



Books

&

Culture

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Quayle Bible Collection  
Exhibit  
2014-2015



**Books & Culture** was taught in 2014 during the spring semester as part of the Quest program. Courses in the Quest core are interdisciplinary in nature and juniors in the program focus on gaining “a better understanding of our global society.”

The Quayle collection provided these students with an opportunity not only to explore different cultures within today’s society, but to consider, as well, how those cultures have changed across time. In the culminating assignment, students selected a book of interest and explored the ways in which it reflected the culture that produced it and influenced subsequent cultural development.

### **Clay Tablets, Ur, 2000 BCE.**

These were perhaps the most exotic books selected for the research project. Clay tablets were among the first written records still in existence. Many of them were business records like the temple records displayed here. The black tablet is shown with the remains of its envelope. Envelopes were used for contracts and for private or diplomatic correspondence.

The writing is “cuneiform,” meaning that the marks on the clay are wedge-shaped. Those marks were made by pressing the edge of a triangular carved reed into the wet clay which were baked to harden them.

The tools and techniques of modern archaeology began developing in the late 19th century. Several of these tablets were excavated at that time by Edgar J. Banks, American Consul in Baghdad and field director for the Oriental Excavation fund, sponsored by the University of Chicago. Flamboyant and an attention-getter, he may well have served as a model for the character of Indiana Jones.

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### Leaf from the Gutenberg Bible (1452-56)

Most of the items on display were produced by the printing press, using moveable type. Pieces of metal type were locked into a frame to form the text which was then inked and pressed onto paper using a press that was not unlike the wine presses of the day. This is one leaf of the first significant work to be printed in this way.

### **Biblia Pauperum, text by John Wycliffe. London : Unwin Brothers, 1885.**

Before the invention of moveable type, there were “block books.” These books were printed from woodblocks in which the entire page, both text and illustrations were carved.

This block book was first printed for an exhibit in 1877 celebrating William Caxton, England’s first printer. The actual blocks used were said to date from the mid-15th century, although some doubt has been cast on their authenticity.

“Biblia Pauperum” translates literally as “Bible of the Poor,” and refers to illustrated books of biblical stories. The books may have been so called because they were inexpensive or because they were used by people who had little money or little education.

### **Book Construction**

Clay tablets, papyrus pages and parchment scrolls were some of the earliest written materials and were used as early as 3,000 BCE. The codex, of which the Gutenberg Bible and the Biblia Pauperum are examples, developed about the time of Christ and was used extensively by early Christians.



### **Esther. Circa 1800.**

The story of Queen Esther is celebrated with readings and plenty of food and drink at Purim. It's a favorite holiday of the student who selected this item.

Esther was the wife of Ahasuerus, King of Persia. Her cousin, Mordecai, ran afoul of the Prime Minister Haman and became the subject of a plot not only against himself, but against all Jews. Esther foiled the plot, saving her people.

Jewish book illustration often avoided human depictions. The Second Commandment and other passages in Exodus and Deuteronomy prohibit the making of "graven" or carved images which were often understood to prohibit images of people and animals.

Decoration of this scroll consists of architectural frames for the text and is non-figurative, but there are small faces, perhaps Esther above alternate panels. Strictures against figurative art was fairly relaxed in many Jewish communities in the nineteenth century.

### **Two Qur'ans**

The Qur'an is said to have been delivered by the archangel Gabriel to Muhammad between 609 and 632. The word Qur'an, itself, means "recitation" and Muhammad is said to have recited the text. His followers did likewise and even now, during the month of Ramadan, there is a particular emphasis on reading it aloud.

Friends of Muhammad are believed to have written the words revealed to him during his lifetime, but for much of its history, the Qur'an was passed down primarily by recitation.

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### **[Qur'an.] Arabic manuscript. Likely 1823.**

The printing press, which encouraged wide dissemination of the Bible, did not do the same for the Qur'an. Printing was banned in the Ottoman Empire in 1483. Even after the ban was lifted in 1729, hand-written volumes were quite common.

Decoration of this manuscript is quite simple, consisting of lines and round, gold medallions. More elaborately decorated Qur'ans have lovely geometric designs, vines and flowers. Muslims rejected portrayal of living creatures in religious art, in particular.

### **Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Muhammad, translated by George Sale. London : Charles Daly, 1836.**

The first Qur'an set in moveable type was printed in Venice in 1537. Others followed, but the text was not widely disseminated in print.

George Sale made the first scholarly translation in 1734. It remained the standard English translation for over 150 years.

