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978-1-108-07410-0 - Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century: Comprizing Biographical Memoirs of William Boywer, Printer, F.S.A., and Many of his Learned Friends: Volume 4

John Nichols

Excerpt

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(1)

ESSAYS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

REFERRED TO IN THE

LITERARY ANECDOTES

OF THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

No. I.

ON THE FIRST PRINTED POLYGLOTTS * ;

WITH

SOME MEMOIRS OF DR. EDMUND CASTELL.

THE first Polyglott work was printed at Genoa in 1516, by Peter Paul Porrus †, who undertook to print the Pentaglott Psalter of Augustin Justinian, Bishop of Nebo. It was in Hebrew, Arabic ‡,

* See vol. I. p. 3.

† “By Porrus it was printed at Genoa, *in ædibus Nicolai Justiniani Pauli*; whither he seems to have been invited for that purpose: after which I conceive that he returned to his usual place of abode at Turin; as by himself, at the end of the book, he is called *Petrus Porrus Mediolanensis Taurini degens*.” C. D. M.—Mr. De Missy had three copies of this Psalter, of which the finest was sold to the late Rev. Mr. Cracherode; and is now, with the rest of that gentleman’s magnificent collection, securely deposited in the British Museum.

‡ The Arabic version is of no authority, as it was translated, not from the Hebrew, but from the Septuagint.

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Chaldaic, and Greek, with the Latin Versions, Glosses, and Scholia, which last made the eighth column, in folio. The Arabic * was the first that ever was printed: and this the first piece of the Bible that ever appeared in so many languages †.

In 1518, John Potken published the Psalter, in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Æthiopic, [or Chaldaic, as he, with some others, called it,] at Cologne: but the name of the Printer is no where to be found throughout the book ‡. It has no Preface properly

* See a particular enumeration of the Arabic versions, both MS and printed, in *Le Long*, p. 214, &c.

† Justinian, presuming this work would procure him great gain, as well as reputation, caused 2000 copies to be printed of it; and promised in his Preface to proceed with the other parts of the Bible. But he was miserably disappointed: every one applauded the work; but few proceeded farther; and scarce a fourth part of his number was sold. Besides the 2000 copies, he had also printed 50 upon vellum, which he presented to every crowned head, whether Christian or Infidel. The whole New Testament was prepared for the press by Justinian, who had also made great progress in the Old. See *Le Long*, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, p. 2. *Maittaire*, *Annal. Typ.* tom. II. Par. I. p. 121. *Palmer*, *History of Printing*, p. 263.

‡ The Printer's name is no where mentioned, except in the following observations of the late reverend and learned *Cæsar De Missy*, to whom this article had been communicated: "I would almost venture to affirm, that you have named him when you named *Pötken*: for, if he does not say expressly that he was the Printer, he seems at least to give us a broad hint of it, when he says: *Statui jam senex linguas externas aliquas discere: & per artem impressoriam, quam adolescens didici, edere: ut modico ære libri in diversis linguis, formis æneis excusi, emi possint.* These words might have been minded, but were omitted, by *Le Long* in the abstracts he made of Potken's address to his readers at the end of the book. Towards the end of the same address he says, *imprimi curavi*: but such a phrase may very well be understood of one who saw his work printed at home with his own types. And, besides, he might have chosen that phrase as the most convenient, on account of his having been absent for some time while the impression was carried on by his kinsman and learned assistant *Soter*, alias *Heyl*. Confer with the above Address what he says, p. 7, (col. 2. *sub finem*) of his *Introductiuncula*, &c. a small work of no more than four leaves, which was certainly intended to go along with the Psalter, though it is not always, and is perhaps very seldom, to be found with it. In the above-mentioned Address he pretends to be the first who had imported

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ON THE FIRST PRINTED POLYGLOTTIS. 3

so called: but from an Address of Potken to the studious Reader, which is printed on the last page of the Psalter, we are informed, that, while his earnest zeal for Christianity, and for the Roman See, made him extremely desirous of learning foreign languages, especially what he calls the Chaldee, for which he was destitute of any proper master; some Æthiopian Fryars happened to be at Rome (as he expresses it) *peregrinationis causâ*, to whom he eagerly applied; and that from his intercourse with them, he had acquired such a knowledge of their language, as to make him believe he might undertake an edition of the Æthiopic Psalter; which was actually published at Rome nearly five years before the date of his Polyglott performance. At the end of the above-mentioned address, he promised to perform something in the Arabic, if he should meet with sufficient encouragement*.

