translator here, this voice is not fully independent but emerges in harmony with that of the inscribed narrator.

The second passage of verse occurs just after Postumien and his company encounter Dioscorus, the spiritual father of a hundred monks. The Latin version of this chapter (following the Greek) relates Dioscorus's instructions to his monks on the mortification of the flesh as a means of avoiding the accumulation of excess bodily fluids and recounts his explanation of the relationship

38 The breaking of a line into verse and prose is also a feature of the passage that Szkilnik identifies as “E”; Szkilnik, “Écrire en vers, écrire en prose,” 223-24.

between nocturnal emissions and imagined forms.³⁹ Wauchier may have felt that the advice here — which is explicitly aimed at a monastic audience — would be inappropriate for a lay public. This could explain why he mentions, in the voice of Postumien, Dioscorus's important role as a teacher and alludes to the way he helped the brothers approach the Sacrament with pure mind and body but omits the finer detail of these teachings, claiming that recounting all of Dioscorus's advice would take too long (*Histoire* 126.8-16). In place of Postumien's account of Dioscorus's teaching, Wauchier instead introduces a passage of sixty-six lines condemning the rich.

Szkilnik suggests, with some justification, that the verse in this section of the work appears misplaced.⁴⁰ The thematic relationship between verse and prose here is certainly less obvious than it is in the earlier passage concerning John's advice to the monks. The first-person address in the later verse passage is also more clearly identifiable as the voice of Wauchier and contrasts both with the "nus" (we) used by Postumien and that employed by Wauchier when he again reverts to prose. This separation of narrative voices is echoed in the visual distinction between verse and prose in the manuscript: though the first eighteen lines are presented as prose, the rest of the passage is written as verse.

The function of this passage in Wauchier's translation may help to explain its relationship to the surrounding text. The verse passage is coherent as a stand-alone piece: it begins by claiming that long sermons do not bore those who truly love God, goes on to identify the rich as especially culpable of this failing, evokes the divine judgement that awaits everyone, and points out the folly of rich people who ignore this fact.⁴¹ Reverting to prose — a transition announced by a red initial in the manuscript — Wauchier reiterates the purpose of his intervention, declaring that he will now abandon the subject of those who are easily bored by God's word and return to Postumien and his companions: "Or lairons nos ester de cex qui a enuiz oient la parole Nostre Seignor reconter et dire [. . .]. Si dirons l'uevre si com Postumiens le continue"

39 Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia monachorum*, in PL 21:442C-443B.

40 Szkilnik describes this passage as "le plus déplacé de tous" (the most misplaced of all); Szkilnik, "Écrire en vers, écrire en prose," 210.

41 Wauchier's tone in this passage bears comparison with his claim in the prologue to the compilation that his work is addressed only to those prepared to listen attentively; see Meyer's edition of the prologue in his "Versions en vers et en prose des *Vies des Pères*," 260-62.

(*Histoire* 128.25-29: Now let us leave the subject of those who are bored by hearing told and recounted the word of Our Lord [. . .]. Let us relate the work as Postumien continues it). Thus, where the Latin text represents a sermon addressed to an audience of monks, Wauchier's version — in line with the other alterations he makes for his public — replaces this with what he presumably regards as a moral lesson more suitable for a non-monastic audience. If this lesson is somewhat out of step with the subject in hand, this is due to the different circumstances in which Wauchier is writing and to his more pessimistic view of his audience's dedication to spiritual matters.

On the one hand, then, the use of verse in this second passage distinguishes Wauchier from both Postumien and Dioscorus and points to an important difference between the contemporary lay audience of the *Histoire* and the monastic audience associated with the vernacular text's Latin and Greek antecedents. On the other hand, Wauchier's mini-sermon performs the same function as Dioscorus's teachings to his monks on the suppression of sensual appetites, albeit for a different audience and on a different topic. Although the form and content of this passage depart significantly from the Latin, the pedagogical intention is therefore the same, and the message is similarly aimed at the salvation of those listening. The most significant difference, Wauchier suggests, is that his public is less willing to pay attention and less receptive to instruction than were Dioscorus's monks.

The uses of verse in the two passages discussed above make for interesting comparison. Both passages of verse are inserted at moments when monks encountered by Postumien within the narrative are engaged in teaching both him and other monks. In each case, Wauchier's voice — to the extent that it is discernible in the text — is identified with or supplements these teachings. Nevertheless, there are important differences in the presentation of this voice. The use of verse in the first case expands on John of Lycopolis's discourse in a way that is continuous with his story. By contrast, in the second instance, a verse passage replaces a teaching that Wauchier does not recount in full, producing a diversion from the main narrative which reflects a change of audience and historical moment. Even with these differences in emphasis, Wauchier's use of verse cannot simply be seen as the foregrounding of a subjective authorial presence. Rather, it appears to be a means of highlighting the intersubjective nature of the text as a work that, through its translation, addresses various audiences at different moments in time.

