



REFORMATION NOTES

News for Partners of the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection
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Fifteen Years . . . and Counting

M. Patrick Graham

The Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection is a repository of rare and valuable documents produced in connection with the Protestant Reformation. The collection now contains more than 2,600 pieces written by Martin Luther, his colleagues, and opponents, and printed during their lifetimes.

Supported by the vision and resources of Lutheran laypeople Richard and Martha Kessler and partners throughout the Southeast, the collection is housed in the Pitts Theology Library of Candler School of Theology. It provides a rich resource for scholars of the Reformation and for clergy and laity who seek to understand the history of the Christian faith.

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In the fifteenth year of the Kessler Reformation Collection, we pause to take stock of where it stands. As the collection has grown through the years, it has stimulated musical programs, provided a venue for visiting lecturers, supported teaching and research, and supplied the grist for scholarly publications. It has been a significant resource for Candler School of Theology and for Emory University as a whole. It is continually the subject of presentations for students, church and synagogue groups, professional organizations, and visiting scholars. It has been a nexus of contact between the academy and the larger world.

From the outset the intent was to build a research collection of materials, dating to 1570, related to the Protestant Reformation in Germany. Although the focus of this collection was to be Luther and his associates, an effort was made to include works of other reformers in Germany, the Roman Catholic responses to Luther, and publications by Humanists such as Erasmus, whose learning was so critical to sixteenth-century scholarship. The aim was to build a research collection that would give historians and theologians the chance to hear the full range of voices raised in this dynamic period.

This issue of *Reformation Notes* not only describes the contours of the collection, noting how many publications by Martin Luther and several other major figures are included and identifying some of the more important pieces in the collection (pages 2–3), but it also attempts to compare it with North America's other

holdings of German Reformation materials (page 4).

This comparison is difficult for two reasons. First, there is no one electronic catalog that can be searched to learn which library has the most works on this topic or that. Many catalogs—electronic and card—must be searched, and one also must consider uncataloged library collections. Therefore, even after a survey has been completed, the results must be presented cautiously, and it must be acknowledged that the results remain somewhat tentative and so subject to later revision as further information becomes available.

Second, there is the matter of collection definition. Some Reformation collections focus on the Swiss reformers, others on the German, and so on. In addition, each collection may have different chronological boundaries. Fairness requires that each collection be measured against its own standards.

Therefore, in what follows there is no attempt to identify North America's largest or finest Reformation collection. Any such effort would require such a tangle of qualifications and caveats that its conclusions would be of questionable value. Rather, what follows is a description of the contours of the Kessler Collection and an explanation of why we believe this collection to be among the largest German Reformation collections in North America.

M. Patrick Graham is Librarian and Margaret A. Pitts Associate Professor of Theological Bibliography.

KESSLER HOLDINGS
OF SOME REFORMERS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Martin Luther | 814 |
| Philipp Melancthon | 145 |
| Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt | 35 |
| Johann Bugenhagen | 22 |
| Urbanus Rhegius | 21 |
| Georg Major | 18 |
| Veit Dietrich | 13 |
| Ulrich von Hutten | 10 |
| Wenzeslaus Linck | 11 |
| Hans Sachs | 9 |



“THE APOSTLE PAUL”
Lucas Cranach, the Elder, from
Hortulus animae (Wittenberg, 1550)

Collection Highlights

BIBLES

The September Testament

The first edition of Luther’s German translation of the New Testament was printed in 1522. Only thirty-six complete and four incomplete copies of this work are known to exist, making it rarer than the Gutenberg Bible. The Kessler Collection includes this work as well as several other printings of Luther’s translation of the Bible.

The Rabbinic Bible

The first complete Hebrew Bible with Rabbinic commentaries was issued by the Venetian printer Daniel Bomberg in 1517. Bomberg was a Christian but enlisted the assistance of Jewish scholars for this and later editions of the work. The Rabbinic Bible was reissued in 1524, 1547, 1567, 1617/18, 1618/19, 1723 (all these editions are held at Pitts). The Rabbinic Bible became the Hebrew Bible of choice among the Reformers.

Erasmus’s New Testament

The Kessler Collection holds the first, second, fourth, and seventh editions of Erasmus’s Greek New Testament.

Dietenberger Bible

J. Dietenberger’s German version of the Bible was richly illustrated and intended as a Catholic antidote to Luther’s version. The Kessler Collection holds both the first (1534) and third (1550) editions of this work.

Zürich Bible

Edited by Leo Jud, Ulrich Zwingli, and others, this Bible drew in part on Luther’s translation. The Kessler copy is the 1536 edition and is lavishly illustrated with two striking title pages and many wood-engravings and initial letters.

LITURGY

Lutheran hymnals

The first Lutheran hymnal, the *Achtliederbuch* (1524), the *Magdeburg Enchiridion* (1536), a 1544 printing of the Klug hymnal, and the 1567 edition of the Bapst hymnal are all part of the Kessler Collection.

The German Mass

Luther’s adaptation of the Latin Mass for German speakers was issued in 1526 as *Deutsche Messe vnd Ordnung Gotes diensts*.

Development of Lutheran Liturgical Practice

One of Luther’s important works relating to the development of Lutheran liturgical practice was printed in 1529: *Teütsche Letaney, vmb alles anligen der Cristenlichen gemayn*.

