

# The Rules to be observed in Translation<sup>1</sup>

- Rules 1-5 & 14 are meant to conserve the past and prevent needless innovation.
- Rules 6-7 are meant to control the paratext and prevent anti-monarchical politics.
- Rules 8-13 are meant to craft the procedures and prevent partisan translation.

1. *The ordinary Bible read in the Church commonly called the Bishops' Bible to be followed, & as little Altered as the Truth of the original will permit.*
2. *The Names of the Prophets & <sup>2</sup>holy writers with the other Names <sup>3</sup>in the Text to be retained as <sup>4</sup>near as may be accordingly as <sup>5</sup>the vulgarly used.*
3. *The old Ecclesiastical words to be kept, (viz.) <sup>6</sup>as the word Church not to be translated Congregation.<sup>7</sup>*
4. *When a word hath diverse significations, that to be kept, which hath been most commonly used by the most of the Ancient Fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, & the Analogy of <sup>8</sup>Faith.*
5. *The division of <sup>9</sup>chapters to be altered either not at all, or as little as may be if necessity <sup>10</sup>doth require.*
6. *No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the Explanation of <sup>11</sup>Hebrew or Greek words; which cannot without some circumlocution so briefly and fitly be <sup>12</sup>explained in the text.*
7. *Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for fit reference of one Scripture to <sup>13</sup>another.*
8. *Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters & having <sup>14</sup>amended & translated them severally by himself where he <sup>15</sup>thinks good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, & agree for their part what shall stand.*
9. *As <sup>16</sup>one company hath dispatched any one Book in this manner they shall send it to the rest to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for His Majesty is very careful <sup>17</sup>in this point.*
10. *If any company upon <sup>18</sup>the review of the Book so sent shall doubt or differ upon any place,<sup>19</sup> & withal send <sup>20</sup>their Reasons: to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief Persons of each company at the end of the work.*
11. *When any place of <sup>21</sup>especial obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority <sup>22</sup>to any <sup>23</sup>man in the land for his judgement <sup>24</sup>on such a place.*
12. *Letters to be sent from Every Bishop to the rest of his clergy admonishing them of <sup>25</sup>the translation in hand, & to move & charge as many as being skillful in the Tongues <sup>26</sup>have taken pains in that kind, to send his particular observations to the Company, either at Westminster, Cambridge or Oxford.*
13. *The directors in Each Company to be the deans of Westminster & Chester for that place, & the King's Professors in the Hebrew and Greek in <sup>27</sup>Each university.*
14. *These Translations to be used where they agree better with the Text than the Bishops' Bible:<sup>28</sup> Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's, Geneva.<sup>29</sup>*

The text is that of BL MS Harley 750, probably the earliest extant copy of the rules, transcribed from images in Helen Moore and Julian Reid, eds., *Manifold Greatness: The Making of the King James Bible* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2012), 88–89. Spelling modernized. Variants noted in the apparatus as **B** are from BL MS Add. 28721 (rules 1-14); those noted **E** from BL MS Egerton 2884 (Rule 15), as modernized by David Norton in *A Textual History of the King James Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7–8. Those noted **C** (rules 1-12) are transcribed out of a manuscript in the Cambridge University Library reproduced in the endpaper of Adam Nicholson, *Power and Glory: Jacobean England and the Making of the King James Bible*, (London: Harpercollins, 2003). Those noted **D** are from MS D. Borlase, dated 1604, transcribed and modernized in Gilbert Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, Vol. 2, Part II (London: St. John's Square: Printed by J.F. Dove, 1820), 505–6, which he received from Dr. Edmund Borlase, and which had allegedly once belonged to Bishop Ravis of the 2nd Oxford Company.

## Textual Apparatus

1 – D, add “of the Bible.” 2 – B, D, add “the.” 3 – D, of the text. 4 – D, nigh. 5 – B, C, they are (D they were) vulgarly used. 6 – D, omit “as.” 7 – B, C, D, add “etc.” 8 – D, add “the.” 9 – B, D, add “the.” 10 – B, C, D, so require. 11 – B, C, D, add “the.” 12 – B, C, D, expressed. 13 – C, an other. 14 – B, C, D, translated or amended. 15 – B, think (D, thinketh). 16 – D, add “any.” 17 – B, for (C, of) this point. 18 – C, their. 19 – B, C, D, add “to send them word thereof, note the place.” 20 – D, the reasons. 21 – D, special. 22 – B, C, D, add “to send.” 23 – B, C, D, add “learned.” 24 – B, C, D, of such a place. 25 – B, C, D, this translation. 26 – D, and having. 27 – D, either University. 28 – B, add “viz.:” 29 – E, D, add rule 15, “Besides the said directors before mentioned, three or four of the most ancient and grave divines, in either of the universities not employed in the [D, omit “the”] translating, to be assigned by the Vice-Chancellors [D, Vice-Chancellor], upon conference with the [D, omit “the”] rest of the heads, to be overseers of the translations as well Hebrew as Greek, for the better observation of the fourth rule above specified.”