

Lesson 4

The 1526 Worms New Testament: Assessing the First Printed English Bible

Prepared & Taught by Bryan C. Ross

Introduction

- In 1526, a small pocket-sized New Testament rolled off a printing press in the German city of Worms. At first glance it appeared unremarkable, but this book would change the English-speaking world forever. It was the first printed English New Testament translated directly from Greek, and it reached England despite determined efforts by both church and state to prevent its circulation. Yet few realize that this famous edition was actually Tyndale's second attempt. A year earlier (1525), he had begun printing a very different New Testament in Cologne, only to see the project interrupted and nearly destroyed. Today we will examine the relationship between those two editions and consider what the surviving evidence tells us about Tyndale's goals, methods, and enduring influence.
- To accomplish this task, we will be considering the following points:
 - Cologne vs. Worms
 - Comparing the Cologne Fragment (1525) with the New Testament (1526)
 - 1526 Worms New Testament
 - Source Text Examples: What Was Tyndale Translating?
 - Impact & Outcome

Cologne vs. Worms

- Cologne (First Printing Attempt, 1525)
 - Cologne was still a strongly Catholic city with authorities opposed to the spread of Lutheran and Reformation teachings.
 - Civic and church leaders worked together to suppress Protestant publications.
 - Tyndale's English New Testament was discovered by Johann Cochlaeus, a leading Catholic opponent of Luther.

- Cochlaeus informed local authorities, resulting in the printing project being shut down before completion.
- Tyndale was forced to flee the city, taking with him the printed sheets that had already been completed.
- The atmosphere in Cologne was characterized by:
 - Strong Catholic control.
 - Active censorship.
 - Enforcement against reformist literature.
 - Little tolerance for vernacular Bibles linked to Protestant ideas.
- Worms (Successful Printing, 1526)
 - Worms (the site of the famous Diet of Worms in 1521 i.e. the assembly held in the city of Worms where Martin Luther refused to recant) had become a center of sympathy for the Reformation after the controversy surrounding Martin Luther.
 - By 1526, Lutheran influence in the city was significantly stronger than in Cologne.
 - Local printers were more willing to produce Protestant and reformist works.
 - Tyndale was able to complete and publish his English New Testament there.
 - The Worms edition was printed in a smaller format, making it easier to smuggle into England.
- The atmosphere in Worms was characterized by:
 - Growing acceptance of Lutheran ideas.
 - Weaker enforcement of anti-Lutheran policies.
 - Greater freedom for Protestant printers.
 - Supportive conditions for distributing reformist literature.

- Cologne = Catholic opposition and censorship, causing Tyndale's project to fail.
- Worms = Reformation-friendly environment, allowing Tyndale's New Testament to be successfully printed and distributed.

Comparing the Cologne Fragment (1525) with the New Testament (1526)

- The Cologne Fragment was printed in quarto format. A quarto is produced by folding a full printed sheet twice, creating four leaves (eight pages). Scholars generally identify the surviving fragment as a large quarto edition. The exact measurements of the surviving British Library copy are not commonly reported in standard references, but because it was a quarto, the page size was approximately:
 - Height: 9 to 11 inches (23 to 28 cm)
 - Width: 7 to 8½ inches (18 to 22 cm)
- Most bibliographers place the Cologne Fragment among the larger Continental quartos of the early sixteenth century, making it noticeably larger than Tyndale's later 1526 Worms octavo New Testament, which was designed to be smaller and easier to conceal and smuggle into England.
- The Cologne edition was intended as a more traditional, heavily annotated scholarly publication, while the Worms edition was a compact volume that could be transported secretly into England after the Cologne printing was interrupted by authorities.
- A consideration of the Cologne Fragment leaves little doubt that Luther influenced Tyndale heavily in terms of formatting and layout. The following images demonstrate the degree to which Tyndale followed Luther's 1522 September Testament in his original 1525 Cologne edition. Both editions contain Prologues, identical lists of Contents, and a text filled with marginal notes, many of which Tyndale copied from Luther, according to McGrath.
- While Tyndale's 1526 Worms edition abandoned these formatting and metatextual features in favor of a stripped-down text, that Tyndale still favored them is evidenced by his 1534 revision. Tyndale's revision included two Prologues, an identical Contents page to the one found in the original 1525 project which answers to Luther's 1522 September Testament, and a text laden with marginal notes and cross references.
- The 1525 Prologue runs 14 pages in length containing 31 paragraphs and roughly 6,400 words. There are 18 different subsections in Tyndale's original Prologue. The subsections were as follows:

- The Old Testament
 - The New Testament
 - The Gospel or Evangelion
 - Which evangelion is called a Testament
 - A justiciary
 - A sensual man
 - A Christian man
 - Nature
 - Faith, love, works
 - Righteousness otherwise justifying or justice
 - Adam bringeth us to bondage
 - Christ letteth us at liberty
 - The evangelion bringeth faith, faith bringeth love: love worketh
 - Christ bringeth all goodness freely, and giveth an example how to bestow in godly
 - Faith receiveth of God, and love bestoweth the same on his neighbour
 - A true Christian man believeth that heaven is his already by Christ's purchasing, and therefore loveth, and worketh, to honour God only and to draw all things to God
 - To bind and loose
 - A Christian man feelethe the working of the Holy Ghost in his soul, and in all tribulations and adversities feelethe God a merciful and a loving Father
- Tyndale's "To The Reader" in the 1526 New Testament (found at the end of the volume) differs signify from the Prologue to the 1525 Cologne fragment. In 1526 NT there are only 5 paragraphs of about 800 words with zero headings or subsections. The Cologne Fragment Prologue (1525) is a full theological introduction to the New Testament, while the shorter "To The Reader" (1526) is a concise guide on how to read Scripture, understand Law and Gospel, and receive the translation charitably despite its imperfections. This underscores one of our main points. Tyndale totally rethought his entire enterprise after his first attempt was thwarted.
 - Both editions contain a table of contents or list of books contained in the New Testament.

Tyndale's 1526 Table of Contents

The Boke Conteyned in the newe Testament.

j.	The Gospell of. S. Mathew.
ii.	The Gospell of. S. Marke.
iii.	The Gospell of. S. Luke.
iiii.	The Gospell of. S. Ihon.
v.	The actes of the Apostles/writte be sa ynct Luke.
vi.	The pistle of. S. paul to the Roayns.
vii.	The fyrst pistle of. S. Paul to the Cor. rinthians.
viii.	The second pistle of. S. Paul to the Cor rinthians.
ix.	The pistle of. S. Paul to the Galathiās
x.	The pistle of. S. Paul to the Ephesians
xi.	The pistle of. S. Paul to the Philippiās
xii.	The pistle of. S. Paul to the Collossiās.
xiii.	The fyrst pistle of. S. Paul to the Tess alonians.
xiiii.	The seōde pistle of. S. Paul to the Tess alonians.
xv.	The fyrst pistle of S. Paul to Timothe.
xvi.	The secōd pistle of S. Paul to Timothe.
xvii.	The pistle of S. Paul to Titus.
xviii.	The pistle of. S. Paul to Philemon.
xix.	The fyrst pistle of. S. Peter.
xx.	The seconde pistle of. S. Peter.
xxi.	The fyrst pistle of. S. Ihon.
xxii.	The seconde pistle of. S. Ihon.
xxiii.	The thyrd pistle of. S. Ihon.
	The pistle vnto the Ebrues.
	The pistle of. S. James.
	The pistle of Jude.
	The revelacion of Ihon.

Note that the 1526 NT still follows Luther's order of books but does not off set Hebrews, James, Jude, & Revelation like the 1526 Cologne Frag.

- The following exercise is designed to determine to what extent Tyndale changed/edited the Biblical text between the Cologne Fragment of 1525 and his New Testament of 1526. To accomplish this task, I have chosen three passages from the book of Matthew. The table below

identifies the passage being compared and the reading from both source texts. Please note that I have modernized the spelling for ease of reading. I have not changed any of the words.

Passage	Cologne Fragment (1525)	Worms NT (1526)
Matt. 1:18-25	<p>18) ¶ The birth of Christ was on this wise/ When his mother Mary was married unto Joseph/ before they came to dwell together/ she was found with child by the Holy Ghost.</p> <p>19) Then her husband Joseph/ being a perfect man, and loathe to defame her/ was minded to put her away secretly.</p> <p>20) While he thus thought/ behold/ the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in sleep saying: Joseph, the son of David/ fear not to take unto thee/ Mary thy wife. For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.</p> <p>21) She shall bring forth a son/ and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins.</p> <p>22) ¶ All this was done/ to fulfil that which was spoken of the Lord/ by the prophet saying:</p> <p>23) Behold a maid shall be with child/ and shall bring forth a son/ and they shall call his name Emmanuel/ which is as much to say, by interpretation, as God with us.</p> <p>24) ¶ Joseph as soon as he awoke out of sleep/ did as the angel of the Lord bade him/ and took his wife unto him/</p>	<p>18) ¶ The birth of Christe was on this wise/ When his mother Mary was married unto Joseph/ before they came to dwell together/ she was found with child by the holy ghost.</p> <p>19) Then her husband being a perfect man/ and loth to defame her/ was minded to put her away secretly.</p> <p>20) Whill he thus thought/ behold the angel of the lord appeared unto him in sleep saying: Joseph the son of David/ fear not to take unto thee/ Mary thy wife. For that which is conceived in her is of the holy ghost.</p> <p>21) She shall bring forth a son / and thou shalt call his name Iesus. For he shall save his people from their sins.</p> <p>22) ¶ All this was done to fulfill that which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying:</p> <p>23) Behold a maid shall be with child/ and shall bring forth a son/ and they shall call his name Emmanuel/ which is as much to say by interpretation / as God with us.</p> <p>24) Joseph as sone as he awoke out of sleep/ did as the angel off the Lord bade him/ and toke his wife unto him/</p>

	<p>25) and knew her not/ till she had brought forth her first son/ and called his name Jesus.</p> <p>*There are 5 marginal notes attached to this passage in the Cologne Fragment.</p>	<p>25) and knew her not/ till she had brought forth her first son/ and called his name Jesus.</p>
Matt. 5:13-20	<p>13) ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth. but and if the salt be once unsavour/ what can be salted therewith? It is thenceforth good for nothing/ but to be cast out at the doors/ and that men tread it under foot.</p> <p>14) Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid/</p> <p>15) neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel/ but on a candlestick, and it lighteth all those which are in the house.</p> <p>16) See that your light so shine before men/ that they may see your good works/ and glorify your Father which is in heaven.</p> <p>17) ¶ Ye shall not think/ that I am come to disannul the Law/ or the prophets: No, I am not come to disannul them/ but to fulfil them.</p> <p>18) For truly I say unto you/ till heaven and earth perish, one jot/ or one tittle of the Law shall not escape/ till all be fulfilled.</p> <p>19) ¶ Whosoever breaketh one of these least commandments/ and shall teach men so/ he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall observe and teach them/ that</p>	<p>13 ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth. but and if the salt be once unsavery/ what can be salted therewith? it is thenceforth good for nothing/ but to be cast out at the doors/ and that men tread it under foot.</p> <p>14) Ye are the light of the world. A cite that is set on an hill cannot be hid/</p> <p>15) nether do men light a candle and put it under a bushel/ but on a candlestick/ and it lighteth all them which are in the house.</p> <p>16) Se that your light so shine before men/ that they may see your good works/ and glorify your father which is in heaven.</p> <p>17) ¶ Ye shall not think that I am come to disannul the Law/ or the prophets. no I am not come to disannul them/ but to fulfill them.</p> <p>18) For truly I say unto you/ till heaven and earth perish/ one jot/ or one tittle of the Law shall not escape/ till all be fulfilled.</p> <p>19) ¶ Whosoever breaketh one of these lest commandment/ and shall teach men so/ he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall observe and teach</p>

	<p>person shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.</p> <p>20) ❸ For I say unto you/ except your righteousness exceed/ the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees/ ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.</p> <p>*There are 5 marginal notes attached to this passage in the Cologne Fragment.</p>	<p>them/ that person shall be called great in the kingdom off heaven.</p> <p>20) ❸ For I say unto you/ except your righteousness exceed/ the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees/ ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.</p>
Matt. 15:21-28	<p>21) ❸ And Jesus went thence/ and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.</p> <p>22) And behold a woman which was a Canaanite came out of the same coasts/ and cried unto him/ saying: Have mercy on me Lord the Son of David/ my daughter is piteously vexed with a devil.</p> <p>23) And he gave her never a word to answer. Then came to him his disciples/ and besought him saying: Send her away/ for she followeth us crying.</p> <p>24) He answered/ and said: I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.</p> <p>25) Then she came and worshipped him/ saying: Master sucker me:</p> <p>26) He answered and said, It is not good, to take the children's bread, and to cast it to whelps.</p> <p>27) She answered and said: It is truth/ nevertheless the whelps eat of the</p>	<p>21❸ And Iesus went thence/ and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.</p> <p>22And behold a woman which was a Canaanite came out of the same coasts/ and cried unto him/ saying: have mercy on me Lord the Son of Daud/ my daughter is piteously vexed with a devil.</p> <p>23) And he gave her never a word to answer. Then cam to him his disciples/ and besought him saying: send her away/ for she followeth us crying.</p> <p>24) He answered/ and said: I am not sent/ but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.</p> <p>25) Then she came and worshipped him/ saying: master sucker me:</p> <p>26) He answered and said: it is not good/ to take the children's breed/ and to cast it to whelps.</p> <p>27) She answered and said: it is truth/ nevertheless the whelps eat of the</p>

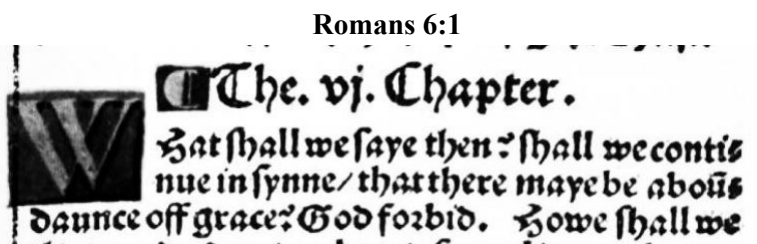
	<p>crumbs/ which fall from their master's table.</p> <p>28) Then Jesus answered and said unto her. O woman great is thy faith/ be it to thee/ even as thou desirest. And her daughter was made whole even at that same time.</p> <p>*There is 1 marginal note in the form of a cross reference attached to verse 21 in the Cologne Fragment.</p>	<p>crumbs/ which fall from their master's table.</p> <p>28) Then Iesus answered and said unto her. O woman great is thy faith/ be hit to the/ even as thou desirest. And her daughter was made whole even at that same time.</p> <p>*The Tyndale's Bible website was used as a resource to create this table.</p>
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- The above comparison only considers three passages, so it is admittedly not exhaustive. That said, it does seem to suggest that Tyndale made few changes to the Biblical text found in Matthew chapters 1-22 between 1525 and 1526. The most glaring difference is the complete lack of marginal notes found in the 1526 New Testament.
- During this time in his life Tyndale was operating under great duress. That he would have simply reprinted those portions of the text that he already had complete makes perfect sense. As we will see in later study this weekend it was not until 1534 that Tyndale was able to revise his text. Revision does not appear to have been a concern in 1526, rather his goal was to just get the text into print.
- Given that Tyndale's actions were made known to the English authorities, many Bible historians believe that this prompted Tyndale to alter the size and contents of his Bible.
 - "The explanation seems to be, that while Tyndale intended the quarto edition should be the first printed, and so the work was actually begun at Cologne, yet, because it was interrupted and the English authorities were instructed particularly as to the character of the book issuing from the press at Cologne, he changed the form to an octavo, leaving out the prologues and glosses [marginal notes & cross reference]" (Condit, 101).
- Altering the project may have given Tyndale's Bible a fighting chance of surviving introduction into England. A dated letter (March 1526) from King Henry VIII to Martin Luther reveals that the English King had knowledge of Tyndale's clandestine project.
 - "... in deuyce with one or two lewd persons (referring to Tyndale and Roye) borne in this our realm, for the translating of the New Testament in to English, as well as with

many corruptions of that holy text, as certain prefaces, and other pestilent glosses in the margins for the advancement and setting forth of his abominable heresies. . . In the aduoydyng whereof, we of our especial tender zeal . . . determined the said venture translations to be burned, with further sharp correction and punishment against the keepers and reads of the same” (Arber, 48-49).

1526 Worms New Testament

- Tyndale’s 1526 New Testament represents the first time the original languages i.e., Greek was translated into English. I have selected the following passages for our consideration to get a feel for Tyndale’s ability as a translator.
 - Romans 6:1
 - Romans 16:25-26
 - I Corinthians 15:3-4
 - Ephesians 3:1-11
 - II Timothy 2:15
- For each example I have included a screenshot from the 1526 NT with a modern spelling reading underneath. I have only updated the spelling for ease of reading. None of the wording has been changed.



What shall we say then ? shall we continue in sin/ that there may be abundance of grace? God forbid.

- I included this example because the use of “God forbid” in the King James Bible is often used by critics to talk about the use of so-called dynamic equivalence by the KJB translators. Tyndale’s use of the same expression demonstrates that he cared more about conveying the force and sense of the Greek in English even if meant not always being woodenly literal in his English renderings.

Romans 16:25-26

Amen.

**To hym thatt is off power to stablysshe you
 accordynge to my gossell / wher with I preache
 Iesus Christ / in openynge off the mistery whs
 ich was kept close sence the worlde began /
 and nowe is openned at thys tyme and
 declared in the scripturs of pros
 phesy / by the commaundes
 met of the everlastyns
 ge god / to sterve vs
 pe obedience to
 the faythe
 publis
 shed amōs
 ge all naciōs: To
 the same god / whych
 alone is wise / be prayse tho
 rowe Iesus Christ for ever Amē.**

To him that is off power to stablish you according to my gospel/ where with I preach Jesus Christ/ in opening of" the mystery which was kept close since the world began / and now is opened at this time and declared in the scriptures of prophesy/ by the commandment of the everlasting god/ to stir up obedience to the faith published among all nations To the same god/ which alone is wise/ be praise through Jesus Christ for ever Amen.

I Corintheins 15:3-4

**For fyrst of all I gave vnto you that which I
 receaved: howe thatt Christ deyed for oure syns
 nes / agreynge to the scriptures: and thatt he was
 buried / and that he arose agayne the thyrde daye
 accordynge to the scriptures: and thatt he was**

For first of all I gave unto you that which I received : how that Christ died for our sins/ agreeing to the scriptures: and that he was buried / and that he arose again the third day according to the scriptures :

Ephesians 3:1-11

The .iiij. Chapter.

FOr this cause I Paul the servant of Jesus am in bonds / For your sakes which are gentyls. If ye have heard of the ministracion of the grace of god which is geve me to you ward: For by revelacion shewed he this mystery vnto me / as I wrote above in fewe wordes / where by / when ye rede ye maye knowe myne vnderstonds ynge i the ministry of Christ / which mystery in tymes passed was nott opened vnto the sonnes of mē as it is now declared vnto his holy apostles and prophet by the sprete: that the gentyls shulde be inheritous also / and of the same body / and partakers off his promys that is in Christ / be the meanes of the gospel / whereof I am made a minister / by the gyfte of the grace of god geven vnto me / after the workynge of his power.

Unto me the lest of all saynt is this grace geven / that I shulde preache amonge the gentyls the vnsearchable ryches off Christ / and to geve light to all men / that they myght knowe what is the felysshippe of the mystery / which from the begynnyng off the worlde hath bene hid in God which made all thyng thorowe Jesus Christ / to the intent / that now vnto the rulerars and powers in heven myght be knowne by the congregaciō the manyfolde wisdom of god / accordynge to the eternall purpose / which he purposed in Christ Jesu oure lord / by whom we are holde

For this cause I Paul the servant of Jesus am in bonds / For your sakes which are gentiles. If ye have heard of the ministration of the grace of god which is given me to you ward:

For by revelation shewed he this mystery unto me / as I wrote above in few words / whereby / when ye rede ye may know mine understanding in the mystery of Christ / which mystery in times passed was not opened unto the sons of men as it is now declared unto his holy apostles and prophets by the sprite: that the gentiles should be inheritors also / and of the same body / and partakers of his promise that is in Christ / be the means of the gospel / whereof I am made a minister / by the gift of the grace of god given unto me / after the working of his power.

