

Vulgate Bible
In Latin, Illuminated manuscript on parchment
Italy, Venice or Padua, c. 1240-50

iv (parchment, *i*, a pastedown, *ii*, removed, stub remains) + 378 (f. 378, now pasted down) folios on parchment, prepared in the manner of southern Europe, hairside white and smooth, fleshside darker and speckled, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto (collation, *i-iii*¹² *iv*¹⁰ *v-vii*¹² *viii*¹¹ [structure uncertain, no loss of text] *ix-x*¹⁰ *xi*¹² *xii*⁸ *xiii*¹⁰ *xiv*¹² *xv*¹⁰ *xvi*⁸ *xvii*¹⁰ *xviii*¹² *xix*¹⁰ *xx*¹² *xxi*¹⁰ *xxii-xxx*¹² *xxxi*¹⁰ *xxxii*¹² *xxxiii*⁴ [-4, following f. 350, cancelled with no loss of text] *xxxv*⁸ [-3, following f. 364, apparently cancelled with no loss of text] *xxxvi*¹⁰ [10, f. 378, now a pastedown]), horizontal catchwords very bottom inside margin in most quires, lacking in quires 14-15, 18-22 and 35, in red in quires 1 and 3, no leaf or quire signatures, ruled lightly in lead with single full-length vertical bounding lines, inside, outside and between the columns, with an extra set of horizontal rules for the running titles, prickings top margin, often in bottom margin, and in outer margin on a few folios, for example ff. 150-151 (justification, 137-136 x 87-85 mm.), written below the top line by as many as three scribes, with the second scribe beginning on f. 236, and then the first scribe taking over again on f. 276, and the third scribe copying the Interpretation of Hebrew Names beginning on f. 351, in a very small regular southern gothic bookhand in two columns of sixty-one to sixty lines, layout varies, ff. 351-377, Interpretation of Hebrew Names, ruled in lead with full-length double vertical bounding lines, inside, outside and between the columns, used for the first letter of entries (justification, 138 x 97-95 mm.), copied below the top line in three columns of sixty-one to sixty lines, occasional guide notes for the running titles in the top margin, majuscules within text highlighted in red, red and blue running titles, one-line alternately red and blue initials at the beginning of Psalm verses and in the Interpretation of Hebrew Names, two-line alternately red and blue initials with contrasting pen work at the beginning of chapters placed in the margins alongside the column of text and numbered in the margins in red and blue roman numerals, most prologues begin with nine- to four-line blue initials with red pen decorations, as many as EIGHTY-TWO PAINTED INITIALS at the beginning of the biblical books and a number of prologues; initials are ten- to six-lines, with extensions of up to thirty-nine lines (initial to Genesis extends full-length of the written space), white-patterned blue, orange, or pink, infilled with large acanthus and other foliage in yellow, orange, bright green or bright blue on highly polished gold and blue or dark pink grounds that follows the shape of the initial, edged in green, or with rectangular frames in blue or orange; a few initials are gold on colored grounds (see discussion of illumination below), overall in very good condition, many folios pristine, others slightly dirty, the ink on a relatively small number of folios has flaked away, with some loss of legibility, for example, ff. 171, 178v-179, and 181, f. 1, darkened and somewhat dirty, ff. 1-8, small stain in outer margins, ff. 55v-56, stain or damage from damp within text, with slight loss of part of eight lines, similar, very small stain on ff. 56v-57, some small slits in the outer margins probably due to weakness in the parchment, for example, ff. 176, 185, 331, repair to top outer corner, f. 172, pen decoration slightly trimmed, bottom margin, ff. 351-353. Bound in its ORIGINAL OR VERY EARLY wooden boards, now covered with later red velvet, boards are cut flush with the bookblock, spine with six raised bands, broken along the hinges, that once entered the boards in grooves on the top of the boards, head and tail bands, once fastened back to front, impressions from clasps remain, upper board, and evidence of straps, lower boards, hinges broken, wear on edges and spine, but in good condition. Dimensions 211 x 131 mm.

