

Hebrew in Early Irish Glossaries

Pádraic Moran

National University of Ireland, Galway

HEBREW was the language of the Old Testament, and the first of the ‘three sacred languages’ recorded on the *titulus* of Christ’s cross.¹ However, while a few Hebrew words had currency in the early Middle Ages by virtue of their transmission in scripture and the liturgy (for example, *alleluia*, *amen*, *cherub*, *gehenna*, *hosanna*, *manna*), there was no coherent tradition of instruction in the Hebrew language in the West before the thirteenth century.²

The opportunities for studying Hebrew in the early Middle Ages may be contrasted with those for Greek. Since the study of Greek language and literature was an integral part of Roman education, some bilingual conversation books, Greek–Latin glossaries, and learned Latin grammars survived that allowed a few enterprising scholars to acquire some knowledge of Greek in the early Middle Ages.³ On the other hand, Hebrew was a localized, essentially ethnic language in the Roman Empire. Outside of its historical homeland, Hebrew literature was read in translation, whether in the Greek Septuagint, the Syriac Peshitta, or the early Latin translations of the Hebrew Bible.⁴ As a result, there was never a tradition of teaching Hebrew to

¹John 19, 19–20. The Latin phrase *tres sacrae linguae* appears to have originated with, or at least been popularized by, Isidore (*Etymologies* ix.i.3: *Tres sunt autem linguae sacrae: Hebraea, Graeca, Latina, quae toto orbe maxime excellunt*). ²See, for example, J. J. Mihelic, ‘The Study of Hebrew in England’, *Journal of Bible and Religion*, 14/2 (May 1946), 94–100. For a comprehensive survey of the study of Hebrew in the early medieval period, see Matthias Thiel, *Grundlagen und Gestalt der Hebräischkenntnisse des frühen Mittelalters*, Biblioteca degli Studi Medievali, 4 (Spoleto, 1973). ³See Walter Berschin, *Griechisch-lateinisches Mittelalter: von Hieronymus zu Nikolaus von Kues* (Berne/Munich, 1980), translated by Jerold C. Frakes, *Greek Letters and the Latin Middle Ages: from Jerome to Nicholas of Cusa* (Washington, DC, 1988); Bernhard Bischoff, ‘Das griechische Element in der abendländischen Bildung des Mittelalters’, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 44 (1951), 27–55, repr. in his *Mittelalterliche Studien*, II (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 246–75. For the evidence of Irish glossaries, see Paul Russell, ‘Graece... Latine: Graeco-Latin Glossaries in Early Medieval Ireland’, *Peritia*, 14 (2000), 406–20, and Pádraic Moran, ‘Greek in Early Medieval Ireland’, in *Multilingualism in the Greco-Roman Worlds*, edited by A. Mullen and P. James (Cambridge, forthcoming). ⁴The closest

foreigners. The only option, therefore, for a serious aspiring student was immersion among the Jews themselves. The most significant Christian scholar to follow this course was Jerome, who began his new translation of the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew (*iuxta hebraeos*) around 391, having retired to a monastery near Bethlehem.

Around the same time that Jerome began his translation project, he produced three technical works: *De Situ et Nominibus Locorum Hebraicorum*, a translation of Eusebius' biblical gazetteer;⁵ *De Interpretatione Hebraicorum Nominum* (hereafter referred to as *Hebrew Names* or *HN*),⁶ a compilation and translation into Latin of the Greek biblical onomasticons then in circulation; and *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, a textual and philological commentary on selected passages from Genesis.⁷ Jerome attributes the original, Greek version of the *Hebrew Names* to the Alexandrian scholar Philo, on the authority of Origen (cf. *HN* 1.2–5). Modern scholars regard its development as more organic, although Alexandria seems likely to have been its place of origin.⁸ This is congruent with the production at Alexandria of the Septuagint translation, about the third century B.C., which presented new problems for readers of the Bible. Proper names, whether of places or people, are not easily translated. In the Hebrew tradition, such names carried significance that was transparent to the reader, sometimes relating to the circumstances of a person's birth or their manifest destiny.⁹ Thus, for example, Jonathan means 'God has given', Eleazer 'God has helped', Ezekiel 'may God strengthen'. Almost invariably, however, these names were transliterated, and not translated, and in the process their symbolic significance was lost. The exception that proves the

contact non-Hebrew speakers would have had with the Hebrew text was the Hexapla, the six parallel versions compiled by Origen in the third century, comprising the Hebrew text in both Hebrew and Greek script, with the Greek translations of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint, and Theodotion. ⁵*Onomastica Sacra*, edited by Paul de Lagarde (Göttingen, 1870, second edition 1887; repr. Hildesheim, 1966), pp. 82–159; *Eusebius: Das Onomastikon der biblischen Ortsnamen*, edited by Erich Klostermann (Leipzig, 1904; repr. Hildesheim, 1966). ⁶*Onomastica Sacra*, edited by Lagarde, pp. 1–81 [the pagination refers to the first edition throughout]. Translations from this text are my own. ⁷*Hieronymi Quaestiones Hebraicae in Libro Geneseos*, edited by Paul de Lagarde (Leipzig, 1868), reprinted in CCL, 72 (Turnhout, 1959), pp. 1–56. Translation and commentary in C. T. R. Hayward, *Saint Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 1995). ⁸For an exhaustive study, see F. X. Wutz, *Onomastica Sacra: Untersuchungen zum Liber interpretationis nominum hebraicorum des hl. Hieronymus*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 3/11 (2 vols) = 41 (Leipzig, 1914–15). On the authorship of the Greek *vorlage*, cf. pp. 14–24. ⁹See James Barr, 'The Symbolism of Names in the Old Testament', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 52 (1969–70), 11–29.

rule is the name of Eve: the Hebrew name חַוְוָה *hawwá*¹⁰ (in the Vulgate, *haua* or *heua*), meaning ‘life-giver’, is firstly rendered Ζωή ‘life’ in the Septuagint at Genesis 3, 20 (though *Eua* thereafter). In many cases, however, the sense of passages in which names are assigned was obscured. For example, the sense of Genesis 30, 6, ‘And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan’, is resolved only when we appreciate that the name Dan means ‘judge’. Biblical onomasticons were intended to bridge this gap, providing interpretations for thousands of Hebrew names.

Only fragments of the Greek originals remain.¹¹ Jerome notes, however, that his sources were very discordant (*HN* 1.6), and this might partially explain some of the inconsistencies in his own version. Many of the names are given multiple etymologies, with little if any semantic thread and no preferred interpretation, as the following examples illustrate:

HN 4.1: Bechor primogenitus uel in clitellis aut ingressus est agnus.
Becher (Genesis 26, 34), first-born, or in saddle-bags, or the lamb entered.

HN 6.19: Fetrefe libycus uitulus siue discooperiens uel certe diuisio aut os declinans.
Potipherah (Genesis 41, 45), Libyan calf, or uncovering, or division undoubtedly, or mouth turning away.

HN 11.29: Zabulon habitaculum eorum uel ius iurandum eius aut habitaculum fortitudinis uel fluxus noctis.
Zebulun (Genesis 30, 20), their abode, or his oath, or abode of strength, or fluid of night.

What is more, where names are found listed under more than one book, there are often further inconsistencies:

HN 81.7: Zabulon habitaculum pulchritudinis.
Zebulun (Revelation 7, 8), abode of beauty.

