CHAPTER 1

That the Good Books May Be Preserved

ARMIN SIEDLECKI

The title of this essay is taken from Martin Luther's tract, *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools* (LW 45:373):

> This is essential, not only that those who are to be our spiritual and temporal leaders may have books to read and study, but also that the good books may be preserved and not lost, together with the arts and languages which we now have by the grace of God.

This statement captures the spirit of the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection, which has been collecting sixteenth-century imprints and source documents relating to the Lutheran Reformation since 1987 and which continues to grow every year. The collection includes and acquires not only Protestant documents, but it also seeks to represent the context of the Reformation, as well as different positions

within the larger discourse of religious reform in sixteenth-century Germany. This essay will outline the historical development of the Kessler Collection in Atlanta and describe its academic importance for Reformation research in North America. An important element that will be discussed is the idea of community outreach in various forms, such as the annual Reformation Day at Emory, concerts, exhibitions, presentations, and publications, all of which characterize the collection and its commitment to promote theological and historical research and make it accessible to wider audiences.

The History of The Kessler Collection

Richard C. Kessler is an American entrepreneur and philanthropist active in the Lutheran Church and various Lutheran organizations, including the Lutheran Brotherhood[1]—an insurance company whose board he chaired. Kessler helped develop the Days Inn hotel chain and served as the company's CEO, president, and chair. When Days Inn was sold in 1984, he developed a line of luxury hotels that constitute part of the Marriott Autograph Collection. He is a descendant of the Salzburgers—a group of Lutherans from Austria and Southern Germany that settled in Georgia near Savannah beginning in 1734 in order to escape religious persecution in Europe.

In October 1987, Richard Kessler and his wife Martha donated their private collection of sixteenth-century documents relating to the Lutheran Reformation to the Pitts Theology Library and so founded the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection at Emory University. Twelve years earlier, the Pitts Library had acquired the holdings of the Hartford Theological Seminary, which had been the leading theological library in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[2] The addition of some 220,000 volumes—including a large collection of rare books—transformed a modest theological library in Georgia into the second-largest theological library at the time and laid the foundation for several of the library's current collections strengths, including hymnody, English church history, and African Christianities. Establishing a Lutheran collection at an historically Methodist institution therefore made sense for the Kesslers, who were Atlanta residents at the time, as Emory University in general and the Pitts Theology Library in particular were developing into a significant research center in the American South.

A formal agreement between the Kesslers and Emory University, represented by Pitts Library director Channing R. Jeschke and Emory University's President James T. Laney (a former dean of the Candler School of Theology at Emory and later US Ambassador to South Korea), was signed to establish a named collection and an endowment to support future acquisitions. An advisory committee with members from Emory University and the Lutheran Church[3] was formed to oversee the future development of the collection. It was decided that the scope of the collection was the Lutheran Reformation in Germany between 1500 and 1570. The reason for beginning with 1500—seventeen years before Martin Luther published his 95 Theses—was to allow for the inclusion of background documents important for the cultural and historical context of the Reformation. This move is indicative of the goal not to build a "fan club" collection, but to establish an academic research collection that documents various perspectives. Thus, from the beginning, there was also a conscious effort to collect not only Lutheran pieces but also materials by Luther's opponents. Materials written by other Reformers (e.g., in the Zwinglian or Calvinist traditions) are included insofar as they respond to the Lutheran Reformation or serve to shed light on the context of the Wittenberg movement.

The existence of an endowment allowed for a robust growth of the collection, which reached one thousand titles in about a decade. In the late 1990s, a four-volume annotated bibliography was compiled, which provided a detailed description of each title, including signature collation and bibliographic references, such as the Weimar Edition of Luther's Works, Josef Benzing's *Lutherbibliographie*, or Karl Hartfelder's *Philipp Melanchthon als Praeceptor Germaniae*. Also provided were an image of the title page, a Kessler number, and the local call number.[4] The work is organized chronologically with one page for each entry. It is unlikely that a bibliography like this would be published in print today, given the current advantages of online searchability, image representation, linked metadata, etc. Although the internet was already being used for academic research, it was still in its early phases of development and many of the possibilities we now take for granted had not been realized. The bibliography is in many ways an unusual, but also remarkable, testimony to the interplay of changing technologies and academic progress, another iteration of which (the development of printing in the fifteenth century and the reform of the university system) had helped set the stage for the Protestant Reformation itself. It is also noteworthy that, due to the

fairly rapid growth of the collection, the bibliography was already out of date by the time it was published, the Kessler Collection having added over one hundred other volumes when the bibliography appeared in print in 1999. This problem, in a sense, confirms the success of the collection and brings to mind the words of the Basel printer Adam Petri on the title page to the first volume of his collection of Luther's writings in 1520 (Benzing 9): *Alio tomo, Domino volente, post hac meliora tradem* (the second volume, God willing, should be issued after these better parts). Although Petri went on to print many other works by the Reformer, he never issued a second volume to his *Lucubrationum*, as Luther's prolific output made it virtually impossible for any printer to keep pace and so maintain a comprehensive collection of all his writings as they appeared.

Processing, Preservation, and Maintenance

Materials in the Kessler Collection are cataloged and processed according to RBMS standards. In addition to the standard elements of bibliographic description, a typical entry for a Kessler Collection imprint includes a signature count, a citation or reference (e.g., Benzing, VD16, Hartfelder, etc.), and notes regarding specific print features, such as the use of red and black ink, graphic elements (woodcuts, title page borders, initials), and printed marginal annotations. Copy-specific features such as inscribed annotations or marks of provenance are included if present. Information about binding is of particular significance here, since book printing and binding were separate industries prior to the nineteenth century, and books were bound at the request of their owners after purchase. Furthermore, separate titles and publications were frequently bound together, sometimes for thematic reasons, sometimes for purely practical reasons. The result is called a *Sammelband* or "collected volume." All this copy-specific information underscores an important point for collecting and preserving rare books: it is essential to consider a book not only for its printed content, but also as a unique object in its own right, since marks of provenance may provide important information about the cultural context in which a book was read and interpreted.

While marks of provenance from previous owners are often a welcome feature of a book, processing and preserving a book, once it is added to the Kessler Collection, is based on the idea of leaving the

book as unaltered as possible and to make any alteration reversible. Call numbers are written in the book with a #1 pencil, which is softer and erases more easily than the standard #2. A call number flag on acid-free and lignin-free paper is inserted into the book to facilitate shelving and retrieval. A specially designed Kessler Collection bookplate is affixed to the front inside cover of the book with a pH-neutral adhesive, usually hinged at the top edge. If the front inside cover contains any inscriptions or other older marks of ownership, the bookplate is placed elsewhere. The Pitts Theology Library does not have its own preservation department, but any pre-existing damage or instability to a book is examined by conservation experts at Emory University's main library. If necessary, a book is typically stabilized rather than restored, since the latter would represent an alteration.

