

### Codicological Description

These Luther pamphlets are two copies of the same treatise titled “Von der Freyheyt eynis Christen menschen” which translates to “On the Freedom of a Christian”. Both pamphlets were printed in Wittenberg, but by the different printers, which was very uncommon. In November of the year 1520 is regarded as an important year for the Reformation where Martin Luther created many pamphlets that opposed the abuse of the papacy. Each pamphlet contains leaves measuring 20.5 centimeters tall and 15.5 centimeters wide. These pamphlets were printed on paper with small black text and paragraph markers at the beginning of each paragraph. For the Luther, Christian freedom of faith from the papacy is essential to the life of a Christian. Addressed to Pope Leo X, Luther points out the abuse of power surrounding the Roman Curia and articulates his Reformation concept of justification by faith. This meant the freedom of a Christian was not dependent upon good works and the practice of the sacraments but on faith and the grace of God alone. Luther believed this liberating idea outweighed Pope Leo X’s papal authority. For Luther, the inner spirituality of a person is saved by faith alone and those who are saved by faith therefore engage in good Christian works. These works help the neighbor and discipline the soul.

<b>Author</b>	Martin Luther
<b>Title</b>	Von der Freyheyt eynis Christen menschen
<b>Place</b>	Wittenberg
<b>Printer</b>	Johann Rhau-Greunenber
<b>Date</b>	1520
<b>Format</b>	20.5 x 15.5 cm
<b>Leaf Height</b>	206 mm
<b>Binding</b>	Disbound (sewn pamphlet)

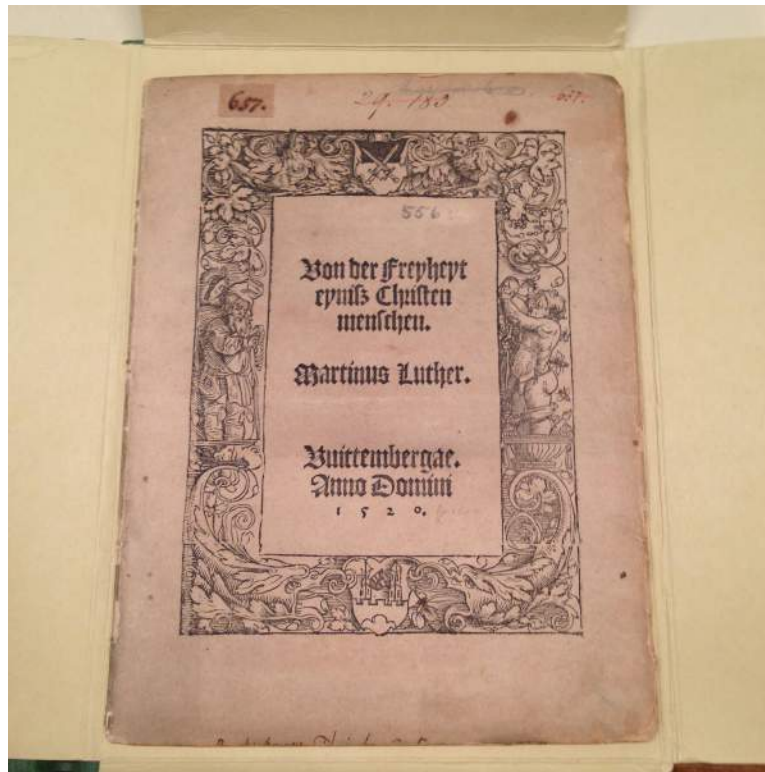


Figure 1-Johann Rhau-Greunenberg Pamphlet Cover

The above edition of the pamphlet is printed in the year 1520 in Wittenberg where Luther's Ninety-Five Theses appeared. Johann Rhau-Greunenberg, the printer of the pamphlet, was the first to print pamphlets for Luther in Wittenberg after he joined an Augustinian Monastery. The cover of the pamphlet has the typical crest/signature of the printer in the top center, for Greunenberg it is the two swords crossing (Figure 1). The cover art begins with a combination of images including castles, creatures, nature, bees, and those drinking wine. The image itself is depicting Bacchus or Dionysus, the Greco-Roman deity associated with wine but also liberation. Those who partake in the ways of Bacchus will be empowered and therefore liberated. This pamphlet was put together in what is called quarto gatherings. These gatherings are used in a process called collating, which helps mark the leaves of the pamphlet in order to ease assembly and minimize confusion. The pamphlet itself has three gatherings that are marked by letters, numbers, blank spaces, and catch phrases or signatures. The cover doesn't have a

