

SIMON OCKLEY



"I read somewhere that everybody on this planet is separated by only six other people. Six degrees of separation. Between us and everybody else on this planet."

– Ouisa, in [John Guare's](#)
["SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION"](#)




**"NARRATIVE HISTORY" AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



SIMON OCKLEY

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1674

 After repeated “eldering” visits, in which a representative of the monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) came to his home to “labor with him,” [Friend John Ellis, Sr.](#) advised a [Quaker](#) elder that he would not be attending meeting for worship “untill the power did move him or work it in him.” (At about this time, another Quaker of Sandwich, [Friend Peter Gaunt](#), was also absenting himself — and Gaunt’s attitude was that the worship of God ought to be an entirely private keep-it-in-your-closet affair. He did not believe in the virtue of what he termed “visible worship of God in the world.” The Sandwich meeting would tolerate this attitude of his, merely recording in its minutes that he “valued not public worship.”)

[Friend George Keith](#)’s A LOOKING-GLASS FOR ALL THOSE, CALLED *PROTESTANTS*, IN THESE THREE NATIONS, WHEREIN THEY MAY SEE WHO ARE TRUE PROTESTANTS AND WHO ARE DEGENERATED AND GONE FROM THE TESTIMONY AND DOCTRINE OF THE ANTIENT PROTESTANTS. AND HEREBY IT IS MADE TO APPEAR, THAT THE PEOPLE, CALLED IN DERISION *QUAKERS*, ARE TRUE (YEA THE TRUEST) PROTESTANTS, &C. Also, his VINDICATION FROM THE FORGERIES AND ABUSES OF T. HICKS AND W. KIFFIN, WITH THE REST OF HIS CONFEDERATE BRETHREN OF THE BARBICAN-MEETING, HELD LONDON THE 28TH OF THE 6TH MONTH. Also, written the 29th of 1st Month, 1673, his THE WOMAN-PREACHER OF SAMARIA; A BETTER PREACHER, AND MORE SUFFICIENTLY QUALIFIED TO PREACH THAN ANY OF THE MEN-PREACHERS OF THE MAN-MADE-MINISTRY IN THESE THREE NATIONS. Also, his AN ACCOUNT OF THE ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY, SHEWING, THE WISDOM OF SOME RENOWNED MEN OF THE EAST; AND PARTICULARLY, THE PROFOUND WISDOM OF HAI EBN YOKDAN, BOTH IN NATURAL AND DIVINE THINGS; WHICH HE ATTAINED WITHOUT ALL CONVERSE WITH MEN, (WHILE HE LIVED IN AN ISLAND A SOLITARY LIFE, REMOTE FROM ALL MEN FROM HIS INFANCY, TILL HE ARRIVED AT SUCH PERFECTION) WRIT ORIGINALLY IN ARABIC, BY ABI JAAPHAR EBN TOPHAIL; AND OUT OF THE ARABICK TRANSLATED INTO LATINE, BY EDWARD POCOCK, A STUDENT IN OXFORD; AND NOW FAITHFULLY OUT OF HIS LATINE, TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH: FOR A GENERAL SERVICE.¹

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

1678

[Simon Ockley](#) was born, accidentally at Exeter while his Norfolk family was traveling.

1. Hayy Bin Yaqzan is an Arabic narrative written by Abû Bakr Ibn al-Tufail in 12th-Century Spain. It had been translated into Latin by Mr. Edward Pocock (the younger) in 1671, three years before. English translations would also be provided by George Ashwell in 1686 (THE HISTORY OF HAI EB'N YOCKDAN, AN INDIAN PRINCE, OR, THE SELF-TAUGHT PHILOSOPHER), and by [Simon Ockley](#) in 1708:

لديهم فرحون قد اتخذوا الهيم، هواهم ومعبودهم شهواتهم وتهالكوا
في حطام الدنيا وانهاهم التكاثر حتي زاروا المقابر لا تنجع فيهم

quod apud ipsos præiens erat, dum cupiditates suas sibi in Deum
asciscerent, & pro cultas objecto haberent, seque perderent quif-
quillas mundi colligendo, acquirendi cupidine eos illusos detinen-
te donec sepulchra viferent, nullum autem consilium apud ipsos
valere, neque verba hinc ipsos movere, nec quicquam efficere

