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Notices of Archaeological Publications

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Notices of Archaeological Publications.

DIE DARSTELLUNGEN DER BIBLIA PAUPERUM IN EINER HANDSCHRIFT DES XIV. JAHRHUNDERTS, AUFBEWAHRT IM STIFTE ST. FLORIAN IM ERZHERZOGTHUME OSTERREICH OB DER ENNS. Herausgegeben von A. CAMESINA; Erlautert von G. HEIDER. Mit. xxxiv. Tafeln. Wien. 1863.

THE history of those productions of the early engravers on wood known as block-books is involved in much obscurity. With few exceptions, the time when they were executed can only be guessed at, and of their origin nothing certain is known. Of these block-books that commonly called *Biblia Pauperum* is the most common, having been reproduced more frequently than any other, the *Ars Moriendi*, perhaps, excepted. It was doubtless indebted for its popularity to its subject, a sort of harmony of the Old and New Testaments, or a series of types and anti-types, the subject in the centre being taken from the New Testament, and the two lateral subjects from the Old Testament.¹ Seven or eight editions of this work exist in different collections in England, varying in style, and evidently produced in different countries, most probably in Holland and Germany; several manuscripts are also known, but no one has attempted to trace them to a common origin, nor are we aware of any recorded opinion that they existed prior to the fifteenth century. A work like the present, therefore, professing to give faithful representations of the earliest manuscript known, executed in the fourteenth century, possesses an especial interest, and the greatest credit is due to Herr Albert Camesina, of Vienna, for the care with which he appears to have executed his task. We are bound to presume that the copy is faithful, knowing, as we do, the deep and intelligent interest Herr Camesina takes in such subjects, and how well he must be aware of the importance of minute fidelity in the performance of such a task.

We are not informed whether the manuscript in question be perfect or not, and yet this is an extremely important question, and for this reason: only thirty-four plates are given in this reproduction, while all the copies of the block-book known contain forty—six, therefore, are wanting. It commences with the Annunciation and ends with the Assumption, and

¹ See in this Journal, vol. xii. pp. 369—373, some remarks by Mr. Scharf on the parallelism of subjects occurring in the *Biblia Pauperum* and early block-

books as compared with those found in the painted windows in King's College Chapel, Cambridge.

would appear, therefore, so far to comprise the complete history of Our Saviour and the Virgin. Should the manuscript be complete, the fact that it contains the smaller number of subjects may be regarded as a proof that it is, if not the original, at least one of the earliest manuscripts of this series of designs. Herr Heider, who contributes a very interesting Introduction, attributes this manuscript certainly to the beginning of the fourteenth century, and says—"There breathes from the figures a tenderness and delicacy of feeling which remind us of the most beautiful poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries." This is true, but he does not say to what country the work is to be attributed. In fact, this part of the subject would require long and careful examination, for there is much in it which has an English character, while some parts are as clearly German. Some parts, also, appear much more like the production of the latter part than the commencement of the fourteenth century.

We have said that the different editions of the block-books vary in character. There is a variation, also, between them and this manuscript, which is noteworthy. The subjects are the same, and there is sometimes a striking resemblance in the number and grouping of the figures employed, but in others the treatment is totally different, and in all there is a simplicity, a feeling, and a life far superior to the productions on wood.

Bibliographers have been always puzzled to give an explanation of the name by which this series of drawings is known—the *Biblia Pauperum*. It has been commonly called in English the Poor Man's Bible, but the correctness of this interpretation has very properly been doubted. Some have considered the meaning to be the Bible of the poor clergy or poor preachers, and the correctness of this explanation appears to be supported by the Introduction of Herr Heider. He describes a pictorial manuscript in the Monastery of Lilienfell, compiled by Abbot Ulrich about the middle of the fourteenth century, in the preface to which the Abbot declares his object to be, "to lay before poor clerks, who have not at their command large collections of books, the truths of Christianity in pictures and short words." We have here the suggested translation of *Biblia Pauperum*—the Bible of the poor clergy.

