Sleek Divines and Beaux Esprits: The Universities and the System of Knowledge in England, *c*.1690-1750

Natasha Bailey

New College
University of Oxford

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Abstract

Despite recent attempts to reassess the culture wars of early Enlightenment England as conversations between educated individuals about pivotal and often technical matters, academics of the period continue to feature in narratives of intellectual change as the gatekeepers of a decrepit religious establishment. The famous contention of John Henry Newman that universities are at best locations for the 'diffusion and extension of knowledge' but not for its advancement thus lives on, and has only been heightened by the persistent supposition among historians that the eighteenth-century English universities 'surrendered their cultural leadership'. This thesis, however, presents an altogether new perspective on the relationship of Oxford and Cambridge to the wider intellectual life of the period, with a focus on the neglected polemical and scholarly writings of 'early career' scholars. During a period coloured by anti-institutional sentiments, young scholars in the universities worked tirelessly to defend the system of knowledge that underwrote the curricula of their institutions, and, indeed, academic authority at large. They also aspired to operate smoothly within, and ideally govern, a rapidly expanding vernacular 'public sphere', aware that their task of defending the Church of England depended upon them successfully doing so. In my account, the shortcoming of the eighteenth-century English universities in terms of the relative dearth of impartial 'research' publications was not a result of their being impervious to 'polite' society but rather of their obsessive and often very successful attempts to engage with it.

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1. Introduction: Men of Parts and Learning

‘There are not many who are influenced by new theories after they are twenty-five or thirty years of age’.
J.M. Keynes, *General Theory* (1936)

1.1 This Thesis: Its Argument

In 1711, a recent Cambridge graduate, William Renau, wrote to his mentor in London, the clergyman John Strype, with a sigh of relief: he had been offered a Church living three miles from Cambridge ‘where there are no Criticks so y^{t} a young man need not be much concerned tho’ his sermons are not extraordinary, and may emprove his preaching faculty there better than any where else where there’s a more awfull assembly’.[1] University scholars of the early eighteenth century have rarely been associated with stardom. But this student’s admission demonstrates an awareness that a student’s performances could draw criticisms and crowds in equal measure, making divinity one of the most exciting professions of the day.

Taking the above passage as a starting point, this dissertation aspires to present a new account of the relationship between the English universities and the intellectual life of the period *c.*1690-1750. My focus is on the role that a series of ambitious students and young divines – henceforth referred to as ‘early-career’ scholars, as explained later – played in the intellectual controversies of their day. These young men – whom I introduce in Chapter 1.5 – all penned their detailed thoughts on popular, controversial, or hotly debated matters at an especially early stage in their academic or clerical careers. They form two generations (1690-1720 and 1720-1750 – covered in Parts 2 and 3 of this thesis respectively) and their publications cover a range of topics that connect theology with another university discipline. Unlike Renau, these early-career scholars did not shy away from the public eye. Rather, their early output

[1] Cambridge University Library MS Add. 3. iii. no. 432: Renau to Strype on 3 August 1711.

reveals a sharp grasp of contemporary issues and a desire to become embroiled in public debates, with the aim of bringing about their resolution. While some of their publications were hardly noticed, several were singled out and even celebrated as important contributions to their subject. Taken together, these works offer unique insights into the curricular developments of the period, not least because they inform us of materials and techniques that were taught in the universities, but which are not evident from curricular schemes or student advice handbooks. My focus on early-career publications, moreover, enables me to explain not just how institutional learning changed over the period in question, but also *why* it changed.

My thesis makes three interrelated arguments, to which the three sections composing the first half of this introduction are respectively dedicated. Chapter 1.2 sets out my first argument. This takes the form of an historiographical claim: namely, that the English universities in the period 1690-1750 were not, as is often suggested, intellectual wastelands but rather institutions that made significant contributions to the advancement of learning. New texts and approaches were taught enthusiastically in both Oxford and Cambridge, and plenty of students went on to make serious and lasting interventions in their chosen fields. It remains the case, however, that scholarly output in these decades was, as a whole, of a rather different nature from that which emanated from the universities in the prior century. Instead of being dominated by Latin and Greek editions and translations aimed at elucidating classical or patristic texts, or by pioneering volumes on the ancient Near East and difficult non-European languages, many early-eighteenth-century scholars composed their publications at least partially in English and tackled issues that were likely to be of wide contemporary interest.

Chapter 1.3 explains why scholarly approaches shifted in this way. I argue that as the universities and the Church came under attack from deists, freethinkers, and other radicals, students and scholars were compelled to turn their backs on ‘pure’ (i.e. not chiefly polemical) scholarship, the production of which had once been the pinnacle and mainstay of an academic

career, and instead to produce works aimed at a wider audience. I thus contend that it was a *greater*, rather than a lesser, engagement with the 'public sphere' in this period that gave, and continues to give, rise to perceptions of scholarly decline.[2]

Chapter 1.4 then explains the consequences of this argument for our understanding of curricular developments. Here, I shall demonstrate that the newfound desire among academics to produce relevant, topical, and useful scholarship resulted in a de-emphasis on logic, philosophical exactitude, and the learned languages in the pedagogic process, and a stress on the value of reading (and producing) impactful literature in English, often with a theological hue. In the process, the medieval ideal of an arts education as preparatory to, rather than coterminous with, the professional theology degree lost much of its weight.

As this outline suggests, my thesis aims to explain early eighteenth-century changes in pedagogy and scholarship while also accounting for the long-held impression of intellectual deterioration. It does so by emphasising both the forces that acted on the universities and those that they exerted on society, which, I argue, combined to create conditions that were less conducive to detached scholarship than to its more activist varieties.

1.2 Between Renaissance and Modernity

In a 1974 prosopographical study of the Oxford and Cambridge student body, Laurence Stone

[2] I use the phrase 'public sphere' in this dissertation not with reference to a Habermasian 'bourgeois' arena but rather to the growth of print and how it impacted modes of intellectual exchange, including propelling the use of the vernacular in both academic teaching and publication. For an overview of historiography on the public sphere in seventeenth-century England, see P. Lake and S. Pincus, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 45/2 (2006). This article discusses the modes of conflict at the centre of religious politics and highlights the emergence of a common view towards the end of the seventeenth century that 'public discussion was a means to discover truth, not through the victory of one side over the other but through the cut and thrust of argument' (p. 284). Such a view is, to a large extent, borne out in this dissertation. Some other studies of the public sphere in connection with print include J. Brewer, 'This, That and the Other: Public, Social and Private in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in D. Castiglione and L. Sharpe (eds), *Shifting the Boundaries: Transformation of the Languages of Public and Private in the Eighteenth Century* (Exeter, 1995); J. Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 81-119; and, more recently, J.M. Latham, 'The Clergy and Print in Eighteenth-Century England, c. 1714–1750' (Univ. of Cambridge D.Phil Thesis, 2017).

remarked that

> efforts must be made, on a far more systematic, scholarly, and sophisticated basis than has hitherto been attempted, to reconstruct the intellectual life of the university, and its effects upon the students who passed through it. Only then will it become possible to trace the full impact of this ancient institution upon English society and culture.[3]

Studies that go beyond outlining the curriculum and the character of student life now exist for the seventeenth century.[4] But, nearly four and a half decades since Stone's plea, knowledge of the intellectual life of ambitious eighteenth-century students and academics remains extremely limited. As Stone feared, it has thus not been possible to trace fully how these institutions influenced English society and culture. Part of the reason for the neglect of the eighteenth-century universities is the lingering assumption among many historians that a deist spirit animated intellectual life in the eighteenth century, with anti-institutional radicals rather than university scholars spearheading advancements across knowledge domains, and particularly within philosophy and theology.[5] The sense of rupture is captured in Jonathan Israel's often cited *Radical Enlightenment* (2001), which proposes that after '1650, everything, no matter how fundamental or deeply rooted, was questioned in the light of philosophical reason' as a 'process of rationalization and secularization set in'.[6] For countless other scholars, too, the role of the universities as 'professional schools dedicated to maintaining theological and political orthodoxies' is said to have been consolidated at the start of the eighteenth century as they 'surrendered their cultural leadership' to a coterie of rabble-rousing deists and savants.[7] The

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[3] L. Stone, 'The Size and Composition of the Oxford Student Body', in L. Stone (ed), *The University in Society, Volume I: Oxford and Cambridge from the 14th to the Early 19th Century* (Princeton, 1974), p. 4.
[4] M. Feingold, 'The Humanities', in N. Tyacke (ed), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume IV, Seventeenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford, 1997) and 'The Mathematical Sciences and New Philosophies' in the same volume.
[5] There is a huge body of literature on the deists, which has recently expanded to include lesser-known figures such as Thomas Chubb. Notable examples include *Atheism and Deism Revalued: Heterodox Religious Identities in Britain, 1650-1800*, ed. D. Lucci, W. Hudson, and J.R. Wigelsworth (Farnham, 2014); J.R. Wigelsworth, *Deism in Enlightenment England Theology, Politics, and Newtonian Public Science* (Manchester, 2009); W. Hudson, *The English Deists: Studies in Early Enlightenment* (Abingdon, 2009); and D. Lucci, *Scripture and Deism: The Biblical Criticism of the Eighteenth-Century British Deists* (Bern, 2008).
[6] J. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 3-4.
[7] L.W.B. Brockliss, *The University of Oxford: A History* (Oxford, 2016), p. 135 and 'The European University in the Age of Revolution, 1789-1850', in M.G Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VI, Nineteenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford, 1997), p. 104.

presumption here is that the questioning of theological dogmas that is often regarded as a key feature of the Enlightenment made the universities, as clerical training grounds, irrelevant. As one scholar put it, they suffered 'under church control'.[8]

Historians of the English universities have been particularly apt to take the anti-academic complaints of radicals at face value. Most dramatically, Richard Westfall insisted in 1975 that the 'catastrophic decline' of Cambridge after the Restoration left an 'intellectual wasteland'.[9] With a focus on the intersection of liberal politics and 'science' at Cambridge, John Gascoigne set out to upturn this narrative roughly a decade later, only to conclude that there was 'limited room for theological experimentation' or indeed any 'intellectual innovation' at the university.[10] More recently, M.A. Stewart claimed that no 'philosopher of eminence taught at Oxford in the eighteenth century', while, in a review of Laurence Brockliss's *The University of Oxford* (2016), J.R. Maddicott added that this university 'contributed little to the Republic of Letters and virtually nothing to the work of European humanists in the editing of classical texts'.[11] For Maddicott, a humanist research culture only began 'timidly to develop' in the nineteenth century, and, when it came to natural philosophy, he concurs with Brockliss that 'even the productive and original did next to no research at Oxford'.[12] Indeed, whereas

[8] B-L. Gunnarsson, 'Introduction', in B-L. Gunnarsson (ed), *Languages of Science in the Eighteenth Century* (Berlin and Boston, 2011), p. 12. For a focus on outsiders, see I. Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment. Volume 2: Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge, 2000) and D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (2006). Notable exceptions that show how heterodox thinkers engaged with mainstream scholarship are M. Pfeffer, 'Paganism, Natural Reason, and Immortality: Charles Blount and John Toland's Histories of the Soul', *Intellectual History Review*, 31/4 (2021) and D. Levitin, 'Matthew Tindal's *Rights of the Christian Church* (1706) and the Church-State Relationship', *The Historical Journal*, 54/3 (2011).
[9] R.S. Westfall 'The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Career', in M.L. Righini Bonelli and W.R. Shea (eds), *Reason, Experiment, and Mysticism in the Scientific Revolution* (New York, 1975), p. 194.
[10] J. Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 27. For an overview of the university, see V. Morgan, *A History of the University of Cambridge: Volume 2, 1546-1750* (Cambridge, 2004).
[11] M.A. Stewart, 'The Curriculum in Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies', in Haakonssen (ed), *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (2 vols, Cambridge, 2006), i, p. 98; J.R. Maddicott, '*The University of Oxford: A History*, by L.W.B. Brockliss', *The English Historical Review*, 133/560 (2018), p. 250; and Brockliss, *University of Oxford*, p. 312.
[12] For a social history of Oxford, see G. Midgley, *University Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford* (New Haven and London, 1996) and A.D. Godley, *Oxford in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1908).

Cambridge has had the advantage of embracing Newtonianism, Oxford has been seen to have had no such redeeming quality.

It is only in the nineteenth century that the universities, more broadly, regain centre stage in studies of European intellectual endeavour. Here, the emphasis tends to be on Germany, where a new academic model was allegedly developed. According to standard narratives, it was at this point that universities morphed from the centres of confessional learning that had been dominant in the early modern period, where young men went to hone their disputative skills and bolster known truths, into secular hubs of research innovation. In the iconic framing of Wilhelm von Humboldt, academics were at last granted the 'isolation and freedom' (*Einsamkeit und Freiheit*) needed to pursue knowledge for its own sake, and the nineteenth-century university accordingly became the guarantor of 'an open-ended process' of investigation (even if teaching remained instrumental, with its focus on preparing students for socio-utilitarian and commercial roles).[13]

Humboldt has now been decentred in the historiography and narratives of epochal transformation *c*.1800 tempered. Yet several prominent historians, including W.B Clark, Chad Wellmon, and Thomas Howard, have continued to depict the nineteenth-century research university as a phoenix rising from the ashes of the eighteenth.[14] The authors of one recent survey insist that the Humboldtian ideal is 'clearly different from earlier thinking, which had regarded knowledge as a fixed, finite body of material that it was the university's task to convey'.[15] In his *Organizing Enlightenment* (2015), Wellmon, in turn, claimed that German universities in the age of Kant ushered in a 'new order to knowledge' that was intimately bound

[13] P. Josephson, T. Karlsohn, and J. Östling, 'The Humboldtian Tradition and Its Transformations', in P. Josephson, T. Karlsohn, and J. Östling (eds), *The Humboldtian Tradition: Origins and Legacies* (Leiden, 2014), p. 2. Humboldt claimed that the university 'is always concerned with the practical affair of training the younger generation. Academies concern themselves only with science and scholarship'. See S. Rider, 'The Very Idea of Higher Education: Vocation of Man or Vocational Training?', in P. Josephson, T. Karlsohn, and J. Östling (eds), *The Humboldtian Tradition: Origins and Legacies* (Leiden, 2014), p. 201.
[14] W. Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago, 2006) and T.A. Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford, 2006).
[15] Josephson, Karlsohn, and Östling, 'The Humboldtian Tradition', p. 3.

up with the philosophy faculty, which became responsible for distinguishing 'real knowledge from mere information'.[16] This ties in with stories of German biblical critics in Tübingen, Halle, and elsewhere absorbing the 'deist spirit' of the eighteenth century to pave the way for an unprecedented era of historicist theology in the nineteenth.[17] Much the same has been argued for classical scholars in late eighteenth-century Germany, who were, according to a 1983 study by Anthony Grafton, like biblical critics, successful in severing themselves from the ordinarily educated through their recondite investigations.[18]

It might be tempting, based on the above historiography, to regard the nineteenth-century universities as the breakaway exceptions, and thus to pass off the eighteenth-century universities as the last institutions to instantiate a pre-modern clerical pedagogic model. But this would be to ignore a large body of research that has revealed that the tentacles of a 'research culture' reached back into the seventeenth century, if not earlier.[19] Indeed, recent scholarship on the seventeenth century has given rise to a consensus that the universities played a pivotal role in European culture and society, while also showing that there was a sustained and productive interplay between academic research, on the one hand, and the (often deeply scholarly) investigations of courtiers and *virtuosi*, on the other.[20] Mordechai Feingold, in particular, has emphasised the commitment of the seventeenth-century universities (especially in England) to the integration and advancement of the 'new science' and humanist agendas.

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[16] C. Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University* (Baltimore, 2015), p. 151. See, more generally, L. O'Boyle, 'Learning for Its Own Sake: The German University as Nineteenth-Century Model', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 25/1 (1983), pp. 3-6.

[17] This story is outlined and challenged in S. Mandelbrote, 'Biblical Hermeneutics and the Sciences, 1700-1900', in J.M. van der Meer and S. Mandelbrote (eds), *Nature and Scripture in the Abrahamic Religions: 1700-Present* (2 vols, Leiden, 2008), ii, p. 23.

[18] A. Grafton, 'Polyhistor into *Philolog:* Notes on the Transformation of German Classical Scholarship, 1780-1850', in M. Feingold (ed), *History of Universities*, 3 (1983), pp. 183-5.

[19] See K. Haugen, 'Academic Charisma and the Old Regime', *History of Universities*, 22/1 (2007). A recent contribution to eroding this juxtaposition is M. Feingold, 'Between Teaching and Research: The Place of Science in Early Modern English Universities', in M. Feingold and G. Giannini (eds), *The Institutionalization of Science in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston, 2019), p. 4.

[20] The main contribution to the English context is D. Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science: Histories of Philosophy in England, c. 1640-1700* (Cambridge, 2015). For the universities in particular, see Feingold, 'Mathematical Sciences'. For the European story, see *Institutionalization of Science*, ed. Feingold and Giannini.

Although the curriculum orbited around the Aristotelian corpus and was orientated towards as well as subservient to theology, Feingold has demonstrated that students had considerable freedom to explore a wide range of domains, from astronomy to Arabic, under the guidance of tutors and professors who were often among the best in their field.[21] In fact – and as we will see more fully in Chapter 1.4 – undergraduates and Master's students in England (but also in Northern Europe) were *required* to focus on secular subjects in order to develop their logical, linguistic, historical, and philosophical skills. Indeed, it was generally stipulated that theological study should commence only during the BD, once one had obtained a thorough grounding in the core secular domains, which were thought to provide one with the necessary skills to interpret the Bible accurately.[22] In a context where knowledge was organised hierarchically and where ancient sources were generally held in higher esteem than modern ones – there to be read and updated rather than hastily displaced – it makes little sense to set apart universities as places for the 'diffusion and extension of knowledge' (in the words of John Henry Newman) from locations supposedly dedicated to its advancement.[23]

While recent scholarship has demonstrated that innovations grew out of canon-orientated learning across seventeenth-century Europe, the anti-clerical climate of the eighteenth century, particularly in England, has been seen to have left especially infertile soil for academic endeavours that involved the subtle alteration of ancient ideas and texts. Indeed, the period from *c*.1690 to *c*.1800 is regularly depicted as one in which the universities were paralysed by forms of intellectual novelty (from anti-clerical satires to experimental chemistry) that the

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[21] See, for example, M. Feingold, 'Patrons And Professors: The Origins And Motives For The Endowment Of University Chairs – In Particular The Laudian Professorship Of Arabic', in G.A. Russell (ed), *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden, 1994). See also Feingold, 'Mathematical Sciences'.

[22] The iconic study of 'general learning' is R. Serjeantson, *Generall Learning: A Seventeenth-Century Treatise on The Formation of The General Scholar* (Cambridge, 1999).

[23] J.H. Newman, *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated* (London, 1873), p. ix. Core studies of the academic debts of 'revolutionary' philosophers include R. Ariew, *Descartes among the Scholastics* (Leiden, 2011); C. Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism: The Late Aristotelian Setting of Thomas Hobbes' Natural Philosophy* (Leiden, 2002); M. Edwards, 'Aristotelianism, Descartes, and Hobbes', *The Historical Journal*, 50/2 (2007); and Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, esp. pp. 329-466.

burgeoning 'public' gleefully embraced.[24] Importantly, it was at the start of this period that two monumental texts appeared that are seen to have set the tone for what followed: Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica Naturalis Philosophiae* (1687) and John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689). In standard accounts, the growing prestige of the first gave birth to a 'quantifying spirit' that quickly became a 'prop for the Enlightenment motif that there should be more Reason all round'.[25] While often only tangentially 'Newtonian', deists and radicals working outside of the universities are presented as those most capable of mathematising nature, psychology, and ethics.[26] Locke's *Essay*, in turn, is associated with the elevation of scientific utility over abstract speculation.[27] The *Essay*, read in light of Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* of the same year, has also become a codeword for latitudinarian and liberal 'social and political values', while Locke's and Newton's theological writings are deemed to have committed both literate laypeople and renegade academics (most obviously William Whiston and Samuel Clarke – who will be fully introduced later in this thesis) to various deistic and anti-clerical positions, further sidelining more traditional scholar-divines from public conversations about the direction of social and spiritual life.[28] Operating in a world supposedly dominated by the thought of Locke and Newton, the eighteenth-century universities appear neither early modern – insofar as this meant that innovative research emerged through the merging of ancient and modern traditions within theological boundaries – nor modern,

[24] Many of these forms of novelty were religious, but some key studies also emphasise the public nature of experimental science, such as L. Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science: Rhetoric, Technology, and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain, 1660-1750* (Cambridge, 1992) and A. Coppola, *The Theater of Experiment: Staging Natural Philosophy in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2016).
[25] J. Franklin, 'Artifice and the Natural World: Mathematics, Logic, Technology', in K. Haakonssen (ed), *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (2 vols, Cambridge, 2006), i, p. 819.
[26] The clearest statement of the impact of mathematics on eighteenth-century moral philosophy in the case of a 'Newtonian' divine can be found in D. Mills Daniel, *Ethical Rationalism and Secularisation in the British Enlightenment: Conscience and the Age of Reason* (Cham, 2020), p. 34.
[27] For the emphasis on utility in the Enlightenment, see *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*, ed. W. Clark, J. Golinski, and S. Schaffer (Chicago, 1999), and, specifically, L. Daston, 'Afterward: The Ethos of Enlightenment', which claims that if anything defined Enlightenment science it was a 'dedication to utility' (p. 495).
[28] P. Walmsley, *Locke's Essay and the Rhetoric of Science* (Lewisburg, 2003), pp. 148-51.

insofar as this is meant to have necessitated a commitment to unencumbered secular goals and the enforcement of rigorous bureaucratic standards.

Justin Champion and others have shown that the 'enlightened' thinkers who picked up on ideas from Locke and Newton to lead the charge against orthodox religion were typically more erudite than eighteenth-century polemicists implied. The Enlightenment, Champion convincingly argues in the case of England, is best described as a battle 'about who or what institution held the authoritative interpretation of truth'.[29] Building on Champion's insight, this dissertation hopes to offer a more sympathetic understanding of England's academic institutions and the activities that took place within them, largely, as I will explain in the next section, by situating them within their cultural context. Indeed, the perceived decline of Oxford and Cambridge in the early eighteenth century appears much less like decline when the undertakings of scholars are viewed in light of the challenges that they faced.[30] Although not always evident from existing studies, academics did not suddenly become ignorant dogmatists in this period simply because conditions changed around them; rather, they adapted their tools and knowledge to render them more suitable to conditions that were ostensibly less favourable to academic authority. In the process, they ensured the durability of a system of knowledge that could lend credence not only to that authority but also, perhaps more fundamentally, to a Christian worldview. It is this responsiveness to developments beyond their walls that, I contend, warrants a reappraisal not only of the universities' legacies but also of the nature of intellectual change in the period as a whole.

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[29] J.A.I. Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660-1730* (Cambridge, 1992). Major studies that bear out Champion's argument are B. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debate from Locke to Burke* (Oxford, 1998) and R. Ingram, *Reformation Without End: Religion, Politics, and the Past in Post-Revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2018).

[30] For a brief survey of longer developments in the 'humanities', see A. Blair, 'Rens Bod. *A New History of the Humanities: The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present*', *American Historical Review*, 120/2 (2015).

1.3 The Universities and the Public Sphere

The second major argument of my thesis – that the universities became increasingly preoccupied with broader societal issues and that it is *this* that gave rise to their perceived shortcomings – might strike some readers as counterintuitive. This is because the universities have, typically, been said to have fallen into disrepair during the eighteenth century owing to their commitment to clericalised learning that was irrelevant in a supposedly more enlightened era. Indeed, tied to narratives of eighteenth-century curricular stagnation is a story of the detachment of the English academic community from wider learned life, as conversations about religion, philosophy, and politics supposedly migrated to societies, salons, clubs, and coffeehouses, thus consolidating the existence of a dynamic public sphere from which the universities were excluded. Stone encapsulated this attitude with his claim that the 'scholarship of dons' in the eighteenth century 'tended to stay on the margins of public affairs'.[31] More recent studies have reinforced the point, with a recent work proposing that during the eighteenth century 'England's most innovative scholarship was not situated at the two ancient universities, but propelled by wealthy gentleman-collectors'.[32]

In the extant literature, politeness is often evoked as the key ingredient of eighteenth-century English intellectual exchange that the universities failed to cultivate.[33] This

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[31] Stone, 'Size and Composition', p. 5.

[32] T. Biskup, 'Transnational Careers in the Service of Empire', in A. Holenstein, H. Steinke, M. Stuber, and P. Rogger (eds), *Scholars in Action: The Practice of Knowledge and the Figure of the Savant in the 18th Century* (Leiden, 2013), p. 65. This dissertation examines several instances where gentleman-collectors and academic scholars corresponded on shared projects. Two examples that I do not look at in any detail in this thesis but that capture the point are T. Shaw, *A Letter to Sir Hans Sloane, Bart. R.S. Præs, containing a Geographical Description and Map of the Kingdom of Tunis* (London, 1730) and J. Swinton, *A Dissertation upon the Phœnician Numeral Characters Antiently Used at Sidon. In a Letter to the Rev. Thomas Birch, D. D. Secret. R. S.* (London, 1757). For a recent study of some of these overlapping interests that sadly pays little attention to university figures, see N. Heringman, *Sciences of Antiquity: Romantic Antiquarianism, Natural History, and Knowledge Work* (Oxford, 2013). For the changing nature of Royal Society investigations, see R. Sorrenson, 'Towards a History of the Royal Society in the Eighteenth Century', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 50/1 (1996), pp. 38-40.

[33] A few important studies that emphasise eighteenth-century politeness include L.E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994); G. Sutton, *Science for a Polite Society: Gender, Culture, And The Demonstration Of Enlightenment* (Boulder, CO, 1995); P. Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Abingdon, 2001); L.E. Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, 45/4 (2002);

interpretation dates back at least to Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, who felt that the Glorious Revolution had, in the words of Lawrence Klein, 'definitively established the dominance of gentlemen over English society and politics'.[34] Shaftesbury bemoaned that the 'mere Amusements of *Gentlemen* are found more improving than the profound Researches of *Pedants*'. He was of the opinion that

> Our Youth accordingly seem to have their only Chance between two widely different Roads; either that of *Pedantry* and *School-Learning*, which lies amidst the Dregs and most corrupt part of Antient Literature; or that of the *fashionable illiterate World*, which aims merely at the Character of *the fine Gentleman*, and takes up with the Foppery of modern Languages and foreign Wit. The frightful Aspect of the former of these Roads makes the Journey appear desperate and impracticable. Hence that Aversion so generally conceiv'd against *a learn'd Character*.[35]

Because the universities had long nurtured a culture of disputation – whereby the pursuit of demonstrable truths was elevated over the cultivation of wit and conversational grace – while encouraging in-depth engagement with ancient history and literature, it was easy for Shaftesbury to portray them as promoting approaches that ran counter to emergent forms of intellectual activity (which were not, according to him, without their own flaws). While Shaftesbury sets out two clear pathways for youth in the above quotation, those familiar with his writings would, however, be aware that he idealised a certain kind of learning: that of the *virtuoso* who was learned, cultured, well-travelled, and observative, but (unlike the scholar) did not see research as an end in itself or pursue inquiries into subjects beyond what was likely to serve the general benefit of mankind.[36] Shaftesbury's formulations are among the most pertinent critiques of eighteenth-century university learning, but other writers of the period paved the way for (and reinforced) his stereotypes. In 1759, the physician and one-time fellow

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and J. Davidson, *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness: Manners and Morals from Locke to Austen* (Cambridge, 2004).

[34] Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness*, p. 1.

[35] A.A. Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (2 vols, London, 1711), i, pp. 333-4.

[36] A.O. Aldridge, 'Lord Shaftesbury's Idea of a University', *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors (1915-1955)*, 29/5 (1943).

of Queen's College, Cambridge, Richard Davies remarked that because university students are taught to 'raise every discourse into a debate' they help to stamp 'the Scholar with the unfashionable name of Pedant'.[37] Roughly a decade later, Samuel Johnson intensified Shaftesbury's accusations in *An Essay on Education* (1771), writing that 'base, or noble, sense disdains the fool; / But most disdains the *Pedant* of a school'.[38]

It is true that university scholars often praised their colleagues for refusing to follow the 'rule of fashion' – or, in the words of the Master of Peterhouse and Knightbridge Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge, Edmund Law, for having 'the courage' to maintain 'great truths, howsoever unfashionable or unpopular they may be' – even if this gave rise to accusations of pedantry.[39] However, as groups whose identity was forged and sustained through reading, writing, and public oratory, academics were no less concerned than more ostensibly public-facing individuals with the demands that an expanding readership placed on their stylistic choices, and sought no less than other members of society to become cultured and worldly. As one university scholar wrote in an article of 1750 in *The Student* – a short-lived and miscellaneous Oxford and Cambridge magazine – 'As an University is or ought to be esteem'd a nursery from which men are to be hereafter transplanted into the larger field of life, nothing that accomplishes the *gentleman* can be deem'd unworthy the attention of the *scholar*'.[40] In fact, we will see throughout this dissertation that university scholars exhibited, in both public and private, an almost obsessive concern with public perceptions of their works, views, and demeanour as they strove to control the direction of intellectual travel.

It might be tempting to regard scholars who occupied university posts as better positioned than churchmen (who were often accused of pedantry, too) to shun rhetorical concerns and

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[37] R. Davies, *The General State of Education in the Universities* (Bath, 1759), p. 13.
[38] S. Johnson, *An Essay on Education* (Shrewsbury, 1771), p. 22.
[39] E. Law, *An Essay on the Origin of Evil*, 2nd edn (2 vols, Cambridge, 1732), i, sigs. A2v-r.
[40] 'Music *no improper part of an* University Education', in *The Student, or, the Oxford, and Cambridge Monthly Miscellany*, ed. C. Smart (Oxford, 1750), p. 130.

focus on the pursuit of pure knowledge. Ostensibly, that is, scholars might have been less concerned with public oratory and community engagement and more with research. It should be stressed, however, that 'academics' in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England were very often professional clergymen and thus learnt to frame their ideas with diverse audiences in mind (the Church being central to the repackaging and disseminating of scholarly insights for a lay audience). For this reason, rhetorical skills were cultivated alongside an ability to think logically in the training of future divines, and the universities took extremely seriously the development of an 'Ecclesiastical Eloquence' no less 'powerfull & persuasive than y^{e} Roman or the Grecian oratory that did such Wonders'.[41]

Good writing style was also elevated in the academic context from the late seventeenth century onwards, which helps to explain the growing prevalence in the early 1700s of short, topic-orientated essays called 'themes' within undergraduate pedagogy. These gained ground against verbal disputations as a way of testing students' ingenuity. A 1704 'advice' manuscript by the St John's College, Oxford, tutor, Thomas Haywood, for example, recommends that students exercise their 'own invention as much as is possible' and follow their 'own Genius in everything' rather than exclusively learning to replicate and defend the opinions of others.[42] For Haywood, students should 'Affect no stile, but be master of all', and he encouraged them to write short thematic pieces to this end.[43] Another interesting piece of evidence that suggests the prevalence of stylistic concerns in BA pedagogy is the notebook of a Cambridge student, William Selwin, from 1727-32, which includes notes on two master eighteenth-century stylists, Joseph Addison and Alexander Pope. One of these entries, which is taken directly from a piece by Addison in *The Spectator*, explains why 'men of great Genius in the same way of writing'

[41] Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 36, fo. 56r: Miscellaneous writings probaby by Francis Turner.
[42] For the Haywood quotation, see Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 40, fos. 17r-19r. This manuscript consists of Haywood's 'Some Short Hints at the Method of Studying in the University'.
[43] MS Rawl. D. 40, fo. 17r.

(i.e. in a particular genre or style) often 'appear together, & in a body'.[44] Selwin's notebook contains many typical entries for a composition of the time, implying that it was a fairly common practice for students to read contemporary English writers and reflect on matters of style. While stylistic concerns were not necessarily prioritised over academic rigour within the universities, historians have largely overlooked the exceptional interest that academics and their students had in developing effective and impactful prose that could allow them to reach readers well beyond the universities.

Particularly important when thinking about the early eighteenth-century academic's choice of form and genre is the impact of the classical scholar and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, Richard Bentley, 'our *English* Scaliger'.[45] Bentley, perhaps more than any other author of his day, demonstrated how to frame scholarly insights in English when launching into print controversies, which in turn made him an exemplar for subsequent students eyeing clerical careers. Discussing the first edition of Bentley's *Dissertation* on the letters of Phalaris (1697) – among the earliest and most striking examples of Greek scholarship to be made available to 'the world at large' – Kristine Haugen commented that it 'managed to be suave, even elegant, as it retailed the telling minutiae of impossible dates, place names, even the names of ancient drinking vessels'. After Bentley's edition met with a hostile reply, however, he 'retaliated in the best tradition of the seventeenth-century pamphlet war, with a grossly expanded and miscellaneous new edition'.[46] This transformation of the polished into the sprawling points to a generic challenge that was faced by almost all of the scholars studied in this dissertation. On the one hand, they sought to offer readable insights into arcane aspects of literary, book, church, and intellectual history, like Bentley consigning dense quotations in

[44] William Selwin's commonplace book from 1727-32 is at St John's College, Cambridge: O.60, fo. 108v. Selwin is quoting from J. Addison, *The Spectator*, 409 (1712), p. 57.
[45] J. Paris, *The True State of Trinity College, in a Letter to a Residing Fellow of that Society* (London, 1710), p. 12.
[46] K. Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA, 2011), p. 101.

learned languages into footnotes and slotting obscure fragments into semi-relevant postscripts. On the other hand, the contentious – and what they often regarded as seditious – claims of their combatants spurred them to compose painstaking point-by-point responses to such combatants' pamphlets that were anything but elegant and tasteful.

Although torrents of polemics poured out of print shops during the first half of the eighteenth century, young scholars who waded into print controversies became increasingly conscious that earmarking their writings as polemics – 'A Reply to an Unknown Hand', 'Further Remarks on', etc. – could result in them being branded as pedants and quickly render their output dated. As David McKitterick explained in his study of Cambridge University Press, 'faster-moving sciences, contemporary politics, or the most transient ecclesiastical disputes' were often of singular and short-lived interest, in contrast to texts such as editions of the Bible or encyclopaedias, which were often preserved and passed down over generations.[47] Foregrounding this fissure between fast and slow reading and writing, the controversial clergyman and renowned stylist Conyers Middleton, whose name will recur in this dissertation, decided to turn in the 1740s from 'meddling with the Church Dispute' (i.e. controversies about religious doctrine or ecclesiastical policies) – which would be 'read chiefly by churchmen' – to 'classical work' (specifically a biography of Cicero) since this would be 'read by every Body'.[48] When the younger Cambridge scholar James Tunstall attacked Middleton's scholarship (in Latin) on technical grounds, Middleton was again quick to raise the issue of style and publicity, writing that Tunstall's decision to pen his piece in a learned language meant that he had not 'the fortune to make himself understood, and will consequently be very little read'.[49]

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[47] D. McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press: Volume 2, Scholarship and Commerce, 1698-1872* (3 vols, Cambridge, 1998), pp. 2-3.
[48] John Hervey to Middleton, quoted in Ingram, *Reformation Without End*, p. 154.
[49] Cicero and M. Brutus, *The Epistles of M.T. Cicero to M. Brutus, and of Brutus to Cicero, with Notes by C. Middleton*, ed. C. Middleton (London, 1743), p. iii.

Middleton's references to his English work being read by 'every Body' and to Tunstall's Latin one being read 'very little' indicate that authors' impressions of the reading public had a visible impact on learned production by this point.[50] The 1739 annotated translation of a relatively obscure poem about the sack of Troy by the third/fourth-century CE Greek grammarian Tryphiodorus (discussed in 3.1) that was produced by James Merrick – one of the young scholars on whom this thesis focusses – is an excellent example of 'popular' scholarship, turning out to be one of the most successful publications in eighteenth-century England, '*far exceed[ing] it's Authors Expectation*'.[51] The possibility of disseminating even highly technical work widely, and thus of making money and a name, spurred aspirational scholars to seek out publication opportunities remarkably early on in their careers. Of underestimated significance in this context is the fact that students rarely received enough scholarship funding to cover their post-BA studies. Accordingly, those who sought to continue on an academic trajectory were incentivised not only to learn as much as they could very quickly but also to publish, which was one of the most obvious ways to gain ground on more experienced scholars and thereby acquire a highly sought-after college fellowship.[52]

While opportunities to make a name for one's self (as Merrick did) within the domain of polite literature increased over the period covered in this thesis with the expansion of a classically educated and generally curious reading public, it should not be supposed that theological writing and the public sphere were fundamentally at odds. Transient as interest in certain aspects of polemical divinity tended to be, books on Christ, the fathers, the nature and future state of the soul, and religious practice were of widespread interest throughout the eighteenth century. Indeed, among the best-selling books of the period was the *Companion for the Festivals and Fasts* (1703) by the acclaimed divine and philanthropist Robert Nelson,

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[50] J. Raven, 'The Book Trades', in I. Rivers (ed), *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (2 vols., London, 2001), ii, pp. 1-5.
[51] J. Merrick, *The Destruction of Troy: Being the Sequel of the Iliad* (Oxford, 1739), sig. A2r.
[52] W.M Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 52-6.

which offers an account of the life and thought of a particular saint for each day of the feasts and fasts in the *Book of Common Prayer* of 1622.[53] At the same time, following the Toleration Act of 1689 and the lapsing of the Licensing Act in 1695, anti-clerical literature 'flood[ed] into the public sphere'. Another of the most widely read books of the period was the former Cambridge student Thomas Woolston's inflammatory *Six Discourses on the Miracles of Our Saviour* (1729), in which he claimed that Christ never really performed miracles, which gained their value purely as allegories. The tremendous number of sales of Woolston's book despite the author's prosecution apparently impressed even Voltaire. While this deluge of controversial literature excited some and terrified others, it generally heightened the stakes of religious debate. Robert Ingram has shown that the Church of England – and the universities by extension – was initially 'wrong-footed by these liberalizing measures'. But he also notes that the Church regained most of 'its former standing by the 1730s'. I will argue that this success was partly due to the efforts of early-career scholars working on its behalf.[54]

Young scholars were particularly attuned to the mood of their time, having been schooled on the latest vernacular writings at university. It is for this reason that they felt uniquely placed to combat the more outlandish claims of an anti-clerical minority and thereby (or so they saw it) do the public a service. Such an activist vision of the early-career scholar's role in a time of religious and intellectual crisis is encapsulated in the claim of John Witty – another of the young scholars who features in this dissertation – that he would dutifully confute the deists through publishing because they have 'rais'd up Such a Spirit of Infidelity in our Nation amongst such lighter Wits as are capable of reading their Arguments but can't confute 'em'. Witty's exclamations about 'How high the Vein runs now' and that 'new Proselytes will continue daily to be made' for the deist cause further suggest the sense of urgency that (he felt)

[53] B.S Sirota, 'Robert Nelson's Festivals and Fasts and the Problem of the Sacred in Early Eighteenth-Century England', *Church History*, 84/3 (2015). Nelson's book was in its thirty-second edition by 1812.
[54] Ingram, *Reformation Without End*, p. 286.

attended his task.[55] Indeed, in a slightly later work, *The First Principles of Modern Deism Confuted* (1707), Witty claimed to be countering the spread of dangerous ideas among 'unwary Persons'. He felt particularly obliged to defend the immateriality of the soul – which he took to be '*one of the strongest Bases of* Religion' – after 'the very Beaux' (presumably Anthony Collins) had produced 'Letters to the Ladys' to persuade them otherwise.[56] Comments such as Witty's are very common in writings from the first few decades of the eighteenth century, with another of the young protagonists of this dissertation, John Chapman, similarly advertising his vernacular apologetic of 1738 on the grounds that 'common Believers are most liable to be puzzled and stagger'd' by the deists' arguments. According to Chapman, 'those Enemies of ours' never failed to take 'every Advantage, from Things or Persons to gain their Ends'; accordingly, only an impartial, public-facing scholar such as himself could provide a 'real Service against Deceivers'.[57]

While the publications that this dissertation studies were usually individual enterprises, it is worth noting that powerful churchmen had 'recourse to the Colleges', and commissioned a number of works by young scholars in the period. Daniel Waterland, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, is one figure who cultivated a small entourage of acolytes to assist him on the 'the open Field of Paper-War'.[58] As this implies, although the destruction of heterodoxy relied on the learning and ingenuity of individuals, the institutions were uniquely positioned to harness the power of collective action to forward their own ends. This sense that academics and clergymen gained their strength through corporate unity is encapsulated in the feisty Oxford Anglo-Saxonist and divine George Hickes's *Spinoza Reviv'd* (1709), in which he rhetorically exclaims that one had to be a fearless soldier to take on the clergy given that they

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[55] J. Witty, *An Essay Towards a Vindication of the Vulgar Exposition of the Creation of the World* (London, 1705), sigs. A5r-v.
[56] J. Witty, *The First Principles of Modern Deism Confuted* (London, 1707), p. iv.
[57] J. Chapman, *Eusebius: Or, The True Christians's Defense Against a Late Book* (Cambridge, 1739), sig. A7v.
[58] J.M. Latham, 'Clergy and Print', pp. 116-20. The quote is from Magdalene College, Cambridge, Archives C/DW, Waterland Papers, 'Unofficial', Waterland to Thomas Bishop, 11 Dec. 1733.

'so lately Conquered LEVIATHAN; [and are] an Order of Men, who have for 1700 Years been used to Combat with Hereticks, and Conquer them'.[59] Far from underplaying the severity of the moment, such references to the successful record of academics and clergymen on the battlefield were a key component of their strategy.

Whereas it has long been assumed that the growth of print (and specifically heterodox print) in the early eighteenth century paralysed the universities, this dissertation takes the contrary perspective. As I seek to demonstrate, it was precisely *because* leading scholars within the universities felt that their institutions were under siege that they took such interest in vernacular religious debates, aware that only by engaging with the enemy could they have any hope of deciding the outcome of contemporary conflicts. All in all, 'Church Dispute' was not marginal to public life in the period but rather a central component of it.

1.4 The General Scholar Reinvented

The above argument – that the universities took on a more public-facing role during the early eighteenth century – underpins the third and final contention of this thesis: that as scholars adapted to the fact that pure scholarship was a less valuable commodity within the system of knowledge than more activist forms of intellectual output, the shape and content of the curriculum underwent a process of transformation. I shall briefly explain my argument and its implications here, largely with reference to the contours of learning in the prior century.

During the seventeenth century, undergraduates were expected to leave university with a thorough grasp of the *trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric), the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, astronomy, and geometry), and the three philosophies (moral philosophy, natural philosophy, and metaphysics). As Richard Serjeantson and others have shown, the early modern undergraduate degree was designed to provide students with a general philosophical

[59] G. Hickes, *Spinoza Reviv'd* (London, 1709), sig. A1r.

understanding and to prevent the early specialisation that many tutors feared would stymie holistic intellectual growth.[60] The Aristotelian corpus provided the backbone to many, if not all, of the undergraduate subjects, while logic also glued the *trivium* to the three philosophies, being aligned with rhetoric insofar as it facilitated 'Clearness of Reasoning' and with natural philosophy insofar as it allowed for mental abstraction from sensory particulars to universals, and thus for the attainment of certain knowledge.[61]

It was widely supposed during the seventeenth century that an extended period of secular study (as represented by the BA) should precede any professional investigations, and this supposition undergirded the widely revered ideal of 'general learning'. Although undergraduate students were sometimes required to touch upon issues that had a clear connection to theology (in the form of discussions of the soul in natural philosophy and the existence of immaterial substances in metaphysics), making hasty leaps from the secular handmaidens to theology was generally regarded as both intellectually and socially problematic. Being the most important document that humans possessed, the scriptures were, according to most learned divines, meant to be interpreted only by those with the requisite education, and this was generally thought to mean an education in all of the forms and bodies of knowledge that could aid the hermeneutic process of comprehending God's word. John Milton thus reflected a much broader sentiment when, around 1631, he poured scorn on undereducated preachers who 'fly off unfeathered to Theology while all but rude and uninitiated in either Philosophy or Philologie'.[62] Although Milton's comment taps into a

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[60] See again Serjeantson, *Generall Learning*. The same emphasis can interestingly also be found in the earliest Dissenting Academies of the 1660s, which, as Mark Burden has shown, treated the 'whole bodie of philosophie' but steered clear of matters divine. See M. Burden, *A Biographical Dictionary of Tutors at the Dissenters' Private Academies, 1660-1729* (Dr Williams's Centre for Dissenting Studies, 2013), p. 15. For the reference to the 'whole bodie of philosophie', see A. Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale: Written by Himself*, ed. R. Parkinson (Manchester, 1845), p. 189.

[61] J. Barecroft, *Ars concionandi: or An Instruction to Young Students in Divinity* (London, 1715), p. 66. See generally M. Sgarbi, *The Aristotelian Tradition and the Rise of British Empiricism Logic and Epistemology in the British Isles (1570-1689)* (New York, 2013), pp. 199-201.

[62] This passage is from Milton's *Epistolae Familiares*, as quoted in P. Hammond, *Milton and the People* (Oxford, 2014), p. 19.

widespread belief in the importance of divines possessing fulsome secular learning, Milton had a high benchmark for erudition. For this reason, his complaint points less to a reality whereby the universities let their students 'fly off' to theology too early (theology was, as noted, first taught during the BD at this time) and more to his own sense that the secular arts were being taught badly and thus that divines, when they eventually did turn to theology, were doing so without the appropriate understanding.

Despite a widespread resistance towards a premature instrumentalisation of learning during the seventeenth century, the reading lists and exercises that were assigned to undergraduates who hoped to pursue careers in law, medicine, or theology sometimes differed from those given to the sons of the gentry and nobility. This was because the latter were thought to require more instruction in the elegant humanist literature of the late Renaissance as well as in *avant-garde* subjects such as experimental philosophy than in textbook traditions grounded in the *corpus Aristotelicum*. The segregation of gentlemen from their more professionally orientated counterparts is obvious, for instance, in the 'Directions for students' (which was aimed at undergraduates) that Richard Holdsworth, a tutor of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, drew up *c*.1640. Here the preponderance of readings for 'serious' students consist of Greek and Latin poetry, scholastic logic and 'controversy', systematic metaphysics, and Aristotelian natural philosophy. But for 'Such as come to the University not with intention to make Scholarship their profession, but only to gett such learning as may serve for delight and ornament', newer vernacular texts such as Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) and 'S^{r} Francis Bacon's Essays' are prescribed.[63] Several critics of the universities, perhaps most famously John Webster, in their turn, complained that *all* students should be schooled in the more fashionable subjects, caricaturing the curricula that were offered to future professionals

[63] [R. Holdsworth], 'Directions for a Student at the Universitie', Emmanuel College, Cambridge, MS 1.2.27.(1), in H.F Fletcher (ed), *The Intellectual Development of John Milton*, vol. 2: *The Cambridge University Period, 1625-32* (Urbana, 1961), Appendix II, pp. 623-64.

as unfit for modern times. But, as Seth Ward, Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, pointed out in 1654, the universities *already* offered a thoroughgoing training in mathematics and experimental philosophy for both gentlemen and future professionals alongside the humanistic arts.[64] Ward simply stressed the benefits of maintaining a unified system of knowledge, noting that it would be imprudent for the universities to present *anyone* (including gentlemen) with 'a Feast all of Custard or Tart' while neglecting 'the variety of Tasts'.[65] Indeed, Ward's description of the universities as offering an adequate balance of the novel and traditional appears to square with the reality of Oxford and Cambridge teaching over the proceeding decades, with extant evidence (including documents such as Newton's Trinity College commonplace book) indicating that Aristotelian philosophy, while remaining the mainstay of the BA, continued to be supplemented with alternative physical theories.[66]

On the back of the assumption that the university curriculum became 'frozen in its antique mold' during the eighteenth century (perhaps owing to the success that figures such as Ward had had in defending it), a number of scholars have looked to the Dissenting Academies that proliferated in the period as institutions uniquely positioned to offer a more relevant and contemporary education along the lines of that offered by Gresham College.[67] In one of the most recent studies, eighteenth-century Dissenting pedagogy has been said to have been more in keeping with that of 'the advanced universities of the Netherlands, Scotland, and elsewhere', with the Academies being places 'where modern languages, experimental science, and civil and constitutional history were taught alongside moral philosophy and theology'.[68] To be sure,

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[64] Feingold, 'Mathematical Sciences', pp. 363-4.
[65] S. Ward and J. Wilkins, *Vindiciae acadamerium* (Oxford, 1654), pp. 49-50.
[66] On the character of Newton's notebooks, see J.E. McGuire and M. Tamny, 'Introduction', *Certain Philosophical Questions: Newton's Trinity Notebook*, ed. J.E. McGuire and M. Tamny (Cambridge, 1983) and W.A. Wallace, 'Newton's Early Writings: Beginnings of a New Direction', in C.V. Coyne, S.M. Heller, and J. Zycinski (eds), *Newton and the New Direction in Science* (Vatican City, 1988). For the eclecticism of the MA, see R. Serjeantson, 'The Education of Francis Willughby', in T. Birkhead (ed), *Virtuoso by Nature: The Scientific Worlds of Francis Willughby FRS (1635-1672)* (Leiden, 2016).
[67] Stewart, 'The Curriculum', pp. 98-9 and Stone, 'Size and Composition', p. 5.
[68] J. Spurr, 'Review of Mark Burden, ed., Dissenting Academies Online', in M. Feingold (ed), *History of Universities XXVIII/2* (Oxford, 2015), p. 189.

the Dissenting Academies played a role in the establishment of new courses moving into the eighteenth century, including English and modern languages, and they taught some exciting texts and approaches.[69] But the idea that they provided a dramatically different educational programme from that on offer in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century universities is flawed, not least because many of the texts taught within these new schools were also read and debated within the universities.

For example, around the time that the famous dissenting tutor Philip Doddridge taught Henry Pemberton's 1728 digest of Newton's *Principia* at his Northampton academy, the text was being disputed at Cambridge; the same can be said for many other 'modern' authors such as Isaac Watts, Shaftesbury, George Berkeley, and Francis Hutcheson.[70] Moreover, just as 'Doddridge set his students to read the deists themselves', so too did university tutors. We find one tutor, for instance, recommending texts no less disruptive than Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651), Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics* (1677), and Collins's *Three Letters to Clarke* (1707-8), while the notebook of the aforementioned Selwin includes a note titled 'What is the criterion or distinguishing mark of Truth?', in which he engages with William Wollaston's *Religion of Nature Delineated* of 1722 (which is often regarded as a key deist text).[71] In any case, even when heterodox or deistic texts were *not* prescribed it does not mean that they went unread, since such works often existed in college libraries or were in the hands of local booksellers from whom they could easily be purchased. The fact that the aforementioned Chapman responded, point-by-point, to Collins's *Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered* (1727) – a notable attempt to show that the coming of Christ was not foreshadowed in the Old

[69] J.W.A. Smith, 'The Curriculum of the Dissenting Academies with Special Reference to the Factors Determining It: 1660-1800' (Durham, unpublished thesis MA, 1950). A similar argument is made in I.V. Hansen, 'English Teaching in the Dissenting Academies', *Australian Journal of Education* (1962).
[70] T. Johnson, *Quaestiones philosophicae in justi systematis ordinem dispositae* (Cambridge, 1741), p. 16. For the other authors, see 'Quaestiones Logicae' and 'Quaestiones Ethicae' at pp. 168-86 and pp. 219-34. Doddridge's notes are from 1729 onwards.
[71] Haywood, 'Hints', at MS Rawl. D. 40, fo. 7r and Johnson, *Quaestiones philosophicae*. For Hobbes, see, for instance, p. 226; for Spinoza, see p. 213; and for Collins, see p. 213. See also St John's College MS O.60, fo. 85r.

Testament – as a BA student at King's College, Cambridge, in 1728 goes some way towards making the point.[72] Many tutors in fact felt strongly that their students should grapple with radical or challenging ideas and doctrines because otherwise they would have no hope of picking holes in them, with Hickes, for one, demanding that 'our *British* Youth should be led into the perfect Knowledge' of the deists' ideas.[73] All told, it seems fair to say that just as Doddridge 'kept his reading up to date', so too did college tutors in Oxford and Cambridge.[74]

Another area where the Dissenting Academies have been earmarked as innovative and thus implicitly used to cast the eighteenth-century universities in a negative light concerns when and how they taught theology. Doddridge, one scholar has noted, held (contrary to the seventeenth-century 'general learning' model) that a 'theological training could not be separated from endeavours that nourished scholarship across disciplines', and, apparently unlike university tutors, he accordingly taught theology alongside its handmaidens as part of an integrated BA education. In this regard, Doddridge's teaching has been said to resemble that which Johann Salomo Semler later advocated in Altdorf and then Halle.[75] But, as this suggests, a dissonance remains in the extant historiography whereby teaching theology alongside the arts is depicted in a German or Dissenting Academy context as a progressive activity and a precursor to the scientific domain of 'higher criticism', yet is regarded in the context of the English universities as a residue of the regressive dogmatism that had long hampered these institutions. In studies of English theology more broadly, historians have tended to point to natural rather than historical theology for evidence of innovative, critical inquiry, with the classic framing of deism being as a naturalising movement that deemed evidence of the divine

[72] J. Chapman, *The Objections of a Late Anonymous Writer, Against the Book of Daniel, Consider'd in a Letter to a Friend* (Cambridge, 1728).
[73] Hickes, *Spinoza Reviv'd*, sig. A5v.
[74] T. Whitehouse, *The Textual Culture of English Protestant Dissent 1720-1800* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 61-2.
[75] Whitehouse, *Textual Culture*, p. 63. On Semler more generally, see E.W. Carlsson, 'Johann Salomo Semler, the German Enlightenment, and Protestant Theology's Historical Turn' (PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2006).

to lie in nature alone. This focus on natural theology has, however, diverted the attention of historians away from the full gamut of ways in which students learnt to study the divine, and, potentially, to come up with innovative ideas about it. Indeed, the third and final major intervention of this dissertation is that the pressure that the universities came under to prepare students to enter into theological controversies (as described in 1.3 above) provided a rationale and imperative for integrating subjects with overt theological payoff into the undergraduate degree. These subjects included moral theology, biblical chronology, and historical apologetics.[76]

The expectation that students would play a role in theological controversies early in their careers not only precipitated this expansion in the number and type of undergraduate disciplines, but also, strikingly, spurred a more positive evaluation among tutors of the place of 'free' enquiry within the academy. Haywood, for one, asserted in his 'Hints' that his undergraduates should 'Learn to doubt & believe in the proper time for both' and 'never be afraid of Free-Thinking in any thing whatever'.[77] The great Hebraist Robert Lowth looked back on his Oxford education as a unique period when 'a liberal pursuit of knowledge and a generous freedom of thought was raised, encouraged, and pushed forward by example, by commendation, and by authority'.[78] As will become clear over the course of this thesis, Doddridge's 'enquiring, innovative, and collaborative method of developing teaching resources' was not uniquely 'characteristic of dissenting education' but simply mirrored – and perhaps even emulated – the growing emphasis on theologically-orientated critical investigation within the universities.[79]

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[76] See, for just one example, R. Greene, *Enkyklopaideia or, A Method of Instructing Pupils* (London, 1707), pp. 1-8, where Greene invites undergraduates to consider 'the Several Doctrines of our Religion' and 'compare 'em with those of other Religions' (p. 3).
[77] MS Rawl. D. 40, fo. 15r and 19r.
[78] G.G. Cunningham, *A History of England in the Lives of Englishmen* (Scotland, 1837), p. 22. See also R. O'Day, *Professions in Early Modern England, 1450-1800: Servants of the Commonweal* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 64-72.
[79] Whitehouse, *Textual Culture*, p. 64.

Echoing Milton's complaint against those who flew off to theology 'unfeathered', learned divines throughout the seventeenth century had regularly accused their enemies of being 'enthusiasts' who attempted to interpret God's word without being sufficiently conversant with the secular arts. Such complaints had usually been against non-conformists and members of radical Protestant sects outside of the universities. But a related, though somewhat different, fear began to develop in the early eighteenth century: that those *within* the universities who intended to pursue careers as Church of England divines were not taking the requirement to become 'generally learned' in the traditional sense seriously enough. For example, in 1709 the Cambridge divine Robert Jenkin wrote nostalgically of 'the old and necessary Methods for the attaining to solid Learning' that were made use of during the Restoration, 'when our Religion, the Christian and Reformed Religion, was as much revered, as it is now despised and vilified'.[80] Of course, Jenkin was not implying that institutional scholars 'despised and vilified' the Christian faith, but simply that the level of theological debate in general had lowered. Such fears only intensified as the century wore on, with the Oxford divine George Horne observing in 1754 that a 'critical cacoethes' (or misguided obsession with 'criticism') is 'now so epidemical among the sleek divines and beaux esprits of the age'.[81] Edward Bentham, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, worded the problem more precisely in his *Reflections upon the Study of Divinity* (1771) when he complained that 'because the instrumental aids of Philology are necessary to the right understanding of the Old and New Testaments, some Professors of Divinity have stopped short of their true object: Finding that Philological knowledge, being more removed from common reach, appears more brilliant, and attracts more

[80] R. Jenkin, *Remarks on Some Books Lately Publish'd* (London, 1709), sig. A2r.
[81] G. Horne, *Spicilegium Shuckfordianum: or, A Nosegay for the Critics* (London, 1754), p. 3. There was even a broader worry among certain figures that those who concerned themselves wholly or mostly with secular philology were immoral. J. G. Walch (1693–1775), for instance, wrote a dissertation *On the Nonsense and Wars of Grammarians* (1716) in which he claims that grammarians and philologists are people of a 'corrupted mind' (see F. Verhaart, *Classical Learning in Britain, France, and the Dutch Republic, 1690-1750: Beyond the Ancients and the Moderns* (Oxford, 2020), p. 112). Verhaart links the issue to a 'power struggle between philologists and other academic disciplines in terms of the hierarchy of the faculties of higher education' (p. 114).

admiration, they have confined their attention here'.[82] So seriously had the arts/theology distinction been eroded by the end of the eighteenth century that John Napleton, a fellow of Brasenose, wrote longingly in 1773 of an age when academic subjects rose 'in dignity as [one] advances in standing and knowledge'.[83]

Assuming that Bentham's observation accurately reflects the reality of mid-eighteenth century university scholarship, it might seem to contradict the contention of this thesis that early-career scholars from *c*.1690-1750 were indispensable to a popularisation campaign and were chiefly concerned, for this reason, with appearing to have a positive impact on the public. But it is important to emphasise that when Bentham referred to philological learning, he referred to the fact that it 'attracts more admiration' than its theological counterpart, and, accordingly, that the young divines who focussed on philology were, despite the more abstruse nature of philological investigations, nonetheless seeking popularity. As this dissertation seeks to show, many eighteenth-century early-career scholars sought, after the manner of Bentley, to overcome the 'opacity and aura of inaccessible expertise' that gave rise to the standard caricature of academics as pedants.[84] The early-career scholars did so, as noted earlier, chiefly by discussing technical linguistic and historical matters in English with reference (and often in response) to popular deistic writings, and their prefaces were very often designed to highlight the altruistic nature of their aims. But whereas Bentley was committed to marrying classical scholarship with polite literary pursuits for the sake of knowledge, apologetic agendas are often what drove early-career scholars to publish. And, given that these scholars were apt to weaponise philological learning for theological ends (i.e. in order to outwit their opponents), they often only *added* to the apparent abstruseness of an already rather technical domain. In this sense, Bentham's comment (and, indeed, the comments of Napleton, Horne, and Jenkin)

[82] E. Bentham, *Reflections upon the Study of Divinity* (Oxford, 1771), p. xix.
[83] J. Napleton, *Considerations on Public Exercises* (Oxford, 1773), p. 37.
[84] Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, p. 244.

about the fading prestige of theology within the institutions only partially captures the mid-eighteenth-century reality. More often than not, that is, the young divines in question (and indeed, the professors of theology themselves) did not bypass theology but rather let religious controversies become intermingled with a range of other niche, often philological debates. It is for this reason that astute contemporaries could caricature such early-career scholars as pedants, even as the latter engaged to a greater extent than ever before with the public sphere.

In a world dominated by conversations about the history of Christianity and the foundations of science and morality, the curriculum transformed from one that was Latinate and heavy on philosophy into a more miscellaneous and (some argued) shallow one that incorporated new texts and made it difficult to separate the signal from the noise. But had tutors not felt compelled to defend Christianity, and, in the process, to submerge their students within a pool of popular texts, they may ironically have continued to produce the kind of research that began in the seventeenth century and recommenced in the nineteenth.

1.5 Methodology and Scope

The structure of my dissertation is broadly chronological, with its two substantial parts spanning the periods 1690-1720 and 1720-1750 respectively. The rationale for straddling the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but focussing on the latter, is that it allows me to pick up where prior studies of a broadly Aristotelian and assimilative English academic culture have left off and where narratives of a destabilising Lockean and Newtonian takeover begin.[85] While allowing me to stress that there was a large degree of continuity between these periods, this structure also makes it possible to pinpoint unappreciated changes in the teaching and scholarly investigation of the same subjects from *c.*1690-1750.

[85] I use the term Aristotelian here with reference to the philosophy textbooks used in the Arts faculty. Some of these textbooks were of course highly eclectic (and self-consciously so), as shown in H. Hotson, *The Reformation of Common Learning: Post-Ramist Method and the Reception of the New Philosophy, 1618-1670* (Oxford, 2020), esp. pp. 100-44.

Each of the two parts contains three chapters that revolve around individuals whose writings grapple in particularly interesting ways with the content and methods of core theological handmaidens. Because of their prominence in the BA and MA, I single out the following as handmaiden subjects: classical languages and literature, natural and moral philosophy, and 'sacred propaedeutics' (sacred chronology and sacred antiquities). These subjects were all regarded as essential components of the training of a young divine, and all of the authors who feature in this study (barring John Mill) were on the pathway towards a clerical vocation (as will be shown in 1.6, this was the most common profession pursued by university graduates of the period). Some of the works that I shall cover are polemical apologetics designed as interventions into immediate local controversies, while others were designed to be of a more lasting, impartial, and scholarly nature. But both are united by their vernacularity, and reflect the growing proximity of English higher education to extra-institutional intellectual life. The works are also united by the fact that their authors were at an early stage in their career (hence the reference to them as 'early-career' scholars), meaning that they were either studying at the time of publishing – whether for a BA, MA, or BD – or had recently graduated and become a fellow of their college or young professional cleric. The fact that all of the works were written in English by students or recent graduates and designed for relatively widespread consumption makes them ideal starting points for investigating the wider cultural resonances of curricular transformation. Far from being a marker of lobotomised learning, theological commitments fuelled many of these individuals to blend new ideas towards a range of ends.

The first chapter of Part 2, 'Classical Learning: David Humphreys', concentrates on a young man, David Humphreys, who studied at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was a protégé of the Master of the College, the aforementioned classical and biblical scholar Bentley, and he published several works as a fellow of Trinity before joining the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In particular, I look at Humphreys's MA publication, *The Apologeticks of the*

Learned Athenian Athenagoras (1714). I argue that Humphreys's linguistic training under the formidable Bentley ideally prepared him to vernacularise and thereby disseminate relatively obscure Greek apologetics for polemical ends. I show that this aim was in line with a broader emphasis in England at the time on rendering the views of early church figures accessible to a wide audience. Humphreys appears to have selected the Christian convert Athenagoras's treatise on bodily resurrection because he wanted to prove that the Greek fathers and modern experimental physiologists concurred against religious radicals that a plastic vegetable stamina, containing the rudiments of a body, could preserve the full human form between death and the eventual ascent to heaven. The example in this chapter casts light on the methods and ideas of an aspirational graduate but also establishes some of the core ways in which polemical battles contributed to a shift in the content of the curriculum, and, in turn, the generic choices of early-career authors.

The next chapter, 'Natural Philosophy: John Witty', turns to Witty, who attended St John's College, Cambridge in the early 1700s, before serving as a research assistant at the Greenwich Observatory. He also later became a priest in Norwich and a chaplain at St Vedast in London, but died prematurely in 1713. In this chapter, I concentrate on Witty's effort to put an end to the ongoing debate about the scientific viability of the creation account in Genesis in his *Essay Towards a Vindication of the Vulgar Exposition of the Mosaic History of the Creation of The World* (1705). This two-volume work was devised as a series of letters to a friend, a popular form in which to express polemical content. Focussing on and contextualising the first volume, I use it to suggest that natural philosophy teaching *c.*1700 had become highly eclectic, with a specific emphasis on the provisional nature of the knowledge gained by experimentation. By studying Witty's work in detail and comparing its claims to those of his opponent, Whiston, at the time Lucasian Professor of Mathematics in Cambridge, I argue that Witty's aim was to show that only a mathematician or natural philosopher who also had the expertise of a divine

could determine accurately the explanatory limitations of secondary causation (and thus when divine intervention in the natural was necessary). He also felt that failing to defend a literal reading of Genesis using whatever means were appropriate (modern science or otherwise) would open the door for deists and the generally sceptical to allegorise other biblical books where more harm could be done, and he specifically feared that the narrative of the Resurrection would eventually be called into question (as indeed it was several decades later in Woolston's *Six Discourses*).