imported into Europe what he calls *the Chaldee* [now more properly called the Æthiopic] *Tongue*. And nothing hitherto has appeared to the contrary. Some quibblers indeed might object, that it rather was imported by the Æthiopian fryars who had helped him to learn it. But he certainly seems to have been the first who presented the European Republic of Letters with a printed *Introductiuncula* to the reading of that language: nor could any body, that I know of, have said in 1518, that in 1513 he had published or printed an Æthiopic book in Europe, as Potken does in his address of 1518, where he acquaints us, that, nearly five years before, he had given at Rome an edition of the Æthiopic Psalter printed by itself: for it is evidently of such a Psalter that he says: *Psalterium. . . arte impressoriâ. . . . quinquennio vix exacto, Romæ editi*: which book is noticed by Le Long, in these words: *Psalmi & Canticum Canticorum Æthiopicè, studio Joannis Potken, cum ejus prefatione Latinâ, in 4º, Romæ, 1513*. That Latin Preface, could I get a sight of it, would perhaps enable me to be more particular and more positive. The book is marked by Le Long himself as being in the Royal Library at Paris; and an account of the said Preface, no doubt, might easily be obtained, if asking for it should become a matter of any importance to the curious. Thus much, however, I thought, might be proposed provisionally, concerning the name of the Printer to whom the world was indebted for Potken's Polyglott Psalter." C. D. M.

* Mr. De Missy had two copies of Potken's Psalter, the best of which was sold for no more than 18 shillings.

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The famous Bible of Cardinal Ximenes, commonly called the Complutensian, consists of six large folio volumes ; having the Hebrew *, Latin, and Greek, in three distinct columns, and the Chaldee paraphrase, with a Latin interpretation, at the bottom of the page, the margin being filled with the Hebrew and Chaldee radicals. It was begun in 1502, finished in 1517, but not published till 1522. A more particular account of it may be seen in *Le Long*, in *Maittaire*, and in *De Bure* ; and an essay expressly on the subject by *Mr. De Missy* †.

In 1546 appeared, at Constantinople, “*Pentateuchus Hebræo-Chaldæo-Persico-Arabicus*,” in three columns ; the Hebrew text in the middle : on the right-hand the Persic version of *R. Jacob fil. Joseph* ; and on the left the Chaldee paraphrase of *Onkelos* : at the top is the Arabic paraphrase of *Saadias*, and at the bottom the commentary of *Rasi*. The whole is printed in Hebrew characters with points, the middle column on a larger size than the others. At the end of *Genesis* appears, “*Absolutus est liber Geneseos in domo Eliezeris Berab Gerson Soncinatis* ‡.”

In 1547 was published, from the same press, “*Pentateuchus Hebraicus, Hispanicus, & Barbaro-Græcus*.” This edition was also printed in three columns : the Hebrew Text in the middle ; the old Spanish version on the right hand ; and on the left, the modern Greek, as used by the *Caraites* at Constantinople, who do not understand Hebrew. The Spanish is designed for the *Refugee Spanish Jews*. At the head and bottom of the pages are the *Targum* and the *Commentary*, as in the former editions §.

* The Hebrew text in this edition was corrected by *Alphonsus*, a physician of *Complutum*, *Paulus Coronellus*, and *Alphonsus Zamora*, who were all converts from Judaism to Christianity. The manuscripts it was printed from had undergone the *Masoretical* castigation ; see *Dr. Kennicott*, *Diss. II. p. 475*.

† See this in p. 15.

‡ *Le Long*, p. 45.

§ *Le Long*, p. 46.

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ON THE FIRST PRINTED POLYGLOTT. 5

The Royal or Spanish Polyglott was printed at Antwerp, by Christopher Plantinus, 1569—1572, by authority of Philip II. King of Spain, in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Chaldee, under the direction of Arias Montanus, in eight volumes, folio; containing, besides the whole of the Complutensian edition, a Chaldee paraphrase on part of the Old Testament, which Cardinal Ximenes had deposited in the theological library at Complutum, having particular reasons for not publishing it. The New Testament had the Syriac version, and the Latin translation of Santes Pagninus as reformed by Arias Montanus *. This work was also enriched with various Grammars and Dictionaries of the several languages it consits of.

