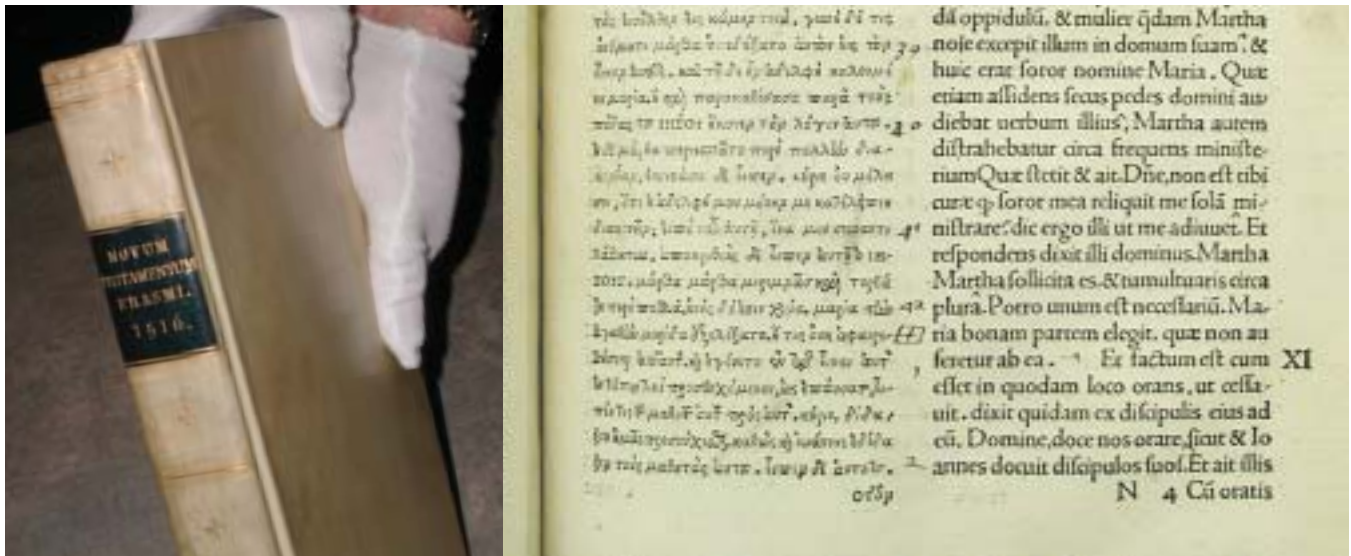


# HIDDEN TREASURES



Some of the earliest printed Greek New Testaments can be found in a surprising place—the F.M. Johnson Archives and Special Collections at North Park University.

**KLYNE SNODGRASS**

**T**here are treasures at North Park—real ones! They have been here for years, since 1963, but only rarely observed. Covenanters deserve to know about these unparalleled resources available at North Park University, resources not many have seen apart from the library staff, a few of my seminary students, and me.

According to oral tradition, in 1963 J. Irving Erickson, then librarian of North Park Theological Seminary, had the foresight to purchase at auction the library of Harold R. Willoughby, who had been professor of Christian origins at the University of Chicago. The purchase included about 3,500 volumes, some of which were typical volumes on New Testament studies. But Willoughby's specialty was New Testament textual criticism. This does not mean he was criticizing the text; rather, a textual critic seeks to determine as nearly

as possible the wording of the original writing, in this case the New Testament.

