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Vulgate Bible

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

Northern France (Paris?), c. 1230-1240

i (parchment) + 375 + *i* (parchment) folios on parchment, complete (collation *i-viii*¹⁶ *ix*²⁰ *x*¹² *xi-xiv*¹⁶ *xv*¹⁸ *xvi-xvii*¹⁶ *xviii*¹⁸ *xix-xx*¹⁶ *xxi*¹⁴ *xxii*¹⁶ *xxiii*¹⁰ *xxiv*¹² [-12, cancelled with no loss of text]), occasional catchwords (many excised or partially cropped), quires signed on the first leaf in the lower margin in Roman numerals (some signatures excised), ruled in lead usually with the top two and bottom one horizontal rules full across, full length single vertical bounding lines, prickings outer margins (justification 140 x 88-86 mm.), written below the top line in a very small, upright gothic bookhand in two columns of 59 to 55 lines, blank spaces for rubrics, running titles in capital letters in red and blue in the upper margins (some trimmed), paragraph signs in alternating blue or red, "modern" chapters indicated in the margins in Roman numerals in red and blue and sometimes by a 1-line colored initial within the text, "old" chapters indicated in the body of the text by 1-line red or blue initials, 3- to 7-line red, blue, or parted red and blue initials parted with blue or red penwork decoration introducing the prologues), 6- to 9-line parted red and blue initials with extensions up to 34 lines (Genesis initial extending full column) with red and blue penwork decoration at the beginning of the biblical books, small initials painted in red for the Interpretations of Hebrew Names, flyleaves and opening folios darkened, edges darkened throughout, some defects on the parchment including small cuts in the margins, not affecting the text (see for example quire 18, ff. 275-293), old repairs to the parchment, some leaves with paler ink (e.g. ff. 9, 16, 18v-19, 19v-20, 21v-22, 22v, 23v, 28, 36v, 37v-38, 38v-3939v, 40v-41), restoration of parchment at the lower right corner of the first leaf, a small nail is protruding from the gutter on f. 194, cockled, overall in very good condition. Modern binding (indeterminate date) of pasteboard covered with white paper vellum, spine with five raised bands, front pastedown lifted, covers bowed. Dimensions 195 x 130 mm.

The two most important innovations observed in thirteenth-century Bibles, the new very small portable format and the text known as the Paris Bible, are evident in this early example of a "working" Bible. It includes functional pen decoration delineating the text, is small in dimensions (but not excessively so), and is copied in a very tiny script, but is easy to handle (and even to collate). Binders often altered the dimensions of "pocket" Bibles, but this manuscript in contrast is preserved close to its original dimensions and survives with prickings in the margins. This is a Bible that will reward research into its text and as a physical artifact, providing us with invaluable evidence into how the Scriptures were used during the later Middle Ages.

PROVENANCE

1. Written and decorated Northern France, likely in Paris c.1230-1240, probably on the early side of that date range, and even in the late 1220s, as suggested by the evidence of the script and decoration. The script does begin below the top line, generally a sign of a date after c.1230; the style of the pen decoration is very generally comparable to manuscripts from the second quarter of the thirteenth century copied in Paris (Stirnemann, 1990, cat. 25 and 25), but with some traits that are more closely related to earlier manuscripts (Stirnemann, 1990, cat. 21 and 23).

Textually this Bible shares many of the features of the Paris Bible, as will be discussed below, but with details of the prologues and the chapters aligning it with Bibles copied in the first three decades of the thirteenth century (Light, 1994). In particular, note the presence of older chapter divisions (unnumbered) indicated by one-line initials painted in red or blue in the body of the text. These "early" features of the text do not establish the date of the manuscript, but they are evidence of the likely use of an exemplar from the early decades of the thirteenth century and lend support to a date in the early part of the second quarter of the century.

We can find no evidence that would allow us to confidently assert that this Bible was copied anywhere but in Northern France, and perhaps in Paris itself. Ruzzier has argued that quires of sixteen leaves are a feature of small-format Bibles made in England, but as a careful examination of her statistics shows, there are exceptions to this rule of thumb (see especially Ruzzier, 2022, pp. 106-107 and cf. Ruzzier, 2013, p. 116).

