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ARTICLE

Everyday Erudition: John Locke, the Bible and the Challenge of Early Modern Biblical Scholarship

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Abstract

The history of early modern scholarship was long written as a subject set at some remove from the rest of early modern society. Learning was the common property of like-minded scholars in the 'Republic of Letters', linked by shared codes of elite sociability and united by a mutual concern to transcend religious boundaries. Recent years have seen such views challenged, with studies demonstrating how much scholarly activity was undertaken to achieve confessional objectives. Yet, these contributions have chiefly focused on orthodox clerical scholars. This article uses the case of John Locke to present a new perspective on the place and significance of erudition in the early modern period. It is based on a thoroughgoing examination of Locke's lifetime of religious reading, bringing together evidence from his manuscript notebooks and journals, his library catalogues and annotated books, and his correspondence and published works. It coins the notion of 'everyday erudition' to reveal how learning was not an abstruse concern. Instead, for Locke and his contemporaries at multiple points on the sociocultural scale, it was a kind of common currency, a tool to be used to come to terms with the historical reality of Christian revelation.

Keywords: John Locke; erudition; religious belief; Republic of Letters; biblical scholarship

In recent years a series of substantial scholarly contributions have begun to recast the history of early modern biblical scholarship. The impetus for much of this reassessment stems from Noel Malcolm's germinal article, 'Hobbes, Ezra, and the Bible: The History of a Subversive Idea'. Until Malcolm's work, shifts in seventeenth-century attitudes towards the Bible were commonly described in terms of how a succession of radical outsiders – chief among them the notorious triumvirate of Isaac La Peyrère, Thomas Hobbes and Benedict de Spinoza – overturned the authority of the revealed word. But, Malcolm demonstrated, such thinkers were not as innovative as believed: the majority of even their most destructive claims concerning the Bible

had already been made by generations of earlier scholars. To chart 'the most significant developments in biblical-critical thinking' one instead needed to turn to the works of 'mainstream critics' who had long been dismissed or overlooked.[1] The two decades of research since Malcolm's intervention have bolstered this claim, in the process revealing how orthodox scholars invested immense energy in advanced biblical scholarship.[2]

If one of the great strengths of the new skein of historiography that appeared following Malcolm's work was the attention it drew to scholars in multiple confessions, one frequent lacuna has been its social and cultural depth, as these studies have largely focused on those writing in Latin. But it would be wrong to assume that abstruse philological questions were only of interest to the scholarly elite. Dirk van Miert has shown how the vibrant print culture of the mid-seventeenth-century Dutch Republic facilitated the popularisation of learned debates for a vernacular reading public.[3] Kirsten Macfarlane has uncovered a transatlantic community of lay biblical readers who immersed themselves in philological minutiae.[4] Rather than circumscribe the learned world as an arena of rarefied activity, it is now increasingly recognised that we should avoid drawing a strict binary between neo-Latin and vernacular cultures.

A red thread that runs throughout these growing bodies of scholarship is the consistent way they show that older traditions of historiography overstated the uniformity of confessionally inflected ways of approaching the Bible. In place of narratives founded on consistent Catholic or Protestant views of the biblical text, scholars have started to consider how confessional views changed over time and how different members of the same confession were as often in conflict with one another as arrayed against adversaries from an opposing religious camp. Yet the emphasis placed on how individuals located in orthodox confessional loci approached the Bible has drawn attention away from those who fit less readily into such a schema; philosophers like Hobbes and Spinoza, who used to play a totemic role in earlier historiography, are now at risk of being seen as largely derivative. But it would be precipitous to contend that these and other such figures simply parroted what they found in recondite tomes. The key questions turn less on whether writers from across the social and cultural world drew on learned biblical scholarship, and more on how, in which ways, for what purposes, and to accomplish what ends.

This article presents a contribution to this broad set of questions via the case of John Locke. One of the great achievements of twentieth-century Locke scholarship was to reveal the centrality of Christianity to Locke's thought and writing. In its wake, substantial attention has been paid not only to how his theological opinions informed

[1]Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes, Ezra, and the Bible: The History of a Subversive Idea', in his *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), 430.

[2]Jan Loop, *Johann Heinrich Hottinger: Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 2013); Nicholas Hardy, *Criticism and Confession: The Bible in the Seventeenth Century Republic of Letters* (Oxford, 2017); Kirsten Macfarlane, *Biblical Scholarship in an Age of Controversy: The Polemical World of Hugh Broughton (1549–1612)* (Oxford, 2021); Timothy Twining, *The Limits of Erudition: The Old Testament in Post-Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, 2024).

[3]Dirk van Miert, *The Emancipation of Biblical Philology in the Dutch Republic, 1590–1670* (Oxford, 2018), 170–92, 213–30.

[4]Kirsten Macfarlane, *Lay Learning and the Bible in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World* (Oxford, 2024).

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his most well-known works but also to his publications concerned with religious matters, chief among them *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) and the posthumous *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul* (1705–7). The nature of Locke's religious identity and the extent of his religious heterodoxy have been at the heart of the last three decades of research and scholarly debate, with Locke's published works and his manuscript collections combed for evidence that might offer insight into his reading of radical literature (especially emanating from those who held or were associated with Socinian opinions) and his views on issues such as the Trinity.[5]

Many of these studies included discussions of how Locke read and interpreted the Bible, including some brief and somewhat impressionistic surveys of his appreciation of the work of contemporary biblical critics such as Richard Simon or Jean Le Clerc.[6] In important respects, however, this area of research remains curiously underdeveloped and analyses of Locke's knowledge of the Bible, as well as of biblical scholars and biblical scholarship, have not yet been fully integrated into accounts of his life and intellectual development. This owes something to the way in which earlier discussions were prematurely foreclosed by the intersection of two older historiographical tendencies: first, that shifts in biblical criticism came from radical attacks on the authority of the Bible; second, that 'humanist' philology was rather staid and introverted, especially in comparison with novel philosophical approaches. When looked at from the perspective of the radicals, Locke could appear timid and more concerned about, than concerned with, the findings of cutting-edge scholarship.[7] Locke's interest in earlier traditions of philology, meanwhile, has been acknowledged but rarely investigated.[8] Despite various studies noting, for instance, the frequency with which Locke's manuscript papers referred to books by those such as John Lightfoot or John Spencer, they have rarely sought to trace when and how Locke obtained or studied these works or to connect them with his publications.[9] The debates of learned scholars are even understood to have been dismissed by Locke in pejorative terms as the stuff of 'frivolous erudition'.[10] Locke's approach to the Bible, it is said, had more in common

[5]John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of the 'Two Treatises of Government'* (Cambridge, 1969); John Marshall, *John Locke: Resistance, Religion and Responsibility* (Cambridge, 1994); John Marshall, 'Locke, Socinianism, "Socinianism", and Unitarianism', in *English Philosophy in the Age of Locke*, ed. M. A. Stewart, (Oxford, 2000), 111–82; Steven Snobelen, 'Socinianism, Heresy and John Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*', *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 20 (2001), 88–125; Victor Nuovo, *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment. Interpretations of Locke* (Dordrecht, 2011); Diego Lucci, *John Locke's Christianity* (Cambridge, 2021).

[6]Marshall, *John Locke*, 337–46; Maria Cristina Pitassi, *Le Philosophe et l'Écriture: John Locke exégète de Saint Paul* (Geneva, 1990); Justin A. I. Champion, 'Père Richard Simon and English Biblical Criticism, 1680–1700', in *Everything Connects: In Conference with Richard H. Popkin*, ed. James E. Force and David S. Katz (Leiden, 1999), 39–61; Justin A. I. Champion, '"Acceptable to Inquisitive Men": Some Simonian Contexts for Newton's Biblical Criticism, 1680–1692', in *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature, and Influence*, ed. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht, 1999), 77–96.

[7]Champion, 'Simonian Contexts'; Kim Ian Parker, 'Spinoza, Locke, and Biblical Interpretation', in *Locke and Biblical Hermeneutics: Conscience and Scripture*, ed. Luisa Simonutti (Cham, 2019), 163–88.

[8]Pitassi, *Le Philosophe*, 67–8.

[9]See, for example, Nuovo, *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment*.

[10]Justin Champion, '"An Intent and Careful Reading." How John Locke Read his Bible', in *Locke and Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Simonutti, 145–7.

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with figures such as Robert Boyle or Jean Le Clerc for their philosophical than for their philological views.[11]

This article offers a new account of Locke's engagement with the biblical text and the work of its early modern scholars. It is based on a thoroughgoing examination of Locke's lifetime of religious reading, bringing together evidence from his manuscript notebooks and journals, his library catalogues and annotated books, and his correspondence and published works. It first sets out Locke's training in the relevant biblical languages before establishing that the Bible and its attendant scholarship were regular areas of preoccupation. It then shifts attention to Locke's two extended stays abroad in France and the Dutch Republic, demonstrating how these contributed to deepening and intensifying Locke's research. Following this, it focuses on Locke's reading of the biblical scholar Richard Simon, disclosing both the unacknowledged ways in which Locke drew on Simon's scholarship in his private studies, and how Locke's published works constituted an implicit attempt to reckon with the challenge posed by Simon's publications. Uncovering Locke's engagement with the Bible and its early modern study, it shows, requires us to break down disciplinary boundaries – between the history of scholarship and the history of philosophy, the histories of the book, note-taking and reading, and of religious orthodoxy and heterodoxy – that have fractured aspects of our picture of Locke's intellectual and cultural world. For Locke and his contemporaries, erudition was not an abstruse concern separated from daily life. Instead, it was a tool to be used to come to terms with the historical reality of Christian revelation and the substance of religious belief – and saving faith – in the past, present and future.

