

Sunday, May 26, 2024—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 236 Assessing the Printed History of the King James Text (1629 Cambridge Edition, Part 3)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 235](#) we continued our look at the 1629 Cambridge Edition. We did so by resuming our survey of Professor David Norton’s book *A Textual History Of The King James Bible*. Moreover, we reviewed statements from Dr. David Reagan’s piece, *The King James Version of 1611: The Myth of Early Revisions* regarding the printed history of the King James text. According to Reagan, “All of these details [four categories identified by Reagan: changes in type face, letter formation, spelling/punctuation, and correction of printer’s errors] establish the fact that there were no true revisions in the sense of updating the language or correcting translation errors.” (Reagan, 7) While we agreed with Reagan that the King James translators made no “translation errors” or mistakes in terms of mispresenting the text in English, we questioned the veracity of Reagan’s statement that “there were no true revisions in the sense of updating the language.”
- We judged the accuracy of Reagan’s statement against the definitions of the following concepts: printer’s errors i.e., errors of the compositor and author’s alterations along with three textual examples raised by Professor Norton in his discussion of the 1629 Cambridge Edition. These examples included:
 - Job 4:6
 - Psalm 113:9
 - Isaiah 6:8
- In doing so, we concluded that Reagan’s statement is not true. There was non-substantive “updating” of language that occurred at the hands of the Cambridge Editors. This was observed most clearly in the example of Job 4:6 (See [Lesson 235](#) for details.).

1629 Cambridge Edition

- Professor Norton comments on the thorny subject of the interchange between the translators and their later editors when he states the following:
 - “Typically the textual changes deal with perceived inaccuracies in the work of the translators rather than printer’s errors. They inaugurate the principal effort made by successive editors through into this century, the effort to refine the KJB as a translation. Usually this refinement is a matter of making the KJB a still more literal representation of the originals: the editors test the text against the original languages and make changes where they judge that the translators were loose in their treatment of the originals. In doing this they treat the translators’ work as improvable, and take licence to know better than them how their work should read. Now, the translators might have agreed that their

work was not perfect, and they might also have assented to some, even many, of the changes, but there is evidence that they rejected some of the readings that their editors decided were better.” (Norton, 86)

- As stated in the previous Lesson, we do not always agree with Professor Norton’s conclusions, especially when they are not supported with objective textual evidence. Norton suggests that the overriding principle of the 1629 Cambridge editors was to increase the literal nature of the English renderings found in the AV.
 - “The commonest changes in the first Cambridge edition give a good idea of its attention to literal accuracy. Thirty of the 199 readings that have become standard involve changes of number, and a further fifteen involve the substitution of a possessive pronoun for the definite article; moreover, most of the spellings of names involve closer attention to their exact spelling in the originals.” (Norton, 87)
- Norton spends much time discussing the relationship between the primary source work-in-progress documents. In doing so, he speculates as follows:
 - “Rather than merely illustrating some typical changes, it will be more useful to take examples that bear on the question of whether the translators would have approved of all of them. Here the annotations in Bod 1602 are crucial because, where they coincide with first-edition readings, they increase the probability that those readings are the intended result of close consideration. Inferences from annotations that do not correspond to the first edition are less certain: further thought may have taken place or an error of transmission may have been made. Similarly, inferences from coincidences with the 1602 text are ambiguous: where these occur in the first edition and come from parts of Bod 1602 that were annotated, they probably indicate the translators’ considered approval, but may represent an oversight. And where the 1629 edition agrees with 1602 against the first edition, it is likely but not certain that the translators rejected the reading.” (Norton, 87)
- Some King James supporters refuse to consider Norton’s work because of the speculative nature of some of his conclusions (Contrary to popular opinion, I do not agree with every “jot and tittle” of Norton’s work.). Some of Professor Norton’s speculations make sense considering the historical evidence, others do not. Responsible readers should consider Norton’s remarks on a case-by-case basis. What follows is the remainder of Norton’s comments on the 1629 Cambridge edition along with photographic evidence to illuminate his points.
 - “Fourteen of the thirty literal changes that 1629 made to number come in parts of the OT that are annotated in Bod 1602. Five of these fourteen have annotations that create the first edition reading and so confirm that the translators decided against the more literal reading that the 1629 editors judged correct. Three examples will be useful not just for indicating the nature of the 1629 work, but also for the kind of problem there may be with it. [The other two examples are Lev. 10:14 and 2 Kgs 18:8.] At Song 4:6, the translators struck through 1602’s ‘to the mountaine of Myrrhe’ and substituted ‘to the mountaines of