“... the Professor’s eldest son, Mr. Edward Pocock published, with a Latin translation of his own, an Arabic piece of Ebn Tophail, the title of which was, *PHILOSOPHUS AUTODIDACTUS, SIVE EPISTOLA ABI JAAFER EBN TOPHAIL DE HAI EBN YOKDHAN. In quâ ostenditur, quomodo ex Inferiorum Contemplatione ad Superiorum Notitiam ratio humana ascendere possit.* It is an ingenious fiction, giving the History of Ebn Yokdhan, who, the Author tells us, according to some, was produced in one of the Indian islands under the Equinoctial, where men come into the world without father or mother. ... He proved afterwards of a discerning and contemplative spirit, and by progressive reasonings with himself, from what he saw, formed a system of Natural Philosophy, Morality, and Metaphysics. In the 50th year of his age, Asal, a person of a contemplative disposition, who came thither from a neighbouring island, for the sake of retirement, found Yokdhan, taught him language, and got from him all the account he was able to give of his original, and the history of his gradual approaches to a knowledge of, and intimate conjunction with God.”

HDT

WHAT?

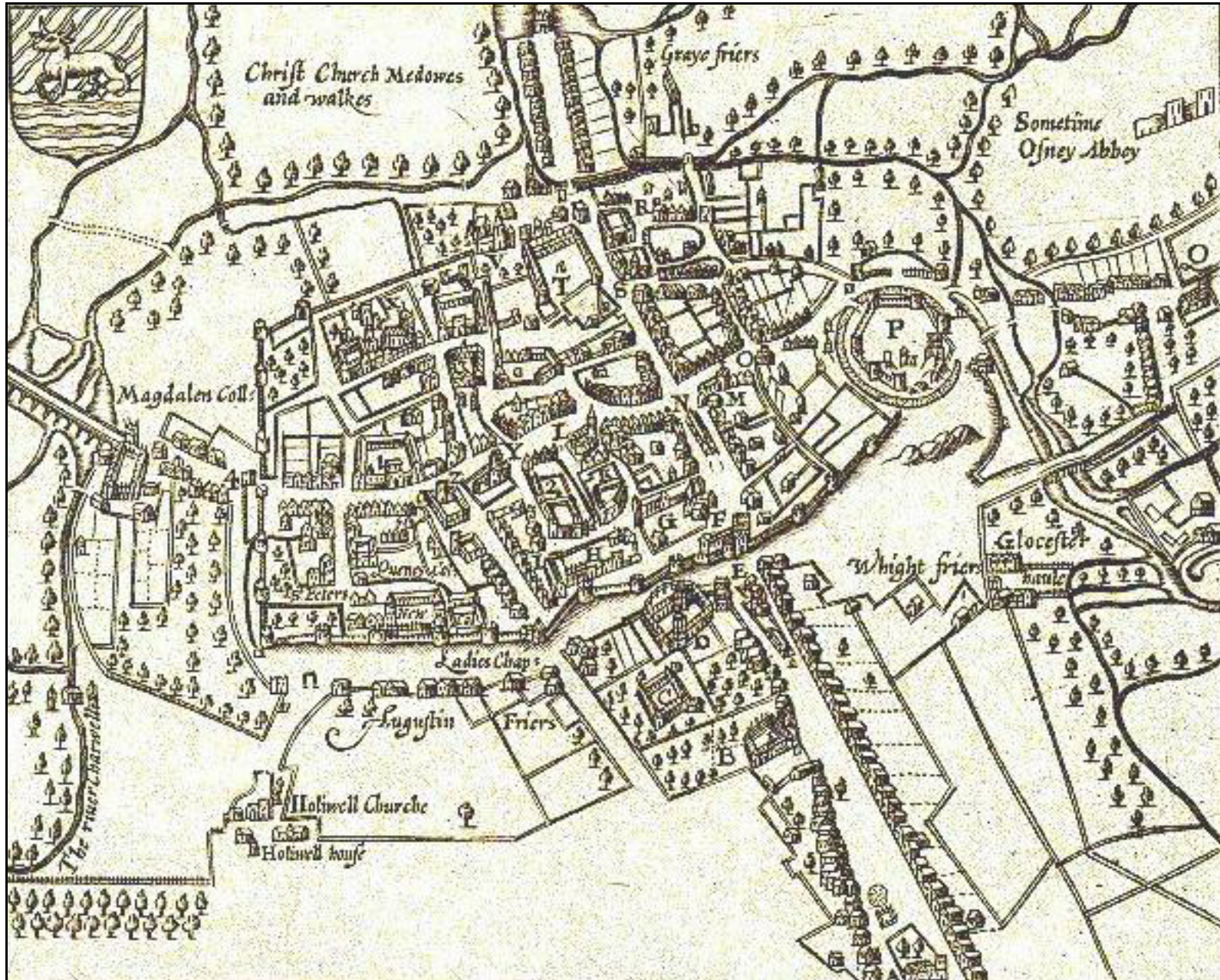
INDEX

SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

1695

[Simon Ockley](#) became a lecturer in Hebrew at Oxford while still but 17 years of age.





SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





SIMON OCKLEY

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1701

[Simon Ockley](#) received his MA at Oxford.



NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

1708

From this year until 1718, [Simon Ockley](#) was preparing his chief work, THE HISTORY OF THE SARACENS, in 2 volumes octavo printed in London. Before his death in 1720 he would be able to cover the period from the death of Mahomet in 632 CE to the death of the fifth Ommiad caliph in 705 CE. Unfortunately he would accept as a main authority a MS of Pseudo-Wakidi's *FUTÚH AL-SHÁM*, which would turn out to have been rather historical romance than history.

