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## Vulgate Bible

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Northern France (Paris?), c. 1230-1250

*ii (modern parchment) + 512 + ii (modern parchment), modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, lacking at least three folios at the end with the conclusion of the Apocalypse and possibly further folios with the Interpretation of Hebrew Names, otherwise complete, collation impracticable due to the binding, no signatures or catchwords, ruled in lead with the top and bottom rules full across, single full-length vertical bounding lines (justification 88-85 x 59-57 mm.), copied in a minute gothic bookhand in two columns of 49-47 lines, majuscules within the text touched with red, red and blue running titles (often trimmed) and chapter numbers, chapters begin with two-line alternately red and blue initials with pen decoration in the other color, prologues being with three- to five-line parted red and blue initials with pen decoration in both colors (prologue to Proverbs begins with painted initial), SEVENTY-SEVEN PAINTED initials (including one that is quite damaged), most four- to six-line, some extending full column, red or blue, with white-details, on grounds of the opposite color, infilled with rinceau and other motifs, many with grotesques, three with animals, FIVE HISTORIATED initials (described below), in red, dull pink, blue, occasional use of silver (now blackened), and metallic bronze, with touches of dark yellow, acid green, and dark green, significant damage from damp: f. 1 (top portion of initial destroyed, now with modern repair, and much of the text now obliterated), ff. 1v-3, similar loss of text, f. 4, initial damaged, ff. 5v-16, 25-33, some damage to text, with occasional modern repairs, f. 33 top margin torn, f. 215 contemporary patch, very thin and narrow, now detached since the glue is dried out, but patched before the scribe began copying, ff. 470-end, some damage from damp in the upper portion of the page (usually without loss of text), top portion of col. a on f. 488, now missing, f. 512, small hole with modern repair, trimmed throughout, especially at top margin (loss of some running titles and tops of initials), occasional initials in the lower margin partially trimmed. Bound in nineteenth-century blind-stamped brown leather over pasteboard by Riviere (binder's name stamped front pastedown), spine with five raised bands, some wear to joints and raised bands, but sound and in good condition. Dimensions 113 x 72 mm.*

This is among the smallest examples known of the Paris "pocket" Bible. One tiny volume contains the entire biblical text, copied in a minute script on tissue-thin parchment and adorned with small painted initials, including five that are historiated. Its text belongs to the recension known as the Paris Bible, the direct ancestor of the sixteenth-century Clementine Vulgate. Although not in pristine condition, this is nonetheless an excellent example of a type of Bible of great importance both to the history of the Vulgate and to the history of the book in the Middle Ages.

## PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of the script and decoration allow us to date this Bible to the second quarter of the thirteenth century, most likely to the 1240s; the question of where it was made is more complicated, but the evidence of its text certainly points to Paris; some of the scribes may have been from England, and the decoration is slightly idiosyncratic, so an origin outside the capital is not impossible, but overall, unlikely.

2. Contemporary corrections throughout, and antiphons, canticles, and the Athanasian Creed were added to the Psalms quite early in its history, linking it to liturgical use for the Divine Office; almost no other marginal comments or readers's notes (some may have been trimmed).
3. Belonged to a private family collection in Neptune, New Jersey; said to have belonged to this same family for at least four generations. A hand-written note card, laid in, records notes from a librarian at the British Museum dated 1912: "13th-century M.S.S., probably late .... Referred to British Museum, Feb. 1912."