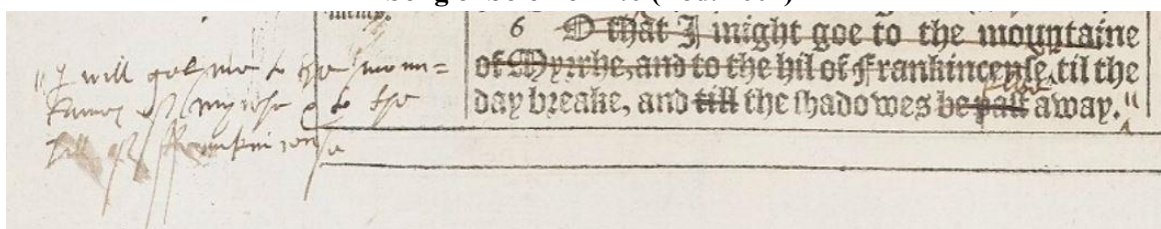
Myrrhe'. One might wonder why they worked this way when a simple insertion of s would have sufficed: perhaps they contemplated a more substantial change and then decided against it and, intending to reinstate the 1602 reading, accidentally changed it. This is possible, but there are other instances of the annotations taking a long way to make a small change, and it is rare for a reading to be deleted and then the same reading written in. Yet 'mountaines' does look like an error: the Hebrew is singular, as is the Greek of the Septuagint, the Latin of the Vulgate and the English of the Geneva and Bishops' Bibles; moreover, the parallelism works better with a singular, for a singular 'hill' follows (also singular in the Hebrew). Consequently the first edition's 'I will get mee to the mountaines of myrrhe, and to the hill of frankincense' seems wrong on two counts, and the 1629 restoration of the 1602 reading absolutely right." (Norton, 87-88)

Song of Solomon 4:6 (1560 Geneva)

6 Vntil the day breake , and the shadowes
flee away, I wil go into the mountaine of
myrrhe and to the mountaine of incense.

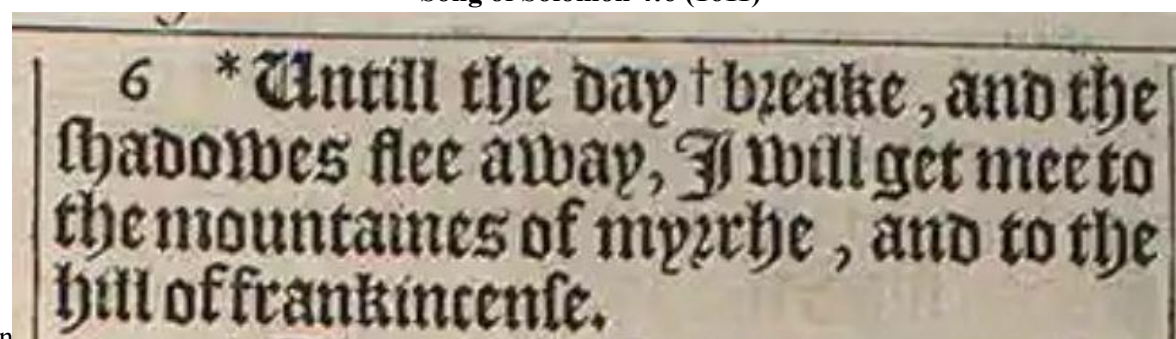
"... I will go into the mountain of myrrh ..."

Song of Solomon 4:6 (Bod. 1602)



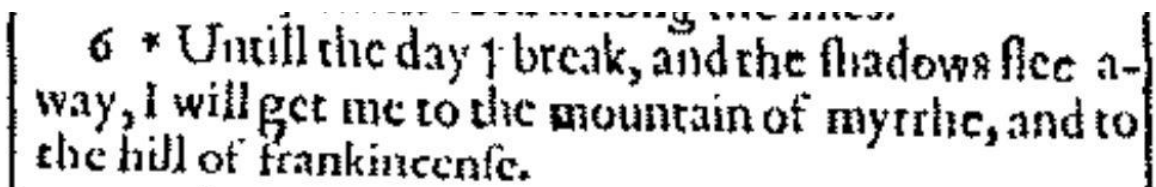
"... I will get me to the mountaines of myrrh ..."

Song of Solomon 4:6 (1611)



"...I will get me to the **mountaines** of myrrh..."

Song of Solomon 4:6 (1629 Cambridge)

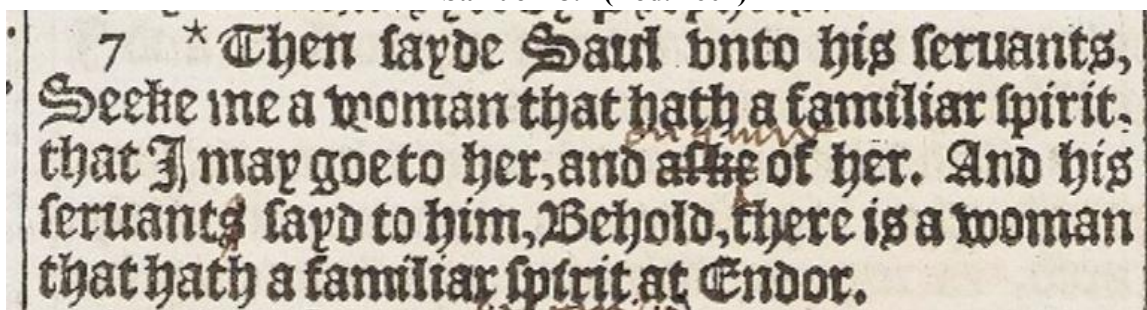


6 * Untill the day I break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrhe, and to the hill of frankincense.

