

The Gutenberg Bible

*A New Facsimile Edition of the
Famous Keystone of Western Printing
Presented in Its Original Size with
the Illuminations Reproduced in
Full Color and Gold*



JEAN GUTTENBERG

PAGEANT BOOKS, INC.

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The Gutenberg Bible has often been called the greatest book in the world. There is good and sufficient reason for the claim. Marking the threshold of a new art, the magnificent work was the first major book in the West to be printed from movable type. The Bible's producers rank high among the handful of men who gave civilization modern printing, an invention to compare with the wheel, the discovery of fire, or the uses of gunpowder.

Printing may have been the supreme achievement of the Northern Renaissance. Because of it, the barbarian dark was pushed back. Advocates of the new humanism or the old theology could count on the presses to send their basic tenets across national borders and into the far places of the earth. Written knowledge, once the province of the cultured few, became available to every literate man.

Publication of the great Bible (sometimes called the 42-line Bible from the number of lines per page; sometimes the Mazarin Bible, for the cardinal in whose library a famous copy was found in 1763) released a spate of printing in Europe. From 1457 to 1500, presses appeared at Strasbourg, Cologne, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Basle, Rome, Venice, Florence, Paris, Lyons, Westminster and a host of other cities and towns. Along with the proliferation of printing presses came rival claimants, their adherents seeking to displace Gutenberg from his position as first of the master printers. There has never been definite proof relating to a specific inventor of printing in the West. Like most inventions, it must have sprung from many hands. But over the years, the weight of evidence has favored Johann Gutenberg as the foremost pioneer practitioner of the new art. Gutenberg, like Shakespeare, left behind only tantalizing fragments concerning his life and work.

Johann Gensfleisch, born into a well-to-do family of Mainz about 1400, took the name of Gutenberg from his patrician mother. Some time after his birth, political disturbances forced the family to flee Mainz and settle in Strasbourg. There Gutenberg grew up and entered into a partnership, presumably to carry out some form of experimental printing. Details of this period are hazy and only known through legal proceedings. For several years before mid-century, Gutenberg disappeared from historical records. By 1448, he had again become a citizen of Mainz.

In that city, from 1450 to 1455, the pioneer printer worked through a crucial period of his career. About 1450, he borrowed 800 gulden from Johann Fust, a goldsmith and capitalist, and two years later, asked for and received a similar amount. The sum was used to promote the art of printing and Gutenberg's working equipment was put up for security. When payment was not forthcoming, Fust went into court in 1455, suing to recover his money with interest and also requesting possession of Gutenberg's tools. As a witness, the burgher produced Peter Schoeffer of Gernsheim, a technician in Gutenberg's employ. Once again, the mists of time blot out the record; it appears Fust did take over much of the printing equipment. The partnership of Fust and Schoeffer was then established and they became prominent printers of Mainz, producing a magnificent Psalter in 1457, among their other works. Gutenberg apparently was bankrupt but managed to continue printing. In 1465, Archbishop Adolf of Mainz appointed him to a court position for life for services rendered in the past. The great printer died in 1468, but circumstances of his death and burial are unknown.

Among printed pieces attributed to Gutenberg are several editions of a Latin grammar by Donatus, some letters of indulgence from the Pope (dated 1454 and 1455), a rare 36-line Bible, and a Latin dictionary called the *Catholicon*. But the major question remains: what was Gutenberg's connection with the famed 42-line Bible which carries his name? There are no clean-cut answers. After much sifting of evidence, scholars have concluded that the Bible was conceived and begun by Gutenberg and probably finished and marketed by Fust and Schoeffer.

de hebreo voluminibus additū noue-
re que usq; ad duo pūda iuxta rē-
dicionis dūmēxat cōditionē: qui sim-
plicitate finio a septuaginta inter-
pretibus nō discordat. Hec ergo et vo-
bis et studioso cuiq; scilicet me scitis
nō ambigo multos fore qui uel inui-
dia uel supercilio maleuolē contemnere
et uidere predara quam disce: et de
turbulento magis riuo quam de pu-
rissimo fōre potare. *Explicit prologus.*

Inquit liber primus de consilio quod dicitur.

