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## Incunabula at Colby College

Morris Schertz

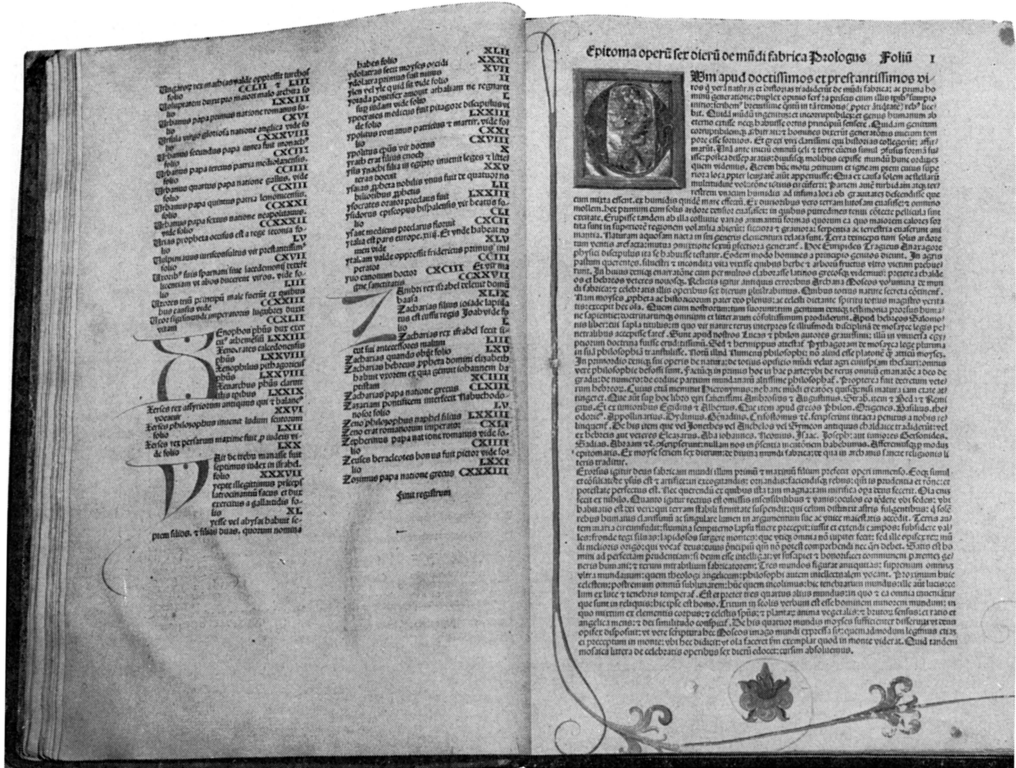
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COLBY'S COPY OF LIBER CHRONICARUM or THE NUREMBERG CHRONICLE (For description, see pages 86-87)

# Colby Library Quarterly

Series V

March 1960

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## INCUNABULA AT COLBY COLLEGE

By MORRIS SCHERTZ

THE term *incunabula* describes all printing which can be dated before the year 1501. It was first used in connection with printing by the dean of Munster Cathedral, Bernard von Malinckrodt, in a tract which he wrote for the second centenary (1639) of Johann Gutenberg's invention. Therein, he characterized the period from Gutenberg to 1501 as the time when printing was in swaddling clothes. (*Cunae* is Latin for *cradle*.) Unfortunately, this limitation gave rise to the impression that the turn of the century signified the end of one era and the beginning of another.

The creative force of fifteenth-century printing, however, carried over well into the sixteenth century. It was not until the middle decades—approximately 1540—that the beginnings of something new could be discerned. It became apparent then that printing was no longer a small trade of adventurous, itinerant men but an established industry in which capital was the essential ingredient for success. Furthermore, economic pressures had pushed printing out of the small towns into a few large cities. These shifts signalled the end of the printed book as an unparalleled technical and esthetic achievement. It was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century that any serious effort was made to revive the art of fine printing.

