

Phoenix Rising—The Early Censorship of William Tyndale’s *New Testament* and Its Influence on *The King James Bible*

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The early censorship of the English Bible was imposed during the sixteenth century. One example is William Tyndale’s pocket-size *New Testament* translation, which underwent destruction including the burning of its manuscript, the published translation texts, and even the printers and possessors of these materials. This article reviews the legal history and the religious significance of the censorship, which further influences the appearance of the Authorized Version (1611). Related facts are parliamentary policies concerning imports of foreign printing, book licensing and the use of the Bible. The latter part of this paper reviews events organized by Wolsey, Tunstall and Warham, and the launch of scholarly based Bible-translation. This paper concludes by re-emphasizing the significance of these parties in sustaining the divine preservation and development of Biblical literature—readers, translators, printers, traders, clergy and legislators. They made the Phoenix rise from the heap of ashes to heaven, and inspired the work of the *King James Bible*.

Keywords: William Tyndale, Bible Translation, censorship, New Testament, Henry VIII, monopoly, King James

Introduction

Censorship is a legal-political term which generically refers to certain policies or actions of control exercised by the government over written or spoken speech, or materials published or performed. Its main purpose is to suppress unacceptable moral, religious or political ideas. Censorship of certain types of religious literature arises at all times due to the tension that exists between the regulative power of the State, *de propaganda fide* of the Church, and individual right of faith expression of citizen(s). As readers together review the history of Bible translation, a cyclical pattern can be observed in this fashion: a capable translator, driven by a divine call, expressed his desire of translating the Bible from its original language into the target language. Then disharmony somehow arose, and it triggered off different forms of censures that further aggrivated three parties—the subject, the Church and the Crown. Subsequent changes were made for the re-balancing of power. This pattern repeats by itself since each side needs to perform its distinct functions respectively: The State (here it applies to the late Tudor and early Stuart monarchy) is a political institution that establishes sovereign jurisdiction within a defined region, it exercises impersonal legitimation and domination over individuals, i.e. laws are obeyed and outlaws are punished. On the other hand, private citizens enjoy legal and religious entitlements to act in a certain way, including freedom of expression and legal protection ensured by the court. Propaganda of the

Church shapes opinions of its members by promoting information on canonical faith, and triggers off political action when such faith is threatened by any opposing heretical activities. The whole idea of Bible translation developed rapidly after William Tyndale and became authoritative in the hands of King James I. Was such development caused by the conflicting relationship between Church, State and individuals? Did it influence the people in a positive or negative way? And what was the influence after all?

Magna Carta Diminished in Power as the State Tightened Foreign Importation

As early as 1297, *Magna Carta*, a "Puritan-like constitution", was confirmed by Edward II of England. It was chartered in England and it guaranteed "the church of England shall be free and shall have all here whole rights and liberties inviolable" (Stephenson & Marcham, 1972, pp. 598-608). The essence of the constitution is to ensure certain rights of barons under the feudal system, and allow the Church to elect its own dignitaries without much of the Royal's instruction. Article 9 highlights the city of London could enjoy its ancient liberties and customs, same as all other cities, barons and boroughs of all ports. Article 29 says "no freeman is to be taken or imprisoned of his free tenement or of his liberties or free customs, or outlawed or exiled or in any way ruined", and article 30 followed by saying "all merchants... are to have safe and secure conduct in leaving and coming to England and in staying and going through England both by land and by water to buy and to sell, without any evil exactions..." and article 37 ensures all liberties and free customs shall be preserved to both ecclesiastical and secular persons.¹ All these point out a clear promotion of liberties for the countrymen especially concerning customs, buying and selling, as well as property issues. Since all printers in England before 1500 were nearly all aliens except for big mercers (such as Caxton), which means foreigners formed the majority of importers of books, such protection deemed to be very important for their sustainable livelihood and thus a thriving continuation of free trades in England.² However, the city grew in its jealousy toward the increase of alien merchants as they were very competitive, travellers brought in foreign imports such as woolen cloths and other artifices and yielded great retail profit. For the better interest of the local merchants, the initial promise of protecting the free trades gradually disintegrated.

To further prevent foreigners from selling goods and other valuable materials or recruiting more foreign apprentices, *An Act Touching the Merchant of Italy* was established in 1483. This act thus required Italian merchants and all other "aliens" to sell their imported wares in gross amount before the first day of May, 1485. Other restrictions imposed were: wares within eight months must be sold upon their first arrival, and aliens had to bring the remaining unsold items back beyond the sea within two months. Besides, no woolen cloth or wool to be brought in and make cloths. However, any merchants dealing with books written or imprinted were exempted from all these limitations, which inherently preserved the import freedom of book printers and traders in both the sovereign and the foreign land, thus free circulation of religious books was ensured for a time.³

¹ Nicholas Vincent, trans., *Magna Carta (1297)* in the National Archive, <https://www.archives.gov/files/press/press-kits/magna-carta/magna-carta-translation.pdf> (accessed May 9, 2015). To the end, it said, "The liberties cited in the charter were said not to be infringed and witnessed by the following: the lord S(tephen) archbishop of Canterbury, E(ustace) bishop of London, J(ocelin) bishop of Bath, P(eter) bishop of Winchester..."

