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Frontmatter
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The Origin of Printing

This work, first published in 1774, consists of a reissue of the *Dissertation on the Origin of Printing in England* by Conyers Middleton (1683–1750), first published in 1735, together with an abridgement of an account of the origin of printing by the Dutch lawyer Gerard Meerman (1722–71). It was compiled by the scholar and publisher William Bowyer (1699–1777) and his apprentice and later business partner John Nichols (1745–1826), several of whose works are also published in this series. Both essays debate the origins of printing, disputing the traditional account that Gutenberg introduced it to Europe and Caxton to England. Appendices describe the progress of printing in Greek and Hebrew, and the first printed polyglot Bibles. The names and achievements of Gutenberg's contemporaries in Germany and the Low Countries are given their due in this interesting overview of the earliest period of printing in the West.

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[More information](#)

T H E
 O R I G I N
 O F
 P R I N T I N G:
 I N T W O E S S A Y S:

- I. The Substance of Dr. MIDDLETON's Dissertation on the Origin of Printing in England.
- II. Mr. MEERMAN's Account of the First Invention of the Art.

An APPENDIX is annexed,

1. On the first-printed GREEK Books.
2. On the first-printed HEBREW Books, with Observations on some modern Editions; and a Collation, from WALTON's Polyglott, of a remarkable Passage, as printed in *Kings* and *Chronicles*.
3. On the early POLYGLOTTs.



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M D C C L X X I V.

Cambridge University Press

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William Bowyer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE present publication was at first designed to have been extended no farther than to re-print the substance of Dr. MIDDLETON'S Dissertation, with Remarks on some mistakes of that ingenious Gentleman; which are thrown into the form of Notes, to distinguish them from the passages they are intended to illustrate.

The SECOND ESSAY, though not pretended to be *a complete History* of the Origin of the Art, we may venture to assert, gives a clearer account of it than any book hitherto published in this kingdom. It contains, in as concise a manner as possible, the substance of the *Origines Typographicæ* of the very learned and ingenious Mr. GERARD MEERMAN, Pensionary of Rotterdam; and may be considered as the outlines of that curious publication, with supplementary Notes on some interesting particulars.

Mr. MEERMAN very clearly fixes the first rudiments of the art to LAURENTIUS, at Harleim; the improvement of it to GEINSFLEICH senior and his brother GUTENBERG * (assisted by the liberality of FAUSTUS) at Mentz; and the completion of the

* In English, GOOD-HILL. See PALMER, p. 17.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-07383-7 - The Origin of Printing: In Two Essays
William Bowyer
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

iv A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

whole to PETER SCHOEFFER, in the same city. The claim of Strasburgh is amply considered, and evidently overthrown.

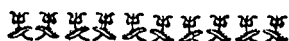
Of the APPENDIX, we need only say, that the assistance of two valuable Friends has enabled us to make it truly interesting. The Reader will there find a distinct account of the first-printed Greek and Hebrew books; a collation of two parallel passages in the Hebrew Scriptures; and a particular history of the early Polyglotts.



C O N-

[v]

C O N T E N T S.



I. Dr. MIDDLETON's DISSERTATION.		P. 1—55
CAXTON constantly supposed by our Historians to have introduced Printing into England.	1	
This supposition rendered doubtful by the appearance of a book at Oxford, dated 1468.	2	
The Oxford printer named FREDERICK CORSELLIS, as appears by the substance of a record published by Mr. ATKYNS on the subject.	— — — —	3
A remarkable particular in this record confirmed by Mr. MEERMAN.	— — — —	5
Dr. M. disputes its authenticity.	—	7—17
The Doctor's objections answered, in notes C. D. E. F. G. H. I. K.	— — — —	ibid.
Dr. M. supposes the Oxford book to have been printed with a wrong date, as several have been in other places, either by mistake or design.	— — — —	21—24
A remarkable instance of an erasure in an edition of BARTHOLOMÆUS <i>de proprietatibus rerum</i> detected by Mr. MEERMAN.	— — — —	21
All books with an earlier date than 1457 may be pronounced forgeries,	— — — —	22
		The

