

Vulgate Bible, Major and Minor Prophets  
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment  
Northern or Central Italy, c. 1180-1210

189 folios on parchment, prepared in the manner of southern Europe, flesh side white and smooth, hair side darker and speckled, stiff, with many original imperfections including uneven edges and holes (for example ff. 28, 124, and 128), modern foliation in pencil, top outer corner recto, erased, and subsequently restored, complete (collation, i-iv<sup>s</sup> v<sup>10</sup> [through f. 42v] vi-viii<sup>s</sup> ix-x<sup>10</sup> [through f. 86v] xi-xii<sup>s</sup> xiii<sup>10</sup> xiv-xxii<sup>s</sup> xxiii<sup>4</sup> [+1, f. 189]), horizontal catchwords inside lower margin (lacking in quires 5, 10, 18, and 20), catchwords in quires 12-17 followed by numbers 1-6, most in roman numerals, but quires 15 and 17 followed by "4" and "6" in early arabics, quires signed on the opening leaf with letters by a modern binder, ruled lightly in crayon, with single full-length vertical bounding lines, (through f. 86v), and then in lead, with double full-length vertical bounding lines (some folios look as if they were ruled in blind, cf. ff. 113-176v, but they are probably ruled in lead that left little trace), full-length vertical bounding lines, prickings in three outer margins throughout (192-180 x 105-103 mm.), written above the top line by at least three scribes, ff. 1-86v, ff. 87-112v, and ff. 113 to the end, possibly another hand beginning at f. 129 (?), in a rounded southern twelfth-century minuscule, approaching gothic, in thirty-two to thirty long lines, musical notation with heightened neumes copied along one red staff-line, f. 136v, in the margin alongside the beginning of lamentations, guide letters for the initials in far outer margins, and notes for running titles, running titles in blue and red, a few rubrics and names of Hebrew letters in red in Lamentations, one-line red initials, three- to two-line alternately red and blue initials (to f. 128v), many with pen decoration in contrasting colors (two formats, in outer margin, or slightly inset), initials, f. 129 to end, are all red, usually with blue pen decoration, but occasionally green or brown, large 10-line red initial with brown pen decoration, f. 136, three seven- to six line large red initials with decorative void spaces within the initials, infilled with simple vines in red or red and blue, on royal blue grounds, either rectangular or stepped, some edged in red, ff. 1, 43, and f. 87. In good solid condition, with some stains and soiling, mostly in outer margins, occasionally text space is stained (for example, ff. 142v-143), but legible throughout, edges darkened. Bound in heavy wooden boards, extending only slightly beyond the bookblock, rebound in modern cream color leather with fore-edge tabs and two heavy metal clasps, fastening back to front, smooth spine, preserving earlier boards and sewing, in excellent condition. Dimensions 245 x 163 mm.

This is a transitional volume. It is smaller than the late Romanesque giant Italian Atlantic Bibles, but its script is still comparatively large, and the parchment is not particularly thin. This sets it apart from the new Bibles copied later in the thirteenth century. It is unusual to find manuscripts including just the Major and Minor Prophets (only five examples in the Schoenberg Database), and aspects of its text, especially the unusual order of the biblical books, the chapter divisions, and the short line of musical notation alongside Lamentations, are of special interest.

## PROVENANCE

1. Written in northern or central Italy at the end of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth century. The script is a rounded twelfth-century minuscule, approaching gothic. In particular, note that adjacent rounded letters are often copied closely touching. Scribes use both the ampersand and tironian "7" to abbreviate "et"; no scribes use e-cedilla or "ae."

The major initials at the beginning of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah are conservative, but the penwork decoration on the minor initials, taken together with the script, and the use of red and blue running titles, support a date around the turn of the century, instead of earlier in the twelfth century. This manuscript presents general similarities in terms of the type of script and pen decoration with Paris, BnF, MS lat. 320, a New Testament, measuring 215 x 135 mm. from Central Italy, late twelfth or early thirteenth century (Avril and Gousset, 1984, pp. 143-144, number 169, and at <http://mandragore.bnf.fr/jsp/rechercheExperte.jsp>) and the Glossed Pauline Epistles, dating around 1200, from Padua-Venice, BnF, MS lat 17249 (Avril and Gousset, 1984, p. 4, no. 1, and at <http://mandragore.bnf.fr/jsp/rechercheExperte.jsp>).