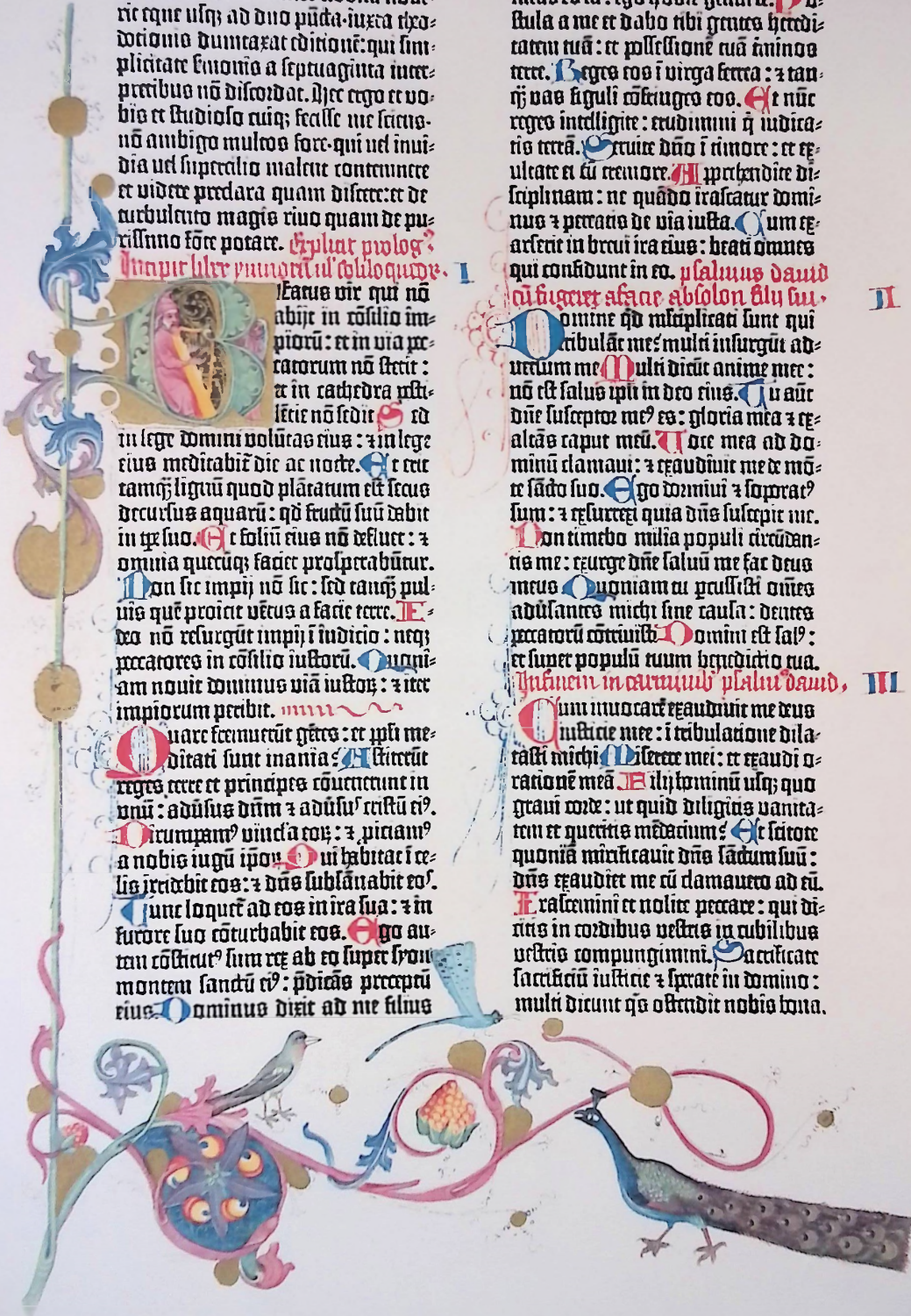
Beatissimus vir qui nō
abijt in cōsilio im-
piorū: et in uia pec-
catorum nō stetit:
et in cathedra mō-
sticie nō sedijt. *S*ed
in lege domini uolūtas eius: et in lege
eius meditabitur die ac nocte. Et erit
tamq; lignū quod plātarum est secus
decursus aquarū: qd fructū suū dabit
in tēpore suo. Et foliū eius nō defluet: et
omnia quęcūq; faciet prosperabūtur.
Non sic impij nō sic: sed tamq; pul-
uis quē proicit uētus a facie terre. *T*e-
deo nō resurgūt impij i iudicio: neq;
peccatores in cōsilio iustorū. Quoni-
am nouit dominus uia iustorū: et iter
imporum peribit.

