

Sunday, January 23, 2022— Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 164 The Work in Progress Documents: Analyzing the Pre-1611 Evidence for The Text, Part 3

Introduction

- The last two Lessons ([162](#) and [163](#)) have been devoted to a discussion of the extant primary work-in-progress documents that speak to the process used by the King James translators to create the King James Bible. Specifically, we have looked at 1) MS 98, 2) Bod 1602, and 3) the Notes of John Bois.
- In doing so, we have only considered them in terms of the first of the following three categories:
 - Scholarly Awareness & Published Access
 - Physical Description & Contents
 - Impact on the readings found in the King James Bible
- Originally, I planned on using this Lesson to look at the “Physical Description & Contents” of MS 98. That was before additional, and more recent primary work-in-progress discoveries were brought to my attention last week (1/10/22-1/15/22). Unbeknownst to me, researchers uncovered additional document finds in British libraries during the middle to latter half of the last decade. I would like to thank Christopher Yetzer and Timothy Berg for bringing these discoveries to my attention.
- These discoveries include the following documents.
 - MS Ward B—Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge
 - Three unpublished letters between Frenchman Isaac Casaubon and John Bois—British Library.
- Writing for the *Church Times* a Hattie Williamson published an article dated 4 May 2018 titled “Frenchman with Poor English Helped Translate the King James Bible, Says Scholar.” The article discusses the manuscript finds of Dr. Nicholas Hardy of the University of Birmingham.
 - “But the question how the translators collaborated to complete this task had been a mystery, until the discovery by Dr. Hardy of three new sources — in the British Library in London, and the Bodleian Libraries in Oxford — that had previously gone unnoticed by scholars for 400 years.

This included a printed copy of the ancient Greek version of the Old Testament, which had been in the Bodleian collections since the 1650s, but whose annotator was unknown

until Dr. Hardy recognized the writing as that of John Bois, one of the translators of the King James Bible.

This led to Dr. Hardy's discovery in the British Library of a set of three unpublished letters between Casaubon and Bois discussing difficult elements of the translation. Dr. Hardy then returned to the Bodlien collections to find Casaubon's notebooks recording conversations that he had had with another translator, Andrew Downes, about further problems associated with the translation." (Williams)

- While these discoveries are amazing finds, they are not necessarily all work-in-progress documents that speak directly to the translation process utilized by the translators. Therefore, we will limit our comments in this class to MS Ward B and correspondence between John Bois and Isaac Casaubon. That said, the existence of the annotated edition of the Greek Old Testament by Bois and the notebook of Casaubon recording his correspondence with Andrew Downs needs to be noted. Further study of these documents could shed more light on the translation's process in the future.
- The rest of this Lesson will be devoted to a discussion of MS Ward B. Next week in Lesson 165 we will look at letters between Bois and Casaubon.

MS Ward B

- On October 16, 2015, a periodical called *Times Literary Supplement* ran an article by Jeffrey Alan Miller titled "Fruit of Good Labours: The Earliest Known Draft of the King James Bible." As the title suggests, Miller announces that he found a heretofore earliest unknown draft of the King James Bible.
- A more extensive essay titled "The Earliest Known Draft of the King James Bible: Samuel Ward's Draft of 1 Esdras and Wisdom 3-4" was written by Miller in 2018 for a compilation of essays on the King James Bible titled *Labors in the Vineyard of the Lord: Erudition and the Making of the King James Version of the Bible*. Miller's essay serves as Chapter 7 in this volume.
- Miller begins his 2015 piece by acknowledging the three primary work-in-progress documents that we have already discussed i.e., MS 98, Bod 1602, and the Notes of John Bois. Regarding these "drafts", as Miller calls them, he states the following:
 - "All the drafts are also written in as yet unidentified hands, and it seems likely that they in fact belong not to any of the translators themselves, but rather to professional scribes producing copies of now lost drafts on their behalf. Moreover, certain parts of the Bible have been left without any extant drafts behind them whatever, making the composition process not just for those specific portions of the translation, but for the work as a whole, even harder to assess in full. Thanks to a newly discovered draft in Cambridge, however, a number of these gaps and others can at last begin to be filled. For in the archives of

Sidney Sussex College there survives now the earliest known draft of any part of the King James Bible, unmistakably in the hand of one of the King James translators.” (Miller, 14)

