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Century and of Many Valuable First Editions in the Library of George John Earl Spencer: Volume 1
Thomas Frognall Dibdin
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THEOLOGY.

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Latin Bibles.

7. *BIBLIA LATINA VULGATA.* *Supposed to have been printed by Gutenberg, at Mentz, between the years 1450 and 1455. Folio. 2 vols.*

FIRST EDITION OF THE BIBLE; and probably the first work printed with metal types. It has not been without considerable research that this point has been established in my own mind, as the reader may perceive on consulting the subjoined note;* having deemed it more advisable to refer the curious in typographical history to the authorities therein stated, than to interrupt the course of bibliographical description in the present place. If any subsequent research should lead to a discovery more decisive respecting the period of printing this extraordinary work, the public shall be made acquainted with it; as it has not been from a blind attachment to any particular hypothesis that the foregoing conclusion is drawn.

This is commonly called the *MAZARINE BIBLE*, on account of de Bure

* See a disquisition by the author of the present work in the viiith. Number of the *Classical Journal*, published by J. A. Valpy; where the following authorities are chronologically arranged and examined. The Cologne Chronicle: Trithemius: Andrea Schottus: Scriverius: Boxhorn: Lipenius: Chevillier: Uffenbach: T. Sincerus: Marchand: Schwarz: the Abbé Sellier: Mylius: Biblioth. Berlin: Freytag: Clement: Fournier: de Bure: Cat. de Gaignat: Heineken: Masch and Boerner: Wurdtewein: the Abbé Laire: Lambinet: Daunou: La Serna Santander: Jansen: and Lichtenberger. Yet I may here remark that Mittarelli, from arguments which do not satisfy me as being clear or conclusive, disbelieves the existence of any Bible before that of 1462; which he conceives was begun in 1450. This is an overstrained conjecture indeed. *Bibl. Cod. MSS. &c. S. Michael, Venet. 1779. fol. App. col. 59—78.* In regard to Schwarz, a farther examination of his *Doc. de*

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having first discovered a copy of it in the library of Cardinal Mazarin, belonging to the ‘ Collège des quatre Nations.’ It has been described with sufficient accuracy by de Bure, Masch, Lambinet, Serna Santander, and Brunet: authorities, which have been particularly referred to in the fore-mentioned disquisition.

The work begins at the top of the first column, on the recto of the first leaf, having the first three lines printed in red, as the following fac-simile shews :

**Incipit epistola sancti iheronimi ad
paulinum presbiterum de omnibus
divine historie libris. capitulum primum.**
Rater ambrosius
tua michi munus-
cula preterea. detulit
sui et suavisimas
lras. q̄ a principio
amicitiae. fide pha

This epistle occupies nearly three leaves and a half. At the bottom of the second column of the fourth leaf :

Orig. Typog. pt. ii. p. 5, has convinced me that his evidence does not exactly apply to the subject. He says the types of this Bible are of equal magnitude with those of the Psalter of 1457 ; and adds, ‘ that he has casually heard of this copy being taken from the Carthusian Monastery and carried into Britain.’ The reader will only compare the fac-similes of these and the Psalter types, and he will readily see the fallacy of Schwarz’s conclusion. The two following remarks of Schwarz, relating to the expenditure of 4000 florins upon this Bible, are worth subjoining :

From the expression “und hoff das,” &c. it would appear that Gutenberg does not declare himself necessitated to lay out the whole money upon printing books alone, but in the wages of workmen, and other similar contingencies.

The other expression, “das Werck der Bücher,” means typography, or printing books in general ; so that those who, with Salmuth, conceive them applicable to this Bible alone, are in error. Pt. i. p. 10. note: see too p. 15.

Mentz ; 1450-5.] LATIN BIBLES. 5

Incipit p̃logus in penthateucū moisi
which is printed in red. At the top of the first column of the fifth leaf, printed in red, we have

**Incipit liber bresith quē nos genesim
dicim'**

The Pentateuch, and the other books of the Old Testament regularly follow ; but the introductory parts, or heads of chapters, are, in this copy, throughout the whole of the two volumes, after the first chap. of Genesis, inserted with a pen, in red ink. The first volume terminates with the Psalms of David, on the reverse of the leaf, about mid-way down the column : thus

[**℟**]audate
eū in cymbalis bene sonātib⁹: lauda-
te eū ī c̃pbalis iubilatōnis : oīs spirit'
laudet dñm. **A**lla.

The second volume commences with the epistle of St. Jerom ' concerning the books of Solomon, which are followed by Isaiah. In chapter xxxvii, 29, it is falsely printed ' ponā circulū ergo in auribus tuis,' which has been faithfully copied in the Mentz edition of 1462. The Old Testament concludes on the recto of the last leaf with the second book of Maccabees. The New Testament begins on the recto of the ensuing leaf, with the prefatory epistle of St. Jerom. The Evangelists are succeeded by the Epistles of St. Paul : after the Epistle to the Hebrews, begin the Acts of the Apostles. Then follow the usual canonical epistles of the other Apostles. In St. John's, chap. v. v. 7, the three celestial witnesses are inserted. The Book of Revelations, or Apocalypse, commences on the recto of the leaf immediately following the end of St. John's second epistle, and terminates at the bottom of the second column, on the reverse of the last leaf. Lambinet * has given a brief, and badly executed specimen of this termination ; in which he has inserted the words ' Explicit apocalipsis,' as if they were printed ; but I suspect, like those in the present copy, they are executed with a pen.