Locke and the Bible: the early years

Akin to many of his Protestant counterparts, John Locke obtained a range of the skills necessary to study the Bible in early life, his education ensuring that he became familiar with Hebrew as well as mastering Latin and Greek. Much of this took place at Westminster School, where Locke was instructed in Biblical Hebrew and demonstrated the fruits of this labour by performing a Hebrew oration.[12] His notebooks contain records of the purchases that bolstered this early progress in Hebrew literacy, including a Hebrew Psalter and a 'Lexicon and grammer [sic]' by Johann Buxtorf, Professor of Hebrew at Basel and one of the seventeenth century's leading Hebraists.[13] Locke continued his Hebrew education at Oxford, where its study was prescribed for bachelors and masters of art.[14] He added to his collection of Hebrew pedagogical aids, picking up another of Buxtorf's works, the *Thesaurus grammaticus* (1609), while also following the lectures of England's leading Hebraist and 'oriental' scholar, Edward Pococke.[15]

Locke would not, unlike some other young men, become a central part of the network of scholars associated with Pococke that contributed to an immense flourishing

[11]Pitassi, *Le Philosophe*, 68.

[12]E. S. de Beer and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Correspondence of John Locke* (9 vols., Oxford, 1976–2023) [hereafter *CJL*], John Locke to John Locke, sen., 11 May 1652, I, 8.

[13]Bodleian Library, Oxford [hereafter BLO], MS Locke f. 11, fo. 82v.

[14]Mordechai Feingold, 'Oriental Studies', in *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. IV: *Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford, 1997), 462.

[15]BLO, MS Locke f. 11, fo. 64v.

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of Hebrew and oriental learning in Oxford. If natural philosophy and medicine were the chief obsessions of much of his early career, however, religious subjects and the study of the Bible were nonetheless a consistent presence even at this time.[16] Locke was guided by such resources as Thomas Barlow's *De studio theologiae*, an annotated bibliography of divinity designed for students.[17] His notebooks find him taking cognisance of Barlow's advice, including by recording the value of the sort of Hebrew scholarship practised by Buxtorf.[18]

The years around the turn of the 1660s would see Locke building on this firm foundation through independent study. Robert Boyle's *Some Considerations Touching the Style of the Holy Scriptures* (1661), for example, offered Locke a wide-ranging discussion of the various scriptural idioms and the issues involved in their interpretation.[19] Locke also followed some of the intense disputes over the Bible that had recently wracked the learned world. He read a succession of works by Isaac Vossius, the Dutch scholar who had become known as a strident defender of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament allegedly made by seventy-two translators during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Locke noted Vossius's views on an array of issues in sacred learning, including the nature of Aquila's translation of the Old Testament, the preeminent status the Dutch scholar accorded Josephus as an authority on Jewish matters and his harsh criticism of the 'Rabbis'.[20] But Locke was also attuned to Vossius's views on more recent writers. He copied out Vossius's warm appreciation of the Huguenot scholar Louis Cappel's *Critica sacra* (1650), which showed that the Hebrew text had faults that could be remedied using the Septuagint.[21] In these and the following years, Locke filled a 1648 edition of the Bible in English with notes and comments. These were eclectic and had no evident partiality for one set of views over another. Where Vossius was one of the Hebrew text's severest critics, Locke here added notes on the Masoretes – the early medieval Jewish scholars responsible for devising the Masorah or textual apparatus of the Hebrew Bible – taken from the work of the English Hebraist John Lightfoot, one of the sternest defenders of the Hebrew text.[22] It would be into this Bible too, in the early 1670s, that Locke inserted notes from Spinoza's work.[23]

Curious but unsystematic, Locke's early reading at once evidences his interest in the biblical text and its contemporary scholars without implying that he had begun to make a concerted move towards methodical study. His predilection fell chiefly on comparatively recent works of Protestant erudition, a tendency that was no doubt closely linked to the availability of such works in London and Oxford. This is not to diminish unduly Locke's application when it came to specific books or scholars: in Vossius's case, for example, Locke read both the pamphlet-length *Dissertatio de vera aetate mundi*

[16]J. R. Milton, 'Locke at Oxford', in *Locke's Philosophy: Content and Context*, ed. G. A. J. Rogers (Oxford, 1994), 36–43.

[17]BLO, MS Locke e. 17, 23–71. On this work, see Nuovo, *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment*, 12.

[18]BLO, MS Locke f. 14, 11.

[19]*Ibid*., 78, 112. On the dating of the majority of the notes in this notebook to the period preceding 1664, see J. R. Milton, 'The Date and Significance of Two of Locke's Early Manuscripts', *Locke Newsletter*, 19 (1988), 50–66.

[20]BLO, MS Locke f. 14, 34, 104, 110.

[21]*Ibid*., 23.

[22]BLO, Locke 16.25, 1.

[23]Parker, 'Spinoza, Locke'.

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(1659) and the longer, more scholarly, *De Septuaginta interpretibus* (1661). What it does indicate is how far, even in the period from the early 1660s into the 1670s, Locke's attention was drawn to works dealing with live controversies in biblical philology. But his reading was for the moment fairly piecemeal, without an evident effort to unravel for himself the history of the Bible or track down the multitude of early modern works dedicated to understanding it.

A shift in emphasis? Locke in France

Locke's two periods abroad, first in France in the later 1670s and then in the Netherlands for the better part of the 1680s, seem to have played a key role in translating an area of consistent interest into one of increasingly focused attention. The efforts Locke devoted to religious and theological studies in France were long obscured by the selective way that his journals and notebooks were printed. The early publication of material from these collections focused almost exclusively on evidence pertaining to Locke's philosophical concerns.[24] When the journals from 1676 to 1679 were partially edited in 1953, John Lough decided not to include 'a great mass of notes on the Old and New Testaments'.[25] Lough's edition also omitted information available for this period of Locke's life contained in other contemporary notebooks.

Yet, as one tracks Locke's travels through France, so one frequently finds him reading and contemplating the Bible. In the second half of 1676, for instance, his observations of sights such as the funeral of the bishop of Montpellier, François du Bosquet, or local botanical details – muscat grapes ripening at the start of August – jostled with page after page of comments on the New Testament.[26] Locke's abiding concern in these months was with biblical chronology, and specifically the problem of how to bring order to the apparently divergent chronological details the New Testament contained. Far from an esoteric pastime, the issue of how to harmonise the Gospel narratives was a burning question, with the gospel harmony rising to become an 'apex genre', a path-breaking mode of inquiry that combined many other disciplines.[27] A central figure in this development was Lightfoot, whose works had inaugurated a critical step change in the genre via their systematic use of Jewish texts.[28] Throughout 1676, Locke read a succession of the English Hebraist's publications, carefully working through them and entering key details into his journal.[29]

Locke's biblical pursuits would be fostered and encouraged during his stays in Paris in 1677–9. He took the chance offered by the city's libraries to look at their manuscript collections, recording in his journal aspects of their script or form.[30] He cultivated contacts who were either themselves biblical scholars or closely associated with those

[24]R. I. Aaron and Jocelyn Gibb (eds.), *An Early Draft of Locke's Essay, Together with Excerpts from his Journals* (Oxford, 1936).

[25]John Lough (ed.), *Locke's Travels in France 1675–1679* (Cambridge, 1953), xxii.

[26]BLO, MS Locke f. 1, 300, 396.

[27]Kirsten Macfarlane, 'Gospel Harmonies and the Genres of Biblical Scholarship in Early Modern Europe', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 76 (2023), 1049.

[28]*Ibid.*, 1044–9.

[29]BLO, MS Locke f. 1, 299–399.

[30]BLO, MS Locke f. 2, 204.

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who were. Foremost among these was the mathematician, philologer and numismatist Nicolas Toinard. Their friendship was forged through their shared preoccupation with chronology, where Locke's interest in this field was matched if not outdone by Toinard's own attempts to complete an immense gospel harmony.[31] Locke used his journals and notebooks to capture conversations between himself and Toinard that touched on biblical themes, including the French scholar's recommendation that the best edition of Sebastian Castellio's French translation of the Bible was that of 1567 or his suggestion that Locke ought to consult Andreas Masius's *Iosuae imperatoris historia* (1574).[32] In scribbling down Toinard's suggestion that he ought to pay particular attention to the beginning of Masius's work – 'espetially [sic] the preface' – Locke reveals that Toinard had pointed him towards Masius's speculative comments concerning the origin and redaction of the Pentateuch, a subject which Locke would later come to reflect on at length.[33]

Another notable Parisian figure for Locke was the Huguenot *homme des lettres* Henri Justel. Justel played a considerable role in the city's intellectual life, maintaining a substantial international correspondence while playing host to a learned academy that was a fixture for visitors from abroad. While Locke's close relationship with Justel has been noted, it has not been fully underlined how far – as evidenced by comments peppered through his notebooks and journals – Justel furthered his knowledge of the Bible and biblical scholarship.[34] This matters since Justel was not simply a central node in the Parisian world of erudition, but also himself learned in this field and active in promoting biblical projects. In the years prior to meeting Locke, Justel had brokered a transconfessional scheme to create a new French translation of the Bible, interceding between a group of ministers and Huguenot scholars associated with Charenton and the Catholic critic Richard Simon.[35] Justel furnished Locke with details concerning the merits of different editions of the Bible as well as serving as a source for knowledge about early modern biblical scholarship, particularly in France.[36] Locke's records of their exchanges reveal Justel informing him, for instance, that, alongside Simon, Siméon de Muis, Valerian de Flavigny and Jean Morin were also distinguished for their knowledge of 'oriental languages'.[37]

The Netherlands: Locke and Protestant biblical scholarship

By the end of the 1670s, Locke had become a familiar presence in learned circles in England and France, even coming to act as a go-between linking these milieux across the channel. In Paris, Locke interceded for scholars such as the Oxford professor of astronomy and Hebraist Edward Bernard, who had him ask – 'when you meete at

[31]Macfarlane, 'Gospel Harmonies', 1049–59.

