The first document that connects Gutenberg with the art of print­ing is the notarial instrument of 6th November 1455 (testimony A). But it says nothing of an invention or a new mode of print­ing. And yet the occasion was such as to make it almost imperative on Gutenberg to mention it, for he had spent 1600 guilders of Fust’s money, apparently without printing anything,@@1 and was on the point of being robbed by the latter and having taken away from him all that he had made and done to give effect to his idea or invention. In the next testimony (B), *i.e.,* the earliest Mainz books with printed dates (1457 to 1467), there is evidence that the new art of printing is not only not kept secret but fully appreciated at Mainz, and its importance fully realized and advertised ; but, though they speak of a “nova ars imprimendi” and an “adinventio imprimendi, ” there is not a syllable as to a Mainz invention or inventor. In testimonies C and D (the *Catholicon* of 1460) there is again not one word about an invention or an inventor, or about Mainz. Yet Gutenberg is supposed to have printed the *Catholicon ;* and it is incredible that he, who had been wronged and robbed by his two rivals (Fust and Schoeffer), should agree with them in explaining and proclaiming the new art, but never with one word assert his claim to the honour and profit of the invention, if he had made any, and should even omit his name, whereas he saw his two rivals never neglect to print their names in full on every book which they published. Those who believe that Gutenberg was the inventor of printing suggest that he kept silent, as otherwise his creditors would have seized his copies and his printing office. But this explanation cannot be accepted ; for the verbose colophon at the end of a gigantic folio book like the *Catholicon,* published at a time when there were perhaps not more than three printing offices in the world, was calculated to draw attention to its printer and his residence, not to conceal him. Testimony F (1466) is no longer regarded as having any reference to Gutenberg or the inven­tion of printing. H (1468) was formerly thought to mean : “ I, the book, am cast *(i.e.,* its types are cast) in the Mainz city, and the house whence the type came (=where the type was invented) produced me. ” But of late years it has been shown that the author of the book, Johann Fons, was Peter Schoeffer’s press-corrector. And, as he no doubt resided in Schoeffer’s house, the two lines evi­dently mean : “I am a little book cast in Mainz, and I was born ( = written) in the same house whence the type comes@@2 ( = where I am printed).” Testimony I (also of 1468) speaks of two Johannes (Gutenberg and Fust) as the “ prothocaragmatici librorum quos genuit urbs Moguntina.” But this certainly means, not that the first printers of books were born at Mainz, but that the two Johannes were the chief printers of books (born) produced at Mainz.

When we now place together the clear documentary testimonies (A to I) of the first fourteen years of printing (1454 to 1468) at Mainz, we see that they all come from Mainz itself. Everybody connected with the art speaks of it in the most public and un­reserved manner ; its importance is as fully realized and advertised during that period as it is in the present day ; the German nation is even congratulated on possessing it ; there is never any secrecy about it ; once (about 1456) it is even called a new art. But, in the midst of all this publicity, the art which Mainz and Germany pos­sess is never said to have been invented at Mainz. The supposed Mainz inventor (Gutenberg) even speaks himself on two occasions (in the lawsuit of 1455 and in the *Catholicon* of 1460), but never says that he had made an invention. The archbishop, too, speaks publicly of Gutenberg in 1465 (testimony E), and rewards him for services, but does not speak of him as the inventor of printing, nor even as a printer. Nor does Dr Homery, in his letter to the archbishop (testimony G), in which he refers to Gutenberg’s print­ing apparatus, call him the inventor of printing.

In 1468 we enter on a new phase in the history of the invention. Even if we reject testimony I as being merely local, testimony K (1468) speaks of the art of printing as having arisen in Germany. This testimony, however, does not come from Germany, nor from Mainz, but from Italy, and is supposed to owe its inspiration to the two German printers who had established a printing office at Subiaco in 1465, and in 1467 at Rome, and who most likely learned their craft at Mainz. But, as the two printers are mentioned in the testimony, and as it does not speak of Gutenberg, nor of Mainz, it is far more likely that it was merely derived from the colophons of Fust and Schoeffer, or from something that Cardinal Cusa had heard during his embassies in Germany. To the Mainz colophons we must also ascribe (*a*) the two testimonies of 1470 (L) and (*b*) the three of 1471 (M), all five of which come from France and Italy. At last, in 1472, we find in testimony O the invention of printing ascribed to Gutenberg of Mainz, but it is mentioned as a rumour, and comes from France. Guil. Fichet of Paris, who gives it, is supposed to have heard the rumour from the three German printers