Masch and Serna Santander describe this edition as having, in the first four leaves and half, or 9 pages, but 40 lines ; in the tenth page 41 lines : the remaining pages, where there is no breaking off, or termination, have uniformly 42 lines in every column. The first volume

* *Origine de l'Imprimerie, &c.* ; edit. 1810, 2 vols. vol. i. p. 104-5.

contains 324 leaves, the second 317: making 641 leaves in the entire work; as Lichtenberger justly observes. See his *Initia Typographica*, p. 31. Each of the columns are about 3 inches and $\frac{3}{4}$ in breadth, and $11\frac{1}{4}$ in height; having a space of about $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch between them. The occasional omissions, or variations, in the dots to the *i*, are considered by De Bure as the effect of an imperfection in the art of printing; but Masch says that the semicircular mark is sometimes introduced when the *i* is to be pronounced long, and the omission of a mark takes place when the *i* is short: yet who ever wrote *mihi* as two long syllables? See the fac-simile.

This work is justly praised for the strength and beauty of the paper; the exactness of the register, the lustre of the ink, and the general splendor and magnitude of the volumes. As an early, if not the earliest, specimen of the art of printing, it is a wonderful production. There are neither signatures, catchwords, numerals, nor running titles; and the water-marks are those of the Bull's head and Bunch of Grapes. In the readings of the text (says Masch,) there is nothing particularly worth mentioning: they agree, almost entirely, with those in the Mentz edition of 1462.

Copies of this work are necessarily of extraordinary rarity. At Paris there are two; one UPON VELLUM magnificently bound in 4 vols: the other upon paper, imperfect—in which appears the memorandum of an illuminator, or binder, of the name of Cremer, with the date of 1456: clearly proving the existence of the Bible before that period. Mr. Edwards favoured me with a fac-simile of this ms. remark, which is published in the *Classical Journal*, vol. iv. p. 471-484. The Mazarin Library contains the paper copy described by De Bure. The Royal Library at Berlin has a copy UPON VELLUM; and three others, upon paper, would appear to be in the public libraries at Frankfort, Hanover, and Leipsic. In the collection of the Cardinal Loménie de Brienne there were two copies (qu. if not one of the foregoing?) which were sold for 2499 livres each. See Laire's *Index Libror. ab inv. typog. &c.* vol. i. p. 5. n°. 5-6; and particularly Fischer's *Typographischen Seltenheiten*; pt. iii. p. 7, &c. 1801, 8vo.

In our own country, besides the present very beautiful copy, upon paper, there are similar ones in the Royal and Bodleian libraries; and a fourth is in the fine collection of Sir Mark Masterman Sykes, Bart. Maittaire, in the first volume of the index to his *Annal. Typog.* p. 136, speaks of a copy of a Bible, in Lord Oxford's library, which, from his description of it, might have been the present one.

LATIN BIBLES. 7

8. BIBLIA LATINA VULGATA: *Without Place, Name, and Date; but probably printed by Albert Pfister, before the year 1460.* Folio. 3 vols.

These volumes are distinguished in the bibliographical world as the BIBLE OF SCHELHORN; and they have yet many partisans who assign to them a date anterior to that of the foregoing impression. The celebrated Schelhorn published a small brochure at Ulm in 1760, 4to. entitled ‘*De antiquissima Latinorum Bibliorum editione*, &c.; which he afterwards republished in his edition of Cardinal Quirini’s work *De Optimorum Scriptorum Editionibus quæ Romæ prodierunt*, *Lindaug.* 1761, 4to. see p. 61—71, with a correct specimen of the type, from a passage in the book of ‘Revelations.’ The singularity, size, and apparent rudeness of the characters, induced many to believe it to be the first printed text of the Scriptures. Meerman and Masch* both give it the first place in the order of their catalogues of Bibles; but the former does not subscribe to its precedence, and the latter does not give any opinion respecting its comparative antiquity with the foregoing. In the absence of the name of the printer, it was assigned to the press of Gutenberg, or Fust and Schœffer; but chance has discovered the legitimate artist who executed it. Clement was ignorant of its existence; and although a copy of it was in the Gaignat collection, yet De Bure concludes his brief account of it by wishing some ingenious and learned bibliographer to describe it more largely and satisfactorily.

In a German periodical publication styled by Camus ‘*Magazin historique-littéraire-bibliographique*,† Meusel gave an account of an ancient volume, discovered by a minister of St. Ulrich, at Augsbourg, of the name of M. J. A. Steiner, and containing three treatises: viz. *The Complaint of Death*; *A brief History of Joseph, Daniel, Judith, and Esther*; and the *Poor Man’s Bible*;‡ all printed in the German language, and adorned with wood-cuts. Of these, the second treatise happens to have a colophon including the name of the printer and the date of the book.

