

This Is the World's Smallest Bible

Bv Kristin Cock 09.10.2018 07:00

MINIATURE BIBLES: It is challenging to get hold of miniature Bibles. At the Nordic Bible museum you can view a selection.

You can see the world's smallest printed Bible and the world's smallest edition of the New Testament at the Nordic Bible Museum.

- The letters inside of the miniature Bibles are so tiny that they can be challenging to read with the naked eye. However, pockets have been sewn into several of the books, which contain tiny magnifying glasses, says executive director at the Nordic Bible Museum, Rune Arnhoff.

He explains that the miniature Bibles seem to be of great interest to the visitors.

- Most who see them are charmed. The miniature books are perfect copies of the larger Bibles, and several of them are beautifully illustrated, says Arnhoff.

The museum's oldest miniature Bible was printed in 1896, while the miniature edition of the New Testament was printed the year prior. Both were made in England, and they are considered the world's smallest printed Bible texts.

- The tiny Bibles demanded their own small printing plates with minuscule letters. To produce the miniature Bibles was an achievement, he says.

Good days

Many visitors are curious about why the tiny Bibles were produced.

- It has been speculated that the Bible text might have been prohibited at the time, and that it was easier to smuggle small Bibles. The most probable reason, however, was the optimism in society at the time. It was a time of economic growth, and people had the capacity to create something extraordinary, like a miniature Bible, says Arnhoff.

The tiny Bibles are not particularly valuable, though they are hard to come by.

Because of their tiny size, a lot have probably disappeared over the years. Additionally, it would be a tempting item to play with for children, and many have probably been lost due to this, says Arnhoff.

The museum also has its own Gutenberg exhibition with an old printing press that showcases how the Bibles were created several hundred years ago.

- We have a writing room where a monk sits and writes texts, like they did during the Middle Ages. Especially children and younger people visiting the museum like to watch this process, says Arnhoff.

He is an eager Bible collector himself and has a collection consisting of over 3000 Bibles. The most unique and rare are exhibited at the museum.

- We want to offer our visitors a peek into the history of the Bible, from the oldest ones written on leather or parchment, to today's digital Bibles. The museum displays a broad selection of Bibles in different sizes, colors, and shapes from all the Nordic Countries, he says.

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