Unto me the lest of all saints is this grace given / that I should preach ainonge the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ / and to give light to all men / that they might know what is the fellowship of the mystery / which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God which made all things

thorowe Jesus Christ/ to the intent/ that now unto the rulers and powers in heaven might be known by the
 congregation the manifold wisdom of god/ according to the eternal purpose/
 which he purposed in Christ Jesus our lord/

II Timothy 2:15

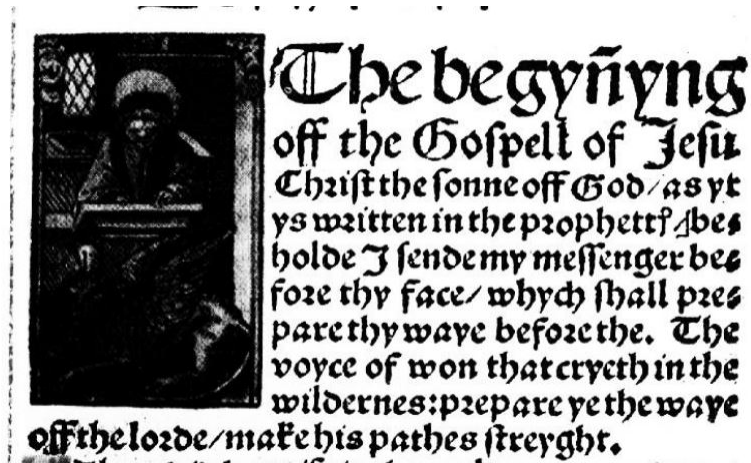
**Studdy to shewe thy silfe laudable vnto god/
 a workmā that nedeth not to be a shamed/ diry/
 dyng the worde of trueth iustly. Vngostly and**

Study to show thy self laudable unto god / a workman that needeth not to be a shamed/ dividing the word
 of truth justly.

Source Text Examples: What Was Tyndale Translating?

- Historical records show William Tyndale used Desiderius Erasmus's printed Greek New Testament as the primary source for his 1526 English translation. The term "Textus Receptus" (Received Text or TR) was coined retroactively in 1633, but it refers directly to the family of Greek texts started by Erasmus and later refined by Stephanus and Beza.
- Because modern translations (like the ESV or NASB) rely on an "eclectic" text derived from older Alexandrian manuscripts, there are distinct differences in specific verses. When Tyndale's 1526/1534 New Testament matches certain specific phrases found in the Textus Receptus tradition, it provides textual proof that he translated from Erasmus's "Textus Receptus."
- We will look at the following textual examples:
 - Mark 1:1-3
 - John 7:53-8:1-11
 - Mark 16:9-20
 - Acts 8:37
 - I John 5:7

Mark 1:1-3



The beginning off the Gospel of Jesu Christ the Sonne off God / as it is written in the prophets/ behold I send my messenger before thy face / which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of won that cryeth in the wilderness : prepare ye the way of the lord / make his paths straight.

- The textual issue is in Mark 1:2. Tyndale's translation reads "as it is written in the prophets," thereby indicating that the rest of verse 2 as well as verse 3 are quotations of more than one prophet, i.e., Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. The modern Critical Text and its corollary Modern Versions all read "as it is written in the prophet Isaiah" in Mark 1:2. The "prophets" reading in Tyndale indicates that the TR was the text basis for Tyndale's work.

John 7:53-8:11

And every man went vnto his awne housse.

The. viij. Chapter.

Iesus went vnto the mounte Olivete / and early in the mornynge cam agayne into the temple / and all the people cam vnto hym / And he sate doune / and taught them. The scribes and pharises brought vnto hym a woman taken in aduoutry / and sett her in the middes and sayde vnto hym: Master thys woman was taken in aduoutry / even as the dede was a doying. Moses in the lawe commaunded vs that suche shulde be stoned: What sayst thou therfore? And thys they sayde to tempt hym: that they myght have / wher off to accuse hym. Jesus stouped doune / and wyth hys fynger wrote on the grounde. And whill they continued asynge hym / he lifte hym sylfe vppe / And sayde vnto them: lett hym that ys a monge you wyth out synne / cast the fyrst stone at her. And agayne he stouped

downe and wrote on the grounde. As sone as they herde that / they went out won by won the first. And Jesus was lefte a lone / and the woman stondynge in the myddes. When Jesus had lifte vppe hym sylfe agayne / and sawe no man butt the woman: He sayde vnto her: Woman / where are those thyne accusars? Hath no man condemned the? She sayde: Syr no man. Jesus sayde: Nether do I condemne the. Go hence and synne no moare.

And every man went unto his own house.

Jesus went unto the Mount Olivete / and early in the morning cam again into the temple / and all the people cam unto him. And he sat down / and taught them. The scribes and pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery / and set her in the midst and said unto him : Master this woman was taken in adultery / even as the deed was a doing. Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned : What sayst thou therefore? And this they said to tempt him: that they might have / whereof to accuse him. Jesus stooped down / and with his finger wrote on the ground. And while they continued asking him / he lifted him self up / And said unto them: let him that is among you with out sin / cast the first stone at her. And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. As sone as they heard that / they went out one by

one the eldest first. And Jesus was left alone / and the woman standing in the middles. When Jesus had lifted up him self again/ and saw no man butt the woman : He said unto her : Woman / where are those thin accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said : Sir no man. Jesus said : Nether do I condemn thee. Go hence and sin no more.

- Once again, the modern Critical Text questions the authenticity of the woman taken in adultery narrative. Consequently, Modern Versions use various means to indicate the alleged questionable nature of the passage. William Tyndale did not do this because his source text, the TR accepts the passage as authentic.

Mark 16:9-20

When Jesus was risen the morowe after the sabboth daye/ he appered fyrst to Mary magdalen/ oute off whom he cast seven devyls. And she went/ and toolde them that were with hym/ as they morned and weppte. And whē they herd that he was alive/ and had appiered to her/

they beleved it not. After that / he appered vnto two of the in a straunge figure / as they walked / and went in to the country. And they went / and tolde it to the remnaunt. And they beleved the nether.

After that he appered vnto the eleven as they sate at meate: and cast in their teche their vnbelefe / and hardnes off herte: be cause they beleved not them which had sene hym after his resurrection. And he sayd vnto them. Goo ye in to all the woorld / and preache the gospel to all creaturs: Whosoever beleveth / and ys baptyfied / shalbe safe: And whosoever beleveth nott / shalbe dampned.

And these signes shall folowe them that beleve: In my name they shall cast oute devyls / and shall speake with newe tonges / and shall kill serpents. And yf they drynke eny dedly thyng / yt shall nott hurte them. They shall laye their hands on the sike / and they shall recovre.

So then when the lorde had spoken vnto the / he was receaved in to heven / and sate on the right honde of god. And they went forth / and preached every where / And the lorde wrought with the / And confirmed their preachynge with myracles that folowed.

The ende of the gospel of .S. Marke.

When Jesus was risen the morrow after the sabbath day / he appeared first to Mary magdalen / out off whom he cast seven devils. And she went / and told them that were with him / as they mourned and wept.

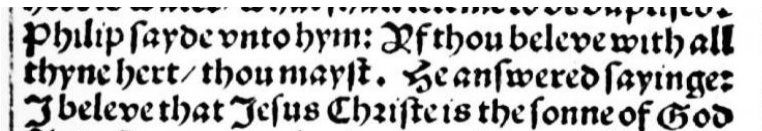
And when they heard / that he was alive / and had appeared to her: they believed it not. After that / he appeared unto two of them in a strange figure / as they walked / and went in to the country. And they went / and told it to the remnant. And they believed them neither. After that he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat: and cast in their teeth their unbelief / and hardness of heart: be cause they believed not them which had seen him after his resurrection. And he said unto them. Goo ye in to all the world / and preach the gospel to all creatures: Whosoever believeth / and is baptized / shall be safe: And whosoever believeth not / shall be dammed. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils / and shall speak with new tongues / and shall kill serpents. And if they drink any deadly thing / it shall not hurt them. They shall lay their hands on the sike / and they shall recover. So then when the lord had spoken unto them he was received into heaven / and sate on the right hand of god.

And they went forth/ and preached every where/ And the lord wrought with them/ And confirmed their preaching with miracles that followed.

The end of the gospel of St. Mark

- Once again, Tyndale did not question that authenticity of Mark 16:9-20 thereby indicating that he used the TR as his source text.

Acts 8:37

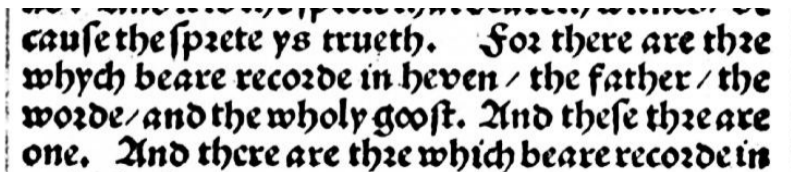


Philip sayde vnto hym: If thou beleve with all thynne hert/ thou mayst. He answered sayinge: I beleve that Iesus Christe is the sonne of God

Philip said unto him : If thou believe with all thine heart/ thou mayst. He answered saying : I believe that Jesus Christe is the Sonne of God

- Acts 8:37 is missing in modern editions of the Critical Text. Therefore, modern English translations use a variety of means to signal to the English reader the supposed questionable nature of the verse. Yet again, Tyndale accepted the verse as a genuine part of the inspired text.

I John 5:7



cause the sprete ys trueth. For there are thre whych beare recorde in heven / the father / the worde / and the holy goost. And these thre are one. And there are thre which beare recorde in

For there are three which bear record in heaven/ the father/ the word/ and the holy ghost. And these three are one.

- This verse is omitted in modern editions of the Critical Text. It was, however, present in the 3rd edition of the Erasmus Greek text published in 1522. Known as the Johannine Comma, I John 5:7 remains a lightning rod for controversy even today in the 21st century. In his 1534 and 1535 editions Tyndale placed parenthesis around I John 5:7. As one can plainly see in the screenshot provide there were no markings around the verse in the Worms New Testament from 1526. For more information about this verse please see Appendix A.

Impact & Outcome

- “The first printed New Testament in the English language was completed in Worms in 1526 in a small octavo edition” (Brake, 100). David Daniell chronicles how the 1526 Worms New Testament differed from the one Tyndale attempted to produce in Cologne the year before.

- “Tyndale and Roye arrived, probably late in 1525, in the safe Lutheran city of Worms, and the small printer Peter Schoeffer undertook an English New Testament, the first ever made, completed in 1526. This is very different from the Lutheran Cologne fragment. It was octavo (pocket-size like all Tyndale’s books printed in his lifetime) and without Prologue or marginal notes, or attribution to him. This “bare text” had impact enough. Smuggled down the Rhine and into English and Scottish ports in bales of cloth, copies circulated quickly. For the first time, the whole New Testament, faithfully translated from the Greek could be read by anyone. That this immediately alarmed the English authorities is amply testified” (Daniell, 144).
- The difficulties and dangers involved in getting Tyndale’s New Testament into England were almost as great as those which lay in the way of their distribution. The clergy opposed the new translation with all their might. Sir Thomas More was one who wrote violently against it (Broadbent, 248).
- Perhaps it was Tyndale’s decision to alter his original plans by altering the size and contents of his Bible but Blackford Condit reports that the initial shipment of New Testaments for Germany avoided detection and arrived safely in London.
 - “The English merchants abroad who had to do with the introduction of this newly printed Testament into England, were aware that the public authorities had been warned by Cochlaeus, and of the consequent difficulties to be overcome. But notwithstanding the impending danger, five Hanseatic merchants took the precious books into their ships, and sailed for London. They expected to find the enemy on guard, but instead, the way was open and the books were landed and safely conveyed to the Merchant’s warehouse in Thames Street. If the enemy slept, the friends of the bible were awake and expectant. Not only in London, but in Oxford and Cambridge, they anxiously awaited the coming of the newly printed English Testaments. . . Thus the way was fully prepared, and from the first the people received these newly printed Testaments joyfully, but, from necessity, secretly” (Condit, 104).
- Condit identifies Thomas Garret as the first distributor of the Tyndale New Testament in England.
 - “The first distributor of these testaments was Thomas Garret, curate of Honey Lane, London. He was a plain man, timid in disposition, but bold in faith, whose preaching was an offense to the hierarchy but a joy to the people. From the Merchants’ warehouse these New Testaments were taken to the house of Garret. Other places of deposit were afterwards found, but the “dark corners” of Garret’s house were the first hiding places of these lights, which must soon light up all England. So there were others who afterwards engaged, at the risk of personal liberty, in distributing, by sale, the precious volumes, yet as the story comes to us, Thomas Garret was the first to do so, and first to suffer. The

books came into his possession, probably in the early part of the year 1526. He proceeds cautiously in his work, selling to priest and laymen alike, but in every case with a special charge: “that they would keep it close.” How the good news must have spread . . . that a printed New Testament in English could be bought of Thomas Garret, in Honey Lane, near Cheapside. . .” (Condit, 104).

- Once introduced to the English people, it did not take the authorities long to figure out what was going on.
 - “While Thomas Garret, Father Hacker and others are diligent in distributing these Testaments in London, Cambridge, and other places, the hierarchy is on the alert. It has examined these books and has determined to condemn them, and all such persons as have to do with them. Bishop Tunstall, by advice of Cardinal Wolsey, sent forth an injunction to the archdeacons on his diocese, under the date of October 24, 1526, for the calling in of New Testament translated by Tyndale; enjoining, “that within XXX days space . . . under pain of excommunication and incurring the suspicion of heresy, they do bring in and really deliver unto our vicar general, all the singular such books as contain the translations of the New Testament into the English tongue” (Condit, 105).
- Brake reports the following regarding the actions Bishop Tunstall engaged in to subdue Tyndale’s New Testament in October 1526. Around this time (October or November 1526) Bishop Tunstall preached a sermon at Paul’s Cross in which he told people that there were three thousand errors in Tyndale’s translation and during which it was officially denounced and publicly burnt (Condit, 105).
 - “In October 1526, Bishop Tunstall, the champion defender of the *Constitutions* [the formal action of the English church taken against Wycliffe and the Lollards in the early 1400s], began confiscating the New Testaments as they were smuggled into England. Public burnings of the copies and punishment of all offenders blackened the spirits of the masses” (Brake, 105).
 - Recall that it was Bishop Tunstall who Tyndale sought out in London to support his work of translating the New Testament into English. Tunstall informed Tyndale that “his house was full”, prompting Tyndale’s departure for Germany. Tunstall was never supportive of Tyndale’s efforts, and Tunstall is now openly waging war on the scriptures in English.
- Public renunciations and burnings could not stop the juggernaut that was the Tyndale New Testament:

- “But if now the New Testaments of Tyndale are burned, for every book thus destroyed hundreds of others will arise from its ashes. Already Dutch printers had taken up the work of printing English Testaments as a commercial enterprise. Christopher Endhoven printed an edition in 1527, at Antwerp; two other editions by Ruremond following in 1528, so that English Testaments became plentier and cheaper. The years 1527 and 1528 were remarkable for the large number of New Testaments imported into England. The authorities were perplexed. They decided to purchase all the books printed and thus stop their circulation” (Condit, 106).
- The following passage from Brake indicates that lengths that Tunstall was willing to go to ensure that Tyndale’s Bible was not available for sale and distribution within England.
 - “A popular story tells how Tunstall began using merchants to purchase copies on the Continent to slow down the supply. Augustine Pakington, a London businessman, was one such merchant. Pakington met with Tyndale to inform him of the plot, believing that the bishop had overstepped his prerogative. To his surprise, Tyndale met the news with enthusiasm. He encouraged Pakington to do as Tunstall commanded. Tyndale felt the burning of “God’s Word” would gain popular condemnation, and the profits from the sale could enable him to relieve his debt and provide for future revisions.

Tunstall’s plot for destruction utterly failed. New Testaments continued to pour into England, and the demand increased at an alarming rate. In fact, pirated copies were circulating and selling in England with very little fear of consequences. Tyndale had a “London Times” bestseller on his hands” (Brake, 100).

- Unable to stop the importation and sale of Tyndale’s New Testament within England, the authorities turned their attention to the persecution of those possessing the word of God in English.
 - “In 1528, persecution began in earnest. Wolsey’s agents abroad are instructed to search out and arrest Tyndale the chief doer of this mischievous work. At home the prisons are already filled to the full with those whose only crime is that of reading the New Testament in English” (Condit, 107).

Conclusion

- The story of the 1526 Worms New Testament is ultimately a story of providence triumphing over opposition. What began as a failed printing project in Cologne became the first successfully printed English New Testament after Tyndale relocated to Worms and adapted his plans to meet the dangers of the moment. By removing the extensive prologues, marginal notes, and larger quarto format that characterized the Cologne project, Tyndale produced a smaller and more

practical volume that could be smuggled into England and placed into the hands of ordinary people. The evidence suggests that while the presentation of the work changed dramatically between 1525 and 1526, the biblical text itself underwent comparatively little revision. Tyndale's immediate concern was not refining his translation but ensuring that the Scriptures could reach the English people.

- The lasting significance of the 1526 New Testament cannot be overstated. It provided English readers with the first printed New Testament translated directly from the Greek, laid the foundation for later English Bibles, and helped shape the language of English-speaking Christianity for centuries to come. Despite public burnings, official condemnations, and relentless efforts to suppress it, Tyndale's New Testament continued to spread throughout England. The authorities could confiscate books and punish readers, but they could not stop the demand for God's Word in the English tongue. The success of the 1526 Worms New Testament demonstrated that the age of the English Bible had arrived, and neither church nor state would be able to reverse it.
- Though William Tyndale did not live to see the full fruit of his labor, the 1526 Worms New Testament proved that the English Bible was no longer merely an idea or a dream. It had become a reality that would transform England, the language, and ultimately the world.

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Appendix A

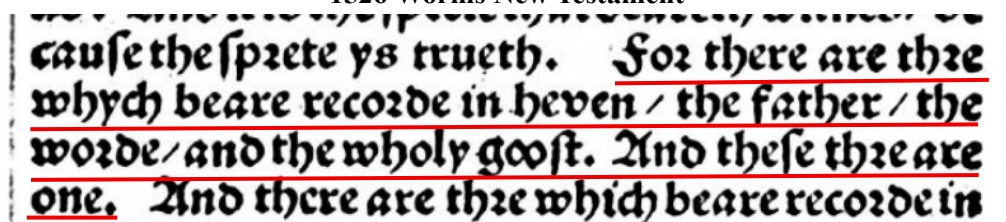
Tyndale on I John 5:7

Prepared by Bryan C. Ross & Alex Bojko

Tyndale's Handling of the Johannine Comma

- In the main portion of Lesson 4, the Johannine Comma was cited as a “Source Text Example” of what Tyndale was translating i.e., the Textus Receptus. We noted that Tyndale included I John 5:7 in the main body of the 1526 Worms New Testament without any parenthetical brackets.

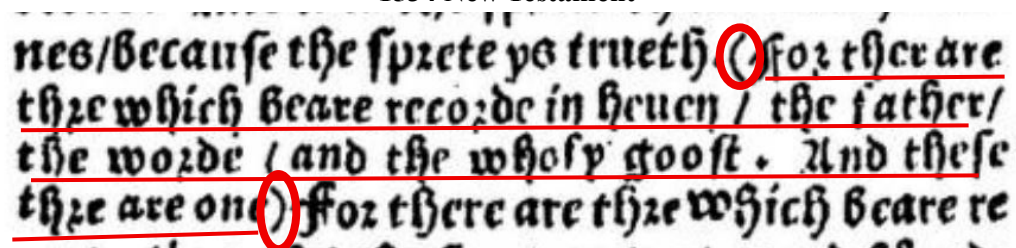
1526 Worms New Testament



cause the sprete ys trueth. For there are thre whych beare recorde in heven / the father / the worde / and the wholy goost. And these thre are one. And there are thre whych beare recorde in

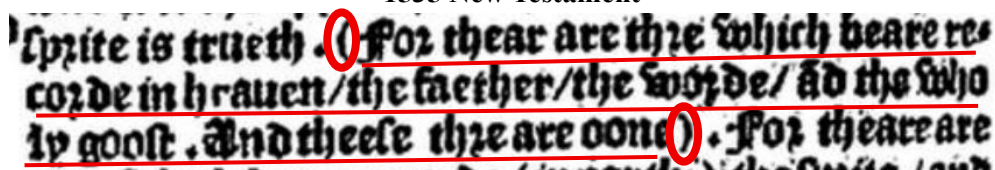
- Later in his 1534 and 1535 revised New Testaments, Tyndale altered his practice regarding the Comma. In these editions he bracketed I John 5:7 with parenthesis thereby demarking the verse from the rest of the text. Consider the following photographic evidence.

