



DEDICATION

Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1397–1468)

This is the last printed *Initial Reports* volume in the *Proceedings of the Ocean Drilling Program* series. We therefore dedicate the Leg 175 *Initial Reports* to the memory of Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1397–1468), whose inventions changed the world through the dissemination of knowledge and ideas.

Johannes Gutenberg was born into a patrician family in the city of Mainz, Germany. His excellent education afforded him great professional opportunities, but he chose to work with his hands: Gutenberg's early training was in goldsmithing.

Gutenberg had the idea of utilizing metalworking techniques, such as casting, punch-cutting, and stamping, for the mass production of books. European books at that time were handwritten by scribes in a Gothic script with many flourishes and embellishments. To reproduce this "look," Gutenberg fashioned a font with over 300 characters, far larger than the fonts of today. To make this possible, he invented the variable-width mold and perfected a blend of lead, antimony, and tin that is used by type foundries up to the present century.

Many years of Gutenberg's life are lost to history, but in 1428, he moved to Strasbourg for political reasons, where he remained for more than 20 years. By 1450 he was back in Mainz at work on a printing press. Between 1450 and 1455, while preparing to produce a large folio Latin Bible, Gutenberg is thought to have printed a number of smaller books, a calendar, and a papal Letter of Indulgence. The *Gutenberg Bible*, or *The Bible of 42 Lines*, consists of 1232 folio pages, with two columns to a page and 42 lines to a column, and is the oldest surviving printed book in the western world. The edition counted one to 200 copies and was printed partly on paper, partly on parchment.

Apparently, Gutenberg's inventive powers were more impressive than his business acumen. The printer had to borrow extensively to fund his vision. A loan made by the merchant Johann Fust was secured by a mortgage on Gutenberg's equipment. When Gutenberg could not make the payments, his books and tools were forfeited, and book publishing entered its first crisis.

Little is known about Gutenberg's later years. After printing his *Gutenberg Bible*, he drifted into history's shadows. He died in 1468 and was buried in the Franciscan church in Mainz.¹

¹Sanborn, Michael, 1995, "Graphion's Online Type Museum" (<http://www.graphion.com/guten.html>), is gratefully acknowledged for portions of this text.