“... I will get me to the **mountain** of myrrh...”

- The 1629’s singular reading “...I will get me to the mountain of myrrh...” is interesting to compare with the plural reading (“mountains of myrrh”) found in the 1611. First, the Hebrew is singular and not plural. Second, the singular “mountain of myrrh” was the established English reading in the Coverdale, Matthews, Great, Geneva, and Bishops Bibles all of which were consulted by the translators, according to Rule 14. Lastly, the singular reading “mountain of myrrh” strengthens the parallelism with the singular form in the next clause, “and to the hill of frankincense.” Given the fact that there is a difference of one English character between “mountain” and “mountains”, it seems reasonable to conclude that “mountains” was a printer’s error in the 1611. At the same time, the annotations recorded in Bod. 1602 suggest that the plural reading was preferred by the King James translators.
- Professor Norton tackles another example in I Samuel 28:7.
 - “At 1 Sam. 28:7, where 1602 reads, ‘and his seruants sayd’, the translators deleted the s: ‘and his seruant said’. By contrast with the previous example, there is no question but that this is a rejection of the literal sense of וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲבָדָיו. The reason seems straightforward: whereas Saul spoke to his servants collectively, the translators judged that they did not reply in chorus but that the natural understanding of the action is that one servant replied: ‘then said Saul vnto his seruants, Seeke me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may goe to her, and enquire of her. And his seruant said to him, Beholde, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.’ The 1629 editors restored the 1602 reading, ‘correcting’ the translators but going against their favoured reading.” (Norton, 88)

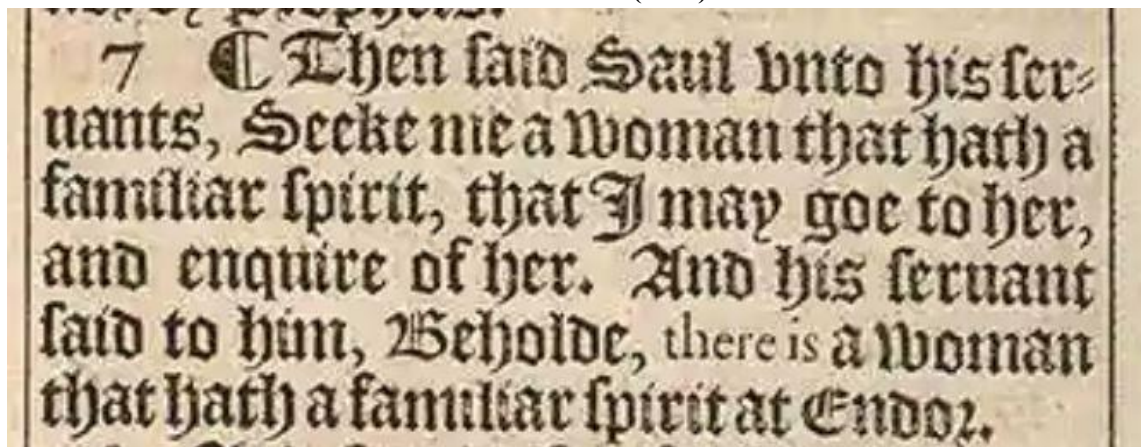
I Samuel 28:7 (Bod. 1602)



7 * Then sayde Saul vnto his seruants, Seeke me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may goe to her, and aske of her. And his seruants sayd to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

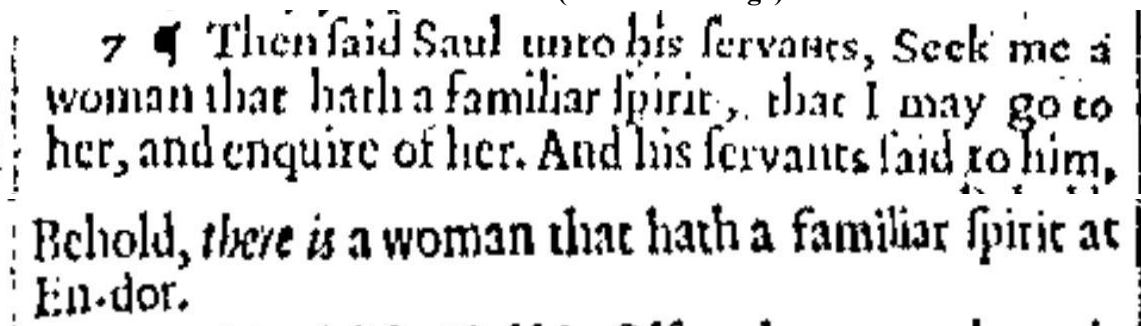
“... And his servants said to him, ...”

I Samuel 28:7 (1611)



“... And his servant said to him, ...”

I Samuel 28:7 (1629 Cambridge)



“... And his servants said to him, ...”