In this year Ockley presented an English translation of a Latin translation by Edward Pocock the younger of a narrative that had been authored in Arabic by Abû Bakr Ibn al-Ṭufail in 12th-Century Spain, and previously done into English by [George Keith](#), the *HAYY BIN YAQZAN*, as THE IMPROVEMENT OF HUMAN REASON: EXHIBITED IN THE LIFE OF HAI EBN YOKDHAN WRITTEN IN ARABICK ABOVE 500 YEARS AGO, BY MUḤAMMAD IBN 'ABD AL-MALIK IBN ṬUFAYL (LONDON: Printed and sold by Edm. Powell in Black-friars, and J. Morphew near Stationers-hall). This is the story of the ultimate autodidact:

"... the Professor's eldest son, Mr. Edward Pocock published, with a Latin translation of his own, an Arabic piece of Ebn Tophail, the title of which was, *PHILOSOPHUS AUTODIDACTUS, SIVE EPISTOLA ABI JAAFER EBN TOPHAIL DE HAI EBN YOKDHAN. In quâ ostenditur, quomodo ex Inferiorum Contemplatione ad Superiorum Notitiam ratio humana ascendere possit.* It is an ingenious fiction, giving the History of Ebn Yokdhan, who, the Author tells us, according to some, was produced in one of the Indian islands under the Equinoctial, where men come into the world without father or mother. ... He proved afterwards of a discerning and contemplative spirit, and by progressive reasonings with himself, from what he saw, formed a system of Natural Philosophy, Morality, and Metaphysics. In the 50th year of his age, Asal, a person of a contemplative disposition, who came thither from a neighbouring island, for the sake of retirement, found Yokdhan, taught him language, and got from him all the account he was able to give of his original, and the history of his gradual approaches to a knowledge of, and intimate



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

conjunction with God.”

