

Arabic and the Study and Translation of the Bible in the Vernacular

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This paper takes as a focal point a 13th-century Hebrew codex currently held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Of unknown authorship and compilatory and fragmentary in nature, this codex consists of a glossary/commentary on various books of the Bible. The most remarkable feature of the text is the fact that it contains 2,017 *aljamiado* glosses in Castilian, 155 in Arabic, and dozens of quotations in Aramaic, mostly from the Targum. It seems to have been part of a more ambitious and comprehensive project, likely a multi-volume set glossing and commenting on the entire Hebrew Bible, a substantial part of which is now lost. Taking the Arabic glosses as a focal point, I will take issue with their provenance, and their exegetical value, and will use them as a vantage point to address broader questions, regarding the role of Arabic and the reliance on Saadia Gaon's translation on the Bible on similar works intended to study the Bible in Castilian and other vernacular languages.