marker because of its distinct imagery, but the following page is marked with the Letter A and the small Roman numeral ii. This pattern continues on with Aiii and then a blank page followed by a catchword or a signature. The catchword is placed underneath the initial text and then used again at the top of the next page to begin the next gathering titled B. This pattern continues on with Bii, Biii, catchword, C, Cii, Ciii, and the closing page.

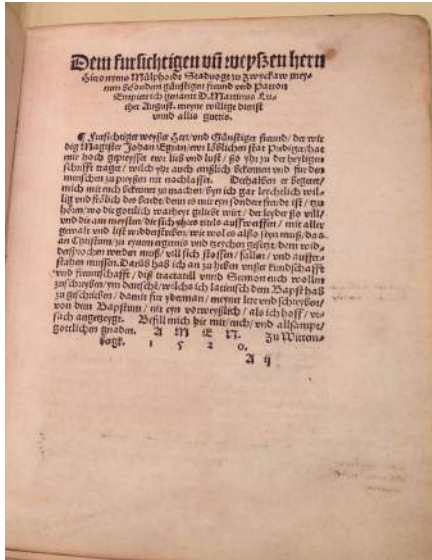


Figure 2-Aii



Figure 3-Aiii

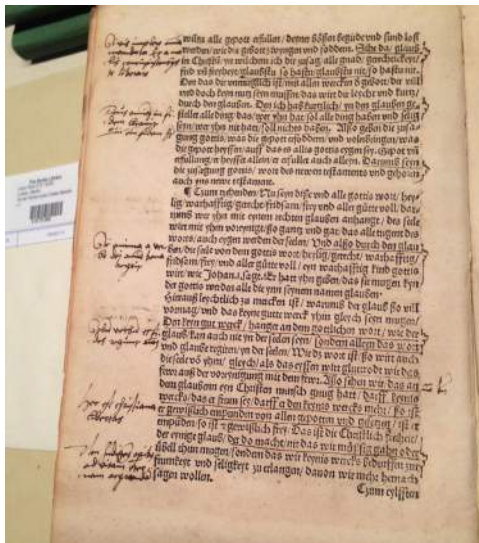


Figure 4-Catchword

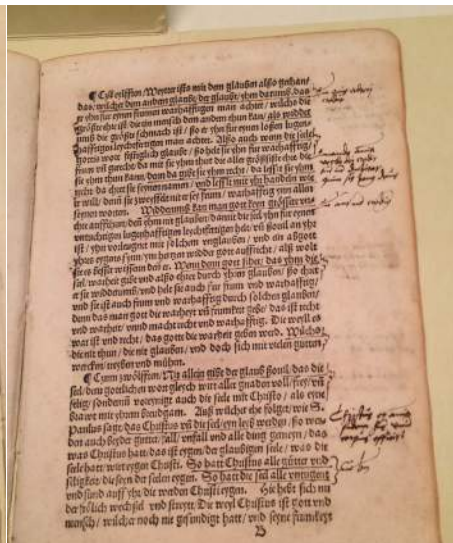


Figure 5-Beginning of Gathering B

As is visible in Figures 2-5, there is a large amount of marginality in the pamphlet. Marginalities are just written ideas that are put in the margins of the pamphlet. Since pamphlets were small and made to be carried and passed around, they were personal and meant to be used. There are some inconsistencies within the pamphlet itself. There are supposed to be paragraph markers at the beginning of each paragraph but it seems that some were missed in the printing process (Figure 6). This could be due to carelessness of the printer, human error in general, or because of the popularity of Luther's pamphlets they were rushed when put together.