2. Numerous marginal annotations and/or corrections by contemporary or nearly contemporary hands throughout (we have not identified any annotations in distinctively English scripts). In the Gospels, cross-references to the other Gospels were added in the margins using modern chapters (functionally replacing the Canon Tables and Eusebian sections found in earlier Bibles).
3. Numerous annotations and some pen trials or inscriptions on the front flyleaf. In particular, we note the following verses relating to the health of Rome attributed to the eleventh-century cardinal, Peter Damian: "P. Damiani Cardinali/ Roma ferax febrium necis est uberrima frugum / Romane febres sunt iure stabilique faithful" (Rome fertile in fevers, abundant in the fruits of death and to which, by an immutable pact, fever is always faithful) (cf. Hare, 1875; these verses are traditionally attributed to Peter Damian writing to Pope Nicholas II).
4. Inscription with a date of "1454" (front flyleaf) and a legible beginning: "Ego Nicolaus...hospitali Romae..."; there are other notes on the back flyleaf and pastedown, including a later shelfmark(?), "No 1."
5. France, private collection.

TEXT

Front flyleaf, recto; [verso blank], List of the books of the Bible with the number of chapters in each book, and other exegetical notes.

ff. 1-336v, Latin Bible with prologues as follows: f. 1, [General Prologue], Frater Ambrosius [Stegmüller 284]; f. 3, [Preface to the Pentateuch], Desiderii mei [Stegmüller 285]; f. 3v, Genesis; f. 19v, Exodus; f. 31v, Leviticus; f. 39v, Numbers; f. 51, Deuteronomy; ff. 61, Joshua; f. 68, [Prologue Joshua], Tandem finito [Stegmüller 311; a note in the margin of f. 61 indicates that the prologue is missing at the beginning of the book of Joshua and is found at the end "Prologus hic deficiens habetur in fine Iosue."], f. 68v, Judges; f. 76, Ruth; f. 77, [Prologue to

