The AGNT Project Report—Q4 2012

As a licensee or friend of AGNT or ANLEX, we would like to update you once a quarter about our continuing work to enhance and perfect these databases and about our plans for the future.

The Project. *The AGNT Project Report—Q3 2008* introduced the team, outlined ongoing tasks, and discussed potential tasks.

PARATEXT – A POWERFUL TOOL FOR BIBLE TRANSLATORS

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Thousands of Bible translators worldwide are currently making use of a software tool called Paratext. It was developed by the United Bible Societies in the nineties of the previous century and soon became the tool of choice for translation personnel all over the world. In 2010 UBS and SIL decided to join forces in the area of software development to further develop this tool together. This tool has been developed specifically for Bible translators, but it is also quite useful for pastors and biblical scholars. Paratext is currently only available to people involved in Bible translation. However, we are currently looking into ways to make the software available to a larger public.
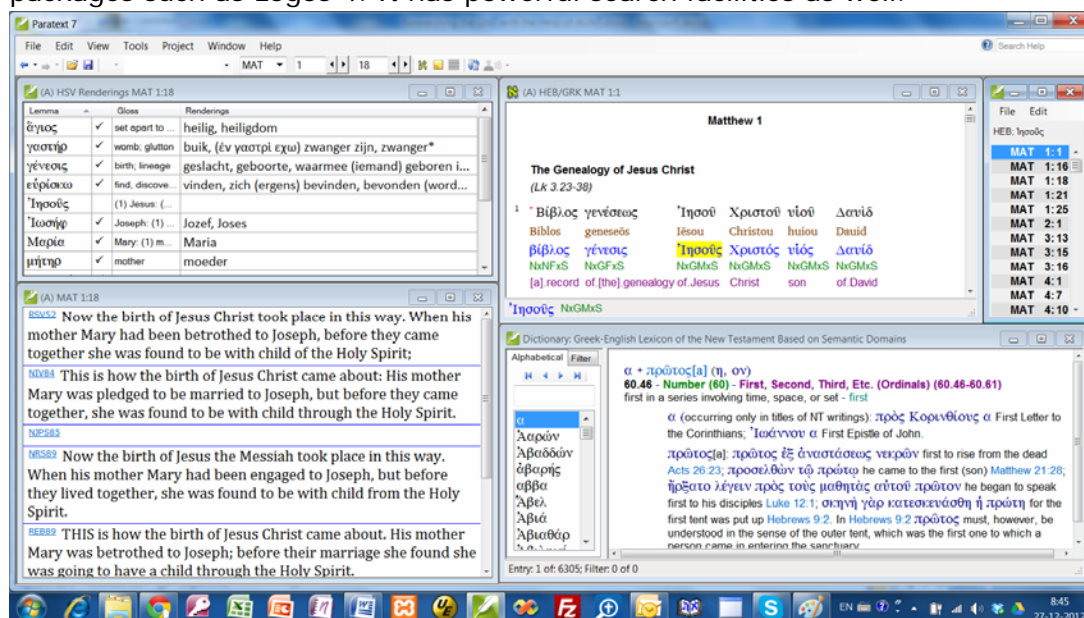
GENERAL OVERVIEW

Paratext is a helpful instrument for different aspects of the Bible translation work, such as:

