

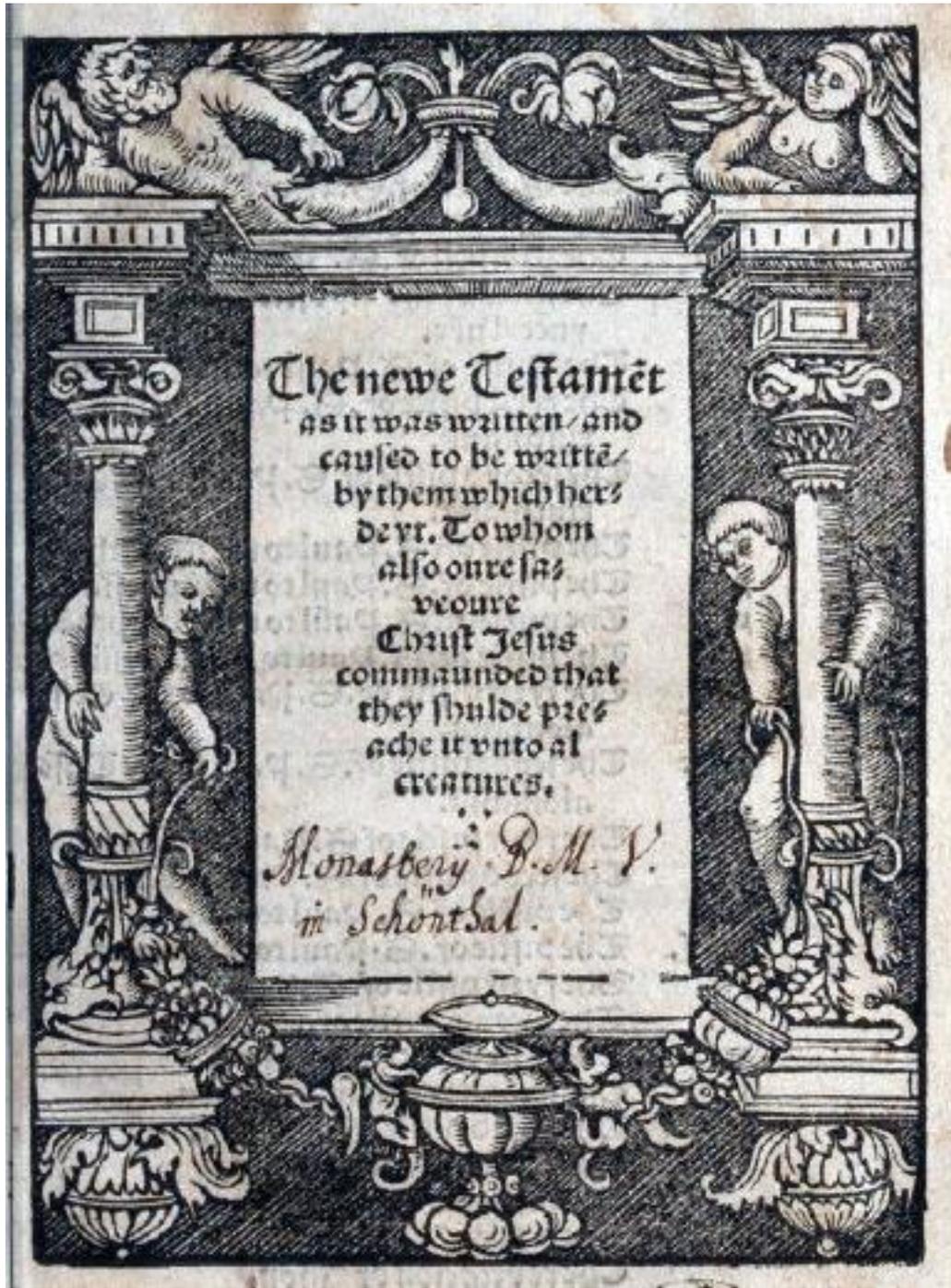
CASE STUDY 2 - Germany - Provenance

William Tyndale's 1526 New Testament is widely recognised as one of the most significant of printed books. His 1534 revision 'not only went forward into later Renaissance Bibles, most notably the Authorised Version, but is still dominant, even today'¹.

There is uncertainty about the provenance of Tyndale's New Testament. The British Library has one of the three known copies. The catalogue entry shows:-

[Worms? printed by Peter Schoeffer? 1526?]

The librarian at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek kindly made their copy available to me so that a study could be made of the watermarks. That copy is in excellent condition and is the only one with the title page:-

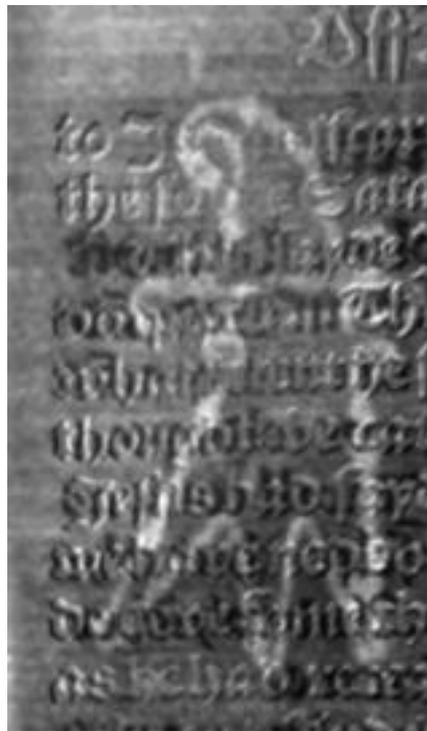


© Courtesy of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek

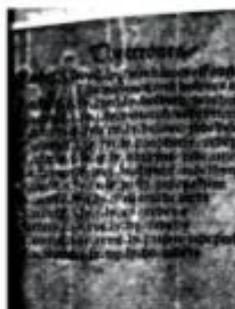
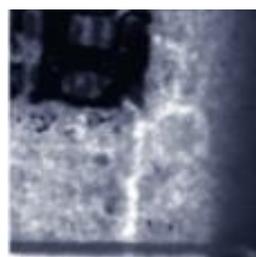
Title page Tyndale New Testament, 1526.