The last chapter in Part 2, 'Sacred Propaedeutics: John Mill and James Hammond', examines the unstudied manuscript notes that James Hammond, at the time an MA student at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, took at the lectures delivered by Mill in the college chapel in the late 1690s. These notes reveal that Mill, who is famous for the critical edition of the Greek New Testament that he published in 1707, taught his students a text-critical approach to the Bible partially to make a polemical case for the ancient, patristic basis of *jure divino* episcopacy. Looking at Hammond's notes accordingly allows me to challenge the idea that eighteenth-century tutors encouraged their BA and MA students to detach textual interventions from wider cultural and religious ones. It also allows me to demonstrate that one of the greatest English scholars of the eighteenth century introduced an advanced mode of historical-philological criticism into his teaching to lend credence to a distinctly apologetic ideal and to train those whom he hoped would disseminate and defend his views. This chapter also powerfully illustrates that a landmark tome, long regarded as initiating the tradition of 'higher criticism', had its genesis in a pedagogic crucible.

The next part of the dissertation (Part 3) follows the same pattern as the previous one. Chapter 3.1, 'Classical Learning: James Merrick and George Costard', compares the distinctive approaches of two young Oxford scholars – Merrick and Costard – to textual editing and conjectural emendation. It shows that making emendations to scripture was generally only

deemed acceptable where there was manuscript evidence to support the intervention, unlike in the case of classical editing, where formal concerns were more significant. Costard matriculated at Wadham in 1726, obtained his MA in 1733, quickly became a fellow of his college, and later served as a University proctor. In the first part of this chapter, I focus on one of his most important early works, *Some Observations Tending to Illustrate the Book of Job* (1747), in which he made heavy use of comparative linguistics and etymologies between Hebrew, Arabic, and other oriental tongues to propose a naturalistic reading of the Resurrection supposedly prefigured in the text. As we will see, Costard somewhat boldly even justified the making of non-manuscript based conjectural emendations of scripture on the basis of these (sometimes dubious) etymological arguments. The second part of the chapter turns to Merrick, who was ten years Costard's junior, matriculating at Trinity College, Oxford, in 1736, obtaining his MA in 1742, and becoming a full fellow of the college in 1745. I focus on his 1739 and 1741 editions of *The Destruction of Troy*, a poem by a relatively obscure Greek poet and grammarian named Tryphiodorus, who lived in Panopolis (in modern-day Egypt) sometime between the third and fifth century AD. Merrick was just a BA student when he produced the 1739 English edition, and, in it, he compared a variety of Greek texts (including a number of manuscripts) as well as passages from scripture with a focus on grammar and style to justify his choice of words and phrases. To this end, he also offered various transhistorical comparisons between literary constructions and expressions, including from the writings of popular authors such as William Shakespeare and Pope. However, in his 1741 edition, Merrick went on to lay great stress on manuscripts as the proximate spur for emending his text, and, in his later writings and letters, he insisted that manuscript variants were necessary when emending scripture. Whereas Merrick's diligent progression from secular to sacred editing and respect for archival discoveries gained him widespread repute as a theologian, Costard forsook his bold early biblical-critical ventures for the history of astronomy, going on to help establish

the boundaries of a separate, secular field. In a way, their trajectories were diametrically opposed: Merrick moved from the secular to the sacred, whereas Costard moved from the sacred to the secular.

The next chapter, 'Natural Philosophy: Ralph Brockman and Benjamin Kennicott', concentrates on two young Oxford scholars who expressed ideas on moral theological topics during their undergraduate degrees at Oxford during the 1740s. Brockman, who was from a noble family, matriculated at St John's College, Oxford, in 1742, and went on to pursue a BD before embarking on a clerical career. For his part, Kennicott, whose father was the master of a charity school in Totnes, matriculated at Wadham in 1744 thanks to the generosity of some of his friends. He was granted a fellowship at Exeter College in 1747 and obtained his MA in 1750. Having completed his degrees, Kennicott was then made a canon of Christ Church (1750) and rector of Culham (1753), before being presented with the living of Menheniot in Cornwall. He spent the bulk of his academic career working on a new edition of the Old Testament (as discussed later) for which he collated scores of Hebrew manuscripts, and his efforts gained him international acclaim as a Hebraist and paleographer. Based on an analysis of Brockman's and Kennicott's writings, this chapter proposes that one of the greatest concerns for students – in this case two *undergraduates* – moving into the mid-eighteenth century was with determining the impact of new ideas about the natural world on 'old' historical-theological questions about divine intervention and the afterlife, often in the face of deistic claims to have extended what was explicable by the light of reason (as opposed to scripture). In the first case, I explore a manuscript letter from 1744 in which Brockman wrangles with the subversive implications of Locke's psychological ideas for the afterlife; in the second, I turn to Kennicott's *Two Dissertations* (1747) and his ambitious effort in this work, published as an undergraduate, to clarify the meaning of the phrase עֵץ הַחַיִּים ('Tree of Life') in Genesis 2.9 'by way of *Conjecture*'. Kennicott attempted to prove that the Hebrew עֵץ (or 'tree') really meant 'trees'

and thus sustenance in general, which allowed him to offer a naturalistic reading of the disputed passage without conceding ground to those, such as the Boyle Lecturer (and Samuel's younger brother) John Clarke, who held that Adam had been created mortal, rather than conditionally immortal. Kennicott's work, most generally, points to a struggle during the 1740s over where to draw the line between increasingly well-understood laws of nature and the dispensations of providence.

Lastly, 'Sacred Propaedeutics: John Chapman' turns to Chapman and his *Phlegon Examined Critically and Impartially* (1734), a response to the renegade divine Arthur Ashley Sykes's polemic on the eclipse at Christ's Passion that Chapman produced soon after obtaining his MA from King's College, Cambridge (in 1731), while a fellow of the college. The chapter argues that the polemical battles of the 1730s over how to study chronology helped to define the status of the textual scholar. Irked by Sykes's argument that the two events (i.e. the eclipse and Christ's Passion) did not in fact coincide, Chapman called upon a barrage of deeply scholarly late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century sources including the writings on Greek literary culture of Johann Albert Fabricius, William Cave, and Henry Dodwell (among numerous others) in an effort to bolster the testimonies of the church fathers and early church historians. Although some agreement was reached between Sykes and Chapman, the debate ultimately morphed into a controversy about the disciplinary status of history, with Chapman being among the most vocal defenders of a 'historical' (or qualitative) approach to chronology over an encroaching 'technical' (or mathematical) one, both of which were taught in the universities. The fact that Sykes, despite being an early advocate of Newton's and Whiston's more quantitative approaches to chronology, ended up in a protracted debate with Chapman over hermeneutics suggests that Chapman was partially successful. That is, even if it was unclear whether he had the stronger arguments, he shifted the debate to one about textual

interpretation, thus excavating a more defined space for literary expertise in an expanding system of knowledge.

By situating the aforementioned 'early career' contributions against a tapestry of printed and manuscript evidence, this thesis argues that young scholars working in the heightened anti-clerical atmosphere of the early eighteenth century, who were often writing under the implicit direction of more senior figures and the quiet force of patronage, contributed in exciting ways to the reconfiguration of knowledge domains, the renovation of academic genres, and the carving out of new scholarly identities. While they all undertook tasks (editing, translation, criticism, reconstruction, and more) and developed arguments that they hoped would constitute genuine intellectual contributions, the value of student ingenuity is particularly marked when it comes to the second generation of scholars, spanning the period 1720–1750. Humphreys and Witty both published when they were already graduates on topics broadly connected to their mentors' research, and they developed relatively modest arguments. By contrast, Merrick, Costard, and Kennicott all attempted to make bold claims that were at least semi-theological. These authors not only situated themselves within impressive intellectual genealogies but also actively foregrounded the originality of their interventions. Two factors were, I suggest, central to this subtle but important shift in the nature of student participation in intellectual life by the mid-century. The first was that the curricular structure came to lay greater stress on eclectic reading, philological study, and critical argumentation, which emboldened students to write more argumentatively. The second was that external pressures – specifically a spike in heterodox religious publications that demanded sophisticated confutation – had come to dominate their social context.

As the eighteenth century progressed, publishing works that simultaneously undermined a radical claim and contributed to knowledge of a given subject became an unofficial precondition for winning the attention of patrons and prestigious academic or clerical roles.

We will find that the pressure to engage earlier with theology, and even to publish, complicated the dynamic between teaching and research and impacted the disciplinary hierarchy that had long been used to justify how the higher educational process was organised. With its appraisal of the contexts, aims, and methods of a series of overlooked early-career productions, this thesis hopes to make a lasting contribution to understandings of how the universities adapted to, embraced, and shaped a vernacularising world.

1.6 Who Went to University?

Between 1650 and 1750, student enrollment fell at universities across Europe, with the two English institutions being hit particularly hard.[86] Numerous explanations for this change have been proposed. One of the boldest is that a 'slowdown in the religious competition that drove the expansion of higher education' in the seventeenth century resulted in a need for the universities to recalibrate their role in a more secular context, and their failure to do so quickly resulted in a drop in student numbers.[87] But confessional polemic did not cease in the eighteenth century, and clerical roles remained highly competitive.[88] As the Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, David Gregory, exclaimed around the beginning of the eighteenth century, 'the Church was overstocked'.[89] The idea that student enrolment numbers fell because the universities remained clerically orientated without sufficient religious competition is therefore inadequate.

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[86] V. Carpentier, 'Higher Education in Modern Europe', in J.L Rury and E.H Tamura (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Education* (Oxford, 2019), p. 263. For a slightly more nuanced argument about the severity of numerical decline, see W. Clarke, 'The Pursuit of the Prosopography of Science', in R. Porter (ed), *The Cambridge History of Science: Volume 4, Eighteenth-Century Science* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 215-6.
[87] Carpentier, 'Higher Education', p. 263.
[88] Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*, p. 37. Here it is noted that 'Laments about the "contempt" in which clergy were held, especially after the end of press censorship in 1695, made no impact on recruitment. Similarly the anticlericalism of the 1730s had no impact on numbers ordained'.
[89] D. Gregory, *David Gregory, Isaac Newton and Their Circle: Extracts from David Gregory's Memoranda 1677-1708*, ed. W.G. Hiscock (Michigan, 1937), p. 20. See also Christ Church, Oxford, Gregory MS 346, fo. 107r: David Gregory's Notebook from c. 1696-1708.

A more plausible explanation for the decline in student numbers is the newfound semi-legal status of Dissenting Academies, which drew some students away from Oxford and Cambridge from the 1660s onwards. There were obviously issues with the universities' allegiance-based systems, and specifically with the requirement at Oxford for students to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles upon matriculation, which pushed those from unconventional religious backgrounds to seek out an alternative education. But we need not assume, as one scholar has done, that 'a slowdown in the university expansion and the revival of other forms of higher education' stemmed from 'new demands for more secular, professional, and scientific education'.[90] Indeed, while the Dissenting Academies (and the more practically orientated Gresham College) could offer courses, they could not confer degrees, and thus any students looking to pursue careers in the non-theological professions of law and medicine still had to go to university. As obvious as it sounds, the Dissenting Academies mainly attracted those with a specific dissenting background (as opposed simply to those seeking out 'science'). They were also relatively temporary institutions, typically dependent upon the time and energy of a single tutor.[91] For this reason, though Dissenting Academies grew, they were never straightforward alternatives to the universities.

In terms of those who did attend university, it has often been said that across Europe, the eighteenth century witnessed an increase in the social standing of the average student, but a decline in the number of elite students 'bother[ing] to enter its doors'.[92] However, it should be noted that this trend was part of a broader social transformation that saw the growth of a middle or 'professional' class that had been non-existent or much smaller in the previous century. In the case of England, many of these young men from the middle ranks of society were still

[90] Carpentier, 'Higher Education', p. 263.
[91] Stewart, 'The Curriculum', p. 107.
[92] Stone, 'Size and Composition', pp. 3-5; Midgley, *University Life*, pp. ix-x; and Clarke, 'Pursuit of the Prosopography of Science', pp. 215-16. Here, Clarke summarises the idea that the universities were designed for 'the Anglican landowning gentry' and especially 'those seeking orders' (p. 216).

directed towards the universities in hopes that they would embark upon clerical careers, and the vast majority of graduates – 70 per cent of those from Oxford and 78 per cent from Cambridge – did indeed end up being ordained into the Church.[93] Moreover, the universities across Europe – the total number of which had swollen to 180 by the end of the eighteenth century – became slightly more 'confessionally closed', with the migration of students between institutions of different denominations being less common than it had been a century prior.[94] All in all, then, eighteenth-century Oxford and Cambridge had smaller, more English, and more Anglican student populations. With this said, a central argument of this dissertation is that declining student numbers by no means constitutes evidence of *intellectual* decline, and smaller numbers of students entering the universities year on year may even have been a factor in fostering more personal relationships between students and tutors, as well as a dynamic 'research' culture. It is telling, in this regard, that the Catholic scholar Pierre François Le Courayer remarked enviously in a 1733 oration at the Sheldonian, delivered after receiving an honorary doctorate from Oxford, that he found 'almost as many Masters, as the UNIVERSITY maintains Students and Fellows': an ideal environment for collegial collaboration between the two groups.[95]

When the numerical and supposed intellectual decline of the universities are linked, it is sometimes because the former is seen to have justified a reduction in scholarly investment, by which it is meant that the institutions purchased fewer books and that fewer chairs were established.[96] But, again, there is little evidence to support such an association, with the early eighteenth century in fact witnessing the foundation of a string of chairs, including prestigious

[93] Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*, p. 45. As regards the social standing of university students, it is noted on p. 39 that 'The social origins of the clergy reflect a broad cross section of the middle reaches of English society'. They tended to be among the poorer students who went to Oxford and Cambridge, but increasingly came from what was labelled the 'gentry'.
[94] Brockliss, *University of Oxford*, p. 133.
[95] P.F. le Courayer, *An Oration Spoken in the Theatre at Oxford: At the Publick Act, 1733* (London, 1734), p. 9.
[96] Stone, 'Size and Composition', p. 5.

professorships in botany, poetry, and chemistry. These, in turn, gave rise to new and exciting subject-specific lecture series. The period also saw huge private endowments, not least John Moore's bequest of 30,000 books to Cambridge in 1715, which formed the core of the impressive Royal Library. Equally underappreciated is the fact that university scholars of the period produced numerous ambitious scholarly tomes, which seem to have been overlooked either because of their linguistic profiles (such as being written in Hebrew or Greek) or because of an unwillingness among historians to stretch existing conceptual and structural frameworks so as to connect the works of eighteenth-century English academics to those of both early modernity and the European universities (see the next section). In short, a decline in student numbers continues to function as an excuse for not engaging with the intellectual resources and transformations of the eighteenth-century universities.

1.7 The International Scene

In studies of the European universities, historians have mostly focussed their attention on a handful of institutions. As one scholar recently put it, in 'the 18th century, only some of these [European universities] were centres of scholarship: Göttingen, Halle, Edinburgh, Leiden in the fields of medicine and philology, Jena from the 1780s. Oxford and Cambridge were certainly not'.[97] This narrative, according to which a couple of exceptional universities pioneered new forms of pedagogy and housed scholars who carried out internationally recognised research, has been prevalent for quite some time. In a 1906 study, for example, Friedrich Paulsen insisted that as the aforementioned German universities began to initiate modernising reforms in the early eighteenth century, 'obsolete, old-fashioned institutes' in England 'were looked down upon as behind the times, hardly more fitting than the schoolbook

[97] F.O. Solleveld, 'The Transformation of the Humanities: Ideals and Practices of Scholarship between Enlightenment and Romanticism, 1750-1850' (PhD Thesis, University of Radboud, 2018).

drills of youth'.[98] The present dissertation challenges this still pervasive sense that the 'border that mattered' in the eighteenth century was 'the one that divided Britain from the rest of Europe', and that the activities pursued in Oxford and Cambridge differed radically from, and were inferior to, those for which certain institutions on the continent are celebrated.[99] In so doing, it takes steps towards providing a more integrated story of knowledge transformation in the period.

One reason why historians have supposed that the English universities were less suited to Enlightenment intellectual culture than the universities of Göttingen, Halle, Edinburgh, and Leiden is because they are thought to have been less concerned with attracting 'star professors' who could pioneer new research in criticism and the natural sciences and thus lure in students from far and wide to their lectures. However, the stress in the extant historiography on celebrated names – particularly Herman Boerhaave, Albrecht von Haller, and Christian Wolff – has had a distorting effect, with historians taking the scholarly and pedagogical models of these figures as the benchmarks of a successful university rather than carefully studying the available evidence (in draft lectures, student notebooks, letters, and so on) to reconstruct how lesser-known tutors and students grappled with a spectrum of subjects including, but not limited to, those on which these famous names wrote.[100] Even if one accepts that pedagogy had to be 'critical', secular-historical, utilitarian, or experimental to be valuable, then the English universities still deserve a major reappraisal in light of the accomplishments of their European neighbours. To offer just one example, the Halle theologian Siegmund Jakob Baumgarten has been celebrated for enlisting students to help him with his major secular-historical undertakings and for encouraging them to put forth 'their own critical study of the sources'.[101] According to

[98] F. Paulsen, *Das deutsche Bildungswesen in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Leipzig, 1906), p. 77, cited in Josephson, Karlsohn, and Östling, 'The Humboldtian Tradition', p. 5.
[99] J.A. Harris, 'Introduction', in J.A. Harris (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2013), p. 6.
[100] G.A. Lindeboom, 'Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738): Teacher of All Europe', *JAMA*, 206/10 (1968).
[101] Carlsson, 'Johann Salomo Semler', p. 93.

one of his best-known students, the aforementioned Semler, studying hermeneutics under Baumgarten 'almost made us doubt our abilities, so difficult yet fruitful' was the task. Baumgarten notably began to teach his students Mill's 1707 New Testament not long after becoming a professor in 1730, in what has been deemed a relatively ground-breaking move.[102] But as noted already, Chapter 2.3 of this thesis will show that students in Oxford were lucky enough to encounter Mill's text-critical approach to the Bible from the man himself as early as the 1690s, stimulating them to interpret received biblical translations in light of manuscript variants and antiquarian findings at the very moment that such methods were beginning to gain serious international traction. The polemical clashes of the early eighteenth century, many of which were over biblical hermeneutics, only reinforced the sense among young English scholars that their research was at the cutting edge of textual-historical inquiry.[103] Historical theology is just one example, but much the same can be said for other fields, whether we take Gregory's lectures on Newtonian physics in the 1690s, Lowth's on Hebrew poetry in the 1740s, or those of the future Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge Thomas Rutherforth on natural law in the same decade.[104]

Particularly among younger scholars, there was also considerable interest in international scholarly developments, and, as I will highlight, some novices even made striking contributions to transnational research projects. In 2.1, for example, I show that Humphreys alongside John Walker, who studied for a BA at Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1710-1713 and became a fellow of the college in 1716, assisted Bentley with the transcription and collation of New

[102] Carlsson, 'Johann Salomo Semler', p. 307. For further evidence of textual scholars in Germany taking an interest in the fruits of Oxford erudition, see D. Levitin, 'European Scholarship on the Formation of the New Testament Canon, *c.*1700', in D. Levitin and I. Maclean (eds), *The World of Knowledge and the Classical Tradition in the Early Modern Age* (Leiden, 2021), p. 432. As Levitin shows, Pfaff hoped that German universities would model themselves on Oxbridge colleges.
[103] Chapman, *Eusebius*, pp. 344-5. Chapman describes a prerequisite for theological study as 'Depth in Languages and Criticism'.
[104] *Sacred Conjectures: The Context and Legacy of Robert Lowth and Jean Astruc*, ed. J. Jarick (London and New York, 2007) and G.L. McDowell, 'The Limits of Natural Law: Thomas Rutherforth and the American Legal Tradition', *The American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 37 (1992).

Testament manuscripts not only in Cambridge but also in Paris and Brussels. In the process, Walker spent a great deal of time with Benedictine scholars such as Charles de la Rue, while Humphreys was the subject of letters from the Swiss theologian and textual critic Johann Jakob Wettstein to Bentley. Even more impressively, Merrick, while still an undergraduate at Oxford, sustained correspondences with some of Europe's most famous classical scholars as he edited Tryphiodorus's poem. His correspondents included the German theologian and philologist Herman Samuel Reimarus, the Dutch scholar Abraham Gronovius, and the so-called 'father of palaeography', Bernard de Montfaucon. Later in the century, the older Costard also corresponded on Arabic astronomy with the acclaimed German orientalist Johann David Michaelis and the Dutch scholar Albert Schultens the Younger.[105]

Beyond such exchanges, there is ample evidence to show that eighteenth-century students and professors in England and on the continent were interested in similar themes and texts, and new periodicals only increased domestic appetites for leaned news from abroad.[106] The gradual decline of Latin as the European lingua franca and the corresponding growth of domestic reading publics did stimulate an inward turn among scholars, who were increasingly expected to focus on producing works of relevance to their own communities. However, there was still a good deal of engagement between English and European scholars of a more traditional variety, which mainly involved the translation of large scholarly editions or compilations into and out of Latin or from one vernacular to another. From 1740-1743, the French physician and scholar Antoine Birr, for instance, quickly expanded and republished a 1735 edition of Robert Stephanus's *Thesaurus linguae latinae* (originally published in 1537) that four young Cambridge graduates had produced. Similarly, Baumgarten's first 'venture into the realm of

[105] E. Kastelein, 'I shall find you quite an Englishman? Hendrik Albert Schultens (1749–1793) and Learning English as a Second Language in the Eighteenth Century' (PhD Thesis, University of Leiden, 2014), p. 56.
[106] For example, the Cambridge graduate-turned-medic, Samuel Jebb, published at the end of his *Bibliotheca Literaria* (1722-4) a list of 'The LABOURS of the LEARNED' from across the continent, which gave a vernacular reading public, including students, access to information about the latest pan-European developments. See S. Jebb, *Bibliotheca Literaria, being a Collection of Inscriptions, Medals, Dissertations, &c* (London, 1724).

secular history' – his *Algemeine Welthistorie* (1744) – was 'a thoroughly revised translation of a multi-volume collaborative work of Oxford and Cambridge scholars, *An Universal History from the earliest account of time to the present,* launched by George Sale in 1736'.[107] In a striking instance of mutual interest and respect, Baumgarten's edition was then retranslated into English in 1760.[108] Perhaps most famously, Michaelis, who is discussed more fully in 3.1, translated into German and augmented Lowth's pioneering Oxford lectures on Hebrew poetry. There was also a constant stream of translations of learned foreign texts (often by English professors) in mathematics and natural philosophy which students were encouraged to read. For example, the Lucasian Professor John Colson, who was a particularly eager translator, learnt Italian in order to translate Maria Gaetana Agnesi's *Instituzioni analitiche ad uso della gioventu italiana* (1748) – which was a brilliant introduction to Leonhard Euler's works, especially on infinitesimal calculus – adding a lengthy introduction.[109]

Evidence of direct interaction and republication are two key barometers of transnational scholarly engagement. A third involves taking a more comparative approach, asking how university teaching and research converged or diverged in different institutions. The first problem that besets anyone wishing to take such an approach is that histories of eighteenth-century knowledge have traditionally made much of the rationalist/empiricist distinction and mapped it onto the continental and British universities respectively, taking the debate between Newton and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz as a proxy. It has been said, for example, that in England Leibniz was 'little more than a name and a symbol – a threat to the honor of Newton

[107] Carlsson, 'Johann Salomo Semler', p. 92.
[108] S.J Baumgarten, *A Supplement to the English Universal History: Lately Published in London* (London, 1760), sig. A3v. The English translator happily comments that where Baumgarten improves upon observations in the original, he does so 'with the candour and modesty of a writer, who means the instruction of the public': far from the pedant historical theologian of caricature.
[109] Nicholas Saunderson, for example, introduced Abraham De Moivre's *Doctrine of Chances* (1711) to Cambridge, while Colson translated for students Pieter van Musschenbroek's *The Elements of Natural Philosophy: Chiefly Intended for the Use of Students in Universities* (London, 1744). In 1752, Colson went on to publish an English version of Jean-Antoine Nollet's *Lectures in Experimental Philosophy*. This is to provide just a few examples.

and to the national honor as well', while interest in his 'rationalist' and systematic ideas was sustained in Germany thanks to the fact that 'Conservative, academic philosophy never lost favor'.[110] Historians accordingly paint England as being overcome by a brand of Newtonian empiricism that left little room for alternative perspectives and especially those of continental 'metaphysicians'. Throughout this thesis, however, I underscore some major problems with assuming that a broad 'Newtonianism' took over English philosophical life and dragged the universities along with it. Not only do I show that several important English pedagogues (particularly Robert Greene at Clare Hall in Cambridge) taught ideas and approaches that look more 'rationalist' according to the traditional Kantian categories, but I also highlight that the majority of the natural philosophical texts taught in the English universities did not fit into a neat empiricist/rationalist dichotomy at all.[111]

Thanks to the careful, recent work of Mogens Lærke and Andrea Strazzoni respectively, it is now possible to make the case that Leibniz's thought was *less* 'rationalist' than once supposed, and that Newton's, in some cases, became *more* so in the hands of textbook authors. As Strazzoni has shown, this was certainly the case for one of the most popular 'Newtonian' textbooks used in Oxford and Cambridge in the mid-eighteenth century: the Leiden Philosophy Professor Willem Jacob 's Gravesande's *Introductio ad philosophiam, metaphysicam et logicam continens* (1736). As an interface between scholarship and pedagogy, textbooks became especially important intellectual resources, in which differing systems of knowledge could be spliced, refined, and suited to the shifting demands of learned and non-learned cultures. The melding of ideas that took place in eighteenth-century Oxford and Cambridge is particularly striking precisely because no single professor dominated the philosophical

[110] C. Wilson, 'The Reception of Leibniz in the Eighteenth Century', in N. Jolley (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 444.
[111] See M. Lærke, 'Leibniz, the Encyclopedia, and the Natural Order of Thinking', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 75/2 (2014) and A. Strazzoni, *Dutch Cartesianism and the Birth of Philosophy of Science: From Regius to 's Gravesande* (Berlin and Boston, 2019).

landscape, with the collegiate system ensuring asymmetries between teaching methods and materials, and, in turn, considerable diversity of thought.

Looking beyond philosophy textbooks only further reveals the overlap between the pedagogic and scholarly priorities of the English, German, Dutch, and French universities. After all, the universities in each of these countries shared a pressing need to deal effectively with the deist critique, even if it was especially pronounced in early eighteenth-century England.[112] An area of particularly strong crossover – which has begun to receive more attention recently – was in the philological study of texts. In his monumental *Academic Charisma* (2006), for example, Clark locates the 'seat of institutional change in the discipline of classical philology' and pinpoints the turn of the nineteenth century as the moment of academic rupture.[113] But it is in precisely this domain of classical philology that change had long been in the making, and even the large-scale, top-down research projects that Clark seizes upon as evidence of a seismic shift have earlier parallels in eighteenth-century pedagogy. This is exemplified by Merrick's efforts in the 1760s to enrol 'so many persons of genius and application' to 'furnish out materials for a far more copious and complete Lexicon of the [Greek] language, than the world ever yet saw'.[114] Merrick, we will see in 3.1, taught at least 60 students, some of whom were still at school, to produce the indexes required for this project in a streamlined vision of collaborative scholarship. By drawing attention to striking, hitherto unexplored evidence of large-scale projects designed to improve not only Greek editions but also the methods used in textual scholarship in general, I hope to replace narratives of radical paradigm shifts that rendered England's universities internationally irrelevant with a more accurate and exciting story of scholarly dynamism and emulation.

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[112] On the trans-national appeal (or threat) of deism in the eighteenth century, see J. van den Berg, 'The Development of Modern Deism', *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 71/4 (2019) and J. van den Berg, 'English Deism and Germany: The Thomas Morgan Controversy', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 59/1 (2008).
[113] Haugen, 'Academic Charisma', p. 200.
[114] Bodleian Dep. c. 254/2: Letter from Thomas Hunt to Merrick, 28 October 1764.

1.8 Bookish Habits

Two of the better-studied aspects of the history of the eighteenth-century universities are their presses and libraries, which is fitting since it is impossible to understand the transmission of knowledge in the period without a sense of how books were produced, acquired, and distributed. Equally, it is essential to bear in mind that publication was only the final stage of an intellectual journey (and, even then, only for some), and there was often a chasm between 'scholarly ideals and the ordinary everyday reality' of academic life that meant not all major projects were realised, just as some (such as Mill's New Testament) had fascinating but hidden pedagogic roots.[115] Especially when it came to university learning, students had long derived their information principally from the 'lecture, the spoken word, [and] notes prepared for such lectures', while their knowledge was examined orally.[116] Having said this, the syllabus changed quite dramatically over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from 'one based on hearing to one based on reading'. Further accelerating this process was the fact that a large number of texts were produced in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that it was deemed necessary for students to read.[117] Tellingly, in an eighteenth-century biography of his brother, the Cambridge Regius Professor of Greek John North, Roger North remarked that now 'publik lectures are not so necessary, or (perhaps) useful, as in Elder times, when first Instituted ~~they were~~, because the Intent of them of them [*sic*] was to supplye the want of Books, and now books are plenty, Lectures might better be spared, and the promiscuous use of books, come in

[115] McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, p. xiii. An indication of this fact comes in Joshua Barnes' *Anacreon Teius Poeta Lyricus* (Cambridge, 1705), which contains a list of 40 or so works that he hoped to publish but most of which never saw the light of day.
[116] McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, p. 33. The Lucasian lectures had to either be printed or deposited in the university library in MS for copying, which may explain why there are so many sets of notes on Saunderson's lectures. This suggests that there would have been a lot more lectures taking place, but that notes were either infrequently taken at such lectures, or that if notes were taken they were not preserved.
[117] E. Leedham-Green, 'University Libraries and Book-Sellers', in L. Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 3: 1400-1557* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 333.

y^e^ place of them'.[118] The early-career works studied in this thesis will, I hope, provide particularly interesting instances of how students adapted the knowledge and resources that they acquired at university – where spoken instruction was blended with active reading and commonplacing – to suit the constraints and opportunities of the printed page. In doing so, their ultimate hope was to cater to but also shape the demands of members of a culture who increasingly expected to find the answers to their questions in books.

Although the universities had historically prioritised oral communication, and London easily dominated the eighteenth-century print market, Oxford and Cambridge, with their numerous libraries and bookshops, were the foremost collectors and consumers of newly printed knowledge. Much has been written on the Oxford and Cambridge presses during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As is now well documented, the Oxford press flourished under John Fell's patronage during the Restoration (from the 1670s) and became a largely official (commercial) university operation by the 1690s.[119] For its part, the 'Cambridge press' came into being as a university-backed commercial enterprise slightly later, in the 1690s, owing in large part to the efforts of Bentley. Since both universities had ample supplies of textbooks thanks to the longstanding operations of local printers and booksellers (such as John Hayes), the job of these presses was mainly to print what we might now call 'research works' or 'secondary literature' (on classical literature, ancient and ecclesiastical history, oriental studies, mathematics, the natural sciences, and so on) as well as Bibles and prayer books, over the publication of which the universities had monopolies.[120] The university presses published almost no volumes on music, modern languages, imaginative prose and poetry, or on practical subjects such as architecture, painting, and agriculture, the last of which were widely held to

[118] British Library Add MS 32514, fo. 35v: The Life of John North.
[119] McKitterick puts it concisely: in the 1670s 'John Fell and Thomas Yate combined to set the Oxford press firmly within the tradition of learned presses that could be traced back to the fifteenth century' (*History of Cambridge University Press*, p. 45). See also W. Poole, *John Fell's New Year Books, 1666-1686* (Oxford, 2018).
[120] McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, p. 29.

be 'more properly of Mechanical Consideration'.[121] But beyond these broad thematic emphases, the contributors to the *History of Oxford University Press* (2013) all suggest that the varying skills of both scholars and printers – as well as broader intellectual and social factors – meant that the range of subjects represented in the university presses' publications remained broad throughout the eighteenth century. If one wanted to find evidence of vernacular 'paper warfare', then one would probably have to look to London print shops, which flourished thanks to the ongoing controversies of the period. The university presses, by contrast, tended to publish grander works of scholarship, and their output, though a strong barometer of the concerns and ambitions of the institutions, does not necessarily offer the best sense of the pace at which intellectual tastes (even among academics) actually changed.

The university presses were not the only outlets for academics, but they were among the most prestigious, partly because the ambitious books that they produced had an appeal beyond English shores. Books printed at the Sheldonian were described in *Le Grand Dictionnaire* in 1737, for instance, as 'magnificent editions […] which for their beauty and accuracy do not yield to any press in Europe'.[122] It was with the Oxford press that two figures who feature in this thesis, Mill and Kennicott, published their very important and influential editions of the New and Old Testament respectively. However, the printing of the latter was in fact the result of a 'liberal subscription from the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin', as well as numerous bishops, clergymen (both Anglican and dissenting), noblemen, and other 'encouragers of literature'.[123] As the dedications and long lists of named individuals at the start of a number of works studied in this thesis betray, the subscription model – according to which a book's printing was funded by individual pre-purchases – had become even more important than the delegate financing model – according to which the Delegates of the Press

[121] T. Baker, *Reflections upon Learning* (London, 1699), sig. A6r.
[122] I. Gadd, citing *Le Grand Dictionnaire*, vol. 7, in 'Introduction', in I. Gadd (ed), *The History of Oxford University Press: Volume I: Beginnings to 1780* (Oxford, 2013), p. 6.
[123] Cunningham, *History of England*, p. 19.

commissioned a work and the university funded it – for the university presses during the eighteenth century.[124] Merrick's *Destruction of Troy* (1739) was one of the more remarkable subscription-funded works, attracting several hundred backers from across the country, including many members of the secular gentry. It is also notable that this mode of financing enabled Kennicott to publish his *Two Dissertations* as an undergraduate, which was 'universally applauded'.[125] As Kennicott proudly noted in a long, heartfelt dedication to his subscribers, it was they who had 'placed me in this Theatre of Learning' and were thus 'entitled, by the strongest claim, to the Labours as well as the Acknowledgements of my Life'.[126] These two examples make it particularly clear that printing by subscription did not undermine the possibilities for erudite publication but simply changed the dynamics of the publication process. The upside was that a young, inexperienced scholar could get published without the wholehearted backing of his university as long as he could gather together enough subscribers to fund his work. The downside was that he may have felt some pressure to appeal to (and satisfy) those who had provided him with financial assistance, and thus end up prioritising style over substance. This dynamic only further precipitated the erosion of boundaries between institutional scholarship and public (literary) culture.

Although the university presses achieved a great deal when it came to publishing sophisticated works in (or partially in) the learned languages, they did lag behind London and foreign printers during the eighteenth century when it came to some more specialist areas. Cambridge scholars, in particular, looked to London printers for certain tasks, and it was here, for example, that the engravings were printed for *Marmor Sandvicense* (1743) by the eminent Greek scholar at St. John's, Cambridge, John Taylor. The problem that the university presses

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[124] J. Feather, 'A Learned Press in a Commercial World', in I. Gadd (ed), *History of Oxford University Press: Volume I: Beginnings to 1780* (Oxford, 2013), p. 257.
[125] Cunningham, *History of England*, p. 19.
[126] B. Kennicott, *Two Dissertations: The First on the Tree of Life in Paradise, with Some Observations on the Creation and Fall of Man; the Second on the Oblations of Cain and Abel* (Oxford, 1747), pp. v-vi.

faced when it came to printing images was not wholly resolved until the mid-nineteenth century, following the advent of lithography in Germary at the very end of the eighteenth century.[127] Associates of the university presses had, moreover, sometimes complained of a 'tension between learning and commerce' that resulted in constant, and sometimes acerbic, interactions with commercial booksellers.[128] But, as we will see, at least some of the publications that booksellers funded on behalf of academics *were* commercially successful, and particular scholars (such as Waterland) worked tirelessly to ensure that even the thorniest of doctrinal polemics appealed beyond specialist university readerships.[129] Especially after *c*.1730, the Cambridge press appears to have recognised the magnitude of lay interest in scholarly debate, and its emphasis accordingly tilted towards a more domestic audience, which did not so much mean unscholarly as 'vernacular'.[130] A notable example of a short and popular but still learned work that the Oxford press published in this period is Nathaniel Forster's *Reflections on the Natural Foundation of the High Antiquity of Government, Arts, and Sciences in Egypt* (1743), which evolved out of his BD thesis, and attempted to dispel 'fables' about the ancient land while establishing a 'Natural History of Egypt' that explained its culture with reference to its unique geography.[131] Some of the early career works studied in Part 3 of this dissertation, such as those by Chapman, were similarly manifestations of this move towards fairly technical *vernacular* scholarship, even though plenty of other works – such as Thomas Mangey's Greek edition of Philo (1742) – continued to have an international impact but were probably too abstruse for the majority of lay readers.

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[127] McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, p. 24.
[128] Gadd, 'Introduction', p. 8.
[129] See also Latham, 'Clergy and Print', esp. pp. 116-25.
[130] McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, pp. 41-3.
[131] N. Forster, *Reflections on the Natural Foundation of the High Antiquity of Government, Arts, and Sciences in Egypt* (Oxford, 1743), p. 2. This text has recently been described as 'one of the most intriguingly experimental Egyptological texts of the early eighteenth century' (see R.J.W. Mills, 'Egyptomania and Religion in James Burnett, Lord Monboddo's "History of Man"', *History of European Ideas*, 47/1 (2021), p. 126).

If the presses were outlets for scholarship, the university and college libraries were inlets, with the Copyright Agreement of 1610 meaning that the Bodleian was presented with a copy of every new publication in England, thus serving academics with ample, up-to-date reading material. As Elizabeth Leedham-Green has pointed out, 'it was in the institutional libraries that the standard texts, the embodiment of the received curriculum, accumulated'.[132] Although Leedham-Green notes that the private collections of dons or wealthy students can tell us more than the collections housed in university libraries about the kinds of texts that particular tutors taught or pupils read, they do not offer the same sweeping overview of established knowledge and how it changed in a given period. The university libraries, not unlike college ones, also received a steady flow of donations, gifts, and benefactions, which included many rare and precious books and manuscripts as well as a great deal of conventional wisdom contained in large format textbooks.[133]

While large, unusual, and expensive books would have usually been consulted via the university or college library (the latter of which were generally closed to undergraduate students), cheaper print had become widely accessible by *c*.1690, so students could also buy their own books. Most of the newer classic titles – such as Ralph Cudworth's *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678) or Robert Boyle's *Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Receiv'd Notion of Nature* (1686) – would have been either borrowed from tutors and peers, bought from university-based booksellers, or acquired in London bookshops, many of which actually sold books that even more efficient Dutch printers produced and distributed. The aforementioned 'classic titles' were, like the works of Boyle and Cudworth, increasingly English books dating from the late seventeenth century. But we must not overlook the highly international nature of eighteenth-century 'textbooks' and standard classical editions, with each academic subject

[132] Leedham-Green, 'University Libraries', p. 316.
[133] K. Jensen, 'Text-books in the Universities: The Evidence from the Books', in L. Hellinga and J.B Trapp (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 3: 1400-1557* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 354-7.

continuing to have at its core texts of pan-European repute and standing. One thinks here of everything from Bernhardus Varenius's *Geographia Generalis* (1650) and Pierre Gassendi's *Syntagma Philosophicum* (1658) to Samuel Pufendorf's *De Officio Hominis* (1672) and Lambert Bos's *Ellipses Graecae* (1713).[134] By revealing where learning in the English universities overlapped with, but also diverged from, that in major European ones, this thesis seeks to substitute common narratives of English parochialism, exceptionalism, and stagnation with ones of unified, or at least cross-pollinating, academic standards.

As regards books and students' access to them, it is finally worth stressing, in a broader social sense, that the eighteenth century was a time when the number of books on the market continually swelled. Indeed, by the middle of the century it was apparently so easy for young men from middling backgrounds to get their hands on books that one father warned his son to 'Beware of the Bibliomanie', which, the father feared, had the classic characteristics of a youth-fuelled speculative bubble.[135] The aforementioned Humphreys also noted soon after graduating from Trinity that a 'Multiplicity of Books is the Rock in Learning, which terrifies all who are just embarqued in their Studies'.[136] Tutors were likewise fearful that 'we should have more Learning, had we fewer Books', to quote Thomas Baker's *Reflections Upon Learning* (1699), with Jenkin further bemoaning in 1709 that thanks to the proliferation of 'Abstracts, Novelles, *and* Bibliotheques, *Men can set up for universal Knowledge*' without taking pains to learn '*exactly any one Art or Science*'.[137] The sheer number of books available to students in their

[134] For lecturers on Pufendorf at Oxford, see C. Wordsworth, *Scholae Academicae: Some Account of the Studies at the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1877), p. 13. Pufendorf's first text to be published in Cambridge was his *Elementa Jurisprudentiae* in 1672. William Stukeley records being taught Pufendorf's *De Officio* as a first-year BA in 1704 (see W. Stukeley, *Family Memoirs of the Rev. William Stukeley*, ed. W.C Lukis (3 vols, London, 1882), i, p. 21).

[135] D. Allen, 'Book-Collecting and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 45 (2015).

[136] D. Humphreys, *A Supplement to Antiquity Explained, and Represented in Sculptures* (London, 1725), i, sig. A1r.

[137] Baker, *Reflections upon Learning*, p. A7r and Jenkin, *Remarks on Some Books*, sig. A2r. For the 'too much to know' narrative, see A. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven, 2010); R. Yeo, 'A Solution to the Multitude of Books: Ephraim Chambers's "Cyclopaedia" (1728) as

native tongue meant that they generally spent less time reading books in the learned languages, and, reflective of this, academic commonplace books from the period are predominantly composed in English.[138] The combination of a newfound reliance on shortcuts to learning (as bibliotheques were thought to be) and the growing use of English in academic pedagogy was widely supposed to have resulted in a slowdown in the production of 'scholarship' (abstruse and often professional matters for academics, divines, or learned courtiers to settle): depth of insight was a major sacrifice at the altar of alleged intellectual progress. For this, the blame rested not only with journalists (such as Pierre Bayle) who *created* the encyclopaedias and 'bibliotheques' but also with the scholars who mined them for information. Despite the existence of these shortcuts, what Shaftesbury labelled 'The frightful Aspect' of becoming a scholar – or the terror of having to become book-learned – only seemed to worsen over the period covered in this dissertation, as the abstracts and bibliotheques were often comment-worthy in their own right and thus only added to the store of resources that one needed to master in order to count as 'learned'. To quote Baker again, 'Learning is already become so Voluminous, that it begins to sink under its own weight, Books crowd in daily and are heap'd upon Books, and by the Mulitude of them, both distract our Minds, and discourage our Endeavors'.[139] It would be ironic if historians of the period let the very same heaps of books that terrified eighteenth-century scholars terrify us, to the detriment of our understanding.

1.9 Implications

"The Best Book in the Universe"', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 64/1 (2003); and V. Keller, *Knowledge and the Public Interest, 1575-1725* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 24-5.

[138] For the wider turn towards English at this time, see T.P Miller, 'The Rhetoric of Belles Lettres: The Political Context of the Eighteenth-Century Transition from Classical to Modern Cultural Studies', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 23/2 (1993), pp. 1-4. Miller does, however, enforce the outdated idea that Oxford and Cambridge remained strongholds of Latin and Greek learning as the Dissenting Academies and universities in Scotland and America began to teach English. I hope to show throughout this dissertation that this was not the case.

[139] Baker, *Reflections Upon Learning*, sigs. A6r-v.

As will become apparent in the case studies that follow, university pedagogy, as manifested in 'early career' publications, was both far more topical and dynamic than most extant studies suggest. By viewing the contributions of a range of young scholars – some of whom were successful, and others less so – against a broader backdrop of intellectual and social transformation in the period *c.*1690–1750, it will become possible to appreciate that the English universities were core contributors to some of the most enduring intellectual developments of the early Enlightenment. As opposed to running only along social or political lines, we will see that the set-piece debates between the 'heterodox' and 'orthodox' within which so many academics became embroiled were very often fought over highly specific topics. By paying close attention to factors such as a contribution's timing, an author's career stage, generic particularities, collaborative contexts, and of course to the ideas themselves, my hope is to go beyond depicting the early Enlightenment as a social tug of war between 'liberals' and 'conservatives', and rather to reveal that it was fought over ways of knowing. Instead of caving into the unrelenting demands of deists and freethinkers, the young scholars in this thesis, and the intellectuals under whom they learned their trade, showed great willingness to alter ways of knowing both nature and texts, with the ultimate goal of preserving a unified wheel of learning that was capable of picking up the very best of the new.

Part 2
Parties or Rivals for Fame, 1690-1720

2.1 Classical Learning: David Humphreys

I. Introduction

In 1714, an MA student of Trinity College, Cambridge, decided to publish. This student was Humphreys, the son of a London leather-seller who, having graduated from Christ's Hospital School, spent the rest of his academic life at this famous college. Humphreys was admitted on a school exhibition in 1707/8, became a scholar in 1709, took his MA between 1711 and 1715, was made a 'provisional' fellow in 1716, and took his BD and DD degrees during the 1720s. What is most interesting for our purposes is that, at a young age, Humphreys published not a short poem or drama (as might have been expected from a student), but a thick scholarly octavo titled *The Apologeticks of the Learned Athenian Philosopher Athenagoras*. This ambitious volume includes, in English translation, the two extant treatises by the second-century philosopher and Christian convert Athenagoras of Athens titled *πρεσβεία* (more commonly known by its Latin title, *Legatio pro Christianis*) and *De resurrectione*; fragments attributed to Justin Martyr, Josephus, and Methodius (with the last two being printed in Greek as an appendix) from the manuscripts of the recently deceased Johann Ernst Grabe; and two of Humphreys's own dissertations. Humphreys's first dissertation concerned Jewish attitudes towards bodily resurrection, while the second was on the life and writings of Athenagoras.[140]

[140] The fragment of 'Josephus' is in Bodleian MS Barocci 26 (a ninth-century collection titled 'Canons of Church Councils'). Also see D. Humphreys, *The Apologeticks of the Learned Athenian Philosopher Athenagoras* (London, 1714), p. 302. The Barocci collection was housed in the Bodleian from 1629. The manuscript fragment that Humphreys published consisted of a Greek transcription, with a Latin translation, of a work on the state of the dead ascribed to Josephus that Grabe wanted to prove, contra Whiston, was not part of an authentic and complete 'Apostolical Constitutions'. See G. Hickes, *Some Instances of the Defects and Omissions in Mr Whiston's Collection of Testimonies from the Scriptures and the Fathers… to Which is Prefixed a Discourse Wherein Some Account is Given of Dr. Grabe and his Manuscripts* (London, 1712).

The present chapter is principally concerned with Humphreys's work, which is an excellent example of how students of the period creatively fused ancient and modern ideas for polemical ends. As I show, Humphreys transformed Athenagoras into a proto-Leeuwenhoekian advocate of 'plastic' vegetable stamina – which were commonly conceived of as indestructible fibre bundles containing a vegetable or animal in miniature – in an effort to salvage Athenagoras's defence of bodily resurrection from modern critics such as William Coward and Henry Layton. At the same time, Humphreys's translations and two treatises offer unparalleled insights into how a university education (particularly in the classics and translation) could be swiftly and effectively adapted to make hard-to-access and often-abstruse Greek texts widely available at a time when the sentiments within them were deemed to be highly valuable and relevant.

Humphreys, like many of his near contemporaries, was the product of a thoroughgoing education in Greek and Latin poetry and prose. As an MA student, he would also have been set on a course of patristic-heavy divinity learning, which typically began with the ancient apologists. To understand and appreciate where Humphreys was coming from when he published his *Apologeticks*, then, we will first look at how Greek and Latin (as well as Hebrew) literature was taught in the early 1700s, and how and when young scholars turned to theology and particularly ancient apologetics. Having done so, we will turn to Humphreys's Trinity College context as well as the content and reception of his first publication. By bringing to light the activities of this little-known student, we will begin to see that pedagogy and publication were designed to interact in such a way as to benefit maximally society and scholarship.

II. Teaching the Classics

Much of the teaching of the classics *c.*1700 followed the same pattern of the previous century, with Greek and especially Latin poetry and prose being read, recited, and translated not only

in the grammar schools but also throughout the BA.[141] Great stress was laid on style and texts were often grouped accordingly into theoretical 'rules' and practical 'examples'. Haywood, for instance, recommended Horace's *Ars poetica*, Aristotle's *Poetics*, and the critical appraisals of several Renaissance luminaries for the 'rules of poetry'.[142] When it came to the 'rules' for 'Classicks Prose', he directed them to Latin texts such as Tully's *De oratore*, and Greek writers including Xenophon, Demosthenes, and Isocrates.[143] Two years later, Waterland added that first-years should begin with 'easy' Greek prose works such as Phaedrus's Fables and Xenophontis's *De Cyri Institutione* before moving onto Hesiod, Theocritus, Isocrates, and Demosthenes in their second year. The point was to provide students with the necessary linguistic skills as well as a general knowledge of Greek history and antiquities so that they could navigate more obscure, idiosyncratic, anonymous, or altogether difficult texts. As late as 1756, Thomas Zouch was provided with a very similar set of authors and instructions to those that Haywood and Waterland recommended upon entering Trinity as a pensioner, being told to 'Read with critical accuracy the following books in the course of the ensuing year, exclusive of all due attention to your Lectures: Demosthenes, and Select Orations of Cicero; Select Tragedies of Sophocles, and Euripides; Juvenal and Persius. Horace will be always in your hands'.[144] Unlike on the continent, where students typically attended lectures and took down 'dictations', students in England had long been urged to read the classics in private and deliver oral 'declamations' on them, a loosely applied statutory requirement for BAs that emphasised

[141] For the basic classical texts studied in both the schools and universities, see P. Quarrie, 'The Christ Church Collections Books', in L.S. Sutherland and L.G. Mitchell (eds), *The History of the University of Oxford, Vol. V: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford 1986).
[142] MS Rawl. D. 40, fos. 1r-2v. These Renaissance books were J.C. Scaliger's *Poetics* (1561), Isaac Casaubon's *De satyrica Graecorum poesi & Romanorum satira* (1605), and Daniel Heinsius's *De satyra Horatiana* (1612). For the former, see K. Haugen 'Aristotle My Beloved: Poetry, Diagnosis, and the Dreams of Julius Caesar Scaliger', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60 (2007).
[143] MS Rawl. D. 40, fos. 1r-2v.
[144] F. Wrangham, 'Memoir', *The Works of the Rev. Thomas Zouch, D.D* (2 vols, York, 1820), i, p. xxviii and xxix.

speech and gesture and was thought of as secular preparation for future preachers and lawyers.[145]

But the early eighteenth century did also see a new practice emerge. This was, as mentioned in the introduction, the 'theme', which was a short essay that usually connected an ancient author with a transhistorical, moral subject. In his *Two Letters of Advice* (1672), the Camden Professor of Ancient History, Dodwell, declared that students should 'exercise frequently your discursive faculty in *Theses* upon some *difficult Question* which you may meet with in your studies, and especially in such as are *intricate* and *subtle*'. Haywood, for his part, considered writing themes in the first year to be an ideal way for students to learn to 'express our thoughts to others' and to 'understand the nature of a Composition in Generall'.[146] Suggesting the flexibility of this model, Greene asked his Cambridge pupils in 1707 (the year that Humphreys entered Trinity) to deliver 'accidental Exercises' orally in the more technical subjects of 'Classicks, History, Chronology, &c'.[147] With such encouragement to contextualise and explicate textual fragments (and the institutional sanction to do so publicly in places such as the Sheldonian) both orally and in writing, it is little wonder that students became increasingly keen to disseminate their ideas on 'some difficult *Question*' in print when relevant issues arose.

Developing thematic essays or speeches was a core part of the BA in Humphreys's day, but so was testing critical and grammatical accuracy, usually through translations. Although students had always been tasked with translating passages into and out of Latin and Greek, a growing emphasis was placed on grammatical and contextual exactitude in the era of Bentley. Bentley himself even introduced a novel system at Trinity for electing BA finalists to college fellowships based on their ability to close read ancient texts. One candidate, Richard

[145] For the wider use of declamations, see Wordsworth, *Scholae Academicae*, pp. 88-9.
[146] MS Rawl. D. 40, fo. 3r.
[147] Greene, *Enkyklopaideia*, p. 2.

Cumberland, described the test in the 1740s under Bentley's successor as college Master, the mathematician Robert Smith, as a rather daunting experience. After being grilled on intricate details about the ancient empires and the reasons for their decline, Cumberland was given 'a sheet of paper written through in Greek with his [Smith's] own hand, which he ordered me to turn either into Latin or English, and I was shewn into a room containing nothing but a table furnished with materials for writing'. The passage, which Cumberland conjectured was by Polybius, 'was maliciously enough selected in point of construction and also of character, for he [Smith] had scrawled it out in a puzzling kind of hand with abbreviations of his own devising'.[148] Such an examination gives a sense of the literary-historical knowledge and the grammatical (as well as paleographical) skills expected of an ambitious undergraduate such as Humphreys.

Equally important for understanding Humphreys's *Apologeticks* is the emphasis placed on patristic learning in the early eighteenth-century MA (with patristics generally having been reserved for the BD or DD in centuries prior). It is now well established that the Restoration, especially in Oxford, saw a massive growth of interest in patristic and especially ante-Nicene literature, which was not only thought to offer a guide to the Bible but also to serve confessional purposes.[149] Yet it is much less appreciated that, by the eighteenth century, it was frequently young college fellows (or even students such as Humphreys) who were tasked with illuminating the status of fundamental doctrines and ecclesiastical structures in the early church and finding effective ways to link the claims in ancient apologetics with modern predicaments. These early-career scholars played an outsized role when it came to *translating* the early church fathers and apologists in particular, often using little-known manuscripts. Even more striking

[148] Wordsworth, *Scholae Academicae*, p. 345.
[149] See J.-L. Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford, 2016); J.-L. Quantin, 'Erudition and Orthodoxy: John Fell and Patristic Scholarship in Restoration Oxford', *Erudition and the Republic of Letters*, 1 (2016); W. Poole, 'Learned Press: Divinity', in I. Gadd (ed), *History of Oxford University Press: Volume I: Beginnings to 1780* (Oxford, 2013); and Poole, *John Fell's New Year Books*.

is the extent to which their work was designed to intervene in high-profile vernacular controversies.

In terms of the shifting pedagogical landscape, while it has already been noted that for most of the early modern period the study of theology was reserved for graduates, this division was partially eroded during the first half of the eighteenth century. One of the bodies of theological literature that some undergraduates and most MA students studied consisted of the ancient apologies for Christianity. Dodwell offered a particularly clear rationale in his *Two Letters* for the early placement of the apologies, writing that 'the *Apologeticks* against the *Heathens*' will 'advance your *Humanity studies,* and will shew you their design in *Divinity;* and will be best intelligible by you as least depending on Ecclesiastical learning, and are most accurately penn'd as being designed against the *Graecian wisedom,* and the *saecular Philosophy*'.[150] In other words, studying the apologies during the MA bridged secular studies (especially the history of philosophy) and theological ones. Later tutors and divines reiterated Dodwell's counsel. The theologian William Wotton suggested that the apologists follow only the study of scripture itself and come before the other '*Apostolici*', while William Edmundson, a tutor of St. John's College, Cambridge, copied down entire lists of authors from Dodwell's *Two Letters* for his students *c.* 1730, beginning with those 'y^{t} flourish'd before y^{e} Conversion of y^{e} Roman Empire to X^{ty}'.[151] He clarified that they should read 'All [of] Origen' along with non-Christians such as 'Philo and Josephus joynd of y^{e} N.T.'. These are precisely the authors whom, as we will see, Humphreys either edited (on behalf of Bentley) or engaged with as he contextualised ancient Greek and Jewish attitudes towards bodily resurrection.

Though not an ante-Nicene father, the works of St. Chrysostom, especially *De sacerdotio*, were also regularly suggested to young divines because of this author's outspoken denunciation

[150] H. Dodwell, *Two Letters of Advice* (Dublin, 1672), pp. 278-9.
[151] W. Wotton, *Some Thoughts Concerning a Proper Method of Studying Divinity* (London, 1734), pp. 11-12 and the commonplace book (or 'Directions') of the fellow and tutor of St. John's College, Oxford, William Edmundson at MS Rawl. D. 214, fo. 82r.

of abuses of church authority and his plain, commanding style.[152] This was the only non-secular work that students who obtained one of the five prestigious scholarships established by Elizabeth Hastings at Queen's in 1739 were asked to translate in the fourth year of their BA.[153] It was also the text that Styan Thirlby edited in 1712 as a young fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, and which John Wesley's father, Samuel, recommended that his son 'digest' and 'Master' as a student of Christ Church in 1725.[154] In terms of the interest of early-career divines in early church apologetics, it is also notable that Thirlby's Chrysostom edition, while it included some fresh manuscript collations as well as the *Oratio Apologetica pro Fuga* of Gregory of Nazianzus, essentially repackaged the 1710 edition of another young divine, John Hughes, a recently deceased fellow of the same college who graduated MA in 1706.[155] Young scholars of the early 1700s supposed that editing a patristic text was an especially effective way to showcase their linguistic skills and ideological soundness simultaneously.

Perhaps even more than in the case of editions, translating ancient Christian texts into English, as in the case of Humphreys's *Apologeticks*, tended to constitute an explicitly apologetic-polemical move. Although not a particularly young man at the time, William Reeves, a fellow of King's College, Cambridge, who graduated MA in 1692, published his first work, *The Apologies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix, in Defence of the Christian Religion*, in 1709, after seven years of work. As Reeves pointed out, translating these apologies was supposed to release them from '*under Lock and Key*', having himself become aware that without such translation, they were as useful as 'a sundial in a grave'.[156] This reveals

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[152] Wotton, *Some Thoughts*, pp. 10-12. Wotton celebrated Chrysostom for his 'constant' comments on the New Testament, the fact that he 'seldom allegorizes', and his skilful reduction of 'all Things to practice by those moral Discourses'.
[153] G. Poulson, *Beverlac; or Antiquities and History of the Town of Beverley* (London, 1829), pp. 461-7.
[154] T.A. Campbell, 'John Wesley's Conceptions and Uses of Christian Antiquity' (PhD Thesis, North Texas, 1984), p. 63.
[155] Thirlby went on to edit, like Ashton, Justin Martyr in 1722. For his edition, see J. Chrysostom, *Joannis Chrysostomi de Sacerdotio libri VI. Graece & Latine quibus dissertationes quasdam præmisit contra librum falsò inscriptum*, ed. S. Thirlby (Cambridge, 1712). See also J. Hughes, *Sancti patris nostri Joannis Chrysostomi Archi-episcopi Constantinopolitani de sacerdotio. Libri VI* (Cambridge, 1710).
[156] W. Reeves, *The Apologies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix* (2 vols, London, 1716), i, p. 3.

the extraordinary awareness among young divines that harnessing the power of vernacularity would greatly extend their audience. Hoping to topple a perceived Catholic monopoly over the fathers, Reeves wanted to convince Englishmen with limited Greek and Latin that the early Christian writers really did prove the historical legitimacy of episcopacy and a barrage of other Church of England dogmas. With an ever-expanding cohort of controversial writers using the English language and patristic literature to fight doctrinal and ecclesiological battles, it was no longer viable to restrict editions to the learned tongues. This sentiment also comes through in Hickes's urgent diagnosis that '*MSS in the Learned languages are kept in some Libraries, hoarded up like the Treasures of* Misers*, never to be seen or known*'.[157] Both Hickes and Reeves realised that young divines in particular were among the best poised to interpret the relevant texts, and the latter's edition therefore had a secondary aim: to 'infuse an Ambitious Warmth in the Younger Clergy of entring upon the Study of Divinity, with the Scriptures in Conjunction with the Fathers'.[158]

Reeves evidently succeeded in his plan to instil in young divines an 'Ambitious Warmth' towards the fathers. For example, Joseph Betty, who obtained his MA from Exeter College in 1720, published at the Sheldonian in 1722 an apologetic piece by Tertullian, the *Prescription Against Hereticks*, to which he added *The Apologeticks of St. Theophilus*. As Betty announced in this work, his inspiration was 'the Learned and Ingenious Mr Reeve's *Preliminary Discourse*' with its 'fine Taste of the *Primitive* Writers' and sense of duty to the public.[159] Betty intended to demonstrate, for a wide audience, that the manner in which early Christians spread their message and enforced discipline in the 'Age of *Communicatory Letters*' ensured a

[157] Hickes, *Some Instances of the Defects*, p. xxv.
[158] Reeves, *The Apologies*, ii, p. lxxix. See B. Young, 'Theology in the Church of England', in J. Gregory (ed), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume II: Establishment and Empire, 1662-1829* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 401-6.
[159] J. Betty, *Tertullian's Prescription Against Hereticks; and the Apologeticks of St. Theophilus Bishop of Antioch to Autolycus* (Oxford, 1722), p. 86.

uniformity of doctrine and practice that, in turn, proved the apostolic succession.[160] When it came to Betty's dissertation on St. Theophilus, however, he made some more incisive theological arguments of his own. Taking Cave's impressive biography of St. Theophilus in his *Primitive Christianity* (1673) as a starting point, and then boldly locating flaws in the conclusions of Dodwell – one of the great Restoration patristic scholars – Betty tried to re-date the life of this ancient Christian.[161] While criticising the most advanced scholarship on ancient theology was typically the sole prerogative of senior theologians, we will see in turning to Humphreys that this duty was gradually extended to those en route to an MA.

Betty's blend of erudition and confessionalised polemic, coupled with a Humphreys-esque desire to proliferate manuscript material, can be seen in a final early eighteenth-century example of vernacular patristic publishing by a recent graduate: the aforementioned Haywood of St. John's College, Oxford, who received a DD in 1714. Haywood's chosen text was the *Spiritual Homilies* of Macarius the Egyptian, preserved as Bodleian MS Baroccianus 213.[162] In his parallel English-Greek edition, Haywood made an important intervention into Macarian scholarship by establishing, for the first time, that a supposed 'epistle' by the author that was thought to be lost was actually no more than another name for the fifty homilies. Haywood – like Reeves, Betty, Hickes, and Humphreys – was also acutely aware of the importance of his edition's vernacularity, highlighting that it would especially help 'the poorer sort of the Country Clergy' (who lacked proper Greek or access to manuscripts) to appreciate the ecumenical nature of the early church.[163] The young scholars mentioned had different

[160] Betty, *Tertullian's Prescription*, p. 11.
[161] Betty, *Tertullian's Prescription*, pp. 92-100.
[162] Haywood's name is not in the book, which is written by a 'Presbyter of the church of England'. J.A. Fabricius mentioned him as the translator, as did nineteenth-century historians. He also composed a 'Church history of Alexandria' in Latin around 1708 (see Haywood to Ockley on 4 August 1720 at British Library Add MS 15911, fo. 38r). Further evidence for Haywood's authorship comes from the fact that his close friend James Keith mentioned the need for an edition of Macarius's *Spiritual Homilies* in a 1718 letter to Valantine Nalson, suggesting it was a topic of discussion in his circles (see J. Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1822), pp. 409-11).
[163] Macarius of Egypt, *Primitive Morality: or, The Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian*, ed. [T. Haywood] (London, 1721), pp. 1-2.

polemical and scholarly agendas, but they shared a pressing sense that erudition needed to be expressed in the vernacular.

III. Student Scholarship in Humphreys's Trinity

Humphreys, as noted, intervened in the domain of vernacular patristics during his MA with his *Apologeticks*: an ambitious compilation text that included fresh manuscript material. In addition to the general pedagogic context just discussed, Humphrey's connection to Bentley, which, as we will see, propelled him into a highly scholarly world from an early age, is an important backdrop for understanding his tremendous early ambitions. Humphreys, who had received a school exhibition, was evidently impressive enough linguistically to be selected as an unofficial assistant to Bentley, where he learnt to edit and translate Greek materials. Along with Bentley, the aforementioned Hickes was another of Humphrey's mentors. Hickes was a notorious advocate of polemical early church and Anglo-Saxon scholarship whom Humphreys described as '*that great Encourager of the Study and Knowledge of Christian Antiquity*'.[164] It was Hickes who backed the young scholar's decision to put Athenagoras's treatises to press and supplied him with the manuscript fragments attributed to Josephus and Methodius. How Humphreys and Hickes met is unclear, but they had several mutual friends, and it is quite possible that Hickes sought out information from Bentley on promising men under his care. Hickes (like Bentley) had been close to the Königsberg-born Septuagint editor, Grabe, and became his literary executor in 1711.[165] The collection that Hickes inherited from Grabe not only contained the fragments assigned to Josephus and Methodius, but also a set of texts by Origen, Bodleian Adversaria Grabii MSS 9750-4, that Humphreys borrowed around the time that he was working on Athenagoras as he helped Bentley with editorial projects.[166]

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[164] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, sig. A8v.
[165] For Grabe's collection and the debates surrounding it, see Hickes, *Some Instances of the Defects.*
[166] Humphreys did not return this manuscript until 1726. On 9 November 1726, the librarian, Joseph Bowles, drafted a letter to Humphreys recalling the Grabe MSS (see Bodleian MS Add. c. 78, fo. 26r).