For many years, the Pitts Theology Library was located in one of the oldest buildings on the Emory campus. The original building housed theology faculty offices and classrooms, a chapel, the office of Emory's chancellor, and the theology library. As the library grew and other spaces became available to Candler, the library expanded to displace most of the other elements (Hauk 2014, 93–105). Special accommodations were made for climate control and security according to modern standards, with a temperature of 65° F and a relative humidity below 50%. A non-water-based FM-200 fire suppression system was installed to avoid possible water damage in case of response to a fire. Access to the collection was restricted to staff working with special collections materials, and patrons would request materials for use in a designated area outside the rare book stacks. While the special collections facilities in the building were designed according to modern standards, the library quickly outgrew the building in general. The lack of a designated special collections reading room, for example, presented challenges for the use and presentation of Kessler Collection materials. The reference reading room (the nave of the original chapel) had a small alcove (the altar space) that allowed for eight glass cases approximately three feet wide and eighteen inches deep, accommodating a small number of books and descriptive labels. Lighting and climate control in these cases was dependent on the environment of the larger room, so that prolonged exposure was not ideal. The move into a new five-storey building in 2014 offered new possibilities. Archives and special collections now has a dedicated floor that even includes a vault area inside the restricted, climate controlled rare book stacks, which allows for the rarest and most valuable materials to be placed inside a doubly secured area

with its own FM-200 system. There is an adjacent, dedicated reading room with controlled access, staffed at all times during special collections office hours, usually weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Use of Kessler Collection and other special collections materials is not restricted to those affiliated with Emory University but is open to anyone after a brief registration protocol.

Academic Significance of the Kessler Collection

Comparing a collection to those held by other institutions always entails difficulties. Every collection is unique and guided by its own parameters and policies. Some may add only Protestant materials but may include Calvinist or Anglican writings unrelated to the Lutheran Reformation. Other collections may focus on materials in a particular language (Latin, German, etc.) or a specific genre (e.g., pamphlets, biblical interpretation). The focus of a collection may be breadth, assembling as many different titles as possible but not allowing for the acquisition of different printings of the same title (which may be important for some research projects), while others may try to collect as many copies of a particular imprint as possible, as, for example, the Folger Shakespeare Library's collection of 1623 Shakespeare First Folios. As stated above, the Kessler Collection includes materials reflecting a variety of positions insofar as they relate to the Lutheran Reformation. It has also consistently tried to achieve a balance of breadth and depth, collecting a variety of titles but also different imprints of the same work. The latter are considered important, because the regional differences of the German language, in which many texts relevant to the Lutheran Reformation were written, were still very pronounced in the sixteenth century.

Since Martin Luther is the central figure of the Kessler Collection, one measure of the collection's academic importance may be a comparison of holdings with other North American libraries. An OCLC search (November 2020) of institutional holdings for books and pamphlets written, edited, or translated by Martin Luther and published between 1515 and 1600 shows that the ten North American libraries with the most holdings are as follows:

Library[5]	Holdings
Kesler Collection (Pitts Theology Library)	1069
Harvard University Libraries[6]	573
Yale University Libraries	419
Columbia University	373
Folger Shakespeare	372
Princeton University	348
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis	314
Library of Congress	180
United Lutheran Seminary	159
Huntington Library	128

The Kessler Collection is not only the sole institution in the American South on this list, but it tops the list by a fairly wide margin. With the exception of the combined holdings of several libraries at Harvard University, the Kessler Collection has more than twice the number of sixteenth-century Luther imprints than any other leading institution in North America.

A comparison with institutions outside North America is a different matter. One would naturally expect European and especially German libraries to have substantially more holdings, partly due to the geographic proximity of the original place of publication and also because these institutions had several more centuries to develop and maintain their collections. The leading library here is the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany, which was founded in 1572 and early on incorporated the collections of such Reformation figures as Johannes Aurifaber or Matthias Flacius (Linder 1997). Another dominant institution is the Bavarian State Library in Munich, which serves as the home to such resources as VD16 (*Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts*, initially published in print, now available online, where it is continually updated) and which spearheads several digitization projects (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek n.d.). A search (October 2020) of holdings registered in VD16 for books and pamphlets written, edited, or translated by Martin Luther and published before 1570 has the fol-

lowing institutions as the ten leading libraries with regard to Luther holdings.

Library	Holdings
Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel	2226
Bavarian State Library, Munich	1798
Lutherhalle, Wittenberg	1340
Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Weimar	959
Sächsische Landes- und Universitätsbibliothek, Dresden	950
University & State Library Saxony-Anhalt, Halle	929
University Library Heidelberg	919
State Library, Berlin	909
Protestant Seminary Library, Wittenberg	902
Research Library, Gotha	896

These figures place the results of a comparative search of North American libraries in context. They confirm that the holdings of Luther imprints at European institutions eclipse those of their North American counterparts, as one might expect, but they also show that the Kessler Collection does place among the leading libraries for Reformation research, not only in North America, but also world-wide. Only three institutions have more registered Luther holdings: the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, the Bavarian State Library in Munich, and the Lutherhalle in Wittenberg.

Select Highlights of the Kessler Collection

As of December 2020, the Kessler Collection holds a total of 3,980 titles. These include two indulgences, a plenary indulgence issued by Pope Leo X, and a special indulgence for clerical benefits issued by Albrecht of Brandenburg. It holds thirteen Lutheran church-orders (*Kirchenordnungen*), more than forty Protestant and nine Catholic catechisms, and several early Lutheran hymnals, including the *Acht-*

liederbuch (a proto-hymnal with eight hymns printed in 1524) and the only known copy of a 1536 printing in Low German of the *Enchiridion geistliker Leder vnde Psalmen* (also known as the *Slüter Hymnal*). The collection includes the first Latin and German editions of the Augsburg Confession, the first edition of the revised Augsburg Confession (Variata), and several later printings of either edition. There is the first edition of Philipp Melanchthon's *Loci communes* and more than thirty other printings of this work of systematic theology, which the reformer kept revising throughout his life. Space does not permit a full description of key holdings but, to demonstrate the importance of the collection in preserving and making available rare source documents of the Reformation and to illustrate why these pieces are important for research, a closer look at some exceptional pieces in two different areas may be helpful: the works of Martin Luther and early printed Bibles.

Martin Luther

With 1,069 imprints, writings by Martin Luther comprise over one quarter of the total holdings. According to an OCLC search (December 2020), over 20% of these are not held by any other North American library. There are two specimens of Martin Luther's handwriting in the collection. The first is a seven-line note in Latin about computing the age of the world (image 1). The note is specifically in reference to one of Luther's books from 1541 (image 2), in which he attempts to determine the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. Luther's calculations were not accepted by everyone in the Wittenberg circle, including his fellow reformer Philipp Melanchthon, and the seven-line note was most likely part of a larger conversation in which Luther was trying to justify his position.

