

Sunday, January 30, 2022— Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 165 The Work-In-Progress Documents: Analyzing the Pre-1611 Evidence for The Text, Part 4

Introduction

- In [Lesson 164](#) we began looking at additional work-in-progress primary source documents that came to light in the last decade.
 - MS Ward B—Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge
 - Greek Old Testament possessing the handwritten notes of John Bois.
 - Three unpublished letters between Frenchman Isaac Casaubon and John Bois—British Library.
 - Correspondence between Casaubon and translator Andrew Downes.
- These findings were made public in published pieces between 2015 and 2018.
- In the case of [MS Ward B](#), Jeffery Allen Miller discussed this document in his October 16, 2015 piece for the *Times Literary Supplement* titled “Fruit of Good Labours: The Earliest Known Draft of the King James Bible.” In the possession of Sidney Sussex College at Cambridge, MS Ward B contains the individual first draft work of Samuel Ward a member of the Second Cambridge Company that worked on the Apocrypha. A second, longer 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.
- The Ward manuscript brings our total of primary works-in-progress to four. As it stands right now, the list includes:
 - MS Ward B—1st draft work of Samuel Ward on 1 Esdras and Wisdom 3-4 of the Apocrypha.
 - MS 98—stage 1 work of the Second Westminster Company on the New Testament epistles (Romans through Jude).
 - Bod 1602—an annotated 1602 Bishops Bible containing the handwritten revisions of the King James translators for portions of both the Old and New Testaments. The stage of the work represented by the annotations in Bod 1602 varies by section.
 - Notes of John Bois—were taken at the General Meeting at Stationers Hall during the final stage of the process.

- A second series of findings by [Dr. Nicholas Hardy](#) of the University of Birmingham was announced on the University website on 30 Apr 2018 in an article titled “[New sources prove a Frenchman was one of the translators of the King James Bible.](#)” It was Dr. Hardy who uncovered the Greek Old Testament containing the handwritten notes of John Bois, unpublished letters between Frenchman Isaac Casaubon and John Bois, and Correspondence between Casaubon and translator Andrew Downes.
- As I stated in Lesson 164, 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 the letters between Bois and Casaubon.

Bois-Casaubon Correspondence

- To date, the most complete treatment of the correspondence between Bois and Casaubon is found in Dr. Nicholas Hardy’s essay “Revising the King James Apocrypha: John Bois, Isaac Casaubon, and the Case of 1 Esdras.” Dr, Hardy’s essay comprises Chapter 8 of *Labors in the Vineyard of the Lord: Erudition and the Making of the King James Version of the Bible*. The correspondence between Bois and Casaubon can be found in MS Burney 363 in the British Library.

Who Was Isaac Casaubon?

- Dr. Hardy answers this question in the opening paragraph of his essay.
 - “When the Huguenot scholar Isaac Casaubon left Paris for England in October 1610, he hoped to fulfil several ambitions. One was to protect himself, and eventually the rest of his large family, from a new wave of religious violence that he feared might break over France after the assassination of his patron and the author of the Edict of Nantes, King Henri IV. Another ambition, not unconnected to the first, was to write more freely on the subject of religion, and especially the early history of the Church, than he had been able to in his Catholic homeland. Casaubon’s third ambition was to continue the work on classical as well as Judeo-Christian literature and history that had made him the most widely acclaimed living humanist.” (Hardy, 266-267)
- That Casaubon would contribute to the King James Bible, arguably the pinnacle of written English, seems unlikely given the Frenchman knew little, if any, English.
 - “In one respect, Casaubon was an unsuitable candidate to advise on an English translation of the Bible: he barely understood the target language. Casaubon had been asked for advice about vernacular translations of the Bible before, but only in languages which he

could read. Casaubon spent nearly four years in England before his death in July 1614, and his efforts to learn English are witnessed by his annotated copy of Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*. The book is marked up with accents to indicate where stress was to be placed in pronouncing words, and marginal glosses translating unfamiliar terms into French, Latin, or Greek; but Casaubon apparently never achieved fluency in the language. He spent much of his time in England at James's court, yet he struggled to follow vernacular sermons which he heard there, as he commented in his diary on 2 January 1611." (Hardy, 267-268)

