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978-0-521-76971-6 - The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England

Naomi Tadmor

Excerpt

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Introduction

The ‘properties of the hebrue tonge’, said William Tyndale, agree ‘a thousande tymes moare with the english then with the latyne’. In English, as in Hebrew, he believed, ‘[t]he maner of speakynge is both one’. Specifically, the word order and available vocabularies of both languages are one and the same: all the translator has to do is to render ‘worde for worde’, in order to convey the ‘grace a[n]d swetnesse, sence and pure vnderstandinge’ of the Word of God.¹ True to his conviction, Tyndale set

¹ W. Tyndale, *The obedie[n]ce of a Christen man and howe Christe[n] rulers ought to governe* (Antwerp, 1528), fo. 15v. In particular, he may have been referring here to the fact that unlike Greek, Latin, or German, neither Hebrew nor English has prominent grammatical cases. When translating the Bible, Tyndale had before him the Hebrew original, the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, Luther’s Bible, and probably a Latin translation by Pagninus published in 1527 and based on the Hebrew. He was also undoubtedly familiar with the Wyclifite Bible. For methodical analyses based on textual comparisons and highlighting Tyndale’s reliance on and responsiveness to the Hebrew, see especially, for example, G. Hammond, ‘William Tyndale’s Pentateuch: its relation to Luther’s German Bible and the Hebrew original’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 33 (1980), 351–85, and references there; M. P. Weitzman, ‘On translating the Old Testament: the achievement of William Tyndale’, in M. P. Weitzman, A. Rapoport-Albert, and G. Greenberg (eds.), *From Judaism to Christianity: studies in the Hebrew and Syriac Bibles*, JSSSup 8 (Oxford, 1999), pp. 33–54, and references there. Tyndale may have learned Hebrew in exile, perhaps in Worms, also an important centre of rabbinical learning, or perhaps even in England, as suggested in J. P. Yates, ‘The time and place of Tyndale’s Hebrew learning: a reconsideration’, *Reformation* 7 (2002), 23–48. The general view that he took the Hebrew as his basis, rather than the Latin or Luther’s translation, has been challenged and convincingly reasserted. See also, for example, discussions of Tyndale’s command of the Hebrew in J. F. Mozley, ‘William Tyndale’s knowledge of Hebrew’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1935), 392–6; S. L. Greenslade, ‘English versions of the Bible, 1525–1611’, in S. L. Greenslade (ed.), *The Cambridge history of the Bible*, vol. III: *The West, from the Reformation to the present day* (Cambridge, 1978; 1st edn 1963), pp. 141–74, and esp. pp. 143–5; G. Lloyd Jones, *The discovery of Hebrew in Tudor England: a third language* (Manchester, 1983), ch. 5; D. Daniell, *The Bible in English: its history and influence* (New Haven and London, 2003), esp. pp. 133–4, 136–7, 147–9, 190, 250; D. Daniell, *William Tyndale: a biography* (New Haven, 1994), esp., e.g., pp. 1–2, 284–318, 336–57; *Tyndale’s Old Testament: being the Pentateuch of 1530, Joshua to 2 Chronicles of 1537, and Jonah* (New Haven, 1992), ed. D. Daniell, esp. pp. xiii–xvii, xxv; D. Daniell, ‘William Tyndale’, *DNB*. See also, e.g., G. Milligan, ‘Versions, English’, *DOB*, vol. IV, pp. 856–7; J. P. Lewis, ‘Versions, English’, *ABD*, vol. VI, pp. 819–20; B. Cummings, ‘The theology of translation: Tyndale’s grammar’, in J. T. Day, E. Lund, and A. M. O’Donnell (eds.), *Word, church, and state: Tyndale*



Illustration 1 ‘We came unto the lande whyther thou senddest us & surely it floweth with milke and hony’ (Bishops’ Bible, London, 1568, at Num. 13). The spies sent by Moses bearing the fruit of the promised land. Note the church spires and crosses of the city in the background and the densely surrounding trees, as well as the spies’ dress, which consists of a mixture of contemporary and oriental-looking garments. The vignettes of this Bible, drawn by Virgil Solis, first appeared in a Lutheran Bible in Frankfurt, 1560.

out to translate the Hebrew Bible not from the Latin Vulgate (as done previously) but from the original. Two years later, his rendition of the Five Books of Moses saw light.

