

Book Reviews

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Eric Marshall White. *Editio Princeps: A History of the Gutenberg Bible*. London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2017. Hardcover, 465p. £120.00 (ISBN 9781909400849).

Eric White's *Editio Princeps* is a staggering work in which he analyzes the history and scholarship surrounding what is popularly known as the "Gutenberg Bible." His thorough research builds upon earlier scholarship, filling in gaps in knowledge and pulling together an impressive number of primary and secondary sources to illuminate the history of this famous book.

White begins with a necessary overview of the history of printing. While Gutenberg is often credited with the invention of printing, White presents a more nuanced and less Eurocentric account. The definition of what is printed is fluid in its early history, making it impossible to identify a true "first" in printing, but White traces printed materials back to seventh-century China. He also notes that the earliest surviving book printed with moveable type that can be dated is from 1377 in Korea. It isn't until 1455 that there is a mention of printing in Europe.

With a view to dispelling myths and conjecture, White delves into primary sources to trace as much of the history of Gutenberg and his Bible as possible. He dispels the myth that Gutenberg died penniless, though he does detail the court case through which Gutenberg's partner and investor sued him. He discusses the smaller ephemeral items printed before the Bible, as well as the ways in which the typefaces evolved and improved before the Bible was printed.

One of the more surprising things was the discussion of how the Gutenberg Bible was forgotten for almost three centuries. Gutenberg's Bible was frequently replaced with new versions, including smaller portable books and cheaper copies. It wasn't until the eighteenth century that scholars began trying to identify the earliest book printed in Europe, and a long debate ensued as they studied books and documents to determine which book came first. White details these debates, offering all sides and opposing views, including arguments over which book was printed earliest and whether Gutenberg or his partner Fust was more responsible for the Bible.

Once White establishes the historic context of the Gutenberg Bible, he documents surviving copies in as much detail as possible. He traces each provenance from the time the copy was authenticated as a Gutenberg Bible through the publication of this book, even including a note that indicates whether it has been made available online through digitization. This census and detailed provenance provides insight into the history of collecting and the book market, tracing the way each book has moved through time. One thing that sets White's book aside from earlier census projects is his inclusion of fragments in the census. White considers fragments to be books with disastrous histories, but books nonetheless, and includes the Mannheim copy, which was widely dispersed in the leaf book *A Noble Fragment* in 1921.

Because he is dealing with more than 400 years of history, there are areas of White's research in which supporting evidence is simply unavailable. White deftly explains these areas, pointing out when evidence is lacking and offering possibilities of what happened based on the little evidence available. His careful approach, presenting evidence and research, even when it contradicts his own findings, creates a balanced and transparent argument.

The sheer amount of White's research can be seen clearly throughout the text and appendices. Because of his attention to the long and complex history of the book as an edition, the scholarly debates surrounding the book, and the long and varied history of each individual copy, this book serves as a history, a historiography, and a reference book. To facilitate its use as a reference book, White organizes the individual copies of the Bible chronologically by the date in which they first appear in history. He includes references to other bibliographies of the Bible, including DeRicci and Needham, making it possible to cross-reference with those works. He frequently references their bibliographies and builds on their work while also providing notes for further readings on individual copies of the Bible.

The amount of information can seem overwhelming in such a large and detailed work, but White presents complicated information, such as descriptive bibliogra-

phy, in simple and easy-to-understand terms, without either complicated jargon or condescension, making this book good for both beginners and seasoned scholars.—
Cassie Brand, Washington University

Michèle Valerie Cloonan. *The Monumental Challenge of Preservation: The Past in a Volatile World.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018. Hardcover, 280p. \$30.00 (ISBN 978-0-2620-3773-0).

Michèle Cloonan's wide-ranging study of cultural heritage preservation opens with the premise that preservation is an unavoidably complex endeavor. Collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches are needed to confront threats to heritage, whether from war and genocide, resource limitations, business interests, or apathy. Cloonan—current professor and dean emerita at the Simmons School of Library and Information Science, and a former conservator, preservation librarian, and special collections curator—takes an expansive view of monuments, including in her definition not only physical edifices but also texts, artworks, collections, natural landscapes, and intangible heritage. In doing so, she emphasizes the highly contextual nature of preservation, which has social, historical, and political valences. These influences, along with legal, technological, and financial factors, shape understandings of what constitutes preservation and what can and should be preserved in any given set of circumstances.

The unifying theme of this ambitious monograph is “monumental preservation,” a concept Cloonan uses to invoke two distinct ideas: the vast scale and complexity of the preservation enterprise, and the monumental status of what we preserve. In this loose collection of ten chapters on a range of preservation topics, she unpacks the notion of monumental preservation and illustrates it with examples from personal experience and allied preservation disciplines. Several chapters present international case studies about monuments in a variety of sociopolitical contexts (ranging from the Book of Kells and Soviet statues to Chicago architecture and Syrian cultural heritage) and the strategies used to address preservation concerns unique to each situation. The remaining chapters delve into specific issues that inform preservation theory and practice, such as human rights and cultural genocide, digital curation, and sustainability.

The work highlights important strategies for meeting the monumental challenge of preservation; in addition to a general call for collaborative and interdisciplinary thinking, Cloonan identifies cases where emergency response networks, documentation strategies, monitoring and assessment programs, and reformatting technology have been successfully deployed. She stops short, however, of offering a clear roadmap for navigating the varied and evolving landscapes of heritage preserva-