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# Jean de Tournes the Elder, a French Printer of Illustrated Books, 1504-1564

*Jon Pearson Perry*

**J**EAN DE TOURNES THE ELDER created some of the finest illustrated books of the French Renaissance and his contributions to the graphic arts are an important chapter in the history of printing.<sup>1</sup> His editions have not been neglected by modern collectors, though many collectors of sixteenth-century books tend to favor titles and editions of greater rarity or special literary significance. This was not the case with Philip Hofer, who came to Harvard University as Curator of Printing and Graphic Arts in 1938. Mr. Hofer collected books from all periods of printing, and the Renaissance in particular, so that the interaction of texts and illustrations could be studied from a perspective embracing the printer's aesthetic aims as well as the scholar's and collector's.

Attentive perusal of the Houghton Library's examples of de Tournes' illustrated books reveals how many aspects of their craftsmanship, and their unsurpassed beauty, which prompted Mr. Hofer to collect them, are qualities de Tournes himself hoped would one day make his books sought after and prized.

At the same time, the prefaces and dedicatory epistles de Tournes wrote for his remarkable illustrated books and certain texts whose publication was of personal, intellectual interest to him, are an unambiguous expression of the printer's own feelings toward his profession and the duties of his art.

These prefaces and dedicatory epistles make it possible for the modern student of Renaissance printing to elucidate the experiences and the ideas that formed de Tournes' aesthetic of craftsmanship and design in printing books, particularly illustrated books. The customary ancillary sources of much of this information, archival material and

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Ruth Mortimer of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, for her encouragement and helpful criticism of the studies which prompted this essay. I am grateful to John Lancaster, also at the Houghton Library, who prepared the plates from volumes in the Houghton Library.

contemporary accounts, fail us when we try to portray the simplest facets of de Tournes' personality as well as his aims and practice as a printer. Aside from Alfred Cartier's occasional references to the prefaces in his monumental *Bibliographie des éditions des de Tournes* (Paris, 1937), few or no investigations of the kind presented here have been attempted up to now.<sup>2</sup> Because the Houghton Library collection of de Tournes' work is so comprehensive, almost to a volume the gift of Mr. Hofer, this study can now be made.

### "Experience Taught Me"

Jean de Tournes was a man of wide learning and unusual competence. He spoke and probably wrote with equal facility, Italian, Spanish, his native French, and Latin. Among his editions we find many intended for German and English readers as well. His business dealings extended throughout Europe. At the age of thirty-eight he was a master printer, married, with four children, and he had published his first volume under his own name, an edition of Erasmus' *Christian Prince*. The year was 1542. Of his activities during the intervening years between 1504, the year of his birth in Lyon, and the appearance of the first of hundreds of titles from his presses, we know next to nothing.<sup>3</sup> There are no extant records of the first four decades of his life, other than tax receipts which offer no clues to his pursuits or training. The prefaces he wrote, however, are an articulate source of information about his early activities. As others have done, we must rely on de Tournes' own words in a dedicatory epistle to Maurice Scève, in the 1545 edition of Petrarch's *Rime and Trionfi*.

De Tournes was an accomplished writer. His prefaces speak with a voice that reveals a forceful personality and refined erudition. They are not mere "jacket copy" of the kind intended to sell a volume to a prospective buyer at any cost.

It is now twelve years and more, my lord, since I first began to train in the printing house of Sebastian Gryphius, and at the outset I was one of the com-

<sup>2</sup> M. Audin's edition of Cartier's *Bibliographie* is definitive.

<sup>3</sup> Contemporary biographical data on de Tournes are given by his son, Jean de Tournes the Younger, who succeeded his father after the latter's death in 1564, *vide infra*. See also E. Vial, "Les de Tournes à Lyon," pp. 113-133 in Cartier's *Bibliographie*. Vial's list of books containing prefaces by Jean the Elder (note, p. 126) is inaccurate and incomplete. There are occasional errors of fact in his text.

positors who helped him set up the printing of the divine works of Messer Luigi Alamanni, a gentleman as much honored in France as celebrated in Italy. The experience taught me not only to appreciate but also to love and to take great pleasure in this Tuscan language; so much so that from that time forward I resolved to continue in the vernacular tongue to the full extent my faculties would lend themselves to it. (a2<sup>r</sup>)

By 1533, de Tournes had been connected, probably for a year or two, with Sebastian Gryphius, the man who, until he was succeeded by his young compositor and protégé, was the outstanding printer in Lyon. These early years were formative ones for de Tournes. Even though important questions remain unanswered for lack of concrete documentation, we can piece together from the prefaces and from information surrounding the publication of his earliest books, a picture of the intellectual circles and their aspirations which nourished not only a fierce pride in craftsmanship, but also de Tournes' dedication to the Protestant faith and to the printing of popular literature.

One might try to imagine the timbre of the conversation that filled Gryphius' workrooms during the years de Tournes was closely associated with him. Gryphius prided himself on his elegant editions of the works of classical authors and he enjoyed the friendship, as did de Tournes, of all the major literary figures of his day. As the focal point of culture and the home of French as well as large numbers of sophisticated Italian merchants and intellectuals, Gryphius' shop, like the city where it was located, was host to as diverse and as learned a train of visitors as we today can imagine. In addition, de Tournes had the opportunity to experience first-hand the details and difficulties of the printing process, and to discuss literature and art with some of the best minds of his day. The environment, like his experience, was one that prepared him to supervise every facet of the creation of a new book, from the preparation of the copy text itself, to assuring himself that the typesetting, the illustrations, and the impression were of the highest quality.