THE ACTUAL PAGES



THE ELECTRONIC TEXT

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

HDT

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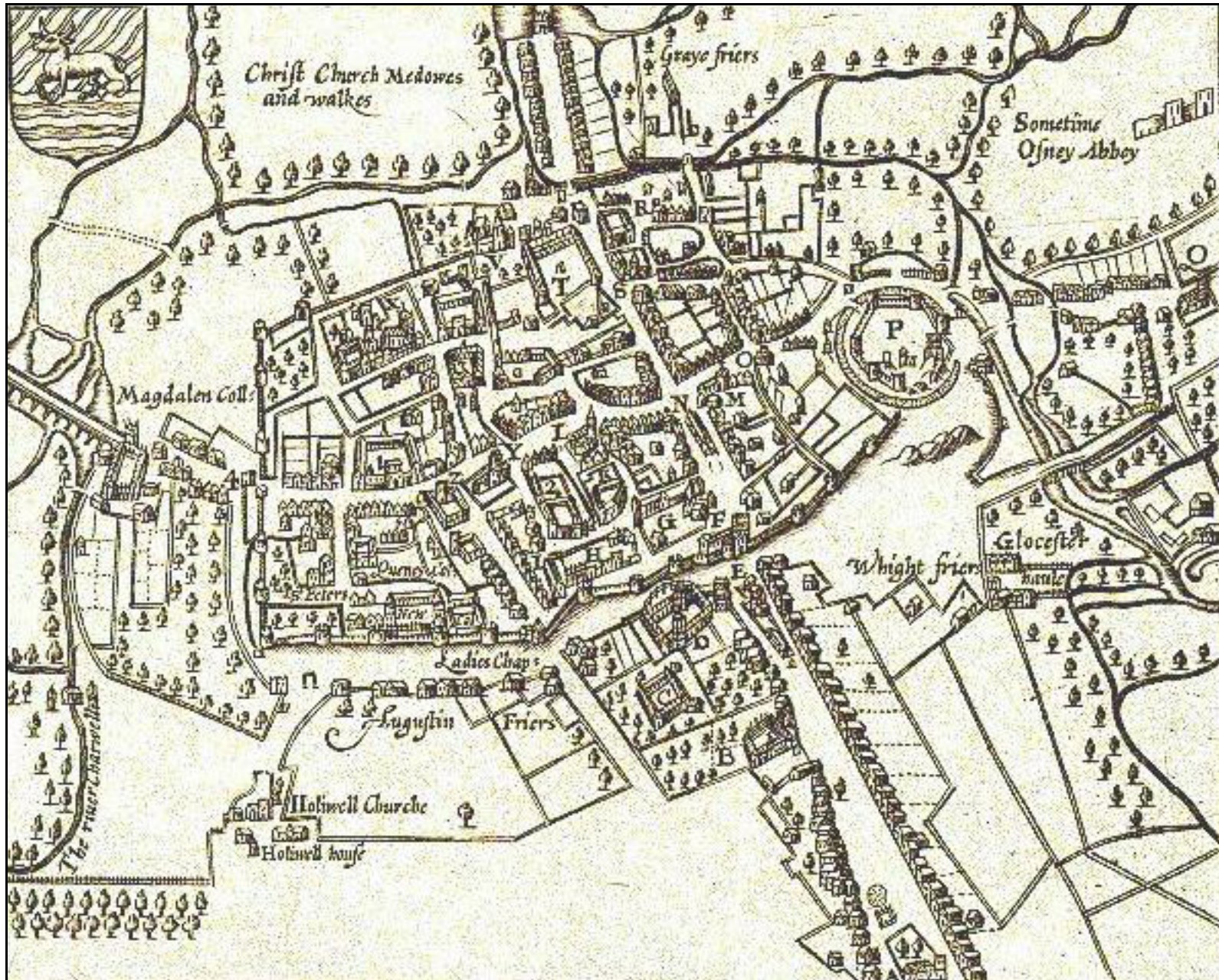
INDEX

SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

1710

[Simon Ockley](#) received his BD at Oxford. He would become a fellow of Jesus College, and vicar of Swavesey, Cambridgeshire.





SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

1711

[Simon Ockley](#) was chosen Arabic professor of Oxford. He would have a large family, and his latter days would be embittered by pecuniary embarrassments (his fate would deserve a chapter in D'Israeli's CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS — the preface to the 2nd volume of his THE HISTORY OF THE SARACENS would actually be prepared

HDT

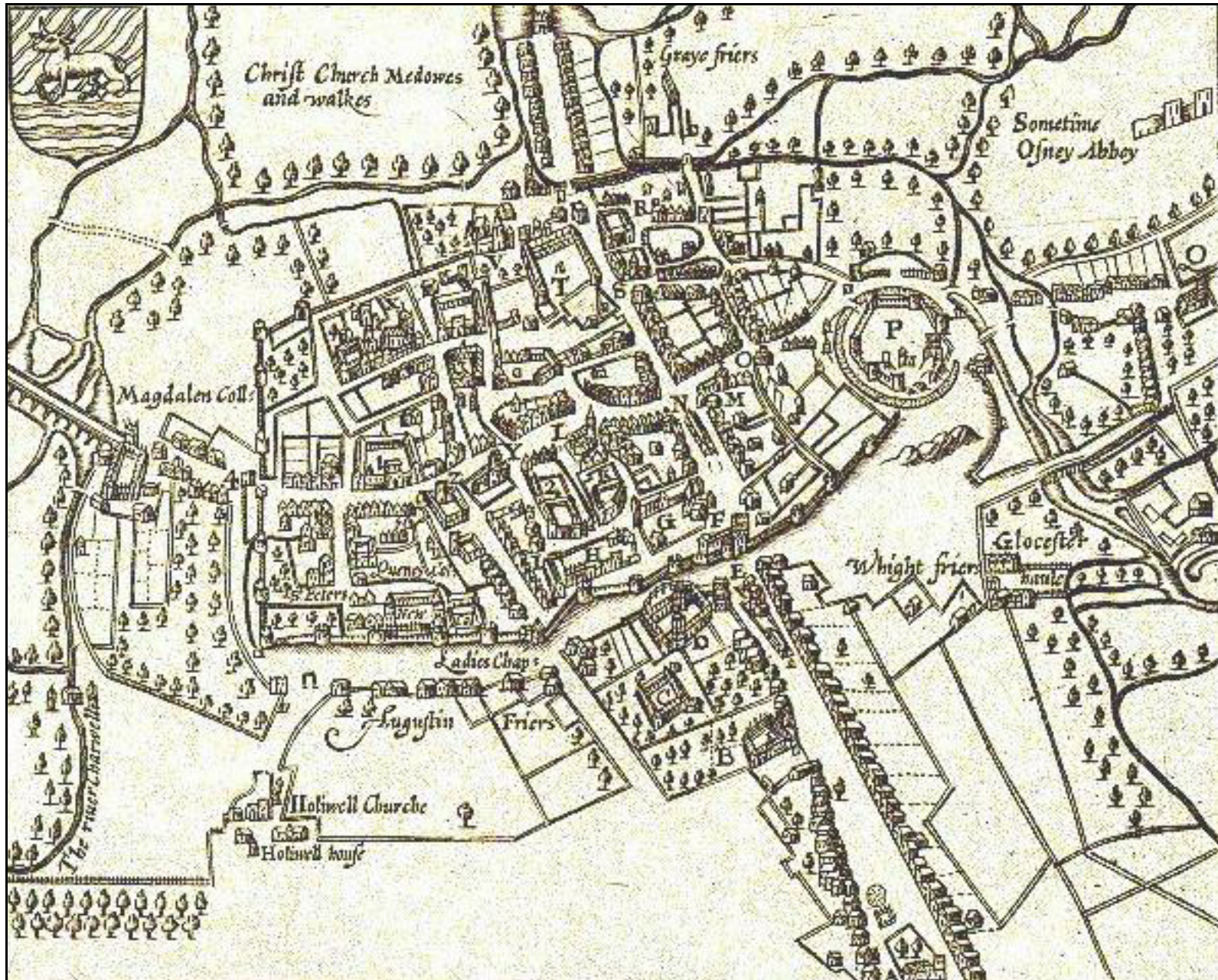
WHAT?

