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Vulgate Bible

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on paper

Southern Germany or Northwestern Austria (Duchy of Bavaria), c. 1460-1500 (colophons dated 1463[?], 1475, 1500)

Two volumes, volume 1: *i* + 317 + *i*, volume 2, *i* + 354 + *i* folios on paper, volume 1, two watermarks, oxhead with eyes and no nostrils below a long single-line rod topped with a five-petal flower, both placed between chainlines and centered over chainline, matching Solothurn, 1461, Wasserzeichen-Informationssysteme CH7740-PO-64988 and CH7740-PO-64992, and three-peak mountain below long single-line rod topped in a seven-petal flower, placed between chainlines, matching Eichstätt, 1460, Wasserzeichen-Informationssysteme (AT8100-PO-151310); volume 2, two watermarks, three-peak mountain, Eichstätt, 1460, as in volume one, and five-peak mountain below long double-line rod with a cross and topped with a seven-petal flower, placed between chainlines, similar to Würzburg 1462, Wasserzeichen-Informationssysteme, DE9045-PO-154214, modern pencil foliation at top recto corners, complete (collation obscured by glue reinforcing spine), folded frame ruling (justification 215 x 147 mm.).

Volume 1: written in dark brown ink in two columns of 50 lines by several scribes in a cursive gothic script, major incipits in a gothic bookhand in either black or red ink often written over red cursive rubrics, majuscules throughout touched with red, several layers of black and red chapter numbers in Roman and Arabic numerals, red running titles occasionally bisected by trimming, hundreds of alternating red and blue four-line initials, numerous red and blue four- to nine-line initials with fine penwork extending into borders, two large painted initials with scrolling acanthus leaves and vines: on f. 1 in tones of blue, green, yellow, and pink, extending into borders on the inner and upper margins, on f. 5v in tones of green and yellow with fine red penwork extending along outer margin, trace of leather bookmark tab on f. 4v, water damage in first quire with considerable text loss in first 8 folios (beginning with 90% and tapering to 10% loss, initials largely unscathed), some moisture staining at top edge throughout, minor cockling of leaves from tight binding, limited flecking and stains of use, missing top corner on f. 31 and outer edge of f. 87 with no text loss, excised lower margins with repairs on ff. 1, 174, 190, and 317, paper pasted over a crossed-through note on f. 138, overall in good condition. Nineteenth-century binding with red-brown leather over cardboard, front and back stamped and tooled with decorative floral outer and inner frames, rounded spine gold-stamped with eight lines and title 'BIBLIA SACRA SCRIPTA' and 'I', bookblock edges speckled in blue, endbands in red, yellow, and white, vivid green silk ribbon bookmark attached at head of spine, pastedowns and flyleaves in blue-green card paper with nineteenth-century bookplates and library stamp, some cracking of cover at hinges and scuffing on front and edges, water damage and discoloration to edge speckling, bottom endband detached at back, bookmark showing wear and staining, in very good condition overall. Dimensions 296 x 210 mm.

Volume 2: written in dark brown ink in two columns of 50 lines by several scribes in a cursive Gothic script, major incipits in either a gothic bookhand or in a cursive gothic script in either black or red, majuscules touched with red on ff. 1-27 and occasionally thereafter, several layers of black and red chapter numbers in Roman and Arabic numerals, incomplete red or black running titles, hundreds of alternating red and blue four- to nine-line initials, water damage in inner margin in first three quires and at bottom and/or outer margins throughout latter two thirds of manuscript varying from minimal text blurring to complete loss (5-20% of text affected, some blurring of initials), heavily worn first and last folios otherwise limited flecking and stains of use, minor cockling of leaves from tight binding, repairs to excised top or bottom margins on ff. 1, 2, 174, 226, 287, 353, and all margins of f. 354 with text loss at top and bottom,

paper pasted over a crossed-through note on f. 225v, overall in fair condition. Nineteenth century binding matching that of vol. 1, minor cracking at top and bottom of hinges and scuffing on covers and corners, most of edge speckling washed away, bottom endband partially detached, bookmark showing some wear and staining, in very good condition overall. Dimensions 294 x 210mm.

The first printed book, the Gutenberg Bible of 1455, took its place within a revived tradition of larger-format Bibles. Our manuscript is a large two-volume Bible with textual features, including numerous prologues by Isidore of Seville, that raise intriguing and still unanswered questions about its exemplar. It is equally fascinating as a physical object, exhibiting various stages of production over time, with several layers of script and decoration. Fifteenth-century manuscript Bibles, still relatively under-studied and much less common than thirteenth-century examples, are relatively rare on the market.