In pursuing this mission, Tyndale was not alone. Already in 1523, the charismatic German clergyman, Martin Luther, published his translation of the Pentateuch, based for the first time not on the Latin Vulgate, but on the ancient Hebrew original.² Indeed, one of the principles of Luther’s

quincentenary essays (Washington, DC, 1998), pp. 36–59; D. Norton, *A history of the English Bible as literature* (Cambridge, 2000), esp. pp. 20–1. Note also S. Daley, ‘The textual basis of English translations of the Hebrew Bible’, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2007), establishing the reliance of English versions on the Masoretic Text, and esp. pp. 349, 372, 378–9.

² Luther’s translation of the New Testament from the original Greek was published in 1522, the Pentateuch in 1523, and the joint Old and New Testaments in 1534. An important basis for a vernacular Bible was also being laid with Cardinal Ximenes’s *Complutensian polyglot*, prepared in Alcalá, Spain, and printed in 1520. A Greek–Latin New Testament was published by Erasmus in 1516. In England, further stimulus came from the teaching of John Colet, see, e.g., Lewis, ‘Versions, English’, *ABD*, vol. VI, p. 818; Greenslade,

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new confession (which around that time acquired its title ‘Protestantism’ and was sweeping through vast tracts of Europe) was that God’s truth was to be found in neither patristic interpretations nor clerical traditions, but in the Scriptures alone. Tyndale, like Luther, also believed that the Text must be released from the shackles of Rome and delivered to all believers in a language they can easily comprehend. It is ‘impossible to [e]stablysh the laye people in any truth excepte y^e scripture were playnly layde before their eyes in their mother tonge’, he insisted.³ If St Jerome produced the Vulgate and in doing so translated the Bible to his ‘mother tonge’, he argued, then ‘Why maye not we also?’⁴ Those who stood in his way, he was convinced, wanted no less than to keep the world in darkness.⁵

In 1536 Tyndale was strangled and burned at the stake (his Bible already committed to the pyre). But if his adversaries wanted to put an end to his mission, Tyndale’s devout pursuit only marked a new start. Two of his loyal assistants and followers, Miles Coverdale and John Rogers, carried on the task. Coverdale’s command of the Hebrew was insufficient for pursuing the actual translation on the basis of the original, but in his 1535 text he included Tyndale’s rendition and also relied heavily on Luther’s translation of the Hebrew Bible. Immediately after Tyndale’s imprisonment, moreover, his friend Rogers continued to collate his published work and any of his unpublished drafts, which he edited and joined together with substantial sections from Coverdale’s Bible as well as additions of his own. In 1537, within months of Tyndale’s martyrdom, this compiled version was printed abroad and issued in London, bearing the name of two disciples, joined together to form the pseudonym ‘Thomas Matthew’.⁶

‘English versions of the Bible’, p. 141. For the Humanist ‘return to Scripture’ in England, see, e.g., L. E. Wooding, *Rethinking Catholicism in Reformation England* (Oxford, 2000), ch. 1. For discussion of biblical translation and contemporary Jewish-Christian relations, see, e.g., N. Seidman, *Faithful renderings: Jewish-Christian difference and the politics of translation* (Chicago and London, 2006), ch. 3.

³ W. Tyndale, ‘W. T. to the reader’, preceding ‘The first Book of Moses called Genesis’, in *The Pentateuch*, trans. W. Tyndale (Antwerp, 1530), no page number, also reproduced in Tyndale’s Bible, ‘The Bible in English’ database, Chadwyck-Healey Literature Collections (ProQuest Information and Learning Co., 2009), <http://collections.chadwyck.co.uk>, last accessed 2009.

⁴ Tyndale, *The obedie[n]ce of a Christen man*, fo. 15v.

⁵ Tyndale, ‘W. T. to the reader’, no page number.

