

Sunday, January 28, 2024—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 223 The AV 1611: Early Criticism (Hugh Broughton)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 222](#) we resumed looking at the AV of 1611 as a historical artifact by considering its early reception. In addition, I laid out that we would also be considering the following additional items:
 - Early Criticism
 - Early Sales
- We concluded the previous Lesson with the following citation from the pen of Dr. Mordechai Feingold editor of *Laborers in the Vineyard of the Lord: Scholarship and the Making of the King James Version of the Bible*:
 - “And, to reiterate, while many of the brethren remained attached to the dogmatic doctrinal annotation of the Geneva Bible, few faulted the translation itself. Grumblings regarding the KJV arose over specific renderings of a word or a phrase, not over the translation as a whole. Only one individual, Hugh Broughton, denounced it *tout court* [with no addition or qualification], but then, he was deeply offended for having been excluded from among the rank of translators. He also took umbrage because the translators had refused to incorporate his prophetically grounded emendations into the KJV.” (Feingold, 27-28)
- In this Lesson we want to consider the topic of early criticism by looking at the objections of Hugh Broughton to the AV. The person of Hugh Broughton has already been discussed in this class. In [Lesson 157](#) (Pre-Jamesian Calls for a New Translation) we discussed Hugh Broughton’s crusade in the late 1580s and 1590s for a new English Bible in some detail. In addition, in [Lesson 198](#) we briefly mentioned Hugh Broughton when discussing subsection 11 of the Preface titled “A Stratification To Our Brethren” as a person that Myles Smith was potentially addressing. Recall that Broughton had been passed over by Archbishop Richard Bancroft as a translator to work on King James’s translation project.
- Moreover, we saw in our study of Myles Smith’s Preface that he anticipated a hostile reception for their work. Indeed, the first two subsections of the Preface are about “columniation” or slander. Later in the Preface, Smith opened subsection 9 titled “The Speeches and Reasons, Both of Our Brethren, and Our Adversaries Against This Work,” with the following line,
 - “Many men's mouths have been open a good while (and yet are not stopped) with speeches about the Translation so long in hand, or rather perusals of Translations made before. . .”

- Regarding this, Dr. David Norton author of *The History of the English Bible As Literature* writes:
 - “. . . if there was a general storm such as they anticipated, almost all direct evidence of it has disappeared. . . yet had not Hugh Broughton carried out his determination to censure the new translation, it might seem that the KJB fell into a vacuum.” (Norton, 73)
- While I do not agree with all of Dr. Norton’s thinking regarding the early reception of the AV (see [Lesson 222](#)), his thoughts regarding Broughton’s early criticisms are highly relevant to the topic of this Lesson. Shortly after the publication of the AV in either late 1611 or early 1612, Broughton published a piece titled, *A censure o f the late translation for our churches sent vnto a right worshipfull knight, attendant vpon the king*. As the title suggests, this work outlined ten main objections to the new Bible. Dr. Norton states regarding Broughton’s *Censure* of the AV:
 - “His response, ‘a censure of the late translation for the Churches, sent unto a right, worshipful knight, attendant upon the King’, was written in either 1611 or 1612 (when he died), and begins: ‘the late bible, right worshipful, was sent me to censure, which bred in me a sadness that will grieve me while I breath. It is so ill done. Tell his Majesty that I had rather be rent in pieces with wild horses than any such translation by my consent should be urged upon poor Churches’. Broughton’s objections, of which he lists ten, show, as one would expect, that the KJB did indeed receive the minute caviling attention that Myles Smith had feared. The most colorful is the second objection, which is to Jesus being called the son of God in Luke 3: the translators he writes,

In fifteen verses ring fifteen core idle words for accompts in the day of judgement, and bring Joseph to be the son of all men there, where thus Saing Luke meant: Jesus was called of the Father My Son, being son of Joseph, as men thought. . . A jew of Amsterdam objected the Bishop’s error to deny the New Testament, that omitted how Christ should come of David. Thereupon I cleared our Lord’s family. Bancroft raved. I gave the anathema. Christ judges his own cause.