### **Letter from the Archbishop of Lund to the Bishop of Odense, 1442. (bound in a 14th century codex)**

Last year the Quayle Collection was contacted by Anders Leegaard Knudsen of *Diplomatarium Danicae* with interest in a letter on parchment, dated March 10, 1442, bound in a manuscript in our collection. He wrote:

*It is issued by the archbishop of Lund, Johannes to the bishop of Odense, Henneke, delegating to him the task of ending the*



*controversy between the cathedral chapter of Roskilde and the bishop of Ribe, Christiern, regarding a loan which the bishop had failed to repay despite repeated requests to do so."*

Parchment is made from animal skin. It is very sturdy, but labor-intensive to make and people took advantage of old scraps. Sometimes the writing was scraped off and an new text written on the surface; here, the old letter was used for a fly-leaf in a new book.

**Nuremberg Chronicle, text by Hartmann Schedel, woodcuts by the workshop of Michel Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff. Nuremberg : Anton Koberger, 1493.**

The Nuremberg Chronicle is a history of the world from its creation through about 1490. It is profusely illustrated with portraits, battle scenes and cityscapes. The student researcher was particularly enchanted by the "peculiar" people shown as inhabitants of exotic lands and asked "Were these people actually real?"

They are not, but neither did they spring from the fancy of the author, Hartmann Schedel. They were widely believed to exist. Schedel and his illustrators relied on descriptions from ancient sources such as Greek historians Strabo and Pliny, as well as Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville.

The peculiar people in the book include skiapods, with only one foot which was so large they used it as an umbrella to protect themselves from the burning sun; blemmyae, with no heads, but faces on their chests; as well as more familiar centaurs and mythological creatures.

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### **Physica Sacra, ou Histoire Naturelle de la Bible, by Jean-Jacques Scheuchzer. Augsburg & Ulm : Christian Ulrich Wagner, 1731-1735**

Physica Sacra is a natural history of the Bible. The engravings are based on descriptions and drawings of the author, who was a Swiss physician and scientist. Scheuchzer was a devout Christian in addition to being a scientist and he believed that the fossils he discovered in his travels could be traced back to the Noah's Flood. Scheuchzer used this fossil record to illustrate the plants and animals of the Bible.

He was not alone in considering the Bible to be an accurate history of the world. James Ussher created a chronology of the world based on the bible which was printed in many bibles of the 17th and 18th centuries.

### **Accounts of the principal Lazarettos in Europe, by John Howard. London : Johnson, Dilly and Cadell, 1792**

Like the Nuremberg Chronicle and the Physica Sacra, the Accounts... relies on illustrations to make the text come alive. The author, John Howard, was appointed High Sheriff of Bedfordshire in 1773 and became a powerful voice for institutional reform. He travelled widely investigating conditions and searching for model prisons, lazarettos (quarantine facilities) and hospitals. His primary interests included sanitary conditions, health of the inmates, abuse, and corruption. He made detailed elevations and floor plans to accompany his findings. His work resulted in the passage of the Penitentiary Act of 1779 which created standards for the humane treatment of prisoners.



Of the publishers, Thomas Cadell, was in particular sympathy with the views of John Howard, having served as governor of the Foundling Hospital in London, treasurer of the Asylum and having made a habit of attending chapel in the prisons of London.

### **Two controversial Bibles**

**Biblia, translated by Casiododra de Reina. Basle : T. Guarinus, 1569.**

In an effort to respond to the criticisms of the Catholic Church levelled by Reformation theologians, the Council of Trent in 1562 requested Pope Pius IV to revise the Index Librorum Prohibitorum, or “list of prohibited books,” to ensure that the faithful were not exposed to heretical or misleading writings.

Curiously, this Protestant Bible, translated by Casiodora de Reina into Spanish and published in Protestant Basel in 1569, carries the text of the Council’s 3rd and 4th decrees on the back of the title page. The two decrees limit the buying, selling and reading of Bible translations.

**The Holy Bible (King James Version). London : Robert Barker, 1532.**

In 1611, Robert Barker purchased the right to be the King’s printer which gave him a monopoly on printing the King James, or Authorized, version of the Bible. In 1531, he teamed up with Martin Lucas to print an edition which became known as the Wicked Bible after a notable printing error. The seventh commandment in this edition reads “Thou shalt commit adultery.” Barker was fined £300, or about \$72,000 in today’s money. He was unable to pay and was sent to debtor’s prison where he died in 1645.