1534 New Testament



nes/because the sprete ys trueth) (For there are thre whych beare recorde in heven / the father / the worde / and the wholy goost. And these thre are one) For there are thre whych beare re

1535 New Testament



Sprete is trueth. (For there are thre whych beare re corde in hrauen / the faether / the worde / ad the who ly goost. And theese thre are oone) For there are

- The evidence presented above demonstrates a clear progression in Tyndale's handling of the Johannine Comma. In his 1526 New Testament, the passage appeared as part of the continuous text without any special notation. In his later revisions of 1534 and 1535, however, Tyndale enclosed the words in parentheses, marking them differently from the surrounding text. The reproduced images from these editions document this change in presentation and provide a visual

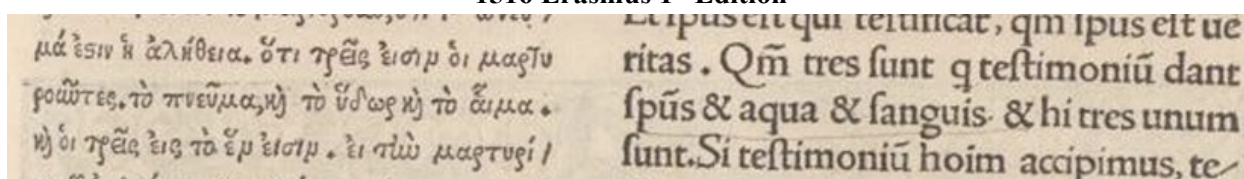
record of how the passage appeared across the major English New Testament editions associated with Tyndale's work.

- We will consider why Tyndale did this in the next section on Erasmus.

Erasmus & The Johannine Comma

- When Erasmus published the 1st edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516, he omitted I John 5:7 from both his Greek and Latin columns. Consider the following image.

1516 Erasmus 1st Edition

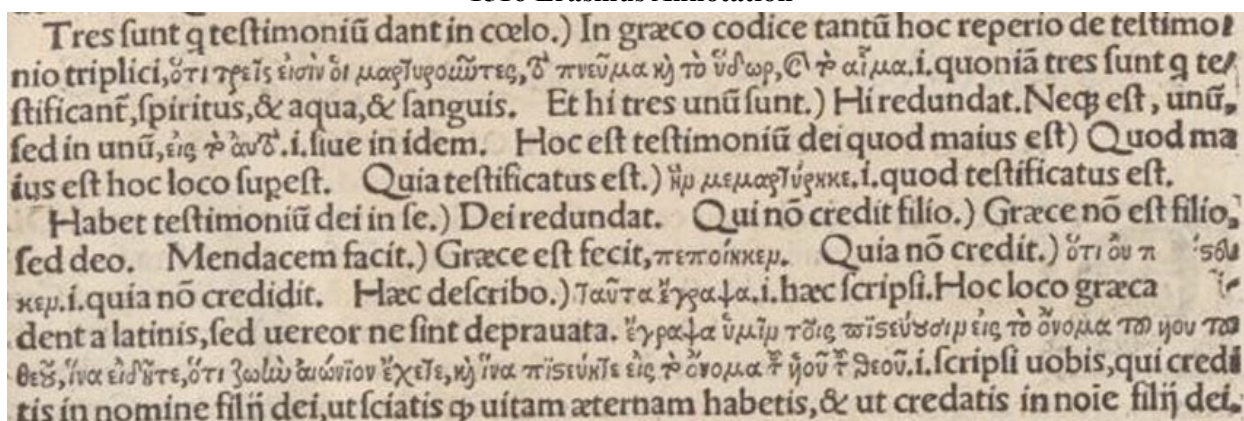


There are three that bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three are one.

For there are three who bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three are one.

- The screenshot above omits the Comma Johanneum (“the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one”) and proceeds directly from verse 7 into 1 John 5:8.
- In the following annotation Erasmus explained his reasons for omitting the Comma from his 1516 edition.

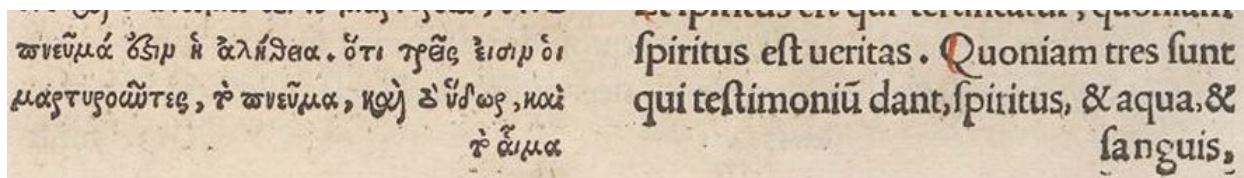
1516 Erasmus Annotation



- The annotation reads as follows:

- ““There are three that bear witness in heaven.” In the Greek manuscript, I find only this concerning the threefold testimony “Because there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three are one.” Here there is a redundancy. It is not “one” (unum), but “unto one” (in unum), that is, ‘toward the same thing’ (in idem). “This is the testimony of God, which is greater.” The words “which is greater” remain in this place. “Because he has testified.” Then there is another redundancy. “Who does not believe the Son.” In Greek it is not the Son but God. “Makes Him a liar.” In Greek it is has made (perfect tense). “Because he does not believe.” I transcribe these things as I find them: “These things I have written...” **At this point the Greek does not correspond to the Latin; however, I fear that the Greek manuscripts have been corrupted.**”
(Translation provided by Copilot)
- Erasmus's annotation explains why the Greek text before him lacked the heavenly witnesses (“in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost...”), while the Latin Vulgate contained them. He notes the discrepancy and expresses concern that the Greek manuscripts available to him may have suffered corruption. This statement became significant in later debates about Erasmus's view of the Johannine Comma because it indicates that in 1516, he did not simply dismiss the Latin reading as an interpolation, but regarded the disagreement between Greek and Latin as a textual problem requiring explanation.
- Erasmus's 2nd edition from 1519 also omitted the Comma from both columns of his diglot.

1519 Erasmus 2nd Edition



There are three that bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three are one.

For there are three who bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three are one.

- The 2nd edition of Erasmus also omitted the three heavenly witnesses. The following is Erasmus' expanded annotation regarding his decision.

1519 Erasmus Annotation

Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo.) In graeco codice tantum hoc reperio de testimonio triplici, ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα, id est, quoniam tres sunt qui testificantur, spiritus, & aqua, & sanguis.

Et hi tres unum sunt.) Hi, redundat, nisi quod interpretes adiecit explicandae sententiae gratia. Neque est, unum, sed in unum, εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ, id est, in idem, ut uerbum uerbo reddam.

Hoc est testimonium dei quod maius est.) Quod maius est, hoc loco superest.

Quia testificatus est.) ἢ μεμαρτύρηκε, id est, quod testificatus est.

Habet testimonium dei in se.) Dei, redundat.

Qui non credit filio.) Graece non est filio, sed deo.

Mendacem facit.) Graece est, fecit, πεποίηκεν.

Quia non credit.) ὅτι οὐ πεπίσθυκε, id est, quia non credidit.

Hac describo.) ταῦτα ἔγραψα, id est, haec scripsi.

Hoc loco Graeca dissident à Latinis, sed uereor ne sint deprauata. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ἔσθῃτε, ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχετε, ἵνα πιστεύητε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, id est, scripsi uobis, qui creditis in nomine filij dei, ut sciatis quod uitam aeternā habetis, & ut credatis in nomine filij dei.

Quas postulamus.) ἃ ἠτήκαμεν, id est, quae postulauimus, praeterito tempore.

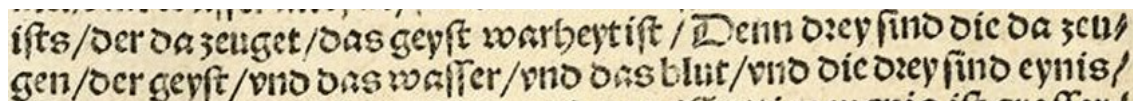
Qui scit fratrem.) εἴ τις ἴδῃ, id est, si quis sciat.

- The annotation in the 2nd edition of Erasmus from 1519 differing slightly from the 1st edition from 1516.
 - “There are three who bear witness in heaven.” In the Greek manuscript I find only this concerning the threefold testimony: “For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three are one.” “And these three are one.” **This is redundant, unless perhaps it was added by way of explanation of the sense.** It is not one (unum), but unto one (in unum), that is, into the same thing (in idem), if I may render word for word. “This is the testimony of God, which is greater.” The words “which is greater” remain in this place. “Because He has testified.” That is, because He has borne witness. “He has the witness of God in him.” The word of God is redundant. “He who does not believe the Son.” In Greek it is not the Son but God. “Makes Him a liar.” In Greek it is has made (fecit), not makes. “Because he does not believe.” That is, because he has not believed. I transcribe these things: “These things I have written.” That is, “I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe in the name of the Son of God.” At this point the Greek differs from the Latin, but I fear that the Greek manuscripts have been corrupted.” (Translation provided by Copilot)
- Between the 1516 and 1519 editions, Erasmus did not alter his basic description of the textual situation regarding the heavenly witnesses. In both annotations, he stated that the Greek manuscripts available to him contained only the testimony of the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and he concluded by observing that the Greek text did not correspond to the Latin text while

expressing concern that the Greek manuscripts may have been corrupted. The principal development in the 1519 annotation is that Erasmus added an explanation concerning the phrase “and these three are one,” which he regarded as redundant and suggested may have been added by an interpreter to clarify the sense. Thus, while the 1519 annotation expands the discussion of the earthly witnesses and offers additional textual observations, it does not add any new direct discussion of the heavenly witnesses themselves. Instead, Erasmus continued to note their absence from the Greek manuscripts known to him and retained his earlier observation that the divergence between the Greek and Latin traditions raised the possibility of corruption in the Greek textual tradition.

- Martin Luther translated the Greek New Testament in German in 1522. Utilizing the 2nd edition of Erasmus from 1519 as his primary Greek text, Luther omitted the Comma in his famous September Testament.

1522 Luther New Testament



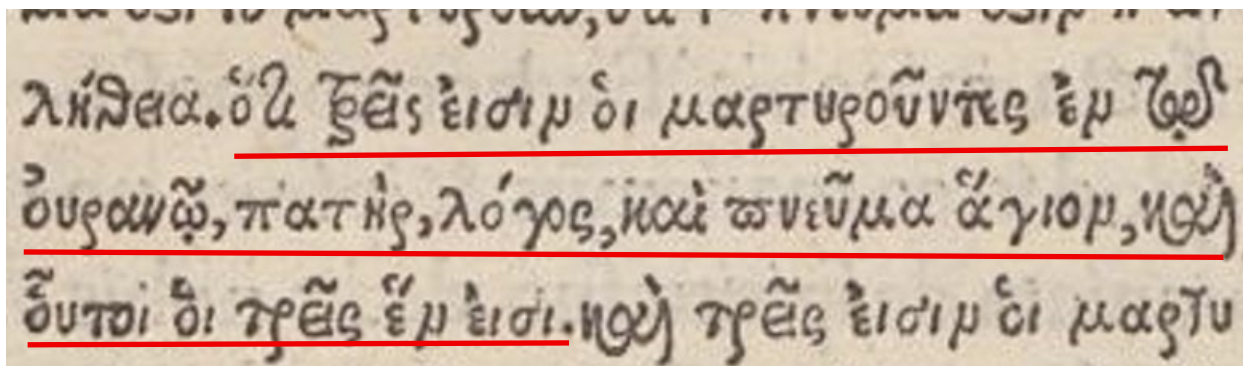
For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three are one.

- Notably, as in Erasmus's 1516 and 1519 Greek texts, Luther's 1522 New Testament moves directly to the earthly witnesses ("the Spirit, the water, and the blood") and does not contain the Comma Johanneum ("the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one"). This reflects the Greek text available to Luther at the time.
- Erasmus's omission of the Comma Johanneum from the first two editions of his Greek New Testament (1516 and 1519) sparked considerable controversy because the passage was familiar from the Latin Vulgate and had long been used in discussions of the doctrine of the Trinity. Erasmus explained that he had omitted the words because he could not find them in the Greek manuscripts available to him, not because he rejected Trinitarian doctrine. Nevertheless, some critics questioned his orthodoxy and accused him of weakening or undermining an important proof text for the Trinity. Erasmus repeatedly defended himself against these charges, insisting that he fully affirmed the doctrine and that his editorial decisions were based on the Greek textual evidence rather than on theological doubts.
- A famous legend later arose from this controversy, commonly known as the "rash wager." According to the traditional story, Erasmus promised that he would include the Comma if a single Greek manuscript could be produced containing it. When such a manuscript was later presented, Erasmus allegedly felt obligated to keep his word and therefore included the Comma Johanneum in his 3rd edition of 1522. The story has often been repeated as an explanation for the passage's entry into later editions of the Textus Receptus. Modern scholarship, however, has questioned

whether Erasmus ever made such a promise, and many scholars now regard the wager itself as a later embellishment of a more complex historical dispute. What remains clear is that the controversy over the Comma brought Erasmus's textual methods under intense scrutiny and even led some opponents to cast suspicion upon his Trinitarian orthodoxy, despite his repeated affirmations of the doctrine.

- In 1522 Erasmus included I John 5:7 in the Greek text of his 3rd edition.

1522 Erasmus 3rd Edition



For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.

- This is the portion of 1 John 5:7 that was absent from Erasmus's 1516 and 1519 Greek New Testaments but appeared in his 1522 edition and later editions. The image appears to show the transition from the heavenly witnesses ("the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit") to the earthly witnesses that follow in verse 8. In addition to including the Greek text in his 3rd edition, Erasmus also wrote the longest annotation to date commenting on the Comma.

1522 Erasmus Annotation

Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in caelo.) In Græco codice tantum hoc reperio de testimonio triplici, ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα, id est, Quoniam tres sunt qui testificantur. Spiritus, & aqua, & sanguis. Diuus Hieronymus præloquens in epistolas canonicas, suspicatur hunc locum fuisse deprauatum, à Latinis interpretibus, & à nonnullis omissum fuisse testimonium patris, filij, & spiritus sancti. Et tamē iuxta nostram additionem adducit hunc locum Cyrillus in opere, cui titulum fecit de thesauro, libro xliij. capite penultimo: Rursum, inquit, Ioannes in eadem epistola ait: Quis est qui uincit mundum, nisi qui credit quia Iesus est filius dei: Hic uenit per aquam & sanguinem & spiritum Iesus Christus, non in aqua solum, sed in aqua & sanguine. Et spiritus est qui testimonium perhibet. Spiritus enim ueritas est. Quia tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent spiritus aqua & sanguis, & hi tres unum sunt. Si testimonium hominum accipimus, testimonium dei maius est &c. Hactenus Cyrillus, uir ni fallor orthodoxus. Atque hic cum dimicet aduersus Arrianos, plurimāq; in illos cōgerat è diuinis libris testimonia, probabile non est illum omissurum fuisse telum, quo maxime confici poterant illi, si aut scisset aut credidisset hoc fuisse scriptum ab apostolo. Iam Beda locū hunc diligenter enarrans cum accurate multisq; uerbis exponat testimonium triplex in terra, nullam mentionem fecit testimonij in caelo patris uerbi & spiritus. Nec huic tamen uiro defuit omnino linguarum peritia, nec in obseruandis antiquis exemplaribus diligentia. Imò ne hoc quidem addit in terra, tantum legit: Tres sunt qui testimonium dant. In codice qui mihi superpeditatus est è bibliotheca minoritarū Antuerpiensium, in margine scholium erat ascriptū de testimonio patris uerbi & spiritus, sed manu recentiore, ut consentaneum sit hoc adiectum.

unfaithful translators and removed from Latin manuscripts. Therefore, following the authority of that edition, we have restored this passage. Cyril also seems to have used this passage in Book Twelve of his work. Again, John himself says in the same epistle: "Who is he that overcomes the world except he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are one." If one removes the testimony of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, one weakens the force of the argument. The Spirit bears witness because the Spirit is truth. The water and the blood bear witness. And these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, and so forth. Thus Cyril, whether through the mistake of orthodox copyists or otherwise, appears very clearly in these books to cite the testimony concerning the divinity of the Son. This could not be the case unless he had read it in his manuscript, or unless he believed this testimony had been inserted into Scripture by the Apostle. At this place Bede complains that certain Greeks, when they frequently read the threefold testimony on earth, made no mention of the testimony in heaven concerning the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. Nor should we lightly dismiss the judgment of so learned a man in examining ancient manuscripts. Yet, in one Greek manuscript from the library of the Minorites at Antwerp, I found written in the margin: "the testimony of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit," but written in a recent hand, and apparently contemporary with that annotation. But one might ask why I did not discuss this matter more fully. I preferred not to do so, although Jerome's authority urges me in that direction. I do not clearly understand Jerome's meaning, although he seems at times to speak rather harshly and somewhat inconsistently with himself. Nevertheless, I do not see enough reason why Jerome should be charged with error in this passage. Therefore, if there was any mistake, we corrected it according to the standard of truth, but restored the proper order. For the first enumeration is that of James, one; Peter, two; John, three; Jude, one. What was said about the omission by unfaithful translators was intended so that no ambiguity might be created among the Gentiles and so that the Arians might not attack the truth, especially in that passage in the First Epistle of John where we read concerning the unity of the Trinity. Yet in all the ancient copies, only the words concerning the water, the blood, and the Spirit are found in that place and edition; the testimony of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit is omitted, though upon it especially rests the strength of the catholic faith, and by it the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the one divine essence, is established. Thus far Jerome. Whether he used Greek manuscripts from which that reading had already disappeared, or whether he knew only manuscripts that contained it, is uncertain. At present, however, this passage is found in the Greek manuscripts, though it is lacking in all the manuscripts of the Latins. Therefore Jerome appears to have complained of the error of the translators, not of the Greek exemplars. Yet the matter remains doubtful. If the Arians, just as the Latins, used this argument, that does not prove that the passage was rightly written by the Apostle, especially since ecclesiastical usage

often approves what it has received. But if this were not so, I do not see who would be able to determine which passages should be retained and which rejected. Yet in the investigation of Holy Scripture I follow the judgment of Christ rather than the opinions of men, however numerous. Whoever pronounces those corrupt who differ from himself condemns others too readily. Why should one call the reading false if it has not been publicly altered? What Cyril read among the Greeks is what the Greek manuscripts now contain. If among us Augustine and Bede read no more than that, or if they did read more, why did none of them employ Jerome's argument, which certainly should have taught the genuine reading if it had been handed down to them? But someone will say: was not this passage very useful against the Arians? First, that argument applies equally among Greeks and Latins, since both once had the same reading. Nor would that passage alone have been useful against them, because they themselves doubtless indicated the reading by which they sought to defend their position. But suppose they granted that the testimony of the water, blood, and Spirit is one. They would reply that the three are one not in nature but in agreement of testimony. Should we think the Arians so foolish that they would not interpret the passage in the same way concerning the Father, the Word, and the Spirit? Indeed, Augustine rejects such an interpretation in disputing against the Arian Maximinus, explaining this passage as referring to the three testimony-bearers according to the customary gloss. "And the three are one," he says, "that is, they are of one substance." This does not establish the faith but rather presupposes the faith. For to those who are more kindly disposed we can make the same point from many passages. Perhaps this passage should be understood more sharply if we are to render the same meaning as those who, with excessive curiosity, attempt to determine how the three differ from one another and from the Spirit. Certainly I do not see how what Arius denied could be proved from this reasoning, nor how the matter could be demonstrated. Since the whole passage is obscure, it cannot greatly help in refuting heretics. But of these matters we have replied sufficiently to the slanderer in the Apology. I will add only this: Stunica repeatedly objected that the Rhodian manuscript, whose authority alone he relied upon, had not supplied this reading from the Greek text but had adapted it from the Latin copies, as was evident from the rule of the language. Yet among the English there has now been found one Greek manuscript which contains what we have published in our editions: "For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three who bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one." Although I suspect that this manuscript was prepared for that very purpose, nevertheless, since the passage is found in Greek manuscripts, namely: "And there are three who bear witness on earth," therefore, having been advised by this British manuscript, we have restored what was said to be lacking in our editions, lest anyone have occasion to slander us further." (Translation provided by Copilot)