PROVENANCE

1. As indicated by the paper and script, this manuscript's main text was completed after 1460 in what is now southern Germany or northwestern Austria; a post-production colophon (discussed below) places it specifically in what was then Lower Bavaria. The manuscript was written by several scribes in an economical script, with sometimes imperceptible scribal changes. A partially erased scribal colophon at the end of volume 2 (f. 354v) once included a date: it appears to have read 1463, but only the 1 and 3 are undisturbed (see COLOPHONS below). This date would agree with the manuscript's watermarks.

2. There are three additional colophons in volume 2 (see COLOPHONS below). On f. 320, a colophon states this manuscript was made in Lower Bavaria in 1475 (it was once pasted over, making it now partially illegible). Another colophon, in the same hand, was copied immediately below the original scribal colophon on f. 354v, but it has been nearly blacked out, and is illegible. The final colophon, added by another scribe immediately below this one, marks the completion of the whole project in 1500.

Neither of the scribes who added these colophons contributed to the manuscript's main text, but they may have been responsible for some of the (roughly written) running titles and a layer of chapter numbering. Unprofessionally executed, these were added at some point after the manuscript's completion, perhaps inspiring the removal of the 1463[?] colophon and addition of the 1475 colophon. While the red and blue initials in both volumes are contemporary with the main text, the penwork and more lavish painted initials, both found only in volume one, may be somewhat later additions. Moreover, some rubrics—by various hands unidentifiable with those found in the main text—were added or overwritten (perhaps decades) after the initial production; the overwritten rubrics post-date the penwork. These final additions may have prompted the final completion colophon dated 1500.

3. In vol. 1, there is a contemporary note on Exodus, chapter 22, in the lower margin of f. 41v, citing Nicholas of Lyra; several sixteenth-century notes cue events in 1 Kings (ff. 145v-150), indicating one reader's particular interest in this book. In vol. 2, Proverbs 30 (f. 47), Job 24-27 (ff. 93v-94), and parts of Nahum, Habakkuk, and

Zephaniah (ff. 214v-216) feature markup by a later hand to clarify the script and abbreviations, and provide punctuation.

4. Several folios have had their margins excised to remove notes (traces remain at the edges), and squares of paper have been pasted over blacked out notes on vol. 1, f. 138 and vol. 2, f. 225v. These lost notes may have once indicated provenance.
5. The front pastedowns and flyleaves of both volumes hold the same two nineteenth-century bookplates and library stamp from the Schönborn-Buchheim family. The larger black-and-white printed bookplate on the pastedowns carries the family's crest: a crowned lion striding across three peaks within a roundel topped by a crown. The smaller bookplate on the flyleaf recto has the same crowned lion, this time in red, and below it "Manuscr. 13" handwritten in German Kurrentschrift. Near these, a round stamp in blue ink places the manuscript at the "Gräf Schönborn Bibliothek" at Schloss Schönborn. Additional brief notes on the pastedowns in orange and ordinary pencil identify the volumes as MS 13 and in a more recent unknown collection, MS 806.

The Schönborn-Buchheim family is the so-called 'Austrian' branch of the House of Schönborn, a mediatised noble family with a long and illustrious history in the Holy Roman Empire. Appearing first around Rhiengau (Hesse) in 1275, the Schönborn's original seat was in the County of Katzenelbogen. Over subsequent centuries they held influence as lords, barons, and then counts, and occupied positions as bishops, prince-bishops, cardinals, and prince-electors, reaching their height in 1642-1756 (called the *Schönbornzeit*). Schloss Schönborn, built in Geisenheim (Hesse) in 1550, is now a wine estate owned by the Schönborn-Wiesenheim (Franconian) branch of the family. When they acquired this manuscript is unknown; they may have been its first owners. It is also unclear when the manuscript left their possession, but it was probably sometime in the twentieth century.