De Tournes' first book, Erasmus' *Christian Prince*, in French translation, had been previously printed in Lyon by Étienne Dolet, several years earlier. Dolet and de Tournes worked side by side at Gryphius' presses during the 1530s. Dolet is remembered today for his outspoken Protestantism and his *De la manière de bien traduire*, a work praised by members of the Pléiade and one of the first of its kind in French. If Dolet spoke as forcefully and as freely in the workroom in his youth



as he did in public in later life, he could not avoid impressing de Tournes with the deep conviction of his reformed faith. By all appearances the de Tournes of Lyon, before Jean, were staunchly Catholic.

The challenges Dolet and de Tournes met as new printers and publishers in the early 1540s were formidable. Dolet discovered to his misfortune that economic crises and the very real risks of political activism in behalf of the reformed faith were pressures that either shaped a career or destroyed it. The two men emerged from Gryphius' workshop to practice their art on their own and passed each other, perhaps like merchants on the river Saône, one struggling to go against the stream, the other, if not exactly content to drift with it, at least prudent enough to avoid the perils of opposing it. By 1544, at any rate, Dolet was already in serious trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities, largely because of his edition of Erasmus' famous treatise. His Protestantism was too hardy to be ignored by the Church and the prefatory epistle, aggressively Protestant in tone, was an indignity that Catholics were unwilling to endure. The book was ordered burned in the square of Notre Dame, by the faculty of theology at the University of Paris, in February 1544, only a few months after de Tournes reprinted Dolet's Erasmus in Lyon. Unrepentant, Dolet himself met the same fate as his little book two years later.

The 1540s were difficult years for the printers of Lyon. The long and violent strike of the *compagnon imprimeurs*, in 1539, made it a risky venture to find and to invest the capital necessary to establish a good printing house. Francis I's edict of 1542, forbidding the junior printers to strike against their masters, lent only a temporary calm and the troubles continued intermittently through the next decade. Despite these obstacles, de Tournes' editions grew in number and soon he was putting out an average of more than a dozen fine books each year.

There is more to be understood in de Tournes' words to Scève in the portion of the preface translated above, from the *Il Petrarca* of 1545. Gryphius' reputation as a printer in the sixteenth century, and today, rests primarily on the kind of books he printed. The bulk of the output of his presses, with the exception of only one or two contemporary French and Italian poets, is what might be called "academic." The collected works of Luigi Alamanni, by contemporary standards the most praiseworthy, certainly the most widely-read Italian Petrarchist

of the first few decades of the sixteenth century in France, were among the very few modern literary achievements Gryphius deemed worthy enough to publish at his own presses. Gryphius wanted to print the "classics" and he earned his reputation in Lyon and all over Europe for the special care he lavished on the works of classical authors.

De Tournes made a fundamental break with his master's printing tradition.<sup>4</sup> His prefaces speak about his determination to strike out independently on his own. He was committed to printing a fine book and at the same time one whose subject matter would be attractive to a wider, more popular literary audience than the usual purchasers of Gryphius' editions of the classics. De Tournes set out to publish popular, contemporary authors. He championed the modern intellectuals and the new ideas of his day. His editions cover a wide range of topics, from the newest anthologies of poetry, to philosophy, medicine, law, astrology and the natural sciences, history, and geography. Works more scholarly, in Latin, are to be found among his editions, but throughout his life it was the vernacular tongues and the tastes of a more popular audience to which he gave his attention.

More important, de Tournes was aware that he was an innovator catering to and nourishing popular literary tastes. He knew from experience that advances in the format and the superlative design of his books assured success in the bookshops of France as well as abroad. While the pocket format was used extensively by Gryphius in the printing of the classics, de Tournes must be credited with expanding the potential and the advantages of that format. His triumph was to print books of high quality "for the masses," one might say, but in any case, exactly the opposite of the printer who designs and prints works

<sup>4</sup> Henri Baudrier writes, in his *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, IX<sup>e</sup> série (Paris et Lyon, 1895-1950), p. 25: "Heureusement, pour la littérature française, Jean de Tournes et son rival Rouillé n'ont pas continué l'œuvre surannée de Gryphius, au contraire, et l'on doit même leur savoir gré d'y avoir coupé court. En délaissant, avec raison, les classiques latins, en publiant de préférence les œuvres des écrivains français, ils ont travaillé au développement et à la vulgarisation de notre langue. Ils ont, en outre, l'un et l'autre, rendu d'immenses services à l'art en portant, à un degré de perfection inconnu jusqu'alors, l'illustration du livre. C'est à ces faits, aujourd'hui démontrés, que Jean de Tournes doit être considéré, avec raison, comme le meilleur et le plus grand imprimeur de Lyon et que Rouillé . . . doit être placé immédiatement après son rival, reléguant bien loin, au troisième rang, S. Gryphius." For Guillaume Rouillé, see the excellent article, "Publisher Guillaume Rouillé Businessman and Humanist," by Natalie Zemon Davis, in *Editing Sixteenth Century Texts*, ed. R. J. Schœck (Toronto, 1966), pp. 72-112.

for a cultural elite, or a select group of connoisseurs, the "collectors" that is, of his own day.

The practical wisdom of his approach proved itself almost immediately. De Tournes was especially interested in vernacular poetry. A personal friend of both Clément Marot and Maurice Scève, he honored one with three, perhaps four separate editions of his collected works, the other by dedicating to him both the *Il Petrarca* of 1545 and the *Il Dante* of 1547.<sup>5</sup> The circumstances surrounding the publishing of the *Il Petrarca* dedicated to Scève are an instructive example.