- Miller goes on to state the following regarding the origin and province of this “earliest known draft” of the King James Bible.
 - “The draft appears in a manuscript notebook formerly belonging to Samuel Ward (1572-1643), who was part of the team of seven men in Cambridge charged with translating the Apocrypha. . . For centuries, Ward's papers in the college lay almost entirely neglected and uncatalogued. This situation persisted until 1985. That year, Margo Todd published a landmark study of the collection [*The Samuel Ward Papers at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge*], in which she supplied the Ward manuscripts with the alphabetical classifications they now possess and gave a brief description of each manuscript's contents. Todd described MS Ward B as containing a "verse-by-verse biblical commentary", with "Greek word studies, and some Hebrew notes".” (Miller, 14)

- Miller then explains his first impression of MS Ward B after seeing it for the first time.
 - “When I looked at the notebook myself for the first time, there didn't seem to be much more to it than that. The part of the Bible to which Ward was referring, however, had been left tantalizingly unspecified, both in Todd's description and in the notebook itself. And as I sought to determine the biblical verses concerned, and which translation Ward seemed to be using, the manuscript's true significance suddenly came into focus.” (Miller, 14)

- Miller then digresses for a moment to comment on why the term “draft” is particularly elusive when applied to the process used to translate the King James Bible.
 - “It is worth saying something about the term "draft" as it applies to the KJB, for an ill-fitting notion of what a draft of the work might resemble may be one of the reasons why so few have ever been discovered. All the evidence suggests that the KJB translators took to heart the injunction that their translation be a revision of the Bishops' Bible. Hence, for example, the decision, even at later stages of the work, to produce nearly full drafts of the Old Testament and the Gospels in the form of emendations and marginal annotations made directly to pages of the Bishops' Bible itself, forty unbound copies of which had been supplied to the translators to aid them in their work. Indeed, the KJB may ultimately have been printed from an annotated Bishops' Bible. This means that if, in looking for drafts of the King James translation, one looks only for manuscripts where the translation of even a single book has been worked out or written out in full, then such a draft might never materialize.” (Miller 14)

- Next Miller elucidates these thoughts by applying them specifically to [MS Ward B](#).
 - “The draft found in MS Ward B throws this vividly into relief. In two different places in the notebook, there appears what seems to be nothing but a sequence of running notes on the Bishops' Bible's translation of two different Apocryphal books. The longer of the two sequences - occupying sixty-six pages of the notebook in total - covers all nine chapters, from the first verse to the last, of the book known as 1 Esdras or 3 Ezra, positioned first in the KJB among the Apocrypha. The shorter sequence, on the other hand, spans just chapters three and four of the Apocryphal book Wisdom. In each case, the notes typically take a similar form. A verse number is given, followed by a quotation from the Bishops' Bible's translation, often only a word or phrase. This Ward encloses in a single bracket, and then proceeds to provide an alternative English translation, usually juxtaposing it with the corresponding portion of the verse in Greek, the language in which the vast majority of the Apocryphal books were known to survive at the time. For instance, a note in Ward's draft for 1 Esdras 1:2 reads simply, "he set] having sett" (sic), followed by a transcription of the Greek word from 1 Esdras in question. The entry represents Ward's suggestion that the Greek word translated as "he set" in the Bishops' Bible should instead be translated as "having set". On turning to the KJB as it appeared in 1611, we find that this is exactly what was done.” (Miller, 14)
- Miller goes on to discuss what MS Ward B might tell us about the manner in which the Second Cambridge Company conducted their work.
 - “This may have been what happened in some cases. Ward's draft, however, strongly implies that his company, the so-called Second Cambridge Company, went about translating the Apocrypha in a different way.

No other hand besides Ward's appears in the draft. Moreover, it clearly shows him not just recording group decisions about the translation after the fact, or even doing so in the process of group decisions being made, but rather working out the translation for himself as he went along, making mistakes and changing his mind. At one point, for instance, one finds Ward wrestling with the syntax of 1 Esdras 6:32. In the Bishops' Bible, the verse relates, in somewhat convoluted fashion, the declaration of King Darius that anyone found disobeying his decrees "of his own goods should a tree be taken, and he thereon be hanged". Proposing a revision to the front half of the passage, Ward at first began, "A tre", but then crossed it out. No, "out of h", he started writing on second thought, but then crossed that out, too. At last, he reverted back to the more straightforward construction with which he had abortively begun, which also more closely mirrors the Greek of the passage: "a tree should be taken out of his possession". Moments like this simply do not chime with seeing Ward's draft as the product, in the main, of a company discussion.” (Miller, 14)