One might wonder why Jerome, who advocated a return to the Hebrew text for his translations in the interests of greater precision, should admit such ambiguities. Adam Kamesar argues that Jerome held his criticisms over for exposition in the *Quaestiones in Genesim*, which can be regarded as ‘a sort of corrective appendix’ to the *Hebrew Names*.¹² Nonetheless, many of

¹⁰On the transliteration of Hebrew here and elsewhere, see note in the appendix below. ¹¹Printed in Lagarde, *Onomastica Sacra*, pp. 161–204, and Wutz, *Onomastica Sacra*, pp. 673–748. ¹²Adam Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible: A Study of the Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim* (Oxford, 1993), p. 107; compare, for example, *Quaestiones* 30.19–20 (cited in Kamesar, p. 110): *male igitur et uolenter in libro nominum Zabulon fluxus noctis interpretatur* ‘wrongly, therefore, and grievously Zebulun is explained as “fluid of night” in the book of names’.

the ambiguities are not clarified, and it appears that Jerome — and perhaps contemporary Jewish scholars — frequently felt unable to identify any one interpretation as definitive.¹³ In such cases, the author listed all plausible alternatives, providing raw material for subsequent generations of translators and interpreters.

MEDIEVAL IRISH SOURCES

There is no evidence for the presence of Jews in England until after the Conquest, and no reason to think Ireland any different. I am aware of only one reference to Jews in Ireland in the annalistic record (*Annals of Inisfallen*, s.a. 1079): *Coicer Iudaide do thichtain dar muir 7 aisceda leo do Thairdelbach, 7 a n-dichor doridisi dar muir* ‘Five Jews came from over sea with gifts to Toirdelbach [Ua Briain], and they were sent back again over sea’.¹⁴ We can assume, therefore, that whatever knowledge of Hebrew there was in early medieval Ireland, it was gleaned from the shelves of monastic libraries, rather than imparted orally.

Matthias Thiel’s catalogue of literary sources for the knowledge of Hebrew in the early Middle Ages shows that Jerome’s works, and in particular the *Hebrew Names*, were by far the most important.¹⁵ In a few cases authors may have had access to Greek materials from the same tradition that Jerome drew on,¹⁶ though, if anything, Thiel’s survey testifies more to the absence of sources for Hebrew.

The study of Jerome’s *Hebrew Names* in Ireland is in evidence in the earliest surviving Irish gospel books, including the seventh-century Codex Usserianus Primus,¹⁷ which include abridgements of Jerome’s work at the start of each gospel text. Patrick McGurk has argued that the broader transmission of such lists points to an Insular, and specifically Irish, origin.¹⁸ The

¹³Barr, ‘Symbolism of Names’, pp. 17–18, outlines reasons why names might not have been easily intelligible, being of foreign origin, deriving from an archaic linguistic stratum (especially in the older biblical books), or comprising words that had become rare in the Hebrew lexical stock (sometimes reconstructed by reference to cognate languages). ¹⁴Marie Therese Flanagan associates the visit with Toirdelbach’s overlordship of Dublin from 1072, and its importance in overseas trade, suggesting the Jews may have come from Rouen (‘High-Kings with Opposition, 1072–1166’, in *A New History of Ireland*, 1, *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, edited by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford, 2005), pp. 899–933 (p. 903)). William the Conqueror, however, had earlier brought a colony of Jews from Rouen to England, and they may therefore have come from closer to home (*William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, 1, edited by R. A. B. Mynors and others (Oxford, 1998), p. 563). ¹⁵cf. Thiel, *Grundlagen und Gestalt*, pp. 14–49. ¹⁶cf. Thiel on Eriugena, *ibid.*, pp. 49–50. ¹⁷Trinity College, Dublin, MS 55 (A.IV.15); cf. Patrick McGurk, *Latin Gospel Books from AD 400 to AD 800* (Paris, 1961), no. 83 (p. 79). ¹⁸*idem*, ‘An Edition of the Abbreviated and

Hebrew Names is also used in Ailerán's exegetical treatment of the genealogical introduction in Matthew's gospel (dated before 665). Aidan Breen, in his edition, details a very wide range of patristic sources, and in his discussion of the onomastic sources argues for use of a wider range of materials than Jerome's *Hebrew Names*, and in particular for the use of Greek onomasticons.¹⁹ Jerome's *De Situ et Nominibus Locorum Hebraicorum* is a pervasive source for Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*, which also uses Jerome's *Hebrew Names* and *Liber Quaestionum*.²⁰

The aspect of interest in Hebrew that is commonly regarded as most characteristically Irish is the exposition of *tres linguae sacrae*.²¹ The earliest example of the Irish treatment of the 'three sacred languages' is by Columbanus, who gives his name 'Ionae hebraice, Peristerae graece, Columbae latine'.²² The significance of this triad of languages is articulated in *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae* (dated 655):

harum uero omnium linguarum noui testamenti tempore, tribus linguis, hebraicae utique, graecae et latinae, principatus committitur; quia in eis crucis christi titulus litteris hebraicis, graecis et latinis scriptus, euangelica auctoritate perhibetur.²³

Of all these languages in the time of the New Testament, chief place is given to three languages, especially to Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; because the *titulus* of the cross of Christ was written in these, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin letters, it is stated with evangelical authority.

Selective Set of Hebrew Names Found in the Book of Kells', in *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity College, Dublin, 6–9 September, 1992*, edited by Felicity O'Mahony (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 102–32. For more recent discussion, see Elizabeth Mullins, 'The Irish Hebrew Name Lists in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, lat. 940', *Scriptorium*, 57/2 (2003), 226–37. ¹⁹*Ailerani Interpretatio Mystica et Moralis Progenitorum Domini Iesu Christi*, edited by Aidan Breen (Dublin, 1995), pp. 81–103. ²⁰cf. *Adomnan's De Locis Sanctis*, edited by Denis Meehan (Dublin, 1958; repr. 1983), esp. pp. 11–18. ²¹cf. Bernhard Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter', *Sacris Erudiri*, 6 (1954), 189–279, repr. in his *Mittelalterliche Studien*, 1 (Stuttgart, 1966), 205–73, translated by Colm O'Grady, 'Turning-Points in the History of Latin Exegesis in the Early Middle Ages', in *Biblical Studies: The Medieval Irish Contribution*, edited by Martin McNamara, Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association, 1 (Dublin, 1976), pp. 74–160; R. E. McNally, 'The "Tres Linguae Sacrae" in Early Irish Bible Exegesis', *Theological Studies*, 19 (1958), 395–403; David Howlett, '"Tres linguae sacrae" and Threefold Play in Insular Latin', *Peritia*, 16 (2002), 94–115. ²²*Sancti Columbani Opera*, edited by G. S. M. Walker, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 2 (Dublin, 1957), p. 54; echoed in Adomnán: *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, edited and translated by A. O. Anderson and M. O. Anderson, second edition (Oxford, 1991), p. 4. ²³PL 35, cols 2149–220 (col. 2181); cf. Michael Lapidge and Richard Sharpe, *A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature, 400–1200* (Dublin, 1985), §291.

Several examples are cited by Bischoff and McNally, the latter's evaluation being that 'Hebrew and Greek were not only *linguae sacrae* to the Bible commentators of the pre-Carolingian period, but more important still they were *linguae ignotae*'.²⁴ Both writers emphasize that the Greek and Hebrew are often pedantic or even entirely fantastical, as in the following account of the suprascription of the cross in its original languages:

Hoc est titulus in cruce Christi, quod scripsit Pilatus. In Ebraica scriptum est: Annun Basilion Toon Martyrion. In Grega dicitur: Visa Malchus Iudaeorum. Et in Latina hoc dicitur: Hic est Iesus Christus Rex Iudaeorum.²⁵

This is the *titulus* on the cross of Christ which Pilate wrote. In Hebrew was written *Annun Basilion Toon Martyrion*. In Greek is said: *Visa Malchus Iudaeorum*. And in Latin this is said: This is Jesus Christ, King of the Jews.