The Introduction of Herr Heider contains a very interesting account of various series of typical representations, commencing with the earliest known, that of the famous enameled Antependium of Klosterneuburg, a work of the twelfth century. In this we find the germ of the *Biblia Pauperum*. Herr Heider thus describes it:—"The events of the New Testament, which appear arranged with those of the Old Testament, commence with the Annunciation of Mary, place before our eyes the most important moments of the life of Christ, and conclude with the Kingdom of the Future, where Christ celebrates his second advent as Judge of the world. By the side of this series of representations, seventeen in number, are ranged two series of types from the Old Testament, which, however, are not placed arbitrarily, but appear arranged according to a leading principle. That is to say, the upper series takes its types before the law-giving of Moses, *ante legem*—the lower series, on the other hand, contains the typical representations from the time of the dominion of the Mosaic law, *sub lege*; so that between the two there appear the representations of the New Covenant, *sub gracia*." These are not all the subjects which are represented on the Antependium, but they are those which bear most directly upon the origin of the *Biblia Pauperum*. In 1844, Herr Camesina

published at Vienna a copy in lithography of this magnificent work of art colored in imitation of the original, with a volume of explanatory text by Herr Arneth. The title of this work is as follows:—"Das Niello-Antependium zu Klosterneuburg in Oesterreich, verfertigt im zwölften Jahrhundert von Nicolaus aus Verdun. In der Originalgrosse lithographirt und auf eigne Kosten herausgegeben von Albert Camesina. Beschrieben und erläutert von Joseph Arneth." Unfortunately only few copies of this work were printed, and its costly nature precludes its admission into most libraries. It should be mentioned that the Antependium was originally an enameled *ambo* made in 1180 by Nicolas de Verdun, and that it was altered into its present form in 1320, when a few additional subjects were introduced.

J. WINTER JONES.

Archaeological Intelligence.

AN instructive and highly interesting collection has been formed in a district rich in treasures of antiquity, not less than in objects attractive to the votary of natural science,—the county of Wilts. The members of the Institute who took part in the Annual Meeting held at Salisbury will recall the historical and architectural attractions of the numerous subjects presented to their notice on that occasion, and also the interesting assemblage of Wiltshire Antiquities brought together in the Temporary Museum. The great treasure of archaeological evidence, it is true,—the collection made by the late Sir R. Colt Hoare,—remains at Stourhead, but it is comparatively unavailable for public instruction; much, however, remains scattered amongst local collectors, many of whom readily contributed their Wiltshire treasures for our gratification at the meeting in 1850. We have received with satisfaction the assurance of the success by which the establishment of the Salisbury and South Wilts Museum, in 1860, has been attended. That depository has been organised on a permanent footing, in a suitable and commodious building at Salisbury; the property being vested in the Town Council. The Museum is open free of charge during the greater part of the week. An instructive illustrated catalogue of the collections, already considerable in extent and carefully classified, has been published, well deserving the notice of antiquaries at large. The Museum contains, amongst numerous ancient relics, the large assemblage of miscellaneous mediæval objects collected by Mr. Brodie during excavations at Salisbury for drainage operations. There is a very remarkable series of implements of flint, including many from the drift, deposited by Dr. Blackmore and Mr. E. T. Stevens; the stone, bronze, and early iron objects have been carefully arranged and described by Mr. Stevens, and illustrated from his drawings. The mediæval series and pottery has been catalogued by our obliging friend and member of the Institute, Mr. Nightingale; the seals, which include an extensive Wiltshire series, by Mr. W. Osmond, jun.; whilst the valuable geological collections have been fully described by Dr. H. P. Blackmore. A valuable group of objects from the Pfahlbauten, or Lake-dwellings, at Robenhausen in Switzerland, deserve especial notice; they have been presented to the Museum by the Hon. and Ven. Archdeacon