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Guide to the J. M. Powis Smith Papers 1901-1931



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.SMITHJMP
Title	Smith, J. M. Powis. Papers
Date	1901-1931
Size	1 linear ft. (2 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
Abstract	J. M. Powis Smith was the Professor of Old Testament and Literature, at the University of Chicago and also served as literary secretary to William Rainey Harper. The papers contain lecture notebooks and other notes. Material relates to the teaching and study of the Old Testament.

Information on Use

Access

No restrictions

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Smith, J. M. Powis. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

John Merlin Powis Smith (1866-1932) was a native of London, England. Emigrating to the United States, where he worked on his uncle's Iowa farm, Smith was graduated from Des Moines College in 1893. In 1899 he received his Ph.D. in Semitic languages and literatures from the University of Chicago. At Chicago he had worked closely with William Rainey Harper; from 1899 until President Harper's death in 1906, Smith served as the President's literary secretary, most of his time being devoted to The International Critical Commentary edited by Dr. Harper. In later years Smith was to revise and update both of W.R. Harper's celebrated Hebrew textbooks. He joined the faculty of the University of Chicago in 1899, remaining there until his death in 1932, having become Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature in 1915. After 1908 he was the editor of the American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures; in 1927-28 he was appointed Annual Professor at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, and-at the time of his death-was President of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis. James Henry Breasted called him "the first important recruit scientifically trained in this University to enter the ranks of our orientalist group as a product of the [American] West." By far his most celebrated activity was his editorship of the Old Testament portion of

the American Standard translation of the Bible published by the University of Chicago Press in 1927. In addition to the responsibilities of the general editorship, he translated Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and the Minor Prophets—all of which were his scholarly specialties. The texts of the addresses delivered at the Memorial Service held in Bond Chapel for J.M. Powis Smith are printed in the University Record, New Series, Volume XIX, January, 1933. Anyone interested in this collection of lecture notebooks may wish to examine the Papers Relating to the American Standard Bible Committee. Revision of the Old Testament, Box X, "Papers of J.M.P. Smith, relating to his work in 1930-1931."

Scope Note

The J.M.P. Smith Papers contain bound and loose lecture notes, a commonplace book compiled by Smith and a bound collection of reprinted articles by Smith. The lecture notebooks contain lectures given as early as 1906 but were used regularly for many years after. Originally additional lecture notes on loose sheets of paper were inserted into the notebooks; these have been removed, placed in folders, and placed next to the notebook of the same subject-matter.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Smith, J. M. Powis (John Merlin Powis), 1866-1932
- Bible. O.T.

INVENTORY

Box 1

Folder 1

Notebook, "Notes on Jeremiah "

Box 1

Folder 2

Notebook, "Notes on Daniel"

Box 1

Folder 3

Notebook

- "Notes on Ezekiel"
- "Life after Death"

Box 1

Folder 4

Loose notes on Ezekiel

Box 1

Folder 5

Notebook, "Survey of Wisdom Literature"

Box 2

Folder 1

Loose notes on Wisdom Literature

Box 2

Folder 2

Loose notes on Isaiah, Chapter I

Box 2

Folder 3

Notebook

- "Notes on Job"
- Notes on Psalms [notebook]

Box 2

Folder 4

Loose notes on Job

Box 2

Folder 5

Loose notes on Job, Chapter 4

Box 2

Folder 6-7

Loose notes on Psalms

Box 2

Folder 8

Commonplace book compiled by JMP Smith

Box 2

Folder 9

Articles by JMP Smith, bound reprints