- As with the last example, all of the pre-1611 English Bibles follow the Hebrew and are plural in reading “servants.” Therefore, the 1611 reading stands alone in its singular reading of “servant.” Again, the difference between “servant” and “servants” is one English character strongly pointing in the direction of a printer’s error. On the other hand, the annotations observed in Bod. 1602 point in the direction of an intentional change on the part of the translators.
- Norton furnishes a third example in this category with II Kings 21:21.
 - “At 2 Kgs 21:21 the translators inserted an *s* after ‘way’, making 1602’s literal ‘walked in all the way’ into more natural English: ‘and he walked in all the wayes that his father walked in’. 1629 agreed with 1602, but a problem arises. ‘To walk in the way or ways of’ is a common OT idiom; the Hebrew uses both singular and plural but the translators sometimes, as here, give a plural for the Hebrew singular. It would be possible throughout to conform the English exactly to the Hebrew, as the 1629 editors did here, but they left some instances untouched, with the result that the text remains inconsistent, though not quite as inconsistent as the translators left it.” (Norton, 88)

II Kings 21:21 (Bod. 1602)

21 And walked in all the way that his father
walked in, and serued the idoles that his father
serued, and worshipped them :

“And he walked in all the ways that his father walked in, . . .”

II Kings 21:21 (1611)

21 And he walked in all the wayes
that his father walked in, and serued
the idoles that his father serued, and
worshipped them :

“And he walked in all the ways that his father walked in, . . .”

II Kings 21:21 (1629 Cambridge)

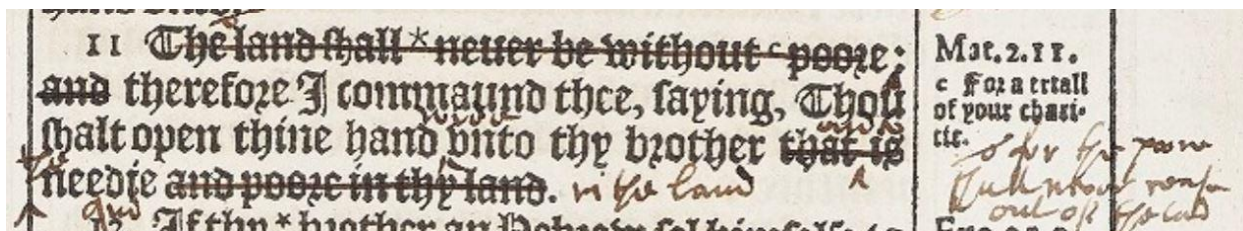
21 And he walked in all the way that his father
walked in, and serued the idols that his father serued,
and worshipped them :

“And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, . . .”

- Norton concludes his discussion of these examples by stating the following:
 - “If it was easy to agree with 1629’s restoration of ‘mountain’, and easy to sympathise with its restoration of ‘servant’, it is difficult to agree with the restoration of ‘way’. This is the nub of the problem. Though one may agree with some of the changes made by later editors in the quest for greater accuracy (Daniell’s ‘philological purity’), others, for various reasons, are more dubious, and this calls into question every instance where a deliberate decision of the translators is rejected. And, once printer’s errors are set aside, there is little in the first edition of which one can say with any certainty that it does not represent a deliberate decision.

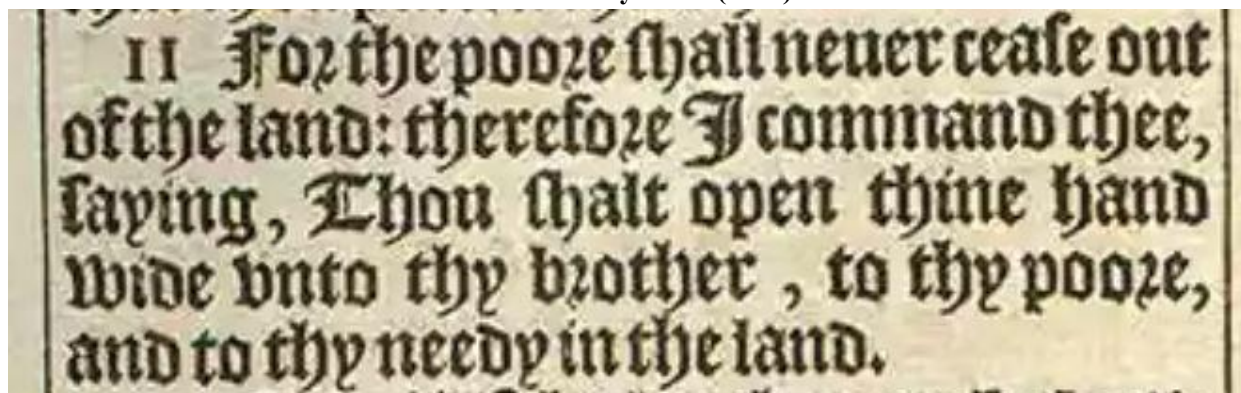
The three examples just discussed may stand as typical of the work of the 1629 editors. The reader who wishes to go further should browse in appendix 8, perhaps beginning with the three instances where the editors restored a possessive pronoun that the translators replaced with a definite article as they annotated Bod 1602, Deut. 15:11 (end), Joel 3:13 and Nahum 3:17.” (Norton, 88)