*Quare fecerūt gētes: et ipsi me-
ditati sunt inania. Atterūt
reges terre et principes cōueniunt in
vnu: adūsus dñm et adūsus cōsiliū ei.
Dirumpam⁹ uindicta eorū: et periciam⁹
a nobis iugū iporū. Qui habitat i ce-
lis irascibit eos: et dñs subleuabit eos.
Tunc loquetur ad eos in ira sua: et in
furore suo cōturbabit eos. Ego au-
tem cōstitui sum rex ab eo super syon
montem sanctū ei: pñdēs pceptū
eius. Dominus dixit ad me filius*

meus es tu: ego hodie genui te. *P*o-
stula a me et dabo tibi gentes hēredi-
tatem tuā: et possessionē tuā in inno-
centia. Reges eos i uirga ferrea: et tan-
q; uas figuli cōfringēs eos. Et nūc
reges intelligite: et uindicta q iudica-
tis terrā. *S*eruite dñō i timore: et re-
uerentate ei cū tremore. *A*pprehēditē di-
sciplinam: ne quādo irascatur domi-
nus et peccatis de uia iusta. Cum re-
arserit in breui ira eius: brati omnes
qui cōfidunt in eo. *psalmus dauid*

cū fugerit a facie abalon filij sui.
Domine qd multiplicati sunt qui
tribulāt me: multi insurgūt ad-
uersum me. *M*ulti dicūt anime mee:
nō est salus ipsi in deo eius. *Q*u autē
dñe suscepit me? es: gloria mea et re-
aleas caput meū. *T*ore mea ad do-
minū clamaui: et exaudivit me tē mō-
te sado suo. *E*go dormiui et sopora-
sum: et resurrexi quia dñs suscepit me.
Non timebo milia populi circūdan-
tis me: reurge dñe saluū me fac deus
meus. *Q*uoniam tu percussisti omnes
adūsantes michi sine caula: dentes
peccatorū cōtrīuisti. *D*ominus est sal⁹:
et super populū tuum bēdictio tua.

In fine in carminibus psalmi dauid.
Quoniam inuocasti et exaudivit me deus
iusticie mee: i tribulatione dila-
tasti michi. *D*ilectio mei: et exaudi o-
ratio nē meā. *E*tilij hominū usq; quo
gravi corde: ut quid diligis uanita-
tem et queris mēdaciū? *E*t scitote
quonia mēdicaui dñs sādum suū:
dñs exaudiet me cū clamaueo ad eū.
Iralemini et nolite peccare: qui di-
ctis in cordibus uestris in cubilibus
uestris compungimini. *S*acificate
sacrificiū iusticie et sperate in domino:
multi dicunt qd ostendit nobis bona.