² "The Importation of Books into England in the 15th and 16th Centuries," *Library*, 4th ser., IV (September, 1923), 146-50.

³ Public Act, 1 Richard III, c.9 ch. IX—"An Act touching the Merchant of Italy," *Statutes of the Realm* (1483).

Prohibition of Bible Translation Activities Approved by the Church

Apart from the changing landscape of importation, the onset of the Wycliffe Lollard heresy also made the ecclesiastical office eager to ban any translation of vernacular Scriptures early on. In January 1408-09, a constitution was directed by Thomas Arundel, the Chancellor Archbishop of Canterbury. The constitution essentially prohibited the laity from preaching without a license, especially no written work of John Wycliffe should be read. Any attempt of "private" translation was prohibited unless first approved by the council provincial. Offenders of the above would be punished for promoting errors and heresies. All these principles were further discussed monthly by an archbishop-assigned panel group held in Oxford, and the law passed was generally known as "Constitutions of Oxford". All this information shows us that there were constantly revised censors designated for the translators well before Tyndale. Yet the invention of printing broke the gate of such prohibition as technology helped promote ideas and speeches. In the 1450s Johann Gutenberg invented the moveable type printing press, and the first religious literature ever printed was Gutenberg's Bible in Latin. It was printed in Mainz, Germany in 1455. From there the number of prints increased and there were more than twenty translations that appeared in Germany between 1466 and 1522 (Dickens, 1991, p. 32).

Individuals Tested These Limits Resulting in Burnings and Censorships

Before taking Tyndale as an example, there were pioneers before him, who tried to navigate different options bypassing the above legal limitations on importation and translation in order to reach their religious goals. In 1516, Erasmus and the printer Johann Froben published a Greek-Latin *New Testament*. This version took from some Latin Vulgate and different Greek manuscripts and other Greek texts. Later the 1522 third edition added *Codex Montfortianus/Britannicus* (MS 61).⁴ It is believed that this third edition of the *New Testament* influenced Tyndale's style of translation. In addition, Martin Luther completed his translation of the *New Testament* in German concurrently based on the work of Erasmus, and next year Tyndale (whom would have read Luther's work, also Erasmus' *Testamentum*) made a translation proposal to then bishop of London Cuthbert Tunstall. Tunstall clearly understood Tyndale's idea of personal breaking of the law, which allowed the laity to see the textual meaning of the *New Testament* in their mother tongue, so project funding was not offered. Tyndale then went to another authority—Sir Henry Gilford the King's Comptroller—and showed him his English translation of the Greek Oration of Isocrates as the evidence of his capability of translation. At the same time he found Henry Gilford, an alderman of London, who offered him free lodging and food in London for nearly a year to support his work.

Meanwhile, there were already quite a number of people from different sectors trying to exercise their religious freedom despite being under careful scrutiny from the Church and State, and scattered conflicts arose. Seven people were burnt at the stake by the Church due to the illegal use of English language for teaching the children about the Lord's prayer. Also a stationer named Thomas Cots was charged of snatching Greek grammar books from a Cambridge dealer and did self-study, but he defended for himself and fought for the rights he

⁴ Henk Jan de Jonge, "Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 (1980), 381-9. Jonge argued about the impact of MS 61 had on Erasmus interpretation of certain text, as one of the theories is Byzantine text may be used instead of older Egyptian text. A 1854 Dublin version of similar collation can be read from <https://archive.org/stream/codexmontfortia01dobbggoog#page/n107/mode/2up> (accessed May 9, 2015).

deserved (Pollard & Redgrave, 1987, p. 25). In order to stifle these noises, the State reacted by targeting at each person, including Tyndale. As Royal investigators charged his attempt to translate Erasmus' work into English, and described his act as heretical, the constant threats of persecution forced William Tyndale to leave London and opted for Germany. The pocket-sized *New Testaments*, without glosses and in octavo size, were then smuggled back into England from Cologne with the sags and saddlebacks of cottons. The influence of this print was widespread. An Essex Lollard described the time when he visited the Augustinian friar Robert Barnes to borrow a copy of Tyndale's work, he encountered several other callers and merchants who were already savoring the book.⁵ There was also Nicholas Field of London who had recently come back from Germany, plus a group of Hull seamen returned from Netherland and German ports in 1527, both of them addressed what they understood from a parcel of English Scripture a new Christian thinking of opposing veneration of images and the holding of masses (Dickens, 1982, pp. 24-27). From these we know readers were struck by the new ideology presented by the *New Testament* and the meaning of the text.