Deuteronomy 15:11 (Bod. 1602)



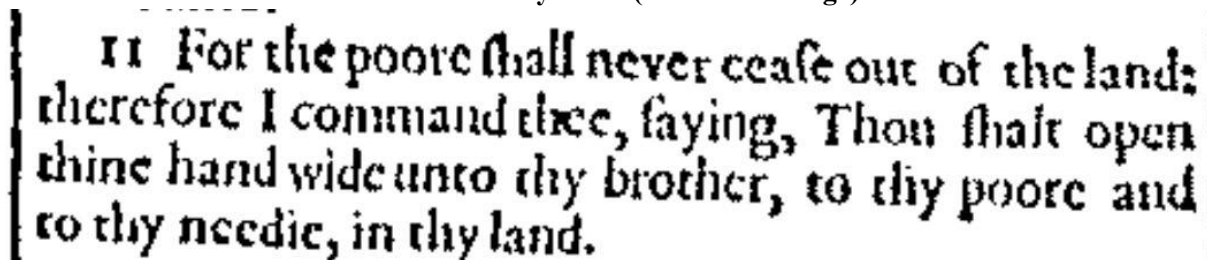
“... needy and poor in thy land in the land.”

Deuteronomy 15:11 (1611)



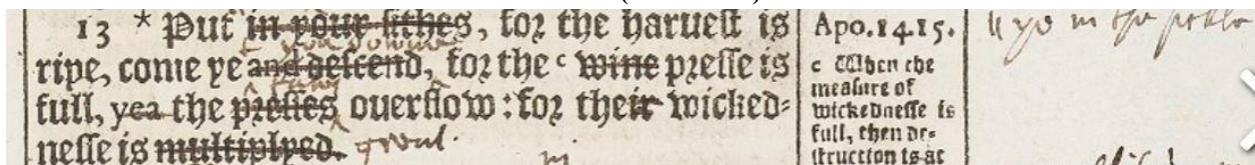
“... needy in the land.”

Deuteronomy 15:11 (1629 Cambridge)



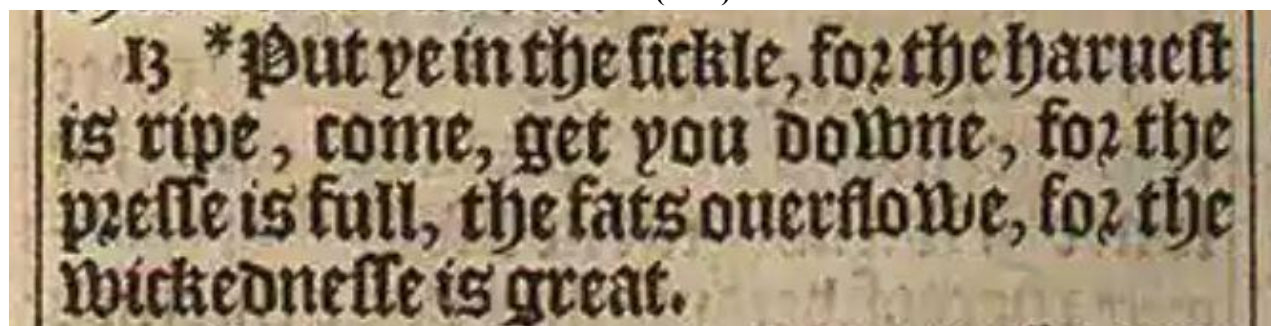
“... needy, in thy land.”

Joel 3:13 (Bod. 1602)



“... for their wickedness is multiplied great.”

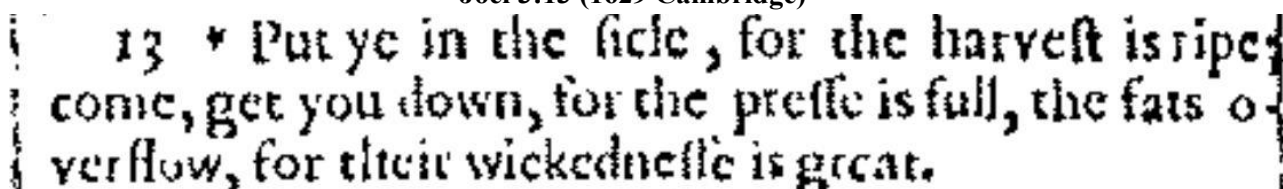
Joel 3:13 (1611)



13 * Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe, come, get you downe, for the presse is full, the fats ouerflowe, for the Wickednesse is great.

“... for the wickedness is great.”