Another item in the collection that contains an inscription in Martin Luther's own hand (image 3) was only recently identified as such, and the discovery helped determine the author of a previously pseudonymous tract.

This pamphlet had been in the Kessler Collection since the early 1990s and, while it was known that the title page contained an inscription in a sixteenth-century hand, the inscriber had not been identified. Furthermore, the author of this tract was unknown, since both names mentioned on the title page (Curtius Malaciola and Johannes Coticula) were clearly pseudonyms. Earlier speculations re-

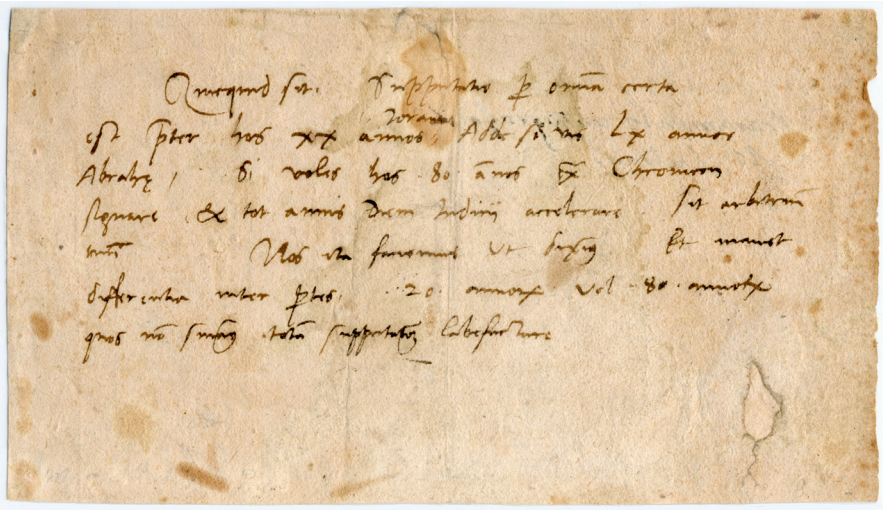


Image 1: Martin Luther manuscript, ca. 1541.
(Note on the computation of the world. 11 x 20 cm; 7 lines in Latin. MSS 090.)

garding the author of this tract had included the satirist Ulrich von Hutten and Johannes Caesarius, but no conclusive evidence could be found. In 2017, Dr. Ulrich Bubenheimer determined that a three-line gift inscription on the title was in Martin Luther's own hand and transcribed the note as follows: *idest p.[atris] lectoris / Betzensteynn / priori Volfgango Volprechto N[urenbergensi]* (= This is Pater Lector Betzensteynn, for Prior Wolfgang Wolprecht of Nuremberg). The figures mentioned in this note are known: Wolfgang Wolprecht was the prior of the Augustinian monastery in Nuremberg, and Johannes Petzenstein was a fellow Augustinian who had come to Wittenberg from Nuremberg to serve as lector and who was later one of Luther's two travel companions (with Nikolaus Amsdorff) on his return to Wittenberg from the Diet of Worms. This allows for the following reconstruction of events: the pamphlet was given by Martin Luther to Wolfgang Wolprecht, and Luther reveals to him the identity of the pseudonymous author as a monastic brother well known to both of them. The identification of Petzenstein also explains the name Johannes Coticula printed on the title page, since the Latin *coticula* means "whetstone" or *Wetzstein* in German, which becomes *Betzstein* or *Petztstein* in some German dialects.

