

THE KING JAMES VERSION AT 400



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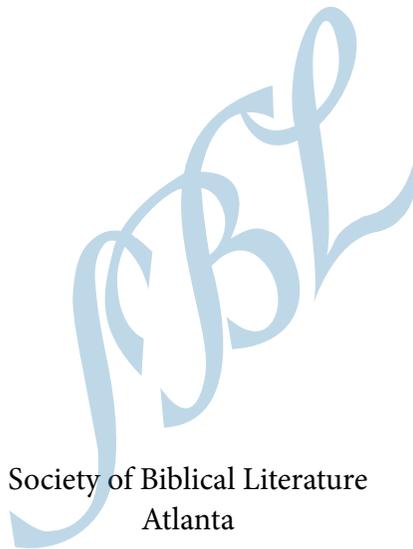
Assessing Its Genius as Bible Translation and Its Literary Influence

THE KING JAMES VERSION AT 400

ASSESSING ITS GENIUS AS BIBLE TRANSLATION
AND ITS LITERARY INFLUENCE

Edited by

David G. Burke, John F. Kutsko, and Philip H. Towner



Society of Biblical Literature
Atlanta

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FOREWORD: VITAL ASPECTS OF THE KJV GENIUS

David G. Burke

The American writer and critic Dwight Macdonald once wrote:

The King James Bible came at the end of the Elizabethan age, between Shakespeare and Milton, when Englishmen were using words more passionately, richly, vigorously, wittily, and sublimely than ever before or since. Although none of the divines or scholars who made it were literary men, their language was touched with genius—the genius of a period when style was the common property of educated men rather than an individual achievement.¹

As this borrowed Latin term, *genius*, has evolved in English usage, it has come to mean “an exceptional natural capacity of intellect, especially as shown in creative and original work in science, art, music, etc.”² To celebrate both the genius of this exemplary Bible translation and the extraordinary achievement of its 400-year longevity, the Society of Biblical Literature and the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship collaborated to organize a series of three scholarly symposia. These were held during the quatercentenary year (2011)—at the SBL Annual Meeting in Atlanta (Nov. 2010), the SBL International Meeting in London (July 2011), and at the SBL-AAR Joint Annual Meetings in San Francisco (Nov. 2011).

In the course of these three symposia a total of forty scholarly papers were presented on a wide range of informative KJV-related topics, under the general theme: *The KJV at 400: Assessing Its Genius as Bible Translation and Its Literary Influence*. The editors of this book have assembled a great many of these papers and organized them into three sections of inquiry and assessment: the KJV in its historical context; the KJV in the history of Bible translation; and the reception of the KJV and its literary influence.

Leading into these sections, the opening chapter represents the two-part keynote paper addressing the general symposia theme, as presented in the opening and closing symposia by David Norton, perhaps the world's leading authority on the text of the KJV. This chapter draws on his most recent research and will serve the reader as a most helpful introduction and grounding for becoming current in the field of KJV studies. The subsequent chapters in the following three sections of the book explore in depth the many distinctive facets of the collective genius of the KJV translators and of their Bible translation. Written by experts covering a wide array of relevant areas of expertise—including Hebrew Bible, Greek New Testament, Bible translation, biblical theology, linguistics, English-language studies, English literature, literary criticism, medieval and Renaissance history, African American church history, liturgy, church history, early cartography, Jewish studies, civil religion, postcolonial studies—these chapters will provide readers with a consummative introduction to the considerable factors that have contributed to the making of the KJV and to its widely attributed genius. The bibliography at the end of this volume lists a range of important works on the KJV that the authors and editors feel are especially authoritative and interesting to anyone eager to learn more about this translation.

Just as a great river is formed by the many tributaries that join to produce its ultimate magnitude and force, so also many streams have contributed to the making of the KJV, to its collective genius, and to its eventual emergence (and long reign) in the English-speaking world as *the* English Bible.