2. Belonged to the Observant Franciscan House at San Nicolò at Carpi, to the north of Modena, northwest of Bologna (possibly founded before 1277, and re-dedicated for the Observant Franciscans in 1449; see Moorman, 1983, p. 111); a fifteenth-century inscription in the lower margin of f. 189v records the gift of the book to San Nicolò by Antonius Christoforus, a canon at the church of St. Mary in Carpi: "Iste libro largitus fuit loco sancti nicolai de carpo ab Antonio christofori nepote domini marci de pe<>inis canonice ecclesie sancta marie de carpo in quo sunt sedecim prophete."

Leonello Pio (d. 1447), Prince of Carpi, provided 400 ducats for the library of San Nicolò in his will ("per acquistare libri per costruire una biblioteca nel convento"). Subsequently, his son, Alberto III Pio (1472-1530), rebuilt the monastery in 1521, and founded the "libreria nova." The inventory of 1600 of the library by Giovanni Francesco Malazappi, *L'Indice dei libri che si trovano nella biblioteca di Carpi della comunità dei fratri del convento di San Nicolò*, listed two Bibles and "a manuscript containing the Books of the Twelve Prophets only" ("una manuscripta continens solum prophetarum 12 libros"), possibly this manuscript, despite the inaccuracy of the title (Prandi, 2000, p. 21, and note 38). The monastery was suppressed in 1810, and the collection was opened to the public; in 1868, 138 volumes, including ten manuscripts were transferred to the Biblioteca Palatina in Modena.

3. When this manuscript left the collection at Carpi is unclear, but it was acquired by Henry White, probably at some time before 1900; Henry White Sale, London, Sotheby's, April 21, 1902, lot 163.

## TEXT

ff. 1-42v, Isaiah, no rubric at the beginning, ending, *Explicit liber ysaie prophete*;

ff. 43-86v, Ezekiel, no rubric at the beginning, ending, *Explicit Iezechiel prophete*;

ff. 87-136, *Incipit liber yemie prophete* ..., f. 136, *Iste est populus quem transtulit nabuchodonosor in anno vii iudeos iii milia et xxiii*, incipit, "In anno octavo decimo nachodonosor transtulit ... cunctis diebus vite eius" [=Jeremiah 52:28-34, written as a separate section, beginning with a rubric and initial];

ff. 136-140v, *Incipit lamentatio hiermie prophete, Aleph ...*"; ending, *Explicit liber Jeremie*; short line musical notation at the beginning of the text in the margin on f. 136v (heightened neumes on one red staff-line), and with the names of the Hebrew letters in red;

ff. 140v-157v, *Incipit liber danielis*, Daniel;

ff. 157v-163v, Hosea;

ff. 163v-165v, Joel;

ff. 165v-170, Amos;

f. 170rv, Obadiah;

ff. 170v-172, Jonah;

ff. 172-175v, Micah;

ff. 175v-177, Nahum;

ff. 177-178v, Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:2, begins with an initial, no rubric);

ff. 178v-180v, Zephaniah;

ff. 180v-181v, Haggai;

ff. 181v-188, Zechariah;

f. 188rv, Malachi [ends mid f. 189v, remainder blank].

This is an interesting – indeed, in some respects, a puzzling – volume. Its text includes the Major and Minor Prophets: Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Daniel, and the Minor Prophets. In almost all biblical manuscripts, as in today's Bibles, the usual order of the Major Prophets is as follows: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, followed by the twelve Minor Prophets from Hosea to Malachi. The omission of Baruch in this volume is noteworthy, but not unusual, since this biblical book is frequently missing from medieval Bibles; it was not, for example, included in the very influential Alcuinian Bibles produced at Tours in the ninth century or in the later Bibles influenced by that recension. Placing Ezekiel immediately following Isaiah, and before Jeremiah, is however, extremely unusual. I know of no parallels.