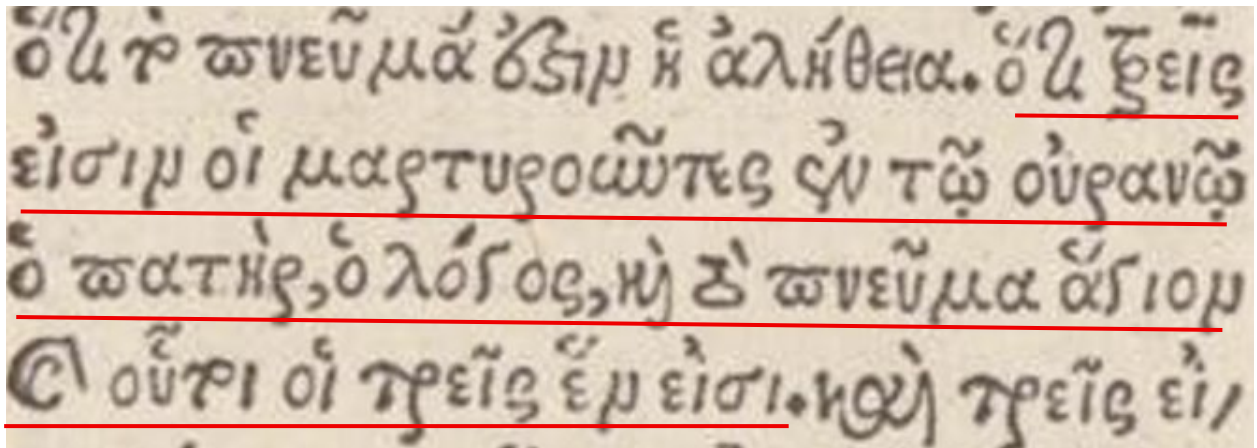
- The 1522 annotation represents a substantial expansion of Erasmus's earlier comments on 1 John 5:7. Whereas the 1519 annotation primarily noted that the Greek manuscripts available to him lacked the heavenly witnesses and briefly discussed related textual details, the 1522 annotation introduces a much broader defense of the passage's inclusion. Erasmus appeals to the testimony of Jerome, who had complained that the passage was omitted from certain copies, and he adds discussions of other patristic witnesses, including Cyril, Bede, and Augustine. He also argues that removing the testimony of the Father, Word, and Holy Spirit weakens the flow of the argument in the epistle, while exploring the significance of the passage in the context of debates with the Arians.
- The most important new material concerns Erasmus's explanation for why the heavenly witnesses now appeared in his printed Greek text. In the 1522 annotation, he responds to criticisms surrounding the passage, discusses the reliability of various manuscripts, and reports that a Greek manuscript from Britain contained the reading. Although he expresses some reservations about the manuscript and acknowledges lingering uncertainties, he states that this manuscript led him to restore the passage to his edition. As a result, the 1522 annotation moves beyond the relatively brief textual observations of 1519 and becomes a detailed discussion of the manuscript evidence, patristic testimony, theological arguments, and editorial decisions related to the Comma Johanneum.
- By the time William Tyndale began his translation work in 1525 and 1526 the 3rd edition of Erasmus from 1522 would have been viewed as the most up-to-date edition of the Greek available. Therefore, Tyndale utilized the 3rd edition of Erasmus as his base Greek text. As we have already seen, this prompted Tyndale to include the Comma in his 1526 Worms New Testament whereas Luther left it out of his 1522 September Testament.

1526 Worms New Testament

cause the sprete ys trueth. For there are thre
whych beare recorde in heven / the father / the
worde / and the wholy goost. And these thre are
one. And there are thre whych beare recorde in

- The controversy regarding 1 John 5:7 continued throughout the 1520s and 1530s. Erasmus's 4th edition of the Greek New Testament from 1527 included the verse in the text along with the longest annotation to date running a full three pages.

1527 Erasmus 4th Edition



For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.

1527 Erasmus Annotation

Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in caelo.) In Graeco codice tantum hoc reperio de testimonio triplici, ὅτι τρεῖς ὁσὶς οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, τὸ πνεῦμα & τὸ ὕδωρ, & τὸ αἷμα, id est. Quoniam tres sunt qui testificantur, spiritus, & aqua, & sanguis. Diuus Hieronymus praeloquens in epistolas canonicas, suspicatur hunc locum fuisse deprauatum, à Latinis interpretibus, & à nonnullis omissum fuisse testimonium patris, filij, & spūs sancti. Et tamen iuxta nostram additionem adducit hunc locum Cyrillus in opere, cui titulum fecit de thesauro, libro xiiij. capite penultimo: Rursum, inquit, Ioannes in eadē epistola ait: Quis est qui uincit mundum, nisi qui credit quia Iesus est filius dei: Hic uenit per aquā & sanguinem & spiritum Iesus Christus, nō in aqua solum, sed in aqua & sanguine. Et spiritus est qui testimonium perhibet. Spiritus enim ueritas est. Quia tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent spūs aqua & sanguis, & hi tres unum sunt. Si testimoniū hominū accipimus, testimonium dei maius est &c. Haecenus Cyrillus, uir nī fallor orthodoxus. Atque hic cum dimicet aduersus Arianos, plurimāq; in illos congerat ē diuinis libris testimonia, probabile non est illum omisurum fuisse telum, quō maxime confici poterant illi, si aut scisset aut credidisset hoc fuisse scriptum ab apostolo. Iam Beda locum hunc diligenter enarrās cum accurate multisq; uerbis exponat testimonium triplex in terra, nullam mentionem fecit testimonij in caelo patris uerbi & spiritus. Nec huic tamen uiro defuit omnino linguarum peritia, nec in obseruandis antiquis exemplaribus diligētia. Imō ne hoc quidem addit in terra, duntaxat in codice manu descripto, tantum legit: Tres sunt qui testimoniū dant. In codice qui mihi suppeditatus est ē bibliotheca minoritarū Antuerpiensium, in margine scholium erat ascriptum de testimonio patris uerbi & spiritus, sed manu recētiore, ut consentaneum sit hoc adiectum ab erudito quopiam, qui noluerit hanc particulā praetermitti. Sed urgemur autoritate Hieronymi, quam equidē nolim eleuare, quanq; ille saepenumero uiolentus est, parumq; pudens, saepe uariis parumq; sibi constans. Tamen nō satis uideo, quid sibi uelit hoc loco Hieronymus. Verba ipsius subscribam: Sed, inquit, si cut euangelistas dudum ad ueritatis lineam correximus, ita has proprio ordini deo iuuante reddidimus. Est enim prima earum una Iacobi, duae Petri, & tres Ioannis, & Iudae una. Quae si sicut ab eis digestae sunt, ita quoq; ab interpretibus fideliter in Latinū uerteretur eloquium, nec ambiguitatem legentibus facerent, nec sermonum sese uarietas impugneret, illo praecipue loco ubi de unitate trinitatis in prima Ioānis epistola positum legimus, in qua etiam ab infidelibus, translatoribus multū erratū esse à fidei ueritate comperimus, trium tantūmodo uocabula, hoc est aquae sanguinis & spiritus in ipsa sua additione ponentibus, & patris uerbiq; ac spiritus testimonij omittentibus: in quo maxime & si des catholica roboratur, & patris ac filij & spiritus sancti, una diuinitatis essentia comprobatur. Haecenus Hieronymi uerba retulimus, ex quibus liquet Hieronymū nihil queri de codicibus Graecis, sed tantū de ijs, qui Graeca Latine uerterūt. At nūc in Graecis codicibus hoc potissimū deest, quod omissum querit, & habet in codicibus Latinis licet non omnibus. Sed unde Hieronymus castigauit errorē interpretum? Nimirū ē Graecis exemplaribus. Sed illi aut habebant, quod nos uertimus, aut uariabant. Si uariabant, quē admodū & Latina, quoniam argumento docet utrū sit rectius utrumue scriptū sit ab apostolo: praesertim cū quod reprehendit, tum haberet publicus usus ecclesiae: Quod nī fuisset, non uideo qui possint habere locum quae sequuntur. Sed tu uirgo Christi Eustochiū, dum à me impensius scripturae ueritatem inquiris, meam quodammodo senectutem inuidorum dentibus corrodendam exponis. qui me falsarium corruptoremq; sacrarū pñū ciant scripturarum. Quis eū clamasset falsarium, nisi publicam mutasset lectionē? Quod si apud Graecos legit Cyrillus, quod nūc habent Graeci codices, si apud nos Augustinus ac Beda, aut tantum hoc legit, aut utrūq; legit, non uideo quid adferat argumentū Hieronymus, quo docet germanam esse lectionē, quam ipse nobis tradit. Sed dicet aliquis: Erat hoc efficax telum aduersus Arianos. Primum cum cōstet & apud Graecos & apud Latinos olim uariasse lectionem, nihil hoc telum aduersus illos ualebit, qui sine dubio patri iure sibi uindicabant lectionem, quae pro ipsis facit. Sed finge non esse cōtrouerſam lectionem, cum quod dictum est de testimonio aquae, sanguinis & spiritus, unum sunt, referatur nō ad eandē naturā, sed ad consensum testimonij, an putamus Arianos tam stupidos

IN EPISTOLAM IOANNIS I CAP. V

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pidos futuros, ut non idem hoc loco interpretentur, de patre, uerbo & spiritu: præsertim cum simili loco uiri sic interpretentur orthodoxi in libris Euangelicis, nec hanc interpretationem rejiciat Augustinus cum Ariano Maximino disputans: imò cum hūc ipsum locum sic interpretetur fragmētum glossæ ordinariæ, in uersuum interuallo additum: Vnū sunt, inquit, id est, de re eadem testantes. Hoc non est confirmare fidem, sed suspectam red dere, si nobis huiusmodi lemmatis blandiamur. Fortasse præstiterat hoc pijs studijs age re, uti nos idem reddamur cum deo, quā curiosis studijs decertare quomodo differat à patre filius, aut ab utroq; spiritus. Certe ego quod negant Ariani, nō uideo posse doceri, nisi ratiocinatione. Postremo cum totus hic locus sit obscurus, nō potest admodum uale re ad reuincendos hæreticos. Sed hac de re copiosius respondimus calumniatori per apo logiam. Illud addam, cum Strunica meus toties iacet Rhodiensem codicem, cui tantū tri buit autoritatis, mirū non hic adduxisse illius oraculum, præsertim cum ita ferè cōsentiat cū nostris codicibus ut uideri possit Lesbīa regula. Verūtāme ne quid dissimulem reper tus est apud Anglos Græcus codex unus, in quo habetur quod in uulgatis deest. Scriptū est em̄ hunc ad modū, ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν ᾧ οὐρανῷ, πατὴρ, λόγος, καὶ πνεῦμα, οἱ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰσι. καὶ ἕα εἰσὶν μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῇ πνεῦμα, ὕδωρ, αἷμα εἰς πλὴν μαρτυρίαν ὅτι ἀληθῶς πᾶσι &c. Quanquā haud scio an casu factum sit, ut hoc loco nō repetatur, quod est in Græcis nostris, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσι. Ex hoc igitur codice britannico reposui mus, quod in nostris dicebat deesse: ne cui sit ansa calumniandi. Tamen si suspicor codicē illū ad nostros esse correctū. Duos consului codices miræ uetustatis Latinos in bibliote ca quæ Brugis est diui Donatiani. Neuter habebat testimoniū patris uerbi & spiritus. Ac ne illud quidē in altero addebatur. In terra. Tātum erat. Et tres sunt qui testimoniū dant, spiritus aqua & sanguis. In exemplari Constantiensi utroq; post testimonium, aqua, san guinis & spiritus, adiectū erat testimoniū patris, uerbi, & spiritus, his uerbis, Sicut in cœ lo tres sunt, pater, uerbum, & spiritus, & tres unum sunt. Nec erat additum, testimonium dant, nec pronomē hi. In codicē quē exhibuit publica bibliotheca scholæ Basilien sis, nō erat, testimoniū spiritus, aqua & sanguinis. Ad hæc Paulus Bombasius uir doctus & in teger, meo rogatu locū hunc ad uerbum descripsit ex bibliothecæ uaticanæ codice perue tusto, in quo non habebatur testimoniū patris, uerbi, & spiritus. Si mouet autoritas ue tustatis, liber erat antiquissimus, si Pontificis, ex illius bibliotheca petitū est testimoniū. Cum hac lectione consentit æditio Aldina. Quid Laurentius legerit non satis liquet. In terea perlata est ad nos æditio Hispaniensis, quæ dissidebat ab omnibus. Habet enim hunc in modum, ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν ᾧ οὐρανῷ, ὁ πατὴρ, καὶ ὁ λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἁγίον πνεῦμα, καὶ οἱ ἕα εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσι, καὶ τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα. Primum in hoc dissonat exemplar quod ex eadem nī fallor bibliotheca peti tum sequuti sunt Hispani, ab exemplari Britannico, quod hic adduntur articuli, ὁ πατὴρ, ὁ λόγος, τὸ πνεῦμα, qui non addebantur in Britannico. Deinde quod Britannicum habebat οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς, Hispaniense tantū, οἱ τρεῖς, quod idē sit in spiritu, aqua, & sanguine. Præterea quod Britannicum habebat ἐν εἰσι, Hispaniense εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσι: postremo quod Bri tannicum etiā in terræ testimonio adiciebat, οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσι, quod non addebatur hic duntaxat in æditione Hispaniensi. Equidē arbitror illud εἰς τὸ ἐν, esse ex idiōmate ser monis Hebraici, Ego ero illi in patrem, non potest aliud sonare, quā ero illi pater. Iam Hispaniensis æditio scholiū de decretalibus adiecerat, quod diuo Thomæ tribuitur. Id de clarat iuxta codices emendatos, in testimonio spiritus, aqua, & sanguinis, non addi, & hi tres unum sunt. Verum id adiectū uideri ab ijs qui fauebant Ariano dogmati. Nam si hic adderetur, nō posset exponi nisi de consensu testimonij, quando natura non possunt unū dici, spiritus, aqua, & sanguis. Ex hoc cōsequeretur, & illud quod præcessit de patre & filio & spiritu sancto, & hi tres unum sunt, accipi posse de consensu charitatis ac testi monij. Nūc his uerbis Ioannes asseruit eandem essentiam patris & filij & spiritus sancti. Principio quod colligunt uerissimum est, patris & filij & spiritus sancti eandem esse na turam simplicissimam & indiuiduam. Id nisi esset, non uere nasceretur de patre filius, nec uere spūs sanctus à patre filioq; pcederet, utiq; deus de substantia dei. De collectiōe tantū agimus. Constat hic agi de fide testimonij, non de substantia personarum. Quod si mul

Nn tis alijs

et alijs locis hæc uox, unū, consensum sonat non unitatē indiuiduī, quid absurdi sit, si hic similiter interpretemur. Quoties legimus in utroq; testamēto, cor unum, spiritum & animam unam, os unū, mentem unā, quum cōsensus ac mutua charitas significatur. Is enim sermonis tropus quū tam familiaris sit diuinis uoluminibus, quid uetat quo minus & hic similiter accipiatur? Dñs Ioannis decimo dicit: Ego & pater unū sumus. Hoc testimonio quomodo prosterneatur Arianus? nisi doceas unū in literis sacris non appellari, nisi quæ sunt eiusdē substantiæ. Nūc quum innumera loca suppetant, quæ docent intelligi de consensu mutuaq; beniuolētia, ad confirmandā opinionē orthodoxi ualebit, ad retundendā hæretici pertinaciam nō uideo quantū ualeat. Quod autē Christus ibi loquatur de cōcordia quam habet cū patre, probabili cōiectura colligitur, quod Christus non respondet ad id quod dixerat sese unū cū patre, sed quod deum appellabat patrem suum, scēq; singulari modo uocabat filiū dei. Et apud Ioannem xvij. Pater sancte, inquit, serua eos in nomine tuo quos dedisti mihi, ut sint unū sicut & nos. Ac rursus, ut omnes unum sint sicut tu pater in me, & ego in te, ut & ipsi in nobis unū sint. Totus hic locus de consensu charitatis ac testimoniū tractat, & uelimus nolimus cogimur illud unum aliter interpretari de nobis q̃ de personis diuinis. Non igitur constringit locus nisi compellat orthodoxorum autoritas, & ecclesiæ præscriptio, docens hūc locū aliter exponi nō posse. Pium autem est nostrum sensum semper ecclesiæ iudicio submittere, simul atq; claram illius sententiā audierimus. Nec interim tamen nefas est citra contentionem scrutari uerū, ut deus alijs alia patefacit. Sed ut ad lectionis negocium redeamus, ex his quæ cōmemorauimus constat, & Latinorum & Græcorum codices uariare, Meaq; sententiā nullū periculū est quācūq; lectionem amplectaris. Nam quod ait Thomas de particula ab hæreticis addita, primum nō affirmat, sed ait dicitur. Alioqui ecclesia catholica per orbem terrarū amplecteretur, quod ab hæreticis esset adulteratū. Illud torquebit grāmaticos, quomodo de spū, aqua & sanguine dicī, tres sunt qui, & hī unū sunt, præsertim quū spiritus, aqua & sanguis apud Græcos sint neutri generis. Verum apostolus magis respexit sensum q̃ uerba, pro tribus testibus, quasi tribus personis, supposuit tres res, spiritū, aquam & sanguinem. Quod genus si dicas, qualis sis artifex, ipsum ædificium testis est.