1. A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BRITISH UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR COLLEGES

One very important contributing “stream” is that of the roles played by the universities (and university learning) in the Renaissance and Reformation eras, in England and throughout Europe. In England the cause of learning was most powerfully addressed by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and their colleges. It was also during this period, especially, that libraries were being established and expanded by these university colleges, and innovative research was being carried out by scholars in many fields. Given the dominance of the church in this age, much of that research was in the areas of the biblical and cognate languages, as well as theology, the arts, humanities, and the sciences.

The Middle Ages bequeathed more than two dozen universities to Europe, and new universities continued to emerge in various cities during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In England, by contrast, the emergence of such centers of higher learning took the form not of new universities arising in various cities but of Oxford and Cambridge continuing to create new colleges, each contributing to the burgeoning of learning in England, especially in the fields of the classical and ancient biblical languages.

Latin was of course the language common to all fields of scholarly inquiry in the Middle Ages and remained dominant in the early 1600s. It was the language in which discussions and disputations were conducted, books written, lectures given, and official documents decreed. Its use assured that intellectual debate had an international scope, albeit one limited to Europe's elite. It was within this pervasive Latinate scholarly milieu that the fourteenth-century Oxford scholar John Wycliffe (ca. 1330–1384) and his Lollard confreres translated the Bible, working from the Vulgate since they had no mastery of Hebrew and Greek. Wycliffe was a reformer ahead of his time, and his Bible translation from the Latin Vulgate was carried out in the face of intense royal and ecclesiastical opposition. It is surely a supreme irony that the Latin of the Vulgate, whose very title means “common,” had come to be viewed in the Middle Ages as the most perfect language in which to convey the *verbum dei*; and thus any effort such as Wycliffe's to translate the “divine language” into a “common” vernacular of his own era was considered dangerous heresy by the church authorities.³

However, by the time William Tyndale (1494–1536) began translating the Bible, just a little more than a century after Wycliffe, a virtual sea change had occurred because of the intense learning that had developed thanks largely to the blossoming of the English Renaissance within the British universities. Unlike his predecessors at Oxford, Tyndale now had full mastery of Greek, and, to a lesser extent, of Hebrew. Like Wycliffe, he was convinced that ordinary people needed to have the Scriptures in their common language, but unlike Wycliffe he was able to access a much greater array of scholarly resources for the biblical languages due to the growth of university college libraries that were expanding exponentially since the advent of printing. With the help of learned colleagues, such as Miles Coverdale and John Rogers, Tyndale was able to produce the first “primary” translation in English—the New Testament in 1526 (revised in 1534), and the Pentateuch in 1530. Tyndale was never able to finish the Old Testament, but all that Tyndale had done survived in the 1536 Bible completed by his colleague, Miles Coverdale, known thereafter as the

Coverdale Bible.⁴ Another of Tyndale's Antwerp colleagues, John Rogers, also published an English Bible in 1537, completing the work of Tyndale, but under the pseudonymous title *Matthew's Bible*, due to the dangers of the time. Rogers slipped in an admiring tribute to his mentor by inserting a "W. T." at the end of Malachi.

2. SCHOLARSHIP AND PREPAREDNESS: FINDING THE BEST TRANSLATORS FOR THE JOB

By the time King James I and Archbishop Richard Bancroft (ca. 1544–1610) were organizing in 1604 the Bible translation project that would become the KJV, the advances of biblical scholarship since Tyndale's time had been so profound that the two men were able to design and staff a translation committee that would comprise six companies of about nine translators each, with scholars drawn from the two great British universities (Oxford and Cambridge) working from three locations (the two universities and Westminster Abbey in London).⁵ All were thoroughly at home with Biblical Hebrew and Greek and the wide range of the Greek and Latin classics; most also knew other ancient and modern languages, and many had learned from youth to read, write, think, and discuss in Latin.