- An analysis of the relationship between Ward's "draft" and the final product, i.e. the 1611 King James Bible, looms large over Miller's essay.
 - "Such an example, however, also shows the complex relationship that Ward's draft has to the translation as eventually published. In the KJB, only a very small piece of Ward's proposed revision for 1 Esdras 6:32 has been followed. The Bible broadly retains the Bishops' Bible's syntax, even as it includes the clarifying "out" recommended by Ward, specifying that the convicted man should be hanged on a tree taken "out of his own property. Furthermore, there appears an additional revision to the passage not suggested in Ward's draft at all: the word "goods" in the Bishops' Bible, which Ward had proposed changing to "possession", instead appears in the KJB as "house". In full, the King James translation of the passage would come to read, "out of his own house should a tree be taken, and he thereon be hanged".

Disparities like this between the KJB and Ward's proposals run throughout the draft of 1 Esdras and Wisdom 3-4. They are, indeed, part of what helps identify Ward's draft as a draft, and not a mere record of the changes made to the Bishops' Bible in composing the KJB after the fact. Sometimes the King James translation went on to follow Ward's proposed rendering to the letter. In the case of Wisdom 3:15, for example, Ward's draft recommends changing the Bishops' Bible's declaration that "glorious is the fruit of the good labour" to "glorious is the fruit of good labours" - a translation that accords more with the Greek of the verse, as Ward notes, and which also aligns with the Geneva Bible, the English translation predating the KJB that the Puritan Ward clearly favoured. Here the KJB reproduces Ward's proposed revision exactly.

At other times, however, the translation altogether rejects what Ward's draft proposes, or consigns it interestingly to a marginal note. Regarding the translation of 1 Esdras 2:7 and 2:9, for example, Ward proposes changing the Bishops' Bible's twin references to "horses", suggesting that they both be replaced with the word "substance". As he makes clear in the draft, though, this is not because Ward thinks that the Bishops' Bible has mistranslated the Greek word from 1 Esdras in question. Rather, he believes that the author of the Greek text of 1 Esdras itself has misunderstood or misrepresented a Hebrew word in the canonical Book of Ezra, which 1 Esdras there parallels. As Ward would write to himself (in Latin) elsewhere in the draft, in the context of a similar passage where he felt that the author of 1 Esdras's Greek had misunderstood a word from the Hebrew Bible: "thus, it seems, did the very author of this book", 1 Esdras, inaccurately "translate" yet another Hebrew word from the canonical Book of Ezra, "since he could not understand it". In the case of 1 Esdras 2:7 and 2:9, however, the KJB would ultimately retain the two references to horses, notwithstanding Ward's critique. Yet, as a marginal note, it would nevertheless include the draft's insistence that the Hebrew word possibly behind "horses" meant "substance" instead." (Miller, 14-15)

- Next, Miller walks his readers through the “movement” of “Ward’s draft of I Esdras and Wisdom 3-4 to the KJB’s published version of the two books” in addition to triangulating it with other extant evidence.
 - “An important piece of collateral evidence lies outside of the draft, in the biography of one of the other men, John Bois (1561-1644), who served with Ward on the company of translators assigned to the Apocrypha. Recounting Bois's involvement in the translation, the biographer - a member of Bois's own family- reports "that part of the Apocrypha was allotted to him", but that after "he had finished his own part", Bois then "undertook a second", being asked to do so "at the earnest request of him to whom it was assigned". Read at face value, this, too, appears to suggest that the company to which Bois and Ward belonged "assigned" individual books or parts of books to individual members. It also seems to imply that certain members of the company evidently did not quite keep up their end of the arrangement, obliging others, like Bois, to step in and help translate additional parts of the Apocrypha, as well. Bois's biography has long been known. But since various aspects of it have been shown to be unreliable, including portions concerning the translation of the KJB, it has been hard to know exactly how much store to set by its testimony.

The discovery of Ward's draft, though, provides compelling evidence that, at least with respect to the Apocrypha company's supposed division of labour, Bois's biography deserves to be credited. Certainly, what one finds in Ward's draft would perfectly align with the scenario outlined in the biography. Indeed, it would explain why the notebook containing Ward's draft of 1 Esdras includes a further draft only of Wisdom 3-4, despite there being a number of blank pages still available where a draft of other portions of the text could have been added. It would also explain why the partial draft of Wisdom comes in the notebook not immediately after the full draft of 1 Esdras, but rather in a different section, written from the back, and with writing concerning other matters further separating the two drafts from each other. Ward, the evidence suggests, was initially assigned to the translation of 1 Esdras, but was requested at a subsequent point to help out with Wisdom, too. Had he himself been the one initially assigned to the translation of Wisdom, it would have made no sense for him to start with the book's third chapter, as he did, instead of the first.