TEXT

Volume 1, ff. 1-317, in the following order: ff. 1-5, [General prologue] Frater ambrosius [Stegmüller 284]; ff. 4v-5, [prologue to Genesis] Desiderii mei [Stegmüller 285]; ff. 5v-30v, Genesis; ff. 31-52, Exodus; ff. 52v-66v, Leviticus; ff. 67-87, Numbers; ff. 87v-105r, Deuteronomy; ff. 105v-107v, Ruth; f. 107, [prologue to Baruch] Liber Baruch vulgo autem lxx [unidentified; not in Stegmüller]; ff. 107v-111, Baruch; ff. 111v-112, [prologues to Joshua] Tandem finito [Stegmüller 311], Post mortem Iosue moysi dominus alloquitur [De Bruyne, 1914, p. 43, chapter list to Joshua]; ff. 112v-125, Joshua; ff. 125-138, Judges (lacking title); ff. 138-139 [prologue to Kings] Viginti et duas [Stegmüller 323]; ff. 139-157, 1 Kings; ff. 157v-172v, 2 Kings; ff. 172v-190, 3 Kings; ff. 190v-207, 4 Kings; f. 207rv, [prologue to Chronicles] Si septuaginta [Stegmüller 328]; ff. 207v-222v, 1 Chronicles; ff. 222v-242, 2 Chronicles; ff. 242v-243, [prologue to Ezra], Itrum [=Utrum] sit difficilium [variation on Stegmüller 330]; ff. 243-248, 1 Ezra; ff. 248v-255v, Nehemiah; ff. 255v-264v, 2 Ezra; f. 265, [prologue to Tobit] Chromatio et helyodoro..., Mirari non [Stegmüller 332]; ff. 265-270v, Tobit; f. 270v, [prologue to Judith] Aput [sic] hebreos [Stegmüller 335]; ff. 270v-278, Judith; f. 278v, [prologue to Esther] Librum hester, Rursum in libro [Stegmüller 341 and 343, copied as one prologue]; ff. 278v-285v, Esther; f. 285v, [prologue to Maccabees] Machabeorum libri duo [Stegmüller 551]; ff. 285v-304, 1 Maccabees; ff. 304v-317, 2 Maccabees; [f. 317 blank].