There is a curious inversion here. The text cited as Hebrew in fact represents Greek βασιλεὺς τῶν μαρτυριῶν 'king of the witnesses/martyrs'.²⁶ Its significance is unclear, and its wording departs from the phrase βασιλεὺς τῶν ἰουδαίων given in the Greek version of all four gospels.²⁷ Conversely, the phrase cited as Greek includes the Hebrew word מַלְאָךְ *mālakh* 'to reign' (or מֶלֶךְ *melekh* 'king'), Latinised as *Malchus*.²⁸ A similar jumbling of languages occurs in a Middle Irish poem 'Episcopus in t-Ebra', found in the Book of Uí Maine, fol. 73^b18–29 (= 132^vb in the old foliation).²⁹ Here similarly, words of Greek origin (Latin *episcopus*, *presbyter*, *diaconus*, *synagoga*) are claimed as Hebrew, while a word ultimately of Hebrew origin (*levita* 'Levite') is claimed as Greek (cf. λευίτης), as are two Latin words (*pontifex*, *sacerdos*).

The tendency towards unbounded improvisation is more fully realized in the *Munich Computus*:

Sol dictus est, eo quod solus luceat, uel a soliditate luminis. Gamse in Hebreo uel simpsia, elios in Greco, panath cum philosophis, foebe cum Syris, titan cum Chaldeis.

²⁴McNally, 'Tres Linguae Sacrae', p. 397. ²⁵*Scriptores Hiberniae Minores I*, edited by R. E. McNally, CCSL, 108B (Turnhout, 1973), pp. 155–71, §83; this passage also cited in McNally, 'Tres Linguae Sacrae', p. 400. Alternative inscriptions are given in the Irish commentary on Mark (*Expositio Euangelii Secundum Marcum*, edited by Michael Cahill, CCSL, 82 (Turnhout, 1997)), echoed in the *Lebor Ollaman* (cf. Róisín McLoughlin, 'Fénius Farsaid and the Alphabets', *Ériu*, 59 (2009), 1–24, esp. p. 18). ²⁶I am unable to make sense of *annun* (apparently corresponding to οὐτός ἐστιν/*hic est*); perhaps this incorporates Greek νῦν 'now'. The spelling *basilion* seems to give the word an incorrect *o*-stem accusative ending (*recte* βασιλέα). ²⁷Matthew 27, 37, Mark 15, 26, Luke 23, 38, John 19, 19. The Latin inscription is similarly unfaithful in its inclusion of *Christus*. ²⁸*Visa* is similarly unclear here: perhaps Latin *visē* 'behold' (2 sg imperative) is intended? ²⁹Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 1225 (D.ii.1).

The sun (*sol*) is so called, because it is used to shine alone (*solus*), or from the strength (*soliditas*) of its light. (The sun is called) *gamse* or *simpsia* in Hebrew, *elios* in Greek, *panath* among the philosophers, *foebe* among the Syrians, and *titan* among the Chaldeans.³⁰

Smit sees the *tres linguae sacrae* tradition as more than a stylistic extravagance, but as originating in a ‘deep, somewhat naive, piety’, being ‘perhaps for them a more or less sacred obligation’.³¹ He recalls Isidore’s statement that knowledge of the three languages is necessary for the clarification of holy scripture (*Etymologies*, IX.i.3). This philological interest connects directly with the work of Jerome, and the application of linguistic knowledge to scriptural exegesis may have been the ultimate aspiration of Irish scholars, whatever their real attainment.

The above-mentioned texts cite Hebrew words explicitly, in contrast with the *Hisperica Famina* and related works.³² The vocabulary of these texts has long been recognized to include Latin coinages based on Hebrew words. However, analysis of this material presents some methodological difficulties. Some words identified as having Hebrew origins have a close correspondence, both formally and semantically, with the Hebrew etymon proposed, and these explanations can be further supported if independent knowledge of the Hebrew word can be traced to known sources.³³ In other cases, however, the identification of Hebrew words can be much more uncertain: formal/semantic correspondences may be looser, there may be absence of any corroborating sources, and difficult words can have competing explanations, even drawing on several different languages.³⁴ Howlett’s assessment may well be true:

³⁰*The Munich Computus: Text & Translation. Irish Computistics Between Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede and its Reception in Carolingian Times*, edited by Immo Warntjes (Stuttgart, 2010), pp. 100–1 (cp. Hebrew שֶׁמֶשׁ *šemeš*, Greek ἥλιος). Warntjes regards this as the source of a parallel passage in *De Ratione Computandi*: cf. *Cummian’s Letter ‘De Controuersia Paschali’, Together with a Related Irish Computistical Tract ‘De Ratione Computandi’*, edited by Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Toronto, 1988), pp. 115–16. ³¹J. W. Smit, *Studies on the Language and Style of Columba the Younger (Columbanus)* (Amsterdam, 1971), pp. 141–46 (cited from p. 144). ³²Edited by Michael W. Herren, *The Hisperica Famina*, 1, *The A-Text* (Toronto, 1974). David Howlett has discussed the Hebrew elements of this and other texts in several publications, including ‘Israelite Learning in Insular Latin’, *Peritia*, 11 (1997), 117–52, and ‘More Israelite Learning in Insular Latin’, *ibid.*, 13 (1999), 135–41. ³³For example, *sennosus* is translated by Herren as ‘toothy’ or ‘chomping’ (lines 158, 170, and 298) and is derived by him from Hebrew יָשָׁן *šēn* ‘tooth’ with a Latin adjectival suffix. In this case, the explanation *sen dentium* (for the Hebrew letter of the same name) may be found in Jerome’s Letter 30: *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, edited by I. Hilberg, CSEL, 54 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1910; repr. 1961), p. 246.4. ³⁴As an indication of the dubious nature of some of these explanations, see

The *Hisperica Famina* were designed neither to blind with science nor to obfuscate with obscurity, but to communicate, to exercise the wits and expand the capacities of students. And so they do for anyone who reads them rightly.³⁵

But when does the ingenuity of the modern reader — with the benefits of modern scholarly resources — surpass that of the original authors? The most optimistic view would admit all conjectures as positive evidence for knowledge of Hebrew. However, as some explanations seem to be more speculative than others, we might instead aim to differentiate the quality of evidence, and the grounds for such an analysis have yet to be established.

The sources for some of the proposed Hebrew-derived Hisperic vocabulary remain enigmatic. Herren cautiously attributed the terms to some ‘Hebrew–Latin glossaries of uncertain origin’.³⁶ Howlett, on the basis of twenty-four proposed Hebrew words not found in Greek or Latin literary sources, argued that because all of these words occur in the Hebrew bible (some only in oblique forms), the ‘most economical explanation’ is that their devisers read them directly from Hebrew manuscripts and knew enough of Hebrew inflection and word-formation to supply their lemmatic forms.³⁷ There is no documentary evidence to show *how* such a knowledge of Hebrew was acquired.

HEBREW IN IRISH GLOSSARIES

In previous evaluations of the study of Hebrew in the early Middle Ages, the evidence of early Irish glossaries has been completely overlooked.³⁸ This is despite the fact that these texts explicitly cite 77 distinct words as Hebrew (listed in the appendix below), in order to explain the origins of particular Irish words.³⁹

OM 620: Garb .i. ebreicum nomen est, gareb .i. scapies interpretatur.⁴⁰

Garb ‘rough’ is a Hebrew noun, *gareb*, i.e. it means *scabies* ‘roughness, itching’.⁴¹

Herren’s discussion of four words of possible Arabic origin (*arotus*, *curuana*, *gansia*, *madiada*; references on p. 194). These are cited from Leo Wiener, *Contributions Toward a History of Arabico-Gothic Culture* (New York, 1917), a work which sets out to prove the author’s hypothesis that Gothic and other Germanic languages are significantly derived from Arabic, and Germanic mythology similarly; see Henry Bradley in *English Historical Review*, 33 (1918), 252–55. ³⁵‘Israelite Learning’, p. 125. ³⁶*Hisperica Famina*, p. 20. ³⁷‘Israelite Learning’, p. 150. ³⁸For an overview of the Irish glossary tradition, see Paul Russell, ‘The Sounds of a Silence: The Growth of Cormac’s Glossary’, *CMCS*, 15 (Summer, 1988), 1–30. ³⁹See below for notes on these abbreviations. The glossaries similarly derive Irish words from Latin, Greek, Welsh (or Brittonic), Norse, English, and Pictish. ⁴⁰An Irish gloss *.i. claime* ‘leprosy’ explains the Latin term *scabies*. ⁴¹Note that Latin *nomen* may be interpreted either as ‘noun’ or ‘name’.