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07383-7 - The Origin of Printing: In Two Essays

William Bowyer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi		C O N T E N T S.	
The Chinese mode of Printing invented in 930.			23
Dr. M. supports his opinion by a mistake of a numeral in a book printed at Cambridge in 1734.	— — — —		24
Curious remarks on this passage, from <i>The Weekly Miscellany</i> , April 26, 1735.	— —		ibid.
Account of the first use of Signatures, In which Dr. M. is mistaken.	— —		27 ibid.
Dr. M. supposes further, that the date of the Oxford book is a false one, as no other appeared from that press for 111 years.			29
This interval probably accounted for.	—		ibid.
A list of books printed at Oxford before 1500.			30
The date of one by THEODORIC ROOD com- puted by Olympiads.	— —		31
Dr. M's remarks on the Olympiads and Luf- trums of the Romans.	— —		32
In which he is mistaken.	— —		ibid.
As he is also in the interpretation of part of the colophon in this book.	— —		36—38
Two Printers in London much earlier than our writers have imagined.	— —		39
Printing very early practised by the School- master of St. Alban's*.	— —		40
			A mis-

* In PALMER's *History of Printing*, p. 327, mention is made of a *Book of Miscellanies*; in the first leaf of which is an account of two books printed at St. Alban's, viz. the Book in which the observations are written; and the *Bookys of Haukyng and Huntynz*, described above, p. 42. These obser-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07383-7 - The Origin of Printing: In Two Essays

William Bowyer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)C O N T E N T S. vii

A mistake of Mr. STRYPE's pointed out by Dr. M, — — —	41
Further proofs of CAXTON's being the first Printer in England, — —	42
This not irreconcilable with the story of CORSELLIS.	43
CAXTON's first book was the <i>Recule of the Histories of Troye.</i> — —	47
He is supposed to have been an assistant in the printing of BARTHOLOMÆUS <i>de proprie- tatibus rerum</i> at Cologne in 1470.	49
The date in this book a false one, —	ibid.
He was an apprentice to a mercer. —	50
Spent 30 years beyond seas in merchandizing.	ibid.

observations Mr. PALMER has printed, and adds at the end, "Thus far we have copied from my Lord's manuscript notes." Mr. MEERMAN (vol. I. p. 142) remarks on this passage, "Re penitus examinata, varia sunt, quæ eandem narrationem plusquam suspectam, imo falsam reddant. Primum est, quod ipsa annotatio evincat, eam non deberi peritissimo PEMBROKE Comiti, ut persuadere lectoribus PALMERIUS voluit, sed alii cuidam anonymo, (quippe semper in tertia persona de PEMBROKE Comite loquitur, e. g. *as may be seen in my Lord's books*, itemque *the which my Lord also has*) quem ego ipsum PALMERIUM, insignem, dum viveret, impostorem, inque ædibus Pembrokianis familiarem fuisse suspicor."—I have been informed that an assistant with PALMER in this work was PSALMANAZAR, an impostor by his own confession. That he had connexions with PALMER, appears from his Life written by himself, and printed since his death. W. B. 1766.

Employed

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07383-7 - The Origin of Printing: In Two Essays

William Bowyer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	C O N T E N T S.	
Employed in a public capacity by Edw. IV.		50
His books were printed in Westminster Abbey, under the patronage of Abbot MILLING, not (as has been supposed) of ISLIP.		52
Dr. M. accuses EACHARD of a mistake in fixing the beginning of EDWARD I's reign.		53
The Historian vindicated. ——— ———		53
CAXTON said to have pursued business till 1494.		54
No longer than 1491. ——— ———		ibid.
Though he printed for EDWARD IV, and HENRY VII; it does not appear that he was a sworn servant and printer to the crown.		55
In the year 1504, however, we find that title assumed by PYNSON. ——— ———		ibid.
As it had before been by WILLIAM FANQUE.		ibid.