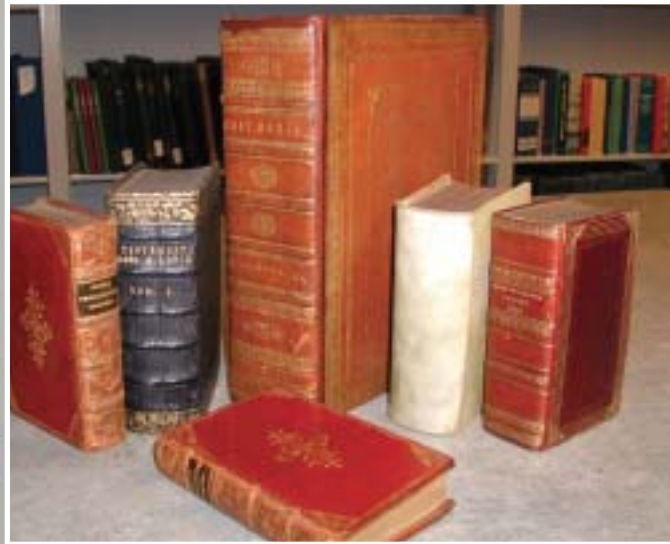
With over 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament in existence, most of which include only portions of the whole (even small portions), numerous variations exist in the actual wording. These variants consist of copyists' errors (omissions, errors of sight, hearing, or memory) and intentional changes (grammatical, spelling, doctrinal, or otherwise), by which a copyist thought he was fixing the text or improving understanding. Willoughby studied New Testament manuscripts, especially ones decorated with art, as some manuscripts were, and his detailed studies of such manuscripts were part of the North Park acquisition.

Willoughby's other interest was the history of the process which has given us modern editions of the Greek New Testament and English translations of it. He spent a good deal of his time and



tiful work of art, for each page of Gutenberg's Bible has some decoration, and the beginning page of each biblical book is elaborately decorated. Gutenberg's publication of the Bible in Latin was the catalyst to print the New Testament in Greek.

The most important treasure in Willoughby's collection is the first Greek New Testament ever published, the 1516 edition by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, which measures



**Left:** Gutenberg Bible facsimile; **above:** some of the Bibles from the Willoughby collection; **opposite page:** the first Greek New Testament, published in 1516

money searching out and purchasing early editions of the Greek New Testament and early translations—Indiana Jones comes to mind!

Here the treasures are unsurpassed—facsimiles (exact replicas) of early Greek manuscripts, a wonderful collection of early printed Greek New Testaments, English translations that changed the course of history, interesting Bibles used by soldiers and others. This is a collection any museum would be proud to own. One can write a history of printed editions of the Greek New Testament and early English translations of the Bible from the treasures in North Park's archives.

Before discussing them, however, an unrelated gift to the library deserves

to be mentioned. About 1454-1455 Johannes Gutenberg published the first substantial printed book in the West, a Latin version of the Bible, and started a revolution in the way information was disseminated. (Now Gutenberg's Bible has been digitized and has its own website!) About 180 copies were printed initially, of which portions of 48 survive—no two exactly alike because of additions by hand after printing.

North Park has a facsimile edition of this beautifully decorated publication (one of only a thousand printed in the United States in 1961). It was a gift from Bernice Brandel to North Park. This two-volume work is large. Each volume measures 19 by 12 1/2 inches and is over 3 inches thick. This is a beau-

11 1/2 by 8 by 1 3/4 inches. This volume is wonderful! In parallel columns it has the Greek New Testament and Erasmus's Latin translation.

Despite its shortcomings (Erasmus had rather few Greek manuscripts to use as a base and the volume has many typographical errors), this edition was the foundation of other editions for many years. To hold this volume and examine its pages is an experience. There are no verse divisions in the text; those were not added in printed editions until the 1551 edition of Robert Stephanus, a copy of which is also in the Willoughby collection. (Our present chapter divisions had been instituted by Stephan Langton who died in

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1228.) Interestingly, someone has added the verses in ink in North Park's Erasmus edition for the Synoptic Gospels and portions of a few other books. (They were added long before Willoughby purchased it.)

