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**Vulgate Bible, with the Prologues and Interpretation of Hebrew Names
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
[Northern France, Paris, c. 1250]**

*543 leaves (3 blank), complete (collation: i-xx²⁴, xxi¹⁶ [last 2 blank], xxii²⁴, xxiii²³ [last blank, a further blank cancelled at end]), with some alphabetical leaf signatures, double column, 46 lines, ruled in plummet, bounding-lines re-ruled in red (probably in the sixteenth century) (justification 100 x 64 mm.), written in dark brown ink in an extremely small gothic bookhand, headings in red, capitals touched in red, running-titles and chapter numbers in alternately red and blue letters, versal initials in Psalms and the Interpretations in alternately red and blue letters, 2-line chapter initials throughout in red or blue with contrasting penwork often extending the full height of the margin, a hundred and twenty-six large illuminated initials from 2 to 31 lines high (mostly 6- or 7-line), the initials in designs of twisting and spiraling foliage and animals and dragons in colors with heightening in white and gold, NINE HISTORIATED INITIALS from 5 to 46 lines high (mostly 6- or 7-line), a few early sidenotes, extremities of some marginal extensions slightly cropped, some minor stains and marks, the white pigment sometimes a bit oxidized (reversible), generally sound. Late sixteenth-century binding (perhaps Roman) of dark olive-brown morocco gilt, paneled in blind, gilt tooled with double foliate borders, central compartments stamped with corner fleurons around oval medallions within sunbursts of the Crucifixion and the Virgin and Child on a crescent moon, spine in compartments gilt, parchment endleaves and flyleaves, painted edges, stubs (only) of catches once on edge of lower cover (binding rather loose but generally sound), in a quarter brown morocco fitted case, title gilt.
Dimensions 142 x 94 mm.*

Typical Paris Bible, with its canonical texts and prologues and in the portable format that became standard in the thirteenth century. Nine historiated initials are by the Mathurin Workshop (25 recorded manuscripts), and a sixteenth-century binding with an inscription confirms its presentation to the Bishop of Tortosa during the Council of Trent, which ratified the medieval Latin Vulgate as the official Christian Bible.

PROVENANCE

1. Written and illustrated in Paris in the Mathurin Workshop, named for a Breviary made for the Trinitarian house [the Mathurins] in Paris located in the heart of the area where university manuscripts were made and active from the 1240s to c. 1250 (See Branner, 1977, pp. 75-77).
2. Presented to Martín de Córdoba y Mendoza, O.P., bishop of Tortosa 1560-74, during the Council of Trent, with a long presentation inscription on the flyleaf in a fine italic hand, in which Magister Giovanni Marssano gives the book to the bishop, saying that all who have seen it have admired its script, its smallness and antiquity, proposing that, in these troublesome

times, it should be in the hands of one who works daily for Religion and the Catholic Church during the present Council ("in Sacro isto Concilio"), dated from Rome, 15 July 1563. That was the opening day of the twenty-third and final session of the Council, probably the most important religious conference since the early Christian period. The fact that the present manuscript was evidently passed around and admired among the delegates of the Council is of some significance, since one of the Council's most enduring legacies was the ratification of the medieval Latin Vulgate as the authentic Christian Bible, distancing Catholicism from the new-fangled Protestant translations from Hebrew and Greek and culminating in the Vulgate editions of Sixtus V (1590) and Clement VIII (1592). The Spanish Dominican prelate, Martín de Córdoba y Mendoza (1512-1581), was successively bishop of Tortosa in north-east Spain, bishop of Plasencia 1574-78, and finally bishop of Córdoba, 1578-81, where he died on 5 June 1581.

3. London, Sotheby's, 11 July 1960, lot 103.
4. Arthur Haddaway (died 1981), with his leather booklabel, gilt; exhibited, *Gothic and Renaissance Manuscripts from Texas Collections*, University of Texas, Austin, 1971, no. 2; his sale, Christie's, New York, 25 September 1981, lot 3.
5. Boehlen Collection, Berne, Switzerland, MS.1201 ES, bought London, Sotheby's 6 December 1983, lot 52.