The readiness to know can be a real threat to the hierarchical authorities held by both the Church and State in terms of stirring up diverse public opinion on religious matters. Press Censorship began as a result of these threats, and Tyndale's *New Testaments* were bought up and destroyed (Pollard, 1911, pp. 162-163). This was not a special measure since Cardinal Wolsey presided over the massive burning of Luther's work at St. Paul's Cathedral in May 1521 before then. And the massive burning of local and continental *New Testaments* continued to be orchestrated by William Warham, the archbishop of Canterbury as well as chancellor of a university, as he re-emerged during Wolsey's last days and took the central role in overseeing anti-heretical business (D'Alton, 2004, pp. 337-357). Another burning incident includes a London merchant named Thomas Sommers, he was caught with the banned books, bishop's office then dressed his neck with "collar of books", but only the books got burnt, not Sommers himself (Foxye, 1838, pp. 452-453, as cited in Cressy, 2005, pp. 359-374). Burning definitely gave the authority more time to think, Bishop Tunstall licensed Sir Thomas More in 1528 to read these books of heresy and best equip himself for "counter apologetics" (Winger, 1956, pp. 57-195). Afterwards he tried to classify them as the revival of accursed Wycliffite heresy, then confiscated the books, and set torch on them as many as they could, sometimes set torch on the owners as well. While it can be hard for Tyndale to further pursue editing task, his friend Augustine Packington, a mercer from Antwerp, notified the bishop and said "for I know the Dutchmen and strangers that have brought them of Tyndale, and have them here to sell; so that if it be your Lordship's pleasure, I must disburse money to pay for them...I will assure you to have every book of them that is printed and unsold" (Hall, 1904, p. 160). The bishop assured him the payment for the books and launched a huge bonfire at Paul's Cross. As a result, the intriguing scenario was, part of the revised translation funding support and printing cost came directly from the payment of the Church. Censorship of a specific religious act could ironically become its patronage.

Severe Legal Restrictions on Importations and Possessions of *New Testaments*

To outlaw is more efficient than to burn. Tunstall and Stokesley of London diocese had to launch an extensive purge of Tyndale's translation. In 1529, there were two men fined heavily for 1840 pounds for selling

⁵ Dickens, *Reformation*, 56. The man was called John Tyball of Steeple Bumpstead.

Tyndale *New Testament*. Between 1527 and 1532 the local diocesan courts convicted more than 200 heretics recorded by Foxe (Burn, 1870, p. 47). Concurrently, Tyndale started the project of Deuteronomy and other Old Testament books, Myles Coverdale continued with the Pentateuch. Such imagery of championed cats chasing after frantic mice is depicted by the following documents. The *King's Proclamation* of June 1530 encouraged the public to surrender English Biblical literature to the authority. This included any books in the English tongue printed in foreign lands, or similar work in French and Dutch language, while the works by Tyndale, Fish and Frith were particularly specified. The keepers of heretical work, including the "printers of the corruptly translated English Holy Scripture" would be corrected and punished (Pollard, 1911, pp. 163-165). Yet specific adjudication of degrees of penalties was not described, one can understand the widespread influence of Tyndale's work from this order.

In 1533-34, *The Act for Printers and Binders of book* furthered this thinking and focused State censorship on printers and retailers. It basically repealed *Magna Carta* and the Statue of Richard III (1483) which did not set limitations on book trades. The law targeted at persons who sold imported religious books in Latin and maternal English from beyond the sea, with offenders be charged of penalty fees 6s 8d per book.⁶ The importation of bound books was basically banned and aliens could not do retail sales. To exclude aliens from selling Tyndale's work would make the censorship of such literature much easier to be implemented since the iron gate was down. However, Tyndale managed to publish a revision of his *New Testament* work in 1534, while Henry was to lead the English church through the *Act of Supremacy* and continued to prohibit books that go against his religious conviction.⁷ In the fall of 1535, due to betrayal by Henry Phillips, William Tyndale was detained in Vilvoorde Castle near Brussels and imprisoned for 16 months. The procedure of accusation was undertaken by the Ecclesiastical court officials, to affirm what he said was heresy, and went on passing the ongoing allegation to the city chancellor and those monitoring in the bishop's offices.⁸ This time Tyndale was charged with heresy by numerous Royal decrees and the Church assembly at Augsburg, his single confinement in the cell cost him health and imposed great mental stress against his final translation work.