The argument is entirely about accuracy of translation and the removal of inconsistencies in matters such as chronology. Broughton has nothing to say of the English qualities of the translation. To judge from his remarks, such considerations are irrelevant.” (Norton, 74-75)
- In 2021 Kristen Macfarlane published *Biblical Scholarship in an Age of Controversy: The Polemical World of Hugh Broughton* for Oxford University Press. This work represents the most updated scholarship on the life and career of Hugh Broughton. We will be relying heavily on McFarlane’s work to frame our discussion of this important early critic of the AV.
- In order to tackle this topic, we will be covering the following points:
 - Broughton’s Campaign for a New English Bible

- Further Thoughts From David Norton
- The Genealogies: Broughton's Covert Influence

Broughton's Campaign for a New English Bible

- While we have told some of this story before in Lesson 157, it bears another look as a backdrop for understanding why Broughton was so critical of the AV when it was first published. Macfarlane begins her recounting of this history with the year 1593.
 - “In 1593, Broughton wrote a brief letter to William Cecil outlining his intention to start work on amending the Bishops Bible, and suggesting how this might take shape: six scholars, with Broughton at the lead, only changing what needed to be changed and adding short notes, tables, and maps at various places to supplement the main text. Broughton informed Cecil that he had been considering such a project for a while . . . and that many noblemen, bishops, doctors, and even lay people had expressed the need for it. Given this encouragement, and the urgency of the proposed, he thought that now was the time to set the wheels in motion.” (Macfarlane, 76)
- Nothing ever came of Broughton's 1593 request. Two years later in June 1595, Broughton tried again “to gain Cecil's approval for the project,” only to be ignored yet again. Frustrated, in 1597 Broughton went public through the publication of *An Epistle to the learned Nobility of England: Touching Translating the bible From the Original*. Regarding this decision, Macfarlane states the following:
 - “Another two years later, with no hint of any funds forth coming, Broughton made a drastic decision. Whereas previously he had been unwilling ‘largely to tell in words’ what problems he saw in the English Bible, for fear that it would be ‘disgraced, ,which now we use’, the continued inaction of the bishops had prompted a change of heart. . . In late May of 1597, therefore, Broughton wrote and published his call to arms: *An Epistle to the learned Nobility of England: Touching Translating the bible From the Original*.

The aim of this word was to move the ‘English Nobility’ (by which Broughton meant ‘al the ancient an good Gentry of the land’) to fund a new English Bible. Broughton claimed to be publishing this at the request of an unnamed lord who desired to know how best to execute a new translation; like many of Broughton's claims, this is difficult to verify. Within this work Broughton made some of the general comments on translation that are now among the best known of his ideas, such as his description of the need for ‘constant memory to translate the same often repeated word in the same sort.’ He also, however, made very specific remarks about the extent and nature of the scholarly knowledge which a good translator should have, including knowledge of the Masorah, a command of classical and rabbinic sources, and an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages in the use of the Septuagint as a translation aid. Finally, Broughton also offered a list of errors he had found in contemporary English Bibles, and comments on who best to

correct them. Many of these errors consisted of contradictory translations of different biblical verses, which Broughton harmonized by carefully examining the syntax, grammar, and lexis of the original Hebrew or Greek text and retranslating accordingly.” (Macfarlane, 76-77)