The Ending of the *Histoire*

What I have been calling, after Dinshaw, the “asynchrony” of Wauchier’s translating voice is, as already suggested, connected to the pedagogical aims of his translation. The lay audience of the French text differs significantly from that of the *Historia monachorum* and of the Greek source on which the Latin is based, yet this public must nonetheless be brought to spiritual understanding through a text that translates the function as well as the contents of the earlier works. This process of adaptation, while aiming to make the work accessible to a new audience, does not result in the kind of transparent translation techniques criticized by Venuti, nor does it straightforwardly confirm the derivative, temporally transient qualities of translation that he associates with such techniques.⁴² Although Wauchier makes obvious adjustments to the linguistic and cultural framing of his source, his translation is far from being a homogenizing domestication of the Latin text. As I have argued, the present, or “now,” of translation in Wauchier’s text spans multiple temporalities rather than privileging one moment over others. Instead of effacing the voice of the translator in an attempt to give the impression of unmediated access to a source text, the *Histoire* constructs a complex, polyphonic discourse in which the voices that Wauchier translates emerge through or alongside his own to speak to his audience in Latin as well as in French, in verse as well as in prose. Though the translator’s presence in the text is always implicit, the moments when the separation between Wauchier’s voice and the text he is translating becomes most apparent are points of temporal, cultural, and linguistic tension generated by the vernacular work’s new context. Yet even as he translates Latin citation for a lay public or substitutes a sermon on the rich for one on suppressing sensual appetites, Wauchier’s voice always emerges in counterpoint to — rather than in separation from — those of the *Histoire*’s monastic narrators.

The conclusion of the *Histoire* in the Carpentras manuscript and the beginning of the work that follows offer further comment on the connections between translation, pedagogy, and time in this compilation. The end of the *Histoire* relates the perils that Postumien and his company encountered on their journey and gives thanks to God for preserving them from harm. In Carpentras 473, this conclusion is followed by the prologue to the next item in the collection,

42 Venuti outlines this position in *The Scandals of Translation*, esp. 31. See also Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility*, 1-42.

Wauchier's translation of Rufinus's *Verba seniorum*, a work which he again attributes to Postumien:

Certes, il n'est hom crestiens qui doit d'otier que par les vies des sainz homes qui ont esté et sont encore, et par les ovres et par les merites des sainz peres, dont je vos racont les faiz en cest livre, ne dure li siecles, quar il fuïrent luxure et tote malvaistié, et si se mistrent el parfont hermitage et es orribles roches de la grant desertine et es fosses obscures et solitaires. La n'avoient il ne fain ne soif ; si les sostenoit Nostre Sire. Nos racontons es escritures les saintes foiz des patriarchas et des prophetes, ce est d'Abraham et d'Isaac et de Jacob, de Moysen et d'Elie et de saint Joham Baptiste et d'autres sainz homes, non mie por ce que nos les glorefiomes, quar Nostre Sire les a bien glorefiez, mais por ce que cil qui les liront et orront en metent avant la doctrine et les exemples de verité et de salu a oes les ames, si que eles puissent eschaper des tormentes males parmenables.⁴³

[Certainly, by the lives of the holy men who have lived and live still, and by the merits of the holy fathers whose deeds I have recounted to you in this book, there is no Christian man who should doubt that this world may not last, for [those holy men] fled lechery and all wickedness and went into the deepest wilderness and onto the terrible rocks of the great desert and into obscure and solitary caves. There they experienced neither hunger nor thirst, for Our Lord sustained them. In the Scriptures we recount the holy deeds of the patriarchs and prophets, that is, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of Moses and Elias, and of St. John the Baptist and of other holy men, not so as to glorify them, for Our Lord has glorified them abundantly, but so that those who read and hear about them set the doctrine and examples of truth and salvation before the eye of people's souls so that they might escape terrible eternal torment.]

In terms of its contents and presentation in the manuscript, this prologue, while translating that of the *Verba seniorum*, does not appear to be uniquely attached to that text. The reference to the works and merits “des sainz peres, dont je vos racont les faiz en cest livre” (of the holy fathers whose deeds I have recounted to you in this book) evokes the larger compilation in which Wauchier's translations feature, rather than referring specifically to the work to come.

43 The quotation is taken from Meyer's edition of this prologue; Meyer, “Versions en vers et en prose des *Vies des Pères*,” 276-77, at 276. Translation mine.

Moreover, the presentation of this prologue in the manuscript suggests that it may have been seen as an epilogue to the *Histoire* as much as an introduction to the work that follows (Fig. 2). Although the *Histoire* itself ends just before the decorated initial *C* at the beginning of the above passage, the thick lettering of the “AMEN” at the end of the prologue to the *Verba seniorum* suggests that the latter might be identified as an alternative point of conclusion for the *Histoire*. The ambiguity concerning the ending and beginning of the two items on this folio is further complicated by the historiated initials. In contrast to the other initials in Wauchier's compilation, the *C* that begins the prologue to the *Verba seniorum* represents a zoomorphic creature, not a human figure; although the letter appears to signal a new section of the work, it does not therefore represent a human authority associated with the text. Such an identification occurs only later, in the subsequent image of Postumien and his monks, which suggests an alternative beginning for the *Verba seniorum* and signals the reprise of Postumien's first-person narration. The designation of this image as the beginning of a new section is further suggested by the marginal note which appears next to it and which is similar to those used elsewhere in the manuscript at the opening of other texts or at the beginning of certain subdivisions of the *Histoire*.⁴⁴ In contrast to the prologue to the *Histoire*, which articulates a transition between different authorities and different works, the prologue to the *Verba seniorum* is therefore positioned ambiguously between the end of one work and the beginning of another.