TEXT

Old Testament:

ff. 1-5, General Prologue;

ff. 5-26, Genesis;

ff. 26- 43, Exodus;

ff. 43-54v, Leviticus;

ff. 54v-71v, Numbers;

ff. 71v-86, Deuteronomy;

ff. 86-86v, Prologue to Joshua;

ff. 86v-97, Joshua;

ff. 97-108, Judges;

ff. 108-109v, Ruth;

ff. 109v-110, Prologue to 1 Samuel;
ff. 110-125, 1 Samuel;
ff. 125-137, 2 Samuel;
ff. 137-150v, 1 Kings;
ff. 150v-162v, 2 Kings;
ff. 162v-163, Prologue to 1 Chronicles ;
ff. 163-174v, 1 Chronicles;
f. 174v, Prologue to 2 Chronicles;
ff. 175-188v, 2 Chronicles;
ff. 188v-189, Prologue to 1 Ezra;
ff. 189-193, 1 Ezra;
ff. 193-198v, Nehemiah;
ff. 198v-204v, 2 Ezra;
f. 204v, Prologue to Tobit;
ff. 204v-208, Tobit;
f. 208-208v, Prologue to Judith;
ff. 208v-214v, Judith;
f. 214v, Prologue to Esther;
ff. 214v-218, Esther;
ff. 218-219, Prologues to Job;
ff. 219-229, Job;
ff. 229-253, Psalms;

f. 253v, Prologue to Proverbs;
ff. 253v-262, Proverbs;
f. 262, Prologue to Ecclesiastes;
ff. 262-264v, Ecclesiastes;
ff. 264v-266, Song of Songs;
f. 266, Prologue to Wisdom;
ff. 266-272, Wisdom;
f. 272, Prologue to Ecclesiasticus;
ff. 272-287v, Ecclesiasticus;
f. 287v, Prologue to Isaiah;
ff. 287v-306, Isaiah;
ff. 306, Prologue to Jeremiah;
ff. 306-326v, Jeremiah;
ff. 326v-328v, Lamentations;
f. 328v, Prologue to Baruch;
ff. 328v-331, Baruch;
f. 331, Prologue to Ezekiel;
ff. 331-350, Ezekiel;
ff. 350-350v, Prologue to Daniel;
ff. 350v-358, Daniel;
f. 358-358v, Prologues to Hosea;
ff. 358v-361, Hosea;
f. 361, Prologues to Joel;

ff. 361-362v, Joel;
f. 362v, Prologues to Amos;
ff. 362v-364v, Amos;
f. 365, Prologue to Obadiah;
ff. 365-365v, Obadiah;
f. 365v, Prologue to Jonas;
ff. 365v-366, Jonas;
f. 366-366v, Prologue to Micah;
ff. 366v-368, Micah;
f. 368, Prologue to Nahum;
ff. 368-368v, Nahum;
f. 368v-369, Prologue to Habakkuk;
ff. 369-370, Habakkuk;
ff. 370-370v, Prologue to Zephaniah;
ff. 370v-371, Zephaniah;
ff. 371-371v, Prologue to Haggai;
ff. 371v-372, Haggai;
ff. 372-372v, Prologue to Zechariah;
ff. 372v-375v, Zechariah;
f. 375v, Prologue to Malachi;
ff. 375v-376v, Malachi;
ff. 376v-377, Prologues to 1 Maccabees;

ff. 377-389, 1 Maccabees;

ff. 389-397v, 2 Maccabees;

New Testament:

ff. 397v-398, Prologue to Matthew;

ff. 398-409v, Matthew;

ff. 409v-410, Prologue to Mark;

ff. 410-417, Mark;

ff. 417-417v, Prologue to Luke;

ff. 417v-430v, Luke;

f. 430v, Prologue to John;

ff. 430v-440v, John;

f. 440v, Prologue to Romans;

ff. 440v-445, Romans;

f. 445, Prologue to 1 Corinthians;

ff. 445v-450v, 1 Corinthians;

f. 450v, Prologue to 2 Corinthians;

ff. 450v-453, 2 Corinthians;

f. 453, Prologue to Galatians;

ff. 453-455v, Galatians;

f. 455v, Prologue to Ephesians;

ff. 456-457v, Ephesians;

f. 457v, Prologue to Philippians;

ff. 457v-458v, Philippians;

f. 458v-459, Prologue to Colossians;
ff. 459-460, Colossians;
f. 460, Prologue to 1 Thessalonians;
ff. 460-461, 1 Thessalonians;
f. 461, Prologue to 2 Thessalonians;
ff. 461-461v, 2 Thessalonians;
f. 461v, Prologue to 1 Timothy;
ff. 461v-463, 1 Timothy;
f. 463, Prologue to 2 Timothy;
ff. 463-464, 2 Timothy;
f. 464, Prologue to Titus
ff. 464-464v, Titus;
f. 464v, Prologue to Philemon;
f. 464v, Philemon;
ff. 464v-465, Prologue to Hebrews;
ff. 465-468v, Hebrews;
ff. 468v-469, Prologue to Acts of the Apostles;
ff. 469-482, Acts of the Apostles;
f. 482, Prologue to James;
ff. 482-483v, James;
ff. 483v-485, 1 Peter;
ff. 485-486, 2 Peter;

ff. 486-487, 1 John;

f. 487, 2 John;

f. 487-487v, 3 John;

ff. 487v-488, Jude;

f. 488, Prologue to Apocalypse;

ff. 488v-494v, Apocalypse;

ff. 495-496v, blank;

ff. 497-542, Hebrew names.