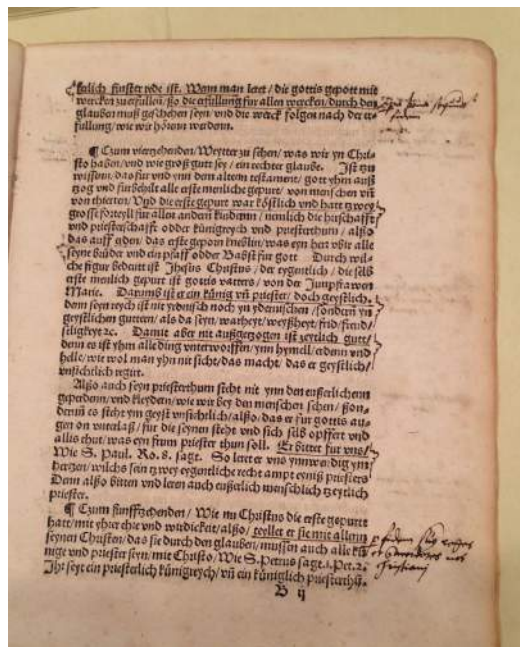


Figure 6-Missing Paragraph Marker

The overall state of the pamphlet is good. It is currently disbound although some of the threading used to sew it together is still present. There is some ink bleeding through the paper from the written marginality as well as some small speckled oil stains throughout. There is also some ink smudges from the printing of the text itself; it was completely dried when they bound it and put it together. The cover itself has small pencil writings, a number written on a separate sheet of paper and then stuck to the top left corner, some red crayon markings, and some small ink writing at the bottom that has been cut in half from the cutting of the paper.

<b>Author</b>	Martin Luther
<b>Title</b>	Von der Freyheyt eynis Christen menschen
<b>Place</b>	Wittenberg
<b>Printer</b>	Melchior Lotter
<b>Date</b>	1520
<b>Format</b>	20.5 x 15.5 cm
<b>Leaf Height</b>	206 mm
<b>Binding</b>	Disbound (sewn pamphlet)



Figure 7-Melchior Lotter Pamphlet Cover

The pamphlet shown in Figure 7 is also printed in the year 1520 in the important printing city of Wittenberg. Melchior Lotter, was mainly known for his printing in Leipzig as a publisher and printer for the Reformation. As a sympathizer of Luther, he was convinced to moved to Wittenberg to open up another branch to be run by his son.<sup>1</sup> The cover of the pamphlet has a

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similar theme of harvest that is seen in the Johann Greunenberg pamphlet. There are small cherubs that are collecting fruit (possibly apples and grapes) to then process it. In the bottom center of the cover there is a group of cherubs playing musical instruments with some form of written staff of notes. On the bottom left and right there are adult figures that have the typical halo surrounding their heads. The figures to the left could be Joseph, Mary, and the infant Jesus and the figure to the right appears to be an unknown women. In Lotter publications there typically is a shield bearing the monogram M.L as the signature of the printer; however, this particular print lacks any signature. This could be because of the rush to produce more pamphlets or because of the importance of the harvest image itself. This pamphlet was also put together in quarto gatherings, however this one has more gatherings than the previous pamphlet. In this collating process the mark of on the leaves of the pamphlet range from A-D with no catchword phrases. The pattern for this pamphlet begins with Aii, Aiii, blank space, B, Bii, Biii, continuing on until the completion of letter D.



Figure 8-Aii



Figure 9-B

<sup>1</sup> Katherine Durr, “Melchior Lotter,” 2013, Vassar College, <http://digitallibrary.vassar.edu/printersmarks/lotter>