INDEX

SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

while in debtors' prison).





SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

1718

In the Treaty of Passarowitz, Venice ceded Morea to Turkey.

The tomb of Pharaoh [Rameses IV \(Hekamaatresetepenamun\)](#) (1,151 BCE-1,145 BCE) in the [Valley of the Kings](#) (#2) had stood open since antiquity. The mummy of the pharaoh had been removed after vandals had disturbed the burial and reburied in a re-used coffin in tomb #35. In this year the tomb was visited by Père Claude Sicard (1677-1726). The tomb contains any number of graffiti left by visitors through the millennia, and at one point Europeans studying the Valley of the Kings used it as their dwelling.

DIGGING UP THE DEAD

The 2d volume of [Simon Ockley](#)'s 2-volume THE CONQUEST OF SYRIA, PERSIA, AND [EGYPT](#), BY THE SARACENS CONTAINING THE LIVES OF ABUBEKER, OMAR, AND OTHMAN, THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS OF MAHOMET, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR MOST REMARKABLE BATTLES, SIEGES, &C. ... was printed in London for R. Knaplock, J. Sprint, R. Smith, B. Lintott, and J. Round. (This is the volume, entitled THE HISTORY OF THE SARACENS...: COLLECTED FROM THE MOST AUTHENTICK ARABICK AUTHORS, that [Waldo Emerson](#) would check out from the Boston Athenaeum on September 22, 1840 and that he and [Henry Thoreau](#) would be copying from during October-December 1840.)

**WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

1720

August 9, Tuesday (Old Style): [Simon Ockley](#) died in Swavesey.



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

1757

A 3rd edition of [Simon Ockley](#)'s THE HISTORY OF THE SARACENS...: COLLECTED FROM THE MOST AUTHENTICK ARABICK AUTHORS was issued for the benefit of his destitute daughter (AN ACCOUNT OF THE ARABIANS OR SARACENS, OF THE LIFE OF MAHOMET, AND THE MAHOMETAN RELIGION, BY A LEARNED HAND, prefixed to this edition, had been prepared by Dr. Roger Long, master of Pembroke-hall, Cambridge).



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

1840

The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s "Cudworth's INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM" appeared in [The Christian Examiner](#). ([Waldo Emerson](#) had the Thomas Birch edition of 1820 in his library.)

- CUDWORTH'S SYSTEM, I
- CUDWORTH'S SYSTEM, II
- CUDWORTH'S SYSTEM, III

At the end of the journal entries for this year, [Emerson](#) listed his readings in Oriental materials during the period: "[Buddha](#); Vedas; [Sir William Jones](#); [Zoroaster](#); Koran; [Ockley](#), History of the Saracens."



CHALDEAN ORACLES

September 22, Tuesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) checked out, from the Boston Athenæum, [Simon Ockley](#)'s HISTORY OF THE SARACENS, which is volume II of his CONQUEST OF SYRIA, PERSIA, [EGYPT](#) BY THE SARACENS published in London between 1708 and 1718. He would return this book on December 12th.



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

October: For the remainder of this year [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Waldo Emerson](#) would be reading the 2nd volume of [Simon Ockley](#)'s THE CONQUEST OF SYRIA, PERSIA, AND ÆGYPT, BY THE SARACENS CONTAINING THE LIVES OF ABUBEKER, OMAR, AND OTHMAN, THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS OF MAHOMET, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR MOST REMARKABLE BATTLES, SIEGES, &C. ..., entitled THE HISTORY OF THE SARACENS...: COLLECTED FROM THE MOST AUTHENTICK ARABICK AUTHORS. This was a volume which Emerson had borrowed from the Boston Athenæum on September 22d and would return on December 12th. Emerson made extracts in his journals. Thoreau would be copying down out of it a number of the aphorisms of Ali, son-in-law of Mahomet upon whom be peace, beloved of the Shiites, such as "Despair is a freeman, Hope is a slave." He would also copy a footnote which explicated this aphorism as "So long as a Man is in Expectation, his Thoughts are in Suspense, and he is in a slavish Condition; but as soon as he gives over his Pursuit, he is free, and at Liberty"²:

Abubeker the first Caliph's speech to Yezid Ebn Abi Sophyan – general of the forces.