Church-State Conjoined Censorship After a Brief Release

The sacrifice of censure finally came, as Tyndale was strangled by a rope, he said, "Oh Lord, open the King of England's eyes." The destruction caused by the censorship resulted in widespread development of the Tyndale's *New Testament* and its forbidden popularity among the public. When the heretical materials spread and the heretics died, there was a time of rest between 1537-41 when quiet circulation of Biblical literature was allowed, as Henry VIII was more supportive of publications of Bible translation, a small window was opened for the further development of the Great Bible and other pirated translated versions to disseminate the messages and influence readers. Later, King Henry VIII assumed legal power on delivering proclamation that could overrule parliamentary statues and acts, *The King's proclamation for the English Bible to be set up in churches* in 1541 was a miraculous act reflected his grace—to put greatest volume of the Bible in English tongue, in every parish

⁶ Public Act, 25 *Henry VIII*, c.15, ch. XV—"An Act for Printers and Binders of Books", Statutes of the Realm (1533).

⁷ Public Act, 26 *Henry VIII*, c.1—"An Act concerning the King's Highness to be Supreme Head of the Church of England, and to have Authority to reform and redress all Errors, Heresies and Abuses in the same", Statutes of the Realm (1534).

⁸ Foxe, *Acts*, p. 508 (book VIII). Note the record of Tindal transitional housing due to financial concerns.

churches by Cromwell for his gracious reign. Henry admitted the reading of the said Scripture showed humility and obedience to God. In order to promote its retail, the Bible price was cheap.⁹ However, as the erratic and declining decision-makings of Henry VIII continued in the 1540s and the dual role he assumed (head of both Church and State) to maximize exercise of power, *The King's proclamation* of 1542 quickly acted against his recent grace and demonstrated the manipulation of his dual rulings, and enforced the licensing for the foreign importation of any religious books. It was quite a new concept since printers had to sign their works and surrender the name of author and time of publication for detailed checking by the State or Church. As it was considered as illegal to publish anonymously, authors and printers could not simply run and hide. Using this collective information, the Church facilitated the State's agenda by letting bishop of London carry out the censorship and banned 38 books including Tyndale's and Matthew's Bible. Some of these materials were previously published with license and privilege, and were legally circulated for some years before it fell under censorship and became illegal prints again (Winger, 1956, p. 174).

The peak of such reversal was very much realized by the same year's *Act for the Advancement of True Religion and for the Abolishment of the Contrary*. The Commons of the parliament was summoned to "abolish, extinguish and forbid" the Old and *New Testament* of Tyndale, whose translation was "crafty false and untrue". Printers or sellers of these materials would be fined ten pound Sterling per book and faced three months imprisonment for the first offence, all goods would be forfeited and resulted in perpetual sentence of imprisonment since the second offence, yet the case had to be witnessed by two officials of the King's council or the diocese, or two justices of peace within that diocese. At the same time, other English translations were not censored, provided that printers cut out and blot out all annotations (not summaries or chapters) before the first of October. While the proclamation reinstated licensing, this act aimed at shaping religious orthodoxy and restoring the peculiar apostolic status of the Church by legal means.¹⁰

Broadly speaking, this censure also guided how the Bible reading activity ought to take place in the society. The censored area extended from religion to culture—class, gender and occupation—about who should read the Bible, who should not. One month imprisonment would be given to women and laborers of the lower classes reading English Scriptures, but those belonged to the upper class were allowed to read the Bible texts in private family settings. Unauthorized preachers citing English Scriptures in any open assembly or churches were outlaws. Exceptions were legal or government officials. Clergy proclaimed doctrines that did not agree with the Church would be on his third offence and refusal to abjure before the judge or majesty council would be deemed as heretic, with all property lost and be faced with the sentence of burning. Furthermore, the accused persons could call in defending witnesses if necessary, same as the prosecutors. Nevertheless, this act differed remarkably from the previous acts by permitting more detailed probing of the cases, calling of defendants, and obviously the severity of punishment was comparatively lower than that of a decade before. Indeed, constant changes made on the legality concerning Biblical literature throughout all these years had already made the enforcement less

⁹ Pollard, 263-264. There was a description of "unbound Scripture should not cost above ten shillings by the seller; bound and well organized ones not over twelve shillings."

¹⁰ Public Act, 34 & 35 *Henry VIII, c.1*—"An Act for the Advancement of true Religion, and for the Abolishment of the contrary", Statutes of the Realm (1542). In order to purge and cleanse the regime from "perversions" and "fantasies" to carry out reformation, the sovereign Lord the King in this act called for a "certain form of pure and sincere teaching" that were more agreeable to the doctrinal ideas of the apostolic Catholic Church.

stringent. One clear example was Grafton and Whitchurch printed unlawful books that year and faced imprisonment because of what the law required. Yet, the penalty received was obviously reduced as one month, and they did not even lose the patent to print church service books including Book of Common Prayers (Winger, 1956, p. 117; see also Dasent, 1890, pp. 107-125; Strype, 1908, p. 566).