Although the exact termination date may be in doubt, we begin the first era of printing with Gutenberg. His invention solved three important problems: the production of individual type letters from a master; ink that would adhere to a metal surface; and a press (adopted probably from a bailing press) capable of feeding and evenly impressing a sheet of paper. Gutenberg's first published book is the 42-line Bible, so called because most of its pages have forty-two lines of print. It was

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not dated, but a Parisian artist rubricated the book and dated his finished work August 15, 1456. This is the first known printed book, although crude fragments have been found which are thought to have been printed from 1446 to 1448. An earlier book may yet be found, since it is known that Gutenberg began experimenting with printing around 1440, but until then his Bible stands as the first incunabulum.

Colby College does not possess a copy of the Gutenberg Bible, nor even a leaf from it, but it does have other examples of early printing. The earliest is a leaf from Gutenberg's *Catholicon*, printed in 1460. In all, Colby has fourteen examples of fifteenth-century printing, equally divided between books and separate leaves. The present article is divided along the same line, describing first the volumes and then the separate leaves that comprise the collection.

## I.

AMBROSIUS, S. *EXPOSITIO IN EVANGELIUM S. LUCAE*. AUGSBURG, ANTON SORG, 1476. f°. H 900\*, Stillwell A492. Without title page, pagination or signatures. This volume, printed in gothic type, is 159 leaves in length, the individual leaf measuring 290 x 188 mm. The number of lines of print to the leaf varies, most leaves having 36 to 39 lines. Twenty lines measure 100G. Leaves 1, 100, 101 and 102 have been repaired and the book has been rebound in modern quarter morocco, with the title, in gilt, on the spine.

This commentary on the gospels of Saint Luke was written by Saint Ambrose sometime after 374, and printed by Anton Sorg in the city of Augsburg, Germany, in 1476. This is the only printing of this work in the fifteenth century, a curious feature because early printers did not have many sources of material. The church fathers, especially, enjoyed great popularity and it was not unusual for a work of theirs to be reprinted a dozen times during the century. In the light of his career, it is odd that Ambrose did not share in this popularity.

Saint Ambrose, born about 339, was not a Catholic at the time he became Bishop of Milan in 374. Before his accession, he had practiced in the Roman courts and was appointed governor of the province of which Milan was the capital. When the then bishop died, the Catholic laity of that city demanded

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that Ambrose be made bishop. He accepted the See, and it was only then that he was baptized and ordained. He remained in that office, a zealous upholder of orthodoxy, until his death in 397.

The first knowledge we have of Anton Sorg is as an apprentice in the printing shop of the monastery of Saint Ulrich and Afra in 1472. Three years later he left the monastery to set up practice for himself in Augsburg, then particularly famed for craftsmen who produced woodcuts for block books, as well as cuts for playing-cards and pictures of saints. Here, in the seventies, book illustration as an art first flourished. Anton Sorg played an important part in this development.

This commentary, as Sorg printed it, is divided into ten books or chapters. It does not contain pictorial illustrations but at the start of each chapter Sorg inserted a large outlined woodcut initial. Smaller woodcut initials head each division within the chapter. The first seven of the large initials have been illuminated in combinations of red, blue and gold, or red, green and gold. The letters for the eighth and ninth chapters are partially illuminated, and that of the tenth left untouched. The small capitals are painted either red, or blue, or green through leaf 91. The remainder are blank.

The practice of illuminating printed books goes back to the tradition of the medieval manuscript. Monastic libraries employed artists to paint in initial letters and to decorate the text in glowing colors. This was the only form of book that the early printer knew and it is not surprising that his books were modeled after the manuscript. This duplication even extended to reproducing, in type, the script used in the manuscript. Because illumination was the feature of the medieval book, the printer had no recourse but to illuminate his book as well. But the printer could not color the text directly, so he left blank spaces to be filled in later. In this instance, Sorg printed outlines of the letters to be illuminated, not a common practice. By the end of the century, printers were no longer concerned with the tradition of the manuscript. They had developed traditions of their own. The illuminated initial was replaced by

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printed black initials and refinements in type design eliminated the original connection between script and type.