⁶ Tyndale published translations of the New Testament, the Pentateuch, and Jonah, and completed drafts from Joshua to 2 Chronicles before his death. These unpublished manuscripts were most probably used in Thomas Matthew’s Bible, see especially *Tyndale’s Old Testament*, ed. Daniell, p. ix; Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 157; Daniell, ‘John Rogers’, *DNB*. For Ezra to Malachi and the Apocrypha, Thomas Matthew’s Bible relied on Coverdale. Coverdale’s Pentateuch, Jonah, and the New Testament were likewise based

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Indeed, around the same time, the English Bible was also embarking upon another journey: from the social and political margins to the centre. It is one of history's ironies that the same monarch who had persecuted Tyndale and demanded his surrender as a heretic also made use of his translations to issue the first authorised version of the English Bible. Already in 1534, the Convocation of Canterbury, led by its newly appointed archbishop, Thomas Cranmer, petitioned for an English Bible. In 1535 Coverdale's Bible was issued with a dedication to Henry VIII; a second edition was set forth 'with the Kynges most gracious license'. Cranmer later solicited the help of the king's advisor Thomas Cromwell to publish an edition of Thomas Matthew's text, so that it could be 'read of every person, without danger of any act, proclamation, or ordinance, heretofore granted to the contrary'.⁷ Around that time, the king's initial desire to divorce and remarry had also spiralled into a fully fledged break with Rome. And so in 1539, a vernacular Bible appeared in England in the manner of the Reformation, authorised by the Head of the Church in England, King Henry VIII. This 'Great Bible' was prepared by Miles Coverdale on the basis of Thomas Matthew's Bible, and thus incorporated Tyndale's work. Its first edition was soon sold out. The second was issued with a formal introduction by Cranmer. A Royal Injunction, moreover, proclaimed that the volume must be obtained and conveniently presented in every parish, where the parishioners 'may most commodiously resorte to the same and reade yt'.⁸

on Tyndale. See, e.g., Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 174, 181–5, 193–7; Daniell, 'Miles Coverdale', *DNB*, and references there; Norton, *A history of the English Bible as literature*, pp. 29–34; Lewis, 'Versions, English', *ABD*, vol. VI, esp. pp. 820–1; Greenslade, 'English versions of the Bible', pp. 147–51; J. F. Mozley, *Coverdale and his Bibles* (London, 1953); Milligan, 'Versions, English', *DOB*, vol. IV, pp. 856–7. Coverdale's text suggests he may have also had before him the Wyclifite Bible, translated from the Latin Vulgate: see Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 185; M. Dove, *The first English Bible: the text and context of the Wycliffite versions* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 192–3.

⁷ 'To Crumwell', in *Miscellaneous writings and letters of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. J. E. Cox, The Parker Society, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1846), vol. II, letter 194, p. 344; see Milligan, 'Versions, English', *DOB*, vol. IV, p. 857; Lewis, 'Versions, English', *ABD*, vol. VI, pp. 820–1. For the licensing of Matthew's Bible, see also Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 157.

⁸ 'Cromwell's injunction to the clergy', in R. B. Merriman, *Life and letters of Thomas Cromwell*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1902), vol. II, p. 152; J. S. Brewer, R. H. Brodie, and J. Gairdner (eds.), *Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII: preserved in the Public Record Office, the British Museum, and elsewhere*, 23 vols. (London, 1862–1932), vol. XIII (1893), no. 281, p. 114. An injunction of 1541 levied a fine on any parish whose church failed to provide a large copy of the Bible, with a substantial reward for the informer who reported the delay in purchase; see Gairdner (ed.), *Letters and papers foreign and domestic*, vol. XVI (1898), no. 803, pp. 390–1. See also T. C. String, 'Henry VIII's illuminated "Great Bible"', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 59 (1996), 315–24, and references there, p. 315; D. S. Kastan, 'The noyse of the new Bible': reform and reaction in Henrician England', in C. E. McEachern and D. K. Shuger (eds.), *Religion and culture in Renaissance England*



Illustration 2 The Great Bible (London, 1540). The title page depicts Henry VIII distributing the Bible to the clergy and laity and – through the hands of Cranmer and Cromwell – to his rejoicing people, who recite *vivat rex*.