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### Two Early American Bibles

**The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Covenant, translated by Charles Thomson. Philadelphia : Jane Aitken, 1808.**

This four volume Bible is significant on a couple of accounts. It is the first published English translation of the Septuagint. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible dating from the third or second century BCE when Jews living in Alexandria and elsewhere along the eastern Mediterranean spoke Koine Greek rather than Hebrew. The English translator, Charles Thomson, had a remarkable and varied career. He taught Latin and Greek at the Academy of Philadelphia Academy before going into business as an importer. When the British imposed steep tariffs under the Stamp Act, he became politically active, serving as the secretary of the Continental Congress. On his retirement, he polished the translation of the Bible that he had been working away at for years.

The printer he chose for the Bible was Jane Aitken, one of the earliest American women printers. Hers is a remarkable story. Her father, a fine printer who published the first English Bible in the United States, died when she was 38. She had worked with him in the printing business and was already one of the finest early book binders in the country. In the twelve years following his death, she brought out 60 titles under her own name -- a large number for the time. In 1815, saddled with the debt her father left her and her own poor health, she retired. The Thomson translation is widely considered to be her finest work.



**New Testament , translated by Samuel Worcester. New York : American Bible Society, 1860.**

**Genesis, translated by Samuel Worcester. Park Hill : Mission Press, 1856**

Sequoya, also known by his English name George Guess, developed the Cherokee syllabary in 1821. This system of writing uses a symbol to represent a whole syllable rather than a single sound as the letters of an alphabet do.

Missionary, Samuel Worcester, who lived among the Cherokee in Georgia and moved with them to Oklahoma, translated the New Testament and most of the Old Testament into Cherokee. Initially, they were issued book-by-book and later compiled into a single volume by the American Bible Society.

Assisting Worcester with the translation of Genesis was a Cherokee man named Stephen Foreman, educated at Union and Princeton Theological Seminaries after his ordination in 1835.

Assisting him with the New Testament was Buck Watie, printer and editor of the Cherokee Phoenix. As a young man, Buck Watie met Elias Boudinot, former delegate to the Second Continental Congress and the founder of the American Bible Society. The two took a great liking to one another and Watie asked to take Boudinot's name. Permission was granted. Watie used that name for the rest of his life and named his youngest son Elias.

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### Children's Bibles

**Kleine Voks~BilderBibel, by Martin Luther. Philadelphia : Kohler, 1864**

**History of the Old and New Testaments, tr by Joseph Reeve from the French of Nicolaus Fontaine. ???, 1688**

**Children's Bible, by Henry A Sherman and Charles Foster Kent. NY : Charles Scribner, 1925**

**Child's Bible, by Cecil C Carpenter. No publication information.**

Books of bible stories flourished in Protestant communities where bible reading was particularly valued. One of the first was Martin Luther's Passional (1529). It was a small book with only 100 pages. Each story faced an illustration. The Kleine BildBibel in the exhibit was a later Lutheran children's Bible.

Catholic Bibles for children were also published during this time in spite of the restrictions on publishing the Bible in the language of the common people. The History of the Old and New Testament, by Nicolas Fontaine in 1670 was in print for 150 years.

Changes in children's bibles reflect changes in the culture as the emphasis shifted from the Old Testament stories to the New Testament. In the 16th & 17th centuries, the punishment of immoral behavior was emphasized, but 18th and 19th centuries stories focused on virtuous behavior. There were gradually fewer tales of murder, incest and adultery.

The tiny white Child's Bible (1932) by Cecil C. Carpenter was given away to comfort grieving children and, perhaps, as advertisement by funeral homes like the Burliew-Cowan Funeral home in Manhattan, KS.

Further reading. There are a number of recent books that might interest you. Here are just a few.

A social history of books and libraries from cuneiform to bytes, by Patrick M. Valentine. Lanham, NJ : Scarecrow Pr., 2012.

Judaism and the Visual Image : a Jewish theology of art, by Melissa Raphael. London & New York : Continuum, 2009.

Censors at work : how states shaped literature, by Robert Darnton. NY : WW Norton, 2014.

The exhibit was created from the research papers by the following students.

Clay Tablets, Greg Henning.

Biblia Pauperum. Matt Jenkins

Esther Scroll, Brittany Friedell

The Qur'an, Cedric Williams

Nuremberg Chronicle, Jared Fulks

The Physica Sacra, Vincent Todakaro

Accounts of the principle lazarettos of Europe, Sydney Johnston.

Biblia Sagrada, Duane Simms.

King James Bible, Manual Barnes

Aitken/Thomson Bible, Will Collins

New Testament (Cherokee), Trent Hoover

Children's Bibles, Jade Courter