- The 1527 annotation reads as follows:
 - "There are three who bear witness in heaven." In the Greek manuscript I formerly found only this concerning the threefold testimony: "For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." That is: "For there are three that testify: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." The divine Jerome, in the prologue to the Canonical Epistles, complains that this passage had been corrupted by Latin translators and that among some copies the testimony of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had been omitted. Yet, following our edition, Cyril also appears to have included this passage in his work Against Julian, Book XIII, near the end. Again, John says in the same epistle: "Who is he that overcomes the world except he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he who came through water and blood and Spirit, Jesus Christ; not in water alone, but in water and blood. And the Spirit is he who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For

there are three who bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater," etc. Thus far Cyril, whether through error or through orthodox sources. And although he argues there against the Arians, it is unlikely that he omitted that testimony, since from it he could have made a particularly strong argument, if he had either read it or believed it had been written by the Apostle. Bede likewise narrates this passage carefully, and although he accurately expounds the threefold testimony on earth in many words, he makes no mention of the testimony in heaven of the Father, Word, and Spirit. Nor, however, should the knowledge of so learned a man be entirely disregarded, nor should diligence in examining ancient manuscripts be lacking. Moreover, in this place he indeed added only the words concerning the earthly witnesses: "There are three who bear witness." In the manuscript supplied to me from the library of the Minorites at Antwerp, a marginal note was written: "concerning the testimony of the Father, Word, and Spirit," but by a recent hand, so that the addition appears to have been contemporary with the annotation. But one may ask why I wished this section not to be omitted. We are urged by the authority of Jerome, which I indeed do not wish to reject, although he seems at times somewhat harsh and, at times, somewhat inconsistent with himself. Yet I do not sufficiently understand what Jerome's intention was in this place. Jerome's words are these: "But, just as we have recently corrected the Evangelists according to the standard of truth, so also we have restored the proper order to these. For the first enumeration is one of James, two of Peter, three of John, and one of Jude. Which having been translated faithfully into Latin by unfaithful translators, produced ambiguities for readers and gave occasion to heretics; especially in that place concerning the unity of the Trinity in the First Epistle of John, where we find that much has been omitted by unfaithful translators from the truth of the faith, namely only the three words concerning the water, blood, and Spirit being retained in that edition, while the testimony of the Father, Word, and Spirit was omitted, though upon this especially the catholic faith is strengthened and the one divine essence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is established." Thus far Jerome's words. From these words it is clear that Jerome either used Greek manuscripts from which this reading had already disappeared, or manuscripts that agreed with the Latin. Yet now this passage is found in Greek manuscripts, although the omitted reading is found in Latin manuscripts, though not in all of them. Therefore Jerome appears to have complained about the error of translators, not about Greek exemplars. But even if Greek exemplars had the reading which we use, the matter would still remain uncertain. For Arians, just like the Latins, used arguments from Scripture, although ecclesiastical usage may have accepted one reading over another. If this were not so, I do not see who could determine from ordinary usage which passages ought to be retained. Yet in Christ's sacred Scriptures I seek truth rather than the authority of men, although I freely acknowledge that in explaining difficult matters I have in some measure grown old among the writings of learned men. Whoever condemns a reading as corrupt merely because it differs from his own judges too rashly. If Cyril read among the Greeks what is now found in Greek manuscripts, and

if Augustine and Bede among us either read only this or, if they read both forms, did not employ Jerome's argument which should have taught them the genuine reading, then the matter remains unresolved. But someone may say: "This passage was very effective against the Arians." First, since among both Greeks and Latins there once existed a varied reading, this passage alone would have carried little weight against them, because each side could appeal to the reading favorable to itself. But let us suppose they did not dispute the reading and admitted that the testimony of the water, blood, and Spirit is one. They would reply that the three are one, not by nature, but by agreement in testimony. Do we think the Arians so foolish that they would not interpret the passage in the same way concerning the Father, Word, and Spirit? that they would not interpret this passage concerning the Father, the Word, and the Spirit in the same way, especially since orthodox writers themselves interpret a similar passage in the Gospels in this manner, and Augustine, in disputing with the Arian Maximinus, does not reject that interpretation. Indeed, when treating this very passage, he explains it according to the ordinary gloss, as though the words had been inserted parenthetically: "And these three are one," that is, they testify concerning the same thing. This does not establish faith, but rather presupposes faith, if we desire to deal gently with those less learned than ourselves. Perhaps the passage would serve better for those who curiously investigate how the Son differs from the Father, or how both differ from the Spirit. Certainly, I do not see how the Arians could be convinced by this argument, nor do I see how the matter could be demonstrated from this reasoning. Since the whole passage is obscure, it cannot be of very great value for refuting heretics. But concerning these matters we have responded sufficiently to the slanderer in the Apologia. I will add this: when Stunica repeatedly asserted that the Rhodian manuscript, upon whose authority he greatly relied, did not provide this reading from the Greek text, but rather that it had been brought into agreement with the Latin copies, as was obvious from the character of the language. Yet, lest anything should remain doubtful, a Greek manuscript has been found among the English in which there appears what is lacking in the common editions. It is written in this manner: "For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three who bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three bear witness." Although I do not think this was done without design, since in the copies known to us the passage is not repeated in this manner: "And there are three who bear witness on earth." Therefore, prompted by this British manuscript, we restored in our editions what was said to be lacking, lest anyone should continue to accuse us falsely. Nevertheless, I suspect that this manuscript was corrected for our benefit. I consulted two manuscripts, very old and faithfully preserved among the Franciscans at Bruges in the library of Donatianus. Neither contained the testimony of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. Nor was it added in the margin of either manuscript. Concerning the earthly witnesses the text simply read: "There are three who bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood." In the manuscript of Constantine, however, after the testimony concerning the water, blood, and Spirit,

there was added: "the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one," but the words "bear witness" and the pronoun "these" were not added. In the manuscript shown to me from the public library of the Basel school there was no testimony of the Father, Word, and Spirit, but only that of the Spirit, water, and blood. Thereafter the learned and diligent Paulus Bombasius, at my request, copied for me from a manuscript in the Vatican Library a passage in which the testimony of the Father, Word, and Spirit was likewise absent. If antiquity carries authority, and if that witness from the Vatican Library is trustworthy, it is certainly of great weight. This reading agrees with the Aldine edition. What Laurentius read is not entirely certain. Afterwards the Spanish edition came to our attention, differing from all the others. It reads: "For there are three who bear witness: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three who bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood." First, this differs from the British manuscript because it omitted the articles which the British manuscript included before Father, Word, and Spirit. Secondly, the British manuscript had: "and these three," while the Spanish edition has simply: "the three." The same difference appears in the words concerning the Spirit, water, and blood. Furthermore, the British manuscript added: "on earth," in connection with the earthly witnesses, whereas this was not added in the Spanish edition. In my judgment, the phrase "are one" seems to be a Hebrew way of speaking, just as when someone says: "I and the Father are one." The Spanish editors added in their scholia and determinations, attributed to Thomas, that according to corrected manuscripts, after the testimony of the Spirit, water, and blood there should be added: "and these three are one." This they no doubt inserted to strengthen their argument against the Arian doctrine. For if this is not added, it cannot easily be explained how there is a unity of testimony when the Spirit, water, and blood are not one in nature. From this the further consequence would follow that the statement concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, "and these three are one," might likewise be understood of agreement in testimony. Yet John is advancing the same essence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The principle from which they argue is this: that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit possess one and the same nature. But this does not follow. For it is not true that the Son is generated by the Father, nor that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, because both are of the substance of God. We are therefore dealing here with an argument drawn from collection and inference. Here the testimony concerns the faith, not the substance of the persons. In other passages this expression signifies agreement rather than numerical unity of an individual thing, and there would be nothing absurd if we understood it similarly here. How often do we read in both Testaments that those who are one in mind, one in purpose, one in affection, are said to be one. This figure of speech is so common in the sacred books that there is no reason why it should not be understood in the same way here. In John chapter 10 the Lord says: "I and the Father are one." How would an Arian answer this testimony, unless you first prove that in the Sacred Scriptures things are not called one except when they are of the same substance? Since countless passages teach that unity can be understood in a benevolent or harmonious sense, such

passages seem more useful for confirming the orthodox position than for overcoming the stubbornness of heretics. Moreover, from what Christ says there concerning honoring the Father, a probable inference may be drawn that Christ was not replying to the statement that he was one with the Father, but rather to the fact that he called God his Father and uniquely called himself the Son of God. Likewise in John 17: "Holy Father, keep those whom thou hast given me in thy name, that they may be one as we are one." Again: "That all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." The whole passage speaks of a unity of love and testimony. Therefore, unless we are willing to interpret the word one differently when applied to us than when applied to the divine persons, this passage compels no certain conclusion. Thus the passage does not constrain us, unless the authority of orthodox writers and the decree of the Church require that it be understood otherwise. It is indeed a pious and sound practice always to submit one's understanding to the judgment of the Church whenever the meaning is not clear. Meanwhile, however, it is not right to raise bitter controversies over matters that God may have preferred to leave less fully explained. Returning to the question of the reading itself, it is clear from what we have discussed that both Latin and Greek manuscripts vary. In my judgment there is no danger in accepting either reading. For what Thomas says, namely that the passage was added by heretics, he does not affirm outright but merely reports. Otherwise the Catholic Church throughout the world would have accepted as genuine something corrupted by heretics. The grammatical argument also has little force, namely that after speaking of the Spirit, water, and blood it says: "There are three who bear witness, and these three are one," especially since Spirit, water, and blood are neuter nouns among the Greeks. Rather, the Apostle seems to have considered the meaning more than the grammatical form, and instead of three witnesses as though they were three persons, he set forth three things: spirit, water, and blood. Since this is so, whatever sort of craftsman one may be, the structure itself bears witness to the point." (Translation provided by Copilot)

- The annotation accompanying Erasmus's 1527 4th edition represents a significant expansion of the discussion first introduced in the 1522 edition. Whereas the 1522 annotation largely focused on explaining the inclusion of the Comma Johanneum after the appearance of a Greek manuscript containing the passage, the 1527 annotation develops into a far more detailed investigation of both the manuscript evidence and the interpretation of the text. Erasmus broadens his survey of the available witnesses by discussing multiple Greek manuscripts, including the British manuscript, manuscripts from Bruges, the Antwerp Minorite manuscript, a Basel manuscript, a Vatican manuscript, and the text of the Complutensian Polyglot. Rather than merely reporting the existence of a manuscript containing the Comma, he compares readings among the various witnesses and notes points of agreement and disagreement.
- The 1527 annotation also reveals Erasmus's continued caution regarding the textual evidence. While retaining the Comma in the printed text, he again expresses suspicion about the British

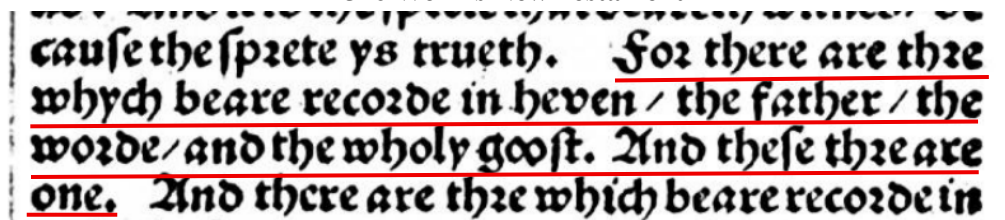
manuscript that had prompted its inclusion and observes differences between that manuscript and other sources known to him. As a result, the annotation moves beyond a simple defense of the passage's inclusion and becomes a broader examination of competing textual traditions. In doing so, Erasmus demonstrates an increasing interest in weighing the evidence of individual manuscripts rather than relying on a single witness.

- A further development in the 1527 annotation is the substantial expansion of Erasmus's discussion of the phrase, "and these three are one." He argues that similar language elsewhere in Scripture can signify unity of agreement, testimony, or purpose rather than numerical or essential unity. To illustrate this point, he appeals to passages such as John 10 and John 17, where the concept of being "one" is used in different contexts. This leads Erasmus into a more extensive consideration of how the text was employed in Trinitarian controversies and whether it could serve as a decisive argument against Arian interpretations.
- By the conclusion of the annotation, Erasmus adopts a notably measured position regarding the variant readings. Although he continues to print the Comma Johanneum, he emphasizes the existence of variation among both Greek and Latin witnesses and states that he perceives no danger in accepting either reading. The result is an annotation that is considerably more expansive than its 1522 predecessor, combining textual criticism, manuscript comparison, and theological reflection into Erasmus's most detailed discussion of the Comma Johanneum up to that point.

Erasmus's Impact On Tyndale

- As noted above, Tyndale followed Erasmus's 3rd edition from 1522 and included the Comma in his 1526 Worms New Testament without any textual markings. This changed in 1534 when Tyndale revised his New Testament and again in 1535. Consider once again the following 3 images.

1526 Worms New Testament



cause the sprete ys trueth. For there are thre
whych beare recorde in heven / the father / the
worde / and the wholy goost. And these thre are
one. And there are thre which beare recorde in

1534 New Testament

nes/because the sprete ys trueth) (For there are
 the which beare recorde in heuen / the father/
 the worde / and the wholy goost . And these
 the are one) For there are the which beare re

1535 New Testament

Sprete is trueth . (For there are the which beare re
 corde in heauen / the faether / the worde / and the who
 ly goost . And these the are one) . For there are

- Was the purpose of the parenetical markings around 1 John 5:7 in Tyndale's 1534 and 1535 revisions designed to reflect textual doubt as expressed in the annotations of Erasmus?
- In an effort to determine whether William Tyndale ever explicitly explained the significance of the parenthetical markings surrounding 1 John 5:7 in his 1534 New Testament, several portions of the 1534 revision were examined. These included the general prologues to the New Testament, the prologue to the Epistles of John, and the end material printed with the 1534 edition. Across all of this material, no direct statement was located in which Tyndale explains that parentheses were intended to denote a textual variant, a doubtful reading, an interpolation, or material absent from some Greek manuscripts.
- The general prologues were reviewed first. While Tyndale discusses his use of marginal notes, explanatory comments, and various reader aids, no explanation was found regarding the use of parentheses within the biblical text itself. Likewise, no discussion was located concerning the textual status of 1 John 5:7, the Comma Johanneum, or the manuscript evidence underlying that passage.
- The Prologue to the Epistles of St. John was then examined. Although Tyndale provides a theological overview of the Johannine epistles, emphasizing faith, justification, love, and opposition to heresy, he does not specifically mention 1 John 5:7. Nor does he discuss the Three Heavenly Witnesses, the doctrine of the Trinity in connection with that verse, Erasmus's treatment of the passage, or any textual controversy relating to it. Most importantly for this inquiry, no explanation of the parenthetical formatting found in the biblical text was identified.
- Finally, the end material accompanying the 1534 New Testament was reviewed. This section consisted primarily of lectionary and liturgical material rather than textual or editorial

commentary. No discussion was found regarding 1 John 5:7, textual variants, or the significance of parentheses.

- Beyond Tyndale's own writings, a search was made for modern discussions of the issue. While a number of articles and discussions address Tyndale's inclusion of the Comma Johanneum and his dependence upon Erasmus's third edition of the Greek New Testament, very few discuss the parenthetical presentation of the passage in the 1534 edition specifically. Sources were located that examine the history of the Comma Johanneum and its appearance in early English Bibles, but no source was identified that cites a direct statement from Tyndale explaining the purpose of the parentheses around 1 John 5:7.
- Accordingly, the present investigation has established the following:
 - The general prologues of the 1534 New Testament were checked.
 - The Prologue to the Epistles of St. John was checked.
 - The end material of the 1534 New Testament was checked.
 - Modern online discussions concerning Tyndale and the Comma Johanneum were surveyed.
- Based upon these sources, no direct statement by William Tyndale has been located explaining either:
 - why 1 John 5:7 was enclosed in parentheses in the 1534 & 1535 editions, or
 - what those parentheses were intended to signify.
- Likewise, no direct discussion by Tyndale of the textual status of 1 John 5:7 has been identified in the materials examined. Consequently, any interpretation of the parentheses as a textual-critical marker remains an inference that would need to be demonstrated from the typography of the edition itself, comparison with other parenthetical passages in the 1534 New Testament, contemporary printing conventions, or other external evidence rather than from an explicit statement by Tyndale.
- The same could be said for Tyndale's 1535 revision.
- The parenthetical presentation of 1 John 5:7 in Tyndale's 1534 and 1535 New Testament is consistent with the possibility that Tyndale was influenced by the textual doubts expressed in Erasmus's annotations of 1522 and 1527. Since Tyndale depended extensively upon Erasmus's

work and no alternative explanation has yet been identified in Tyndale's own writings, the connection is plausible. Nevertheless, no known statement from Tyndale explicitly confirms that the parentheses were intended to communicate Erasmus's reservations about the passage.

English Bibles After Tyndale

- Since we cannot find any explication from the pen of Tyndale himself it behooves us to look at what can be gleaned by considering other Reformation Era English Bibles.
- The first complete English Bible was published by Myles Coverdale in 1535. In the case of 1 John 5:7, Coverdale followed Tyndale's 1534 revision in placing parentheses around 1 John 5:7. Like Tyndale, Coverdale offered no marginal explanation for why he did so.

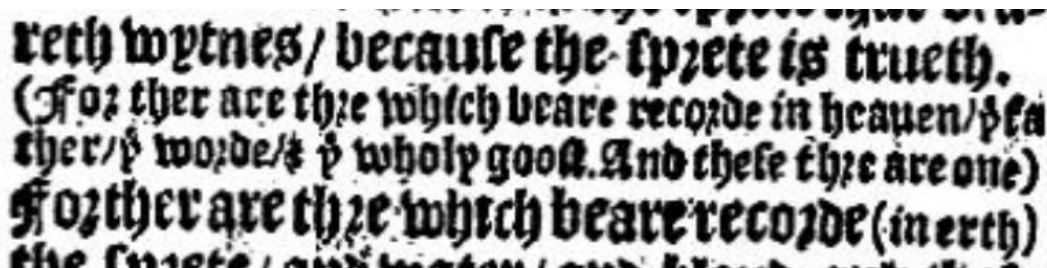
1535 Coverdale Bible

te is the trueth. (For there are thre which
beare recorde in heauen: the ffather, the worde,
and the holy goost, ⁊ these thre are one.)

- An examination of the prologue to Myles Coverdale's 1535 Bible did not uncover any explicit explanation of the significance of parentheses, brackets, or other editorial marks placed around portions of the biblical text. Although Coverdale discusses his translation method, acknowledges the possibility of translation and printing errors, and encourages the correction of mistakes when they are discovered, he does not explain the purpose of parenthetical markings.
- Likewise, no discussion was found concerning 1 John 5:7, the Three Heavenly Witnesses, the Comma Johanneum, manuscript evidence, or any textual controversy associated with that passage. The prologue contains general remarks about translation and interpretation but does not address the textual status of any specific verse in the New Testament.
- Accordingly, the evidence presently available from Coverdale's prologue does not provide a basis for determining why certain passages may have been enclosed in parentheses, nor does it offer any direct explanation of the treatment of 1 John 5:7. Any attempt to interpret such parenthetical markings as indicators of textual doubt, variant readings, or awareness of contemporary debates must therefore rest on evidence external to the prologue itself rather than on an express statement by Coverdale.

- The next Reformation Era English Bible to be published was the Matthew's Bible in 1537. This Bible introduced a third way of handling 1 John 5:7. Not only was the verse placed in parathesis it was also printed in smaller font when compared the verses immediate before and after it.