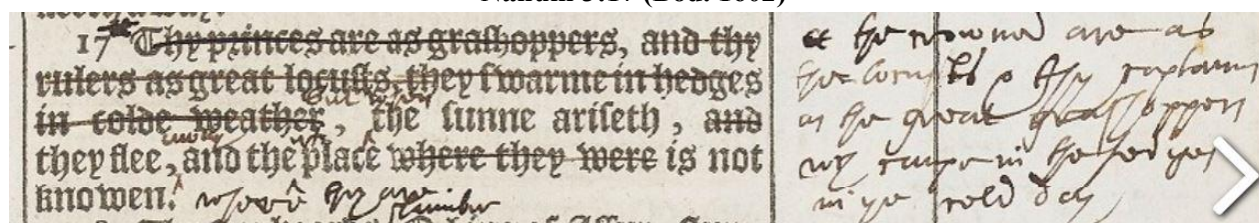
Joel 3:13 (1629 Cambridge)



13 * Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down, for the presse is full, the fats ouerflow, for their wickednesse is great.

“... for their wickedness is great.”

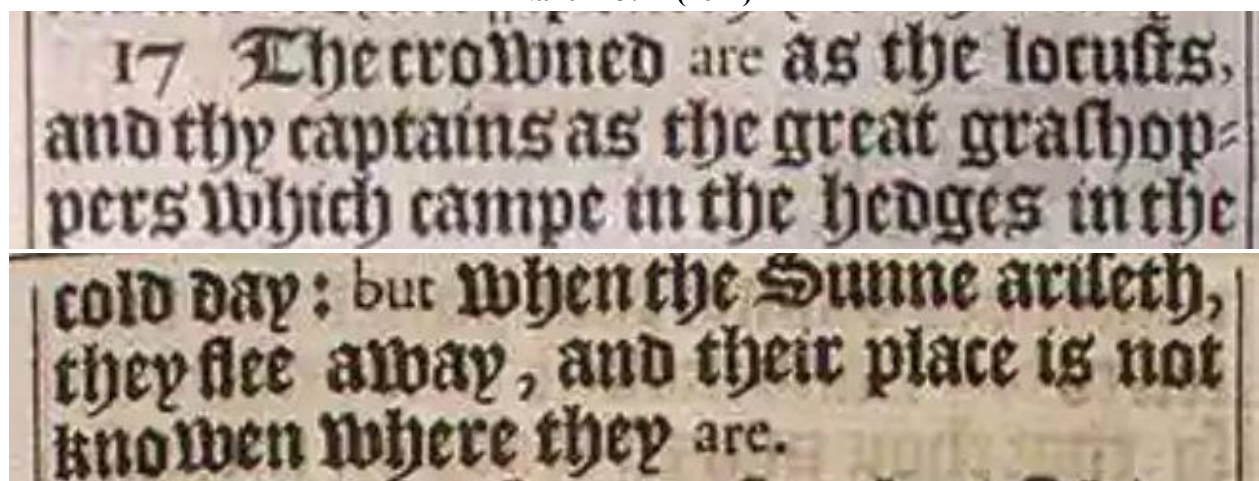
Nahum 3:17 (Bod. 1602)



17 Thy princes are as grasshoppers, and thy rulers as great locusts, they swarme in hedges in colde weather, the sunne ariseth, and they flee, and the place where they were is not knowen.

“Thy princes are as grasshoppers, . . .”

Nahum 3:17 (1611)



17 The crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers which campe in the hedges in the cold day: but when the Sunne ariseth, they flee away, and their place is not knowen where they are.

“The crowned are as the locusts, . . .”

Nahum 3:17 (1629 Cambridge)

17 Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains
as the great grasshoppers which camp in the hedges
in the cold day: *but* when the sunne ariseth they flee
away, and their place is not known where they are.

“Thy crowned are as the locusts, . . .”

- “. . . In the course of this browsing, occasional examples will be found that appear to run counter to the picture I have just given: sometimes (e.g. Lev. 11:3, 1 Kgs 15:19 and Jer. 4:6) the 1629 editors change the text to readings found in the Bod 1602 annotations, and sometimes, perhaps showing the human inconsistency that is almost impossible to escape, they make the translation less literal (e.g. Gen. 39:1).

Leviticus 11:3 (Bod. 1602)

3 Whatsoever parteth the hoofe, and is clo-
uen footed, and chaweth cud among the beastes,
that shall ye eate.

“. . . and chaweth **the** cud among the beastes, . . .”

Leviticus 11:3 (1611)

3 Whatsoever parteth the hoofe, and
is clouen footed, & cheweth cud among
the beastes, that shall ye eate.

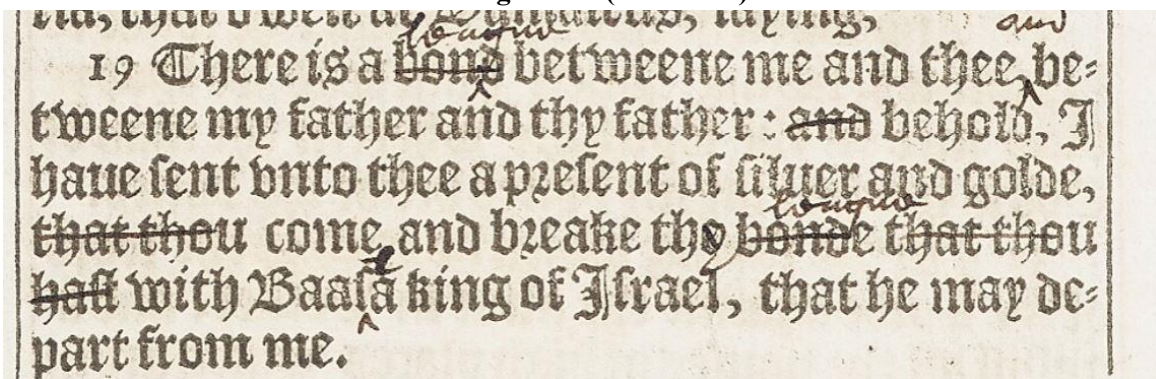
“. . . & cheweth cud among the beastes, . . .”