"Yezid, be sure you do not oppress your own people, nor make them uneasy, but advise with them in all your affairs, and take care to do that which is right and just, for those that do otherwise shall not prosper. When you meet with your enemies, quit yourselves like men, and don't turn your backs; and if you get the victory, kill no little children, nor old people, nor women. Destroy no palm trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons, that live retired in monasteries, [who propose to themselves to serve God that way: Let them alone, and neither kill them; nor destroy their monasteries.] and you will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogues of Satan, who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter, till they either turn Mahometans or pay tribute."

"Good actions are a guard against the blows of adversity."

"Death is the easiest of all things after it, and the hardest of all things before it." Abubeker's sayings

"Paradise is under the shadow of swords" Mahomet. [The complete quotation from Abdóllah: "The Apostle of God has said, That Paradise is under the Shadow of Swords; either we shall succeed, and then we shall have all the Plunder; or else die, and so the next way to Paradise."]

God is "nearer to men than their jugular veins" Alcoran [Dr. Algazáli's interpretation reads partly as follows: "...[God] is exalted by [infinite] degrees ... above the Earth, and at the same time is near to every thing that hath a being; nay, nearer to Men than their Jugular veins, and is witness to every thing."]

— "The heavens are folded up in his right hand, and all the creatures are couched within his grasp." Algazáli's

2. Note that this ties Henry David Thoreau's remarks on desperation in WALDEN directly to his remark about the azad tree.



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

Interpretation of the Mahometan Creed.

When Abu Musa, of Cufah, was asked what he thought of going out to assist Ali against his enemies, he answered – “Sitting still at home is the heavenly way. The going out is the way of the world.”

He being governor of the besieged city.

Sentences of Ali Son-in-law of Mahomet

X The Remembrance of Youth is a sigh.

XV. Thy lot, or portion in life, is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it.

LXXXVIII A man is hid under his tongue.

LXXXVIII He that hath no courage, hath no religion.

XCV The tongue of a wise man lieth behind his heart.

XCVI The heart of a fool lieth behind his tongue

101 Despair is a freeman, Hope is a slave.³

102 The opinion of a wise man is divination.

103 Enmity is business enough.

113 Your victory over your enemy is your forbearance. –Ockley.

October 7, Wednesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) wrote [Margaret Fuller](#) that he had been consulting [Simon Ockley](#)'s HISTORY OF THE SARACENS, “which I read hastily many years ago, the book which [Gibbon](#) praises so heartily.”

December 12, Saturday: [Waldo Emerson](#) returned, to the Boston Athenæum, [Simon Ockley](#)'s HISTORY OF THE SARACENS, which is volume II of his CONQUEST OF SYRIA, PERSIA, [EGYPT](#) BY THE SARACENS published in London between 1708 and 1718. He had checked out this book on September 22d.

3. “So long as a Man is in Expectation, his Thoughts are in Suspense, and he is in a slavish Condition; but as soon as he gives over his Pursuit, he is free, and at Liberty.”



SIMON OCKLEY

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1841

March 12, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was still reading through the proof-sheets of [Waldo Emerson's ESSAYS: 1ST SERIES](#).⁴

ESSAYS, 1ST SERIES

Note that Emerson deployed the term “Over-soul” –the term upon which Emersonians have come to bank so totally– on precisely **this one occasion in all his writing**. It was a nonce term for which he provided no real definition — and to which he would not again refer.

During this month a 2d edition of [Noah Webster's](#) unabridged QUARTO DICTIONARY was appearing on bookstore shelves. Note that on the internet nowadays, Webster is being characterized as Emerson's friend who included this term in his dictionary — I can uncover no evidence that Webster and Emerson ever met, and the initial edition of “Webster's Dictionary” in which this term appears happens to be the revision published in 1913:

O"ver*soul` (?), n. The all-containing soul. [R.] That unity, that oversoul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other. Emerson.



