

### Miles Smith (1552/53-1624) and the Uses of Oriental Learning

Item I doe give vnto the Librarie of Hereford these Bookes followinge, The Venice Byble conteyninge the Targumim and the Rabbins in fower Volumes bounde in white Leather Maimonides in fower Volumes. Kimhi his Miklol (That is to saye) his Grammar in Hebrew & his Dictionarie in Hebrew. Kimhi vpon the Psalmes *Elias Levita* his *Meturgemam*. The Byble in Hebrew in 4 Volumes in 4<sup>o</sup> guylded leaves, & *Stephanus* print *Raphalingus Arabick Dictionarie*. *Erpenius Arabick Grammar*. Arabick Newe Testament and 5. Bookes of Moses Arabick Lexicon Talmudicum and the Hebrew Concordance.<sup>1</sup>

On 7 March 1624, the bishop of Gloucester, Miles Smith, made his will.<sup>2</sup> In it, he left twenty volumes of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic books to the library of Hereford Cathedral. Smith had been born in Hereford, he became a prebend there in 1580, and his career was closely associated with that of another Hereford Cathedral prebend, Gervase Babington (1549/50-1610). His time at Gloucester seems to have been difficult and controversial, and it is striking he chose to leave his books to the library at Hereford, where he was born, rather than Gloucester, where he was a bishop. Smith does not seem to have been unique in his desire to improve libraries' holdings of oriental books: Richard Kilbye (1560-1620), for instance, left his collection of Hebrew books to the library of Lincoln College, Oxford.<sup>3</sup> Hereford Cathedral Library had already undergone a resurgence from 1611 onwards, when the chained library was founded by Thomas Thornton (1541-1629), Oxford's vice-chancellor in the late-sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Thornton

established a Donors' Book at the Library (modelled on the [Donors' Book](#) of the recently-established Bodleian Library), and [it](#) shows that Smith's donation of his oriental books was not the only specialized donation of books on a particular subject: Thornton himself donated a group of books relating to British history and antiquities.<sup>5</sup> [The](#) particular purpose [of Smith's donation](#) was to provide the clerical readers [of the Library](#) with the fundamental of oriental studies as it was practised in England in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.<sup>6</sup>

The centrepiece is the four-volume edition of the fourth Rabbinic Bible, published in Venice in 1568.<sup>7</sup> These volumes gave English readers access to the key commentaries of Abraham Ibn Ezra, Rashi, and David Kimhi, as well as the Aramaic Targums, and several other rabbinic commentators.<sup>8</sup> Ibn Ezra, Rashi, and Kimhi were the triumvirate of rabbinic commentators to whom English orientalist most frequently referred. Sections of each were available in the Latin translations of Jean Mercier (1510-1570) and Paulus Fagius (1504-1549), but the Rabbinic Bible provided access to the original texts.<sup>9</sup> Along with the Rabbinic Bible, Smith left a further volume of rabbinic commentary, Kimhi's commentary on the Psalms in Paulus Fagius's edition.<sup>10</sup> Kimhi's commentary was omitted from the fourth rabbinic bible because of [its](#) anti-Christian content, which made it necessary to own this supplementary volume. Smith also donated Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah* and the Torah in Hebrew, in four volumes, with David Kimhi's commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets.<sup>11</sup> To help with comprehension of these books, Smith left a variety of grammars and dictionaries: Kimhi's *Michlol* and *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (again, fundamental texts to early-modern English orientalist); Elia Levita's *Lexicon Chaldaicum*, his Aramaic dictionary, also edited by Paulus Fagius; the dictionary of

Talmudic Hebrew, *Sefer he-Arukh*; and Isaac Nathan's fifteenth-century biblical concordance, *Sefer Me'ir nativ*.<sup>12</sup> As well as Hebrew books, Smith left the latest in Arabic scholarship. Again, he provided primary texts (Erpenius's Arabic New Testament, published in 1616, and the Arabic Pentateuch, published in 1622), along with a grammar (that of Erpenius, published in 1613) and a Latin-Arabic dictionary (that of Franciscus Raphelengius, published in 1613).<sup>13</sup> Here were the necessary tools for the study of the Bible in Arabic. Taken together, these volumes form a study kit, which would allow theologians to read and interpret the biblical texts.

Smith was certainly reputed to be an expert in oriental languages. In the sermon he preached for Smith's funeral, Thomas Prior claimed that [the deceased](#) 'was inferior to none, either for knowledge in Diuinity, or skill in the Easterne Tongues'. Prior commended Smith for how 'well acquainted' he was with 'Histories Ecclesiasticall, and profane; with the Iewish and Christian Doctors, with Diuines ancient and moderne; with Fathers Greeke and Latin', and concludes that he was so 'perfect in the Greeke, the Hebrew, the Chaldee, the Syriacke, and the Arabicke tongues, I am bold to affirme, that there are few so learned men vnder heauen'.<sup>14</sup> [J. Stephens, the](#) editor and author of the preface to the 1632 edition of Smith's sermons [also](#) praised Smith's learning in classical authors, in the Greek and Latin Fathers, and [in](#) the 'Rabbins also, so many as he had with their Glosses and Commentaries he read and vsed in their owne Idiome of speech, and so conuersant he was and expert in the Chaldie, Syriacke and Arabicke, that he made them as familiar to him almost as his owne natiue tongue'.<sup>15</sup> These praises were echoed verbatim by Anthony Wood, who concluded that Smith, 'for his exactness in those Languages' was 'thought worthy by K. *Jam*[es] to be called to that great work of the last

translation of our English Bible'.<sup>16</sup> Such praises were, at least partly, conventional; but the annotations in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic books Smith left to Hereford do bear witness to the painstaking hours he must have spent working through these texts. Comparison of the hand which wrote these marginal annotations with Miles Smith's signature, preserved in a letter in the British Library, show that many of the notes are in his autograph.<sup>17</sup> Smith's notes on the Rabbinic Bible, in particular, demonstrate the thoroughness with which he worked through Jewish texts. He read all the different kinds of commentary contained in these volumes. What seem almost certain to be his little marginal markings (in the form of pairs of vertical lines, like small speech marks) are to be found across the Targums, the magna and parva Masorah, and the commentaries of Kimhi and Rashi. His notes cover all four volumes of the Rabbinic Bible. There is clear evidence here of intense linguistic study. The evidence of these books, therefore, invites [the](#) question: what did Smith think these books were for? What could be achieved by studying them? For a divine like Smith, what were the possibilities of oriental reading in the early seventeenth century?<sup>18</sup> These are the questions this article sets out to answer, and, in so doing, to offer the first detailed account of the nature, chronology, and motivation of the oriental studies of one of the key translators of the King James Bible; the man chosen to articulate the purpose, method, and aims of the volume on behalf of all the other translators, Miles Smith.

Evidence to answer these questions is, however, as always when it comes to the habits and ideas of the King James Bible translators, sparse and fragmentary. Smith's annotations to his oriental books hardly provide exhaustive evidence. Many of Smith's notes amount to small dashes in the margin beside particular passages, and it would be

dangerous to infer too much about Smith's investment or use of such passages based only on marginal dashes. And even when Smith writes out fuller comments in the margin beside particular passages, he is normally summarizing what is to be found in the Hebrew, rather than commenting on it (although, as we shall see, he does sometimes pass comment). Other than his Arabic books, the volumes Smith left to Hereford Cathedral were largely not very thoroughly annotated, in the way many scholarly books were if their owners, for instance, planned to produce a new edition of the book or to develop a substantial series of published works from their reading. A second set of evidence is Smith's sermons, which came to make use both of versions of the Bible in oriental languages and of rabbinic sources. The third set of evidence, the King James Bible itself, can only ever provide oblique evidence of an individual translator's role. That Smith was a key figure in the project is well attested. He was a member of the First Oxford Company, a group comprising some of Oxford's most distinguished orientalist: John Harding, John Rainolds, Thomas Holland, Richard Kilbye, Richard Brett, and Daniel Fairclough. This group was responsible for the translation of the books of the prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi. Along with Thomas Bilson, bishop of Winchester, Smith seems to have been responsible for checking through the entire translation after it was completed; it seems probable that Bilson chose Smith to help him on the basis of the wide-range of his linguistic learning, extending over both Hebraic and Greek scholarship, and, perhaps, of his episcopal-Calvinist theological orthodoxy, too.<sup>19</sup> When the translation was completed, Smith wrote the translation's preface, a celebrated work of English prose. J. Stephens, the editor and of Smith's sermons states that Smith wrote the preface 'in the name of all the Translators, being the same that now is extant in our

Church Bible, the Originall whereof I haue seene vnder his own hand'.<sup>20</sup> Conflicting stories about the various responsibilities of the KJV translators abound, but a newly noticed parallel between the text of the preface and of the sermons discussed here does make it highly likely that Smith was indeed the author of the preface. We have, therefore, three important groups of evidence by which to explore the aims and methods of Smith's oriental studies: his annotated books, his sermons, and the KJV itself, especially the preface.

Before we turn in detail to the nature and purposes of Smith's oriental learning, it is worth pausing to say something about Smith's broader theological position and place in the English church. Kenneth Fincham has shown that, as a practicing churchman, certainly during his episcopacy, Smith was far from the most active among his contemporary bishops. He limited his preaching, abdicated responsibility for administrative duties, and failed to take part in the development of the local clergy through exerting his ecclesiastical patronage; Fincham even goes so far as to describe him as 'indolent'.<sup>21</sup> He seems not to have been a natural ecclesiastical administrator. Nevertheless, Smith's defence of English Calvinism was to remain famous after his death. For Peter Heylyn, writing in his biography of [William](#) Laud, Smith was not only a 'great Hebrician' but also one who 'spared not to shew himself upon all occasions in favour of the Calvinian party'.<sup>22</sup> Even on his deathbed, Thomas Prior heard him 'discourse sweetly of the Certainty of Salvation, and of Perseuerance in Grace', which for Prior were 'comfortable truths so much opposed by Papists, Arminians, and carnall Gospellers'.<sup>23</sup> One can presume that the 'Arminians' referred to here include Laud, with whom Smith clashed around 1616. Laud, writing to Smith in that year, told him that 'his

Ma<sup>tie</sup> was graciously pleas'd to tell me,' that 'there was scarce euer a Church in England soe ill govern'd' as Gloucester cathedral. The king, according to Laud, had ordered him to 'sett in order what I there found amiss'. Laud tried to make two reforms: he implementd the 'repayer of some *partes* of the edifice of the Church' and 'remoued the Communion Table, from the mydle of the quier to the vpper end, the place appointed to it both by the Iniunctions of this Church & by the practise of all the Kings Ma<sup>ties</sup> Chappells & all of the Cathedrall Churches in the Kingdome'.<sup>24</sup> William Prynne, in his polemical account of Laud's episcopate, helpfully draws out the implications of this removal of the communion table in the eyes of the Church's more Calvinist wing: Laud 'intended to turne the Communion Table into an Altar'. Puritan factions attacked Laud in a libel, and Laud sought for Smith to 'reform such tongues and pens'. In a letter to Richard Neile, Laud expressed his doubts over 'what course for redress of these things his Lordship [i.e., Smith]' was likely to take.<sup>25</sup> According to Prynne, Smith was furious: if the communion table were moved, or any other 'such Innovations' were introduced into his Cathedral, 'hee would never come within the Walls of the Cathedrall more'.<sup>26</sup> Biographical evidence, therefore, all indicates that Smith's Hebraism went alongside a commitment to the traditions of English Calvinism.

Study of Smith's sermons suggests the same conclusion. At one point in his second sermon,<sup>27</sup> Smith defends the authority of Calvin and Luther against what he sees to be wrongful slurs from Catholics. They 'escaped not the tongues of the wicked', and yet 'their liues were proposed by all that knew them, for a paterne, for others to follow, and they found as many all their lifetime, that did reuerence them for their vertue, as did honour them for their learning' (41-42). More broadly, Smith's sermons were centrally

concerned with defending English Protestantism against the Counter-Reformation. Crucial here, for Smith, was one issue in particular: the role of unwritten traditions in determining dogma. The Council of Trent had enshrined the rule that doctrine was to be found ‘in written books and unwritten traditions’ (in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus).<sup>28</sup> For post-Tridentine Catholics, this was a means to counter Protestant claims to base their faith on the authority of scripture alone. Smith devotes several lengthy passages to the defence of *sola scriptura* against the Tridentine claims of unwritten traditions. Smith’s longest discussion of this issue can also be found in his second sermon. Here, he draws on scripture itself in order to prove the exclusivity of its authority. ‘Be not the Scriptures the rule of our faith, the direction of our steppes, &c?’, Smith asks. ‘Yes, they [i.e., Catholics] will grant after a sort, they be a rule, but not *adaequata regula*, there are other rules besides, namely, Traditions.’ ‘But Christ saith,’ Smith points out, ‘*Search the Scriptures, for in them you thinke you haue eternall life, and they are they that testifie of me*. Search the Scriptures. He doth not say, Search or enquire after Traditions. *The Scriptures testifie of me*. Why doth not He send them to something else, if any thing else were to be trusted?’. If Christ had withheld anything which was vital for salvation, it ‘necessarily bewrayeth either want of knowledge, or want of charity’. ‘Therefore’, Smith concludes, ‘we are to rest vpon the Scriptures, & hold them to be sufficient witnesses of Christ, euen without tradition’ (32).

In the fourth sermon, he picks up the issue of unwritten traditions again, and advances a different argument. ‘As for the Word (the Food of the Church)’, Smith asks rhetorically, ‘how many ways (blessed God!) doe they adulterate it, or make it vnprofitable, and so make it no Gospell at all’. The most insidious way in which



Catholics ‘adulterate’ scripture is to ‘equall their Traditions (they call them the Apostles Traditions,)’ even though, ‘they cannot shew them in the writings of the Apostles’. And against this position, Smith advances a sentence from one of the Fathers themselves, Tertullian: ‘I do not accept what you bring from outside Scripture to support you, as *Tertullian* saith’ (79).<sup>29</sup> Even the Fathers do not think much of their own ante-Nicene tradition. And Smith turns to the theme again in his eleventh sermon. Here, the early Fathers are unreliable because of man’s propensity to lie and distort the truth, ‘sauing they which were priuiledged with the priuiledge of infallibility, the Apostles and Prophets I meane’. All other, later sources, are ‘subject to error and mistaking’ (204). At the core, therefore, of Smith’s project is an attack on the Counter-Reformation insistence that unwritten tradition should play a role within scriptural interpretation.<sup>30</sup> Smith’s *sola scriptura* argument clearly puts a great deal of weight on the need to establish an exactly authoritative Biblical text. It is within this polemical context--the attack on unwritten traditions, the defence of the total sufficiency of Scripture--that we need to begin to understand Miles Smith’s Hebraism. But what evidence is there for how Smith’s study of Hebrew began and developed?