Irsan 632.01: Lía a nomine ebraico lia, laboriosa.

Lía 'stone', from the Hebrew noun *lia*, hard-working.

OM 495: Fássag ebraice transgressio .i. ro-búth ann ríamh ce do-réarach, unde dicitur fássag mbreth .i. quod dixerunt qui de hoc mundo transierunt.

Fásach 'maxim, precedent' in Hebrew [means] going over, i.e. it was there before though it has gone, as is said 'a precedent of judgments', i.e. what they said, those who passed over from this world.

The first Hebrew word given here appears to be גָּרֵב *gārēbh* 'scabby', explained at *HN* 38.24 and 54.17, for the name Gareb mentioned at 11 Samuel 23, 38 and Jeremiah 31, 39. The second word is לֵאָא *lē'á* 'weary', translated at *HN* 8.7, for the name Leah (cf. Genesis 29, 16ff.). In the third example, the headword is treated ambiguously as both Irish and Hebrew, and the explanation is close to that in *HN* 13.11 (Exodus 34, 25) *Fasec transgressus siue transcensio*. Remarkably, the fact that this is the Hebrew word for Passover (פֶּסַח *pesah*) receives no mention.⁴²

This corpus presents an opportunity to explore how accurately Hebrew was known, what sources were used in its study, and how these sources were transmitted and interrogated. The glossaries in question are O'Mulconry's glossary (OM), *Sanas Cormaic* (Y; Cormac's glossary), *Dúil Dromma Cetta* (DDC), and a glossary named *Irsan*.⁴³ The number of entries in each text citing Hebrew words (some repeated in more than one text) and their relative proportion within the text as a whole are given in the table below.

Glossary	Hebrew entries	Total entries	Approx. %
O'Mulconry's glossary	57	877	6%
<i>Irsan</i>	20	233	9%
<i>Sanas Cormaic</i> (total)	15	1300	1%
(short recension)	5	694	1%
(long recension only)	10	606	2%
<i>Dúil Dromma Cetta</i>	3	646	0%

It should be immediately obvious that OM has more Hebrew entries than any other glossary. This also appears to be the earliest glossary compilation, dated by MacNeill to between the mid-seventh and mid-eighth centuries.⁴⁴

⁴²On Jerome's transliteration of Hebrew words, including *f* for the letter פ *pê* (as in this example), see James Barr, 'Jerome and the Sounds of Hebrew', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 12 (1967), 1–36. ⁴³References to printed editions are given (under Abbreviations) at the end of this article. These texts are currently being edited by the Early Irish Glossaries Project for print publication (along with a related glossary, *Loman* (CIH 622.13–627.35), which contains no Hebrew words). Manuscript transcriptions and other resources are available online at the Early Irish Glossaries Database: <<http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/>>. ⁴⁴Eoin MacNeill, 'De

Irsan, though by far the shortest of the texts considered here, is distinguished by having the highest concentration of Hebrew etymologies, and is also valuable for having several entries not found in any other text.

The prologue to OM declares its source for Hebrew at the outset:

Incipit discreptio de origine scoticae linguae quam congregauerunt religiosi uiri, adiunctis nominibus ex Hebr<ae>icano Hi<e>ronimi et tractationibus, i.e. Ambrosi et Cassiani et Augustini et Eisdori, Virgili, Prisciani, Commiani, Ciceronis, necnon per literas Graecorum, i.e. Atticae, Doricae, Eolicae ling<u>ae, quia Scoti de Graecis originem duxerunt, sic et ling<u>am.⁴⁵

Here begins a description of the origin of the Irish language which religious men compiled, having combined Jerome's *Hebrew Names* and [other] discussions, i.e. by Ambrose and Cassian and Augustine and Isidore, Virgil, Priscian, Commianus, Cicero; and also by means of Greek literature, i.e. in the Attic, Doric, and Aeolic language, because the Irish derive their origin from the Greeks, and thus too their language.

Source analysis duly bears this out: of the 77 words cited as Hebrew, *HN* is the most plausible source for 61. In a few cases, this work appears to have been supplemented with other sources. Two words, *bresith* (OM 142) and *cinoth* (OM 238), are not explained in *HN*. These represent the Hebrew names of the book of Genesis (taken from its opening words בְּרֵאשִׁית *bərēšīth* 'In the beginning') and the book of Lamentations (תְּקִינֹת *kīnōth*) respectively, and are explained in Jerome's prologues to his Vulgate translations.⁴⁶ Both words are also discussed by Isidore in *Etymologies*, vi.i.4 and i.8 respectively. In the latter case, however, Isidore translates *cinoth*, a Hebrew plural, with the singular *lamentatio*, and the same mistake is echoed in OM, suggesting that Isidore, rather than the Jerome's prologue, was the source for this entry. Isidore is also the most likely source for OM 371 *Edom sanguinius*, an explanation which does not occur in *HN*, but is found in *Etymologies*, vii.vi.34.

What of Jerome's other works? The *Liber Quaestionum* explains the literal meaning of *bresith* as *in principio*, though the Irish glossary entry omits this information, treating the word only as the Hebrew title of Genesis, which therefore suggests dependence instead on Jerome's prologue and/or Isidore. The *Liber Quaestionum* is arguably a source for OM 772, which gives a syllabic etymology for the word Israel:

OM 772: Israhél ebraice is i.e. uir,⁴⁷ ra i.e. uideo, el .i. deus .i. fer darbo follus dia. *Israel*, in Hebrew *is*, i.e. man; *ra*, i.e. I see; *el*, i.e. God; i.e. a man to whom God was manifest.

Origine Scotiae Linguae, *Ériu*, 11 (1930–32), 112–29 (pp. 116–17). ⁴⁵adiunctis] adiunctis MSS; duxerunt] dixerunt MSS. ⁴⁶The latter in the prologue to the Book of Kings. ⁴⁷*uiro* MS.

HN interprets the word as *vir videns deum* ‘man seeing God’ at 63.22 and 74.15, with a fuller explanation at *HN* 13.21:

Israhel est uidere deum siue uir aut mens uidens deum. et de hoc in libris hebraicarum quaestionum plenius diximus.

Israel is to see God, or man or mind seeing God. And I have said more on this in the books of Hebrew questions.

Jerome refers to *Liber Quaestionum*, 52.12:

uir uero uidens deum his literis scribitur, ut uir ex tribus literis scribatur, aleph iod sin, ut dicatur eis, uidens ex tribus, res aleph he, et dicatur raha. porro el ex duabus, aleph et lamed, et interpretetur deus siue fortis.

[Israel, i.e.] ‘man seeing God’ is written with these letters, so that ‘man’ should be written with three letters, *aleph*, *yodh*, *shin*, as should be said *eis* [עִשׂ]; ‘seeing’ from three, *resh*, *aleph*, *he*, and it should be said *raha* (רַחַ); and then *el* from two, *aleph* and *lamedh* [לֶ], and it should be interpreted as God or strong.⁴⁸

OM 772 is the only glossary entry that enumerates the individual syllables of a Hebrew word (*is*, *ra*, *el*), and in doing so it follows the treatment of the *Liber Quaestionum* rather than the simpler explanation of *HN*. Regarding the *Liber de Situ*, I can find no indication of its use, perhaps unsurprising given that it focuses on the location of places, rather than the interpretation of their names.

