

Sunday, November 12, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 216 The AV 1611: Examining The Marginal Notes (Textual Variants/Alternative Textual Readings)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 215](#) we began looking at marginalia in the 1611 that marked some sort of textual variant within the source texts used by the King James translators. Recall that we observed two different functions for the double vertical line markings (||) as noted by Samuel Ward at the Synod of Dort in 1618.
 - “where a Hebrew or Greek word admits two meanings of a suitable kind, the one was to be expressed in the text, the other in the margin,” i.e., alternative English renderings. (Pollard, 339)
 - “. . . to be done where a different reading was found in good copies.” (Pollard, 339)
- The number of marginal notes of this second category is very small compared with the number of alternative English renderings demarcated by the double vertical lines. When a textual variant is being cataloged in the margin, the note usually takes one of the following five forms:
 - “Some Read”—9 occurrences: Ezra 8:14; Ps. 102:3; Song. 5:4; Matt. 1:11; I Cor. 15:31; Eph. 6:9; I Peter 2:21; II Peter 2:11; 2:18
 - “Some Copies”—4 occurrences: I Chron. 1:6; 1:7; Ezra 2:33; 10:40
 - “Some Copies Read”—4 occurrences: Acts 25:6; James 2:18; II Peter 2:2; II John 1:8
 - “Greek Copies”—2 occurrences: Matt. 26:26; Luke 17:36
 - “Many Ancient Copies”—1 occurrence: Luke 10:22
- Of the thousands of marginal notes found in the 1611 only 20 clearly indicate the presence of textual variants in the source texts used by the King James translators. Please see [Lesson 215](#) for a description of the process used to arrive at these findings as well as photographic evidence of each note and discussion of possible sources for each variant.
- In this Lesson we want to provide an analysis of the material covered in Lesson 215. Therefore, the current Lesson is best viewed as part two of a two-part treatise.

Analysis

- Before beginning our analysis, I need to note my awareness of F.H.A. Scrivener’s 1884 work titled *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611)*. Section II of Scrivener’s book is titled, “Its Marginal Notes And Original Texts.” In this Section beginning on page 58 Scrivener states:

- “The following marginal notes relating to various readings occur in the New Testament in the two issues of 1611. They are nearly all derived from Beza's text or notes.” (Scrivener, 58)
- In this section Scrivener catalogues more marginalia dealing with “various readings” in the New Testament than the 13 observed in Lesson 215 and discussed below. None of the additional examples cited by Scrivener are explicitly marked by the 1611 as being textual in nature. They are marked with double vertical lines (||) and simply read “or”, thereby indicating alternative English renderings. Scrivener’s claim that there are additional, non-explicitly marked marginalia of a textual nature in the 1611 is retroactive and speculative. Given the testimony of Samuel Ward at the Synod of Dort and evidence furnished by the 1611 itself, the translators’ words must take priority over Scrivener’s. At the end of the day, there are only 20 marginal notes in the 1611 that explicitly catalogue different readings found in the source texts utilized by the King James translators.
- The following is a statistical breakdown of the five different categories of marginal notes covered in Lesson 215. Many thanks to Alex Hanna for providing the data presented in the following table.

	# Of Verses	% Of Total Verses
OT	23,145	
NT	7,957	
Total	31, 102	
“Some Read”		
OT	3	0.013%
NT	6	0.075%
Total	9	0.029%
“Some Copies”		
OT	4	0.017%
NT	0	0.000%
Total	4	0.013%
“Some Copies Read”		
OT	0	0.000%
NT	4	0.050%
Total	4	0.013%
“Greck Copies”		
OT	0	0.000%
NT	2	0.025%
Total	2	0.006%
“Many Ancient Copies”		
OT	0	0.000%
NT	1	0.013%
Total	1	0.003%

All 5 Categories		
OT	7	0.030%
NT	13	0.163%
Total	20	0.064%

- The evidence presented in Lesson 215 and the above table suggests that the categories labeled “Greek Copies” and “Many Ancient Copies” are referring exclusively to variants stemming from known editions of the *Textus Receptus*. Put another way, these two categories are specifically noting variants in the Greek editions available to the King James translators. In contrast, the more general categories of “some read,” “some copies,” and “some copies read” are cataloging known variants in a variety of sources utilized by the translators when doing their work, i.e., they are not exclusive to Hebrew and/or Greek variants. Therefore, these categories could be referring to any of the following:
 - Prior English Bibles: Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthews, Great, Geneva, Bishops, and Douay-Rheims
 - Peshitta
 - Latin Vulgate
 - Spanish (1569), French (1588), Italian (1607), etc.
 - Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts
 - TR Editions
 - LXX
- Observations such as these should not be surprising when one considers the nature and scope of the translators’ work outlined by Myles Smith in the Preface.
 - “Neither did we think much to consult the Translators or Commentators, Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek or Latin, no nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered: but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see.”
- According to the data presented in the table above, only 0.064% of the canonical text of the 1611 contains marginalia noting textual variants in the sources consulted by the King James translators. Meanwhile, the NIV “offers some 133 text-critical indicators in its text of the New Testament,” according to Holger Szesnat’s article [“Some Witnesses Have ...”: The Representation of the New Testament Text in English Bible Versions.](#)” (Szesnat, 3)
 - “The NIV offers some 133 text-critical indicators in its text of the New Testament; two of these come in the form of notes within the text itself, the rest by way of footnotes. The