* *Orig. Typographica*; vol. ii. 284: *Bibliotheca Sacra*; vol. iii. p. 64-5-6: ‘Sed quæ ex hisce duabus editionibus antiquissima dicenda sit, non determinamus,’ says Masch.
† *Historisch-Litterarisch-Bibliographischen Magazin*, 1792, 8vo.

‡ This is one of the famous *Biblia Pauperum*; concerning which Heineken and Daunou have been copious and entertaining. The reader will find both the above works of Pfister described in the ensuing pages.

This curious volume was sent to Paris, to be deposited in the National Library; and Camus, A.D. 1799, wrote a minute, elaborate, and interesting account of it, which was published at the end of the second volume of the *Mémoires de l'Institut*; after a few copies, printed on larger paper, had been previously distributed among the author's friends. His account is adorned with fac-similes of water-marks, types, and wood-cuts: and it is immediately obvious, that the types of the present Bible, and those of the Four Brief Histories just mentioned, resemble each other. As there happens to be a copy of this latter uncommonly rare work in the present collection, I have had an opportunity of carefully examining both, and I find them exactly conformable. Now, as the name of Albert Pfister, the town of Bamberg, and the date of 1462, all appear in the colophon* of the Four Histories, designating the printer, place, and year of the execution of the volume, it would seem to follow that Albert Pfister printed the present Bible. But it is not a necessary consequence that this Bible should have been an *anterior* production: the same types might have been *afterwards* used. Yet

Camus informs us that, at the end of the observations published by Meusel, there is a curious passage from a MS. of the date of 1459, which is preserved in the library of Cracow.† After specifying, in sufficiently barbarous Latin, the working or printing with metal and wooden types, the author concludes thus: 'et tempore mei [sc. 1459] Bambergæ quidam sculpsit integram bibliam super lamellas, et in quatuor septimanis totam bibliam in pergamino subtili præsignavit sculpturam.' 'Without doubt,' adds Camus, 'the four weeks relate to the time of finishing the impression, and not to that of the composition of the blocks. It is indisputable that Pfister printed at Bamberg in 1462, ‡ with types like those of the present Bible; he, therefore, might have executed this Bible; except that it seems too extravagant for belief that upwards of 430 sheets could have been worked off in the space of a month. Paul of Prague's MS. is, in other respects, vague and obscure; he talks before of cutting or engraving 'in laminibus æreis, ferreis, ac ligneis solidi ligni, atque aliis,' &c. Lichtenberger intimates that this Bible might have been printed at Mentz;

* This colophon is given in a subsequent page.

† The name of the author of this MS. was Paul of Prague, a doctor of medicine and philosophy: see Camus, *ut supra*: and La Serna Santander *Dict. Bibliogr. Choisi*; vol. 1. p. 125. vol. 11. p. 180.

‡ Panzer, vol. 1. 142, was incredulous upon this point. He supposed the Bamberg books to have been the production of some unsettled, itinerant printer.

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Damasus concerning the Four Gospels. The first five lines are indented, to make room for the (illuminated) letter B. It ends on the reverse of the last leaf, at top of the second column, with,

**Dicit, q̄ testi-
monium perhibet istorum. Eti-
am. Venio cito amen. Veni do-
mine ihesu. Gracia domini no-
stri ihesu cristi cum omnibz vo-
bis amen.**

This copy is perfect at the commencement and conclusion of each volume, but it wants the Prophets and the Libri Hagiographi. A perfect copy, according to Masch, contains 264 leaves in the first volume, 310 in the second, and 296 in the third : 870 leaves in the whole work. There are neither running titles, numerals, signatures, catchwords, nor capital initials : nor are the chapters distinguished by any head-title. A full page contains 36 lines. The water-mark is too much overpowered by the text to be distinctly deciphered ; but the paper is of a very excellent manufacture : being firm, delicate, and of a soft and creamy tint. In regard to the readings of the text, Masch tells us that they frequently vary from those of the Mentz impression of 1462. He exhibits numerous specimens of these variations ; in which, however, Schelhorn has been more copious. He conceives that the types are cut in wood, from their comparative rudeness, and differing from each other : but this may be questionable. In the copy now under consideration, the beginning of each volume is printed much better than the conclusion ; although the second volume is pretty uniformly executed throughout. The workmen probably became more careless towards the conclusion, which may account for the disparity.

A copy of this Bible is in the Brunswick Library ; another is in that of the University of Jena ; Schelhorn had an imperfect one, and Panzer's concluded with the Psalter ; which had been transposed. A fragment of it is in the Leipsic Library. That in the Gaignat collection, which was UPON VELLUM, was sold for 2100 livres : a price greatly beneath its value ; occasioned, perhaps, from the article being so superficially described. See *Cat. de Gaignat*: vol. i. n°. 16. It is now in Count M'Carthy's collection. His Majesty is in possession of a perfect paper copy.