**MARCHESINUS, JOHANNES. *MAMMOTRECTUS SUPER BIBLIAM.*** VENICE, FRANCISCUS RENNER, DE HEILBRONN AND NICOLAUS DE FRANKFORDIA, 1476. 4°. HC 10557, Stillwell M203. Without title page or pagination. The volume, printed in a small semi-gothic, is 228 leaves in length, with signatures: A-C<sup>8</sup>, a<sup>10</sup>, b-y<sup>8</sup>, i<sup>8</sup>, z<sup>8</sup>, z<sup>8</sup>, the first and last leaf blank. Signature B<sup>4</sup> is signed C<sup>4</sup> in error. Printed in two columns, with 39 lines to the column, the type block measuring 143 (158) x 46 mm. The leaf measures 200mm., twenty lines 70SG. The preliminary blank leaf is torn and many leaves are stained. Except for the first twenty-nine leaves, all spaces are blank. Contemporary binding of limp vellum.

This elementary commentary on the Bible, printed in Venice in 1476, is Colby's earliest example of Italian printing, published thirteen years after the craft was introduced into that country. Conrad Sweynheym and his partner Arnold Pannartz, fleeing the sacked city of Mainz, settled temporarily in the Benedictine monastery at Subiaco, outside Rome, and issued their first book around 1464. They then proceeded to set up shop in Rome in 1467. The third Italian city to boast a press was Venice, where John de Speyer, a former goldsmith of Mainz, established a press in 1469.

There, Franciscus Renner turned out his first book in 1471. In 1473 Nicolaus de Frankfordia became his partner and this partnership lasted until 1476. This three year period was Renner's most productive. He worked alone from 1478 to 1483, and no book bears his imprint after that date although he is thought to have lived until 1494.

Renner published three separate editions of the *Mammotrectus*. Colby's copy is of the first edition, which is still in its original binding of limp vellum.

**NICOLAUS DE LYRA. *MORALIA SUPER TOTAM BIBLIAM.*** MANTUA, PAULUS DE BUTZBACH, 29 APRIL 1481. f°. HC 10375\*, Stillwell N90. The correct collation is: 272 leaves, signatures a<sup>10</sup>, b<sup>6</sup>, c<sup>4</sup>, d-z<sup>8</sup>; A-K<sup>8</sup>, L<sup>12</sup>, with no blank leaves and without title page or pagination. Copinger, in error, states that quire k reads k<sup>6</sup>, with a blank leaf following k<sup>6</sup>, and that full pagination is only 270 leaves. This collation was based on the British Museum copy, which lacks the last two leaves of quire k. Our copy is imperfect, wanting: leaf a,

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all of quires F and K and leaves L<sup>2-11</sup> of the last quire. Collation of library copy then reads: 245 leaves, signatures a<sup>9</sup>, b<sup>8</sup>, c<sup>4</sup>, d-z<sup>8</sup>; A-E<sup>8</sup>, G-I<sup>8</sup>, L<sup>2</sup>. There are 54 to 55 lines of type to the column, two columns to the leaf, the type block measuring 211 (224) x 59 mm., with the full leaf measuring 259 mm. Twenty lines measure 78G. Rebound in white vellum, with spine partially detached from binding. Initial spaces left blank, with many manuscript notes.

This commentary on the entire Bible was the last book to come from the press of Paulus Johannes de Butzbach (or Puzbach, or Butschbach), who was born in the town of Butzbach, now in the state of Hesse, western zone of Germany. Nothing is known of Butzbach before 1473, when he issued his first book, nor after 1481, when he published his last. In this interval he printed thirteen books, almost all concerned with biblical themes. The writings of Nicolas de Lyra seems to have enchanted Butzbach for, of the thirteen books he printed, four were by de Lyra.

De Lyra, an outstanding Hebrew scholar of the Middle Ages, was born in Lyre, Normandy, about 1270, and died in Paris, probably in October 1349. In 1300 he joined the Franciscan order and studied in Paris, where he received a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1309. He held many important posts in his order and is credited with the founding of the College of Burgundy in Paris in 1330. De Lyra is the author of numerous theological works and his fame rests on his insistence that the Bible be literally interpreted. Some scholars are of the opinion that his commentaries and tracts influenced Martin Luther.

Our copy is imperfect; twenty-five leaves are missing. It is very probable that the book was initially bound in this incomplete state. One of the first users of this volume numbered the leaves and scribbled notes in the outer margins. The inked-in pagination only accounts for 245 leaves, and one of the notes reads that the index is not complete. These notes, along with the inked pagination, have been partially cut away in the re-binding of the book. The present binding is seventeenth century, with no evidence that it was rebound before then. It would seem, therefore, that the notes and pagination were inserted while the volume was in its first state, *i.e.*, in its original binding. It must be concluded, then, that the book was imperfect when first bound.