Until the early or mid thirteenth century, the contents of Bibles varied considerably in many different respects, including the choice and order of the biblical books, their prologues, and the way the books were divided into chapters and verses, as well as details of the text itself. During the course of the thirteenth century, a concerted effort was made to standardize these variant features, largely because of the emergence and rapid growth of the University of Paris. Paris provided a focus for centralized production, and the University provided the means for regulating and standardizing the text. It is for this reason that the "standard" medieval vulgate Bible is often referred to as the "Paris" Bible. The Paris Bible took its final shape by about 1230, prefigured in a group of Bibles copied between 1200 and 1230 (see Light, 1994). By the middle of the thirteenth century, when the present manuscript was made, the "Paris" text of the Bible had become the norm not only in France, but also in England and Italy.

The standardized Paris Bible includes a canonic sequence of texts, prologues, numbered chapters, running titles, and so on. It also reorganized the books of the Bible to correspond with our present order, grouping the historical books (Genesis to Job), the books of songs and praise, and the minor and major prophets together. The idea behind such a grouping, as well as the more complex apparatus accompanying the Bible, was intended to allow readers to put "word into deed," as Stephen Langton recommended, or as Hugh of St.-Victor wrote: students of the Scriptures "must learn history and diligently commit to memory the truth of the deeds that have been performed, reviewing from the beginning to the end what has been done, when it was done, and by whom it has been done."

The text of the present manuscript follows the standard Parisian sequence as given in Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, I, 1969, pp. 96-7, including Psalms, with all the prologues listed there, followed by the Interpretation of Hebrew Names in the version beginning, "Aas apprehendens" (see Branner, 1977, pp. 154-155; see also Light, 1994, for a discussion of the canonic 64 Prologues found in "Paris" Bibles).

ILLUSTRATION

There are over 130 fine illuminated initials here, including nine with miniatures. The subjects of the historiated initials are:

f. 1r, Ambrosius writing, 22mm. by 17mm., plus long marginal extensions, the monk seated at a sloping desk;

f. 5r, Six days of Creation with God blessing the world on the seventh, 127mm. by 10mm., with the Crucifixion at the foot;

f. 204v, Tobit and the swallow, 15mm. by 14mm., Tobit in bed with the bird flying above;

f. 219r, Job comforted by his wife, 15mm. by 16mm., Job seated, a woman standing and reasoning with him;

f. 229r, King David playing his harp, 18mm. by 18mm.;

f. 253, King Solomon instructing a youth, 17mm. by 15mm., plus long marginal extensions, the king holding a birch and about to chastise the boy who is stripped to the waist;

f. 306r, Stoning of Jeremiah, 14mm. by 15mm., the prophet kneeling, a man holding his shoulder and raising a stone;

f. 326v, Jeremiah bewailing the fall of Jerusalem, 10mm. by 13mm.;

f. 398r, Tree of Jesse, 37mm. by 12mm. Jesse asleep in bed, a king and a queen in the branches above him.

The illumination is attributable securely to the Mathurin Workshop, as defined by Branner, pp. 76-7 and 214-5. Another Bible from the same workshop is illustrated in Alexander, et al., pp. 63-65, no. 11. The workshop, which painted twenty-five manuscripts, of which twenty-one are Vulgates, clearly specialized in the illustration of the Bible. It is characterized by "simplicity of the figures, the flat, rather unarticulated drapery, and the sketchy drawings of the heads" (Branner, p. 76; compare especially Cambridge, Harvard University Library, MS lat. 264, color pl. Branner, XIII). Normally, the Genesis initial is composed of joined ovals or quadrilobes, whereas here the figures sit beneath Gothic arches, more typical of small ivories and found also in Bibles attributed to the Soissons Atelier. A forthcoming study by Laura Bruck on the development of new sequences of illumination, in keeping with the new order of the books of the Bible and its purpose, promises to help explain better the choice of the subjects of the historiated initials, which apart from their attribution to distinctive workshops, have been largely ignored in the scholarly literature.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Bible Gateway

<http://www.biblegateway.com/>

Bible links

<http://www.mediaevum.de/theol1.htm>