The renowned Cambridge linguist Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626) is a prime example of the impressive depth of the KJV translators' scholarship and preparedness at this point in history. Proficient in all biblical and cognate languages and several dozen modern languages, a spellbinder in the pulpit who often preached from the Greek New Testament, Andrewes exemplifies the "collective genius" of the KJV in terms of the scholarship these translators brought to the project. Dean of Westminster since 1601, Andrewes was appointed director of the First Westminster Company of translators (assigned Genesis–2 Kings) at the project's inception.⁶ The Second Westminster Company (New Testament Epistles) included Ralph Hutchinson (ca. 1552–1606), president of St. John's College, Oxford, who as a boy had been a classmate of Lancelot Andrewes, studying Hebrew and Greek at the Merchant Taylor's School in London.⁷

Edward Lively (ca. 1545–1605) was made director of the First Cambridge Company (1 Chronicles–Ecclesiastes); that he was the Regius Professor of Hebrew at Trinity College, Cambridge, testifies to the high importance accorded to the learning of Biblical Hebrew in this age. The Second Cambridge Company (Apocrypha) included Andrew Downes (ca. 1549–1628), Regius Professor of Greek at St. John's College, Cambridge;

and John Bois (1561–1644), lecturer in Greek in the same college, whose detailed Latin notes made during the general review stage represent one of the few surviving artifacts of the KJV project.

The First Oxford Company (Isaiah–Malachi) was directed by John Harding (d. 1610), Regius Professor of Hebrew and president of Magdalen College, Oxford, and also included John Rainolds (1549–1607), president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, said by peers to be a “living library.” The Second Oxford Company (Gospels, Acts, Revelation) included the gifted polymath Sir Henry Saville (1549–1622), warden of Merton College, Oxford, and at an earlier time tutor in Greek to Elizabeth I.

The scholars appointed to the KJV project were clearly drawn from the “brightest and best” of their time. This aspect of their deep scholarly preparation is a most significant contribution to the “collective genius” of the KJV, and readers will find this more fully exemplified in Norton’s key-note chapter and evidenced in many of the book’s other chapters as well.

3. A THOUGHTFUL STRATEGY: DEVELOPING A DETAILED PLAN OF WORK AND INTENSELY COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

The plan and process designed by James I and Bancroft was brilliant, ensuring that individual scholarly virtuosity was brought into a balanced and harmonious team structure. A careful and collaborative set of draft-text review stages provided a system of checks and balances amid the differing theological and translation preferences of the individual translators, ensuring that idiosyncratic or tendentious phrasings would not survive to the final draft. Since this project brought together loyal Church of England scholars and committed Puritan dissenters, it was important to James that the translators from each side grasped the higher aim of a “common” English Bible. The carefully prepared “rules,” as well as the structure, were designed to ensure the best outcome.⁸

Rule 1 mandates that the translators were to use the Bishops’ Bible (the translators worked from the 1602 printing of this 1568 translation) as their base text and, after consulting the original language texts and all other available Bible translations, make improvements with “as little altered as the truth of the originall will permitt.” Rule 8 prescribes the process: “Every particular Man of each company, to take ye same Chapter or Chapters, and having translated or amended them severally by himselfe, where he thinketh good, all to meete together, confer what they have done, and agree for their Parts what shall stand.” Rule 9 elaborates the next steps: “As any one

Company hath dispatched any one Booke in this Manner they shall send it to the rest to be considered of seriously and judiciously: for His Majesty is verie careful of this point.” The last stage of review for the translators was the “general meeting” (or general review), in which two translators from each company convened to go over the drafts for the entire Bible.⁹ It has been well noted that when the general review was done “the words of the King James Bible would have gone through at least four winnowing processes. Nothing was left to chance.”¹⁰

4. A LASTING LEGACY: A SOLID MODEL FOR DOING BIBLE TRANSLATION

The KJV translation project was carried out with great foresight and disciplined linguistic skill, yet its English text is hardly without problems. And no literary text can hope to be timeless and ever new. So many of the KJV’s words have changed enough in meaning over the 400 years as to be misleading to modern readers.¹¹

And, while so often graceful and cadenced, its Elizabethan English can also in places strike today’s readers/hearers as obscure and archaic.¹² Add to this the limitations of the manuscript base the translators worked from: the translators had access only to relatively few manuscripts, most of which were quite late. That was not at all their fault, but since their time astounding manuscript discoveries have vastly improved the manuscript base for both the Greek and Hebrew Testaments. That this was a shortcoming of the KJV was increasingly recognized by scholars until finally official English and American revisions were made in the late 1800s to bring the English Bible text in line with the many new discoveries of ancient biblical manuscripts.¹³