Signatum est super nos lumen vul-
lus tui domine: dediti leticiam in cor-
de meo. **A**scendu frumenti vini & olei
tui: multiplicati sunt. **I**n pace in id-
ipsum: dormiit et requiescunt. **Q**uo-
nia tu domine: singulariter in ipse co-
stitisti me. *Influem pro ea que heredi-
tate consequitur psalmus dauid.*

Auribus meis: intende clamorem meum.
Intende voci orationis mee: rex me-
us et deus meus. **Q**uonia ad te ora-
bo domine: mane exaudies vocem meam.
Mane astabo tibi & videbo: quoni-
am non des volens iniquitatem tuam.
Neq; habitabit iuxta te malignus:
neq; permanebit iniustus ante oculos
tuos. **O**disti omnes qui operantur
iniquitatem: preces omnes qui loquun-
tur mendacium. **T**urum sanguinum et
colosum abominabitur dominus: ego autem
in multitudine misericordie tue. **I**n-
troibo in domum tuam: adorabo ad
templum sanctum tuum in timore tuo. **D**omine
deduc me in iusticia tua: propter in-
imicos meos dirige in conspectu meo vi-
am meam. **Q**uonia non est in ore eorum
veritas: cor eorum vanum est. **S**epulcrum
patris est guttur eorum: lingua sua do-
lose agebat: iudica illos deus. **O**e-
ridant a rogationibus suis: secundum
iniquitatem impietatum eorum repelle eos:
quonia irritaverunt te domine. **E**t late-
rent omnes qui sperant in te: in cecum re-
ultrabit et habitabis in eis. **E**t glo-
riabuntur in te omnes qui diligunt no-
men tuum: quonia tu benedixisti ius-
to. **D**omine: ut sicut bone voluntati-
as tue coronasti nos. *Influem in carum
bus per octava psalmus dauid*

Domine ne in furore tuo arguas
me: neq; ira tua corripia me.

Misere mei domine quonia in infernum
sum: sana me domine quonia conturbata
sunt ossa mea. **E**t anima mea turbata
est valde: & tu domine usque quo-
uertere domine et eripe animam meam: saluum
me fac propter misericordiam tuam. **Q**uo-
nia non est in morte qui memoretur
tui: in inferno autem quis confortabit tibi?
Laboraavi in genuitu meo: lauabo
per singulas noctes lectum meum: lacrimis
meis stratum meum rigabo. **T**urbatus
est a furore oculus meus: inueneram
inter omnes inimicos meos. **O**scendi-
te a me omnes qui operamini iniqui-
tatem: qui exaudiuit dominus vocem fletus
mei. **E**xaudiuit dominus orationem meam:
dominus orationem meam suscepit. **E**t rube-
scant et conturbentur omnes inimi-
ci mei: conturbentur et conturbentur valde
et locutur. *Influem psalmus dauid quem
cantavit david pro verbis dñi filij genuini.*

Domine deus meus in te speravi:
saluum me fac ex omnibus persequen-
tibus me et libera me. **N**e quando ca-
piat ut leo animam meam: dum non est qui
redimat neq; qui saluum faciat. **D**omine
deus meus si feci istud: si est iniquitas
in manibus meis. **S**i reddidi retribu-
tionibus michi mala: decidam merito
ab inimicis meis manibus. **R**edesqua-
tur inimicus animam meam et comprehen-
dat: et conculcet in terra vitam: et glo-
riam meam in pulverem deducat. **E**t
surge domine in ira tua: et exalta te
in finibus inimicorum meorum. **E**t sur-
ge domine deus meus in precepto quod
mandasti: & syriagoga populi circunda-
bit te. **E**t propter hanc in altum regrede-
re: dominus iudicat populos. **I**udica me
domine secundum iusticiam meam: et secundum in-
nocentiam meam super me. **C**onsumet
iniquitas peccatorum: et diriges iustum

The Gutenberg Bible was placed in time by Heinrich Cremer, vicar of the Collegiate Church of St. Stephen in Mainz, who rubricated, illuminated and bound a set of the work in 1456, marking the date within the volumes. Allowing several months for Cremer's efforts, it seems apparent the Bible came from the presses some time in 1455. The printers themselves placed no date on their work. Whatever its actual date, the 42-line Bible was a remarkable achievement for its time or any other. Most pioneering works are crude, tentative and fumbling. The Gutenberg Bible is none of these. As a complete and polished entity, it has stood inspection for 500 years.