[32]BLO, MS Locke f. 3, 185; BLO, MS Locke f. 28, 113.

[33]BLO, MS Locke f. 28, 113.

[34]Gabriel Bonno, *Les relations intellectuelles de Locke avec la France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955), 107–16; Champion, 'Richard Simon', 44–6.

[35]Jacques Le Brun and John D. Woodbridge, 'Introduction', in Richard Simon, *Additions aux Recherches curieuses sur la diversité des langues et religions d'Edward Brerewood*, ed. Jacques Le Brun and John D. Woodbridge (Paris, 1983), 22–9.

[36]See, for example, BLO, MS Locke f. 28, 135.

[37]BLO, MS Locke f. 15, 11.

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Mr Justells' – whether the scholars there knew of any copies of the Epistle of Barnabas in the city.[38] Once in England, Locke was tasked to help Toinard obtain information about various publications, among them a planned translation of the 'Talmud'.[39] Locke's notebooks and journals from the turn of the 1680s confirm his own continued investment in matters of biblical scholarship and sacred history: Edward Pococke apprised him about Johannes Drusius and Joseph Scaliger's works on ancient Jewish sects; he noted that it was said the Hebrew Bible published by the Amsterdam-based Jewish printer Joseph Athias was 'the best'.[40]

Between this time and Locke's mature theological publications, however, lies a second key period encompassing his extended stay in the Netherlands between 1683 and 1689. It would not be true to say that this time in the Low Countries broke the mould set by Locke's French experience, but it did witness a deepening effort on his part to study the Bible and consult recent scholarship. One dimension of this was once again personal, as Locke formed close friendships there with figures who shared his intellectual concerns and whose religious opinions had an affinity with his own. Of particular import, in this regard, stand the Arminian scholars and theologians Philippus van Limborch and Jean Le Clerc and the Quaker merchant Benjamin Furly.

Alongside his new-found confidants and collaborators, Locke's stay in the Netherlands allowed him scope to rapidly collect resources for his studies. The accumulation of books had been a feature of his time in France, with his purchases there enlarging the fair collection of works he had assembled over the previous quarter century.[41] But the lively print culture of the Netherlands – both as a leading centre for the production of new publications and as a location rich in book auctions – played host to a shift in intensity in Locke's purchases. Some aspects of Locke's Dutch book buying have been noted in previous scholarship, particularly his obtaining 'Socinian' works and texts by critics such as Simon and Le Clerc.[42] Yet, it has been underappreciated how far Locke also obtained multiple works of erudite biblical scholarship and editions of the Bible. Not long after arriving, Locke purchased a mass of publications by leading seventeenth-century Protestant biblical scholars such as Johann Buxtorf II, Jacques Cappel, Louis Cappel and Johann Heinrich Hottinger.[43] To these he soon

[38]*CJL*, Edward Bernard to John Locke, 8 Mar. 1679, I, 692; BLO, MS Locke f. 28, 150.

[39]BLO, MS Locke f. 28, 168. On this translation, in fact of the Mishnah, rather than the Talmud, see Theodor Dunkelgrün, 'The First Complete Latin Translation of the Mishnah (1663–1676): Isaac Abendana and Rabbinic Erudition in Restoration England', in *The Mishnaic Moment: Jewish Law among Jews and Christians in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Piet van Boxel, Kirsten Macfarlane and Joanna Weinberg (Oxford, 2022), 110–11.

[40]BLO, MS Locke f. 4, 190 (25 Oct. 1680); BLO, MS Locke f. 5, 134 (7 Oct. 1681).

[41]John Lough, 'Locke's Reading During his Stay in France (1675–79)', *Library*, 8 (1953), 245–8, 252–8. See too, BLO, MS Locke f. 5, 92–103, a list of Locke's library in Christ Church drawn up in July 1681, including John Harrison and Peter Laslett (eds.), *The Library of John Locke* (Oxford, 1971) [hereafter H&L], 2673[a]; H&L 308; H&L 1752[a]; H&L 550; H&L 551; H&L 2865; H&L 2674; H&L 327; H&L 312; H&L 2874.

[42]Marshall, 'Locke, Socinianism', 150–6.

[43]See, for Buxtorf II, BLO, MS Locke f. 8, 41 (22 Mar. 1684), H&L 551[b], H&L 551[c]. Locke also purchased a copy of the *Epitome grammaticae Hebraeae* (1665 [1613]) by Buxtorf II's father, Johann Buxtorf. While this is not present in H&L, another copy of the work is: H&L 551[a]. For Jacques Cappel, see *ibid*., 36 (20 Mar. 1684), H&L 581; for Louis Cappel, *ibid*., 42 (22 Mar. 1684), H&L 585[a]; *ibid*., 49 (29 Mar. 1684), H&L 585; and *ibid*., 203 (9 Oct. 1684), H&L 584; for Hottinger, *ibid*., 42 (23 Mar. 1684), H&L 1522[c], H&L 1522[a], H&L 1522[b], H&L 1522[e], H&L 1522[d], H&L 1520, H&L 1521; and *ibid*., 210 (Oct. 1684), H&L 1522, H&L 1518, H&L 1519. Locke

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added exemplars of contemporary English and continental erudition, including major works by John Marsham on chronology, John Spencer on the religion of the Ancient Hebrews and Étienne Le Moyne on sacred philology.[44] He also bought new copies of the Bible, among them Franciscus Junius and Immanuel Tremellius's Latin translation, an interleaved copy of the Greek New Testament and Robert Estienne's 1532 Latin edition.[45]

Locke's time in the Netherlands gave him the opportunity to study these materials and to consider the questions they posed. He drew on Hottinger's *Cippi Hebraici* (1662 [1659]) for details regarding biblical weights and measures, copying out a conversion list into a notebook.[46] He addressed queries to Toinard in Paris, asking which writers provided the best treatment of the ancient Hebrew Republic or which version of the Old Testament was used by the Jews at the time of Jesus Christ.[47] And he offered feedback to others, writing to Le Clerc to relay his appreciation of the latter's article on Hebrew poetry in the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (1686–93), in which Le Clerc had contended that ancient Hebrew verse rhymed. He would, Locke explained, hardly be 'curious to enquire' into this issue if it was a matter of 'bare speculation concerning this peice [sic] of Antiquity'. But the matter held great significance, since it could potentially be used to assess the text of the Hebrew Bible: in any places where Hebrew verse failed to rhyme one might well suspect 'our copys differ from the original'.[48]

Locke also showed an intent to know more about how early modern scholars had argued over the biblical text. As we have seen, he was broadly familiar with some of these debates, having read Vossius's publications on the Septuagint in the early part of the 1660s, followed key interventions in biblical chronology, and been offered insight into the history of scholarship by friends such as Justel and Toinard. Locke's journals and notebooks of the mid-1680s suggest he was making an effort to learn more about the disputes concerning the Old Testament that had preceded Vossius's work. These debates were inaugurated by a Catholic scholar, Jean Morin, who in a succession of publications during the 1620s and early 1630s had argued that the editions of the Bible preferred by the Catholic Church – the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate – were superior to those versions of the text preferred by Protestants, especially the Masoretic Hebrew text.[49] Morin's views prompted intense conflict among Protestants, who disagreed about how they could best respond to him. Morin had framed his arguments in terms of what would come to be described as 'external' evidence: the Septuagint and Vulgate were superior on account of the evaluation of evidence concerning the reliability of their transmission or the quality of their extant manuscripts. Some Protestant

also purchased (BLO, MS Locke f. 8, 42) a copy of Johann Heinrich Hottinger's *Etymologicum orientale* (1661) but this is not present in H&L.

[44]See, for Marsham, BLO, MS Locke f. 8, 265 (10 Mar. 1685), H&L 1915; for Spencer, *ibid*., [300] (22 Nov. 1685), H&L 2740; and for Le Moyne, BLO, MS Locke f. 9, [4] (1 May 1686), H&L 2061.

[45]See BLO, MS Locke f. 8, 44 (25 Mar. 1684), H&L 325; *ibid*., 67 (24 Apr. 1684), H&L 2862; *ibid*., 57 (12 Apr. 1684), H&L 328; and, for other Bibles purchased in these years, see, for instance, *ibid*., 70 (26 Apr. 1684), H&L 2861; *ibid*., H&L 302.

[46]BLO, MS Locke c. 33, fo. 18r.

[47]*CJL*, John Locke to Nicolas Toinard, 13/23 Nov. [1684], II, 647; *ibid*., Toinard to Locke, 24 Mar./3 Apr. 1687, III, 162.