Kings], Viginti et duas [Stegmüller 323]; f. 77v, 1 Kings; f. 87v, 2 Kings; f. 96, 3 Kings; f. 105v, 4 Kings; f. 114v, [Prologue to Chronicles], Si septuaginta [Stegmüller 328]; f. 114v, 1 Chronicles; f. 122v, 2 Chronicles, followed by the Prayer of Manasseh; f. 132v, [Prologue to Ezra], Utrum difficilius [Stegmüller 330]; f. 132v, 1 Ezra; f. 135v, Nehemiah; f. 139v, 2 Ezra; f. 143v, [Prologue to Tobit, Chramatio [sic] and elyodoro ..., Mirari [Stegmüller 332]; f. 144, Tobit; f. 146v, [Prologue to Judith], Apud hebreos [Stegmüller 335]; f. 146v, Judith; f. 150, [Prologue to Esther], Librum hester; Rursum [Stegmüller 341 and 343, written as one]; f. 150, Esther; f. 153rv, [Prologues to Job, Cogor per singulos; Si aut fiscellam [Stegmüller 344 and 357]; f. 153v, Job; f. 159v, [Prologue to Proverbs], lungat epistola [Stegmüller 457]; f. 160, Proverbs; f. 165, [Prologue to Ecclesiastes], Memini me [Stegmüller 462]; f. 165, Ecclesiastes; f. 167, Song of Songs; f. 168, Wisdom; f. 171v, [biblical introduction copied as a prologue], Multorum nobis; f. 171v, Ecclesiasticus (lacking the Prayer of Solomon); f. 182v, [Prologue to Isaiah], Nemo cum prophetas [Stegmüller 482]; f. 182v, Isaiah; f. 195v, [Prologue to Jeremiah], Ieremias propheta [Stegmüller 487]; f. 195v, Jeremiah; f. 211, Lamentations; f. 212, [Prologue to Baruch], Liber iste [Stegmüller 491]; f. 212v, Baruch; f. 214, [Prologue to Ezekiel], Ezekiel propheta [Stegmüller 492]; f. 214v, Ezekiel; f. 228v, [Prologue to Daniel], Daniele propheta [Stegmüller 494]; f. 229, Daniel; f. 235, [Prologue to Minor Prophets], Non idem ordo [Stegmüller 500]; f. 235, [Prologue to Hosea], Temporibus ozie [Stegmüller 507]; f. 235v, Hosea; f. 237v, [Prologues to Joel], Sanctus ioel; Ioel fatuel filius ... prophetare [Stegmüller 511 and 510]; f. 237v, Joel; f. 238v, [Prologues to Amos], Ozias rex; Amos propheta ... vocem tuam, etc.; Hic amos [Stegmüller 515, 512, 513]; f. 238v, Amos; f. 240v, [Prologue Obadiah], Iacob patriarcha [Stegmüller 519]; f. 240v, Obadiah; f. 240v-241, [Prologues to Jonah], Sanctum ionam; Iona columba [Stegmüller 524 and 521]; f. 241, Jonah; f. 241v, [Prologue to Micah], Temporibus ioathe [Stegmüller 526]; f. 241v, Micah; f. 242v, [Prologue to Nahum], Naum prophetam ... demonstrabitur [Stegmüller 528]; f. 242v, Nahum; f. 243, [Prologue to Habakkuk], Quatuor prophete [Stegmüller 531]; f. 243v, [copied in the lower margin], Abachuc amplexans [Stegmüller 530]; f. 243v, Habakkuk; f. 244v, [Prologue to Zephaniah], Tradunt hebrei [Stegmüller 534]; f. 244v, Zephaniah; f. 245, [Prologue to Haggai], Ieremias propheta [Stegmüller 538]; f. 245v, Haggai; f. 246, [Prologue to Zechariah], In anno secundo [Stegmüller 539]; f. 246, Zechariah; f. 248v, [Prologue to Malachi], Deus per moysen [Stegmüller 543]; f. 248v, Malachi; ff. 249v-250, [Prologues to Maccabees], Cum sim promptus; Memini me; Machabeorum duo [Stegmüller 547, 553, 551]; f. 250, 1 Maccabees; f. 259, 2 Maccabees; f. 266, [Prologues to Matthew], Matheus ex iudea; Matheus cum primo [Stegmüller 590, 589]; f. 266, Matthew; f. 275v, [Prologue to Mark], Marcus evangelista [Stegmüller 607]; f. 275v, Mark; f. 281, Quoniam quidem [Luke 1:1-4]; f. 281 [Prologue to Luke], Lucas syrus natione [Stegmüller 620]; f. 281, Luke; f. 290v, [Prologue to John], Hic est Iohannes [Stegmüller 624]; f. 291, John; f. 298, [Prologue to Romans], Romani sunt in patribus [Stegmüller 677]; f. 298, Romans; f. 301v, [Prologue to 1 Corinthians], Chorinthii sunt achaici [Stegmüller 685]; f. 302, 1 Corinthians; f. 305v, [Prologue to 2 Corinthians], Post actam [Stegmüller 699]; f. 305v, 2 Corinthians; f. 308, [Prologue to Galatians], Galate sunt greci [Stegmüller 707]; f. 308, Galatians; f. 309, [Prologue to Ephesians], Ephesi sunt asiani [Stegmüller 715]; f. 309, Ephesians; f. 310v, [Prologue to Philippians], Philippenses sunt macedones [Stegmüller 728]; f. 310v, Philippians; f. 311, [Prologue to Colossians], Colosenses et hii [Stegmüller 736]; f. 311v, Colossians; f. 312, Epistle to the Laodiceans; f. 312, [Prologue to 1 Thessalonians], Thessalonicenses sunt macedones [Stegmüller 747]; f. 312, 1 Thessalonians; f. 313, [Prologue to 2 Thessalonians], Ad tessalonicenses [Stegmüller 752]; f. 313, 2 Thessalonians; f. 313, [Prologue to 1 Timothy], Timotheum instruit [Stegmüller 765]; f. 313, 1 Timothy; f. 314, [Prologue to 2 Timothy], Item