The medieval printers, practicing an art rather than a craft, lavished infinite care on this first printing of the Book of Books. A large and distinguished format, fine press work, creamy paper and an elaborately beautiful Gothic type face all contribute to this majestic production. After experiments with 40- and 41-line pages, the printers settled on a 42-line page with two columns of type. There are 1,282 printed pages, in black ink. Spaces were left for capital letters and headings, and owners of the book employed artists to illuminate its pages with religious miniatures, dragons, peacocks, falcons and a Gothic riot of medieval flowers.

The number of Gutenberg Bibles printed at Mainz is not known. Estimates say some 200 copies, of which 165 were on paper and 35 on vellum, came from the presses. At present, there are 47 known copies and there have been reports (not yet fully authenticated) of one or two more.

This masterpiece marking the birth of printing has long been coveted by bookmen around the world. Because so few copies of the great Bible exist, and because of its supreme importance to all bibliophiles, Pageant Books, Incorporated has undertaken the enormous task of printing a full size, full color edition of the Gutenberg Bible in facsimile. Utilizing the finest that modern printing, engraving and binding processes have to offer, American craftsmen are producing the book in the United States.

The project is creating a book for posterity, one which will be treasured as long as men value beauty and dignity. To assure the highest quality in the finished product, the producers of this Bible have allotted a full year to the undertaking and limited the edition to 1,000 copies, 996 of which are for sale. The Bible will prove an invaluable addition to the collections of churches, museums, universities, libraries, and will have an overwhelming appeal to scholars and those engaged in publishing and the many phases of the graphic arts.

The new edition derives from the 1913-14 facsimile printed in collotype by Insel Verlag, Leipzig. Sources for this edition were Gutenberg Bibles from the Berlin Staatsbibliothek and the Fulda Landesbibliothek. The Leipzig facsimile preserves some of the loveliest illuminated pages in existence.

The Pageant Gutenberg Bible is in two volumes, volume one containing 648 pages, volume two 634. Page size is approximately 12 by 18½ inches and margins are wide. The paper is off-white, 90-pound, 100 per cent rag content stock made especially for this edition by the Curtis Paper Company. It has a laid finish and is smooth enough to take quality gravure printing.

To make the Pageant Bible an outstanding book, as close to the original as possible, two printing processes are employed. The 93 illuminated pages are being done by five-color process, sheet-fed gravure, to assure true and careful reproduction of the many subtle colors on the original leaves. Gold is widely used, and is protected from discoloration by an undercoat and an overcoat of lacquer.

To guarantee richness and fidelity, each color sheet is fed through the press seven separate times. The remaining pages, 1,189 of type alone, are being printed by photo-

lithography in three-color line to reproduce faithfully the rubrication which enhances the black letters.

Various printing processes were tried before the above-mentioned were chosen as yielding the best results. Even then, careful testing was necessary. Gold presented a special problem. After several experiments, a golden-bronze powder proved most satisfactory. Tests in a tarnish machine gave rise to a special process, employing protective lacquers, to protect the metallic powder from harmful chemical reactions. The process inks were tested as well, in a fadeometer for 200 hours, equivalent to 200 days of exposure to direct June sunlight. Both the color inks, containing the most permanent pigments available, and the lacquer-protected golden bronze, should last the life of the book.

The Pageant facsimile edition of the Gutenberg Bible will be luxuriously bound in half leather (top grade cow-hide) with 24 carat gold stamping. The sides, suitably decorated, and marbled end papers will add to the richness of the volumes. Printed sheets will be hand-folded and hand-sewn on tapes with strong Irish linen thread. The spine of each book will be reinforced with a tough, flexible canvas which will have five-inch extensions inserted and glued into split boards. Every phase of the production process will be meticulously done by master hand craftsmen who are determined to make this monumental work a crowning achievement of the binder's art.



An exact page from the Pageant Gutenberg Bible is enclosed. The portrait of Gutenberg on page one is from a copper engraving; after the painting at Mainz; the device on page four is the printer's mark of Fust and Schoeffer. Brochure written and designed by John S. Blay.