The archaistic language and the inadequate manuscript base remain the enduring challenges to continued use of the KJV, but these problems notwithstanding, the practices modeled by the translators set the standard for what many still consider to be a sound approach to Bible translation work to this day. And the translators’ conceptualization and design of the project also represent one aspect of the KJV’s collective genius. The five model practices are:

(1) *Collaborative translation by teams with a variety of skills and perspectives.* In recent centuries all substantive Bible translations have been developed by teams that are structured to include specialists in Hebrew, Greek, linguistics, theology, English language and poetry, and other relevant disciplines. Predecessor translations had involved more than a single

translator,¹⁴ but the king's design of a large committee made up of six companies significantly raised the bar.¹⁵

(2) *Preparation of guidelines (rules) for the project prior to its inception.* This was not an altogether new idea, but given the theological tensions among the collaborating parties, the king and Bancroft had sagely perceived that the project must be well organized, its aims well defined, and its stages carefully mapped and managed. Bancroft's rules were so well articulated that the central aim of the project (rule 1, above) was never in question for either party, and the procedural stages assured a thorough vetting and traditional language use. This brilliant "process mapping" also points to genius, and is a practice emulated to this day in Bible translation work.

(3) *Use of a multilevel draft review process.* This idea of an intensely collaborative multistage vetting process designed by James I and Bancroft is now standard practice for Bible translation projects. Phrasings and lexical choices are tested from the standpoint of as many expert perspectives as possible, and are always open to revision.¹⁶ Given the theological tensions within the companies, this careful review process, articulated in rules 8 through 13, assured that the end result would be free of contentious or polemical language.

(4) *Providing a preface to the translation.* The KJV's use of a preface to give context was not a new feature in English Bible translations. Wycliffe's Bible editions had a preface, as did Tyndale's 1534 New Testament. But in writing such a comprehensive preface, Miles Smith (Puritan scholar and member of the First Oxford Company), gave the translators' work crucial context, enabling readers to see what the translators were thinking regarding their task of bringing God's Word into English vernacular form. He reveals their self-understanding as translators: the awareness that they were not themselves perfect and were ever standing on the shoulders of their predecessors. More than any others, this KJV preface set the standard of transparency and self-disclosure for later Bible translations, and a preface has been a standard feature in Bibles ever since.¹⁷

(5) *Use of marginal notes to indicate textual decisions.* The use of marginal notes was not something new for the KJV. Tyndale had already used such abundantly, but they were largely interpretive and sharply polemical.¹⁸ The similar use of marginal notes was continued in the 1560 Geneva Bible; that the Geneva interpretive notes were frequently critical of the established church and royalty made it the Bible of choice for Puritan dissenters. In passages where the literal translation leaves the meaning open

to the reader, Geneva sought to close that gap by providing the “correct” interpretation in the margins. The KJV also used marginal notes, but by the decision of the king these could only be textual notes indicating alternate readings where a word in the Hebrew or Greek was capable of more than one meaning or where an alternate reading in an ancient language text might represent a valid translation choice. James had taken umbrage with the Geneva notes, which often attacked royalty, and he made sure that Bancroft’s rule 6 proscribed interpretive and polemical notes completely.¹⁹ In time, as the KJV became the “Authorized Version” in England, this restraint advantaged the KJV as a Bible translation so sure and secure in its translation decisions that interpretive notes were not needed. It had refused to make interpretive decisions for the reader, and it thus had the high ground in times of sharp theological disagreements.

5. A LASTING LEGACY: THE ENRICHMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The eventual impact of the KJV on English language usage and on its literature testifies also to its genius, even though the translators deny having aimed for literary excellence or influence on the subsequent development of English usage. Their chief aim was to produce a new translation of the Bible in an English style that would communicate clearly to ordinary people and be acceptable to all church parties.²⁰ This they would do by using the best available sources to effect an accurate transfer of meaning from the ancient language texts into what they considered “proper English,”²¹ while assuring that the text would read well and be easily understood by those hearing it read.