That Hickes gave Humphreys leave to publish these fragments, and to use Adversaria Grabii MSS 9750-4, makes sense when we consider the tasks that Bentley had set Humphreys. The nature of these tasks can be gleaned from Bentley's correspondence with Wettstein, for example, who informed Bentley on 19 September 1716 that he had recently laid eyes upon a 'manuscript of the Greek chains [i.e. anthologies of commentaries by church fathers on the Bible], in which Origen's comments on the Psalms are word for word as Mr. Humphrey wanted them to give to the public' (though Humphreys never did publish these commentaries).[167] Meanwhile, de la Rue regularly mentioned Humphreys's scholarship on Origen in letters to Bentley from this time.[168] As we learn from one such letter, 'Doctus Humphreys', Bentley, and another Trinity MA student, Walker, helped de la Rue with his edition of Origen's *Opera Omnia*, which partially involved relaying information about the *Περί Ευχής* or 'Treatise on Prayer', of which the only extant manuscript was in Trinity College Library.[169] Humphreys had clearly developed a reputation as a keen assistant to Bentley with skills in Greek and a strong grasp of pre-Nicene Christianity.

Walker appears to have outshone even Humphreys, however. He supplied the Cambridge classicist John Davies with emendations for his acclaimed edition of Cicero's *De natura deorum* (published in 1718) when he was just a BA student, revealing a 'proficiency in critical learning highly creditable to so young a man'.[170] Bentley was also responsible for initiating Walker 'in the *arcana* of Greek and Latin manuscripts, and the proper methods of examining them'; unsurprisingly, Walker was granted a college fellowship in 1716. Over the ensuing years, he worked tirelessly as Bentley's 'zealous agent' and made such impressive collations

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[167] J.H. Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley, D.D., Master of Trinity College* (2 vols, London, 1830), ii, p. 521: 'il me montra un manuscript des chaînes grecques, dans lesquelles les commentaires d'Origene sur les Pseaumes sont mot pour mot comme Monsieur Humphrey les a voula donner au public' (the translation is Monk's).
[168] Monk, *Life of Richard Bentley,* ii, pp. 533-5.
[169] R. Bentley, *The Correspondence of Richard Bentley, D.D*, ed. J.H. Monk (2 vols, Cambridge, 1842), ii, pp. 546-7 and E.G. Jay, *Origen's Treatise on Prayer: Translation and Notes with an Account of the Practice and Doctrine of Prayer* (Eugene, 2010), pp. 73-5. The only extant manuscript was that previously owned by the college fellow Herbert Thorndike.
[170] Monk, *Life of Richard Bentley*, ii, p. 431.

of New Testament manuscripts in Paris, St. Maur, and Brussels that he was promised half of the profits of Bentley's Greek New Testament, which, unfortunately for him, never materialised.[171]

Given the links that Bentley and Walker formed with de la Rue and the Benedictines at St. Maur, especially Montfaucon, it will come as no shock that Humphreys's next undertaking was a popular five-volume English translation of Montfaucon's heavily illustrated French masterpiece, *L'antiquité expliquée, et représentèe en figures* (1719-24). In this work, published as a still young fellow of Trinity, Humphreys insisted that books and artefacts, the two major classes of 'antiquities', were equally necessary to 'compleat Erudition': a particularly striking emphasis on material culture.[172] Yet even with the growing pressure to incorporate coins, statues, and inscriptions into historical and philological scholarship, Humphreys did not use these materials himself but again opted, in his own antiquarian way, to translate into the vernacular learned material that he imagined would be useful to young, historically-minded divines. As he put it, the modern 'Multiplicity of Books is the Rock in Learning, which terrifies all who are just embarqued in their Studies', and so it was important to select those productions, whether ancient or modern, Greek or French, that would help to keep the toolkits of budding divines fully up-to-date.[173]

While much has been written about Bentley's major literary contributions, and on the politicised climate of Trinity under his mastership, his role as a tutor and mentor is still underappreciated.[174] By considering the contexts in which Humphreys produced his student

[171] Monk, *Life of Richard Bentley*, ii, pp. 434-5 and S. Johnson, *Life of Pope*, ed. P. Peterson (London, 1899), ii, p. 116.
[172] Humphreys, *Supplement to Antiquity*, sig. A4v.
[173] Humphreys, *Supplement to Antiquity*, sig. A1r.
[174] But do see Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, which mentions Walker several times in passing (p. 62, 106, 129, 176, 188, and 194). For Bentley's interest in the education of BA students, see a letter from Bentley to Mr Leeds (1703/4) about the education of Mr Wright's son at Cambridge and his preparation for being a divine. Bentley says that the boy has 'abilities not only in Greek and Latin, but Philosophy, Geography, Geometry, History, &c so that he is every way well qualified for the place he now desires'. See the transcript of Bentley's letter in *The Diary (1709-1727) of Edward Rud, Sometime Fellow of Trinity* College, ed. H.R Luard (Cambridge, 1860), p. 40.

publications, however, we can appreciate just how much Bentley and his contemporaries spurred graduates to contribute to large-scale, pan-European editing projects, which should help to refine the still-dominant assessment that this famous critic had a great 'incapacity for working with others'.[175] Bentley's encouragement of the young might have indeed extended to those pursuing similar projects on the continent, with Johann Friedrich Burg using a manuscript version of Origen's *De oratione* 'lodged in the Library of *Trinity* College at *Cambridge*' for his BD thesis at the University of Leipzig in 1711, which he presumably consulted on his trip to England in 1710 (when Bentley was the college master).[176] As Michel de La Roche, author of the *Memoirs of Literature*, surmised in a striking appraisal of early eighteenth-century student-led patristic scholarship, Burg's confutation of Whiston's interpretation of the fathers on the Holy Ghost was 'one of the best Pieces, that ever was written upon that Subject' despite its author being '*a very young Man*'.[177]

By the early eighteenth century, the best graduate students in England, Germany, and beyond were expected to turn rapidly from the classical and philosophical literature that still dominated their undergraduate and early MA studies to the textual remains of early Christianity for the purpose of settling contemporary religious controversies. There was a fear among academics that vernacular battles over core aspects of the Christian faith such as those that Whiston spearheaded would result in widespread confusion, as Whiston was apt to mis-authenticate works and to explicate the words of early church figures in such a way as to align them with their own doctrinal or ecclesiological views. Having manuscripts, and the linguistic and palaeographical skills needed to decode them, was a major advantage in this context. But

[175] J.P.C. Roach, 'The University of Cambridge: The Age of Newton and Bentley (1660-1800)', in J.P.C. Roach (ed.) *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely: Volume 3, the City and University of Cambridge* (London, 1959).
[176] J.F. Burg, *Dissertatio Theologica de Spiritus Sancti […] contra V. Cl. Guil. Whistonum* (Leipzig, 1711) and D. Meyer, 'Burg, Johann Friedrich', in *Religion Past and Present* (Brill, 2011).
[177] M. de La Roche, 'A Theological Dissertation against Mr. Whiston, shewing, that the HOLY GHOST ought to be worshipp'd and glorified with the Father and the Son', *Memoirs of Literature: Containing a Weekly Account of the State of Learning, both at Home and Abroad* (4 vols, London, 1712), ii, p. 151.

the likes of Whiston also claimed to be using the most sophisticated evidence. For this reason, students who were knee-deep in books and had the time to pore over fragmentary evidence had to show that such scholarship was only *pseudo*-scholarship, and that they were better placed to forge the church's early history.

IV. The Apologetics of Athenagoras

One ancient writer who seemed especially useful in the midst of eighteenth-century controversies over ancient attitudes towards the immortality of the soul and bodily resurrection was Athenagoras. Known as the first Christian to dedicate a work to the topic of resurrection, Athenagoras was celebrated for his robust, philosophical arguments that displayed a mastery of pagan learning. The first, and only, English translation of Athenagoras's *De resurrectione* before Humphreys's was by the now little-known Henrician cleric Richard Porder (d. 1547), published posthumously in 1573 with the polemical aim of warding off the 'swarmes of atheistes and epicures' who were supposedly infesting the country.[178] The *Legatio pro Christianis*, however, had never been translated into English, existing only in the Greek-Latin Oxford editions of Fell (1682) and Edward Dechair (1706). Humphreys was, in other words, the first to make the *Legatio* (or 'Apology') available to English readers who did not have ancient languages. Like most students of his day, Humphreys understood 'compleat Erudition' as learning directed towards theological ends, and he was naturally aware of the apologetic potential of those early Christian writings that had allowed this fledgling religion to triumph over heathenism after a rocky first couple of centuries.

Humphreys (like Reeves) dedicated his work to Nelson. The fact that Humphreys produced his *Apologeticks* as an MA student pursuing scholarly or clerical employment, and

[178] R. Porder, *The Most Notable and Excellent Discourse of the Christian Philosopher Athenagoras, as Touching the Resurrection of the Dead* (London, 1573).

that he secured the position of secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, with which Nelson was well-connected, shortly after its publication, means that it was probably conceived partially as part of a quest for patronage.[179] But Humphreys also had a broader scholarly agenda. In particular, while he carefully avoided naming targets, his *Apologeticks* sought to combat the views of two controversial authors who were infamous in England by the time that Humphreys began his studies: Layton and Coward. According to numerous publications that Layton produced between 1693 and 1704, physiology revealed (and scripture confirmed) that the soul was merely a function of the body, while Coward had argued in *Second Thoughts Concerning Human Soul* (1702) that the *material* soul would rest with the body in the grave until the universal resurrection, with the idea of an immaterial soul being a heathen invention that the early fathers proliferated through 'Pious Ignorance'.[180] Humphreys summoned Athenagoras's treatises, along with the fragments of Justin Martyr, Josephus, and Methodius, to show that even if the soul and body were a hylomorphic entity that acted (and, to some extent, 'thought') in unison, this had to mean that they were *both* immortal, and he claimed that Athenagoras made this argument on the basis of the existence of a 'plastic power' in nature (though Humphreys, we will see, was determined to show that this was not just a primitive Christian idea but also one held by the generality of ancient Jews as well as modern natural philosophers).

It is not difficult to see how Humphreys extracted such a principle from Athenagoras's *De resurrectione*, for he noted that Athenagoras was 'a Platonist' who attributed 'a vital Energy, a Plastick Power to the Body', even as, like Plato, he argued for a 'low kind of sluggish Life in all Matter'.[181] After citing a lengthy passage from Cudworth's *True Intellectual System*, Humphreys felt emboldened to conclude that the belief in a plastic power was an 'almost

[179] Campbell, 'John Wesley's Conceptions', p. 65.
[180] W. Coward, *Second Thoughts Concerning Human Soul* (London, 1702), sig. A2v.
[181] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, pp. 131-3.

general Notion of all Philosophers', excepting the 'Atheistic, old Atomick' ones. As he argued, if matter was not 'endued with this Plastick Power', then God would have 'continually to exert Himself in a miraculous Manner, and form every Plants, Herb, Mineral, or Animal Body, inasmuch as no verbal Command can be conceived sufficient for the Production of Things, without some Efficient Cause'.[182] Based on the principle of efficiency, in other words, Humphreys concluded that God was far more likely to endow matter with a plastic power than to form every individual natural body Himself. In what followed, however, Humphreys was clear to distinguish his (Athenagoran) notion of 'internal Energy' as the 'lowest kind of Life' from the idea of 'Mr. *Lock*' who 'seems to assert, that Matter may even be capable of being endued with a Power of Thinking'.[183] Humphreys's distinction between Athenagoras's notion of a living, plastic matter 'without any Knowledge or Consciousness of its own' and Locke's thinking matter was an important one, since Leibniz and others had seen Locke's postulation of thinking matter as what ultimately allowed Coward to reject an immaterial, rational soul.[184] For Humphreys, Athenagoras's notion that a 'Plastick or Vegetative' power existed in nature endowed human bodies with a kind of '*low* Life' or 'Tendancy to some Actions', and this was, according to Humphreys, crucial to Athenagoras's moral argument for bodily resurrection.[185] That is, this 'low life' or plastic power in the body meant that it too (along with the soul) was 'an Agent, in all good or evil Actions', and so it would be unjust if the soul alone was punished or rewarded for the actions to which the body and soul both contributed.[186]

Even more impressive than Humphrey's engagement with up-to-date writing on matter and mind was his argument that most of the ancient Jews also adhered to this notion of a plastic or vegetative power. He made this case by appealing not only to the 'great *Jewish* Doctor'

[182] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 134.
[183] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 141 and pp. 134-5.
[184] On Leibniz and Coward, see A. Thomson, *Bodies of Thought* (Oxford, 2008), esp. pp. 97-120.
[185] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 141.
[186] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 141.

Maimonides, who chastised those who read Old Testament and cabbalistic allegories literally, but also Menasseh Ben Israel, who offered a compelling causal account of bodily resurrection in his *De resurrectione mortuorum* (1636).[187] Translating from Ben Israel, Humphreys recorded that it was 'certainly the Opinion of the Ancients, that the Resurrection would be effected by the means of a certain Dew rained from Heaven of a Plastick Vertue'.[188] To offer scriptural evidence, Humphreys latched onto a reference to 'dew' in Isaiah 26.19, and surmised that 'the *Jews* examining what second Causes, what Means might be instrumental in the Raising of the Dead' had 'allegorically shadow'd it out, by saying, God would rain down a Dew of a Plastick Power, which should impregnate the Earth, and vivify the dead Bodies, or their Particles'.[189] In arguing that ancient Jews embraced the notion of a dew or plastic power, Humphreys was likely drawing on Cudworth, whom Humphreys cites at intervals, and who referred to Thales's notion of water as a creative principal that perhaps expressed 'the Force of the Hebrew word *Merachepheth*', which, according to Cudworth, implied among the Jews 'an Understanding Prolifical Goodness, Forming and Hatching the Corporeal World into this perfection; or else a Plastick Power, subordinate to it'.

Humphreys still had to explain, however, how this plastic power could resuscitate a decomposing body to its full glory. Further combining scriptural exegesis and recent natural philosophical developments, Humphreys maintained that the ancient Jews believed in an 'incorruptible *Bone Luz*': a small, tenacious bone that was thought to withstand corruption and allow the body to regenerate after death.[190] Curiously, he believed that the argument of the

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[187] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 68. For Ben Israel on the resurrection, see S. Rauschenbach, *Judaism for Christians: Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657)* (London, 2019), pp. 73-6. For the wider English backdrop to such debates, see M. Pfeffer, 'The Pentateuch and Immortality in England and the Dutch Republic: The Confessionalization of a Claim', in D. Levitin and I. Maclean (eds), *The World of Knowledge and the Classical Tradition in the Early Modern Age* (Leiden, 2021), pp. 164-75.
[188] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 15.
[189] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, pp. 14-5. He made a similar parallel at pp. 22-3 when he argued, again citing Ben Israel, that 'my author' (i.e Athenagoras) and some of the ancient Jews agree that since the soul and body act in unison, they must be '*again united*' to be rewarded or punished together.
[190] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 43.

ancient Jews regarding the bone luz and its animation by a plastic dew was the 'same in Substance, as the Opinion of the Moderns about the *Stamina*, and very nearly resembled the eternal Atome of *Leibnitz*'. The latter is of course a reference to the famously enigmatic monads of Leibniz that were, at a basic level, thought of as indivisible, simple, and perceptive entities.[191] Yet Humphreys was also alerting his readers to the fact that the Dutch microscopist Antonie van Leeuwenhoek had used 'certain and demonstrative Experiments' to show the existence of an indestructible stamina or seed. As Humphreys understood it, Leeuwenhoek had illustrated that a plant is essentially a stamina that 'is only swelled up, and filled by a Quantity of extraneous Fluids and fleshy Substance', while in animals 'the Blood, the Flesh, and all the grosser Parts, be only consider'd as Cloathing to the finer *Stamina*'.[192] He could conclude from this that the stamina, like the '*bone luz*', would not assimilate itself to earthy matter and would contain all of the necessary information to enable the body to resurrect after death. In holding this view, he was far from alone, for George Garden, in a 1685 paper in the *Philosophical Transactions*, inferred that the stamina was 'formed *ab Origine Mundi*'.[193] From all of this, Humphreys was convinced that there was firmer evidence than ever for accepting not just that bodily resurrection was possible, but that the ancient Jews had possessed a vague knowledge of its underlying natural principles, which scientists of his own day were only beginning to understand experimentally.[194]

As much as Humphreys's historical alignment of the views of Jews and Christians on the issue of bodily resurrection was directed at modern authors who, like the ancient Sadducees, questioned the revealed status of such doctrines, there is also a pedagogical explanation for his

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[191] D. Garber, 'Leibniz: Physics and Philosophy', in N. Jolley (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz* (Cambridge, 1994).
[192] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 101.
[193] G. Garden, 'A Discourse Concerning the Modern Theory of Generation', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 17/192 (London, 1686), pp. 476-7. See generally E. Reichman and F. Rosner, 'The bone called Luz', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 51 (1996).
[194] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 28 and pp. 101-2.

approach. That is, just as reading ancient and modern natural-philosophical ideas was standard in eighteenth-century BA studies, delving into Hebrew texts was typical of early MA studies. Towards the end of his *Advice to a Young Student*, written in the early 1700s, Waterland thus recommended, with reference to Hebrew, that unless 'you have learn'd something of it in School', it would be best to 'defer the learning of it till you have taken a *Degree*; for then you may lay aside all other Studies for a few Months, till you make yourself Master of it'.[195] In Oxford, Haywood gave similar advice, noting in his unpublished 'Some Short Hints at the Method of Studying in the University' of 1704 that MA students should step up their work on Hebrew and other oriental tongues using texts such as Brian Walton's *Introductio ad linguas orientales* (1655) and the Cambridge Arabist Edmund Castell's *Lexicon Heptaglotton* (1669).[196] Following such advice, Humphreys probably spent the early 1710s intensively reading Hebrew sources, perhaps under the guidance of Simon Ockley, a Jesus College fellow and Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic, with whom Humphreys shared several mutual friends (including Hickes). Ockley had recently translated an Italian work by the Venetian Jew Leon of Modena into English as *A History of the Present State of the Jews* (1707), and was convinced that '*Hebrew* learning is necessary for us Christians'.[197] Taken together, these factors suggest why Humphreys was so keen to prove the utility of his Hebrew learning, and why he even made the odd comparison between Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Syriac versions of scripture.[198]

As Humphreys became more linguistically advanced, there may well have been specialised teaching at Trinity College on not just the 'Ancient Apologists both Gr. & Latin' but also the

[195] D. Waterland, *Advice to a Young Student. With a Method of Study for the Four First Years* (London, 1730), p. 33. This work was first drawn up very early in the century.
[196] Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 40, fo. 9r.
[197] See a letter from 15 March 1717 prefixed to W. Wotton, *Miscellaneous Discourses Upon the Traditions and Usages of the Scribes* (London, 1718).
[198] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 45.

Jewish books that these early Christians had confuted.[199] In particular, Humphreys probably interacted with (and may well have been tutored by) the Regius Professor of Hebrew, Henry Sike, whom Bentley helped bring to Cambridge from Utrecht in 1705, and who served as a fellow and tutor at Trinity until his death in 1712.[200] Sike was apparently 'the sort of scholar who publishes little but who puts his considerable learning at the disposal of his pupils and colleagues without reserve', which makes it all the more likely that the young Humphreys would have consulted him.[201] A number of Humphreys's Trinity contemporaries also took a keen interest in Jewish books, as is evident from, for example, a 1715 letter concerning Old Testament apocrypha by the future Bishop of Exeter, Nicholas Clagett. At the end of a short list of early apologists, including Athenagoras, and the scholarship on them, Clagett specified that 'Wagenselius has published the principal pieces written by the Jews against the X^n religion with a confutation of them, and Aug. Pfeifferius has written Exercitationes upon the Talmud, Targumim & Alcoran exposing the weakness of them'.[202] As suggested by his reference to the output of two famous German scholars – the Hebraist Johann Christoph Wagenseil and the Lutheran orientalist August Pfeiffer – Humphreys's fellow student was as up-to-date with continental historical scholarship as Humphreys himself.

Humphreys was probably acquainted with Clagett, and, like his Trinity contemporary, and indeed some of the greatest seventeenth-century Christian Hebraists, he was perfectly capable of coupling his discussion of similarities between Jewish and Christian beliefs with sometimes unflattering accounts of Jewish sects whose ideas were incompatible with Christianity. He ridiculed, for instance, the prediction of the Sadducees that a 'Temporal *Messiah*' would

[199] For a reading list for students during the 'Baccalaureatus Intervallum', see MS Rawl. D. 214, fos. 82r-4v.
[200] L. Forster, 'Henry Sike of Bremen (1669-1712) Regius Professor of Hebrew and Fellow of Trinity', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 10/3 (1993), pp. 263-4.
[201] See A. Hamilton, 'Henry Sike (1668-1712), A German Orientalist in Holland and England', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 84/1 (2021), pp. 231-41.
[202] British Library Add MS 32556, fo. 95r: Nicholas Clagett to Cox Macro on 6 September 1715.

eventually herald an age of heightened carnal pleasure.[203] On the whole, however, Humphreys's outlook on Jewish ideas and Rabbinical scholarship was markedly positive. Not only did he quote at length from the Mishnah, Talmud, and Hebrew Old Testament commentaries, but he also tended to foreground the outlooks of the 'great Body of the Jews, and especially the most intelligent' rather than the beliefs of specific sects. In this regard, Humphreys's *Apologeticks* may well have been an indirect response to the Oxford divine and Regius Professor of Greek, Humphrey Hody, whose *The Resurrection of the (Same) Body Asserted* (1694) emphasised the views of those Jewish sects that *did* reject bodily resurrection in order to conclude that the Rabbis have made 'generally very Idle and Impertinent Observations' on the Old Testament.[204] The principal inspiration for Humphreys's more optimistic and accumulative approach to Rabbinical (and patristic) literature was none other than Ben Israel, whom he praised for having 'collected the more celebrated Proofs of the Rabbins' in much the same way that his own *Apologeticks* assembled underappreciated Greek sources alongside extracts from Jewish books that he had translated into English.[205]

Although Humphreys was clearly conscious of the need to carry out original manuscript work – as is clear from the footnotes to the Greek appendixes of his *Apologeticks* – as a relatively inexperienced scholar he did not feel confident opining on technical questions about, say, authorship and chronology. In the case of a 'Josephus' fragment titled 'Of the Cause of the Universe Against Plato', for example, Humphreys left it an open question as to whether it was by Flavius Josephus, a Christian who went by the same surname, or another author entirely, admitting that '*very little can be affirmed with Certainty*' on the matter.[206] This particular

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[203] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, pp. 35-6.
[204] H. Hody, *The Resurrection of the (Same) Body Asserted, from the Traditions of the Heathens, the Ancient Jews, and the Primitive Church* (London, 1694), p. 97.
[205] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 63.
[206] The uncertainty was understandable. The tract, attributed to Hippolytus, is very similar to the 'Discourse on Hades' that Photius and modern scholars like Whiston assigned to Josephus. See W. Whiston, *An Extract Out of Josephus's Exhortation to the Greeks, Concerning Hades, and the Resurrection of the Dead* (London, 1737). It was, however, reckoned by many scholars by the early 1700s that the 'Josephus' fragment was by Hippolytus,

admission of ignorance can, however, be read as a subtle dig at Whiston, who had confidently used this fragment, which was contained within the Barocci 'Canons of Church Councils', in his notorious quest to authenticate the heretical 'Apostolical Constitutions'.[207] But Humphreys was generally timid about embroiling himself in complex scholarly debates. At another point in the *Apologeticks*, for example, he passed off a disagreement between Dodwell and Bayle on the timing of the oral delivery and intended audience of Athenagoras's *Legatio* as 'nothing material'.[208]

Humphreys's effort to present his chosen material without getting his teeth into historical details about authorship and chronology can give his volume a slightly miscellaneous feel, but one question to which he *did* dedicate himself was that of transmission. In fact, it was important for him not only to justify bodily resurrection on natural-philosophical grounds, but also to undermine the supposition of certain moderns (such as Coward) that the Jews adopted their 'Christianising' tendencies '*second-hand from the* Greek Philosophers'.[209] As Humphreys pointed out, the Jews could have just as easily acquired their philosophical notions from the Egyptians, with whom they always held a '*Correspondence and Traffick*', and he was sure to clarify that 'the *Jews* meant something more by a Resurrection than a Μετεμψύχωσις, or Transmigration of the Soul into another Body' so strongly associated with '*Plato* and *Pythagoras*'.[210] Humphreys also argued that the Athenians would not have mocked St Paul when he preached on Christ's resurrection if Paul had merely discussed transmigration, since his audience would have been well-acquainted with Platonism. He therefore conjectured that Paul had defended 'the Resurrection of the same Body' and contended, in general, that the

since this was the line that William Cave took when he discussed Hippolytus and Josephus in his *Historia Literaria*.

[207] Hickes, *Some Instances of the Defects*, p. xxiii.

[208] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, pp. 108-9.

[209] There was clearly interest in narratives about transmission from the Jews, out of Egypt, to Christians at this time in Cambridge. Leonard Chappelow, who republished John Spencer's *De Legibus* in 1727, for example, was Humphreys's contemporary, taking his MA at St. John's College in 1716.

[210] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, sig. A7r and p. 44.

ancient Jews of Philo's day meant something more than transmigration when they discussed resurrection.[211] The notion that Athenagoras, a Platonically orientated Athenian, defended bodily resurrection was indispensable to his framing of this argument.

Whereas Humphreys sought to distinguish between the Jewish and Platonic notions of resurrection, he aligned their conceptions of style and method, arguing, for instance, that the style of modern Jewish 'doctors' such as Maimonides had a distinct 'Parallel to either *Plato* or *Cicero*'. To Humphreys's mind, the learned Rabbis offered an 'Allegorical Key' to the sacred Jewish books in much the same way that ancient apologists such as Athenagoras drew out the philosophical meaning of scripture in their attempt to convert heathens to Christianity. Just as Humphreys believed that it was necessary to come to terms with the views of the heretical Sadducees against whom so much Rabbinical scholarship was directed, he urged his readers to 'take a View of the Theology and prevailing Opinions of those Times' when Athenagoras lived in order to understand how he effectively appealed to non-believers.[212] Humphreys was aware that 'the Success of the Gospel hath happily made his [Athenagoras's] Arguments unnecessary', but he felt that Athenagoras's strategies were still highly relevant insofar as they demonstrated the power of 'humane Learning in the *Christian*'s Mouth'. As this suggests, the 'general scholar', as one who mastered the secular arts and sciences before proceeding to theology, remained very much an ideal for Humphreys, even if his decision to publish a theological work during his MA, which was a period traditionally dedicated to the arts, had a hand in eroding this longstanding educational model.

V. Humphreys, Francis Lee, and the 'Canon'

[211] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 44.
[212] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 3 and pp. 109-11.

Despite the fact that it addresses a theological topic, Humphreys's heavy reliance on existing scholarship and his deferential tone can give his *Apologeticks* a youthful feel.[213] It nonetheless received a favourable write-up in the *Memoirs of Literature* and caught the eye of two notable thinkers: the maverick London physician, scholar, and non-juror, Francis Lee, and the biblical historian Thomas Browne. Lee, for his part, lauded and indeed leaned on Humphreys's *Apologeticks* in a dissertation '*Of the* DYSTOCIA in *Women*' published in 1722, where he argued that Eve's creation from the rib of Adam could have been a *scientific* account, given that 'the latter *Jews* tell us of a spermatic Bone, which they name *Luz*' that is, like semen, 'a medullary (and consequently osseous) Substance'.[214] He also expressed an appreciation for Humphreys's recognition of overlaps between the ideas of Jews and Christians, which he deemed to bolster a narrative that underlay one of his own most ambitious research undertakings (to which I will return shortly): to establish the authorship and date of production for the mysterious and apocryphal II Esdras. As for Browne, his *The Evangelical History of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (1787) praised Humphreys's attempt to offer a scriptural basis for the resurrection through experimental physiology as most impressive.[215]

Like Humphreys, Lee was a friend of Nelson, and was similarly engaged in editing some of Grabe's manuscripts following his death in 1711. As the editor of the second volume of Grabe's famous Septuagint, Lee even described himself in a letter to his close friend Ockley as knowing 'the secret of his [Grabe's] soul'.[216] It was in Lee's much-anticipated, posthumously published *An Epistolary Discourse, Concerning the Books of Ezra* (1722), however, that he referred to the *Apologeticks* of his 'learned Friend Mr. David Humphreys'.[217]

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[213] Roach, 'Age of Newton and Bentley' and L.S Sutherland, 'The Curriculum', in L.S. Sutherland and L.G Mitchell (eds), *The History of the University of Oxford: Vol. V, The Eighteenth-Century* (Oxford, 1986), pp 483-4.
[214] F. Lee, *Apoleipomena; Or, Dissertations Theological, Mathematical, and Physical* (2 vols, London, 1722), i, pp. 202-3.
[215] T. Browne, *The Evangelical History of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London, 1787), p. 708.
[216] Add MS 15911, fo. 3r: Francis Lee to Simon Ockley, 27 November 1714.
[217] For the reference to Humphreys, see Lee, *Apoleipomena*, i, p. 61.

Lee had shown an early interest in reading the Cabbala literally, stemming from his involvement with the Philadelphian Society in London, which was dedicated to the ideas of the mystic Jakob Boehme. But Lee was already becoming disenchanted with mysticism around 1708/9, not long before he turned to Humphreys's *Apologeticks*. As noted, Humphreys warned against reading Jewish allegories (including the Cabbala) literally, thus implicitly critiquing Boehme. Moreover, in turning away from mysticism, Lee may also have been drawn to the fact that Humphreys peppered his work with nominalist proclamations such as that 'Words are meer arbitrary Marks of Idaeas'.[218] That is, as Brian Vickers has underscored, the essentialist's collapse of the distinction between word and thing – based in part on a literal reading of the proclamation in John 1.14 that word became flesh – was widely associated with mystics such as Boehme during the seventeenth century.[219] Lee was finally drawn to how Humphreys showed 'out of the Talmud and Zohar, and other Jewish Books' that just because the Jews expressed a 'Hatred to the Christians' it did not follow that they spurned all principles contained in the New Testament.

Perhaps most interestingly, Humphreys's suggestion that the Jews, by and large, accepted bodily resurrection and the immortality of the soul fed into Lee's ambitious project to establish the authorship of the Second (apocryphal) Book of Esdras. The existing narratives about who penned the text were wildly divergent. While some earlier accounts had ascribed the book to Ezra the Scribe (and argued that it had been kept secret by the elders of the synagogue for 'Private Information'), another proposed that it was the handiwork of a late Christian heretic. The text was also attributed to a 'second' Ezra and an inspired Christian, the latter of which

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[218] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, p. 10 and F. Lee, *An Epistolary Discourse, Concerning the Books of Ezra*, ed. T. Haywood (London, 1722). For Lee's retreat from cabbalism, see B.J. Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought: Behmenism and Its Development in England* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 166.

[219] Vickers notes, for example, that 'If the rediscovery of hermetic texts in the Renaissance aided the revival of a concept of natural language, so did the spreading interest in the cabala' and that the 'innate power of the word is an important concept in many mystical traditions'. See B. Vickers, 'Analogy Versus Identity: The Rejection of Occult Symbolism, 1580-1680', in B. Vickers (ed.) *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance Revised* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 105. See, too, the discussion of Jacob Boehme on p. 107.

would have made it a theoretically legitimate part of the *New Testament* that was, again, kept secret.[220] Lee, as we will see, rejected all of these views.

The Arabic Laudian manuscript of II Esdras – which Lee used in his *Epistolary Discourse* to make his case for the authorship of the original, Hebrew II Esdras – had been a source of interest among Oxford scholars for some time, including with John Gregory in the early seventeenth century. But it had never been translated out of Arabic. Ockley, as a highly proficient orientalist, had been designated as the most competent person to translate it, and, in the end, it was Whiston who pressed him to do so. However, Ockley, despite agreeing to translate the Arabic manuscript, feared that Whiston might use it towards subversive ends. As Lee described the situation, scholars including Ockley and himself dreaded to think that the manuscript would '*make for the* Arian *Cause he* [Whiston] *was then reviving*'.[221] Indeed, Whiston had already used a draft translation of another Bodleian Arabic manuscript (of the 'Apostolical Constitutions') that Ockley had sent him for private consultation in his notorious *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd* to argue for the canonical status of the 'Apostolical Constitutions'; he was of the opinion that II Esdras was similarly canonical.[222] Ockley was also mindful that Whiston's plan would be abetted by the fact that the Bodleian manuscript of II Esdras had itself been translated out of its original Greek into Arabic during the Middle Ages, when, Ockley claimed, so many Arabian 'Monkish Performances' were produced. For this reason, it contained a multitude of errors, rendering it, to his mind, 'all Rhapsody and Confusion'.[223] Because of its imperfect state, Ockley realised that its materials could be 'Now Orthodox; Then Heretical' in just a single paragraph. Before Whiston could get his hands on this translation, Ockley thus conspired with Lee to have the latter produce an 'orthodox'

[220] Lee, *Epistolary Discourse*, pp. 17-19. See generally A. Hamilton, *The Apocryphal Apocalypse: The Reception of the Second Book of Esdras (4 Esra) from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1999).
[221] Lee, *Epistolary Discourse*, sig. A3v.
[222] W. Whiston, *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd* (4 vols, London, 1711), p. ii.
[223] S. Ockley, *An Account of the Authority of the Arabick Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (London, 1712), p. 11.

dissertation on the manuscript that they would prefix to Ockley's translation. This way, Lee and Ockley could save both the text and the public from being imposed upon by any 'heretical' Arian reading that Whiston might conjure.

As promised, Lee's dissertation (the *Epistolary Discourse*) explicated the content of II Esdras and made a case for its authorship in such a way as to weaken its subversive potential. To begin with, he described a long series of absurdities or 'Wild Imaginations' in the text, with Lee maintaining that nothing in the II Esdras 'doth show more uncouth and odd than his whole Account of the *Creation* of the Universe'.[224] Lee went on to note that, notwithstanding the absurdities in the author's account of the creation, II Esdras could still have been deemed an inspired book had its prophecies come true, but they remained unfulfilled. He thus concluded that the book could not have been written by the inspired Ezra, whom he deemed to have composed the 'undoubtedly genuine' I Esdras.[225] Since Lee perceived II Esdras to exude the 'Traditional Knowledge' as 'taught in the *Alexandrian* School of the Jews, and wherin Philo was so excellently versed' – being 'Prophetical and Cabbalistical' as well as agreeable to the pre-Christian books of Tobit and Baruch – Lee finally conjectured that it was probably the handiwork of an '*Egyptian Jew*'. Based on Humphreys's (and Menasseh Ben Israel's) conviction that one could hold various 'Christian' doctrines without any conversance with the New Testament, he was further emboldened to propose that this 'Egyptian Jew' wrote *before* the birth of Christ.[226] Because of its non-canonical nature, he ultimately concluded (with Ockley) that it would do a grave injustice to the Church of England for the text to be 'bound up with the Sacred Scriptures'.[227]

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[224] Lee, *Epistolary Discourse*, pp. 6-7.
[225] Lee, *Epistolary Discourse*, p. 13. See also M. Feingold, 'A Rake's Progress: William Whiston Reads Josephus', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 49/1 (2015), p. 23. Even Whiston admitted that his thesis regarding the canonicity of II Esdras could not be proved for certain without the then-lost ancient Ethiopic and Greek versions of the text, and, in the end, he came to accept Lee's thesis.
[226] Lee, *Epistolary Discourse*, pp. 19-22.
[227] Lee, *Epistolary Discourse*, pp. 3-4.

It is evident from Lee's orthodox yet polemical usage of Humphreys's MA publication that this young scholar offered important insights that helped one of the most incisive early eighteenth-century historians to prise apart the apocryphal from the canonical and make a sophisticated textual attribution in a pan-European debate. But, as Lee had noted, Humphreys's contribution was mainly valuable insofar as it confirmed and explored points that Ben Israel had already made, and, where Humphreys *did* make an original contribution seems to have been in the translations that he provided from manuscripts. As with his work on Origen for Bentley, Humphreys, as a student, played a supporting role to the major scholars around him, offering 'underlabour' for their advanced theological projects and thus assisting with the general effort of his generation of clergymen to forge a vision of the early church as (much like them) a collective of learned men with acceptable views on core Protestant doctrines.

VI. Conclusion

Encapsulating the early eighteenth-century debate over whether editing a text was in itself a polemical act, Whiston tellingly exclaimed in a note in his *Memoirs*, with reference to the divine and Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, Charles Ashton, that

> Dr. Ashten published himself, many years ago, an excellent edition of Origen. After which I asked Dr. Bentley, then master of Trinity college, and regius professor of divinity, why they did not banish Dr. Ashton, as they had done me, for Arianism? since he had published the grossest Arian book extant in all antiquity, as this treatise of Origen's is known to be. He replied, but the notes are orthodox. To which I answered, will orthodox notes make an Arian book other than Arian?[228]

As this passage indicates, Whiston cast doubt on the notion that framing one's intentions as *historically* valuable, and providing notes of actual historical value, could render even a highly controversial text theologically or institutionally acceptable. But many scholars hoped that when they released fresh evidence, often in the form of manuscripts, from '*under Lock and*

[228] W. Whiston, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston Containing Memoirs of Several of His Friends Also Parts 1–2* (2nd revised edn, London, 1754), p. 314.

Key' by translating it from the learned languages into English, their notes could prevent any controversial ideas contained within such texts from being misinterpreted.[229] Lee's dissertation was certainly designed to this effect.

As a student effort in an age when young men rarely put a text to their name, Humphreys's *Apologeticks* may strike readers as more of a storehouse of graduate learning than a fully formulated thesis about the genesis and transmission of a text or historical doctrine. Cautious to come across as neither a polemicist (which would have meant naming a specific target) nor as an antiquarian (which would have meant having none), Humphreys's work is generically perched between a popular historical apology and a scholarly edition-come-translation. As he lamented when describing his translation (and notes) on Athenagoras's 'Apology', he would have liked to dwell at far greater length on 'very curious Points of Learning concerning the ancient Theology, both *Greek* and *Egyptian*', but, his text being but an '*English* Translation, I conceive it will not be so proper to do it'.[230] Humphreys had succeeded in showing that Athenagoras was a supporter of bodily resurrection and that modern experimental physiologists were, importantly, in agreement with this ancient writer about the scientific viability of such a doctrine. The fact that Humphreys had translated the relevant work by Athenagoras into English for the first time meant that all of his countrymen would be able to see for themselves that a learned ante-Nicene author promoted bodily resurrection, which, Humphreys hoped, would make them far less likely to be deceived by dangerous modern critics of the idea. For Humphreys, producing an English translation that was digestible was thus both a *modus operandi* and a constraint, insofar as it made it possible for him to reach a large number of readers while bridling his ability to showcase his hard-earned graduate knowledge. This dual mandate and Humphreys's diligent pursuit of it makes his work a palpable instantiation of what

[229] Ockley, *An Account*, p. 25 and Whiston, *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd*.
[230] Humphreys, *Apologeticks*, pp. 114-5.

happened when the conflicts of interest that beset a young, theologically orientated early eighteenth-century mind went unresolved.

2.2 Natural Philosophy: John Witty

I. Introduction

Before turning to the protagonist of this chapter – Witty – I begin by outlining the state of natural philosophy pedagogy in the English universities around 1700, grappling chiefly with the question of whether students at the time had access to a comprehensive natural-philosophical system. As it stands, the decades flanking 1700 have retained a dual identity that renders the broader intellectual history of Oxford and Cambridge susceptible to mischaracterisations. On the one hand, the period from *c.*1690-1720 is (not incorrectly) treated as the epoch in which Newtonian natural philosophy was integrated into the BA curriculum.[231] On the other, it is described as an interim in the history of institutional science: the witness to, as opposed to the beneficiary of, a paradigm shift away from Aristotelian thought.[232] The latter perception is chiefly the result of an assumption among historians that most tutors at the time were unprepared to teach the Newtonian system or indeed experimental physics in general, and that students with an interest in the natural world were accordingly forced to look elsewhere – whether to London, Scotland, or the Continent – for serious scientific instruction.[233]

While it is true that university natural philosophy remained deeply indebted to qualitative, even metaphysical, Aristotelian-Scholastic ideas well into the late seventeenth century, Feingold, among others, has shown that some tutors and students in England and across Europe (not least in the Jesuit academies) did apply principles from geometry and astronomy to the physical world well before the pedagogic ascendancy of Newton.[234] At the same time, several

[231] The major authority here is Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment*.
[232] John Friesen, for instance, refers to general 'suspicions of the new philosophy among university authorities' in the last decades of the seventeenth century. See J. Friesen, 'Christ Church Oxford, the Ancients-Moderns Controversy, and the Promotion of Newton in Post-Revolutionary England', *History of Universities*, XXIII/1 (2008), p. 39.
[233] According to M.A. Stewart, Oxford was particularly backwards in this regard. He claims that 'No philosopher of eminence taught at Oxford in the eighteenth century' (see 'The Curriculum', p. 98).
[234] Feingold, 'Mathematical Sciences'.

major figures, mostly clustered in 1650s Oxford, pioneered the experimental approaches that quickly became associated with the early Royal Society, and which, at least rhetorically, were often juxtaposed against the 'disputative' mode of natural philosophy traditionally advocated in the universities. But, even by the time that Newton pursued his BA in 1660s Cambridge, exploring the novel output of René Descartes or Kenelm Digby, let alone the experimental methods of Boyle or Thomas Willis, remained a privilege mostly reserved for MA students (and often ones hoping to become physicians at that).[235] Indeed, even as students began to encounter experimental physics in print around this time, this did not mean that they read textbooks dedicated to the subject or flocked to live demonstrations, the mass attendance of which remained rare until the mid-eighteenth century. The widespread hostility to Descartes' approach in England only made it harder to produce a coherent textbook of natural philosophy in the late seventeenth century, for fear of reproducing a singular (and fictitious) system. But just because they were faced with significant difficulties, it does not mean that tutors eschewed the integration of non-Aristotelian approaches into their teaching. Rather, as the present chapter shows, a widespread eclecticism in early eighteenth-century university natural philosophy pedagogy yielded some creative and exciting results.[236]

This chapter begins by analysing three manuscripts containing the physics notes of Oxford students from *c*.1690-1710. The students engage in strikingly different ways with traditional Aristotelian natural philosophy, from formal commentary to poetic speculation. Far from indicating a uniform rejection of Aristotelian thought, the notes underscore the degree to which questions and frameworks (if not all of the specific insights) associated with the *libri naturales* continued to be valued well into the eighteenth century. But the natural philosophy curriculum also changed a great deal in the post-Restoration period. In particular, the status of both the

[235] For a slightly earlier period, see Serjeantson, 'Education of Francis Willughby'.
[236] On natural philosophical eclecticism during a slightly earlier period, see Hotson, *Reformation of Common Learning*.

history of philosophy and experimental natural history were elevated thanks in large part to the publication of Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy* (1655-1662) and Thomas Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* (1667). Both works, as we will see, were recommended by the end of the seventeenth century in the manuscript directions of tutors, as space was carved out for the teaching of both historical and encyclopaedic approaches to natural philosophy in the early 1700s. There had long been debates over whether or not natural philosophy was a deductive *scientia* that was capable of providing certain knowledge of nature or whether it was only ever capable of yielding probable knowledge; the heuristic division by certain tutors of natural philosophy into the *history* of natural philosophy and experimental natural history did, however, shift the epistemological status of this core pedagogic domain further towards the probabilistic, at least for a time.

Just as students increasingly grappled with the history of philosophy alongside the results of experimental trials – and works associated with the 'new philosophy' more broadly – they were also expected to be au fait with another kind of 'system': that which explained the creation of the world. In his *Telluris Theoria Sacra, or Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1681), Thomas Burnet put forward a Cartesian account of Genesis in what would remain the most controversial of the interventions into a long and high-profile series of debates between various 'world makers'.[237] However, this did not stop at least one tutor from assigning Burnet's text as an 'English system'.[238] Studying Burnet would have certainly made students aware that natural philosophy could be used to undermine orthodox readings of biblical history. As I show in the second part of this chapter, one young Cambridge scholar from the post 'world makers' generation, Witty, was convinced that he could show that a literal reading of Genesis was more compatible with modern natural philosophy than his contemporaries realised. To make his case,

[237] W. Poole, *The World Makers Scientists of the Restoration and the Search for the Origins of the Earth* (Oxford, 2010).
[238] MS Rawl. D. 40, fo. 7r.

he produced *An Essay Towards a Vindication of the Vulgar Exposition of the Mosaic History* (1705) in two volumes. Taking as his target Whiston, a Cambridge contemporary whom Burnet had inspired, Witty summoned a host of scientific papers that he would have read at university and used them to bolster a six-day creation narrative. All in all, Witty's *Essay* provides an intriguing window into the role that a young, ambitious scholar of the early eighteenth century envisaged physics to play within the fast-moving field of polemical divinity.

II. The Problem of Systematicity

Philosophy tutors in the English universities *c*.1700 were faced with the issue of how to introduce coherence into undergraduate natural-philosophy pedagogy in the wake of major attacks on the Aristotelian system that had long served as the backbone of the subject. While scholars have often pointed to the sharp demise of Aristotelian natural philosophy as encountered by students in Latin (and sometimes Greek) commentaries during the seventeenth century, much less is known about how this process occurred, or how tutors dealt with attacks on such a longstanding tradition.[239]

The first point to be made here is that change, especially in a pedagogic context, did not always occur as rapidly as it might seem if one focusses on the titles of the great texts (not least Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687)) that mark an epoch. Many students thus continued to engage with a highly traditional mode of Aristotelian-scholastic commentary into the early 1700s. One example is a book of natural philosophy notes titled 'Naturalis Philosophiae Systema, &c. per Anonymum', which a Wadham College undergraduate, James Bisse, donated to the Bodleian in the early 1700s, though it was probably produced in the seventeenth century by one of the students named on the inner-cover, either

[239] For an overview of the classic stance on Aristotle and the universities, and a helpful response to it, see M. Feingold, 'Aristotle and the English Universities in the Seventeenth Century: A Re-evaluation', in H. Robinson-Hammerstein (ed), *European Universities in the Age of Reformation and Counter Reformation* (Dublin, 1998).

Robert Wynne or Richard Lloyd.[240] Born in Essex, Bisse matriculated in 1687, obtained his BA in 1693, his MA in 1697, and his MD in 1701. He then became physician of Codicote in Hertfordshire, where he remained until his death in 1748.[241] The natural philosophy notes that he acquired, and presumably used, follow the *Cursus Conimbricensis*, and specifically the commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, which are supplemented with both Reformed Aristotelian commentaries, including Bartholomäus Keckermann's *Systema Physicum* (1610), and Paduan ones such as Giacombo Zabarella's *De prima rerum materia* (1607).[242] As per Aristotle's *Physics*, these commentators start with general philosophical questions, such as whether speculative philosophy can be correctly divided into physics, metaphysics, and mathematics ['An Philosophia Speculativa recte dividutur in Physicam, Metaphysicam & Mathematicam?'], and end, nearly 200 pages later, with topics usually assigned to *physica particularis*, such as whether the world is eternal ['An Mundus sit aeternus'].[243] In between, the questions – which are mostly structured according to relevant 'heads' and answered with a dialectical response of 'Thesis', objections ['Dubium'], and resolutions – encompass everything from whether nature extends ['intendit'] to include monsters to whether place ['locus'] is motionless ['immobilis']. Several of the student's responses also begin with a small diagram that consists of further definitions and distinctions, before proceeding to theses and objections that emerge through the student's wrangling with the subtly divergent perspectives of the relevant commentators.[244]

While it might be supposed that only an idiosyncratically old-fashioned student would have acquired and consulted these heavily Aristotelian notes, the fact that Robert Sanderson's highly conventional Aristotelian textbook, *Physicæ scientiæ compendium* (first published in

[240] Bodleian MS Misc. 15. This manuscript consists of forty-seven 'quaestiones' in natural philosophy, with the replies and theses. The first ten pages are lost. The manuscript, as such, begins on fo. 11r with 'Quaest. 1ª. An Philosophia speculatiua recte diuidantur [*sic*] in Physicam, Metaphysicam et Mathematicam?'.
[241] Regarding Bisse, see A. Wood, *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, ed. A. Clarke (5 vols, Oxford, 1894), iii, p. 339. Bisse was a good friend of Wood, helping him during his last illness. Wood put Bisse as one of the executors of his will. Bisse is sometimes spelt 'Biss'.
[242] C. Schmitt, *John Case and Aristotelianism in Renaissance England* (Kingston and Montréal, 1983), p. 74.
[243] MS Misc. 15 fo. 11r and 193r.
[244] MS Misc. 15: 'An Natura intendit Monstrum' (fo. 81r) and 'An Locus sit Immobilis' (fo. 112v).

1671), was reprinted in Oxford well into the 1690s suggests that Bisse would not have stood out among his contemporaries. At the same time, as Charles Schmitt revealed long ago (and as a number of other scholars have gone on to substantiate), even the most traditional Aristotelian textbooks were often highly dynamic, stretching to encompass ideas that bore little relation to Aristotle's original writings. This is clear in one of Schmitt's paradigmatic examples: the Oxford tutor John Case's *Lapis Philosophicus* (1599), which is a commentary on the first eight books of Aristotle's *Physics* that invites students to question core principles in the *libri naturales* via model dialogues between *respondens* and *opponens*.[245] Many late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century commentaries and textbooks, including Sanderson's, were similarly designed to demonstrate how students might square an alternative idea or definition (from, say, chymistry) with an Aristotelian precept, with the latter setting the terms of the debate. It was all the better if an alternative genealogy, in which, say, the chymical idea was endowed with Aristotelian roots, could be conjured.

The fact that a similar dialectical procedure was still being employed well into the eighteenth century is evident not only from the volume acquired by Bisse but also from the notes of later students. In one example from 1722, an anonymous student compiled a list of physics *quaestiones*, beside which he either places an 'A' (for affirm) or an 'N' (for negate). While the student was probably preparing for the Act (or final disputations) – for which he would have been randomly assigned statements to defend – it is nonetheless striking that his various affirmations and negations left him defending a broadly Aristotelian cosmology. He straightforwardly affirms, for instance, that the Stagirite's principles about bodies are admissible ['Principia corporum Aristotelica sint admittenda'], that Aristotle correctly defines motion ['Motus ab Aristotle recte definiatur'], and that final causes are to be admitted in natural

[245] J. Case, *Lapis philosophicus; seu, Commentarius in octo lib. phys. Aristot. in quo arcana physiologiae examinantur* (Oxford, 1599). See Schmitt, *John Case and Aristotelianism*.

philosophy ['Causa finales admittenda sunt in Philosophiâ naturali'].[246] He also concurs with certain ideas that were in keeping with Aristotle's thought but also that of modern authors such as Boyle, including the proposition that air possesses weight. More interestingly still, the student agrees with the idea, associated with the Oxford chymist John Freind's innovative chymistry textbook, based on Oxford lectures, *Praelectiones Chymicae* (1709), that air has a *force* of elasticity, which would have been foreign to Aristotle.[247] While just one example of a common process of mediating between the new and established, the student's notes bear witness to an increasingly apparent non-systematic tendency during his day to affirm potentially inconsistent positions. Could Aristotle's ideas on bodies and motion, which are accepted, be squared with Freind's Newtonian notion that one of the most important of these bodies, air, possesses an elastic force? Perhaps, but the issue is not addressed. While most tutors remained desirous to offer their pupils a coherent picture of the universe in which principles could be applied across adjacent pedagogic domains (especially natural philosophy, logic, ethics, and metaphysics), they also needed to teach novel findings, and many opted for a form of eclecticism that stretched even the already open Aristotelian fold.

One way to address (and oftentimes evade) the issue of (in)coherence was to grapple with natural philosophy in verse. This is illustrated in the notebook of a distinguished Christ Church undergraduate, Henry Brydges, who tackled standard natural-philosophical issues through poetry as a student in 1693 (possibly reflecting a less industrious tendency among students in this wealthier college, in contrast to Bisse at Wadham). Brydges obtained his MA in 1698, his DD in 1711, and then later became a divine, serving as Royal Chaplain. His engagement with physics again revolves around *quaestiones*, but, unlike in Bisse's volume, where the references

[246] British Library Lansdowne MS 394 (A book of College exercises, anno 1722), fos. 11r-12r.
[247] Lansdowne MS 394, fos. 11r-12r. The query on air reads 'aer habeat vim Elasticam'? See also J. Freind, *Prælectiones chymicæ, in quibus omnes fere operationes chymicæ ad vera principia rediguntur* (London, 1709) and A. Guerrini, 'The Tory Newtonians: Gregory, Pitcairne, and Their Circle', *The Journal of British Studies*, 25/3 (1986), p. 310. She refers to Freind's 'Newtonian lectures on chymistry' as evidence of a political-intellectual axis between Newtonian physicians and conservative Oxonians.

to commentators are explicit and where there are detailed theses and objections with distinctions and definitions, Brydges provides six to twelve lines of poetry under each philosophical question. Although these mostly deal with the philosophical matters at hand, they also make frequent reference to ancient poets and philosophers. One example comes in response to the question of whether corpuscles exist ['An qualitates sint corpuscula'], which Brydges denies with an elaborate, twelve-line poem in hexameter and pentameter describing the hidden things that Democritus laboured to uncover ['Abdita Democritus dum rerum aperite laborat'].[248] In addition to proceeding, as per Aristotle's *Physics* and the set of notes that Bisse acquired, from *physica generalis* to particular physical problems and then upwards to the human soul, the questions to which the poems serve as answers reveal a broadly Aristotelian outlook. One affirms that nature has a principle of motion ['An natura sint principium motus?'], while a second question, which follows straight on, states that everything is material ['An eadem sit omnium materia?'].[249]

While Brydges appears to have been more concerned with honing his poetic wit than with chalking up Scholastic distinctions, the above example does point to a more general interest among even non-scientifically inclined undergraduates in matter theory (and in uncovering possible contradictions in the corpuscular philosophy). Few names would have come to mind faster than Descartes' in the 1690s when it came to the issue of matter and motion. While Descartes' corpus had become popular in the Dutch Republic and Scotland as a truly systematic alternative to Aristotle (at least until the late 1680s), it was never welcomed with open arms in the English universities, where the thought of another French philosopher, Gassendi, had formed a more appealing alternative. Not only did students frequently encounter Descartes' thought through critiques of it (most notably Samuel Clarke's editions of Jacques Rohault's

[248] Henry Brydges's notebook is at British Library Add MS 64125. For this quote, see fos. 96v-7r. He continues: 'Sic Atomos formâ variœs, et sentit/ Fragmina, non oculis aspicienda, senex'.
[249] Add MS 64125, fo. 83r.

Traité de Physique (1671), which Clarke continually revised and republished from the 1690s through to the 1720s), but, when it was taught, it was typically as the new straw-man philosophy against which supposedly more robust, experimental approaches could be developed. The future Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, Isaac Barrow, set the tone for such hostility in a 1652 oration at Cambridge.[250] In it, he warned of Descartes' inability to account for the generation, propagation, or 'specific operations' of animals, plants, and minerals, and drew attention to the more sophisticated ways that Galenists and chymists accounted for these processes.[251] Barrow also attacked Descartes methodologically for fashioning axioms 'from his own thinking' to form a 'private metaphysics', which clashed with Barrow's own philosophical method of 'bringing together axioms from single examples and from experiments diligently tested'.[252] His attitude sits somewhere between that of the Professor of Medicine at Utrecht, Henricus Regius, who was among Descartes' most prominent institutional advocates, and the piercing hostility of the French scholar Pierre Daniel Huet, who argued in his *Censura philosophiae Cartesianae* (1689) that, by building a metaphysical system on top of radical scepticism, Descartes opened the door to irreligion.

One manner in which Cartesianism found its way into English philosophical pedagogy was via the works of Nicolas Malebranche, which were popular for a time in Oxford. It was an MA student at Magdalen College, Oxford, Thomas Taylor, who was among the first to translate Malebranche's *Treatise Concerning the Search after Truth* (in 1700). The London mathematics teacher Richard Sault produced the other popular English translation of Malebranche's *Recherche de la Verité* (1674).[253] But Malebranche was no straightforward Cartesian, and

[250] I.G. Stewart, '"Fleshy Books": Isaac Barrow and the Oratorical Critique of Cartesian Natural Philosophy', in M. Feingold (ed), *The History of the Universities: Volume XVI* (Oxford, 2000), p. 39.
[251] Translations of Barrow's Latin oration are from Stewart's appendix in '"Fleshy Books"', pp. 83-7.
[252] Stewart, '"Fleshy Books"', pp. 87-8.
[253] Several Oxford students bought copies of Sault's translation, including Thomas Devey and Thomas Haywood. For the latter's copy, see St John's College Library, Oxford: HB4/2.a.4.24: N. Malebranche, *Malebranch's Search After Truth: or A Treatise of the Nature of the Humane Mind*, tr. R. Sault (London, 1694). Haywood bought the *Treatise* as an undergraduate in 1697. For Devey, see Feingold, 'Mathematical Sciences', p. 413.

Taylor, in particular, foregrounded anti-Cartesian views even as he promoted Malebranche's. In fact, in 1692, Taylor translated the French Jesuit Gabriel Daniel's anti-Cartesian satire, *A Voyage to the World of Cartesius*, with minimal notes to indicate dissent from Daniel's outlook – this was a text designed 'at once to advertise and lampoon' Cartesian thought.[254]

English students of the period were offered a vision of Cartesianism through an even less positive lens than Taylor's, with the best-known example being Clarke's successive editions of Rohault's *Traité de Physique*. Clarke graduated with a BA from Cambridge in 1695, before receiving his MA in 1697 and his DD in 1710 from the same university, and he later served as chaplain to John Moore, Bishop of Norwich, Boyle Lecturer (from 1704-5), chaplain-in-ordinary to Queen Anne (in 1706), and rector of St James's, Westminster (in 1709). He produced the first edition in 1697, during his MA, but his annotations became progressively more critical of Descartes' ideas (with which Rohault mostly agreed) and supportive of Newton's in the editions of the early 1700s, beginning with that of 1702.[255] Clarke's notes were pored over by students in the succeeding decades. The viability of specific Cartesian insights was also being hotly debated during university Acts *c*.1700. A Cambridge verse from 1698, for example, begins with the statement that 'clear and distinct ideas of things are not always required to achieve certainty', while a verse from 1703 commences with the anti-Cartesian claim that 'It is not possible to explain the actions of animals only by the laws of mechanics'.[256] Descartes' philosophy is recommended as *the* modern 'system' in Haywood's aforementioned 'Hints' for students, though it is certainly not championed, and Haywood lists Taylor's

[254] Poole, *The World Makers*, p. 20.
[255] For a unique English translation of Rohault's *Traité de Physique*, which was probably produced by a student, since there is a 'Course of Mechanical and Experimental Philosophy' at the beginning, see British Library Lansdowne MS 1182. For Rohault generally, see M. Dobre, 'Jacques Rohault and Cartesian Experimentalism', in S. Nadler and T.M. Schmaltz (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Descartes and Cartesianism* (Oxford, 2019).
[256] The act verse is printed with the title *Præexistentia animarum nec rationi nec religioni adversatur* (Cambridge, 1698). It reads: 'Claræ ac distinctæ rerum ideæ non semper requiruntur ad certitudinem consequendam'. The second one is the same as the title: *Brutorum actiones non possunt solvi per leges merè mechanicas* (Cambridge, 1703).

translation of Daniel, among other anti-Cartesian works, as an antidote.[257] Another way that tutors diluted Cartesian ideas was by placing them alongside myriad alternative perspectives, as is the case in Greene's advice to his students from 1707, *Enkyklopaideia*.[258] Here Greene pairs Giovanni Alfonso Borelli's iatromechanical account of animal motion, *Du motu animalum* (1680–1), with distinctly un-Cartesian works such as William Harvey's *De generatione* (1651).[259] Other pedagogic sources from the time similarly list the works of 'Cartes' without comment next to texts containing principles that differed tremendously from, or contradicted, Descartes' own.[260]

Such indifference or opposition to Cartesianism in the late seventeenth century and early 1700s was, combined with popular works of early Royal Society propaganda, primarily responsible for producing the anti-systematic thinking that makes the state of scientific pedagogy in the universities at this time so difficult to summarise neatly. But there is another key source that fuelled the turn away from 'systems' of philosophy: Jean Le Clerc's *Physica*, which drew heavily on the ideas of Locke and the Port-Royal tradition and formed part of a more complete textbook, the *Opera Philosophica* (1698). The hack writer Charles Gildon translated the logic part of the *Opera* into English in 1712 as *Logic; or, The Art of Reasoning*, and bits of this translation found their way into Ephraim Chambers' landmark English-language encyclopaedia, *Cyclopædia, or, An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1728). The textbook was widely available.[261] When it comes to the *Physica* itself, Le Clerc's was a work that, contrary to Aristotle's *Physics* and the student notebooks summarised above, began with and did not move much beyond *physica particularis*, only offering some general

[257] MS Rawl. D. 40, fo. 8v.
[258] Bod. MS Rawl. D. 40, fo. 8v.
[259] Greene, *Enkyklopaideia*, p. 2.
[260] See, for example, Johnson, *Quaestiones philosophicae*, p. 31, 43, 65, 110, 143, 191, 196, and 206. Pagination is from the 1741 edition.
[261] For the popularity of Le Clerc's *Opera Philosophica*, see D.F. McKenzie, *Cambridge University Press, 1696-1712: A Bibliographical Study* (2 vols, Cambridge, 2009), i, p. 100, 161, 166, and 255; ii, p. 84.

'principles' towards the end. Influenced by the rhetoric of friends such as Boyle, Le Clerc rejected philosophical systems outright, whether the Peripatetic one that many scholars of Le Clerc's day argued was premised on *materia prima* or Democritian/Epicurean atomism.[262] Indeed, Le Clerc singled out such speculations for having hampered the development of natural philosophy in the ancient world. Meanwhile, he warned young readers that it had not yet been possible to find *any* principle that satisfactorily accounted for the properties of corporeal bodies, and he thus maintained that the whole discipline of natural philosophy, though characterised by near-daily breakthroughs, still 'swarms with uncertain conjectures'.[263] In this sense, Le Clerc's *Physica* would have looked to contemporaries in the English universities much like an anti-textbook. It denied the systematic approaches of both Aristotle and Descartes, but stressed that the results of experiments were provisional, with progress being reserved for later ages. With his warning that future ages would almost certainly historicise the interventions of practising natural philosophers, Le Clerc also contributed profoundly to the historicisation of parts of natural philosophy.

III. Without a Spine – Before *Newtoniana*

In the years before robust and comprehensive Newtonian textbooks appeared, some intriguing if highly miscellaneous evidence exists that indicates the character of natural-philosophical instruction. While in some cases affirming the continued (and often creative) use of Aristotelian sources, which, we have seen, could swing from the relatively metaphysical to the decidedly 'anti-systematic', it more strikingly points to the ascent of historical approaches (that almost certainly drew on Le Clerc's *Physica*). The first discernable historical mode was simply to historicise philosophy and view it through the lens of past 'systems'. The second has its origins

[262] Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 395-6.
[263] The translation of Le Clerc is taken from Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, p. 396.

in the tradition of *historia naturalia* and Baconian encyclopaedism. Both of these approaches, at least in principle, offered a way to teach aspects of the new philosophy without simply bombarding students with a miscellany of provisional, experimental findings.

The first of the two approaches – which might simply be referred to as the history of philosophy – is exemplified in an anonymous set of manuscript directions for Oxford students from *c*.1700 at Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 188. Here the anonymous tutor advocates a comparative, historical approach to philosophical systems, noting that when it comes to 'naturall philosophy 'tis probable y^{t} ~~am~~ an Histor=icall method in y^{e} study of it might be most scient=ificall; & y^{t} y^{e} best way would be to begin with y^{e} most antient authors'.[264] The tutor urges students to start with Diogenes Laërtius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Stanley's *History of Philosophy*, and Theophilus Gale's *The Court of the Gentiles* (1676-82) as synoptic overviews of the main ancient philosophies.