format of these footnotes is fairly uniform, with few exceptions: variants are introduced as “some manuscripts read / add...” (e.g. Mt 5:22) or “some manuscripts omit / do not have...” (e.g. Mt 12:47). It must also be noted that the abbreviations ‘Mss’ for manuscripts and ‘MS’ for manuscript, which are sometimes used in the footnotes of the NIV, are never explained. This seems odd, since these abbreviations are hardly common outside the academic scene. Later editions of the NIV seem to have converted all “Mss” to “manuscripts” (see also the current NIV website).” (Szesnat, 3)

- Quantitatively, a comparison between the text-critical marginalia in the King James New Testament with that of the NIV yields the following results.

	verses	NT%	Total%
KJV text-critical indicators	13	0.163%	0.042%
NIV text-critical indicators	133	1.671%	0.428% *

* 10X Higher

- The number of text-critical marginal notes in the NIV when compared to the 1611 is 10 times higher. Therefore, there is simply no quantitative comparison between the explicitly marked textual marginalia in the 1611 when compared to Modern Versions.
- Qualitatively, when the nature of the marginal notes cataloging textual variants in the 1611 is compared with Modern Versions, there is simply no comparison between the two. The following table endeavors to breakdown the 20 notes in question into qualitative categories based on the contents of each note.

	DW	Name	SD	Other	Omissions
“Some Read”					
Ezra 8:14		1			
Psalms 102:3	1				
Song of Solomon 5:4	1				
Matthew 1:11			1		
I Corinthians 15:31	1				
Ephesians 6:9	1				
I Peter 2:21	1				
II Peter 2:11			1		
II Peter 2:18				1	
“Some Copies”					
I Chronicles 1:6		1			
I Chronicles 1:7		1			
Ezra 2:33		1			
Ezra 10:40		1			
“Some Copies Read”					
Acts 25:6			1		
James 2:18	1				
II Peter 2:2	1				
II John 1:8	1				
“Greek Copies”					
Matthew 26:26	1				
Luke 17:36					1
“Ancient Copies”					
Luke 10:22				1	
Total	9	5	3	2	1
%	45%	25%	15%	10%	5%

DW = Different Way of Saying the Same Thing

SD = Substantive Difference In Meaning

- A full quarter of the notes (5 total: Ezra 2:33; 8:14; 10:40; I Chron. 1:6, 7) deal with the spelling of proper names and are of no practical or theological consequence. Meanwhile two notes are marked “other,” including the one found at II Peter 2:18, which is just strange on its face and arguably the result of a scribal error or typo in certain printed editions of the TR. There is a difference of one Greek character accounting for the difference between the reading found in the text and the one appended to the margin (See [Lesson 215](#) for more.). Likewise for the note at Luke 10:22, it marks a variant reading that is found in the AV in the next verse at Luke 10:23 (See explanation below.). The remaining 13 marginal notes are analyzed further below. Please note:
 - DW=Different Way of Saying the Same Thing
 - SD=Substantive Difference In Meaning
 - Psalm 102:3—|| like smoke: || Or, (as some read) into smoke.