Great eloquence has frequently been claimed for the KJV English, yet as the chapter here by Robert Alter shows, there are passages where the translators came up short. Over the centuries critics have voiced concern about its hebraized and graecized English,²² but as Alter has aptly demonstrated in his chapter and elsewhere,²³ the paratactic style that the translators carried from their Hebrew Bible into their English text has been enormously influential in English literature ever since. Literary excellence may not have been their aim, but if their translation in numerous passages has been deemed eloquent, that is surely a fitting by-product of their assiduous work.²⁴

The KJV has been deservedly lauded in the many publications that have recently marked its impressive four-hundred-year achievement. Its

staying power has truly been extraordinary, originating as it did in such a different time and culture from today's. As Kent Harold Richards, past executive director of the Society of Biblical Literature, has noted: "It is remarkable that the KJV played such a dominant role over such a long period of time in the English-speaking world. That in itself speaks to its genius."²⁵

NOTES

1. Cited in Scott McLemee, "Views: Let Us Now Praise KJV," *Inside Higher Ed* (Feb. 16, 2011): 1. Online: <http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/views/mclemee324>.

2. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (2nd ed. unabridged; New York: Random House, 1987), 797.

3. See further Mary Dove, *The Earliest Advocates of the English Bible: The Texts of the Medieval Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), xix–xx. The 1407 Arundel Constitutions (so named for Thomas Arundel, then archbishop of Canterbury) were officially issued from the Council of Oxford, less than two decades after the Wycliffe Bible was published by his associates in 1390. The council's specific aim was to declare translation of the Bible into English and distribution of such as heretical activity. The fear of what evils an English translation might unleash was still so strong a century later that Thomas More (1478–1535), in his own relentless pursuit and suppression of heresy, declared that Wycliffe had "purposely corrupted that holy texte, malycyously planting therein suche wordys as might in the reders erys serue to the profe of suche heresyas as he went about to sow." Cited from *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* 3.113, in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (ed. C. M. Lawler, G. Marc'hadour, and R. C. Marius; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 7:314.

4. A "primary" translation of the Bible is one that is done from original language texts. The Wycliffe translation from the Latin Vulgate is by contrast an example of a "secondary" translation. Tyndale's translation work was largely carried out on the Continent because it was still very dangerous to be doing something viewed by church authorities as promoting heresy. Tyndale was hunted down and brought to the stake in Brussels in 1536 as a condemned heretic. Ironically, only a few years later (1539), Henry VIII, having arranged to have himself declared the supreme head of the Church of England, ordered that an English Bible be placed in every English parish, and it was Tyndale's surviving colleague Miles Coverdale who was appointed to create it. Because Archbishop Cranmer preferred the English text of John Rogers's 1537 Bible (itself an editing of Tyndale and Coverdale texts), the base text used by Coverdale was that of Rogers's pseudonymous 1537 Matthew's Bible. This revised Bible became known as the Great Bible because of its large size (for lectern reading), but it was by and large the Tyndale Bible as completed and edited by Miles Coverdale.

5. Westminster Abbey was dissolved as a Benedictine monastery by Henry VIII in 1540. By 1560 the monastic community was replaced by a collegiate church under a

charter granted by Elizabeth I, calling for a Dean and twelve prebendaries or canons. The monastic dormitory became the Dean's Library. The two universities were obvious work centers and two translation companies were assigned to each. With the appointment of Lancelot Andrewes, Westminster's dean since 1601, as director of the First Westminster Company, the abbey made its Jerusalem Chamber available for the work. Given the distances between Oxford, Cambridge, and London, and the slow means of travel, this third location was helpful for translators resident in London or nearer there than the universities.

6. See further the chapter below by Malcolm Guite, "The Word and the Words: Andrewes, Donne, and the Theology of Translation."