In 1586 a Polyglott Bible was published at Heidelberg, in two volumes, folio; printed in four columns, Hebrew, Greek, and two Latin versions, *viz.* St. Jerom's and those of Pagninus; with the notes of Vatablus; and in the margin are the idioms, and the radices of all the difficult words. Two other dates have been seen to this edition, *viz.* 1599 and 1616: but Le Long, after an attentive comparison, declares them to be only different copies of the same impression; but that some of them have

* "We need say the less of this great work, as it is not pretended that the least correction was made in this edition of the Hebrew text. Indeed no such thing could possibly be expected from an Editor who believed the perfection of the Hebrew text—*quantâ integritate* (says he) *semper conservata fuerint Biblia Hebræa, plerique doctissimi viri constanter asseverarunt, &c.* Hody, p. 516, 517." Dr. Kennicott, Diss. II. p. 477.—This edition (which is particularly mentioned in Le Long, p. 20,) is described by M. De Bure as a work most beautifully printed; but, on account of the great number of treatises it contains, it is difficult to arrange the volumes properly. Mr. De Missy, from whom, just before his death, I hoped to have received an accurate relation of this edition, had a good copy of it; which, happening to be but in indifferent binding, was sold for no more than seven pounds, to Mr. Mac Carthy, who purchased many other articles, and particularly many little French curiosities.

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the Greek Testament with the addition of the Latin version of Arias Montanus *.

In 1596, Jacobus Lucius printed an edition, in Greek, Latin, and German, at Hamburg, in four volumes, folio, "Studio Davidis Wolderi;" the Greek from the Venice edition of 1518 †; the Latin versions those of St. Jerom and Pagninus.

In 1599, Elias Hutterus published one at Noremberg, in six languages; four of them, the Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek, and Latin, printed from the Antwerp edition: the fifth was the German version of Luther: and the sixth the Sclavonic version of Wittemberg ‡. This Bible was never completed, and goes no farther than the book of Ruth.

* "Quæ sub Vatabli nomine circumferuntur Biblia, ejus non sunt; annotationesque eidem adscriptæ auctorem habent Robertum Stephanum." Walton, Proleg. IV. p. 33. See Le Long, p. 15.

† Le Long, p. 26.—Fabricius, Bibliotheca Græca, says the same. But the Editor, Wolderus himself, in his Preface, speaks thus: "De LXX Interpretum Græcâ, deque Latinâ Hieronymi, ut putatur, versione nihil moneo: nisi quod scire tua non parum, opinor, interest; in iis, Plantinianam editionem me esse sequutum: quod correctior quidem quæ esset nulla sese mihi offerret." As far as can be judged from a collation of some passages, it appears that he followed the edition of Plantinus, but used his own judgment in the punctuation and other less material particulars. The new Latin version, here printed, appears to be, not that of Pagninus (though said to be his by Wolderus); but rather that which Robert Stephens published in 1557, corrected from the observations of Pagninus and Vatablus. The New Testament is the first of Beza, which Robert Stephens printed in 1556, with the same types which he used in the following year for the above mentioned Latin version of the Old Testament.—We are indebted for this note to the MS annotations which Mr. De Missy had made many years ago on the margin of his copy of Le Long's Bibliotheca Sacra, such as it is in the Leipsic edition of 1709.—Mr. De Missy's copy of Wolderus was sold for no more than half a guinea; and is now in the Royal Library.

‡ Instead of the Sclavonic, some copies were printed with the French version of Geneva; others with the Italian of the same city; and others again with a Saxon version from the German of Luther.—Hutterus published the Psalter and New Testament in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and German. He also published the New Testament in twelve languages; viz. Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, Italian, Spanish, and French, in one page; and Latin, German, Bohemian,

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The next work of this kind was, “*Biblia Sacra Polyglotta, studio Guy Michaelis Le Jay. Parisiis, apud Antonium Vitray, 1628, & ann. seqq. ad 1645,*” in ten volumes, very large folio. This edition, which is extremely magnificent*, contains all that is in those of Ximenes and Plantinus, with the addition of the Syriac and Arabic version.