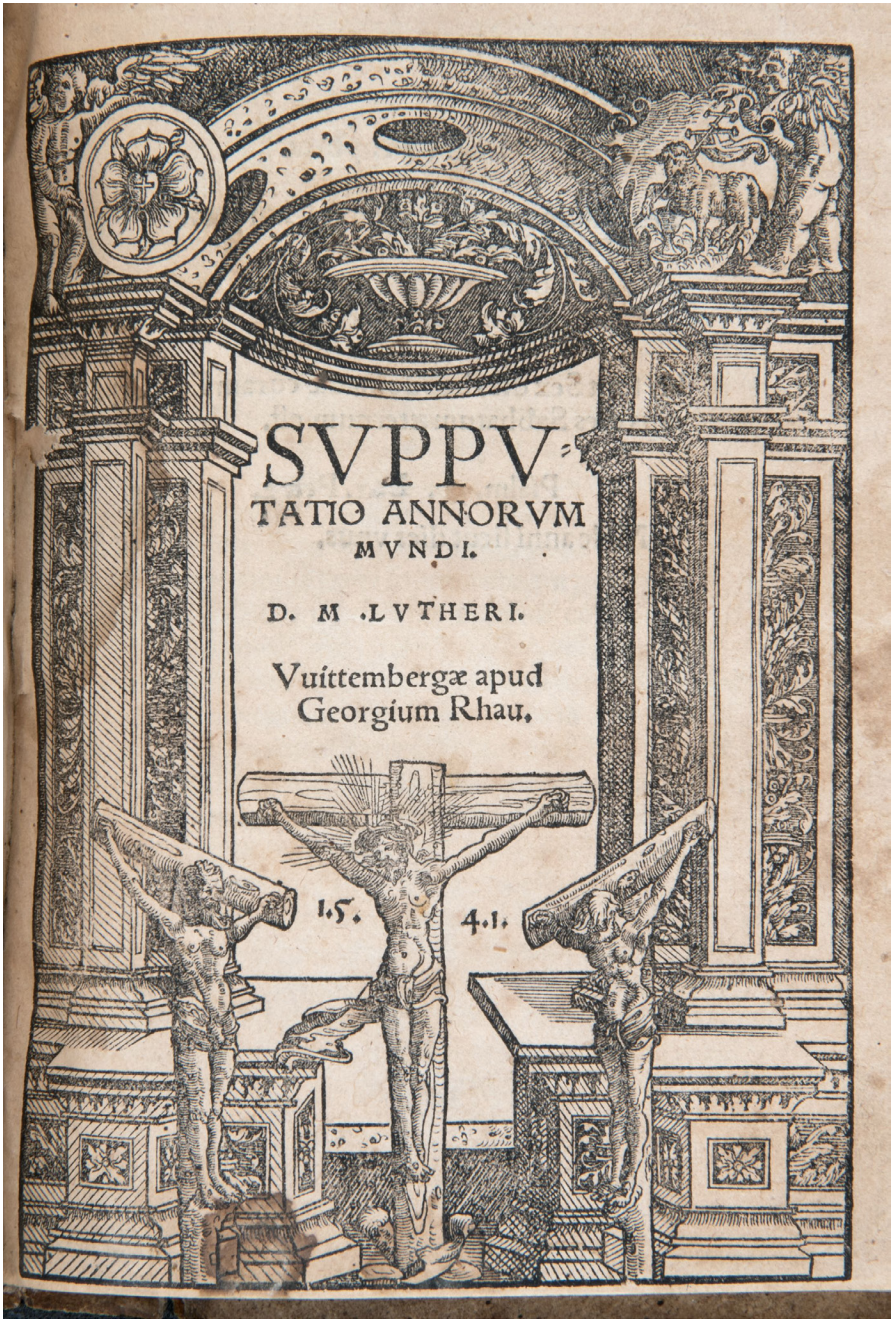
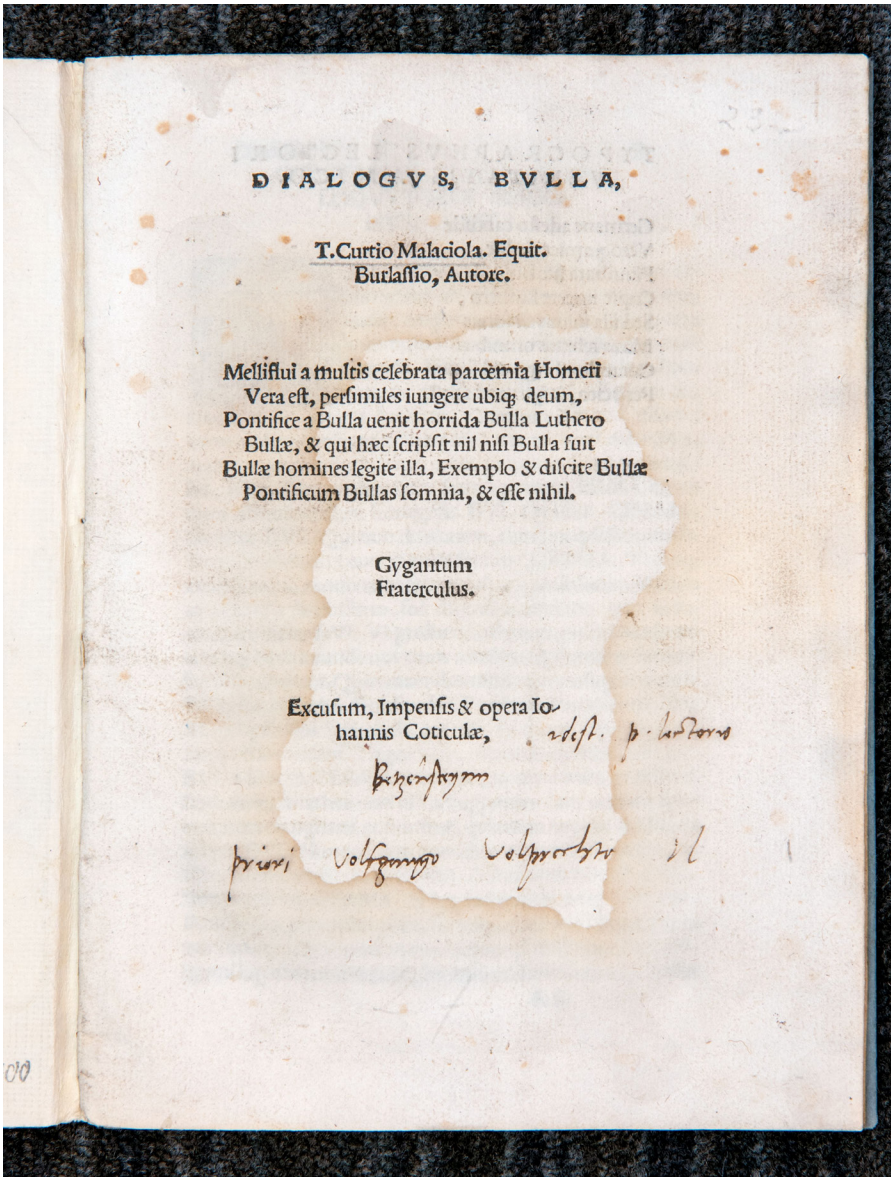


Image 2: Title page of Luther's *Supputatio annorum mundi* (1541).
(Martin Luther, *Supputatio annorum mundi* (*Computation of the age of the world*) (Vuittembergae: apud Georgium Rhau, 1.5.4.1.) [204] p.; 21 cm (4to); Benzing 3366, VD16 L 6716; title within architectural woodcut border; initials. 1560 ASPH:2.)



DIALOGVS, BVLLA,

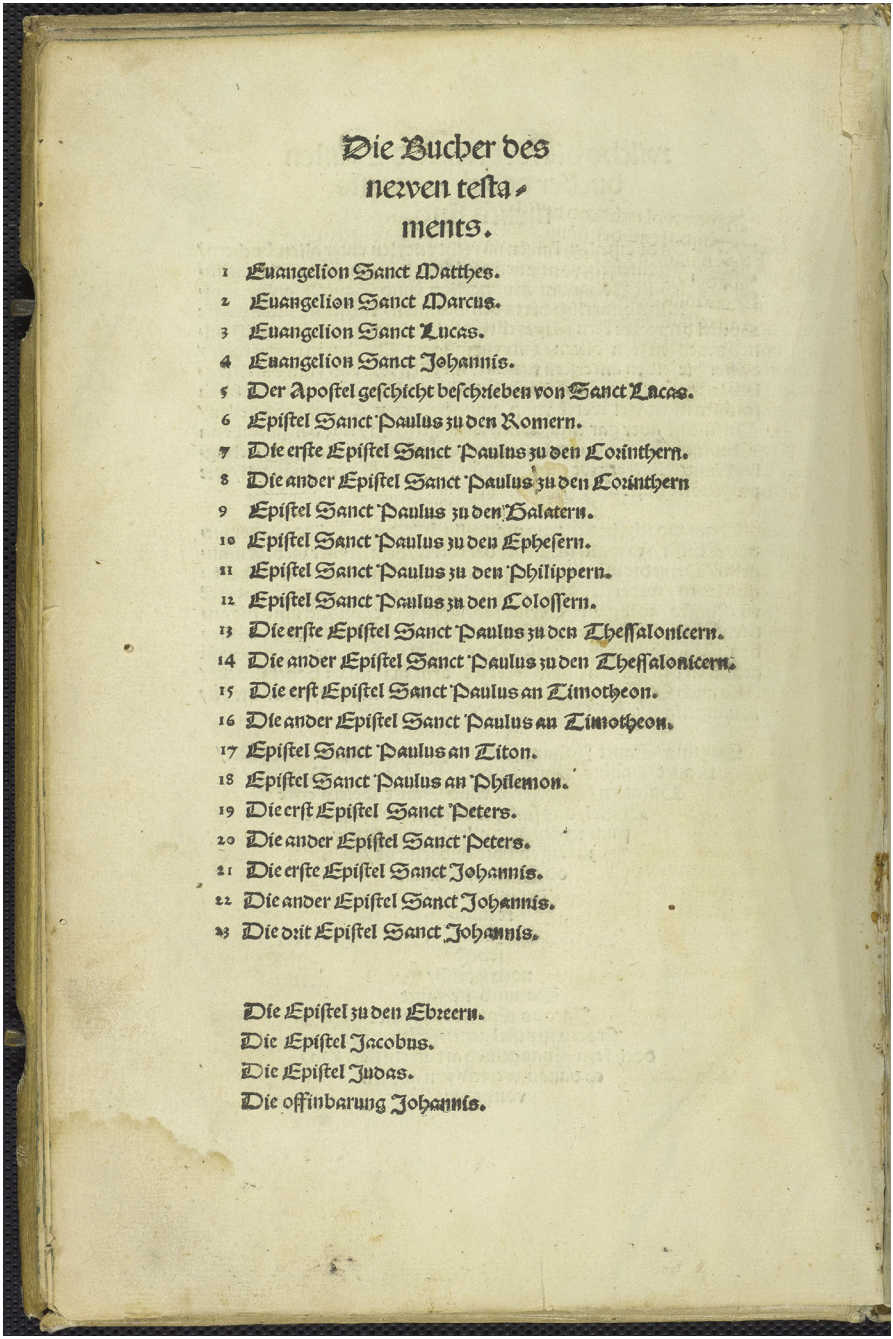
T. Curtio Malaciola. Equit.
Burlaſſio, Autore.