#### ‘The language of Canaan’: The Development of Smith’s Hebrew Studies

It is difficult to say much for certain about how Smith began to study Hebrew. He arrived at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, around 1568, and soon afterwards seems to have moved from Corpus to Brasenose, where he took his BA in 1573 and MA in 1576.<sup>31</sup> Smith arrived at Oxford during a vibrant moment in the university’s intellectual history, and especially in the history of oriental studies. John Rainolds (1549-1607) became a

fellow of Corpus around the same time as Miles Smith became an undergraduate there, and in 1569 Rainolds became the tutor to the young Richard Hooker (1554-1600), whose works would later become defining texts of 'Anglicanism'. Rainolds would go on to become one of the key figures in the origin of the King James Bible and to lead the First Oxford Company of translators, of which Smith was a member. It certainly seems plausible that he would have met the young Miles Smith around this time. After a failed attempt to learn Hebrew when he was younger, Rainolds was making progress with the language around the time Smith was completing his BA.<sup>32</sup> Hooker, too, seems to have attempted to become proficient in Hebrew around this time, and deputized for Thomas Kingsmill (d. in or after 1605?), Oxford's Hebrew professor, in the later 1570s. Miles Smith's arrival at Corpus Christi, therefore, and his time as an undergraduate at Oxford as a whole, coincided with the growth of Hebrew studies there.

There is a tiny sliver of evidence, though, to suggest that Smith may have been moving in circles that had particular interests in literature, history, and humanism, rather than in theology and oriental languages. After taking his MA in 1576, Smith became chaplain at Christ Church College, Oxford. There is evidence that around this time Smith became acquainted with a young scholar who would go on to become England's most celebrated antiquarian, William Camden (1551-1623). One of Smith's very few surviving letters, dated 26 June 1617, is written to Camden, in which Smith reminisced about their long acquaintance, dating back 'almost half an age'. 'At the first', Smith wrote, 'I presaged what help in time you would afford to the furtherance of Learning, and what an ornament you would prove to your Countrey: and I thank God I was not deceived'.<sup>33</sup> If Smith 'presaged' Camden's contribution to learning and to his country, then their

acquaintance must at the very least have dated from before the first publication of Camden's *Britannia* in 1586; if 'almost half an age' amounts to just shy of fifty years then their acquaintance might have begun at the very end of the 1560s or the early 1570s, when Camden was at Christ Church College, Oxford. Camden's tutor in the late 1560s and early 1570s was Thomas Thornton, the man who would go on to become librarian of Hereford Cathedral and to work with Smith as a canon there. It is not out of the question that he may have met Smith around this time; perhaps the 'Smith meus', whom Camden refers to in a very early letter, probably written around 1568, concerning Thomas Watson's translation of Polybius, might even refer to Miles Smith.<sup>34</sup> It was likely Thornton, too, who had given Camden an entré into the social world of Christ Church around this time, which centred on another of Thornton's tutees, Sir Philip Sidney, and included men such as the mathematician, Thomas Savile (d. 1593), and the geographer, Richard Hakluyt (1553-1616).<sup>35</sup> Of course it is tempting to speculate further, but what is striking is that our chief surviving piece of evidence for Smith's connections at Oxford around this time places him in the ambit of a historian-to-be, rather than of theologically-inclined orientalist.

Two of Smith's sermons can be dated to the Elizabethan period, and neither contains any evidence of the uses of Hebrew, which would so characterize the sermons that can be definitively dated to the Jacobean period. One sermon which belong to the Elizabethan period is number five in the 1632 edition of Smith's sermons, on 2 Kings 18:13. Two references help us date this sermon to the mid-to-late 1590s. Smith's references to Philip II of Spain suggest the latter was still very much alive ('I see no cause why he [Philip] should complaine of wrong suffering from her'; 'This man, besides

the name of Brother and Sister, which goeth betweene Christian Princes currant, married her Maiesties owne sister [...] and so shoud loue her euen naturally' (109, 110-11)). Philip died in 1598, which is therefore the sermon's *terminus ad quem*. A *terminus a quo* of 1594 can be established from Smith's reference to Roderigo Lopez, Elizabeth's Portugese doctor, who, according to Smith, was 'hyred' by Philip 'to take away her life by poysoning, she being warned thereof, did not consent to take the fatall drugge' (109). Roderigo was arrested on 1st January 1594. This sermon, written between 1594 and 1598, contains none of the oriental learning we find in his later sermons.

The evidence of Smith's other definitively-datable Elizabethan sermon tells a similar, but more striking, story. This sermon was first published in 1602 by Robert Burhill (1572-1641), a fellow of Corpus Christi College, seemingly without Smith's consent. In his preface to the sermon, addressed to Smith's patron, Gervase Babington, Burhill defends his unauthorised publication by asking: 'For why shoulde hee suffer his learned papyrs to bee like the hidden riches of a covetous man, good for none vntill the owners death?'<sup>36</sup> The sermon had been preached at the Worcester assizes, so it is likely that the original sermon dates from the 1590s, when Smith had become rector of Hartlebury and Upton-upon-Severn in the diocese of Worcester.<sup>37</sup> The sermon is then republished in the posthumous 1632 volume of Smith's sermons. Collation of these two editions of the same sermon show that they are almost identical, with the exception of many small differences in punctuation, some small modifications to expression (e.g. 'touching bodily presence' (1602 edition) is 'concerning bodily presence' in 1632 edition), and one substantive addition to the text. In Robert Burhill's 1602 edition, we find the following passage, discussing the appellation 'the wise':

I grant that in al ages, and in al nations some haue gone away with the name of  
wisdome, as that *Romane* that was called *Corculum* (*Nosica* was so called) that  
Grecian that was called *sophia* (not *sophos* but *sophia*) *Democritus Abderita* was  
so called: that Iew that was surnamed *Hechacham*, *Aben Ezra* was so surnamed:  
the Britane that was called *the sage*, *Gildas* was so called, *Gildas sapiens*, &c.  
(23)

In the 1632 edition of the sermon, the passage regarding wise Jews reads as follows: ‘that  
Iew that was surnamed *Hochacham*, *Aben-Ezra* was so surnamed, **so were also *R.***  
***Iebudah*, and *R. Ionah*, as appeareth by *Kimchi*, in his *Micdol*** [sic] [my emphasis]’.  
So the only substantive modification to the sermon is in the addition of a reference to  
Kimhi.

That Smith revised this sermon seems likely. Elsewhere the small differences in  
the sermon’s wording between the 1602 and 1632 editions do not have the character of an  
overly\_conscientious editor’s tidying or an inaccurate typesetter.<sup>38</sup> That the phrase was  
omitted by eye-skip in the 1602 edition is certainly a possibility, although, then again,  
that no other substantive phrases were omitted in this way suggests the sermon was set in  
types quite carefully. There is also no reason to think that Burhill might have deliberately  
omitted this reference to a Jewish source out of dislike for rabbinic interpretation: like  
Smith, in fact, Burhill had an interest in Hebrew sources, producing a commentary on  
points of philological difficulty in the Hebrew of the Book of Job, which is now in  
Corpus Christi College, Oxford.<sup>39</sup> What seems most likely is that Smith added this point

when revising the sermon. The revision can be connected directly to one of Smith's annotations in the Hebrew books he left to Hereford Cathedral. In the margin beside the relevant passage in Kimhi's *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (Smith doesn't seem to have made a clear distinction between the *Michlol* and the *Sefer ha-Shorashim*), Smith has written: 'R: Iehudah, hochacam vocatur' [Rabbi Jehudah is called 'hochacam'].<sup>40</sup> No other example connects Smith's Hebrew reading so directly to his writing. It points to the growing interpenetration between Smith's Hebraic reading and the writing of his sermons after the 1590s, when the first version of the sermon Burhill published seems to have been written.

Does this revision imply that Smith only got hold of the *Sefer ha-Shorashim* after he had written the Worcester assize sermon? As ever, evidence is sketchy, but there are some clues about the provenance of this book. Smith's 1529 Bomberg *Sefer ha-Shorashim* is now bound together with his 1545 Bomberg *Michlol*.<sup>41</sup> It seems certain these books were bound together when they reached the library in Hereford.<sup>42</sup> But were they bound together when Smith first owned them? This is probable, because Smith's initials--which he tended to enter at the front of his books--appear only at the front of the first volume, i.e., at the beginning of the *Michlol*. At the back of the whole volume, i.e., at the beginning of *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, Smith has written his name ('Miles Smyth'). This suggests that Smith received both books as a single volume. Inscriptions in the *Michlol* and *Sefer ha-Shorashim* point to the volume's provenance. On the left of the *Michlol*'s title page, written from top to bottom, is the following: 'Tho: Kingsmelli. ex dono D. Sampsoni' [from the gift of Dr Sampson to Thomas Kingsmell]. 'D. Sampsoni' was possibly Thomas Sampson (1517-1589), dean of Christ Church from 1561, and a 'severe Calvinist'. He left England in the Marian period to stay in Strasbourg, from where he

journing into Switzerland; he seems to have studied Hebrew with Immanuel Tremellius during this time.<sup>43</sup> ‘Tho. Kingsmelli’ is almost certain to be the Regius Professor of Hebrew, Thomas Kingsmill (d. in or after 1605?).<sup>44</sup> Kingsmill became a demy scholar of Magdalen College in 1558, fellow of Magdalen in 1559, then reader in natural philosophy 1563-1565 and public orator 1565-1569. He seems to have been a firm Protestant, and was famously disciplined for expressing heretical views and for shaving his head in mockery of the tonsure. In 1569 he resigned his fellowship of Magdalen and became regius professor of Hebrew. But as Wood vividly put it, Kingsmill became ‘distempered in brain with too much lucubration’, and he was temporarily suspended from his professorship probably in the 1570s. He seems to have recovered, though, and continued to hold his post until 1591. Smith’s *Michlol*, therefore, seems to have passed through the hands of the man who was Hebrew professor at Oxford during Smith’s time at the university.<sup>45</sup>

On the end paper of the volume as a whole (i.e., at the beginning of *Sefer ha-Shorashim*) is another inscription, almost certainly in Smith’s hand: ‘D: Hardings gift’. This Dr Harding seems likely to have been John Harding (d. 1610), Thomas Kingsmill’s successor as Regius Professor of Hebrew (in 1591), who became president of Magdalen College in 1607. Harding would later become a member of the First Oxford Company of translators, along with Miles Smith. This volume of Kimhi, therefore, may bear witness to the tradition of sixteenth-century Oxford Hebrew scholarship, which culminated in the KJV: from Sampson (who studied Hebrew in Europe), to Kingsmill, to Harding, to Smith. In giving the volume as a gift, each scholar seems to pass on the tradition to his friends or to the next generation. When might Smith have received it? Harding died in

1610, which gives a *terminus ad quem* for his gift to Smith. According to Wood, he was made DD on the 11 March 1596.<sup>46</sup> If Smith wrote his ‘Dr Hardings gift’ when he first received the gift, this suggests the volume was given to Smith sometime between 1596 and 1610. Given that Harding was Smith’s colleague on the King James translation, it seems likely (if by no means certain) that Harding gave him the volume sometime between 1605 and 1610, when both men would have been meeting to discuss the translation in Oxford.

Another of the volumes Smith left to Hereford also seems likely to have been acquired as a consequence of the King James translation work. This is Isaac Nathan’s *Sefer Me’ir Nativ*, published in Basle in 1581, which may fit the description of a ‘Concordant. Hebraic.’, which Smith acquired in October 1607 as part of the dispersal of John Rainolds’s library after his death. Rainolds bequeathed to each translator of the First Oxford Company (Kilbye, Harding, Holland, Brett, and Smith) a volume, mostly of Hebrew commentary or grammar.<sup>47</sup> Smith refers to this volume in his will as ‘the Hebrew concordance’, and so it seems likely that the *Sefir Me’ir Nativ* is the volume he received from Rainolds. Was this perhaps a book that the company had used in its translation work, and which Rainolds therefore bestowed on Smith in order that he might continue to use it? Even if not, it certainly does suggest that some of the Hebrew books that Smith left to Hereford Cathedral were acquired directly as a result of the King James Bible translation. A possible conclusion of all this is that Smith, rather than simply applying his thorough mastery of Hebrew texts to the King James Bible translation, actually stepped up his study of Hebrew texts as a consequence of his involvement in the translation.



Further evidence that Smith's Hebrew learning had entered a new phase by the 1600s is found in Smith's sermons. Particularly important is [the fourth sermon](#), on Romans 1:16, which can be dated to between 1605 and 1609. Towards the end of the sermon, Smith is attacking the Douai-Rheims translation of the Bible. 'They pretend that it is not well translated by our men', Smith says, 'but why do they not translate it better?'. And then the crucial passage: 'Why in their forty seven years of leisure (for so many it is since they left their Country) haue they set forth the New Testament onely'? (79)<sup>48</sup> This gives an unambiguous *terminus ad quem* for the sermon of 1609, the year in which the Douai-Rheims Old Testament started to emerge. And forty-seven years is a very specific figure: it seems likely that Smith is counting either from the death of Queen Mary and the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558, and is therefore speaking in 1605, or from the establishment of the English College at Douai in 1561, and therefore would be speaking in 1608. The Hampton Court Conference had taken place in 1604, and by 1605 Smith was likely already to have begun the work of translating the Bible.<sup>49</sup>

This sermon that is centrally concerned with [biblical translation](#) is also the earliest datable piece of writing in which Smith starts explicitly to engage with Jewish customs and language. When discussing the reverence for physical copies of the [Bible](#) near the end of the sermon, Smith explains that the Jews 'giue a summe of money to be preferred to the handling of, and doe bragge, that they haue handled the Tree of life, for so they call it, *Gnets hachaijm*' (93). He draws in references to other Jewish beliefs and traditions. In a lengthy discussion of the role of unwritten tradition in scriptural interpretation, Smith mentions the Karaites approvingly: 'and (*Keraim*) *Textuall*, men that stucke to the Word written, that withstood the Pharises, which made voyd the Commandements of God with

their Traditions'. Smith compares the Karaites to the men whom God 'in these later corrupt times' always continued to 'stirre vp [...] [those] that professed & maintained the truth that now we stand upon' (74). Smith's argument here is that the Karaites were a kind of Jewish Protestants, who advocate a *sola scriptura* faith.<sup>50</sup> Smith also goes on to explain that, for Jews, it is necessary not only to fulfil the minimum demands of the law, but 'if a man will be *Chasid*, that is, an holy man indeed, he must haue *Ribbith letorah*, he must supererogate, and doe more than the Law hath prescribed'. The new use of Hebrew sources and references to Jewish culture in a sermon about biblical translation-- and which coincides with the commencement of the King James Bible translation in the 1605-1608 period--points to the possibility that it was work on the Bible itself which galvanized and gave new urgency to Smith's reading of Hebrew commentaries. Partly, of course, the King James Bible grew out of emergent oriental studies in England, but here, perhaps, we see the way in which the Bible translation project itself spurred on the study of Hebrew texts.