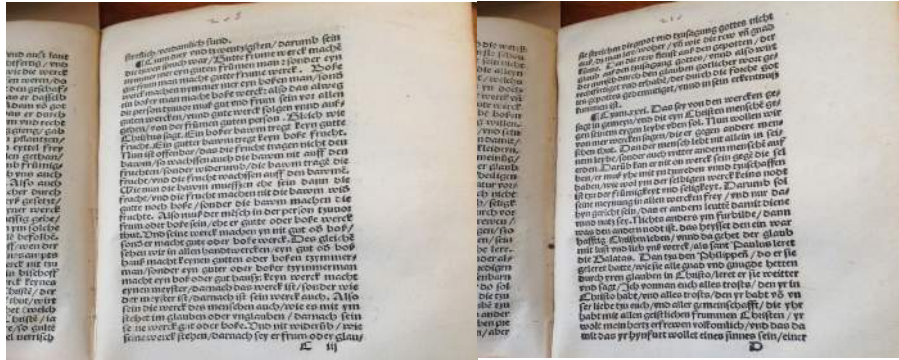


Figure 10-Ciii

Figure 11-D

Differing from the previous pamphlet there is not marginality present in the Melchior Lotter version. The margins are clear of any ink marks or hand written thoughts; however there are inconsistencies in the printed pamphlet. All the paragraph markers are present but the spacing and indentations are variable (Figure 12 and 13). The overall state of the pamphlet is very good. It looks as though it has barely been handled and kept in good condition. It is however disbound with the sewing string still attached. There appears to be some circular hole on the right edge of the cover of the pamphlet, which could be attributed to as damage from worms.



Figure 12-Extra spacing after paragraph

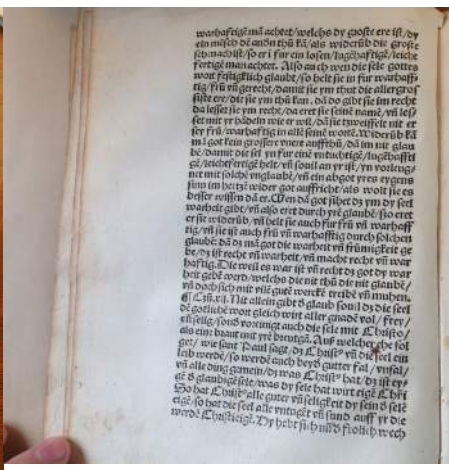


Figure 13- Lack of indentation

The early years of the Reformation, the supply of pamphlets needed to reach a large audience with its message, therefore there was a major turn to the vernacular.<sup>2</sup> Only a small

portion of the German population could read and an even smaller portion could read Latin. This drastic turn to print in the German language made the pamphlets more available to the small population that was literate. The pamphlets themselves were resolutely addressed to the laity hence the switch to the vernacular.<sup>3</sup> Due to the popularity of Luther's pamphlets there was massive printing and reprinting of his works. This meant that because of the amount of pamphlets being printed it actually saved money to print from one's actual town rather than to send for the products that were being produced in a much larger printing town. This may explain why there were two of the same pamphlets printed in the same place in the same year by different printers. Luther's popularity was growing and the demand for his writings was so great that two printers were used. Also since Wittenberg wasn't a big printing area like Augsburg or Leipzig, it was necessary for two printers to print the work. Since Luther brought Melchior Lotter to Wittenberg to print his works, there was an obvious necessity demand for another printer.

Even though the texts were bring printed in the German language it is impossible to claim that the Reformation flourished completely because of printing. The Reformation was still dependent on oral communication even though it took root by literate means; the lay folk experienced the printed works by having people read it to them or have it relayed in sermons.<sup>4</sup> This created a hybridized way to get the information for the lay people; they would use pictures, written word, and spoken works all together to present the Reformation as propaganda to the

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1994), 21.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1994), 81.

<sup>4</sup> Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 2.



masses (the common folk). Spoken word was affected by access to the printed page, which made pamphlets a great option to get information around.<sup>5</sup>

Pamphlets were made cheaply which allowed for those with small amounts of disposable income to purchase them; they weren't as expensive as regular books. Since pamphlets were being used to spread information against the papacy, they had to be passed around in secret. This meant that they could also be traded or exchanged for items other than money.<sup>6</sup> Pamphlets were a necessary and defining part of the Reformation that changed the view of the church, the authority of the Pope, the power of the lay people, and the ways in which we read and evaluate texts.

## Bibliography

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe Volume 1* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 372.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 159.

1. Durr, Katherine. "Melchior Lotter." 2013. Vassar College.  
<http://digitallibrary.vassar.edu/printersmarks/lotter>.
2. Edwards, Mark. *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1994.
3. Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe Volume 1*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
4. Pettegree, Andrew. *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
5. Scribner, Robert W. *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaaganda for the German Reformation*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981.