[48]*Ibid*., John Locke to Jean Le Clerc, 20/30 Jul. [1688], III, 489–92.

[49]On the issues discussed in this paragraph, see Twining, *Limits of Erudition*, 61–183.

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scholars, notably Buxtorf II and Hottinger, believed Morin's claims could be headed off on this ground by using historical and philological scholarship to vindicate the Hebrew text. Others, chief among them Louis Cappel, pursued an alternative strategy. Across a series of works that culminated in his *Critica sacra*, Cappel proposed a new methodological approach that prioritised the 'internal' evidence of the biblical text itself. When faced with multiple 'variant readings', Cappel argued, the most probable sense could be reconstructed by applying something he termed his 'canon', which dictated one ought to prefer the reading that gives the 'truer, clearer, apter, neater and more fitting meaning, which coheres better with what precedes and follows it, is closer and more aligned with the intentions and overall scope of the writer, and more conforming and concordant to the pattern of the whole of Scripture, in whatever book the reading occurs'.[50] Morin's work was no threat, Cappel contended, since the Protestant religion was founded on more than merely 'external' evidence.

Locke entered numerous comments into his journals and notebooks referencing these controversies, paying particular attention – here echoing his earlier notes from Vossius's work – to Cappel's interventions.[51] One of Cappel's celebrated works had considered the subject of the age of the Hebrew vowel points, arguing in favour of a comparatively late date for their origin (post 500 CE). Some Protestants disagreed with Cappel's argument because they believed it risked undermining the certainty of Scripture; it was essential, they insisted, to hold that the Hebrew vowel points had a truly ancient origin well within the era of prophecy. Cappel dismissed their concerns by appealing to his 'canon': there was no danger for the authority of Scripture because its overall sense remained unaffected whether one believed the vowel points were an older or more recent invention. Locke copied out several comments regarding this debate, notably detailing how many scholars believed Cappel had soundly answered those who opposed him.[52] But Locke was not blind to criticism of Cappel's work. When he read Le Moyne's *In varia sacra notae et observationes* (1685) in May 1686, he excerpted Le Moyne's assessment that balanced a tribute to Cappel's industry with a note of caution about his judgement.[53] It was all well and good, Le Moyne had outlined, to have amassed such a trove of variant readings, but they should not be drawn on indiscriminately or be used to bring the text of the Bible into doubt. Cappel had at times erred in this regard.[54] Locke's evident interest in Cappel's work meant that he would not be content simply to rely on secondary commentary. He consulted the *Critica sacra* itself in May 1687, copying out excerpts on the reliability of the Hebrew text of the Bible and on editions of the New Testament.[55]

The Locke who worked his way through these publications in the Dutch Republic had significant continuities with his younger self, the Locke who had worked through Vossius's publications – among others – around the turn of the 1660s. In both cases, he was drawn to major debates in biblical philology. In both cases, too, his eye was

[50]Louis Cappel, *Critica sacra* (Paris, 1650), 303.

[51]See, for example, BLO, MS Locke c. 33, fo. 18r, 31r.

[52]*Ibid.*, fo. 18r.

[53]BLO, MS Locke f. 9, [6], citing Étienne Le Moyne, *In varia sacra notae et observationes* (2 vols., Leiden, 1685), II, 575–6.

[54]Locke would copy out a similar view from the *Acta eruditorum*: BLO, MS Locke c. 33, fo. 31r.

[55]BLO, MS Locke f. 9, 117 (8 May 1687), citing Cappel, *Critica sacra*, 2, 11.

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caught by cutting-edge scholarly theses, especially Cappel's claims. And in both cases the local book markets and his personal acquaintances helped facilitate his purchases, with the Dutch Republic's burgeoning print trade and its vibrant auction market allowing for an array of new acquisitions. But for all these ostensible similarities, Locke's approach had shifted. His move to the Dutch Republic inaugurated a period of considered collection, as he began to accumulate an increasingly extensive personal library of earlier works of Protestant biblical scholarship. Alongside Locke the purchaser of radical 'Socinian' literature or the works of Arminian theologians, we also need to place Locke the assiduous collector of orthodox Protestant erudition.

Locke and the prohibited Catholic critic

It would be vital for the trajectory of Locke's biblical studies that just as he was more systematically reviewing past and contemporary Protestant scholarship, so he engaged with the *oeuvre* of a scholar who presented one of the most significant challenges to that body of learning, the Catholic Richard Simon. Simon, the author of compendious 'critical histories' of the Old and New Testaments, is almost as well known for the controversy his work provoked as for his scholarly attainments. When his first major work, the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, was on the cusp of publication in 1678 it was brought to the awareness of Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet who – reportedly after seeing Simon's claim that Moses was not the author of the biblical books customarily ascribed to him – led a campaign that culminated in its prohibition and Simon's expulsion from the Oratory. Bossuet's opposition to Simon would prove long-standing, and Simon would be forced to publish the majority of his works overseas, forming a long-standing partnership with the Dutch printer-publisher Reinier Leers.[56]

These events contributed to creating an image of Simon and his work as marking a watershed moment in late seventeenth-century biblical scholarship, with the daring insights previously made by the likes of Spinoza now apparently branded with a learned imprimatur.[57] Recent historiography has adjusted this picture. One set of contributions has unpicked the close connection frequently posited between Simon and the works of ostensibly radical outsiders. Treatises such as the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, it has been shown, need to be approached in terms of long-standing scholarly debates, particularly those provoked by figures such as Morin, Cappel and Buxtorf II.[58] A second set of studies has explored aspects of the confessional nature of Simon's work. While it had long been acknowledged that Simon argued that the vicissitudes of the biblical text's history necessitated an authoritative ecclesiastical

[56]Otto S. Lankhorst, *Reinier Leers (1654–1714): Uitgever & Boekverkoper te Rotterdam* (Amsterdam, 1983), 56–8, 77–8; Timothy Twining, 'Publishing a Prohibited Criticism: Richard Simon, Pierre Bayle, and Erudition in Late Seventeenth-Century Intellectual Culture', in *The Worlds of Knowledge and the Classical Tradition in the Early Modern Age: Comparative Approaches*, ed. Dmitri Levitin and Ian Maclean (Leiden, 2021), 336–65.

[57]Champion, 'Richard Simon'; Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford, 2001), 450–2.

[58]Twining, *Limits of Erudition*, 245–90; Hardy, *Criticism and Confession*, 378–91.

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interpreter, recent work has revealed additional ways in which Simon's scholarly arguments were designed to bolster Catholic claims in interconfessional disputation.[59] These new bodies of scholarship hold particular implications for returning to and reassessing the attention Locke paid to Simon's work. Although Locke's interest in Simon's publications has received some consideration, this has been almost entirely from the perspective of Simon as an avant-garde scholar associated with Spinoza or radical Socinian scholarship, a perspective that has, it will be argued here, overlooked several ways in which Locke drew on and used Simon's work.[60]

Present in Paris in the later 1670s, Locke was serendipitously well placed to learn about Simon and the publications that had begun to make his name. Locke also benefited from his association with Justel, since the Huguenot was one of a number of Protestants with whom Simon enjoyed amicable relations and who, as we have seen, had even attempted to enlist the then Oratorian's help to prepare a French translation of the Bible. Locke's move to the Netherlands, meanwhile, coincided with Simon's turn to the Dutch presses; frequently found discussing Simon's publications with similarly interested friends such as Limborch and Le Clerc, Locke would take the occasion of visiting Leers's store to ascertain when Simon's various works were expected to come off the press.[61]

Locke's awareness of Simon's publications translated into their purchase, beginning with the latter's 1675 translation of Girolamo Dandini's *Missione apostolica al Patriarca, e Maroniti del Monte Libano* (1656).[62] By 1680 he had obtained some of the flurry of polemical works that appeared following the initial prohibition of the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, in addition to the work itself in the pirated Amsterdam edition (1680).[63] Once in the Netherlands, Locke picked up the vast majority of Simon's books published there, including those on ecclesiastical history, Simon's polemical exchanges with Le Clerc, the 1685 edition of the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* and the first volume of Simon's critical history of the New Testament.[64] He also obtained, by early 1685, a copy of the *Disquisitiones criticae*, printed in England in 1684, and later, after his return

[59]Dmitri Levitin, 'From Palestine to Göttingen (via India): Hebrew Matthew and the Origins of the Synoptic Problem', *Erudition and the Republic of Letters*, 7 (2022), 196–247; Kirsten Macfarlane, 'Christianity as Jewish Allegory? Guilielmus Surenhusius, Rabbinic Hermeneutics, and the Reformed Study of the New Testament in the Early Eighteenth Century', in *The Mishnaic Moment*, ed. van Boxel, Macfarlane and Weinberg, 378–400.

[60]Marshall, *John Locke*, 337–46; Champion, 'Richard Simon'; Champion, 'Simonian Contexts'; Marshall, 'Locke, Socinianism', 145–53; Lucci, *John Locke's Christianity*, 59–67.

[61]*CJL*, Locke to Le Clerc, 20/30 Jul. [1688], III, 492.

[62]Locke had purchased and begun reading the *Voyage du Mont Liban* (1675) (H&L 912) by June 1678: BLO, MS Locke f. 3. 153–4.

[63]See BLO, MS Locke f. 4, 5 (27 Jan. 1680), H&L 2726; *ibid*., 201 (16 Dec. 1680), H&L 2673[a].