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When Mary I came to the throne, a ‘total prohibition on the Bible in English was not restored’ and plans were made to commission an approved translation of the New Testament, yet devout advocates of the English Bible were once more vulnerable to a charge of heresy.⁹ Less than two decades after the martyrdom of his friend and master, John Rogers was burned at the stake. The legislation that permitted his imprisonment resurrected the laws against Lollardy, issued more than a century earlier to eradicate the first English biblical translation, the Wyclifite version, based on the Vulgate.¹⁰ In fear of the current measures, however, a team

(Cambridge, 1997), pp. 46–68; Daniell, *The Bible in English*, esp. pp. 135, 198, 204–9; M. Aston, ‘Lap books and lectern books: the revelatory book in the Reformation’, in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *The church and the book*, Studies in Church History 38 (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 163–89; see also, e.g., Lewis, ‘Versions, English’, *ABD*, vol. VI, pp. 821–2, 830–2; Lewis, ‘Great Bible, the’, *ABD*, vol. II, p. 1,090; Greenslade, ‘English versions of the Bible’, pp. 147–5. Note that in 1543 the Henrician legislation attempted to restrict the reading of the Bible: reading among apprentices, serving men, artificers, and husbandmen was forbidden, as well as among women, except for women of gentle status who were allowed to read the Bible in private: Act for the Advancement of True Religion, 34 & 35 Hen. VIII c. 1, and see also below, p. 72. The accession of Edward VI was marked by ‘a renunciation of prior censorship and licensing regulation that had been imposed under Henry VIII’: see J. N. King, ‘The book-trade under Edward VI and Mary I’, in L. Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (eds.), *The Cambridge history of the book in Britain*, vol. III, 1400–1557 (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 164–78, on p. 164; see also, e.g., K. Sharpe, *Reading revolutions: the politics of reading in early modern England* (New Haven and London, 2000), esp. p. 329; E. H. Shagan, *Popular politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge and New York, 2003), esp. pp. 209–15, 268–9, 272; D. MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s house divided, 1490–1700* (London, 2004), esp. pp. 203–4.

⁹ MacCulloch, *Reformation*, pp. 283–4. As MacCulloch explains with reference to the English Bible: ‘[h]ere was one achievement of the English Reformation which the government was apparently prepared not to challenge, but perhaps to attempt to redeploy for its own purposes in the manner championed by Catholic Humanists like Cardinal Pole’. As Wooding says, Marian Catholics were ‘making their own spirited claim to the scriptural revival which characterized the age’. While it seems that local bishops exercised discretion in withdrawing the vernacular Bible from churches, and personal possession was not an heretical offence, no English Bibles were printed under Mary, however (as opposed to fifty-four editions printed during the previous reign of Edward VI), and government measures encouraged the flight of apologists, printers, and book-sellers: see D. MacCulloch, ‘England’, in A. Pettegree (ed.), *The early Reformation in Europe* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 166–87, on pp. 184–5, and references there; E. Duffy, *The stripping of the altars: traditional religion in England c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven, 1992), p. 530; L. E. Wooding, ‘The Marian Restoration and the Mass’, in E. Duffy and D. M. Loades (eds.), *The church of Mary Tudor* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 227–58, on pp. 242–3, and references there; D. M. Loades, ‘The Marian episcopate’, in *ibid.*, pp. 33–56, on p. 52; Loades, ‘The personal religion of Mary I’, in *ibid.*, pp. 1–29, on p. 21; J. Edwards, ‘Spanish religious influence in Marian England’, in *ibid.*, pp. 201–26, esp. pp. 219–20; King, ‘The book-trade under Edward VI and Mary I’, esp. pp. 170–1, and references there; P. Marshall, *Reformation England: 1480–1642* (London, 2003), p. 101, and see, e.g., broader discussion on pp. 103–10, and references there.

¹⁰ The death penalty for impenitent heretics was enacted in 1401. The English translation of Scripture was banned in 1407 (ban lifted in 1538). See, e.g., M. Aston, *Lollards and reformers: images and literacy in late medieval religion* (London, 1984); A. Hudson, ‘Wyclif

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of learned biblical scholars found refuge in Geneva, where they joined forces to prepare yet another version of the Holy Text translated in its entirety from the ancient tongues. This rendition was also based on the Great Bible and on Tyndale and included an extended apparatus with learned Hebraist comments and pious notes, as well as woodcuts and maps.¹¹ Miles Coverdale, then also in exile, came to lend a hand. In the century following its publication, at least 140 editions of the Geneva Bible are known to have appeared.¹²