This was soon followed by “*Biblia Sacra Polyglotta, complectentia textus originales, Hebraic. Chaldaic. & Græc. Pentateuchum Samaritanum, & Versiones Antiquas, cum apparatu, appendicibus & annotationibus; studio & operâ Briani Walton. Londini 1657, & ann. seqq.*” † in four

Bohemian, English, Danish, and Polonese, in another. Calmet, ubi supra. See *Le Long*, p. 26.—In Mr. De Missy's catalogue appeared, “*Hutteri Biblia Polyglotta, & Nov. Test. vol. II.*” The two volumes were sold to the Trustees of the British Museum.

* The Samaritan Pentateuch was first printed in it, with its version, from MSS. brought into Europe between the year 1620 and 1630, under the care of the very learned Morinus. See Dr. Kennicott, *Diss. II.* p. 478.

† Nine languages are used in this edition; yet there is no one book in the whole Bible printed in so many. In the New Testament the Four Evangelists are in six languages; the other books only in five; those of Judith and the Maccabees only in three. The Septuagint version is printed from the edition at Rome, anno 1587. The Latin is the Vulgate of Clement VIII. The Chaldee Paraphrase is completer than any former publication. The edition is enriched with Prefaces, Prolegomena, Treatises on Weights and Measures, Geographical Charts, and Chronological Tables. Calmet, ubi supra, p. viii.—Dr. Walton was assisted in this laborious undertaking by Dr. Edmund Castell, who translated from the Syriac some fragments of Daniel, the books of Tobit and Judith, the Letters of Jeremiah and Baruch, and the first book of the Maccabees; he also translated the Song of Solomon from the Æthiopic into Latin, and added notes to the Samaritan Pentateuch; but the most considerable assistance he gave was by his *Lexicon* in two volumes, a work which is a necessary supplement to the Polyglott.—Alexander Huisse collected the various readings at the bottom of each page; revised the Septuagint version, the Greek Text of the New Testament, and the Latin Vulgate; he also collated the edition of the Old Testament printed at Rome, and the New Testament of Robert Stephens, with the Alexandrine manuscript. See *Prideaux*, vol. II. p. 47. Dr. Thomas Hyde corrected the Arabic, Syriac, and Persic; as Loftusius did the Æthiopic version of the New Testament. Louis le Dieu and Samuel Clarke

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volumes *. To which was added, “*Lexicon Heptaglotton, Hebraicum, Chaldaicum, Syriticum, Samaritanum, Æthiopicum, Arabicum, & Persicum, digestum & evulgatum ab Edmundo Castello*†, 1686,” in two volumes more. This may properly be called a new edition of *Le Jay*, with improvements; no pains having been spared in making it as perfect as possible: the whole was revised with great care, and accurately corrected; and it is justly considered as the most useful of all the *Polyglotts*, though *Le Jay’s* is the handsomest. *Dr. Walton’s* edition was supposed by *Mr. Palmer* to have been printed from sheets surreptitiously obtained from the press at *Paris*; and to have been published with improvements so soon after, as to reduce *M. Le Jay* almost to want, after having expended above £5000.

Clarke were also assistants in the work. *Le Long*, p. 33, &c.—“The immense merit of this work is too well known to need any laboured recommendation. And yet, it must be observed, that in this, the best and most useful of all editions, the Hebrew Text is printed Masoretically; almost in an absolute agreement with the many former editions, and with the latest and worst MSS.” *Kennicott*, *Diss.* II. p. 480.

This *Polyglott* was published by subscription, and was probably the first book ever printed in that manner in England. Of the books so published in this country, *Minshien’s Dictionary* in eleven languages may, perhaps, more properly be called the earliest, though not strictly within the modern idea of a *Subscription*: but yet in effect the same thing: he printed the names of all the persons who took a copy of his work, and continually added to it, as purchasers came in. *Dryden’s Virgil* was, I think, the next after *Walton’s* work, and the *Paradise Lost*, by *Tonson*, in folio, the next; and there the notices of my intelligent friend *Mr. Bindley* end.—*Blome*, a notorious plagiarist, afterwards carried the practice of publishing books by subscription to a greater height than any of his contemporaries.