Immediately after the publication of *Délie* in 1544, Maurice Scève was the poet of the hour in Lyon. Though the lyrics of the *Délie* are written in the then popular, ten-line *dizain* form, the sequence of poems is the first French *canzoniere* to be inspired as a whole by Petrarch's *Rime* and the works of contemporary Italian Petrarchists. The *Délie* was the closest any French poet, with the possible exception of Clément Marot, had come to appropriating the poetic diction and the panoply of images and metaphors of Petrarchan poetry to the French language.<sup>6</sup> After the publication of *Délie* the demand for Petrarch's love poetry appears to have increased markedly. In the years between 1545 and 1550, de Tournes' *Il Petrarca* alone went through three editions despite the active competition of other publishers. The little volume's popularity was so apparent that Guillaume Rouillé, that other famous Lyonnais publisher of the period, was prompted to issue his own version of the text, copying de Tournes' successful "pocket" format and graceful typographical design.

De Tournes quickly capitalized on the popularity of Scève's *Délie* and the growing vogue of love poetry from Italy. No new, local edition of Petrarch's love lyrics had appeared in Lyon for nearly forty years, since the edition "pirated" in 1508 by Baldassare da Gabiano, the counterfeiter of Aldine press editions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cartier lists four editions of the collected works of Marot, 1549, 1553, 1558, and a 1559 edition which may be a gloss. De Tournes used the same popular "pocket" format for the contemporary French poet as he did for his earlier edition of Petrarch's poetry. The preface by de Tournes in *Les Œuvres de Clément Marot*, 2 volumes, 1549, 82<sup>r</sup>, amplifies earlier views on the use of "new" type fonts for poetry and the format of the book already familiar to us from study of the *Il Petrarca*.

<sup>6</sup> See Maurice Scève, *The 'Délie' of Maurice Scève*, ed. I. D. MacFarlane (Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 1-43.

<sup>7</sup> See Henri Baudrier, *op. cit.*, VII<sup>e</sup> série, pp. 1 ff. Italian editions were available through the representatives of Italian printers at the Great Fairs in Lyon. Still, it is



The *Il Petrarca* is a fine job of printing and a handy little book as well. A reference to it in a catalogue gives no idea of the "feel" of this book. De Tournes intended it to be a "pocket" edition in the true sense of the word and that concern is reflected in his preface. His object was clearly to bring the reader and author together through the medium of the book and it is designed to encourage their intimacy. Experience, he tells us at every juncture, has been his guide. "Then, having cut this type face," a small, graceful italic,

and others appropriate to the printing of poets and other works which please, it suddenly came to my memory that I once saw Petrarch printed quite badly and tiringly in a small volume, a thing that seemed to me surely no less offensive to the poet than wearisome to the reader. However, I came out the better from the experience to exert myself in this language so greatly esteemed in our times . . . (a2<sup>r</sup>)

The new type face and the new format suggested themselves, we are told, and experience confirmed his determination to mould the whole book so it could be carried close at hand, neatly tucked away in a coat pocket perhaps, to be called forth easily by its owner. The book measures roughly 2 1/2 by 4 inches and is 2 inches thick, a perfect size to fit in the palm of the hand.

*"To Make Progress from the Example of Others"*

There is no doubt that de Tournes set high standards for his own printing. He was also concerned about the state of the art among his fellow printers. So indignant was he over the poor craftsmanship and short-sightedness of some of them that in 1544, in his edition of the *Recueil des œuvres de feu Bonaventure des Periers*, one of his earliest volumes and the work of a popular, native Lyonnais poet, he placed

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remarkable that de Tournes was the first French printer to publish a local, Lyonnais edition of Petrarch's love poetry in nearly forty years. De Tournes himself links the sudden vogue for the Italian lyrics to the discovery of a crypt in 1533, in the convent of St. Francis, Avignon, allegedly the tomb of Madonna Laura. De Tournes says elsewhere in his preface to the *Il Petrarca* that he is dedicating the little volume to Scève to commemorate the poet's role in this "discovery" and his subsequent efforts to adapt Italian poetry, "questa lingua da nostri hoggi tanta estimata, massimamente nella Corte del nostro gran Syra [Francis I]." Though Scève succeeded in popularizing the Petrarchan idiom, the "discovery" was undoubtedly a venture prompted by political motives. The tomb came to light after diligent search only a few months after the betrothal of Henri d'Orléans, the future Henri II, to Catherine de Medici.



an epistle at the end of the text, addressed not to the reader, but to other printers, "L'Imprimeur aux Imprimeurs":

If each one of us took care to do better and better for the development and the perfection of our art, and, not corrupted by the hope of gain, to make progress from the example of others, we would not have such a bad reputation as we have today for producing faulty works. (n3<sup>r</sup>)

To develop and perfect the art of printing, we must "make progress from the example of others." Perhaps he was recalling earlier years and the hard work in Gryphius' workshop. Now that he was in business for himself, though, other lessons needed to be put into practice. A desire for profit, without a care for the printer's responsibility to the author and the reading public, is incompatible with the aim of printing books well, especially *new* books. Some new ethic must govern the duties of a printer in an era when it had become essential to cater to the public and popular literary tastes and the temptation to "pirate" an edition was sore indeed. In the light of the events of 1539, the *compagnon imprimeur* who read the phrase "corrupted by the hope of gain" would have agreed with the sentiments that follow. This was the same charge he and his fellow workers lodged against their masters.<sup>8</sup> "We are so given over to unfair gain," de Tournes continues,

that as soon as one of us has put out a beautiful piece of work, it is unrestrainedly redone by another. Redone, I say, most often with a thousand faults. And in this way he who first took pains with it is robbed of his labor, because as long as bad works are sold, good ones do not sell . . .

And worst of all, as I see it, the error most often befalls new books from which, with just cause, he who first brings them to light ought to reap a just profit, without being either hindered or handicapped.