- **Editing** – Paratext provides a powerful text editor using either standard format markers or styles, including a powerful spelling checker that can be used with practically any language in the world. Paratext supports 98% of all scripts in world and efforts are underway to enable the tool to handle the remaining 2% as well.
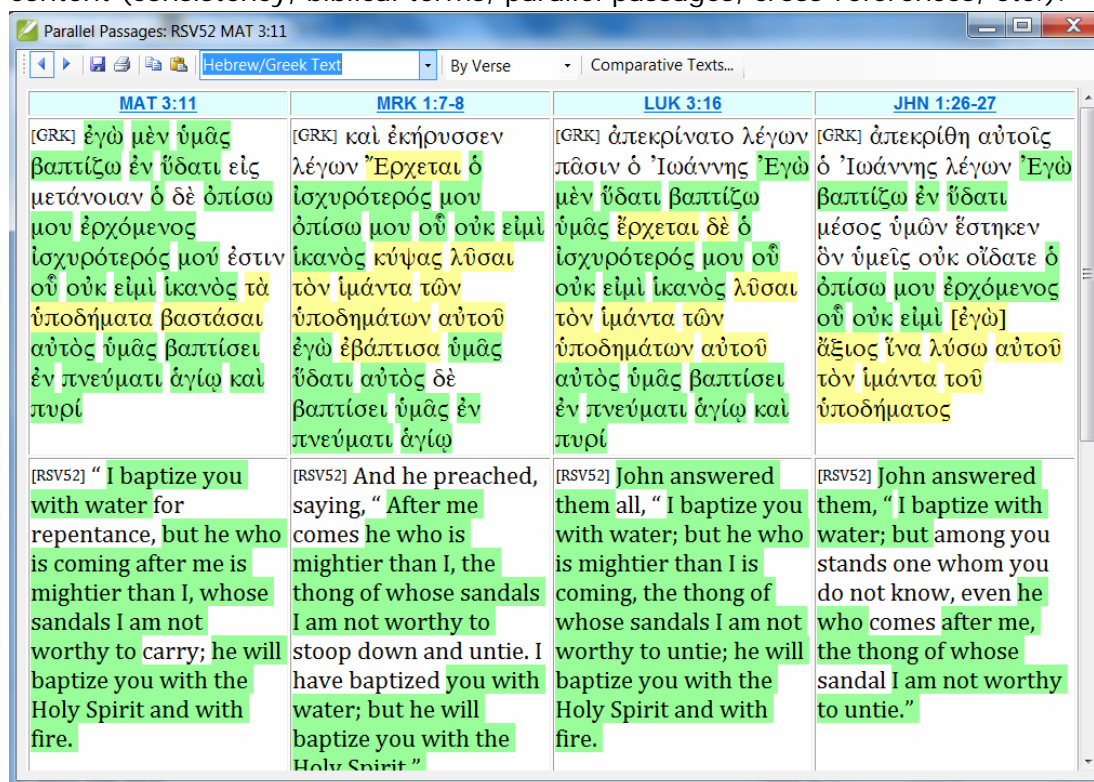

- **Research** – Paratext gives access to numerous resources, such as source language texts with analytical data, source language dictionaries, translator notes (SIL) and

handbooks (UBS), ancient texts, contemporary versions, and other useful background materials, such as checklists of biblical terms. It also supports links to other resource packages such as Logos 4. It has powerful search facilities as well.

- **Checking** – Paratext has tools that help the Bible translator check the translated text for both format (orthography, punctuation, quotation marks, brackets, layout, etc.) and content (consistency, biblical terms, parallel passages, cross-references, etc.).
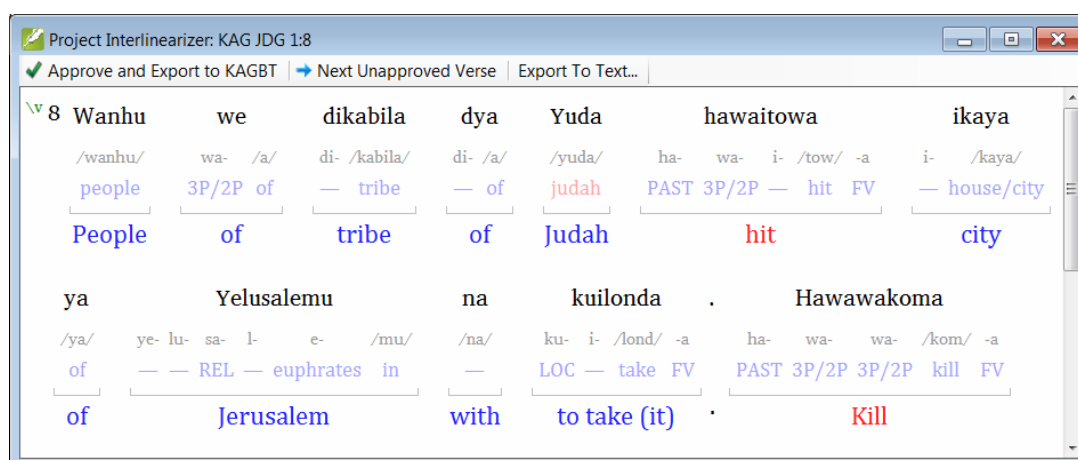