7. The Merchant Taylors' School, founded in 1561, provided the early education for eight of the KJV translators. Its master, Richard Mulcaster, was a Greek and Latin specialist who presciently recognized how important the mastery of Hebrew would be for advancing biblical learning and thus ensured that the young boys also acquired Hebrew in their early schooling. See further Julian Reid, "The Oxford Translators," in *Manifold Greatness: The Making of the King James Bible* (ed. Helen Moore and Julian Reid; Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2011), 93.

8. The fourteen rules for translating are usually called "Bancroft's rules," since they were issued by him (though James I may well have had input to them). A beautifully reproduced British Library copy of the rules can be found in Moore and Reid, *Manifold Greatness*, 88–89.

9. When one considers the distances between London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and the mode of travel by horse or coach, these general review sessions must have been logistically difficult to manage.

10. Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 81. For the clever James I, who styled himself as "peacemaker" (taking his motto, *beati pacifici*, from the Sermon on the Mount), this carefully designed process did bring a form of unity. This would be the Bible read in the churches, and Puritans could not easily disown it or disparage it because their best scholars had collaborated in its production.

11. KJV editions published by the American Bible Society have long included an appendix listing over five hundred such words; this list appears as appendix B in David G. Burke, ed., *Translation That Openeth the Window: Reflections on the History and Legacy of the King James Bible* (Society of Biblical Literature Biblical Scholarship in North America 23; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2009), 243–58.

12. See especially the chapters in this volume by Robert Alter, David J. A. Clines, and James D. G. Dunn for examples of this.

13. The discovery, for example, of several ancient Greek codices from the fourth-fifth centuries CE had revolutionized the state of the Greek NT, rendering the Greek base for the KJV inadequate. The text of Rev 1:5 illustrates this: the Greek text available to the KJV translators had *lousanti*, "washed," but the centuries older codices have *lysanti*, "freed." Recent Bibles are now able to correct this homophonic copyist error; cf., e.g., NRSV: "freed us from our sins by his blood" rather than "washed us." The relatively recent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has similarly affected study of the Hebrew Bible text.

14. Wycliffe and Tyndale each had Oxford colleagues who carried some of the load. The Geneva Bible, Great Bible, Bishops' Bible, and Douay-Rheims Bible also employed small teams.

15. The terms *companies* and *directors* bespeak the managerial intent for this project; these terms reflect the entrepreneurial spirit of the late Elizabethan Age when organizations like the East India Company were being formed.

16. As Miles Smith notes in his KJV preface, they were ever willing to revise if that would improve the end result. The enduring literary quality of their work has much to do with this "burnishing" (in Smith's words), since revision is always a key to good writing.

17. The great drawback of the KJV preface, however, is the dense and abstruse style of scholarly writing used, so different from that of the translation itself. Everything readers would want to know about their approach is detailed there, but it was too daunting for all but the learned reader. Publishers eventually dropped it from editions, with the result that many users still are unaware of its existence. See further the chapters here by Richard Burridge and Jacobus Naudé.

18. For example, Tyndale's note at Num 6:22–27 reads: "hereof ye see that Aaron (where he lift up his hand and bless the people) was not as dumb as our bishops be."

19. "Noe marginal notes att all to be affixed, but only for ye explanation of ye Hebrew or Greeke Words, which cannot without some circumlocution soe briefly and fitly be expressed in ye Text."

20. As Miles Smith in the preface puts it: "we desire that the Scripture may speake like itself, as in the language of *Canaan*, that it may bee understood even of the very vulgar."

21. See further on this the Norton chapter below (15, 27 n. 17).

22. Already in his 1689 *Table Talk*, John Selden groused: "If I translate a French book into English, I turn it into English phrase and not into French English. ... [In this Bible] the Hebraisms are kept and the phrase of that language is kept." Quoted in David Norton, *The King James Bible: A Short History from Tyndale to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 185.