As Protestant rule was reasserted in England, the following decades saw the publication of three additional authorised versions of the English Bible. In 1568, the Elizabethan Archbishop Matthew Parker issued the solemn 'Bishops' Bible' to counter some of the more radical interpretations of the Geneva Bible and its popular tone. This version went back to the Great Bible, and thus also incorporated a great deal of Tyndale's work. Before too long, English Catholics were provided with an authorised version of their own. The Rheims Douai version (also prepared in exile) was based – in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation – not on the Hebrew text but on the Latin Vulgate; yet it also contained numerous adaptations in the light of the Hebrew, and, moreover, bore important similarities to contemporary Protestant versions.¹³ When James VI of

and the English language', in A. Kenny (ed.), *Wyclif in his time* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 85–103; J. A. Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988), esp. pp. 234–5; Dove, *The first English Bible*, esp. chs. 1–2, and p. 10; Daniell, 'John Rogers', *DNB*, and see also, e.g., Duffy, *The stripping of the altars*, p. 80; Shagan, *Popular politics and the English Reformation*, esp. pp. 30, 210; Marshall, *Reformation England*, pp. 16, 104; MacCulloch, *Reformation*, p. 285.

¹¹ See, e.g., Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 307; Norton, *A history of the English Bible as literature*, pp. 39–41, 81–4, 89–94; Lewis, 'Versions, English', *ABD*, vol. VI, p. 822; Lewis, 'Geneva Bible', *ABD*, vol. II, pp. 962–3; Greenslade, 'English versions of the Bible', pp. 155–9, and note the description of Geneva as a centre for biblical and Hebraic studies.

¹² A. S. Herbert, *Historical catalogue of printed editions of the English Bible, 1525–1961* (London, 1968), pp. 61–2, and, e.g., Milligan, 'Versions, English', *DOB*, vol. IV, p. 858; Greenslade, 'English versions of the Bible', p. 159; Lewis, 'Versions, English', *ABD*, vol. VI, p. 822. The first full edition of the Geneva Bible was published in 1560, the last in 1644. During this period a number of revisions were also issued. The Geneva Bible remained the most popular until the final success of the King James Bible.

¹³ See, e.g., R. F. Collins, 'Versions, Catholic', *ABD*, vol. VI, p. 814; Lewis, 'Versions, English', *ABD*, vol. VI, pp. 823, 830–2; P. Lewis, 'Douay version', *ABD*, vol. II, pp. 227–8; Greenslade, 'English versions of the Bible', pp. 161–3; Milligan, 'Versions, English', *DOB*, vol. IV, pp. 858–9. The New Testament was published at Rheims in 1582, the Old Testament at Douai in 1609. The title page introduced it as being based on the 'authentic Latin', 'diligently conferred with the Hebrew, Greeke, and other editions in diuers languages'. This version is named here 'Rheims Douai' according to its publication order, and following *ABD* and 'The Bible in English' database, Chadwyck-Healey Literature Collections. See also A. Walsham, 'Unclasping the book? Post-Reformation English Catholicism and the vernacular Bible', *Journal of British Studies* 42 (2003), 141–66. For the Vulgate's reliance on the Hebrew, see especially A. Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible: a study of the Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim* (Oxford, 1993), esp. ch. 2.

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Scotland came to the English throne, the ultimate and most enduring Authorised Version was commissioned. Unhappy with the interpretative tone of the Geneva Bible, and faced with demands from godly clergy to issue a Bible 'more aunswerable to the truth of the originall' (to replace the formal Bishops' Bible), James sanctioned a new translation.¹⁴ Fifty-four learned scholars were then assembled by royal command from their bishoprics and university colleges in order to form several 'companies', which divided between them the sacred work. Here, again, existing versions were to provide both a basis and a point for comparison, incorporating amongst them Tyndale's seminal translation.¹⁵ The most learned Hebraists in the land were to pore over the text word by word, avoid controversial definitions and prevent dangerous neologisms, yet at the same time render faithfully the original Hebrew Bible, and, moreover, agree its rendition throughout.

It would be impossible to overemphasise the importance of the cumulative process by which the English Bible was formed, nor the impact of its cardinal versions, crucial also for the subject matter of this book. To begin with, the dissemination of the English Bible thus marked a

¹⁴ Greenslade, 'English versions of the Bible', p. 164; Norton, *A history of the English Bible as literature*, pp. 61–2. The King James Bible was commissioned in 1604. After its publication, the Bishops' Bible was no longer printed, and the King James Version replaced it in public use, although it was never officially 'authorised'; see, e.g., Greenslade, 'English versions of the Bible', p. 168.