Although very large format Bibles from the eleventh and twelfth centuries were often copied in many volumes, there is nothing about this manuscript that suggests it was ever one volume of such a multi-volume set. Instead, this modest-size volume, in clear, fairly large script, was an independent copy including the Major and Minor Prophets; examples of manuscripts with similar contents are surprisingly uncommon. For example, in the Schoenberg Database, there are only five

other examples of the Major and Minor Prophets, copied together in one volume without the Gloss: one from Lambach, c. 1150; one German (?) example, now Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 8, also c. 1150; two very early examples, one c. 800, and the other possibly from Cluny dating from the eleventh century; and one that may have been part of a multi-volume Bible. In the first volume of catalogue of the Latin manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale there is only one example, MS lat. 157. An early Italian example is Siena, Bibl. Communale cod. F.III.3, copied at the Monastery of S. Eugenia near Siena in 1017, which measures 310 x 225 mm. (Berg, 1968, no. 163, p. 320).

Two aspects of the text are noteworthy. It is usual in medieval Bibles to introduce each biblical book with one or more prologues from various sources. These extra-biblical texts, some dating back to Jerome or even earlier, others added later in the tradition, are completely absent here. Secondly – and this is in keeping with the date of the manuscript – the chapters used to divide the books are not the chapters found in Bibles today (chapters very similar to modern chapters are commonly found in Bibles from c. 1230 and later, and in some cases are found, alongside older chapter divisions, in manuscripts from the opening decades of the thirteenth century; their use in Italy may be slightly later). The chapters here are each clearly marked by an initial, but are unnumbered. Most of the biblical books in this manuscript are divided into numerous short chapters of varying lengths. Usually Bibles that include older chapter divisions also include summary lists of the chapters known as capitula lists before each book of the Bible. There are no capitula lists in this manuscript.

In some books of the biblical books in this manuscript, someone, probably in the thirteenth century, added numbers for some of the chapters, usually, but not always corresponding with modern chapter divisions in very small Arabic numerals. The chapters used throughout this manuscript deserve more careful study. Isaiah, for example, is divided into frequent short chapters of unequal length (at 1:9, 1:16, 1:24, 2:1, 2:10, 2:22, 3:6, and so forth). Arabic numerals are added alongside some of the chapters in Isaiah (not always at the current modern divisions, for example f. 6v, "8" and "9"), and in Ezekiel, for example, ff. 51v, "14," through f. 64v, "27" (in these cases, the Arabic numerals usually correspond to modern chapter divisions). Jeremiah, in contrast, was copied with very few divisions; paragraph marks were added within the text in black ink to supply some divisions, for example on f. 98v, chapter thirteen is marked (in this case the modern chapter is marked by a Roman numeral).

Perhaps the most interesting question this volume poses, however, is the reconstruction of its original context: what was this modest-sized volume intended for? It is carefully copied, with attractive but modest decoration. Still, its parchment is not of the highest quality; throughout there are holes and other original imperfections, and many folios are quite dark and mottled. There are no marginal comments added by later readers, although there are numerous symbols of various types. Most are simply "nota" marks (marginal symbols calling attention to a particular passage, usually based on the letters n, t, and a), but some of symbols here are different, including numerous k's, for example, ff. 3v and 7, which probably mark liturgical readings, circles with a cross superimposed, for example, f. 6v, an odd shaped sign, f. 80, and a ladder-shaped sign, for example f. 102v.

The only other clue to the use of the manuscript is the short phrase of music added in the margin on f. 136v, at the beginning of Lamentations; the music is written as heightened neumes with one red staff-line, a type of notation common before the introduction of the four-line staff. This is the only music in the manuscript, although someone traced the shape of a musical interval in the margin on f. 137v. Lamentations was part of Matins during Holy Week before Easter; therefore the presence of music at the beginning of this text suggests the volume was used liturgically. The remaining marginal notations, or at least some of them, might also mark liturgical lections for the Divine Office. The lack of marginal comments (and the biblical prologues), suggests this was not a volume used for study or in the classroom, but in addition to liturgical use, it would have been well-suited for private devotional reading.