Lutheran Service Book

In 1543 Luther’s secretary, Veit Dietrich, edited and published *Agend Buechlein für die Pfar-Herren auff dem Land*, a Lutheran service book designed to assist country clergy in leading worship.

Church-orders

Twelve Lutheran church-orders (*Kirchenordnungen*) are part of the Kessler holdings.

Reformation Woodcuts

More than 3,000 wood and metal engravings from the Kessler Reformation Collection have been digitized, and these digital images (JPEGs and PDFs) have been placed on the Internet at www.pitts.emory.edu. Hundreds of these images are illustrations of biblical texts, and all are available free of charge for use in teaching and research. They may be viewed directly on a computer monitor, downloaded into a digital presentation, or printed out for use in more traditional methods of instruction. Comments and suggestions for improvement should be sent to libmpg@emory.edu.



**THEOLOGICAL DEBATE
AND INSTRUCTION**

Papal Bulls &c.

Twenty-eight papal bulls, as well as an unused indulgence from 1515.

Leipzig Disputation

The first and only printing of the Leipzig Disputation between Andreas Karlstadt and Martin Luther on the one hand, and Johann Eck, on the other (1519).

'The Address to the German Nobility,' 'The Babylonian Captivity,' and 'The Freedom of the Christian Man'

1520 printings for each of these three important pamphlets by Luther. Each was issued in the summer of that year as Luther struggled with Pope Leo X.

Passional Christi vnd Antichristi

A polemic in the form of thirteen pairs of extraordinary woodcuts (attributed to Lucas and Hans Cranach) issued in 1521, depicting scenes from the life of Christ contrasted with scenes from the life of the pope.

Augsburg Confession

The first official Latin and German editions of the *Augsburg Confession*, as well as the first of six unofficial German editions of the work, two other German editions, two other Latin editions, and the 1559 translation into Greek.

Loci communes

The first edition of the *Loci Communes* and twenty other editions of this systematic theology by Melancthon, perhaps his most significant work.

Catechisms

Twenty-five Protestant (including both Luther's *Small Catechism* and his *Large Catechism*) and three Catholic catechisms.

CHURCH AND STATE

Der Stat Nurnberg verneute Reformation

Published in 1564, this is the first edition of the final revision of the Nuremberg municipal code.

Holy Roman Empire

A dozen works issued by Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, as well as other publications by John Frederick, elector of Saxony, and other German princes.

Schmalkald War

Thirty-five works dealing with the Schmalkald War and printed in 1546.



"THE APOSTLE PETER"
Lucas Cranach, the Elder, from
Hortulus animae (Wittenberg, 1550)

**KESSLER HOLDINGS OF SIX
CATHOLIC AUTHORS**

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Desiderius Erasmus | 72 |
| Johannes Cochlaeus | 37 |
| Johann Eck | 34 |
| Georg Witzel | 29 |
| Hieronimus Emser | 11 |
| Thomas Murner | 3 |

**STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE
KESSLER REFORMATION COLLECTION**

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Armin Siedlecki

During the past two months I have conducted a study of the Kessler Reformation Collection to determine the depth of the collection and its significance in the larger academic world. After establishing some basic facts (How many hymnals are there? How many church orders? How many items by Luther? Melancthon? Cochlaeus?), it was time to compare these holdings with those of other libraries.

First, I ran a few preliminary searches on the two important databases for North American libraries (OCLC and RLIN). In order to get an idea of the comparative significance of our holdings, we selected a "test case" that might serve as a representative sample. Specifically, we looked at the number of works written by Martin Luther (far and away the most prolific German author of the sixteenth century) and published in 1522 (one of the reformer's more prolific years), trying to get a sense of how many volumes within this category were held by libraries in North America.

I expected (hoped) that the Kessler Collection would place among the top five institutions on this continent, but I must admit that I was quite pleasantly surprised at the results. The OCLC database listed a total of 120 titles, of which



"RETURN OF THE SPIES,"
Zürich Bible, 1536.

77 were held by the Pitts Theology Library (64 percent). The library with the second most holdings was listed at a total of 26 titles (22 percent). Thus, at least according to this publicly available source, the Kessler Collection not only emerged as the leading library in this particular category, but did so by a substantial margin.

As has been explained (page 1), these figures are not the end of the matter (and as one comedian observed, at least 46 percent of all statistics are misleading). Therefore, I began contacting librarians

at the leading institutions the survey had turned up. This was certainly one of the more enjoyable aspects of my research. Virtually all the people I contacted were extremely helpful and willing to assist in my analysis, providing me with descriptions of their collections and referring me to other useful resources. In two cases, my colleagues at other institutions that did not yet have online records for all their special collections even sent me photocopies of relevant entries from their libraries' card catalogs.

As I suspected, most of the figures I had retrieved from the OCLC and RLIN databases had to be adjusted upward, and in fact I would have been surprised if this had not been the case. Nevertheless, even with adjusted figures, the Kessler Collection still held more works by Luther published in 1522 than any other North American library: a total of 83 titles, compared to 60 and 54 volumes for the next two libraries.

Therefore, with all the caveats advanced earlier (page 1), my analysis indicates that the Kessler Collection has become one of North America's richer resources of original imprints of German Reformation materials dating to 1570.

Armin Siedlecki is Catalog Librarian for the Kessler Reformation Collection.



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