- Broughton’s *Epistle* was not well received by its intended audience as once again no action was taken. Making matters worse, key figures such as William Barlow and Richard Bancroft, both key figures in the translation of the AV, openly mocked Broughton in a satire titled *Master Broughtons Letters*.
 - “If any reaction was forthcoming from this first foray into the public arena, it was not positive, for only a month or so later Broughton wrote a furious letter to Cecil, accusing Whitgift of hindering his proposed translation, and making it clear that he held the archbishop responsible for the continued production of English Bibles brimming with errors. Broughton was concerned enough about the reception of his work in England that he even considered moving to Scotland where he had been assured he would receive a warm welcome. . . [Broughton was also involved in a controversy “over the meaning of Christ’s descent into hell” with Thomas Bilson, William Barlow, and then Archbishop Whitgift.] . . . it quickly became bitterly personal thanks to the publication of a satire against Broughton, penned anonymously by Barlow and Richard Bancroft, entitled *Master Broughtons Letters*. Although specifically engendered by the controversy over Christ’s descent . . .” (Macfarlane, 77-78)
- Broughton’s *Epistle* was also attracting another form of unwelcomed and unanticipated attention. Roman Catholic apologists were using Broughton’s strong arguments regarding errors in English Bibles as a club to beat Protestants.
 - “. . . just as the English bishops seemed to be united against him, the frankness of Broughton’s *An Epistle to the Learned Nobility* was beginning to attract the wrong kind of attention, from Catholic controversialists who were keen to seize on Protestant admissions of corruption in English Bibles. The problem began when Thomas Wright of the English College at Douai called upon Broughton’s ‘*Epistle dedicated to the Lordes of the Councell*’ as evidence for the minor premise of his syllogism proving that ‘All Protestants who are ignorant of the Greek and Latin tongues are Infidels.’ Despite the ardent dismissals of Wright’s comments by various Protestant (including Barlow, who asked how anyone could take seriously a man ‘grown mad with his self-louing phrensey’), Broughton’s work continued to be exploited for confessional ends. . . [Later in this paragraph Macfarlane states the following based on some documents in the Cambridge University Archives.] Intriguing, there is some hint that *An Epistle* might in fact have made its way into the hands of the AV translators despite this bad press, as it seems likely to be the learned letter of Broughton’s that Bancroft enclosed in one of his missives to the translators. However, on balance, though *An Epistle to the Learned Nobility* had been written with the aim of aiding the English Church, in the years after its

publication it seemed to do rather more good for Catholic controversialists than Protestants.” (Macfarlane, 78-79)

- King James I ascended the throne of England in 1603 upon the death of Queen Elizabeth I. Broughton saw this a new opportunity to press his plans for a new English Bible.
 - “Six years after the publication of *An Epistle to the Learned Nobility*, with the decent controversy still raging and no hint of patronage for his translation project, the succession of James I in 1603 gave Broughton what he perceived to be a window of opportunity. He has always thought his scholarship would be better received in Scotland than in England, and with a Scottish King on the British throne, Broughton felt confident that a change in his fortunes was imminent. This is shown in a letter entitled ‘Of Amending the Genevan translat.’, sent to James by Broughton soon after his succession and before 1604. In this, Broughton explained to James that many bishops and nobles had long wished for an improved version of the Geneva Bible and that even Anthony Gilby (d. 1585), who was one of its translators, had been ‘most earnest to have his word amended’. As well as briefly reiterating some of the general rules that Broughton had already mentioned in his *Epistle to the Learned Nobility*, this letter also informed James that another work was soon to be printed (*An advertisement of corruption*) which would further reveal the ‘gross errors’ in the text and notes of current English Bibles, and urged him to take action in this matter. Whether Broughton ever did send this letter, or indeed whether James ever received it and replied is a matter speculation but, in any case, he would have no more support from James, either for his new English Bible or his other projects, than he had from Elizabeth.” (Macfarlane, 79)
- After having been shut down at every turn to revise the English Bible, despite his ongoing efforts, Broughton was beside himself when he realized that James did sanction a revision of the Bishops Bible at Hampton Court, to be headed by Bishop Bancroft his arch nemesis, and that he had been excluded from the project.
 - “Despite his ongoing efforts [1605 translation of Ecclesiastes dedicated to Prince Henry, James’ oldest son] Broughton’s patience was waning, especially after he heard about the central role Richard Bancroft had been assigned in the new translation commissioned by King James. Broughton’s frustration at his old enemy’s prominence in an enterprise so important to him is recorded particularly vividly in a document written around 1609 entitled ‘Rules concerning the BB [bishops] translation of the Bible.’ Here, Broughton described how he believed that Bancroft had wormed his way into the enterprise, manipulating James so that he would be allowed to appoint translators ‘accord to his unlearned choice.’ To minimize his harmful influence, Broughton declared, he had designed this document to establish what ‘themata or rules should be laid down: shewing what learning a translator ought to have’. It is probable that Broughton was intending to publish this work, though he never did, even after Bancroft died in November 1610.