- DW—Being “consumed like smoke” or “consumed into smoke” are different ways of saying the same thing.
- Song of Solomon 5:4—|| for him: || Or, (as some read) in me.
 - DW—either way her bowels were moved within her. This is a different way of saying the same thing.
- Matthew 1:11—|| Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren: || some read, Josias begat Jakim, and Jakim begat Jechonias.
 - SD—there is a substance difference between the text and margin in this case. The translators chose the theological correct reading in the body of the text given the 14 generations mentioned in Matthew 1:17 while showing awareness of the variant in the margin.
- I Corinthians 15:31—|| your: || Some read, our.
 - DW—either way in the context both Paul and Corinthains are rejoicing. There is no theological/doctrinal impact.
- Ephesians 6:9—|| your master also: || Some read, both your, and their master.
 - DW—it is implied in the context that God in heaven would be the “master” of both “masters” and “servants.” The text and margin equal a different way of saying the same thing.
- I Peter 2:21—|| for us: || Some read, for you.
 - DW—the context implies that Peter is including himself in the statement. The text and margin equal a different way of saying the same thing.
- II Peter 2:11—|| against them: || some read against themselves.
 - SD—the reading “against them” found in the text refers to either fleshy humans or “dignities” in verse 10. Whereas the reading “themselves” would be referring to angels in verse 11. Theological implication?
- Acts 25:6—|| more then ten days: || Or, as some copies read, no more then eight or ten days.
 - SD—the variant “no more then eight or ten days” would be substantive when compared against the main body of the text, “more than ten days.” The difference however is of no theological/doctrine consequence.

- James 2:18—|| without: || Some copies read, by thy works.
 - DW—see comments in [Lesson 215](#).
- II Peter 2:2—|| pernicious ways: || Or, lascivious ways, as some copies read.
 - DW—“pernicious ways” verses “lascivious ways” are a different way of saying the same thing.
- II John 1:8—|| wrought: || Or, gained. Some copies read, which ye have gained, but that ye receive, etc.
 - DW—there is no difference in meaning between “wrought” and “gained.” As for the pronoun difference, see our comments above on I Corinthians 15:31.
- Matthew 26:26—|| blessed it: || Many Greek copies have, gave thanks.
 - DW—the text “blessed it” and the margin “gave thanks” equal different ways of saying the same thing.
- Luke 10:22—|| All things: || Many ancient copies add these words, And turning to his Disciples he said.
 - Other—The words found in the marginal reading at verse 22 are present in the text of the 1611 in verse 23.
- Luke 17:36 is the only marginal note in the 1611 dealing with the omission of an entire verse in earlier editions of the TR (See [Lesson 215](#)).
 - Luke 17:36—|| Two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left: || This 36. verse is wanting in most of the Greek copies.
- Quantitatively, most of the marginalia in the 1611 noting variant readings in the source texts utilized by the King James translators deal with the spelling of proper names and/or constitute different ways of saying the same thing. There are only three substantive differences in meaning between the text and margin in the 1611 (Matt. 1:11; Acts 25:6; I Pet. 2:11) none of which are theologically/doctrinally consequential. Only one, at Luke 17:36, deals with the omission of a whole verse in earlier iterations of the TR.
- Yet, many contemporary advocates of the Critical Text/Modern Versions such as James R. White seek to leverage the type of marginal notes covered in these Lessons against King James Bible defenders. Consider the following example from the 2nd Edition of White’s *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust Modern Translations*:
 - “Modern Bible translations as a matter of standard practice include footnotes to indicate to the reader where the Greek or Hebrew manuscripts contains variants. KJV Only

advocates generally dislike such footnotes, feeling that they can confuse the reader that they are in fact faith-destroying. If a version dares to note that a word, phrase, or verse is questionable, it will be accused of attacking the Word of God by those who define the KJV as the Word of God. Unfortunately, many AV defenders seem unaware that, as noted previously, the King James Version contained 8,422 such marginal readings and notes when first published. . .

Most of these notes gave alternative readings, but some indicated that the KJV translators recognized the existence of textual variants in the Greek and Hebrew texts. One example should suffice [White shows no awareness of how many marginal notes fit this category.] to demonstrate that the dislike for textual notes on the part of AV Only advocates is more than slightly inconsistent. Note the KJV's own marginal reference at Luke 10:22:

Many ancient copies add these words, And turning to his disciples, he said,

If the KJV is not "attacking God's Word" with such marginal notes, why is the NASB or NIV?" (White, 263-264)

- White and his troop are seeking to equate marginal notes like the one found at Luke 10:22 in the 1611 with the scores of text critical notes found in the Critical Text and Modern Versions as though they were the same thing. Note the suspect nature of White's argumentation. First, he mentions that the 1611 contained 8,422 "marginal readings and notes when first published." That said, only 20 of the AV's marginal notes appear to raise textual issues, the vast majority of which are non-substantive. Then, he cited one example (Luke 10:22), without mentioning how many total notes fit this category, as though it were emblematic of all the marginal notes found in the AV. The marginal notes in the AV dealing with textual variants when compared to the Critical Text and Modern Versions are far fewer in number (quantitative) and less significant in nature (qualitative) in that they are not calling into question the legitimacy of entire verses/passages or changing the meaning of the text.

Works Cited

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- Szesnat, Holger. "[Some Witnesses Have ...](#)": [The Representation of the New Testament Text in English Bible Versions](#)." 2007.
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