- Casaubon's limitations in English did not disqualify him from participating in discussions pertaining to the English Bible. Fluency in Latin, the scholarly language of his day, granted Casaubon access to debates.
 - "This did not, however, disqualify Casaubon from participating in debates about the English Bible. On the same day that Casaubon sat through this largely incomprehensible sermon, the king and his bishops must have switched to Latin for a task that provided one of Casaubon's first tastes of their preoccupation with biblical translation and scholarship. Casaubon records that after the sermon, the king spent a long lunchtime examining the notes that accompanied the Catholic translation of the Latin Old Testament and Apocrypha, recently published at Douai as a follow-up to the translation of the Rheims New Testament of 1582. James Montagu, bishop of Bath and Wells, read the notes; the king gave his (presumably not very positive) judgement on them; and Casaubon, along with Lancelot Andrewes and Richard Neile, bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, indicated their approval of what the king had said. Casaubon was impressed to find James so studious in such matters, compared with his former patron Henri IV." (Hardy, 268)

Date, Circumstances, and Contents of the Bois-Casaubon Correspondence

- Dr. Hardy reports the following regarding the date and circumstances of the letters between Bois and Casaubon.
 - At some point after Casaubon arrived in London, John Bois wrote to Casaubon about 'a few specific passages which were somewhat obscure.' Bois and his 'company' had struggled with them 'while we were translating the Apocrypha.' Two letters from Bois, and a reply from Casaubon, survive among the collection of manuscript letters addressed to Casaubon in the British Library. Their letters discuss some of these problems in great detail, and they give us a glimpse of what must have been a more extended series of exchanges about the translation that took place through conversation as well as correspondence.

The Bois-Casaubon correspondence presents a tremendous opportunity. More than any other source, it can be used to reveal the intellectual depth of some of the translators' efforts. They drew on the work of continental figures whose views, methods, and intellectual legacies are not well known among scholars of vernacular biblical translations. The role of Casaubon himself illustrates this most vividly, but he is far from

the only non-English scholar whose work was an important reference point. The translators' frequent recourse to the whole gamut of contemporary biblical scholarship was necessitated by the range of philological, historical, and theological problems which they were trying to address. These went far beyond simple choices of wording or phrasing and extended to the authorship and dating of 1 Esdras; the reliability of different textual witnesses to it; its value as a sidelight on the sections of the canonical Old Testament with which it overlapped; and the cultural context in which it was written, including its relationship to pagan as well as to Jewish texts. In considering these issues, the translators were employing historical and critical techniques of interpretation whose prominence in early modern theology and biblical scholarship has been amply demonstrated by intellectual historians, even if scholars of vernacular translation have not yet given them much attention.

. . . The content of the letters makes it clear that at the time of writing, Bois was involved in the final stages of revision of the King James Bible. However, given the challenges which scholars have previously faced in tracking the progress of that revision, and especially in establishing how long it might have continued into 1611, it is worth trying to date them more precisely.

The *terminus post quem* [earliest possible date] for this correspondence must be October 31, 1610: Casaubon arrived in London on October 30, but his reference to a consultation with one of Bois's colleagues 'yesterday' rules out that date for the letters. As for their *terminus ante quem* [latest possible date], the letters must predate Casaubon's death on 12 July 1614. But Casaubon's incidental remarks about his status as a mere 'visitor' in England, his separation from his own library, and his lack of material wealth or other advantages make it likely that the letters fall within the earlier part of this period. Casaubon had been allowed to leave France under the assumption that he would return in a matter of months, and that if he were to stay, he risked losing the stipend he had been receiving from the French crown. When he left for England, moreover, he did not take his library with him. But within a year of Casaubon's arrival, all of these problems were more or less solved. On 10 December 1610, Casaubon received permission from the Queen Regent of France to stay in England, and resolved to do so; five days later, he received notice that he would be granted two lucrative prebends; and on 15 October 1611, he received a substantial part of his library from France. It therefore seems likely that Casaubon wrote his reply to Bois before any of these things had happened, in November or December 1610—but at the very least, before the arrival of his books in October the following year.” (Hardy, 269-271)

- The dating of these letters to late 1610 or early 1611 places them during the final stages of the translational process, thereby making them primary work-in-progress documents.
 - “. . . the letters confirm that serious, if not extensive, revision was still being undertaken at a very late stage of the whole process, and that this process of revision extended to the Apocrypha as well as to the canonical books of the Bible. The letters can also help to

provide unprecedented insight into the passage from the early stages of drafting the translation, when the translators were divided into companies, to the finished product of 1611. This is because they happen to cover 1 Esdras, the apocryphal book that appears to have been drafted primarily by Samuel Ward [See our discussion of MS Ward B in Lesson 164].”