Yet, as Ward's draft also indicates, even books like 1 Esdras went on to become something more than strictly individual productions. The evidence for this goes beyond the sheer gap between the version of 1 Esdras proposed in Ward's draft and the book's eventual published form in the KJB. Ward's draft, in certain places, appears to show this very process occurring.

At multiple points, for example, Ward seems to have gone back and added new material to the draft, and at least two such instances were almost assuredly in response to suggestions provided by another of his colleagues translating the Apocrypha, perhaps in the context of a company-wide discussion. In the two cases in question, Ward added

references to the work of the celebrated early modern scholar Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614), once regarding 1 Esdras 3:5, and the other time regarding 1 Esdras 4:39. Yet, though Ward himself would come to have personal dealings with Casaubon following the latter's move to England in 1610, both of these references to Casaubon in the draft appear to have come by way of Bois. As Nicholas Hardy has recently shown, an edition of the Greek text of the Apocrypha, heavily annotated by Bois, survives in the Bodleian Library; and, alongside both 1 Esdras 3:5 and 4:39, Bois has added notes seemingly drawn from the same two works by Casaubon that Ward cites. Moreover, in a letter that Bois wrote to Casaubon around the same time, Bois describes himself as having discussed those two portions of the Apocrypha, among others, with his colleagues at work on the King James translation. In each case, the Bible's published version of 1 Esdras would go on to reflect the proposed revisions drawn from Casaubon that Ward added. Read in conjunction with the evidence of Bois's annotations and correspondence, such moments in the draft provide an unparalleled glimpse of the translation's early process of development, stage by stage.

Just as importantly, though, the draft also helps to illuminate moments where the translation did not develop, where the Apocryphal books' apparent origins as individual productions still remain visible even in the KJB's published state. As a case in point, the edition of the Greek text of the Apocrypha to which Bois made his annotations appears not to have been the same edition being used by Ward for his draft. That is to say, different translators not only seem to have been initially assigned to the translation of different Apocryphal books, but to have then gone about their work on the basis of different editions of the text to be translated itself. More than one nineteenth-century scholar noticed that there seemed to be a maddening lack of consistency with regard to which version of the Apocrypha's Greek was being privileged at any given moment across the KJB, but none could quite figure out why or how this might have happened. Ward's draft provides an illustration.

To what extent this complex (if also precarious) interplay between individual and group translation evidently at work in the Apocrypha company points to the possibility of a similar dynamic at work across the Bible's five other translation companies is hard to say. In the end, though, an awareness of that difficulty itself may represent one of the most valuable insights offered by Ward's draft. Not only does it profoundly complicate the notion that members of a given company necessarily worked on the translation of each book together as a team; it forces us to think harder about the extent to which all the companies necessarily set about their work in the same or even a similar way. The KJB, in short, may be far more a patchwork of individual translations - the product of individual translators and individual companies working in individual ways - than has ever been properly recognized.

Many additional riches await to be gleaned from Ward's draft of 1 Esdras and Wisdom 3-4. It represents not just the earliest draft of the KJB now known to survive, but one utterly unlike any previously found. Ward's draft alone bears all the signs of having

been a first draft, just as it alone can be definitively said to be in the hand of one of the King James translators themselves. It also stands as the only draft now known to survive of any part of the Apocrypha in the KJB, and the only draft yet to be discovered in Cambridge, one of the three initial centers of the Bible's composition. The true value of Ward's draft, though, lies less in the sheer fact of its uniqueness, and more in what the draft, in its uniqueness, helps to reveal about one of the seventeenth century's most extraordinary cultural achievements. It points the way to a fuller, more complex understanding than ever before of the process by which the KJB, the most widely read work in English of all time, came to be.” (Miller, 15)

- Next week in Lesson 164 we will consider some additional work-in-progress documents that need to be noted in the discussion before moving on.

Works Cited

Miller, Jeffery Alan. “Fruit of Good Labours: The Earliest Known Draft of the King James Bible” in *Times Literary Supplement*. October 16, 2015.

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