¹⁵ The Bishops' Bible was to be used as the initial source text and amendments were to be entered into it in consultation with the original as well as existing versions, including in particular Tyndale, Matthew, Coverdale, the Great Bible, and the Geneva Bible: see, e.g., D. Norton, *A textual history of the King James Bible* (Cambridge, 2005), esp. Introduction, and p. 8, where the instructions for the translators are reproduced; Norton, *A history of the English Bible as literature*, pp. 56–75, 92; Greenslade, 'English versions of the Bible', pp. 164–8. See also A. W. Pollard (ed.), *Records of the English Bible: the documents relating to the translation and publication of the Bible in English, 1525–1611* (London, 1911), pp. 53–55, and the 'Report on the making of the version of 1611 presented to the Synod of Dort', in *ibid.*, pp. 336–9. Note also the only remaining working copy of the King James Bible, consisting of a copy of the Bishops' Bible with copious annotations, possibly transcribed in preparation for a general meeting of the King James translators: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Bib. Eng. 1602 b. 1 (containing annotations made in the Bishops' Bible in preparation for the King James Bible), and see Norton, *A textual history of the King James Bible*, esp. ch. 1, 'Making the Text'. The Pentateuch and the historical books of this working copy's Old Testament contain very full textual annotations; however, important annotations on the prophets are absent and the apparatus and notes are not included. The evidence suggests that Bib. Eng. 1602, b. 1 was unbound when used by KJV translators and probably included additional leaves or comprised more than one copy. Norton's figures (*A textual history of the King James Bible*, pp. 23–4) suggest that overall 63 per cent of the text of KJV differs from the text of the Bishops' Bible, a figure that highlights the importance of the other versions consulted and especially, as many emphasise, the influence of Tyndale, as well as the discretion of the KJV translators. In Norton's readings, 56 per cent of the KJV Old Testament relates to changes noted in Bib. Eng. 1602, b. 1.

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new era in the history of the English book. Between 1570 and 1630, the production of the vernacular Bible in England increased tenfold, a higher rate per capita than in any Protestant country in Europe.¹⁶ From the time of the publication of the Geneva Bible, moreover, testaments were increasingly published not in large folios but in smaller formats, suitable for personal and home demand. To be sure, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, sacred texts were both cherished and widespread; by the 1630s, however, a Londoner could buy an unbound duodecimo for no more than 3–4s.¹⁷ During the second half of the seventeenth century, the evidence in our possession suggests that the family Bible was ‘becoming an increasingly normal object in households right down the social order’.¹⁸ In Shakespeare’s lifetime alone, between 1564 and 1616, it is estimated, 211 editions of the Bible appeared and about 422,000 copies were sold.¹⁹ The English population around 1600 still numbered about 4,000,000, which meant that most ordinary households could have had a copy and most individuals could have had one within reach.²⁰

The dissemination of the English Bible also led to – and was combined with – the growing popularisation of other devotional texts. Between 1530

¹⁶ P. Collinson, ‘England’, in R. Scribner *et al.* (eds.), *The Reformation in national context* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 86; Collinson, ‘William Tyndale and the course of the English Reformation’, *Reformation* 1 (1997), 72–97, on p. 90.

¹⁷ See A. Fox, ‘Religion and popular literate culture in England’, *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 95 (2004), 266–82, on 272–3, and references there. The field is broad, however, see especially, e.g., B. Smalley, *The study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (London, 1983; 1st edn 1953); L. F. Sandler, ‘Christian Hebraism and the Ramsey Abbey psalter’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972), 123–34; Aston, *Lollards and reformers*; D. M. Loades, ‘The piety of the Catholic Restoration in England, 1553–8’, in J. Kirk (ed.), *Humanism and reform: the church in Europe, England, and Scotland, 1400–1643: essays in honour of James K. Cameron* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 289–304; Duffy, *The stripping of the altars*; Hellinga and Trapp (eds.), *The Cambridge history of the book in Britain*, vol. III; I. M. Green, *Print and Protestantism in early modern England* (Oxford, 2000); Swanson (ed.), *The Church and the book*; B. Murdoch, *The medieval popular Bible: expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2003); E. Duffy, *Marking the hours: English people and their prayers, 1240–1570* (New Haven and London, 2006).

¹⁸ See Fox, ‘Religion and popular literate culture’, pp. 272–3, and references there.

¹⁹ Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 129. See also, e.g., A. Hastings, *The construction of nationhood: ethnicity, religion, and nationalism* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 58; I. Green, *Print and Protestantism*, ch. 2.

