

EVALUATING DR. H.D. WILLIAMS' ARTICLE ENTITLED: REVELATION 14:1 – A LAMB OR THE LAMB?

(Translating, Context, Syntax, Synonyms, Semantics, Polysemy, Interpretation,
and Translator Attitude)

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Dr. Williams says, “A translator should first translate into the receptor language using the [exact – POH] original language Words underlying the King James Bible...”

This is a good statement by Dr. Williams with one possible caveat for the moment: Does “should” mean “must”? If it does, then this would mean that it will be a long time until many language groups receive the word of God in their tongue or even a portion of the word of God in their tongue because there are very few translators who are fluent in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek as well as the particular language group(s) that still need the word of God. Additionally, if “should” here means “must”, then a number of language groups who received their translations of the Bible from the KJB would not have had them, had Dr. Williams’ advice here been followed. And it is interesting that the Bible Societies originally asked their translators to “set aside the primacy of the original language texts”. Additionally, Dr. Phil Stringer, Pastor of Ravenswood Baptist Church of Chicago, IL, says, “The Scriptures never tell us that translation must be done from the original languages. To teach that as a doctrine is to add to the Word of God.” [Underlining added]

Dr. Williams says, “... the original language Words underlying the King James Bible are the Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text by Abraham Jacob ben Chayyim, second edition, printed by Daniel Bomberg ...”

As far as this author knows, that statement is correct. For information purposes, this author lists below the various traditional MT editions and their relationship to the exact readings underlying the KJB. As far as can be determined, the following editions probably match the underlying readings of the KJB, although none of these are in print nor available so far as this author knows.

- 1. The “Editio Princeps” edition of the entire Bible, Soncino, 1488.*
- 2. The Third edition of the entire Bible, Brescia, 1494*

The following may match the underlying readings of the KJB

- 1. The Second Quarto edition of the Bible, Bomberg, Venice, 1521*
- 2. The Bible, Quarto, Bomberg, 1525-1528*

The following generally available Hebrew texts are the closest to the texts/readings underlying the KJB, although in the minutiae there are the noted differences. This may not be an exhaustive list since only a word by word collation with the KJB might reveal all the differences.

1. TBS'-Ginsberg

- a. Omits "his sons" in II Kings 19:37*
- b. Omits "of hosts" completely in II Ki. 19:31*
- c. Omits "Euphrates" in II Sam. 8:3*
- d. Omits "as if a man" in II Sam. 16:23*
- e. Omits "unto me" in Ruth 3:5*
- f. Omits "to me" in Ruth 3:17*
- g. Omits "children of" before "Benjamin" in Judges 20:13*

Total = 7 (There may also be problems in Josh. 5:6; I Sam. 1:4; I Sam. 15:6)

2. 1866 Letteris (Green, B&FBS, most Hebrew TR/MT interlinears, online, electronic etc.)

- a. Omits "his sons" in II Kings 19:37*
- b. Omits partially "of hosts" in II Kings 19:31 (Leaves space and vowel points, but no consonants.)*
- c. Omits "Euphrates" in II Sam. 8:3*
- d. Omits "as if a man" in II Sam. 16:23*
- e. Omits "unto me" in Ruth 3:5*
- f. Omits "to me" in Ruth 3:17*
- g. Omits "children of" before "Benjamin" in Judges 20:13*

Total = 6.5

3. Ben Chayim 1524 (The following may have been corrected in the 1524-1525 edition which is believed to be the 2nd edition/ editio princeps of Jacob ben Chayim, Venice, 1524-1525)

- a. Omits Josh. 21:36 (Probably orthographic or "eye" mistake)*
- b. Omits Josh. 21:37 (Probably orthographic or "eye" mistake)*
- c. Omits Nehemiah 7:68*
- d. Omits "unto me" in Ruth 3:5*
- e. Omits "to me" in Ruth 3:17*
- f. Omits "and they departed from before Pi-hahiroth" in Numbers 33:8*
- g. Omits "Euphrates" in II Sam. 8:3*
- h. Omits "as if a man" in II Sam. 16:23*
- i. Omits "children of" before "Benjamin" in Judges 20:13*

Total = 9

Dr. Williams says, "... the original language Words underlying the King James Bible are the ... Traditional Greek Received Text which is printed by the Dean Burgon Society."

Here Dr. Williams is mistaken. The “Traditional Greek Received Text which is published by the Dean Burgon Society” is actually F.H.A. Scrivener’s Greek text, and Scrivener’s text, in some 30 or so places discovered so far by this author, is NOT the “Words underlying the King James Bible” in at least those 30 or so places. Dr. Williams was cc’d on numerous e-mails to that effect and is aware, or should be aware, of those problem areas of Scrivener’s text. Only a word by word collation of the entire New Testament of Scrivener’s text with the KJB would reveal any additional places where Scrivener’s text does not match the exact readings underlying the KJB New Testament.

Dr. Williams says, “Any translator understands that errors will be made in a translation.”

This author is in agreement if Dr. Williams is talking about the process of translation as a translation is done. However, it is not necessarily the case that the final product of translation work will have errors. There is no logical, theological, nor Biblical reason why the extent of DIVINE preservation from error could not extend to translations. The KJB in English, the “product”, would be one example of a translation without errors. Dr. Williams may not agree with that statement, but all that this author wishes to note for the moment is that it is mere PRESUPPOSITION and ASSUMPTION to think that a translation cannot be without mistake (without error, inerrant), i.e., that any and every translation must have at least one mistake/error.