It might be tempting to argue, therefore, that Smith only began to study Hebrew in the early years of the seventeenth century. This is possible, although it seems unlikely. It is hard to see why Smith would have been chosen as a biblical translator, let alone one with such a prominent role as the writer of the preface and reviewer of the whole finished text of the Bible, if he did not already have significant linguistic expertise. He was not a high-ranking member of the church like Thomas Bilson, bishop of Winchester, with whom Smith oversaw the final version of the text. A passage in the preface to the first version of Smith's edition of the works of his mentor and patron, Gervase Babington, published in 1592, also points to Smith's earlier interest in Hebrew learning. 'Indeed

vnneath a mans life will suffice to reade the bookes that are written alreadie vpon the scriptures in the three chiefe tongues,' Smith commented, 'but yet for them that are ignorant of the tongues, there is not as yet (to borrow a few of *Moses* words) an helper found out meete for them'.<sup>51</sup> Smith's specific reference to the commentaries 'in the three chiefe tongues' does not seem like a local reference relevant only to Babington's works, which make little use of oriental learning, but more generally to signal Smith's acceptance, already by 1592, that Hebrew commentaries can have value for the biblical exegete. The 1600s seems not to have been a completely new departure for Smith into Hebrew learning, but rather a development of his earlier interests into a new, more explicit phase. From around the mid-1600s onwards, Smith starts to engage more precisely with Hebrew sources in his sermons. Several of Smith's sermons were Gunpowder sermons, and so must date from at the earliest 1606; some can be shown to date from much later. In these sermons, Smith goes much further in his use of Hebrew and Rabbinic sources than he does in sermon four (c. 1605-8). Consideration of exactly how Smith understood the nature, aims and value of this Hebraic reading will constitute the next part of this article.

#### **'Out of the very fountains themselves': Defending the *Hebraica Veritas***

The most straightforward, but also probably the most fundamental and most important use to which Smith puts his Hebrew learning is to clarify the meaning of the Old Testament. He does this many times in his sermons. A particularly instructive example is found in the eighth sermon (preached on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot) in which Smith's text is Jeremiah 6:16, and his translation is that of the King James Bible.

The verse reads: ‘Thus saith the Lord, Stand yee in the wayes, and see, and aske for the old pathes, where is the good way and walke therein [Geneva: in it], and yee shall find rest for your soules’ (149). Two of Smith’s sermons are preached on Jeremiah, one of the books for which the First Oxford Company was chiefly responsible, and so this must have been a verse with which Smith had worked with particular intimacy. His sermon asks what exactly the ‘old paths’ means, and he turns to the Hebrew for clarification. ‘I say, that in the originall,’ Smith writes, ‘it is not קדום which properly signifieth old, but עולם which more properly signifieth euerlasting or perpetuall’ (159). Here again, Smith goes back to the Hebrew text to draw a fine distinction: not ‘old’, but ‘everlasting’. This seems to be either a rather uncommon distinction, or one of Smith’s own making: it is not adopted by the King James Bible (which reads ‘old’) and none of the commentaries gathered together by John Pearson in the *Critici Sacri* make this point.<sup>52</sup> At any rate, we can say this does not appear to have been a commonplace in the commentary on the verse.

Smith goes on to show that the distinction between ‘old’ and ‘everlasting’ has significant implications in polemic against the Counter-Reformation. His sermon draws out a distinction between Catholic over-veneration of antiquity (‘old paths’) and the Protestant willingness to seek out, with greater radicalism, paths which are ‘euerlasting or perpetuall’. Catholic doctrine and practice may indeed be a thousand years ‘old’, but being old does not equate with the ‘everlasting’ continuity between modern times and the practices of the original Christians at the time of Christ that Smith seeks. Old, Smith says, is not enough; Protestants are seeking the ‘everlasting’ traditions of the Church. Smith draws this distinction within a wider attack on Counter-Reformation arguments that the

Protestant Church is a novel invention. ‘For they [the Catholics]’, Smith writes, ‘haue the prescription of a thousand yeeres, and more, when as our faith is but of yesterday. Where was it before *Martin Luther*, &c.?’ Smith’s answer is that, in relative terms, it is really the Catholic faith which is ‘but of yesterday’. Their traditions may be old, ‘but where are they the nearer for that? was their doctrine from the beginning? or shall it last euer in our Church?’ Their ‘doctrine’ was not ‘from the beginning’ because it does not rely on Scriptural authority, but on the claims of unwritten traditions. And Smith again flourishes the phrase from Tertullian: ‘I do not accept what you bring from outside Scripture to support you’. He concludes: ‘I will not admit of that which they alledge out of their owne head without Scripture’ (159). Smith founds an argument about the lack of scriptural warrant in Catholic traditions, and therefore of genuine originary antiquity on the return to the original fountain of Hebraic truth in Scripture.

This is an effective point not only because it relies on detailed reading of the original language of scripture in order to defend *sola scriptura* Protestantism; it also parades the superior philological expertise of the Protestant Church. In all his sermons, Smith never preaches on the text of the Vulgate, and rarely even refers to it. In this respect, he is quite different from Lancelot Andrewes, who often preached on Vulgate texts. The Vulgate of Jeremiah 6:16 describes the ‘ways’ as ‘antiqui’, old: it is only by recourse to the Hebrew text that Smith can uncover the meaning ‘everlasting’. In doing so, he reaches for nuances beyond those that had been sanctioned in the King James translation, which simply prints ‘old’. The implicit argument in the sermon, therefore, is that the Tridentine decision to enshrine the authority of the Vulgate (a text which is merely ‘old’) distorts the true meaning of the biblical text, which can only be recovered

by a return to the ‘everlasting’ Hebrew original. In this context, the less explicitly polemical moments in which Smith cites the Hebrew Bible can be seen as defences of the *Hebraica veritas*, such as when in the tenth sermon Smith argues that the word השכל can mean both ‘wisdom or knowledge in God’s matters’ and ‘wisdom or knowledge in matters of the world’, an ambiguity not rendered in Latin. Protestants have the *Hebraica veritas* on their side, whereas the Vulgate is always necessarily a clumsy instrument.

As Smith would have known well, the *Hebraica veritas* needed defending in the late sixteenth century. Catholic arguments that post-Christian masoretic editors of the Hebrew Bible corrupted and distorted the Bible’s meaning, and that Jerome had access to superior, pre-masoretic manuscripts, were well known among the translators and Oxford theologians more generally. The arguments are fought out in the much read and reprinted *Conference* between the leader of the First Oxford Company, John Rainolds, and the Jesuit, John Hart. Hart cited the evidence of the Dutch theologian, Willem van der Lindt, that ‘the Hebrew Bibles, which are extant now, are shamefully corrupted in many places by the Jews out of spite and malice against Christians’.<sup>53</sup> This Catholic argument had complicated significantly the return to the ‘original’ Hebrew text proclaimed by English Protestants, because it was no longer clear how *original* that Hebrew text was. Smith’s vowel-pointed Rabbinic Bible would have brought him face-to-face with the masoretic traditions of scriptural scholarship, and it is impossible to imagine that he would not have been aware of the Catholic attack on the masoretic Hebrew text. Nevertheless, Smith is always able to defend a relatively uncomplicated notion of a return to the Hebrew Bible. In the preface to the King James translation, for instance, even though Smith engages at length with Catholic arguments against the translation of Scripture and in support of the

Vulgate, his lack of engagement with this crucial plank of Counter-Reformation polemic is striking. Instead, he repeatedly and uncomplicatedly proclaims the translators' return to the 'Hebrew fountain'; even the *Decretum Gratiani* proclaims that the 'credit of the old books (he meaneth the Old Testament) is to be tried by the Hebrew volumes; so of the new by the Greek tongue'. 'If truth be to be tried by these tongues', Smith concludes, 'then whence should a translation be made, but out of them?' (lxvi). Smith's practice in his sermons defends [at every turn](#) the return to the original Hebrew text.

It is in this context that we might understand another facet of Smith's engagement with the languages of the Old Testament: his dismissal of the Septuagint. It would not have seemed strange if Miles Smith had left a copy of the Septuagint in his bequest of the orientalist's kit to Hereford Cathedral Library. There were English biblical scholars in this period--of whom John Bois was perhaps pre-eminent among those who were involved in the King James translation--who saw the Septuagint as a means to clarify the meaning of the Hebrew Bible. The Septuagint translators were believed to be working from unaccented Hebrew manuscripts and therefore the translation might offer a way to return to the original purity of the pre-masoretic Hebrew [Bible](#). In a late sixteenth-century Counter-Reformation context, though, similar arguments could be used to attack the Protestant insistence on *Hebraica veritas*. For Willem van der Lindt, the authority whom we have seen cited [by John Hart](#) and attacked [by Rainolds](#), the differences between the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint provide a means to undermine the claims of the *Hebraica veritas*. Our modern Hebrew Biblical manuscripts differ a great deal, according to van der Lindt, from the manuscripts that were originally available in antiquity. 'If therefore this text of the Hebrew manuscripts', van der Lindt argues, 'from where today

they [i.e., Protestants] think that the solid truth of Scripture should be sought, is not true and faithful, it therefore appears absolutely clearly that often enough in many places the text differs from that which was indeed in the hands of the 70 translators and of Jerome in his own age'.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, Miles Smith prefers to dismiss the value of the Septuagint at the expense of the Hebrew Bible.

He makes two statements about the value of the Septuagint, one in the preface to the King James Bible and another in his (frustratingly undatable) second sermon. In the preface, Smith offers a relatively moderate critique of the Septuagint translation. The translators were 'interpreters, they were not Prophets. They did many things well, as learned men; but yet as men they stumbled and fell, one while through oversight, another while through ignorance; yea, sometimes they may be noted to add to the Originall, and sometimes to take from it' (lviii). This is clearly no divinely inspired translation; on the contrary, it is provisional and prone to error. The Septuagint was, though, Smith goes on, still decent enough to be used by the Apostles at the time of Christ:

The translation of the *Seventy* dissenteth from the Original in many places, neither doth it come near it, for perspicuity, gravity, and majesty. Yet which of the Apostles did condemn it? Condemn it? Nay, they used it, (as it is apparent, and as Saint *Hierome* and most learned men do confess;) which they would not have done, nor by their example of using it so grace and commend it to the Church, if it had been unworthy the appellation and name of the word of God. (lxiii)



We can compare this to Smith's more strongly worded attack on the Septuagint in his second sermon:

yet the worst translation (made by our men,) is sounder, and more agreeable to the Originall, than the Translation of the Seuentie: and yet the Apostles themselues *suffered the same, nay, vsed the same, (as is euident to the learned:)* (35)  
[emphasis added]

Note [here](#) the close verbal parallels: 'Condemne it? Nay, they vsed it' parallels 'suffered the same, nay, vsed the same'; and 'most learned men doe confesse' parallels 'as is euident to the learned'. These verbal parallels, incidentally, make it more or less certain that Smith did indeed write the preface to the King James Bible. It shows, too, that there is a certain moderation to the criticisms of the Septuagint in the preface in comparison with the sermon, which claims that the Septuagint is worse than the worst of Protestant translations in its agreement with the 'Originall', i.e., the Hebrew Bible. This is far away from seeing the Septuagint as the key to recovering a more ancient, pre-masoretic Hebrew text, and again implicitly defends the superiority of the Hebrew 'Originall' over the Septuagint translation. In this context, we might be unsurprised by the conclusion Daiches draws from his analysis of the King James translation of the Book of Isaiah that 'in no case does A.V. prefer either LXX or Vulg[ate] to the Hebrew text'.<sup>55</sup> Isaiah was, of course, one of the books of the Prophets for which Smith and the First Oxford company were responsible.

In the preface to the King James Bible, Smith attempts to lay claim to perhaps the greatest and most divisive authority who spoke for the *Hebraica veritas*: St Jerome himself. Erasmus, whose work on editing Jerome and preparing his new translation and edition of the Greek New Testament were carried out at the same time and were intimately related, had found in Jerome a model for a humanist, philological return to the original biblical text.<sup>56</sup> He had cast Jerome as the Christian grammarian *par excellence*, who prized historico-philological work on the biblical text above Origenian allegorization. Smith's preface picks up on Erasmus's lead, but goes further in taking Jerome as a model for the specific approach [of the King James Bible](#) to the Hebraic purity of the Old Testament. The old Latin translations before Jerome, Smith argues, were drawn not 'out of the Hebrew fountain [...] but out of the Greek stream', i.e., they were based on the Septuagint. Whereas Jerome decided to 'undertake the translating of the Old Testament, out of the very fountains themselves' (lviii). Later in the preface, Smith goes on to say that 'S. *Hierome* maketh no mention of the *Greek* tongue, wherein yet hee did excel; because hee translaed not the Old Testament out of *Greek*, but out of *Hebrew*' (lxvi). It is important to Smith, therefore, that Jerome has specifically rejected the Septuagint (still current in his time) to return to the Hebrew text. Smith's criticisms of the Septuagint pick up some of Jerome's language in the lengthy comparison between the Septuagint and the Hebrew Bible he offers in his 57th Epistle, addressed to Pammachius. Smith's claim that 'sometimes they [the Seventy] may be noted to add to the Original, and sometimes to take from it' (lviii) echoes Jerome's claim that it would be tedious to enumerate 'quanta Septuaginta de suo addiderint, quanta dimiserint' (how many things the Seventy have added, and how many things omitted').<sup>57</sup> In their return to the Hebrew

Bible, therefore, according to Smith's preface, the translators are following Jerome's example and imitating his practice. The Catholics, on the other hand, do not show any real reverence for Jerome in their confused fetishization of his translation, of which they have failed even to decide upon a definitive edition.<sup>58</sup> Smith's preface casts Jerome, and his return to the Hebrew text at the expense of the Septuagint, as the translators' model. As we have seen, [for Smith](#) this modelling on Jerome is part of a much wider series of strategies, by means of which he sought to defend the Hebraic truth of the Old Testament.