Of the remaining twelve words cited as Hebrew in Irish glossaries, one is Greek confused as Hebrew (*trena*, *lamentation* = θρηνησις), and for the rest I have not been able to identify any source, nor even any closely corresponding Hebrew word. I can therefore only assume — until further light is shown — that these entries are defective, owing perhaps to faults in the sources used, or to errors on the parts of the compilers themselves, or to the vagaries of manuscript transmission.⁴⁹

TRANSMISSION AND RECEPTION OF JEROME'S *HEBREW NAMES*

Lagarde based his edition of *HN* principally on three manuscripts:⁵⁰

F Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 6228 (Freising, s. viii ex), fols 1r–40v.⁵¹

⁴⁸The translation is my own. ⁴⁹OM and *Irsan*, representing the bulk of entries, are preserved only in sixteenth-century manuscripts. ⁵⁰He also occasionally cites readings from the older editions of Jean Martianay (1699) and Dominic Vallarsi (1735, 1767). Bernard Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana Manuscripta*, 4 vols (Steenbrugge, 1969–1972), II, 1–29, lists 16 manuscripts of *HN* from the tenth century and before. ⁵¹cf. F. Brunhölzl, ‘Die Freisinger Dombibliothek im Mittelalter: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte, ihrer Bedeutung für die literarische Überlieferung und zu ihrer Stellung im geistigen Leben Südbayerns bis zum Ausgang

H Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. bibl. 154 (olim B IV 19; s. ix ex).⁵²

B Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, 289 (olim Regius theologicus latinus oblongus 353; Liesborn, s. xii)⁵³

Several of the Hebrew words and explanations in Irish glossaries agree with variants in F and H specifically, against B and Lagarde's critically edited text. In a few cases, corruptions in FH fundamentally alter the sense of the entry in *HN*, and this sense is reflected in the Irish glossaries. For example:

OM 460: *Ét autem ebraice, timuere et obstupuere, ar is omun 7 mothugad bés ina cethrae. Eti quoque mecum, ar is selb cach óin a c[h]ethra diless.*

Éit 'cattle, herd of cattle' moreover in Hebrew, they fear and stupefy, for fear and amazement is the nature of cattle. *Eti* also [means] with me [i.e. mine], for everyone's possession of their cattle is their property.

The second part of this entry is derived from *HN* 35.16, where Jerome translates *Etthi* (Hittites) as *metum* 'fear' (cf. Hebrew חָיִת *hēth* 'fear'). The compiler of OM has read this as *mecum* 'with me', as is confirmed by his reference to *selb* 'possession' in his justification of a Hebrew etymology for *éit* 'cattle'. This is unlikely to be his error, however, as *mecum* also occurs for *metum* in Lagarde's variants from FH.

Similarly, in OM 715 *Imdae, emda ebraice .i. plenitudo (Imdae* 'numerous, plentiful', *emda* in Hebrew, i.e. plenitude), the Hebrew word cited differs from Jerome's *iemla*,⁵⁴ but corresponds better with the variant *iemda* in FH. OM 19 *Adomnán ebraice desiderabilis interpretatur* seems to be derived from *HN* 3.9, where *adama* is a variant in FH for the better reading *abdan* preferred by Lagarde.⁵⁵ The latter would hardly have allowed the glossator to make such a connection. There are other, similar correspondences that reflect more minor orthographical variants, but nonetheless provide cumulative evidence for the transmission of this version of the Jerome's text in Ireland:

balach *Irsan* 629.01: balac FH, bale B [*HN* 3.19]

balam *Irsan* 629.03: balam FH, balaam B [*HN* 16.20]

des zwölften Jahrhunderts' (unpublished dissertation, Munich, 1961), p. 310. ⁵²cf. Friedrich Leitschuh and Hans Fischer, *Katalog der Handschriften der königlichen Bibliothek zu Bamberg*, 4 vols (Bamberg, 1887–1912), 1 (repr. Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 131–32. ⁵³cf. Valentin Rose, *Verzeichniss der lateinischen Handschriften der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, 11, *Die Handschriften der Kurfürstlichen Bibliothek und der Kurfürstlichen Lande*, Erste Abteilung, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, 13 (Berlin, 1901), pp. 65–67; Andreas Fingernagel, *Die illuminierten lat. Handschriften deutscher Provenienz der Staatsbibliothek PK Berlin*, 8.–12. Jahrhundert, Teil 1, *Text* (Wiesbaden, 1991), p. 43. ⁵⁴*HN* 42.17, referring to the name Imlah in 1 Kings 22, 8. ⁵⁵Referring to the name Hemdan at Genesis 36, 26.

edor enim eber OM 466: edroi FH, edrai B [HN 18.9]
 goni OM 681: goni FH, guni B [HN 13.18]
 uel OM 485: uel FH, aut B [HN 6.17]

As already discussed above, Jerome often supplies multiple interpretations for a given Hebrew name. His intention may have been to furnish readers with all possible alternatives in order to support future exegetical efforts. This approach suited the work of Irish etymologists too. These looked for both formal (phonetic and/or graphical) and semantic associations between Irish and Hebrew words, and the ambiguity of Jerome's interpretations broadened the range of semantic options available.

In some cases the compiler apparently modifies Jerome's interpretation to suit his purpose. Sometimes he omits a word from his source, as in *elom exercitus* (OM 384), originally *elom exercitus fortitudinis* (HN 54.13).⁵⁶ He can also extend Jerome's interpretation, as in OM 129 *Bás ebraice, tribulatio uel angustiae uel mors latine* (*Bás* 'death' in Hebrew, affliction or difficulties or death in Latin), from HN 3.26 *Bosra in tribulatione uel angustia*. Here, the compiler not only jettisons the final syllable of the Hebrew word, but exacerbates its significance from acute ('anguish or difficulties') to terminal ('death').

There are also signs, however, that the compiler engaged in a deeper analysis of his source material. Some of the glossary entries contain appropriate translations of Hebrew words that have no exact direct explanation in Jerome, but instead seem to be inferred from his text. For example:

OM 487: Fálith ebraice faleth [falet YAdd 627] saluus .i. fáilith cech slán.
Fálid 'glad, cheerful', in Hebrew *falet(h)*, safe; i.e. everything safe is happy.

The Hebrew word cited corresponds to פָּלֵת *pālēt* 'deliverance'. Jerome gives similar, though distinct, interpretations at HN 18.17 *Faleti saluator meus* [*falecti* BFH] and HN 27.21 *Faletti saluans me*. The glossator seems to have inferred — correctly — that the *-i* ending of the Hebrew word corresponds to *meus/me* in the interpretations. This is the Hebrew suffixed pronoun ' .-ī, and it would have been confirmed from numerous parallels:⁵⁷ HN 3.15 *Achī frater meus*, HN 3.4 *Beerī puteus meus siue putei mei*, HN 7.9 *Gani elatio mea siue hortus meus*, HN 18.9 *Edraī inundatio pascet me*, and many more.

⁵⁶Similarly *Irsan* 629.03, which contracts HN 16.20 *Balaam uanus populus*, etc. to *balam .i. uanus*, and OM 134b, which shortens HN 16.22 *Behelfegor habens os pelliceam to Belfegor .i. os pellicium*. ⁵⁷The suffixed pronoun represents the accusative case (Latin *me*) when affixed to verbs, the genitive case (*mei*) or possessive pronoun (*meus*) when affixed to substantives; cf. W. Gesenius, E. Kautzsch, and A. E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford, 1910), §§ 33 and 91b.

In the same way, two entries show that the glossator had correctly inferred that final *-o/-a* in Hebrew words corresponds to Latin *eius*, representing masculine (י *-ō*) and feminine (ה *-āh*) suffixed pronouns:

OM 608: Gat ebraice fortitudo .i. quia per uim rapitur.
Gat ‘theft’, in Hebrew, strength, i.e. because it is taken by force.

Hebrew טַז ‘strong’;⁵⁸ HN 6.27 *Gaza fortitudo eius*, cp. HN 3.27 *Beriā in clamore eius*, HN 7.14 *Ieschā tabernaculum uel unctio eius*, HN 8.16 *Melchā regina eius*, etc.