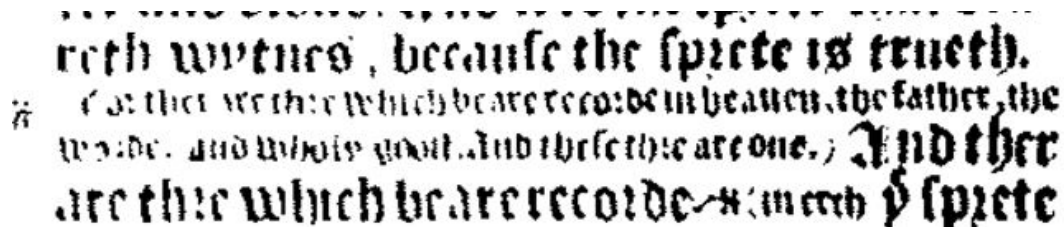
1537 Matthew's Bible



reth wytnes / because the spȳte is trueth.
 (For ther are thre which beare recoꝛde in heauen / þe fa-
 ther / þe woꝛde / & þe wholy goode. And these thre are one)
 For ther are thre which beare recoꝛde (in erth)

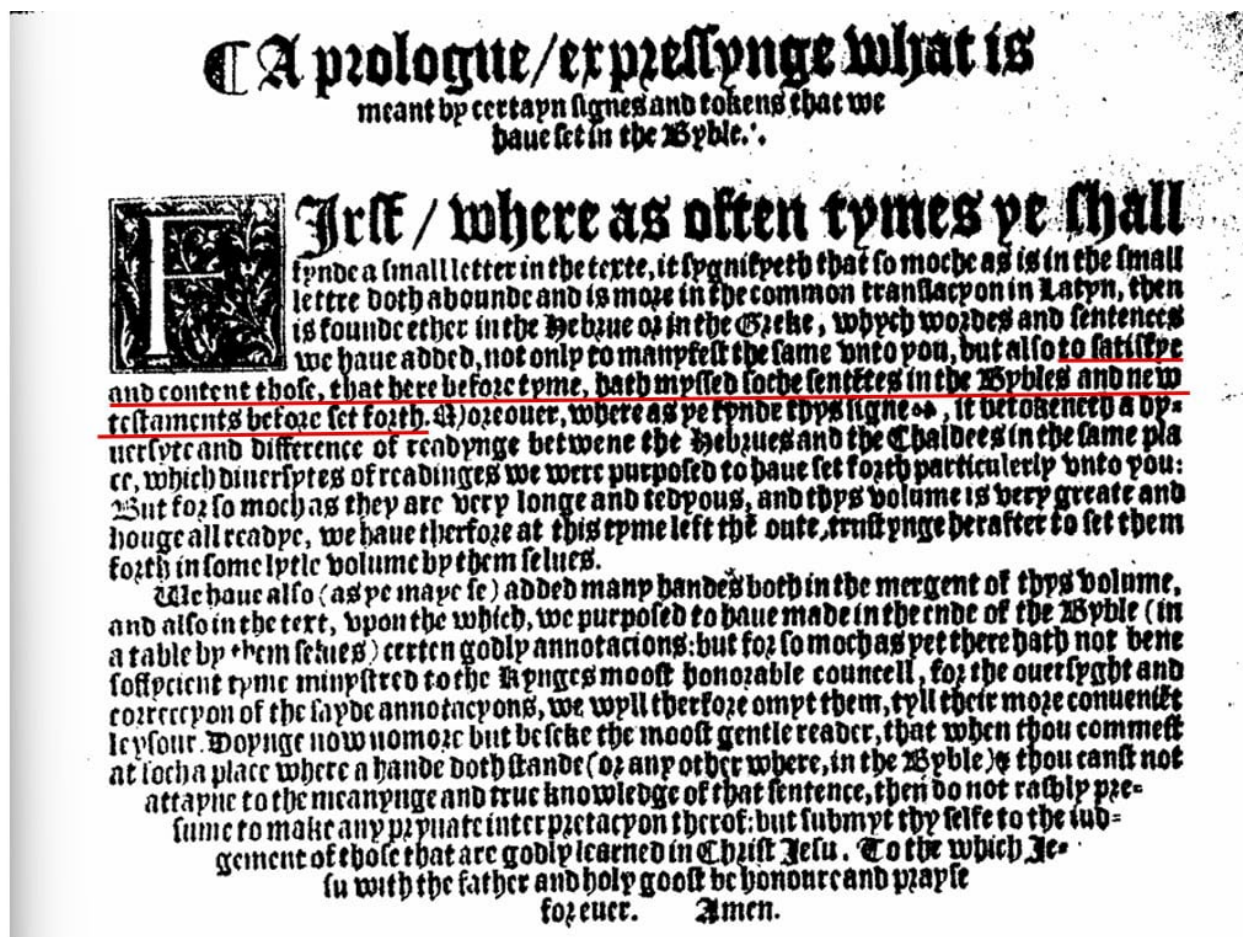
- An examination of the front matter of the Matthew Bible (1537) did not reveal any explanation of the use of parentheses or smaller type within the biblical text. Although the editors provide extensive prefatory and instructional material, no statement was located describing a typographical system for marking textual variants, doubtful readings, or passages of uncertain authenticity. This finding is noteworthy because 1 John 5:7 appears in the Matthew Bible enclosed in parentheses and printed in smaller type than the surrounding text. The formatting clearly distinguishes the passage from its context, but the front matter does not explain the reason for that distinction. Nor does it discuss the textual status of the Comma Johanneum itself.
- Accordingly, while the typography demonstrates that 1 John 5:7 was treated as a special case in the Matthew Bible, the surviving front material and lack of a marginal note provides no explicit explanation of what the parentheses or smaller type were intended to signify. Any interpretation of those features must therefore be based on other evidence rather than on a direct statement from the Bible's editors.
- The Great Bible from 1539 followed the Matthew's Bible in printing 1 John 5:7 in smaller font with parenthesis around the verse.

1539 Great Bible



reth wytnes, because the spȳte is trueth.
 ¶ For ther be thre which beare recoꝛde in heauen, the father, the
 woꝛde, and wholy goode. And these thre are one. And ther
 are thre which beare recoꝛde in erth þe spȳte

- There is a Prologue in the front of the 1539 Great Bible titled, “A Prologue Explaining What Is Meant by Certain Signs and Tokens That We Have Set in the Bible.” In this section, Miles Coverdale the editor of the Great Bible explains why he used smaller letters in certain places.



A Prologue Explaining What Is Meant by Certain Signs and Tokens That We Have Set in the Bible

First, whereas oftentimes you shall find a small letter in the text, it signifies that so much as is in the small letter does abound and is more in the common translation in Latin than is found either in the

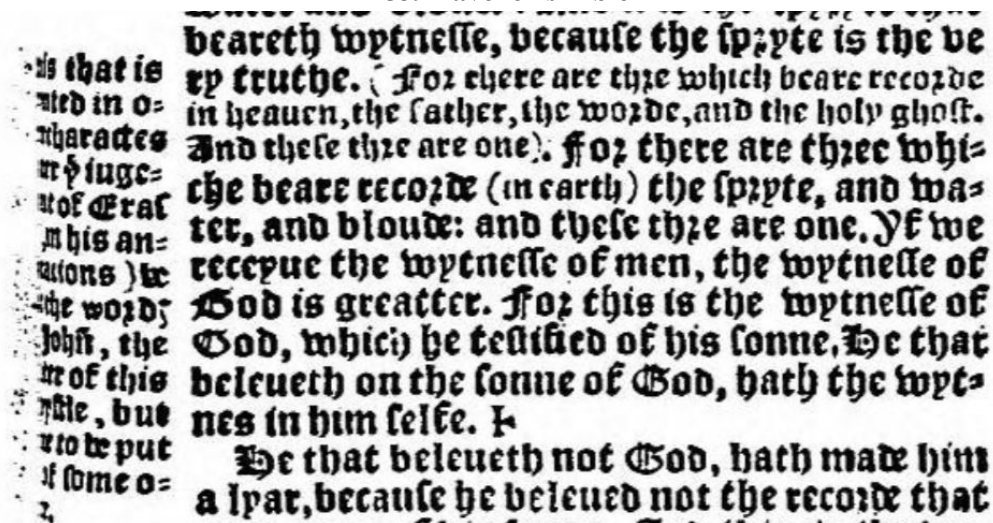
Hebrew or in the Greek. These words and sentences we have added, not only to make the same manifest unto you, but also to satisfy and content those that heretofore have missed such sentences in the Bibles and New Testaments before set forth. Moreover, whereas you find this sign [symbol], it betokens a diversity and difference of reading between the Hebrews and the Chaldees in the same place.

Those differences of reading we intended to have set forth particularly unto you. But because they are very long and tedious, and this volume is already very great and huge, we have therefore at this time left them out, trusting hereafter to set them forth in some small volume by themselves.

We have also (as you may see) added many hands, both in the margin of this volume and also in the text, upon which we intended to have made, at the end of the Bible (in a table by themselves), certain godly annotations. But because there has not yet been sufficient time allowed to the King's most honourable council for the oversight and correction of the said annotations, we will therefore omit them until a more convenient leisure. Doing now no more but beseech the most gentle reader that when you come to such a place where a hand stands (or anywhere else in the Bible) and you cannot attain to the meaning and true knowledge of that sentence, then do not rashly presume to make any private interpretation thereof, but submit yourself to the judgment of those who are godly learned in Christ Jesus. To whom, with the Father and Holy Ghost, be honour and praise for ever. Amen.

- This brief prologue from the Great Bible (1539) is important because it provides one of the clearest contemporary explanations of a typographical convention used in an early English Bible. The editors explicitly state that words and sentences printed in small letters were material found in the traditional Latin translation but not found in the Hebrew or Greek texts. They further explain that these readings were retained “to satisfy and content” readers who had previously missed such passages in earlier English Bibles. As a result, the note demonstrates that sixteenth-century English Bible editors consciously distinguished certain readings from the main text through special typography while still preserving them for readers accustomed to the traditional form of the Bible. For studies of passages such as 1 John 5:7, this statement is especially significant because it proves that early English Bible publishers used textual markers to identify material lacking support in the Hebrew or Greek originals, providing an important historical context for interpreting the use of smaller type and other distinguishing marks in Reformation-era Bibles.
- Also translated in 1539, the Taverer Bible translated by Richard Taverer is explicit as to why the text of the Comma was placed in parenthesis along with smaller font. As the following screenshot demonstrates, Taverer appended a marginal note to the verse.

1539 Taverner's Bible



- The marginal note reads as follows according to Timothy Berg in an article by Peter Gurry for the “Evangelical Textual Criticism” blog.
 - “This that is printed in other characters after the judgment of Erasmus in his annotations be not the words of John, the writer of this Epistle, but came to be put in, of some other.” (Gerry)
- Taverner’s marginal note is significant because it explicitly connects the special typography of the passage to the textual judgments expressed by Erasmus in his annotations. According to the note, the words printed in different characters were regarded by Erasmus as not belonging to the original text of John's epistle but as having been introduced by another hand. At the same time, the explanatory prologue to the Great Bible (1539) demonstrates that special typography was also used in contemporary English Bibles to identify words and sentences found in the Latin tradition but absent from the Hebrew or Greek text, while still preserving those readings for readers accustomed to them. Consequently, Taverner's note is valuable not merely because it identifies the passage as typographically distinct, but because it explicitly explains the reason for that distinction. Unlike the more general explanations found elsewhere, Taverner directly links the special formatting of the Comma Johanneum to Erasmus's judgment that the words were not part of the original text of the epistle.
- After the publication the Taverner and Great Bibles in 1539, later Bibles changed their printing conventions for 1 John 5:7. The Geneva New Testament from 1557 and complete Geneva Bible from 1560 published the text in normal Roman font with not paratheses or marginal notes.

1557 Geneva New Testament

7 For there are thre which beare record
in heauen, the Father, the Word, and the ho
ly Gost : and these thre are one.

1560 Geneva Bible

7 For there are thre , which beare recorde
in heauen, the Father, the Worde, and the
holie Gost: and these thre are one.

- In 1568 the Great Bible was revised by the Bishops of the Anglican Church to create the Bishops Bible. As the following screenshots demonstrate from the 1568 and 1602 editions of the Bishops Bible printed the text of the Comma in normal font without any textual footnotes.

1568 Bishops Bible

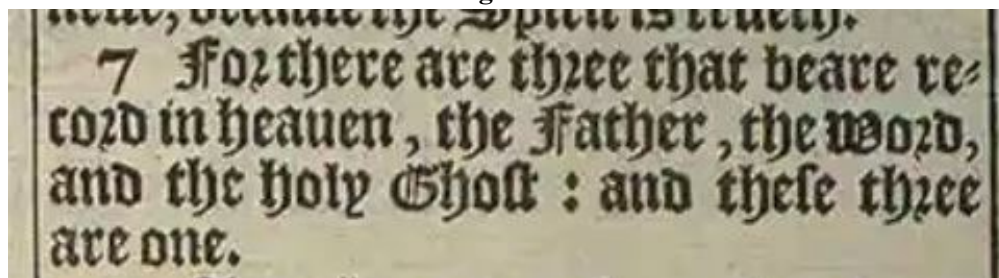
7 For there are three which beare recorde
in heauen, the father, the worde, and the
holy ghost, and these three are one.

1602 Bishops Bible

7 For there are three which beare record in
heaven, The Father, the word, and the Holy
ghost, and these three are one.

- Finally, the King James Version was published in 1611. A revision of the Bishops Bible, the King James published the text of 1 John 5:7 in normal black letter font without any textual notes in the margin.

1611 King James Bible



- Viewed chronologically, the treatment of 1 John 5:7 in English Bibles underwent a noticeable evolution during the Reformation era. Tyndale's 1534 and 1535 revisions first distinguished the passage through the use of parentheses, a practice continued by Coverdale in 1535. The Matthew's Bible (1537) and Great Bible (1539) went further by combining parentheses with smaller type, while Taverner's Bible (1539) explicitly connected this special formatting to Erasmus's doubts regarding the passage's authenticity. By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, this practice largely disappeared. The Geneva Bible, Bishops' Bible, and ultimately the King James Version printed 1 John 5:7 as ordinary text without special typography, brackets, or explanatory notes. Thus, the history of the passage in early English Bibles reflects a progression from visible typographical distinction and occasional explanatory comment toward its eventual presentation as an unmarked part of the biblical text

Conclusion

- The evidence presented in this appendix demonstrates that William Tyndale altered his treatment of 1 John 5:7 between the 1526 and 1534 editions of his New Testament. In 1526, the passage appeared as part of the continuous text without special markings, whereas in the 1534 and 1535 revisions it was enclosed in parentheses.
- The timing of this change coincides with the increasingly detailed discussions of the passage found in Erasmus's Greek New Testaments and annotations, particularly the expanded treatments in the 1522 and 1527 editions. During this period, Erasmus drew attention to the textual difficulties surrounding the Comma Johanneum, the variation among Greek and Latin witnesses, and the ongoing debate concerning its authenticity.
- No direct statement has been located in Tyndale's surviving prologues, prefaces, or other material explaining why he introduced the parentheses around 1 John 5:7. Likewise, no explicit declaration has been found in which Tyndale attributes this change to Erasmus or to any specific textual source.
- Nevertheless, the chronology of the evidence suggests that Tyndale's revised presentation of the passage is consistent with an awareness of the concerns that Erasmus had publicly raised

regarding the text. The change from unmarked inclusion in 1526 to parenthetical treatment in 1534 and 1535 reflects a departure from Tyndale's original practice.

- Subsequent English Bibles continued and, in some cases, expanded this practice. Coverdale's Bible (1535), Matthew's Bible (1537), the Great Bible (1539), and Taverner's Bible (1539) each distinguished the passage through typography, parentheses, smaller type, or explanatory comments. Taverner's Bible is particularly noteworthy for explicitly connecting its treatment of the text to Erasmus's judgments.
- By contrast, later English Bibles such as the Geneva Bible, Bishops' Bible, and the King James Version eventually printed 1 John 5:7 as part of the ordinary text without the visual distinctions that characterized many earlier Reformation-era editions.
- Taken as a whole, the evidence preserved in this appendix places Tyndale's changing treatment of 1 John 5:7 within a broader Reformation-era discussion concerning the text's authenticity, manuscript support, and theological significance. Between 1516 and 1527, Erasmus moved from noting the absence of the heavenly witnesses in the Greek manuscripts available to him to providing increasingly extensive discussions of the passage, its manuscript history, and its use in Trinitarian controversy. The influence of these debates extended beyond Erasmus himself and formed part of the intellectual environment in which Reformers such as Luther and Tyndale produced vernacular translations of the New Testament. Against this backdrop, Tyndale's decision to move from unmarked inclusion of the Comma in 1526 to parenthetical treatment in 1534 and 1535 represents a noteworthy departure from his earlier practice. Although no surviving statement from Tyndale explicitly explains the change or directly attributes it to Erasmus, the chronology and character of the evidence suggest that his revised presentation was consistent with the growing awareness of textual uncertainty that Erasmus's scholarship had helped bring to the forefront. The subsequent treatment of the passage in the English Bible tradition, from Coverdale and Matthew to the Great Bible and Taverner, further demonstrates that these concerns were neither isolated nor confined to a single translator. Accordingly, the documentary record reveals a progression from simple inclusion of the passage to various forms of typographical qualification intended to alert readers to its disputed status, before its eventual return to unmarked presentation in many later English Bibles. In this respect, the history of 1 John 5:7 in the English Bible reflects not only the transmission of a particular text but also the gradual incorporation of Renaissance humanist textual criticism into the work of Reformation translators and editors.

Works Cited

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Lesson 5

The 1530 Pentateuch and Other Old Testament Translations: Giving the Hebrew an English Voice

Prepared & Taught by Alex Bojko

Introduction

- In this lesson, I will seek to explain the following regarding Tyndale and his Old Testament translation work:
 - Hebrew learning on the continent and Old Testament English translations pre-Tyndale.
 - The contents and source of Tyndale's Pentateuch.
 - Examples of Tyndale's translation work on the Old Testament.

Hebrew Learning On the Continent and Prior Old Testament English Translations

- John Rothwell Slater in his doctoral dissertation titled ["The Sources of Tyndale's Version of the Pentateuch"](#) provides the following description of Hebrew learning on the continent at the time of Tyndale:
 - "When it [the Pentateuch] appeared, the study of Hebrew was a novelty in England, the first chair of Hebrew in an English university having been established in 1524 at Cambridge, in the year that Tyndale had left his native land never to return. On the continent scholars had been studying Hebrew, with the aid of learned Jews, for half a century. Hebrew studies flourished in Italy and Spain. Johann Reuchlin, Sebastian Münster, and others had cultivated the language with zeal and genius in Germany, and in several of the German universities great advance had been made in this difficult branch of philology" (Slater, 5).
- Recall from the Early Life and Times of William Tyndale lesson that Tyndale left England for Germany in 1524 because Lutheranism there allowed for Tyndale to do his translation work. Carolus Eduardus Foerstemann in 1841 published the first of three volumes detailing the records of the University of Wittenberg. Volume 1 covers the years 1502-1560. In the matriculation records of Wittenberg for 1524, Guillelmus Daltici is listed which could be William Tyndale:

Anno m. d. XXIII

Sub Magistratu venerabilis viri d. Casparis Glacij Theologie Doctoris
infrascripti in album excepti sunt a primo die Maij ad festum usque Luce.

Heinricus Plintzler Francigena dioc. Herbipolen. 6 Maij.	Valentinus Mollerus dioc. Misnen. 25 Maij.
Johannes Sinapius Sweinfordianus dioc. Herbipolen. 7 Maij.	Paulus kemp dioc. Ruppen. 25 Maij.
Hieronimus Praun dioc. Vratislauien. 9 Maij.	Johannes Lindenfels ex kircheym dioc. Magun: 25 Maij.
Guendelinus Girrich Phortzen. Dioc. Spiren. 18 Maij.	Christophorus Rothfuss ex Gersspach dioc. Spiren. 25 Maij.
Raphael Wanner de Helffis 19 Maij.	Christophorus ex Vonningen dioc. Spi- ren. 25 Maij.
Vipertus Hagenius dio: Herbipo: 19 Maij.	Jacobus Jacobi Polonus dioc. Gniesnen.
Paulus Gurlus Bohemus ex opido Tlutz 20 Maij.	Georgius Bernhard dioc. Vratislauien.
Gregorius Gurunzi Bohemus Zeulitz 22 Maij.	Anthonius Priellius Obirweiler Dioc. Maguntinen.
Paulus Vuermus Reusporgen. Dioc. Bre- men. 22 Maij.	Thomas Rutthe dioc. Caminen.
Theodericus kappenburg Luneburgen. 22 Maij.	Nicolaus Adeus dioc. Sleswiccen.
Joachimus Heytzko Littenbergen. Dioc. Bremen. 22 Maij.	Johannes Widdelstet de dutz.
Heinricus Smedenstede Lunaburgen. 22 Maij.	Wolmannus Grasser de Storack Dioc. Buttauien.
Vrbanus Zolstainer Dio. Saltzpurgen. 24 Maij.	Paulus Bachammer ex gmunden Dioc. Buttauien. 25 Maij.
Jacobus de Vratislauia 24 Maij.	Volfgangus Machimus Bauarus Dioc. Ratispanen. 26 Maij.
Jacobus Bachenhemius Bubonius Dio: Worma: 24.	Franciscus Ricko de Rostock.
Joannes Nhon de Hochstadt Dioc. Hal- berstaden. 24 Maij.	Jacobus Liskau vratislauien.
Mathias Erich dioc. Halberstaden. 24 Maij.	Marcus Schulte Stendalien. Dioc. Hal- berstaden.
Joannes Gollerus Halliopolis Dioc. Saltz- purgen. 24 Maij.	Franciscus Hector Magdenburgen.
Johannes Trangerus vratislauien.	Johannes Holsten Magdenburgen.
	Fridericus Leoner Magdenburgen.
	Guillelmus Daltici Ex anglia 27 Maij.
	Joannes vranger auentinus Dioc. Ratis- panen.
	Matthias Retter Parochus Michelfelt 29 Maij.
	Gaspar Pehr australis dioc. Saltzpurgen.
	Paulus Hynsken dioc. Caminen.