#### **'Skill of their own tongue': Interpreting *Hebraica Veritas***

One of the rare occasions on which Smith did make recourse to the Septuagint was in a sermon preached on Christmas Day, which took as its text an old chestnut, Isaiah 7: 14: 'Behold a Virgin (or the Virgin) shall conceiue and beare a Sonne, and she shall call his Name Immanuel'. The first part of the sermon focusses on the problematic translation or interpretation of the word 'Virgin', which in the Septuagint reads 'παρθένος', properly translated today as 'young girl', but which Smith takes to mean 'virgin'. His recourse to the Septuagint here is both strategic and passing: let us 'omit', Smith proclaims, 'the authority of the seuenty Interpreters which were Iewes, and so translated it before this matter was in controuersy', and who therefore should not be 'excepted against for partiality' (47). It is instructive to contrast Smith's passing and opportunistic use of the Septuagint here with the use made of it by Lancelot Andrewes in a sermon on the same passage. Andrewes asks his audience to follow Matthew's own quotation of the Septuagint translation of this passage (Matthew 1: 23), and with the apostle to 'rest hardly on the skill and integrity of all the seventy, that more than an hundred years before

it came to pass turned it *παρθένος* in Greek, that is “a virgin” who could skill of their own tongue better than Kimchi, or Albo, or any Rabbin of them all’.<sup>59</sup> Both clerical officeholders among the many university men who translated the Bible, and both sharing an interest in oriental languages and eastern texts, the sharp distinction between the two emerges here with clarity. For Andrewes, the Septuagint is a better means of clarifying the meaning of the Hebrew Bible than the rabbis; for Smith, the opposite is the case. Kimhi and the other rabbis, for Smith, could indeed ‘skill of their own tongue’ better than most, and their commentaries shed invaluable insight into the many meanings of the Hebrew language.

Many of Smith’s notes in his *Rabbinic Bible* draw attention to the way commentaries might illuminate particular Hebrew words. In his note on the commentary on Jeremiah 30:16, which the King James gives as ‘they that spoil thee shall be a spoil’, Smith notes that ‘*shasas* and *shasah* mean the same thing’.<sup>60</sup> Beside the commentary on Judges 14:5, ‘and behold a young lion [כפיר] roared against him’, Smith notes that there are ‘various names of the Lion for its different ages’.<sup>61</sup> And Smith saw that the rabbis could help to illuminate longer phrases, too. Their writings are a storehouse of Jewish proverbs. In the margins of his copy of Paulus Fagius’s edition of Kimhi’s commentary on the Psalms, Smith drew attention to an ‘adagium Rabbinicum’.<sup>62</sup> In his sermons, which are frequently littered with classical and patristic *exempla* and commonplaces, we find Smith drawing on the grammarian Kimhi to a similar effect. In Smith’s seventh sermon, another of his learned assize sermons, he takes his audience through the various ‘corrupter[s] of Iustice’, the last of which is ‘Precipitancie’. ‘The like may be said of Haste, that it causeth many ouer-sights and trippings’, Smith explains. *He then* turns to

proverbs, both English and Hebrew: ‘So we say, Hast maketh waste. And *Kimhi* vpon the first of *Esay*, recordeth this for the Apophthegme of the ancient Hebrew Doctors, *Ashrei hadaijan sheme chammets dino, Blessed is that Iudge doth Fermentare, (is well aduised of) his Sentence*’ (141).<sup>63</sup> The rabbis are, therefore, authorities on the habitual ways in which the Hebrew language is used. We might note, too, that this listing of Hebrew, English and classical proverbs alongside one another implies a syncretism between Eastern and Western cultures, as though they were working to find terminology for the same set of ideas and experiences.

Proverbs can become sites for theological interpretation. In [his eleventh sermon](#), Smith argues that God is not himself responsible for tempting mankind. ‘Therefore,’ Smith concludes, ‘let no man say, when hee is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted when he [i.e., man] is drawne away of his own lust, &c.’ (201). Corroboration of this idea can be found in ‘a Prouerb among the Rabbins’: ‘*Bap litmop pathechin lo*: that is, When a man offers himselfe to be defiled, they open vnto him, (that is, the Diuill openeth vnto him)’. Smith’s source is Ibn Ezra’s commentary on Exodus 10:20, ‘But the Lord Hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go’ (KJV). Ibn Ezra writes: ‘This is to be understood à la the words of our sages of blessed memory who said, "The door is opened for one who comes to defile himself"’.<sup>64</sup> Ibn Ezra is saying that ‘the Lord Hardened Pharaoh’s heart’ does not quite mean ‘the Lord made Pharaoh do this’: the Pharaoh ultimately ‘defiled himself’. Is this a point of language? Or is it a point of theological interpretation? Rather like the example of the fine distinction between the ‘old’ and ‘everlasting’ paths, it is both. Smith is here attempting to negotiate the problems of the extent of human free will within a Calvinist

understanding of predestination, and the rabbis provide insights into the linguistic problems which underpin this debate.

Rabbinic interpretation, therefore, can help Smith to clarify difficult points in the original Hebrew text. An example of this practice comes in the seventh sermon, addressed to judges at the assizes, where Smith discusses ‘Partiality’, that ‘hinderer of Justice’. To illustrate how this works, Smith weaves together various classical and biblical *exempla*. One example is drawn from Ezekiel 9:9, where ‘the Prophet *Ezechiel* reckoning vp the grieuous sinnes of *Iuda*, maketh this an especiall one, that the City was full of *Muttah*’. ‘[W]hats that?’, Smith asks rhetorically. ‘*Mishpat mutteh*, that is, Iudgement turned from the bias, as it were, as the Hebrew Interpreter doth expound it’, and a printed marginal note specifies that the ‘Hebrew Interpreter’ here is David Kimhi (137). Both the Geneva and King James translations read simply that the city is ‘full of perverseness’, so here we find Smith using the grammarian Kimhi to excavate a layer of meaning which supplements that found in the King James translation.

Smith knew, however, that rabbinic interpretation of points of difficulty is hardly characterized by complete consensus. His notes on the Rabbinic Bible are responsive to the Bible’s polyvocal presentation of differing interpretations of individual passages on a single page. The majority of his marginal notes on the Rabbinic Bible draw attention to disagreement between rabbis; his notes only seldom try to delve into the nature of these disagreements. Yet, it is striking that on one occasion when he does so, Smith records that one rabbi ‘rejects the exposition of Rashi because it has little agreement with grammar’.<sup>65</sup> Because of the texts that were selected for inclusion in the Rabbinic Bible, those volumes, especially, encouraged Smith to see rabbinic argument as a set of

disagreements between Rashi, Kimhi, Ibn Ezra, and the Targum paraphrases. Deeper analysis could sometimes be obscured. A case in point is Smith's response to Ibn Ezra's commentary on Genesis 2:24, 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh'. Rashi argues that 'one flesh' refers to 'the bringing forth of a child', whereas, for Ibn Ezra, the phrase means 'they shall live together as if they were one flesh, or let them once again be one flesh'. 'Some say', Ibn Ezra goes on, 'they will be one flesh through the child they will produce. However, this interpretation is farfetched'. Smith notes in the margin that Ibn Ezra 'rejects Rashi's exposition of "one flesh"', and so implies that this is a disagreement between Rashi and Ibn Ezra.<sup>66</sup> But that is only part of the story: a fuller contextualization of this argument would require reference to the midrash on this chapter of Genesis.<sup>67</sup> The parameters of Smith's understanding of rabbinic argument were established by the textual presentation and editorial decisions of the Rabbinic Bible.

The Rabbinic Bible governs the way Smith navigates rabbinic argument in his sermons, too. ~~Sermon six~~[The sixth sermon](#), for instance, contains a long discussion of Biblical conceptions of 'meekness'. This Jacobean sermon was preached on Psalm 76:~~verse~~<sup>9</sup>, 'God arose to judgement, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah' (KJV). This verse raises a question which lies somewhere between a point of translation and a point of theological or historical interpretation: who exactly are 'the meek'? Does this refer generally to all the 'meek' of the world? Or is there some more specific referent here? Smith argues that 'meekness becometh Gods Church especially', and so 'the meek' is a kind of short-hand for those to whom salvation has been promised. In other words, these were a group of people defined by God, not by any particular earthly identity. 'And

this truly', Smith says, 'the Chaldee Paraphrast, and some of the Rabbins commenting vpon this Text did see that [the meek] were not to be appropriated to any particular ranke of men, but to the visible Church, (called otherwise Gods first-borne, Gods flocke, Gods Spouse, Gods secret-ones)'. Yet Smith notes that among the Jewish commentators there is a dissenting voice: 'though *Kimhi* as a Jew, would haue it to be vnderstood of Iewes by nature, and of Israel according to the flesh' (122). Whereas the Targum paraphrase refers generally to 'all the meek of the land', Kimhi says that the verse refers specifically to 'the Israelites, who are the meek of the land'.<sup>68</sup> Rabbinic interpretation provides far from sure answers to the puzzles posed by the Old Testament: the rabbis need to be navigated carefully, with watchful eyes on moments when they disagree among themselves, and also when their disagreements may be motivated by ideological biases ('*Kimhi* as a Jew'). Ultimately, of course, Smith is finding support among the rabbis for views he has already arrived at, and therefore his own sense of what is already the right answer provides the best way of navigating the disagreements he found in the Rabbinic Bible. Rather than authoritative guides, the range of rabbinic opinion on particular problematic passages means that confirmation and support can be found for interpretations already arrived at by other means.

The rabbis were, for Smith, hardly innocent grammarians. Their puzzling out of particular words sometimes had large theological significance, which occasionally moves Smith to vigorous disagreement. His greatest opprobrium is to be found in one of his notes on the Rabbinic Bible, when he comments on Ibn Ezra's interpretation of Genesis 3:7, 'And the eyes of them both were opened, and they *knew* that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons [emphasis added]' (KJV).



What is this 'knowledge of good and evil' which Adam and Eve have now gained? Ibn Ezra explains as follows: 'Upon eating of the tree of knowledge, Adam knew (*yada*) his wife. *Yada* (knew) is a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse is called "knowledge" because sexual desire came from the tree of knowledge. Moreover, a young man begins to have sexual desire at the age at which he begins to "know" good and evil'.<sup>69</sup> Smith records his ire over this interpretation in a passage of densely splenetic Latin. '[T]his phrase [the knowledge of good etc.]', he writes, 'is crassly forced to refer to the sexual union between Adam and his wife (Hebrew: *mashgal* [Smith's transliteration of *mishgal*])'.<sup>70</sup> Ibn Ezra's interpretation of the 'knowledge' Adam and Eve acquired by eating the forbidden fruit is not an orthodox one among the reformed Genesis commentaries of which Smith would likely have approved. Gervase Babington, whose Genesis commentary Smith edited and published, asks what it means that Adam and Eve's 'eyes were opened' (the closest he comes to discussing what Adam and Eve 'knew'). For Babington, the 'eyes' could refer to the 'eyes of the bodie' and 'the eyes of their minde and vnderstanding'. Bodily eyes can be opened in three ways: 'when of blinde they are made seeing'; 'when a man is made to see that which before he could not see though he were not blind'; 'when they are made to know and discern what before they saw plainely, and yet did not know'. The 'eyes of the minde' could be opened 'three waies' too: 'by doctrine and teaching'; 'by aduersitie and affliction'; and 'by conscience and feeling of sin committed'.<sup>71</sup> None of these interpretations equates 'knowledge' with sexual intercourse in the way that Ibn Ezra does. In the context of this sort of moralizing interpretation, it is easy to see why Smith was shocked by Ibn Ezra's willingness

‘crassly’ to equate ‘knowledge’ with ‘mishgal’. Regardless of Ibn Ezra’s ‘skill of his own tongue’, his interpretation was misguided and deserved to be rejected utterly.

In contrast to Smith’s sometimes vigorous attacks on rabbinic interpretation, he tends to cite the Aramaic Targums with approval. We have already seen that in the sixth sermon, he sides with the reading of Psalm 76:9 (‘the meeke of the earth’) presented by ‘the Chaldee Paraphrast’ against the one offered by David Kimhi. In the thirteenth sermon, one of the most elaborate displays of Smith’s oriental learning, Smith cites the Targums on Genesis 9:6, which Smith quotes almost, but not quite, according to the King James Version, ‘*Hee that sheadeth mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed*’. ‘By man? By what man?’, Smith asks, ‘A priuate man? No, but, *gnal meimar dajanaija*, that is, By the word or commandment of the Iudges, as the Chaldy Paraphrast doth rightly vnderstand it’ (242). Addressed to an audience of judges at the assizes, this sermon’s use of the Targums to unpack an Old Testament passage’s specifically judicial meaning would have been particularly appropriate. Later in the same sermon, Smith turns to the Targums as well as Rashi to unpack a difficult phrase from Numbers 15:30, ‘with a high hand’, which the King James translators render ‘presumptuously’. This is a phrase which had garnered a great deal of comment in the sixteenth-century secondary literature on this topic by Hebraists including Paulus Fagius and Sebastian Münster (1488-1552). Smith explains that when someone commits an offence without prior deliberation he acts ‘not with a high hand, as Moses speaks’. He goes on to say that the phrase can mean ‘not במזיד arrogantly, presumptuously, (as *Shelomoh* [Rashi] expoundeth it) not בריש גלי with an uncovered face, that is, impudently, (as *Onkelos* taketh it)’ (245). In contrast to his more

divided attitudes towards the rabbis, Smith cites the Targums three times in his sermons, and each time offers approval of their interpretations of the passages in question.

Why might Smith, on balance, have found the Targums a more reliable source for Jewish interpretations of the Bible than the rabbis? One answer is simply that the format of the Targums provides exactly what Smith needs: as translations of the Hebrew originals, they grapple directly with points of grammatical and interpretive difficulty, and in so doing show how Jews negotiated some of the Old Testament's obscurities. As Paulus Fagius, sixteenth-century Europe's greatest Christian Targumic scholar, argued, 'all places which seem in the Hebrew Bible to have something of difficulty or obscurity, are explained beautifully, and all obscurity is removed, in the Aramaic Paraphrase'.<sup>72</sup> We have seen Smith use the Targums in this way in his sermons.