PATRITIUS, FRANCISCUS. *ORATIO AD INNOCENTIUM VIII.* [ROME, STEPHAN PLANNCK, AFTER DECEMBER 1484.] 4°. H 12469\*, Stillwell P134. The book is only four leaves in length, and is without title page, pagination or signatures. The leaf measures 198 x 126 mm., with 33 lines of type to the leaf, except that leaf 1<sup>a</sup> has 32 lines and leaf 4<sup>a</sup> has 24 lines. The type block measures 145 x 90 mm., twenty lines measuring 84G. Space, with catchletter *n*, left blank. Rebound in half calf.

This is a plea by Patritius, Bishop of Gaetna, to Pope Innocent VIII, printed by Stephan Plannck sometime after December 1484. Innocent was elevated to the papacy on August 29, 1484, and although no date is recorded in the book, or any record to show when Plannck completed it, it can be assumed from the text which is addressed to the *new* pope that it could not have been printed before December 1484.

The plea is short, the whole pamphlet being four leaves in length, with the verso of the last leaf blank. The style of type used is a rotunda, which came into prominence principally through Plannck's activities. The design resembles the formal gothic that Gutenberg used in his 42-line Bible, which was modeled on the liturgical handwriting of the Mainz scribes. The rotunda is smaller and more rounded, but keeps the somber appearance of the first gothic. It became one of the most popular letters of the early period, rivaling the roman.

Plannck was born in Passau, Germany. In 1478 he acquired the printing business of Ulrich Han, who vies with Sweynheim and Pannartz for the distinction of printing the first book in Rome. Plannck was the most prolific printer in Rome during the fifteenth century, and one of the most prolific in Europe. His output numbered some three hundred editions in twenty-one years of production. He issued his last book in 1499, and nothing is heard of him after that date.

*BIBLIA LATINA CUM POSTILLIS NICOLAI DE LYRA, etc.* NUREMBERG, ANTON KOBERGER, 12 APRIL 1493. 4v. f°. HC 3170\*, Stillwell B552. We have the last volume of this four-volume work. Volume Four contains the entire New Testament. It is 353 leaves in length, with signatures: a-z<sup>8</sup>, aa-xx<sup>8</sup>; first and last leaf blank. Two columns of type to the leaf; the leaf measures 342 mm. Each column has 71 lines of type; the type block measures 262 (279) x 82 mm., twenty lines 72G. All blank spaces filled. Bound in original binding



of tooled vellum over wooden boards, with clasps and bosses removed. Preliminary blank leaf torn and leaves of first quire soiled.

On April 12, 1493, Anton Koberger published a four-volume edition of the Bible, each volume with a commentary by Nicolas de Lyra. Our Volume Four contains the entire New Testament and is completely rubricated. Four months later, Koberger published the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, the book with which his name is most closely associated.

Koberger was born in 1440, the year Gutenberg is thought to have begun his experiments in printing. Koberger was listed as a master goldsmith for a time. The start of his career as a printer is obscure. He appears to have operated a press as early as 1470, although his first book was not issued until 1473. By 1480 Koberger had developed the largest printing house in all Europe; he had twenty-four presses and employed a hundred men. He branched out into bookselling throughout the continent and was so successful that his presses were unable to cope with the demand. Because of this, he let out huge quantities of work to other printers. After his death in 1513, his heirs discontinued printing altogether and devoted themselves to bookselling.

One of the interesting features of this volume is its binding. The text is in its original thick wooden boards, which are covered by a sheet of tooled vellum. Originally, the front and back covers had five raised metal bosses embedded in the wood. These bosses were used to protect the binding, for in medieval libraries books were shelved flat, one on top another, rather than upright. This was due to the enormous size of books in those days. However, the bosses have been removed; all that is left are five drilled holes at the four corners and in the center of each cover.

Two metal clasps, now removed, were originally fastened to the head and tail of the front cover. Latches were placed opposite them on the back cover, and when the book was not in use the clasps were locked in place. Clasps were used to give added protection to the binding and to prevent the leaves from spreading, thereby collecting dust and moisture. The binding is in excellent condition; the spine is very tight. The only dam-

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age to the wooden boards is on the lower right-hand corner of the front cover, where the wood seems to have been eaten away.