Volume 2, ff. 1-354v, in the following order: f. 1rv, [prologue to Jerome's translation of the Psalms in Hebrew] Scio quosdam [Stegmüller 443]; ff. 1v-35, Psalms, *iuxta hebraica*; [f. 35v blank]; ff. 36-47v, Proverbs; ff. 48-52, Ecclesiastes; ff. 52-54, Song of Songs; f. 54, [prologue to Wisdom] Liber sapientie [Stegmüller 468]; ff. 54v-62v, Wisdom; ff. 62v-63, [biblical introduction to Ecclesiasticus, copied as a prologue] Multorum nobis; ff. 63-85, Ecclesiasticus; f. 85rv, Athanasian Creed, lines 1-28 on the Trinity (erroneously marked as Ecclesiasticus 52); ff. 85v-99v, Job; ff. 100-125v, Isaiah; f. 126, [prologue to Jeremiah] Ieremias propheta [Stegmüller 487]; ff. 126-155v, Jeremiah; f. 155v-158, Lamentations; f. 158, [prologue to Baruch] Liber iste [Stegmüller 491]; ff. 158-161v, Baruch; ff. 161v-162, [prologues to Ezekiel] Ezechiel propheta [Stegmüller 492], Ezechiel qui in Latinum ... in sepulchro et arphaxat [Stegmüller 5202 and 5203]; ff. 162-187v, Ezekiel; ff. 188, [prologues to Daniel] Daniele prophetam iuxta [Stegmüller 494], Daniel interpretatur iudicium [Stegmüller 5204]; ff. 189-199v, Daniel; ff. 199v-200, [prologue to minor prophets], Non idem [Stegmüller 500]; f. 200, [prologue to Hosea] Temporibus ozie [Stegmüller 507]; ff. 200-204, Hosea; f. 204rv, [prologues to Joel] Sanctus joel [Stegmüller 511], Joel propheta ... mortus est atque sepultus [Stegmüller 5208 and 5209], Johel phatuel cuius [unidentified; cf. Stegmüller 510]; ff. 204v-205, [prologues to Amos], Ozias rex [Stegmüller 515], Amos qui interpreter ... cum patribus suis [Stegmüller 5210 (Isidore, *Liber proemiorum*, PL 83, 170BC), with *De ortu et obitu partum*, ch. 43, PL 83, 143]; ff. 206-209, Amos; ff. 209-209v, [prologues to Obadiah] Iacob patriarcha, Hebrei [Stegmüller 519 and 517 copied as one prologue], Abdias servus domini inter omnes prophetas ... venerabiliter requiescunt [variation on Stegmüller 5211 (Isidore, *Liber proemiorum*, PL 83, 171A), with his *De ortu et obitu partum*, Ch. 44, PL 83, 144]; ff. 209-210, Obadiah; f. 210rv, [prologue to Jonas] Sanctum ionam [Stegmüller 524], Ionas interpretatur columba ... pergitur Tiberiadem [Stegmüller 5212 (Isidore, *Liber proemiorum*, PL 83 171B-172A), with his *De ortu et obitu partum*, ch. 45, PL 83, 144-145]; f. 211v, [prologues to Micah] Temporibus ioathe [Stegmüller 526], Micheas propheta terminatur [variation on Stegmüller 5213]; ff. 211v-214, [prologues to Nahum] Naum prophetam [Stegmüller 528], Naum qui est [Stegmüller 5214]; ff. 214-215, Nahum; ff. 215-216, [prologues to Habakkuk] Quatuor prophete [Stegmüller 531], Abacuk interpretatur ... passionemque salvatoris [Stegmüller 5215], ff. 216-217, Habbakuk; f. 217rv, [prologue to Zephaniah] Tradunt hebrei [Stegmüller 534], Sophomas speculator [Stegmüller 5216]; ff. 217v-218, Zephaniah; ff. 218v-219, [prologue to Haggai] Ieremias propheta [Stegmüller 538]; f. 219rv, Haggai; ff. 219v-220, [prologue to Zechariah] Anno secundo [variation on Stegmüller 539]; ff. 220-224, Zechariah; f. 224rv, [prologues to Malachai] Deus per moysen [Stegmüller 543], Malachias qui [Stegmüller 5219]; ff. 224v-225v, Malachai; f. 226, [prologue to Matthew] Matheus ex iudea [Stegmüller 589]; ff. 226-242v, Matthew; f. 243, [prologue to Mark] Marcus evangelista [Stegmüller 607]; ff. 243-253, Mark; f. 253, [prologue to Luke] Lucas Syrus [Stegmüller 620]; ff. 253v-271, Luke; [prologue to John] Hic est iohannes [Stegmüller 624]; ff. 272-284, John; f. 284v, [prologue to Romans] Romani sunt in partes [Stegmüller 677]; ff. 284v-290v, Romans; f. 291, [prologue to Corinthians] Corinthetae sunt achaici [Stegmüller 685]; ff. 291-297, 1 Corinthians; ff. 297-301, 2 Corinthians; ff. 301v-303v, Galatians; ff. 303v-305v, Ephesians; ff. 306-307v, Philippians; ff. 307v-309, Colossians; ff. 309-310, 1 Thessalonians; ff. 310v-311, 2 Thessalonians; f. 311, [prologue to 1 Timothy] Tymotheum instruit [Stegmüller 765]; ff. 311-312v, 1 Timothy; f. 312v, [prologue to 2 Timothy] Item Tymotheo scribit [Stegmüller 772]; ff. 313-314, 2 Timothy; f. 314, [prologue to Titus] Tytum commonefacit [Stegmüller 780]; ff. 314-315, Titus; f. 315, [prologue to Philemon] Philemoni familiares [Stegmüller 783]; f. 315, Philemon; ff. 315-320, Hebrews; f. 320v, [prologues to Acts] Lucas anthiocenses natione syrus [Stegmüller 640], Actus

apostolorum nudam [Stegmüller 631]; ff. 320v-338, Acts; f. 338rv [prologue to Jacob] Non enim ordo est ita apud [Stegmüller 809; erroneously numbered Acts 29]; f. 338v, [prologue to Jacob] Iacobus apostolus sanctus ... investigare possit [unidentified; cf. Stegmüller 806]; ff. 338v-340, Jacob; f. 340, [prologue to 1 Peter] Ante[?] nunc divites et plorate ... andree apostoli [unidentified; cf. the conclusion of Stegmüller 812, erroneously numbered Jacob 5]; ff. 340-342, 1 Peter; f. 342, [prologue to 2 Peter] Per fidem hunc ... manifestat et cetera [Stegmüller 818, variant incipit]; ff. 342-343v, 2 Peter; f. 343v, [prologue to 1 John] Rationem verbi [Stegmüller 822]; ff. 343v-344, 1 John; f. 344, [prologue to 2 John] Usque adeo [Stegmüller 823]; f. 344, 2 John; f. 344v, [prologue to 3 John] Gayum prelati [Stegmüller 824]; f. 344v, [prologue to Jude] Iudas apostolus frater iacobi [Stegmüller 826]; ff. 344v-346, Jude; ff. 346-354v, Apocalypse.