Melliflui a multis celebrata parœmia Homeri
Vera eſt, perſimiles iungere ubiq; deum,
Pontifice a Bulla uenit horrida Bulla Luthero
Bullæ, & qui hæc ſcripſit nil niſi Bulla fuit
Bullæ homines legite illa, Exemplo & diſcite Bullæ
Pontificum Bullas ſomnia, & eſſe nihil.

Gygantum
Fraterculus.

Excuſum, Impenſis & opera Io-
hannis Coticulæ,

Image 3: Anti-Papal tract with inscription by Martin Luther.
(Johannes Petzenstein, *Dialogus, Bulla T. Curtio Malaciola, Equit. Burlassio, authore … Excusum, impensis & opera Iohannis Coticulae*. (Wittenberg: Melchior Lotter, 1520). [6] p. 20 cm (4to); VD16 M 383. 1520 MALA.)



Die Bucher des
newen testa-
ments.

1 Euangelion Sanct Matthes.
2 Euangelion Sanct Marcus.
3 Euangelion Sanct Lucas.
4 Euangelion Sanct Johannis.
5 Der Apostel geschicht beschrieben von Sanct Lucas.
6 Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Romern.
7 Die erste Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Corinthern.
8 Die ander Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Corinthern
9 Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Galatern.
10 Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Ephesern.
11 Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Philippern.
12 Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Colossern.
13 Die erste Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Thessalonicern.
14 Die ander Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Thessalonicern.
15 Die erst Epistel Sanct Paulus an Timotheon.
16 Die ander Epistel Sanct Paulus an Timotheon.
17 Epistel Sanct Paulus an Titon.
18 Epistel Sanct Paulus an Philemon.
19 Die erst Epistel Sanct Peters.
20 Die ander Epistel Sanct Peters.
21 Die erste Epistel Sanct Johannis.
22 Die ander Epistel Sanct Johannis.
23 Die drit Epistel Sanct Johannis.

Die Epistel zu den Ebreern.
Die Epistel Jacobus.
Die Epistel Judas.
Die offinbarung Johannis.

Image 4: Table of contents from Luther's September Testament.
(*Das Newe Testament Deuotzsch*. (Vuittemberg: [Melchior Lotther for Christian Döring and Lukas Cranach, September 1522]). [222] leaves; 31 cm (folio in 6's and 4's); VD16 B 4318, Darlow & Moule 4188; woodcuts, initials, bound in blind-stamped, bleached pigskin of the 17th century over wooden boards. 1522 BIBL:1.)

There are 286 Bibles in Latin, German, Hebrew, and Greek in the collection. The most significant of these is perhaps Martin Luther's September Testament (images 4 and 5)—the first printing of Luther's translation of the New Testament into German from the original Greek.

The work is remarkable from a theological standpoint, but it also marks a watershed moment in the development of the German language, as it ensured that Luther's Thuringian-Saxon dialect, which was understood in both Northern and Southern Germany, would provide the standard for High German in years to come. Lucas Cranach the Elder provided twenty-one full page woodcuts for the Book of Revelation. The work is bound with a 1522 Basel printing by Adam Petri of sermons by the medieval mystic Johannes Tauler (VD16 J 785).

It is said that Luther was inspired to learn Greek by the publication of Erasmus's Greek New Testament in 1516 and that he used Erasmus's second edition (1519) as the basis for his translation of the New Testament into German. The Kessler Collection holds both editions, as well as the third, fourth, and fifth editions.

In the first edition of his Greek New Testament (image 6), Erasmus had used a few late Greek manuscripts as the basis of his text, and for parts of the Book of Revelation there were no Greek manuscripts available, prompting him to translate the missing sections from Latin back into Greek. By the time the second edition was published in 1519, he was able to include manuscript evidence for the entire Greek text. The main reason why the 1516 edition was edited and printed so quickly was so that it might appear before the publication of Cardinal Jimenez de Cisneros's Complutensian Polyglot (also held by the Kessler Collection). The Complutensian Polyglot (image 7) is a six-volume work that included the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the Septuagint to the right and the left of the traditional Latin Vulgate,[7] as well as the Aramaic Targum translation below. The New Testament portion included the first printed text of the Greek New Testament, which was completed in 1514 but could not be sold until the early 1520s because Erasmus had secured a temporary monopoly from Pope Leo X for publishing his Greek New Testament.

Regarding early editions of the Hebrew Bible, the Kessler Collection holds the first four editions of the Rabbinic Bible. Published in

Image 5: Woodcut illustration by Lucas Cranach the Elder in Luther's September Testament (Four Riders of the Apocalypse).


EPISTOLAE PAVLI APOSTOLI, AD GRAECAM VERITATEM ET VE/ TERVM LATINORVM CODI/ CVM FIDEM RECOGNITAE PER ERASMVM ROTE/ RODAMVM SACRAE THEOLOGIAE PROFESSOREM.

ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ

ΦΡΟΒΕΝΙ

ΠΑΥΛΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ Η ΠΡΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΟΥΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ

EPISTOLA PAVLI APOI STOLI AD ROMANOS.