The Negative Influence: Printing Monopoly and State Authorization Sidelined *Parrhesia* and *Licentia* of Individuals

The philosophical understanding of *parrhesia*—old Greek understanding of producing frank speech of truth, and *licentia*—medieval Latin description of free and outspoken opinions, were in Roman's time the commonest concepts of freedom of expression; and the typical response from the government was the use of authorized recognition, to indicate these openly published speeches were to be regulated the proper government licenses (Clegg, 1997, pp. 18-28; 2001, pp. 41-45). Licenses and privileges granted by the State rendered to printing were very important to printers in terms of providing standardization and regulation. Licensing means authorized officials first read a manuscript of the print and then granted it approval for publication (Winger, 1956, pp. 171-172). Privilege means this approved publication was chartered to a specific party, the king granted it an exclusive status. The practice of licensing and privilege brings formality to the censorship, and also institutionalizes the monitoring system.

The effort of modestly giving out licenses and privileges to individuals was not robust enough eventually to stop the free blossoms of Bible translation work. The largest printer, Stationers' company of London, was granted a monopoly of book trade by the Crown between 1557 and 1603, which means an exclusive privilege of licensing was granted to this centralized station. The chartering for such incorporation was important, doing local London book trade ever since could literally mean the book trade of all England excluding university publishing. The centralization of printing in the city was partly because of the growth of the middle class, the advancement of reformation movement and the popularity of vernacular book reading (Winger, 1956, p. 158). Meanwhile those who belonged as members (more than a thousand) would have their comparatively small profiles registered in this main company, including the records of books, and received protection of trade including financial benefits in return. Sometimes it met the Crown's expectation to reduce seditious and heretical publication during this process (Winger, 1956, p. 183). This is because the Stationers' power included the right to "seize, burn or convert" any work went against statutes or proclamations (Clegg, 1997, p. 21; Arber & Rivington, 1875-1894, pp. 28-32). The practice of monopoly went on from late Tudor to the first two Stuarts. An obvious example is the royal printer of King James, Robert Barker, prevented mass prints of Geneva Bible years before King James version appeared, and let Richard Jugge (Queen Elizabeth's royal printer) to have the monopoly of printing of the edition of Bishop's bible in 1575, he did this on behalf of William Norton—who held the "Bible stock" of giant Stationer's company. From this we can see the commercial effect played behind connectivity and monopolization. Profits slowly yielded through an ardent supervision of Bible translation and the exclusion of rival versions were the hallmark results of obtaining monopoly (Pollard, 1911, p. 40).

As readers contemplate on State authorization, its initial "start-up" idea emerged years before the Bishop's Bible or *King James Bible*. In 1534, the Convocation of Canterbury appealed to Henry VIII for an "authorized" English version to replace the outlaw one (Wilkins, 1737, p. 690; Cranmer, 1846, pp. 344-345). Ten scholars

were even appointed, however, the details of the project did not proceed as expected. As Queen Elizabeth worked with the Privy Council to reinforce her reign, she announced the proclamation in 1553 which forbade common people to print and sell “false books, balletes, rhymes, and other lewd treatises in English tongue” without the license from the Queen (Wilkins, 1737, Vol. IV, p. 86). This announcement completely repealed the decision Privy Council made in June 1552, which was to re-license Tyndale's *New Testament*.¹¹ The history of Elizabethan settlement upon 1559 and some policies still continued during James I's reign since 1603, in particular, the matter of setting up council, committee and regulatory body. There was a draft resembling the form of an act of parliament during the late period of Elizabeth's reign, where the State requested a new version of the Bible. The order was said “to be levied by censure ecclesiastical as to the said Lord spiritual... to put in execution by the Lord Chancellor”.¹²

To proceed, Parliaments in James' reign were suspended until 1640, this suspension happened when the royal prints of the *King James Bible* appeared. There were several parliamentary members who issued arguments defending the long-existing right of freedom—*parrhesia* and *licentia*—to produce parliamentary speeches effectively.¹³ On June 14, 1643, reopening of the Parliament led to a new licensing procedure, that is, to forbid the “many false, forged, scandalous, seditious, libelous, and unlicensed papers, pamphlets, and books to the great defamation of religion and government.” The assumption of traditional watchdog role was changed from the bishop of London to the Parliament itself, it was to review and censor the nature and content of books after the abolition of the Court of Star Chamber, the Parliament was literally the enforcer of the new licensing law (Witte, 2008, pp. 1527-1594). Long after the publication of King James version, the mentality of guarding the victory of monopoly and authorization still persisted. In 1831, a pamphlet named the *Existing Monopoly An Inadequate Protection of the Authorized Version of the Scripture* was written by a linguist, Thomas Curtis, in terms of pointing out the minor errors of the authorized version. He called upon readers' attention to some translation errors from the original text that may need to be “fixed”, Oxford University then quickly responded with an accurate “follow-up” of line-for-line reprints in 1833 to supplement the shortcomings of the version (Pollard, 1911, pp. 72-76).