In the “*Collectanea Ecclesiastica*” of *Samuel Brewster*, esq. Lond. 1752, 4to, is an English treatise by *Bp. Walton*, called, “*A Treatise concerning the Payment of Tyths in London.*” In the *Life of Dr. Edward Pocock*, prefixed to his *Theological Works*,” are some curious particulars relating to the *London Polyglott*. See *Granger*, vol. II. p. 29. Towards the printing of the work, *Dr. Walton* had contributions of money from many noble persons, which were put into the hands of *Sir William Humble*, treasurer for the work.

† Of whom see a particular account in p. 22.

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sterling to complete his work *. But Mr. Palmer mistook the date of Le Jay's Polyglott (which he makes to be 1657), and then formed his conclusion of the sheets being sent into England from Paris; and met with a correspondent, it seems, that encouraged his error. Le Jay's Polyglott was published, in ten volumes, MDCXLV: the English Polyglott, in six volumes, not till MDCLVII, twelve years after the other †. Under a fine head of Dr. Walton, engraved by Lombart, and prefixed to his edition of the Polyglott, we are told it was begun only in MDCLIII.—It is said indeed that the English put out Proposals for a cheaper and better edition, soon after Le Jay's was published, which might in some measure hinder the sale of it. But other causes concurred. The enormous size of the book rendered it inconvenient for use: and the price deterred purchasers. And farther, the refusal of Le Jay to publish it under Richelieu's name, though that Minister, after the example of Cardinal Ximenes, had offered to print it at his own expence, damped the sale.—The English Polyglott, in return, made but little way in France. A large paper

* It appears by M. De Bure's account, that Le Jay declined an offer, which had been made him, of supplying England with a number of copies at a reasonable price; and was afterwards obliged to sell a great part of his impression for waste paper.

† Dr. Walton got leave to import paper, duty free, in 1652; began the work 1653; and published it 1657. It is surprising he could get through six such volumes in four years; though certainly many printers were employed on it; among others, Mr. Thomas Dawks, of Low Leyton, maternal grandfather to William Bowyer. But it is plain that, in the reprinted leaf of the Preface, Dr. Walton robs the Protector of the honour of patronizing this work, which was begun in 1653, and published in 1657; three years before the Restoration, 1660. The license was granted by the Council of State in 1652; and was continued by Oliver, who dissolved the Rump Parliament in 1653. After the Restoration, Dr. Walton had the honour of presenting his Bible to king Charles II. who made him his chaplain in ordinary, and soon after promoted him to the bishoprick of Chester. He was consecrated Dec. 2, 1660; and died Nov. 29, 1661.

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copy* was sold, in 1728, in the library of Colbert, the six volumes bound in fourteen. Castell's Lexicon, that went along with this set, was on a smaller-sized paper. The same copy was again sold to M. De Selle, and formed afterwards a part of the curious collection of the Count De Lauraguais.

The last leaf but one of the Preface of Walton's Polyglott is cancelled in most of the copies; a circumstantial account of which I am enabled to lay before the Reader from a letter to my worthy predecessor :

“ TO MR. BOWYER.

“ DEAR SIR,

Balsover Street, 21 April, 1770

I WILL venture to be positive, that I never spoke a word before this, concerning two different Dedications of Walton's Polyglott; though I remember something that may have been the occasion of somebody's thinking I did. The fact is, to the best of my remembrance,

“ I. That when we met at Cambridge [nineteen or twenty years ago], and, in company with several other persons, visited the Library of Trinity-College, a gentleman, on my taking notice there were two copies of the said Polyglott, dropt a hint about exchanging duplicates for other books :

“ II. That upon this I made bold to observe— Duplicates were not always a mere superfluity, especially in public libraries, where they might have been intended to be kept together for curiosity's sake, on account of some remarkable difference between them; which might even be the case with the very books just taken notice of :

* M. De Bure says, there is a tradition that no more than twelve copies of Walton's Polyglott were printed on large Paper, and that it is doubtful whether any of Castell's Lexicon were printed in that size. This doubt is easily removed by the slightest inspection of the very fine copy on large paper in the British Museum, which was the Presentation-book to king Charles the Second. Another is in the Lambeth Library; and a third, I believe, is in the library of the Cathedral Church of Chichester.

“ III.