**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 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 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 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.
2. Greek and Latin Text
   * Category: Translations
   * Window Title: The Polyglot Effect
   * Subtitle: Printers place as much of the Word of God before readers as possible
   * Image: Bonaparte 1928, Sig. A3 verso – A4
   * Caption Metadata:
     + Hieronymus Megiser
     + Specimen quinquaginta diversarum atque inter se differentium linguarum, & dialectorum
     + Frankfurt am Main, Germany
     + 1603
   * Narrative
     + Polyglot scholars agreed that when it came to printing the Word of God, more languages were better. Different translations were thought to complement one another, since multiple languages could reveal more of the divine meaning of Scripture than any single language could on its own. This rationale compelled the Antwerp scholars to add Syriac to the roster of Biblical languages in their polyglot, since it would allow the Gospel to speak in another voice. The introduction of Syriac reflected the general scholarly interest in printing the key texts of Christianity in as many languages as possible. The book shown here, for instance, gave readers 50 different versions of the Lord’s Prayer in various languages and dialects. It was compiled by Hieronymous Megiser, a German historian and philologist who was interested in spreading the polyglot effect through dictionaries, grammars, and even a polyglot thesaurus.
   * Persistent Link to Catalog: <https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/nby/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&v1=1&BBRecID=666622>
   * Other Sources:
     1. Guillaume Postel, *Lingvarvm duodecim characteribvs differentivm alphabetvm, introdvctio, ac legendi modus longè facilimus….* Paris, 1538 Wing ZP 539 .V52
3. Syriac Translation
   * Category/Icon: Tools
   * Window Title: Philology and Near Eastern Studies
   * Subtitle: Polyglots open up new fields of study using Near Eastern languages
   * Image: Case folio F 017 .788, Title Page
   * Caption Metadata:
     1. Joseph Scaliger
     2. *De emendatione temporum*
     3. Paris, France
     4. 1583
   * Narrative
     1. Polyglots played a large role in increasing the presence of Near Eastern languages in scholarship. In particular, the typefaces designed to print unfamiliar languages often enjoyed long careers printing works of history, linguistics, and ethnography. The typefaces used to print the Syriac text in the Antwerp polyglot were passed down to Plantin’s son-in-law, Frans Raphelengius, who used them to print a revised edition of the French scholar Joseph Scaliger’s *De emendatione temporum*. This book, which charts out human history using ancient calendar systems, shared the same intellectual spirit as the polyglots, as it placed the histories of Near Eastern peoples (Jews, Babylonians, Persians, Egyptians, etc.) alongside that of the Greeks and Romans.
   * Persistent Link to Catalog: <https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/nby/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&v1=1&BBRecID=656475>
   * Other Sources:
     1. Edward Rowe Mores, *A Dissertation upon English Typographical Founders and Foundries*. London, 1778. Case Wing Z 40745 .59
4. 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 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. 39-47ish or so. Check it out.
5. 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 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.
6. Greek Text
   * Category/Icon: Sources
   * Window Title: Greek Manuscripts
   * Subtitle: Polyglot editors reveal the Greek New Testament
   * Image: VAULT Greek MS 2, ff. 1v-2
   * Caption Metadata
     1. Gospels
     2. 12th century
   * Text – Knowing Greek
     1. Knowledge of Greek was at the heart of the scholarly culture that produced the great polyglots. The original language of the New Testament, Greek had been a staple of biblical scholarship in Europe since the end of the 15th century. Although some Greek manuscripts could be found in medieval libraries, they became more widely available after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, when refugees brought their books with them to new homes in Europe. Polyglot scholars attempted to find the oldest possible Greek manuscripts to make their editions, and would have been happy to have the Newberry’s 12th-century copy of the Greek Gospels.
   * Persistent Link to Catalog: <https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/nby/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&v1=1&BBRecID=160179>
   * Other sources:
     1. Erasmus, Desiderius. *Novum Instrumentum*. Basel, 1516. VAULT Case folio C 4 .516
7. Greek Text (could be anything here)
   * Category/Icon: Sources
   * Window Title: Acquiring Manuscripts
   * Subtitle: Polyglot editors depend on merchants and diplomats to acquire the sources they need.
   * Image: Case G 601 .137, Title Page
   * Caption Metadata:
     1. Ogier Ghislan de Busbecq
     2. The four epistles of A.G. Busbequius, concerning his embassy into Turkey.
     3. London
     4. 1694
   * Narrative
     1. Polyglots required manuscripts, but obtaining them could be difficult and prohibitively expensive. As such, polyglot scholars depended on others – diplomats, scholars, and members of the aristocracy – to travel to the Near East and acquire manuscripts for them. This process became much easier over the course of the 16th century, as diplomatic relations improved between European states and the Ottoman Empire. The friendlier relations allowed for more Greek and Near Eastern manuscripts to come to Europe. One of the more successful of these agents was Ogier Ghislan de Busbecq, the Holy Roman Empire’s ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in the 1550s and 1560s. An avid humanist himself, Busbecq always set time and money aside to purchase manuscripts – especially Greek ones – to bring back with him to Europe. His efforts helped provide the raw material for the scholars who worked on the Antwerp polyglot.
   * Persistent Link to Catalog: https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/nby/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&v1=1&BBRecID=269378