Some of my favorites in the collection are the small pocket editions of the Greek New Testament published by Stephanus (especially the 1551 edition, the first one with the verses) and the Elzevir brothers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many of these also lack verse divisions, and they measure only 5 by 3 by 1 inches. One of particular note is from 1633, the second edition from the Elzevir brothers, in which they claim their text has the *tex-*

*tus receptus*, the received text that all use. This text, which was a foundation for the King James Version, dominated editions of the Greek New Testament until the work of B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort in 1881. (Virtually all Greek editions today essentially follow the Westcott-Hort text.)

Among early English translations, the collection includes facsimiles of William Tyndale's first printed translation in English (1526), copies of the Rheims Bible (1582), and the Geneva Bible (1589 and 1608, which also stands behind the King James Version). The collection also includes a copy of Thomas Jefferson's truncated rendering of the Gospels and a Confederate

pocket Bible published in 1863.

To some, no doubt, these are merely old books, but that is like thinking the Mona Lisa is an old picture. These are historical treasures that display the history of the Bible and its effect. They are valuable teaching tools for the seminary and the university and are available for consultation, by appointment only, in the F. M. Johnson Archives and Special Collections of the Brandel Library. (Contact Ellen Engseth, director of archives and special collections of Brandel Library, at 773-244-6223 to set up an appointment.)

These treasures deserve to be enjoyed by others besides a few students, the archivist, and me. □

## Exhibit Provides Up-Close View of Early Scriptures

As a young man, Joel Lampe says he lost the faith taught him by his father, Craig Lampe, a noted authority on old and rare Bibles. The younger Lampe tried to find God by studying other faiths, including Judaism and Islam.

In 1990 Lampe went to Israel to study the Dead Sea Scrolls and visit historical biblical sites. As he saw sites he had only read about in the Bible, Lampe began to see Scripture in a different light. He realized they were more than just words of wisdom passed down through the ages. They were words written by real people about real events.

A couple of years later, he said, he began studying the lives of William Tyndale, John Rogers, Thomas Cranmer, and John Wycliffe—biblical publishing pioneers who were persecuted or killed for challenging the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Lampe also said he learned from his academic study of Jesus' disciples that, many of them experienced horrific deaths "and none even flinched."

"These were eleven guys who went eleven different directions and never saw each other again. They all told the same story and refused to

deny what they saw. There had to be something to what they believed," he said.

About two years ago, Lampe and his father's long-time friend and colleague, Lee Biondi, a noted curator of ancient manuscripts and Bibles, decided to put together a religion-related exhibit that would appeal to the masses. Their traveling Dead Sea Scrolls to the Forbidden Book exhibit allows an up-close view of the ancient biblical artifacts and historic Bibles such as the Gutenberg Bible (1455), the English Wycliffite Bible (circa 1329-1384), the first Tyndale New Testament (1526), Luther's Reformation German Bible (1536), and the King James Bible (1611), and several others of historical significance.

The exhibit also features Dead Sea Scrolls fragments and material from other finds, including a section of Colossians (3:21-4:7 on the front side and 4:7-15 on the back) written on papyrus in Coptic, an ancient Egyptian language. The exhibit includes several 5,000-year-old pictographic clay tablets from ancient Mesopotamia.

"We wanted to tell the entire story of the Bible, from the very beginning to today. Most of the pieces are pri-

vately owned, and most of the owners are very religious but wanted to remain anonymous," Biondi said.

Biondi is a renowned curator of art exhibits throughout the world. He said to his knowledge this is the only exhibit featuring a complete history of the Bible.

While most exhibits of this nature keep people at arm's length from the items on display, Biondi and Lampe wanted visitors to see the relics up close. "It's all still amazing to me when I see people react to it," said Biondi, who was raised Presbyterian by a Baptist mother and Catholic father. "I see it fresh through the eyes of the people who see it for the first time.

"In many exhibits of this type, only wealthy people are usually invited to view it," Biondi said. "But we wanted to make it available to anyone who is interested in it."

The exhibit began last September in Dallas and is traveling to other cities. For more information, including photos of the collection, go online to [www.deadseaexhibit.com](http://www.deadseaexhibit.com). □

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