23. See especially Robert Alter, *Pen of Iron: American Prose and the King James Bible* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

24. See further the chapters here by Malcolm Guite, Barbara Lewalski, C. Clifton Black, and Seth Lerer.

25. Kent Harold Richards, "King James Version (KJV)," offprint from *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (ed. Choon-Leong Seow and Hermann Spieckermann; Berlin: de Gruyter, forthcoming), 23.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This volume represents the collective effort of the Society of Biblical Literature and the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship, which organized a series of three scholarly symposia on the King James Version on the occasion of its four-hundredth anniversary.

It is common to lionize the work of the individual in literature, art, music, or science. However, it is particularly appropriate in the context of this volume of essays and this collaboration of organizations to highlight collective work, of which the KJV is a stunning example. The translation was an orchestra with strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion, conducted and organized into a majestic recording. We cannot help but think of the legend of Ptolemy's Seventy-Two. Like the Bible itself, the KJV is testimony to the occasional mathematical result in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Those parts were indeed numerous, and we want to thank and acknowledge the persons, organizations, and institutions that made this volume possible. First, the symposium series from which these essays were drawn was enthusiastically supported by the King James Bible Trust, which, under the leadership of its chair, the Rt Hon Frank Field MP, was established to celebrate the KJV's impact in history, language, and culture. The Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship at the American Bible Society and the Society of Biblical Literature, particularly through its Executive Director Emeritus, Kent Harold Richards, were actively involved with the Trust. Second, David Burke, Dean Emeritus of the Nida Institute, acted as solid bookends for this project. Besides participating in the symposia, he was invaluable in their organization, coordinating a stellar list of participants and providing measured insight along the way. He then served as the chief editorial hand managing this publication. Third, this volume was impeccably worked through by Charles Houser, a consummate editor who eyed every detail. Finally, the contributors to this volume have been the musicians. They have brought their own artistry and expertise to a daunt-

ing composition, and together this collection bears witness to the genius, influence, and legacy of the King James Version.

John F. Kutsko and Philip H. Towner



THE EDITORS TO THE READER

Anyone writing about the King James Bible is forced to make a couple of arbitrary decisions. First, what should the 1611 landmark translation be called? The authors gathered together in this volume revealed a wide array of preferences along with interesting shorthand ways of referring to the translation, the most predominant by far were the Authorized Version (AV) and the King James Version/Bible (KJV/B). Both names have the advantage of being used everywhere in the English-speaking world where the 1611 translation is read. But both may be misleading to the general reader, for, as several of our authors make clear, the translation was never officially authorized by any legal or ecclesiastical body; and, as essential as he was to getting the project started, King James's ongoing involvement is less clear, and he certainly should not be mistaken as an active translator, something that might be inferred by naming a translation after him. In the end, the editors felt it best to allow the authors to choose between these two names as they saw fit rather than impose one name upon all our contributors.

Another arbitrary decision the editors needed to make was to choose which version of the KJV/AV the authors should quote from when a specific printing was not being referenced. Many authors seemed to quote from their personal copies of the Bible, perhaps editions bestowed on them at confirmation years ago and now no longer in print. Here some imposition of editorial will seemed to be called for. Unless an author was intentionally quoting a specific printing for an obvious reason (such as a facsimile edition to make a point about original spelling), the editors have conformed quotations to *The Bible: Authorized King James Version* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). Of the four strongly recommended editions listed in the bibliography (pp. 519–20), this seemed to be the best choice for nontechnical purposes because it is inexpensive and widely available, is a bare-bones text uncluttered by section headings and other modern “helps,” contains the full Christian canon (including the