As regards the place of Aristotle specifically, the tutor singles out the Peripatetics for being 'many and voluminous', and therefore states that it must 'suffice to note some few of y^{m}'. Although he included the Coimbra commentaries – which means that his students would have covered some of the same topics as Bisse – he also lists prominent nominalists (such as Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza, who also intimated that *materia prima* could exist without form), and, more strikingly, Willis for his *De anima brutorum* (1672), which was an important physiological study of animal souls based on his Oxford lectures of 1661. The latter inclusion might seem strange given that Willis's text was sometimes cited for its materialist tendencies.[265] However, Willis had argued, in an Aristotelian-Galenic vein, that animals – including humans – have vital and sensitive souls, which he connected to blood and animal

[264] See Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 188, fos. 3r-4r. Feingold has suggested that this manuscript was composed in the late 1680s but it seems to have been put together *c*. 1700. This is because it contains a reference to two texts by John Potter that were published in 1697, but Potter is referred to as 'Mr' and not 'Dr'. He obtained his DD in 1706, implying that the 'directions' were composed sometime between these years.
[265] Thomson, *Bodies of Thought*, pp. 97-134.

spirits/nerves respectively. He deemed these souls to be responsible for a host of cognitive functions, but divorced them utterly from the God-given immortal souls that humankind alone possessed. Evidently, the tutor felt that Willis's work was sufficiently safe for his undergraduates to peruse. More generally, natural philosophy teaching under this tutor had become a distinctly historical (if slightly miscellaneous) affair, with different schools being stretched to include myriad perspectives whose relationship to the doctrines of their namesakes (in this example Aristotle) would not necessarily have been obvious.

Rohault's *Traité de Physique* also assisted with the process of historicising natural philosophy in its own way by describing, in the preface, Descartes' profound debts to, and apparent improvements upon, Aristotle's ideas.[266] Despite the strong opposition to Cartesian systematicity in England at the start of the eighteenth century, a distinctly teleological outlook on the history of natural knowledge (akin to Rohault's) – according to which the moderns daily improved upon the ancients – found an increasing number of proponents in the English universities. To provide a particularly striking example, a Cambridge student in the early 1730s composed a manuscript note on 'Modern Improvements of Knowledge, since the Time of Aristotle', where he listed scores of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century individuals whom he considered to have made transformational discoveries in either medicine or mathematics.[267] Telling in terms of the sources that undergraduates with an interest in the history of philosophy consulted at this time, his note begins by flagging up the fact that he was using 'Glanvil's Plus Ultra &c', and, at the very start of his commonplace book, he provides a list of texts under the heading 'Hist. of Philosophy', which culminates in Sprat's *History of the Royal Society*. Both

[266] Lansdowne MS 1182, fos. 3r-11v.

[267] St John's College, Cambridge: O.60, fos. 76r-7v. The medical discoveries that he lists are bodily parts (such as arteries and ducts) and physiological processes (such as the circulation of the blood) while the mathematical discoveries refer to logarithms, decimal arithmetic, and algebra. For transformations in natural philosophy's relationship to histories of philosophy at this time, see Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, esp. pp. 1-32 and 542-48 and Serjeantson, 'Education of Francis Willughby'. As Serjeantson shows, Willughby's 1650s commonplace book divides authors into ancients and moderns, although Willughby is less explicitly concerned than Selwin with the issue of *improvement*.

of these works were centrepieces of the propaganda campaign of the early Royal Society, which had a vested interest in underscoring the advances that modern experimentalists, including members of their institution, had brought about.

While experimental approaches were increasingly presented in popular works such as Glanvill's and Sprat's as the route by which to acquire an improved knowledge of nature, reading texts such as Rohault's alongside them would have underscored the importance, for students, of wedding experimentation to 'rational' modes of philosophising. Rohault's chief contention was that experiments 'are necessary for the establish=ing of Natural Science', as he claimed 'Aristotle himself appears to have been so well satisfied of', but that (again as Aristotle realised) they are only useful when judged in light of what is generally known (and interpreted by a well-honed rational faculty). As a consequence, Rohault noted that Aristotle 'debar'd the Younger Hearers from these [experimental] Studies' in his Lyceum until they were acquainted 'with the World'.[268] Rohault's aim here was not so much to elevate Aristotle's method as to convince his readers that natural philosophers should engage in a process of Cartesian ratiocination before they conducted any experiments. Indeed, as Mihnea Dobre has noted, Rohault generally sought to reduce 'observed natural phenomenon to a causal explanation based on a series of conjectures, which are tested through various experiments', but, according to his method, 'no testing of the fundamental ontological principles is done'.[269]

Although many tutors of the period shared Rohault's fear of introducing students to experiments too early, some saw an ingenious, quasi-historical way to solve the problem that allowed them to avoid having to accept a Cartesian-Rohaultian reliance on ontological principles. For these tutors, the answer was to take a more encyclopaedic approach to natural philosophy. According to the aforementioned anonymous tutor, for example, students should

[268] Lansdowne MS 1182, sig. fo. 5v. See the initial, unfoliated leaf for the outline of this 'Course of Mechanical and Experimental Philosophy'.
[269] Dobre, 'Jacques Rohault', p. 393.

grapple with experimental philosophy (after the history of philosophy) not by attending live experiments but rather by 'gathering together those experiments, w^{ch} are as yet scattered up and down promiscuously in M^{r} Boyles works, Collegium Medico=Curiosorum, Acta Lipsiaca, German & other Philosophicall Transactions'. Students should then schematise the experimental results that they have gathered by referring 'y^{m} to particular heads', taking Francis Bacon's *Historia Naturalis* as a 'specimen'.[270] The emphasis here is thus not on *historia litteraria* but *historia naturalia*, or on finding natural categories that could allow students to group discrete findings rationally. This tutor's advice, which, like the above student's notes, drew inspiration in part from Sprat's polemical *History* (which he notes 'will be of use in experimental philosophy'), gives a powerful window into how experimental and natural-historical approaches (as showcased in the modern scientific journals) were integrated into the natural philosophy curriculum without students actually being required to carry out experiments themselves.[271] It also helps us to appreciate the ways in which obscure college tutors facilitated a shift in natural philosophy away from knowledge about nature that could be deduced from (and traced back to) general principles and towards a subject that had its foundations in observational and experimental data.

The advice of the anonymous tutor, far from being idiosyncratic, is matched in several other pedagogically orientated sources from the period. A similar concern with *historia naturalia*, but with a greater emphasis on its entanglements with *historia litteraria*, for example, can be found in Haywood's 'Hints', in which he argues for splitting natural philosophy into 'systems' (by which he simply meant schools or sects), on the one hand, and

[270] MS Rawl. D. 188, fo. 6r and 8r. See also M. Feingold, *The Mathematician's Apprenticeship: Science, Universities and Society in England 1560-1640* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 95. Feingold has used this manuscript to argue that tutors were 'reticent when it comes to scientific instruction' around this time, though he notes that Sprat, Glanvill, and others are recommended. It seems that the author simply retained a traditional view of natural philosophy as a subject that sought knowledge of causes, and therefore excluded from it chemistry and the mathematical subjects.
[271] MS Rawl. D. 188, fo. 6v.

experimental philosophy, for more particular knowledge of nature, on the other.[272] But Haywood urged students not to get lost in the particulars and to 'consider well what my L^d. Bacon advises' in his 'advancement of Learning': namely, that 'more distinct and part=icular Knowledge' must branch out from a single (methodological) 'stemme' if one is to retain the 'Harmony of the Sciences' (or what Bacon called *prima philosophia*). Again, following Bacon, Haywood suggested that this was to be achieved by producing a *historia litteraria*, or by 'Observ[ing] the gradual Discoveries & Improvements of Truth in every age', together with the 'occ=asional Birth, Growth, & Progress of Errour'.[273] This comparative study of past belief systems would, on Haywood's account, allow students to discover the best insights and frameworks produced in all ages and thereby streamline miscellaneous data into a comprehensive causal scheme.

The Professor of Mathematics at Altdorf, Johann Christoph Sturm, advocated a similar approach in his 1697 textbook, *Physica electiva sive hypothetica* (later re-edited by Wolff), which was sometimes used in the English universities.[274] According to Sturm, a well-known experimentalist in his own right, experiments were necessary for gathering data, but they could never divulge their causes. At the same time, he argued that all past speculative philosophies contained flaws and often failed to account for the observable. As he saw it, what was needed, then, was a comparative account of all available speculative hypotheses that could potentially explain observed effects, which (in contrast to Haywood) Sturm suggested should be consulted only *after* a true, precise, and thorough account of a subject had been drawn up based on experiments. While noting that counterexamples from experiments could invalidate a past

[272] MS Rawl. D. 40, fos. 17r-19r.
[273] MS Rawl. D. 40, fos. 17r-19r. See also A-M. Hartmann, 'Light from Darkness: The Relationship between Francis Bacon's *Prima Philosophia* and his Concept of the Greek Fable', *The Seventeenth Century*, 26/2 (2011), pp. 203-5. For post-Baconian *historia litteraria*, see C. Blackwell, 'Reading Bacon after the Challenge of German *Historia Litteraria*', *Intellectual News*, 14/1 (2004).
[274] Johnson, *Quaestiones philosophicae*, pp. 11-13. For the German reception of Sturm, see T. Ahnert, *The Culture of Experimentalism in the Holy Roman Empire: Johann Christoph Sturm (1635-1703) and the Collegium Experimentale*, http://sammelpunkt.philo.at:8080/archive/00000308/.

hypothesis, Sturm argued that even defective theories should be studied because they might contain insights that could stimulate further inquiry.[275] This attempt to square the historical, speculative, and inductive was, again, broadly Baconian since it presents the entire spectrum of philosophical knowledge as worthy of study insofar as obscure texts and outdated theories might contain kernels of truth.

Haywood and Sturm, in particular, offered ways to integrate experimental data into undergraduate natural philosophy teaching without advocating a fully-fledged philosophical system or a totalising causal framework. With this said, some tutors (such as the anonymous one) promoted historical study (as a way to master past 'systems') and *natural*-historical study (as a way to come to terms with recent discoveries), without suggesting that they ought to be synthesised. Moreover, students who read Le Clerc would have come to understand experimental results as merely provisional and thus only capable of yielding probable knowledge, despite being superior to knowledge deduced from inevitably arbitrary postulates. The fear of making *a priori* deductions from an infirm starting point combined with the lack of a single set of rules to interpret natural particulars left some students of the period uncertain as to how to advance a natural-philosophical argument, let alone an argument that had theological implications.

IV. John Witty and the Vulgar Moses

During the seventeenth century, the subject of natural philosophy usually *excluded* astronomy, hydrostatics, and mechanics, which were deemed to be separate, more mathematical, and even practical domains. The anonymous tutor mentioned above, for instance, instructed his students that astronomy is 'to be referred to mathematicks', and made no mention of the other two.[276]

[275] G. Wiesenfeldt, 'Speculative and Experimental Philosophy in Universities: Eclecticism', *Early Modern Experimental Philosophy*, https://blogs.otago.ac.nz/emxphi/experimental-philosophy-in-universities-eclecticism/ (6 December 2010).
[276] MS Rawl. D. 188, fo. 5r.

However, as is well known, the borders between (qualitative) natural philosophy and these (quantitative) subjects were rendered increasingly porous over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it eventually became standard for courses of natural philosophy to be broken down into mechanics, or the general laws of motion and force; hydrostatics, or the study of fluids; optics, or the study of light and vision; and astronomy, or the study of planetary motions. Much like with the 'historicising' process described above, several texts hastened this expansion and particularisation of the content of natural philosophy, chief among them 's Gravesande's *Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy* (1720), which John Theophilus Desaguliers translated into English in 1721. In the preceding decades, however, those students who did, for whatever reason, regard natural philosophy as '*among those parts of Mathematicks, whose Object is Quantity in general*' had to rely on other sources.[277] In the absence of a textbook that collected the miscellaneous late seventeenth-century experiments in mechanics and mixed mathematics, they were faced with two options: ignore the majority of this data, or get hold of copies of the journals that typically showcased these results.

One student who did try to harness such data and use it for apologetic purposes is Witty, whose *Essay* offers a particularly striking example of how an early eighteenth-century student applied mixed-mathematical and experimental learning to biblical exegesis. Writing between his BA and MA degrees and in the wake of the 'world makers' debates, the official target of Witty's apologetic (like so many publications of the decade) was an ill-defined set of 'deists'. But he chiefly had in mind his slightly older Cambridge contemporary, Whiston, whose *New Theory of the Earth* (1696) had used a host of arguments about comets and diurnal motion to challenge the traditional idea of the six-day creation of the universe.[278] On Whiston's account, 'the Production of all the World out of nothing' happened in an instant and was 'precedaneous

[277] W. 's Gravesande, *Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy* (London, 1721), pp. viij-ix.
[278] Witty, *An Essay*, sigs. A7r-v.

to the Six days Works'. As for the rest of Moses's account, Whiston ventured that 'the Primitive Days of the World were Years'.[279] To his mind, then, the creation of the universe was simultaneously much faster and much slower than was usually supposed. As a major contribution to natural-philosophical understandings of Genesis, Whiston's work soon became a regular fixture on student reading lists, and would have typically been encountered (as with most controversial pieces) alongside the 'answers' to it by established scholars and divines.[280] For a young, ambitious man such as Witty, responding to the contentious claims of a notorious young author such as Whiston presented the ideal chance to display not only the tremendous relevance but also apologetic payoff of a university education.[281]

In one sense, Whiston's *New Theory* combined the Burnetian belief that scripture needed to be read to fit modern natural-philosophical knowledge with a more orthodox assertion of the simplicity of Mosaic history as literally understood. In another, it represented a daring assertion of the role of providence that simultaneously left minimal room for divine intervention after the initial moment of creation.[282] Like Whiston, Witty felt that philosophical explanations should not be used as a '*Test whereby to try the truth of Sacred Scripture*'. But he also reckoned that Whiston had strayed too far from orthodoxy in his attempt to square Genesis with (Newtonian) natural philosophy. With his defence of a clear role for divine providence where secondary causes appeared insufficient, Witty was almost certainly inspired by another Newtonian, the Oxford Savilian Professor of Astronomy, John Keill, who, in his *An Examination of the Reflections on the Theory of the Earth Together with a Defence of the Remarks on Mr. Whiston's New Theory* (1699), attacked Whiston for claiming that certain celestial events, and especially the comet that coincided with the Deluge, could have occurred

[279] W. Whiston, *A New Theory of the Earth from its Original to the Consummation of all Things* (London, 1696), p. 4 and 230.
[280] Poole, *The World Makers*, p. 73.
[281] For the recommendation of Whiston's work to BA students at Oxford in 1704, see MS Rawl. D. 40, fo. 7r, and, for its recommendation to students at Cambridge c. 1722, see MS Rawl. D. 214, fo. 110r.
[282] See Poole, *The World Makers*, pp. 68-73.

naturally. While Witty's response came too late to have a bearing on the Whiston-Keill debacle, the proliferation of scientific works (including Newton's 1704 *Opticks*) over the ensuing decade convinced him that there was more to say about the scientific viability of the creation as a six-day event.

Before turning to the *Essay*, a brief biography of the now obscure Witty is in order. Born in Yorkshire, he was educated in Beverley and admitted to St John's College, Cambridge, as a sizar in April 1696, aged seventeen. Having obtained his BA in 1700, he was made deacon of York in 1702, before becoming (as noted in the introduction to this thesis) research assistant to John Flamsteed at the Greenwich Observatory in 1705, where he carried out computations and helped to prepare Flamsteed's *Historia Coelestis Britannica* (though this was not actually published until 1725).[283] During his year in Greenwich (1705-6), Witty was a part of Flamsteed's household, and it was from here that he published his *Essay*.[284] It was also Flamsteed who put him forward as a candidate for the first Plumian Professorship of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy at Cambridge in 1706, though he narrowly lost out to Roger Cotes. Not long after, in 1707, Witty became a priest in Norwich, and, in the same year, he published a dense anti-deist apologetic titled *The First Principles of Modern Deism Confuted*, which, according to one admirer, made 'very good Use of Mr. *Lock*'s Principles against the *Free-Thinkers*'.[285] Despite being away from Cambridge, he received his MA in 1711, likely in honour of his already impressive set of publications. Around this time, he also served in the prestigious role of chaplain to William Cavendish, Second Duke of Devonshire. Finally, he was made a chaplain at St Vedast in London in 1712, but he died later that year, at

[283] See Cambridge University Library RGO 1/30 for copies and translations of Ptolemy's star catalogues among Flamsteed's papers, where Flamsteed's places of the Moon and planets are computed from sextant and mural arc observations by Witty, Abraham Riley, Isaac Wolferman, and Joseph Crosthwait (35r-59v). At RGO 1/59 and 1/60 are planetary and lunar calculations based on data from 1676-90 and 1705-6 respectively in Witty's hand. All of this reveals the highly regular technical work that Witty carried out on behalf of Flamsteed.
[284] J. Bennett and R. Higgitt, '"Greenwich near London": The Royal Observatory and its London Networks in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 52/2 (2019).
[285] J. Witty, *A Treatise of the Sphere*, ed. J. Hodgson (2nd ed, London, 1734), pp. iii-vi.

the tender age of thirty-three. With his skills as a theologian and computational astronomer, and his willingness to combine them, Witty ensured that he became a well-patronised, if ultimately unfortunate, young scholar.

Few specifics are available about Witty's education at St John's. However, throughout his time at the College, Humphrey Gower was Master, and notably celebrated the ability to 'keep and use other *Arts* and *Sciences* in due subordination and subserviency to the study of *Divine* matters'.[286] While there is no evidence of Gower's teaching in Cambridge – and he did not publish a major work – he was known for his deep concern towards the students of his college, and left a number of important books to St John's, including an early Renaissance volume on mnemonics, an illustrated herbal, and an edition of Marco Polo's account of his travels (1485). Gower's interest in modern astronomy (shared by Witty) is also suggested by the fact that he left the college a copy of John Wilkins's *A Discovery of a New World* (1638).

More striking with regards to Witty's *Essay*, which was framed as 'several Letters', is the fact that one of the metrics by which an undergraduate's knowledge was tested at St John's was through the production of epistles. We know this because one student, John Gibson, referenced the 'giving in of our Epistles which was on Thursday the last day of October'.[287] As concerns the content of Witty's *Essay*, it is also interesting that contemporary tutors in other colleges (including the anonymous one discussed above) regularly prescribed to their students the learned journals that Witty mined for evidence. Greene, for instance, instructed his third-years to consult van Leeuwenhoek's entries in the *Philosophical Transactions* on 'Minerals, their minute parts' as well as the latest editions of the German *Acta Eruditorum* and *Miscellanea Curiosa*.[288]

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[286] H. Gower, *A Discourse Deliver'd in Two Sermons [on 2 Kings ii, 11, 12]* (Cambridge, 1685), pp. 55-7.
[287] J. Gibson, 'John Gibson's Manuscript', in G.C.M. Smith (ed) *The Eagle: A Magazine Supported by Members of St John's College*, 18/98 (1892), pp. 256-7.
[288] Greene, *Enkyklopaideia*, pp. 3-6. Haywood similarly recommended the *Philosophical Transactions*. See MS Rawl. D. 40, fos. 7r-8v.

As has already been indicated, it is impossible to prise apart fully those sources that Witty read at university from those that he would have absorbed subsequently (save ones such as Newton's *Opticks* that were published after 1700). But what can be said is that it was fairly common for young scholars to spend the immediate post-BA period pursuing MA-style work (whether formally or informally) in preparation for ordination and in hopes of obtaining patronage through the publication of successful apologetics. Indeed, one contemporaneous Cambridge student, Thirlby, carried out his own studies for a total of eleven years between his first and second degrees. In Witty's case, early publishing efforts were mingled with his professional astronomical research and duties as a courtly chaplain, yet they were nonetheless officially rewarded with a degree from Cambridge and can thus be understood as manifestations of the traditional clerical career path.

With all of this in mind, we can turn to Witty's *Essay*. While an ostensibly modest attempt to 're-assert Moses's right in the Hexaemeron to a simple Historical Dress', this work was, in practice, motivated by a rather less self-effacing conviction that the 'first, second, and third Days and Nights' of the creation had never been 'Philosophically accounted for before'.[289] Although Witty clarified that there was no *a priori* reason to accept 'philosophical' objections to Mosaic history because God *could* suspend the laws of nature should He desire, he was sure that it was possible to square even the best natural philosophy with the literal reading. Proving this point, Witty claimed, was 'of the greatest extent' (i.e. it was his work's most important aim).[290]

One major protestation that deists, freethinkers, and other sceptics had made against the six-day account of the Creation was that light was supposedly created on the first day, while the sun had to wait until the third. Witty's first hurdle was thus to show that light was not

[289] Witty, *An Essay*, sig. A7r-v.
[290] Witty, *An Essay*, p. 13.

necessarily an effect of the sun. Interestingly, he did so by calling upon Book 3 of Newton's *Opticks*, which showed that light is not inherent in objects but is rather 'in us'. Witty specifically cited Newton's famous experiment demonstrating that the eye perceives colours when a finger is pressed against it in a dark room, quoting Newton's claim that light rays 'are not colour'd; in them there is nothing but a certain power and disposition to stir up a sensation of this or that colour'.[291] With a tone of superiority, he added that 'Some, I believe, have mistaken Mr. *Newton* in this Particular, and fancy'd that he thought Colours inherent Qualities in what he calls colour'd Rays'.[292] This would have implied that the sun was necessary for the existence of light, but Witty was convinced that, since we cannot know certainly what light is and that it seems *not* to inhere in rays, we cannot 'say that its ante-solar Existence is inconsistent with the nature of Light'. In a Miltonic vein (for Milton wrote of light in *Paradise Lost* that 'Before the sun, / …thou wert' (3.8-9)), Witty speculated that light may have originally been luminous matter that became condensed in the sun and stars, and that it took some time for the sun to become 'fix'd [as] something lighter than others'.[293] He admitted, however, that this speculation had not yet been experimentally established.

Witty applied much the same method to the second, third, and fourth days of the Creation, noting apparent problems with the Mosaic narrative, and then calling upon recent experimental and observational data to resolve them. When it came to the separation of the waters upon the creation of the firmament on day two, for example, he explained that, according to some, 'to talk of Waters above the Firmament, is to talk at an extravagant rate; to insist upon an *Utopian* Ocean, a System of Fluids no where actually existent in Nature'. But he reasoned that when Moses used the word 'waters' (or chaos) he probably meant fluid matter in general, since 'this

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[291] I. Newton, *Opticks: Or, A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflexions and Colours of Light* (London: 1704), p. 90.
[292] Witty, *An Essay*, pp. 63-4.
[293] Witty, *An Essay*, p. 63. Milton may well have taken this idea from Benedictus Pererius's often cited *Commentariorum et Disputationum in Genesim Tomi Quatuor* (Rome, 1591-9).

was the notion of the Chaos embrac'd by the old Philosophers' (including Thales, the Phoenicians, the Indian Brahmans, the Egyptian priests, and several Greek and Latin poets).[294] As Witty pointed out, every body 'save the central' in each world system is composed of some fluid matter, and the firmament was generally used to refer to the space in between two systems of fluids. He also specified that the word 'heaven' was very often used to refer to the firmament in scripture and ancient writings, and so '*Moses* may mean the Waters in the Clouds by those above the Firmament'. Moses, according to Witty, would therefore have been right, scientifically, to speak of waters above the firmament.

In another example, this time relating to the emergence of dry land and the production of vegetables, Witty's direct target was again Whiston, who had argued that the draining of primitive water from the Earth took around a year. To combat Whiston, Witty had to show that physical processes can happen extremely quickly. His first port of call was the explanation of the speed of sound. Here he was able to cite an experiment performed by the 'Virtuosis of the Academy *del Cimento*' whereby 'a piece of Ordinance were fir'd off at a Mile distance from the place of observation, 'twixt the appearance of the flash of the Fire, and the approach of the Report, there pass'd 10 half Seconds estimated by the vibration of Pendulums'.[295] In the case of light, he was even more confident that it is 'propagated in an instant', taking 'not above 8 Minutes in passing from the Sun to us' (adding that 'common Air is a very gross medium in comparison to the purer Æther').[296] The eight-minute estimation offered here came from the Danish astronomer Ole Rømer's observations on the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites that had been published in 1676 in the *Journal des sçavans* and soon after appeared in the *Philosophical*

[294] Witty, *An Essay*, p. 64 and 70.
[295] See 'EXPERIMENTS About the Motions of SOUNDS', tr. R Waller, *Essayes of Natural Experiments Made in the Academie del cimento, under the Protection of the Most Serene Prince Leopold of Tuscany* (London, 1634).
[296] Halley had commented in a *Philosophical Transactions* paper 'Concerning the Motion of Light' (19 October 1692) on how aether slowed down objects passing through it (including planets). See D. Levitin, 'Halley and the Eternity of the World Revisited', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, 67/4 (2013), p. 318.

Transactions.[297] These observations allowed Witty to infer that the same might be true of the motion of other particles. As he wrote, 'Now Sound is propagated in a bodily Vehicle; let the Waters therefore at the creation be put into such a motion, and in how small a time would they be drain'd into the Seas'. Using Edmond Halley's 1687 paper in the *Philosophical Transactions* titled 'An estimate of the quantity of vapour raised out of the sea by the warmth of the sun; derived from an experiment shown before the Royal Society' – in which Halley calculated the depth of the Thames at a particular point – Witty could generalise to the dimensions of water in the whole 'terraqueous Globe' at the Creation.[298] Following a series of calculations, he concluded that three quarters of the water now in the lakes, seas, and rivers could have been in place by the end of the third day. With the draining of the waters and the resultant emergence of land, vegetables could form, though Witty conceded to Whiston (who argued that plant generation could only be explained if we allow 'the primitive *Days* to have been *Years*') that vegetables might not have come to full perfection on the third day.[299]

One problem that Witty still faced was that modern natural historians and botanists usually considered the multiplicity of plant species on the Earth to be the consequence of different climates, specifically the cold North and the warm regions around the equator, where the 'nutrimental Vehicles are not so easily passable' in plants. But most agreed that at the Creation there had just been one, warm climate. This fact led some to argue that the plants that thrive in cold climates would have quickly died in the warmth, making it impossible for the full spectrum of vegetation now in existence to have come to fruition within six days. Witty retorted, however, that because of the abundance of water during the early days of the universe, even cold-climate plants would have had the requisite material to survive. As he explained, 'let

[297] Witty, *An Essay*, pp. 79-81. Halley, for example, also called upon Rømer's observations.
[298] E. Halley, 'An estimate of the quantity of vapour raised out of the sea by the warmth of the sun; derived from an experiment shown before the Royal Society, at one of their late meetings', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 189 (1687).
[299] Witty, *An Essay*, pp. 87-93 and Whiston, *A New Theory*, p. 89.

the Heat be such as would have a sufficient effect upon those which requir'd most, still it could not injure those which requir'd least: Whatever exhal'd from 'em, they had Fluids enough to support themselves, and for the Heat to continue to prey upon'.[300] This argument is indicative of his sense that combining the latest evidence about how natural processes *normally* occur with an understanding of the special conditions at the Creation would yield an account of plant generation and development that was compatible with a literal reading of Genesis.

Witty's willingness to use the 'special circumstances' argument and only to rely on secondary causes 'as long as it was warrantable' is nowhere more evident than in his treatment of spontaneous generation, where his line of reasoning was far closer to Whiston's. When it came to the issue of how full-fledged animals could have developed by the time of Adam's creation, Whiston made the case that 'the Seeds of Plants and Animals must be all ow'd to have been all the immediate Workmanship of God' but that they then grew naturally into their designated beings over the normal gestation period because they were placed in highly fertile soil. His elongation of the creation period via his allegorical reading of Genesis made this appear highly reasonable. Whiston was adamant, however, that

> 'Tis Evident from the Mosaick History of the Creation, that Our First Parents were on the very same Day in which they were made, in a State of Maturity and Perfection, and capable of all Humane Actions, both of Mind and Body. Now if they, like the other Animals, had been produc'd in the usual Time and Process of Generation, and come to ripeness of Age and Faculties by degrees afterwards; That were plainly impossible. This Creation therefore must have been peculiar, and the immediate Effect of a Divine Power.[301]

In other words, Whiston maintained that humans were the only beings who emerged fully formed via divine assistance.[302] Witty agreed that God could have created all natural beings barring humans in the form of seeds, but he claimed that if this had been the case then God would have helped these seeds to develop speedily into fully-fledged beings. Another option,

[300] Witty, *An Essay*, p. 98.
[301] Whiston, *A New Theory*, p. 227.
[302] Whiston, *A New Theory*, p. 228.

according to Witty, was simply that God created the beings in their mature state (as Whiston had argued was the case with the first humans).

While Whiston was one of Witty's targets when he wrote about the generation of primitive plants and animals, he was also seeking to counter all of those who had argued, after Lucretius, that the speed at which large animals were originally brought into being and came to perfection meant that they most likely generated spontaneously. Such a position was often rather vaguely attributed to 'atheists' by the time that Witty was writing.[303] Ventriloquising the argument of 'the *Atheists*' who defended spontaneous generation, Witty wrote that if the world 'can produce small things now, when almost spent, what might it not do in its full strength and vigor'?[304] Keen to reveal his thorough education in late seventeenth-century natural philosophy and natural history, Witty proceeded to cite a series of experiments to counteract this 'atheistic' stance.[305] He summoned, for example, an experiment that the Italian naturalist Marcello Malpighi had performed on soil from deep in the ground, which, having been dug up and laid in a vessel covered with silk that let in only light and water, did not give rise to a single plant or animal. He also referenced the slightly earlier 'accurate Observations' of the Italian physician Francesco Redi, who proved that it was not putrefying flesh that generated insects but rather 'Eggs there deposited', along with Jan Swammerdam's evidence that flies do not generate in maggots but instead appear in the *form* of maggots until their anatomical parts mature.[306] Witty rounded off his argument with a protracted discussion of seed generation,

[303] More generally, see M.R. Goodrum, 'Atomism, Atheism, and the Spontaneous Generation of Human Beings: The Debate over a Natural Origin of the First Humans in Seventeenth-Century Britain', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 63/2 (2002).
[304] Witty, *An Essay*, p. 120.
[305] This experiment, among others, is written up in M. Malpighi, *Anatome Plantarum* (2 vols, London, 1675 and 1679). The Royal Society published this work.
[306] Witty, *An Essay*, p. 125. Swammerdam came to this conclusion in his *Historia Insectorum Generalis* (Utrecht, 1669). For Redi, see E. Parke, 'Flies from Meat and Wasps from Trees: Reevaluating Francesco Redi's Spontaneous Generation Experiments', *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 45 (2014) and P. Gottdenker, 'Francesco Redi and the Fly Experiments', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 53 (1979). It was common for naturalists to attack spontaneous generation in the late seventeenth century and Edward Ruestow concluded in the 1680s that the theory was essentially dead by this time. See E. Ruestow, 'Leeuwenhoek and the Campaign Against Spontaneous Generation', *Journal of the History of Biology*,

concluding that the spontaneous production of tiny, complex, and intricate bodies that contained full plants or animals in miniature (as seeds were, he claimed, now 'universally receiv'd' to be) defied all of the known laws of nature and indeed reason itself.[307]

Even as Witty mobilised experimental data to support his claim that large animals could not generate spontaneously, he was aware that the dedicated Lucretian, or even a simple sceptic, could easily counter his position by stating that the Earth was far more vigorous in its primitive state than in its present one. Due to the enhanced generative powers of the youthful Earth, one could further contend that large animals might have generated spontaneously *then* even if they no longer could. As Witty summarised the argument, the 'only reason the *Atheists* bring for their making the inference from the least Vegetables to the greatest, and from Insects to larger Animals, is, the wide difference they fancy 'twixt the Earth now, and its self in its primitive condition'.[308] But he was not aware of any proof for the claim that the condition of the Earth had degraded over time. On the contrary, he pointed out, based on fossil evidence, that antediluvian animals and plants were very similar to those that existed in his day. While the atheist might still object that at least some of these antediluvian animals were generated spontaneously before the Flood and then non-spontaneously afterwards, Witty put the burden of evidence on his opponents to show that this was the case. Indeed, he noted that if 'the Earth was therefore capable of producing many larger Animals at first, ought we not expect some, tho' fewer, now'? Until it was established that at least one large animal generated spontaneously in his day, Witty was content to assume that animals and plants were produced in the same way at the creation and after the Flood.

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17 (1984). But others have shown that the theory remained alive, and Witty's attacks on it certainly suggest that he felt that there was still work to be done. For a discussion of experimental investigations using the microscope, which includes a discussion of spontaneous generation, see M.J. Ratcliffe, *The Quest for the Invisible Microscopy in the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 40-9.

[307] Witty, *An Essay*, p. 130.

[308] Witty, *An Essay*, pp. 120-1.

In all of this, Witty added argumentative force – though, it must be said, little by way of fresh evidence – to a series of points that Bentley had made in his widely read *The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism* (1693). In this work, Bentley rejected (exactly as Witty would do) the argument of those 'atheists' who 'tacitly suppose, that there is an universal decay of Moisture and Fertility in the Earth', highlighting that there was no natural philosophical evidence to support such an idea and plenty of evidence to suggest that the Earth was fundamentally unchanged.[309] John Woodward, however, reasserted the point that Bentley had gainsaid in *An Essay Toward a Natural History of the Earth* (1695), claiming that the 'Earth, though not indifferently and alike fertil in all parts of it' before the deluge 'was yet generally much more fertil than ours is'.[310] By reasserting Bentley's argument, Witty was determined to keep the ball in the possession of the 'orthodox' as he realised that conceding to Woodward that the Earth was very different before the Flood would severely limit his ability to explain the antediluvian state of nature using principles and discoveries from modern natural philosophy (and thus damage the relevance of 'general learning').

In his turn, Whiston had tried to find a *via media* between Woodward and Bentley with a natural but not literal explanation of the Creation. Like Witty, he perceived there to be strong overlaps between pre- and post-diluvian nature, which allowed him to use modern experimental and observational data to explain the processes involved in the formation of the universe and the vast majority of beings within it. However, we have seen that Whiston wanted to explain phenomena such as the formation of primitive plants and animals without appealing to divine intervention, whereas Witty was happy to pivot from secondary causes to God when doing so would allow him to 'save' a literal reading of Genesis. Witty evidently perceived there to be more danger in conceding to a non-literal hermeneutic method than in failing to explain

[309] R. Bentley, *The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism* (London, 1693), p. 22.
[310] J. Woodward, *An Essay Toward a Natural History of the Earth* (London, 1695), p. 84.

something naturally. In other words, Witty sensed at least as much danger in Whiston's willingness to move the goalposts in an allegorical direction as in Woodward's conception of universal degradation. Whereas the latter threatened to limit the extent to which modern natural philosophy could be used to explain the sacred word, the former threatened to expand the remit of possible interpretations of the sacred word itself.[311] As Witty explained it, 'If Moses's History of the Creation is not to be literally interpreted, then neither is that of the Fall; and if the Fall is a piece of Mythology, then so is the Redemption; and if the Redemption is a Fable, then welcome Deism, and farewell reveal'd Religion'. He accordingly defended a literal reading of the Mosaic version of the creation because he feared that not doing so would create a slippery slope and embolden deists to question more profound aspects of the Christian faith.[312]

V. Conclusion: Resystematising?

In 1681, Thomas Manningham, a young New College fellow, composed a work titled *Two Discourses* in which he claimed that the flaws in the arguments of the 'atheists', whose numbers were apparently visibly growing, could only be exposed by combining 'all the Amplitude of *Topics*, whether *Theological*, *Metaphysical*, *Physical*, *Moral*, or *Mathematical*'.[313] Manningham's proclamation is emblematic of a widespread post-Restoration sense that the knowledge domains taught in the universities were thoroughly interconnected, and that deepening the links between them would create an irrefutable rock of knowledge around which so-called atheists could not pass. But the perceived value of combining all of the 'topics' in a single work to combat atheism and unorthodoxy faded in the ensuing decades. This is perhaps partly because two totemic anti-atheism volumes that had

[311] Witty, *An Essay*, p. 117.
[312] Witty, *An Essay*, sig. A3r.
[313] T. Manningham, *Two Discourses: The First Concerning Truth, the Second Shewing Popery One Great Cause of Atheism* (Oxford, 1681), pp. 17-18.

combined philosophical, historical, and mythological learning to a fuller extent than many had imagined possible – Edward Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae* (1662) and Cudworth's *True Intellectual System* – still failed to stop atheism and irreligion in its tracks. On the contrary, Witty (like many of his contemporaries) lamented, in 1707, that his was an unparallelled 'Age of Liberty and Free Thinking'.[314] In the aftermath of Cudworth's publication, anti-clerical thinkers such as Collins were in fact emboldened (against the backdrop of the lapsing of the Licensing Act and the creation of the Toleration Act) to take the ancient idea that matter might possess a vital, thinking power to its extreme in efforts to challenge the immateriality of the soul, gaining themselves the demeaning label of 'Men of *Matter and Modification*'.[315] At the same time, we have seen that Whiston and others used new physical discoveries to undermine strictly literal readings of the Bible.[316] Trouble had thus arisen in both the domains of natural and revealed religion (which of course overlapped in both of these contexts), and scholars such as Witty realised that they would do best to deal with the issues as they arose, topic by topic, rather than attempting to pursue what we might call a theory (but in this period more like a history) of everything.

On another level – that of sheer manpower and resources – the outpouring of works with anti-clerical or doctrinally dubious agendas in the 1690s and early 1700s made it seem far more strategic for young divines to pick off areas with which they were best prepared to engage, whether that be in mathematics or natural philosophy (as in Witty's case) or in classical philology and patristics (as in Humphreys's). This way, these early-career scholars could (hopefully) expose the fallacies of their enemies within a domain in which they were proficient,

[314] Witty, *First Principles of Modern Deism Confuted*, p. ii.
[315] Hickes, *Spinoza Reviv'd*, sig. A3v.
[316] Witty's *First Principles of Modern Deism Confuted* was mainly aimed at Collins. His argument, against Collins, was that we have '*no* Immediate Ideas' about 'the primary Essences of Matter' (xi), which Witty explained (after Locke and Newton) is demonstrably unextended, unthinking, and unable to move itself.

and, from the perspective of the universities and Church, their works could be seen as a corpus that covered 'all the Amplitude of *Topics*'.

Why Witty decided, in his *Essay*, to revive a debate regarding whether the six-day Creation account in Genesis could be scientifically explicated that the historian might be forgiven for thinking was already over by the early 1700s, however, still requires further explication. As I see it, there are two principal reasons why he decided to weigh in on the world-making controversy in its twilight. The first is simply that Witty believed that he had something to contribute to the history of knowledge. As he saw it, he had managed 'to account for the first, second, and third Days and Nights [of the Mosaic creation account]; which I can't say any have Philosophically accounted for before me'.[317] This was important because, in doing so, Witty had extended the number of passages in scripture that could be read literally while still being shown to be compatible with philosophy.

The second reason why Witty appears to have revived the subject of the scientific viability of the Mosiac Creation seems to be more sociological in nature. That is, whereas Keill had largely attacked Whiston in his *An Examination* on natural philosophical and mathematical grounds, and objected to his arguments for special providence, Witty felt that Whiston's presentation of a non-literal reading of Genesis had been allowed to slip through the net, and, as noted in the prior section, he worried that allowing this form of reading to pass as acceptable might lead to a slippery slope, encouraging the less learned or more provocative to view more doctrinally significant parts of the Bible through a similarly non-literal lens. In other words, although Witty admitted that he did not 'think those learned Men, who have made too free with Moses' actually wanted to engage in 'the promotion and propagation of Deism', the manner in which they had approached the Mosaic history of the Creation had 'given great occasion to the

[317] Witty, *An Essay*, sig. A7r.

Enemies of Revelation' to do more damage elsewhere in the scriptures.[318] Whiston had also, we might recall, been appointed to the Lucasian chair in Cambridge in 1701, granting him a high-profile podium from which to express his views, not least among undergraduate students. It seems likely that this promotion of a figure whom Witty deemed to be something of a rabble-rouser pushed him to select a topic that would allow him to harm the image of this contemporaneous rising star.

[318] Witty, *An Essay*, sig. A5r.

2.3 Sacred Propaedeutics: John Mill and James Hammond

I. Introduction

Many historians have mentioned Mill's 1707 Greek New Testament, which is a landmark in the history of theological erudition that was recently described as 'Far and away the single most decisive contribution to eighteenth-century textual criticism'.[319] Indeed, according to Wettstein, this 'learned man [Mill] alone did more, in the labour of thirty years, than all those who had preceded him'.[320] Despite this, no serious attention has been devoted to Mill's religious ideas. In part, this is because he did not write any discursive, controversial works; the extended Prolegomena to his variorum edition was notoriously cautious and historical.[321] At the same time, there has not yet been a full study of turn-of-the-century theological pedagogy in the English universities, with the prevailing assumption being that these institutions had become backwaters.

This chapter takes steps towards filling these gaps by focussing on a hitherto unstudied set of notes on a lecture that Mill delivered as Principal of St. Edmund Hall.[322] The notes – which are housed in a miscellaneous Harleian manuscript in the British Library – were dictated by a keen young divine, Hammond, who jotted down words, phrases, and occasionally verses from the Septuagint and New Testament (the 1633 edition of the *Textus Receptus*) and translated them from Greek to English.[323] More tellingly, he recorded Mill's reflections on scripture. While they are undated, we can surmise that these notes, which were dictated 'in chapel after

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[319] Carlsson, 'Johann Salomo Semler', p. 307. For Mill generally, see Handley, S., 'Mill, John (1644/5-1707)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).
[320] J.J Wettstein, quoted in W. Baird, *History of New Testament Research, Vol. 1, From Deism to Tübingen* (Minneapolis, 1992), pp. 25-6.
[321] J. Mill, *Ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη. Novum Testamentum* (Oxford, 1707). The fullest extant study of Mill is A. Fox, *John Mill and Richard Bentley: A Study of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, 1675-1729* (Oxford, 1954). Also see J. Sheehan, *Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, 2005), pp. 96-8.
[322] British Library MS Harley 6941.
[323] For Hammond's name, see the inscription on the first leaf of the relevant manuscript section at MS Harley 6941, fo. 191r.

morning and evening prayers', are from the late 1690s, since Hammond commenced his MA in 1697, at which time he would have stepped up his divinity studies before entering the Church. As the reference to morning *and* evening prayers suggests, at least two lectures took place (even if these were on a single day), and the fact that his notes take up sixteen large folio pages further indicates that they were taken over several lectures.[324]

Using Hammond's notes, this chapter not only offers a glimpse into the principles that undergirded Mill's academic research, but also provides unparalleled evidence that students were actively encouraged to take a textual-critical approach to scripture seriously, thus demonstrating that the universities (probably even more than the Dissenting Academies fuelled a broader transformation in theological method). Indeed, as this chapter argues, Mill was at the cutting-edge of theological teaching well beyond England; it was not until the mid-eighteenth century that the illustrious German professor J.S. Baumgarten came to appreciate fully Mill's contributions and to teach his text at the University of Halle.[325] Rather than being innovative in the sense of contributing to Enlightenment secularisation, however, I make the case that Mill chiefly deployed a microscopic philological mode of biblical criticism in order to build overtly apologetic arguments, which, in their own right, give a much fuller sense of Mill's driving concerns and their relationship to the polemics of the period. Complicating any notion that 'textual decisions' were 'totally separate from interpretative and doctrinal concerns', as Haugen has suggested (at least in the case of Bentley), I show that Mill forsook pretences to impartiality, and rather extracted scriptural passages to unroll a powerful vision of *jure divino* episcopacy.[326] This chapter will thus allow us to see beyond the neutral façade of Mill's New

[324] MS Harley 6941, fo. 191r: 'in Capella post preces matutinas et vespertinas; omnia ad lin 5.^{tam} pg 4^{tae}, per Jacobum Hammond dictae Aulae: scripta fuerant pruisquam illic ad sui, sed eoliquorum testis fueram auritus'. For Hammond, see *Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1714*, ed. J. Foster (4 vols, Oxford, 1891), ii, p. 640. For the identification of Thomas Hearne's hand as that in which the notes are written (with Hearne presumably having copied the notes from Hammond's original dictations), see Fox, *John Mill and Richard Bentley*, p. 24. For a brief note on Mill's teaching in chapel and at hall, see Feingold, 'The Humanities', p. 260.
[325] Carlsson, 'Johann Salomo Semler', p. 308.
[326] K. Haugen, 'Transformations of the Trinity Doctrine in English Scholarship from the History of Beliefs to the History of Texts', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 3 (2001), p. 150.

Testament and to understand some of his ideological motivations. Over the course of this chapter, it will become clear that the Episcopalian Church and universities were, to Mill's mind, mutually dependent guarantors of methodological and historical continuity, and that Mill regarded a text-critical approach, intended as the culmination of extensive general learning, to be the securest means by which to reveal this fact. In the end, the pedagogic setting functioned for Mill as a site both for testing pioneering scholarly methods and insights *and* for protecting a highly traditional brand of erudite churchmanship.

II. Teaching the Bible

While studies of late seventeenth-century biblical criticism have tended to sideline teaching, Hammond's lecture notes underscore that, in some quarters of the English universities, there was a perceptible pedagogical shift away from foregrounding doctrinal principles via compendia, 'systems', or 'bodies' of divinity and towards an emphasis on establishing such principles through the study of scripture itself, with occasional recourse to the fathers as witnesses and interpreters.[327] Indeed, during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, philological approaches to scripture were increasingly mandated as a core part of divinity training. One piece of evidence for the increased significance of such approaches comes from Dodwell's *Two Letters*. As Dodwell informed his readers (who would mainly have been students), determining what a sacred author meant by a given term or phrase, especially where translation had occurred, was best

> resolved by *Philological* learning: by enquiring how the same Author used the same expression in other clearer parallel places; how the Auditors themselves usually understood it, and so to examine the *Idiomes* either of the place or Country from other ~~their~~ contemporary writers.[328]

[327] For a prime example of the 'systematic' approach, see Wadham College student Nicholas Lloyd's 'Method of catechisticall divinity' (produced in the 1650s) in Bodleian MS Rawl. C. 759. For patristic scholarship in the Restoration, see Quantin, *Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, esp. pp. 293-6 and Quantin, 'Erudition and Orthodoxy'.

[328] Dodwell, *Two Letters*, p. 192. Edmundson's MS 'Directions' that cites Dodwell's *Two Letters* is MS Rawl. D. 214.

Strikingly, by the early eighteenth century, this approach was being extended to BA students, who, at least in England, had not typically engaged with theological material until their graduate years. In 1707, for example, the aforementioned Greene instructed his first-year students at Clare Hall to tackle a 'Lesson in the *Greek* Testament Morning and Evening with the *Critici Sacri*'.[329] When Elizabeth Hastings established the prestigious Hastings Scholarship at Queen's College, Oxford, in 1739, the BA students who held the scholarship were also tellingly required to 'spend one hour every morning in the study of the scriptures and to write their own explications of such particular places and passages' as their tutors 'shall think proper'.[330] It would be very surprising to find similar advice from a mid-seventeenth-century tutor, when the BA was reserved for the secular arts and philosophies. It should also be stressed that even references to 'systems' of divinity, which became less common in the eighteenth century, were not always (or even regularly) to pieces of *systematic* theology but rather simply to works that were complete or comprehensive in nature. This often included, ironically, works such as Hugo Grotius's *De veritate religionis Christianae* (1627) that were anti-systematic in the traditional sense of logically extrapolating doctrine from scripture.[331] Even then, it became standard for tutors to assert that their students should not dive into commentators or explanatory works until they could confidently read the scriptures in their original languages. Haywood, for one, urged early-stage divinity students to take a 'Chapter or more in the Greek Testam^{t} every day, a chapter in the Septuagint, & by degrees […] a Chapter in the Orig. Hebrew', and

[329] Greene, *Enkyklopaideia*, p. 1.
[330] Poulson, *Beverlac*, p. 464.
[331] For attitudes towards biblical interpretation in the English universities, see D. Levitin and S. Mandelbrote, 'Becoming Heterodox in Seventeenth-Century Cambridge: The Case of Isaac Newton', in D. Levitin and N. Hardy (eds), *Confessionalisation and Erudition in Early Modern Europe: An Episode in the History of the Humanities* (Oxford, 2019). Gilbert Burnet's *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (London, 1699) – which was a rather political work – was also often used by students as a divinity 'system'.

compare 'the text w^th^ the Context, and parallel places' with the help of 'acient versions in the Polygl: Bib:' and 'the ancient Fathers' but not to 'meddle not with comments too soon'.[332]

Mill, as a major contributor to this philological and contextualist shift, similarly encouraged his students to stick closely to the word of the scriptures and to try to work out the sense of a key theological term with reference to broader historical information without relying on what one contemporary would refer to as 'Burdensome Commentaries'.[333] Such a method naturally required broad learning, especially in grammar, geography, antiquities, and ancient philosophy. Bearing this out, Hammond's early notes dwell on aspects of Jewish culture, with Mill explicating words relating to rituals, feasts, geographic regions, and monuments (such as the 'Pillar of Absalom'). More significantly, this method led Mill to propose revisionist readings. For instance, he taught students to interpret Ezra 6.11 – which, in the Septuagint version, read 'καὶ ὠρθωμένος πληγήσεται' – as referring not, as in the King James Bible, to a man being 'hanged' from 'timber' but to his being impaled on a stake. Mill came to this conclusion not only by consulting 'some MSS' printed in Walton's London Polyglot Bible, but also because such a punishment 'was (and is) a custom much used by the Eastern nations, & likewise by the Romans, & is remembered by Juvenal &c'.[334] In this sense, he sought to impart to students an up to date perspective on the history of cultural practices.[335] He also demanded of them a sound grasp of the classical poets who, after all, remained some of the most important sources on ancient customs, as the Oxford divine John Potter's *Archaeologia Graeca* (1697) made abundantly clear.[336] In doing so, Mill endeavoured to illustrate that pagan authorities were indispensable to understanding the letter of scripture, and that many of the tools and

[332] MS Rawl. D. 40, fos. 13r-14v.
[333] These quotations are from W. Whiston, *Sermons and Essays upon Several Subjects* (London, 1709), p. 302 and pp. 307-8. For a classic student textbook on sacred geography, see E. Wells, *An Historical Geography of the New Testament […] Adorned with Maps; in Two Parts* (London, 1708) and Wotton, *Some Thoughts*.
[334] MS Harley 6941, fo. 194r.
[335] D. Levitin, 'From Sacred History to the History of Religion: Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity in European Historiography from Reformation to Enlightenment', *The Historical Journal*, 55/4 (2012), p. 1141.
[336] J. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, 1991), pp. 164-6.

techniques that students had picked up as undergraduates when studying the classics could be used to illuminate the sacred word.

Even as Mill guided students towards subtly contextualist readings, his lecture promoted a deeply philological approach, which is perhaps unsurprising given that it was titled 'An explication of certain Greek terms in both the Old and New Testaments' ['Explicatio vocum quarundam Graecarum in utroque Testamento occurrentium'] and that Mill made his name with an approach to biblical and ecclesiastical scholarship based on close reading and emendation.[337] To provide just one example of how this method played out in the lecture, the King James Bible translated the 'λογικὴν λατρεία' in Romans 12.1 as a 'reasonable service'. On Hammond's account, however, Mill interpreted these words as 'a spiritual sacrifice'. This might seem odd given that a 'living sacrifice' (θυσίαν ζῶσαν) is mentioned earlier in the same verse, which Mill bypassed.[338] But it appears that he was intent on collapsing the distinction between the act of worship/devotion ('a reasonable service') and the offering presented (the 'living sacrifice'). Paul's original aim in Romans 12.1 had been to elevate the 'rational' worship of the Christians over the 'barbaric' and bloody animal offerings of the pagans.[339] By breaking down the object/act distinction, then, Mill sought to emphasise further the non-corporeal nature of Christian sacrifices and play up their spiritual (and rational) character (as acts of worship) in a manner reminiscent of Philo's claim that 'what is precious in the sight of God' is the 'true purity of a rational (λογικον) spirit in him who makes the sacrifice'.[340] Confirming that the above usage of the term 'λατρεία' was not simply a mistake in Hammond's

[337] MS Harley 6941, fo. 191r. For the best-known argument for the 'turn to texts', see Haugen, 'Transformations of the Trinity Doctrine'. See also J.-L. Quantin, 'Document, histoire, critique dans l'érudition ecclésiastique des temps modernes', *Recherches de science religieuse*, 92 (2004). For Mill's work on the language of Malalas's chronicle, see Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, pp. 83-6. Some scholars read Mill anachronistically as ushering in 'genuinely modern or scientific NT textual criticism': E.J. Epp and G.D. Fee, *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, 1993), p. 19.
[338] MS Harley 6941, fo. 194r.
[339] A.J. Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition: The Purpose, Genre and Audience of Paul's Letter* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 157-9.
[340] Philo of Alexandria, cited in Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, p. 158.

transcription, the similar 'προσφέρω λατρείαν' is rendered 'to offer a sacrifice' in the next sentence of Mill's manuscript, with the word 'θυσίαν' (sacrifice) again suspiciously missing in favour of the more Christian 'worship/service' (λατρείαν). Mill's subtle alteration of received readings of biblical passages – based on new evidence and a re-assessment of the original author's intentions – may be relatively benign in this example, but we will see that he later directed the same practice towards more controversial ends.

Hammond frequently referred with pride to his tutor's 'opinions' or 'inclinations' so as to underline their conjectural but ultimately probable character. This suggests that Mill had some success in convincing his students that the use of their critical judgment was, to quote a recent scholar, 'the pinnacle of all literary scholarship'.[341] A good deal of Mill's own critical judgement was reserved for the Septuagint, which was a text that many scholars, including his friend Thomas Smith, an acclaimed Oxford-based antiquary and orientalist, deemed to be 'corrupt in a thousand places'.[342] Mill shared Smith's ambitions to edit the Septuagint after 1688, making heavy use of the notoriously difficult Codex Alexandrinus. In particular, Hammond's notes suggest that Mill followed Jerome in holding that the six-column tables of Origen's landmark *Hexapla* – which only survived in the four-column Codex Sinaiticus – had caused a good deal of the confusion among Septuagint scholars by retaining both Hebrew words and their transliterations into the Greek alphabet. As Jerome put it, 'the very Hebrew words, too, are copied in their own letters, and expressed in Greek letters in the neighboring column'.[343] That being said, Mill's decision not to shield students from these realities is notable, and seems to have stemmed from a strong conviction that finding errors in the

[341] N. Hardy, *Criticism and Confession: The Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Republic of Letters* (Oxford, 2017), p. 36.
[342] For Mill and the Septuagint, see S. Mandelbrote, 'English Scholarship and the Greek Text of the Old Testament, 1620-1720: The Impact of Codex Alexandrinus', in A. Hessayon and N. Keene (eds), *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2006), esp. p. 90.
[343] MS Harley 6941, fo. 194r and A. Grafton and M. Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), p. 91.

Septuagint and the *Textus Receptus* would open up a space for the next generation of critical scholars to restore the biblical text to its true glory. Read in this way, Mill's edition was not an attempt to foreclose interpretative possibilities but rather to provide a rich resource for future critics, whose art remained 'anything but autotelic'.[344] It is telling in this sense that Ludolph Küster, in his 1710 Rotterdam republication of Mill's work, could already add twelve new manuscript discoveries, just three years on.[345]

Due to the heavy emphasis in Mill's edition on new material and the huge number of textual discrepancies that it located, it is unsurprising that the English divine Daniel Whitby feared that it might open the doors for libertines and Catholics to cast doubt on received textual readings, articles of faith, and even the coherence of revelation as a whole. Collins confirmed this fear in his *Discourse of Freethinking* (1713), using Mill's edition as an occasion to question the veracity of scripture, while John Toland licked his lips when he heard of '30000 variations, which some of our divines have discover'd'.[346] But we should note that the concerns of Whitby – who was a notorious anti-patristic cleric with millenarian inclinations – were driven in part by his desire to undermine the authority of institutional divines such as Mill.[347] Contrary to Whitby's charge, Mill's method was in no ways meant to weaken faith, and Mill was indeed convinced that traditional theological agendas, more than subversive ones, would benefit from the flowering of a text-critical approach to the biblical text. As Samuel Parker the Younger put it in *Censura temporum* (1708), the errors and inconsistencies that scribes and translators had introduced among the biblical manuscripts over the ages, and that Mill's edition had helped to

[344] Hardy, *Criticism and Confession*, p. 43.
[345] T. Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London, 1808), p. xvi.
[346] B.M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament Fourth Edition* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 154-5; J.A.I. Champion, *John Toland: Nazarenus* (Oxford, 1999), p. 140; and Sheehan, *Enlightenment Bible*, pp. 44-5.
[347] D. Whitby, *Examen variantum lectionum Johannis Milli* (London, 1710). For a fuller discussion, see J.-L. Quantin, *Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, pp. 296-7.

expose, were simply akin to 'so many freckles in a good Face; a sure Sign that Beauty is not counterfeit'.[348]

III. Mill's Apologetic Turn

While Mill sought to provide the most convincing arguments for his alternative readings of the biblical text – often based on his critical interpretation of newly discovered manuscript variants – his approach did not preclude the promotion of an apologetic agenda, and may even have facilitated it. An exposition of 1 Peter 3, for example, gave Mill a chance to intimate some of his ideas on salvation. In a rare appeal to the church fathers in the lecture notes (which might be surprising given the prevalence of patristic citations in Mill's edition), Mill singled out Irenaeus and Tertullian to make a case against purgatory. With interesting hesitancy, Hammond recorded that these fathers had an idea, which 'might be groundless', that there is a 'middle state' for the departed souls of the righteous (principally Abraham) 'before the day of Judgement', stemming from the reference to Jesus preaching to 'spirits in prison' after his Resurrection in 1 Peter 3.19 ('ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν').[349] As Hammond went on to note, such an idea propped up a key tenet of 'y^{e} Papists' – purgatory – that Mill obviously wanted his students to combat, teaching them to read the word 'spirits' (πνεύμασιν) as 'men' rather than 'souls'. On this reading, the resurrected Jesus spoke to convicts. Hammond highlighted that this made sense given that the word 'souls' (ψυχαί) in 'y^{e} verse following' was to be understood as 'men'; compared to this latter example, the case of 'spirits' was quite straightforward.[350] Nonetheless, Hammond's curious uncertainty when he notes that the opinion of Irenaeus and Tertullian about a middle state *might* be groundless indicates that Mill was willing to entertain the testimonies of these venerable authorities even

[348] S. Parker, *The Good or Ill Tendencies of Books, Sermons, Pamphlets, &c. Impartially Consider'd, in a Dialogue Between Eubeulus [sic] and Sophronius* (London, 1708), p. 17.
[349] MS Harley 6941, fo. 195v.
[350] MS Harley 6941, fo. 195v.

as he proceeded to challenge the Catholic Church's interpretations of their position on purgatory.[351]

Rather than primarily targeting Catholic beliefs, however, Mill's principal goal was to shore up fundamental doctrines of the Church of England. After all, most of the young scholars whom he taught at St. Edmund Hall were destined to enter the Church and come to its aid during theological controversies that might flare up during their lifetimes. In this regard, the question of the nature of the Trinity was an especially pressing concern. We can glean this most clearly from Hammond's remarks on Mill's exposition of 1 Peter 3.18. The King James Bible had translated this verse as 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit'.[352] Isolating the word 'περὶ' (for) – but remarking that 'here and elsewhere' in some manuscripts it also read 'υπερ' (for/over) – Mill rather ambiguously surmised that the Holy Spirit has an evident 'relation to Christ'. He also concluded, without supplying evidence, that in Romans 6.4, a statement on Christ's resurrection, 'διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρός' meant that Christ rose 'by the Power of y^{e} Father', instead of the more common translation of 'δόξης' as 'glory'. The implications of such manoeuvres might seem opaque, but Mill evidently had a plan, since Hammond proceeded to conclude from these insights that in the New Testament, 'the Resurrection of our Lord is ascribed to each of y^{e} 3 persons of y^{e} Trinity': in 1 Peter 3.18 to the Holy Ghost, in Romans 6.4 to God, and in John 10.18 to Christ. That is, Mill had to erode the distinction between Christ and the Holy Ghost in 1 Peter 3.18, and prove that Romans 6.4 referred to God's power rather than His glory, if he wanted to advance the stronger claim that the resurrection was attributable to each person of the godhead. Suggesting that he had some success, Hammond added a marginal note stating that all 'y^{e} Apostles believed the trinity

[351] For when English divines thought that Catholic positions emerged (based on discussions in 1680s London), see Quantin, *Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, pp. 324-7.
[352] MS Harley 6941, fo. 195v: 'ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζῳοποιηθεὶς δὲ τῷ πνεύματι'.

& so was all one'.[353] Mill had done his job for now, in a particularly transparent instance of how textual criticism could be harnessed to prop up doctrinal orthodoxy.

Mill's attempt to find scriptural proof for the Trinity, however, brought with it an additional problem: namely, that it might resonate with what he elsewhere described as the 'damnable Doctrine' of the Gnostics. According to this doctrine, which Mill feared would 'totally destroy, & eradicate all Christianity', Christ 'never personally came into the world' and someone suffered 'in his stede'. Mill did not want to get caught up in the history of philosophy, and the messy Trinitarian debates between the Gnostics and the fathers, even if he had elsewhere used patristic writings to serve his purposes. But he was fully aware that he needed not only to illustrate the unity of the Godhead, but also to show that Christ was fully human, and thus de-emphasise his proximity to the Holy Ghost.[354] Exhibiting a deftness gained by experience, Mill did so, in part, by arguing that the 'likelyest' interpretation of 'πνευμα' at the end of John 19.30 – when Jesus 'bowed his head, and gave up the ghost' – was not in fact 'Holy Ghost' or 'Spirit' (as per tradition) but rather 'breath'. By opting for the most corporal signification of 'πνευμα', Mill was able to propose that John referred to Christ taking his last, all-too-human breath, 'with a great Cry'.[355] Haugen has demonstrated how Mill ventured 'into the plane of textual criticism' (in the preface, notes, and Prolegomena to his New Testament) in order to defend Church of England orthodoxy, and has stressed his desire to authenticate the sole Greek manuscript reference to the much disputed *comma Johanneum* (John 5.7-8).[356] Yet Hammond's notes provide uncharted evidence that Mill also harnessed pedagogy as a weapon in this theological warfare, and that he exposed students to a sophisticated mode of biblical

[353] MS Harley 6941, fo. 196v.
[354] MS Harley 6941, fo. 195v.
[355] MS Harley 6941, fo. 197r.
[356] Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, pp. 203-4; Haugen, 'Transformations of the Trinity Doctrine', pp. 159-60; and J. Levine, 'Erasmus and the Problem of the Johannine Comma', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58 (1997). For shifts in the use of manuscripts, see W. Yarchin, 'Biblical Interpretation in Light of the Interpretation of Nature: 1650-1900', in S. Mandelbrote and J. van der Meer (eds), *Nature and Scripture in the Abrahamic Religions: 1700-Present* (2 vols, Leiden, 2008), i, p. 53.

philology in the process. It is also true, as Haugen points out, that scholars such as Mill developed such methodological techniques in a bid to stay one step ahead of radical contemporaries because, as they were aware, hiding manuscripts or failing to embrace new evidence would make that evidence look more circumspect than it would appear if they simply presented it.[357] Ockley made the point very clear when weighing up the pros and cons of translating the Arabic manuscript version of II Esdras (discussed in 2.1), writing that when Whiston first proposed the translation he was 'very well aware, that the refusing my Assistance in that Particular, might prove of worse Consequence to the Church, than granting it', because it would appear as though there was something to hide.[358]

While the Trinity debate was no doubt high stakes, it was largely dwarfed in 1690s England by discussions about the nature of episcopacy and church-state relations.[359] Mill's lecture was delivered in the decade immediately following the eruption of the non-juring controversy, and, thanks to his desire to fashion St. Edmund Hall as a refuge for non-juring scholars, he was potentially suspect in spite of his commitment to the new regime.[360] Aside from an unwillingness to swear the oath of allegiance to William III and Mary, a major problem with non-jurors was their desire to claim special powers for the Church, grounded in scripture and the fathers, not to mention their insistence on liturgical conformity and elaborate ceremony. Grabe, for example, who is often associated with this group, did not attend Communion, and even constructed his own liturgy based on that of the early Greek Church.[361] It is now well established that Grabe and those who shared some of his ecclesiastical commitments (not least Dodwell) spurred on both the schismatic non-jurors with whom they associated *and*,

[357] Haugen, 'Transformations of the Trinity Doctrine'.
[358] Ockley, *An Account*, p. 5.
[359] Levitin, 'Matthew Tindal's *Rights*', pp. 717-25.
[360] G. Thomann, 'John Ernest Grabe (1666–1711): Lutheran Syncretist and Anglican Patristic Scholar', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43/3 (1992), p. 419 and N. Keene, 'John Ernest Grabe, Biblical Learning and Religious Controversy in Early Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 58/4 (2007), p. 658.
[361] Mandelbrote, 'English Scholarship', p. 92.

unwittingly, 'doctrinally suspect low churchmen' such as Whiston, who used the fathers to question established Church dogma.[362] Mill was circumspect on divisive matters – and was known for his shifting allegiances – but Hammond's notes reveal that Mill, with his deep attachment to episcopacy, was far from a neutral actor in post-Revolutionary England.