[64]See BLO, MS Locke f. 8, [92] (5 Jul. 1684), H&L 2026; *ibid*., 241 (1684), H&L 857; BLO, MS Locke f. 9, 7 (6 Jun. 1686), H&L 2680; BLO, MS Locke f. 29, 30 (1687), H&L 2681; *ibid*., 31 (1687), H&L 2673; *CJL*, Locke to Toinard, 31 Oct./10 Nov. [1688], III, 517, H&L 2675. Locke also obtained Simon's anonymously published *Novorum Bibliorum Polyglottorum synopsis* (1684), although it is unclear by which date: BLO, MS Locke b. 2, fo. 86v, H&L 2682[a].

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to England, ensured that Furly sent him Simon's subsequent two volumes on the New Testament.[65]

As his journals and other notebooks reveal, Locke read many of these books soon after purchasing them. He made extensive notes from Simon's works that dealt with church history, focusing on how they could be used to criticise the contemporary Roman Catholic Church.[66] Locke also worked through Simon's biblical publications. In February 1685, Locke read Simon's *Disquisitiones criticae*, a shorter summary of the main findings of the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*. Locke used Simon as a source for information on the Samaritans, excerpting Simon's account of Josephus' discussion of their origins together with a list of scholars (Morin, Hottinger and Brian Walton, editor of the London Polyglot Bible) who had analysed and evaluated the Samaritan Pentateuch.[67] Once again, Locke here traced the contours of earlier seventeenth-century controversies, as Morin had famously used textual agreements between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint to contend that the Greek text was superior to its Masoretic counterpart.[68] Locke's other notes from the *Disquisitiones criticae* covered the history of the Vulgate and the issue of when, and by whom, the books of the Old Testament had been written.[69] In mid-1686, Locke made notes from Simon's *Réponse au livre intitulé sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande* (1686), the erstwhile Oratorian's reply to Le Clerc's attack on his work. Locke excerpted Simon's definition of the term 'tradition' and his attempt to even the scales regarding contemporary evaluations of Catholic and Protestant scholarship by denigrating the work of the Huguenot scholar Samuel Bochart and heralding that of earlier Catholic scholars like Andreas Masius and Franciscus Lucas of Bruges.[70]

Reading Simon: Locke in his library

Locke's use of Simon's works went beyond simply reading and making excerpts in his journals and notebooks. Once again, the editorial history of Locke's manuscript papers here intersects with underappreciated aspects of his life and intellectual development. As Lough's edition of Locke's journals removed material pertaining to the Old and New Testaments, so too the editing and study of Locke's library has obscured the depth of his engagement with Simon's *oeuvre*. The key evidence in this case is Locke's interleaved copy of Thomas Hyde's *Catalogus impressorum librorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae in Academia Oxoniensi* (1674), which – apparently purchased in the Netherlands in 1684 – ultimately became the master catalogue of his library.[71]

[65]For the *Disquisitiones criticae*, see BLO, MS Locke f. 8, 261 (18 Feb. 1685), H&L 976; for Simon's works on the New Testament, see BLO, MS Locke f. 10, 133 (22 Apr. 1692), H&L 2676; *ibid*., 177[a] (7 Feb. 1693), H&L 2677.

[66]See, for the *Voyage du Mont Liban*, BLO, MS Locke c. 33, fo. 9r; for the *Histoire critique de la créance et des coûtumes des nations du Levant* (1684), BLO, MS Locke f. 8, 97–8 (*c*. 17–18 Jul. 1684); and for the *Histoire de l'origine et du progrès des revenus ecclésiastiques* (1684), *ibid*., 241–[4] ([*c*. Dec. 1684?]).

[67]BLO, MS Locke f. 8, 261–3 (18–25 Feb. 1685).

[68]Hardy, *Criticism and Confession*, 257–64; Twining, *Limits of Erudition*, 75–88.

[69]BLO, MS Locke f. 8, [262]–3.

[70]BLO, MS Locke f. 9, 7–8 (6 Jun. 1686).

[71]BLO, MS Locke f. 8, 49 (28 Mar. 1684). Hereafter Hyde's catalogue is referred to as *Hyde*, following Harrison and Laslett's practice.

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When they published the results of their investigation of Locke's library, John Harrison and Peter Laslett used *Hyde* to undergird their work and their own catalogue reproduced the material found in it. Yet, as Laslett noted, albeit without much additional discussion, Locke seems to have initially used *Hyde* to make comments on given works and authors, rather than as a catalogue.[72] The Bible had a prominent role in this context, and Locke drew from a variety of sources that he had purchased in the mid-1680s to comment on aspects of its text, history and interpretation. Under the heading 'Pentateuchus', Locke again considered the Samaritan Pentateuch, copying out remarks from Le Clerc's *Bibliothèque universelle* that summarised James Ussher's view that the Samaritan Pentateuch had been edited – or, in Ussher's terms, corrupted – by Dositheus, meaning that it was not a reliable ancient version that could be used as a source for variant readings.[73] Locke also returned to Vossius's publications. Vossius had paired his valorisation of the Septuagint with a denigration of post-Second Temple Jewish learning, including reiterating arguments made by Morin that works such as the Mishnah and Talmud were written much later than often believed. Vossius's claims evidently interested Locke, who adapted remarks from the Dutchman's work to record this point.[74]

It was to Simon's publications, however, and especially the *Disquisitiones criticae* and the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, that Locke overwhelmingly turned when it came to the Bible and its history. From these works, Locke cited information on an immense array of subjects, including: different biblical texts (entries on the Septuagint and New Testament); ancient biblical authors or translators (Luke, Paul and Jerome); ancient and early Christian writers (Diodorus Siculus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, the 'Fathers'); allegedly ancient works of Jewish scholarship (the Zohar); Jewish scholars (Isaac Abravanel, Abraham ibn Ezra, Elijah Levita, Josephus, Joseph ben Gorion (alleged author of the *Sefer Yosippon*), David Kimhi and Philo); and early modern Christian scholars (Leone Allacci, Theodore Beza, Denis Amelote, Sebastian Castellio, Johann Buxtorf, Johann Buxtorf II, Louis Cappel, Johannes Drusius, Abraham Ecchellensis, Hugo Grotius, Lucas Holstenius, Franciscus Lucas of Bruges, Juan Mariana, Andreas Masius, Jean Mercier, Jean Morin, Denis Pétau, Guillaume Postel, Gabriel Sionita, James Ussher and Brian Walton).

In some of these cases Locke's excerpts were brief, especially those concerning early modern scholars in which he often simply registered Simon's judgements of them or their work. Other notes were lengthier, and indicated how far Locke was keen to assemble information regarding a given subject or scholar. As in Vossius's case, Locke's attention was caught by Simon's treatment of the Septuagint and he made extensive notes regarding it on multiple pages, excerpting Simon's evaluation of the text's early modern editions.[75] Locke also followed Simon's comments on the *Letter of Aristeas*, an anonymous historical work that purported to recount the origin of the Septuagint

[72]Peter Laslett, 'John Locke and his Books', in *The Library of John Locke*, 30.

[73]BLO, Locke 17.16, addition 'Pentateuchus', excerpting (with minor edits) Jean Le Clerc, *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (25 vols., Amsterdam, 1686–93), II, 262.

[74]BLO, Locke 17.16, additions 'Misna' and 'Talmud', both citing Isaac Vossius, 'De Sibyllinis aliisque quae Christi natalem praecessere oraculis', in his *Variarum observationum liber* (London, 1685), 285.

[75]BLO, Locke 17.16, without heading but opposite 87, citing [Richard Simon], *Disquisitiones criticae* (London, 1684), 148.

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under Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Among defenders of the Septuagint, the *Letter* had been used to vouchsafe its authority, particularly via its account of how the text was produced by seventy-two elders, scribes who were sent to Ptolemy by Eleazar, the High Priest at Jerusalem. Yet considerable doubt had long been cast on the work and its claims, and Locke noted that in both the *Disquisitiones criticae* and *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* Simon underlined how far the *Letter* could not be relied on.[76] Simon's comments on early modern editions of the Hebrew Bible also caught Locke's notice: while that published by Daniel Bomberg was the 'most accurate of all', the quarto editions published by Robert Estienne and Christophe Plantin were marked out for the quality of their script, which came 'nearest the manuscripts of the Spanish Jews whose was the fairest writing'.[77] As this begins to show, rather than acquiring purely bibliographical information, Locke used Simon's works to obtain opinions on the Bible, how it had been printed and published, and the nature of its manuscripts.

Locke also observed Simon's reasoning and the rationales he provided for why the work of some scholars ought to be preferred to others. In the case of the sixteenth-century Jewish scholar Elijah Levita, Locke gathered comments from the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* that argued Levita was the 'most learned of all the Jewish critics' because he was willing to depart from the views of earlier Jewish authorities on the Masoretic apparatus of the Hebrew Bible.[78] Locke also documented Simon's views of prominent Christian scholars. In notes on Buxtorf and his son, Buxtorf II, Locke noted Simon's criticism of both men for their stubborn attachment to the 'views of the Rabbis, without having consulted other authors'.[79] Contrariwise, Locke collected testimony that positively appraised the Buxtorfs' opponent, Cappel. While this included noting that on occasion Cappel had the tendency to multiply variant readings unnecessarily, the great majority of the references indicated why Cappel's 'most learned' work (i.e. the *Critica sacra*) ought to be preferred to others in its account of the changes which the biblical text had undergone, and how Cappel had resolved the issue of the antiquity of the Hebrew vowel points.[80]

It would be ill advised to link too closely the excerpts Locke made with his own views. Yet the tenor of Locke's notes is striking, and when drawn together with other evidence they suggest some subtle ways in which Locke's reading in the 1680s may have inclined him to certain overarching positions rather than others. During this period Locke keenly followed Simon's writings, not only obtaining and reading the vast majority of his publications, but also placing Simon's judgements at the centre of his intellectual resources: every time Locke glanced through *Hyde*, whether in use as a repository of information or as a guide to his library, his eyes would catch sight of Simon's opinions. This is important in itself, since it reveals in granular detail how the

[76]BLO, Locke 17.16, 'Aristeas', citing, *Disquisitiones criticae*, 109, and Richard Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Rotterdam, 1685), 187, with a cross reference to an additional entry, 45, citing the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, 189.