- All told, Bois asked Casaubon about six passages from the Apocrypha.
 - “Bois asked Casaubon about six passages in total, which he numbered himself. The numbering of the passages follows their order as they are found in all editions of the Bible that feature both of the books covered, beginning with 1 Esdras 3:5 and ending with 2 Esdras 2:23. The first query is written on one side of a single leaf. At the top of the page, Bois promises to write with multiple queries, but at the bottom of the page, he asks Casaubon to write his opinion about ‘this passage,’ singular, on the same leaf as the first query itself. Bois also expresses his hope that Casaubon will allow him to become one of his ‘clients’ and that, if it pleases Casaubon, he will ‘knock on your door more often, and bring you many queries of this kind.’ Bois could have been describing a metaphorical visit, conducted through the medium of correspondence; but since he reports elsewhere that he met Casaubon several times when they were in London, this is unlikely. Bois ends the letter by signing his name. Bois’s remaining five queries are introduced on a separate leaf. Unlike Bois’s first missive, the second one introduces the remaining problems immediately, without any preamble, and ends without any valediction other than Bois’s initials, as though Casaubon would have known the full name of the sender already. For reasons that will soon become clear, this is probably because the second letter was sent to Casaubon on the same day as the first one.

Casaubon’s reply to all six queries alludes to the existence of two separate letters, and gives no indication that Casaubon has received any communication from Bois other than what is found in this manuscript. It occupies two sides of a single leaf, and addresses Bois’s queries in the same order as Bois numbers them. Casaubon begins by explaining that he ‘would have replied’ to Bois’s ‘earlier letter’ (my emphasis) if there had been somebody at his disposal who could serve as a courier for his response. Casaubon’s next sentence also reads like an answer to Bois’s suggestion that they meet in person: ‘Indeed, I was and still am minded to visit your own residence, to hear you talk about matters like these.’ . . .

The wording and format of Bois’s two letters, and the aggregation of their content into a single reply by Casaubon, suggest that Bois’s letters were written within a short time of each other, and in some haste. Bois clearly hoped to receive a rapid reply to the first problem in particular, requesting an answer ‘in a few words’ to the first query alone on the sheet on which it was written. Casaubon’s explanation for his failure to respond to the earlier letter indicates that he was aware of the need for a swift response. This is confirmed by a crucial detail that conclusively demonstrates the speed at which Bois’s questions were posed and Casaubon’s answers delivered. The same detail also reveals

that other queries relating to the translation of the Apocrypha were coming thick and fast to Casaubon's door, not all of them from Bois. When Bois introduces the fifth query, about the meaning of a term that occurs in 1 Esdras 9:48 and 55, he comments: 'I hear that one of my colleagues consulted you about the words ... yesterday' (my emphasis). Today, Bois hopes that Casaubon will not find it tedious to hear his own conjecture about their meaning. Casaubon's affirmation of this fact shows that he was replying to Bois on the same day as he received Bois's letter, which must also have been the same day on which the letter was written: concerning the problem in 1 Esdras 9, Casaubon says he 'can add nothing to what you yourself write, and what the outstandingly learned man outlined to me in conversation yesterday. Bois's letters and Casaubon's reply were, therefore, all written on the same day: that is, the day after Casaubon had been consulted about one of the passages in question by Bois's unnamed colleague.' (Hardy, 273-275)

- Dr. Hardy believes that Bois's colleague with whom Casaubon had been conversing was none other than Andrew Downes. Downes, like Bois, had served on the Second Cambridge Company that translated the Apocrypha. Therefore, it would make sense that Bois and Downes would both be asking Casaubon about passage from the Apocrypha.
 - "Andrew Downes is a strong candidate, being the only translator other than Bois who is known to have been involved both in drafting the Apocrypha and in revising other parts of the translation. Downes, moreover, can be shown to have discussed the Apocrypha with Casaubon soon after the latter's arrival in London, surely with the final revision of the Bible in mind. Finally, Downes and Casaubon had been corresponding with each other since before Casaubon left Geneva in 1596, and they would continue to do so while Casaubon was in England. Ultimately, however, the lack of definitive evidence means that it is safer to continue referring to Bois's 'anonymous colleague' rather than to any specific translator." (Hardy, 275)
- Judging by the extant evidence, there is little doubt that Casaubon was heavily involved in the revision of the Apocrypha found in the King James Bible.
 - "Whatever the identity of Bois's colleague, it is clear that Bois's letters to Casaubon formed part of a larger process of revision and consultation. We have seen that Bois's first letter offered to present Casaubon with more queries along similar lines, and Casaubon's reply indicated his desire to hear them. If this happened in person, it would explain why no more letters survive. There can be no doubt that Bois and Casaubon definitely did meet in person at some point: years later, Bois would recall that he saw Casaubon 'often' when he was in London. These meetings probably pertained to Bois's work on the King James Bible, for as far as we know, Bois did not return to London after he had finished working on the translation. . .