Therefore, for my part, I have determined to conduct my own printing house in this fashion: no new book will be printed that has been previously printed by another, until he has recovered the return and the profit due him for his efforts and expenses. And I beg all others in our art to hold to this course of action and to adhere to it diligently in the hope that the work will be well done and with the result that each will have the rewards and the profit that rightfully belong to him. (n3<sup>r-v</sup>)

*Que ce sera bien faict*, that the work will be well done, is a goal that for de Tournes at least, became a kind of motto. The epistle as a whole

<sup>8</sup> See Aimé Vingtrinier, *Histoire de l'imprimerie à Lyon* (Lyon, 1894), pp. 209-219, for the revolt of the junior printers, the edict of Francis I, and the circumstances surrounding its promulgation.

has the flavor of a *credo* and the message is simply, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." De Tournes, it will be seen, incorporated a variant of this in his printer's device.

De Tournes' outspoken views on the state of the art, in his epistle of 1544 to his fellow printers, are not isolated remarks. He seldom missed an opportunity to comment on the work of the other printers of his day in the prefaces he wrote for many books which came from his own presses. One such preface is of special interest because he turns his attention to printers of illustrated books, and to a field of endeavor in which he was soon to earn himself great distinction. His argument recommending his edition of Julius Obsequens' anthology of exemplary tales, entitled *I Prodigii* (1554), asks the reader to judge the printed book, like its contents, along moral and didactic lines.

Three things, both each in its own right, and all together, are necessary in the doing of any enterprise, discreet and learned reader. The useful, the pleasing, and the honest are always wont to move our souls.

But it is also true that we see, when, on occasion, these motives are separated from one another, or divided into their many and varied aspects (which each and all contain within), their natural power to move and to sway our hearts is either greatly increased, or entirely lacking.

To be sure, the pleasant can be wholly separated from both the useful and the honest, as we often see is the case in many pleasures which are dishonest and deleterious in every way. Yet very rarely do we find the useful separated from its pleasures, and the honest, never.

Indeed, in these present times there are many books printed not only with lascivious texts, but also with like illustrations of the sort which, without warning, lure our poor youth (to say nothing of other ages) to foul, dishonest, and altogether damnable pastimes; they are things that Princes ought not only to prohibit by grave penalties, but also pursue and extinguish everywhere, as if they were the worst and deadliest poison.

But the volume you have before you, made up of six books, by three authors, and entitled *I Prodigii*, beyond the numerous and great pleasures and delights that it affords you by its remarkable contents and its lovely variety, will be of use in countless ways no less to your soul than to your body. You will admire it above many other books for its lofty subjects and discussions, learnedly and clearly resolved in pretty speeches between great and noble persons . . .  
(a2<sup>r-v</sup>)

The useful, the pleasing, and the honest are considerations de Tournes constantly urges on himself and on his fellow printers in the practice of their art. The *II Petrarca* of 1545 demonstrates de Tournes' awareness of how a book may be designed so that it serves both the

author's text and the reader's pleasure and utility. To serve a reader honestly requires careful attention to the subject matter of the book and in this preface de Tournes makes it plain he is offering a volume of moral instruction as well as pleasant diversion. But more than this, de Tournes shows he is conscious of the power of the printed page to instruct. The Italian reader could hardly have missed the double meaning of his first words, "Tre cose, o da per se, o insieme tute, Discreto, & Sapiente Lettore, a far qualunque impresa occorra." The word *impresa* can also mean a printing, or an edition. Things useful, pleasant, and/or honest, "are always wont to move our souls." But it is the success with which each of these qualities is realized in relation to the others that determines whether their *natural* effect on us is augmented or diminished. The implication that books which exploit their youthful or unsuspecting readers also abuse the potential of the printer's art is unmistakable. Printers guilty of such practices, of such obtuse disregard for the potentials of their art, are to be condemned.

#### *Book Illustration and the Ars memorativa*

The preface we have examined appeared in 1554, the same year in which de Tournes published his pioneering *Figures du Nouveau Testament* and while he must have been pondering the design as well as the role of illustrations for the text. Many printers abuse illustrations and are blind to their strong, natural effect on us, he declares. If it is in their power to corrupt the aims of the useful, the pleasing, and the honest, and this is naturally so, then pictures and illustrations may be designed to enhance desirable effects. Illustrations explain and adorn a text. But in their own right and in addition, they have a unique capacity to help us remember what we have read in the text. That de Tournes had already formed his ideas on the subject when he published his "picture book" of the *New Testament* is convincingly demonstrated by his preface to the 1556 edition of the *Figures*.

Instructive things when they have been portrayed to be seen with the eye, and through it have entered into our apprehension, and from there into our understanding and then into the memory, move us and urge us on to a greater extent, and remain more stable and more firmly in our minds than those which have entered solely by means of the ears. (A2<sup>r</sup>)

Illustrations move us because they have a unique, natural effect on the mind and the faculty of memory. De Tournes plainly wants his



illustrated *New Testament* to serve its readers beyond the moral instruction they may receive from the pulpit, "solely by means of the ears."

De Tournes could easily have found a model for the instructive uses of illustrations in the works of classical authors such as Quintilian and Cicero. His own words in the preface quoted above suggest that he did. That he read Quintilian or Cicero and tried to realize their ideas on paper and in print should surprise no one. As was the case with many artistic preoccupations of the Renaissance, the works of the authors of classical antiquity were the only unambiguous source of practical instruction on this subject. De Tournes' preface succinctly paraphrases Cicero's famous description, in *De oratore*,<sup>9</sup> of the power of a visual image to convey complicated meanings. "It has been sagaciously discerned by Simonides or else discovered by some other person," Cicero observes,

that the most complete pictures are formed in our minds of the things that have been conveyed to them and imprinted on them by the senses [a sensu tradita atque impressa], but that the keenest of all our senses is the sense of sight, and that consequently perceptions received by the ears or by reflexion can be most easily retained in the mind if they are also conveyed to our minds by the mediation of the eyes, with the result that things not seen and not lying in the field of visual discernment are earmarked by a sort of outline and image and shape so that we keep hold of as it were by an act of sight things that we can scarcely embrace by an act of thought. (II, lxxxvii, 357)

De Tournes created a "memory book" by which the casual reader could grasp by an act of sight a variety of details and stories difficult to recall or "embrace by an act of thought."