The Positive Influence: Church-State Authorization of Collaborative Translation Effort

A conference was held at Hampton Court under James I between 1604 and 1605, it was to resolve the old problem Elizabeth suggested, about “translation inadequacies” discovered during the time of Henry VIII and Edward VI. A new translation of the Bible was to mend the flaws and reflect the truth of the original language, at the same time, it was certainly accomplished with censorship in full view. King James demonstrated keen interest in succeeding Elizabethan project for some reasons, the keeping up with absolutist approach could be one of those, it realized 1 Samuel 8:9-20 and his *True Law of Free Monarchies* (1598); *True Law on Law and Equity*

¹¹ Great Britain, Privy Council, *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1542-1604 (new ser.; London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1890-1907), IV, 73.

¹² Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 329. British museum add.MS 34729, fol.77, “Due to the presence of a wide range of Bible translations work, one settled version of vulgar translation of the Bible from the original language was needed, as the document was believed to be enacted by the Queen, the message detailed out that six or more student or workers of the universities were to be employed and partnered with Archbishop of Canterbury Whitgift.”

¹³ 1604's “The Form of Apology and Satisfaction” to King James I emphasized the liberties enjoyed by the people, especially the *parrhesia* were not a “mere privilege” of a concerted view restricted by the Crown, but also shared by the Parliament itself.

(1616)—with high emphases placed on legality of conscience of the King, such conscience is inherited from God and is above the common law (Sommerville, 2001, pp. 18-19, 75; Figgis, 1914, pp. 49, 138). The divine mandate of Bible translation operated in 1604; fifty-four revisers were selected within five months, of whom forty seven scholars provided keen service (Daniell, 2003, pp. 436-438). Bedwell was the Arabic scholar, and Regius Professors of Hebrew and Greek from Oxbridge were all invited, other scholars with fit linguistic expertise also joined the team. Work at first phase was started in 1607, revision of the translation task went slowly, it claimed that some critical points were discussed fourteen to seventeen times over the table. Though being known as the Authorized Version, there was no formal legal authorization given to the work except its solemn appearance in the Book of Common Prayer. It was confirmed that Robert Barker (the royal printer) paid an amount of 3,500 pounds for the amended Bible translation which took more than 5 years to complete, the work still required a big fund afterwards, a painstaking process that caused him bankruptcy and litigation without ends (Daniell, 2003, p. 451). Nevertheless, work supervision seemed to include diverse members: language experts, University Chancellors, bishops and Privy Council, above all, there was a directed path of coordination.¹⁴ Main regulation of this translation version included the use of Bishop's Bible (incorporation of works of Tindoll, Matthew, Coverdale, Whitchurch's, Geneva) as the blueprint and minimized any necessary changes, for example, to retain most proper names and traditional ecclesiastical terminology.

King James bible translation project defined the era of collaboration between academia, printing company, the State and the Church. Despite the fact that there were "translators and critics" witness the painstaking slowness in the circle as frequent attendees of many meetings read aloud previous versions one after another. Diligence of the committee is observed, which cancelled all the fiery, ideological, anti-ecclesiastical marginal notes patriarchs offered except textual cross-referencing. The final product was a refined and standardized version of cleaner and clearer printing layout; it adopted classical language usage throughout the texts, and rather coherent attention to specific terminology passed down from lineage.

Phoenix Rising—The Substance That Survived All the Censures

Translation landscape experienced great changes across decades, as many legal amendments, propaganda of orthodoxy, and temporal sufferings of individuals exert tremendous influence. The English Bible still advanced its textuality as context of censorship brought about the goods and the bads. Lynne Long, an expert on translation of English literature, has expressed her view on the two ironies of Bible translation history. The first irony is the survival of Tyndale's work under censure, its element permeates through all the fabrics of subsequent official versions, and leads to one time popularity of Geneva Bible; the second is the hushing of *King James Bible*, which was supported by ambitious patronage and caught up with popularity, it merely stood before the abolishment of the monarchy (Long, 2001, pp. 210-211). The legal restrictions and the bonfire did not hinder divine preservation of Tyndale's translation work. This leads to another question, what are the successful elements of the work that

¹⁴ There were no margin notes included except those for Hebrews and Greek explanation or cross-reference of texts; mutual agreements on edition needed to be made among committee members (head of each company). Director or head of each company were the Deans of Westminster, King's Professor in the Hebrew and Greek of universities as mentioned above. Heads of companies should converse with overseers, the Vice Chancellors of the work, when the commonest ancient reference of a meaning has to be taken. Bishops ordered fellow clergy about the use of this version, they also sent back relevant questions or comments to the companies of Westminster, Cambridge or Oxford. The work of coordination and supervision was said to belong to the Privy Council and the royal authority as well.

were able to stand the trials of censorship and further influence the subsequent translators in the era of monopolization and licensure?