OM 708: Īala ēn .i. ial ebraice exercitus interpretatur.
Īalla ‘flocks’ of birds, i.e. *ial* in Hebrew means army.

Hebrew הָלָהּ *hāl* ‘army’; HN 27.16 *Elo exercitus eius* (cp. also HN 18.6 *Elon exercitus fortitudo*, HN 54.13 *Elom exercitus fortitudinis*).⁵⁹

Another entry recognizes that the Jerome frequently interprets final *-on* as *tristitia*:

OM 289: Dagh .i. bonus uel piscis. (*Dag* ‘good’, i.e. good or fish.)
Hebrew דָּג *dāgh* ‘fish’; HN 32.7 *Dagon piscis tristitiae*, cp. HN 11.10 *Sefion egressum est os tristitiae*, HN 12.27 *Ebron participatio tristitiae...*, HN 15.25 *Arnon aceruus tristitiae...*, etc.

The entry below shows that the compiler inferred the meaning of *gala* from several interpretations containing it as an element:

OM 614: Gal .i. galar, ccala enim apud Ebreos tranmigratio interpretatur .i. quia motat mentem.

Gal ‘excitement’, i.e. *galar* ‘sickness’, for *gala* in Hebrew means transmigration, i.e. because it [sickness] moves the mind.

Hebrew גָּלָהּ *gālā* ‘depart, emigrate’; HN 7.4 *Galaad aceruus testimonii siue transmigratio testimonii*; cp. HN 64.24 *Galilaea uolubabilis siue transmigratio perpetrata*, HN 27.26 *Galiloth reuelationis uel transmigratonis*, HN 28.2 *Golam transmigratio eorum*, HN 59.8 *Magalim transmigrations siue coloniae*.

At times, however, the compiler is out of his depth. In OM 133, he seems to have guessed that the *-tan* ending of *iectan* corresponds to the diminutive ending in *parvulus* (compare the Irish diminutive *-án*), when it is in fact part of the Hebrew root (קָטַן *kātōn* ‘small’):

⁵⁸I assume here that *gaz* was corrupted to *gat*. ⁵⁹MacNeill, ‘*De Origine Scotiae Linguae*’, p. 114, noted that the order of entries in OM indicates that, in an earlier recension, certain headwords with *-ia-* would originally have been written with early Old Irish *-ē-* (e.g. OM 498 *fiada*, 499 *fiadnaise*, 501 *fiad*, 502 *fiach*, 507 *fiacuil*). This suggests that here in OM 708 the headword *īala* (*Dictionary of the Irish Language*, *iall* 2, gen. sg. *éille*) was at some point updated from original *ēla*, and that Hebrew *el* was adapted to *ial* similarly. (If so, the entry must also have been moved from the E letter block to I at the same time or after.)

OM 133: Bec .i. iec ebraice .i. paruus. (*Bec* ‘small’, i.e. *iec* in Hebrew, i.e. small.)

HN 7.13: *Iectan paruulus*.

In another entry, the Hebrew name *Elcana* (Exodus 6, 24), translated *dei possessio* in Jerome, appears to have been wrongly segmented, with the glossary compiler taking *Elc-* to mean *possessio*.

OM 382: Elg ebraice possessio est diuisa, unde Elg nomen Hiberniae quia possessio est diuissa ab Eorapa. Unde elgon .i. guin Elge .i. guin do t[h]úaithe 7 do c[h]áirte elgon, 7 elgonach úad.

Elg ‘Ireland’, in Hebrew, possession is divided, from which *Elg*, a name for Ireland, because [its] possession is divided from Europe. From which *elgon* ‘malice’ [*<Elg* ‘Ireland’ + *guin* ‘wounding’], i.e. wounding of *Elg*, i.e. *elgon* is a wounding to peoples and to relatives, and *elgonach* is from it.

cf. *HN* 13.3, 35.20 *Elcana dei possessio*.⁶⁰

These slips serve only to highlight the method more clearly. The comparative analysis of Hebrew words in these entries reveals a systematic approach to the study of the language, and an effort to extract more from Jerome’s text than he intended to provide. And some of the discoveries made through the close reading of *HN* may have seemed reasonably intuitive to a Irish speaker. For example, Hebrew is not the only language with suffixed pronouns. The final vowel of Hebrew *faleti* ‘saves me’ (cf. OM 487) corresponds formally to that in Old Irish *beirthe* ‘bears it’,⁶¹ and even though the person in this example is different, the grammatical category is the same. In both languages the pronominal particle is an unstressed enclitic, not separated in writing from the word to which it is affixed. The coincidence of these features in both Hebrew and Irish may have made it easier for a native Irish speaker to discover them than, say, a speaker of Late Latin or proto-Romance.

The same method of analysis was identified in just one other text by Thiel, who regarded it as highly unusual in the context of his survey.⁶² The text in question is a trilingual Latin–Greek–Hebrew glossary, a remarkable undertaking in itself, published by Laistner from Vatican, Bibliotheca Reginae Christinae, MS 215 (s. ix ex.).⁶³ A shorter recension is found in

⁶⁰The glossator’s source may have read *elcana possessio dei*. ⁶¹For example, Milan glosses 42b7, cf. Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish* (Dublin, 1946), §429.

⁶²cf. *Grundlagen und Gestalt*, pp. 139–58: ‘Sein oben charakterisiertes “philologisches” Ziel strebte der Autor mit einer erstaunlichen und im Rahmen unserer Untersuchung fast einmalig dastehenden Sorgfalt und Konsequenz an’ (p. 139).

⁶³M. L. W. Laistner, ‘Notes on Greek from the Lectures of a Ninth-Century Monastery Teacher’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 7 (1923), 421–56 (pp.

Barcelona, Arxiu de la Corona d'Arago, Ripoll MS 74 (Santa Maria de Ripoll, s. x/xi). Thiel argued that the text was based on an original Hebrew–Latin glossary, afterwards expanded to include Greek lemmata.⁶⁴ Although derived from an onomasticon, the text is more than a collection of extracts. All of its 196 lemmata are single words, in contrast to the phrase interpretations generally given in Jerome. In fact, the compiler has compared and analysed entries in the *Hebrew Names* in order to isolate the elements of compound names, and so distil a conventional glossary of synonyms from a collection of looser interpretations. The focus of the text is clearly the study of the Hebrew language itself, rather than its use for exegetical interpretation, and hence Thiel characterized the work as ‘philological’.

Thiel notes several ways in which the identification of common elements allowed the compiler to infer the meaning of individual Hebrew words: suffixed first-person pronoun *-i* (compare OM 487), third-person plural pronoun *-am/-an*, masculine plural ending *-im*, feminine plural ending *-oth*, compounds with theophoric elements *el, ia* (Jah), compounds with *ab* ‘father’ or Aramaic *bar*/Hebrew *ben* ‘son’.⁶⁵

The glossary is the most impressive witness to the study of *tres linguae sacrae*. Thiel noted that in both the Vatican and Ripoll manuscripts the glossary is preceded by the Greek–Latin glossary *Scholica Graecarum Glossarum*, attributed to Martinus Hiberniensis of Laon,⁶⁶ and argued further that the treatment of Greek pointed to the original recension deriving from the Irish circle at Laon in the mid-ninth century. If this is the case, then the evidence of vernacular glossaries, and O’Mulconry in particular, would suggest that Irish scholars at Laon were using a method for studying Hebrew that had originated in Ireland as early as the seventh century.