²⁰ For population size, see E. A. Wrigley and R. Schofield, *The population history of England, 1541–1871: a reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1989; 1st edn 1981), pp. 208–9. Taking Laslett’s figure of mean household size as a rough measure, there would have been in 1600 about 682,000 households of craftsmen, tradesmen, husbandmen, yeomen, gentlemen, and unknown others (excluding labourers and paupers). Over 80 per cent of the total population was, moreover, concentrated in households with three or more residents and over 50 per cent in large households with five or more, with a clear correlation between household size and wealth. The experience of service and mobility among households throughout the life-cycle no doubt further increased exposure to the Bible: see P. Laslett, ‘Size and structure of the household in England over three centuries’, *Population Studies*

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and 1740, for example, 792 new catechisms are known to have appeared in England; with the addition of related instructive texts, the number of catechetical publications in the period came to 1,043.²¹ Indeed, children's education, as scholars explain, was based from its earliest stages on devotional reading (taught earlier and more universally than the more specialised skill of writing).²² Women also played an active role in the domestic inculcation of reading, and could certainly possess impressive knowledge of the Bible even if they could not write.²³ The Bible was read aloud and silently, in public and in private; at home, in church, or in the field; while praying and meditating, while sewing and spinning, or while doing other work.²⁴

The English Bible, scholars emphasise, and increasingly the Old Testament, thus had a crucial impact on the formation of the English

23 (1969), 199–223; N. Tadmor, 'The concept of the household-family in eighteenth-century England', *P&P* 151 (1996), 111–40; N. Tadmor, *Family and friends in eighteenth-century England: household, kinship, and patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), esp. ch. 1 and pp. 31–40, as well as pp. 108–9, and references there.

²¹ I. M. Green, *The Christian's ABC: catechisms and catechizing in England c. 1530–1740* (Oxford, 1996), ch. 2 and p. 51, and see publications listed in the Appendix.

²² See especially M. Spufford, 'First steps in literacy: the reading and writing experiences of the humblest seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographers', *Social History* 4 (1979), 407–35; D. Cressy, *Literacy and the social order: reading and writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980); K. Wrightson, *English society, 1580–1680* (London and New York, 2003; 1st edn 1982), pp. 195, 199–207; R. O'Day, *Education and society, 1500–1800: the social foundation of education in early modern Britain* (London, 1982); K. Thomas, 'The meaning of literacy in early modern England', in G. Baumann (ed.), *The written word: literacy in transition* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 97–131; R. A. Houston, *Scottish literacy and the Scottish identity: illiteracy and society in Scotland and Northern England, 1600–1800* (Cambridge, 1985); I. M. Green, '"For children in years and children in understanding": the emergence of the English catechism under Elizabeth and the early Stuarts', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 37 (1986), 397–425.

²³ See, in particular, e.g., Thomas, 'Literacy'; M. Spufford, 'Women teaching reading to poor children in the 16th and 17th centuries', in M. Hilton, M. Styles, and V. Watson (eds.), *Opening the nursery door: reading, writing and childhood 1600–1900* (London, 1997), pp. 47–64; K. Charlton, '"Not publike onely but also private and domesticall": mothers and familial education in pre-industrial England', *History of Education* 17 (1988), 1–20; K. Charlton, *Women, religion and education in early modern England* (London, 1999); O'Day, *Education and society*; Fox, *Oral and literate culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford, 2000), esp. pp. 18–19, 407–9.

²⁴ See, for example, practices of reading investigated with particular reference to the Geneva Bible: F. Molekamp, 'The Geneva Bible and the devotional reading and writing of early modern women', unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Sussex (2009). For women's reading and household reading at a later period, see, e.g., N. Tadmor, '"In the even my wife read to me": women, reading and household life in the eighteenth century', in J. Raven, N. Tadmor, and H. Small (eds.), *The practice and representation of reading in England* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 162–74. As Norton explains, the literary qualities of different biblical versions also invited particular modes of reading, whether joyous, studious, searching, etc.: see Norton, *A History of the English Bible as literature*, chs. 1–2. For practices of reading and orality and literacy more broadly, see also Sharpe, *Reading revolutions*; Fox, *Oral and literate culture*; A. Fox and D. Woolf (eds.), *The spoken*