Classical writers on the *ars memorativa* all point out that the mind is capable of storing and absorbing great quantities of information in meaningful order by means of visualized images which, as Quintilian for example explains, when associated with a readily identifiable place containing distinct "localities," can be recalled quickly and in sequence when "revisited" by the searching mind.<sup>10</sup> To depict, as well as recall,

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from *De Oratore*, tr. E. W. Sutton, Loeb Classical Library Series, 2 volumes (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), I, 469.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Yates's *The Art of Memory* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 1-26, offers a useful summary of classical Roman writing on the subject. Throughout the book she employs illustrations drawn from sixteenth-century books, but her treatment has no direct bearing here. De Tournes turned to the *ars memorativa* not for theoretical speculations on memory, but for practical advice on the nature of the optimum "image" to illustrate a text.

a sequence of events, images are distributed in distinct frames, like the easily identifiable localities within the confines of a house, or along the road of a familiar journey, or in the ample architectural spaces of a familiar public building.<sup>11</sup>

The first thought is placed, as it were, in the forecourt; the second, let us say, in the living-room; the remainder are placed in due order all round the *impluvium* and entrusted not merely to bedrooms and parlours, but even to the care of statues and the like. This done, as soon as the memory of the facts requires to be revived, all these places are visited in turn and the various deposits are demanded from their custodians, as the sight of each recalls the respective details. (XI, ii, 20)

It is easy to imagine that the reader who familiarized himself with the illustrations of de Tournes' *Quadrans historiques de la Bible* (1553) could return to the book again and again and, merely by looking at the illustrations, recall nearly all that he had read in the verse quatrains beneath them, or in the full text of the Scriptures. Rhyme serves the aim of the memory book as well. But these effects are secondary to de Tournes' realization that each "frame," each "locality" printed on the page will yield up its meaning with a *minimum of extraneous detail or embellishment*, a fact that allows the illustrator great freedom of invention while permitting him to simplify the background of the visual field. Most important, the architectural "setting" or "locality" becomes the book itself. Each page is the custodian of an image. The imaginative effect on the mind of each image depicted in those "frames" becomes the artist's paramount concern.

When he came to this realization, de Tournes might have asked himself, how should an illustration be designed in order to be most effective? What qualities enhance its effect on the imagination? Once again, Quintilian and Cicero are sources of practical advice. It is action, not static portrayal, that moves the mind. The figures, images of people doing things, must be active and distinctive so that they create an immediate effect in the imagination. We might do well to follow Cicero's practice at this point, Quintilian argues, and in his own text he quotes the passage in the *De oratore* that follows immediately after the portion de Tournes paraphrased, where Cicero says,

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from *Institutio oratoria*, tr. H. E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library Series, 4 volumes (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), IV, 223. An *impluvium* in the Roman house was a light-well, in the center of the *atrium*, with a cistern beneath it intended to catch rainwater from the roof, which sloped inward.

one must employ a large number of localities which must be clear and defined and at moderate intervals apart, and images that are effective and sharply outlined and distinctive [*imaginibus autem agentibus, acribus, insignitis*], with the capacity of encountering and speedily penetrating the mind . . . (II, lxxxvii, 358)

There is no more succinct description of the salient design features of Bernard Salomon's woodblock illustrations for the *Bible* and the *New Testament* manuals by which they are recognized as an innovating departure from earlier, more traditional, pictorial "ornamentation" of the Scriptures.

An instructive demonstration of Salomon's artistic achievement and de Tournes' fruitful adaptation of the "memory book" technique to book illustration is a comparison of several contemporary Biblical illustrations from books printed in the preceding generation and up to de Tournes' *Quadrins historiques de la Bible* of 1553. The contrasts between Salomon's woodblocks and those of the other illustrators are explicit. Events are portrayed in distinct localities, they are *dramatically* situated. People are not simply depicted doing something consistent with their roles in the text, but in *strikingly active* poses and situations that capture the emotions of the moment. "True and lively portraictures," de Tournes calls them, as if recalling Cicero's "imagines agentes," on the title page of his 1553 English edition of the *Quadrins*.<sup>12</sup>

Where the other illustrators portray a scene in which all elements are symmetrically disposed within the confines of the rectangular border, Salomon's scenes appear to move beyond those borders, where we can no longer see them. We look to those borders and depths of the scene quickly, drawn there by Salomon's ability to capture a glimpse of the action quite unlike the other illustrators' ornate "tapestry" of events. He simplifies the background in that he rejects all that is extraneous, distracting, or conventional in the setting. On close examination, the visual effects he achieves are remarkable for the detail of the finely-cut contours, and the often lavish panorama they depict at the same time. Everywhere attention has been paid to economy as well as grace of line.

De Tournes patronized Salomon faithfully over the years, engaging

<sup>12</sup> Other illustrations from the de Tournes series can be found in Ruth Mortimer's *French Sixteenth Century Books*, Part One of Harvard College Library Department of Printing and Graphic Arts: *Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), volume I.



him repeatedly to execute the full series of woodblocks for his Bibles. In Salomon he found an artist who could give him both the high quality and the effect he desired.

De Tournes had been actively engaged in dramatizing the Christian faith since 1553, the year he issued his first Bible illustrations. He saw his artistic achievement not in the abstract, aesthetic terms we today might ascribe to it, but as a concrete reflection of his commitment to the "reformed" Church. Eventually he published the *Quadrins* for German and English Protestant communities. He quartered Protestant troops in his home in November and December 1562, just two years before his death at the age of sixty. His supplication to be relieved of this burden (and the intolerable abuses that went with it), which he had undertaken in addition to giving all his available cash and stores "pour faict de la religion," still remains today in the municipal archives of Lyon.