What about their sources? Did the Vatican glossary draw on the same material used for O’Mulconry, perhaps some intermediate glossary of

446–49). I refer to this text as the ‘Vatican glossary’ for convenience (abbreviated Vat.), and cite entries following the numbering in Laistner (A1, A2, B1, B2, etc.).⁶⁴Bischoff had reasonably assumed that it was based on a Hebrew–Greek onomasticon, with Latin equivalents added afterwards. Entries such as Vat. 110 *iasan* ἄνεμος *ventus* disprove this, however: *HN* 39.8 supplies the interpretation *iasan uetus* (= Jashen at II Samuel 23, 32, associated with יָשָׁן *yāšān* ‘old’); the translation ἄνεμος ‘wind’ depends on a misreading of *vetus* as *ventus*. Although *iasan* ἄνεμος cannot have been an original pair, an alternative explanation to Thiel’s may be that the glossary was originally Greek–Latin (ἄνεμος *ventus*), and that the Hebrew words were added afterwards (erroneously, in this example).⁶⁵*Grundlagen und Gestalt*, pp. 143–51. ⁶⁶On other connections between the *Scholica* and *Sanas Cormaic* see Russell, ‘*Graece... Latine*’, pp. 416–19. The Irish origins of the *Scholica* have, since Thiel’s study, been called into question in J. J. Contreni, ‘Three Carolingian Texts Attributed to Laon: Reconsiderations’, *Studi Medievali*, 17/2 (1976), 802–8.

Hebrew extracted from *HN*? With one exception, Hebrew words in Irish glossaries are cited without reference to Greek,⁶⁷ and therefore any common source would have reflected the state of the Vatican glossary before Greek was added there, that is, before it was made trilingual.⁶⁸ The Vatican glossary and O'Mulconry do contain some shared material: fourteen Hebrew words are common to both.⁶⁹ Most of these words, however, may have been found independently in *HN*. An exception is Vat. G1 *gez... fortitudo*, corresponding to OM 608 *gat fortitudo*, which indicates that the author correctly segmented the Hebrew possessive pronoun in *Gaza fortitudo eius* (as discussed above). This correspondence is suggestive of a closer textual link, even if one example hardly proves the case.

The Vatican glossary contains many more Hebrew words than those found in O'Mulconry and related texts. This is not surprising. The Irish texts are not glossaries of Hebrew *per se*, but only cite Hebrew words which they feel offer plausible etymologies for Irish headwords. We must assume that their compilers drew on a larger stock of Hebrew vocabulary than they were able to use to these ends. There are also Hebrew words in O'Mulconry not found in the Vatican glossary at all.⁷⁰ So far as the evidence allows us to tell, any common source underlying both texts (as suggested by the entries for *gat/gaz*) underwent considerable independent development in each. Their most significant feature in common is their shared method of analysis of Hebrew words.

CONCLUSION

With a few exceptions, nearly all of the Hebrew words cited in Irish glossaries are derived from Jerome's work on the interpretation of *Hebrew Names*. An onomasticon is hardly an ideal starting-point for acquiring a knowledge of any language. The meanings of personal, place, and population names are frequently obscure even to educated speakers of a language, and particularly when extracted, as in this case, from literature already ancient to its readers. Jerome's collection of interpretations were vague, varying, and often disparate in character, and were intended to

⁶⁷The exception is OM 2 *Abba ebraice pater grece genitor latine*; cf. Vat. A7 *abba πατήρ pater*. ⁶⁸This assumes that Thiel's explanation is correct, that the text was first a Hebrew-Latin glossary, with Greek added later. ⁶⁹See Appendix, s.vv. *abba*, *Ádam*, *ammonae*, *danæ*, *debrath*, *el*, *enean*, *enec*, *er*, *esda*, *gat*, *is*, *ra*, *sam*. Additionally, Vat. B8 *beth... domus* is paralled in both *Irsan* and *YAdd* (see below s.v. *beth*). ⁷⁰Admittedly, the Vatican glossary may also be selective: Hebrew words known to its compilers may have been omitted where no Greek equivalent was readily found. We should bear in mind, however, that a vast work of Greek lexicography was available to the Irish circle in Laon, in the Greek-Latin glossary in Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 444.

facilitate biblical exegesis rather than study of the language. Indeed, as a translator, Jerome provided these interpretations precisely so that one could appreciate the symbolic resonances of certain Bible passages without having to learn the original language at all. All the more remarkable, then, that this is precisely what Irish scholars attempted to use his text for, and with some, albeit limited, success.

The originality of the Irish glossary compilers goes well beyond their analysis of Hebrew, however. In collating 77 Hebrew words with Irish words bearing some formal and semantic relationship, they systematically collected evidence for the origins of the Irish language that was compatible with the biblical account of the creation of languages (Genesis 11, 1–9) and the Irish version of it articulated in the story of Fénius Farsaid and the fabrication of Góidclc at the Tower of Babel.⁷¹ The close attention to Hebrew evidenced in these glossaries certainly supported, if it did not precipitate, this aspect of the Irish origin legend.

ABBREVIATIONS

CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CIH	<i>Corpus Iuris Hibernici</i> , edited by D. A. Binchy, 6 vols with single pagination (Dublin, 1978)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DDC	<i>Dúil Dromma Cetta</i> , CIH 604.39–622.12
<i>Etymologies</i>	<i>Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Libri XX</i> , edited by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911)
HN	<i>De Interpretatione Hebraicorum Nominum</i> , in <i>Onomastica Sacra</i> , edited by Paul de Lagarde (Göttingen 1870, second edition 1887; repr. Hildesheim, 1966), pp. 1–81, repr. in CCSL, 72 (Turnhout, 1959), pp. 57–161
<i>Irsan</i>	Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1337 (H.3.18), pp. 80a–83b = CIH 627.36–633.33
OM	‘O’Mulconry’s Glossary’, edited by Whitley Stokes, <i>Archiv für celtische Lexicographie</i> , 1 (1900), 232–324 and 473–81
Vat.	Hebrew–Greek–Latin glossary in Vatican, Bibliotheca Reginae Christinae, MS 215. Numbering follows the edition in M. L. W. Laistner, ‘Notes on Greek from the Lectures of a Ninth-Century Monastery Teacher’, <i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i> , 7 (1923), 421–56 (pp. 446–49).

⁷¹*The Early Irish Linguist: An Edition of the Canonical Part of the Auraicept na nÉces*, edited by Anders Ahlqvist (Helsinki, 1982), §1; cf. *The Irish Sex Aetates Mundi*, edited by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Dublin, 1983), §24.

- Y *Sanas Cormaic*, in *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, IV, edited by Kuno Meyer (Dublin, 1913) [based on Yellow Book of Lecan]
- YAdd *Sanas Cormaic* (see previous), referring to articles found only in the long recension

APPENDIX: HEBREW WORDS CITED IN IRISH GLOSSARIES

This appendix lists the words cited as Hebrew in the glossaries, including the texts' translations and variants. References numbers are to the editions cited under Abbreviations, above. Sources and parallels, where identified, are detailed after each word.⁷²

Where the form of the word cited and its translation correspond reasonably closely to an actual Hebrew word, I enclose that word in brackets afterwards. For convenience I cite Hebrew words in both Hebrew and Latin script. The latter follows standard academic transliteration, except in denoting 'soft' consonants (generally post-vocalic) with *bh*, *gh*, *dh*, *kh*, *ph*, *th*.⁷³