Indeed, publication of such a document would have been difficult, at least in England, given the extent and ferocity of Broughton's accusations against Bancroft within it. What began as a neutral set of rules soon turned into a raging polemic outlining all the reasons why Bancroft could not be trusted to produce a good translation. These include some intellectual reasons, such as his commendation of Lively, now deceased, in the 1599 *Master Broughton's Letters*: Broughton worried that this was a sign that an English Bible produced under Bancroft would have many of the qualities he strongly disagreed with in Lively's translation of Dan. 9, . . . Beyond this, Broughton doubted the sincerity of Bancroft's motivations, holding him personally responsible for the fact that the faulty Geneva and Bishops' translation had held sway for so long and, perhaps most strikingly, accusing him of burning copies of the 1609 *Defense of the Concert*. The most damning, however, and most dangerous allegation Broughton made was that Bancroft was guilty of simony: that he had effectively bought the bishopric of London in 1597 by paying Penelope Blount, countess of Devonshire, Henry Cuffe and Gilly Merrick to campaign for his appointment. For this reason, Broughton declared, he would rather call Bancroft a "Buy-shop" than a bishop. Although the 'Rules' remained unpublished, Broughton did print a brief, sanitized extract from them in his 1609 *A short oration of the Bibles Translation*, and they likely also inspired his more polemical list of errors 'allowed' by Bancroft in his 1609 *A Defense of the Book entitled A Concert of Scripture*. All in all, however, each of these did little more than repeat the comments Broughton had already printed in *An Epistle to the Learned Nobility* and elsewhere, and they certainly made no positive contribution towards Broughton's attempts to gain traction for his idea about translation. (Macfarlane, 80-81)

- By the end of 1609 and beginning of 1610, "Broughton's writing was veering dangerously towards a pure ad hominem attack on the men involved in the King's translation, with personal jibes against particular translators woven into his intellectual and theological arguments." (Macfarlane, 81) Despite being completely shut out of the translational process by 1610, Broughton had not abandoned his efforts to influence the final product.
 - "In his 1610 *Querelae de quodam scoparcha* he announced that if the bishops did indeed manage to provide a translation better than those he had produced of Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Daniel or Job (which was then in press), he would not begrudge it. Equally, if they failed to meet such standard, he would still be willing to do the job himself for a royal stipend. And again, in a further letter to James written that same year, Broughton complained about the slow progress of the translation and the inadequacy of the chosen translators, but outlined once more his own opinion of the learning a good translator ought to have, and reiterated his offer to provide a better translation himself, if provided with an appropriate stipend." (Macfarlane, 81)
- With all this background it should not be surprising to learn that when the AV was finally published in 1611, Broughton disliked the final product produced by Bancroft's committees. In 1611 Broughton published *A censure of the late translation for our churches sent vnto a right worshipfull knight, attendant vpon the king*.

- “Indeed, as well as Broughton’s most famous critique of it, the 1611 Censure, there exists also a more extensive document dissecting the AV and demanding that ‘the first edition be only for a trial.’ This reveals that among Broughton’s strongest objections to the new Bible was the clear influence of Lively’s *A true chronology*: the First Oxford Company, to whom the book of Daniel was assigned, must have had this work before them as they translated. Evidence of his influence included many changes to the Bishops’ Bible text of Daniel that were chiefly recommended in Lively’s work.