- **Publishing** – Paratext can create beautiful PDFs of parts of Scripture that include illustrations and are ready to be published for translation testing purposes. For more permanent publications it relies on another tool developed by UBS, called Publishing Assistant. This latter tool converts a Scripture text into the format required by Adobe InDesign and significantly reduces the time required for typesetting.

GLOSSING TECHNOLOGY

A feature that is especially appreciated by translators is the statistical glossing technology, which compares two Scripture texts, analyzes them, and uses statistical methods to determine the equivalents of a word or phrase in text A on the basis of the data found in text B. This technology was developed by the British and Foreign Bible Society and has several applications, such as:

- The *Guess Translations* tool, which looks for equivalents of a given word in another Scripture text.

- The Paratext *Interlinearizer*, which creates an interlinear back translation of a translated text, which can be corrected and enhanced manually by the user. The program learns from the corrections brought in by the user to create an even better back translation. A back translation generated with a computer is many times more objective than one generated by a human being and therefore gives a more reliable impression of the quality of a translation. This tool also provides the translation consultant with the opportunity to get more closely acquainted with the language he is checking and so do a much better job.

- Paratext can generate lists of translation and transliteration equivalents to be used for consistency checking. This is especially helpful for terms that are usually rendered consistently, such as names of

people and places, trees, animals, realia, etc. This means that a translator who wants to make sure that all 3000 names in the Old Testament have been rendered in a consistent fashion does not have to check everything manually, but can let the computer do most of this work. The work of the computer will inevitably have to be verified but this is easy and takes only a small fraction of the time that the entire process would have taken if it had to be carried out manually.

WORK FLOW AND DATA SECURITY

One continuous concern of a Bible translator working in an isolated part of the world is: How can I keep my precious data safe? Another serious challenge for translators working in a team is the following: How can we make sure that each one of us always has the latest version of the text in front of him?
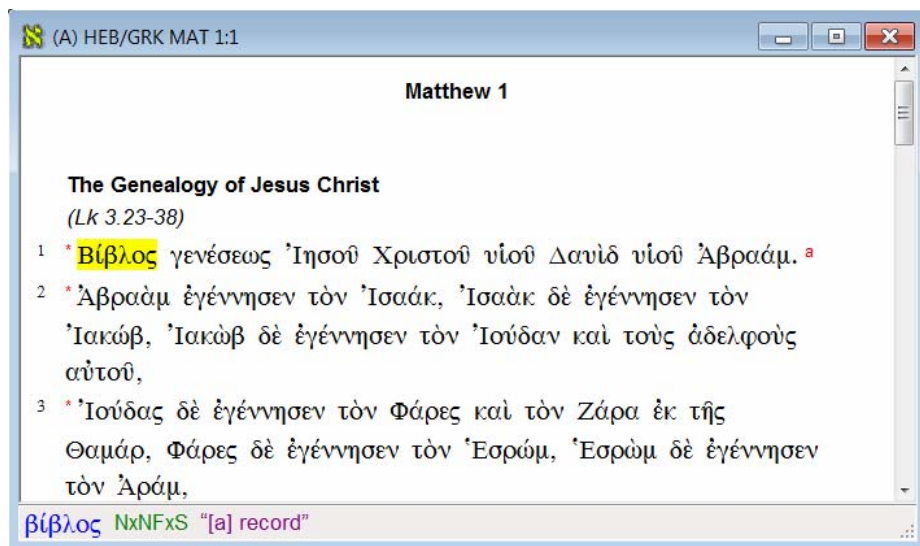
This has been resolved by Paratext's *Send/Receive* technology. All changes made by any individual team member are sent to a central place (which can be a central Paratext repository on the internet or a local drive, depending on the options that are available in a given situation) and shared with the other team members. Different team members can work on one and the same book and chapter (even though this is not generally considered best practice!). Conflicts only arise when two members of a team attempt to edit the same verse but even then they can be easily resolved.