SCHEDEL, HARTMANN. *LIBER CHRONICARUM*. NUREMBERG, ANTON KOBERGER, 12 JULY 1493. f°. HC 14508\*, Stillwell S281. With title page, pagination reading: [20] cclxvi [6] cclxvii-ccxcix [3] l, with leaves cclviii-cclxi, leaf [6] of third group and last two leaves blank. The library copy is imperfect; the following leaves are wanting: [2]-[7]; cclix, cclxi; leaf [6] of third group; cclxix-cclxxxiii, cclxxxv-ccxcix; and all of last group. In all, 41 leaves are missing. The majority is from the end where, except for leaf 284, all between 268 and 302 are missing. Fully rubricated, with initial letter *O* illuminated. Rebound in a smooth, dark leather, with back cover partially detached. Leaves 267, 268 and 284 torn. Some ms. notes.

In December of 1491 two wealthy merchants, Sebald Schreyer and Sebastian Kamermaister, and two noted artists, Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwruuff, all of Nuremberg, entered into an agreement to produce an illustrated history of the world and to share in the profits. Hartmann Schedel, the city physician, was selected as the author, for it was known that he had been at work on such a history for three years. Schedel agreed and undertook to enlarge the scope of his book to include all history from the creation of the world to the proposed date of publication, 1493. Koberger was also a natural choice as printer, for he was one of the most renowned in Europe.

When completed, the *Chronicle* was the most profusely illustrated book of the fifteenth century, featuring 1809 portraits and scenes. This figure, however, is misleading, since many of the cuts were used over and over again to represent totally different subjects in different parts of the text. For instance, forty-four cuts depict 224 different kings and emperors, and twenty-two cuts are used for sixty-nine cities. Actually, there are 645 separate woodcuts. This repetitive practice was not unusual in a fifteenth-century book. In fact, it was not unusual for a printer to buy woodcuts from another printer and use them in entirely different situations than originally intended.

The book is a large folio. Our copy has been cut down for rebinding, yet measures fifteen and a quarter inches high and more than twelve inches wide. Its present binding of dark, smooth leather is probably from the nineteenth century. The

book is printed in a gothic type and is completely rubricated. The first letter of the text, an *O*, is illuminated in blue and gold, surrounded by a red and green border. Ornaments in green, red and gold lead from the letter, down the entire inner margin and across the tail margin to the fore edge of the page. The title page, which is a separate woodcut, is also illuminated in looping curls of red, green and blue. But the attraction of the book is its illustrations; woodcuts fill out each page. However, the indiscriminate use of them makes it apparent that they were not intended to represent real situations. Nevertheless, they are brilliantly done; their execution is imaginative and flawless. They are not signed, and it is impossible to assign individual illustrations to either artist.

PHILELPHUS, JOHANNES MARIUS. *NOVUM EPISTOLARIUM*. VENICE, JOANNES TACUINUS, DE TRIDINO, 20 OCTOBER 1492. 4°. HC 12977\*; Stillwell P569. Without title page or pagination, the volume is 108 leaves in length, with signatures: A<sup>4</sup>, a-n<sup>8</sup>. The leaf measures 192 mm., 40 lines to the leaf, the type block measuring 161 (165) x 115 mm. Leaf n<sup>2</sup> is not signed and b<sup>2</sup> is torn. Spaces, with catch-letters, not filled. Rebound in modern quarter calf.

Mario Filelfo was the son of Francesco Filelfo, one of the great Italian humanists of the Renaissance. Mario attempted to follow the path of his father's success as a poet and a scholar, but became more of a wandering troubadour than either of these. He scribbled thousands of Latin and Italian verses and traveled extensively through Italy seeking patrons and audiences for his work. He also tutored the children of wealthy families and wrote biographies of his generous patrons. Despite all this, his poems were described as dull and impoverished, and he never approached the fame of his father.

Tacuinus first published an edition of Filelfo's letters on October 6, 1492. Two weeks later, he issued a second edition. This is the edition the library owns, and is an exact duplicate of the earlier edition. The only difference appears to be in the dates given in the colophons.