Small Bibles containing the complete Old and New Testaments were one of the greatest achievements of thirteenth-century book production. Italian examples of pocket Bibles, such as this one, are much less common than examples from France and England. This book includes very attractive illuminated initials and interesting annotations. In contrast with many books of this type, it is close to its original dimensions and preserves an interesting early binding covered in red velvet. Usually preserved in later bindings, most thirteenth-century Bibles have been severely trimmed.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in northern Italy in Venice or Padua in the second quarter to the middle of the thirteenth century, probably c.1240-50, as suggested by the style of the painted and pen initials, as well as details of its text. Most of the comparable Bibles from Venice-Padua have been dated slightly later in the third quarter of the thirteenth century by art historians (see discussion of illumination below, and Avril and Gousset, 1984, nos. 4, 6, 7 and 8, pp. 5-9). This book seems earlier, however, given the simpler style of the pen decoration and the evidence that suggests it was copied from an exemplar that was not divided according to the modern chapter divisions, although this is admittedly speculative (chapters discussed below).

Venice, whose strategic position at the head of the Adriatic made her a key commercial and naval power, was perhaps the most prosperous city in Europe by the later thirteenth century. Padua, although not as powerful, was also a thriving urban center, with one of the earliest Universities in Italy, founded in 1222. This Bible could have been produced in either center. The workshop responsible for it included a corrector; his work is evident throughout, in the formal corrections carefully written in the margins, usually boxed in red. In addition to the marginal corrections, other passages were scraped and rewritten (obvious in the New Testament since the corrector used a darker ink than the scribe, but present in the Old Testament as well).

2. There are various informal texts added in as many as seven hands on the front pastedowns and flyleaves, and on f. 377v-378 (the back pastedown); their contents vary, but they show that the Bible was used in a learned environment, and most likely by people composing sermons. The presence of so many hands may suggest that this was a Bible used within a Franciscan or Dominican community and shared by a succession of friars. The added texts range in date from brief notes on the front pastedown that may date from the thirteenth century through notes as late as the fifteenth century. The notes on the front flyleaf, f. ii verso-iii verso, and the back pastedown appear to be English. The manuscript may have been in England by the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, or used by an English owner in Italy.
3. Note in Arabic, front flyleaf, f. iii, possibly "rahmat Allah" (?) (God's mercy);
4. Back pastedown, dealers' notes in pencil, "No 954," and "378" with price codes.

TEXT

f. i verso (recto pasted down)-iii verso, notes in as many as seven hands from the thirteenth century (?) through the later fourteenth or fifteenth century, including a note on the captivities of Israel, distinctions, notes for sermons, and a rather formally written text that seems to be a series of advice on moral life on ff. ii verso- iii verso, ending with distinctions.