II. Mr. MEERMAN'S Account of the First Invention of the Art.

The obscurity attending all former accounts of its origin. ——— ———		56
Whence it arises, ——— ———		ibid.
The honour of the invention claimed by Har- leim, Mentz, and Strasburgh, ———		57
To be ascribed, in some measure, to each.		ibid.
The Testimony of HADRIAN JUNIUS.		ibid.
Some account of GALIUS and QUIRINIUS, from whom JUNIUS learnt what he has related.		ibid.
Critical observations on the name of FAUSTUS.		59
		Account

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07383-7 - The Origin of Printing: In Two Essays

William Bowyer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

C O N T E N T S.		ix
Account of the famous editions of TULLY'S Offices.	59	
An error of SCHMIDIUS pointed out. ———	60	
Another of MAITTAIRE'S, with Dr. TAYLOR'S remarks on it. ——— ——— ———	61	
A remarkable particular in Duke LAUDER- DALE'S Bible. ——— ———	ibid.	
M. DE BURE'S account of these editions of TULLY.	62	
The Greek quotations in them barbarously printed.	100	
Remarks on JUNIUS'S narrative. — —	64	
Though some particulars of it are to be set aside, it is true as to the main fact.	ibid.	
I. LAURENTIUS fil. JOHANNIS the first inventor.	ibid.	
Who proceeded, however, no farther than <i>separate wooden types.</i> — —	ibid.	
His first essay was about 1430. — —	65	
He died about 1440, after having printed the <i>Horarium</i> , the <i>Speculum Belgicum</i> , and two different editions of <i>Donatus.</i>	65—70	
SCRIVERIUS'S account of the invention a little dif- ferent from that of JUNIUS. ——— ———	65	
A description of the <i>Horarium.</i> ———	66	
When <i>direction-words</i> , <i>folios</i> , and <i>running-titles</i> , were respectively introduced. ——— ———	ibid.	
ULRIC ZELL the first printer at Cologne. ———	67	
Printing esteemed a reputable employment, and no derogation to nobility. ——— ———	69	
Coat-armour granted to the <i>Typothetæ</i> and <i>Typographi.</i>	ibid.	
A summary account of the life of LAURENTIUS.	69—72	
JUNIUS'S account of the robbery committed by a servant of LAURENTIUS. — —	72	
An inquiry who was the guilty person. —	74	
Proved to be JOHN GEINSFLEICH senior.	76—78	
b	There	

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07383-7 - The Origin of Printing: In Two Essays

William Bowyer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x C O N T E N T S.	
There were two JOHN GEINSFLEICH's; the youngest distinguished by the name of GUTENBERG. — — —	76
The character of the latter. — —	ibid.
GEINSFLEICH senior, the <i>first</i> printer in Mentz, published, in 1442, ALEXANDRI GALLI <i>Doctrinale</i> and PETRI HISPANI <i>Tractatus</i> . — — —	79
These tracts used in schools in ERASMUS's young days. — — —	ibid.
Many curious specimens of early printing discovered by Mr. MEERMAN, unnoticed by former writers. — — —	80
Particularly <i>two editions</i> of the Grammar of ALEXANDER, one of them shewn to him by Mr. BRYANT in the Sunderland Library at Blenheim, printed at Florence <i>before</i> 1472. — — —	ibid.
GEINSFLEICH at first used <i>wooden types</i> , cut after the model of those which he had stolen. — — —	84
In 1443, he entered into partnership with FUST (who supplied money), MEIDENBACHIUS, and others. — —	85
In 1444, they were joined by GUTENBERG. — —	ibid.
The latter, by the assistance of his brother, first invented <i>cut metal-types</i> . —	ibid.
With which, in 1450, they printed the <i>earliest</i> edition of the Bible, which was seven or eight years completing. — —	86
This not the edition which FUST sold in Paris as a manuscript. — —	ibid.
	This