[77]See, respectively, BLO, Locke 17.16, without heading but opposite 87, citing *Disquisitiones criticae*, 19; BLO, Locke 17.16, 85 (Locke's paraphrase and translation), citing *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, 121.

[78]BLO, Locke 17.16, 'Elias Levita', citing *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, 146.

[79]BLO, Locke 17.16, 'Buxtorfius J.', excerpting freely *Disquisitiones criticae*, 21, and *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, sig. ****2.

[80]BLO, Locke 17.16, 'Cappellus L.:', citing *Disquisitiones criticae*, 13, 157, and *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, sig. ****3, 9, 146.

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prohibited works of a Catholic author printed by the Dutch presses could permeate the contemporary intellectual world. But it also contributes to a broader point, one that emerges when one combines the notes taken from Simon with those also taken at this time from Le Clerc, Vossius and others. What these writers appear to have instilled in Locke is a level of comparative uninterest in a broad swathe of early modern Protestant biblical scholarship, which, exemplified by the work of the Reformed scholars Buxtorf II and Hottinger, had sought to vindicate the authority of the Hebrew Bible by using historical and philological scholarship. Locke had bought an array of these publications soon after arriving in the Netherlands, but one finds much less evidence in his papers and printed books from these and the following years that he diligently read them. Having returned to England in 1689, he would decide not to take many of these works to Otes, the manor house in the parish of High Laver (near Harlow) where he lived during the last some decade and a half of his life, preferring to leave them in London.[81]

Hyde, together with Locke's journals and notebooks, also offers suggestive insight into the nature of Locke's learning. Judging by the standards of some of his contemporaries, one can find ways in which his expertise was limited, whether in terms of his linguistic proficiency (evidence has not been located, for example, that he ever seriously tried tackling rabbinic Hebrew or any other 'oriental' languages) or his familiarity with manuscripts. But it would be injudicious to leave the matter framed in these terms. Rather, what emerges is how he was able to gain considerable knowledge of the Bible and its early modern study despite not dedicating himself to biblical scholarship. Here, firm foundations made for ready consolidation, as Locke's education, financial means and network of friends and acquaintances paired effectively with other contemporary developments, especially the accessible and pithy surveys found in Simon's works and the helpful overviews provided by the new genre of the learned journal. In the decade following his visit to France, Locke shifted from being someone alert to various issues in biblical scholarship to one up to date with the latest publications and aware of the most recent controversies and their implications for other areas of Christian theology and belief.

Locke and the challenge of early modern biblical scholarship

The later years of Locke's life would see him compose a series of works addressed to religious themes, chief among them the *Reasonableness of Christianity* and the posthumously published *Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*. Locke's printed books and his manuscript notebooks contain much evidence of his activity conducting research that would underlie these texts. With *Hyde* coming to be used as a catalogue for his print collections, Locke employed Thomas Pope Blount's *Censura celebriorum authorum* (1690) as an equivalent repository for information. While Simon had loomed largest in *Hyde*, a comparable place in the *Censura* would be taken up by Le Clerc's *Bibliothèque universelle*, including notes on subjects such as the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint and the English scholar John Bois.[82] Locke continued to fill various notebooks and add

[81]Laslett, 'John Locke', 16–17. For those still left unbound in London in 1699, see BLO, MS Locke b. 2, fo. 171r–v, including, by Buxtorf II, H&L 551[b], H&L 551[c]; and, by Hottinger, H&L 1520, H&L 1522[a], H&L 1522[b], H&L 1522[c], H&L 1522[d], H&L 1522[e].

[82]BLO, Locke 15.38, 4, 28, 693.

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annotations to his copies of the biblical text, with the publications he had purchased in the 1680s by Spencer, Le Moyne and Marsham featuring prominently alongside other mainstays such as Lightfoot, Le Clerc and Simon.[83] It is beyond the scope of this article to present a comprehensive evaluation of how Locke drew on these scholars for his mature theological publications. Instead, what follows will reveal some of the contours of Locke's engagement with Simon's work, using it as a case study to show both how Locke's publications reckoned with the challenges Simon's books posed and how Locke recognised that works of advanced erudition impinged directly on faith and theology.

By the later 1680s or early 1690s, Locke had begun to compile a notebook dedicated to the Old Testament, using its opening pages to write down material taken from Simon's *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*.[84] This was not the first time Locke consulted the work. In 1680, he had taken some brief notes from the pirated edition published by Daniel Elzevir, copying out some of the anachronisms that, Simon argued, revealed how parts of the Bible such as the Pentateuch were not written by the authors to whom they were traditionally ascribed.[85] When Locke later returned to the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, he did so with the 1685 authorised version in hand. Locke's attention was drawn to the same set of issues as before, only this time, in place of a few brief references, he took copious notes from the book's first chapters. These chapters had made Simon famous, particularly for his suggestion that the Pentateuch was chiefly composed by 'public scribes' or, as Locke put it, 'publique officers', whose duty it was 'to write & register all important actions' that 'happend [sic] in that state & lay them up in the publique Archives'.[86] In page after page Locke transcribed, translated and paraphrased Simon's views concerning the Bible's text and history, covering subjects such as the role of Ezra as a compiler and redactor of the Pentateuch, the style of the Old Testament, and the differences between the Hebrew text and the Samaritan Pentateuch.[87]

In fixating on Simon's account of the scribal origins of the Old Testament, Locke focused on an aspect of his work that appeared to many to pose a threat to received Protestant accounts of the Bible's origin and its inspired status. In the years that followed the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*'s pirated publication, some had bracketed it with the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1670) as a radical attack on the biblical text.[88] Simon denied this association: unlike the *Tractatus*, his work was constructive rather than destructive because it clarified how otherwise inexplicable features of the text – inexact chronological figures, multiple spellings of proper nouns – had come into being.[89] But his account of the Bible's inspiration was idiosyncratic. When paired with a succession of other arguments, including his highlighting of the depredations the text had undergone in its transmission and the uncertainties involved in interpreting unpointed Biblical Hebrew, the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* could be viewed as a

[83] See, for example, BLO, MS Locke f. 30; BLO, MS Locke f. 32; BLO, Locke 10.59, H&L 307.
[84] BLO, MS Locke f. 32.
[85] BLO, MS Locke f. 28, 75.
[86] BLO, MS Locke f. 32, fo. 1r.
[87] *Ibid*., fo. 1r–23r.
[88] Malcolm, 'Hobbes, Ezra, and the Bible', 387–9.
[89] Twining, *Limits of Erudition*, 266–70.

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polemic in favour of the necessity of Catholic tradition.[90] Such a confessional line was also present in Simon's three volumes on the New Testament.[91]

Protestants could be circumspect when faced with Simon's publications. Simon's Catholic credentials did not, as we have seen, prevent Locke himself from drawing on his work throughout his own notes and papers. Locke's attitude appears to have resembled his close associate Limborch. Writing to Locke when the second volume of Simon's critical history of the New Testament had just appeared, Limborch suggested that it was their duty to consider the work judiciously, selecting that which was good and passing over the rest as if it had never been written.[92] Others were less willing to leave Simon's work unchallenged. Some published polemical tracts, variously underlining the apparent links between Simon's work and Spinoza's or its claims on behalf of Catholic tradition.[93] Isaac Vossius located the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* inside long-running arguments over the text of the Old Testament, using the occasion to reiterate his unmitigated preference for the Septuagint.[94] In time, Simon's arguments concerning the use of allegoresis in the New Testament would prompt the Amsterdam-based Hebraist Guilielmus Surenhusius to craft a sophisticated new account of Jewish exegesis.[95]

The need to counter Simon was a preoccupation for some of Locke's other associates. Foremost among these was Le Clerc, who made answering Simon's publications an abiding concern. His first foray was the anonymously published *Sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande* (1685), which subjected the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* to systematic criticism. Le Clerc's work was itself not uncontroversial, with its argument in favour of an even more attenuated notion of biblical inspiration causing a considerable stir in some corners of the Protestant Republic of Letters.[96] Locke himself dramatised this reaction in a missive to Limborch. Reading the work's discussion of inspiration he had, he commented, sensed 'cries of protest as if it meant the end of all religion'. But he nonetheless recognised that the *Sentimens* raised a 'fundamental' question: if 'certain parts' of the Scriptures were 'purely human writings', then where in them 'will there be found the certainty of divine authority'?[97] In the years to come, Locke and Le Clerc would find that many of their views on the interpretation of ancient texts closely coincided, particularly their agreement on the point that linguistic affinities between ancient authors did not necessarily equate to shared intellectual affinities between them.[98] In Le Clerc's hands, this principle served only to increase the distance that separated the Old from the New Testaments, a distance whose theological import the Arminian underlined as a means of responding to Simon's attempt to maintain the Old Testament's inspiration.[99]

[90]Hardy, *Criticism and Confession*, 380–3.
[91]Levitin, 'From Palestine to Göttingen'; Macfarlane, 'Christianity as Jewish Allegory?'
[92]*CJL*, Philippus van Limborch to John Locke, 28 Oct./7 Nov. 1689, III, 742.
[93]Twining, *Limits of Erudition*, 283–4.
[94]*Ibid.*
[95]Macfarlane, 'Christianity as Jewish Allegory?', 390–5.
[96]Twining, 'Publishing a Prohibited Criticism', 354–8.
[97]*CJL*, Locke to Limborch, 26 Sept./6 Oct. 1685, II, 748–9.
[98]Hardy, *Criticism and Confession*, 393.
[99]*Ibid.*, 392–3.

