Spotlight
Highlights from the Otto Schaefer Collection

391 x 290 mm. 13 paper leaves from volume I, fol. 102-114, i.e. The Book of Joshua. The ‘Gutenberg Bible’, the first printed edition of the Latin Bible and the first substantial printed book of the Western World, is a work of art whose majestic craftsmanship has never been surpassed. From the number of lines per column this edition is named the 42-line Bible (or B 42), in order to distinguish it form the 36-line Bible, which appeared a few years later. The present fragment originates from the incomplete Bible of Mannheim Court Library, which was dispersed in the 1920s in single leaves or single books. The present complete Book of Joshua constitutes the largest connected fragment from the Gutenberg Bible in private hands.
This reformed complete Bible was published in 1531, even before Luther had finished his translation of the Bible into German. The editors used his existing translations and adjusted them to the Swiss German language. The remaining texts were translated by theologians from Zurich, foremost by Ulrich Zwingli, the leader of the Reformation in Switzerland.

Fifth edition. 277 × 197 mm. 32 almost half-page woodcuts. Unique copy of this edition, containing the woodcuts of the first edition (1484), full of life and movement, often abundant in figures set within innovative compositions. Based on Columna’s Latin *Historia destructionis Troiae*, Millet’s mystery play was the first secular drama in print.
Earliest printed classical play in vernacular language


This is the earliest printed classical play in any vernacular language, and the first illustrated edition of an ancient drama. The pride and glory of this edition are the fine woodcuts showing the 28 stage scenes. The anonymous artist is named ‘Master of the Ulm Terence’ from this edition.

275 x 202 mm. 100 woodcuts. *Il Filocolo* was the first literary work of Giovanni Boccaccio, based on the popular French romance of *Floire et Blancheflore*.

This is the first translation of Boccaccio’s text into German. Hundred spirited woodcuts of high quality, probably from a Nuremberg workshop, illustrate the adventurous romance.
First illustrated book printed in Mainz with rare metalcuts

Johannes de Turrecremata, 
*Meditationes seu contemplationes devotissimae.* [Mainz]: Johann Numeister, 3 September 1479.

Seventh edition, the fourth illustrated.  
264 x 195 mm. 34 metalcut illustrations within ornamental frames.

This rare work is the first illustrated book printed in Mainz. Moreover, the use of metalcuts instead of the common woodcut illustration seems extraordinary, as this technique is generally rare in German book illustration.
The images are based on a – now lost – picture cycle of frescoes in Rome which Turrecremata had commissioned himself.

This book was owned by illustrious bibliophiles, such as Ambroise Firmin-Didot, William Morris, John Pierpont Morgan, Otto Schäfer.
Giovanni Boccaccio, *De mulieribus claris*. Ulm: Johann Zainer, 1473. First edition. 286 x 203 mm.

Large illustrated woodcut border and 81 woodcuts. The great Florentine poet Giovanni Boccaccio wrote his biographical work ‘On Famous Women’ as a counterpart to his earlier collection ‘On the Fates of Famous Men’.

The work combines the stories of both the revered and the reviled women of renown, offering exempla of behaviours that should inspire the reader to aspire to a virtuous life. The ‘Master of the Ulm Boccaccio’, one of the most important German illustrators of the incunabula period, was named after his work in the present book. Also noteworthy as the first fully-illustrated book printed in Ulm.
The first translation appeared as early as 1466. The present German Bible is the first illustrated Bible in the history of printing with movable type. The first two initials represent St Jerome in conversation with Paul, and God the creator.

[Augsburg: Günther Zainer, between 1474 and 76]. 470 x 320 mm. 73 large historiated woodcut initials in contemporary colouring. Eighteen German Bibles were printed before Luther’s great work. All were translations of the Latin Vulgate;

Third edition of the Bible in German
First edition of Heldenbuch (book of heroes)

Heldenbuch. – Hie fahet an der helden buch, das man nennet den wolfdieterich (...) Auch sa gt es von dem rosengarten. [Strasbourg: Johann Prüss, about 1479]. First edition.

290 x 205 mm. Three painted initials, 230 woodcut illustrations from 156 blocks.

The Heldenbuch is a collection of Middle High German epic poetry. The stories, some of which are related to the Nibelungenlied, deal with the heroes of the Germanic tribes during the Migration Period, as Ortnit, Hugdietrich, Wolfdietrich, Ermenrich, Etzel and Dietrich von Bern. The woodcuts were only used for this edition.
Six popular and extremely rare illustrated German Incunables in one Volume (Sammelband) all printed in Strasbourq. 261 x 191 mm.

Couldrette, *Melusine*, German translation by Thüring of Ringoltingen. [Strasbourg: Heinrich Knoblochtzer, c. 1477]. Third German edition. 67 woodcuts illustrate the adventurous tale of the fairy Melusine, who transforms into a mermaid every Saturday, and the knight Raymond.
Historia Alexandri Magni, German translation by Johann Hartlieb. Strasbourg: Martin Schott, 10 December 1488. Sixth edition in German. 29 woodcuts. The most popular German prose Alexander of the late Middle Ages. According to Hartlieb’s introduction, the book was intended as a ‘mirror of princes’.

Francesco Petrarch, Griseldis, German translation by Heinrich Steinhöwel. [Strasbourg: Heinrich Knoblochtzer], 1478. Sixth or seventh German edition. 10 woodcuts. The popular story of Patient Griselda is based on the last novella of the Decameron by Giovanni Boccaccio.
Sammelband


Jean de Mandeville. *Itinerarius*, German translation by Otto von Diemeringen. Strasbourg: Johann Prüss, 1488. Seventh German edition. Apocryphal or not, Mandeville’s *Travels* around the Arabian peninsula, Palestine, India, Tibet, China, Egypt etc. set the stage for all published travel literature.
Jacobus de Theramo, *Belial*, in German. Strasbourg: Heinrich Knoblochtzer, 10 August 1477. Seventh German edition. 55 woodcuts. This book takes the form of a lawsuit between Lucifer and Jesus Christ, with King Solomon presiding as judge, in which the Devil sues Christ for trespassing in his descent into Hell. It was perhaps intended as a legal case book exemplifying the canonical process of a trial.
Speculum humanae salvationis, in German: *ein spiegel der menschlichen behaltnisze.

375 x 280 mm. 278 woodcut illustrations from 255 blocks. – The popular ‘Mirror of Salvation’ recounts the events of the Gospels and life of the Virgin Mary in juxtaposition to corresponding Old Testament prefigurations. This edition is the first dated printed book with illustration in Switzerland and a magnificent example of early woodcut printing in Basel. The cuts are graphically strong, expressive and focused on the essence of their subjects.
Mirror Of Salvation
Theuerdank: Die … geschichten des … Ritters Tewrdannckhs. Nuremberg: Johann Schönsperger, 1517. Printed on vellum, Melchior Pfintzing (ed.).

First edition. c. 370 x 245 mm. With xylographic title and 118 woodcuts.

This allegorical epic poem celebrates the feats of Emperor Maximilian (Theuerdank) on his journey to win his bride, Mary of Burgundy. It was draft by the emperor himself, printed with a specially designed calligraphic type and illustrated with woodcuts by well-known artists as Hans Schäufelein, Leonhard Beck, Hans Burgkmair, and others.