



Bob Burke
Bible
Collection

University of Oklahoma
Libraries

Introduction

To Jews and Christians, the Bible is Holy Scripture, a book to be read frequently, its messages internalized and put into action in everyday lives. To others, the Bible offers interesting examples of ancient literature that provide historical, anthropological and cultural insights about the peoples of the near mideast and the northern coastline of the Mediterranean Sea. For all, the Bible is considered a book. It, however, has never been an ordinary book. From the time it first appeared in printed form in the mid-1400s, the Bible has been published in more editions and translated into more languages than any other book. As a book, it has become the object of the collector's search. Its numerous editions, formats and translations provide a rich field for collectors, and several outstanding collections have been formed over the years. The University of Oklahoma Libraries is fortunate to have received as a gift the Bible collection of Bob Burke. The Burke Collection is a valuable complement to the William Bizzell Bible collection already held by the University of Oklahoma's Bizzell Memorial Library. Together they comprise an important resource for the history of printing, fine bindings, the translator's art, and the historical development of the Bible in Western civilization.

The Collection

The Bob Burke Bible Collection came to the University Libraries in 2002 as a gift of attorney, historian and collector Bob Burke of Oklahoma City. The collection includes more than 2,000 different Bibles ranging in publication dates from 1492 to 2000. Also included in the collection are pre-print items representing early examples of writing or hieroglyphics from the Sumerian region of Mesopotamia circa 3000 B.C., a papyrus fragment from the third century A.D., and a handwritten Biblical text from the 13th century A.D. The collection contains an incunabulum published in 1492 along with other Bibles from the 16th to the 20th centuries. There are numerous editions containing first examples of maps in the Bible, early woodcut illustrations, color illustrations, and Bibles published especially for groups such as the family, Sunday school teachers, children, soldiers and sailors, and even college students. The collection also includes auxiliary and specialized studies about the Bible, among which are an early history of the Christian Church in Japan; a fine, early edition of the first century A.D. historian Flavius Josephus' work; many separately printed books of the Bible; prayer books; and Psalters. Bibles printed in more than 100 different languages, including many for Native Americans, may be found in the collection.

Collection Highlights

Genesis Chapter 39 and 40. A handwritten text in Latin. Circa 1250 A.D.

Handwritten copies such as this preserved Biblical texts until the advent of printing in the mid-15th century. This particular document is significant because it incorporates numbered chapter headings, a practice begun in the early 13th century.

Vulgate Bible published by Jerome Paganini of Brixi in Venice, Italy, 1492.

The Vulgate Bible, a translation into Latin, was the principal Bible used by Christian Europe until the Reformation period. The publication of this edition coincides with Christopher Columbus' first voyage of exploration. It also is noteworthy for being the first Bible to include a woodcut illustration on the title page and the first to have an alphabetized list of historical figures who were mentioned in the text.

King James Bible published by Robert Barker in London, 1634.

While not a first edition of the King James translation, this Bible is remarkable for its detailed genealogical illustrations and maps.

A Simplified System of Embossed Reading for the Use of the Blind published by the National Institute for the Blind, Brighton, circa 1850.

This special Bible utilizes a shorthand system developed in England by William Moon. Like Louis Braille, Moon used embossed symbols for letters, numbers, words, prefixes and word endings.

The Collector

A native of Broken Bow, Oklahoma, Bob Burke is a practicing attorney in Oklahoma City. He also is an historian and prolific writer who has authored more than 40 books, including



Bryce Harlow: Mr. Integrity, which received a Pulitzer Prize nomination. Before beginning his law career Mr. Burke was a radio/television sportscaster and journalist in Oklahoma and New York. He holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Oklahoma and a law degree from Oklahoma City University. Mr. Burke is active in civic and community affairs and has served on the boards of the Oklahoma Arts Institute, Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, Oklahoma Heritage Association, Jim Thorpe Association, Wiley Post Commission, Red Earth Board of Directors and Oklahoma City University President's Club Executive Committee. His interest in Bibles dates to his early 20s when, as a Sunday school teacher, he became aware of the many different translations of the Bible. He has been collecting Bibles for more than 30 years.



*The University of Oklahoma is an equal
opportunity Institution.*

*500 copies of this publication were printed at no
cost to the taxpayers of the State of Oklahoma.*