**Edited Antwerp Polyglot (New Testament) – Open to Acts 2**

Intro Text

Six decades after the Complutensian, the Flemish printer and entrepreneur Christopher Plantin resolved to publish another polyglot, both as an act of devotion and as a way to cement his status as the greatest printer of his time. Originally, Plantin suggested printing a new edition of the Complutensian, but the advances in biblical scholarship since 1517 called for an entirely new edition that would have four languages: Latin, Aramaic, Greek, and Syriac, a relative newcomer to European biblical scholarship. During the 1560s, Plantin began assembling the resources and scholars needed for the project in his printing shop in Antwerp. But the world in which they worked was a far different one than the world the Complutensian scholars had known; the events of the Reformation had made the act of producing a Bible in its original languages very controversial; Protestants demanded that the Bible be translated from its original languages, while Catholic authorities insisted that only the Latin Vulgate was needed. Many in the Church opposed Plantin’s polyglot, and religious tensions in the Low Countries threatened to derail the work completely. Eventually, the printer secured the support of Philip II, the king of Spain, who sent the esteemed biblical scholar Benito Arias Montano to assist with the project. The six-volume Bible was printed between 1569 and 1572 in 1200 complete sets at a cost of at least 40,000 crowns, a third more than what Plantin had originally estimated. The Inquisition scrutinized the work intensely, and did not allow the Bible to be sold until 1580.

1. Syriac Text
   * Category/Icon: Sources
   * Window Title: The Syriac Bible
   * Subtitle: Polyglot scholars seek out manuscripts of a new biblical language
   * Image: VAULT Hebrew MS 25, f. 93, 139, 178, 321
   * Caption Metadata
     1. Syriac Gospel Lectionary
     2. 13th-15th century
   * Narrative
     1. During the age of the great polyglots, scholars were keen to bring in any new ancient biblical languages that came to their attention. The first of these was Syriac, which was introduced to Europeans at the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517). Syriac was a literary language that was very close to Aramaic (though it had a different alphabet), and scholars were convinced that this was the language spoken by Christ, Mary, and the apostles. More importantly for polyglot creators, the first translation of the New Testament was into Syriac, in a version known as the Peshitta. Scholars and printers throughout Europe were eager to bring this early translation into print, and acquired manuscripts to make the necessary typefaces. Plantin’s polyglot used a 13th-century copy of the Peshitta; the Newberry’s copy shown here dates from the same time.
   * Catalog: <https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/nby/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&v1=1&BBRecID=844229>
   * Other Resource:
     1. Contini, Riccardo. “Gli inizi della linguistica siriaca nell’Europa rinascimentale,” in *Italia ed Europa nella linguistica del Rinascimento* (Bib ID: 135672), pp. 483-502.
     2. Wilkinson, Robert J. *The Kabbalistic Scholars of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Latin Vulgate

* + Category/Icon: Translations
  + Window Title: Royal Patronage
  + Subtitle: Polyglots were also signs of political power
  + Image: Wing oversize ZP 5465 .P7013, frontispiece
  + Caption Metadata:
    1. Pieter van der Heyden
    2. Antwerp, Belgium
    3. 1571
  + Narrative
    1. Due to their extremely high cost, all of the great polyglots required the assistance of the state. This forced their creators to play delicate games of diplomacy between secular and ecclesiastical authorities in order to finish them. Plantin had a more difficult time than most; many of the contributors to the project (including Plantin himself) were suspected Protestants. A crisis ensued when, with the polyglot project well under way, a Protestant revolt in the Netherlands led to a brutal repression by the Spanish in 1567. Plantin faced financial ruin in the aftermath, but he used the polyglot to save himself (and his business), pitching it as both a monument of Catholic piety and a scholarly tool to combat Protestantism. His rebranding efforts won the support of Philip II, who ensured that the project would be completed. The spectacular frontispiece in the first volume of the finished edition commemorated Philip’s support.
  + Persistent Link: <https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/nby/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&v1=1&BBRecID=234961>
  + Other Sources:
    1. *Correspondance de Christophe Plantin*, Epp. 39-47. Check it out.

Hebrew Text

* + Category/Icon: Translations
  + Window Title: Transliterating New Languages
  + Subtitle: Scholars use Hebrew to unlock other Near Eastern languages
  + Image: Wing ZP 556 .Z61 – Sig. A4v-B4; Sig. B2v-B3; Sig. F4v-G
  + Caption Metadata
    1. Johann Widmanstetter, ed.
    2. Syriacae lingvae Iesv Christo, eivsque Matri Virgini atq; Iudaeis omnibus, Christianae redemptionis Euangelicaeq́…
    3. Vienna
    4. 1555
  + Narrative
    1. Christians in Europe assumed that Near Eastern Christians were backward, misguided, and ignorant of Christian doctrine. In part, the polyglots were made to help Europeans learn the languages needed to minister to their wayward brethren. Syriac was one of these, but, like many Near Eastern languages, hardly anyone in Europe was familiar with it. To get around that problem, polyglot scholars used more familiar languages to help readers access unfamiliar ones. For the Antwerp polyglot, Plantin’s collaborators decided to transliterate the Peshitta into Hebrew, so scholars could begin to grasp how the Syriac alphabet worked. They could then use the accompanying Latin paraphrases to translate it. In so doing, Plantin’s team followed the same approach taken by Johann Widmanstetter, the first European to print the Peshitta in 1555. That edition was accompanied by this short text, which used Hebrew and Latin to help scholars master the Syriac alphabet.
  + Persistent Link to Catalog
  + Other sources:
    1. Wilkinson, Robert J. *Orientalism, Aramaic, and Kabbalah in the Catholic Reformation: The First Printing of the Syriac New Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.