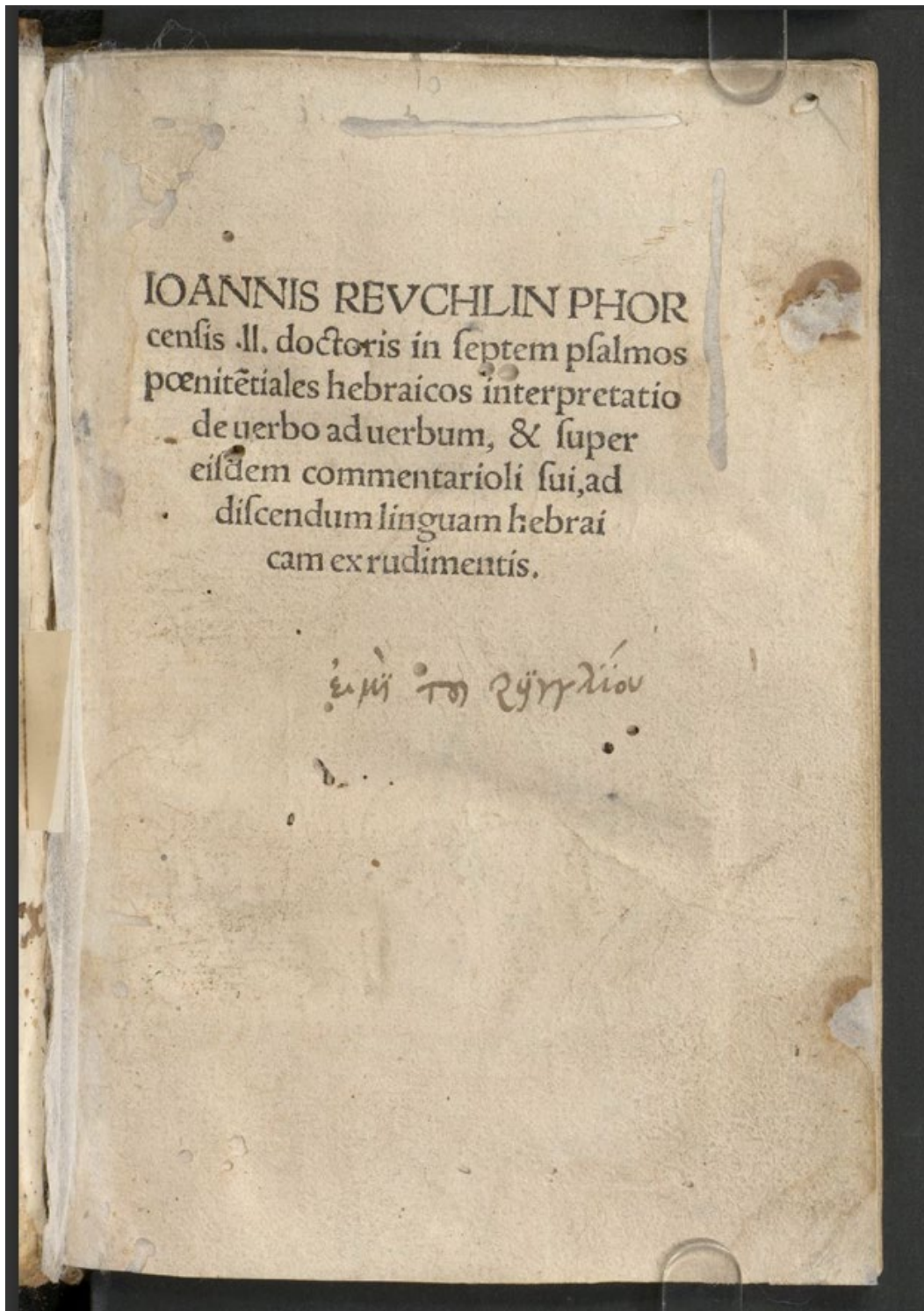
- J.F. Mozley in his 1937 Tyndale biography provides a possible theory as to the name Guillelmus Daltici and makes the case for it being the concealed identity of William Tyndale:
 - “I could not trace it as a place name, or a family name, or a Christian name. Its form seems not at home in English, or Latin, or in any other tongue that Tyndale was likely to use. But suddenly it flashed upon me that by reversing the two syllables of *Tindal* you get *Daltin*, which only differs from *Daltici* by one letter. The present register is but a copy of the original, and if the copyist misread the final letter, all becomes clear. In those perilous times it was common enough for men to disguise their names. Robert Barnes is entered in the Wittenberg register of 1533 as *Antonius Anglus*, though his real name was added in the margin by Melanchthon” (Mozley, 53).
- Given the widespread nature of Hebrew learning in Germany, it is possible that one of the places Tyndale went to learn Hebrew was Wittenberg. Tyndale’s inclusion in the Wittenberg matriculation records for 1524 also provides possible proof that Tyndale met Martin Luther. Even if Tyndale did meet Luther, this does not mean he agreed with him theologically. I believe there are enough differences between Tyndale and Luther’s theology to say that Tyndale was not Lutheran. He is Tyndale and nothing more.
- To demonstrate the widespread popularity and interest in Hebrew learning in Germany and Europe, Slater in his doctoral dissertation provides a list of Hebrew language textbooks available in the sixteenth century:

¹ The following list of Hebrew textbooks published from 1500 to 1530 is given in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Many of these ran through several editions.

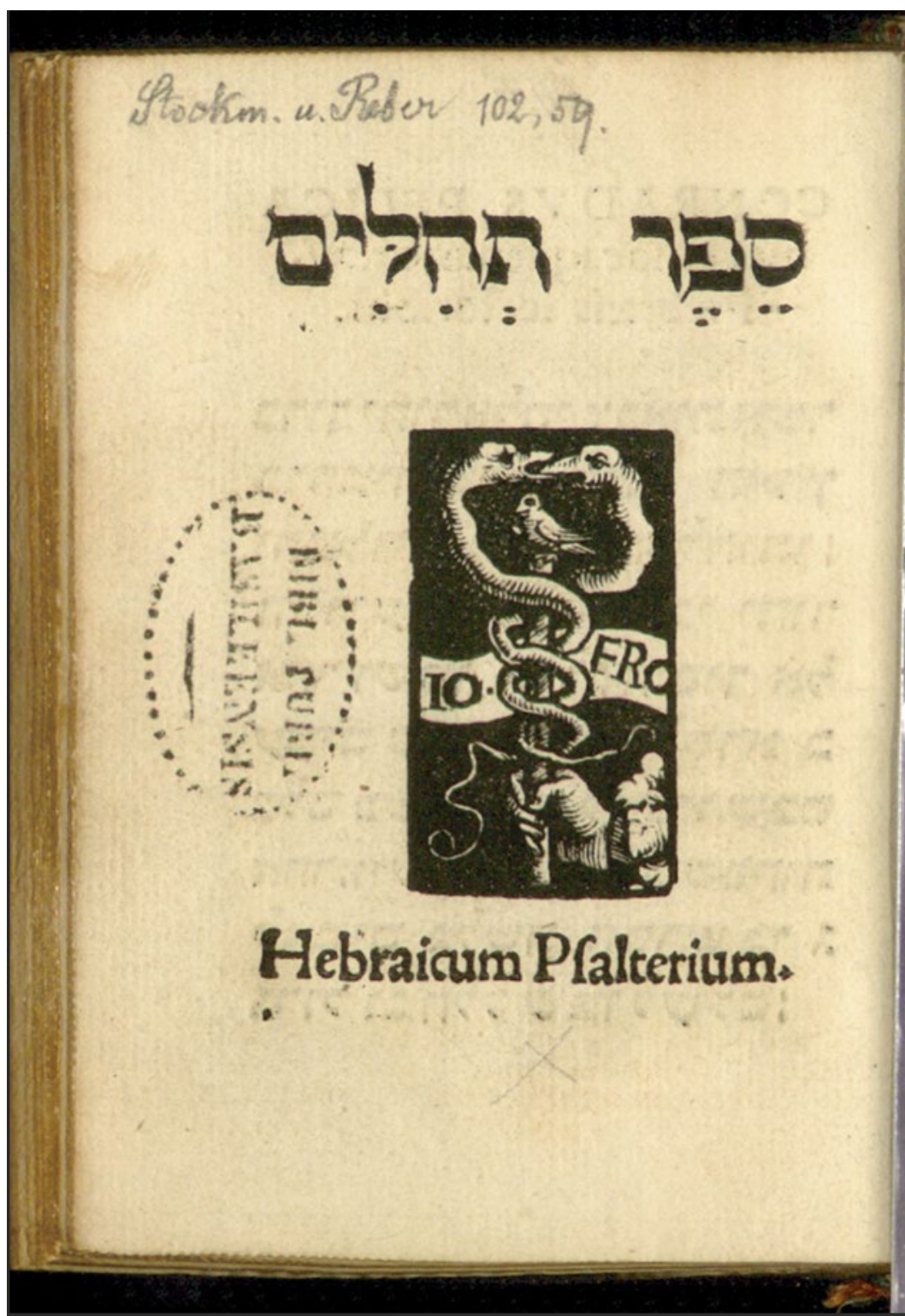
- 1504. Pellicanus, Conrad. *De modo legendi et intelligendi Hebraeum* (Strasburg).
- 1506. Reuchlin, Johann. *Rudimenta Linguae Hebraicae una cum Lexico* (Pforzheim)
- 1508. Tissardus, Franciscus. *Grammatica Hebraica et Graeca* (Paris).
- 1513-1521. Guidaccerius, Agathius. *Institutiones Graecae Hebraicae* (Rome).
- 1516. Capito, W. F. *Institutiuncula in Hebraicam Linguam* (Basel).
- 1518. Boeschenstein, John. *Hebraicae Grammaticae Institutiones* (Wittenberg).
- 1502. Münster, Sebastian. *Epitome Hebraicae Grammaticae* (Basel).
- 1520. Pagninus, Sanct. *Institutiones Hebraicae* (Lyons).
- 1522. Anonymous. *Rudimenta Hebraicae Grammaticae* (Basel).
- 1524. Münster, Sabastian. *Institutiones Grammaticae in Hebraicam Linguam* (Basel).
- 1525. Aurigallus, Matthew. *Compendium Hebraicae Chaldaeeaeque Grammaticae* (Wittenberg).
- 1526. Zamorensis, Alphonsus. *Introductiones Artis Grammaticae Hebraicae* (Complutum).
- 1528. Van Campen, John. *Ex Variis Libellis Eliae quidquid ad Graecam Hebraicam est necessarium* (Louvain).
- 1528. Fabricius, Theodorus. *Institutiones Linguae Sanctae* (Cologne).
- 1528. Pagninus, Sanct. *Institutionum Hebraicarum Abbreviatio* (Lyons).
- 1529. Clendardus, Nicolas. *Tabulae in Graecam Hebraicam* (Louvain).
- 1530. Sebastianus, Augustus. *Grammatica Linguae Ebraae* (Marburg)

Slater, *Sources*, 20.

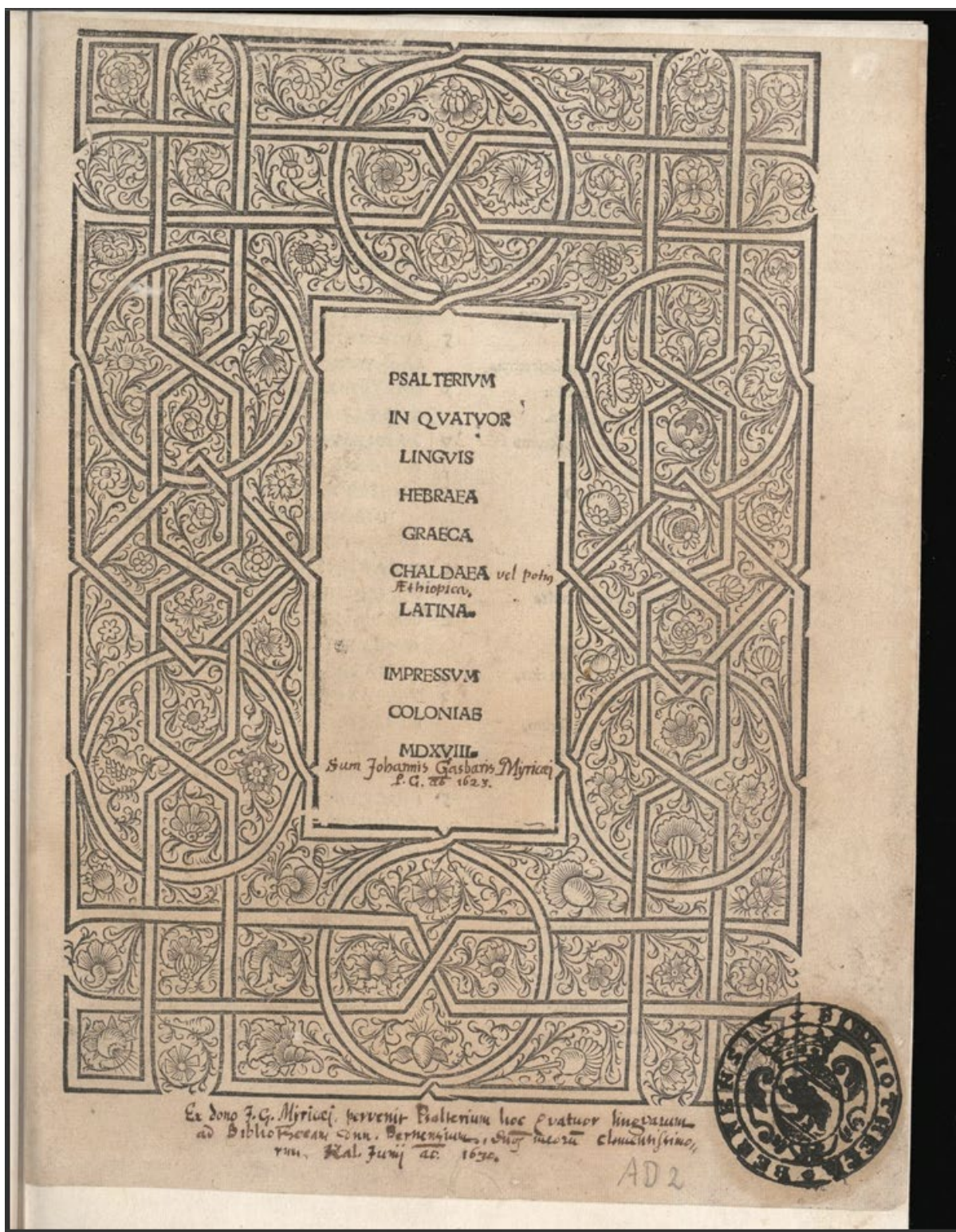
- Though I was not able to find some of the exact textbooks on this list, my research agrees with Slater's findings concerning the large presence of Hebrew language sources on the continent. The following pages contain screenshots of the title pages of such language works:



Johann Reuchlin, Hebrew Grammar Book from the seven Hebrew penitential Psalms (1512).



Conrad Pellicanus, Hebrew Psalter (1516).



[Psalms in four languages: Hebrew, Greek, Chaldee, and Latin. Cologne, \(1518\).](#)

ΔΑΒΙΔ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ
ΜΕΛΟΣ

Ακαίρειος ἀνὴρ ὃς οὐκ ἐπορεύθη ἐν βουλῇ ἁσέ
καὶ ἐν ὁλῶ ἀμαρτολῶν οὐκ ἔση· (66μ)
καὶ ἐπὶ καθέλευα λοιμῶν οὐκ ἐκάθισεν·

Αλλ' ἐν τῷ νόμῳ κυρίου τὸ θέλημα αὐτῶν·
καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν μελετήσῃ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτῶς·
καὶ ἔσται ὡς τὸ ξύλον τὸ πεφυτευμένον παρὰ τὰς λιβελοῦσας
ὅτι κχεπὸν αὐτοῦ δώσῃ ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ· (τῶν υἱολογῶν)
καὶ τὸ φύλλον αὐτοῦ ὅκ ἀπορρυήσεται·
καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἂν ποιῇ καθευδωθήσεται·
οὐχ οὕτως οἱ ἄσεβεις οὐχ οὕτως·
ἀλλ' ἡ ὥσ' ἡ χνὸς ὃν ἐκρίπῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ προσώπου ἡς γῆς·
διὰ τὸ τοῦ ἁγίου ἀνασῆσαι αὐτὸν ἐν κρίσει·
οὐδὲ ἀμαρτωλοὶ ἐν βουλῇ δικαίως·
ὅτι γινώσκῃ κύριος ὅλον δικαίωμ·
καὶ ὁ ἁσὲ βῶν ἀπολεῖται·

ἌΝΕΡΙΓΡΑΦΟΣ
ΓΑΡ ἙΒΡΑΙ
ΟΙΣ

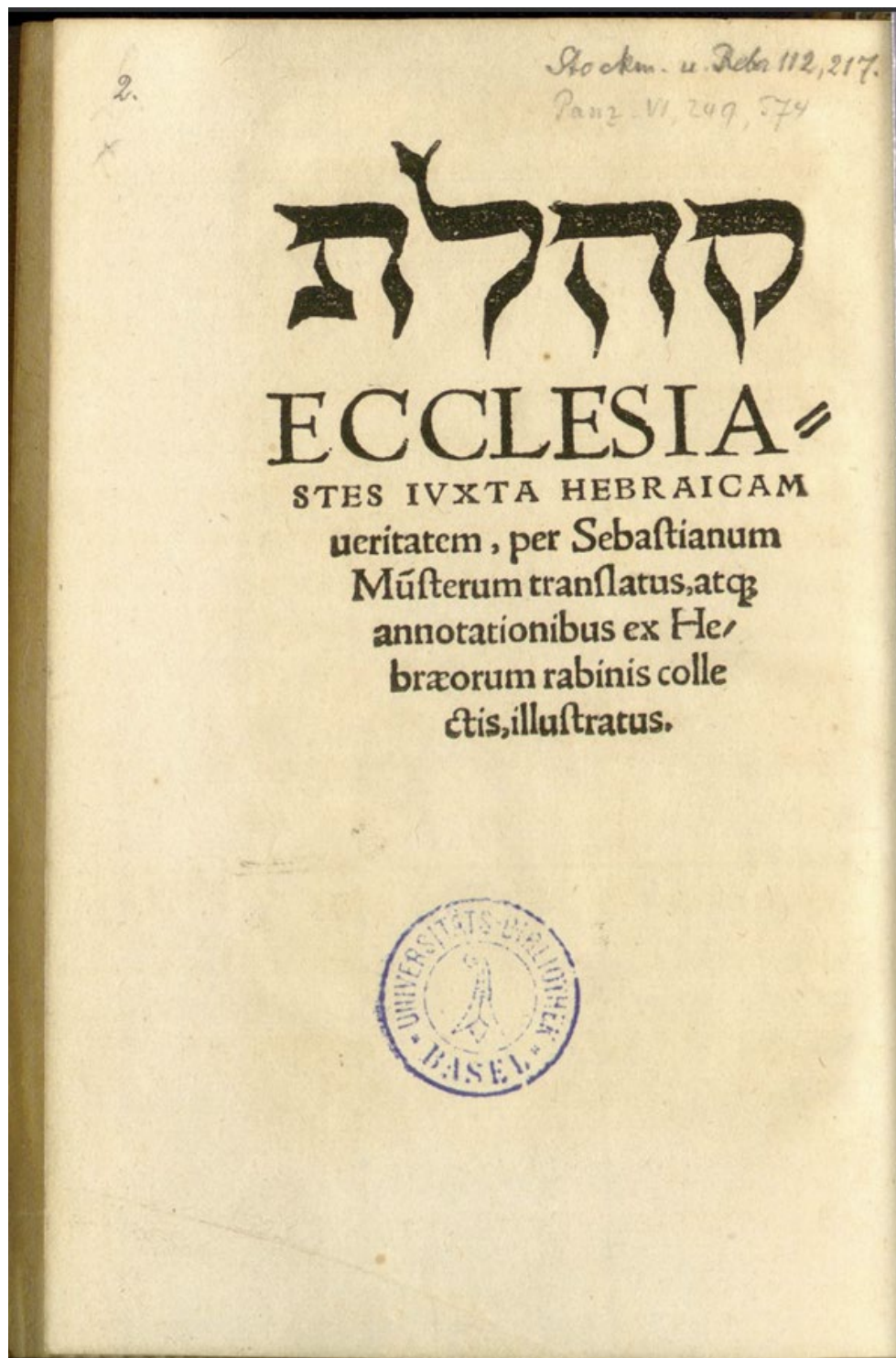
Νατὶ ἐφύλαξε μὲν ἐσθῇ,
καὶ λατὶ ἐμελέτησεν κενά·
Γαρεῖσασιν οἱ βχολεῖς τῆς γῆς·
καὶ οἱ ἀρχόντες σπνχθασιν ἐπιτοχυτό·
κατὰ τὸ κυρεῖς καὶ κατὰ τὸ χρεῖς αὐτῶν·
Διαρεῖσασιν τὸν δέσμονος αὐτῶν·
καὶ ἀπορεῖ φωμεν ἀφ' ἡμῶν τὸν ζυγὸν αὐτῶν·
Ὁ καλοικῶν ἐν οὐρανῶν ἐκγελάσεται αὐτοῦ·
καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐκμνήσει αὐτὸς·
Τότε λαλοῦντες αὐτῶν ἐν ὁργῇ αὐτῶν·
καὶ ἐν τῷ θυμῷ αὐτῶν ταρεῖς αὐτῶν·
Ἐγὼ δὲ καλῶς ἔχθην βχολεῖς υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ·
ἐπὶ σῶν ὅρος τοῦ ἁγίου αὐτοῦ·
λιγγυέλλων τὸ πρὸς ἁγμά κυρίου·
Κύριος εἶπε πρὸς με υἱός μου εἶδεν·
ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγεννηκάσ·
Αἰησαι παρ' ἐμῶν καὶ δώσω σοι ἔθνη τῶν κληρονομιῶν σου·
καὶ τὴν κατὰσχίσιν σου τὰ πέλας τῆς γῆς·
Γοιμανεῖς αὐτῶν ἐν ῥάβδῳ φσιλῆα·