Paratext Live is a tool that allows a translation team to work together by doing a quick *Send/Receive* every few seconds so that all team members always have the same text in front of them. This makes it possible for them to work together even if they are not working in the same location.
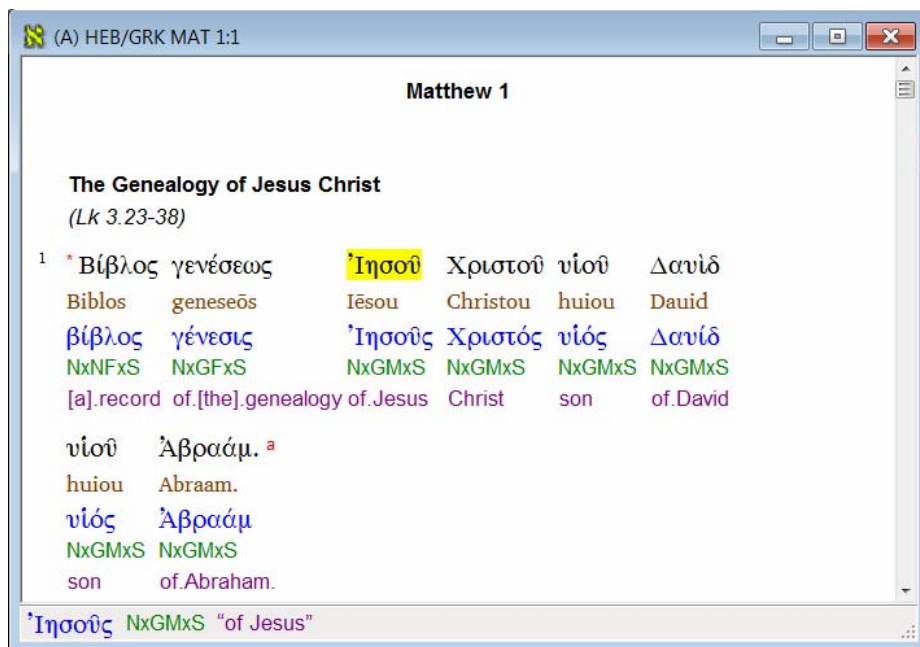
PARATEXT AND AGNT

In this section we want to investigate how Paratext can help a translator, exegete, or consultant research the source texts of the Bible. The current version of Paratext is 7.3. As far as the text and morphology of the New Testament is concerned, this version relies on the Analytical Greek New Testament (2nd edition, 2003). Paratext 7.4, which will come out in May 2013, will make use of the most recent edition of AGNT, including the ERGs (English Reference Glosses).