The British Museum has stated that the October 20th issue is a reprint of the October 6th edition, and that it was not printed *before April 1495*. I can find no amplification of this note, and do not know on what grounds it is based, but it

would appear that the October 20th date is questionable. If one accepts this date, it would mean that Tacuinus reset and printed the edition within the space of fourteen days. One cannot help wondering why a reissue was necessary so soon after the first. There were five other editions preceding the October 6th issue, the fifth printed in Bologna in 1489. A share of these printings must have been sold in Venice. It is unlikely, then, that the demand would have been great enough to exhaust Tacuinus' first printing in a matter of hours. The time factor is important: printing was slow and every operation was done by hand. Even conceding a demand of this magnitude, typesetting and printing would have had to begin immediately after the first printing left the press. The correct date must wait for elucidation from the British Museum.

## II.

The remainder of Colby's collection of incunabula is made up of seven separate leaves. Although single leaves do not offer substantial insight into the workings of the early press, they are the only examples we have of these important fifteenth-century printers: Johann Gutenberg, John de Speyer, Nicolas Jenson, Andreas Toressano and Wynkyn de Worde. The other two leaves are from the presses of Franciscus Renner and Anton Koberger, whose contributions have already been described in Part I. They will simply be listed here in their chronological positions.

BALBUS, JOHANNES. *CATHOLICON*. MAINZ, [EPON. PRESS (JOHANN GUTENBERG)], 1460. f<sup>o</sup>. HC 2254, Stillwell B19. One leaf not signed, measuring 363 x 289 mm. Printed in a small gothic type, two columns to the side, the type block measures 270 x 81 mm. Twenty lines measure 79G. Rubricated. Sheet is watermarked with a slashed D. Acquired from the Sloane-Krech copy.

No piece of printing has ever been signed by Gutenberg. Nevertheless, exhaustive research has proven beyond doubt that he printed three books—the 42-line Bible, the 36-line Bible, and the *Catholicon*, as well as some fifty other pieces, mostly broadsides.

Much of his life still remains a mystery, although more research has been expended on Gutenberg than on any other

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printer of any age. The obscurity begins with his birth. The exact date is unknown, but it is thought that he was born in Mainz between 1394 and 1399. A popular uprising in that city in 1425 resulted in his family's banishment. It is believed that he then took up residence in Strasbourg, perhaps in 1430, and from this city we get the first hints of his interest in printing. Nothing is certain until 1448, when it is known that he was back in Mainz. He disappears again, this time until 1455, when he is a defendant in a lawsuit brought by Johann Fust to recover some sums of money loaned to Gutenberg in 1450 and 1452. He also demanded forfeiture of Gutenberg's tools and equipment. There is no record of the outcome of the suit, but it may be assumed that Fust won, since he began printing soon after. Very little else is known of Gutenberg. In 1465 Archbishop Adolf of Mainz appointed Gutenberg his servant for life, an honorary position. Sometime before February 26, 1468, he died. Tradition has it that he was buried in a Franciscan church in that city, but his grave has never been found.

The *Catholicon*, written by Johannes Balbus of Genoa in the thirteenth century, was a popular encyclopedia and Latin dictionary. Our single leaf belongs to the "I" section of the dictionary. The complete volume is 373 leaves, and is printed in a small gothic type. The type, about a third smaller than Gutenberg used before, is a significant step forward in cheapening the cost of books. In contrast to the average forty-two lines of print to each leaf in his Bible, Gutenberg was able to get approximately sixty-eight lines to the leaf here, a decisive savings in paper and ink.

LIVIVS, TITUS. *HISTORIAE ROMANAE DECADES*. [VENICE] VINDELINUS DE SPIRA, 1470. f°. HC 10130, Stillwell L210. One leaf, without signature. Printed in a roman type, the type block measures 269 x 150 mm., with the leaf measuring 375 x 280 mm. The type block has 49 lines of print, twenty lines measuring 109R. There are no blank spaces.

Titus Livius, or Livy, was born in Padua in 59 B.C. and died there in 17 A.D. Livy lived in Rome for the greater part of his life. He entered the imperial literary circle there, and gained the friendship of Augustus Caesar. His *History of Rome*, which took some forty years to write, tells the story of

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Rome from the arrival of Aeneas in Italy to the death of Drusus, younger brother of the Emperor Tiberius, in 9 A.D.