In Hammond's notes, Mill's arguments about episcopal power began with John 20.21, which read 'Then said Jesus to them [the apostles] again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you' [εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν· καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ κἀγὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς]. From this statement, Mill was convinced that the Saviour bestowed a divine power upon the Apostles and that 'our Lord intended it for their successors & so from Generation to Generation while the World endures'. His language resounded strikingly with Stillingfleet's celebration, in the mid-1680s, of the institution of episcopacy, which was based on the '*Apostolical Succession*' and set to endure until 'the World's End'.[363] But it is also interesting that Mill explicitly refers to Tertullian's view that the 'successors of the apostles' [seminis Apostilici traduces] possessed an 'inherent' authority thanks to the 'vicarious power of the spirit' [vicaria spiritus praesentia]. Mill would certainly have been familiar with Tertullian's belief that the episcopate is responsible for providing a historically verifiable genealogy or 'pedigree of doctrine'.[364] Mill might even have seen the Church – which was intimately linked to the universities – as responsible for guarding the true interpretation of scripture. Indeed, to Mill's mind, since bishops were 'to that Office ordained by the Apostles themselves, & these were to ordain others, & so on', 'Episcopacy is absolutely necessary & inherent to Christianity', and he feared that without it 'the Christian Religion

[362] Mandelbrote, 'English Scholarship', p. 92. For Whiston as biblical critic, see N. Keene, '"A Two-Edged Sword": Biblical Criticism and the New Testament Canon in Early Modern England', in A. Hessayon and N. Keene (eds), *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 99 and Feingold, 'William Whiston Reads Josephus'.
[363] E. Stillingfleet, *A Sermon Preached at a Publick Ordination* (London, 1685), pp. 38-9.
[364] MS Harley 6941, fo. 198r. See D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 146.

cannot subsist'.[365] Although this was by no means uncommon in Restoration Oxford and beyond, the non-juring threat made such pronouncements immediately suspect.

One of Mill's conclusions that would have proven especially controversial was that modern bishops possessed a power 'wholly distinct from & independent of any civil or secular Power or Authority whatever, & this is a Power of Preaching the Word of God, a Power of Administring the Sacraments, a Power of Ordaining fit persons to the Ministry'.[366] Mill's use of the word 'authority' in relation to clerical power is particularly striking, as becomes clearer when we turn to the final pages of Hammond's notes on the topic of absolution.[367] Based on John 20.3, Mill seems to have described the idea of 'sins' (ἁμαρτίας) as 'twofold'. On the one hand, he noted that, in the gospels, some sins resulted in a 'venial' (or temporal) punishment, but that the sinners did not break their covenant with God and were cured by Christ; on the other, he described those 'heinous offences we commit', or mortal sins that are so grave that, once committed, result in a privation of grace, which 'none but God alone can pardon' on the day of judgement. It was in discussing the latter kind of absolution that Mill deployed a crucial distinction between 'authoritative' and 'declarative' power. To summarise briefly, declarative power was often traced back to the discourse of 'keys' – the ability to open the gates of heaven – in the New Testament and particularly in Peter. This power was traditionally regarded as 'softer', since it was gleaned from the gospels, yet Gregory the Great famously concluded (contra Jerome) that 'all Priests were made God's Vicegerents here on earth, in his name to retain and forgive sins, not *declaratively* only, but *judicially*' (a summary by Anthony Sparrow,

[365] MS Harley 6941, fos. 198r-v.
[366] MS Harley 6941, fo. 198r.
[367] For a discussion of how *jure divino* episcopacy and royal supremacy were approached in seventeenth-century Cambridge (along with a useful historiographical overview), see D. Levitin, 'Teaching Political Thought in the Restoration Divinity Faculty: Avant-Garde Episcopacy, the Two Kingdoms and Christian Liberty', in M. Goldie (ed), *Politics, Religion and Ideas in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Britain: Essays in Honour of Mark Goldie* (Woodbridge, 2019). For the political dimension of discussions about *jure divino* episcopacy in the Restoration, see J. Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England: The Politics of The Royal Supremacy, 1660-1688* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 129-46.

writing in 1637).[368] Despite the fact that the Book of Common Prayer extended the right to absolve sins to bishops as part of the sacramental life of the Church of England, Mill was surely aware of the implications of adopting Gregory's argument for the judicial power of priests. As Mill would have recognised, the language of declarative/authoritative power had also become part of legal parlance, largely thanks to Grotius, for whom declarative power was 'indicative' and conditional while authoritative power was 'imperative' and unconditional.[369]

While Mill began his discussion with the standard assertion that bishops had 'declarative' or 'hypothetical' power to absolve sins at communion and confession, he provocatively added that they also had 'Authoritative' power of 'a higher strain' that allowed them to absolve sins at visitations.[370] This power of a 'higher strain' may refer to the fact that, at visitations, bishops did not have recourse to traditional Anglican sacraments, meaning that the power rested directly with the bishop rather than with the sacraments as such. Given its proximity to Catholicism, however, the issue of sacerdotal absolution – especially when it rested on 'imperative' power – was much contested in England. Mill's notion resonates, for example, with an anonymous and contemporaneous treatise on *Sacerdotal Powers* (1713) in which the author concluded that 'the Authority of Remitting Sins which Christ gave his Apostles, is more than *meerly Declarative*' but rather authoritative 'by Vertue of Christ's Authority, whose *Delegates* they [bishops] are'.[371] Some years later, the Erastian theologian and Bishop of Bangor, Benjamin Hoadly, unambiguously linked the notion of '*Authoritative Absolution*' with the non-jurors, pithily retorting that an 'infallible *Absolution* cannot belong to *Fallible Men*'.[372] Whether for fear of seeming too bold, or simply because he had arrived at the same conclusion

[368] A. Sparrow, *A Sermon Concerning Confession of Sins, and the Power of Absolution* (London, 1637), pp. 15-16.
[369] C.A. Stumpf, *The Grotian Theology of International Law: Hugo Grotius and the Moral Foundations of International Relations* (Berlin, 2006), pp. 138-9.
[370] MS Harley 6941, fo. 199v.
[371] [R. Laurence], *Sacerdotal Powers: or, the Necessity of Confession, Penance, and Absolution* (London, 1713), p. 7.
[372] B. Hoadly, *Preservative Against the Principles and Practices of the Non-Jurors* (Dublin, 1716), p. 92.

as Hoadly, Mill seems to have nuanced his claim, with Hammond clarifying that a bishop's power at visitations 'in effect is declarative too', given that even they 'cannot divine the thoughts of mens hearts'. Mill's endeavour to illustrate that the power to absolve hinged on the sinner being truly repentant (a knowledge reserved for God alone) was, it would seem, an attempt to appeal to both non-juror divines and those more tolerant churchmen, for whom ordination was not a prerequisite for being a legitimate clergyman.

IV. Conclusion

Mill's caution about imputing 'authoritative' power to bishops might serve to reinforce Haugen's depiction of him as a 'Whiggish' individual who willingly lent a hand to the prevailing orthodoxy (his nickname was, after all, 'Johnny Wind-Mill').[373] But, despite Mill's political neutrality, Hammond's notes reveal that he had strongly held ecclesiastical perspectives. It is notable in this regard that he brought his lecture to a close with the pronouncement that the only legitimate clerics were those who had 'come into a constant succession from the Apostles on whom the Saviour of y^{e} world & founder of our Religion breathed the Holy Ghost'; echoing John 10.1, he lambasted non-ordained clergymen as mere 'thieves & Robbers', 'exceedingly different from us'.[374] Borne out by Hammond's dictations, Mill's contribution to philological scholarship (as the culmination of an extensive liberal arts education) was, to a significant extent, designed to help defend his version of 'ancient' ecclesiastical government and the Episcopalian Church of his day, which, with its emphasis on a learned clergy, remained one of the chief patrons of academic research. Protecting this system was, in other words, one of the surest means by which Mill could safeguard his favoured, humanistic approach to learning.

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[373] K. Haugen, 'Imagined Universities: Public Insult and the *Terrae Filius* in Early Modern Oxford', in A. Goldgar and R.I. Frost (eds), *Institutional Culture in Early Modern Society* (Leiden and Boston, 2004), p. 339.
[374] MS Harley 6941, fo. 199v.

It is somewhat ironic, however, that a lofty insistence on a hierarchical clerical order that derived its original powers from the Apostles and was sanctioned by the Greek fathers is exactly the attitude that, taken to its extreme, allowed some non-jurors to defend complete Church independence and thus provoke the eruption of debates about the very legitimacy of appeals to patristic ecclesiology. One popular response involved trying to 'save' fathers such as Cyprian from a damaging association with schism by locating anti-schismatic proclamations in patristic writings themselves. Doing just this, Stillingfleet's *The Unreasonableness of Separation* (1681), for example, called upon Cyprian's account of 'the ancient and regular *Discipline* and *Order* of the *Church*' to stress the desire for unity among the fathers.[375] As late as 1719, George Rye, one-time Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, recycled these Restoration arguments, beseeching his readers to accept that the 'ancient Governours of the Church' had 'wisely submitted to Necessity, and had more regard to the safety of the Church, than to the Concerns of particular Members'.[376] Despite his tempering of controversial sacerdotal claims, Mill was certainly willing to champion the fathers as testifying to the apostolic succession and to see modern bishops as their direct successors. One of the most unique facets of his undertaking, as illuminated by Hammond's notes, was that he attempted to forward an ecclesiastical agenda premised on the principle of *jure divino* episcopacy not only by appealing to patristic authority, which was commonplace in late Restoration Oxford, but also through the kind of emendations grounded in variant readings that would blossom among Cambridge academics such as Bentley over the ensuing decades. For precisely this reason, Hammond's notes offer us a precious window into a moment in English intellectual history when a distinctive ecclesiological tradition fuelled a powerful set of scholarly practices.

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[375] E. Stillingfleet, *The Unreasonableness of Separation* (London, 1681), p. 247; Rose, *Godly Kingship*, pp. 133-40; and Levitin, 'From Sacred History', pp. 1153-4. See also Levitin, 'Matthew Tindal's *Rights*'.
[376] G. Rye, *Treatise Against the Nonconforming Non-Jurors* (2 vols, London, 1719), ii, p. 189.

Aside from providing concrete evidence of Mill's ecclesiastical preferences, Hammond's notes also confirm (and extend) what some of his contemporaries suspected: that he was not operating from a neutral place on *doctrinal* matters, tied as these seem to have been, in his mind, to a broadly Tertullian vision of episcopal 'guardianship'. As this chapter has demonstrated, Mill's critical interpretations of biblical passages in the pedagogic setting were often infused with his doctrinal ideals, largely about Christology and the Trinity. Although his New Testament contains many patristic citations and conjectural readings that bolstered aspects of his Trinitarian worldview, the more political aspects of his outlook on the Church and episcopal government are not easy to extract from this highly refined work. A sense that Mill sought to promote doctrinal orthodoxy has been hinted at in extant scholarship, but it also remains common to view his New Testament as one step in a progressive march towards the 'impartial', evidence-led biblical scholarship associated with nineteenth-century German higher criticism. This narrative rests in part on the fact that his 'earnest and anxious' thirty-year venture to see a totemic catalogue of discrepancies between biblical manuscripts through the press made him popular with figures of a wide range of political and religious persuasions across Europe for generations to come, ranging from Fell to Wettstein.[377] Yet, in exposing the otherwise invisible concerns that underlay Mill's scholarly work, Hammond's notes remind us that charting the often laudatory reception of major academic texts among *scholars* only tells us half of the story of intellectual genesis: looking to the classroom, or in this case the chapel, brings to the fore a much more intricate and dynamic picture of scholarly production and collaboration that simultaneously reminds us of the specific confessional concerns that coloured Mill's world.

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[377] S.P. Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 41-3. For Mill's scholarship and its Oxford context, see Poole, 'Learned Press', pp. 357-9 and Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction*, p. 126. More generally, see Fox, *John Mill and Richard Bentley*, pp. 105-15. Before Mill published his New Testament, it was eagerly discussed by continental scholars such as Gijsbert Cuper in a letter to Antonio di Marco Magliabechi. See J. Touber, '"I am happy that Italy fosters such exquisite minds". Gijsbert Cuper (1644-1716) and Intellectual Life on the Italian Penninsula', *Incontri*, 2 (2015), p. 100.

One might seek to claim based on the evidence presented in this chapter that Mill was methodologically innovative in his textual-critical approach to the New Testament, while being ideologically conservative in defending a Restoration Episcopalian sacerdotalism. However, I have argued that these two domains cannot be so easily disentangled, since Mill realised that defending a 'patristic' ecclesiology was one of the surest ways to safeguard an academic-clerical culture that prized subtle, historical interventions and immense (not to mention expensive) text-based undertakings as normal science. Far from witnessing an increased separation between serious and 'determinedly secular and literary' activities and the lobotomised scholarship of 'ecclesiastical duty', Hammond's notes reveal that the early eighteenth century remained a time when avant-garde textual criticism was intimately tied to and fuelled by the institutional concerns of the world in which its masters operated.[378] Equally, we have seen just how much a major, internationally renowned theologian came to rely on his students as the pressures of confessional and doctrinal warfare intensified, in much the same way that the other two chapters in Part 2 of this dissertation underscored the close relationships between early-career students and major professors in this period. Far from being disinterested backwaters, Oxford and Cambridge would have appeared as active contributors to major public debates about the Church and its foundations at a time of heightened polemical strife, spearheading, in the process, disruptive innovation within the domain historical theology as they prepared their students for the world.

[378] Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, p. 105.

Part 3
A Rough But Well-Wrought Armour, 1720-1750

3.1 Classical Learning: James Merrick and George Costard

I. Introduction

The present chapter homes in on two Oxford scholars, Costard and Merrick, who made lasting contributions to the histories of literature, theology, and scholarship, but whose names are now largely forgotten. The youthful publications of Costard and Merrick – who studied a generation after Humphreys, Witty, and Hammond – offer unique insights into how the teaching of classical and oriental languages and literature changed during the eighteenth century, and give a sense of the ramifications that such institutional changes had beyond the bounds of the universities.

Costard matriculated at Wadham in 1726, obtained his MA in 1733, quickly became a fellow of his college, and later served as a University proctor. Ten years Costard's junior, Merrick matriculated at Trinity College in 1736, obtained his MA in 1742, and became a full fellow of the college in 1745. It was not easy for contemporaries to overlook either Costard or Merrick. Keen to put pen to paper early in his career, Costard produced *A Specimen of a New Translation of the Book of Psalms* (1733) as just an MA student, and went on to write several influential works on sacred history and the history of astronomy, including *The Rise and Progress of Astronomy Among the Ancients* (1746, with a *Further Account* in 1748); *The Use of Astronomy in History and Chronology* (1764); and *The History of Astronomy, with its Application to Geography, History, and Chronology* (1767). In addition to publishing these monographs, Costard contributed to the advancement of astronomical knowledge in mid-eighteenth-century Oxford in various ways: he collated the Bodleian manuscript of the Arab

astronomer Ibn Younis for Joseph Ames, then Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries; penned a piece for the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions* in 1746 that took a sober look at Chinese chronology and astronomy (a topic on which he also corresponded with Shaw); and published and added a preface to Halley's translation of the 'Spherics' of Menelaus in 1758.[379] Steeped in Oxonian scholarship, in 1760 Costard also co-published, with the Laudian Professor of Arabic Thomas Hunt, a second edition of the landmark *Historia religionis veterum Persarum* (1700) by the former Laudian Arabic and Regius Professor of Hebrew, Thomas Hyde.[380] Thanks to these efforts, he gained a reputation in England and beyond as 'a man of uncommon learning, and eminently skilled in Grecian and Oriental literature'.[381] As a nineteenth-century commentator, J.D. Humphreys, recognised, 'among the many great scholars and truly eminent men' who entered the Church of England few 'excelled the Rev. George Costard, either in extent of erudition, or excellence of heart' despite 'the highly abstruse nature' of his investigations.[382] Yet, in spite of such accolades, very little has been written about Costard since, and the fact that his scholarship was obtuse and defied neat classificatory boundaries might help to explain why. In the wake of recent pioneering work on the relationship between theology and the arts in the seventeenth-century universities, however, it

[379] For Costard's role in editing Halley's 'Sphæra Barbarica', see Costard's letter to Thomas Birch from 29 March 1761 (British Library Add MS 4440, fos. 91r-6r) and E. Halley, *Menelai Sphæricorum libri III., quos olim, collatis MSS. Hebræis et Arabicis, typis exprimendos curavit ... E. Halleius. Præfationem addidit G. Costard* (Oxford, 1758). For Costard on Chinese astronomy, see 'A Letter from the Rev. Mr. G. Costard, to the Rev. Thomas Shaw, D. D. F. R. S. and Principal of St. Edmund-Hall, Concerning the Chinese Chronology and Astronomy', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 44/483 (London, 1746). See also Costard's letter to Thomas Shaw at Wellcome Library MS 5403/23 and a brief discussion in G. Cantor, *Quakers, Jews, and Science: Religious Responses to Modernity and the Sciences in Britain, 1650-1900* (Oxford, 2005), p. 122.

[380] T. Hyde, *Veterum Persarum et Parthorum et Medorum religionis historia*, ed. T. Hunt (Oxford, 1760). Costard was the author of the 'To the Reader' [Lectori Benevolo] and assisted Hunt. See T.S. Baynes (ed), *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and General Literature* (25 vols, Chicago, 1895), xii, p. 427. An MS letter from Hunt to Merrick from 7 August 1763 (at Dep. c. 254/2, which is unfoliated) informs us that Hunt was actively engaged in editing Hyde's work: 'D^{r}. Sharpe will be likewise obliged to you for your kind notice of the correction recommended in Cap. 18. P. 214 of the *Relig. Vet. Persarum*'.

[381] For Costard's biography, see J. Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century* (6 vols, London, 1812), ii, pp. 248-32 and A. Kippis, *The Lives of the Most Eminent Persons Who Have Flourished in Great Britain* (2nd ed., 5 vols, London, 1789), iv, p. 294.

[382] P. Doddridge, *The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge*, ed. J.D. Humphreys (5 vols, London, 1829), iii, p. 235.

is time that Costard's contributions to academic textual criticism and his immediate Oxford context are given the attention that they deserve.

Whereas Costard focussed his energies on astronomy and Arabic scholarship, Merrick dedicated himself to Greek language and literature. Even keener for juvenile acclaim than Costard, Merrick made a splash in 1739 when, as a mere undergraduate, he published a copiously annotated scholarly translation of the only extant work of an obscure Greek poet and grammarian named Tryphiodorus who (as noted in the introduction) lived in Panopolis, in modern day Egypt, between the third and fifth century AD. This work was a long Homeric poem titled *The Destruction of Troy*. Reflecting in 1760 upon Merrick's rather arcane achievements much as J.D. Humphreys reflected upon Costard's, the English poet and landscape gardener, William Shenstone, wrote to a friend that 'I have known a Person of the truest genius take Pains to translate a Poem, when with one tenth Part of the Labour he could have compos'd a Poem ten times better. For instance Merrick & his Tryphiodorus'.[383] Taylor, whom Merrick assisted with his edition of Demosthenes in the late 1730s, similarly lauded Merrick as an 'exceptional young man, with singular abilities in the finer detail of letters' ['eximii juvenis, et singularissima in cultioribus literus maturitate'].[384] As we will see, the young Merrick was not only willing to collaborate with fellow English scholars such as Taylor on their editorial projects, but he also sought out advice and garnered tremendous respect from scholars across Europe. In drawing attention to Merrick's intensive labours and the pains that leading lights within the Republic of Letters went to in order to aid him, I hope to show that it was perfectly possible for a mid-eighteenth-century English student to reach great intellectual heights and embed himself within erudite and international scholarly networks.

[383] William Shenstone to Thomas Percy, 15 February 1760, in *Letters of William Shenstone*, ed. M. Williams (Oxford, 1939), p. 552.
[384] See the preface to Taylor's edition of Demosthenes, where he thanks Merrick for his help.

The broader aim of this chapter is to provide a new understanding of how young textual scholars of the mid-eighteenth century viewed the relationship between sacred and secular literary history and criticism, with a focus on the similarities and differences between Costard's and Merrick's respective approaches. To this end, the first part of this chapter reconstructs the pedagogic context from which Costard's works emerged, with a particular emphasis on the teaching of Arabic. It then analyses, in some detail, his first major theological publication, *Some Observations Tending to Illustrate the Book of Job* (1747), tracing his inventive historical and etymological arguments for why Job dated from around the time of the Babylonian captivity (598-38 BCE). His thesis, I show, had some similarities with those of more ostensibly radical contemporaries including Le Clerc in *Sentimens* (1685) and William Warburton in his hugely popular *Divine Legation of Moses* (1738-42).[385] Despite Costard's partial corroboration of one of Warburton's most notorious theses – namely, his late dating of Job – I demonstrate that he rejected Warburton's overarching allegorical interpretation of the text and his assignment of its authorship to Ezra the Scribe, while coming to a strikingly different conclusion about the book's form. With a less polemical and more technical, stylistic analysis than Warburton, Costard managed to remain within the bounds of a surprisingly expansive orthodoxy.[386]

Even if Costard's challenge to the standard dating and authorship of Job was less inflammatory than Warburton's, he made some equally, if not more, striking departures from accepted practices when it came to methodology, which is most apparent in his willingness to emend biblical terms and phrases in light of oriental lexicography and etymology rather than manuscript evidence. It is on this score that a comparison of his approach to textual emendation

[385] J.S. Watson, *The Life of William Warburton, Lord Bishop of Gloucester* (London, 1863), pp. 78-9. See also F.E. Manuel, 'The Eighteenth Century Confronts Job', in *History of Universities*, XXII/1 (Oxford, 2007), pp. 164-5.

[386] Costard is referred to as an 'orthodox champion of sacred history' in C. Kidd, *The World of Mr Casaubon: Britain's Wars of Mythography, 1700-1870* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 83.

with Merrick's is instructive. As I show in the second half of the chapter, Merrick used intra-Greek grammatical comparisons, trans-historical formal considerations, and manuscript variants to justify his conjectural emendations even of an unquestionably *secular* text, and he insisted that the only solid basis for emending scripture, as Costard had recently done, was because a manuscript variant had been located in the archive. Merrick's diligent progression from secular editing (as a young scholar) to sacred editing (later in his career) helped to solidify his credentials as a serious theologian, with his career providing a clear example of how a dutiful commitment to an intellectually hierarchical model of 'general learning' could bear fruit well into the eighteenth century.

II. Oxford 'Orientalism'

In a 1714 inaugural lecture upon taking up the Hebrew chair at the University of Franeker, Schultens announced that Arabic was among the most fundamental propaedeutics to biblical studies, being 'the most splendid daughter of Hebrew'.[387] His view was echoed in England when an anonymous author boasted in 1735 that Schultens 'assures us from *Arabian* Writers far more ancient than *Muhammed*' that Arabic and Hebrew 'were once very much alike'. For this reason, the author regarded Arabic as a key means by which to 'reconcile the *Hebrew* and *Greec* Texts' (or the Hebrew Old Testament and Septuagint).[388] In a 1738 inaugural lecture titled 'De antiquitate elegantia utilitate linguæ arabicæ', given at Oxford's *Schola Linguarum*, as well as in a 1743 address 'To the Students in Arabic, and the other Oriental Languages, in the University of Oxford', Hunt confirmed that consulting Arabic lexicographers, moralists, and historians was the surest way to illustrate '*the several books of the* Hebrew *scripture*'.[389]

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[387] H.F. Vermuelen, *Before Boas: The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment* (Lincoln and London, 2015), p. 248.
[388] *A Discourse Concerning the Usefulness of the Oriental Translations of the Bible* (London, 1735), p. 6.
[389] T. Hunt, *A Dissertation on Proverbs VII, 22, 23* (Oxford, 1743), p. iii-iv. Also T. Hunt, *De antiquitate elegantia utilitate linguæ arabicæ* (Oxford, 1739). See finally Bodleian MS Rawl. Letters 96, fo. 228r (a letter from Hunt to Richard Rawlinson from 1748). We learn here that Hunt was desperate to get his hands on a 1639 copy of

Going further than Schultens, he held that it was Arabic, rather than Hebrew, that resembled a '*vast ocean*' from which all other eastern 'dialects' were '*but many rivulets*', and he accordingly looked to Arabic to perfect the Hebrew tongue.

There was nothing new about recognising the theological potential of oriental versions of scripture, not least in England where such outlay bore fruits no less significant than Walton's Polyglot Bible of 1652-7.[390] As was generally accepted by the late seventeenth century, future theology students should learn to read critically not just in Hebrew but in 'those Tongues, which seem at first derived from it, as most of the *Orientals* are'.[391] The 'oriental' languages had indeed been taught for much of the seventeenth century, with chairs in Arabic being founded in Cambridge (1632) and Oxford (1636), and with various Hebrew lectureships existing even earlier.[392] Keen to preserve and extend these roles, Martin Eagle (or Ædler) – a tutor of oriental languages in Cambridge – urged John Covel, Master of Christ's College, in 1688 and again in 1708, to ensure that future divines received instruction not just in Arabic but also in Persian, Chaldee, and Syriac.[393] Ockley echoed this sentiment in his *Introductio ad linguas orientales* (1706) – which was addressed to 'Juventuti Academicae' – when he encouraged young scholars to pick up the basics not just of the above languages but also Ethiopic, Coptic, Armenian, and Turkish, partly to help them carry out theological scholarship but also so that they could read and interpret secular texts in these languages.[394]

Largely because the eighteenth-century professors in oriental languages published less than their predecessors, there remains a supposition that eastern learning fell out of fashion, along with the ideal of 'learning and enquiry for its own sake', during the Enlightenment in

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Thomas Greaves' 1737 Oxford oration, *De linguae Arabicae utilitate*, from a book sale in 1744. This also implies that he saw himself as following in distinctly local footsteps, and he gave his oration a strikingly similar title.

[390] See generally *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. Loop, A. Hamilton, and C. Burnett (Leiden and Boston, 2017). See also *Discourse Concerning the Usefulness*, p. 6.

[391] Dodwell, *Two Letters*, pp. 194-5.

[392] M. Feingold, 'Oriental Studies', in N. Tyacke (ed), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume IV, Seventeenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford, 1997), p. 458.

[393] British Library Add MS 22911, fos. 203r-4v: Martin Eagle to John Covel, 18 May 1709.

[394] S. Ockley, *Introductio ad linguas orientales* (Cambridge, 1706), A4r-A7r.

Oxford and Cambridge.[395] But, in reality, the spotlight merely shifted in the eighteenth century away from a general interest in engaging with eastern texts towards a concern with their linguistic features and their potential to enable greater philological exactitude. Hunt, for one, not only elevated Arabic as an elegant, living language, but he also stressed that it had evolved to include many transliterated Hebrew words. For this reason, he was confident that orientally proficient students would 'meet with very few words' in the (Hebrew) Bible that they could not understand, which he argued was even (or perhaps especially) the case in instances where scripture contained 'no parallel instances' of the same word.[396] Shortly after arriving at Oxford in 1726, Costard befriended Hunt, and this connection undoubtedly endowed the young scholar with a sense of the urgent need to justify the theological payoff of marrying oriental scholarship with philological approaches to scripture.

How exactly students went about acquiring their linguistic skills is another matter. It is difficult to say for certain in Costard's case, though it is likely that Hunt taught him. That is, while Costard was no longer a student during the 1740s when Hunt delivered 'the Arabick Lecture, as my Predecessors D^{r}. Pocock and D^{r}. Hyde did', Hunt taught regularly in his college (Hart Hall) from 1718 onwards when Costard *was* a student.[397] As he informed his friend, the book-collector and clergyman Richard Rawlinson, in November 1740, he tended to begin his lectures by 'reading in Hebrew, (as w^{t} w^{d} be useful to many young students) and from thence proceed to Arabic'. Obviously a hit, one of Hunt's lecture series, which took place 'in our dining hall', 'every Tuesday and Thursday morning between y^{e} Hours of 9 and 11', was attended by 'upwards of 50 scholars', and the anonymous author of an essay on Arabic learning at Oxford in *The Student* (1750) stated that Hunt 'is as willing as he is able to instruct us'.[398]

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[395] The classic study is G.J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century* (Oxford, 1996), esp. pp. 84-115, 147-79, and 212-55.
[396] Hunt, *Dissertation on Proverbs*, p. v. For discussions of 'Hebraisms', see Hunt to Merrick, at Dep. c. 254/2, fo. 3r.
[397] MS Rawl. Letters 96, fo. 228r.
[398] MS Rawl. Letters 96, fo. 38r and '*Of the* Arabick Language', in *The Student*, p. 46.

Costard, in his turn, became a tutor at Wadham soon after graduating, and was almost certainly a driving force behind the rapid progress that Kennicott made in grasping the eastern tongues. This is suggested in a 1775 letter that Costard sent to Schultens the Younger in which he refers to Kennicott as his 'worthy Friend & Pupil', and from Kennicott's acknowledgement of Costard at the outset of his *Two Dissertations* (a remarkable essay that he published during his BA).[399] Like Hunt, Costard was a popular tutor, though critics lamented that such 'a senseless *Idol* had so numerous an Assembly of zealous Devotees at his Sacrifices'.[400]

Students could also carry out a great deal of work in private thanks not only to the Polyglot Bibles but also the proliferation of lexicons, dictionaries, and critical commentaries.[401] The anonymous author of a *Discourse Concerning the Usefulness of the Oriental Translations* (1735), for example, managed to gain proficiency in the eastern tongues 'without the Direction of a Master' by consulting 'the Works of the learned *Bochart*, wherein one discovers such a Mastery in this Kind of Learning'.[402] In addition to the works of the great French linguist Samuel Bochart, the oriental lexicons of the Leiden scholar Jacob Golius and Castell were also hugely significant to eighteenth-century divinity pedagogy. In his *A Specimen of a New Translation of the Book of Psalms*, Costard frequently called upon all three to validate his translations of selected Psalms, especially when his renditions departed from the authorised (King James) Bible.[403] According to Costard, not only had knowledge of Hebrew become

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[399] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, A2r. See also Kastelein, 'I shall find you', p. 56.
[400] B. Holloway, *A Dissertation upon II Kings x.22, Translated from the Latin of Rabbi C-----d* (London, 1752), p. 4 and 12.
[401] Hunt was constantly enquiring after and buying oriental lexicons and dictionaries. Usefully, a Wadhamite, John Richardson, from the 1750s went on to produce *A Dictionary, Persian, Arabic, and English* (London, 1777-80) while Leonard Chappelow, Arabic Professor at Cambridge, produced *Six Assemblies; Formerly Published by the Celebrated Schultens in Arabic and Latin, with Large Notes and Observations* (Cambridge, 1767).
[402] *Usefulness of the Oriental Translations*, p. 6.
[403] See, for example, Costard's analysis of Psalm 104:18 ('The craggy Hills are a Refuge for Wild Goats, and the Rocks for the *Saphans*') in G. Costard, *A Specimen of a New Translation of the Book of Psalms* (London, 1733), p. 16. He decided to reject the King James Bible's rendering of 'לשפנים' (saphans) as 'conies'. To justify his decision, he consulted Golius's *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum*, which interpreted the word as '*Animal quadrupes fele minus; pulveracei Coloris, cauda carens*' (a four-footed, dust coloured animal, smaller than a cat and with no tail). He then compared this instance with Proverbs 30:26, where the same Hebrew word read in Arabic as 'قنفذ', which Golius and Castell had translated as 'Herinaceus Echinus' (a variety of hedgehog). Costard was tempted by the Chaldee, which Golius rendered '*Speciem Columba*' and Buxtorf read as a turtle (dove?). But he ultimately

increasingly sophisticated since the publication of the King James Version in the early seventeenth century, but so too had knowledge of other oriental languages. He thus felt equipped, even as a graduate student, to help 'rescue those truly divine Poems, from that Disguise, in which they are at present involved' (that of the KJV).[404]

While most students were reliant on lexicons, they could also call upon a number of staple biblical texts as well as translations of and commentaries on them. As Costard's MA essay suggests, the Psalms were a popular choice for students across Europe not only because they were a frequent subject of paraphrases, sermons, and commentaries, but also because they could be easily approached with a basic grasp of the oriental languages and using a text-critical method. It was for these reasons that the Psalms also formed a core part of the lectures by the illustrious Dutch linguist Sebald Rau during his tenure as Professor of Oriental Philology at Utrecht in 1750.[405] While Hunt agreed that the Proverbs could be explicated using Arabic adages, which were storehouses of eastern moral philosophy, he deemed Job even more suited to his method of critical study, writing that the '*language of the book of* JOB *has been allow'd to have a nearer affinity with the* Arabic*, than that of any other part of the* Old Testament'.[406] Hunt was even poring over a 'little Arabic MS^{t}', which was 'ill written, both as to the Character and the spelling', but nonetheless 'introductory to the reading of Job's letters, of w^{ch} I have some'.[407] Hunt, perhaps more than any of his English contemporaries, made the ideal of critical-oriental study practicable, yet his basic sentiment was shared by a much wider community of English students and divines. As early as 1715, John Barecroft, for instance,

opted for 'Saphans', preferring to use 'the Eastern Name, only altering the Termination'. See J. Golius, *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum contextum ex probatioribus orientis lexicographis* (Lyon, 1653), p. 1609-10.

[404] Costard, *A Specimen*, p. 9.

[405] British Library, Add MS 28298, fos. 171r-4v: Sebald Rau 'dictata in Psalmorum loca', dictated by Johann Christopher Brucher.

[406] See the preliminary address to Hunt, *Dissertation on Proverbs*, p. v. See also British Library MS Harley 2427; a student working through the Psalms, and a fragment of Proverbs 20:14-30:33, in 161 neat folio pages. The main text is in Hebrew with vowel points and accents, accompanied by a parallel Septuagint and a Latin version. The Psalms also have an English translation. There was, more generally, a strong print tradition of the adages in Europe dating back to Scaliger (unlike for other genres). See N. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), p. 270.

[407] MS Rawl. Letters 96, fo. 160r.

exclaimed in his *Ars concionandi: or, an Instruction to Young Students in Divinity* that 'if we were as well acquainted with the Ancient *Eastern Poetry* and *Eloquence*, as with that of our own Time, what lively Strains of Beauty and Majesty should we find in the Book of *Job*, in the *Psalms*, and in many of the *Prophets*'.[408] With his attraction to Old Testament poetry (and specifically the Book of Job), Costard was very much of his day.

Another branch of oriental scholarship that was taking shape within Costard's immediate Oxford context was of a more antiquarian, and specifically numismatic, character. Inspired by scholars such as his Wadham college tutor, John Swinton, and Oxford's Lord Almoner Professor of Arabic, John Gagnier, Costard realised that studying coins was crucial to understanding civilisations such as the ancient Samaritans and Chaldeans, where we otherwise 'have but little Light to guide us'.[409] As manuscript evidence reveals, Costard was working with several oriental coins in the 1750s as well as a 'Mohammedan amulet' with an Arabic inscription that Gagnier had translated into Latin in 1724. This artefact also fascinated Hunt, who was convinced that the 'Mahometans' used it to defend themselves 'from evil spirits'.[410] Teaching ancient oriental history via coins was indeed another of Hunt's offerings to BA students. We know this because amidst the papers that belonged to Merrick – whom Hunt would refer to in 1748 as 'amico meo' – there is 'an Explanation by M^{r} Hunt' of a coin owned by 'D^{r} Barton' (i.e. Philip Barton, Canon of Christ Church) from 'Jan. 8. 1738' (during Merrick's BA).[411] At the header, Merrick has crossed out the word 'given' and replaced it with 'drawn up', suggesting that Merrick's notes were based on a lecture or public discussion. The object in question was a brass 'medal or coin', which had apparently been stamped 'by Simon

[408] Barecroft, *Ars concionandi*, p. 10.
[409] G. Costard, *Two Dissertations, I. Containing an Enquiry into the Meaning of the Word Kesitah, Mentioned in Job, chap.42. vers.11 […] II. On the Signification of the Word Hermes* (Oxford, 1750), p. 2.
[410] See Costard's letters to Charles Godwyn from 1750 (Bodleian MS Godwyn 13), with the Garnier reference at fo. 13v. Gagnier was paid 'ten pound per annum' to read the Arabic lecture at Oxford instead of Dr Barton. For Gagnier's role, see Hunt to Rawlinson, MS Rawl. Letters 96, fo. 31r, and for Hunt on the amulets, fo. 61r.
[411] Bodleian MS Dep. c. 254/2: Merrick's notes on Barton's coin from 8 January 1738. For Hunt on Merrick, see T. Hunt, *De usu dialectorum orientalium: ac præcipue arabicæ, in hebraico codice interpretando, oratio habita Oxonii* (Oxford, 1748), p. 21.

the High-Priest and Prince of the Maccabees on his restoring the Jewish nation to their antient state of Freedom & Independency'. Interestingly, Hunt's dating of the coin to the time of Simon Maccabeus (*d*. 135 BCE) went against the near-consensus that the script originated from the time of Ezra the Scribe (whom, we might recall, Warburton argued was the real author of Job).[412] Hunt's belief that the coin had been deliberately stamped with the 'old Samarian character' to make it appear more ancient than it really was resounds, as we will see, with Costard's attempt to pinpoint deliberate anachronisms in the Book of Job so as to 'lower' its date. For now, however, the main point is that Hunt, Costard, and other members of their academic circles (including BA students such as Merrick) were engaging actively with oriental antiquities as part of their broader quest to understand ancient sacred history.

We can finally surmise that, in addition to Hunt, Costard's early education – as exhibited in *Some Observations* – bore the imprint of another, more famous Oxonian: Lowth. Not only was Lowth a friend and mentee of Hunt, but he also held the prestigious title of Oxford's Professor of Poetry. Lowth's oft-cited lectures, *De sacra poesi hebraeorum*, began in 1741 and were attended by none other than Michaelis during a visit to Oxford that was the 'most delightful time of [his] life'.[413] In these lectures, Lowth broke ground in the study of biblical poetry with his emphasis on parallelisms between Hebrew and Greek verse structures, though it was sometimes said that his specialism lay in classical Latin and Greek, and that his dearth of expertise in oriental languages (and particularly Arabic) prevented him from providing deeper explanations of Hebrew passages.[414] Michaelis, by contrast, was a renowned Arabist, whose German translation transformed Lowth's lectures into 'a rich treasure of Oriental learning'.[415] It is very likely that Costard (like Michaelis) attended Lowth's lectures given his

[412] D. Jennings, *An Introduction to the Knowledge of Medals* (London, 1764), pp. 11-2.
[413] A. Lifschitz, *Language and Enlightenment: The Berlin Debates of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 101-5.
[414] See K. Haugen, 'Hebrew Poetry Transformed, or, Scholarship Invincible between Renaissance and Enlightenment', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 75 (2012).
[415] R. Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, tr. C.E Stowe (Boston, 1829), p. x.

interest in Old Testament poetry; his friendship with Lowth's mentor, Hunt; and the fact that, as we will see, he read the Book of Job as 'an exulted and regular piece of *Eastern* poetry, of the *Dramatick* kind' (a claim with Lowthian overtones).[416] With this being said, some of Costard's conclusions about Job, particularly his dating of the book, departed considerably from Lowth's (and most other accounts).[417] Though Costard assimilated sources from far and wide, he remained an intrepid thinker, beholden to none.

III. Sacred Drama

As Costard was aware, the Book of Job had attracted the 'Attention of the curious' in the decades leading up to his publication. Along with being the subject of numerous printed books, a British Library manuscript shows that it was central to the 1714 philological lectures of Christian Benedict Michaelis, Professor of Philosophy at Halle, and the famous botanist Carl Linnaeus even dedicated his first public lecture at the Swedish Academy of Sciences in 1739 to Job and the 'economy of nature'.[418] But, as Costard realised, much confusion remained about who the historical Job was and how his enigmatic verses should be interpreted. To cite Jerome's famous remark on the book, 'while one thing is said, it does another, as if you would hold tightly an eel or a little murena fish, when you press harder, then the sooner it escapes'.[419]

Particularly significant in the English context was the recent stir caused by Warburton, whose *Divine Legation* boldly described the Book of Job as a retrospective allegory of the suffering of the Jews. As one critic, Richard Grey, put it, for Warburton '*Job* is the *Jewish*

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[416] G. Costard, *Some Observations Tending to Illustrate the Book of Job* (Oxford, 1747), esp. pp. 93-123.
[417] R.P. Gordon, *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Versions: Selected Essays of Robert P. Gordon* (Ashgate, 2006), p. 279.
[418] Michaelis's lectures titled 'Historia Jobi notis perpetuis et necessaria paraphrase illustrata' are in British Library Add MS 4352, fos. 229r-61v. For Linnaeus, see L. Koerner, 'Daedalus Hyperboreus: Baltic Natural History and Minerology in the Enlightenment', in W. Clark, J. Golinski, and S. Schaffer (eds), *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe* (Chicago, 1999), p. 396. For some important works on Job, see Sheehan, *Enlightenment Bible*, p. 161 and J. Lamb, *The Rhetoric of Suffering: Reading the Book of Job in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1995), esp. pp. 110-27.
[419] K.S. Hedlin, *The Book of Job in Early Modern England* (PhD Thesis, University of California, 2018), pp. 22-6.

People, and his Wife their Heathen Wives – that his three Friends are real Enemies and signify the Adversaries of the *Jews*'.[420] While this audacious reading was based on flimsy evidence (or, indeed, cooked up from evidential gaps), the Book of Job formed a core part of Warburton's overarching thesis, according to which the early Jews were ignorant of a future state of reward and punishment. Many divines had summoned the Book of Job to prove that the earliest Jews knew of an afterlife, so Warburton simply had to illustrate that the text was not in fact written by Moses, or at the time of the Mosaic dispensation, but much later, by none 'other than the great EZRA himself'.[421] He went on to date it to the period immediately after the Jews were restored to their homeland, since he argued that before the Captivity the Jews supposed that God distributed his dispensations equally, during the Captivity they would have thought that His dispensations were distributed indifferently, and only after the Captivity would this topic be hotly debated between Job and his friends.[422] Warburton's landmark work would have almost certainly been discussed among Costard's Oxford circles, not only because it was sensationally popular but also because several of Costard's friends were part of Warburton's extended network, including Hunt's and Gagnier's patron, Thomas Parker, 1st Earl of Macclesfield, and Doddridge. It has even been claimed (without evidence) that Costard was 'officially a Warburtonian but by bent a Lowthian'.[423] Yet, even as he cited several of Warburton's claims, Costard, we will see, was far from a straightforward advocate of the *Divine Legation*'s 'official' line, and *Some Observations* was in many ways a *via media* between Warburton's view of the poem as a political allegory and Lowth's more orthodox

[420] R. Grey, *An Answer to Mr. Warburton's Remarks on Several Occasional Reflections* (London, 1744), p. 14. For Warburton's thesis, see *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated*, 3rd edn (5 vols, London, 1742), ii, pp. 509-11.
[421] Warburton, *Divine Legation*, ii, p. 543. One example of an author who assigned Job's authorship to Moses is the Benedictine scholar Augustin Calmet (in *Préface sur le Livre de Job* (1722)). An example of a response to Warburton that rejects his conclusion about the future state but accepts his allegorical reading is W. Worthington, *An Essay on the Scheme and Conduct, Procedure and Extent of Man's Redemption* (London, 1743), p. 494.
[422] Warburton, *Divine Legation*, ii, p. 503.
[423] J. Lamb, 'The Job Controversy, Sterne, and the Question of Allegory', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 24/1 (1990), p. 8.

reading of it as a piece of ancient sacred history. Costard aimed, in short, to bring both clarity and moderation to the debate.

In line with a broader interest during his day in the Bible's historical and literary value, Costard crowned Job 'one of the finest remains of Antiquity'.[424] Quite conventionally, he noted that it described an encounter between three friends who, with profoundly Miltonian overtones, met to debate 'a Question no less important than how – to vindicate the ways of God to Men'.[425] But Costard wanted to drill down a little harder on the nature and meaning of this famous meeting, and began by trying to settle where exactly the 'land of Uz' – Job's homeland – was located. To do so, he seized upon the reference to 'swift ships' in Job 9.26. In the King James Bible, a marginal note stated that this passage referred to 'Ships of Desire', but Costard deemed this 'hardly intelligible' and instead argued that, properly understood, the passage served as a key to Job's whereabouts, since it exposed his 'acquaint[ance] with Boats and Shipping'. To prove the inaccuracy of 'our English translation' that rendered the passage 'swift ships' ('אבה אניות'), Costard claimed that the Hebrew 'אבה' was much like the Arabic 'أبا' or 'aba', which signified 'Arundo. Arundinetum. Papyretum [reed/papyrus]', an idea that he may well have pilfered from Schultens' Arabic-Latin *Liber Jobi* of 1737.[426] The passage in question, Costard confirmed, also had striking similarities to the language used to describe the vessels made from bulrushes in 1 Isaiah 18.2, and he happily noted that Theophrastus's *Historia plantarum* listed boat-building as a chief use of papyrus. Going further, he took the adjective 'swift' to imply that the ships were on a rapidly flowing river (probably the Tigris), which limited the possible locations for Job's place of origin 'to the North of *Babylon*, and in respect of *Judea* to the *East*'.[427] Whether they cited Costard or not, later commentators (including the Hebraist Charles

[424] Costard, *Some Observations*, p. 25. See generally Sheehan, *Enlightenment Bible*, pp. 118-82.
[425] Costard, *Some Observations*, p. 25.
[426] A. Schultens, *Liber Jobi cum nova versione ad hebraeum fontem et commentario perpetuo* (Lyon, 1737), p. 256 and R. Grey, *Liber Jobi in versiculos metrice divisus, cum versione latina Alberti Shultens* (London, 1742), pp. 64-5.
[427] Costard, *Some Observations*, pp. 7-9.

Peters) often mentioned Job's maritime upbringing as a key historical detail for determining his location.[428] For our purposes, however, it is most significant that Costard used the nuances of oriental philology to pave the way for a Warburtonian re-dating of the text.

To pin down Job's location more precisely, Costard turned to the descriptions of Job's friends, which also gave him occasion to display his competence in sacred geography, another classic handmaiden to theology. Following 'Dr Hyde', Costard treated Job's friend Eliphaz as a Temanite from the 'Country of *Edom*'. Costard also pointed readers to the student classic, *Geographicae Veteris Scriptores Graeci minores* (1698-1712), by the Oxford scholar John Hudson, which shored up Ptolemy's assertion that the capital of the land of Edom was the city of '*Bosra*'. But the fact that this would have placed Eliphaz over 1,000 miles from Job, when he apparently came to assist him speedily, struck Costard as strange. Moreover, another of the three friends, Zophar, who is described as a 'Naamathite', was sometimes said to have come from near the Red Sea and sometimes from Arabia Felix (now Yemen), neither of which would have placed him close enough to Mesopotamia for him to have quickly arrived for the meeting. Such discrepancies ultimately led Costard to speculate that the whole episode 'is a Poetical Invention' of an author who consciously eschewed '*Geographical* Niceties'.[429] At this stage, he struggled to determine how much to invest in accurately placing Job using oriental philology (à la Hunt) and how much to assign to narratology (à la Lowth). Crudely put, he was split between historicist and literary modes of criticism.

By the time that it came to assessing when Job lived and who he was, Costard seems to have decided that Job was best approached using Lowthian, literary analysis, but that such a reading had to be historically justified. One of Costard's chief arguments for Job being a late production was that it exuded '*Eastern* Figure and *Hyperbole*' while remaining, in Costard's

[428] C. Peters, *A Critical Dissertation on the Book of Job*, 2nd edn (London, 1757), p. 445.
[429] Costard, *Some Observations*, p. 12.

words, a 'Regular' poem that could be elucidated using the rules of the Horatian *ars poetica*. As Costard saw it, the orderly method that gave Job its poetic regularity must have arisen from 'Leisure, Education, and the Establishment of Schools and Academies', which only emerged some centuries later than Moses.[430] The reference to writing on lead in the poem was also a giveaway, since Costard was convinced that this practice only began when 'the politer Arts of Life, made writing more frequent and necessary', and specifically when the Greeks began to contrive elaborate productions such as tragedies that forced them to go beyond the oral.[431] Drawing heavily on Warburton, Costard firmed up this stylistic reading by directing readers to moments in the text where anachronisms were carefully avoided in order to 'preserve the Characters of the Speakers', such as the fact that the word *Jehovah* is mostly left out because it was a name known only to the (later) House of Jacob, and *not* to Abraham's family. According to Costard, it is only at the 'Beginning and the Conclusion, where the Author had no foreign Character to maintain' that the word is 'constantly used'.[432] By reading the replies of Job's friends to his pleas as '*Three* Distinct Acts', with the first and last chapters forming the other acts, Costard not only treated Job as a 'Regular Poem' but also a five-act classical tragedy. On this basis, he could draw out further cases of 'art and contrivance', and then use them as clues for correctly dating the text.

Moving into the terrain of pre-Greek astronomy and astrology – subjects in which Costard had distinct expertise – allowed him to cement Job's late date. In this regard, Costard was particularly concerned with the phrase '*hanging the Earth upon nothing*' at Job 27.6. According to him, this implied that the poem's author knew that the earth was a spherical globe, which could 'hardly have been before long voyages were undertaken by sea', 'many Ages after *Moses*'.[433] He also drew attention to the fact that more constellations are mentioned in Job,

[430] Costard, *Some Observations*, pp. 14-17 and p. 27.
[431] Costard, *Some Observations*, p. 22.
[432] Costard, *Some Observations*, pp. 29-30. This hypothesis was lifted from *The Divine Legation*, ii, pp. 492-5.
[433] Costard, *Some Observations*, p. 28.

including 'Aish' and the 'Crooked Serpent', than in the writings of older prophets such as Isaiah and Amos (who were probably the first to mention constellations).[434] As Costard noted, such meticulous naming of constellations only became common with the Chaldeans at the height of the Babylonian Empire.

In addition to his astronomical arguments, Costard strengthened his case by pointing to a range of linguistic anachronisms, such as the fact that Job's author used the word 'Satan' to signify an evil principle, and, as Costard noted, this signification first appears in Chronicles 21.2, which was composed as late 'as the [Babylonian] *Captivity*'.[435] Likewise, the author of Job deployed the Hebrew word 'Ruach' to signify a separate existence (which 'the moderns' know as spirit), and the only similar instance of this is in Kings 22.21, whose author lived 'as late as the 37th Year of *Jehojachim's* Captivity'. These realisations prompted Costard to conclude tentatively that ''Twas to living and conversing here [among the Chaldeans], or to keep up to the Characters of the Speakers perhaps, that we meet with a number of *Syriac* and *Chaldee* significations of words interspersed throughout this Poem, scarce, if at all, to be met with in the other Books of the old Testament'.[436] Through a combined knowledge of literary history, oriental grammar, and astronomy, Costard had become fully convinced that the only way to read the Book of Job literally was to read it literarily. Costard's dating of the Book of Job evidently convinced some of his high-profile contemporaries, for the Cambridge scholar John Garnett, then Lady Margaret preacher, paraphrased his argument in a 1749 publication.[437]

In using historical and etymological details to justify a formalist reading of Job, one can assume that Costard had Bentley's edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost* at the back of his mind.

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[434] Costard, *Some Observations*, pp. 30-33. More generally, see G. Costard, *A Letter to Martin Folkes, Esq; President of the Royal Society, Concerning the Rise and Progress of Astronomy Amongst the Antients* (London, 1746).
[435] For a recent instantiation of this kind of argument, see A. Hurvitz, 'The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered', *Harvard Theological Review*, 67 (1974).
[436] Costard, *Some Observations*, pp. 29-30.
[437] See J. Garnett, *A Dissertation on the Book of Job, Its Nature, Argument, Age and Author […] to which are Added Four Sermons* (London, 1749), p. 280.

But a more obvious inspiration still for this hermeneutic mode was the work of Theodore Beza, who argued that Job was so dramatic a poem and so abundantly filled with artful passages that it was closer to fiction and ought to be excluded from the Bible.[438] Lowth, in his turn, dedicated a whole lecture (number 34) to explicating Job's 'acts' based on the principles of Aristotle's *Poetics*. He claimed that 'Though the poem of Job do not contain a plot or fable, it possesses, nevertheless, some things in common with the perfect drama' and certainly follows 'the dramatic form', being an 'anticipation as it were of a genuine tragedy'. This resonates strongly with Costard's view that although the Book of Job, or any '*Eastern* Productions', did not lay 'the foundation for Greek stage', it shared manifold features with classical tragedies.[439]

Having established that the Book of Job was penned soon after the Babylonian exile by a writer who furnished his account with antiquated language for dramatic effect, Costard could pivot to the most difficult question of all: whether the text prefigured the Resurrection. Here Costard's knowledge of oriental philology again proved indispensable. Unlike Warburton, he did not dwell on 'Whether the *Jews* had any Notion of a *State* after *Death*', dismissively observing that such an idea was commonplace in classical literature and that it would have been absurd if the Jews were the only people that God left in a state of total ignorance. Indeed, he pointed out that 'Upon this Notion is founded the whole Story of Ulyßes's visit to the Shades, in Homer. *Odyss*. 11th'. Impressed by this assessment, Merrick commended 'Mr Costard on Job' in an undated draft 'Sermon on Easter' for convincingly repudiating the idea that only the Gospels brought the doctrine of 'Life & Immortality' into the world.[440] When it came to the apparent prefiguration of Christ's resurrection in Job (19.25), however, Costard was less convinced. The verse read, in the King James Version, 'For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth', yet Costard provocatively

[438] H.M. Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy: Restored with an Introductory Essay* (New York, 1918), p. vii.
[439] Costard, *Some Observations*, p. 25 and Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry*, p. 282.
[440] Bodleian MS Dep. c. 257.

claimed that 'the words seem to intend any thing rather than a Resurrection' in the Christian sense.[441] It is notable here that, in the year before Costard published *Some Observations*, the unprolific Richard Brown, soon-to-be Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic, summoned this very passage in one of the three sermons that he delivered at St. Mary's, Oxford, in order to foreground his view that '*Job* had the knowledge of a future state and resurrection'.[442] These rather derivative lectures may well have fuelled Costard's efforts to de-Christianise Job using historical criticism.

In a bid to de-Christianise further Jewish history, Costard proceeded to underscore that most heathens rejected the idea of Christ's *bodily* resurrection, drawing attention to Pliny's *Natural History*, for example, which recorded how, when the Athenians heard the Apostle Paul mentioning the event, ''tis said *they mocked*' him. Merrick, in his sermon draft, also remarked that the heathens 'mocked when they heard of it [the Resurrection]', since '~~they could not confirm it by certain proofs~~'.[443] But Costard soon retreated into philological territory, spurred on by a conviction that the editors of the King James Bible had deliberately made the relevant Hebrew lines in Job more overtly prophetic. Specifically, he claimed that the translators had sneakily added 'day' to verse 25 (the redeemer 'shall stand at the latter day upon the earth') to give it a more millenarian character. He also pointed to their insertion of 'worms' at Job 19.26 ('And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God'). By implying that Job had died and been buried, this translation increased the verse's apparently prophetic quality.[444] More generously, Costard proposed that 'worms' may have been added to verse 26 due to some confusion surrounding the Arabic, opening up a space for him to demonstrate that the passage in question had a 'very easy and natural Meaning, and perfectly consistent with the carrying on of the *Drama*'. He proceeded to submit to the 'Judgment of the

[441] Costard, *Some Observations*, p. 33.
[442] R. Brown, *Job's Expectations of a Resurrection Considered* (Oxford, 1747), p. 10.
[443] MS Dep. c. 257 and Costard, *Some Observations*, p. 33.
[444] Costard, *Some Observations*, p. 33.

Learned' some emendations as 'Conjectures, which every one may admit or reject as he thinks proper'.[445]

Drawing as usual on Golius, Costard's reasoning went that the Hebrew 'נָקַף' or 'nakaph' ('*gravissimo ictu*, *hasta*, *fuste*'; 'with a very heavy blow; spear; club') was much like the Arabic 'nakîph' ('*exesus à teredine*'), and the nominative case of the verb 'teredine' signifies a worm that gnaws wood.[446] After comparing the Arabic with Ethiopic and Syriac versions of the text, Costard could confirm that the 'general Notion' of the Hebrew 'נָקַף' was to 'wear away', and he thus proposed reading the passage as 'Nay after this Skin of mine is consumed away'. This made sense, he argued, in '*Job's Case*' because he was 'being undoubtedly wasted away with Sores and Grief'. It also buttressed Costard's larger claim that Job was not so much a prophetic as a moral tale of physical and spiritual restoration.[447] While this minor revision would not have shocked many critics, Costard's underlying desire to decrease the prophetic nature of the verse and accentuate the late, quasi-secular character of the text was more disconcerting.

Although Costard's approach to the Book of Job and its dating shared many features with Warburton's – based as it was on locating anachronisms in the text that implied a deliberate attempt to render it archaic – their methods also diverged strikingly. Specifically, whereas Costard mainly analysed the text's language and stylistic features, Warburton was preoccupied with grander themes that allowed him to prove that it was an allegory of the suffering of the Jews. Warburton noted, for example, that the harsh behaviour of Job's comforters jarred with standard Jewish ideas about friendship, and the story must therefore not be about historical individuals but hostility towards the Jewish people in general.[448] In contrast to Warburton, one of Costard's main polemical aims was to demonstrate that Job was *not* allegorical, which was a position that he may well have derived from Schultens, who had made the same argument

[445] Costard, *Some Observations*, pp. 34-6.
[446] Golius, *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum*, p. 2443.
[447] Costard, *Some Observations*, pp. 36-39 and Garnett, *A Dissertation on the Book of Job*, p. 200.
[448] Lamb, 'The Job Controversy', p. 4.

against Le Clerc.[449] Throughout his career, Costard expressed a general aversion to allegoresis, and ridiculed Philo and the Alexandrian Jews for their 'Allegorical and ridiculous commenting on the Law of *Moses*'.[450] While Warburton's and Costard's narratives were closely aligned, then, they could easily be juxtaposed by commentators such as Peters, who wryly noted in his *A Critical Dissertation on the Book of Job* (1757) that the story is 'neither Allegorical, nor properly Dramatic' but rather a 'plain and orderly relation of facts'.[451]

It should finally be noted that Costard's belief that Job contained many flights of fancy because the Jews were, to cite his MA publication on the Psalms, 'People of warm enthusiastick Heads' and thus more likely to write poetry 'in the Devotional Strain' resonates strongly with the judgment of Hunt, who imputed the origins of abstruse allegoresis not to the Greeks but to the '*the lively imaginations of these* Eastern *writers*'.[452] According to Hunt, the Jews, whom (as we have seen) he deemed to have been heavily influenced by eastern language and culture, were transported '*from one thing to* another', and driven to '*overlook those rules of method and connexion, that are observed by* Europeans *of a cooler and more regular fancy*'.[453] It was not a Warburton-inspired belief in the latent political message embedded in Job but rather a Hunt-inspired confidence in the rationality of the ancient Greeks over their enthusiastic predecessors and neighbours that led Costard to assume that the regular, structured, and astronomically-advanced Job had to have a much later composition date than was traditionally supposed.

IV. Merrick, Tryphiodorus, and Trans-Historicism

[449] Lamb, 'The Job Controversy', p. 3. For a nineteenth-century summary of this controversy, see A. Barnes, *Notes, Critical, Illustrative & Practical on the Book of Job, with a New Translation & an Introductory Dissertation* (New York, 1854). For an allegorical reading, see Worthington, *An Essay*, p. 494: 'Job is set forth as a sort of Representative of *Adam*, or rather of Mankind in general'.
[450] G. Costard, *A Further Account of the Rise and Progress of Astronomy Amongst the Antients* (Oxford, 1748), p. 44.
[451] Peters, *Critical Dissertation*, p. 94 and Lamb, 'The Job Controversy', p. 6.
[452] Hunt, *Dissertation on Proverbs*, p. vi.
[453] Hunt, *Dissertation on Proverbs*, p. vi.

Unlike Costard, who plunged into biblical criticism as an MA student to showcase his grasp of critical apparatuses and oriental languages, the subject of Merrick's first publication, a Homeric poem, made perfect sense given his age and stage. It is not that Costard wholly neglected his training in ancient Greek literature. On the contrary, in his MA dissertation on the Psalms, he ventured that there are 'several Places [in the Psalms], which *Homer*, one would be almost tempted to imagine, had imitated, the Resemblance is so very exact', and he regularly used passages from the Greek poets to justify his critical interventions.[454] Yet his goal was ultimately to emend the authorised translation of his chosen biblical books. The young Merrick, by contrast, treated the Homeric tradition as an end in itself and did not publish his highly regarded *The Psalms, Translated or Paraphrased in English Verse* (1765) until he had reached the ripe old age of forty-five.

Merrick's debut, *The Destruction of Troy* (1739), was the first English translation of Tryphiodorus's poem by the same title, and, according to the estimation of one biographer, attracted 'a more numerous list of subscribers than perhaps any work of the time' (numbering around 1000).[455] While we will see that Merrick spent his MA producing a Greek-Latin parallel edition of the same poem with copious annotations, his 1739 translation was aimed at educated English readers. For this reason, Merrick summoned far more modern literary sources than he would two years later, drawing especially on Pope's and Madame Dacier's respective English and French editions of Homer. His first performance was, in short, an attempt to extend the contemporary trend of transforming Greek texts into vernacular ones.

In a long dissertation on the chronology and style of Tryphiodorus that Merrick appended to the 1741 republication of his translation, Merrick explained that his vernacular notes were designed to 'illustrate the Poem, [rather] than to settle the Reading of the Context', and were,

[454] Costard, *A Specimen*, p. 7.
[455] Cunningham, *History of England*, p. 289.

in this sense, intended for popular consumption.[456] Hence, instead of trying to pinpoint Tryphiodorus's sources, Merrick drew out similarities between *The Destruction of Troy* and a wide range of texts from different periods and languages. To offer one striking example, when glossing a passage in Tryphiodorus that reads 'To sink in endless night, and wake no more', Merrick noted that the ancient grammarian Moschus 'ends with the very Expression which *Tryphiodorus* uses', and went on to observe that the 'same Metaphor is somewhat farther pursued in *Plato's* Apology for *Socrates*; and it is remarkable that That great Philosopher and our Countryman *Shakespear* have hit upon the same Sentiment, and almost the same Expression'.[457] Merrick's aim was not to treat Tryphiodorus's phraseology as a key to unlocking his sources in a historicist sense, but rather to justify his own English word choices, show that the poem was equal in brilliance to the best productions of all time, and, to some extent, bolster a traditional conception of poetry as capable of capturing universal and transcendent truths. In seeking to explain these outstanding parallels without recourse to history, Merrick surmised that many of the named authors had 'copied their Descriptions from Nature'.[458]

Perhaps the most striking feature of Merrick's 1739 annotations, however, is the extent to which he drew on sacred literature, which is all the more notable given that he was studying for a BA, which, as has been noted, historically precluded the investigation of theological material. Merrick's ability to locate pertinent scriptural and occasionally patristic sources to illuminate Tryphiodorus's poem did not escape contemporaries. For one, the elderly French-born, Oxford-educated classicist and bibliophile, Michael Mattaire – who helped Merrick with

[456] Merrick, *Destruction of Troy*, p. lxxxviii.
[457] The passage in Moschus reads: 'we, the wise, the mighty, and the brave, / Sink undistinguish'd in the silent Grave' and are 'Wrapt in perpetual Sleep, and Night's eternal shade'. Whereas Socrates wrote that 'there be no sensation after death, but as when one sleeps, and sees no dream, Death were then an inestimable gain', Shakespeare's Hamlet exclaimed in a famous soliloquy: 'To die! To sleep! / No more. And by a Sleep to say we end / The Heart-ache' (Merrick, *Destruction of Troy*, pp. 74-8).
[458] Merrick, *Destruction of Troy*, p. lxiii.

his edition – exclaimed in a 1741 letter to Merrick that 'I wish, all those, who are conversant both in the sacred and in the learned heathen-writers, would (as you do) by a proper comparison illustrate the one by the other; and (if I may so say) adorn the Sanctuary with the spoils of Egypt'.[459] A later biographer likewise noted that it is remarkable 'how early the author [Merrick] had turned his thoughts to sacred criticism'.[460] Such remarks indeed substantiate a broader contention of this dissertation that theological material gradually percolated down from the BD into the MA and even BA phases of a university education as the eighteenth century wore on. In one example of Merrick's usage of sacred criticism, he pointed out in a footnote to line 319 of Tryphiodorus's poem ('Such *Heav'n's* decrees, and such the will of *Jove*') that the expression in the Greek text 'ηλυθε βουλη' is 'somewhat uncommon, but is exactly parallel'd and explained by a passage in *Isaiah*'. He even noted that 'the *Septuagint* Translation has expressed it in the very same words with *Tryphiodorus*', as 'ελθοι ή βουλη'.[461] As Merrick suggested, the phrase, which he translated in the footnotes as '*because the Counsel of Jupiter was come*', exactly paralleled Isaiah 5.19, which read, in the King James Bible, 'let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come!'. Suggesting Merrick's acuity, it appears that, to this day, biblical scholars have been unable to find any phrases that more closely parallel this passage in the Septuagint version of Isaiah than Tryphiodorus's, and it is not surprising that classicists were soon calling on Merrick to consult Grabe's Septuagint manuscripts in Oxford.[462]

While Merrick was not primarily concerned with discerning whether Tryphiodorus had access to Isaiah, he did tantalisingly admit in his 'Dissertation' of 1741 that 'there are some

[459] MS Dep. c. 254/2: Mattaire to Merrick, 10 October 1741.
[460] C. Coates, *The History and Antiquities of Reading* (London, 1802), p. 437.
[461] Even in the above example regarding perpetual sleep, Merrick had observed that Moschus's lines have 'a wonderful resemblance' to a passage in the Book of Job, where the words of the 'inspired Writer' are that 'Man dieth, and wasteth away' and 'riseth not till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep' (14:7-12).
[462] Merrick, *Destruction of Troy*, p. 49. The Professor of Rhetoric at Gresham College in London, John Ward, for example, asked Merrick on 9 December 1742 to look at Grabe's manuscripts. See British Library Add MS 6226, fos. 61r-2v.

