

BIBLE EXHIBITION IN THE ANTAL REGULY MUSEUM LIBRARY



The series of events on the occasion of the *Bible Year* offered an exceptional opportunity for a new exhibition in 2008, based on the cooperation of the Cistercian Order at Zirc and the Antal Reguly Museum Library of the National Széchényi Library. The museum library keeps a number of interesting and rare Bibles, which we used as the core material of the exhibition open from 13 September 2008 to the end of the year. We tried to have each age from the 15th century onwards represented. The first part is constituted of four Bibles in Latin, including oldest one in the library, which was published in Nuremberg in 1477. The book originating from Anton Koberger's workshop went from Heinrichau to Zirc. It contains hand-painted initial letters and a manuscript poem in Hungarian the author of which was a Hungarian Cistercian monk, probably at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. His verse is a characteristic proof of the animosity in the Order between Germans and their Hungarian fellow monks.

One volume of the Vulgata's critical edition (*Biblia Sacra. Juxta latinam Vulgatam versionem...*) is also in

available in our stock. We owe the latter to Brian Walton, who organized its publication in six volumes between 1655 and 1657. The funding for the expensive edition – for the first time in England – was raised by recruiting subscribers, and Oliver Cromwell contributed by not levying tax on the paper. (*Biblia Sacra polyglotta...* Edidit Brianus Waltonius... London, Thomas Roycroft, 1655–1657.)

Perhaps the most beautiful piece in the exhibition was the Czech Bible which is decorated with over a hundred hand-painted woodcuts (*Biblij czeská, to gest, wssecka Swata Pijisma, obogijho, Starého y Nowého zákona*. Praha, 1570, Jirí Melantrich Rozdalovský z Aventýna.). This book is related to the Cistercians too, because its translation was done by Welchrad Cistercian monks.

In collecting material for the exhibition, we did not focus only on the Bible, as the Holy Script is an endless source for all branches of art. Thus, from the Music Collection we loaned documents related to the Bible, among them the sheet music of Franz Liszt's *Christus-Oratorio*, a special feature of which is the dedication in the composer's hand to conductor Hans Richter. On the other hand, the Information Directorate supplied a part of the literary exhibits from its core material. This is how we could include among the exhibits the first edition of Mihály Babits's *Book of Jonah*.

The corridor of the museum library was decorated with biblical maps, thanks to the idea and assistance given by Katalin Plihál (NSZL Map Collection). To our greatest pleasure, the Bakony Museum of Natural

Science also contributed to the Zirc event: Developing the theme of the Bible and nature, they added a small compilation of the minerals, animals and plants that the Holy Script talks about.

The exhibition was opened on 13th September 2008. Guests were greeted by scientific director László Boka. Walter Hecker, the curator of the Hungarian Bible Society, spoke about the events of the Bible Year 2008, and the exhibition was opened by Bernát Bérczy, a young Cistercian monk.

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Decorative initial letter from the oldest Bible of the museum library.
(Bible, Nürnberg, 1477, Anton Koberger)

this block, published in 18 volumes from 1926 to 1995. The new translation is the work of the Benedictine monks of the Italian Saint Jerome Abbey. Its footnotes contain explanations rich in data about the translation. The first two completely Hungarian Bible translations were also on display, although of the Vizsoly Bible only a 1990 reprint could be presented. Being a Catholic collection, the Zirc library boasts several copies of the first edition of the Káldi Bible. The polyglot editions are genuine highlights, of which the Paris and London ones are