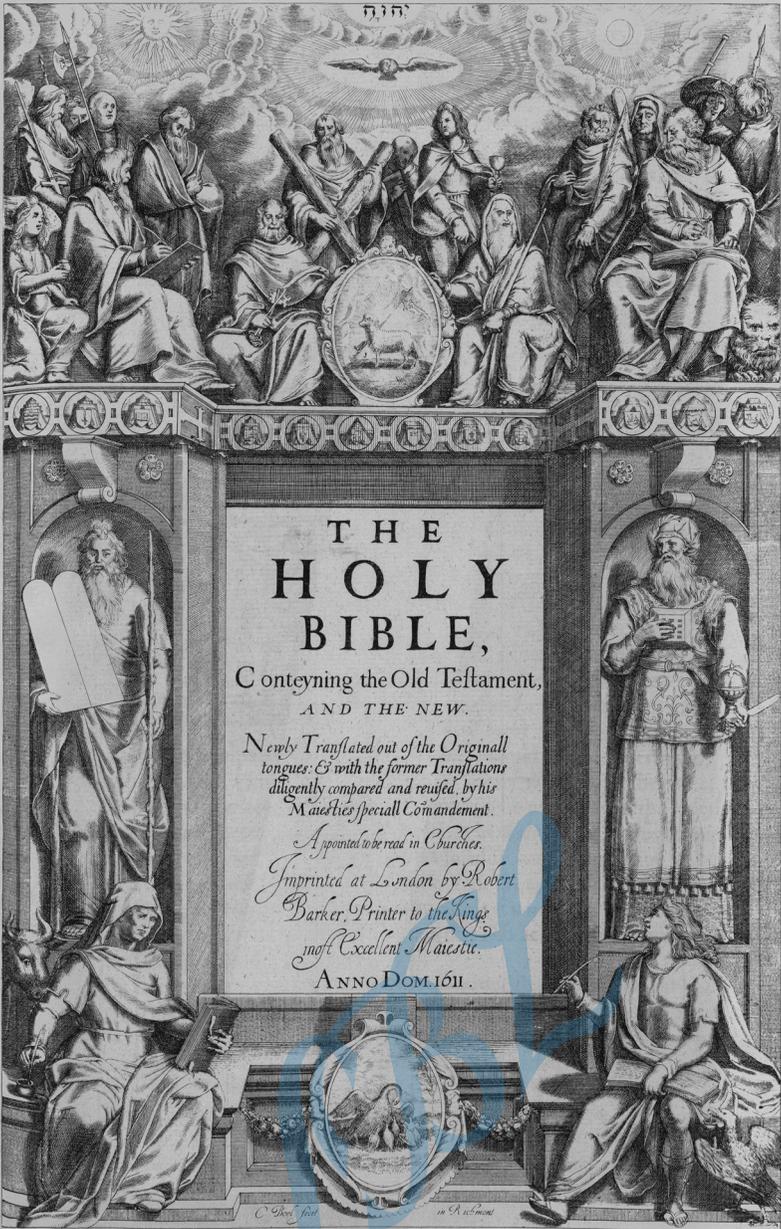
Apocrypha), uses modern British rather than American spelling, employs italics for the purposes intended by the original translators,¹ and is formatted in the traditional “verse style” where each numbered verse is slightly indented from the left margin and a special character (¶) is used to indicate a new paragraph. Readers should not infer too much from this editorial choice and are encouraged to cross-check Bible quotations with their own trusted editions or with one of the editions cited in the bibliography.

It should be noted, however, that quotations from the Bible’s dedication (“To the Most High and Mighty Prince, James”), preface (“The Translators to the Reader”), the 1611 edition’s other front matter, the chapter summaries, or the Bible’s many marginal notes are not from any single edition but are taken from whichever edition or source the individual authors identify in their notes. The bibliography lists several resources for readers interested in examining these intriguing components of the KJV Bible more closely.

NOTES

1. Keynoter Norton observed after spending many years editing the *New Cambridge Paragraph Bible* (2006) that the KJV’s use of italics has “been a perpetual source of difficulty to editors and bemusement to readers. ... Besides tradition, the only grounds for keeping them—and then only in the original form—is that they are the work of the translators, but these are poor reasons” (David Norton, *A Textual History of the King James Bible* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 162). Cambridge University Press, following Norton’s recommendation, printed the *New Cambridge Paragraph Bible* without italics.





THE
HOLY
BIBLE,
Conteyning the Old Testament,
AND THE NEW.

Newly Translated out of the Originall
tongues: & with the former Translations
diligently compared and revised, by his
Majesties speciall Comandement.

Appointed to be read in Churches.
Imprinted at London by Robert
Barker, Printer to the Kings
most Excellent Majestie.

ANNO DOM. 1611.