## TEXT

ff. 1-512v, Latin Bible, with prologues as follows: f. 1, [General prologue] Frater ambrosius [Stegmüller 284]; f. 3v, [prologue to Genesis] Desiderii mei [Stegmüller 285]; f. 4, Genesis; f. 24v, Exodus; f. 40, Leviticus; f. 51v, Numbers; f. 68, Deuteronomy; f. 83, [prologue to Joshua] Tandem finito [Stegmüller 311]; f. 83, Joshua; f. 94, Judges; f. 104v, Ruth; f. 106, [prologue to Kings] Viginti et duas [Stegmüller 323]; f. 107, 1 Kings; f. 121, 2 Kings; f. 133v, 3 Kings; f. 148, 4 Kings; f. 16v1v, [prologue to Chronicles] Si septuaginta [Stegmüller 328]; f. 162, 1 Chronicles; f. 163, [prologue] Eusebius ieronimus ... Quomodo grecorum [Stegmüller 327]; f. 163v, 2 Chronicles, concluding with the Oratio Manasse; f. 187v, [prologue to Ezra] Utrum difficilium [Stegmüller 330]; f. 188, 1 Ezra; f. 192, Nehemiah; f. 197v, 2 Ezra; f. 203, [prologue to Tobit] Chromatio et helyodoro ... Mirari non desino [Stegmüller 332]; f. 203v, Tobit; f. 207, [prologue to Judith] Apud hebreos [Stegmüller 335]; f. 207v, Judith; f. 212v, [prologue to Esther] Librum hester; Rursum in libro [Stegmüller 341 and 343, copied as one prologue]; f. 212v, Esther; f. 217v, [prologue to Job] Cogor per singulos [Stegmüller 344]; f. 218, [prologue to Job] Si aut fiscellam [Stegmüller 357]; f. 218v, Job; f. 228v, Psalms [ending f. 252v, bottom column a; contemporary hand copied the Athanasian Creed (very abbreviated) in the blank space]; f. 253, [prologue to Proverbs] lungat epistola [Stegmüller 457]; f. 253, Proverbs; f. 261v, [prologue to Ecclesiastes] Memini me [Stegmüller 462]; f. 261v, Ecclesiastes; f. 264v, Song of Songs; f. 266, [prologue to Wisdom] Liber sapientie [Stegmüller 468]; f. 266, Wisdom; f. 272, [biblical introduction to Ecclesiasticus, copied as a prologue] Multorum nobis; f. 272v, Ecclesiasticus, without the Prayer of Solomon; f. 288v, [prologue to Isaiah] Nemo cum prophetas [Stegmüller 482]; f. 289, Isaiah; f. 308v, [prologue to Jeremiah] Ieremias propheta [Stegmüller 487]; f. 308v, Jeremiah; f. 330v, Lamentations; f. 332v, [prologue to Baruch] Liber iste [Stegmüller 491]; f. 332v, Baruch; f. 335v, [prologue to Ezechiel] Ezechiel propheta [Stegmüller 492]; f. 335v, Ezechiel; f. 357v, [prologue to Daniel] Danielelem prophetam [Stegmüller 494]; f. 357v, Daniel; f. 367, [prologue to Minor prophets] Non idem ordo est [Stegmüller 500]; f. 367, [prologue to Hosea] Temporibus ozie [Stegmüller 507]; f. 367v, Hosea; f. 370v, [prologue to Joel] Sanctus ioel [Stegmüller 511]; f. 370v, [prologue] Ioel filius fatuel [Stegmüller 510]; f. 370v, Joel; f. 372, [prologue to Amos] Ozias rex [Stegmüller 515]; f. 372, [prologue] Amos propheta [Stegmüller 512]; f. 372, [prologue] Hic amos [Stegmüller 513]; f. 372v, Amos; f. 374v, [prologue Obadiah] Iacob patriarcha; Hebrei [Stegmüller 519 and 517 copied as one prologue]; f. 375, Obadiah; f. 375, [prologue to Jonah] Sanctum ionam [Stegmüller 524]; f. 375v, [prologue] Ionas columba et dolens [Stegmüller 521]; f. 375v, Jonah; f. 376, [prologue Micah] Temporibus ioathe [Stegmüller 526]; f. 376v, Micah; f. 378, [prologue to Nahum] Naum prophetam [Stegmüller 528]; f. 378, Nahum; f. 379, [prologue to Habakkuk] Quatuor prophete [Stegmüller 531]; f. 379v, Habbakuk; f. 380v, [prologue to Zephaniah] Tradunt hebrei [Stegmüller 534]; f. 380v, Zephaniah; f. 381v, [prologue to Haggai] Ieremias