Timotheo [Stegmüller 772]; f. 314, 2 Timothy; f. 314v, [Prologue Titus], Titum commonefacit [Stegmüller 780]; f. 314v, Titus; f. 315, [Prologue Philemon], Philemoni familiares [Stegmüller 783]; f. 315, Philemon; f. 315, [Prologue to Hebrews], Nunc primis dicendum [Stegmüller 793 (variant beginning)]; f. 315v, Hebrews; f. 317v, [Prologue to Acts], Lucas anthiocenses natione syrus [Stegmüller 637]; f. 318, Acts; f. 327, [Prologue to the Catholic Epistles], Non ita est ordo [Stegmüller 809]; f. 327, James; f. 328, 1 Peter; f. 329v, 2 Peter; f. 330, 1 John; f. 331, 2 John; f. 331, 3 John; f. 331, Jude; f. 331v, [Prologue Apocalypse], Omnes qui pie [Stegmüller 839]; f. 332, Apocalypse.

ff. 337-375, incipit, "Aaz apprehendens vel apprehensio, ...Zuzim consiliantes vel consiliatores eorum," *Expliciunt interpretationes*; [f. 375v, blank].

The version of the *Interpretations of Hebrew Names* that is commonly found in Bibles dating after c. 1230; Stegmüller, 1950-1980, no. 7709; printed numerous times in the fifteenth century, and in the seventeenth century, when it was included in among the works of Bede, Cologne, 1612, 3:371-480; there is no modern edition, despite the text's great importance for the history of the Bible, exegesis and preaching in the High Middle Ages. The text is attributed in one manuscript (Montpellier, Bibl. de la Faculté de Médecine, MS 341) to Stephen Langton (d. 1228). Langton was famous as a teacher and commentator on the Bible. Giovanna Murano's study of the text concludes that the evidence is lacking to support this attribution to Langton, leaving the question of the author of this text an important one for further research (Murano, 2010).

The Latin Vulgate was born anew in the thirteenth century with a new physical format and a new text. These developments started in Paris and influenced the Bible down to the present day. Paris in the thirteenth century was the center of the dissemination of the new text of the Vulgate known as the Paris Bible, which was distinguished from earlier Bibles, and linked to modern Bibles, by the order of the biblical books and new chapter divisions. The thirteenth century also saw the development of a new physical format for the Bible, the portable or "pocket" Bible (often defined as less than 200 mm. in height). The earliest examples of these very small (if somewhat chunky) one-volume Bibles were copied in Paris at the end of the 1220s or the early 1230s and the format was adopted quickly throughout Europe. The Bible discussed here is important both as an early example of a small portable Vulgate and as an early example of the Paris Bible, with some transitional features linking its text to Bibles copied in the first thirty years of the century known as Proto-Paris Bibles.

The biblical books in the Bible discussed here are arranged according to the new order of the Paris Bible, except for the omission of the Psalms (not an uncommon feature of thirteenth-century Bibles), and the inclusion of the apocryphal Epistle to the Laodiceans in the Pauline Epistles.

Paris Bibles include a set of sixty-four prologues (conveniently listed in Ker, 1969, pp. 96-97). All of these prologues are found in our Bible except the prologue to 2 Chronicles (Stegmüller 327) and the Wisdom prologue (Stegmüller 468). The omission of these two prologues in particular links our Bible directly with some examples of the Proto-Paris Bible (Light, 1994, p. 166-167). Added in the margins in early hands are an additional prologue to Habakkuk (Stegmüller 530), and prologues to the Catholic Epistles (Stegmüller 815; 818; 823; 824; 825).

One of the hallmarks of the mature Paris Bible of c. 1230 is the presence of the chapter divisions still used today (commonly referred to as "modern" chapters) and the disappearance of the summary texts known as capitula lists and their accompanying older chapter divisions. In many books of this Bible there are both older and modern chapters; older chapters are indicated with small one-line initials placed within the line of text (unnumbered), whereas modern chapters are marked in the margins with red and blue roman numerals. There are Proto-Paris Bibles that also include both sets of chapters, but the capitula lists found in these earlier Bibles have been omitted here. Finally, we turn to the text itself. Specific textual variants can be found in the Paris Bible (Quentin, 1922, p. 385); the Paris Bible variants are present in our Bible in Genesis, Leviticus, Judges, and Ruth. They are, however, absent in Judges, a very interesting fact and a reminder of the complexity of the textual transmission of the Vulgate during these years.

Transitions are particularly interesting moments to historians. The Bible described here was made at a pivotal moment in the history of the thirteenth-century Vulgate, and offers rich rewards to historians of the book, and to those interested in the text of the Bible and its reception in the thirteenth century.

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