ff. 1-350v, Latin Bible, with prologues as follows: f. 1, [General prologue] Frater ambrosius [Stegmüller 284]; f. 2v, [prologue to Genesis] Desiderii mei [Stegmüller 285]; f. 3, Genesis; f. 16v, Exodus; f. 27v, Leviticus; f. 35, Numbers; f. 46v, Deuteronomy; f. 56, [prologue to Joshua] Tandem finito [Stegmüller 311]; f. 56, Joshua; f. 63, Judges; f. 70v, Ruth; f. 71v, [prologue to Kings] Viginti et duas [Stegmüller 323]; f. 72, 1 Kings; f. 83, 2 Kings; f. 92, 3 Kings; f. 102v, 4 Kings; f. 111, [prologue to Chronicles] Si septuaginta [Stegmüller 328]; f. 111v, 1 Chronicles; f. 119, 2 Chronicles, concluding with the Oratio Manasse; f. 129, [prologue to Ezra] Utrum difficilium [Stegmüller 330]; f. 129, 1 Ezra; f. 131v, Nehemiah; f. 135, 2 Ezra; f. 139, [prologue to Tobit] Chromatio et eliodoro .. Mirari non desino [Stegmüller 332]; f. 139, Tobit; f. 141v, [prologue to Judith] Apud hebreos [Stegmüller 335]; f. 141v, Judith; f. 145, [prologue to Esther] Librum hester; Rursum in libro [Stegmüller 341 and 343, copied as one prologue]; f. 145, Esther; f. 148v, [prologue to Job] Si autem scellam [Stegmüller 357]; f. 148v, Job; f. 155, Psalms; f. 171v, [prologue to Proverbs] Chromatio et eliodoro ... Lungat epistola [Stegmüller 457]; f. 172, Proverbs; f. 177v, [prologue to Ecclesiastes] Memini me [Stegmüller 462]; f. 178, Ecclesiastes; f. 180, Song of Songs; f. 181 [prologue to Wisdom] Liber sapientie [Stegmüller 468]; f. 181, Wisdom; f. 185, [biblical introduction to Ecclesiasticus, copied as a prologue] Multorum nobis; f. 185v, Ecclesiasticus, with the Prayer of Solomon; f. 197v, [prologue to Isaiah] Nemo cum prophetas [Stegmüller 482]; f. 197v, Isaiah; f. 212, [prologue to Jeremiah] Ieremias propheta [Stegmüller 487]; f. 212, Jeremiah; f. 227v, Lamentations; f. 229, [prologue to Ezechiel] Ezechiel propheta [Stegmüller 492]; f. 229, Ezechiel; f. 243v, [prologue to Daniel] Daniele propheta [Stegmüller 494]; f. 244, Daniel; f. 250, [prologue to Minor prophets] Non idem est ordo [Stegmüller 500]; f. 250 [prologue to Hosea] Duplex est apud hebreos [Stegmüller 504]; f. 250, Hosea; f. 252, Joel; f. 252v, Amos; f. 254, Obadiah; f. 254v, Jonah; f. 255, Micah; f. 256, Nahum; f. 256v, Habbakuk; f. 257, Zephaniah; f. 258, Haggai; f. 258, Zechariah; f. 260v, Malachi; f. 261, 1 Maccabees; f. 269v, 2 Maccabees [the scribe completed the book on f. 275v, extending the text into the lower margin]; f. 276, [prologue to Matthew] Matheus ex iudea [Stegmüller 590]; f. 276, Matthew; f. 285v, [prologue to Mark] Marcus evangelista [Stegmüller 607]; f. 285v, Mark; f. 291v, [prologue to Luke] Lucas syrus natione [Stegmüller 620]; f. 292, Quoniam quidem [Luke 1:1-4 treated as a prologue]; f. 292, Luke; f. 302v, [prologue to John] Hic est Iohannes [Stegmüller 624]; f. 302v, John; f. 310v, Primum queritur [Stegmüller 670]; f. 311, Romans; f. 314v, [prologue to 1 Corinthians] Epistola prima ad corinthios [Stegmüller 690]; f. 315 Corinthii sunt acaii [Stegmüller 685]; f. 315, 1 Corinthians; f. 318v, [prologue to 2 Corinthians] In secunda ad corinthios Post actam [Stegmüller 699]; f. 318v, 2 Corinthians; f. 321, [prologue to Galatians] Galathe sunt greci [Stegmüller 707]; f. 321, Galatians; f. 322v, [prologue to Ephesians] Ephesi sunt asiani [Stegmüller 715]; f. 322v, Ephesians; f. 323v, [prologue to Philippians] Philippenses sunt macedones [Stegmüller 728]; f. 323v, Philippians; f. 324v, [prologue to Colossians] Colosenses et hii [Stegmüller 736]; f. 324v, Colossians; f. 325v, [prologue to 1 Thessalonians] Thessalonicenses sunt macedones [Stegmüller 747]; f. 325v, 1 Thessalonians; f. 326, [prologue to 2 Thessalonians] Ad thessalonicenses [Stegmüller 752]; f. 326, 2