Leviticus 11:3 (1629 Cambridge)

3 Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-
footed, *and* cheweth the cud among the beastes, that
shall ye eat.

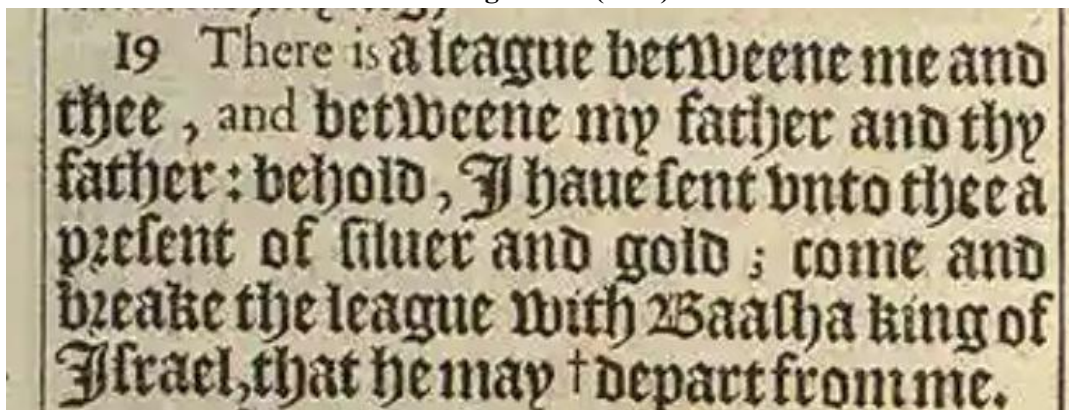
“. . . *and* cheweth **the** cud among the beastes, . . .”

I Kings 15:19 (Bod. 1602)



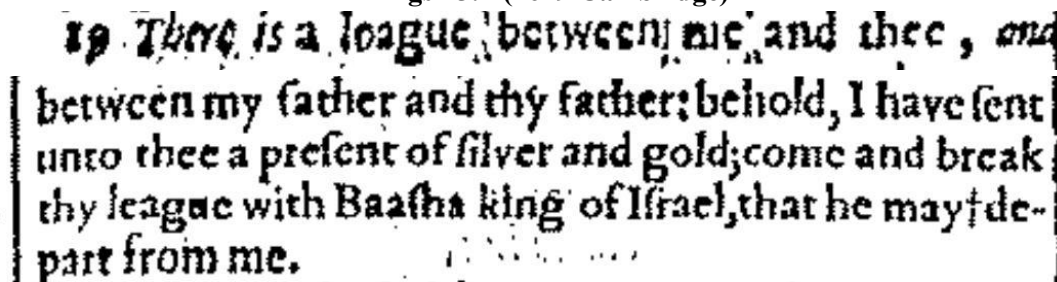
“... come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, ...”

I Kings 15:19 (1611)



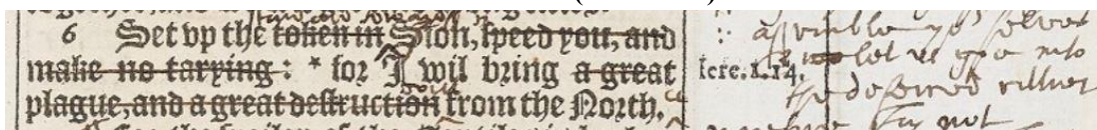
“... come and break the league with Baasha king of Israel, ...”

I Kings 15:1 (1629 Cambridge)



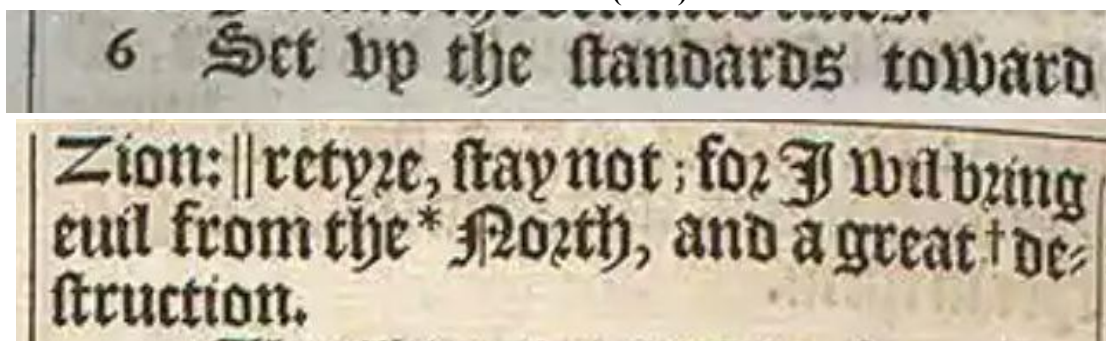
“... come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, ...”