Lines' in *The Destruction of Troy*, such as the aforementioned example, that are 'so very much the same' as in other texts 'that there is good Reason to believe that one of the Authors was in some Measure obliged to the other'.[463] The fact that Merrick sought advice on matters surrounding historical borrowings and debts is suggested by a letter that Tunstall sent to him in August 1742, in which the former attempted to explain a similar parallel that Merrick had located between a passage in the Byzantine encyclopaedia *Suda* (that tangentially helped to illuminate line 340 in Tryphiodorus's poem) and Isaiah 1.22. As Tunstall reasoned, since the words 'κάπηλοί ὑμῶν' in both texts did not appear 'in Origens' Hexapla' – which contained the Greek versions of the Old Testament that the author of the *Suda* might have read – it seemed either that the author had accessed a mysterious manuscript or knew the passage 'from memory'.[464] Despite the exciting implications for understanding the genesis of the *Suda* and Tryphiodorus's sources, Merrick does not seem to have pursued the subject.

Why Merrick was happy to make grammatically astute but largely trans-historical comparisons becomes clearer when situated in relation to his broader intellectual orientation, and especially his debts to the Greek scholarship that blossomed in the Dutch Republic in the early to mid- eighteenth century. According to the *Suda*, Tryphiodorus had not only produced *The Destruction of Troy* but also a lost 'lipogrammatic' version of the Odyssey. Lipogrammatic poems are ones in which a letter of the alphabet is intentionally excluded. On most accounts, Tryphipdorus had divided his lost Homeric poem into 24 books and systematically omitted one letter of the alphabet from each. English readers of Merrick's day were reminded of this obscure fact by the English essayist and poet, Addison, who, in a 1711 article in *The Spectator*, scoffed that if Tryphiodorus's long-lost poem had been extant it would have been 'oftener quoted by our learned pedants than the Odyssey of Homer'.[465] Addison went on to surmise that

[463] Merrick, *Destruction of Troy*, p. lxiii.
[464] MS Dep. c. 254/2: Tunstall to Merrick, 30 August 1742.
[465] J. Addison, *The Spectator*, 59 (1711), pp. 236-8.

in composing his poem without recourse to certain letters Tryphiodorus would have been driven to generate an inexhaustible fund of 'obsolete words and phrases, unusual barbarisms and rusticities, absurd spellings and complicated dialects!', and that this is precisely what would have made his poem so appealing to the textual critics of his day.

Distancing himself from scholarly pedantry, Merrick similarly described Tryphiodorus's lost lipogrammatic Odyssey as 'useless and absurd' and agreed with Addison that it would be 'highly valued by our learned Pedants', citing several Renaissance scholars who had tried their hands at 'letter-dropping'. But, despite his antipathy towards pedantry, Merrick was not untarnished by this sin. In his 'Dissertation', for example, he conveyed the excitement that he felt upon hearing that the 'very learned Father *Montfaucon*' planned to produce a 'new *Greek* Lexicon' that would 'contain four thousand words more than are to be found in any other'.[466] Merrick learnt this from Montfaucon himself, whom he informed in a draft reply that he was eagerly awaiting ['avido expecto'] this lexicon, which does not seem to have ever materialised.[467] As Merrick's career progressed and he focussed increasingly on theological subjects, he became even more convinced that gathering and comparing Greek words and phrases, howsoever 'rustic', would allow for the development of a more advanced mode of biblical criticism. In his *Annotations critical and grammatical on Chap. I. v. 1-14. of the Gospel according to St. John* (1764), he explained that he had been inspired, on this score, by several European scholars, including the German philologist Georgius Raphelius and the Leiden Professor of Theology, Johannes Alberti, who not only compiled the largest Greek New Testament lexicon to date in 1735, but also later worked on an edition of the Greek grammarian Hesychius of Alexandria, in the last volume of which he repeatedly cited Merrick's notes.[468]

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[466] Merrick, *Destruction of Troy*, p. xvi.
[467] John Ward remarked to Merrick on 21 August 1744 that the state of the project (as described to Merrick) sounded 'pretty much the same with what he told me himself some years since at Paris' and now his 'circumstances are but low'. See Add MS 6226, fo. 86v.
[468] J. Merrick, *Annotations, Critical and Grammatical on Chapter 1, v. 1-14 of the Gospel According to St. John* (London, 1764), B1r-B4v.

Most significantly for our purposes, Alberti had made his name in 1725 with *Observationes Philologicae in sacros Novi Foederis*, in which he gathered together hundreds of passages, words, and sayings from non-Christian texts that resembled those in the New Testament. His principal aim in doing so was to vindicate the Evangelists and Apostles against charges that their writings were stylistically inferior to those of classical authors. Merrick cited Alberti regularly, especially in his later works, but he would have also recognised that a similar sentiment abounded in the publications of compatriots, including the English schoolmaster Anthony Blackwall's popular *The Sacred Classics Defended* (1725). Following in their footsteps, a long footnote to a line in Merrick's translation of Tryphiodorus defended both the Egyptian poet and St. Luke against accusations of breaking the rules of Greek grammar by joining an infinitive mood to an imperative. In Tryphiodorus's case, the problematic line read 'Hear then, ye princes of the *Dardan* State', which previous editors of Tryphiodorus's poem including Henri Stephanus, Fridericus Jamotius, and Michael Neander had all altered in their editions. In Luke 9.3, it was written 'And he said unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey'. While Beza had censured the latter passage, among others, on grammatical grounds, Merrick believed that such a construction was perfectly acceptable and that equivalents existed in the 'purest' of Greek texts. He offered examples ranging from the Dutch scholar Jacobus Gronovius's edition of Herodotus's *History* (book. 3 p. 211) to Pindar's *Pythia*, and the 105th epistle ascribed to the Sicilian tyrant Phalaris (6th century BCE), adding that a combination of an imperative and infinite mood is 'used promiscuously' by the Didactic poets.[469]

Rather than arguing that the evangelists made no grammatical errors or never used so-called Hebraisms, one of Merrick's key contentions, which mirrored the sentiments of Alberti, Raphelius, and Blackwall, was that even the 'purest' heathen writings were not devoid of the Hebraisms or odd constructions strewn throughout the New Testament. The main problem, as

[469] Merrick, *Destruction of Troy*, pp. 82-4.

Merrick saw it, was that scholars did not look hard enough for parallels between classical texts and scripture and were thus too quick to jump on supposed barbarisms. Most problematically, this led them to make alterations to the sacred text 'without sufficient support from manuscript copies'.[470] While Merrick found Grotius particularly guilty of doing so, he also singled out Bentley for his rather trigger-happy attitude towards conjectural emendation. Merrick took particular issue with the fact that Bentley had altered the ninth verse of St Paul's *Epistle to Philemon* without taking note of a very similar passage in Demosthenes's first *Olynthiac*. According to Merrick, such a parallel would have prompted a more 'cautious Critic' to 'question the necessity of altering the text of St. Paul'.[471] Merrick, more generally, made some of the strongest injunctions against emending scripture without scouring the entire tapestry of ancient literature (or, as we will see, having recourse to a superior manuscript copy). Such an emphasis on comparative literary approaches as a bulwark against rash textual alterations justified Merrick's amassing of thousands of sacred and secular passages.

Bentley's interventionalist approach had a profound impact on eighteenth-century education and scholarship, but so too did Merrick's comparative-literary one. As he explained, he could not realise his vision of sacred criticism without launching a major indexing project along the lines of what Huet had begun in France. In essence, Merrick held that assembling indexes of the most 'considerable authors' in one volume would amount to nothing short of a great new '*Lingua Graecae Thesaurus*' (a reference to Stephanus's massive Parisian undertaking).[472] While only partially realised, Merrick's life-long friend, Hunt, celebrated this scheme and anticipated that it would lay the foundation for a more 'complete Lexicon of the language, than the world ever yet saw'.[473] Hunt even proposed expanding the enterprise to

[470] Merrick, *Annotations, Critical and Grammatical*, p. 5. For a copy of Merrick's letter to Kennicott from 29 September 1768, see MS Dep. c. 254/2.
[471] J. Merrick, *A Letter to the Rev. Mr Joseph Warton* (London, 1764), p. 6.
[472] MS Dep. c. 254/2, fo. 2v: Draft Letter from Merrick to James Harris, c. 1763/4.
[473] MS Dep. c. 254/2: Hunt to Merrick, 28 October 1764.

include Arabic texts. By the mid-1760s, Merrick had taught at least 60 students from English schools and the two universities to select textual editions, partition off and slot relevant words into grammatically organised columns, insert these into tables on large sheets of paper, and drop the indexes into alphabetically-labelled paper bags. He smugly confirmed that, among dozens of successful examples, 'Aristeas's History of the Septuagint' had been 'voluntarily transcribed by a young gentleman of fourteen'.[474] Whatever his motivational strategies, Merrick's streamlined vision of collaborative scholarship ensured that, even in their elementary studies of grammar, future generations of schoolboys were primed to supply the building blocks for avant-garde sacred criticism.

V. The Search for Manuscripts

While Merrick's *The Destruction of Troy* had a laudatory reception in England, it was his Greek-Latin parallel edition of the same text, produced as an MA student, that piqued the attention of a more international audience. In a letter of September 1741, Mattaire underscored to Merrick, his mentee, the 'woonderfull ripeness' of the Greek in his edition of Tryphiodorus, which Mattaire noted was reminiscent of

> a young Dutch Gentleman (Matthias Rover) much about your age; who in 1737 published and adorned with his notes Musaeus; and in 1739 Fragmentum Graec. Veteris Jurisconsulti &c. I wish your example may be follow'd by others in both our universities.[475]

Mattaire's comparison of Merrick and Matthias Röver, a student at the University of Leiden, is informative for a number of reasons. Both waded into print during their teenage years with editions of fourth- or fifth-century Greek poet-grammarians: Tryphiodorus's 691-line poem on the destruction of Troy in Merrick's case and Musaeus's 343 hexameter epyllion on the love story of Hero and Leander in Röver's. Both published and sought to vindicate texts that the

[474] Merrick, *A Letter*, p. 5. The indexes are at Bodleian MSS. Auct. V.1 subtus 16-29, 29^{n}, 30.
[475] MS Dep. c. 254/2: Mattaire to Merrick, 5 September 1741.

French Jesuit René Rapin had denigrated in his *Les réflexions sur la poétique* (1674) for their 'coarse and low character'.[476] Both approached major European scholars for guidance on abstruse literary matters. And, most significantly, both assiduously compared published and unpublished versions of their chosen texts in fleshy footnotes, an expectation among advanced scholars that was rarely met by students. Outstripping even Merrick, Röver had in fact obtained seven manuscripts to compare with the seventeen earlier editions of Musaeus's poem. Three of these were in the Bodleian, and Röver received the collations of them made by Gronovius from his son Abraham, the University of Leiden librarian.[477] Manuscripts, it would seem, offered an ideal excuse for students to establish links with heavyweight scholars beyond their universities.

Merrick likewise contacted the younger Gronovius, yet his belief in the power of manuscript variants to spawn and justify new and improved readings of ancient texts led him to call upon even better-known scholars, including the aforementioned Montfaucon, the so-called 'father of palaeography'. In his *Bibliotheca Bibliothecarum* (1739) – which Merrick praised for its 'immense industry and learning' – Montfaucon had enticingly mentioned a manuscript fragment in the Royal Library at Paris that resembled *The Destruction of Troy*. Soon after, Merrick politely enquired whether the Frenchman might spare a moment to send him a copy of this fragment, which Montfaucon did willingly.[478] Although Montfaucon noted that several learned men had ascribed the manuscript to Tryphiodorus, Merrick established that, 'by the Transcript of it, which I have received from the same Hand, it appears to be nothing else but the Beginning of *Coluthus*'s Poem on the Rape of *Helen*'.[479] He admitted in an undated draft letter to Montfaucon that the confusion was understandable not only because

[476] Merrick, *Destruction of Troy*, p. lxxiv.
[477] M. Rover, *Mousaiou to grammatikon Tà Kath'Her o kai Leandron* (Leiden, 1737).
[478] See Bodleian MS Dep. c. 254/1 for the fragment at the Royal Library at Paris that Montfaucon sent to Merrick on 13 December 1740.
[479] Also see Merrick, *Destruction of Troy*, p. lxxxvii.

Tryphiodorus's and Coluthus's poems were often published together – beginning with the Aldine *editio princeps* – but also because they had a certain 'Styli Similitudinem'.[480]

Rather more successfully, Merrick wrote to Reimarus, who had obtained a rare manuscript version of Tryphiodorus's poem from his father-in-law, another acclaimed German textual scholar, Fabricius. Upon hearing from Merrick, Reimarus generously sent him a collation of this manuscript against the 1566 Greek edition of Stephanus. Reimarus enumerated no fewer than 677 differences between the manuscript and printed text.[481] Merrick happily remarked in a draft letter to Mattaire that 'Mr Reimarus of Hamburgh has favour'd me with the various readings of a manuscript of Tryphiodorus', and that these helped him to restore 'the corrupt Passages' and supplied him with 'a few Lines which are wanting in the former Editions'.[482] This manuscript, which Merrick refers to as '*MS Reimarus*', features in the preponderance of the footnotes to his 1741 edition.

Even as Merrick went to lengths to procure these manuscripts, it is notable that he felt at liberty with the handiwork of a heathen such as Tryphiodorus to change the meaning of words and phrases where grammar, style, or a parallel instance in another text seemed to warrant it. Unlike in his later work on scripture, in which Merrick urged that emendations should be 'supported by the Authority of a Manuscript', his 1741 edition is peppered with conjectures that go against unpublished material.[483] While Merrick was not the only Oxford student of his day who desired to bring original English translations of ancient material into the world, his cautious attitude towards textual interventions set him apart from contemporaneous scholars such as Costard. As products of their times, Costard and Merrick both realised that scripture was full of unclear and highly poetic passages that needed careful elucidation, but Merrick

[480] MS Dep. c. 254/1: Merrick to Montfaucon, undated.
[481] MS Dep. c. 254/1: Reimarus to Merrick, 9 February 1740.
[482] MS Dec. c. 254/2: Merrick to Mattaire, 26 July 1741.
[483] An example comes in the footnote to line 117. Merrick proposed to change 'χυμχ' by a single letter (adding an epsilon) so that it read 'χευμχ', noting that it appeared in this form in a similar context in Callimachus's *Hymn in Jovem* (J. Merrick, *Tryphiodorou Iliou Halosis* (Oxford, 1741), p. 21).

hoped that most of these passages could be explained away by textual comparison. By contrast, Costard, citing Richard Simon's *Histoire Critique* (1678), underscored that comparative linguistics could very often be used to justify correcting the alleged errors.[484] Even more boldly, we have seen that Costard used historical reconstruction to develop a narrative about the genesis of a sacred text that made his conjectures seem believable. To a reader such as Merrick, such manoeuvres would have looked as though they had been cut to fit a rather provocative agenda rather than being determined by the extant evidence.

VI. Conclusion: The Limits of Conjecture

Unlike Merrick, whose reputation as a theologian was forged, as per the tradition of general learning, through major secular editorial exploits, Costard quickly gained a reputation as a biblical critic with a brazen style, who, in the words of a detractor, displayed the 'infinite Stores of a critical Invention'.[485] While his works were positively reviewed as far afield as Germany – in the *Neue Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* of 1752 that the Leipzig-based rhetorician and historian Johann Gottlieb Krause had launched in 1715 – they also met with criticisms at the time and among later historians, with Alexander Chalmers claiming in *The General Biographical Dictionary* (1813) that Costard dealt 'too much in conjectures' and possessed 'more erudition than judgement'.[486] Some of the criticisms of Costard also reflect broader intra-confessional disagreements in mid-century England.[487] Most significant in this regard was the response of Benjamin Holloway, who had been busy drawing up manuscript 'animadversions' on the *Divine Legation* earlier in the 1740s. Holloway was a renowned follower of the

[484] Costard, *A Specimen*, p. 25.
[485] B. Holloway, *Marginal Animadversions on Mr Costard's Two Late Dissertations* (London, 1750), p. 21.
[486] A. Chalmers, *The General Biographical Dictionary* (32 vols, London, 1812), x, p. 302.
[487] J.G. Krause, *Neue Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* (Leipzig, 1752), pp. 497-9. In a letter from John Watson to Richard Richardson from April 29th 1757, Costard's dissertations are described as being 'very learned' (see R. Richardson, *Extracts from the Literary and Scientific Correspondence of Richard Richardson*, ed. D. Turner (Yarmouth, 1835), p. 422). His work is also praised in E. Ironside, *Miscellaneous Antiquities, in Continuation of the Bibliotheca Topographica* (London, 1797).

clergyman John Hutchinson, and sought to prove that the unpointed Hebrew of the Old Testament contained a latent Trinitarian philosophy.[488] Adopting Hutchinson's belief in the 'native Light and Perspicuity' of Hebrew, Holloway shunned Costard's attempt to read an ancient text such as the Book of Job 'by an *Arabic* Dictionary', which he saw as a wrongheaded replication of the approach of 'the learned and Pious *Pocock*'.[489]

As we have seen, however, Costard came to scholarly maturity in a world that valued oriental learning for far more than polemical purposes, and, addressing topics that forced the marriage of astronomy, archaeology, and linguistics, his output can be regarded as the culmination of scholarly traditions that had long flourished in Oxford. With approaches to Hebrew poetry such as Lowth's developing during his days as a young scholar and tutor, and with the mentorship of Hunt, who transformed Arabic and other eastern languages into profuse interpretative resources for biblical critics, Costard could proudly remark in 1750 that 'few places, if any, in Europe are so well adapted as the university of Oxford' for the studies in which he was engaged.[490]

Though Merrick, like Costard, was interested in how secular learning could be used to improve understandings of sacred history, we have seen that he cut his teeth on secular texts as a young scholar at Trinity and took a rather different approach to the issue of conjectural emendation throughout his life. As already noted, the mid-eighteenth century was a time when the attempt to alter translations and editions of scripture usually relied on finding or re-reading manuscripts, and Merrick was a strong proponent of this. Even Hunt, in his *Dissertation on*

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[488] D. Gürses, 'The Hutchinsonian Defence of an Old Testament Trinitarian Christianity: The Controversy Over Elahim, 1735-1773', *History of European Ideas*, 29 (2003). See also S. Mandelbrote, 'Biblical Scholarship at Oxford in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: Local Contexts for Robert Lowth's *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum*', in J. Jarick (ed), *Sacred Conjectures: The Context and Legacy of Robert Lowth and Jean Atruc* (New York and London, 2007).

[489] J. Bate, *Michah v. 2. and Mat. ii. 6. Reconciled; with some Remarks on Dr. Hunt's Latin Oration at Oxford, 1748* (London, 1749), p. 5 and S. Mandelbrote, 'Biblical Scholarship at Oxford', pp. 18-20.

[490] Costard, *Two Dissertations*, p. 47. It is fitting, on this score, that Costard maintained correspondences with some of Europe's most renowned orientalists including Michaelis and Schultens the Younger. For his letters to Schultens, see Kastelein, 'I shall find you', p. 56.

Proverbs VII (1744), explained his own translation of 'stocks' [עכס or ékes] as to 'dance, skip or bound' in verses 22-3 not only by underscoring the remarkable agreement between the '*Chaldee*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic*' ('so many versions of great antiquity and authority') but also by citing manuscripts 'never yet printed'.[491] Another of Merrick's friends, John Ward, Professor of Rhetoric at Gresham College, expressed a similar idea in a letter from 15 December 1743 to Merrick when he remarked that even Bentley had not taken 'those liberties, which some persons have apprehended he would have done' in his copy of the Greek New Testament, making 'no alterations of the common reading but from the authority of manuscripts'.[492] In his own *Annotations on the Psalms*, Merrick offers plenty of conjectures on, and occasionally corrects, the Hebrew text. But he noted that even these interventions were just that – conjectures – and that they could only be properly judged as to their worthiness against Old Testament manuscripts. He anticipated that many of these would soon come to light in the Old Testament edition of his 'dear old friend' (and Costard's former student) Kennicott. Merrick also reiterated in a letter to Kennicott that critics had often gone awry for 'want of authority from MSS' and swore that he would never propose 'an alteration of the sacred Text, without sufficient manuscript copies'.[493] Contemporaneous scholars echoed Merrick's point about scripture for secular texts, too, with Tunstall stating in a 1742 letter to Merrick that the manuscript that he asked the young Oxonian to consult that autumn was not 'antient enough to enter into the subject' of his debate (with Middleton), so he was unable to 'take the advantage of its authority'.[494] Another Cambridge scholar of the period, Jeremiah Markland, in turn echoed Tunstall's point when he wryly commented on a fellow scholar's conjecture about Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* that it is sadly 'confirmed by two very good MSS', though it

[491] Hunt, *Dissertation on Proverbs*, pp. 2-6 and p. 11.
[492] Add MS 6226, fo. 79r.
[493] Merrick, *Annotations, Critical and Grammatical*, p. 5. For a copy of Merrick's letter to Kennicott from 29 September 1768, see Bodleian MS Dep. c. 254/2.
[494] MS Dep. c. 254/2, fo. 3v. See J. Tunstall, *Epistola ad virum eruditum Conyers Middleton* (Cambridge, 1741) and J. Tunstall, *Observations on the Present Collection of Epistles* (London, 1744).

'could not be true, had it been confirmed by twenty'.[495] Even as Montfaucon developed more accurate methods for dating manuscripts, and it became increasingly acceptable to make emendations to both secular and sacred texts when there were competing readings, those with unpublished and especially ancient material almost always gained the upper hand.

Aligning Bentley with continental and particularly Dutch critics because of his elevation of inventive conjectural emendations, Haugen has contended that 'only in England, and only outside the circles in which Greek scholars emended their puzzling and poorly attested texts, could it appear novel or menacing for a critic to inset a reading he had thought up himself'.[496] But following Bentley's controversial edition of *Paradise Lost* – and in a climate that emboldened precocious students like Costard to offer imaginative etymologies and conjectures about sacred literature – it was scholars such as Merrick working *inside* of the academy who dedicated themselves to developing more fine-grained hierarchies for valuing textual manoeuvres. Reckoning that just as much if not more ingenuity was required to justify keeping a text the same as to warrant changing it, Merrick came to regard the quest to expose imperfections as just as arduous and venerable as any attempt to edit them away.

[495] Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, ii, pp. 427-8.
[496] Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, p. 133.

3.2 Natural Philosophy: Ralph Brockman and Benjamin Kennicott

I. Introduction

During the early eighteenth century, undergraduate philosophy training continued to encompass physics, ethics, and metaphysics. As propaedeutics to theology (and, to an extent, law and medicine), these domains were designed to equip students to demonstrate the existence and nature of the divine through oral disputation, textual analysis, and even experimentation.[497] As Tunstall put it in his *Lectures on Natural and Revealed Religion* – delivered at St. John's College Chapel in the 1730s – the study of natural (and increasingly moral) philosophy should 'end in the discovery of the first cause'. According to Tunstall, this was the trajectory followed by two of the greatest philosophers of all time: Socrates and Newton.[498] The English Jesuit tutor Thomas Phillips similarly claimed in 1758 that 'the true *Philosopher*, and much more, the true *Divine*' does not stop at 'Notions, which are received before they are examined' but rather proceeds until 'he has found such fixt Principles and a Truth so clear that it cannot be questioned'.[499] As this chapter shows, there was a growing expectation that students would learn from the get-go to shore up and interpret received theological dogmas as they carried out philosophical enquiries.

The extant scholarship on philosophy pedagogy in the early eighteenth-century English universities has emphasised a supposed 'holy alliance' between Newtonianism and

[497] P. Blum, *Studies on Early Modern Aristotelianism* (Leiden and Boston, 2012), p. 18, 44, 47 and R. Serjeantson, 'Becoming a Philosopher in Seventeenth-Century Britain', in P. Anstey (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 2013).
[498] J. Tunstall, *Lectures on Natural and Revealed Religion: Read in the Chapel at St. John's College, Cambridge* (London, 1765), p. 100.
[499] T. Phillips, *The Study of Sacred Literature Fully Stated and Considered: In a Discourse to a Student in Divinity, at a Foreign University* (London, 1758), pp. 123-4.

Anglicanism in this period.[500] The presumed proponents of such an alliance are often misleadingly dubbed 'latitudinarians', not least because, in addition to supporting both Newton's physics and Church of England doctrines, they are deemed to have been highly optimistic about the power of the light of reason while de-emphasising more traditional theological concerns such as the nature of biblical miracles and the future state of the soul. But almost every writer who enticed university scholars to engage in theological debates during the mid-eighteenth century did so by grappling with a 'traditional' theological matter (which was usually grounded in a statement in scripture). Moreover, 'latitudinarianism' had very little to do with promoting natural over revealed religion, or even championing 'reason', and much more to do with how willing one was to assert that there was only one way of believing and worshipping within the Church of England.[501] As we will learn from the examples in this chapter, university students of the 1740s used a striking degree of reason as they grappled with traditional problems concerning how to interpret scripture. But textbook *physics* rarely lent itself to theological application. In fact, even the topic of the supernatural soul, which conventionally concluded natural philosophy textbooks, was absent from most eighteenth-century physics textbooks, as were more speculative questions concerning causation and the nature of matter.

This chapter begins by surveying the state of physics teaching in relation to that of the other traditional branches of philosophy: ethics and metaphysics. With this disciplinary set-up in mind, it turns, in the subsequent sections, to two theological issues that piqued the interest of students and allowed them to apply their undergraduate knowledge to highly precise questions that had either become of public concern or remained unsettled among scholars. The first of these issues concerned the future state of the soul, which was a hot topic in the late

[500] For this 'holy alliance', see Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment*, pp. 2-5. For the apparent Newtonianism and latitudinarianism of Cambridge, see Stewart, 'The Curriculum', pp. 101-2.
[501] See J. Spurr, '"Latitudinarianism" and the Restoration Church', *The Historical Journal*, 31.1 (1988).

1730s from both a historical and a philosophical perspective. Historical discussions revolved around whether the doctrine of the afterlife had a basis in the Old Testament, while philosophical ones centred on whether humans would retain their bodies, and especially their memories, in the afterlife. To examine how students grappled with these matters, I focus on the fascinating manuscript reflections of Brockman, who, as noted in the introduction to this dissertation, was a BA student at St John's, College, Oxford, when he penned his thoughts on the afterlife in a revealing letter to a close relation or friend.

The second theological issue that garnered the interest of students, and with which I grapple in the final major section of the chapter, was the status of the 'Tree of Life' in the garden of Eden, and, specifically, whether the tree was a symbol/sacrament, a singular and divine life-giving plant, or a reference to sustenance in general. Although debates around the nature of the tree were as old as biblical criticism itself, the topic had become contentious during the 1720s and 1730s thanks to the provocations of several English theologians, and especially John Clarke, who claimed that the tree was a natural source of nutrients for a naturally *mortal* Adam. I focus here on the intervention of another Oxford student, Kennicott, and his *Two Dissertations*, which he produced as a Wadham undergraduate. In this work, Kennicott harnessed his already impressive skills as a Hebraist and philologist to try to settle the matter in a conjectural fashion, arguing that misunderstandings had been perpetuated among divines by their failure to understand the phrase 'Tree of Life' as the plural 'Trees of Life' and thus to make accurate deductions about the condition, and conditions, of the first humans.

Brockman's and Kennicott's writings are very different. While Brockman's unpublished letter was, as noted, highly private – and accordingly offers rare evidence of a student contemplating vexing (and fairly controversial) issues at the intersection of moral and natural theology – Kennicott hoped that his published text would reach a wide audience of academics,

divines, and educated laypeople. Kennicott's *Two Dissertations* is, in this regard, a prime example of how an ambitious student applied the sophisticated philological tools that he picked up as an undergraduate to advanced areas of scholarly inquiry. As this suggests, the two pieces of writing are at least united in demonstrating the extent to which undergraduates of the 1740s had been licensed, and, it would seem, even encouraged, to engage with highly topical theological material.

II. Boyle Lecturers?

The late seventeenth century witnessed an explosion of interest in what is often referred to as 'physico-theology'. Bentley's Boyle lectures, delivered during the early 1690s and widely read when published as *The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism* in 1699, are perhaps the most memorable contribution to this domain. As designated by Boyle, the lectures were to use natural philosophy as a barricade against infidelity and atheism. In his lectures, Bentley sought to combat materialism in particular, drawing on a miscellany of works of Restoration divinity to formulate a robust argument against the idea that the world, and the beings within it, could have been formed by chance. The next lecturer, John Harris, also attacked a doctrine that complicated the relationship between God/the creator and the world/the creation – namely, Spinozism – while William Derham's lectures, which were perhaps the most physical of all the physico-theology lectures in the early 1710s, focussed on evidence of the divine in natural history. More generally, late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century divines by and large supposed that natural philosophers and natural historians were their allies, who could furnish them with observational and experimental insights to shore up God's existence *a posteriori*. Vast numbers of students, in their turn, soaked up this sentiment, with a BA student (of Witty's generation) quoting the great seventeenth-century naturalist John Ray at length in his

commonplace book, including Ray's imperative that we 'take notice of and admire His Infinite Wisdom and Goodness in the Formation of them [God's creatures]'.[502]

By the mid-eighteenth century, however, the mood had changed somewhat, with the endeavour to understand the creation morphing from a principally natural philosophical programme to a heavily text-critical one (culminating in the debates around Hutchinson's interpretative scheme in the 1750s). While Newton's work did not exactly offer a 'natural theology', it was largely thought to have resolved the knotty issues surrounding the length and nature of the events involved in the creation by confirming that, while nature ordinarily operates according to natural laws, the creator God could, on occasion, suspend such laws. When it came to the moral considerations that surrounded God's relationship to nature, 's Gravesande had a profound impact on students' approaches and understanding thanks to his production of the popular, pedagogically orientated *Introductio ad philosophiam, metaphysicam et logicam continens* (1736). This text was not only widely read in the Dutch universities but also in Oxford and Cambridge. It seems to have been particularly popular because of 's Gravesande's argument that Newton's conclusions about nature afforded 'moral evidence' of equal weight to that which could be obtained by pure mathematical deductions. He reasoned that three generally reliable sources indicated the 'moral necessity' of God's natural laws: the senses, testimony, and analogy.[503] While 's Gravesande maintained that mathematical certainty is derived from the fact that the discipline deals with ideas themselves (or, for him, abstract conceptions of figures) and that, for this reason, no appeal to God is necessary to accept a mathematical demonstration, he argued that, in the case of physics, God would not deceive us in the use of the senses or in the applicability of our analogies and that these sources thus gain their certainty from the divine will. What Strazzoni has called 's

[502] See the commonplace book of an anonymous mid-eighteenth-century Cambridge undergraduate in British Library Egerton MS 834, fos. 227r-31r. This manuscript appears to have been from after 1748 due to the reference within it to Sir Hans Sloane's entertainment to the Prince and Princess of Wales on 7 June of that year.
[503] Strazzoni, *Dutch Cartesianism*, pp. 171-97 and 188-9.

Gravesande's 'foundationalism' was ultimately an argument for the nomological regularity of nature, which Newton only cursorily defended as the first of his four 'Rules of Reasoning in Philosophy'.[504] It was on this basis that 's Gravesande's 'foundationalism' could be used in England to bolster broader efforts to show that Newtonian physics was compatible with orthodox theology. More generally, the integration of approaches such as 's Gravesande's into the BA curricula suggests that academic natural theology, by the 1730s, just as often involved subtly adapting theories about causation and the status of sensory and analogical evidence as it did launching attacks on the deistically inclined with commonplace assertions about the magnificence of a divinely-created nature.

When it comes to the teaching of physics in 1730s England, university pedagogues tended to take a two-pronged approach. As has just been suggested, one involved showing that Newtonian natural philosophy had solid metaphysical and moral foundations (à la 's Gravesande). The other, much more common, approach involved delving into and separating out the realms of traditional physics to which Newton's insights applied (such as optics, hydrostatics, mechanics, and astronomy), with additional time left for adjacent (and overtly less disrupted) areas such as natural history. Some of the most important expositors of post-Newtonian physics within the universities include Nicholas Saunderson, Thomas Rutherforth, and James Bradley. While students regularly copied down one another's lecture notes – and many of the notebooks from the 1730s and 1740s therefore contain significant overlaps – these lecturers did adapt their approaches over time.[505] An interesting instance of such evolution can be found in the lectures that Saunderson delivered in his Cambridge college, St John's. Although all of his lectures use the same laws of nature to explain a variety of natural phenomena, his earlier 'Lectures upon Hydrostatics, Mechanics, Sounds, Astronomy, Optics,

[504] Strazzoni, *Dutch Cartesianism*, p. 179.
[505] CUL Add MS 9316, for example, contains the Latin notes of the future physician Anthony Askew on Thomas Rutherforth's 'Ordo institutionum physicarum', probably taken down in the late 1740s when Askew was a student at Emmanuel College. Rutherforth's lectures were very popular.

and The Tides' from 1727-9 – as recorded by the fourth-year student Johan Parnther – mostly discussed general topics, including fluids and their properties, gravity, repulsion, and elasticity.[506] By contrast, his 1737 lectures, which the third-year student Thomas Aynscough took notes on, are structured according to four more specific topics: 'Of y^{e} Circulation of y^{e} sap', 'Of winds', 'Of Thunder & Lightning', and 'Technical Chronology'.[507] The consistent appeals to experimental evidence, however, firmly unite these sets of physics lectures and set them apart from seventeenth-century ones. Indeed, the first half of the eighteenth century was a watershed moment when the teaching of experimental approaches moved from a fringe to a standard practice in the universities, and indeed gradually overtook more historical approaches to become the core of a physics education.

In addition to taking students through experimental procedures step-by-step, it is common to find physics textbooks and sets of physics lecture notes from the 1730s onwards referring to *systems* of natural philosophy, which is interesting when we consider that opposition to Cartesianism in late seventeenth-century England had resulted in a firm rejection of the language of systematicity in contexts such as Witty's Cambridge (thanks, not least, to the popularity of Le Clerc's writings and Royal Society propaganda). As Newton's theories were increasingly argued (and, indeed, experimentally demonstrated) to be compatible with insights from a miscellany of domains (from chymistry to moral theology) they gradually transmogrified into a 'system' not just of the cosmos, but of natural philosophy in general. Thus, in 1735, we find a tutor at Magdalene College, Cambridge, John Rowning, publishing a popular university textbook titled *A Compendious System of Natural Philosophy*.[508] Tellingly, Rowning begins with a set of universal principles, which further points to a renewed confidence

[506] Cambridge University Library MS Add 589 C.
[507] Cambridge University Library MS Add 6312, fo. 39r. By this point, Hales's notion that sap only ascends in plants and that 'y^{e} sun contributes something to its ascent by rarifying it' was being widely debated. Saunderson appears to have been teaching the (by then outdated) idea that the sap also descends as the heat causes it to condense, and the student who took notes on Saunderson's lecture concludes (contra Hales) that sap circulates.
[508] J. Rowning, *A Compendious System of Natural Philosophy* (2 vols, Cambridge, 1735), i, p. 4.

in acquiring certain knowledge of nature.[509] The first is the 'Attraction of Gravitation', or '*a Disposition in Bodies to move towards each other, even when at great Distances asunder*'. The second is the 'Attraction of Cohesion', or '*a like Disposition in Bodies to move towards each other*' when they are very near, and the third is the idea of repulsion, or '*a Disposition in Bodies, whereby in some Cases they endeavour to avoid, or fly from each other*'. Rowning's willingness to discuss *universal* philosophical principles here contrasts strikingly with the historical and encyclopaedic approaches described in 2.2. But he was not the only tutor to produce a 'system' based on such principles derived from Newton's works. Rutherforth similarly produced a popular *System of Natural Philosophy* in 1748, based on his lectures at St. John's, while Colson justified his translation of van Musschenbroek's *The Elements of Natural Philosophy* in the same decade on the basis that English students were *still* in need of '*a complete system of natural Philosophy in our own tongue*'.[510] Students eagerly accepted the clarity that such systems brought, with one, John Willey of Christ's College, dictating 'An Introduction of natural phylosophy' at a 1738 college lecture where it was explained that there are three methods for understanding 'y^{e} appearances of nature' – the Aristotelian, the Cartesian, and the Newtonian – and confidently asserting that the last is 'y^{e} Best, Because it proceeds upon fundamental principles which are plainest & most simple, nature acting uniform to itself, with the fewest and easiest causes'.[511]

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[509] Rowning, *Compendious System*, i, p. iii.

[510] van Musschenbroek, *Elements of Natural Philosophy*, p. xi. For an account of the Cambridge education of one ambitious young natural philosophy student, see C. Jungnickel and R. McCormmach, *Cavendish: The Experimental Life* (Berlin, 2016), pp. 123-46.

[511] John Willey's notes on Gervase Holmes's physics lecture from 1738 are at UCLA, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, MS.2014.005 (and British Library, RP 10276/1). Other Newtonian lectures from the same period include those of W.S. Powell's (St John's College, Cambridge: MS O.84) and William Heberden (St John's College, Cambridge: W.23). Undated notes on Nicholas Saunderson's Cambridge lectures by 'J. Wall' are at Bodleian MS Rigaud 3; Edward Bentham's notes on Bradley's lectures on 'pneumaticks' and 'opticks' from between 1730 and 1740 are at Bodleian MS Eng. misc. e 50; and, for Anthony Askew's notes on Thomas Rutherforth's Newtonian physics lectures (probably from the 1740s), enclosed with a copy of the printed text from St. John's College, Cambridge, titled *Ordo institutionum physicarum* (Cambridge, 1743), see Cambridge University Library MS Add 9316. Lastly, for a general outline of Newtonian teaching in eighteenth-century Cambridge, see Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment*, pp. 142-70.

While experimental philosophy textbooks developed their own robust form, several hurdles remained to teaching experimental approaches in an academic context where oral debate drove examination. The attempt to square speculative modes with experimental practices is suggested by the fact that the English naturalist Stephen Hales's *Vegetable Staticks* (1727) – a pioneering, experimentally-grounded attempt to disprove the received notion that sap circulates in plants – is listed as 'affirmative' for the disputation question of whether a combination of analytical reasoning and experimentation is the preferred method in physics ['UTRUM *Methodus rationinandi analytica et experimentalis in Physicis disciplinis sit praeferenda*?'].[512] Even more strikingly, no texts are given for the negative side, which indicates just how standard an experimental approach to natural philosophy was by this time. Suggesting a disconnect between the medium and message, however, it is perhaps ironic that students were compelled to confirm the integral role of experimentation in a *disputation*: the hallmark of a traditional philosophy education.

The continued emphasis on obtaining generalised, even universal, accounts of the causes of natural phenomena is evident in a range of other university exercises and lectures. Among the most obvious examples is Rutherforth's *A System of Natural Philosophy*, which begins with the claim that the 'qualities, which really belong to bodies' must be found out 'by experiment and observation', but then clarifies that to gain 'real and universal' knowledge we must impute the same cause to '*natural effects of the same sort*' and be allowed to generalise from the bodies that are experimented upon to '*all bodies whatever*' (a clear instance of the aforementioned neo-Newtonian emphasis on nomological regularity). As Rutherforth warned, philosophers who failed to follow these rules could either end up producing 'philosophical romances' (a nod to Cartesianism) or useless natural histories that are purely descriptive.[513]

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[512] Johnson, *Quaestiones philosophicae*, p. 1.
[513] T. Rutherforth, *A System of Natural Philosophy: Being a Course of Lectures* (2 vols, Cambridge, 1748), i, sig. C3r.

While the status and nature of the experimental method were pressing concerns of mid-eighteenth-century natural philosophy pedagogy, tutors also encouraged their students to grapple with more epistemological questions, and especially to interrogate the relationship between certain and probable knowledge. In Bentham's *Introduction to Logick, Scholastick and Rational* (1773) – which was compiled 'long ago' for the 'private use' of his students – we find, for example, questions such as whether probabilistic arguments command assent ['Probabilibus sit Assentiendum?'] being affirmed.[514] Probabilistic arguments also became extremely common in divinity pedagogy, with Tunstall teaching his students that despite the lack of natural evidence for a future state, one seems highly likely to exist in light of the 'innumerable probabilities of there *being* a providence', with the strongest argument being 'the *moral* one taken from the unequal distribution of things'.[515] As this claim suggests, the moral issue of theodicy allowed evidence of worldly corruption to be used to justify the necessity of a supernatural scheme that was beyond the senses.

The relationship between natural laws and providence had long been a thorny theological question, and it continued to be debated throughout the eighteenth century. In the introduction to his popular natural philosophy textbook, for instance, Rowning objects to the idea that just because natural philosophy '*ascribes Effects to natural or* mechanical Causes, *acting by* fixed *and* unalterable Laws, *it therefore excludes a Providence*'. For him, the new philosophy (of Newton) is not mechanical at all (indeed, '*the very Reverse*') because it shows that God necessarily and continually acts upon matter, '*either mediately or immediately*'. Rowning also denies that just because something acts according to a natural law it acts '*necessarily and unalterably*', since it can simply act 'ordinarily, *and in common Cases*'.[516] In this regard, he left ample room for the miracles of the Christian past, which, as Tunstall and 's Gravesande

[514] E. Bentham, *An Introduction to Logick, Scholastick and Rational* (Oxford, 1773), sig. A2r and pp. 100-4.
[515] Tunstall, *Lectures on Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 224.
[516] Rowning, *Compendious System*, i, p. xxxviii.

had affirmed, could easily be accounted for as part of a providential scheme that rested on strong *moral* grounds.

Turning to the examples of Brockman and Kennicott allows us to appreciate more fully the degree to which a physics that was seen to reflect the existence of a deity (even if chiefly on moral grounds) liberated even very young students to grapple with technically difficult issues about exactly whether, when, and why such a deity would be likely to break those laws of nature.

III. A Future State

As noted, physico-theological works (such as Ray's) that argued for the existence of the divine from the evidence of creation were popular with eighteenth-century undergraduates. Certain tutors, like John Denne, a fellow of Corpus Christi, Cambridge, took physico-theology especially seriously, with Denne even publishing his own *Wisdom of God in the Vegetable Creation* (1730) in veneration of Ray. Most graduate students and young fellows were expected to use natural principles to account not just for the existence of God but also for specific revealed doctrines or articles of faith.[517] The nature of the immaterial soul and its relationship to the body had long seemed especially deserving of philosophical explanation, and this section focusses on philosophical ruminations about the soul in light of the widespread early to mid-eighteenth-century interest in the afterlife. It culminates in the striking example of Brockman's reflections on this matter as a BA student.

The question of the future state of the soul had long been intimately bound up with the question of what happened to the body upon death. While bodily resurrection was usually deemed to be both a miracle and a historical reality in the case of Christ, Catholics – along with

[517] For a classic mid-eighteenth-century distinction between reason and experience, see T. Rutherforth, *The Credibility of Miracles Defended* (Cambridge, 1751).

many Lutherans and an increasing number of Reformed thinkers – argued that *all* human bodies were resurrected. Whether the soul was conveyed to heaven or hell through the same body that it occupied during one's life or with another bodily vehicle was, however, an open question. The debate was further complicated by the fact that it was thought to be possible either for the body to be resurrected with the soul straight after death, or, more heretically, on the Day of Judgment in a universal resurrection (a position known as 'mortalism' that the likes of Dodwell, Coward, and Burnet promoted).[518] The lack of consensus on all of these points made the afterlife a particularly fertile site for scholarly discussion.

A seminal text that offered both a historical and natural philosophical treatment of bodily resurrection was Hody's *The Resurrection of the (Same) Body*, which was apparently drawn up to confute Origen's opinion that the soul would be united with a '*thin and Etherial*' body upon death (a position that Burnet advanced in his *De statu mortuorum & resurgentium tractatus* (1727)).[519] While Hody recognised that to argue for the '*Probability* of the Doctrine of the Resurrection, from the Opinions and Traditions of the *Heathens,* may seem perhaps a very vain Attempt', he added that it 'is no more than what many of the Ancients have endeavour'd to do' (including Photius and Justin Martyr). He proceeded to catalogue heathens who held an idea of bodily resurrection. Hody argued, for example, that the idea of the transmigration of souls that the Pythagoreans, Platonists, some Stoics, and many 'ancient Gentiles' promoted was nothing but a 'broken and imperfect Tradition, concerning the *Resurrection* of our Bodies', which they had in fact gleaned from Noah's descendants.[520] But Hody turned to natural philosophy to explain *how* the same body could be resurrected. One issue, often termed the 'cannibal problem', that opponents of the doctrine summoned was that

[518] L. Strickland, 'The Doctrine of 'the Resurrection of the Same Body' in Early Modern Thought', *Religious Studies*, 46/2 (2010) and J.E. Force, 'The God of Abraham and Isaac (Newton)', in J.E. Force and R.H. Popkin (eds), *The Books of Nature and Scripture: Recent Essays on Natural Philosophy* (Dordrecht, 1994), p. 199.
[519] T. Burnet, *De statu mortuorum & resurgentium tractatus*, tr. M. Earbery (2 vols, London, 1728), ii, p. 3.
[520] Hody, *Resurrection of the (Same) Body*, pp. 2-10.

the matter from 'our dead Neighbours' might intermingle with that of a fruit or vegetable, which another human then ingests. Hody got around the issue of the 'subtle *Cookery* of Nature' by surmising that, in such cases, God would prevent one from dying until any ingested human matter had been excreted from the body, an idea that was grounded in the 'infallible *Statick* Experiments' of the great Italian physician Santorio Santorio.[521]

Hody also argued from anatomy that 'Tis enough' if only 'the *Bones* are rais'd up and cloth'd with new *Flesh*', since, to his mind, everything beside bones, ligaments, skin, nerves, and tendons 'makes nothing at all to the *Wholeness* or *Integrality* of the Body'. On this occasion, his argument was taken from Boyle's 'Some Physico-Theological Considerations about the Possibility of the Resurrection' (1675), which argued for a general bodily resurrection on the basis of chymical experiments and Ezekiel 37.7-8.[522] As Boyle put it, 'Vegetable substance, thus swallowed up, and changed by one of the most fretting and destroying substances that is yet known in the world [oil of vitriol], should not only retain the essential qualities of its Nature, but be restorable to its obvious and sensible ones, in a minute'.[523] In combining natural proofs with historical evidence for bodily resurrection, Hody could confidently pronounce that he had finally undermined the Origenean fallacy, in a paradigmatic instance of the learned Restoration divine's willingness to co-opt the latest physiological and philosophical conclusions for theological purposes.

Though particularly striking in its combination of historical and natural arguments, Hody's work was not the only text to offer a physiological defence of bodily resurrection, with another, slightly later, example being George Berkeley's analogy between the soul and vegetables that

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[521] Hody, *Resurrection of the (Same) Body*, pp. 184-7 and Strickland, 'The Doctrine of "the Resurrection"', pp. 164-8.
[522] Hody, *Resurrection of the (Same) Body*, pp. 184-90 and Strickland, 'The Doctrine of "the Resurrection"', p. 172.
[523] R. Boyle, 'Some Physico-Theological Considerations about the Possibility of the Resurrection', *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle*, ed. M.A. Stewart (Manchester, 1979), p. 202.

are 'left to rot in the earth' but soon 'rise up again with new life'.[524] Berkeley's case indeed resounds with Digby's argument in *A Discourse Concerning the Vegetation of Plants* (1661).[525] But Berkeley's immaterialisation of bodily substance allowed him to evade many of the difficulties that beset more traditional thinkers who saw the natural world as corruptible. Indeed, discussions of the physical possibility of bodily resurrection only became more complicated following Locke's provocative alignment of 'person' with consciousness (and memory) rather than with the material body in his *Essay*, which seemed to threaten the notion of a holistic self. To add further complexity to the matter, Locke was notoriously ambiguous about whether consciousness was more closely aligned with an immaterial or material soul, despite stressing its independence from both, as well as about how the soul related to the mind.[526]

Numerous authors quickly attempted to surmount the problems that beset Locke's notion of personhood, with some (like Stillingfleet) glueing personhood to the body and others (like Henry Lee and Shaftesbury) to an immaterial soul *qua* mind.[527] Henry Felton, Principal of St. Edmund Hall, who had been a student of the college during Mill's day and was a friend of Waterland, approached the matter from a slightly different angle. He not only opposed Locke's severing of 'person' from the body but also sought to bolster Hody's numerical resurrection thesis, as is clear from a 1725 Easter sermon on *The Resurrection of the Same Numerical Body*, reprinted three times before 1733.[528] While Felton admitted that certain passions only affect 'Animal Life', he clung to the essentially hylomorphic conception of Aristotle's *De anima*, according to which the soul (responsible for rationality) and body exist in an '*intimate*

[524] M.A. Hight, 'Berkeley and Bodily Resurrection', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 45/3 (2007).
[525] K. Digby, *A Discourse Concerning the Vegetation of Plants* (London, 1661), pp. 80-90.
[526] See L. Dacome, 'Resurrecting by Numbers in Eighteenth-Century England', *Past & Present*, 193 (2006).
[527] H. Thiel, *The Early Modern Subject: Self-Consciousness and Personal Identity from Descartes to Hume* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 163-6.
[528] J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London, 1690), p. 28.

Conjunction' and partake in the same sensations and affections.[529] As Felton exclaimed in a perceptive attack on Locke's disembodied theory of consciousness, 'if I once happen to find myself conscious of the actions of *Nestor*, then it is *Nestor* and not *I*, or Nestor and I together' that constitute a person, with the body being irrelevant.[530] Since Felton deemed a 'person' to be a distinct fusion of body and soul, he reasoned that the same body would have to ascend to heaven if we were not simply to have a '*Resurrection* of the *same Consciousness*', in a palpable instance of how engaging with the ambiguities in Locke's natural philosophy could be used to clarify (or even contest) his 'theology'.

The scepticism in the above passage from Felton also curiously parallels that which lay behind Hody's objection to Origen's/Burnet's 'ethereal' take on the resurrection, with Hody contending that it would be absurd if 'God gave us a *Body* here in this Life' when 'so many *Souls* or *Spirits*, might have conduced as much'.[531] God, after all, does nothing in vain. Given that Felton shared Hody's scepticism towards those who tried to account exactly for all natural (let alone divine) operations, he may as well have replicated his next imperative: 'Go, learn to be modest. Enquire first what God has promis'd, then judge of his *Wisdom* by his Promises'. Fundamental to Felton's critique of Locke's theory of personhood had been his belief that, even '*after so many useful Discoverys made by Anatomy*' in recent times, the nature of the soul-body-spirit union lay '*beyond the Views of our Natural Light*' and was only of consequence insofar as it guaranteed a future state of rewards and punishments, which, he believed, necessitated the unity of body and soul.[532]

Even for those who were less concerned about bodily resurrection, the issue of the soul's fate after death presented a raft of questions that natural philosophy could help to answer, and,

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[529] H. Felton, *The Resurrection of the Same Numerical Body, and its Reunion to the Same Soul, Against Mr. Locke's Notion of Personality and Identity* (Oxford, 1725), p. 20.
[530] Felton, *Resurrection*, pp. 16-17.
[531] Hody, *Resurrection of the (Same) Body*, p. 221.
[532] H. Felton, *The Christian Faith Asserted Against Deists, Arians, and Socinians in Eight Sermons* (Oxford, 1732), p. vii.

interestingly, that even young pupils tackled.[533] Selwin's commonplace book, for example, contains a thesis delivered in St. John's College in April 1733 on whether the existence of a future state can be inferred from the light of nature ['Status futurus colligi potest ex lumine Naturae'] while the would-be acclaimed natural theologian William Paley selected the contentious question of 'whether eternal punishments are repugnant to the divine attributes' for a 1762 undergraduate disputation in the same university.[534] The freedom to discuss such an idea in the classroom is striking given that an entry 'On the Heathens Notions of a future State, with Regard to modern infidels' in *The Gentleman's Magazine* from November of the same year specifies that only '*Infidels*' believe that a future state is 'discoverable and establish'd by *Natural Deduction* and *unassisted Reason*'.[535] Interest among students in the historical status of the doctrine of an afterlife seems to have become especially pronounced after the publication of Warburton's *Divine Legation*, which (as noted in the last chapter) controversially argued that this doctrine was not part of the Mosaic dispensation. An epitome of Johann Lorenz Mosheim's *Institutiones historiae Christianae* of 1739, probably compiled by a pupil not long after its publication, for example, carefully records the beliefs of various Greek and Jewish sects regarding a 'future state', noting that all of the 'heathen philosophers' (besides Plato) held 'jarring notions' on the subject.[536] The author of the epitome went on to summarise the Stoic idea that the soul's existence without the body would be 'limited to a certain time', in a slightly more nuanced take on the matter than that found in, say, Jonathan Swift's 1713 epitome of

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[533] Some examples include F. Gastrell, *A Moral Proof of the Certainty of a Future State* (London, 1725); G. Ollyffe, *The Truth of a Future State, and of its Happiness by a Redeemer* (London, 1732); J. Jackson, *A Farther Defence of the Ancient Philosophers, Concerning their Doctrine and Belief of a Future State* (London, 1747); and J. Towne, *A Critical Inquiry into the Opinions and Practice of the Ancient Philosophers, concerning the Nature of the Soul and a Future State* (London, 1747).

[534] St John's College MS O.60, fo. 62r and G.W. Meadley, 'Memoirs of William Paley, D.D.', *The Works of William Paley* (5 vols, Boston, 1810), i, pp. 17-18.

[535] *The Gentleman's Magazine: or, Monthly Intellegencer*, 3/35 (London, 1733), p. 581. For contributions to this controversy, see J. Hallet, *A Defense of a Discourse on the Impossibility of Proving a Future State by the Light of Nature* (London, 1731) and C. Fleming, *Some Thoughts upon the Grounds of Man's Expectation of a Future State, from the Principles of Reason* (London, 1739).

[536] British Library Add MS 41844 C, fos. 3r-4v (compendium of Mosheim).

Collins's *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, where it is claimed that Seneca, 'like his religious Brethren the *Stoicks*, denies the Immortality of the Soul, and says, all that is feign'd to be so terrible in Hell, is but a Fable'.[537] When it came to ancient Jews, the author noted that the Essenes read Mosaic Law as a system of 'spiritual & mysterious truths' and confined 'rewards & punishments merely to y^{e} soul'. Indeed, this view resounds with Dodwell's earlier claim that the Essenes were so 'extremely drawn to the spiritual sense' of Mosaic law that they 'neglect the *external* observances'.[538] By contrast, the author noted that the Pharisees (who were more overtly opposed to Christianity) 'believed y^{e} body was also to partake' in a future state.[539] But he was just as damning of the Pharisees as the heathens, noting that they 'equaly frustrated' the 'End of virtue & religion', being a 'deluded nation'.[540]

While these historical notes do not express any doubts about the afterlife, neither do they forward a positive theory about the future of soul-body relations. Some students, however, *did* try to explain such issues philosophically. This brings me to the 1744 draft letter that Brockman penned two years after arriving at university for an unnamed but intimate correspondent. Despite confessing that, 'like most young People', the 'station of Hereafter has not taken up my thoughts' (being 'apt to think we have a Lease for a Long Term'), Brockman was willing to grapple with the matter at the behest of his correspondent.[541]

Brockman's letter began by pronouncing on the subject that Warburton had dwelt on: whether the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishment had an Old Testament basis. While he noted that this is a 'Truth so clear & Evident, that no one can Doubt it, but an Atheist', he proceeded to explain that the doctrine of the afterlife was extremely *unclear* from both the 'Heathen system of Religion' and the Old Testament. As he put it, the doctrine was 'not so

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[537] J. Swift, *Mr. Collins's Discourse of Free-Thinking Put into Plain English* (London, 1713), p. 26.
[538] H. Dodwell, *Separation of Churches from Episcopal Government* (London, 1679), pp. 249-50. See Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 519-20.
[539] MS 41844 C, fos. 5r-7r.
[540] MS 41844 C, fo. 5v.
[541] British Library Add MS 42617, fo. 24r.

general[ly] receiv'd' among the Jews as 'y^e Gospel has made it appear' (being evident only in the Book of Job), and, thus, 'we can have no Light into a Future State, nor can one make conjectures' about it from the Old Testament. Indeed, he admitted to believing that, in general, 'Revelation itself says nothing' about the soul that will enjoy the afterlife 'in Express Terms', giving us only some 'some small glimmerings'. Yet he felt a certain pleasure at being 'left somewhat in y^e darkness' on the matter, and excitedly remarked that the paucity of biblical evidence regarding the future state of the soul made it a 'Large field for Conjecture & probabilities'.[542]

Of all of the topics that related to the state of the soul in the afterlife, Brockman was most interested in the question of whether we would retain our *memory*. As a figure within Brockman's immediate Oxford remit, it is interesting, in this regard, that Seed of Queen's College explained in a high-profile sermon of 1741 to mark Waterland's death that 'Philosophers and Divines of the first Distinction' reckon that the immaterial soul, though intimately bound to the body, possesses faculties that are now 'clogged and encumber'd by Matter' that will 'shoot out and exert themselves, as soon as she is divorced from this gross corruptible Body' (a very different stance to Hody and Felton).[543] While he highlighted that it was unclear whether dormant faculties of the soul would become 'new Inlets of Pleasure' in heaven, or whether God would 'superadd new Capacities to it', he seemed to think that a disembodied soul would be capable of experiencing sensations. He was also sure that Waterland – with 'Mr. *Locke*'s Clearness of Reasoning and the extensive reading of Bishop *Stillingfleet*' – was the kind of person who would enjoy future bliss. That being said, despite suggesting that humans would be recognisable in heaven, Seed did not specify *how* this would be possible if they were bodiless.[544]

[542] British Library Add MS 42617, fo. 24r.
[543] J. Seed, *The Happiness of the Good in a Future State Set Forth* (London, 1741), p. 2.
[544] Seed, *Happiness of the Good*, p. 2 and 10.

Brockman took it upon himself to proffer a more precise explanation. Like Locke, he bound memory to reflection (and both to consciousness), writing that 'the soul is capable of thinking, the idea of w^{ch} we have from reflexion & our memory is had from Reflection'.[545] At the same time, he claimed that, assuming memory 'Dies not with us in y^{e} grave', our soul must be 'conscious whether we have [^ done] ill or well' in the past when it is judged if we are to remain the same person and thus be evaluated according to our actions on earth. He gave the example here of it being unjust to punish a criminal who was not conscious of his actions. Brockman surmised, on this basis, that God would not needlessly 'blot out all memory' upon arrival in heaven or hell.[546] But, unsure of what to make of the body, he speculated that conscious 'mind-souls' of the Lockean variety would be reconstituted 'in y^{e} likeness of his [God's] Body'. Offering an explanation far closer to Origen's and Burnet's than Hody's or Felton's, he argued that this seemed plausible since we know that immaterial spirits can 'wear y^{e} Forms of Body'.[547] In *De statu mortuorum*, Burnet had indeed made the controversial claim that 'If the Soul does survive this corporeal Dissolution; and, free from Confinement, flourishes in a separate State, many Questions arise concerning this separate Existence' and especially 'what Sort of Body it assumes'. He proceeded to answer this point with the suggestion that 'after the Millennium and Ascension into Heaven, our Bodies will be Ætherial and cœlestial'.[548] Although there is little evidence of what Brockman was reading – and he rarely provides citations – it is plausible that he consulted sensational texts like Burnet's, which would have been widely available to any gentleman-scholar.[549]

Considering any possible objections to the notion that human souls constitute embodied clusters of memories in the afterlife in the fashion of a schoolboy preparing for a disputation,

[545] Add MS 42617, fo. 24v.
[546] Add MS 42617, fos. 24r-v.
[547] Add MS 42617, fo. 25r.
[548] Burnet, *De statu mortuorum*, i, p. 2 and ii, p. 3.
[549] A copy of the text was in fact housed in Brockman's college library from 1745 at the bequest of the former St. John's fellow Nathaniel Crynes. See St John's College Library, Oxford: HB4/2.a.1.16.

Brockman went on to speculate about what this would mean for the sinner's experience of eternal torments. In this regard, he ventured that hell might not be 'Local' but 'chiefly allegorical': an idea that he may have picked up from a text like John Clarke's *An Inquiry into the Cause and Origin of Moral Evil* of 1721 (based on his popular Boyle lectures), which stated that Hell torments cannot be understood in '*a strictly literal* sense'.[550] Brockman reckoned that the real punishment for sinners would thus arise from their reflections upon past ills, which lead him to restate the importance of damned souls retaining memory, and, by extension, to propose that it would be strange to deny memories of past goods to the righteous. Going further, Brockman ventured that pleasure would be especially marked in heaven if we could converse by a 'particular Language' or even 'by Intuition' about these past deeds.[551] Yet he quickly realised that, by the same token, possessing memory might constitute a form of suffering for the righteous insofar as they would immediately realise which of their beloved were absent from heaven and accordingly assume that they had been damned. As Brockman wrote:

> if we retain y^{e} knowledge of one another after this Life, will it not Diminish much from our Happiness, supposing ourselves happy when we see many of our Friends & Relatives, nay perhaps our nearest kindred deliver'd up to perpetual misery, as will certainly be y^{e} case, for who can answer for another Life.

He continued to ponder: 'Shall God cast an oblivion over Minds in regard to y^{e} miserable, so that we shall not know that there are any y^{t} are such, yet Dives & Lazarus knew one another', or 'shall we be so throughly convinc'd of his just judgement & mercy, w^{ch} would have pardon'd had not y^{e} crimes have been so Black as intirely to have excluded all mercy'.[552]

With an 'awfull sense' of God's justice, Brockman ceased conjecturing on the topic and he urged his correspondent to let the letter 'go no farther than y^{e} hands or y^{r} own Family',

[550] Add MS 42617, fo. 25v and J. Clarke, *An Inquiry into the Cause and Origin of Moral Evil… the Objections of the Antient and Modern Defenders of the Manichean Scheme, Particularly Mr. Bayle* (London, 1721), p. 72. The opposite view is clearly expressed in T. Swinden, *An Enquiry into the Nature and Place of Hell* (London, 1727).
[551] Add MS 42617, fo. 25v.
[552] Add MS 42617, fo. 25v.

fearful that it might be misinterpreted by 'too severe Criticks'.[553] But, in his attempts to affirm the standard notion that the same 'person' *qua* immaterial soul ascended to heaven or descended to hell, Brockman had come to some rather controversial conclusions: that scripture revealed very little about the future state, that suffering would probably triumph over pleasure in heaven thanks to memory, and that hell was figurative rather than literal. In generating this last point, Brockman had perhaps rather literally read Satan's famous claim in Book 9 of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) that 'The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven'. His letter is, in any case, a palpable instance of how students absorbed and adapted novel philosophical theories to grapple with complex and topical theological issues during their earliest student days.