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Unlike Le Clerc, Locke himself would not target Simon's work by name in either the *Reasonableness* or the *Paraphrase*. But this did not mean these works were composed without an eye on Simon's publications. The ground Locke chose to do this on differed from Le Clerc and he did not enter into debate concerning the nature of biblical inspiration. Recent scholars have explained Locke's views on this subject in terms of his apparent agreement with a 'proof' of Scripture's inspiration taken from the work of Faustus Socinus.[100] Socinus had contended that it was wrong to frame this issue in terms of the Bible's textual record, which, at best, could only allow for arguments based on probabilities. Instead, one had to appeal to the truth of the Christian religion itself, whose moral excellence provided an unequivocal 'proof' of the authority of Scripture.[101] However far this argument accurately captures Locke's views, what matters for our purposes here is that Locke did not deem it necessary to deal in his published works with the 'fundamental' issue Le Clerc had raised. Locke took Scripture's inspiration as a given, and throughout, for example, *A Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity* (1697), referred frequently to the 'Divine Truths in the inspired Writings' or the 'inspired Writings of the Holy Scriptures', among other similar references.[102]

Locke instead took Simon's work into account in a more oblique way. A key part of this involved elaborating a distinctive method of scriptural interpretation that he programmatically enunciated in the preface to the *Paraphrase*.[103] Locke discussed the problems interpreters faced when they approached Paul's letters. One set of obscurities originated in the nature of the letters themselves, involving the challenges in construing the meaning of the text when interpreters were ignorant of much of the context in which the letters were composed, the unique form of Greek they contained, and Paul's own distinctive style and character.[104] Drawing on the categories of seventeenth-century scholarship, Locke elaborated on two further difficulties interpreters faced that were 'external' to the text: first, how subsequent editorial changes, especially the division of the text into chapters and verses, had distorted how the text was read; second, the process by which later philosophical and theological systems had assimilated the text's meaning to their own notions of orthodoxy.[105]

Having highlighted these problems, Locke proposed to remedy them via a methodological prescription. To interpret one of Paul's letters it was necessary to read it multiple times, going through the text ignoring any artificial editorial interventions and paying keen attention to the 'Tenour of the Discourse'.[106] Locke insisted this was a process: one had to read and re-read each letter until the 'Apostle's main Purpose' was identified. It was vital, however, since once Paul's design was located it provided a key

[100]Nuovo, *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment*, 53–73.

[101]*Ibid*., 60–2.

[102]John Locke, *Vindications of The Reasonableness of Christianity*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford, 2012), 169, 171.

[103]On Locke and textual exegesis, see too Hannah Dawson, *Locke, Language and Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2007), 214–18.

[104]John Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul to the Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians*, ed. Arthur W. Wainwright (2 vols., Oxford, 1987), I, 103–4.

[105]*Ibid*., 105–8.

[106]*Ibid*., 110.

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to understanding the rest, an overarching point of clarity that could illuminate otherwise dark places.[107] Locke underwrote his hermeneutic with an argument concerning divine inspiration that operated at the level of the sacred text's author (rather, that is, than in terms of the text *qua* text). The interpreter could be confident that the letters contained an overarching design because Paul, writing in complete possession of the light he had received from heaven, did so in order to achieve a specific end, encompassing 'the Information, Conviction, and Conversion of others'.[108] In a manner akin to how Cappel, some half a century earlier, had responded to Morin and Buxtorf II by focusing on the overall meaning of an individual passage, so Locke shifted attention away from the text as a document, directing it instead towards securely ascertaining its overall meaning.

Locke's implicit recognition of the need to take cognisance of developments in seventeenth-century biblical scholarship also registered in the *Reasonableness* and its *Vindications*. As is well known, Locke provided an explanation for the origin of the *Reasonableness* in the debates between dissenters over justification in the 1690s. Having established that faith alone justified – a point 'direct and plain' in Scripture – he then set out to search the sacred writings to find out 'what it was which, if a Man believed, it should be imputed to him for Righteousness'.[109] Recent treatments of the *Reasonableness* have focused chiefly on the ultimate end to which Locke intended to direct this inquiry, characterised in terms of his attempt to set out a 'Scripture-based theological ethics'.[110] Less well studied is how Locke justified his arguments in historical terms. This was an essential dimension of his work, since in order to establish surely 'what our Saviour proposed as matter of Faith to be believed', the content of his teaching had to be reconstructed.[111]

Locke was well prepared for this task. As we have seen, he had long been invested in the study of early Christianity and was well versed in the writings by Lightfoot, Toinard and others that focused on the chronology of the New Testament. Yet in mounting this inquiry Locke entered territory that Simon had made freshly controversial. In his *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament* (1689), Simon discussed the intellectual, literary and scribal culture from which the New Testament had originated. In so doing, he developed two sets of claims that would hold particular consequence for Locke. One set of arguments focused on the interpretation of the New Testament. Simon argued that it had not been sufficiently recognised that Christ and the apostles were embedded in the hermeneutical landscape of first-century Judaism.[112] In overlooking this, commentators had applied anachronistic standards to the biblical text, trying to understand it by employing notions of the 'literal' sense that would only develop many centuries later. Instead, when Christ, Paul, or others in the New Testament cited the Old Testament, they did so using mystical, allegorical, or parabolic modes of exegesis. Simon constructed this argument by drawing on earlier scholars,

[107] *Ibid*., 110–12.

[108] *Ibid*., 112.

[109] Locke, *Vindications [Second Vindication]*, 34–5.

[110] Lucci, *John Locke's Christianity*, 49.

[111] John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, ed. John C. Higgins-Biddle (Oxford, 1999), 56.

[112] Richard Simon, *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament* (Rotterdam, 1689), 244–53; Richard Simon, *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament* (Rotterdam, 1693), 1–2.

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among them Juan Maldonado and Hugo Grotius. But where Grotius had argued that the non-literal nature of such citations precluded them from being used as proof of Christianity, Simon drew the opposite conclusion: as these modes of exegesis were not arbitrary, but founded on authoritative traditions of interpretation in the 'Jewish Church', they could be considered positive evidence.[113] In confessional terms, Simon had adduced a further argument in favour of the authority of tradition, in place of the purely written word.

Simon's second pertinent set of arguments addressed the circumstances in which the text of the New Testament had itself been created. Here, Simon distinguished the New Testament from the Old: unlike in the case of the Old Testament, when the New Testament was written there existed no public scribes to record officially the events of their times.[114] The texts it comprised could be traced to fairly fortuitous moments: the Gospels were put into writing at the request of those who wished to preserve the memory of the apostles' preaching; Paul's letters were to instruct the recently founded churches; the Book of Acts was to inform the faithful about the progress of the Christian religion since its founding.[115] Perhaps even more so than in his account of the Old Testament, Simon moved to separate true Christian belief from its textual record. It was only in time that distinct Christian communities created the sorts of institutions – chief among them ecclesiastical ones – that could reliably create and store documents.[116] In the subsequent instalments of his work, Simon emphasised how far key Christian doctrines, including the Trinity, were transmitted via oral tradition, rather than through authoritative texts, and could not be located in the earliest manuscript sources.[117]

Locke, along with close acquaintances such as Isaac Newton, was much interested in Simon's arguments in these areas.[118] But he was unwilling to accept his broader claims and the *Reasonableness* and its subsequent *Vindications* would present an attempt to reconceive how Protestants approached the New Testament in the period following Simon's work. As scholars have recognised, Locke built his account on theological imperatives very different from those of Simon, holding that the New Testament itself – and, specifically, the Gospel narratives – provided a sufficient basis on which to found the Christian religion.[119] And it was this which underlay his inquiry as he investigated the scriptural record itself to find out what the saving content of revelation was by reconstructing the course of Jesus' ministry on earth.[120] The results of his examination are well known: the 'whole tenour' of Jesus' and the apostles' preaching revealed

[113]Macfarlane, 'Christianity as Jewish Allegory?', 385–6.

[114]Simon, *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament*, 2.

[115]*Ibid*.

[116]*Ibid*., 2–4, 104, 154.

[117]Simon, *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament*, 94–8, 115, 285, 464, 565, 649, 652, 663, 733, 764, 890–1.

[118]Rob Iliffe, 'Friendly Criticism: Richard Simon, John Locke, Isaac Newton and the *Johannine Comma*', in *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Nicholas Keene (Aldershot, 2006), 137–57.

[119]Lucci, *John Locke's Christianity*, 58–67.

[120]Locke, *Reasonableness*, 56.