Jeremiah 4:6 (Bod. 1602)



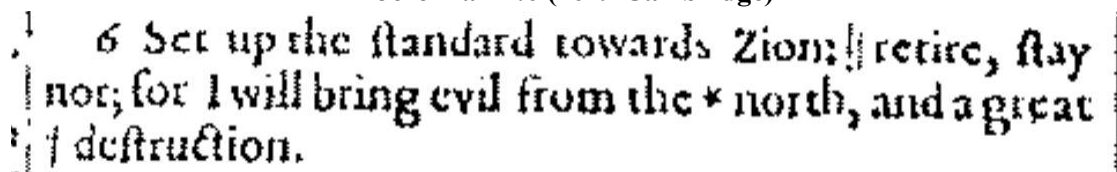
“Set up the standard ...”

Jeremiah 4:6 (1611)



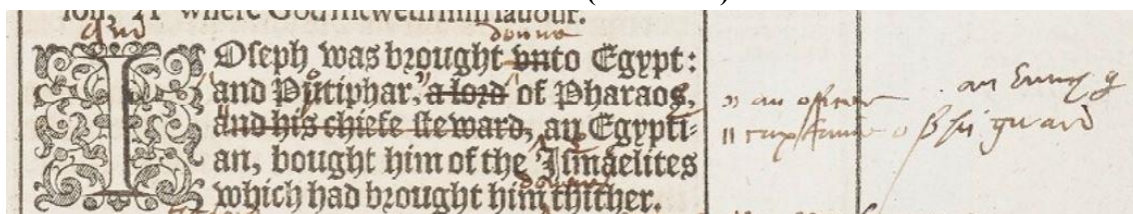
"Set up the standards. . ."

Jeremiah 4:6 (1629 Cambridge)



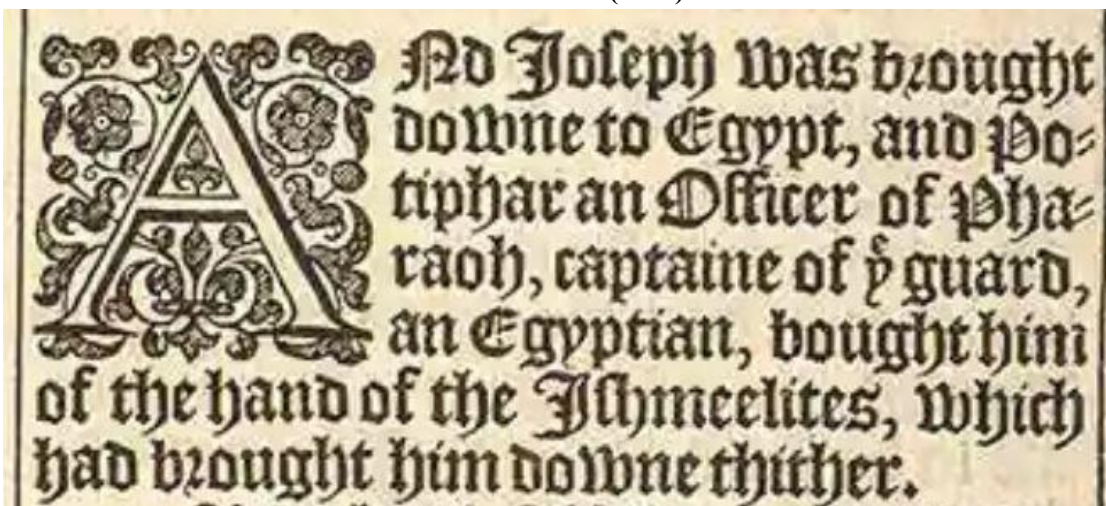
"Set up the standard . . ."

Genesis 39:1 (Bod. 1602)



". . . bought him of the Ishmeelites . . ."

Genesis 39:1 (1611)



". . . bought him of the **hand** of the Ishmeelites, . . ."

Genesis 39:1 (1629 Cambridge)

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

“... bought him of the **hands** of the Ishmeelites, ...”

- Norton concludes his discussion of the 1629 Cambridge edition by offering the following words of caution.
 - The coincidences with annotations that the first edition did not follow are subject to the same argument made when discussing Bod 1602: the translators may have had further thoughts which the first edition incorporates, so we cannot be certain that the 1629 editors are following their final intentions, even though this seems likely in some cases.” (Norton, 89)
- This is clearly a complicated topic. It is easy to see why many King James advocates have sought ankle deep explanations instead of plunging the depths of this topic. The reality is much messier and more complicated than popular treatments of the topic have led many to believe. The book *The Myth of Verbatim Identity* has sought to provide a scriptural solution to these difficulties.

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