IV. Kennicott and the Nature of Man

Though moral philosophy (which traditionally encompassed politics, ethics, and oeconomics) was distinct from natural philosophy and theology, the above discussion of treatments of the future state of the soul among university scholars and students has already suggested that the lines between these domains were blurry. Suggesting the difficulty that even a figure as systematic as Leibniz had in separating out the moral, natural, and supernatural, he wrote in his *Essais de Theodicée* (1710) that natural theology, which aimed to prove God's *moral* attributes, was a 'part of philosophy'.[554] Further complicating matters in England is the fact that 'deists' such as Thomas Morgan and Wollaston regularly asserted the proximity of the moral to the natural (and, by extension, to the supernatural about which nature supposedly taught) with the aim of grounding entire moral systems in that which could be observed in the

[553] Add MS 42617, fo. 25v.
[554] G.W. Leibniz, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of* Evil, tr. E.M. Huggard and ed. A.M Farrer (New York, 2009), p. 183.

creation.[555] In their turn, texts of the early 1700s that defended Christianity *against* the deists regularly did so with reference to its basis in a *natural* (but of course ultimately God-given) system of morality. A prime example of a text that argued that humans have an innate (God-given) knowledge of good and evil owing to the natural and immutable relationship between things or their 'fitness' is Samuel Clarke's *A Discourse Concerning the Unalterable Obligations of Natural Religion* (1705). A similar point could, however, be made about Cudworth's posthumous *Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* (1731), which propelled the notion that both reason and morality are universal and innate. Indicating that at least some prominent academics were attracted to ideas such as Clarke's and Cudworth's, the first Oxford Poetry Professor, Joseph Trapp, asserted in his poem *Thoughts upon the Four Last Things* (1735) that a 'Sense of Things / From Nature, and Eternal Reason springs: / Tis mix'd, congenial, with the Minds of All; / Tis *Universal*; therefore *Natural*; / Therefore *from God*'.[556] According to Trapp, natural universals must also be divine, which, we will shortly see, would have represented an unsettling departure from the supposition among most Church of England divines of the period that moral laws, like natural ones, stemmed from and were resolvable into God's will.

Taking the innate ideas argument in a slightly different direction, Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy at University of Glasgow, also made a major intervention into understandings of the relationship between the natural and moral in a slew of works that were read in the English universities, including his *Inquiry into the Ideas of Virtue and Beauty* (1725) and *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755). While the *Inquiry* was eagerly discussed by Cambridge scholars such as John Byrom during the late 1720s, his *System* was interestingly

[555] For this recommendation, see the first table at the end of E. Bentham, *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (Oxford, 1745). More generally, see I. Rivers, '"Galen's Muscles": Wilkins, Hume, and the Educational Use of the Argument from Design', *The Historical Journal*, 36/3 (1993). For Wollaston in particular, see D. Lucci, 'William Wollaston's *Religion of Nature*', in D. Lucci, J.R. Wigelsworth, and W. Hudson (eds), *Atheism and Deism Revalued: Heterodox Religious Identities in Britain, 1650-1800* (Farnham, 2014).
[556] J. Trapp, *Thoughts upon the Four Last Things* (London, 1735), part 2, p. 4.

recommended to undergraduates in a 1755 republication of Waterland's *Advice to a Young Student* as one of 'the latest and best' ethical systems (along with the *Elements of Moral Philosophy* (1754) that Hutcheson's student, David Fordyce, produced).[557] For Hutcheson, natural affections or passions are aroused when we act in ways that we perceive to be morally good or benevolent – as evidenced by witnessing positive affections in others – and the arousal of such passions is the principal marker of virtue. Hutcheson became widely known for his notion of humans as 'disinterested' (i.e. selfless) moral agents, and for his account of ethics as being grounded not in rational calculation but in the disciplined cultivation of unselfish habits (which he dubbed a *cultura animi*).[558]

For all of the excitement that they generated, Hutcheson's ideas (like those of Clarke and Cudworth) found a much wider variety of critics than they did advocates in England. Indeed, in Oxford and Cambridge, seventeenth-century English and German jurisprudential literature tended to dominate the reading lists of students in the domain of ethics, and thus the thrust of their reading ran counter to the output of these authors. Moreover, when seeking anything akin to moral universals, mid-eighteenth-century students and young divines tended to rely upon scriptural descriptions of good and evil and the moral precepts found in the Bible. Bentham, for instance, emphasised the importance of scriptural moral axioms in his *Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (1745), which was designed for Oxford students, when he noted that some of England's greatest natural philosophers – including Locke, Boyle, and Newton – upheld revelation as the principal source of moral ideals and commands.[559] Many divines were, however, happy to accept that the 'light of nature', or a mental faculty responsible for

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[557] The architect of a famous shorthand system, John Byrom, for example, wrote in his diary that he and his Cambridge friend 'talked about Hutchinson's book, of virtue, moral sense'. See R. Parkinson, ed., *The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byrom* (Manchester, 1855), i. p. 365. For Waterland's recommendation of Hutcheson, see his *Advice to a Young Student*, p. 28. More generally, see See Carey, *Locke, Shaftsbury, and Hutcheson*, pp. 161-72.

[558] T. Ahnert, 'Religion and Morality', in J.A. Harris (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 645-6.

[559] Bentham, *Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, p. 102.

rationality, allowed for the interpretation of scriptural dictates (so their religion was, to this extent, entirely rational), and they also recognised that, as with evidence from nature, moral insight is squared with revealed history. Achieving a rational account of biblical descriptions was especially pressing in the case of the problem of evil and the related issue of free will, which (we will see) became a highly contentious topic after the publication of Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697, 1702), Leibniz's *Théodicée* (which was largely a response to Bayle), the Boyle lectures of Burnet and John Clarke, the Dublin divine William King's Leibnizian *De origine mali* (1702), and the English translation of this last work by Law (his *Essay on the Origin of Evil* of 1732).[560] The last of these works was hugely popular with English students in the ensuing decades.

While many students, on the basis of comments such as Bentham's, would simply have accepted that they ought to ground their moral ideals in scripture, some young scholars relished the opportunity to think more deeply about the foundations of ethics, largely in reaction to Samuel Clarke and Hutcheson. Such was the intention of the Cambridge MA graduate Thomas Johnson, whose popular book of model disputation questions, *Quaestiones philosophicae* (1735), was used in disputations in Oxford, Cambridge, and beyond throughout the eighteenth century. In this text, students are asked to consider whether humans possess innate moral sense ['UTR. *Detur innatus sensus moralis*?'].[561] Among the texts that Johnson listed that affirmed this view are Shaftesbury's *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue* (1699) and Hutcheson's aforementioned *Inquiry*, while Johnson recommended his own *Essay on Moral Obligation* (1731) for explicating the opposing position. More generally, Johnson rejected the idea (which he associated with Clarke) that a natural light enabled humans to discern the '*natural*,

[560] For an overview of Law's early career, see J. Stephens, 'Edmund Law and His Circle at Cambridge', in G.A.J. Rogers and S. Tomaselli (eds), *The Philosophical Canon in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Rochester, 1996), pp. 163-73. For an analysis of Law's *Essay*, see N. Bailey, 'Academic Collaboration in the Early Enlightenment: Daniel Waterland (1683-1740) and his Cambridge Tyros' (forthcoming, 2022).
[561] Johnson, *Quaestiones philosophicae*, pp. 219-20.

necessary, *or independent Fitness* of Things', and he wryly pleaded guilty of being (like the German jurist Pufendorf) '*one of those dull Mortals who can have no Idea of a Law without a Law-giver*'.[562] Johnson was by no means the only thinker of his day to associate Clarke with the argument for a universal moral sense, with Gilbert Burnet's *A Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion* (1737) – a popular abridgement of the Boyle lecturers – listing Clarke as a prominent proponent of the idea that all men have an obligation to observe the 'eternal Differences of THINGS'.[563] Nor was Johnson unique in expressing a broad-based scepticism towards Clarke's general philosophical suppositions, with it being common to read in sermons and treatises in defence of revelation that the '*Mind has an innate Activity, but no innate Furniture*' and that '*No Principles can be allowed to be universal, but what Experience proves to be so*', to quote the divine John Ellis's *The Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation* (1743).[564]

Evidencing the profound concern with the universality and temporal specificity of moral precepts in Johnson's Cambridge days, some of his close university friends, including Law but also John Gay, a young fellow of Sidney Sussex College, went even further in their opposition to moral innatism, adopting a Hobbesian/Pufendorfian alignment of the individual good with what is most beneficial to the commonwealth.[565] Gay indeed used Locke's doctrine of the association of ideas to argue that humans learn to act 'morally' by imitating others and associating certain actions with pleasure (rather than necessarily actually causing or experiencing pleasure themselves). Strongly opposed to the idea of disinterested benevolence, Gay accused Hutcheson of introducing into moral philosophy the undiscernible and therefore

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[562] T. Johnson, *An Essay on Moral Obligation* (London, 1731), pp. 25-8 and Johnson, *Quaestiones philosophicae*, p. 185: 'Moralis actionum natura, ordine naturae, voluntati divinae antecedat'. See also T. Johnson, *A Summary of Natural Religion* (Cambridge, 1736), pp. 1-2.
[563] G. Burnet, *A Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion* (4 vols, London, 1737), iv**,** p. 403.
[564] J. Ellis, *The Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation* (London, 1743), pp. vi-viii and p. xi.
[565] For Pufendorf and Hobbes, see I. Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments: Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 193.

unprovable occult qualities that had been banished from natural philosophy.[566] Law, in turn, set himself against even the notion of an equal distribution of rationality across humankind. As he saw it, reason (like morality) was dramatically altered by differences in the '*Tempers* of body and *Powers* of mind, and Circumstances in the world', as well as '*Education*, *Opportunities* and *Ways of Life*; the *Station* they are in, or the *Government* they live under'.[567] To speak, therefore, 'of one *fixt*, *immutable* and *universal* Law of Nature' was, for Law, to frame 'an imaginary Scheme without the least foundation in the nature of things, directly contrary to the present order of the whole creation'. Although some critics predictably accused Law of stripping morality of its universal, immutable, and axiomatic status, he was convinced that his vision was most compatible with the dispensations of providence and a sense-based epistemology, according to which natural 'truths' never reached beyond the probable.[568] Heavily indebted to Joseph Butler, Law claimed that this eminent Bristol divine (whose *Analogy of Religion* (1736) Bentham in fact taught to his Oxford students) had revealed the 'perfect *Analogy* between Religion and the common course of Nature' and shown that the 'Dispensations of Religion are perfectly analogous to those of Providence in the constant course of both the natural and moral world'.[569]

The fact that Law's moral arguments soon found favour with students is evident from two anonymous letters in 'Defence of RELIGION' by an Oxford student of the name 'R–' published in *The Student, or, the Oxford, and Cambridge Monthly Miscellany* of 1750. In these entries, the student defends the extreme relativism/contingency associated with Law and Gay, coming to the even more flagrant conclusion that 'Good and evil, fit and unfit, are relative

[566] N. O'Flaherty, *Utilitarianism in the Age of Enlightenment: The Moral and Political Thought of William Paley* (Cambridge, 2019), p. 40.
[567] E. Law, *Considerations on the State of the World with Regard to the Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, 1745), pp. 6-7.
[568] O'Flaherty, *Utilitarianism in the Age of Enlightenment*, pp. 40-50.
[569] Law, *Considerations*, p. 188, 192, and pp. 224-5. For this thesis, he also relied on William Wotton, *Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning* (London, 1694). One piece of evidence that Bentham taught Butler's *Analogy* is Bodleian MS Add c. 24. This is an index of the *Analogy* from around 1740 that Bentham produced, and it includes some of Butler's hand corrections.

terms' and that '*naturally* evil, unfit, unjust, &c. is a mere playing with words'.[570] Defining man as a self-interested animal (against Hutcheson), but noting that some men have more skill 'in the arts of tricking and dissimilation', 'R–' realised that there would inevitably be a continual 'opposition of engagements and pursuits' in the world, and that, accordingly, 'A's misery will appear at certain seasons to be B's happiness'. Ultimately, human 'reason' only ensured that men would act as 'greater savages than the brute creation'.[571] Indeed, 'R– ' concluded that, left to their own devices, humans would 'put each other into the most deplorable state of circumvention and rapine that can be conceived', and that nothing could render 'compatible views which look so different' but the 'sense of a Being who will make it the ultimate interest of all particulars' and 'effectually promote the general happiness' (in the afterlife).[572]

Questions about the relationship of moral truths to natural philosophical and revealed ones – with a focus on the problem of evil – had, as already indicated, been brought together in interesting ways in John Clarke's often-cited *An Inquiry into the Cause and Origin of Moral Evil* (originally delivered as Boyle lectures). In this work, Clarke maintained that God had, at His will and pleasure, slotted creatures into different stations, in 'such a Subordination as their respective Natures would best admit of'.[573] This argument strongly resonates with that found in John Tillotson's *The Remaining Discourses* (1700), which claimed that evil resulted from the existence of a great chain composed of beings of varying degrees of perfection (from ants to angels) whose understandings sometimes compelled them to act in ways deserving of severe punishment.[574] But, even if Clarke regarded divine providence as responsible for natural

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[570] *The Student*, p. 124.
[571] *The Student*, p. 175.
[572] *The Student*, pp. 125-6.
[573] Clarke, *An Inquiry*, pp. 103-4 and 298-300.
[574] Ahnert, 'Religion and Morality', p. 645. The Bishop of Bristol, George Smalridge, in fact recommended in 1714 that Leibniz should consult this work, since it preempted a point that Leibniz had tried to develop in his own *Theodicy*. See 'Leibniz to Caroline' on 29th March 1715, at http://www.leibniz-translations.com/caroline.htm and J. Tillotson, *Remaining Discourses, on the Attributes of God*, vii (London, 1701), pp. 51-80. See generally M.R.

hierarchies, he sought to relieve God of responsibility for evil by denying that He was the immediate or efficient cause of human actions, or even natural events, and by playing up the irrationality and capacity for evil of humans instead.[575]

As the above might already imply, one of Clarke's chief aims was to defeat Bayle, who intimated in his entries on the 'Manichéens' and 'Pauliciens' in the first edition of his *Dictionnaire* and in the 'Eclaircissement sur les Manichéens' of the second that the existence of moral and natural evil contradicted traditional conceptions of God as omnibenevolent. Taken together, these entries damningly laid responsibility for sin and destruction at the feet of God. As Bayle put it in his last publication, *Entretiens de Maxime et de Thémiste* (1707), given that '*the Rules of Philosophy*' offer evidence that '*if it be repugnant to the Nature of God to produce Sin*', it is, by extension, also '*repugnant to the same Nature to produce Creatures who will infallibly produce Sin*'.[576] On this basis, Bayle convinced himself that it was irrational to believe in a benevolent God and the literal truth of revelation at the same time, and he was thus of the view that one's belief in Christianity had to rest on blind faith.

Clarke, for his part, accused Bayle of assuming that God 'designs to seduce Men into Sin' by placing 'them in the most disadvantageous Circumstances possible', and of overlooking the fact that just because one knows that something will happen, one is not necessarily its cause.[577] He also reckoned that although 'all Sin is supposed in Scripture to be from the Devil' – as if the 'natural Laws of the Creation were at his Disposal' – much of the evil described in the Bible was simply the result of natural principles. For Clarke, the world operated according to certain laws, which were the cornerstones of a carefully designed but free artifice that even

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Antognazza, 'Metaphysical Evil Revisited', in L. M. Jorgensen and S. Newlands (eds), *New Essays on Leibniz's Theodicy* (Oxford, 2014), p. 112.

[575] Clarke, *An Inquiry*, p. 47 and 300.

[576] Clarke, *An Inquiry*, p. 246. For the original, see P. Bayle, *Entretiens de Maxime et de Thémiste* (Rotterdam, 1707), p. 142: 'Pendant qu'il voudra philosopher on lui soûtiendra que s'il repugne à la nature de Dieu de produire le peché, il repugne à la meme nature de produire des creatures qui produiront le peché infailliblement dans les circonstances qu'il leur choisira'.

[577] Clarke, *An Inquiry*, pp. 247-8.

supernatural agents were largely incapable of disrupting. This did not mean that humans followed the same laws, however. Indeed, Clarke was averse to making humans 'Modes of the Deity' (a likely swipe at Spinoza), and was equally affronted by the idea associated with Berkeley that there is no created world, but only 'imaginary Representations in our own Minds, without any Thing external'. Clarke deemed man to be an '*Intelligent* and *Voluntary Agent*' who might act irrationally but possessed a '*Natural Inclination* towards Moral Good'.[578] While Law might have otherwise agreed, he would have found this final salvo redundant.

In downplaying the supernatural character of scriptural descriptions of evil, Clarke also provocatively asserted that it is irrelevant whether such 'Representations be only figurative, or whether they be literally true', nonchalantly (but tellingly) adding that it is 'not the Business of Religion to give a philosophical Account of natural things'.[579] As I noted in the last section, it could well have been the case that Brockman began to speculate on the potentially figurative nature of hell torments after reading Clarke's work. At the same time, and just over the road at Wadham, the young Kennicott was also reading the published version of Clarke's Boyle lectures, but, unlike Brockman, he did so as he grappled with the meaning of the 'Tree of Life' in Paradise, which had long been a key to understanding the condition of pre-lapsarian man.

Justifying his forays into scripture as a BA student, Kennicott confirmed early on in his *Two Dissertations* that Rutherforth, a slightly older contemporary, had 'cleared up' the status of the Tree of *Knowledge* in *An Essay on the Nature and Obligations of Virtue* (1744) that Rutherforth claimed was based on his tutoring at St. John's College, Cambridge.[580] But Kennicott announced that a 'rational account' of the Tree of *Life* was still wanting.[581] In addition to displaying his ingenuity and skill in Hebrew, Kennicott hoped that offering such an

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[578] Clarke produced a translation of Grotius's *De veritae*, which also forwarded a voluntarist theology, titled *The Truth of the Christian Religion* (London, 1716).
[579] Clarke, *An Inquiry*, pp. 291-2.
[580] T. Rutherforth, *An Essay on the Nature and Obligations of Virtue* (Cambridge, 1744), 'To Thomas Anthony Abdy, Esq'.
[581] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, p. 3. See Rutherforth, *Nature and Obligations of Virtue*, from p. 274.

account would allow him to render Mosaic history (and especially Genesis 2) less vulnerable to the 'keenest satyr' of the deists.[582] Whether or not his undertaking had any impact on the deists, it was so impressive within an institutional context that it was 'unanimously agreed' that he should be awarded his degree before the statutory time without taking any examination (an extremely unusual occurrence), and without paying fees.[583] As a successful text produced by an undergraduate, Kennicott's *Two Dissertations* offers an intriguing insight into how an advanced student with his eyes on an academic career deployed natural and moral philosophical insights towards theological ends.

Kennicott's *Two Dissertations* begins by describing a number of issues with received notions of the Tree of Life. First, he noted that if the tree was all that was needed to sustain everlasting life, then God would have created all of the other trees in vain, something that he (like Hody and most theologians) deemed to be unlikely. Second, he remarked that had Adam eaten from the Tree of Life and then from the Tree of Knowledge, God could not have punished him with death because he would have been protected by the life-giving properties of the former.[584] Similarly, Kennicott reasoned that the serpent would presumably have told Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of Life *after* eating from the Tree of Knowledge, convincing them that they could, by this means, couple their newfound knowledge with everlasting life. Instead, as Kennicott put it, we find Adam 'going for Fig-Leaves'. On top of this, Kennicott argued that the Tree of Life would have had to immunise Adam against sin in the first place, since otherwise it could not have truly been a blockade against mortality. He was certain in all of this that Adam was created *conditionally* immortal. As he reasoned, God's test relied on the real possibility of morality, which would not have been the case if Adam could have simply eaten from the Tree of Life and thereby secured everlasting life.[585] Man, on Kennicott's account, was

[582] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, p. 7.
[583] *The Gentleman's Magazine, and Historical Chronicle*, 59 (London, 1789), p. 289.
[584] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, p. 8 and 11.
[585] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, p. 76.

accordingly formed in a middle state between God and the baser parts of creation, and it was this 'derivative Perfection' that meant that he was finite, 'capable of miscarrying', and a 'dependent Creature' who, somewhat paradoxically, had to possess '*Free-Agency*'. Leibniz had made the very same point in his *Théodicée* when he stated that 'there is an *original imperfection in the creature* before sin, because the creature is essentially limited'.[586] The point also resonates with that which King forwarded in *De origine mali* (which Kennicott cites regularly). On King's account of the scale of nature, while no created being is perfect (and some are more perfect than others), every creature is as perfect as it can possibly be, and even perceived imperfections (or evils) in nature ultimately contribute to God's plan to communicate the most 'Happiness to as many Beings as could be made capable of it, on the very best Terms'.[587] Freedom to choose exists within this system of limitations, constraints, and consequences.

Several notable scholars – from Jean Calvin to Simon Patrick, King, and 'the famous Dr. Clarke' (presumably Samuel) – had considered many of the above difficulties. They all concluded, following Augustine, that the Tree of Life was most likely a sacrament, with fruit that offered an outward sign of eternal life. As Patrick put it in *Aqua Genitalis* (1659), Eden was a '*Type of the cœlestial paradise*' just as '*the Son of God is the tree of life*'.[588] This was a simple formulation of the Calvinist position, on display in Calvin's *Commentary on Genesis*, that the Tree of Life is a 'figure of Christ, inasmuch as he is the Eternal Word of God'.[589] Clarke, who called the Tree the 'Original Emblem of *Immortality*', had a similar reading.[590] But Kennicott pointed out that since sacraments have to be attended by corresponding

[586] For the Leibniz quotation, see Antognazza, 'Metaphysical Evil Revisited', p. 112.
[587] The quotation is from Law's translation. See Law, *Essay on the Origin of Evil*, p. xii. For a fuller discussion, see Bailey, 'Academic Collaboration'.
[588] S. Patrick, *Aqua genitalis, a Discourse Concerning Baptism* (London, 1659), sigs. A1r-v. See also S. Patrick, *A Commentary upon the First Book of Moses, called Genesis* (London, 1695), pp. 40-1.
[589] J. Calvin, *Commentaries of the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, ed. A. Uyl (2 vols, Woodstock, 2018), i, p. 44.
[590] S. Clarke, *The Works of Samuel Clarke: Sermons on Several Subjects* (London, 1738), p. 123.

conditions and only retain their status as sacraments if the contract is not broken, the tree could not be a sacrament. To make this point, he cited Genesis 3.22 – '*now, lest he put forward his hand,* [after Adam's Transgression] *and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever*' – as evidence that the tree was not part of a sacramental contract because its promise remained the same *after* the original sin. By contrast, 'a numerous Body' of recent writers (most notably Johann Heinrich Heidegger) had transformed the tree into an allegory of future life, a point that Kennicott was quick to oppose on stylistic grounds. As he saw it, the Mosaic narration was mostly plain, unprophetic, and non-allegorical.[591] Before he finally began to forward his own (naturalistic) interpretation of the meaning of the Tree of Life, Kennicott drew attention to several more difficulties with the standard account, including the fact that Adam's posterity (had he remained in Paradise) would have been unable to feed on a single plant once they were numerous and dispersed across the face of the earth, and that the guard of Angels at the gates of Eden should have been near the tree itself were it so important.

In developing his thesis, Kennicott pitted himself against John Clarke, whose view, as expressed in one of his Boyle lectures, was that Adam was a mortal being who had to eat continually from the Tree of Life in order to preserve his vitality. Providing a natural philosophical basis for his argument, Clarke proposed (to cite Kennicott's paraphrase) that, according to the 'Maxim in Physics', so 'long as the Nourishment receiv'd into the Body is proper to assimilate itself to the several parts of the Body, so long life is preserv'd and maintain'd'.[592] Clarke went even further. Based on the assumption that Adam and Eve were physiologically similar to modern humans, he concluded that the tree preserved life naturally, as would any fruit-bearing plant, and that once Adam and Eve were no longer able to eat its fruits, their 'saline particles' lost 'their power of attracting the Fluids' during nutrition, meaning

[591] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, pp. 21-3.
[592] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, p. 78.

that 'motion will cease, and end in corruption'.[593] In this, Clarke took a side in a long controversy about whether and how, in the words of Luther, 'corporeal food or natural fruit [was able to] effect such a conservation of the body as to prevent it from being weakened or debilitated by time'. For Luther, the 'reply is easy and divine. "He spake, and it was done!" [Psalm 33.9]'.[594] By contrast, Clarke's naturalist explanation was broadly indebted to Thomas Aquinas's belief that the material 'Tree of Life' – even if it had a sacramental function – offset the 'inefficiencies' of the body. The chymical thrust of Clarke's reading also reflects the opinion of the Flemish physician Jan Baptiste van Helmont, who argued that, after the Fall, the immaterial 'archeus' in human bodies began to obey the newly created sensitive soul rather than the intellectual (and immaterial) one. Once the archeus, as the essential agent of digestion, lost its power to convert substances into nourishment, some parts of food could no longer be assimilated, meaning that the ingested substance disintegrated, necessitating excrement.[595]

Kennicott wanted to find a convincing explanation of the status and function of the 'Tree of Life' without either treating it as symbolic or arguing that Adam was a natural (mortal) being. He did so by suggesting, from the 'Principles of nature' and scripture, that a single tree could not have daily sustained Adam and Eve, and that the 'Tree of Life' that was traditionally (and on Clarke's account) thought to have been 'planted for their [Adam and Eve's] Preservation' should really be understood as 'trees of life', or sustenance. One objection to this bold thesis, he noted, might be that God would not have needed to feed Adam and Eve at all had they been immortal, rendering all of the fruit trees in Eden, including the Tree of Life, superfluous. But Kennicott retorted that Adam's 'Instinct as an Animal, and much more his Reason as an Intellectual Being, would have induc'd him to obey the call of Hunger', since he

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[593] The quotations are from Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, p. 76. Kennicott is paraphrasing and expanding upon claims made in Clarke, *An Inquiry*, pp. 216-7.
[594] M. Luther, *A Commentary on the First Five Chapters of The Books of Genesis*, ed. and trans. H. Cole (Edinburgh, 1858), p. 127.
[595] A. Clericuzio, 'Chemical and Mechanical Theories of Digestion in Early Modern Medicine', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 43/2 (2012), p. 333.

was, after all, still a finite and composite being designed to operate within a material environment. As Kennicott put it in what could have appeared to be a concession to the 'deists' but was really a reiteration of a point found in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, 'God governs all things according to their Natures, so here he left natural causes to produce natural effects'.[596] After the Fall, he held that fruit became 'less fit to assimilate itself to the several parts of the body', and Adam, now a sinner, was barred from eating the especially rich and delicious fruits of paradise, with his once perfect body falling prey to degradation and corruption.

Kennicott spent much of his essay bolstering these rational arguments with philological ones, which involved locating several instances where the Hebrew word 'עץ' read 'trees' (plural), or *lignum*, rather than 'tree' (singular), or *arbor*. While he argued that this noun was sometimes used in the singular – where it is 'confin'd by the emphatic article' or where there is a 'necessary restriction in the sense' – he maintained that it was more often deployed in the plural as a 'whole Genus of Trees'. He proceeded to offer his own translations of other passages in the Pentateuch that contained similar expressions (such as tree, life, and everlasting), and to demonstrate why a number of passages scattered throughout the Bible that referred to a 'Tree of Life' were 'meer probable Allusions' that 'prove nothing'.[597] Kennicott displayed that the 'Tree of Life' in Revelation 22.1-2, for example, referred to two trees, one on each side of a '*River of Water of Life*'. Here, he supposed that St. John used the *words* 'Trees of Life' but the *idea* of the 'Trees of Meat' (from Ezekiel 47.12). To support this view, Kennicott directed readers to *A Commentary Upon the Prophet Ezekiel* (1723) by the late biblical scholar William Lowth, who described Ezekiel as referring in this verse to the Second Temple at Babylon, to which John also alluded in Revelation 22 when he cited Ezekiel. Having provided philological grounds for his conjecture regarding the plurality of the Genesis 'tree' – which he deemed to

[596] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, pp. 76-9.
[597] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, p. 91.

be more consistent with the 'Simplicity and literal Plainness' of the original – and having also assured readers that he had pre-empted any possible objections that might be drawn from other uses of the word throughout scripture, Kennicott ended his thesis with a complete English translation of Genesis 2.8.[598] Most pleasing to him was the fact that his reading of 'this remarkable particular', put forth 'by way of *Conjecture*', would free Christians from the 'charge of accounting for Natural Things by the introduction of Supernatural Agency', even if he achieved this largely by emphasising Adam's original (if conditional) immortality.[599]

While Kennciott's *Two Dissertations* was widely praised for its critical and thorough approach to sacred hermeneutics, one fellow student, Richard Gifford of Balliol College, took the work's publication as an ideal chance to one-up his immediate contemporary, producing *Remarks on Mr. Kennicott's Dissertation Upon the Tree of Life in Paradise*, which was published in London in 1748, the year that he obtained his BA. Gifford claimed (quite plausibly) that his *Remarks* had been drawn up '*last Summer*', before Kennicott had added an appendix to his work explaining some of its more confusing claims. Although he approved of Kennicott's intention to defeat 'Deists, and other Enemies to the Truth', Gifford expressed concern that Kennicott's attempt to alter the received reading of scripture, even if his intentions had been benevolent, would play into the culture of doubting its authority.

Gifford, for his part, sought to resolve any apparent contradictions in the standard account without resorting to conjectural emendation. He did so in several ways. One involved raising objections to Kennicott's reading of 'עץ' as 'trees' by comparing other scriptural instances of this word with Greek and Arabic versions. Another involved offering a 'rational' explanation of his own. Convinced that there was just a single Tree of Life in Eden, and that Adam was originally created *mortal*, Gifford followed Clarke in appealing to chymistry to suggest that

[598] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, pp. 102-3.
[599] Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, pp. 40-4.

the fruits of this tree were 'of a high solar Nature' or a 'Solar, and Vital Tincture', which meant that one would not die so long as the sun remained in heaven and the 'Substance of the Body' could adequately assimilate this fruit.[600] Gifford, in turn, surmised that the 'Odds are at least a Thousand to one' that Adam never ate from the Tree of Life at all, hence why he could die after eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Underlying this argument was his supposition that the 'whole Genus of Trees that we are today acquainted with' must have existed in Paradise – since God originally created everything that now exists – making it implausible that Adam would have befallen the specific tree capable of endowing him with immortality. Even if Adam had eaten from the Tree of Life, Gifford explained that by the time that he ate from the Tree of Knowledge the 'vivifying Particles of that fruit' (i.e. from the former) would have worn off, given that Adam's body 'was formed upon the same laws that ours are' with the 'same Juices, and Nerves' and thus digested vegetable matter in like fashion.[601] In response to Kennicott's objection that Adam's posterity could not have all fed from a single plant had there been no Original Sin and thus that there must have been multiple trees in Eden capable of prolonging life, Gifford conjectured that God could have permitted 'them to have raised other trees from the same Stock'.[602]

Whereas Kennicott tried to 'save' the Genesis narrative by accepting that Adam's body was, in a sense, supernatural and that all of the trees were natural, Gifford rendered the Tree of Life natural (like Adam) but suggested that it was of a more perfect nature. In other words, whereas Kennicott regarded Adam as a special, immortal being who ate from delicious (but non-immortalising) fruits before the Fall – stressing, in turn, the catastrophic consequences of that event – Gifford supposed that Adam was mortal but had been given the chance to preserve his life indefinitely by eating from a specific tree. As noted, Gifford had no intention of

[600] R. Gifford, *Remarks on Mr. Kennicott's Dissertation Upon the Tree of Life in Paradise* (London, 1748), p. 15.
[601] Gifford, *Remarks on Mr. Kennicott's Dissertation*, pp. 18-9.
[602] Gifford, *Remarks on Mr. Kennicott's Dissertation*, p. 44.

changing the received reading of Genesis, since he worried that doing so would legitimise and even encourage further efforts (especially by those with less noble intentions than Kennicott) to cast doubt upon the veracity of scripture. Indeed, much like Witty, it was the potential for a slippery slope that apparently provoked Gifford to make his contribution. Kennicott, by contrast, believed that 'naturalising' the Tree of Life by downplaying its singularity would render Genesis more acceptable to naturalising deists while putting an end to a long-standing debate between learned theologians. Although the two students had opposite views on how to 'save' scripture, then, they both wanted to preserve the possibility of reading the Bible as a literal, natural history. It was their fundamental opposition to allegorical or figurative readings, in the end, that united them against those who sought to transform sacred history into a series of moralising allegories.

V. Conclusion

In his *Considerations on the State of the World with regard to the Theory of Religion* (1745), Law claimed that theological scholarship and natural philosophy had undergone tremendous progress over the ages, hand in hand, and could be further, or even infinitely, improved if the 'sober Rules of Criticism' were combined with 'more sound Philosophy'.[603] With the increased technicality of both natural philosophy and biblical criticism over the first half of the eighteenth century, however, fewer and fewer scholars felt qualified to produce totemic works that squared physics with scriptural tenets in hopes of providing generalised theories about Mosaic philosophy. The reactions to Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* had sent out a particularly strong signal to both mathematicians/natural philosophers and divines to be extremely careful when trying to synchronise sacred and natural history.[604] Fearful of appearing amateurish or

[603] Law, *Considerations*, pp. 236-7 and p. 250.
[604] W. Poole, 'Sir Robert Southwell's Dialogue on Thomas Burnet's Theory of the Earth: "C & S discourse of M[r] Burnetts Theory of the Earth" (1684): Contexts and an Edition', *The Seventeenth Century*, 23/1 (2008).

imprudent, scholars during the 1730s and 1740s tended either to make use of the specific insights that they gleaned from philosophers to bolster religious doctrines (as with Hody, Felton, and Brockman), or, conversely, to tap into the great range of information offered up by theologians, linguists, and orientalists to elucidate particulars in the Bible in philologically and historically-orientated research (as in the case of Kennicott).

The strikingly experimental nature of the two pieces of undergraduate writing explored in this chapter might be explicable based partially on social grounds. The somewhat controversial speculations in Brockman's unpublished letter never saw the light of day – and might have caused some shock had they done so – but they reveal a student working through some of the most theologically demanding issues of the mid-eighteenth century. Kennicott's nuanced reading of Genesis was, by contrast, a merger of historical and 'rational' considerations, and was undergirded by his emphasis on taking seriously the genre, style, and intended audience of this sacred book. This approach was increasingly associated with Lowth, as well as Kennicott's own tutor at Wadham, Costard, who, as we saw in the last chapter, read the Book of Job in the same year that Kennicott published his *Two Dissertations* as an epic drama on the basis of what he considered to be its deliberate (and sometimes accidental) anachronisms. Indeed, Kennicott's reading of the Tree of Life as 'sustenance' was rooted in his conception of Moses as a simple historian who would not have included a symbol, sacrament, or type in an otherwise factual narrative. Gifford was less keen to alter received readings of the Bible, but he too was of the opinion that Genesis was a simple history of the natural world and was as opposed to allegoresis as his undergraduate contestant. Ultimately, each of the above students tried, in their own small way, to take insights from the domains of philosophy, physiology, and ethics and to use them to interpret either supposedly scriptural doctrines (such as that of the afterlife) or the letter of scripture itself. If nothing else, they concurred on the importance of theological conclusions being philosophically and philologically plausible, and rejected

contemporary attempts to extract pleasing moral or social messages from the Bible without sufficient justification.

3.3 Sacred Propaedeutics: John Chapman

I. Introduction

Scholarly investigations into the fierce disputes about miracles that flared up between 1730 and 1750 have tended to revolve around anti-institutional luminaries such as David Hume.[605] When Hume's 'Of Miracles' appeared in 1748, however, it garnered relatively little attention, and, as one of his biographers relayed, the Scotsman returned from a trip to Turin shocked 'to find all England in a ferment on account of Dr. Middleton's *Free Inquiry*, while his own performance was entirely overlooked'.[606] While there have now been several studies of Middleton and his boisterous English contemporary Sykes – including their approaches to miracles – historians have largely ignored the responses to them by academics of the period. This has served to solidify a perception of the universities as passively safeguarding an easily definable orthodoxy rather than shaping the nature of that orthodoxy, and has led historians to underappreciate how university scholars helped to refine the boundaries between history and the 'sciences' (particularly medicine and mathematics) against the backdrop of polemical warfare.[607]

An area of particular interest in the mid-eighteenth century that saw young academics race to prove the utility of the technical and conceptual resources that they had acquired as students was chronology, and especially the dating of biblical events in light of astronomical evidence. This chapter begins by surveying how chronology was taught, and then turns to look at one

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[605] See L.M. Dorman, *David Hume and the Miracles Controversy, 1749-1800* (California, 1973) and P. Harrison, 'Prophecy, Early Modern Apologetics, and Hume's Argument Against Miracles', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60/2 (1999). A relatively rare response to Hume from England was Rutherforth, *The Credibility of Miracles Defended*.

[606] T.E. Ritchie, *An Account of the Life and Writings of David Hume* (London, 1807), pp. 36-7.

[607] For a recent monograph that focusses on the likes of Middleton, see Ingram, *Reformation Without End*. An older example is H. Trevor-Roper, *History and the Enlightenment*, ed. J. Robertson (Yale, 2010), pp. 98-110. See also B. Young, 'Conyers Middleton: The Historical Consequences of Heterodoxy', in S. Mortimer and J. Robertson (eds), *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy, 1600-1750* (Leiden and Boston, 2012), p. 238.

young scholar, Chapman, who tried to combat Sykes' provocative account of the eclipse that supposedly occurred at Christ's Passion. Sykes was a Cambridge-educated clergyman and close friend of Newton. As we will see, by casting doubt on the surviving testimonies about the eclipse – primarily that of the second-century Greek chronologist Phlegon of Tralles – Sykes controversially 'naturalised' the event. I focus on Chapman's first response to Sykes's *A Dissertation on the Eclipse Mentioned in Phlegon* (1732), titled *Phlegon Examined Critically and Impartially*.[608] Chapman was a recent graduate of King's College, Cambridge, who had been made a fellow of the college in 1727. At this pivotal stage in his career, he attempted to carve out a distinct identity as an ecclesiastic critic by putting, as we will see, a philological stamp on a debate that appeared to be meandering in a mathematical direction. This section, then, not only reveals the importance of print warfare to the fashioning of a young scholar's identity during the 1730s, but it also points to a broader sense of urgency among these young scholars to determine which skills exclusively belonged (or should belong) to the divine.

In order to elucidate the matter further, I proceed to look briefly at another debate about miracles in which young academics of the 1730s intervened. While one of Sykes's publications sparked this dispute, too, here it related not to chronology but to medicine, and specifically to whether men were possessed by demons in the Bible. In his work on demons, *An Enquiry into the Meaning of Demoniacks in the New Testament* (1737), Sykes argued that many supposed instances of possession in the New Testament were actually instances of mental illness. Although Sykes did not explicitly state that this gave physicians, with their understanding of such illnesses, greater authority than divines when it came to the interpretation of certain passages in scripture, the disciplinary implications would have been obvious. I conclude from these studies that English divines of the 1730s were fully aware that their literary-historical approaches to scripture could not simply be assumed to provide all of the answers to quandaries

[608] J. Chapman, *Phlegon Examined Critically and Impartially* (Cambridge, 1734).

in the Bible but rather had to be *shown* to do so in highly specific contexts. We will also see that Hume did not launch the conversation about biblical miracles, but rather intervened in a vibrant debate with pre-existing parameters.

On a more sociological level, this chapter suggests that Chapman and others began to work as part of research teams as battles were waged on multiple fronts.[609] The task of writing grander histories of miracles and prophecies generally fell to seasoned divines or academic grandees with powerful positions within the Church of England or universities such as Waterland, Thomas Sherlock, Zachary Peace, and Richard Smalbroke.[610] By contrast, young scholars tended to produce shorter essays on more obscure historical topics that granted them the opportunity to adapt deftly the totemic writings of earlier *erudits* within the sphere of vernacular apologetics. This was precisely the kind of task that, we will see, they had been encouraged to undertake at university.

II. Teaching Chronology

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, chronology became a crucial bridge between secular and sacred history, and, by the early 1700s, it was an undisputed component of the BA in England. While certain aspects of the subject were reserved for graduate years, commonplace books and reading lists suggest that basic chronology was often taught early on in the BA.[611] The 1723 commonplace book of a Cambridge undergraduate, for example, gives pride of place to 'A Treatise of Technical Chronology', and begins with the statement that 'Chronology is either Historical or Technical'. He proceeds to outline that the historical (or

[609] For an analysis of academic teamwork in the 1730s, see Bailey, 'Academic Collaboration'. For the claim about the 1730s being particularly anti-clerical, see B. Young, 'Newtonianism and the Enthusiasm of Enlightenment', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 35 (2004).
[610] See T. Sherlock, *The Use and Intent of Prophecy* (London, 1725) and *The Tryal of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus* (London, 1729). See also Z. Pearce, *The Miracles of Jesus Vindicated* (London, 1729) and R. Smalbroke, *A Vindication of the Miracles of our Blessed Saviour* (London, 1729-1731).
[611] Greene, *Enkyklopaideia*, p. 1.

relative) part of chronology situates actions within their 'true times' – the period, epoch, era, or reign in which they were understood to have occurred – whereas technical chronology explains 'y^{e} several Characters by which particular times are distinguished from one another'. The latter, in other words, studies the 'absolute' marks of time, such as eclipses, that allow for the comparison of events across places and cultures, and, to this extent, relies on astronomical and computational knowledge.[612] Historical chronology was, by contrast, principally hermeneutic. Both approaches were thought to be necessary, but, as we will see, they were not always seen as fully compatible, especially where scripture was concerned.

Chronology was also one of the subjects for which continental authors were especially well represented on reading lists. While not explicitly mentioning the technical/historical distinction – despite covering authors on either side of the divide – Greene was typical in recommending a set of high-profile, confessionally diverse European chronologists to his first-year Cambridge BAs in the early 1700s. For 'technical' chronology, he assigned to them the Jesuit Denis Pétau, the Lutheran Aegidius Strauch, and the Reformed William Beveridge, while, for its 'historical' counterpart, Greene suggested another Lutheran, Christoph Helvig. Nicholas Toke of University College, to give one example, seems to have been taken by the 'historical' approach, proudly informing his uncle, the non-juring clergyman Thomas Brett, that during his first term at university 'I have read Justin & Josephus, & consulted Helvicus & Du Pin. History is my afternoon study'.[613] It is also worth noting that, even as an undergraduate, Toke summoned theological authors, both Jewish and Christian, as historical sources.

[612] Egerton MS 834, fos. 165r-72r. Another student, Edward Vernon of Trinity College Cambridge, includes in his commonplace book (British Library MS Stowe 1013, fos. 1r-26r) notes on 'Nature, End & Use of Chronology'. This commonplace book is dated 1713, when Vernon matriculated at Trinity.

[613] Bodleian MS Eng. th. c. 27 fos. 337r-8v: Toke to Brett, 23 November 1721. Helvig's *Theatrum historicum et chronologicum* of 1609 was published in English as *The Historical and Chronological Theatre of Christopher Helvicus* in 1687. For the chronological tables of another University College student, William Brigden, from 1708, see British Library Add MS 34660.

On top of a venerable lineage of European and British chronologists, tutors also prescribed students their own unpublished writings on the subject, as John Baker of Trinity College, Cambridge, did.[614] Although the core authors mentioned above were widely read throughout the eighteenth century, chronologies were also being continually refined and updated, and so teaching the subject necessarily involved constant adaptation. This is suggested by the inclusion of Newton's *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* (1728) and James Anderson's *Royal Genealogies* (1732) in the lists of authors that Edward Gibbon was set to read during his undergraduate days at Magdalen in the early 1750s.[615] As was true for many subjects in the mid-eighteenth century, Renaissance authorities and their heirs constituted the bulk of the reading material but were swiftly augmented by recent texts and discoveries.

Whereas sacred chronology was only of occasional interest to most undergraduates, it had long formed a core part of the MA (and the BD), and continued to do so throughout the eighteenth century. In his 'RULES FOR A STUDENT OF THE Holy Scriptures' (written sometime before his death in 1675 but published in 1700), the acclaimed English Hebraist John Lightfoot had made a strong case for the study of biblical chronology on the grounds that the 'Holy Spirit hath, in divers Places, purposely and divinely laid Stories and Passages out of their proper Places for special Ends'. The role of the sacred chronologist, according to Lightfoot, was not only to reassign the events to their 'proper Places' but also to explain these mysterious 'Ends'.[616] This was no simple task. To begin with, the French scholar Louis Cappel had argued in his controversial *Chronologia Sacra* (1655) that Old Testament events should be dated, where possible, using the unpointed Hebrew Old Testament and not the Masoretic version,

[614] J. Byrom, *The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byrom*, ed. R. Parkinson (34 vols, London, 1854), i, pp. 15-17.
[615] Gibbon recalled that he had traipsed through 'Helvicus and Anderson, the annals of Usher and Prideaux', and 'the systems of Scaliger and Petavius, of Marsham and Newton'. See E. Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life*, ed. G.A Bonnard (London, 1966), p. 43 and A. Grafton, 'Joseph Scaliger and Historical Chronology: The Rise and Fall of a Discipline', *History and Theory*, 14/2 (1975), p. 156.
[616] J. Lightfoot, *Some Genuine Remains of the Late Pious and Learned John Lightfoot, D.D* (London, 1700), p. 4.

which he believed to contain many corruptions.[617] Such a view had some uptake in Britain, with Walton notably republishing part of the *Chronologia Sacra* in the Apparatus to the London Polyglot Bible, which, despite its initially hostile reception in Oxford, was often recommended to MAs by 1700.[618] Edmundson's recommendation – in his manuscript divinity directions (probably from the 1730s) – that students acquaint themselves with Cappel was typical of his day.[619]

A less controversial guide to biblical chronology was that of the Irish biblical scholar James Ussher, whose *Annales* (1650) famously defended an orthodox creation date of 4004 BC. Notwithstanding his stated support of Cappel in his *De Graeca Septuaginta Interpretum Versione Syntagma* (1655), Ussher's *Annales* questioned a raft of Cappel's arguments about the status of the Masoretic text, and it was his comprehensive chronology to which most tutors pointed their divinity students. Lightfoot labelled Ussher 'the magazine of all Literature and knowledge', while Wotton enshrined his chronology as 'perfect in its kind', and its dates were etched into the margins of the Bishop of Worcester William Lloyd's Authorised Version of the Bible of 1701.[620] One would be hard-pressed to find an eighteenth-century student who lacked a basic grasp of Ussher's system.

Although most high-profile chronologists and theology students embraced Ussher's account, there remained some discrepancies about the precise dating of the creation and other sacred events throughout the eighteenth century. While such debates, on the whole, concerned more established scholars, BA students did sometimes tackle the issue. This is suggested by a roughly drawn-up sacred chronology in an undergraduate commonplace book from around

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[617] D. van Miert, *The Emancipation of Biblical Philology in the Dutch Republic, 1590-1670* (Oxford, 2018), p. 213. On Cappel, see Hardy, *Criticism and Confession*, esp. pp. 311-7.
[618] See Feingold, 'Oriental Studies', pp. 453-4 and J. Barr, 'Why the World was Created in 4004 B.C.: Archbishop Ussher and Biblical Chronology', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 67/2 (1985).
[619] See Edmudson's advice in MS Rawl. D. 214, fos. 90r-116r.
[620] C.A. Patrides, 'Renaissance Estimates of the Year of Creation', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 26/4 (1963), p. 318 and Wotton, *Some Thoughts*, p. 21.

1700 that tallies up various periods to prove that 'From y^e^ Creation' to 'y^e^ Birth of Christ' it was 'in all – 4000' years (which squared with the calculations of Helvig, Jacques Cappel, and Martin Luther). Meanwhile, efforts to bolster the controversial Septuagint chronology – which would have made the world more than 6500 years old by the Renaissance – lingered on even after the Septuagint was dealt a fatal blow by the research of Simon in Paris and Hody in Oxford.[621] One very popular work that made use of the Septuagint chronology was the Cambridge-educated clergyman John Jackson's three-volume *Chronological Antiquities* (1752). Suggesting that the incompatibility of the Septuagint and Hebrew dates continued to present an intellectual, if not a serious theological, challenge, Gibbon recalled being asked to reconcile the two during his mere fourteen months as a BA in the same year that Jackson's work appeared.[622] The fact that popular texts like the *Universal History* (1744-7) – a comprehensive sourcebook used by many students – offered widely divergent creation dates from 6984 BC to 3616 BC, without clearly favouring any one, further implies that the universities encouraged students to approach biblical chronology critically.

Heavily mathematicised approaches to chronology also had a mixed fate in the eighteenth-century universities. Computational, astronomical data had long been a pillar of the subject, and the cleric John Boswell insisted, in his 1738 student handbook, *A Method of Study*, that technical chronology should be the culmination of mathematical studies, since to

> be in a Capacity to trace the *Periods* of past Events, with the Accuracy of a *Scaliger*, an *Usher*, a *Prideaux*, *&c* will require a considerable Skill in *Numbers* and *Geometry*, in the Courses of the heavenly Bodies, particularly of the *Sun* and *Moon*, in adjusting the Motions of the one to the other, and in calculating the Times of *Eclipses*.[623]

It was, after all, the Savilian Professor of Astronomy who was supposed to lecture on chronology in Oxford. Yet not all tutors (or students) were equally strong advocates of heavily mathematised approaches. In his pioneering 1680s lectures as Camden Professor of History,

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[621] Madelbrote, 'English Scholarship', pp. 77-83.
[622] Grafton, 'Joseph Scaliger', pp. 156-8.
[623] J. Boswell, *A Method of Study: or, An Useful Library* (2 vols, London, 1738-43), i, pp. 78-9.

for example, Dodwell did not so much lean on astronomical computations as his capacious literary and historical knowledge of Roman law, customs, and institutions to date events of the Augustan era.[624] As one undergraduate reported after attending these lectures, the schools were so 'thronged and crowded' that it was impossible to stand.[625] Slightly later, the future Archbishop of Canterbury John Potter's accounts of Greek epochs and Olympiads in his student-orientated *Archæologiæ Græcea* (1697 and 1699) made him the hero of students (not least Chapman) who sought to challenge the authority that Whiston and Newton had acquired in the field.[626] Grafton has noted that, when it came to eighteenth-century inheritors of Renaissance scholarship, 'in no study were their reactions more varied or more violent than in chronology'.[627] As subsequent sections further establish, his point rings true in the university context, with chronology being taught through often-contradictory texts and competing, but equally specialised, computational and interpretative approaches.

III. The Eclipse of Phlegon

In his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), Locke warned young gentlemen that the 'learned Noise and Dust of the Chronologist is wholly to be avoided', associating chronology firmly with academic pedantry.[628] But it was within an urbane context that the battle over Phlegon's eclipse began. Having attended Samuel Clarke's Boyle lectures, Sykes (a longstanding friend and patronee of Clarke) advised him to remove from the second edition of the published lectures a reference to the eclipse at Christ's passion. In particular, Sykes had

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[624] H. Dodwell, *Praelectiones academicae in schola historices camdeniana* (Oxford, 1692).
[625] T. Hearne, *Remarks and Collections*, ed. H.E Salter (11 vols, Oxford, 1725-8), x, p. 54. See Feingold, 'The Humanities', pp. 349-52.
[626] Barecroft, *Ars concionandi*. See generally, J. Buchwald and M. Feingold, *Newton and the Origin of Civilization* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 112-3 and 381-422. For a late vocalisation of the anti-Newton line, see S. Musgrave, *Two Dissertations. I. On the Graecian Mythology. II. An Examination of Sir Isaac Newton's Objections to the Chronology of the Olympiads* (London, 1782). He states at pp. 121-22 that Newton, 'having investigated with success the laws of the material world, seems to have imagined, the same mathematical knowledge, which had enabled him to do this, would be equally serviceable to him in unravelling the difficulties of ancient history'.
[627] Grafton, 'Joseph Scaliger', p. 156.
[628] J. Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London, 1693), p. 218.

doubts about whether the eclipse that Phlegon claimed to have taken place at the Passion was a supernatural eclipse, instead reckoning it to have been a natural event. In doing so, Sykes intimated that Phlegon's testimony could not be used to corroborate the biblical account, which referred to a supernatural eclipse and an earthquake taking place simultaneously at the time of Christ's Passion. Whiston soon entered the fray, writing another account of the circumstances that had prompted Clarke to amend his edition in a biography of Clarke that Whiston penned to rival Sykes's.[629] Whiston argued that Sykes merely *supposed* that the eclipse naturally occurred, and, through a series of careful calculations, argued that it must have been supernatural (and thus a miracle).[630] Whiston's account unsurprisingly outraged Sykes, and various authors quickly rallied around both authors.

Chapman's aim in *Phlegon Examined* was to nuance Whiston's argument, and, on the basis of philological arguments, to settle the debate about Phlegon's eclipse. As a newly minted college fellow and a promising divine, he seized upon the debacle around Sykes's account not only to establish his preeminence in 'critical' scholarship but also to fulfil one of his key intellectual and social obligations: promoting accounts of religious history that would fit comfortably with the thrust of Church of England doctrine. With the nature and status of miracles serving as a key bridge between the historical and philosophical approaches to theology taught to graduates, the Phlegon affair was an ideal place for Chapman to start.

Born in Hampshire in 1704 and educated at Eton, Chapman matriculated at King's College, Cambridge, in 1724. He took his BA three years later, at which point he was elected as a fellow of his college. In 1731, he graduated with an MA. During his four years of graduate study, Chapman evidently worked on classical scholarship, contributing a map of ancient Greece to his slightly younger college contemporary Richard Mounteney's *Demosthenous*

[629] W. Whiston, *Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Samuel Clarke* (London, 1748), pp. 147-8.
[630] J.M. Steele, *Ancient Astronomical Observations and the Study of the Moon's Motion (1691-1757)* (New York and London, 2012), p. 27.

logoi eklektoi in 1731 (two copies of which were subscribed to by the then-Provost of Chapman's college, Andrew Snape, whose sermons Chapman would later edit).[631] Some years later, Chapman also assisted Tunstall, the 'pupil monger' of St John's, with a publication that established (contra Middleton) the spurious nature of Cicero's letters to Brutus.[632] Even before making these contributions, he had become a chaplain to Potter, then Archbishop of Canterbury (a position that Tunstall, in turn, took up in 1743).[633] As noted by another St John's student of the period, Samuel Squire, Potter consistently 'indulged' the 'younger Students of both Universities' who dubbed him their 'common Father and Patron', while Chapman specifically referenced Potter's investment in the edifying potential of 'the excellent Literature of *Rome* and *Athens*' when it was properly 'subservient to the *Christian Cause*'.[634]

Chapman was no stranger to theological debate, either. As a BA student in 1728, he had published (as noted in the introduction to this dissertation) a response to Collins titled *The Objection of a Late Anonymous Writer against the Book of Daniel Considered*, in which he scrutinised Collins's textual interpretations and located errors in his translations of Hebrew and Greek sources. Shortly after, in 1731, Chapman produced *Remarks on A Letter to Dr. Waterland* under the pseudonym 'Philobiblicus Cantabrigiensis'. It is also noteworthy here that Squire similarly published under a pseudonym, 'Theophanes Cantabrigiensis', writing in the 'spirit of Bentley's Phileleutherus Lipsiensis'.[635] Not only did Chapman use his *Remarks* to defend Waterland, by this point a towering representative of Cambridge historical divinity, but

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[631] W. Thurlbourn, *A Catalogue of the Entire Library of the Reverend Dr. Andrew Snape, Late Provost of King's College, Cambridge, Deceased* (Cambridge, 1743). Chapman competed for the Provostship of the College in 1743 with William George (losing by a significant margin). George was a friend of Samuel Pegge, a student of St. John's whom we will meet later, had been a popular principal of Eton, and also became Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge that year.
[632] Z. Grey, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. Thomas Baker, B. D* (Cambridge, 1784), p. 114.
[633] See R.L. Warner, 'Potter, John (1673/4-1747)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).
[634] S. Squire, *Two Essays: The Former, A Defence of the Ancient Greek Chronology; to which is Annexed, A New Chronological Synopsis: The Latter, An Enquiry into the Origin of the Greek Language* (Cambridge, 1741), sig. A2v and Chapman, *Eusebius*, sig. A3v.
[635] Richard Hurd to James Devey on 23 Jan 1741, reproduced in *The Early Letters of Bishop Richard Hurd, 1739-1762*, ed. S. Brewer (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 35-6.

he also took aim at Middleton's controversial, though rather shallow, notion that '*Greek* is originally only a Dialect of the *Hebrew*'. Principally consulting the 'Discoveries of Learned Linguists', Chapman was convinced of 'what a ridiculous Figure' the likes of 'Gesner or Scaliger or Bochart [would] have made in Chronology, and Critique, if they had refer'd the *French*, *Italian*, *English* and many other Tongues to the Babal-Confusion'.[636] Although the origins of languages and letters fascinated many eighteenth-century students – with Squire, for example, addressing the topic in another 1741 publication, and with Costard and Merrick, as we saw in 3.1, interrogating the matter in their works on biblical language – Chapman's commitment to making use of what he considered the 'best' modern critical scholarship is particularly striking. At the same time, Chapman's connections with the likes of Tunstall and Waterland, as well as important bishops, including Potter, Edmund Gibson, and Sherlock, betrays something of an English theological axis in this period. All of the above promoted ecclesiastical tradition and historical scholarship (not least on the nature and doctrinal implications of patristic writings), and condemned, in no uncertain terms, both the Erastian tendencies of well-patronised followers of Hoadly (including Sykes) *and* the calls that a range of anti-institutional figures made for greater freedom of religious conscience.

Chapman's decision to turn to Phlegon in 1734 undoubtedly owed something to his desire to situate himself among those 'Men of the highest Character for Learning, Penetration, and Judgement' whom, he claimed, had expressed great regard for Phlegon's testimony. Notwithstanding Chapman's fleeting reference to some '*Chinese* accounts of extraordinary Darkness in ancient times' (probably with Thomas Dawson's *An Appeal to the Genuine Records and Testimonies of Heathen and Jewish Writers* (1730) in mind), Chapman was sceptical about histories that he could not personally consult, 'and of which all my Knowledge

[636] J. Chapman, *Remarks on a Letter to Dr. Waterland, in Relation to the Natural Account of Language* (Cambridge, 1731), p. 32.

must be fetched from the Relations and Extracts of Travellers'.[637] Instead, he declared that his 'business is only with *Greek* and *Latin* Writers' and the eminent critics who discussed them, including modern heavyweights such as Grotius, Fabricius, Daniel Heinsius, Huet, Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont, Adriaan Reland, and Johann Christian Wolf, all of whom dated Phlegon's eclipse to the 4th year of the 202d Olympiad (or the year of the Passion) against the 'Scruples and Exceptions of *Kepler*, *Vossius*, *Bayle*, and *Basnage*'. Since Sykes, according to Chapman, had argued in both his *Dissertation* and *Defence* 'pretty much in their way and upon the same Hypothesis', Chapman could indirectly challenge these major figures as he combated his English provocateur. Rather than asserting the singularity of his argumentative mode, however, Chapman placed himself within a longstanding lineage of textual editors and critics, including several former Cambridge men. To this end, he made an elaborate show of establishing the dates of the Byzantine chronicle Suidas – a rare work to have mentioned that the entirety of Phlegon's soon-to-be-lost *Chronological Account* was extant – in the first portion of his 87-page essay, eventually 'chus[ing] with Dr. *Cave* and *Bentley*' to place the encyclopaedia 'under the Emperors *Basilius* and *Constantinus*'.[638] In other words, where Chapman could have simply cited Cave and Bentley, he decided to re-open the case and outline the evidence, only to agree with their conclusions.

Dating texts was one thing, but, as Merrick suggested in manuscript notes from around the same time that Chapman was writing, perhaps the most fundamental stage in any theological inquiry was to determine the status and evidential weight of a text. This was grounded in his mantra that if one were to disbelieve an account of a doctrine '& it be true, I withhold from

[637] T. Dawson, *An Appeal to the Genuine Records and Testimonies of Heathen and Jewish Writers* (London, 1733), pp. 43-6.
[638] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 9. In his discussion of Suidas, Chapman made extensive use of Fabricius's *Bibliotheca Græca, sive notitia scriptorum veterum Græcorum quorumcumque monumenta integra*. This work was owned by a number of students (see, for example, St John's College Library, Oxford: Theta.4.9-22).

God the honour due to him', but 'If I believe it, & it be not true, I am guilty of idolatry'.[639] In a palpable instance of how Locke's ideas were effortlessly suited to religious orthodoxy, Merrick further maintained that revealed texts should 'determine our assent not only to things unsuggested by reason, but (as Mr Locke observes) even against the probable deductions of Reason'.[640] The relative authority of miracles, prophesies, and the conclusions of natural science for establishing the truth of Christian doctrines was a subject of widespread debate during the 1730s, and was, for example, a core theme in Tunstall's chapel lectures at St John's from this decade.[641] Aware of such discussions, Chapman latched onto Sykes's foundational claim that clinging to weak evidence (such as the disputed passage in Phlegon) would eventually erode religious faith. Indeed, Chapman conceded in the preface to *Phlegon Examined* that, unlike with '*Prophecies* and *Miracles*', Phlegon's passage was not 'one of the grand and principal Supports of Christianity, the removal of which would shake the whole Superstructure', but rather 'collateral and supernumerary Evidence'.[642] By contrast, Dawson had claimed in his *Appeal* that Phlegon's account (among others) offered 'an undeniable Proof that the Gospel-Revelation came from God'.[643] Despite Chapman's prudent refusal to claim more for his source than the records warranted, he was still reticent to give 'up a Testimony immediately, because it happens to be *disputed*'.[644] To his mind, such iconoclasm threatened not only to precipitate a gradual rejection of scriptural authority, but also to invalidate a primary task of learned divines: to examine and critically compare historical testimonies.

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[639] For Merrick's ruminations, see MS Dep. 257. For an account of Merrick's life and works, see G.G. Cunningham, *Lives of Eminent and Illustrious Englishmen* (8 vols, Glasgow, 1835), v, pp. 288-9.
[640] MS Dep. 257.
[641] Tunstall, *Lectures on Natural and Revealed Religion*, pp. 253-60.
[642] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, pp. 1-3. In this, Chapman's view resounds with that of *A New and General Biographical Dictionary* (12 vols, London, 1784), x, p. 340. This account claimed that the debate about Phlegon was 'a controversy merely learned, since the cause of religion is little concerned'. For Sykes's view, see *A Dissertation on the Eclipse Mentioned by Phlegon* (London, 1732) p. 5 and Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 2 and 4.
[643] Dawson, *An Appeal*, sig. A1r.
[644] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 2 and 4.

Beyond Chapman's perspective on the status of Phlegon's testimony, his handling of the source is, once again, characteristic of his desire to transform discussions about the natural world into ones about the history of scholarship. Since most accounts, including several in the gospels, claimed that Christ's crucifixion coincided with a full moon *and* an eclipse, which are mutually exclusive under normal circumstances, it was widely held that Christ's death had been marked by a 'miraculous *Darkness*' (to cite Samuel Clarke's paraphrase of Matthew).[645] Yet, rather than naturalising the darkness 'at our Saviour's Passion', Sykes had laboured to show that the 'remarkable Eclipse' mentioned in 'a certain Fragment' of Phlegon, which was often cited as extra-biblical evidence of the miraculous event, was in fact a natural occurrence that happened at a different point in time. More specifically, he ventured that this eclipse was the one that Johannes Kepler had dated to the second year of the same Olympiad.[646] While Sykes could have tried to re-date Phlegon's eclipse, he instead argued that later authors had corrupted or misinterpreted the original text. As Chapman saw it, the debate therefore turned 'upon the reading of *Phlegon*'s words', meaning that to confute Sykes he had to harness the method that 'all Criticks require and acquiesce in': namely, consulting 'those antient Writers' themselves to see how the matter 'stands at present in them'.[647] These authorities were, respectively, Eusebius, the *Chronicon Paschale*, Johannes Philoponus, Africanus, and Origen, but Chapman also added a 'Postscript Explaining a Passage in Tertullian' (the *Apologia*), which, Chapman argued, Sykes had 'quite Destroyed' by adding a bracketed expression that twisted its meaning to align it with his broader hypothesis.[648] As all of this suggests, Chapman took a controversy that was teetering on the border of technical and historical chronology and dragged it decidedly in the latter direction.

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[645] S. Clarke, *The Works of Samuel Clarke: A Paraphrase on the Four Evangelists* (London, 1738), p. 126.
[646] For a discussion of Clarke, Whiston, and Phlegon, see Steele, *Ancient Astronomical Observations*, pp. 25-7.
[647] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, pp. 11-2 and p. 62.
[648] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 83.