Casaubon's own papers, most of which are now separated from his correspondence and located in the Bodleian Library, provide further evidence that he was fully involved in the revision of the Apocrypha. Most importantly, one of Casaubon's notebooks contains

traces of conversations about the Apocrypha with Andrew Downes. These form part of a longer series of notes on Casaubon's studies and his conversations with English acquaintances, which Casaubon began to make on 4 December 1610, soon after his arrival in England. The English figures mentioned also include another translator, John Overall, who hosted Casaubon for nearly a year in the deanery of St Paul's. Casaubon and Overall's conversations covered technical questions of biblical textual criticism, chronology, and the genealogy of Christ, as well as the theological and ecclesiastical issues that preoccupied both men." (Hardy, 275-276)

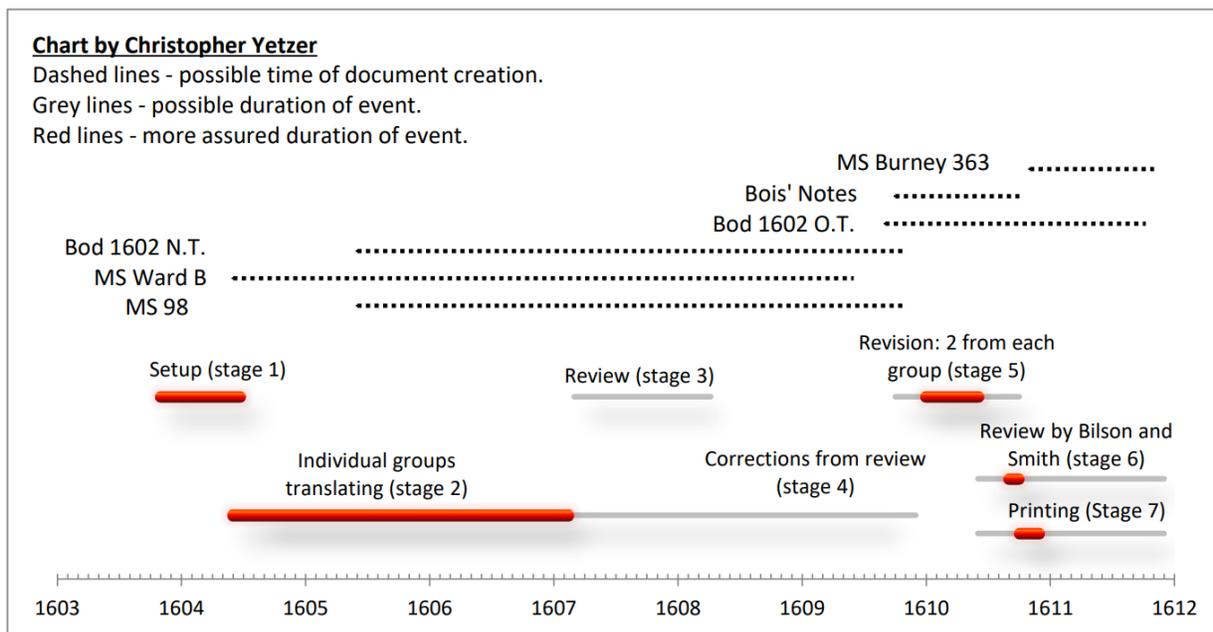
Summative and Conclusory Statements

- Dr. Hardy's essay is both long and thorough. Pages 279 through 285 contain a "sidelight" discussion on Bois's annotated Septuagint in the Bodleian Library. Each one of Bois's queries of Casaubon on the Apocrypha is discussed in detail along with Casaubon's response on pages 285 through 308. At the end, Appendix A contains a Latin/English transcript and translation of all three of the letters. While this information is important and essential, it is complex, tedious, and beyond the scope of this class. Therefore, we will limit our comments to some important summative and conclusory statements from the pen of Dr. Hardy.
 - "The Bois-Casaubon correspondence reveals how the translators dealt with a small number of specific problems with a level of forensic detail unmatched by any other document pertaining to the King James Bible. Combined with other evidence, they also show that Casaubon probably assisted in the revision of all of the apocryphal books. Seeing the King James Bible through Casaubon's eyes can thus provide new insights into the mechanics of the translation, but it can also allow us to apprehend the broader scholarly and theological factors that shaped it." (Hardy, 267)
 - "Nonetheless, Bois's correspondence with Casaubon gives us an unusually deep insight into the confessional and theological exigencies that might have influenced the translators' work; the range and complexity of the intellectual problems faced by the translators of the Apocrypha in particular; the philological and historical resources that might be used to solve those problems; and, finally, the particular sophistication of the discussions that took place when the translation was being revised." (Hardy 308-309)
- According to Hattie Williamson's article dated 4 May 2018 for the *Church Times* titled "[Frenchman with Poor English Helped Translate the King James Bible, Says Scholar](#)," Dr. Hardy is "currently writing a book-length of the King James Bible for Princeton University Press."

Conclusion

- Please recall that before the week of January 10, 2022 I was unaware of Samuel Ward's draft of 1 Esdras and Wisdom 3-4 (MS Ward B) at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge and the Bois-Casaubon correspondence (MS Burney 363) in the British Library. Both resources need to be added to our list of primary work-in-progress documents and placed appropriately in our working timeline.

