THE PRINTING PRESS



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Depicting Gutenberg's printing press at work, this image is entitled *Impressio Librorum* ("Book Printing"). It is Plate 4 of the *Nova Reperta* ("New Discoveries") by Theodor Galle (1571 - 1633), after Johannes Stradanus (also known as Jan van der Straet and Giovanni Stradano, 1523 -1605). The engraving was printed in Antwerp, by Philips Galle, in the late 16th century. Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

Johannes Gutenberg had also published a Bible—the first book ever <u>printed</u> with <u>movable metal type</u> in the Western World—on his printing press.

Gutenberg's Bible was both beautiful and expensive. It cost about three year's pay for an average clerk.

<u>Gutenberg's achievement</u> changed the world. As Michael Inman, the curator of rare books at New York Public Library, puts it:

The <u>mass printing of identical texts</u>, which hadn't really been possible before Gutenberg, greatly facilitated the spread of knowledge. Over a period of several hundred years, language - spelling and grammar - was gradually codified. Literacy rates went up. More and more people were reading the same texts and discussing or debating the same ideas. This improvement in communication was one of the most important outcomes of printing.

<u>The Gutenberg Bible</u> was not burned because it was printed in Latin, not in the vernacular (everyday language of people). This was different from <u>Luther's Bible translation</u> which was published, in "high German," in 1534 (by Hans Lufft, in Wittenberg).

Many church officials were very displeased about Luther's translation since it gave German speakers the ability to read the Bible in their own language. If one had the ability to read, one also had the ability to interpret for oneself. This was not the preferred way of governments and the Catholic Church.

Book burning was not unique to Europe during the Middle Ages. As missionaries ventured to the "New World," they exported theological correctness.

Their zeal, in converting others, helped to destroy important aspects of ancient cultures, such as Mayan books.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-PRINTING-PRESS-Book-Burning-and-Censorship

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-PRINTING-PRESS-Book-Burning-and-Censorship

Media Stream





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Gutenberg at Work in His Shop

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Martin Luther - Bible Translation in German

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