In 1995, Nicholas Watson, a scholar of late-medieval English literature, emphasizes in his iconic paper about the impact different strata and status quo of the society felt, once the language of the Bible was changed from Latin to *Lingua Anglicana* (Watson, 1995, pp. 822-864). He named a set of complex relationship between “barbarous mother tongue, an uneducated readership with a ‘carnal’ understanding of truth, and a dangerous force of rebel.” The rebel implies the laity who gained direct access to the divine truth instead of being mediated by the well-studied clergy as intermediaries, and these rebels posed the danger of pride and contempt towards certain domain (Watson, 1995, pp. 843-844). To further elucidate this thinking from sixteenth century context, the *New Testament* of William Tyndale stood in such a time as this, a time when vernacular language just naturally became the legal language of the State, but not yet crowned with orthodoxy in religious realm (Long, 2001, p. 162). Tyndale plowed through this hardened soil and finished up his work. Since vernacular movement already blossomed under the late Tudor monarchy, Bible translations could further develop under the hands of the Stuart monarchs.

Therefore, the first successful element is continuation of vernacular translation movement, it created a new community culture since Tyndale, which were distinct from both the State and the Church. This suddenly “empowered” martyrs of believers equipped by the vernacular Word (truth) of God, and declared a new form of power of spiritual independence (Helgerson, 1992, p. 264). This third force drew the attention of the less educated ones, farmers and fishers and laborers alike to a “new social realm” that redefines nationhood in their mindset. The secular State and the diocesan Church attempted to frustrate this third force by persecuting its members frequently—usually Henrician and Marian refugees, they went through fire, new laws, control over printers, and so forth. Yet as vernacular movement went on, the ideological stronghold of State and Church was weakened as each individual who believes in the championed Word of God would evolve in knowledge, he or she continued to join the legacy of invisible true Church—the spiritual readership of vernacular community. They were to reinterpret the identity of nationhood. This individual right of belief was in conflict with the Church and State’s status quo, and stood in defiance of any censorship activities. This tide came so strong that King James version could simply ride on it, to call on forty-seven erudite clergy and lay scholars to serve on board, and crowned the previous vernacular versions with more educated language and moderate theology. The move of including formerly censored product to Church-State approved new edition was merely an act of assimilation. It was a *via media* approach to invite “free self” back into the family of traditional hierarchy through the act of translation.¹⁵

The second successful element concerns about moderate literal rhythm that rings itself through different translations. One of the strongest characteristics of Tyndale’s *New Testament* is possibly reflected by his choice to translate the work of Isocrates as mentioned in the earlier part of this paper. Since evidence of such translation can hardly be found, so the deduction goes this way: if Tyndale did come up with such translation as first draft, it demonstrated his surpassing interest in classical Greek rhetoric in its simplest form. Isocrates was a disciple of Socrates and quite reclusive to political or ecclesiastical platform in B.C. 370s due to the lack of his “confidence”

¹⁵ King James Bible was still heavily influenced by the major tenants of Bishop’s instead of Catholic-oriented Douay-Rheims.

to proclaim civil ideas in the public. At the same time, he desired to pursue well-constructed rhetorical prose to express political satires and disseminate notions of freedom didactically. His work was filled with style of perfected prose rhythm, it highlighted even flow of language (e.g. avoid the meeting of two vowels, hiatus), featured the use of figures of speech and metaphors, parallelism in sense, form and sound (αντιθεσις), (παρισωσις), (καρομοιωσις) (Freese, 1894, p. 22). While Tyndale admitted his translation intended to offer laypeople a Scripture “playnly layde before their eyes in their mother tongue, that they may se the processe, ordre and meaninge of the text.”¹⁶ Would features of Isocrates eventually be inherited and modified in Tyndale’s translation style?

Demonstration of linguistic simplicity and exactness of Isocrates, inevitably speaking, is the translation gem that was truly inherited from Tyndale to King James. The constant keeping of allusions is transported from one Bible translation to another—a high degree of memory recognition of Biblical allusions, coupled with many repetitions and parallelisms (Leppihalme, 1997, pp. 32, 52). If we see Tyndale’s *New Testament* as the pedigree of other subsequent translations, meaning Coverdale-Matthew-Great-Geneva-Bishop-King James Bibles, then these are examples of gems embedded along the line (KJV 1611): “search and ye shall find” (Matt. 7:7); “for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt 26:52); by their fruits ye shall know them (Matt. 7:20); “sanctify them through the trueth” (John 17:17); “believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth in all things” (1 Corinthians 13); “perfect love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18); “thy father hath killed the fatted calf” (Luke 15:11-32); “whosoever therefore resisteth power, resisteth the ordinance of God.” (Rom. 13:2) The sonorous pattern of Tyndale’s *Magnificat* and Sermon on the Mount also appeared quite exactly in *King James Bible*.