- abba* (אבא 'abbā), *genitor* OM 2, *aba* Y 28 [HN 63.20, 73.24, 76.14, *Etymologies* VII.xiii.5, Vat. A7; cf. *abba pater*, Mark 14, 36, Romans 8, 15, Galatians 4, 6]
- abross* 'handiwork', *abra fēs* OM 5
- Adam*, *terrenus/homo uel terrigena* OM 320, Y 1 [HN 2.17, 64.7, *Etymologies* VII.vi.4, Vat. A3]
- Adomnán*, *desiderabilis* OM 19 [HN 3.9]
- ammonae*, *fides* OM 85 [Vat. A31]
- amon* (אמן 'amēn), *uere fidelitas* OM 85 [HN 60.14, 80.10 (also *Etymologies* VI.xix.20)? HN 53.8, 60.11?]
- andoin*, *ecclesia/conuocatio* OM 98, *annon* DDC 620.32
- aran*, *sublenis* OM 111, *Irsan* 628.22 [HN 16.13, 27.19?]
- abilon*, *confusio* Y 116 [HN 3.18, 25.6, etc.]
- bala*, *inueterata Irsan* 629.1 [HN 3.23]
- balach* (בלח 'belā), *deuorans Irsan* 629.1 [HN 3.19]
- balam*, *uanus Irsan* 629.3 [HN 16.20, 21.28, 72.27]
- bas*, *tribulatio uel angustiae uel mors* OM 129, OM 713 [HN 3.26]
- bé*, *mulier* OM 130
- bél*, *os* OM 134b, *linga Irsan* 629.8 [HN 16.22, 21.26, 48.10]
- Belfegor*, *os pellicium* OM 134b [HN 16.22, 21.26, 48.10]
- beth* (בית bayith), *domus* YAdd 171, *Irsan* 629.7, *Irsan* 629.9 [HN 48.11, Vat. B8]
- bresith*, *Genes* OM 142 [*Etymologies* VII.vi.34; Jerome, prologue to *Book of Kings*]
- bret[h]* 7 *breithem Irsan* 628.35⁷⁴

⁷²A detailed analysis of the source for each entry will form part of the forthcoming editions. ⁷³By coincidence, the voiced plosives (*b d g*) in post-vocalic position would have similar pronunciation according to Old Irish orthography. ⁷⁴The entry claims *breth* 'judgement' and *breithem* 'judge' as Hebrew, without further details.

- caedes* (כַּדְּשׁ *kādhēs*), *sanctus* OM 193, *Irsan* 629.19 [HN 17.3]⁷⁵
ccala (גָּלָה *gālā* ‘depart, emigrate’), *transmigratio* OM 614, *galann Irsan* 631.35
 [HN 7.4]
cinoth (קִינוּת *kīnōth*), *lamentatio* OM 238 [Etymologies vi.i.8]
citt, *ouis Irsan* 629.33
dag(h) (גָּד *dāgh*), *bonus uel piscis* OM 47, OM 289, YAdd 91, YAdd 493 [HN 32.7]
dalilia (דָּלִי *dalī*), *situla* OM 292, YAdd 461, *dalin* DDC 613.28 [HN 32.6, Etymologies vii.v.56]
dama (דּוּמָה *dūmā*), *tacens* OM 293, YAdd 497 [HN 5.8]
dancē (דָּן *dān*), *iudicium* OM 294 [HN 5.7, 12.22, Etymologies vii.vii.14, Vat. D1]
debrath (דְּבַרְת *dābhərath*), *loquella* OM 296 [HN 26.29, Vat. D3]
eastbaith, *mearor* YAdd 560, *Irsan* 630.19
edom, *sanguinius* OM 371 [Etymologies vii.vi.34]
edor enim eber, *inundatio pascet me* OM 466 [HN 18.9, 27.19]
eit, *timuere et obstupuere* OM 460 [HN 12.23]
el (אֵל *ēl*), *deus* OM 772 [HN 13.21, 63.22, 74.14, 76.20, *Liber Quaestionum* 52.12, Vat. E1]
elg, *possessio est diuisa* OM 382 [HN 13.3, 35.20]
elom, *exercitus* OM 384 [HN 54.13]
emim (אֵימִים *ēmīm*), *terribilis* OM 389 [HN 22.14]
enean (עָנָן *ānān*), *nubes* OM 396 [HN 18.9, Vat. E13]
enec (הֵלֶק *hēlek*), *portio* OM 403 [HN 27.10, Vat. E17]
eona (יוֹנָה *yōnā*), *columba* OM 396 [HN 46.4, 52.10, 65.1, Etymologies vii.ix.4]
er (עַר *ēr*), *uigelans* OM 413 [HN 18.9, 64.19, Vat. E4]
esda (חֶסֶד *hesedh*), *miser cordia* OM 430 [HN 41.21, Vat. E20]
esserge, *uigelans et surgens* OM 446 [HN 18.9, 64.19 (see *er* above)]
etan, *frons* OM 455, *Irsan* 630.27
ettim, *robustorum* OM 467 [HN 42.1]
eti, *mecum* OM 460 [HN 35.16]
fa, *nihil uel subito* OM 485 [HN 6.17]
fal, *ruina* OM 486a [HN 45.22 (see *ful* below)]
fal (פָּלַג *pālāgh*), *diuisio Irsan* 631.7 [HN 6.14]
faldas, *cadens* OM 568 [HN 6.17]
faleth (פָּלַת *pallēi*), *saluus* OM 487, *falet* YAdd 627 [HN 18.17, 27.21]
fano, *asparcio Irsan* 631.8
fassag (פָּסַח *pesah*), *transgressio* OM 495 [HN 13.11]
fat, *iudicium Irsan* 631.6 [HN 15.10]⁷⁶
fē (פֶּה *pē*), *os* OM 599, *Irsan* 631.2b [HN 48.19]
fiadai (פְּדֵיָה *pədhāyā*), *redemptio domini* OM 498 [HN 42.5, 45.25]
fines, *os mutum Irsan* 631.9 [HN 35.22]
fison, *prudencia Irsan* 631.9
ful, *ruina* OM 556 [HN 45.22]
gad, *temptatio* OM 694, *Irsan* 631.33 [HN 7.3, 13.12, 80.19]
gareb (גָּרַב *gārēbh*), *scapies* OM 620, *garb* YAdd 716 [HN 38.24, 54.17]

⁷⁵cf. Y 291, where the same word is mislabelled as Greek. ⁷⁶The interpretation here seems based on a misunderstanding of HN 15.10 *Fath* κλίμα, *id est plaga...*, confusing κριμα ‘judgment’ with κλίμα ‘region’.

- gat* (גַּת ^caz), *fortitudo* OM 608 [HN 6.27, 22.18, 32.23, 51.24, 69.13, 27.24, Vat. G1]
- gemila*, *infirma* OM 695, *Irsan* 631.34
- gera* (גֵּרָא ^{gērā}), *ruminatio* OM 641, YAdd 701 [HN 7.8]
- gessuri*, *uicina luminiis* OM 650 [HN 22.20]
- goni*, *hostes* OM 681, YAdd 717 [HN 7.8, 13.18]
- ial* (הֵל ^{hēl}), *exercitus* OM 708 [HN 18.6, 54.13, 27.16]
- idida*, *dilectus Irsan* 632.11 [HN 39.4]
- iec*, *paruus* OM 133, Y 151, *ecec* DDC 608.8 [HN 7.13]
- imdae* (ימלא ^{yimlā}), *plenitudo* OM 715, *emdae* YAdd 765, *idema Irsan* 628.2 [HN 42.17]
- is* (אִיִּס ^{īṣ}), *uir* OM 772 [HN 13.21, 63.22, 74.14, 76.20, *Liber Quaestionum* 52.12, Vat. 17]
- lia* (לֵא ^{lē'ā}), *laboriosa Irsan* 632.1 [HN 8.7]
- moises*, *Irsan* 633.2⁷⁷
- ofaz*, *aurum purum* OM 9 [HN 55.7, *Etymologies* xvi.viii.2]
- ra* (רָא ^{rā'eh}), *uideo* OM 772 [HN 13.21, 63.22, 74.14, 76.20, *Liber Quaestionum* 52.12, Vat. R8]
- sam* (שָׁמֶשׁ ^{šemeš}), *sol* OM 860, Y 1154 [HN 30.19, 33.23, Vat. S13]
- trena*, *lamentatio* OM 874 [confusing θρηνησος as Hebrew]
- uoia*, *torquet* OM 554 [HN 28.20]

⁷⁷This entry cites *Moyses* as a Hebrew word from which the headword *Mois* is derived. The former appears to be the Latin form of the name *Moses* (Hebrew מֹשֶׁה ^{mōšē}); the latter does not seem to reflect any Irish word, and may therefore be an Irish adaptation of the same name.