Among the first printers of Livy's *History* were John and Wendelin de Speyer, who came from Speyer, a city situated between Mainz and Strasbourg, the two cities most closely associated with the activities of Johann Gutenberg. It is not known when they first arrived in Venice, but on September 18, 1469, John de Speyer was granted the exclusive privilege of printing in roman type by the governing body of Venice. This patent was to last five years. The brothers were very active, for in less than one year—John died in 1470—they published three books, all in roman. This was not the first use of this type, but the Speyers were first to achieve prominence with it. Their roman is not comparable to modern roman. It lacks the lightness and form associated with it but, regardless of defects, it was a remarkable accomplishment. Its popularity overwhelmed the black gothic and it became the standard letter for most of Europe. Wendelin carried on alone after his brother's death. He soon met with difficulties. He lost his business in 1473, but began again in 1475. He abandoned printing altogether in 1478.

ANTONINUS FLORENTINUS. *SUMMA THEOLOGICA (PARS II)*. VENICE, FRANCISCUS RENNER, DE HEILBRONN, AND NICOLAUS DE FRANKFORDIA, 1474. f°. HCR 1254, Stillwell A772. One leaf, unsigned, measuring 207 x 172 mm. Two columns of type to the leaf; the type block measures 194 x 55 mm. Twenty lines 75G. (See page 82.)

RAINERIUS DE PISIS. *PANTHEOLOGIA, SIVE SUMMA UNIVERSAE THEOLOGIAE*. NUREMBERG, ANTON KOBERGER, 12 FEBRUARY 1477. HC 13018\*, Stillwell R10. f°. One leaf, headed *Caritas*. The leaf is not signed; it measures 442 x 316 mm., with 51 lines to the leaf, the type block measuring 324 x 95 mm. Twenty lines 115G. Rubricated. (See pages 84-87.)

PLUTARCHUS. *VITAE ILLUSTRUM VIRORUM*. VENICE, NICOLAUS JENSON, 2 JANUARY 1478. f°. HC 13127\*, Stillwell P758. Two leaves, signed H<sup>4</sup> [H<sup>5</sup>]. The outer leaves, that is, H<sup>4a</sup> and [H<sup>5b</sup>] have 51 lines of type, the type block measuring 281 (287) x 160 mm., with twenty lines measuring 111R. The inner leaves, H<sup>4b</sup> and [H<sup>5a</sup>] have 49 lines of type, the type block measuring 270 x 160 mm. The whole leaf measures 344 x 269 mm. Spaces left blank.

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Nicolas Jenson, printer of this edition of Plutarch's *Lives*, is a giant in the history of typography. He is considered one of the foremost type designers of printing. William Morris, the English poet and printer who established the Kelmscott Press, maintained that Jenson carried the development of roman type as far as it could go. Although it is true that Jenson's type set the standard for many subsequent roman designs, it is difficult to share Morris' enthusiasm. The modern roman has a graceful, pleasing thin and thick effect which Jenson's block type never approached.

Jenson was born about 1420 in Sommevoire, in north central France. After serving an apprenticeship in the mint at Paris, making dies for coinage, he became master of the royal mint at Tours. Legend has it that in 1458 Charles VII of France sent Jenson to Mainz to spy out the new mystery of printing and acquire sufficient knowledge to work at it on his return to Paris. It seems certain that Jenson did learn printing in Germany before settling in Venice, but if Jenson ever went to Mainz, he never returned to France. In any case, he is the first non-German printer of whom we know.

The first roman character, which was for a time credited to Jenson, was actually designed by John de Speyer. Jenson's roman design was an immediate success. From 1470 to 1480, the year of his death, he printed 150 books, the greater part in roman. He also designed and used a gothic.

**JUSTINIANUS. *DIGESTUM VETUS* (and *SUMMARIA of PETRUS FOSSANUS*).** VENICE, ANDREAS TORRESANUS, DE ASULA, 26 MARCH 1491. f°. H 9556\*, Stillwell J500. One leaf, numbered CLXXVIII, measuring 425 x 287 mm. Printed in gothic type, two columns to the side; the type block measures 325 x 111 mm. Paragraph marks and capitals printed in red.