For instance, at Dan. 9:24, where the 1602 Bishops Bible translated ‘to seal up the sinns’, following the reading in the main text of the Hebrew (*ketiv*), the AV had instead put the Hebrew Bible’s marginal (*qeri*) reading of ‘to make an end of sins’ in the main text, with the main reading ‘to seal’ in the margin. This reveals of the readings that had been recommended by Lively, on the theological grounds that for Christ merely to have sealed up sin rather than ending it would diminish the nature of his sacrifice. Broughton, however, objected that that theology alone was not reason enough to depart from the text as given in the Hebrew Bible. Another similar example occurred at Dan. 9:25, where Broughton was horrified to notice that the AV had followed Lively’s interpretation of the verse against the precedent set by the Bishops’ Bible:

. . . to but Jerusalem, unto Messiah the prince, there hall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: and the street shall be built again, and the wall . . .
(Bishops Bible 1602)

to build Jeruslam, unto messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks; and three score and two weeks, the street shall be built again, and the wall . . . (AV, 1611)

As Broughton noticed, whereas the placement of the colon in the 1602 Bishops’ translation forced the reader to follow the traditional Christological interpretation of the verse and assign both the 7x7 and 62x7 to the period of Jerusalem’s rebuilding to the Messiah, the placement of the semi-colon in the 1611 AV pushed the reader towards Lively’s interpretation, enabling only the 7x7 to be assigned to the period from Jerusalem’s rebuilding to the messiah. This meant that, following the AV translation, the word ‘messiah’ at this crucial point was difficult to interpret as a reference to Jesus Christ.

In seeing Lively’s interpretation of Daniel embedded in the AV, Broughton had one of his worst fears about the project confirmed, and these same objections to the Livelian elements of the AV’s translation were repeated in his 1611 *Censure*. However, despite Broughton’s complaints, his hopes that the AV might be recalled and a fresh translation commissioned were never fulfilled. Indeed, Broughton, suffering by this stage from tuberculosis, returned to England in the year of its publication and died soon afterwards.” (Macfarlane, 81-82)

- Macfarlane concludes here with comments regarding Broughton’s desire to revise the English Bible as follows:
 - “Finally, from the perspective of the English Bible, this chapter has nuanced and complicated some of the usual commonplaces about Broughton’s response to the AV by placing them within their long-term intellectual and political context, showing how Broughton’s criticisms of this translation were a fusion of theological and scholarly objections as well as the culmination of years of intensive debate and exchange, especially with Lively. As importantly, it has been suggested that the reason why such criticisms were never taken seriously by Broughton’s contemporaries was not so much because of their intellectual quality as because of the peculiar way in which Broughton merged such scholarly-theological concerns with highly personal and vicious attacks on particularly prominent individuals like Bancroft.” (Macfarlane, 83)

Further Thoughts From David Norton

- As good as Macfarlane’s treatment of Broughton has been, we would be remiss if we did not also touch on a couple of points raised by Dr. David Norton in *A History of the English Bible as Literature*.
 - “The airing Broughton gives to his ideas of sweet oratoriousness of the Scriptures must have served to remind the KJB translators that there was more to translation than meaning. But he never advocates for a rhetorical or poetical translation and is absolutely clear that the duty of translators is to be as faithful to the meaning of the original as possible.

All he says of English style in the Epistle, which was published in 1597, is that a translation ‘should have a mild style, to win all to a good work, which is exasperatingly vague. . . English style is hardly even a minor matter for Broughton: the usual style [Geneva] will do because it is familiar, and he returns squarely to the issue of exactness. He judges a translator’s duty to be ‘to show the ring meaning of old hid doings, which by mistaking blame the holy letters’. (Norton, 58-59)
- One of Broughton’s main criticisms of the AV was that the translators did not apply a principle of rigidity or “uniformity of phrasing” or “identity of words” when rendering Hebrew and Greek words into English. Dr. Norton states the following regarding this point:
 - “Repetitions must be translated identically (the KJB translators specially excused themselves from doing this, but it became principle of the RV), . . .” (Norton, 59)
 - “The preface concentrates on the translators’ use of various words for a single original word, and they may well be replying to Broughton.” (Norton, 68)