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that Jesus' messiahship alone was 'the sole Doctrine pressed and required to be believed'.[121]

What has not been fully acknowledged is that Locke complemented this point about the Gospels' sufficiency with a set of claims about their nature as historical narratives. Locke's views on this subject were largely only implicit in the *Reasonableness*, on occasion referring, for example, to his having worked through the 'History of the four Evangelists'.[122] Yet, especially in the *Second Vindication*, Locke intimated that in describing the Gospels as a history he meant more than that they simply dealt with historical subjects. Rather, Locke was making a claim about the objectives of the Gospels' authors. Simon had tempered their authorial agency: they simply wrote to try and preserve some memory of what had happened as living witnesses died. For Locke it was quite otherwise. He argued that the inspired writers of the New Testament were themselves historians whose task, in narrating the history of Christ and the apostles, was to provide a 'true and useful account of the Religion' whose origin they had set out to relate.[123] It was in these terms that Locke contended his overriding claim regarding recognition of Christ's messiahship had its central purchase: it was this alone that was recorded in the records of Christ's and the apostles' preaching by all the Evangelists, and it was consequently this point that it had been their major duty as historians to commit to writing. To think otherwise, Locke argued, one would have to think the inspired writers were negligent, or, at least, 'very strange Historians'.[124] Communication of revelation, for the world of the first century and for posterity, depended on a purposeful record of sacred history.

The *Reasonableness* and its subsequent *Vindications* also dealt with the difficulties Simon raised concerning the language and exegesis found in the New Testament. Locke was not alone in this. It would later be an objective of Surenhusius's *Sefer ha-Mashveh* (1713) to overturn Simon's claims by accepting parts of his arguments before reframing them to Protestant purposes. Surenhusius agreed with Simon that the rules of New Testament allegoresis were not arbitrary. But rather than founded on authorised traditions, they were instead based on sets of then widely used principles and conventions found in first-century Jewish literary culture that could still be recovered.[125]

Locke implicitly countered Simon in several different ways, all of which differed from the path Surenhusius would come to take. One of these – as we have just seen – was to develop a method of scriptural interpretation that made it possible to understand the saving message of the New Testament without the sort of immense expertise in Hebrew texts that Surenhusius's approach would demand. But in the setting of the *Reasonableness* Locke also deployed other arguments. Since one of the premises of Locke's account was that Scripture's central salvific message was directly expressed and accessible to all, it risked undermining his case if he were he unable to explain places in the Gospels that were not plain or easy to understand or where Jesus was apparently intentionally obscure. A central issue arose here in terms of those places in

[121] *Ibid.*, 109.
[122] *Ibid.*, 121.
[123] Locke, *Vindications [Second Vindication]*, 155.
[124] *Ibid.*, 139–41.
[125] Macfarlane, 'Christianity as Jewish Allegory?', 389–96.

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the New Testament where Jesus seemed to hide his identity. Subsequent scholarship has treated this issue in terms borrowed from William Wrede's later work, describing it as Locke's approach to Jesus' 'Messianic secret'.[126] Framed in this way, Victor Nuovo explained Locke's account of Christ's conduct in terms of Locke's focus on the concrete demands of the historical context in which Jesus lived: the threat posed by the Roman authorities were he to be identified as the King of the Jews and the need to survive and train his disciples necessitated Jesus' actions.[127] This is no doubt true. Nevertheless, Nuovo overlooked how far a crucial point Locke made in this respect was that it also accounted for Christ's use of certain kinds of language. It was his concern over coming into conflict with the contemporary authorities, that is, that caused Christ to employ 'Obscure, Ænigmatical, or Figurative terms. (All which, as well as Allusive Apologues, the Jews called Proverbs or Parables).'[128] Thus, Locke implicitly sapped the polemical force behind Simon's claims: it was to conduct himself as demanded by a specific situation, not owing to unwritten authoritative traditions, that meant Christ had not always spoken in 'plain and direct words'.[129]

It might be suggested that perhaps, after all, Locke had found his own way to heed Limborch's advice that in reading Simon's works one could draw out what was worth reading, while passing over the rest in silence. In consulting Locke's theological publications, one looks in vain for the erstwhile Oratorian's name, let alone any suggestion to seek out his works. But in his study, this is what Locke had been doing: eagerly obtaining and working through Simon's books, filling his notebooks with references to the Catholic scholar's views. And even if his published works avoided mentioning Simon, in composing them Locke could not afford to ignore entirely Simon's arguments. It would go too far to say that Locke wrote with a view to rebut Simon. Rather, what he carried out was a twofold process of assimilation and inoculation, taking on and adapting Simon's findings where appropriate, while taking steps to ensure his work avoided the baleful consequences of Simon's confessionally inflected claims.

In peeling back and peering through the layers of Locke's engagement with Simon's work it has been possible to bring out some of the implications of taking seriously Locke's lifelong interest in the Bible and biblical scholarship. Simon's, of course, were far from the only works Locke read, and his books vied for Locke's attention among those of Vossius, Lightfoot, Cappel, Spencer, Le Moyne and others. Simon was unique among these writers as a Catholic, and Locke's reading and reckoning with his work was affected by their confessional difference. But Locke dissented from Simon in a distinctive way. Other Protestant opponents of Simon, such as Surenhusius, took on and extended traditions of Reformed Hebraism to show how ever more sophisticated linguistic methods allowed one to refashion otherwise familiar modes of Protestant scholarship to oppose new Catholic threats.[130] Locke, often close to but never strictly part of a clerical or confessional nexus, had the space to pursue a different tack, reconsidering and reframing rather differently the value and use of historical and

[126]Nuovo, *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment*, 70.
[127]*Ibid*., 70–2.
[128]Locke, *Reasonableness*, 76–7, 102.
[129]*Ibid*., 102.
[130]Macfarlane, 'Christianity as Jewish Allegory?', 396–7.

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philological scholarship. Like Simon, he was willing to dissipate some of the close links that others posited between historical and critical scholarship and religious belief. Unlike Simon, however, he did so not to turn to ecclesiastical tradition but to prioritise a set of theological presuppositions that he believed constituted the central theological message of the Gospels. For some, Locke had gone too far, since in so doing he risked undercutting the concrete historical basis of numerous central Christian doctrines. Locke potentially welcomed this development; he at least appears not to have feared it.

Conclusion

The history of early modern erudition was long written as a history whose subject stood at some remove from much of early modern society. As the preserve of scholars in a transnational neo-Latin Republic of Letters, the pursuit of learning was taken to be an end in itself undertaken by like-minded men. If it had a purpose beyond these shared networks of elite sociability, it was as a means of transcending contemporary conflicts, especially those caused by *odium theologicum*.[131] These views no longer stand without scrutiny. Much early modern biblical scholarship was conducted, recent historiography has shown, with a view to its confessional import, as scholars and theologians – often working as members of given confessional institutions – sought to oppose their religious adversaries.[132] In contrast to the earlier ecumenical vision, one of the great merits of studies framed in terms of confessionalised erudition has been the way in which they have brought out more clearly the embeddedness of scholarship in its contemporary setting, offering explanations as to why some issues were seen as pressing at some moments rather than others or why certain institutions invested immense resources in scholarship. In so doing, they have also begun to widen our sense of the early modern intellectual world: by drawing links between confession, erudition and religion the concept has opened up new ways of seeing why ostensibly scholarly issues were not purely of relevance to rarefied groups but also to other sections of the literate public at different points on the social scale.[133] Scholarship, in this sense, was not something exceptional, but often – at different levels, and for different audiences – integrated into daily life.

In uncovering Locke and his encounters with the Bible and biblical scholarship, this article has contributed to reconstructing what could therefore be termed a world of everyday erudition. In employing such a term, it is not intended to suggest that Locke's learning was mundane or routine. To possess it, Locke required rigorous schooling, considerable means to purchase often lengthy works in Latin and the vernacular languages, and the social and cultural capital to build networks with similarly interested acquaintances and confidants. His case is in this way distinct from, say, that of the recently unearthed 'Broughtonians', a largely self-taught community of tradespeople who busied themselves with sacred philology on both sides of the Atlantic.[134] Like

[131]See the discussion in Hardy, *Criticism and Confession*, 1–17.

[132]See the works cited in n. 2.

[133]Macfarlane, *Biblical Scholarship*; Michelle Pfeffer, *Scholarship, Society, and the Soul in Early Enlightenment England: The Making of Heterodoxy* (Oxford, forthcoming).

[134]Macfarlane, *Lay Learning and the Bible*.

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them, however, Locke's example is one that is not neatly captured in terms of the academic or clerical elite that long dominated the history of scholarship. Instead, such instances begin to bring out how erudition was everyday because it was recognised as an essential resource to tackle a wide variety of concerns by writers and thinkers at multiple levels on the social and cultural scale. Rather than simply 'frivolous', in Locke's case, erudition could be a tool to think about the sacred past, its employment necessitated by the historical nature of revelation and its record in written artefacts, and its findings hotly contested by those who held different confessional views. Scholarship, in this sense, was a kind of early modern common currency, one whose pervasiveness is evident to those who search through Locke's journals, notebooks, letters and recorded remnants of conversations, but whose contemporary ordinariness meant that it was rarely highlighted at the time. But it was there. And if we want to understand how Locke and his contemporaries read and understood the Bible, how they thought about Christian theology, or how they argued over central Christian doctrines, then we, like Locke, must pay attention to it.

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