who commenced printing at Paris in 1470. But, as two of them had resided, immediately before they came to Paris, in the univer­sity of Basel, and are supposed to have learned their art there, the rumour is ascribed to “ Bertolff von Hanauwe,” who appears in the lawsuit of 1455 as Gutenberg’s servant, and who was printing at Basel in 1468. Perhaps it came rather from information which Fichet obtained from the St Victor cathedral, near Mainz, as he speaks of the art having been invented not far from that town. Testimony P (1474) again comes from Italy, from Rome, and was perhaps derived from one of the German printers settled there at that time. It merely speaks of Gutenberg, Fust, and Mentelin as printers, but says not a word which even touches upon the invention of the art. In testimony Q (1476) we have definite mention of Mainz as the inventress of the art ; it is given as an addition to the Mainz colophon of 1468 (see I). In 1478 Mainz is again mentioned in a Cologne testimony (R), which gives evidence of research, as it is an amplification of an earlier one in which Mainz was not men­tioned. Germany, Gutenberg, and Mainz are again mentioned in the Venetian testimony S (1483), which gives for the first time 1440 as the date of the invention. In the same year we have two earlier testimonies (P and N) worked into one (T), to the effect that printing was invented either by Gutenberg or by Fust or by Jenson. Testimony V (1492), which states that printing com­menced at Mainz, is practically equivalent to Q. In 1494 and 1499 we have three German testimonies (X, Y, Z) as to Gutenberg being the inventor of printing ; these, however, come, not from Mainz, but from Heidelberg. Z is given by a relative of Gutenberg, Adam Gelthus ; and, as the latter resided at Heidelberg, it is clear that he was the real source of the other two Heidelberg testimonies (X and Y). Two years later, when Wimpheling, the author of testimony Y, had left Heidelberg, he ascribed (CC) the invention of printing to Strasburg, though stating that Gutenberg was the inventor. Testimony AA is recorded above to show the great con­fusion that reigned in people’s minds about the invention. We must add to these testimonies those of 1504 (EE) and 1505 (FF), which are owing to Ivo Wittig, a relative of Gutenberg, and a canon and the keeper of the seals of the Str Victor cathedral, near Mainz, of which Gutenberg had been a lay member according to its *liber fraternitatis.* Thus in the period from 1468 to 1505 we have (1) several vague statements made in Italy and France as to the art of printing being known or practised or invented in Ger­many, statements which arose from the books and colophons pub­lished at Mainz ; (2) one item of rumour in 1472 that Gutenberg invented it near that town ; (3) two Mainz statements, of 1476 and 1492, and one Cologne statement, of 1478, that it was invented at Mainz ; (4) three German statements, of 1492, 1494, and 1499, that Gutenberg had invented it ; and (5) two Mainz statements, of 1504 and 1505, to the same effect. It is to be particularly noticed that the statements (2, 4, 5) which speak distinctly of Gutenberg being the inventor can be clearly traced to Gutenberg himself and two of his relatives.

Seeing then how slender the basis is for the tradition that printing was invented by Gutenberg at Mainz, and that even this slender basis was not laid till fourteen years after the art had been fully established and proclaimed in that city, we cannot be surprised to find the tradition promptly contradicted. This con­tradiction was made in 1499 (testimony BB) in a *Chronicle* pub­lished at Cologne. To facilitate the understanding of this testimony it is divided above into eight sections. The first (taken from Hart­mann Schedel's *Chronicle,* 1493), second, sixth, seventh, and eighth are no doubt due to the compiler of the *Chronicle,* and must not be connected with the third, fourth, and fifth, which, according to the compiler, are due to Ulrich Zell, a printer at Cologne, who had probably settled there about 1463, and had most likely learned his art at Mainz, as he called himself “clericus Moguntinus.” As Zell’s testimony leaves to Gutenberg nothing but the honour of having perfected the art, various attempts have been made to ex­plain away this account. As long as no typographically printed *Donatus* had been found that could be fitted into Zell’s account, it was argued that he meant *Donatuses* printed from wooden blocks ; and this argument is brought forward even at the present time. But a practical printer like Zell must have been able to express himself to that effect if he had really meant to say so ; and, as block-printing was not less practised in Germany than in Holland, we could hardly assume that things printed in Holland would have inspired the German inventor rather than the same things printed in Germany. That testimony OO speaks of a *Donatus* printed from wooden blocks may be ascribed to the notion arising at that time (c. 1533) that block-printing had given rise to typography. It has also been asserted that Holland in the *Chronicle* means Flanders ; but the *Chronicle* is usually very correct in geographical matters. It has also been suggested that Zell most likely learned his art in Fust and Schoeffer’s office and invented the passage to injure the reputation of Gutenberg, who had been their enemy. Finally it has been said that Zell did not suggest or write the passage at all ; but it is hard to see how this can be maintained in face of the com­piler’s own statement to that effect. Therefore, all these sugges-

@@@1 In line 42 Gutenberg distinctly declares that “ he hoped that he was under no obligation to Fust to devote the first 800 guilders to the work of the books and, as Fust, by advancing the second 800 guilders in 1452, had become Guten­berg’s partner, it seems clear that the former claimed in 1454, when the trial is calculated to have commenced, his money and interest because Gutenberg had as yet not printed anything.

@@@2 Venit is the present not the perfect tense.