- Dr. Norton offers the following summation on Broughton’s approach to translating, “At the back of this lies an equation between literal translation and eloquence in translation: the translation would be eloquent not as English but as Hebrew and Greek in English.” (Norton, 59) Put another way, an English Bible should strive for accuracy in translation above eloquence in English. Any eloquence achieved in English should be commensurate with the eloquence found in the original languages.
- Norton concludes a section of Chapter 3 regarding Broughton by pointing out that while his specific translational advice/views were largely ignored he did contribute to the “intellectual atmosphere” that gave rise to the AV.
 - “Much of Broughton’s work was ignored. But, however little the KJB translators responded to its detail, it contributed significantly to the intellectual atmosphere of the times by encouraging a reverence for the eloquence of the original without arguing for an equivalent eloquence in English, but above all by demanding the whole truth and arguing that it could only be revealed through the closest attention to the words and syllables of the perfect originals.” (Norton, 60)

The Genealogies: Broughton’s Covert Influence

- In Lessons [190](#), [191](#), and [192](#) we assessed the preliminary contents of the 1611. This included photographs and a brief discussion of the 36 page Genealogy found in the prefatory material of the 1611. At the time we mentioned briefly that the genealogies were a combined effort of Hugh Broughton and John Speed.
- Kirsten Macfarlane’s book does an excellent job tracing how the work of the AV’s chief critic came to populate 36 pages of the preliminary material of a book he censured.
 - “. . . at roughly the same time he was writing his *Concent*, Broughton was producing a spin-off project from his chronological studies that would take these aims even further. The work would eventually manifest as the genealogical diagrams prefixed to AV, although the bulk of the work that lay behind them, as we shall see in this chapter, was in fact carried out by Broughton from the 1580s until the early 1590s, in collaboration with the cartographer John Speed (1551/2-1629).

Despite their prominent placement at the forefront of the AV, these diagrams have not enjoyed much critical press. Their attribution to Broughton, along with the cartographer John Speed whom he met in London, has long been known thanks to Lightfoot. Lightfoot recorded that Broughton’s difficult relationship with the mainstream English ecclesiastical establishment, along with his omission from the AV translation committees, meant that they had to be published under Speed’s name alone.” (Macfarlane, 85)

- After considering the matter of the origin and creation of the genealogies, Macfarlane has concluded that they are much more than ornamental or decorative pieces.

- “. . . far from being purely ornamental or incidental, Broughton’s genealogical work was a fusion of secular and sacred scholarship with significant implications for the relationship between the learned culture that produced them and the lay readership for which they were designed.” (Mcfarlane, 86)
- Between pages 86 and 108, Mcfarlane leaves no stone unturned in surveying the history, theology, and working relationship between Broughton and Speed that gave rise to creation of the genealogies found in the AV. While interesting, the details lie beyond the scope of this Lesson. Mcfarlane concludes this lengthy section as follows:
 - “It is evident from these indexes how Speed and Broughton wanted readers to use their genealogies. They probably imagined that when readers of the Bible came across a new name, or were confused by an apparent genealogical inconsistency, they would turn to their indexes, check the name in the table, find it in the genealogies with the reference, and thereby gain all the information necessary to situate that figure within the intricate networks of scriptural kinship. The AV genealogies were intended to be anything but ‘decoratively printed but useless’ additions to the main translation. They were an apparatus to settle confusion and be actively used, not passively admired. They were interventions against the outdated diagrams of the Bishops Bible. They were meant to correct potential misapprehensions of the scripture at the same time as scripture was being read.” (Mcfarlane, 108)
- Through the genealogies, Broughton covertly influenced the final product of 1611 even if he was not selected to work as a translator and detested the outcome. In my mind, this is one of history’s little ironies.

Works Cited

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