propheta [Stegmüller 538]; f. 381v, Haggai; f. 382v, [prologue to Zechariah] Anno secundo [Stegmüller 539]; f. 383, Zechariah; f. 386, [prologue to Malachi] Deus per moysen [Stegmüller 543]; f. 386v, Malachi; f. 387v, [prologue to Maccabees] Domino excellentissimo ..., Cum sim promptus [Stegmüller 547]; f. 387v, [prologue] Reuerentissimo ..., Memini me [Stegmüller 553]; f. 388, [prologue] Machabeorum librum duo [Stegmüller 551]; f. 388, 1 Maccabees; f. 401v, 2 Maccabees; f. 411, [prologue to Matthew] Matheus ex iudea [Stegmüller 590]; f. 411v, [prologue to Matthew] Matheus cum primo [Stegmüller 589]; f. 411v, Matthew; f. 425, [prologue to Mark] Marcus evangelista [Stegmüller 607]; f. 425v, Mark; f. 434, Quoniam quidem [Luke 1:1-4 treated as a prologue]; f. 434, [prologue to Luke] Lucas syrus natione [Stegmüller 620]; f. 434v, Luke; f. 449, [prologue to John] Hic est Iohannes [Stegmüller 634]; f. 449v, John; f. 460, [prologue to Romans] Romani sunt in partes ytalie ... scribens eis a chorinto [Stegmüller 677]; f. 460, Romans; f. 465, [prologue to 1 Corinthians] Chorinthii sunt achaici [Stegmüller 685]; f. 465, 1 Corinthians; f. 470, [prologue to 2 Corinthians] Post actam [Stegmüller 699]; f. 470v, 2 Corinthians; f. 473v, [prologue to Galatians] Galathe sunt greci [Stegmüller 707]; f. 473v, Galatians; f. 476, [prologue to Ephesians] Ephesii sunt asyani [Stegmüller 715]; f. 476, Ephesians; f. 477, [prologue to Philippians] Philippenses sunt macedones [Stegmüller 728]; f. 477, Philippians; f. 478v, [prologue to Colossians] Colosenses et hii [Stegmüller 736]; f. 478v, Colossians; f. 479v, [prologue to 1 Thessalonians] Thessalonicenses sunt macedones [Stegmüller 747]; f. 479v, 1 Thessalonians; f. 480v, [prologue to 2 Thessalonians] Ad thessalonicenses [Stegmüller 752]; f. 480v, 2 Thessalonians; f. 481v, [prologue to 1 Timothy] Tymotheum instruit [Stegmüller 765]; f. 481v, 1 Timothy; f. 482v [prologue to 2 Timothy] Item Tymotheo scribit [Stegmüller 772]; f. 482v, 2 Timothy; f. 483v, [prologue to Titus] Tytum commonefacit [Stegmüller 780]; f. 483v, Titus; f. 484v, [prologue to Philemon] Phylemoni familiares [Stegmüller 783]; f. 484v, Philemon; f. 484v, [prologue to Hebrews] In primis dicendum [Stegmüller 793]; f. 484v, Hebrews; f. 488v, [prologue to Acts] Lucas anthiocenses natione syrus [Stegmüller 640]; f. 488v, Acts; f. 499v, [prologue to Catholic Epistles] Non ita est ordo [Stegmüller 809]; f. 499v, James; f. 504, 1 Peter; f. 505v, 2 Peter; f. 506, 1 John; f. 507v, 2 John; f. 507v, 3 John; f. 507v, Jude; f. 508, [prologue to Apocalypse] Omnes qui pie [Stegmüller 839]; f. 508v, Apocalypse, ending imperfectly in chapter 16:20 on f. 512v, "... et omnis insula fugit//"

Latin Bible in the translation known as the Vulgate; the order of the biblical books, choice of prologues, use of "modern" chapters, and readings of the text itself (based on examination of selected readings) are all characteristic of the textual recension known as the Paris Bible. Now lacks the *Interpretation of Hebrew Names* almost invariably found in Bibles of this sort following the Apocalypse. Esther is divided into nine chapters only. Liturgical texts were added to the Psalms (antiphons and canticles in the margins, and the Athanasian Creed in space left blank by the original scribe at the end).

## ILLUSTRATION

Books of the Bible and the prologue to Proverbs, f. 253, begin with painted initials, generally 4- to 5-lines, with some extending the full length of the column; the Psalms are divided into the usual secular divisions, with painted initials at ff. 232, 234v, 239, 242, 244v, 247 (Psalms 26, 38, 52, 68, 80, and 97), in addition to Psalm 1 on f. 228v; prologues begin with 3- to 5-line parted red and blue initials with penwork in both colors.

Now with five historiated initials (the General prologue on f. 1 almost certainly once began with a depiction of Jerome as scribe, but the upper part of the initial has been obliterated). One can assign this artist (or artists) to Paris, with reservation: the palette, which includes touches of dark yellow and acid green was used in some Parisian ateliers in this period, and there are general stylistic similarities between the work of artists associated with the Soisson atelier and our artists, but the closest parallel is with a small unnamed group mentioned briefly by Branner (Branner, 1977, p. 81), that includes a Bible, Vatican Library, MS Vat. Reg. Lat. 16 (Branner, fig. 204), an Aristotle, Paris, BnF, MS Lat 16082 (Branner, fig 205 of f. 1, remaining initials may not be as close), and part of the Fécamp Bible, British Library, Yates Thomas MS 1, ff. 321-419v (see Online Resources; f. 397 is a good comparison). Branner mentions the saturated blues and delicate faces in brown ink, both found in the Bible described here in some of the historiated initials, and in the human faces perched on top of animal bodies (e.g., ff. 425, 477, 499v). The use of a dark forest green in our Bible is notable (e.g. the initial of David, f. 228v) (and unusual).