- Please consider the following updated working timeline.
 - Stage 1 (1604-1608)—Six companies produce draft translations.
 - MS Ward B (Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge)—first draft work of Samuel Wade on 1 Esdras and Wisdom 3-4.
 - MS 98 (Lambeth Palace Library)—represents the Stage 1 work of the Second Westminster Company on the New Testament Epistles .
 - Bod. 1602 (Bodleian Library, Oxford)—annotated 1602 Bishops Bible with handwritten annotations of the translators. Bridges the gap between MS 98 and what was reviewed at the General Meeting(s).
 - Stage 2 (1609-1610)—General Meeting(s) review the company drafts and establish the text to be printed.
 - Notes of John Bois (Corpus Christi College, Oxford-Fulman MS & British Library-MS Harl. 750)—contain Bois’s notes on the discussions of the General Meeting on Romans through Revelation.
 - MS Burney 363 (British Library)—Bois-Casaubon Correspondence from late 1610 or early 1611.
 - Stage 3 (1611)—Two men, Thomas Bilson and Myles Smith, work with the King’s printer Robert Barker to see the text through to the press.
 - Two printings of the 1611 bear witness to the final decisions of the translators.
- Completeness dictates that we also note the following yet under studied/unclassified works that could one day need to be added to our list of primary work-in-progress documents pending further study.
 - Greek Old Testament at the Bodleian Library with copious marginal notes by John Bois.
 - Isaac Casaubon’s’ notebooks, also at the Bodleian Library, recording conversations that he had had with another translator, Andrew Downes.
- Lastly, Facebook friend and fellow researcher Christopher Yetzer furnished me with the following horizontal timeline for your consideration. Please note the Brother Yetzer’s timeline divides the Bod. 1602 Old and New Testament into two different sections on the timeline. This is illustrative of a technical point regarding the document that we have not yet discussed.



Works Cited

- Hardy, Nicholas. "Revising the King James Apocrypha: John Bois, Isaac Casaubon, and the Case of 1 Esdras" in *Labors in the Vineyard of the Lord: Erudition and the Making of the King James Version of the Bible*. Brill, 2018.
- Miller, Jeffery Alan. "Fruit of Good Labours: The Earliest Known Draft of the King James Bible" in *Times Literary Supplement*. October 16, 2015.

Appendix A

Bios's Annotated Old Testament

This volume is in the possession of the Bodleian Library at Oxford and possesses the shelf mark Bodleian Library, D 1.14 Th.Seld. It was Dr. Nichols Hardy of the University of Birmingham who first identified the handwriting in this annotated copy of the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) as belonging to King James translator John Bois. Professor Hardy wrote about this unique volume in his 2018 publication “Revising the King James Apocrypha: John Bois, Isaac Casaubon, and the Case of 1 Esdras.” This essay serves as Chapter 8 in *Labors in the Vineyard of the Lord: Erudition and the Making of the King James Version of the Bible*. The entirety of the following citation found in this Appendix are taken from Dr. Hardy’s fabulous essay.