Andreas Torresano was born on March 4, 1451, in the town of Asola, in northern Italy. He died in Venice in March 1529. Although his career as a printer spanned a good portion of the creative period of early typography, he did nothing to enhance the growing technological revolution. Yet he does have a grasp on immortality, for his name is enmeshed with the two titans of Venetian printing: Nicolas Jenson and Aldus Manutius.

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Torresano is cited as successor to the printing establishment of Nicolas Jenson. This claim appears to hang on an unsubstantiated boast made by Torresano in 1483 that he had been printing with Jenson's equipment and type. Jenson willed his type and matrices to his closest friend, Peter Uglheimer of Frankfort. The transfer of these evidently took place after Jenson's death. How Torresano acquired the identical equipment has never been explained.

Torresano's relation to Aldus Manutius is more substantial. Manutius may have worked with Torresano for a time in Venice after his arrival in 1490. Whether this is true or not, he did marry Maria Torresano some time before 1499. On Manutius' death in 1515, Torresano succeeded to the press and directed it until his own decease in March 1529, when it passed into the hands of Manutius' eldest son, Paulus.

Aldus Manutius is most notable for his design of italic type. The size of books had not altered to any extent since Gutenberg. Books produced at the close of the century were still quite cumbersome and, although huge folios with broad margins and large type were esthetically appealing, they were prohibitive in cost. Relatively few individuals could afford them. This was a serious problem, since book production had increased fantastically since the early years, Venice alone having over two hundred printers. By the end of the century, the book market was glutted with books that could not be sold because of their price.

The roman and gothic types then in use were too large for a small format. Efforts to reduce their size had proved unsatisfactory. There was a need for a face that could be closely set and yet possess the legibility of the larger type. To accomplish this, Manutius created an italic type which was based on an Italian handwriting known as Chancery script, whose chief characteristic was its thin, sharp, inclined line. In 1500 Aldus cut a type face following this line. The first book to be printed with the new character was an edition of Vergil, a volume of 228 leaves which measured only six inches high by three and a half inches wide, hand-size. The small book had instant success, selling at a price equivalent to fifty cents in our day.



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JACOBUS DE VORAGINE. [ENGLISH] *THE GOLDEN LEGEND*. WESTMINSTER, WYNKYN DE WORDE, 8 JANUARY 1498. f°. C 6745, Stillwell J138. One leaf, numbered CXLIII, measuring 263 x 184 mm. Two columns to the side, with 47 lines to the column, the type block measures 222 (232) x 76 mm., with twenty lines measuring 95G. Running head: *The lyf of Saynt Edward the Martyr*.

De Voragine was born in Varazze, a city on the coast of the Gulf of Genoa. His birth date is not known, but it is thought to be between 1228 and 1230. In 1244 he entered the Dominican order and was soon teaching in several houses of the order. In 1267 he became Vicar General for the province of Lombardy, and in 1292 was appointed Archbishop of Genoa. He died there on July 13, 1298.

De Voragine was the author of many works, but his *Golden Legend*, written sometime between 1255 and 1260, was one of the most popular books of the Middle Ages. He gave it the title of *Legend of the Saints*, or *Legenda Sanctorum*. In medieval usage, *legend* did not mean myth or fable, but rather lesson, lecture or reading. Thus, it was a didactic account of the lives and works of the saints. William Caxton, the first English printer, gave the reason for its popular title in the preface of his translation, which he published in 1483: "For in like wise as gold is most noble above all other metals, in like wise is this legend most noble above all other works." Caxton's version was subsequently reprinted several times by Wynkyn de Worde.

De Worde, whose real name was Jan von Wynkyn, was born in the city of Worth, in Alsace. It is believed that Worde worked with Caxton in Holland and returned to England with him in 1476 as assistant. After Caxton's death in 1491, Worde inherited his establishment. In the first two years, Worde published only five books and did not sign his name to any. The first book to contain his name was issued in 1494. It can only be assumed that he felt unsure of himself and did not want to attach his name to his earliest experiments. However, he forged ahead rapidly and, by the end of the century, had issued some one hundred books. At his death in 1534, he was credited with eight hundred publications.