Thessalonians; f. 326v, [prologue to 1 Timothy] Tymotheon instruit [Stegmüller 765]; f. 326v, 1 Timothy; f. 327v, [prologue to 2 Timothy] Item Timotheo scribit [Stegmüller 772]; f. 327v, 2 Timothy; f. 328v, [prologue to Titus] Titum commonefacit [Stegmüller 780]; f. 328v, Titus; f. 329, [prologue to Philemon] Phylemoni familiares [Stegmüller 783]; f. 329, Philemon; f. 329, [prologue to Hebrews] In primis dicendum [Stegmüller 793]; f. 329, Hebrews; f. 332, [prologue to Acts] Canit psalmista [Stegmüller 633]; f. 332, [prologue to Acts] Lucas natione syrus [Stegmüller 640]; f. 332, Acts; f. 341v, [prologue to Catholic Epistles] Non ita est ordo [Stegmüller 809]; f. 342, James; f. 343, [prologue to 1 Peter] Symon petrus [Stegmüller 814]; f. 343, 1 Peter; f. 344, 2 Peter; f. 344v, [prologue to 1 John] Rationem uerbi [Stegmüller 822]; f. 344v, 1 John; f. 345v, [prologue to 2 John] Usequo ad deo [Stegmüller 823]; f. 345v, 2 John; f. 345v, [prologue to 3 John] Gaium pietatis [Stegmüller 824]; f. 345v, 3 John; f. 346, [prologue to Jude] Judas apstolus [Stegmüller 825]; f. 346, Jude; f. 346, [prologues to Apocalypse] Iohannes apostolus et euangelista [Stegmüller 829]; Apocalipsis iohannis [Stegmüller 835]; f. 346, Apocalypse [ending mid column b, f. 350v, remainder blank];

ff. 351-377, Aaz apprehendens uel apprehensio ... Zuzim consiliantes eos uel consiliatores eorum [ends mid column b, remainder blank];

Interpretation of Hebrew Names; Stegmüller 7709.

ff. 377v-378, [informally added later], Names of the books of the Bible, many abbreviated, with the number of chapters in each written above in Arabic numerals; various notes citing Jerome and Augustine, and *Nota de iuramentio*, incipit, "Leuitici v, anima quo peccaverit, Gen. vi et parlipomenon vi, Si peccauerit ..."

ILLUMINATION

The eighty-two painted initials in the Bible, found before the books of the Bible and before some prologues, vary from simple gold initials on white-patterned blue, or blue and pink grounds (for example, Ruth), to more complex illuminated initials executed in vibrant colors on highly polished gold grounds. Two initials are figurative: f. 321, initial to Galatians, face of Paul with sword, and f. 328v, Titus, face of Paul; both are done in a style showing the influence of Byzantine art, with dark skin tones and white details darkened skin, with features in white. Overall, the style may be compared to other thirteenth-century Bibles painted in Venice or Padua, for example, Paris, BnF, MSS lat. 232, 216, 174 and 13146 (see Avril and Gousset 1984, nos. 4, 6, 7 and 8, pp. 5-9, plates A and II and III). The pen decoration in this Bible is simpler than most of these examples, which may be later; note however the dragon drawn by the pen flourisher at the beginning of Matthew.

The opening two initials (general prologue and Genesis), have a soft color palette, with deep blue initials, decorated with acanthus and vines in orange, pale yellow and green, on gold and blue grounds; the Genesis initial ends with a two-headed animal. The remaining initials are executed in a number of styles; some, like the initial to Exodus, feature the body of the initial in white-patterned blue, partially formed by the long sinuous body of a dragon with head and wings, on a gold ground, with a partial pink frame, edged in green (other examples of this type include Leviticus and Numbers). Other initials are brighter, with bold crisp colors and square frames; the Joshua initial is pink and orange, with orange, yellow, and blue acanthus bordered in white, on very polished gold,

in a blue frame with white details; some of the initials of this type are strikingly modern in their use of abstract ribbons of deeply scalloped vines and curls (for example, the initial to 1 Kings). Throughout, the colors are striking, with frequent use of bright orange, dark green, acid green, very deep blue, and light blue with white highlights, including small dots, which contrast with the highly polished gold.