- “The edition in question is the Sixtine Septuagint, published in Rome in 1587. Bois’s copy of this book contains thousands of marginal and interlinear annotations in Bois’s neat, distinctive hand, some of which can be dated to the period before the publication of the King James Bible. Others certainly postdate it, but since Bois is said to have participated in the later Cambridge revision of the translation, they may still attest to an ongoing development of his thinking about the translation, as well as the Septuagint itself.

There is a clear palaeographical basis for attributing the annotations to Bois. Moreover, there are several striking, and at times word-for-word, parallels between the annotations and Bois’s correspondence with Casaubon. Most importantly, though, there is also an external witness to Bois’s authorship of the annotations. The royal librarian, Patrick Young, made a partial copy of the annotations for use in an edition of the Septuagint which he was preparing. Young’s copy identifies Bois as the author of the annotations. The copy is now in Leiden because it was acquired by Isaac Vossius, the Dutch philologist who was interested in the Septuagint rather than in English biblical translations. Finally, it has been possible to construct an account of the book’s provenance that explains how it left Bois’s possession and reached its current location in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: John Selden probably purchased it, along with at least one other book annotated by Bois, from the London publisher and bookdealer, Cornelius Bee, after Bois’s death in 1644. Selden may have bought it, along with the only other book in the Selden collection known to have been annotated by Bois, in order to assist Young with his Septuagint edition: both books bear on the textual criticism of the Greek Bible, and, unlike the Sixtine Septuagint, Selden may already have had a copy of the other title. Books such as these, and any more belonging to Bois that may be found in Selden’s collection, may demonstrate that Selden had a firm documentary basis for his famous and oft-quoted comment about the process by which the King James Version was produced.

The most obvious reason for Bois’s use of the Sixtine Septuagint is a prosaic one: it was the only substantially new edition of the Greek Old Testament that had been published since the translation of the English version which Bois and his colleagues were supposed to be revising, the Bishops’ Bible. As far as Bois knew, no previous English translator had made any use of it. But Bois’s appreciation of the Sixtine edition probably went deeper than this: it appears to have been

his primary source for the Septuagint. At any rate, it was certainly the edition which Bois was using when he wrote to Casaubon, as the quotations in his correspondence reveal.

. . . Bois's Septuagint has many uses for the scholar of the King James Bible. One of the most important is that some of Bois's marginalia represent an earlier, more rudimentary stage of deliberation about passages which Bois would eventually discuss with Casaubon. But this book has a much bigger part to play in the story of the King James Bible than merely providing a record of the translators' deliberations about specific problems. Many of Bois's annotations in it gesture towards other elements of his study of the Bible; and when these elements are considered more closely, in combination with the other surviving records of Bois's scholarship, they reveal some of the assumptions that underpinned the specific work which he undertook for the translation.

. . . Without the extensive information about such matters which is preserved in Bois's Septuagint and other writings, it would be harder to make sense of the motivations underpinning the specific queries which Bois put to Casaubon.

The pitfalls of reading the surface text of the Bois-Casaubon correspondence in isolation will be clear to anybody who has worked on the sources for poorly attested collaborative enterprises such as the King James Bible. Irena Backus has already demonstrated the value of understanding that Bois's notes on the New Testament are engaged in a conscious dialogue with the work of Theodore Beza, even when they do not cite him. An even more striking and recent example is furnished by the case of Samuel Ward. My comparison of Bois's Septuagint and correspondence with Ward's notes on 1 Esdras has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that Ward derived the content of at least two of those notes from Bois; and yet Ward's notebook, in itself, has not yielded any hard evidence of this, or any other, collaboration. Gaps like the ones in Bois's New Testament notes and Ward's notebook are an inevitable result of the complexity of the subjects with which the translators were dealing; the pervasiveness of certain basic considerations in their minds; and, finally, the close, collaborative and face-to-face way in which they worked from the drafting stage through to the final revision, which meant that they did not always need to put their shared thoughts and presuppositions to paper.

The new pieces of evidence discussed in this essay, then, have far greater functions than the narrow one of establishing who was responsible for any given part of the Bible of 1611. They invite speculation about the reasons why the text took its eventual form, as well as the bare facts of how the translation came together. What follows is an attempt to reconstruct the thinking that informed Bois and Casaubon's deliberations, beginning with evidence of Bois's reading drawn from his Septuagint and related sources, and following with further evidence drawn from the Bois-Casaubon correspondence itself." (Hardy, 279-285)