PAVLVS SERVVS Iesu Christi, uocat⁹ apl̄s, segregatus in euāgeliū dei, quod ante promiserat per ꝓphetas suos, in scripturis sanctis de filio suo, q genit⁹ fuit ex semine Da uid, secūdū carnē, qui declarat⁹ fuit fili⁹ dei, in potētia, secūdū spiritū sanctifica tiōis, ex eo q̄ resurrexit a mortuis Iesus christus dn̄s noster, per quē accepim⁹ gratiā & muneris aplī̄ci functionē, ut obediat̄ fidei inter oēs gentes, sup ipsi us noīe, quor⁹ de numero estis & uos, uocati Iesu Christi, omnib⁹ qui Romæ estis, dilectis dei, uocatis sāctis, Gratia uobiſ & pax a deo patre nostro, & dn̄o Iesu Christo. Primū q̄dē gratias ago deo meo, ꝑ Iesum Christū, super oibus uobis, quod fides uestra annunciat̄ in toto mundo. Testis eni meus est deus, cui seruio in spiritu meo, in euāgelio fi- lij sui, quod indesinenter mentionē ue stri facio, semp in orationibus meis de precans, si quo modo tandem aliquā/ do, prosperū iter cōtingat uolente deo, a ut ueniā

Image 6: First page of Paul's letter to the Romans in Erasmus's Greek New Testament (1st ed.)
(*Nouum instrumentu[m] omne diligenter ab Erasmo Roterodamo recognitum & emendatum. (Apud inclytam Germaniae Basilaeam: in aedibus Ioannis Frobenij Hammelbergensis, mense Februario. Anno M.D.XVI)*. [28], 324, 672 [i.e. 636], [3] pages; 32 cm (folio in 6's and 8's); Darlow & Moule 4591, VD16 B 4196; bound in blind-stamped, polished calf over wooden boards; old ownership mark: "Ex Bibliotheca Sci[en]tiae SS. Joan. Bapt. & Jan. E. in Haugis. Herbipolis," manuscript marginalia. 1516 BIBL B.)

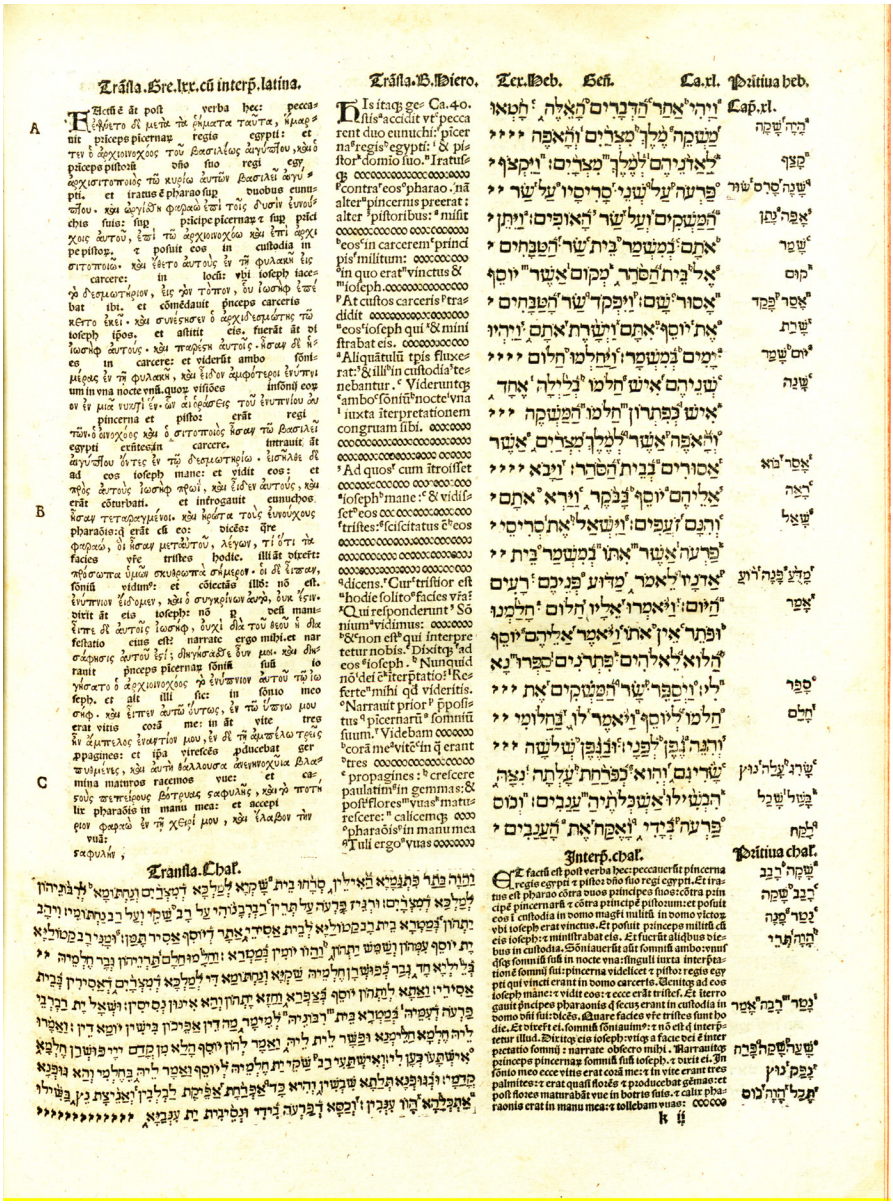


Image 7: A page from the book of Genesis in the Complutensian Polyglot (1514). (*Uetus testamentu[m] multiplici lingua nu[n]c primo impressum* [v.1] ... ; *Nouum testamentum grece et latine in academia complutensi nouiter impressum* [v.5]. Academia Complutensi: Industria Arnaldi Guillelmi de Brocario, in Academia Complutensi, [1514–1517]. 6 vols.; 39 cm (folio in 8's and 6's); Darlow & Moule 1412; title page in red and black with coat of arms of Cardinal Jiménez, surrounded by ornamental engraved, woodcut border. 1514 BIBL V.1–6.)