Small, portable Bibles which include the complete text of the Vulgate in one volume revolutionized the use and ownership of the Bible and were one of the great achievements of thirteenth-century bookmaking. The earliest examples of these portable Bibles were copied in Paris at the end of the 1220s or the early 1230s, and the format was adopted quickly throughout Europe. This Bible is an example of an Italian pocket Bible. Although certain elements of the text of this Bible are clearly related to the Paris Bible (a Bible with a particular order of the books of the Bible, a certain set of prologues, a distinctive text, modern chapter divisions, and the inclusion of the glossary of Hebrew Names, created in Paris c. 1230), overall it is important as an example of a Bible that shows relatively little direct influence of the Paris text.

The order of the books in this Bible is identical with that in the Paris Bible, with the interesting exception that it lacks the book of Baruch. Baruch is included among the prophets in the modern Vulgate (although it is considered apocryphal in Protestant Bibles). During the Middle Ages, Baruch is found in many, but certainly not all, copies of the Vulgate. It was not included in the ninth-century Alcuinian Bibles or Bibles copied from them, but it was included in the Paris Bible (Berger, 1893, reprint, 1976, pp. 106, 108, 130, 154 and 169; and Bogaert, 1974, pp. 61 and 66-70.).

The Paris Bible circulated with a standard set of prologues (conveniently listed in Ker, 1969, Vol. I, pp. 96-8, and in Branner, 1977, pp. 154-155). The prologues in this Bible are quite different, and a number of prologues not found in the Paris Bible are included. Moreover, it is particularly noteworthy that this Bible lacks five of the six prologues that are not found in manuscripts of the un glossed Vulgate before the Paris Bible, or its direct ancestor, the proto-Paris Bible (Amos, "Hic Amos," Stegmüller 513; Maccabees, "Cum sim" and "Memini me," Stegmüller 547 and 553, Matthew, "Matheus cum primo," Stegmüller 589, and the Apocalypse, "Omnes qui," Stegmüller 839); this Bible does include the prologue to Ecclesiastes beginning "Memini me" (Stegmüller 462).

Most of this Bible is divided according to numbered chapter divisions basically the same as those found in modern Bibles. These chapters were widely disseminated in Bibles across Europe after c. 1230 because of their use in Paris Bibles. Esther, Ezekiel and Daniel, however, were divided according to another system; the chapter divisions in these books were corrected in Arabic numerals by a contemporary, suggesting the scribe may have been working from an exemplar not divided according to these new chapters. This is conjectural, but the inclusion of rubrics throughout the Song of Songs, a feature which is more common in earlier Bibles, supports this idea (see Reilly 2001). The book of Psalms in thirteenth-century Bibles most often stands out from the other biblical books because it lacks running titles. Here the Psalms are numbered and include running titles. The glossary known as the *Interpretation of Hebrew Names* which followed the Apocalypse in the Paris Bible, and indeed, in many other thirteenth-century Bibles, is included,

copied in a different hand, with slightly different style of pen decoration. The actual text of the Bible, insofar as one can tell by checking a handful of characteristic passages, is not that of the Paris Bible in the Old Testament.

The text includes formal corrections throughout in a number of contemporary hands; some are enclosed in a red box; these corrections are of the sort that were an integral step in copying the book, a final proofreading before the job of copying the manuscript was complete. Other passages in the Bibles were scraped and rewritten. There are also frequent nota marks (indeed, so frequent, they bring to mind an over-zealous student who highlights an entire article), as well as notes on the flyleaves at the beginning and end. The notes on the flyleaves are the type of valuable evidence for the actual use of this Bible that is all too often lost when Bibles are rebound. The early binding on this Bible has also preserved for us the original dimensions, or very close. It is a small volume, but not as small as many examples, which have lost the ample margins still preserved here.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Latin Bible:

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

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