In 1558, when he published yet another edition of the *Quadrins*, he felt the need to defend himself against the "evil of the times" lest anyone charge him with disrespect for the Holy Scriptures for making them the subject of a "picture book." The piety of his intentions rings clear in the preface he printed in that edition:

My always sincere affection for you, dear reader, continually called for by the duty of my profession, can not but attempt to satisfy you daily in that which you desire and expect from my vocation: to please you, I wish that my will were as free and loose in scope as it is restrained and cut short by the evil of the times.

Truly, it is restrained not by itself but by the diversity of today's minds, some of them tender and delicate, some rough and unrefined, and still others too strangely different from even these two: the scrupulous and the stubborn. It would avail me as much to roll the rock of Sisyphus as to believe I could satisfy such a great number of people filled with the capricious and diverse opinions the present age maintains. I forego the ingratitude and the mockery that fill all.

Being diligent and doing my duty to illustrate our Gallic tongue in such a way that, according to my small understanding — and knowing also that brevity accompanies good grace — the great and wondrous works and miracles of our God, creator and conservator of all things, be better retained in your hearts, I have tried to please you in this work which is the illustration of the Holy Bible, so that if you have not the leisure to read and enjoy the Word as you would wish to, then you may at least cover the walls of the chambers of your memory with these pictures, and more honestly, we feel, than you do the like chambers and rooms of your home with those of foreign nations hardly befitting the faithful.



PLATE I

ABOVE: WOODCUT, a2<sup>r</sup>, *Biblia cum concordantijs veteris et novi testamēti et sacrorū canonū*, f<sup>o</sup>. Lyon: J. Marion, 1520.

BELOW: LEAF C2<sup>v</sup>, *Les Figures de l'Apocalypse de saint Iau apostre & dernier evangeliste, exposées en latin & vers françois*. 8<sup>o</sup>. Paris: L. Groulleau, 1547.

SEC. MATTH. 41



ad quenda: & dicit ei, Magister dicit, Tem-  
pus meum prope est, apud te facio pascha cum  
discipulis meis. Et fecerunt discipuli sicut co-  
stituit illis: I. E. S. V. S., & parauerunt pascha.  
¶ Vespere autem facto, discubebat cum duo-  
decim discipulis suis, Et edētibas illis, dixit, Luc. 22. 14  
Amen dico vobis: quia unus vestrum me tra-  
dit

Cap. 27. EVANG.



Sapient. 1. d scribis & senioribus dicebant, Alios saluos fe-  
cit, seipsum nō potest saluum facere: si rex Is-  
raēl est, descendat nunc de cruce, & credemus  
ei. cōfidit in deo: liberet nūc eū si vult, dixit  
enim, Quis filius dei sum. Idipsum autē &  
latrones qui crucifixi erant cū eo impropera-  
bant ei. A sexta autē hora tenebræ factæ sunt

PLATE II

LEAF f1<sup>r</sup>

LEAF f5<sup>v</sup>

*Novum testamentum illustratum insignium rerum simulachris.* 16° in 8's.

Paris: F. Gryphius, 1541.



le quali à l'alba peruenne à l'auella, non troua-  
dtoni il corpo suo, vennero à dirli d'hauer vedu-  
to eziandio una visione d'agnoli, i quali dice-  
uano lui essere vivo. Poi andati alcuni de no-



stri compagni à l'auella, così trouarono, come le  
donne haueano detto: non però videro lui. Ed  
egli disse loro: Ah! scioechi, e tardi di cuore in-  
credere à tutte le cose che hanno parlato i Pro-  
feti. Non fu egli necessario che Christo patisse  
cotesco

LEAF 18<sup>r</sup>

Il Nuovo ed eterno testamento di Giesu Christo. 16° in 8's.  
Lyon: J. de Tournes and G. Gazcau, 1556.



bestia: e adoraronne il dragone, il quale diede  
la podestà à la bestia: e adorarono la bestia,  
dicendo: Chi è simile à la bestia? e chi può com-  
battere con esso lei? Fulle eziandio dato bocca  
fauellante cose grandi, e bestemmie: e fulle dato  
podestà di far quarantadue mesi. E aperse la boc-  
ca sua à bestemmia il Nome di Dio, e'l suo ta-  
bernacolo, e quegli che habitano in cielo. E ful-  
le conceduto di far guerra co' Santi, e di vincer-  
gli.