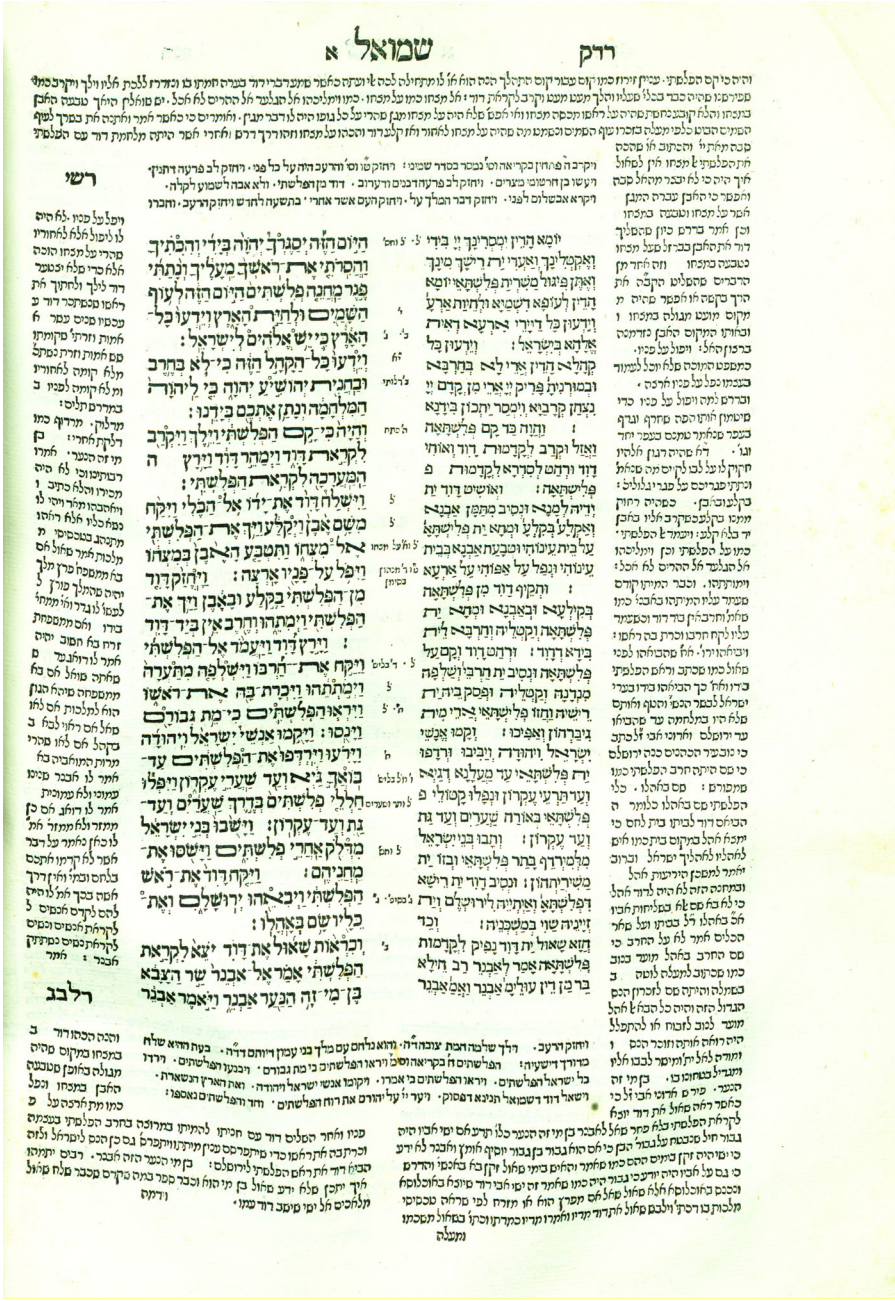


Image 8: A page from the First Book of Samuel in the first Rabbinic Bible, edited by Jacob ben Hayyim (1524).
(תרה נבים וכתובים. Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1524. 4 vols.; 39 cm (folio); Haberman 93; 1524 BIBL V.1–4.)

Venice in 1517, 1525, 1547, and 1567, it combined the biblical text along with rabbinic commentary (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Nachmanides, etc.).

The first edition (1517) was edited by Felix Pratensis, a Sephardic Jew who had converted to Catholicism. That, and the fact that the printer—Daniel Bomberg—included a dedication to Pope Leo X, led to a general rejection of the work in Jewish circles. The second edition of 1524, on the other hand, was edited by the Masoretic scholar Yaaqov Ben Hayyim. It was much better received, and some would discount the 1517 printing altogether and consider the 1524 edition as truly the first Rabbinic Bible. It became the standard text of the Hebrew Bible and was the version that many Christian translators used in the sixteenth century and beyond.

Outreach and Research Initiatives

As mentioned above, the Kessler Collection is primarily an academic research collection, but from the beginning there has been a conscious effort to broaden access to the collection beyond Emory University. Presentations to church groups and schools are quite common and encouraged. In addition, there are several other outreach initiatives, including an annual celebration of Reformation Day at Emory, and exhibitions of materials from the collection, publications, and digitizations.

Beginning in 1988, Pitts Library has hosted an annual celebration of Reformation Day. The program for this day has changed several times over the years but has typically included a church service and sermon, one or more lectures on a specific Reformation topic, a presentation of new acquisitions for the collection, and often a Reformation-themed concert, connecting the music of the Lutheran composer Johann Sebastian Bach to a particular piece in the collection. The goal of this celebration was to raise awareness of the collection as well as to raise funds for future acquisitions. In recent years, friends of the collection have been offered the opportunity to "adopt" a volume in the collection for which they would have their names inscribed on the Kessler Collection bookplate and entered into the catalog record, indicating that the item was acquired with their subvention.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic presented a number of challenges. A traditional gathering for Reformation Day was impossible, but considerations to move the celebration to a virtual environment also

prompted a new program—the Kessler Conversations (Pitts Theology Library n.d.). In the fall of 2020, a series of three online interviews was conducted by Pitts Library director Bo Adams with a focus on the relationship between Reformation theology and infectious disease. A conversation with Anna Johnson (Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary) focused on Martin Luther's sermon, "Whether One Should Flee the Deadly Plague," and other related writings. A second conversation with Erik Heinrichs (Winona State University) dealt with medical and cultural responses to plagues in sixteenth-century Germany, while the final interview, with Ronald Rittgers (Valparaiso University), explored the theology of suffering in relation to the plague as a central theme in sixteenth-century religious thought. Moving to an online format offered greater flexibility in terms of scheduling speakers and made the program accessible to people who might not otherwise have been able to attend. Each of the three interviews was live-streamed as well as recorded for future viewing. The program was well received, and a new series of conversations with a focus on poverty in the Reformation and today was scheduled for the Spring of 2021.

The construction of a new library building in 2014 included a twelve-hundred square foot gallery space with twenty-two custom display cases, facilitating the exhibition of Kessler Collection materials in ways that were not previously possible. The library usually has three exhibitions per year, featuring different collections from its special collections holdings. The fall exhibition has traditionally included materials from the Kessler Collection, as it coincides with the annual celebration of Reformation Day at Emory, and the focus usually aligns with the theme chosen for the year. Since 2017 marked the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 Theses, all three exhibitions were Kessler-themed. The first of these was "Law and Grace: Martin Luther, Lucas Cranach, and the Promise of Salvation" (October 11, 2016–January 16, 2017) and was done in collaboration with four German museums from the heartland of the Reformation: the State Museum of Prehistory in Halle, the Luther Memorial Foundation of Saxony-Anhalt (which includes the Luther House and the Melanchthon House), the German Historical Museum in Berlin, and the Foundation Schloss Friedenstein in Gotha. This exhibit was part of a larger initiative by the German state department, called "Here I Stand," which also included Luther exhibitions in New York ("Word and Image: Martin Luther's Reformation," Morgan Library & Museum, New York City, October 7, 2016–January 22, 2017) and Minneapo-

lis ("Martin Luther: Art and the Reformation," Minneapolis Institute of Art, October 30, 2016–January 15, 2017). The centerpiece was an oil painting by Lucas Cranach the Younger, entitled *Law and Grace*, which depicted a tree that is dead on one side (law) and flourishing on the other (grace), surrounded by religious symbolism illustrating this theological dichotomy.[8] The last exhibition of 2017 celebrated the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Kessler Collection.

