This essay examines a group of twenty-three thirteenth-century Bibles that also include a Missal, and three related Bibles that include some materials for the Mass.\(^1\) Some of these Bible-Missals (a descriptive term used here to describe all the Bibles in this group) are quite well-known individually, but they have never been studied together as a group defined by their contents.\(^2\) Confronting one such manuscript out of context, it would be possible to take its contents for granted, and miss the fact that this is in actuality a very unusual combination. These unique and innovative Bibles were never a common type of manuscript, but they survive in significant enough numbers to underline the fact that the liturgical use of the Bible in the thirteenth century and later is an essential part of its story, and one that significantly alters our modern understanding of the use of the Late Medieval Bible.

The present paper originated in a larger project that surveyed the non-biblical texts found in a group of 215 Bibles.\(^3\) This earlier study

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\(^1\) This is a preliminary study based on my own examination of seventeen of the twenty-six Bibles; the remainder I know through catalogue descriptions and other studies (see Appendix). A careful examination of all these Bibles, and a comparison of the Mass texts included in each is needed for a full exploration of this topic. I would like to thank Eyal Poleg for allowing me to consult his dissertation, *Mediations of the Bible in Late Medieval England*, University of London, 2008, and for his helpful comments on this essay, and Nancy M. Shawcross, Curator of Manuscripts, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania for her assistance in obtaining the accompanying images.


demonstrated that the most common non-biblical texts circulating in thirteenth-century Bibles were not texts for preachers (for example real or topical concordances, biblical themes selected for preaching against heretics, and collections of sermon themes arranged according to the liturgical year), or exegetical tools such as Gospel harmonies, or verse summaries of the Bible, but rather liturgical texts, including calendars, capitularies (that is, lists of liturgical readings for the Mass), texts for the Divine Office, and, the focus of the present discussion, Bibles that include Missals or other texts for the Mass. This observation should not perhaps be surprising, since the fact that the content of the liturgy was essentially biblical needs little comment, and it is arguable that during the Middle Ages people who could understand Latin knew the Bible primarily through the liturgy. Certainly literate monks and clerics of the Middle Ages knew the Bible through many paths – but the liturgy was one of the most important; they heard the Bible during Mass, they recited the Psalter in its entirety each week, and heard extensive readings from the Bible during the Night Office and in the refectory. Previous studies have focused on the use of the thirteenth-century Bible in preaching and exegesis. Their

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4 The verse summary known as the *Summarium biblicum* is studied by Lucie Doležalová in this volume.

5 I am speaking of the educated who knew Latin; people who knew no Latin probably derived their knowledge of the Bible primarily from sermons; Pierre-Marie Gy, "La Bible dans la liturgie au Moyen Âge" in *Le Moyen Âge et la Bible*, ed. Pierre Riché and Guy Lobrichon, Bible de tous les temps 4 (Paris, 1984), pp. 537–52, at p. 552, expressing the viewpoint that the illiterate, who were the majority of the population, had no direct knowledge of the Bible, and knew it only through the ministry of clerics.