Although I know of no exact parallels to this modest-sized copy of the Prophets, this book can be grouped generally with the small copies of the complete New Testament which were produced in Italy (as well as in Southern France) beginning in the late twelfth century. Although the fact may seem surprising, complete copies of the New Testament were in fact uncommon before this date. These New Testaments, most of which date from the late twelfth or early decades of the thirteenth century, although some are later, are generally small (the largest examples are roughly the size of this copy of the Prophets; many examples are smaller), and many of them, unlike the manuscript described here are illustrated (twenty are listed in Eleen, 1987; see also the broader study by Ruzzier, 2008). These New Testaments, however, like this copy of the Prophets, exhibit the same interest in smaller format biblical manuscripts that include a comprehensive set of biblical books.

To appreciate the context of this manuscript, and these copies of the New Testament, a word on the history of the Bibles copied in Italy is necessary. From the middle of the eleventh century through the end of the twelfth century, Italy was the center for the production of huge, impressive copies of the Bible known as the "Atlantic" (from Atlas the mythological giant) or Giant Bibles. These Bibles, associated with the Gregorian reform and commonly copied for use in monasteries, usually included the complete biblical text in one or two volumes.

These classic Romanesque Bibles – very large in size, often consisting of more than one volume, and owned and used corporately within a monastic community, stand in sharp contrast with most Bibles copied in the thirteenth century. Thirteenth-century Bibles, almost always complete in one volume and quite small – the most well-known examples are quite tiny – were convenient, portable Bibles that are usually associated with individual owners. This new type of Bible appears in Northern France and in England in significant numbers in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. Innovative one-volume Bibles, however, were copied in these countries starting in the late twelfth century and through the first decades of thirteenth century; textually and materially distinct, these transitional Bibles were the direct ancestor of the new thirteenth-century Bible of post c. 1230.

In Italy, in contrast, this new tradition takes hold slightly later; although some examples exist from the second quarter of the century, most Italian Bibles of the new type date from the middle or second half of the thirteenth century. Moreover, in Italy, where the new small-format New Testaments were copied beginning in the late twelfth century, there seems to have been no parallel

to the transitional one-volume Bibles copied in France (including the textually important example known as the proto-Paris Bible), and England.

## LITERATURE

Avril, François and Yolanta Załuska. *Manuscrits d'origine italienne, I. VIe-XIIIe siècles*, Manuscrits enluminés de la Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, 1980.

Avril, François and Marie-Thérèse Gousset. *Manuscrits d'origine italienne, II. XIIIe siècle*, Manuscrits enluminés de la Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, 1984.

Ayres L. "The Italian Giant Bibles: Aspects of their Touronian Ancestry and Early History," in *The Early Medieval Bible: its Production, Decoration and Use*, ed. R. Gameson, Cambridge, 1994, pp.125-154.

Berg, Knut. *Studies in Tuscan Twelfth-Century Illumination*, Oslo, Bergen and Tromsø, 1968.

Eleen, Luba. "New Testament Manuscripts and Their Lay Owners in Verona in the Thirteenth Century," *Scriptorium* 41 (1987), pp. 221-236.

Moorman, John R. H. *Medieval Franciscan Houses*, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, 1983.

Prandi, Anna. *Tesori di una Biblioteca Franciscana, Libri e Manoscritti del Convento di San Nicolò in Carpi, sec. XV-XIX*, Modena, Mucchi, 2000.

Ruzzier, Chiara. "La Produzione di manoscritti neotestamentari in Italia nel XIII secolo: Analisi codicologica," *Segno e testo* 6 (2008), pp. 249-294.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Nadia Togni. "Les 'Bibles Atlantiques' et la reforme ecclésiastique du XIe siècle," *Gazette du livre medieval* 42 (2003):

<http://www.unige.ch/BiblesAtlantiques/bibles.html>

Mandragore, base des manuscrits enluminés de la BnF:

<http://mandragore.bnf.fr/jsp/rechercheExperte.jsp>

Marilena Maniaci and Giulia Orofino, La Bibbie Atlantiche:

<http://bibbie.cea.unicas.it/tipologia>

TM 489