COLOPHONS

f. 320, Original scribal colophon, "Iste codex <?> e<s?>/-sis[?] <c.l..> finit[?] p<?>/ inferioris bavarie nationis / A.D. 1475" (This Book <largely illegible section> in Lower Bavaria in 1475).

f. 354v, later(?) colophons, "Explicit liber apocalypsis. anno 1[...]3 amen."; "[first line lost] / <...> ons nationis bavariae" (largely illegible, but concluding "in the nation of Barvaria); "finit anno domini 1500 in <die?> dominica letare" (Finished in the year of our Lord 1500 on Laetare Sunday [the fourth Sunday in Lent]).

The biblical version called the Latin Vulgate today dates back to the work of St. Jerome (d. 420), who was commissioned by Pope Damasus I in 382 to revise the Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*) text of the Gospels using the Greek text. After completing this task, Jerome continued in his work, eventually translating most books of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. Many of the prologues in this Bible, and in other Latin Bibles from the Middle Ages, were written by Jerome himself to accompany his new translations.

The fifteenth century was an important period in the history of the medieval Vulgate, although one that has not yet been the subject of a detailed scholarly study. There was a revival of larger format "lectern" Bibles during this period, which survive in significant, but relatively small numbers, especially when compared with the number of Bibles copied in the thirteenth century. Two important textual recensions were current. Bibles associated with Windesheim congregation are of particular interest since Johannes Busch in his Chronicle (c. 1464), tells us that the Canons prepared a new, corrected text of the Vulgate for use within the congregation (Greitemann, 1937). The most famous fifteenth-century Bible, however, is not a manuscript, but rather the first printed book, Gutenberg's Bible of 1455. The text of this Bible has been studied (Needham, 1987), and allowing for some important differences, it is generally based on the thirteenth-century Paris Bible.

It is noteworthy, therefore, that the order of the books of our Bible and the set of prologues used to preface certain biblical books differ both from the Windesheim Bible and the Paris Bible. The order of the books is as follows: v. 1, Genesis-Deuteronomy, Ruth, Baruch, Joshua, Judges 1-4, Kings 1-2, 1-2 Chronicles, 1 Ezra, Nehemiah, 2 Ezra, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1-2 Maccabees; v.2, Psalms, Proverbs-Ecclesiasticus, Job, Major and Minor Prophets (including Baruch again), Gospels, Pauline Epistles, Acts, Catholic Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

Positioning Ruth following Deuteronomy, instead of after Judges, is very unusual, and may simply be an error, as is the insertion of Baruch immediately after Ruth. A contemporary hand noted the error, and stated that Baruch should instead follow Jeremiah, which in fact it does, meaning there are two copies of Baruch in this Bible. The position of Maccabees in the middle of the Old Testament rather than at the end, is also of note (cf. Berger, 1893, pp. 335-336, no. 108, 117, 118-125, for some similar orders, none duplicating the order in our Bible exactly). Finally, this Bible, very interestingly, includes the Hebraica Psalter, Jerome's translation from the Hebrew, which is notable since the large majority of manuscripts of the medieval Vulgate include the Gallican Psalter, dating back to Jerome's translation from the Greek Septuagint.

Turning to the prologues, we note the absence of the set of prologues particularly characteristic of the Paris Bible (Light, 2012), and the inclusion of numerous prologues by Isidore of Seville (see TEXT, above, prologues to Ezekiel, Daniel, and to many of the minor prophets). Although we do not know how widely the Isidorian prologues circulated in other fifteenth century Bibles, earlier in the Middle Ages, certainly in the thirteenth century, they circulated primarily in Bibles from Spain. Also worthy of note is the fact that the beginning of the Athanasian Creed was copied, by the main scribe, at the end of Ecclesiasticus. Could this Bible from fifteenth-century Bavaria have been copied from an earlier Spanish Bible? The actual text of this Bible has not yet been studied, but based on this evidence, there is strong likelihood that it will repay further study. As a physical artifact, this Bible is just as fascinating. Its various stages of production, range and layers of scripts, and layers of decoration, all promise to tell a fascinating story, just waiting to be unraveled.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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