The screenshot below shows what a typical Paratext source text window looks like. It shows the Greek UBS text in a format that closely resembles the printed edition. The analytical data for each word is displayed on the status bar. Whenever the user hovers over a particular word with the mouse that word is highlighted and the corresponding background data are shown below.
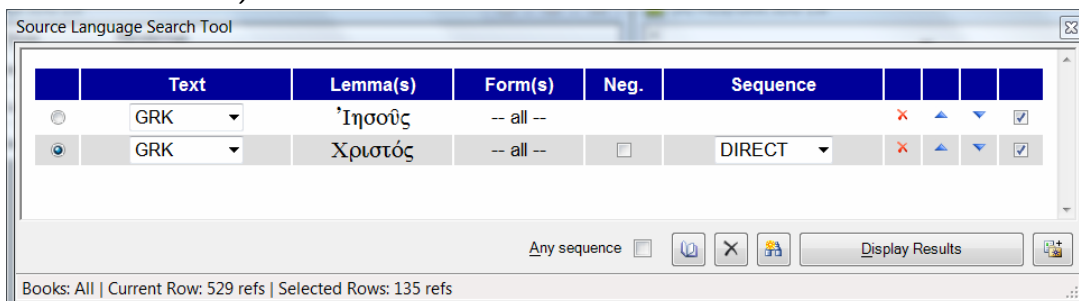
The user who prefers to view both text and analysis in an interlinear format can achieve this by changing the view settings, as can be seen in the screenshot below:
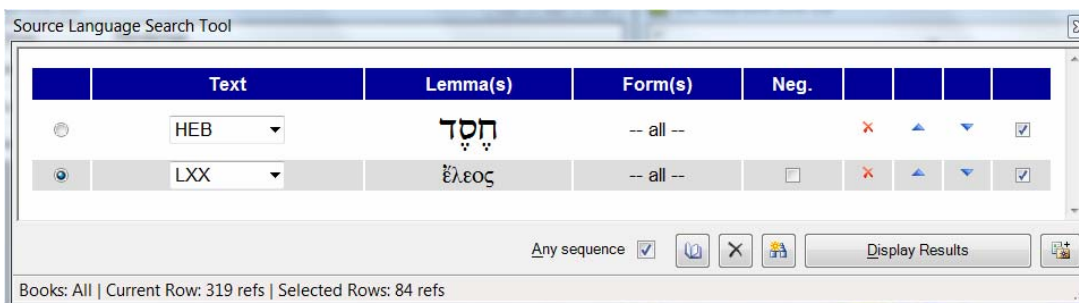

A menu with a number of basic search options pops up at a mere right click. The item that has been highlighted can be looked up in a dictionary (either in Paratext or in Logos or, in the future, ANLEX). One can also generate a list of passages where this item is found for further research.

More interesting, however, is the Advanced Search window. It allows the user options such as:

- Look for specific morphological forms of a certain word.
- Look for direct and indirect sequences of two words, such as Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (see screenshot below).

- Look for direct and indirect sequences of words and morphological forms, such as ἐπί followed by a noun in the accusative.
- Look for direct and indirect sequences of forms, such as the well-known "accusativus cum infinitivo."
- Look for words across texts, such as all verses in the Old Testament where the BHS has the word חֶסֶד "loyalty" and where the LXX has ἔλεος "mercy" (see screenshot).

- All kinds of variations are possible. Paratext has the built-in capability to compare lists of Scripture references. This allows for queries such as:
  - Display all references where the Greek NT has χάρις, but where the Revised Standard Version does not have "grace."
  - Display all references containing the names "Abraham" and "Sarah," but that do not contain the name "Isaac."

CONCLUSION

Paratext has many more features, which cannot be all dealt with in this article. More information can be found on www.paratext.org.

We can safely say that tools such as Paratext make the work of a Bible translator significantly easier. Tools like this help accelerate Bible translation and enhance the quality of the translated Bible.

Editor's Note: The AGNT Project and the United Bible Societies have signed a new agreement for UBS to use AGNT in Paratext.

As always, we remain open to developing AGNT and ANLEX in ways that are most useful to the needs of students and readers of God's Word.

Thank you for your continued support of *The AGNT Project*, for faithfully marketing the AGNT and ANLEX databases, and for making these state-of-the-art tools for studying the Greek New Testament available to students, scholars, pastors, translators, and laymen worldwide.

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