

The Privately Printed Bible: Private & Fine Press Editions of Biblical Texts in the British Isles and North America, 1892-2000
by Ronald D. Patkus
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In his opening introduction, Patkus explains that *The Privately Printed Bible: Private & Fine Press Editions of Biblical Texts in the British Isles and North America, 1892-2000* was a project that came about as a result of his teaching at Vassar College. When preparing a syllabus for his course "Bible as Book" he discovered that, while there are numerous general histories of the Bible and specialized works on the Bible, those resources did not give significant attention to the output of private and fine presses. Patkus felt the need to address this gap in the literature on the Bible.

After completing diligent research and visiting multiple special collection libraries, Patkus was able to produce a broad survey of the history of private and fine press printings of biblical texts. He wisely chose to focus on English-language examples from the United Kingdom, Ireland, and North America, and, even though he set those limitations, his study includes more than 500 works. In addition to focusing on one language and using selected geographical locations, Patkus also narrowed the time-frame of his study to the late nineteenth century printing revival through the twentieth century. In these pages he describes well-known texts, such as the Doves Bible, the Oxford Lectern Bible, the Golden Cockerel Four Gospels, the Spiral Press Ecclesiastes, the Pennyroyal Caxton Bible, and the Arion Press Bible. Luckily, for those who are not printers or printing historians, he also brings up lesser-known works for us to learn about and admire.

Patkus has written the volume in five chapters, dividing them by generations of printers. Within each generation, the author first offers general comments and then concentrates on individual presses, providing context on their history and their interest in printing biblical texts. Surprisingly, despite the many presses covered, a satisfying amount of detail about each is provided. Because Patkus was writing this in the context of teaching book history, he gave attention to the production and physical appearance of the books.

Over 100 attractive images successfully support Patkus' remarks about the aesthetics of layout, design, and illustration produced by the presses. The book contains a number of helpful checklists, tables, and graphs that present the reader with opportunities to consider the books from a variety of perspectives. GBW members will be delighted to find that Patkus mentions colleagues Carol Blinn and Claudia Cohen among the noteworthy people involved with biblical texts.

This book would make a worthy addition to a reference library for those interested in the book arts. Patkus has created a publication that will work nicely on a syllabus for educators who teach the history of the book, or could serve as a useful training manual for individuals studying private press printing aesthetics.

Barbara Adams Hebard was trained in bookbinding at the North Bennet Street School. She was Book Conservator at the Boston Athenaeum and became the Conservator of the John F. Burns Library at Boston College in 2009. Ms. Hebard writes book related articles and book reviews, gives talks and presentations, exhibits her bookbindings nationally and internationally, and teaches book history classes. She is a Fellow of IIC, a Professional Associate of AIC, chairperson of the New England Conservation Association, and has served several terms as an Overseer of the North Bennet Street School.