כָּפֹר תְּהִי לִי
שִׁיר הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָיָה לָךְ בְּעֶצֶת
וּבְתוֹרַתוֹ יְהוָה יוֹסֵף לִי
וְהָיָה כְּעַץ שְׁתוּל עַל-פְּלִגְמִים
אֲשֶׁר פָּרִיו יִהְיֶה בְּעֵתוֹ
וְעַל-הוּלָא בֹל
וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ
לֹא כֹהֲרֵשִׁים
כִּי אִם-כְּפֹץ אֲשֶׁר-תִּקְטֹן רוּחַ
עַל-כֵּן לֹא יִקְמוּ רִשְׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט
וְחַסְאִים בַּשִּׁיחַ צַדִּיקִים
כִּי יוֹדַע יְיָ דֶּרֶךְ צַדִּיקִים
וְדֶרֶךְ רִשְׁעִים תֵּאֲבֹד

פֶּה רִשׁוֹנִים
וְלֹאִים יִהְיֶה דִּיק
יִתְצִבוּ מִלְכֵי אֶרֶץ
וְרוֹזְנִים נֹסִדוּ יִדֹּד
עַל-יְיָ וְעַל מַשִּׁיחוֹ
בְּנִתְקָה אֶת מִסְרוֹתֵי יְיָ
וְנִשְׁלִיכָה מִפְּנֵי עֲבֹתֵימוֹ
וְיִשְׁבְּבוּ שָׁמַיִם יִשְׁחָק
אֶרֶץ יִלְעָה לֵמוֹ
אוֹ דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶפְסוֹ
וּבְתַרְוֹנוֹ יִבְהַלֵּמוֹ
וְאִנִּי בִּמְכַתִּי מִלְכֵי
עַל-צִיּוֹן הִרְקִדְשִׁי
אִמְכָּרָה אֶל חָק
יְיָ אִמְרָה אֱלִי בְּנִי אֲתָהּ
אִנִּי הַיּוֹם יִלְדָּתְךָ
שָׁאֵל סִמְנִי וְאֲתָנָה גּוֹיִם בְּחִלְתְּךָ
וְאֲחִיתְךָ אֶפְסֵי אֶרֶץ
תִּרְוַעַם בְּשִׁבְטֵי בְּרָחִל

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Example of the Greek and the Masoretic Hebrew in the 1518 Psalms in four languages work.



Sebastian Münster, Hebrew of Ecclesiastes, (1525).

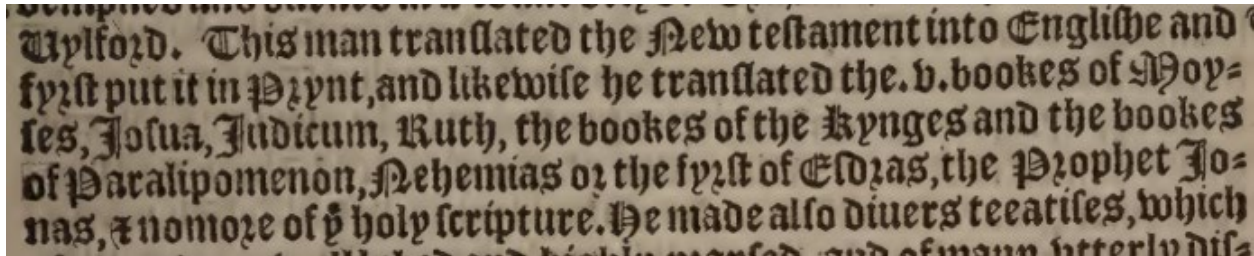
- It is clear that Tyndale had access to numerous Hebrew language resources by the time he arrived on the continent. David Daniell in *William Tyndale: A Biography* explains the following regarding how Tyndale learned Hebrew:
 - “A printed Hebrew text of Scripture would not have been too hard to come by from a German bookseller. Access to the volumes of the Complutensian Polyglot would have been of great value to him, giving him comparative texts and supporting grammar and dictionary and, for most of the Hebrew Bible, Targums, that is, Aramaic commentaries and paraphrase. For those volumes he would certainly have needed access to a library, in a university or well-equipped monastery—the notion that he did much of his Hebrew work at Wittenberg begins to look a little more attractive” (Daniell, 295).
- It is also worth noting that other Old Testament English translations were published during the time Tyndale did his own translation work. Most of them were done by Tyndale’s accomplice George Joye. These translations included the [Psalms](#), [Proverbs](#), [Isaiah](#), and [Jeremiah](#). However, these are nowhere near the accuracy and literalness of Tyndale’s Pentateuch which was based on the Masoretic Hebrew text. George Joye produced his versions by translating into English Latin versions of Old Testament books. David Daniell writes in *The Bible in English*,
 - “Joye’s general method was to stay close to his main authority (usually Zwingli) but to introduce variations from the Vulgate and elsewhere. He was not trying for any literal accuracy, and he liked to fill out the text with words and ideas of his own. . . . Joye did not break new ground. He made no fresh work from the Hebrew. Early on he showed a certain gift with trenchant English. Yet he was an innovator in that all the books he translated into English had not been touched by Tyndale” (Daniell, 167-68).
- Thus, Tyndale is in a class of his own and the first to produce a literal, English translation of the Hebrew.

Contents and Source of William Tyndale's Pentateuch and Other Old Testament Translations

- Tyndale's [1530 Pentateuch](#) included the following contents in the order shown below:
 - “W.T. to the Reader”—General Prologue to the Pentateuch.
 - “A Prologue Showing the Use of the Scripture”—A prologue providing insights to Bible study, roughly four paragraphs were added in a 1534 revision of the Pentateuch. Also serves as Tyndale's prologue to the book of Genesis.
 - Genesis
 - “A Table Expounding Certain Words”—This is the first time such a table exists to, as Tyndale explains, “expound the words which are not commonly used, and show how the Scripture useth many words which are otherwise understood of the common people, and to help with a declaration where one tongue taketh not another” (“[To the Reader](#)” [1526 New Testament](#), Tyndale, 1:390).
 - Prologue to Exodus
 - A table of words
 - Exodus
 - Prologue to Leviticus
 - Leviticus
 - Prologue to Numbers
 - Numbers
 - Prologue to Deuteronomy
 - Deuteronomy
 - A table of words
- Tyndale revised his [Pentateuch in 1534](#). The only changes of significance Tyndale made to this edition were to “A Prologue Showing the Use of the Scripture” and the text of the book of

Genesis. The title page to Genesis reads, “The first book of Moses Newly corrected and amended by W.T.” The five books of the Pentateuch could either be purchased separately or in one volume.

- In 1531, Tyndale would go on to publish his translation of the [book of Jonah](#). Edward Hall in his 1548 chronicle titled *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancastre and York* provides the following information regarding Tyndale as the translator of the historical books:



Transcription: “This man translated the New Testament into English and first put it in print, and likewise he translated the five books of Moses, Joshua, Judicum [Judges], Ruth, the books of the kings [1 Sam. – 2 Kings] and the books of paralipomenon [1 and 2 Chronicles], Nehemias or the first of Esdras [Ezra and Nehemiah], the prophet Jonas, and no more of the holy Scripture.”

- Hall believed the historical books were translated by Tyndale, not Miles Coverdale or John Rogers [Thomas Matthew].
- Furthermore, there is testimony from Tyndale that he was aware of the content of the historical books, before the Pentateuch was published, as he mentions content from the historical books in his own writings. In addition to mentioning content from the historical books, Tyndale also frequently translates and cites the Psalms and certain verses from other portions of the Hebrew Old Testament such as the Minor Prophets.
- In explaining the source text from which Tyndale did his Old Testament translation work, Slater concludes in his doctoral dissertation after comparing several passages from the book of Genesis that:
 - “Tyndale in translating his Pentateuch kept constantly before him the Hebrew text and Luther’s version, with the Septuagint and Vulgate within easy reach, and fragments of the Middle English archaisms running through his mind as he worked; that he probably made his first draft from the German, checking it constantly by the Hebrew, and departing from it in nearly every case where he detached Luther in an evasion . . .” (Slater, 54).
- Thus, Tyndale first looks at the Hebrew and then whatever he has at his disposal which can mean Luther’s translation of the Pentateuch, Hebrew helps on the continent, the Latin Vulgate, and anything else he could get his hands on. However, he is mostly on his own. The

“Middle English archaisms” Slater mentions provide further evidence to the argument that Tyndale had knowledge of the Wycliffe Bible.

Tyndale and his Handling of the Hebrew Old Testament Narrative

- Gerald Hammond in his work *The Making of the English Bible* provides the following summation regarding Tyndale’s translation work on the Old Testament and its connection to the Authorized Version:
 - “From the start, then, Bible translation was crucially different from other forms of translation. Not only were there no substantial additions to the original, or omissions from it—to have made either would have been tinkering with God’s word—but at the level of sentence and clause translators did their best to maintain a word for word equivalence. No English version maintains the equivalence more strictly than the Authorized Version, but its basis for doing so rests on Tyndale’s example. His scrupulousness is sometimes remarkable, extending as it does from his readiness to include formulaic repetitions, as in the Leah-Rachel passage, to the registering of individual pronouns; and the result is the creation of that *sui generis* Bible English which, through the Authorized Version, has had so much influence on our ways of thought and forms of expression” (Hammond, 30-31).
- Leland Ryken, in his book commemorating the 500th anniversary of William Tyndale’s New Testament titled *William Tyndale’s New Testament: A Biography of the Book That Changed Our World* echoes Hammond’s sentiments and comes to the following conclusion:
 - “If the King James Version, the very touchstone of elegant English, is largely the product of Tyndale, then obviously Tyndale is not the racy and colloquial translator that his enthusiasts and the modern advocates of dynamic equivalence portray him as being. Whatever we decide regarding the King James Bible is largely true of Tyndale also” (Ryken, 141).
- Consider Jeremiah 17:5 that Tyndale quotes in *An Answer Unto Sir Thomas More’s Dialogue*:

**Whether the pope and hys secte
to heare them raue and rage as mad men. And
therfore saith the Scripture cursed is he that tru
steth in man and maketh flesh his arme/that is
to saye/his strength. And euen so cursed is he**

Jeremiah 17:5 referenced in *An Answer Unto Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* (1531)

Transcription: "And therefore saith the Scripture cursed is he that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, that is to say, his strength."

<p>5 brenne. These thingus seith the Lord, Cursid^h the man that trostith in man, <u>and putteth flesh his arm,</u> and fro the 6 Lord his herte goth awei. Forsothe it shal ben as 'iencian treesⁱ in desert, and</p>	<p>with outen ende. The Lord seith these 5 thingis, <u>Cursid is the man that trestith in</u> <u>man, and settith fleisch his arm,</u> and his herte goith awei fro the Lord. For he 6 shal be as bromes in desert, and he schal</p>
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[Early Version \(left\) and Late Version \(right\) of the Wycliffe Bible of Jeremiah 17:5 \(Forshall and Madden, 381\)](#)

**on, which shal burne eneuere. Thus saith
the LORDE: Cursed be the man that put teth
his trust in man, and that taketh flesh for his
arme: and he, whose herte departeth from**

[1535 Coverdale Bible BL \(H18\)](#)

"Cursed be the man that putteth his trust in man, and that taketh flesh for his arme"

Beuermoze. Thus sayeth the Lorde: Cursed
 & That sa, be the man that putteth his trust in man / &
 keth flesh for *that taketh flesh for his arme: & he/whose
 his arme is / herte departeth from the Lorde. He shall be

[1537 Matthew's Bible Folio BL \(H34\)](#)

“Cursed be the man that putteth his trust in man, and that taketh flesh for his arme”

moze. Thus sayeth the Lorde. * Cursed be
 the man that putteth his truste in man, and
 that taketh fleshe for his arme: & he/whose
 herte departeth from the Lorde. He shall be

[1540 Great Bible Folio BL \(H52\)](#)

“Cursed be the man that putteth his trust in man, and that taketh flesh for his arme”

5 ¶ Thus saith the Lord, & Cursed be the
 mā that trusteth in mā, & maketh flesh his
 arme, & withdraweth his heart frō y Lord.

[1560 Geneva Bible Folio RF \(H107\)](#)

“Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arme”

5 Thus saith the Lorde,*Cursed be the man that putteth his trust in man, and that taketh flesh for his arme, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. Psal.xlix.d.
Pro.xii.e.
Iere.xlvic.
and.xlviii.
Eze.xxix.3

[1568 Bishops Bible Folio BL \(H125\)](#)

“Cursed be the man that putteth his trust in man, and that taketh flesh for his arm”

5 ¶ Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arme, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

[1611 King James Bible Folio BL \(H309\)](#)

“Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm”

- Tyndale introduces the phrase “maketh flesh his arm” to the English language and it is incorporated in the King James Bible. The example proves the point of Hammond and Ryken that what is true for Tyndale is also true of the King James Bible. It also allows us to ask, if Tyndale’s quotation of Jeremiah 17:5 ended up being verbatim to the King James Bible how much similarity would there have been with the Old Testament if Tyndale went beyond the Pentateuch and Jonah?
- We must understand this about Tyndale before we study his translation work. His main guide was the Hebrew and the Greek text. Gerald Hammond mentions how Tyndale followed the original Hebrew word order while also maintaining his own English style. He uses Tyndale’s translation of Genesis 3:1-19 as an example:
 - “The power of this passage lies in its revelation of how disturbingly close to comedy this archetypal tragedy comes, in the contrasts of God’s omniscience and the serpent’s guile with the humans’ ignorance and naivete. What gives the contrasts their strength is the unsophisticated sequential narrative. Tyndale seldom ignores the Hebrew *waw* and rarely

gives it any other form of translation than ‘and’. And to a remarkable extent the original’s word order is followed, even to the point of reproducing most of the subject-verb or verb-qualifying clause ‘inversions’ of the Hebrew. Their narrative function is that they come to represent the voice of God, giving his words a rhetorical emphasis which detaches it from more common discourse of the snake and Adam and Eve” (Hammond, 49).

- Consider the following table of similarity of select verses between William Tyndale’s translation of Genesis 3 and the King James Bible [the text in the table is that of William Tyndale’s 1530/34 Pentateuch. Bolding indicates where the wording of the King James Bible is different from that of William Tyndale. Brackets indicate changes in punctuation and word order in the King James Bible]:

Tyndale’s Pentateuch (1530/34)
“ But the serpent was subtler than all the beasts of the field which the Lord God had made [.] and [he] said unto the woman. Ah sir¹, that God hath said, ye shall not eat of all manner trees in the garden” (Gen. 3:1).
“ But God doth know, [no comma] that whosoever ye should eat of it , [no comma] your eyes should be opened and ye should be as God and know both good and evil (Gen. 3:5).
“And the eyes of both of them were opened, that [no comma] they understood how that they were naked. Then they sewed fig leaves together and made them aprons (Gen. 3:7).
“And the Lord God called [unto] Adam [.] and said unto him: [comma instead of colon] where art thou?” (Gen. 3:9).
“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto the earth whence thou wast taken : for earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19).

- The other way in which Tyndale captured the word order of the Hebrew was by maintaining the noun+of+noun construction, which is how the Hebrew uses the superlative. This is evident in phrases such as “the mother of all that liveth,” “the beasts of the field,” etc.
- Tyndale is also well-known for coining terms to meet the standard of the Hebrew. In his latest book on William Tyndale titled *William Tyndale and the English Language*, David Crystal provides five appendices alone for first recorded uses of compound nouns, gerunds, noun suffixes, abstract nouns and people nouns; one appendix on adjective suffixes; and one appendix on phrasal verbs (176-188). David Teems also provides an appendix of words Tyndale coined in

¹ In French, there is a grammar rule known as “le masculin l’emporte sur le féminin” or “the masculine takes precedence over the feminine. When using a third-person plural pronoun in a sentence to describe a group of people, and there is a group of females and one male is present in the group, the plural pronoun “ils” is used. Tyndale uses “ah sir” in Genesis 3:1 to show that Adam and Eve were in the garden together. Based on the plural pronouns used throughout Genesis 3:1-6, I agree that Adam and Eve were in the garden together when Satan tempted Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The use of “ah sir” also shows Tyndale understood the importance of male headship in the family and that there is a difference between how God made man and woman in their respective roles (1 Cor. 11:3, 7-9). “Ah sir” in Genesis 3:1 is also emblematic of the remnants of the Anglo-French that came to England after the Norman Conquest, as discussed in Bryan Ross’s message “Assessing the Pre-Tyndale Historical Context.”

Tyndale: The Man Who Gave God an English Voice (268-272). Notable words include, “Passover,” “free will,” “birthright,” “scapegoat,” and “thank-offering.”

- David Teems in his Tyndale biography writes a fictitious narrative and italicizes the words that Tyndale coined when used in the narrative. The narrative is meant to show the reader the magnitude of William Tyndale’s contribution to the English language:
 - “If you have ever been to the *sea-shore* just because the *waves* somehow enchanted you, or if on a particular visit someone kicked sand in your boyfriend’s face (an outdated and *inexcusable* act) thinking him a *weakling*, though you *refused* to believe it because you happened to be wearing *rose-colored* glasses and because of a *long-suffering* faith in your *dearly beloved*, or simply because you consider him a *goldy* man, *unbeliever* that he used to be, William Tyndale gave you the words to tell your story.
 “If by some act of *childishness* on the part of one of your friends (some particular *busybody*, though you once thought them the *salt of the earth*) you have ever been used as a *scapegoat*, or if that bad grade you got in English caused an *uproar* in your home, in spite of how *zealous* you were about Keats, how much time you spent at your *writing-table*, or how that *stiff-necked* teacher, that *taskmaster*, Mr. Jones, *grossly* misunderstood it when you said you *lost* your homework or that the dog buried it in some *ungodly* place. The *peace offering* you made him hardly moved him a single *jot*, which I am sure left you disillusioned and *brokenhearted*” (Teems, xxii).
- David Crystal writes concerning “thank-offering” in *William Tyndale and The English Language*:
 - “*Thank-offering* is less often encountered, but it’s still around. In Lev. (7.12) it takes the form of ‘sweet cakes mingled with oil’. Today it’s generally encountered in a religious setting, and there’s always a biblical echo even in a secular context. Between 1966 and 2004 a lecture series at the British Academy in London was initiated by the Association of Jewish Refugees: they called it ‘A Thank-Offering to Britain’.” (Crystal, 54).
- Clearly, Tyndale is not archaic in the twenty-first century and remember, whatever is true for Tyndale is also true for the King James Bible.

Conclusion

- Through a study of William Tyndale’s Old Testament translation work, it is clear that William Tyndale had a way with words and he was ahead of his time when it came to not just the standards necessary for proper Bible translation but also the development of the English language itself. He truly set off a wave of sixteenth and seventeenth century Bible translation

that would be based on the proper text and method and would ultimately culminate in the King James Bible we hold in our hands today.

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