C O N T E N T S.		xi
The partnership dissolved; and a new one entered into between FUST and GUTENBERG. — — —		86
This latter one also dissolved in 1455. —		ibid.
A magnificent edition of the <i>Psalter</i> published in 1457, by FUST and SCHOEFFER.		ibid.
Another printing-office opened by GUTENBERG at Mentz. — — —		87
Who printed, in 1460, the <i>Catholicon</i> Jo. DE JANUA. — — —		ibid.
Account of this <i>Catholicon</i> , and of a curious <i>Vocabulary</i> printed at Alta Villa in 1469. —		ibid.
GUTENBERG used none but <i>wooden or cut metal types</i> . — — — —		88
The completing of the art is owing to PETER SCHOEFFER, the servant and son-in-law of FUST, who invented a mode of casting the <i>types</i> in matrices. — —		89
And was probably the first engraver on copper plates.		ibid.
TRITHEMIUS's narrative of the invention.		ibid.
A correction of Mr. MEERMAN's, in a passage of this narrative; with remarks on the correction.		90
A further account of the invention, by Jo. FRID. FAUSTUS — — —		91
JOHN SCHOEFFER's account of it, —		92
Who was mistaken in his mother's name.		ibid.
The first book printed with the improved types was DURANDI <i>Rationale</i> , in 1459.		92
From this year to 1466 many other books were printed by FUST and SCHOEFFER.		93
b 2		More

xii	C O N T E N T S.	
More copies printed on vellum than on paper.		ibid.
In 1471 SCHOEFFER was in partnership with CONRAD HENLIF, a kinsman of his master FUST. — — —		ibid.
SCHOEFFER continued to print many books till 1490. — — —		ibid.
The claim of <i>Straßburg</i> fairly considered.	93—99	
GUTENBURGH attempted in vain to accom- plish the art in that city. ———		94
The first actual printers there were MENTELIUS and EGGESTENIUS, from whom no books appear till after the dispersion of the Mentz Printers in 1462. — —		96
From this period Printing spread rapidly through Europe. — — — —		ibid.
At Constantinople in 1490. ——— ———		ibid.
In Africa and America, in the middle of the next century. — — — —		ibid.
In Russia, about 1560. ——— ———		ibid.
In Iceland, on the authority of Mr. BRYANT, 1612.		97
The notion of Printing being invented at Strasburgh accounted for. — —		ibid.
JOHN SCHOEFFER's duplicity, in ascribing the invention to his grandfather FUST. ———		98

A P P E N -

C O N T E N T S. xlii

A P P E N D I X.

N° I.

On the first-printed Greek Books. 102—107	102—107
The first Greek printing was a few Sentences of TULLY's <i>Offices</i> , at Mentz, 1465, which were miserably incorrect. —	102
In the same year, some quotations in LACTANTIUS, neatly printed in <i>monasterio Sublacensi</i> . <i>ibid.</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
A Semi-gothic type first used in this edition of LACTANTIUS; the characters before this time having been uniformly Gothic, whence our Black . — — —	<i>ibid.</i>
The Roman type, when, where, and by whom, first used. — — —	<i>ibid.</i>
A beautiful edition of AULUS GELLIUS, in 1469. — — —	<i>ibid.</i>
The printers of it almost ruined, by not being able to sell the copies of the books they printed. <i>ibid.</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
Their petition, presented to the Pope. —	<i>ibid.</i>
The first whole Greek book was the Grammar of CONSTANTINE LASCARIS, at Milan, 1476. <i>ibid.</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
A Greek <i>Psalter</i> printed at Milan in 1481. 103	103
And one at Venice (also the <i>Batrachomyomachia</i>) in 1485. — —	<i>ibid.</i>
Remarks on an edition of PLINY's <i>Nat. Hist.</i> at Venice, 1469. — —	<i>ibid.</i>
Remarks on the Venice <i>Psalter</i> . —	<i>ibid.</i>
HOMER was printed at Florence, in 1488. —	104
THEOCRITUS, at Milan, in 1493. — —	<i>ibid.</i>
	Short

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07383-7 - The Origin of Printing: In Two Essays

William Bowyer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv	C O N T E N T S.	
	Short account of ALDUS. — —	104
	He invented the <i>Italic</i> character, and why. —	105
	Account of R. and H. STEPHENS, and of the state of early Greek printing in France.	ibid.
	Greek correctly printed in that kingdom sooner than has been generally supposed. — —	ibid.
	The first Greek edition of <i>the whole Bible</i> .	106
	A passage in MALTTAIRE, on a curious edition of the Latin Bible, vindicated against Mr. PALMER, on the authority of Dr. TAYLOR. —	ibid.
	Account of another scarce edition of the Latin Bible, published by SERVETUS. — —	107

N^o II.On the first-printed Hebrew Books; with
Observations on some modern Editions.