LEAF Y6<sup>v</sup>

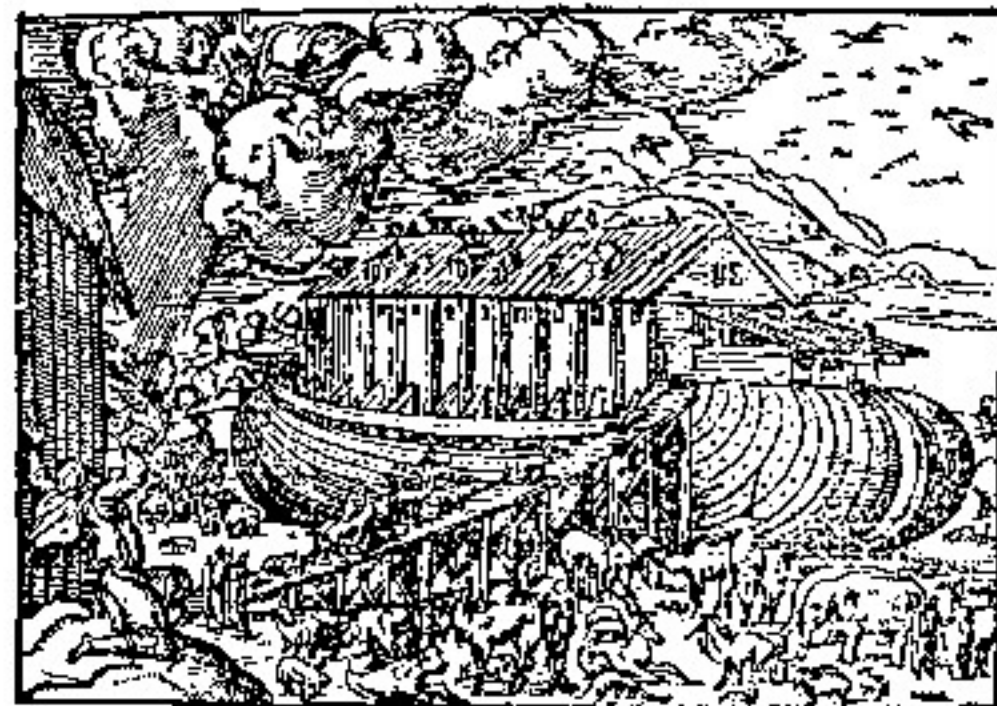
PLATE III

GENESE IIII.



*Cain occit Abel, par grande ofense,  
Nayant respect à son frere germein,  
Duquel le sang, en sa pure innocence,  
Cria à Dieu, de ce meurtre inhumain.*

GENESE VI. & VII.



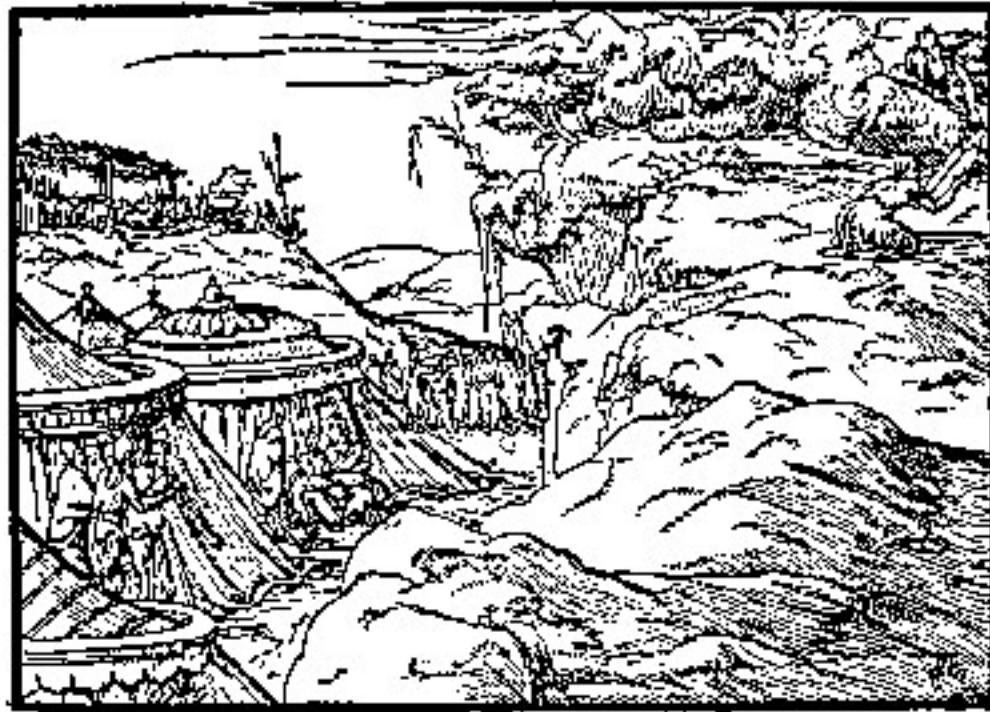
*Le grand deluge, à Noé Dieu predict,  
Lui conseillant sa grand' arche former:  
Puis y entrer, & tout ce qu'il lui dit,  
Ayant conclu toute chair consumer.*

B 3

PLATE IV

*Quadrins historiques de la Bible. 8°. Lyon: J. de Tournes, 1558. LEAVES B2<sup>v</sup>-B3<sup>r</sup>.*

EXODI XXIIII.



*With God Moses fasting endeth without pain  
Of nightes fortie, and fortie daies euer.  
The holie law is in tables putted again,  
The wiche with feare thei must kippe, and reuere.*

LEAF I6<sup>r</sup>

*The true and lyvely historyke purtreasures of the woll Bible. 8<sup>o</sup>.*  
Lyon: J. de Tournes, 1553.

IONÆ II. & III.



*Daies and nightes thre in her bodie the whall  
Jonas did kepe, and then coost him to lande:  
Where of his god heare did the voice to call,  
Wiche him go preshe, to Niniue dit commande,*

LEAF N6<sup>r</sup>

PLATE V



# The true and lyuely histo-

RYKE PVRTREATVRES  
OF THE VVOLL  
BIBLE.



AT LYONS,  
BY IEAN OF TOVRNES.  
M. D. LIII.

PLATE VI

. . . I have wished to portray [the Old Testament] for you here: to the end also that, often having before your eyes the history of the lives of the Holy Patriarchs, you can so well conform your life to their example that it will serve the accomplishment of God's will and your salvation. Amen. (A4<sup>v</sup>-A5<sup>r</sup>)

De Tournes' reformed faith is evident here and with good reason. To defend his duty as a printer, perhaps, if not as a Protestant, he takes care to point out he is not asserting that the Scriptures can be replaced by a version of them reduced to mere pictures. Instead, we are reminded, his book is designed as an aid to mind and memory. He publishes this edition with a spiritual purpose at a time when it is essential not to be misunderstood.