But perhaps a more important motivation for Smith's particular interest in the Targums was his awareness of their relative antiquity. Several of his notes on the Rabbinic Bible show his interest in the ages of the various Jewish interpretive traditions: he notes, for instance, that 'Rabbi Saadiah Gaon is more ancient than Rashi'.<sup>73</sup> His notes on Elia Levita's preface to his Aramaic lexicon, in which Levita traces the history of the composition of the Targums, develop this interest. Smith read Levita's preface in the 1560 Cologne edition, in which Levita's preface had been translated by Paulus Fagius, although Smith annotated the Hebrew rather than the Latin. At one point, Levita explains that Jonathan's paraphrases are older than those of Onkelos (Jonathan being a disciple of Hillel, who lived two centuries before the fall of the Second Temple), and Smith notes in the margin: 'Jonathan is more ancient than Onkelos'.<sup>74</sup> Jonathan's paraphrases are, therefore, very old indeed, having been compiled significantly before the time of Christ,

and long before the Jewish apostasy, after [the failure of the Jews](#) to recognise the messiah. In contrast, even the relatively ancient Jerusalem Talmud was a far later work; as Levita explains, it was compiled by Rabbi Yochanan three hundred years *after* the fall of the Temple, and Smith makes a note of the time at which Rabbi Yochanan, ‘compiler Talmudi Ierushalemitani’, lived. The more ancient traditions of the Targums, therefore, provide access to Jewish interpretations which are not tainted by post-Christian, self-interested Jewish attempts to obscure the sense of the Scripture. This attitude towards the Targums seems to have become enshrined in seventeenth-century English [biblical scholarship](#). For Thomas Barlow, [bishop of Lincoln](#) in the late seventeenth century, in his advice on the method of studying theology, he points out that ‘[f]or your understanding of the *Old Test.* how the Ancient *Jews* interpreted it, consult 1. The *Chaldee Paraphrase*. 2. *Josephus*. 3. *Philo-Judaeus*.’ Barlow concludes: ‘As for *Antiquity*, so for *Authority* and *Sobriety*, they are more significant than any (may be) than all the *Rabbins*’.<sup>75</sup>

So far, we have seen that Smith used his rabbinic reading to clarify the meaning of passages (even controversial ones) in the Old Testament. But Smith recognised that his Hebrew learning might shed light on the *New Testament*, too. It was increasingly recognised in the sixteenth century that the Greek of the New Testament was inflected by Hebrew turns of phrase, habitual expressions, and patterns of thought. Joanna Weinberg has traced the long sixteenth-century roots of the study of the New Testament in its Hebraic context, which would come to be practised by seventeenth-century scholars like John Lightfoot.<sup>76</sup> Laurence Humphrey, Oxford’s [regius professor of Divinity](#) when Smith studied at the university, had argued in a book published during his exile in Basel that

Hebrew was a necessary weapon in the arsenal of the student of the New Testament as much as of the Old, as ‘both are filled with so many Hebraisms’.<sup>77</sup> Smith’s interest in New Testament Hebraisms was, therefore, far from without precedent in the early seventeenth century.

Smith understood that the Greek grammar of the New Testament was shaped by Hebrew grammar. In the headnote to his second sermon on John 6:67-70, Smith cites verse 69 as follows: ‘And we haue beleueed and knowne, (Hebraism, for we doe beleuee and know) that thou art the Christ, the Sonne of the liuing God.’ (23). Smith notices here that John is employing a Hebraism by using the past tense (‘we haue beleueed’) to mean the present tense (‘we doe beleuee’). This is quite a commonplace recognition even in the earlier sixteenth century: the Geneva Bible translated this verse into the present tense (‘And we beleuee and are sure’). Even Martin Luther, whose knowledge of Hebrew was largely derived second-hand from the works of Sebastian Münster, comments on this kind of grammatical Hebraism. In Luther’s lectures on the first Epistle of St John (taken in the Renaissance and today to have been written by the same St John who composed the Gospel), Luther comments on verse 10, ‘If we have not sinned’. ‘Others explain this as referring to sin committed in the past’, Luther shows, ‘but I would be willing to explain it as referring to sin committed at the present time. For the Hebrew manner of speaking explains a verb in the past tense through a verb in the present tense’. And Luther concludes: ‘Indeed, it is my understanding that John himself often uses Hebraisms’.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, it does show that Smith was aware that the implications of Hebraic study could not be restricted solely to the Old Testament. The problems raised by grammatical

Hebraisms are of course vital ones for a translator, for whom judgments about whether a passage should be translated in the past or present tense are crucial.

Smith shows sensitivity, too, to the way in which the New Testament's Greek phraseology is imprinted by the apostolic authors' Semitic culture. In his seventh sermon, Smith discusses the ways 'prejudice' can become 'a great corrupter of *Iustice* and *Iudgement*'. To illustrate this point, Smith quotes from John 1:46: 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth, said *Nathaniel*, *John* 1?'. And then he quotes Philip's reply, with a further comment: '*Come and see* (בא רחוקה a Prouerbe among the Iewes to this day.)' (134). This is an 'extremely common phrase' in Aramaic in the Talmud, as Strack and Billerbeck's authoritative modern analysis of the parallels between the New Testament and the Talmud has shown.<sup>79</sup> But whereas awareness of grammatical Hebraisms in John's Gospel seems to have been commonplace in the sixteenth century, this point about 'come and see' seems not to have been common knowledge. Later commentators do note that parallels to this phrase are to be found in the Talmud. John Lightfoot, for instance, observes that there is 'Nothing more common in the *Talmudick* Authors than *בא רחוקה* & *בא רחוקה* *חמי* & *את רחוקה* *Come and behold, come and see*'.<sup>80</sup> Grotius similarly comments that 'Come and see' is a 'frequent locution in the *Zohar*'.<sup>81</sup> But none of the earlier commentaries on John 1:46 collected in Pearson's *Critici Sacri* mention that this is a common Aramaic phrase.<sup>82</sup> Johannes Drusius's books on biblical adages and proverbs (the latest work in this field in Smith's time) do not seem to discuss 'Come and see'. Joachim Zehner's *Adagia Sacra*, another authoritative contemporary book on this topic, does mention 'come and see', but Zehner's quotation of the phrase is different from Smith's, so it seems unlikely that this is Smith's source.<sup>83</sup> Quite how Smith knew that 'come and see' was a 'Prouerbe among the

Jewes to this day' is not clear, but his recognition that the apostles and the authors of the gospels wove their Greek texts out of a Hebrew culture is clear. The implications of the kit of oriental books that Smith left to Hereford Cathedral were not confined to the study of the Old Testament.

In tracing the ways in which Smith used rabbinic commentary in order to understand the Hebrew Bible, we seem to have moved quite far away from the polemical concern to defend the *Hebraica veritas* against the background of which we initially situated Smith's oriental studies. It would indeed seem reductive to argue that Smith's engagement with the rabbis is *purely* a matter of polemic against the Counter-Reformation. Nevertheless, confessionalized polemic is not wholly separate from Smith's engagement with rabbinic commentary. In around 1608, Smith seems to have been consulted as an authority on rabbinics in an anti-Catholic context. His name appears in a footnote to the enormous work of Protestant theology, *A Catholike Appeale for Protestants*, published in 1609, which had been produced collaboratively by several leading English divines and written up into its final form by Thomas Morton (1564-1659), the future bishop of Durham and at that time already the author of several works of anti-Catholic controversy.<sup>84</sup> Book Three of this work, 'Concerning the faith of the Jewes', sought to refute Catholic claims that their confession found support in the commentaries of the rabbis. A section of the argument focussed on Catholic readings of Genesis 14:18, 'And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God'. The authors of *Catholike Appeale* sought to rebut claims that the midrash on this passage of Genesis supported Catholic claims that

Melchizedek was fulfilling his priestly official duties in ministering the bread and the wine, and that giving the bread and wine was a kind of sacrifice.

The *Catholike Appeale* generally worked by taking passages from Catholic authors and turning them against their own confession. As Anthony Milton explains, Morton's work was a classic of a genre in which 'Romanist writers were manipulated in order to act as testimonies of Protestant doctrine and to attack each other'.<sup>85</sup> But, as the author of the *Catholike Appeale* here acknowledges, on the matter of the midrash on this passage of Genesis, 'I could not finde that due satisfaction from the confession of our Aduersaries, which in other questions I had done'. 'I therefore', he explains, 'held it requisite to desire the helpe of our learned Doctors [marginal note: D. Smith, D. Layfield, M. Bedwell], who are most expert in the knowledge of the Hebrew; vnto whom I laid opn the Apologists allegation of *Rabbi Samuel in Bereshit Rabba*, of *Rabbi Phinees ibid.* of *Rabbi Hadarsan ibid.*' 'They (after they had perused the *Bershit Rabba*)', reported that 'they found in the places alleged iust *nothing to the purpose*, as may appeare by their owne wordes, whereunto they haue subscribed their names'.<sup>86</sup> The document to which they subscribed is printed in the margin, and signed 'Miles Smith, Iohn Layfield, William Bedwell'. All three of these expert witnesses were involved in the translation of the Bible at the time they were asked to give testimony: Layfield and Bedwell were both members of the First Westminster Company. In the year after the publication of *Catholike Appeale*, Layfield and Smith were both among the inaugural members of Chelsea College, a theological institute designed to bolster the kind of Protestant theology represented by the *Catholike Appeale*.<sup>87</sup> The printing of Smith's signed testimony on rabbinics is an indication of the respect his contemporaries had for his knowledge on such matters. It



also shows that the study of rabbinic commentary was far from entirely innocent in a confessionalized context. Even though the *Catholike Appeale* dismisses the Catholic search for support among rabbinic interpretation as ‘all one labour to follow a swallow in her flight’, nevertheless it was still valuable to prove that Catholics did not even have the Jewish rabbis on their side. This is perhaps emblematic of Smith’s practice in his use of the rabbis more broadly. Based on the acceptance that those rabbis do indeed have a particular ‘skill of their own tongue’, Smith sifts through the rabbis’s grossest excesses (equating ‘knowledge’ with ‘mishgal’, for instance) to find ways in which his own understanding of the Bible’s language can correspond with that of the Hebrew and Aramaic interpretive traditions. The rabbis do not dictate Smith’s interpretations; but there is authority to be gained, when possible, by aligning his own linguistic interpretations with those of the Jewish tradition.

#### **‘Variety of translation is profitable’: Smith and the Arabic Bible**

We have seen that Smith uses the rabbis and the Targums in order to clarify difficult scriptural passages. But does this mean that Smith was looking to eliminate all ambiguity in Scripture and to find single, true, and fixed meanings for the whole Bible? Far from it. In fact, as Katrin Ettenhuber has pointed out, Smith’s preface to the Bible explicitly invites readers of the Scripture to revel in its ambiguities.<sup>88</sup> Smith explains that while everything necessary for salvation is made unambiguously clear in the scriptures, ‘it hath pleased God in his Divine Providence here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness [...] that fearfulness would better beseem us than confidence’. He gives the examples of scriptural *hapax legomena* (words ‘having neither

brother nor neighbour, as the *Hebrews* speak’) and ‘many rare names of certain birds, beasts, and precious stones, &c. concerning which the *Hebrews* themselves are so divided among themselves for judgment, that they may seem to have defined this or that, rather because they would say something, than because they were sure of that which they said’ (lxvii). As we have seen, Smith’s interest in the interpretations of particular biblical phrases by rabbis and the Bible’s Aramaic translators goes beyond the comparatively narrow range of difficult nouns he specifies here. But this remains an important acknowledgment that the senses of Scripture will sometimes be impossible to pin down, and that the best response is often to acknowledge the multiplicity of possible interpretations rather than arbitrarily to side with a single one. ‘They that are wise’, Smith warns, ‘had rather have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings, than to be captivated to one, when it may be the other’ (lxvii).

Nevertheless, while some ambiguity will always remain, Smith acknowledges (following Augustine) that ‘variety of translations is profitable for finding out the sense of the Scriptures’ (lxvii). It is not so much that the scriptures, for Smith, are a place of some sort of radical indeterminacy of meaning. They are rather texts that are simply incomparably rich in meanings, and so which are always likely to be illuminated by ‘that variety of translations’, rather than definitively capable of being rendered fully from their Hebrew and Greek originals into other languages. Smith presents God as a divine author overflowing with Erasmian *copia*, a seemingly unlimited storehouse of words and meanings with which to express the world. God went about ‘using divers words in his holy writ’ to express ‘one thing in nature’, and Smith encourages us to ‘use the same liberty’ in translating the Scriptures, which Smith calls, significantly, ‘that copy [copia]

or store that he hath given us' (lxviii). Each translation is able only to draw upon that store of words and meanings in ways that are comparatively single and straightforward, and yet in the process each translation helps to draw out another of the original's implications. In the examples we have been tracing in his sermons, we find Smith acknowledging that the original Hebrew contains a plenitude and subtlety of meaning that cannot readily be rendered by single English words or expressions. Each instance of the 'variety of translation' is a way of shedding new light on that 'store he hath given us': a way of opening up new meanings, rather than definitively shutting meaning down.

This attitude to biblical translation emerges with particular clarity from an aspect of Smith's interest in oriental languages that we have not yet considered: his study of Arabic. Smith may have begun to study Arabic seriously around 1610, when evidence suggests he may have been receiving assistance in the language from the Arabic-speaking Coptic Christian traveller to Europe, Joseph Abudacnus. On 28 August 1610, Abudacnus wrote a letter to William Bedwell, one of Smith's fellow biblical translators, and fellow consultant on rabbinic matters for the *Catholike Apologie*, and the leading English student of Arabic, in which he asked if Bedwell has seen 'D. Smiht', and says that he intends 'with God willing' to send him 'something in Arabic'. Alastair Hamilton, in his edition of Abudacnus's letter to Bedwell, accepts that this 'Smiht' is Miles Smith, based on the additional evidence of a 1611 letter from Abudacnus to Erpenius (in Arabic), in which he writes that Smith was among those gentlemen who had approached him for instruction in Arabic.<sup>89</sup> And Smith's study of Arabic does indeed seem largely to postdate his main work on the King James translation, where the engagement with Arabic sources seems to have been limited. In his list of the important precedents for biblical translation

in ‘The Translators to the Reader’, including those which were commonly known in his own age, Smith mentions that ‘the Psalter in *Arabick* is with many, of *Augustinus’s Nebiensis’s* setting forth’ (lx), i.e., Agostino Giustiniani’s edition of the Psalms in Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Arabic.<sup>90</sup> His knowledge of the Bible in Arabic may well, therefore, at best have been confined to the Psalms. Smith goes on to note that the translators did not ‘think much [i.e., think it too much work] to consult the translators or commentators, *Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin*’ (lxvi), with no mention of Arabic. The Syriac translation of the Bible was already available to the translators in the Antwerp Polyglot Bible; the Arabic was not, and so it was not possible to incorporate it into the translation project. Smith’s intensive study of Arabic after the King James Bible was complete, therefore, went beyond the translator’s immediate needs to solve difficult problems in the biblical text.