		108—117
	The <i>Psalms</i> first printed in 1477. — —	108
	The Pentateuch, in 1482. — — — —	ibid.
	The <i>Prior Prophets</i> , in 1484. — —	ibid.
	The <i>Posterior Prophets</i> , in 1486. — —	109
	The <i>Hagiographia</i> , in 1487. — — — —	ibid.
	THE WHOLE TEXT in one volume, in 1488.	ibid.
	A fine copy of the <i>Hagiographia</i> (the only one at that time known of), presented by Dr. PELLER to Eaton College. — — — —	ibid.
	Another since discovered at Rome. — —	ibid.
	About the year 1520 the Jews adopted the <i>Masora</i> . — — — —	110
	The whole of the <i>New Testament</i> first published in Hebrew in 1599. — — — —	ibid.
	A pre-	

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07383-7 - The Origin of Printing: In Two Essays

William Bowyer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

C O N T E N T S. xv

A <i>pretended</i> ancient Gospel of St. Matthew, with a Latin translation, in 1537. — —	ibid.
A remarkable edition of the Bible published at Mantua, in 1742. — —	ibid.
Amazing variations in the several printed copies.	111
A Collation of the Account of the Dedication of the Temple. — —	114—116
Some account of STANISLAUS GRSEPSIUS, and the singular fate of his treatise <i>De multiplici fide, et talento Hebraico</i> . — —	117

N° III.

On the first-printed Polyglotts.

The first Polyglott work (printed by PORRUS at Geneva, in 1516) described. —	118
Some account of PORRUS. — —	ibid
Remarks on the Septuagint version; and on the Illyrian, Gothic, Arabic, Æthiopic, Armenian, and Syriac versions. — —	ibid.
Account of SAADIAS. — —	ibid.
PORRUS the first printer of Arabic. —	119
2000 copies of his <i>Pfalter</i> printed, by order of JUSTINIAN Bishop of Nebo, besides 50 on vellum.	ibid.
Account of POTKEN, and his <i>Pfalter</i> of 1518.	120—127
Particular remarks on this <i>Pfalter</i> of POTKEN, and on LE LONG's account of it. — —	ibid.
Whether ERASMUS was the first editor of Polyglott Books. — — —	ibid.
The Complutensian edition of the Bible, by Cardinal XIMENES, published in 1522.	128
5	A Poly-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07383-7 - The Origin of Printing: In Two Essays

William Bowyer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi		C O N T E N T S.	
A Polyglott Pentateuch at Constantinople, in 1546.	— — — —		128
Another, at the same place, in 1547.	—		129
The Antwerp Polyglott, 1569—1572.		ibid.	
Remark of Dr. KENNICOTT on this edition.		ibid.	
Heidelberg Polyglott, 1586.	—		130
The edition of WOLDERUS, in 1596.	—	ibid.	
Remarks on it.	— — —	ibid.	
The Polyglott of HUTTERUS, 1599.	—		131
Remarks on it.	— — —	ibid.	
LE JAY'S Polyglott, 1645.	—		132
Bishop WALTON'S, 1657.	— —	ibid.	
Some account of its contents.	—	ibid.	
Remarkable particulars relating to this edition.	— — —		133—135
A curious letter, on a compliment to the Protector, suppressed by Bishop WALTON after the Restoration.	— —		135—139
The Hebrew and Samaritan Text, in the English Polyglott, incorrectly printed.			140
Remarks on some errors in the Preface to it.		141, 142	
Further observations on the name of JOHN SCHOEFFER'S mother, p. 92.	— —		143
And on the passage of TRITHEMIUS, quoted in p. 90.	— — —		144

THE