

*Bindings and marks of ownership*

With the exception of the 16th century gilt-tooled binding on the *Bokes of Salomon* (H19), the bindings in the collection are probably more noteworthy for later rather than earlier work. They range in date from a contemporary London binding on the 1527 Erasmus New Testament (H32) to 20th century morocco, with all centuries in between being represented. The earlier bindings have generally suffered from the ravages of time or later repair, but one of the 1552 prayer books has a handsome if straightforward gilt-tooled black turkey binding of around 1700, in very fresh condition (H53). However, as many of these books have been through the hands of 19th and early 20th century collectors, much rebinding has been done according to the custom of that time, and among the solid morocco bindings with heavily gilded edges are nice examples of the work of Francis Bedford, Rivière, and Sangorski & Sutcliffe. The most striking example of this school of activity is probably a binding by Birdsall of Northampton, on the 1539 Taverner Bible (H8), in bright citron morocco with a heavily gilded pattern of Tudor roses, fleur-de-lys and floral bunches (see Figure 2).

Although this is not a large collection, it can be seen to represent a microcosm of the patterns of collecting, using and owning biblical and liturgical texts over the centuries. We can see, in some of the early inscriptions, straightforward ownership of the books as working devotional texts, with names written simply at various points within the texts, though sometimes accompanied by a religious sentiment appropriate to the content. The significance of the Bible as a sacred text suitable for recording special things may be seen in the 1550 Coverdale Bible (H22), where one John Ketterye in 1555 chose the opening page of the New Testament on which to write the bequest of property to his kinsman Thomas. The liturgical books are regularly annotated for working purposes, with revised texts written in by later generations of owners, or offending words (such as the name of the Pope) obliterated in the cause of reform. Margins are liberally used for pen trials and trivia ('William Wright is my name and withe my hand I wrote the same', etc.), and one of the prayer books (H59) has a note 'Henry Higgenson we we [sic] are not good boye', to which the counterpoint, several pages later, reads 'Cozen Elizabeth you are not a good wench'.

With the passing of time the ownership patterns change and we can see the beginnings of collecting as opposed to mere owning. Notes begin to appear in 18th century hand commenting on the rarity or interest of the edition, as interest in typographical antiquities grows. Once into the 19th century, the books have very much become collectible objects, cherished by being taken out of their earlier covers and put into new morocco, often with some kind of nod towards a contemporary style, as interpreted by Victorian eyes. The binding of the Marbeck *Concordance* of 1550 (H23) imitates a 16th century roll binding, while two of the prayer books (H51,