In some cases, King James version tried to reverse the word choice (regardless of having Anglo Saxon or Latinate nature) that do not reflect well the already delineated ecclesiastical authority or a royal status, e.g. senio(u)r/presbytery (1 Tim. 4:14 TYN 1530/KJV 1611); congregation/church (in many verses); love/charity (1 Cor. 13:1); authority/dignities (2 Pet. 2:10). Yet on the sentence level, there were many successful allusions translated by Tyndale that appear in the King James version. As all these gem phrases “ring a bell” of both Bible translators and readers, even legislators and printers, it inevitably evokes echoes of Tyndale’s translation—this linguistic familiarity preserves the meaning of Biblical text from its source language to the target language in creative fashion. This does not only make Bible translators and readers of today strongly dependent on familiarity of allusions, but it also reflects a kind of cultural conservatism accepted by many generations of English-speaking audiences from the hands of the translator(s). This cannot be destroyed by any censorship activities. F. F. Bruce once wrote, “a translator who aims at reproducing the meaning of the original in the idiom of his own day will make the clause or sentence and not the single word his working unit.”¹⁷ Tyndale’s “victory” in his idiomatic translation makes the King James’ Bible seldom modify the more important figure-of-speech expressions, as any modifications of forms would greatly hinder such recognition (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 31). In other words, to kill the flow and the spirit. The apparent changes made on King James version are mostly lexical understanding and

¹⁶ Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 95. It was originally a tract of “Tyndale’s story of his translation”, preface to the translation of Genesis in the Pentateuch translation 1530 version. My reading of Isocrates can be completely refuted, if anyone desires to demonstrate fastidiously the actual content transferral between Tyndale and Erasmus conversation with reference to Latin. For instance, *The Newe Testament in Englishe and in Latin. Nouum Testamentum Anglice [tr. by W. Tyndale] et Latine (of mayster Erasmus transl.)*. London: Powell (1548).

¹⁷ F. F. Bruce, “The New English Bible,” *Faith and Thought* 92, no. 1 (1961): 47-53, esp. 50 and 52.

string-bead stanzaic reshuffle of traditional meters, probably affected by Douay-Rheims and commented by Yeats, added the adoptions of royal tones, smart organization of chapters and numbers, appendices and layouts.¹⁸ Whether the publication of *King James Bible* made the vernacular look less vernacular may need another in-depth discussion, but on the matter of sustaining the rhythm and familiarity of the language, and to let the readers get in touch with the translated text, it was certainly a key consideration of the *King James Bible* translation committee—they made good lyrical strength of Tyndale's work and the subsequent versions even better. It even influenced situations across the continent—Abraham Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* is stout on the use of literary allusion and old proclamation of liberty (Elmore, 2009, pp. 7-10).¹⁹

The preface of *King James Bible* says this, "The Holy Bible, containing the Old Testament and the New. Newly translated out of the Original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by his Majesty's special commandment."²⁰ As we travel along the Bible translation history, God was allowed by human to redeem what had happened—after the drama of continuous legal twists, ecclesial bending and ideological fights between individuals, State and the Church. *King James Bible* still came forth, and its elegance settled the martyrs' dust and ashes. While most people shortly contemplated the greatness of *King James Bible* in its 400th anniversary in 2011 (Luther Bible celebration this year) and the footprint it leaves on the modern bible translations, let us not forget how William Tyndale, also his printing and merchant allies, plowed the soil of Englishness and extended its influence, set the rhythm and the free pulse of the spirit, and let the immortal phoenix rise.

Conclusion

This research addresses important issues about reaction of the following: privacy of translation thought, freedom of religious and literary expression, situational functions of Church and State, the past state of successive legal monopolization and licensure on book printing. All these have greatly influenced further development and perception of literature since Tyndale.

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¹⁸ From the work of Gregory Martin and Cardinal Allen, etc. The Vulgate text was adopted, Ephesians 6:12 "in the celestials' KJV "against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ruth 3:15 "He went into the city" in the first edition; "she" in second edition.

¹⁹ The influence of Psalm 90:10 in the Bible was heavy on Lincoln's address. There was also a King James version of the inaugural bible used his first inaugural address, delivered March 4, 1861.

²⁰ The description ended with "...appointed to be read in Churches. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majestie. Anno Dom. 1611."

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