In one afternoon a quick survey was made of the book and three different watermarks were found by using an electroluminescent light sheet. Images were duly captured. One watermark is the Basle crozier, which was processed to 'remove' the overprinting. Fuller

details of the digital 'removal' process are given below under IMAGE PROCESSING AND ARCHIVING.

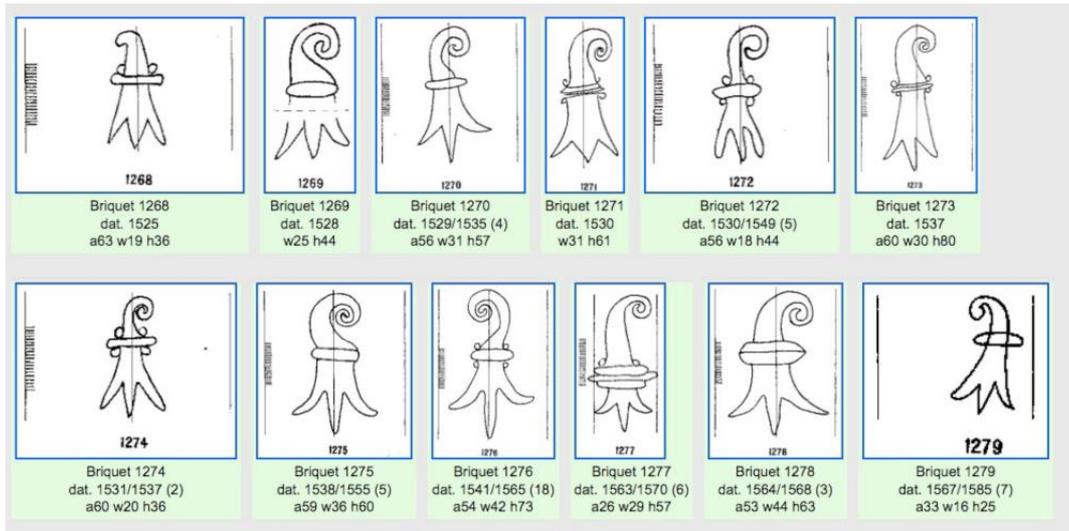


The second watermark is a large crown and the third is a heart shape surmounted with a trefoil. The second and the third watermarks were divided over two pages and are shown below digitally 'reassembled':-



For full details of the need for digital ‘reassembly’ and for the procedure to do so please see IMAGE PROCESSING AND ARCHIVING below.

Reference to the on-line data fileⁱⁱ of Briquet’s *Les Filigranes* gave the following similar crozier watermarks:-



Briquet - Basle crozier watermarks.

The geographical distribution of those Basle crozier watermarks was then plotted on a map (green pins). The Briquet locations of the crown watermarks (blue pins), heart / trefoil watermarks (purple pins) and cities of Worms (yellow square) and Antwerp (red square) are all shown below:-



It is evident that whereas Worms is centrally placed among the watermark locations, Antwerp is far outside the clusters. The distribution of all those watermarks around Worms confirms the likelihood that Worms was the place of printing. I found the same crown watermark



BL C.53.b1
obediēce

in no less than twenty placesⁱⁱⁱ in the British Library copy of Tyndale's 1528 *The obediēce of a Christen man ...*^{iv} The British Library catalogue suggests Antwerp as the place of printing:-

Hans luft: at Marlborow in the lāde of Hesse [Antwerp: J. Hoochstraten,] 1528

Admittedly, evidence of the provenance of paper is not necessarily proof of the place of printing. However the distribution of the crown watermarks recorded by Briquet clustered around Worms raises doubt as to Antwerp as the place of printing of the 1528 book and confirms the likelihood that Worms was the place of printing of both books.

This example illustrates the way in which access to images of watermarks provides a valuable and successful means of research into provenance.

ⁱ David D. Daniell, *William Tyndale. A Biography* (Yale, 1994), p. 134.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ksbm.oeaw.ac.at/scripts/php/BR.php>

ⁱⁱⁱ Watermarks of crown at:-

C5, C6; D6,D7; E5, E8; F5, F8; G6, G7; H5, H8; J6, J7; K6, K7; L6, L7; M6, M7; N6, N7;
05, 08; P5, P8; Q5, Q8; R6, R7; S6, S7; T5, T8; S6, S7; T5, T8; X5, X8.

^{iv} British Library Catalogue. C.53.b.1. Hans luft: at Marlborow in the lãde of Hesse

[Antwerp: J. Hoochstraten,] 1528. The obediẽce of a Christen man and how Christẽ rulers ought to governe, where in also (yf thou marke diligently) thou shalt fynde eyes to perceave the crafty conveyãice of all iugglers.