The ambiguity here may be partly attributable to the fact that this prologue's focus on the pedagogical value of transmitting ancient examples is a topic that is not specific to the *Verba seniorum*: the same applies to Wauchier's translation of the *Historia monachorum* and to the larger compilation in which both of these texts appear. Both the general prologue to the compilation and the introductory passages of the *Histoire* mention the exemplary nature of the material and its spiritual purpose;⁴⁵ as seen above, in the *Histoire* Postumien

44 This note reads, “Ci parole des seyns exemples ques avoyt veu li sayns moynes postumens” (fol. 118rb, right margin: Here the holy examples that the holy monk Postumien had seen are spoken about).

45 Wauchier's general prologue to the collection states that he wishes to recount the lives of the fathers which he has translated into French for attentive listeners “por ce qu'il i praignent bones essamples et retiegnent, les vies des sainz peres” (so that they might take good example from it and retain the lives of the holy fathers); Meyer, “Versions en vers et en prose des *Vies des Pères*,” 261. Translation mine.

claims he has written about his encounters with the desert hermits “si que cil qui ne les virent mie poissent entendre et oir les ovres, si qu’il i praignent exemple d’aquerre gloire parmenable” (*Histoire* 51.8-10: so that whoever has not seen them may understand and hear about the works, and thus take example from them to acquire eternal glory). The prologue to the *Verba seniorum* consequently offers a comment on the temporal complexity of translation not only in the work it introduces but also in the *Histoire* and in the compilation more broadly. What this prologue suggests is that the edifying text, as the medium through which the holy deeds of the past are made present, acts as a point of connection between historical, contemporary, and future times. Wauchier’s (and possibly Postumien’s) recounting of the works of the desert fathers is associated, on the one hand, with the written transmission of stories about biblical patriarchs and prophets and, on the other, with engagement with these examples in the present as a means of ensuring the future salvation of readers and listeners. Translation is, from this eschatological perspective, part of a larger, temporally expansive educational programme that reaches from Old Testament biblical history to the Day of Judgement. Here, the temporality of translation is not just to be thought of in terms of the textual survival that concerns poststructuralist translation theory: the afterlife of the source made possible through translation is connected to the afterlife of the Christian subject.

The second initial on this folio, which re-introduces Postumien’s narrating voice and begins the *Verba seniorum* proper, depicts a scene of instruction that mirrors the one described in the preceding prologue (Fig. 3). Insofar as this image visually references earlier depictions of Postumien in the *Histoire*, it is also in dialogue with the work just completed, as well as with the one that is about to begin. Like the illuminated initial that opens the *Histoire*, this image appears within the capital O of “Or” (now), in this instance spoken not by the translator but by Postumien. The figure on the right is Postumien himself, seated with a book in his left hand before a company of monks; although his appearance resembles that in other portraits, his long, grey beard suggests an older man compared with the brown-haired figure on fol. 85va (Fig. 1) or the older, short-bearded figure on fol. 103ra (Fig. 4). As well as being visibly older, Postumien is represented as part of a monastic community rather than as a wandering pilgrim, as a teacher as well as a witness. This illumination thus reminds us of its location within a narrative time that looks both backward and forward to a time in which holy men are encountered, beards have greyed, and books are written.

This decorated “Or,” though still marking the present moment of enunciation, acts as a *mise en abyme* of the previous text as well as of the work to come. Postumien here recounts his experiences to a crowd of monastic listeners while clutching what is presumably the book that will transmit those experiences to posterity. This scene of communal instruction figures an encounter that Wauchier’s translation tries to recreate through its use of direct discourse. Yet it also points to the temporal and cultural gap that his translation has to overcome in recasting the Latin work in French for a lay audience. The francophone listeners whom Postumien addresses through Wauchier’s text, though they might imagine otherwise, are far from identical with the monastic listeners facing him in the painted initial. As Wauchier’s adaptation of his source attests, his audience is temporally, educationally, and spiritually distinct from the monastic audiences inscribed within and addressed by the Latin work. Nevertheless, in this particular illuminated “now,” the moment in which Postumien speaks to his company of monks is contiguous with the moment in which he speaks to Wauchier’s audience — or, more accurately, the moment in which Rufinus’s translated text, in the voice of Postumien, speaks through Wauchier to a contemporary francophone readership. This illumination is thus a reminder of the historical expansiveness as well as the intersubjective complexity of the present of Wauchier’s translation. If translation can be said to have a time in this compilation, that time is “now” — that is to say, a present that reaches across all past and future nows and the asynchronous voices and communities that inhabit them.

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