As new tools for the study of Arabic were published, Smith’s study of the language developed. Three of the volumes Smith left to Hereford Cathedral bear witness to his study of Arabic after the publication of the King James Bible: Raphalengius’s 1613 Arabic lexicon, Erpenius’s editions of the New Testament (1616), and the Pentateuch in Arabic (1622). These volumes are by far the most heavily annotated of those left by Smith to Hereford, and their systematic notes deserve a far more thorough study than can be provided here. Nevertheless, it is possible to say something about what Smith’s notes tell us about how he used these books. Smith’s annotations turn these books into an elaborate series of concordances to the Bible in Arabic. The centre of the concordance is the 1613 Latin-Arabic lexicon. Beside each Arabic word, Smith notes the book, chapter and verse in which it is used in the New Testament and the Pentateuch. In the Arabic Bibles, in

turn, Smith has cross-referenced many words with other examples of their use. In general, in the New Testament Smith cites other New Testament usages; in the Pentateuch he cites other usages in the Pentateuch. The concordance, however, connects the language of the two Testaments. Smith also notes the Hebrew roots of Arabic words and their Latin translations (in both Old and New Testament) and their Greek translations (in the New Testament). Taken as a little group, therefore, Smith's annotated copies of these books constitute a helpful kit for the beginner student of biblical Arabic.

The Arabic Pentateuch was published in 1622, when Smith was around seventy years of age, and just two years before he died. This must have been a huge investment of time and energy for a man already preoccupied with the duties of the Gloucester episcopate. What does his commitment to the study of Arabic tell us about the wider motivations behind Smith's oriental studies? Smith's incorporation of Arabic into his sermons again offers suggestive possible answers to this question. Smith cites the New Testament in Arabic on two separate occasions, once in sermon [eleven](#) and once in sermon [thirteen](#). Smith begins the [former](#) by expounding the reason for the 'excellency of the Gospell about the Law'. One reason is because God spoke to the ancient church 'πολυμερῶς', that is 'at sundry times, or by sundry parts' for 'the word is indifferent for either sense'. The Hebrew translation of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews is 'for the former' (i.e., 'at sundry times') whereas 'the Syriacke and Arabick are for the latter' (i.e., 'by sundry parts'). Smith concludes that both are possible: 'well, since as I say, the word will beare both, and both are consonant to the circumstances of the Text, we may be bold to make vse of both' (199). Here the Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic renderings of the New Testament each catch different possibilities of the Greek original's meaning. None of

these versions would be sufficient by themselves, but at the same time, Smith does not see a need to fix one single meaning to ‘πολυμερῶς’. Translations provide multiple ways of unfolding the copia of scriptural meaning.

The second example of Smith’s citation of Arabic in his sermons helps to shed further light on what Smith conceptualized these translations to be and how they might be used. Smith’s [thirteenth](#) sermon is preached on Romans 13:3, ‘Rulers are not a terror to good workes but to the euill’; and because it is another assize sermon it is unsurprising that Smith dwells on the exact meaning of the verse’s first word, ‘ἄρχοντες’. Some interpreters of this verse, Smith argues, do not think that in this context the word means ‘rulers’, but instead they ‘restraine the word to inferiour Magistrates, that beare rule and vse the word by Commission from the Highest’. ‘Indeed’, Smith explains, ‘the Syriack Paraphraste translateth the word, ἄρχοντες in my text, by *Daiinei*, that is, Iudges, & so doth the Arabicke too, by *Al-chacam*, Iudges’ (138). Smith goes on to say that on this matter of the exact referent of ἄρχοντες ‘we haue the iudgement of two kinds of Learned Men’, and then he corrects himself, ‘that I may not say two Churches, the Syriacke, and the Arabicke’ (238). Not ‘two kinds of Learned Men’, but ‘two Churches’. The Arabic translation gives Smith access to the Egyptian Church’s interpretation of the New Testament. Erpenius’s preface to the New Testament had drawn attention to the provenance of the manuscript from which he had published the text, ‘copied by hand in the Monastery of St John, in the Theban desert’ in 1342.<sup>91</sup> When looking at the [Bible](#) in Arabic, we are looking at a product of the Egyptian Christian Church. If Smith had studied Arabic with Abudacnus, then he had encountered first hand a living witness of the Christian Church in Egypt, the history of which would go on to preoccupy slightly

later English scholars like John Selden (1584-1654).<sup>92</sup> Oriental translations give Smith access not to the Bible's one true meaning, but to what the Bible *has meant* to Christians in the East, the antiquity of whose churches stretches back for centuries, and may have embodied traditions of Christianity free from the taint of western Popery. The study of the Arabic Bible, therefore, gives Smith's access to a Christian interpretive tradition of greater weight and significance than the Jewish interpretive traditions with which we have already seen him grapple.

It is striking that in both instances, when Smith cites the Bible in Arabic, he cites it along with the Bible in Syriac. Erpenius argues in his dedicatory epistle to the New Testament (which Smith annotated), that the 'antiquity and fidelity of this translation' means that 'it will be no less useful to future theologians, than that noble Syriac edition'.<sup>93</sup> And he points out that his presentation of the Arabic version apes that of the Syriac.<sup>94</sup> Study of the Arabic Bible is, therefore, a new horizon for English oriental studies, extending beyond that of the Syriac translation of the Bible, of which the King James translators had already made use. Smith's engagement with this new possibility within the study of oriental languages shows that the motivation to study the Bible in its Eastern tongues was not narrowly circumscribed by the need to produce a new translation. He is keeping up-to-date, as it were, with the evolving possibilities of oriental studies.

This suggests that the King James translation, for Smith, always remains somewhat provisional rather than definitive, a conclusion that is borne out, too, by Smith's use of the King James Bible in his sermons. Smith's fourteenth sermon provides a valuable example here because it is the only one of all Smith's sermons to which it is

possible to give an absolutely precise date: 5 November 1617. We know that this is a [Gunpowder Day](#) sermon, hence the 5th of November. '[T]he Gunpowder Traytors', Smith pronounces near the beginning of the sermon, 'the memoriall of whose confusion, as also Gods gracious preseruing of our Gracious King, and the whole State, we celebrate this Day with all thankfulness' (256-7). But Smith allows us to be more precise, when he specifies that 'euen about this time twelue yeeres, they attempted against our now Soueraigne' (267). This sermon, therefore, [is](#) preached six years after the King James [Bible](#) translation was completed. Smith bases the sermon on the King James Bible translation of 1 Samuel 25:29. However, near the sermon's beginning, Smith is showing that 'Ingratitude' is a 'very malignant beast, or rather monster', against which we need to pray, 'as the Prophet *Hosea* doth against Ephraim, *O Lord giue them, What wilt thou giue them? barren wombes (or aborting wombs, רחם משכיל)* and dry breasts'.<sup>95</sup> This is Hosea 9:14, and the King James version reads: 'Giue them, O LORD: what wilt thou giue? giue them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts'. A marginal note [offers](#) some Hebraic context for 'miscarrying womb': '*Hebr. that casteth the fruit*'. Smith's version does not correspond to either the King James translation proper or the Hebraic gloss it [provides](#). Smith's version is, in fact, closest to the Geneva Bible, which asks the Lord to give them 'a barren wombe and drie breasts', but the Geneva does not gloss the difficulty of the Hebrew here. Just as the Arabic translation of the Bible does not exhaust all possible interpretations of the [Bible](#)'s language, neither does the King James translation. It is still vital to return to the original text, to keep working with it and exploring the ways in which its plenitude of meanings might continue to be uncovered.



## Conclusions

We have been trying to understand the possible motivations behind Smith's bequest of his oriental books to Hereford Cathedral Library. What kinds of things could he imagine the divines who used the library to have learnt from the hours spent unlocking those books' difficulties? Close analysis of his notes, sermons, and the preface to the [Bible](#) has shown that, at heart, his interest is that of a translator: oriental texts are means to uncover the [Bible](#)'s polysemous possible meanings. A Calvinist translator working in early seventeenth-century English ecclesiastical culture was necessarily working within a confessionalized context, which gave added urgency and necessity to the study of oriental texts. If the study of oriental texts uncovered meanings of the [Bible](#), albeit ones not strictly necessary for salvation, the mastery of oriental texts and languages became essential. Such study also gave Protestants the opportunity to trace the genealogies of their biblical interpretation through traditions which were not tainted by Popery. Many of those traditions were themselves problematic, but, as we have seen, Smith differentiated between the later rabbinic interpretations, which needed to be carefully sifted for useful matter, and the Targums, which offered surer guides to what [was](#) valuable in Jewish traditions. The Arabic translations point to what the [Bible](#) meant to Eastern Christians, rather than [to](#) Jews, and so were a witness to a whole Church's interpretations of the [Bible](#). But all these traditions remain helpful guides to interpretive possibilities, rather than sources of finalizing authority. That authority remained always with the biblical text itself, to which Smith always returns.

What does our account of Smith's oriental reading tell us about his place within English scholarly and ecclesiastical culture in the early seventeenth century? It would be

a great mistake to label Smith as a ‘Christian Hebraist’ or as an ‘oriental scholar’. He is in no sense an exclusive specialist in these languages. Errors in transcription in the margins of his Venice Bible— *mashgal* for  *mishgal*, for instance—might point to a shakier knowledge of Hebrew than the conventional paeans of his linguistic expertise suggest.<sup>96</sup> His use of Hebrew and other eastern languages in the sermons, too, is marginal: he dips in occasionally to explain points of interest or difficulty, often citing eastern languages in brackets. The range of his reference to oriental texts is narrower than that of some of his more specialized contemporaries, such as Richard Kilbye: nor can his depth of engagement with the ideas of the rabbinic commentators be compared to Kilbye’s.<sup>97</sup> Not only would it be an error to describe Smith as an ‘oriental scholar’: he is not really a ‘scholar’ at all. He never produces works of ‘scholarship’ in Latin, targeted at the learned European audience and the Frankfurt bookfair in the way other contemporary English scholars like William Camden or Henry Savile were doing. He does not seem to have participated in the international correspondence networks of the  *respublica literaria*, unlike other English scholars with an interest in oriental texts, such as William Thorne, John Rainolds, or Thomas Bodley. The kinds of questions he is asking of Eastern texts, too, are not really those which preoccupied the Republic of Letters: there is no evidence that he was interested in historical chronology, for instance, in the manner of English scholars who were responding to Joseph Scaliger, such as Hugh Broughton and Thomas Lydiat. His interest in historical context is largely restricted to the immediate interpretation of biblical passages. He does not engage in the wider reconstruction of Jewish customs and contexts in the way that Isaac Casaubon was doing in the early 1610s when he was writing his  *Exercitationes* in response to Cesare Baronio. Partly, of course,

this might be a function of the fact Smith is writing sermons, not Latin scholarly works; then again, the fact he chose not to devote himself to Latin scholarly works tells us a lot about the aims and nature of his reading. His engagement with oriental sources mixes the conventional (citation of Jewish commentators on the Christological implications of Psalm 2, in which he follows Erasmus, who follows Nicholas of Lyra) with references that are sometimes eclectically arbitrary and unsystematic (his point about the giving of the name ‘Hochacham’): all this points to the independence of an enthusiastic and learned amateur, with plenty of first-hand acquaintance with Hebrew texts, but relatively unconcerned by the questions that were circulating in learned correspondence and Latin tomes. In this he is very different from a scholar like John Rainolds, not because his levels of linguistic expertise were necessarily lower, but because the way he chose to use that expertise was very different. Smith was not trying —and failing— to become a scholar in the Republic of Letters: it was simply not his objective to participate in that arena.

If terms like ‘scholar’ are unhelpful when it comes to describing Miles Smith, how might we describe him? Although there is plenty of well worked-out theology in his sermons, it also might feel strange to describe him as a theologian. Just as he did not aspire to the scholarly masterpieces of an Isaac Casaubon, he did not aspire to the systematic theology of a William Perkins or a Richard Hooker. His work and his reading is that of a cleric: although his association with Oxford University was clearly strong and was reinforced by his work on the King James Bible, his career was emphatically within the Church. He is a cleric, nonetheless, who believes that proper biblical interpretation is based on a mastery of grammar—in the sense of the tools of linguistic and textual

interpretation--as well as, or possibly rather than, abstract systematic theology.

Fundamental to all his work was the need for mastery of the linguistic difficulties presented by the biblical text in its original language, difficulties on which rabbis and Targum paraphrases could shed light. In this, he is firmly part of a tradition of Christian humanism that dates back at least to Erasmus (one of the modern authors he cites most frequently in his sermons), but to which he brought a particular interest in Hebrew texts that is absolutely uncharacteristic of Erasmus. The scope and nature of his oriental studies, focussed on the need to interpret biblical language rather than to historicize the culture of the [Bible](#), places him firmly within a tradition of sixteenth-century biblical humanism, rather than as an avatar of the seventeenth-century combination of wide-ranging historical erudition and polemic. His work lies at a point where intensive grammatical study of the biblical text and theological interpretation meet one another.