As tension over religious issues grew in France toward the end of the 1550s and exploded into armed conflict in the next decade, de Tournes' position as a leading Protestant and as a leading printer in Lyon grew increasingly difficult. At the time of his death, in September 1564, the plague raged uncontrolled in the city and the entire contents of his shop were impounded by local church authorities supported by victorious Catholic armies. The supplications of his son, Jean de Tournes the Younger, who succeeded his father as master printer, took months to free his father's estate.

The memories of the plague and the Civil War were bitter to the younger de Tournes and none more painful than the memory of the loss of his father. The elder de Tournes' steadfast faith and dedication to his art, his literary taste, and that finely developed intellect that knew how soft-spoken brevity accompanies graceful manners, showed a strength of character that struck his son as distant and alien to the troubled times.<sup>23</sup> "I can not express how harsh and bitter that year

<sup>23</sup> "Quam ater, quam infaustus mihi fuerit annus ille, dici non potest. Cohorresco, cum ejus recordatio subit. Familia nostra, quæ ex quindecim constabat . . . ad duos redacta fuit. Atque ego relictus, qui parentum, adgnatorum cognatorum et adferentium obitum deslerem. In his, pro dolor, amisi patrem: patrem, inquam, cui plus debebam quam ullus alius unquam patri suo debuerit . . . Neque vero me solum afflixit hæc acerba mors, verum etiam omnes viros frugi qui eum noverant, ac omnes litteratos. Nec immerito. Quantopere enim studuerit, quamdiu [-diu] vixit, rem litterarium juvare, nosse licet ex variis ac laboriosis librorum editionibus, quos suis typis excusit tum suo nomine, tum etiam nomine ac impensis Seb. Gryphii, typographi de litteris si quisquam alius benemeriti, ab anno videlicet M.D.XL ad LVI. Vix recreabamur ab illa peste, cum nec opinantibus supervenerit secundum bellum civile, ac deinde, aliud ex alio, velut unda supervenit undam. Nec adhuc sedati sunt fluctus . . ." From the preface by Jean de Tournes the Younger, in *Theophili Institutiones*, in 16° (de Tournes, 1580), quoted in Cartier, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

was for me," his son recalled in a preface he wrote for an edition published at his father's presses sixteen years later, in 1580,

and I shiver when the memory of it comes back to me. Our family that numbered fifteen souls . . . was reduced to two, and I was left alone to mourn the painful deaths of my relatives, associates, and friends. Among them I include with anguish the death of my father, a father, I say, to whom I owed more than any son ever owed his father . . . nor was I alone afflicted by his harsh death, but all who had the privilege of knowing him, and all men of letters, and not without good cause. How hard he worked as long as he lived to further the cause of literature men know from the many learned editions that issued from his own presses and those of Sebastian Gryphius, a printer worthy of the name, if there is another, from 1540 to 1556. We had scarcely recovered from the plague when, despite the wishes of all, the second Civil War broke out, as one huge wave crests on top of another, and the flood has not yet subsided . . .

One of the important consequences of our study is the realization that de Tournes possessed a consistent, persuasive view of the potentials and responsibilities of his art. The prefaces prove to be rich storehouses of his views, documents which, properly examined, can tell us much about the man as an individual and as a graphic artist. We can see clearly that he did not form his ideas about the design of books and the task of illustrating them in a vacuum. The artist speaks. Personal experience and the simple verities of visual and mental cognition helped him plan and execute some of the most remarkable illustrated books of the Renaissance.

De Tournes was a man who thought about his art and practised it with every bit as much vigor as a Marot or a Ronsard. The success with which he realized his views can be measured by how we regard his achievements when we contrast them with those of his contemporaries. The clear contrast he established between the pictorial "ornamentation" of a text and the potential strategies for actually *illustrating* it, is as modern an innovation in the art as we can hope to find.

His printer's device is as distinctive an expression of the man as it is of the artist. Many other students of de Tournes' work have used it to reveal the reciprocal duty to faith and to man so characteristic of him. The phrase "Son art en Dieu," which appears as a motto in many of his editions, is a simple anagram for his own name, "Jan de Tournes."

The relation of this motto to the prefaces we have examined is obvious, but the significance of his other device, his favorite, is more



opaque and still more personal. Look once again at the title page of *The true and lyvely historyke purtreatures of the vvoll Bible* (1553). [Plate VI] Its meaning has not been better explained by de Tournes' bibliographers than as a bold image punctuated by a vigorous sentiment proclaimed in the tablet in the center. He adopted the device at the outset of his career and used it to the end, his son employing it after him.

Two serpents intertwined devour each other while one gives birth. The image implies the cyclical character of life and experience, of balance and reciprocity born and consummated in one continuing process.<sup>14</sup> In the center of the device a tablet proclaims in Latin the same advice he gave his fellow printers:

QUOD TIBI FIERI NON VIS, ALTERI NE FECERIS

The motto is a version of the Golden Rule, of course, "What you do not want done to you, do not do to another." De Tournes, printer and personality, are intertwined in the motto as the snakes are in the image that surrounds it. Here, as in the motto "Son art en Dieu," we can find de Tournes' name and his finest aim in his own art. The translation from Latin to French befits his life-long effort to print fine books for a popular audience. Out of the Latin anagram forever emerges a new offspring in French:

Q CE FIER LIVRE SOIT BIEN FINI, IAN DE TOUR[NE]S

May this proud book be well wrought.

<sup>14</sup>For other meanings of the image of two snakes intertwined, see A. Henkel and A. Schone, *Emblemata* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 629-662.

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### ERRATA

IN THE ARTICLE by Marcel Françon, "Historical Background of French Literature in the First Part of the Sixteenth Century," XXIII:1 (January 1975), p. 50, line 27, read Charles VIII (instead of Charles VII); p. 52, line 25, read Clement VII (instead of Clement VI); and p. 59, line 26, read Louis XIII (instead of Louis XII).