Given Sykes's debts to Kepler, and Chapman's own desire to engage with continental scholarship, Chapman initially decided to concentrate on the astronomer's 'very feint attempts to set up *Eusebius* against *Phlegon*'.[649] While Huet had attacked Kepler for fixing Phlegon's eclipse to the 2nd year of the 202d Olympiad in order to 'save' his theory of eclipses, Chapman homed in on Kepler's *Eclogae chronicae* (1615), which Grafton has described as 'an epistolary analysis of central questions in the life of Jesus and the history of the Jews' from 'the reign of Herod the Great to the Jewish War'. [650] For Chapman, the issue was that Kepler's argument revolved around a belief that Jerome had carelessly mistranslated Eusebius's 'τώ δέ έτει' ('quarto annum' or 'fourth year') in his Latin translation of Book 2 of Eusebius's lost *Chronicle*. According to Kepler, Jerome confused Eusebius's particle 'δέ' with the numerical symbol 'δ' (or 4) – hence the common dating of Phlegon's eclipse to the 4th year of the 202d Olympiad, and thus the Passion – when really Eusebius meant only 'autem annum' ('in the year').[651] Unimpressed, Chapman claimed that the passage in Jerome could not be read in any other way but 'quarto autem annum' (with the numeral 'δ'). As he insisted, his view was backed up by the Roman librarian Anastasius Bibliothecarius (c.810-78), renowned for his 'extraordinary abilities in point of Literature'; George Syncellus's manuscript consultations; and a number of other Latin and Greek sources.[652] Mocking Kepler's 'Wonderful Logick', 'random conjecture', and intimation that the Greek text of Eusebius was '*ambiguous and uncertain*', Chapman questioned why Scaliger went to the 'trouble of publishing an Edition of him' at all.[653] With a particular commitment to 'saving' Eusebius – the eponymous hero of his *Eusebius* (1739), dedicated to Potter – Chapman's comment on Scaliger is also underwritten

[649] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 61.
[650] P. Bayle, *A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical* (10 vols, London, 1739), viii, p. 385 and A. Grafton, *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), p. 124.
[651] J. Kepler, *Joannis Keppleri mathematici Eclogae chronicae ex epistolis doctissimorum aliquot virorum, & suis mutuis* (Frankfurt, 1615), p. 87.
[652] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 13 and pp. 21-2.
[653] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 14 and Kepler, *Eclogae*, p. 126.

by a more serious fear that casting doubt upon the style and utility of ancient sources might endanger 'Weighty authorities' and ultimately delegitimise the slow-burning critical-editorial projects that had become a core activity of university scholars.[654] In all of Chapman's writings there is a palpable sense that his success within the world of religious apologetics hinged on the herculean efforts and triumphs of textual editors.

The weight that Chapman placed on editing – especially patristic and antique Greek texts – when it came to apologetic history is perhaps best exhibited by his treatment of the Byzantine *Chronicon Paschale*, a source containing several passages on Phlegon that resound with those from Eusebius. This text was particularly helpful since it replaced the numerical symbol 'δ' with the word 'τεταρτοω' (fourth) in relation to the 202d Olympiad.[655] While many modern authors 'thrust down this *Chronicon*' as 'low as the 7th Century' – rendering it of dubious historical authority – Chapman followed the 'last Learned Editor' (Charles Dufresne) whose 1688 edition compared the original text with a considerably shorter ancient manuscript from the surprisingly early date of c. 354 AD. In doing so, Dufresne concluded that the *Chronicon* was actually composed of two parts, one of which constituted the 'original', while the other was supplemented by whomever had 'carried down' the manuscript into the seventh century. Dufresne's conclusion was 'confirmed by the great *Fabricius*' and 'the most Eminent Ecclesiastical Criticks', including Cave (who had changed his mind in the 1698 'Supplement' to his *Historia Literaria*) and 'our most Learned Dr. *Hody*', who even planned to build on Dufresne's conclusions in his unfinished 'De scriptoribus rerum Aegyptiorum'.[656] Since the quotations about Phlegon appeared in the first part of the *Chronicon*, they almost certainly dated from 'a few years after Eusebius' lived, and were thus composed long before the tenth century, when Phlegon's work had been cited as extant in the Suidas. Dufresne's conjecture

[654] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 15.
[655] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 17.
[656] J. Chapman, *Phlegon Re-examined: In Answer to Dr. Sykes's Second Defense of His Dissertation Concerning Phlegon* (London, 1735), pp. 84-6.

therefore allowed Chapman to claim that the Phlegon passages in the *Chronicon* were trustworthy because they were unlikely to be 'mere *transcripts* of one Author from another', and, if they *were* transcriptions, the author could have at least consulted the original text.[657]

Chapman's arguments about the *Chronicon* did not impress Sykes, who located a range of passages early in the work – including a reference to Basil the Great as Bishop of Caesarea, who did not gain that title until 370 AD – which implied that the original manuscript was composed later than Chapman had supposed.[658] Not deterred, Chapman sought to show, in a Bentleian vein, that the anachronisms Sykes detected as later additions to the manuscript of the *Chronicon* smelled of a '*Second* Author in Disguise'.[659] Having analysed Sykes's chosen passages in painstaking detail, Chapman concluded that they were almost certainly the embellishments of 'some busy and officious Continuator'. According to Chapman, it was conceivable that 'some Adulterations might creep' into the original manuscript over time, but impossible that '*one* Person' authored the entire text in the first place. Ironically, then, he could assert that Sykes had strengthened Dufresne's two-author hypothesis while offering conjectures that were weak evidence for re-dating the initial manuscript to much later than 354. Despite being 'debarr'd from a Sight' of the MS, Chapman was confident that he could augment Dufresne's insights if given a chance. While the debate about the *Chronicon* formed only a part of Chapman's overall argument, it provides a clear instance of how he deployed modern textual editions to advance his thesis, without submitting to the specific claims of any one author.

Although Chapman's analysis of Phlegon's reception was mostly literary-critical, he did harness other sources, including modern mathematical texts, to bolster his thesis. In one example – a response to Sykes's claim that Phlegon's 'ἔκλειψις' signified a *natural* eclipse –

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[657] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 20.
[658] A.A. Sykes, *A Second Defence of the Dissertation Upon the Eclipse Mentioned by Phlegon* (London, 1734), p. 16.
[659] Chapman, *Phlegon Re-examined*, p. 85.

Chapman argued from Keill's Oxford *Lectiones Astronomicae* (1718) that the 'primary and original signification' of the term 'imports any sort of *defectus*' (the then-current Latin term for an eclipse) and that 'neither Astronomers nor Historians were debarred from applying it to such *preternatural Phaenomena*, as nearly resembled a *natural Eclipse* in *effect* tho' not in *cause*'.[660] In this reading, Chapman boasted that he had 'two very excellent Judges of Language Grotius and Huetius concurring with' him, not to mention a scholion on Aristophanes, which, in a passage that gave 'trouble to many Learned men', illustrated that the word 'ἔκλειψις' denoted an extraordinary event in a poetic sense.[661] This also provides a nice instance of the use of Greek poets together with scholiasts, which Dodwell had singled out in his pedagogic *Two Letters* as particularly useful for explaining the Bible in that they offered '*Divine,* and *Natural,* and *Historical* notions of their *Gods* and *Heroes* under *mystical* and *Parabolical* expressions' (though he warned that 'their *Antiquity* gives them no special advantage over us' when it comes to topics like '*Hierarchyes of good or evil Daemons,* and *the state of the Soul after death*').[662] But, even here, we can see that Chapman emphasised the linguistic at the expense of arguments from computational astronomy and technical chronology.[663] He took the same approach to the question of where the darkness and earthquake that Phlegon described occurred, with Chapman again unable to forsake the mighty Dutch and German philological compilations that increasingly constituted the backbone of MA studies in England. This time, confuting Sykes's reading of a 'barbarous' Latin passage in Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* (which intimated that the darkness was confined to Jerusalem), Chapman called not only on the accounts of Tertullian, Arnobius, Africanus, and the Greek text of Origen's later *Contra Celsum*, but also the great Reland, 'whose Judgment is of no small weight among the best

[660] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 63 and 66.
[661] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 67.
[662] Dodwell, *Two Letters*, pp. 215-7.
[663] For two authors who use such arguments, see Bayle, *A General Dictionary*, viii, pp. 383-8 and W. Whiston, *The Testimony of Phlegon Vindicated* (London, 1732).

Criticks and Divines'. The latter's *Palestina ex monumentis verteribus illustrata* (1695) – a quotation from which adorned Chapman's title page – allowed him to assert that in several ancient sources the phrase 'πᾶσα γῆ' signified an earthquake both in Judaea *and* elsewhere on the earth.[664]

While most of *Phlegon Re-examined* offered specific objections to Sykes's *Defense of his Dissertation*, a striking feature of this work is its suggestion of moderate agreement. Chapman was pleased that Sykes had taken on some of his main arguments, and proudly began with a summary of 'how far we are advanced and agreed in the principal Points'.[665] In other words, rather than being coloured by invectives, the debate was a scholarly one, with both sides convinced that making a persuasive case for a particular textual interpretation could potentially advance knowledge of the subject. Meanwhile, since the dispute was chiefly hermeneutic, both Sykes and Chapman cast their arguments in terms of probabilities. Tempting as it might be for historians to support tacitly historical positions that seem, at face value, more 'enlightened', this would be to miss the subtlety of how eighteenth-century scholars themselves understood the nature, and limitations, of historical arguments.

The debate had arisen in the first place because both Sykes and Chapman had grandiose ambitions to help the Christian cause and they were thus willing to aid each other (or at least appear to aid each other) in coming to the truth. As Sykes wrote in a letter to Cox Macro from 15 October 1737, he 'would gladly have the Helping hand of a Friend or Enemy to remove any real difficulty from X^{ty}', being 'ready & open to conviction; not easily frightened by any names in an Enquiry after Truth'.[666] Sykes deemed the confutation of shaky evidence to be of the utmost importance because faith had to be built upon the strongest possible foundations, whereas Chapman feared that casting doubt on the testimonies of some of the greatest Christian

[664] Chapman, *Phlegon Examined*, p. 76.
[665] Chapman, *Phlegon Re-examined*, p. 1.
[666] Add MS 32556, fo. 241r: Sykes to Cox Macro, 15 October 1737.

writers, as well as on the supernatural nature of events surrounding Christ's history, was a slippery slope that would weaken faith. Despite their divergent orientations, this was a controversy that ended in stalemate, and in fact in rare agreement, with both accepting that the case could not at present be fully settled but that whoever had the better (and in this case more probable) arguments would ultimately win. Chronology had (for the time being) been safely reclaimed as a hermeneutic enterprise, and both authors managed to avoid being covered in the dust that Locke perceptively feared could coat the chronologist.

IV. The Case of Demons

Whereas Chapman's discussion about Phlegon's eclipse ended up relating less to astronomy than to the veracity and authority of Greek testimonies, one of Sykes's next provocations concerned a slightly different set of disciplinary relations: those between classical philology and medicine. In *An Enquiry into the Meaning of Demoniacks*, and several follow-up works, Sykes presented the brazen thesis – partially inspired by Richard Mead's medical writings – that many distempers that the ancients blamed on demons were, in reality, diseases such as 'The *Epilepsy*, or *Falling Sickness*'.[667] In the case of the Old Testament, and the Book of Samuel specifically, Sykes appealed to the seventeenth-century physician Thomas Sydenham to argue that Saul's melancholy was of a natural rather than divine origin, and resulted in common symptoms such as 'Anger, Jealousy, Suspicion &c' and '*dreadful Convulsions*'.[668] But Sykes also drew on the Cambridge divine Joseph Mede, whose biblical exegeses were hugely popular, to develop the idea that classical daemons had been thought of as '*Soul-gods*' or '*Deified Souls of men after Death*' (distinguishable from the '*Sovereign Gods*' of

[667] A.A. Sykes, *An Enquiry into the Meaning of Demoniacks in the New Testament* (London, 1737), p. 6. See R. Mead, *Medica sacra, sive de morbis insignioribus qui in bibliis memorantur commentarius* (London, 1748).
[668] Sykes, *An Enquiry*, p. 28.

mythology).[669] Backed up by Hippocrates's *De morbo sacro*, Sykes could argue that quacks had often tricked laypeople into thinking that their diseases stemmed from deified souls, allowing cunning folk to deploy 'Expiations, *Charms*, and *magic Tricks*' to cure them. When explaining scriptural accounts of 'demonic' possession, Sykes thus held that it was usually 'absurd to introduce a Deity into the Affair'.[670] Unwilling to make God the first cause of even *natural* illnesses, Sykes transformed Christ's 'miraculous' powers into those of a run-of-the-mill physician.

Sykes's view unsurprisingly contradicted the opinions of most Church of England divines. As Mill put it when explicating Matthew 8.28 in his lectures at St. Edmund Hall, 'one great Reason why we should hear of so many men possessed in our saviors time, [was] that God almighty permitted the Devil to enter them that our saviors power & authority might be manifested the more, & he ver[^il]y thinks thinks [*sic*] that our Lord cured every demoniac in the countrey' who were both 'very solitary' and 'χαλεποὶ λίαν, or stark raging mad'.[671] The point that Mill hammered home was that the Devil could never possess a man without 'the special permission & license of God for some great end', which seems to have been a consensus view among English divines. In general deliberations on miracles, supernatural agents continued to be of primary interest, residing as they were thought to somewhere between God and nature. As the Benedictine Augustin Calmet exclaimed in 'A Dissertation Upon *True* and *False* MIRACLES' – replicated in the Oxford *Bibliotheca Biblica* (1728) – 'there is nothing so much talked of as Miracles and the Operations of Good and Evil Spirits upon Bodies'.[672]

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[669] J. Mede, *The Apostasy of the Latter Times, Or, The Gentiles Theology of Daemons Revived in the Latter Times Amongst Christians* (London, 1641). For an example of eighteenth-century uses of Mede, see the Master of Peterhouse, Edmund Law, who consistently appeals to Mede's scriptural interpretations in his annotated 1606 New Testament (from 1757), which he considered 'materials towards a more perfect edition, as well as a more accurate translation' (British Library, C.45 g.13).

[670] Sykes, *Enquiry into the Meaning of Demoniacks*, pp. 7-8 and p. 13.

[671] British Library MS Harley 6941, fo. 6v.

[672] A. Calmet, 'A Dissertation Upon *True* and *False* MIRACLES, and the Power of DEMONS and ANGELS over *Bodies*', in S. Parker and T. Haywood (eds), *Bibliotheca Biblica; Being a Commentary upon the Old and New Testament. Gather'd out of the Genuine Writings of Fathers and Ecclesiastical Historians* (5 vols, Oxford, 1728), iv, pp. 420-4.

Probably due to his wide-ranging knowledge of classical texts, Sykes has recently been dubbed 'sophisticated and learned', and he was indeed one of the more informed mid-eighteenth-century authors to tackle the subject of biblical miracles. Being in many ways an over-zealous populariser of Mede's ideas, however, it was easy for Sykes's historically astute contemporaries to poke holes in his mapping of classical ideas (such as 'soul-gods') onto sacred literature.[673] Most institutionally-embedded scholars were willing to admit cases of 'counterfeit dispossession' among Christians, and to countenance the possibility that scriptural references to demons heavily overlapped with pagan ones.[674] But Sykes's alignment of the common biblical word 'Δαιμόνιον' (demon) with the slippery classical one 'Δαιμων' (daemon) was a step too far. Where the latter term was thought to have numerous acceptable meanings, divines typically limited the significations of the former to the devil, evil spirits, idols, or fallen angels.

One of the earliest responses to Sykes was the Oxford-educated divine Thomas Church's *An Essay Towards Vindicating the Literal Sense of the Demoniacks in the New Testament* (1737), which begins by pointing out that 'Δαιμόνιον' always refers in scripture either to the '*Devil*, or to *Idols*, as has been observed by Criticks ancient and modern'.[675] Far from shying away from medical arguments, however, Church addressed a number of Sykes's claims on this score directly. Sykes had appealed to Pliny's list of medicines used to heal the possessed, for example, to suggest that the forms of 'possession' being treated in the New Testament were natural, but Church retorted that because remedies like 'Nails taken out of a Grave' were 'so ridiculous' they must have cured 'something more than *mere Madness*'.[676] Likewise, scholarship on Jewish culture such as J.C. Wolf's *Curae philologicae et criticae* (1735) informed Church that the Jews 'very rightly' singled out many men who were mad but not

[673] S.D. Snobelen, 'Lust, Pride, and Ambition: Isaac Newton and the Devil', in J.E. Force and S. Hutton (eds), *Newton and Newtonianism: New Studies* (Dordrecht and London, 2004), p. 179.
[674] W. Weston, *An Enquiry into the Rejection of the Christian Miracles* (Cambridge, 1746), p. 210.
[675] T. Church, *An Essay Towards Vindicating the Literal Sense of the Demoniacks in the New Testament* (London, 1737), p. 8.
[676] Church, *An Essay*, p. 20.

possessed, with madness being a fairly common disorder.[677] In cases like the lunatic in Matthew, Church argued that a devil could bring about the specific symptoms described, but, more broadly, he made it clear that there was nothing to stop devils (or God) from 'inflict[ing] even natural Diseases', as Henry Hammond, Locke, Jacques Lenfant, and Cave, among others, had argued. In other words, just because the material cause of diseases could be explained using modern medical theories – or 'sufficient external Testimony' – this did not preclude supernatural agents from being first or even efficient causes (just as Phlegon's eclipse could have been the natural effect of a supernatural cause). More generally, Church (like Chapman before him) feared that Sykes's disregard for the accounts of miracles and oracles that members of the 'primitive Church', including Cyprian, Lactanius, Eusebius, and St. Augustine, had offered threatened 'the Faith of History, in general'.[678]

The only problem with Church's response was that, by rehashing and admonishing many of Sykes's particular arguments, he glossed over his rather dubious premise: namely, that classical and biblical demons were principally thought of as the souls of deceased men. It is perhaps this failure to address Sykes's core thesis that led Sykes to label Church, in his aforementioned letter to Cox, a 'modern Writer, & hitherto well behaved'.[679] In contrast to Church, scholars with a more literary-critical orientation avoided this problem by surveying the plethora of ways in which the ancients understood classical daemons. This style of argumentation is epitomised by *A Critical Dissertation Concerning the Words Δαιμων and Δαιμόνιον* (1738) by a mysterious 'gentleman of Wadham College' (probably Swinton or Costard), which enumerates the conceptions of daemons among heathen poets and philosophers. At one point, the author claimed that one of the many classical significations of 'Δαιμων' (or daemon) was '*genius*', following Empedocles, Servius, and Apuleius (the last of

[677] Church, *An Essay*, p. 42. See J.C. Wolf, *Curae philologicae et criticae* (Hamburg, 1735).
[678] Church, *An Essay*, pp. 14-20 and p. 24.
[679] Add MS 32556, fo. 241r.

whom Markland had been busy editing in Cambridge).[680] Based on comparative etymology, the linguistically orientated author reasoned that the root of the Latin word 'genius' should be sought among the Etruscans (an ancient Italian civilisation). Swinton published a description of their language titled *De lingua Etruriæ regalis vernacula dissertatio* in the same year, which the *Critical Dissertation* cites for the claim that many Latin writers 'borrowed' words from the Etruscan language.[681] In the case of demons, a clear example of linguistic borrowing could be seen when it came to the Arabic word 'Gin' or 'Gen' (in Acts 12.15), which the author claimed was interchangeable with the Latin 'Genii' (a '*Demon*, in the Scripture Sense of the Word'), and which was the term used in relation to the possession of wild beasts in Isaiah 13.21 and the lunatic in Matthew 17.15. Citing Walton's Polyglot Bible, he ventured that the Ethiopic word 'Genn' likewise denoted 'a Spectre, or Apparition' (Mark 6.49) and even the '*Devil* himself' (John 30.8). With this in mind, the author concluded that 'Gen in both the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* Languages, when used in a bad sense', can be said 'with no small Appearance of Reason' to have 'the same Import' as the various scriptural terms for demons or devils: 'Δαιμων', 'Δαίμονες', and 'Δαίμονια'.[682] The anonymous Wadham author (who was perhaps Swinton) and others agreed with Sykes, then, that biblical demons were closely related to classical ones, but they denied that it followed from this that biblical demons were the souls of deceased men.

Returning to Cambridge, philological concerns also dominate the speculations of another divine: the seasoned non-juring cleric, Thomas Brett. He delved into the topic of daemons in a manuscript letter from May 1739 to Samuel Pegge, a fellow of St. John's College, former student of Tunstall's, and newly minted vicar of Godmersham. Pegge, who was thirty-seven years Brett's junior, was in the process of produceding his first-ever work – on daemons –

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[680] *A Critical Dissertation Concerning the Words Δαιμων and Δαιμόνιον* (London, 1738), pp. 14-16. For Markland on Apuleius, see Chalmers, *General Biographical Dictionary*, xxi, p. 320. Mentored by Bentley, he aided Taylor with his Lysias (1739) and Demosthenes (1741), helped Mangey to collate manuscripts for his 1741 Philo edition, and saw through the press a second (1740) edition of Davies's Maximus Tyrius.
[681] Swinton published other works on the language and customs of the Etruscans.
[682] *Critical Dissertation,* pp. 14-16.

when Brett penned his epistle.[683] In his letter, Brett adopts a distinctly pedagogic tone, helping Pegge to select sources and to formulate arguments. In this sense, the exchange offers a rare glimpse into the non-official relationships that often fuelled the undertakings of early career scholars.[684] As Brett explained in his letter, he had been

> Looking y^{e} other Day into y^{e} supplement to Colliers Dictionary, as I was turning y^{e} Leaves to find y^{e} passage I wanted, I accidentally saw y^{e} word Daemon, & could not pass it without reading what he says upon. And as what he says is much to your purpose I cannot forbear to transcribe it for you.[685]

A neat transcription of the passage on 'DAEMON a Genius or Angel' – which established that the word 'in holy scripture, is always taken for a Devil, or bad spirit' – duly followed along with various insights from Platonic philosophers.[686] Brett proceeded to offer advice and information to Pegge regarding further sources on daemons that it would be 'proper for [him] also to consult'. These included Apuleius (whose work Brett enclosed), Johannes Cassianus (who according to 'Caves *Hist. Lit*. was a Christian & flourished about y^{e} year 424'), and 'Plato's Symposiacs'. As Brett explained, these works decisively established 'that y^{e} Heathens did not look upon Daemons to be y^{e} souls of men deceased, w^{ch} is y^{e} first point you undertake to prove'.[687] Evidently, Pegge was engaged in much the same enterprise as the anonymous Wadhamite, seeking to expose the precise linguistic and conceptual contours of 'Gentile Polytheism' against Sykes's '*figurative Scheme*'.[688]

In addition to helping Pegge to home in on the most relevant literature on the subject of daemons, Brett also encouraged his acolyte to marry the etymological-philological approach

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[683] See S. Pegge, *An Examination of the Enquiry into the Meaning of Demoniacs in the New Testament: In a Letter to the Author. Wherein it is Shewn, that the Word Demon does not Signify a Departed Soul, either in the Classics or the Scriptures* (London, 1739).
[684] The letters that Mattaire sent to the young Merrick in 1741, pointing him towards 'the truest and surest' edition of Typhiodorus, offer another palpable example of an older scholar assisting a younger one with his projecs. See MS Dep. c. 254/2: Mattaire to Merrick, 22 August 1741.
[685] Bodleian MS Add c. 244, fo. 211r: Brett to Pegge, 30 May 1739.
[686] MS Add c. 244, fo. 211r.
[687] MS Add c. 244, fo. 211r.
[688] Pegge, *An Examination*, p. viii and 11.

of the Wadham essay with the theological emphasis on scriptural 'devils' that preoccupied more traditional divines.[689] Aiming to 'shew how y^e^ Septuagint understood & in what sense they have used y^e^ word Δαιμόνιον. Which is but seven Times (I think) used in y^e^ Old Testament', Brett naturally 'thought it worth while to examine ~~& examine~~ every Hebrew word they have so translated'.[690] In so doing, he found that

> In two places y^e^ Hebrew word is שֵׁדִים viz Deut. XXXII. 17. & Psal. CVI. 37 which y^e^ lexicons say signifies Destroyers. And in Psal. XCI. 6. it is יָשׁוּד y^e^ Future Tense of שׁוּד w^ch^ signifies devastavit, destruxit. And they have translated y^e^ verb by y^e^ noun derived from it. In Psal. XCVI. 5 original is אֱלִילֵי y^e^ plural of אֱלִיל w^ch^ y^e^ lexicons & other Translators say is Res nihili and therefore our English & other modern Translations render it Idols.[691]

Despite being a clear-cut case of grammatically orientated biblical philology, Brett cemented his observation by turning to 'Clemens Alexandrinus in his Admonitio ad gentes p. 41. C. ed. Paris. 1624'. This allowed him to confirm that, when it came to Psalm 96.5, the King James Bible offered 'y^e^ true Reading Because y^e^ Gentiles believed that a Daemon dwelt in their Idols', and so one 'might very properly translate y^e^ original word by Δαιμόνιων εἰδωλα, or by Δαμόνια' (demonic idols or simply demons). At other moments, Brett called upon modern sacred lexicography to establish that in '*Is*. XIII. 21. & XXXIV. 14. y^e^ original is צִיִּים w^ch^ Buxtorf in his Lexicon interprets Feri, Barbari, Desertorum, Locorum, Incolae', suggesting again that demons were not to be exclusively aligned with the deified souls of men, and, in this instance, were more akin to savage, demon-like goats. When it came to the Septuagint translation of 'שֵׁדִים' as 'Δαιμόνια', Brett pointed out that 'y^e^ Hebrew word signifies Destroyers', which indicates that demons were regarded 'as Beings superior to Men, & who, by permission of God, could destroy, & consequently torment men, & bring Diseases upon them'.[692] These competing significations of the word 'demon' were equally grounded in scripture, as Brett had shown at length.

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[689] For Brett-like lines, see Pegge, *An Examination*, pp. 69-71.
[690] MS Add c. 244, fo. 211r.
[691] MS Add c. 244, fo. 211r.
[692] MS Add c. 244, fos. 211r-v.

Brett's final argument in his letter to Pegge involved a wider historical observation. To his mind, because

> y^e^ LXX [i.e. the Septuagint authors] were Jews & y^e^ sect of y^e^ Pharisees (for y^e^ Sadducees rejected all scripture but y^e^ five Books of Moses) they believed all departed souls to be in Hades: therefore they could not believe these, whom they stile Δαιμόνια & suppose to ~~be departed~~ inhabit y^m^ to be departed souls.[693]

For this reason, Brett was assured that 'the LXX have never used y^e^ word Δαιμόνια for y^e^ souls of men deceased', and he saw no need to scour classical literature for alternative readings. Taking a hyperbolic swipe, he went so far as to lambast Sykes for his inability 'to produce one Author, Gentile, Jew, or Christian, who has ever called y^e^ souls of Men deceased' by the same term that scripture used for demons. As Brett's philological ruminations in this letter suggest, promising divines such as Pegge were not only expected to consult the broader history of Christian doctrines but also to use philology to square classical and biblical concepts. Whereas Chapman derived material from critical compilations, editions, and historical encyclopaedias in his attempt to authenticate Phlegon's testimony, slightly later debates over whether demonic possessions should be explained medically or supernaturally placed emphasis on situating expressions within their linguistic, etymological, and intellectual contexts.

Notwithstanding the fact that Pegge's work came 'so late', when the 'subject was almost worn out', his *An Examination of the Enquiry into the Meaning of Demoniacs* was praised by several learned divines, not least for convincingly arguing that Sykes had misread Tertullian and Justin Martyr (and offered far more detail than, say, Church).[694] Thomas Hutchinson, for one, wrote to Pegge in June 1739 to express gratitude for a having been sent a copy of Pegge's *Examination*, which, Hutchinson noted, corroborated his own efforts to confute those 'confus'd, blund'ring pieces of dulness and perversness, which have appear'd under the several

[693] MS Add c. 244, fos. 211r-v. J. Buxtorf, *Lexicon hebraicum et chaldaicum complectens voces omnimodas quæ in Sacris Bibliis exstant* (Scotland, 1824), p. 378.
[694] *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 66 (London, 1796), p. 892.

titles of Enquiry &c Farther Enquiry &c Review &c.' on the subject of demonic possession.[695] While the debate over the nature of biblical demons gradually subsided, the ink that university scholars, and especially younger ones, spilt on deconstructing Sykes's arguments points to a deep concern during the 1730s with even subtle anti-clerical arguments about what Sykes himself admitted to be 'uncommon subject[s]'.[696] The kind of material that young divines could (and indeed needed) to grapple with in order to undermine Sykes's premises was exactly that which they had been trained to read, extract from, and critique during their BA and MA degrees, and it was accordingly irresistible for many of these young divines to become embroiled in the debates in question simply by reading the same texts in a divergent way to Sykes. Moreover, by subtly reinforcing one another's readings of the same texts, the young divines who responded to Sykes were able to appear united, with important consequences for the outcomes of the debates. As Sykes admitted with reference to his writings on the nature of biblical daemons, although he 'must stop [publishing], till I see whether what I have done will stand the Test of strict reason', the 'united strength of these gentlemen' (his respondents) was likely to overwhelm readers and prejudice them against his arguments.[697] It could well be for a similar reason – i.e. a concern with provoking a coordinated response from divines – that Sykes claimed to have withheld his work on daemons from the press upon first penning it (in the 1720s) because 'M^{r} Woolstons controversy was on foot', making Sykes 'unwilling to raise a controversy at that time'.[698] Sykes may, of course, also have worried about questioning the Bible during a moment of weakness for the Church of England, or about losing readers to Woolston and his notorious critics. Whatever the case, young academics evidently had an outsized influence within the public sphere of the 1720s and 1730s.

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[695] Bodleian MS Eng. letters d. 43 fo. 209r: Hutchinson to Pegge, 7 June 1739. Hutchinson's main contribution to the debate was his *Remarks Upon a Pamphlet, Intit'l'd, A Review of the Controversy About the Meaning of Demoniacs* (London, 1739).
[696] Add MS 32556, fo. 241v.
[697] Add MS 32556, fos. 241r-v.
[698] Add MS 32556, fo. 241v.

V. Conclusion: Sacred Criticism and the Classics

The fact that Chapman, Squire, Pegge, and others scoured classical and early church writings as they came to terms with miracles and the supernatural was, this chapter has suggested, a natural outgrowth of their training in the mid-eighteenth-century English universities. As is indicated by reading guides such as *The Student's Library* – and as I already noted in 2.1 – MA students during the first half of the eighteenth century sharpened their teeth on (rather than culminating their academic training by reading) authors including Jerome, Tertullian, Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria, Ambrose, Philo, Dionysius the Areopagite, Athanasius, and Basil, often consulting guides to primitive literature such as Cave's *Historia Literaria* alongside these authors.[699] Many of the patristic and classical editions that were routinely recommended to students were products of the huge investment in scholarship on primitive Greek authors in Oxford and Cambridge during the late seventeenth century, which eighteenth-century scholars, in their turn, mined for details that they could use to build arguments about a plethora of technical matters. The meeting of early modern erudition and Enlightenment 'criticism' was especially pronounced in the realm of apologetics.

All of the early career scholars mentioned in this chapter were also enmeshed in an academic world that was deeply hostile to anti-Patristic sentiments (such as those of Middleton and Sykes).[700] As an inspiration for a whole generation of young divines, Waterland, in particular, championed the primitive fathers as the most trustworthy expositors of the scriptures and insisted that theological doctrines (like all other ideas) were best understood with reference to historical circumstances and especially ecclesiastical tradition.[701] Chapman's work on

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[699] *The Student's Library: or, A Choice Collection of Books, in all Faculties and Parts of Learning* (London, 1713), pp. 2-3.
[700] R.D. Cornwall, *Religion, Politics and Dissent, 1660-1832: Essays in Honour of James E. Bradley* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 105-6.
[701] Ingram, *Reformation Without End*, pp. 53-4.

Eusebius – with its claim that 'Human Testimony' is the only means by which 'the Proofs *and* Doctrines *of a divine* Revelation *are convey'd to succeeding Ages*' – provides a palpable instance of how the generation after Waterland adopted this stance.[702] Appalled by those who excluded 'the *ancients*, to make room for *themselves*', Waterland's mantra was that 'Antiquity ought to Attend as a handmaid to Scripture, to wait upon her as her mistress', and he made it clear that consulting a range of classical texts was essential when fixing the meaning of 'Scripture *words* and *phrases*'.[703] Potter (to whom Chapman dedicated *Eusebius*), Tunstall, and Markland, as some of the figureheads of Waterland's generation, shared his view, and, as we have seen, numerous younger scholars, in their turn, became advocates of the literary-critical approaches to sacred texts and ancient testimonies that had been the lynchpin of their education.

When it came to the topic of post-apostolic miracles in particular, the standard view remained, to quote Merrick's student notes, that working miracles – or producing 'effects in the material world contrary to the ordinary & established course of it' – was a means for those living in 'the earliest ages of the Church' to prepare 'a way for the reception of their Doctrines'.[704] But this does not mean that anything like a consensus existed among academics, as is evident from the fact that a young Cambridge fellow, William Weston, published an over 400-page work titled an *Enquiry into the Rejection of the Christian Miracles by the Heathens* (1746), which focussed on the general contempt for the miraculous among ancient sages. Collating historical instances of 'misguided Zeal and blind Superstition', Weston's text caused a storm in Cambridge.[705] He even ventured that, contemptible as Spinoza's opinions on

[702] Chapman, *Eusebius*, sig. A5v.
[703] D. Waterland, *The Works of the Rev. Daniel Waterland, D. D*, ed. W. Van Mildert (10 vols, Oxford, 1823), v, p. 93 and i, p. 93.
[704] MS Dep. c. 257. See A. Walsham, 'Miracles in Post-Reformation England', *Studies in Church History*, 41 (2005).
[705] See Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment*, pp. 137-8. Weston's major work met with negative responses from fellow Cambridge scholars, including R. Hurd, *Remarks on a Late Book, entitled, An Enquiry into the Rejection of the Christian Miracles by the Heathens* (London, 1746) and T. Comber, *The Heathen Rejection of Christianity in the First Ages, Considered* (London, 1747). His sermons also elicited a hostile reaction from

miracles generally were, Spinoza was at least 'consistent with himself'.[706] Weston carefully avoided implying that the miracles of Moses, Christ, or the Apostles fell into the same camp as those that filled the pages of Plutarch, but he somewhat provocatively clarified that his chapters in support of Christian miracles were only a salvo, and suggested that the 'rational' heathens who rejected miracles were akin to the Protestants who castigated the superstitious practices of the Catholics.[707] It has been easy for historians to imagine a swarm of young divines defending the superstitious early church, but, given the plurality of views that an academic education spawned, consensus formation often proved a torturous process.

In writing on miracles, however, all of the divines discussed in this chapter were united in one respect: they were trying to solve one of the most intractable theological problems. As early as 1672, Dodwell's *Two Letters* flagged up 'one Question' that is 'exceedingly intricate, and yet omitted by most that I have seen of our late ingenious Authors': namely, 'the distinction of *true* from *counterfeit* miracles'. For Dodwell, prizing 'real' miracles apart from false ones required a sophisticated grasp not only of the Bible and ancient belief-systems, but also of natural philosophy, since miracles were necessarily 'above the power of *natural Agents*' and violated the ordinary course of nature. In fact, he placed miracles squarely under the umbrella of natural theology, which generally rested on evidence about the divine obtained by the natural faculties, rather than the other branch of '*Scholastical Divinity*': historical theology or 'that part of Divinity that is Textuary'.[708] By the mid-eighteenth century, however, miracles were studied almost exclusively in a 'textuary' mode, as young scholars transformed debates about supposedly natural events and agents into controversies about ancient and patristic

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some. See, for instance, Bodleian MS Ballard 40 fo. 181r: William Parry to George Ballard, 11 May 1746. Here, it is Weston's politics rather than his religious views that caused concern. Parry specifically condemns Weston for being 'too lavish in his Compliment' of the United Provinces, such that 'the man must be a Republican at Heart'. Parry did, however, note that Weston 'is an excellent scholar, and is a Master of a neat and eloquent style', meaning he is 'capable of doing either a great deal of Good or Harm'.

[706] Weston, *An Enquiry*, p. 2.

[707] E. Radner, *The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 119-20.

[708] Dodwell, *Two Letters*, p. 205 and 212.

hermeneutics. It has been suggested that they did so in part because of a fear that increasingly sophisticated research in physiology, psychology, mathematics, and other domains that interrogated evidence from the senses would erode the power of a discipline that could only do so much to accommodate matters of 'fact'. Asserting our inevitable reliance on *texts* when it comes to understanding the past – regardless of what universal laws appear to necessitate – was among the best ways for scholars of the period to defend the Bible's core doctrines while allowing for elegant concessions when they were warranted by the evidence.

Part 4: Conclusion
One Continued Train of Liberal Education

4.1 Decline or Transformation?

In a 1744 sermon at Oxford titled *The Influence of Education Justified, with Regard to the Profession of Christianity*, the former Oxford divinity student and rector of West Hendred in Berkshire, John Spry, asserted a commonplace: that 'the Path of Revelation is in it self one continued Train of Liberal Education'.[709] A liberal education was virtually synonymous with a 'general' one in the early modern period. As outlined at the outset of this study, the driving idea behind this concept was that secular arts and sciences should be given pride of place in the early years – typically the first seven years – of a university education. But, as we have seen, the content of a liberal (or general) education morphed considerably between 1690 and 1750. In the face of a plethora of public controversies over religion conducted in the vernacular, academics began to prepare their students to grapple creatively with theological material earlier in the pedagogical process, fearful of losing ground to their enemies. A major consequence was that easily actionable learning was elevated, while the returns for more intricate and abstract scholarship diminished.

In the seventeenth century, scholars in the English universities idealised, and often attempted to cultivate, erudition, even as they fought confessional battles.[710] Erudition took many forms, from dense tomes of legal history to translations of rare Arabic fragments, and the projects that scholars carried out as they climbed the academic ladder frequently had very little to do with their eventual careers as divines. But such time-intensive scholarship, while reflected upon with nostalgia by some eighteenth-century scholars, appeared to others

[709] J. Spry, *The Influence of Education Justified, with Regard to the Profession of Christianity* (Oxford, 1744), p. 25.
[710] See especially J.-L. Quantin, *Church of England and Christian Antiquity*.

indulgently detached in an era marked by fraught disputes about the foundations of Christianity. Against the backdrop of 'such Variety of Opinions, both in *Religion* and *Politicks*, and as great a Liberty in venting them without Control', scholars and their students became masterfully adept at twisting knowledge into shapes that would appeal to a wider readership, and sought to present the best face of academic authority to an expanding literate society.[711] While modern historians continue to caricature pedantry as the cardinal sin of the eighteenth-century academic, most of the young scholars in this thesis were more guilty of a form of *haute vulgarisation* (i.e. of packaging their insights to reach the widest possible audience) than its opposite. Correspondingly, when the eighteenth-century English universities did not live up to the high standards set by a prior generation, it is not because they were impervious to the wider intellectual culture (as is commonly supposed) but rather because they became *more* concerned to engage with it.

This dissertation has not, however, presented a story of precipitous decline. On the contrary, it has sought to offer a bold and more sympathetic appraisal of the state of university learning: one that unearths the innovations that occurred within their hallowed walls during this long-neglected period. In doing so, my aim is not so much to canonise the often unassuming works of the young scholars and divines whom I have studied as to appreciate their intellectual endeavours in light of what *they* sought (and sometimes managed) to achieve. In the process, clues have emerged as to what spurred on pedagogical and indeed broader intellectual transformations. As I have argued, many of the characteristics of the 'modern' universities were present in the universities of early Enlightenment England, when the imperative for academics to speak and write in a language common to the rest of their society grew, and collaborative work in the service of a socio-spiritual agenda was elevated over lonely toil in the pursuit of recondite truths. As institutions embedded in society, but with grand

[711] Barecroft, *Ars concionandi*, p. 66.

pretences to be at its helm, the eighteenth-century universities were sometimes driven to compromise on their commitment to the interests of learning. Yet such concessions ultimately stemmed from their acute awareness of the extent to which their corporate model, and the very foundations of a durable and reliable system of knowledge, rested on the continued and widespread acceptance of a set of beliefs that could no longer be taken for granted.

4.2 Soldiers of Christ

To understand the universities in the period *c.*1690-1750 is, to a large extent, to appreciate the degree to which their members regarded their moment in history as exceptional. The universities had, since their medieval inception, functioned as arms of the Church, and the ties between the English universities and the Church of England after the Reformation were especially strong. As noted in the Introduction, the university curriculum was designed to achieve several goals simultaneously. On the one hand, because tutors were aware that the 'Generality of Students are intended to be Clergy-men', they sought to endow their pupils with the tools needed to interpret scripture accurately and to understand the history of the Church, its canons, and creeds.[712] On the other, it was meant to enable the gentry and would-be lawyers and medics who entered the universities' doors to acquire the specialist knowledge required for their profession (or lack thereof). The early eighteenth-century universities fell short when it came to the second of these aims, only beginning to recover their reputations as prestigious training grounds for the secular professions after a revamping later in the century. But this was not so much a result of negligence as of a pronounced awareness that the times warranted a concentration of resources in the interest of theology.

Many academics justified their emphasis on active, theologically orientated learning on the grounds that the threats to religion were so substantial that without defeating them there

[712] Waterland, *Advice to a Young Student*, p. 7.

could be no learning at all. This sentiment abounds in *University-Politicks. Or, the Study of a Christian, Gentleman, Scholar* (1760) by the influential Oxford scholar, John Burton. Following St Paul's imperative in 1 Thessalonians 4 to ensure 'that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business', Burton generally championed apolitical learning and the cultivation of the life of the mind. Indeed, he lamented the fact that, in his day, 'to be quiet' had become an 'unfashionable and mortifying doctrine, suited rather to the dullness of a primitive Christian than the vivacity of a bright genius and the enterprizing spirits of this age'.[713] But, against the backdrop of grave threats to religion, Burton felt that it was justified to respond aggressively where one's adversary had fired the first shot. Burton was therefore happy to accept that, on certain occasions, 'the interposition of our best endeavours is needed and required, as the Means of preserving the publick good'.[714] On Burton's account, there were strong grounds for justifying the apologetic action of young scholars working on behalf of orthodoxy. Desperate times called for desperate measures.

The mandate to pursue forms of learning suited to a state of emergency had a discernable impact on the pedagogical structure of the universities, and, more seriously, on the knowledge hierarchy that undergirded it. In particular, as I have sought to show, theology's descent into a position alongside other domains of knowledge – with a growing number of BA students publishing on the topic – made it both a more and less privileged aspect of the encyclopaedia of learning. As this thesis has indicated, the sense of urgency was not lost on students, who regularly framed themselves as warriors combatting the worst possible ideas. The severity with which they viewed novel threats to religion is summed up in the comment of a mid-eighteenth-century Cambridge undergraduate, who wrote furiously in his notebook with reference to modern freethinkers (and quoting from a piece that Addison had published in *Tatler*) that 'If

[713] J. Burton, *University-Politicks. Or, the Study of a Christian, Gentleman, Scholar* (Oxford, 1760), p. 4 and 98.
[714] Burton, *University-Politicks*, p. 11.

one were to take the word Priestcraft out of the mouths of these shallow monsters, they would be immediately struck dumb'.[715] The student also followed Addison in his striking willingness to censure, copying down his claim that we 'ought not to treat such miscreants as these upon the foot of fair Disputants, but to pour out contempt upon them'.[716] This student's (and indeed Addison's) venomous attitude was in step with pedagogic advice from the period, with Barecroft, for example, writing in a popular work of advice that young scholars should study the scripture with the aim of constructing a 'fence against that *Heretical Pravity*, under which the *Deism* and *Infidelity* of these *Licentious Days*, would so Artfully *hide* it self'.[717] More explicitly advocating the militarisation of theological learning, the biographer William Oldisworth, in the preface to *The Works of Mr. Edmund Smith* (1729), wrote that Smith, a prominent Oxford theologian, 'looked upon *School-Divinity* as upon a rough but well-wrought Armour, which might at once defend the Christian Hero, and quip him for Combat'.[718] Later in the century, Richard Watson, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, referred to how his Peterhouse colleague 'thought it to be his duty to demolish every opinion which militated against what is called the orthodoxy'.[719] Military metaphors are everywhere to be found in the scholarly writings of the period.

One might object that the language of Christian scholarship had been militarised since the inception of the universities, and that the 'irreligion' of the mid-1600s, with the spectre of Hobbes looming large, was just as proximate a cause for a pedagogical transformation as the deistic and freethinking publications of the early eighteenth. But two further points should be made here. The first is that the story narrated in this dissertation is not a self-contained one, and that many of the strategies, and much of the rhetoric, that scholars leveraged during the

[715] Egerton MS 834, fo. 247r.
[716] Egerton MS 834, fo. 247r.
[717] Barecroft, *Ars concionandi*, p. 15.
[718] E. Smith, *The Works of Mr. Edmund Smith, Late of Christ-Church, Oxford*, ed. W. Oldisworth (London, 1729), p. x.
[719] R. Watson, *Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson*, 2nd edn (2 vols, 1818), i, p. 39.

battles of the early Enlightenment were borrowed from earlier periods. In fact, many saw themselves as the direct heirs of Restoration scholars (including Samuel Parker, Cudworth, John Tillotson, and Stillingfleet) who had fought to confine Hobbes' and Spinoza's interventions to secular domains such as politics, natural philosophy, and ethics, and, in the case of Tillotson and Stillingfleet, to shape a broad basis for the Church of England that emphasised its 'rational' character. Having said this, it was commonly noted that young divines of the mid-eighteenth century are 'of a different Stamp from those that lived forty Years ago'.[720] The point was not necessarily that they departed methodologically from earlier luminaries (though, in terms of the genres that they opted for and the scope of their projects, there are certainly differences) but rather that they had begun to 'act and think in a Way so enlarged and refined, as was not known to our great Forefathers'.[721] In other words, the sleek divines studied in this thesis were trained to create an impression of 'general learning' when, very often, their knowledge had been gleaned from sources that were watered down to allow for rapid dissemination and widespread consumption.

The second point is that large-scale changes are not always obvious to those living through them, and, even in the period covered in this dissertation, alterations to the longstanding pedagogic model that cleanly separated the secular arts and sciences from theology were rarely made explicit. Rather, the proof was in the pudding, or in the fact that several BA students published biting religious polemics, and that myriad vernacular works of historical and natural theology became the starred readings on BA lists.[722] The erosion of standard disciplinary categories occurred with particular rapidity during the muddy decades around 1700, when the

[720] *The Weekly Miscellany*, 23 November 1734.
[721] *The Weekly Miscellany*, 23 November 1734.
[722] Many examples have been given throughout this dissertation, but a particularly striking piece of evidence of the shift comes from R. Newton, *A Scheme of Discipline with Statutes Intended to be Established by a Royal Charter for the Education of Youth in Hart-Hall in the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1720). It is stated on p. 11 that every BA student who intends to study theology shall 'publickly Speak or Read before the Principal and the rest of the Society a *Theological Essay*, in the nature of a short Sermon'. BA students also attended disputations in the Cambridge Divinity Schools. For this reference, see Watson, *Anecdotes*, pp. 22-3.

issue of God's relationship to the universe remained sorely unresolved. Some certainty, I have argued, was restored during the 1730s and 1740s when a robust textbook physics was developed that decisively excluded cosmic and metaphysical issues. This facilitated a clearer articulation of the parameters of revealed and natural theology. But, even then, the cases of Kennicott and Chapman show that this consolidation hardly put an end to controversies about matters at the intersection of theology and the other disciplines. Indeed, if anything, debates simply moved further into the province of history and the nascent 'humanities' (chronology, literary criticism, the history of astronomy, moral psychology, etc.), which served to enhance the reputation of the textual critic beyond academic and clerical circles.[723] So, even if change occurred gradually, and combatants recycled many of the terms used to conduct debates during the previous century, the cumulative impact of decades of religious controversy in England, increasingly conduced in cheap, easy-to-access forms thanks to the flourishing London print market, warranted a more strategic weaponisation of institutional resources.

As this suggests, it was not only the accretion of supposed religious threats but also demographic and geographical factors – not least the proximity of Oxford and Cambridge to London – that gave rise to the sleek divine. By 1700, London had overtaken Paris as the most populous city in Europe, and the preponderance of young academics had their works printed in the city (barring university sermons and labour-intensive scholarly tomes).[724] Urbanisation and literacy accelerated more generally, and it is estimated that, by the end of the seventeenth century, 40 per cent of people in England lived in urban environments with greater access to schools and churches.[725] Living in towns and cities also allowed for greater political and social

[723] The term 'critic' and attempts to determine its signification can be found in a vast array of mid-eighteenth-century works. An especially notable example is Horne, *Spicilegium Shuckfordianum*, from which the quotation in my thesis title is taken.
[724] J. White, *London in the Eighteenth Century: A Great and Monstrous Thing* (Harvard, 2013), p. 1.
[725] Lake and Pincus, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere', p. 282.

engagement, with discussions often taking place within newly established coffee houses.[726] Habermas famously framed the emergence of the public sphere as part of a process of secularisation, which is a stance that underlies Elizabeth Eisenstein's argument that 'the pulpit was ultimately displaced by the press' in the eighteenth century. But this dissertation has sought to show that even as the press grew in size and influence in parallel with an increase in literacy rates and the expansion of formal education, the role of established religion in English society did not diminish, and vernacular debates about the nature and status of the Church and its doctrines may even have precipitated a more widespread concern with theology.[727] While the number of men who attended Oxford and Cambridge during the eighteenth century was considerably smaller than during the seventeenth, scholars with ambitions to enter the Church, or with positions within it, relished the opportunity that the expanding print market presented to make the value of academic learning clear to a wider audience.

With emerging opportunities for youthful fame through the publication of historical and theological polemics, academic grandees naturally began to fear that their students would neglect their scholarly tasks in pursuit of more trivial or political agendas. As Burton exclaimed,

> let [not] the inquisitive genius dwindle into the News-monger. 'Tis surely no desireable praise of his industry that he spends more hours of study in the Coffee-house, than in his College; and is more conversant in modern pamphlets, than in books of solid ancient learning.[728]

The crux of Burton's complaint was that the modern youth who engaged in a 'down right abuse of application' did so because of a 'false notion of popularity'.[729] References to fame-seeking academics are common in writings from across Europe, with an obvious example being

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[726] S. Pincus, '"Coffee Politicians Does Create": Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture', *Journal of Modern History*, 67 (1995).
[727] E.L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 104-5 and J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger (Oxford, 1989).
[728] Burton, *University-Politicks*, p. 93.
[729] Burton, *University-Politicks*, p. 93.

Christian Ludwig Hagerdorn's *How to Become Famous in the Academic World* [Die Mittel in der gelehrten Welt berühmt zu werden] (1736).[730] But the reference to the 'falseness' of the young divines' envisaged popularity is particularly interesting in the context of the works studied in this thesis, only several of which were, despite their pretences, read beyond narrow clerical-academic circles. While religious books and treatises were among the most popular publications in eighteenth-century England, this is typically because they were either practical or scandalous.[731] The arcane works of sacred history and criticism that the sleek divines produced in hopes of ending (but more probably perpetuating) controversies about Christian doctrine and history frequently fell on deaf ears.

The limited reach of youthful expressions of antiquarian biblical criticism begs an obvious question: why were these works written at all? One answer is simply that ostensibly fending off the ghoul of deism became a virtual precondition for employment in the universities and the Church. Even when anti-deist, anti-freethinking, or anti-heterodox texts were published anonymously, their authors were often known among institutional insiders (though of course academic fame was reserved for the more daring). Another is that these young scholars believed that their painstaking efforts to produce more historically or philosophically viable answers to religious quandaries would place the Christian faith, and specifically its English formulation, on firmer foundations, thus protecting the cultural and intellectual fabric of the institutions, and, in a roundabout way, their jobs. Few scholars feared that the *universities* would be overrun by the 'enemy', with most members concluding that even if the institutions were liberalised to allow dissenters to enter them 'Every Thing will go on quietly and uniformly in the old

[730] M. Füssel, 'On the Means of Becoming Famous in the Learned World', in A. Holenstein, H. Steinke, M. Stuber, and P. Rogger (eds), *Scholars in Action: The Practice of Knowledge and the Figure of the Savant in the 18th Century* (Leiden, 2013), p. 129.
[731] Among the most popular practical religious works was R. Nelson, *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England* (London, 1703), while one of the most popular scandalous ones was T. Woolston, *Six Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour* (London, 1727-30).

Channel'.[732] As Chapman put it in 1739, '*Complaints and Calumnies from our most polite Sceptical Adversaries are grown so trite and familiar for these hundred years past, as to lose all their Edge and Significancy*'. Yet the possibility that bad ideas might live even in the dampest corners of a clerical bookshelf was concerning enough, and there was nothing more satisfying for a young divine than joining the '*hundreds among the Clergy*' who martyred themselves '*in Blood and Flames, for the sake of Truth and a good Conscience*'.[733]

Naturally, not all university-trained individuals felt that conscripting the student body in the interests of the Church in order to launch a unified offensive against '*Complaints and Calumnies*' was a particularly effective strategy. For one, Richard Davies noted how 'illiberal a Bondage' it was to require students to swear by the Thirty-Nine Articles. As he saw it, the fact that 'the Soldier of Christ' comes to university not as a 'Volunteer' but coerced 'into the Service' meant that 'an universal Rust has spread over the Institutions'.[734] The other consequence, according to Davies, was that 'Such Geniuses [as] might have best exercised themselves in a Collegiate retirement' and 'risen up Teachers in many branches of speculative Science' are 'let loose' in the world to cause disruption.[735] The fact that the universities did not incorporate unorthodox thinkers within their fold meant, according to Davies, that they lost access to talent and put their model of learning at serious risk of condemnation and scorn. Watson echoed the point a few years later, wondering whether 'our Universities, by the Removal of Subscription, should become fuller; and the dissenting Academies be less frequented'. He went on to speculate that neither 'Learning' nor 'Religion' would be 'injured by the Competition'.[736] This dissertation has argued that there was plenty of room for university

[732] [R. Watson], *A Letter to the Members of the Honourable House of Commons; Relating to the Subscription Required of Graduates in the Universities* (London, 1772), p. 20 and pp. 17-18.
[733] Chapman, *Eusebius*, sig. A7r-A8v.
[734] Davies, *General State of Education*, p. 11, 16, and pp. 21-2.
[735] Davies, *General State of Education*, p. 22.
[736] Watson, *Letter to the Members*, pp. 16-17 and Watson, *Anecdotes*, p. 27. Watson was in favour of dropping the requirement that students subscribe to the Articles in order to take a degree, being committed to 'the civil and religious Liberties of Mankind' (*Letter to the Members*, p. 5). This was a 'Question which has been lately agitated in the University of Cambridge' ([R. Watson], *A Second Letter to the Members of the Honourable House of*

scholars to publish bold narratives with unusual theological implications, and to draw on an exceptionally wide array of resources (including heterodox ones) to advance their arguments. But the point remains that those who refused to swear by the Articles either lost their institutional positions or decided to go elsewhere.

4.3 Tradition and Modernity

The encroachment of theological learning on the secular disciplines in the English universities has parallels in Europe, with scholars across confessions coming to recognise that the Bible was the *locus* par excellence for the meeting and testing of knowledge from nascent technical disciplines. As in England, continental academics had to contend with competing forces: on the one hand, a recognition of the cross-confessional payoff that would ensue from an improved understanding of the ancient and natural worlds; on the other, an appreciation that some secular domains could only bear fruit if their theological shackles were unfastened. In England, the result was an outpouring of secular critical, antiquarian, and natural historical publications by divines, which, in turn, led some commentators to speak of 'an Age where Learning is admired almost to the loss of Religion'.[737] Indeed, it was widely complained that theology did not command the respect that it did '*when our Religion*, *the* Christian *and* Reformed *Religion*' was properly revered.[738] The religious establishment was nonetheless comfortable in the knowledge

Commons (London, 1772), p. 8). Both tracts were published anonymously but he admits to writing them in his autobiography (Watson, *Anecdotes*, p. 43). Watson does note that the issue was less pronounced at Cambridge, where students only had to swear by the Thirty-Nine Articles to take a degree (rather than to matriculate, as at Oxford). As a result, the 'depths of science, and the liberality of principles in which the University of Cambridge initiates her sons, would, had he been acquainted with them, have extorted praise from Mr. Gibbon himself' (Watson, *Anecdotes*, p. 27).

[737] Boswell, *Method of Study*, p. 20 and Jenkin, *Remarks on Some Books*. Latham shows in 'Clergy and Print' (pp. 195-6) that there was a decline from the 1720s in titles produced by clergymen that contain religious references and a rise in appeals to history and antiquity (as well as in titles containing the term 'discourse', rather than its more polemical equivalents). He concludes that there was a 'general shift towards non-religious forms of writing in the later century' (p. 201).

[738] Jenkin, *Remarks on Some Books*, sig. A2v.

that 'the Ends of civil Government can scarcely be attained without' it, as were the universities, so long as they continued to supply the Church with compliant and enterprising men.[739]

In Germany and the Dutch Republic, the universities likewise continued to act as preparatory schools for the acquisition of professional knowledge, and, particularly in the latter, they were reputed for housing impressive professors in medicine and oriental languages during the early eighteenth century. With a greater number of endowed secular chairs for non-theologians to fill, professional theologians were, by extension, more likely than in England to confine themselves to theology (rather than pursuing a range of arts).[740] At least in Germany, the status of an academic discipline, not least theology, was also determined in part by the needs of the marketplace. As Ian Hunter argues in *Rival Enlightenments*, the more utilitarian aspects of philosophy that could be redirected in the service of a rapidly expanding state (which he calls 'civil philosophy') gradually split from the more abstract or 'scholastic' domains of systematic (as well as historical) philosophy and theology.[741] The classic, though implicit, argument among scholars of the German universities has been that theology became similarly divided, gaining 'academic' *bona fides* as it shed its practical skin.[742] But this view, in some

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[739] Watson, *Letter to the Members*, pp. 8-9. Interesting, anecdotally, is the story relayed by Watson about his ascent to the Regius Professorship in Divinity at Cambridge during the 1760s. He writes of how he had studied no theology when he applied for the position, and had seven days to obtain a BD or DD. He was offered one by the monarch, and then began to study the scriptures. He 'reduced the study of divinity into as narrow a compass as I could, for I determined to study nothing but my Bible, being much unconcerned about the opinions of councils, fathers, churches, bishops, and other men, as little inspired as myself'. Watson, *Anecdotes*, pp. 37-9.

[740] See, for example, Clark, *Academic Charisma*, pp. 37-43 and p. 46. Clark argued that the early modern German universities, and, indeed, the universities in most of reformed Europe were defined by the number of their professorial chairs in a range of languages, arts, and sciences (in contrast to the English ones). In Basel alone, for example, there were nine professors of philosophy. The number of professorships in Oxford and Cambridge did increase over the eighteenth century, but students still received the bulk of their teaching in college from a 'generalist' (college tutors were usually trained in theology but taught the full range of subjects). A more general sense that professors in specialised chairs pursued their designated subject rather than being theologically orientated generalists exudes from *Scholars in Action*. See the 'Introduction', and particularly p. 11, on which it is claimed that 'the universities developed increasingly as places careers were made and fields of research were defined'.

[740] Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments*, p. xi.

[741] Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments*, p. xi.

[742] This argument is made, for example, in M.C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford, 2010), p. 33. See also R.S. Turner, 'University Reformers and Professorial Scholarship in Germany 1760-1806', in L. Stone (ed), *The University in Society, Volume II: Europe, Scotland, and the United States from the 16th to the 20th Century* (Princeton, 1974).

senses, puts the cart before the horse. That is, before the efforts to integrate Wolffian teachings into the Pietist mould in the late eighteenth century, there remained a great deal of cross-confessional consensus about the need to combat the excesses of freethinking and firm up the historical integrity of the Bible. The result was an outpouring of bibliographic and encyclopaedic works in both German and Latin that created a zealous, bookish face for the clerical profession. The eighteenth-century German universities were, like the English ones, well stocked with students from clerical backgrounds, and, as one scholar put it, churches across the central and northern Protestant parts of Germany were as inclined towards 'corporate self-recruitment'.[743] But the sleek divine is much harder to find in Germany, perhaps because, unlike in England or France, there was neither a 'national' church to defend (or attack) nor a close-knit public sphere – nurtured by an increasingly powerful, centralised state and concentrated in a major city – in which to make a splash.[744]

With its relative religious freedom, a unified Church, and London as a printing hub, it is no surprise that deist and anti-deist publications alike proliferated in England, with great interest abroad in both radical provocations and public-facing, defensive, vernacular publications that 'orthodox' scholars, in turn, developed. Michaelis claimed that he was emboldened to express scepticism towards the literal truth of the Bible after a trip to London in the early 1740s. Voltaire supposedly experienced a similar conversion, while, as we have seen, major theologians such as Baumgarten looked to orthodox critics like Mill to strengthen the defence against such scepticism.[745] Many 'orthodox' English works were swiftly translated into German (as well as other European vernaculars), and they were frequently the subject of

[743] A.J. La Vopa, *Grace, Talent, and Merit Poor Students: Clerical Careers, and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 30.
[744] For this view of the public sphere in England and France, see Lake and Pincus, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere', p. 292.
[745] Lifschitz, *Language and Enlightenment*, p. 104.

engrossed commentary in nascent learned journals.[746] Vernacular public spheres across the continent had their own microclimates, but, because the apparent threat was now shared, they also had a great deal in common. The declining use of Latin also meant, on the one hand, that a number of formidable multi-lingual men of letters could begin to monopolise epistolary communication, and, on the other, that commercial book-sellers with the ability to ship cheap volumes overseas in bulk could increase their stake in academic knowledge transmission.

On a pedagogic level, the renewed emphasis on applied theological learning in the eighteenth-century European universities has often been regarded as a bend in a road that otherwise headed directly towards the research university. But the Reformed universities were *expected* to elucidate the Christian faith for the sake of society, and the latitude with which they did so in the seventeenth century might well be regarded as the exception and not the rule. Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine have underscored the centrality of virtue to the sixteenth-century humanist curricula and the wider branding of the universities, and indeed humanist pedagogy, more broadly, became intimately tied up with Reformed thought in the universities towards the end of the sixteenth century.[747] Judging the eighteenth-century universities by the same standards as the seventeenth-century ones so as to offer the research university a smooth passage through to the nineteenth has yielded perpetual disappointment. But with the virtue-signalling Renaissance humanists setting the goalposts, the eighteenth-century 'sleek divines' should be as easy to place historically as their more academically ambitious seventeenth-century forebearers.

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[746] Semler, for example, commented on many English works on demonic possession, which had been translated into German. This is particularly true slightly later, in the 1770s, when the controversy over Biblical possessions heated up again. See H.C. Erik Midelfort, 'The Gadarene Demoniac in the English Enlightenment', in E. Michelson, S.K. Taylor, and M. Noll Venables (eds), *A Linking of Heaven and Earth Studies in Religious and Cultural History in Honor of Carlos M.N. Eire* (Abingdon, 2016), p. 61. The English controversy on the issue of Biblical demoniacs alone resulted in at least 38 publications between 1737 and 1787. See Erik Midelfort's postscript from pp. 63-6.

[747] See A. Grafton and L. Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London, 1986) and Hotson, *Reformation of Common Learning*.

Perhaps we ought to blame the eighteenth-century scholars themselves for sealing their own fates. With some of the most vocal reactions to institutional authority arising on English shores, and the general tendency among historians to flock to evidence of dissent rather than of obedience, it is understandable that eighteenth-century England has mainly been studied for the rise and progress of a deistic 'skeptical hermeneutics'.[748] The resultant picture of a conservative academe at war with a radical counter-elite has made for a particularly striking contrast with Germany's *Aufklärung*, where a harmonious academic-bureaucratic hybrid has long been said to have paved the way for nineteenth-century academics to ransack the methodological and conceptual treasures strewn on England's streets and to usher in an age of unbound 'higher criticism'. It would, of course, be going a step too far to engage in full-throttled revisionism and pinpoint the origins of a modern research culture in eighteenth-century England.[749] After all, much of what gives this period its interest-value is the fact that it *lacks* modern features, not least in the form of bureaucratic oversight. Nevertheless, legacies are not shaped in a vacuum, and much of what has contributed to the rather sorry framing of early Enlightenment Oxford and Cambridge (and perhaps to the over-zealous celebration of Leiden, Göttingen, and Halle) stems from the scholarly writings of the period. Academics had and have a habit of complaining, and, while we should probably listen to their complaints, we should do so without forgetting that it is often during particularly disruptive moments that decline is most acutely felt.

[748] Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, pp. 14-15 and Mandelbrote, 'Biblical Hermeneutics and the Sciences'.
[749] There have been some attempts to do so, and, when read cautiously, much can indeed be learnt about the period from reconstructions of this nature. See, for example, W. McCane, 'Benjamin Kennicott: An Eighteenth-Century Researcher', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 28/2 (1977), p. 446.

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