Seen in this clerical context, we might note that [Smith's](#) mastery of Hebrew was a valuable part of his work as a minister. A modicum of Hebrew learning seems to have been expected among prominent clergy by the early seventeenth century: John Donne, far from a specialist in Jewish texts, made [an](#) effort in this regard, as Chanita Goodblatt has shown.<sup>98</sup> Smith clearly went far beyond the minimum, but there is evidence that [he](#) made use of his learning in the context of his ministry. In the posthumous preface to his sermons, Smith's anonymous biographer records that upon being asked to deliver the lesson at evening prayer in Hereford Cathedral, Smith took his 'little Hebrew Bible (the same I suppose that he afterwards vsed to his death, and I haue oftentimes seene) of Plantins Impression, sine punctis' and 'deliuered the Chapter thence in the English Tongue plainely, and fully to that learned and iudicious Auditory'.<sup>99</sup> Such knowledge not

only furnishes the opportunity for dramatic performance. Once the interpretations of the [Bible](#) ‘in the 3. chiefe tonges’ have been made available in the vernacular, they are such that any ‘good Christian may vse them, as a traueller doth a Map, the better to find out the way’.<sup>100</sup> These are not simply abstruse matters of interest to what Smith tends to call ‘the learned’; they contain practical help for anyone who might wish to seek a better understanding of the [Bible](#). As a cleric with a specific interest in the languages of [Scripture](#), too, it is easy to see how he might have seemed a suitable member of the translation companies, and indeed why his knowledge and experience, combining practicing churchmanship with linguistic expertise, might have seemed the ideal support to Thomas Bilson in his process of checking through the [Bible](#). That he wrote the preface might speak to the fact that Smith was also seen as a humanist reader and writer in the round, with knowledge of classical texts and the mastery of rhetoric that went with them. This is certainly how his biographer presents him.<sup>101</sup> Among the translators of the [Bible](#), perhaps the strongest point of comparison would be with Lancelot Andrewes, another cleric with a particular interest in, and aptitude for, grappling with the grammatical foundations of biblical interpretation. His place might also be alongside the other clerical translators, John Layfield (d. 1617) and Richard Brett (1567-1637), who along with Smith became founding fellows of Chelsea College in 1609, where learning was designed to bolster Jacobean orthodoxy. All this points to the practical ways Smith’s oriental learning underpinned his career as a cleric.

While we need to acknowledge the place oriental learning could play within an English clerical career in the late sixteenth century, Smith’s labours in this regard seem somewhat surplus to requirements. It is striking that the bequest of oriental books to

Hereford with which this article began is the only bequest of books in Smith's will; they seem to have an importance for which the scattered references in his sermons cannot quite account. The notes in the margins of the books only occasionally seem to correspond closely with the contents of Smith's sermons. These books are also far from the working notes of a translator; the most heavily annotated volumes, those in Arabic, were published after the translation was complete. There is a sense in which Smith's reading of oriental texts is excessive to *any* utilitarian justification--polemic, translation, clerical career advancement. Rather than moving towards a grand synthesis of his reading that could form the basis of a publishable book, we might conclude that there is an importantly private quality to Smith's reading of these texts. That seems especially to have been the case with his work on Arabic, which, as we have seen, he undertook most intensively when already in his late sixties. If the notes he made on his Arabic books are in any sense 'public', the public to whom they were addressed was restricted to the circles of those clergy working in Hereford who might make use of the library after Smith's death. They seem highly unlikely to have been intended to contribute to a publication, or to have been intended themselves to be published. Even his sermons were finally only a posthumous publication. This excessiveness to any immediate utilitarian justification might point to a possibility: that the study of oriental texts, and the grappling with the multiplicity of scriptural meaning they entailed, was itself a kind of devotional act. For Lancelot Andrewes, the Hebrew language played a part in his private prayers, so it would not be without precedent to think of Smith's study of Hebrew in this context.<sup>102</sup> It is perhaps especially tempting to see devotional possibilities in Smith's minute and laborious work on the Arabic Bible, a witness to a whole Church's biblical understanding

uncovered for the first time. In the preface to the King James Bible, Smith concludes his rapturous, sublime description of Scripture, that ‘panary of wholesome food against fenowed traditions’, ‘treasury of most costly jewels’, ‘fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life’, with an injunction that ‘[h]appy is the man that delighteth in the Scripture, and thrice happy that meditateth in it day and night’ (lvi).

When we are looking at Smith’s oriental books today, it is possible that we are looking not only at an arsenal of weapons against the Counter\_Reformation or the laboratory of a clerical translator and characteristically linguistically-minded senior figure in the Jacobean church hierarchy, but also at the object (and product) of Smith’s thrice happy daily and nightly scriptural meditations.

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<sup>1</sup> TNA: PROB 11/144, sig.102. The will is dated ‘The seaventh daye of Marche *anno Domini iuxta &c.* 1623’ (i.e., 1623/24). References to the King James Bible throughout this essay (including to ‘The Translators to the Reader’) are to *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, eds. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford, 1997). This essay has its origins in a paper on Miles Smith, given [jointly](#) by the author and Karen Collis at a conference on the King James Bible in 2011, organised by Joanna Weinberg. I would like to express a huge debt of gratitude to Karen for her thoughts and advice at that initial stage of this project. Further thanks for assistance must go to Sophie Butler, Mordechai Feingold, Nicholas Hardy, Jeffrey Miller, Joanna Weinberg, and the anonymous reviewer of this essay for Brill.

<sup>2</sup> The best account of Smith’s life is to be found in John Tiller, ‘Miles Smith’, *ODNB*. The earliest biography of Smith is the account of his life prefaced to the 1632 collected edition of Smith’s sermons (*Sermons of the Right Reverend Father in God Miles Smith, Late Lord Bishop of Gloucester* (London, 1632), ¶3r-¶¶3r), which is signed ‘J.S.’. For the year of Smith’s birth, see his portrait in Christ Church College, Oxford, which is dated 1616 (and therefore could be early 1617), and gives Smith’s age as 64.

<sup>3</sup> See Joanna Weinberg’s essay on Kilbye elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> On Hereford Cathedral [Library](#)’s history, see Joan Williams, ‘The Library’, in *Hereford Cathedral: A History*, eds. G.E. Aylmer and J.E. Tiller (London, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Thornton’s donation is recorded in Hereford Cathedral Library P.9.8 [the Cathedral Library’s Donors’ Book], pp. 523-5. Hereford Cathedral Library is hereafter abbreviated to HCL.



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<sup>6</sup> The best guide to this field remains Mordechai Feingold, ‘Oriental Studies’ in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume IV: Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford, 1997), 449-504.

<sup>7</sup> HCL A.2.1-4.

<sup>8</sup> On the genesis of the Rabbinic Bibles, see David Stern, ‘The Rabbinic Bible in its Sixteenth-Century Context’, in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, eds. Joseph Hacker and Adam Shear (Philadelphia, 2011), 76-108, 252-268. On the readership of the Rabbinic Bible in Europe, see Stephen Burnett, ‘The Strange Career of the *Biblia Rabbinica* among Christian Hebraists, 1517-1620’, in *Shaping the Bible in the Reformation: Books, Scholars and Their Readers in the Sixteenth Century*, eds. Bruce Gordon and Matthew McLean (Leiden, 2012), 63-83.

<sup>9</sup> For Mercier, see, for instance, *Io. Merceri [...] Commentarii locupletissimi in Prophetas quinque priores inter eos qui minores vocantur* (Geneva, 1583).

<sup>10</sup> HCL A.1.6: Paulus Fagius, ed. *Sefer Tehilim im perush Rabi David Kimhi* (Izny, 1542).

<sup>11</sup> HCL A.1.8-11: *Mishneh Torah*, 4 vols. (Venice, 1573 or 1574-5 or 1576) and HCL A.1.1-5: [*Chamisha Chumshi Torah*] *Quinque libri legis*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1539-1544).

<sup>12</sup> HCL A.1.7: *Sefer Mikhlol* (Venice, 1545) bound together with *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (Venice, 1529); HCL A.6.1: Elijah Levita, *Lexicon Chaldaicum* (Cologne, 1560); HCL A.6.2: Nathan ben Jehiel of Rome, *Sefer he-’arukh* (Basel, 1599); HCL A.5.1: Isaac Nathan, *Sefer me’ir Nativ* (Basel, 1581).

<sup>13</sup> HCL A.3.3: Thomas Erpenius, ed. *Nouum D.N. Iesu Christi Testamentum arabice*. (Leiden, 1616); Thomas Erpenius, ed. *Pentateuchus Mosis Arabicè*; (Leiden, 1622); Thomas Erpenius, *Grammatica Arabica: quinque libris methodicè explicata* (Leiden,

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1613): Franciscus Raphelengius, *Francisci Raphelengii Lexicon Arabicum* (Leiden, 1613).

<sup>14</sup> Prior's funeral sermon is published as the final sermon in Miles Smith, *Sermons of the Right Reverend Father in God Miles Smith, Late Lord Bishop of Gloucester* (London, 1632), 302. For the rest of this article, this volume will be cited as Smith, *Sermons* in the footnotes, and references to all quotations from Smith's sermons themselves will be in brackets in the main text.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, *Sermons*, ¶¶2r. [For the identification of the 'J.S.' who wrote the preface to Smith's \*Sermons\* as 'Master Stephens', Smith's 'Secretary', see Thomas Fuller, \*The Worthies of England\* \(London, 1662\), 'Herefordshire', p.38: 'See the preface of his works written by Mr. Stephens'. I am grateful to Mordechai Feingold for pointing out this reference to me.](#)

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, 2 vols. (London, 1691), 1:416-17.

<sup>17</sup> Smith's autograph signature ('Miles Gloucester') is found in his letter to William Camden, now BL Cotton MS Julius C V, fol.189r. The body of the letter appears to be in the hand of a secretary, but the unmistakable majuscule 'M' of the 'Miles' of the signature is found many times in Smith's annotated books (compare especially the 'Miles Smyth' in the flyleaf of Smith's copy of *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, HCL A.i.7. part ii, and 'Elogia R. Mosis ben Maimon', 10 vii' of the same volume). There are, however, some notes which are not in Miles Smith's hand in these volumes, especially some of the notes in the *Sefer ha-Shorashim*. These notes were probably made before he received the book. The majority of the notes, however, and the ones upon which this article focusses, are in Smith's hand.

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<sup>18</sup> For a comparable and important account of a King James translator's library, see David Norton, *The King James Bible: A Short History from Tyndale to Today* (Cambridge, 2011), 62-70.

<sup>19</sup> See Samuel Ward's report on the translation to the Synod of Dort, discussed by Jeffrey Miller elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *Sermons*, ¶¶1v-¶¶2r.

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I* (Oxford, 1990), 90, 273, 54, 196, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Heylyn, *Cyprianus Anglicus* (London, 1668), 69.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, *Sermons*, 303-304.

<sup>24</sup> TNA SP 14/90, f.177; letter from William Laud to Miles Smith, 27 February 1617.

<sup>25</sup> William Scott and James Bliss, eds. *The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God, William Laud, D.D. sometime lord archbishop of Canterbury*, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1847-1860), 6.240-41.

<sup>26</sup> William Prynne, *Canterburies Doome* (London, 1646), 78, 75.

<sup>27</sup> This article follows the numbering found in the 1632 edition of Smith's sermons.

<sup>28</sup> For a full discussion of English Protestant attacks on Catholic support for unwritten traditions, see Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford, 2009), 50-68.

<sup>29</sup> 'Non accipio quod extra Scripturam de tuo infers, as Tertullian saith' (79).

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of Smith's attitude to the Fathers in his preface to the KJV, see Katrin Ettenhuber, "'Take vp and read the Scripture": Patristic Interpretation and the Poetics of

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Abundance in "The Translator to the Reader" (1611)', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 75 (2012), 213-32.

<sup>31</sup> According to Wood, Smith 'became a Student first in C[orpus] C[hristi] coll[ege] about 1568' (*Athenae Oxonienses*, 1:416).

<sup>32</sup> See the comments in his posthumously published *Letter [...] for the studie of Diuinitie* (1613): 'Wherefore I wish that you also ioyned Hebrew to your Greeke, though peradventure you haue once began it, and giuen it ouer. For in that you may follow me, sith you propose my example, so much the better, who my selfe, when I was first Master of Arts [i.e., 1572], began the study of it, and being weary, left it: the next yeer [1573] perceuing the necessary vse of it, I set againe vpon it, and I thanke God, since continued a student in it.' (John Rainolds, *A Letter of Dr Reinolds to his friend, concerning his aduice for the studie of Diuinitie* (London, 1613), A5<sup>r</sup>-A6<sup>r</sup>). This was around the same time that Smith was completing his BA and embarking on his MA.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Smith, ed. *V. Cl. Gulielmi Camdeni, et Illustrium Virorum ad G. Camdenum Epistolae* (London, 1691), 189; the original letter is to be found in Camden's letter book, now BL Cotton MS Julius C V, fol.189<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> BL Cotton MS Appendix LXII, fol.11<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> On Camden in Oxford, see Wyman Herendeen, *William Camden: A Life in Context* (Woodbridge, 2007), 59-88.

<sup>36</sup> Miles Smith, *A Learned and Godly Sermon, preached at Worcester, at an Assise: By the Revered and learned, Miles Smith, Doctor of Diuinitie* (Oxford, 1602), \*5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> John Tiller, 'Miles Smith', *ODNB*.

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<sup>38</sup> A few examples of differences between the 1602 and 1632 edition of this sermon, drawn from the sermon's first few pages, include: 'was not ordained for the instruction only of them, in whose daies it was written, but to bee for the vse of the Church in al succeeding ages' (1602, page 2); 'was not ordained for the vse onely of them, in whose dayes it was written, but to be for the instruction of the Church in all succeeding ages' (1632, page 1); 'as touching bodily presence' (1602, page 5); 'as concerning bodily presence' (1632, page 2); 'Tullie, whome I toulde you of even now' (1602, page 9); 'Tully, that I told you of euen now' (1632, page 4).

<sup>39</sup> Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 34-35. Thanks to Joanna Weinberg for the account of this manuscript which she provided for me.

<sup>40</sup> David Kimhi, *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (Venice, 1529), 4iii<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> HCL A.i.7. part i and ii.

<sup>42</sup> The list of Smith's donation in the donor's book gives only 'R. David Kimchi Michlol' (HCL P.9.8, fol. 497<sup>v</sup>), and this seems to accord with Smith's will, which mentions 'Kimhi his Miklol (That is to saye) his Grammar in Hebrewe & his Dictionarie in Hebrewe.'

<sup>43</sup> See Alec Ryrie, 'Thomas Sampson', *ODNB*. It is possible that Sampson acquired this volume while he was on the continent.

<sup>44</sup> See Ronald H. Fritz, 'Kingsmill family', *ODNB*.

<sup>45</sup> On Kingsmill and sixteenth-century Oxford Hebraic studies see James McConica, 'The Rise of the Undergraduate College', in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume III: The Collegiate University*, ed. McConica (Oxford, 1986), 1-68, [at](#) 56.

<sup>46</sup> [Wood, \*Athenae Oxonienses\*, 1.776.](#)

<sup>47</sup> Bodl. MS Wood D. 10, 12: the bequest was given on 9 October 1607.

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<sup>48</sup> I am grateful to Sophie Butler for pointing out this passage to me.

<sup>49</sup> This bolsters the tradition that Smith was ‘there at the beginning’ of the translation project.