Occasional publications provide another opportunity for outreach. There are two irregularly published series that have focused on materials from the Kessler Collection. The first is Emory Texts and Studies in Ecclesial Life, which issues larger book projects and includes the four-volume annotated Kessler Bibliography mentioned earlier. Another series—Occasional Publications of the Pitts Theology Library—includes shorter publications, often translations into English or Spanish of pamphlets held by the Kessler Collection. Another recent translation project should be mentioned in this context: *Luther as Heretic: Ten Catholic Responses to Martin Luther, 1518–1541*, a collection of translations from Latin or German into English of texts written by Martin Luther's contemporary opponents (Graham and Bagchi 2019). The goal of this and other translation projects is to make texts previously unavailable in English accessible for research and study.

The discovery, noted earlier, of a previously unknown Luther inscription in 2017 gave rise to a promising research initiative. Ulrich Bubenheimer, who had identified the inscription, was invited to Atlanta to visit the Pitts Library and explore other contemporary inscriptions and marks of provenance in the Kessler Collection. In addition to a detailed report, Dr. Bubenheimer also co-curated an exhibit in the fall of 2019, entitled "A Book More Precious than Gold: Reading the Printed Book Alongside Its Previous Owners and Readers" (Pitts Theology Library n.d.). To encourage further research on Reformation source documents, a research fellowship was established that included an honorarium as well as the cost of expenses for young scholars in the field of Reformation studies.

In 1999, the Kessler Collection had begun digitizing woodcut images and engravings found in its books. The focus was specifically on images rather than text, and the audience for the Digital Image Archive was an informed laity rather than academic specialists. The images, which could be downloaded freely for non-commercial use in JPG or PDF format, were particularly popular with churches, which would use them as illustrations for Sunday bulletins. For use

in publications, a high-resolution TIFF image could be provided for a nominal fee. The DIA eventually grew beyond the Kessler Collection to include other books from Pitts special collections and now has over sixty-five thousand images.

More recent digitization projects have focused more heavily on texts or a combination of text and images. Technological developments in recent years have also opened up new possibilities. Thus, unlike the DIA, which scanned and preserved images in black and white, recent digitization efforts by the Pitts Library are in color and may include hyperlinked background information. A good example of future initiatives is a project currently under development but available in its beta version (Adams 2019). The work in question—*Passional Christi vnnd Antichristi* (*Passion of Christ and Antichrist*)—is an anonymous polemical pamphlet, often attributed to Martin Luther, with woodcut engravings attributed to Lucas Cranach the Elder. It is a series of thirteen contrasting image pairs with scenes from the Passion of Christ on the left side and scenes from the life of the pope on the other, culminating in the final juxtaposition with Christ ascending to heaven and the pope moving in the opposite direction.

Since the work may be analyzed from a variety of angles, there are various annotations provided by experts in the field, including an art-historical explanation of graphic features in the engravings, historical and theological background and context, as well as a transcription of the sixteenth-century inscribed annotations found in the copy held by the Pitts Theology Library. The goal is to provide a multi-layered, interactive digital work, which offers the reader a thick description of the content and context of the sixteenth-century work.

Conclusions

When Luther wrote to the "councilmen of all cities in Germany" of the importance that "the good books may be preserved and not lost," he was not referring to his own books but to the books that he deemed essential for a good Christian education, including works on the arts and languages. He was thinking of a solid, humanist education in the biblical languages and classical authors, along with the early Christian writers and, of course, Scripture itself. Regarding his own books, he wrote in 1545, one year before his death: "I wished that

all my books were buried in perpetual oblivion, so that there might be room for better ones." This self-deprecating judgment appears in the preface to the first volume to the Latin portion of his collected works published in Wittenberg (LW 43:327–8). The paragraph before the statement explains his reluctant approval to the publication of his writings:

> For a long time I strenuously resisted those who wanted my books, or more correctly my confused lucubrations, published. I did not want the labors of the ancients to be buried by my new works and the reader kept from reading them. Then, too, by God's grace a great many systematic books now exist, among which the *Loci communes* of Philip excel, with which a theologian and a bishop can be beautifully and abundantly prepared to be mighty in preaching the doctrine of piety, especially since the Holy Bible itself can now be had in nearly every language. But my books, as it happened, yes, as the lack of order in which the events transpired made it necessary, are accordingly crude and disordered chaos, which is now not easy to arrange even for me.

As Luther's writings, as well as those of his friends and opponents, have become an important chapter in the history of Christianity and, as such, indispensable reading for any student and scholar of religious history, it is fortunate that his books were not buried in perpetual oblivion. The Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection plays an important part not only in preserving these documents but also in making them accessible in North America and beyond.

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Notes

1 In 2001, the Lutheran Brotherhood merged with the Aid Association for Lutherans to form Thrivent, a not-for-profit organization for financial services.

2 A *New York Times* article at the time of sale noted: "Among the factors that led trustees to choose Emory among several contenders, including Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., the State University at Stony Brook, and the Billy Graham Center in Chicago, were its respected academic reputation, its financial backing and the character of its existing library (Briggs 1976).

3 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was formed a few months later—on January 1, 1988—as a merger of the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

4 Call numbers for the Kessler Collection follow the local convention for special collections books at the Pitts Theology Library and consist of the date of publication followed by the first four letters of the main entry (e.g., 1529 LUTH). In situations where the main entry is duplicated, an additional suffix is added, beginning with "A" and proceeding alphabetically, adding double digits when necessary (1529 LUTH B, 1522 LUTH EEE). In a *Sammelband*, where distinct publications were bound together, the call number of the first title bound in the volume is followed by ":1". Each subsequent title bound in the same volume receives the same call number with the number following the colon being successively increased by 1 (e.g., 1521 BIEL:1, 1521 BIEL:2, 1521 BIEL 3, etc.).

5 Unless otherwise indicated, a university's holdings includes the holdings of all its libraries.

6 Harvard includes the holdings of the Houghton Library, the Widener Library, and the Andover-Harvard Theological Library. Other Harvard libraries do not hold sixteenth-century imprints by Luther.

7 The placement of the three language versions in columns with the Vulgate in the center prompted some cynics critical of non-Latin versions of the Bible to remark that the Vulgate appeared like Christ on the cross between the two thieves.

8 This graphic was a popular motif in early Lutheran art and is also seen in several woodcuts and even bindings in books held by the Kessler Collection.