Subjects as follows:

f. 4, Genesis (historiated, full-length of the page, damaged (faces darkened and/or effaced, some holes, modern(?) repairs), creation with seven elongated ovals on alternately dusty pink and blue grounds, with the Crucifixion with John and Mary at the bottom (against a solid blue ground);

f. 228v, Psalms, David playing the harp, dressed in forest green with a deep blue cloak;

f. 253, Proverbs, King Solomon, dressed in green with a blue cloak with Rehoboam (note the finely drawn faces in brown ink);

f. 289, Isaiah, standing prophet, slightly damaged;

f. 460, Romans, Saint Paul.

Rinceaux initials vary in complexity, but among the notable ones are:

f. 68, Deuteronomy, rinceau with a tail-less lion;

f. 188: 1 Ezra, includes a hybrid of a bird with a long neck ending in a human face;

f. 253, prologue to Proverbs, rinceau with a winged grotesque and human head;

f. 261v, Ecclesiastes, includes an animal (a greyhound?);

f. 425v, Mark, with a bird perched at top (slightly rubbed);

f. 502v, James, grotesque with finally drawn human head at the top.

Thirteenth-century "pocket" or portable Bibles were a remarkable invention; copied on very thin parchment in very small scripts, scribes were able to compress the entire text of the Bible

into one compact volume. 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.

Small is, however, relative, and the outstanding characteristic of this Bible is just how small it is – and how very, very tiny script is. As we can see in the case of the Bible described here, thirteenth-century Bibles were often trimmed by later binders, and consequently their overall dimensions can be misleading. The measurement of the size of the written space, or the justification, on the page is more revealing (and unchanging). The Bible traditionally said to have belonged to Saint Louis, Paris, BnF, MS lat 10426 is a good example of a more usual small pocket Bible, on the small end of the spectrum, with outer dimensions of 152 x 97 mm., (justification 100 x 66 mm.), 44 lines. Compare that with the Bible described here; a smaller overall written space, (justification 88-85 x 59-57 mm.) and even more lines per page (49-47); its script is quite remarkably small. One can cite other examples of very small Bibles, which come close to ours in the size of written space but were copied with fewer lines per page: Paris, BnF, MS lat. 233, (justification 89 x 60) mm., 46 lines; and BnF, MS lat. 228, (justification, 88-90 x 59-60 mm.), 46 lines.

Paris was also the center of the dissemination of a new text of the Vulgate, known as the Paris Bible. Textually, the Bible discussed here is a perfect example of a Paris Bible. Copies of the mature Paris Bible are distinguished by a particular order of the biblical books closely resembling the order of modern Bibles, except in the New Testament where the Gospels are followed by the Pauline Epistles, Acts, the Catholic Epistles and then the Apocalypse. This, in fact, is a new order, found for the first time in Parisian Bibles dating c. 1200-1230, and then in the Paris Bibles of after c. 1230. The books of the Bible are introduced by a characteristic set of sixty-four prologues, present here without exception (conveniently Ker, 1969, vol 1, pp. 96-8; and Branner, 1977, pp. 154-155). The text of these Bibles is associated with certain characteristic textual readings, and the biblical books are divided into numbered chapters, which are essentially the same as the chapters still used today. This Bible diverges from the typical Paris Bible in only one aspect, i.e., it lacks the *Interpretation of Hebrew Names*, a glossary that is almost always present in copies of the Paris Bible, and indeed, in thirteenth-century Bibles copied throughout Europe.

## LITERATURE

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Stegmüller, Fridericus. *Repertorium biblicum medii aevi*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1950-61, and *Supplement*, with the assistance of N. Reinhardt, Madrid, 1976-80.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

*Repertorium biblicum medii aevi* (digital version of Stegmüller)

<http://repbib.uni-trier.de/cgi-bin/rebihome.tcl>

Latin Bible

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

British Library, Yates Thompson, MS 1

<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8149&CollID=58&NStart=1>

TM 941