<sup>50</sup> This is a widespread view among early-modern scholars: see Daniel J. Lasker, ‘Karaism and Christian Hebraism: A New Document’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (2006), 1089-1116.

<sup>51</sup> Miles Smith, ed., *The Workes of the Right Reverend Father in God Gervase Babington, late Bishop of Worcester* (London, 1592), A3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> John Pearson, *Annotata ad Libros Propheticos Veteris Testamenti: Sive Criticorum Sacrorum: Tomus IV.* (London, 1660), 5498-5505. On this passage, Pearson samples Sebastian Munster, Franciscus Vatablus, Sebastiano Castalio, Isidorus Clarius, Johannes Drusius, and Hugo Grotius. Several comment on the ‘old’ paths, but none make Smith’s point.

<sup>53</sup> John Rainolds, *The Summe of the Conference Betwene Iohn Rainoldes and Iohn Hart* (London, 1584), 244. Hart is citing Willem van der Lindt, *De optimo Scriptura interpretandi genere libri III* (Cologne, 1558), especially 19-22. For a subtle account of van der Lindt’s attacks on the authority of the Hebrew text, see Theodor W. Dunkelgrün, ‘The Multiplicity of Scripture: The Confluence of Textual Traditions in the Making of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible (1568-1573)’ (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 2012), 246-261. As Dunkelgrün explains, ‘Lindanus argued that variant readings between the Septuagint and the Hebrew text are not the result of faulty Greek and Latin translation, but rather of the intentional corruption of the Hebrew text through Jewish transmission’ (247).

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<sup>54</sup> Quòd igitur ista Hebraicorum codicum lectio, vnde hodie quidam suspicantur solidam esse Scripturarum veritatem petendam, non sit vera aut germana, hinc in primis liqueat, quòd locis non parùm multis ab illa dissentiat, quae aut 70. interpretum, aut Hieron. adeò aetate fuerit in manibus.’ (van der Lindt, *De optimo*, 19). Van der Lindt then embarks on a much broader critique of the Hebrew vowel points.

<sup>55</sup> David Daiches, *The King James Version of the English Bible* (Chicago, 1941), 207.

<sup>56</sup> The classic account of Erasmus and Jerome is Lisa Jardine, ‘The In(de)scribable Aura of the Scholar Saint in His Study: Erasmus’s Life and Letters of Saint Jerome’, in her *Erasmus, Man of Letters* (Princeton, 1993), 55-82.

<sup>57</sup> *Ep.* 57.11, in Jerome, *Epistulae*, ed. Isidore Hilberg (Vienna, 1910-1918) = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (CSEL), 54:522.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Doth not their *Paris* edition differ from the *Lovain*, and *Hentenius*’s from them both, and yet all of them allowed by authority?’ (lxv).

<sup>59</sup> Lancelot Andrewes, *Ninety-Six Sermons by the Right Honourable and Reverend Father in God, Lancelot Andrewes, Sometime Lord Bishop of Winchester*, 5 Vols. (Oxford, 1841), 1:138.

<sup>60</sup> HCL A.2.3: *Biblia Rabbinica* (1568), vol.3, fol.69 iii<sup>v</sup>: ‘Shasah & Shasas, eiusdem significationis’.

<sup>61</sup> HCL A.2.2: *Biblia Rabbinica* (1568), vol.2, fol.35 viii<sup>f</sup>: ‘Leonis nomina varia pro diuersitate aetatis’.

<sup>62</sup> HCL A.1.6: Paulus Fagius, ed. *Sefer Tehilim* (Isny, 1541), 1 4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> The Latin word ‘Fermentare’ here might suggest that Smith is drawing upon the celebrated Dutch authority on Jewish proverbs, Johannes Drusius, who notes that ‘Beatus

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judex qui fermentat iudicium' [Blessed is the judge who lets his judgement ripen] is a 'saying among magistrates', as may be seen from David Kimhi's commentary on Isaiah.

See: 'אֵת דִּינֹו שֶׁמֵהֵמֵן אֵת הַדֵּן אֲשֶׁרִי *Beatus judex qui fermentat iudicium*. Sententia Magistrorum, quae sumpta (videtur certè) ex Ies. 1.17. אֲשֶׁרֹו הַמִּוֶּךְ quod exponunt, *Beatum praedicate fermentum*, aut *fermentatum*, h.e. iudicem qui non iudicat nisi post diligentem inquisitionem. Vide Davidem Camium in Comment. ad illum locum', in *I. Drusii Proverbiorum Classes Duae*, in *Tractatum Bibliocrum Volumen Prius: Sive Criticorum Sacrorum Tomus VIII*, ed. John Pearson (London, 1660), 1677.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibn Ezra's commentary on the Pentateuch*, ed. and trans. H. Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver, 5 vols. (New York, 1988-2004), 2: 192. Incidentally, it seems likely that Smith is recording his own discovery from Ibn Ezra here. Although Drusius does record this proverb ('Venit ut se polluat, aperiunt ei' [they open the door to him, who comes to defile himself]), he cites the Gemara as the expression's source, rather than Ibn Ezra (in *J. Drusii Adagiorum Ebraicorum Decuria aliquot*, in *Tractatum Bibliocrum Volumen Prius*, 1897-1898).

<sup>65</sup> HCL A.2.3: *Biblia Rabbinica* (1568), vol.3, fol.107 viii<sup>r</sup>: 'Reijcit exposit: R: Shelom vt re grammaticae parum consonam'.

<sup>66</sup> HCL A.2.1: *Biblia Rabbinica* (1568), vol.1, 1 v<sup>r</sup>: 'Reijcit expositionem R: Shelom de carne vna'.

<sup>67</sup> I am particularly grateful to Karen Collis for her insight on this point.

<sup>68</sup> David M. Stec, ed. and trans. *The Targum of Psalms. Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes* (Collegeville, Minnesota, 2004) = *The Aramaic Bible*, 16:148; Kimhi's Commentary on the Psalms: 'V.9. *Cum exurget ad iudicium Deus*.



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Tunc quando accinget se se Deus ad iudicium in extraneos populos exercendum, atque vt ex illorum potestate & tyrannide vindicet Israelitas qui sunt mansueti terrae [the Israelites who are the meek of the earth], tum omnes populi contremiscent & à bellis cessabunt' (David Kimhi, *Commentarii in Psalmos Davidis* (Paris, 1666), 335).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibn Ezra's Commentary*, 1:68.

<sup>70</sup> HCL A.2.1: *Biblia Rabbinica* (1568), fol. 1 v<sup>r</sup>: 'hanc phrasim [scientiae boni &c]: de Adamo & vxore hanc vsurpatam ad concubitum (Hebr: mashgal) crasse, quamquam obtorto quasi collo rapit & applicat'.

<sup>71</sup> Gervase Babington, *The Workes of the Right Reverend Father in God* (London, 1615), 20-1.

<sup>72</sup> 'Alter causa est, quod ut iam ex Galatino quoque audiimus, omnes ferè loci qui in Biblijs Hebraicis nonnihil obscuritatis & difficultatis habere uidentur, in Paraphrasi Chaldaica sublata omni obscuritate pulchre explicantur' (Paulus Fagius, *Thargum, hoc est Paraphrasis chaldaica Onkeli* (Strasbourg, 1546), \*5<sup>v</sup>). Fagius goes on to say that the Targums give particular clarity to passages which prophesy Christ: Smith does not leave any evidence of interest in this kind of Christological reading of the Targums.

<sup>73</sup> HCL A.2.4: *Biblia Rabbinica* (1568), fol.85 v<sup>r</sup>: 'R. Saadiah antiquior R: Shel: Iarch.'

<sup>74</sup> HCL A.VI.1, notes on the preface (n.p.).

<sup>75</sup> This tract was published posthumously: Thomas Barlow, *Autoschediasmata, de studio theologiae* (Oxford, 1699), 9-10.

<sup>76</sup> Joanna Weinberg, 'A Sixteenth Century Hebraic Approach to the New Testament', in Christopher Ligota and Jean-Louis Quantin, eds. *History of Scholarship* (Oxford, 2006), 231-50.

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<sup>77</sup> ‘Nemo sine ea in nouo aut ueteri Instrumento interpretando cum laude aliqua uersari potest. tot Hebraisimis plena sunt omnia’ (*Interpretatio linguarum: seu, De ratione conuertendi et explicandi autores am sacros quam prophanos, libri tres* (Basel, 1559), 141).

<sup>78</sup> H.J. Grimm, et al., eds. *Luther’s Works*, 56 vols. (St Louis, 1955-1986), 30:232-3.

<sup>79</sup> Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 4 vols. (Munich, 1922-1928), 2:371 point out that the phrase is ‘ungemein häufige Wendung’ in Aramaic in the Babylonian Talmud and the Mishna. I am particularly grateful to Joanna Weinberg for her guidance on this issue.

<sup>80</sup> John Lightfoot, *The Works of the Reverend and Learned John Lightfoot D.D.*, ed. George Bright, 2 vols. (London, 1684), 2:524 [misnumbered, 532].

<sup>81</sup> ‘Locutio frequens in Zohar’ (in John Pearson, ed. *Annotata ad SS. Euangelia: Sive Criticorum Sacrorum Tomus VI* (London, 1660), 1573).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 1523-1574. The earlier commentaries collected here are by Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus, Vatabalus, Castalio, Clarius, Zegerus, Drusius, Scaliger, Casaubon, Cameron Gualperius, as well as Jacques and Louis Cappel. Clearly this is far from an exhaustive list, but it does suggest that the point about ‘come and see’ was not a standard one in the commentary on this verse.

<sup>83</sup> Joachim Zehner, *Adagia Sacra* (Leipzig, 1601), 525.

<sup>84</sup> On Morton, see Brian Quintrell, ‘Thomas Morton’, *ODNB*.

<sup>85</sup> Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed* (Cambridge, 1995), 233.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas Morton, *A Catholike Appeale for Protestants, Out of the confessions of the Romane Doctors* (London, 1609), 394.

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<sup>87</sup> On Chelsea College, see D.E. Kennedy, 'King James I's College of Controversial Divinity at Chelsea', in *Grounds of Controversy: Three Studies in Late 16th and Early 17th Century English Polemics*, eds. D.E. Kennedy, Diana Robertson, and Alexandra Walsham (Melbourne, 1989), 97-126.

<sup>88</sup> Ettenhuber, "'Take vp and read'", e.g., 223.

<sup>89</sup> The letter from Abudacnus to Bedwell is printed in Alastair Hamilton, *William Bedwell: The Arabist, 1563-1632* (Leiden, 1985), 99-100. The identification of 'D. Smiht' with Miles Smith is first suggested in M. Th. Houtsma, 'Uit de oostersche correspondentie van Th. Erpenius, Jac. Golius en Lev. Warner. Eene bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de beoefening der oostersche letteren in Nederland', *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen, Letterk. Verh. der Koninkl. Akademie* 17 (1887), 13-16, in his discussion of the 1611 letter from Abudacnus to Erpenius. Houtsma's identification of Miles Smith necessarily remains somewhat tentative as Abudacnus's rendering of 'Miles' into Arabic has been garbled. Hamilton cites Houtsma's article in his 'An Egyptian Traveller in the Republic of Letters: Joseph Barbatus or Abudacnus the Copt', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57 (1994), 123-50, [at](#) 130.

<sup>90</sup> Agostino Giustiniani, *Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum et Chaldaeum, cum tribus Latinis interpretationibus et glossis...* (Genoa, 1516).

<sup>91</sup> 'edimus, inquam, ex elegantissimo Bibliothecae nostrae codice, manu exarato in Monasterio S. *Ioannis*, in Thebaidos deserto, anno aerae *Diocletiani* (quam martyrum iustorum illi vocant) 1059. id est Christi 1342' (Erpenius, ed. *Nouum Testamentum arabice*, \*\*3<sup>r</sup>).

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<sup>92</sup> See Selden's publication of parts of the tenth-century historical chronicle, *Nazm al-jawahr*, by Eutychius (877-940), Patriarch of Alexandria, as *Eutychii Aegyptii, Patriarchae Orthodoxorum Alexandrini ... Ecclesiae suae origines* (London, 1642).

<sup>93</sup> 'Est enim liber hic [...] verum etiam ob versionis & antiquitatem, & fidelitatem, Theologis omnibus non minus futuris utilis, quam nobilis illa Syriaca editio' (\*\*1<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>94</sup> 'Edimus, Benevole Lector, totius novi foederis antiquissimam atque elegantissimam versionem Arabicam, hactenus majori ex parte typis nondum evulgatam, aemulati atque imitati nobilissimae illius editionis Syriacae, quae Viennae prodijt, elegantiam' (\*\*3<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>95</sup> Smith's text reads משכיל for טשכיל.

<sup>96</sup> Errors in the printing of Hebrew in the posthumous *Sermons* volume may be down to the inexperience of the printer, Elizabeth Alde, in working with Hebrew. Most of the titles she printed were popular ballads or literary and dramatic works, with only a few theological ones, and those of a less ostentatiously learned nature than Smith's. On Elizabeth Alde's biography, see R.B. McKerrow, et al. *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of foreign printers of English books 1557-1640* (London, 1910), 6.

<sup>97</sup> See Joanna Weinberg's chapter in the present volume.

<sup>98</sup> Chanita Goodblatt, *The Christian Hebraism of John Donne: Written with the fingers of man's hand* (Pittsburgh, 2010). More broadly on the use of Hebrew in early modern sermons, see Carl Trueman, 'Preachers and Medieval and Renaissance Commentary', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, eds. Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford, 2011), 61-3.

<sup>99</sup> Smith, *Sermons*, ¶¶2<sup>v</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> Miles Smith, ed. *The Workes of the Right Reverend Father in God Gervase Babington, late Bishop of Worcester* (London, 1615), A6<sup>r</sup>. Smith revised the 1592 and 1596 versions of this preface for publication in 1615, when he acknowledged that there were indeed now ‘many helpers’ available to Christians who did not know the ‘3 chiefe tongs’.

<sup>101</sup> See the biography of Smith in the preface to his sermons, which celebrates his universal knowledge not only of ‘Diuinity’ and the ‘rabbins’, but also of the humanities, including ‘Antient Classicall Authors of the best note in their own languages’, ‘stories of all times’, and ‘the Site of places’ (*Sermons*, ¶¶2<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>102</sup> On Andrewes’ use of Hebrew in his private devotions, see Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg, *“I have always loved the Holy Tongue”: Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship* (Cambridge, MA, 2011), 43.