I do not readily remember any poem, play, sermon, novel, or oration, that our press vents in the last few years, which goes to the same tune. We have a great many flutes and flageolets, but not often the sound of any life. Yet, Wordsworth's Laodamia, and the ode of “Dion,” and some sonnets, have a certain noble music; and Scott will sometimes draw a [Page 373] stroke like the portrait of Lord Evandale, given by Balfour of Burley. Thomas Carlyle, with his natural taste for what is manly and daring in character, has suffered no heroic trait in his favorites to drop from his biographical and historical pictures. Earlier, Robert Burns has given us a song or two. In the Harleian Miscellanies, there is an account of the battle of Lutzen, which deserves to be read. And Simon Ockley's History of the Saracens recounts the prodigies of individual valor with admiration, all the more evident on the part of the narrator, that he seems to think that his place in Christian Oxford requires of him some proper protestations of abhorrence. But, if we explore the literature of Heroism, we shall quickly come to Plutarch, who is its Doctor and historian. To him we owe the Brasidas, the Dion, the Epaminondas, the Scipio of old, and I must think we are more deeply indebted to him than to all the ancient writers. Each of his “Lives” is a refutation to the despondency and cowardice of our religious and political theorists. A wild courage, a Stoicism not of the schools, but of the blood, shines in every anecdote, and has given that book its immense fame.

SIMON OCKLEY

4. The copy the author inscribed to Thoreau is now at the Yale Library.



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

August: Just as [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) was preparing a saving-the-appearances exit strategy from the [Brook Farm](#) experiment in communal living in West Roxbury on the Newton line, [Henry Thoreau](#) was considering becoming a member. Also, in August, he was studying Hugh Murray's HISTORY AND DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF BRITISH [INDIA](#), the 2nd volume of [Simon Ockley](#)'s THE CONQUEST OF SYRIA, PERSIA, AND ÆGYPT, BY THE SARACENS CONTAINING THE LIVES OF ABUBEKER, OMAR, AND OTHMAN, THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS OF MAHOMET, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR MOST REMARKABLE BATTLES, SIEGES, &C....., entitled THE HISTORY OF THE SARACENS...: COLLECTED FROM THE MOST AUTHENTICK ARABICK AUTHORS, [Luís Vaz de Camões](#)'s *LUSIADS*, the [Sir William Jones](#) translation from Sanskrit of INSTITUTES OF HINDU LAW; OR, THE ORDINANCES OF MENU, ACCORDING TO THE GLOSS OF CULUCCA, COMPRISING THE INDIAN SYSTEM OF DUTIES, RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL, [Edward Gibbon](#)'s AUTOBIOGRAPHY, and Charles Lyell's PRINCIPLES OF GEOLOGY. (Lyell was spending this year and part of the next, travelling in the United States, Canada and Nova Scotia. During this visit he sought the assistance and fellowship of [Dr. Augustus Addison Gould](#), conchologist at Boston).



That title –The Laws of Menu with the Gloss of Culluca– comes to me with such a volume of sound as if it had swept unobstructedly over the plains of Hindostan, and when my eye rests on yonder birches — or the sun in the water — or the shadows of the trees — it seems to signify the laws of them all. They are the laws of you and me — a fragrance wafted down from those old-times, and no more to be refuted than the wind. {One-fifth page blank} The impression which those sublime sentences made on me last night, has awakened me before any cock-crowing— Their influence lingers around me like a fragrance or as the fog hangs over the earth late into the day. When my imagination travels eastward and backward to those remote years of the gods, I seem to draw near to the habitation of the morning — and the dawn at length has a place. I remember the book as an hour before sunrise.

“NARRATIVE HISTORY” IS FABULATION, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY



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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: January 16, 2014



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



SIMON OCKLEY

SIMON OCKLEY

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.