

Nomination form International Memory of the World Register

*Documents representing the beginning and the early development of the
Reformation initiated by Martin Luther*

2014-18

1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

The documents recommended here represent the beginning and the early development of the Reformation that Martin Luther initiated and that spread from Wittenberg far beyond the German empire of his time and well beyond his own epoch. They document how a religious, ecclesiastical impetus exerted its critical power; directing this force toward the revision of traditional positions, and how it gradually developed into larger societal and political phenomenon which made an impact throughout the world. The selected writings make clear what "Reformation" in this case means. "Reformation" stands for the many aspects of this process of transformation which, based upon the question of the relationship of the human being with God, determined and altered all levels and elements of society and human life – religion, politics, society, culture. Because of this, the Reformation is properly regarded as the threshold of an epoch. It ushered in the modern era. Even if the Reformation exhibits many continuities with trends of the preceding years of the "Late Middle Ages," its new hermeneutical stimuli fundamentally altered or redefined religious life and political action, social structures and responsible organization of the public realm, ethical principles and legal regulations. The various ways in which the Reformation made its impact went beyond European borders and assumed "significance for the world's history" and "world-wide relevance" (see "Perspectives for the Anniversary of the Reformation 2017", thesis 1). The documents recommended for acceptance into the Memory of the World Register demonstrate this in an outstanding and exemplary manner. At the same time they both represent the development of the transition from manuscript to print media which received a key impetus from Martin Luther's Reformation, and they draw attention to the application of various media and modes of communication that sought the greatest possible impact on the masses and the inspiration and mobilisation of the public. They highlight and exemplify the means of conveying and appropriating the content of the message of the reformers and their moulding of new forms of the culture of popular piety, the reforms in education and scholarship along with transformations in political and society life, and the increase in the appreciation of the vernacular languages and the daily routine of life.

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

Prof. Dr. Irene Dingel / Dr. Henning P. Jürgens,
Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte Mainz

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

The Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG) serves as a scholarly partner of the Memory of the World Nomination committee of the German commission for UNESCO.

The IEG is an interdisciplinary research institute located in Mainz and a member of the Leibniz-Gemeinschaft. Its research focuses on European history from the Early Modern period to contemporary times with special focal points on the history of Western Christianity. The IEG cooperates with numerous universities and other research institutions in Europe and all over the world and provides public access to historical documents concerning the history of the Reformation.

www.ieg-mainz.de

2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

as in 2.1.

2.4 Contact details

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3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

- a) I: Luthers Psalter-Vorlesung 1513/15 Psalterdruck mit Marginalien und Glossen Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Shelfmark: 71.4 Theol. 4° and
II: Luthers Psalter-Vorlesung 1513/15 Scholienheft, Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, Shelfmark: Mscr. Dresd. A 138
- b) Luthers Römerbrief-Vorlesung 1515/16; Studentische Mitschrift Anhaltische Landesbücherei Dessau, Shelfmark: Georg 1049a
- c) Handexemplar Luthers der Hebräischen Bibelausgabe, Brescia 1494, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Shelfmark: Inc. 2840
- d) Plakatdruck der 95 Ablassthesen (Nürnberg, Hieronymus Hölzel, vor Ende 1517), Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Shelfmark: gr. 2° Luth. 54
- e) Luthers Schrift „Ein Sermon von Ablass und Gnade“, (Wittenberg, Johann Grunenberg, 1518), Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek – Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Shelfmark: Auth. Luth. 1518 (9)
- f) Luthers Schrift „Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen“ (Wittenberg, Johannes Grunenberg, 1520), Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Shelfmark: Theol. 4° 00224/08 (08)
- g) eigenhändiger Entwurf Martin Luthers für seine Rede am 18. April 1521 vor dem Reichstag in Worms, 17./18. April 1521, Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar, Ernestinisches Gesamtarchiv, Shelfmark: Reg. E 81
- h) eigenhändiger Brief Luthers an Karl V., 28. 4. 1521, Stiftung Luthergedenkstätten in Sachsen-Anhalt, Lutherhaus Wittenberg, Shelfmark: I5/1387
- i) I: Das Neue Testament Deutzsch, Wittenberg, Melchior Lotter, 1522, Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Shelfmark: Bibel-S. 4° 257 and
II: Biblia das ist die gantze Heilige Schrift Deutsch. Mart. Luth., Wittenberg, Hans Lufft, 1534, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek – Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Shelfmark: CI I : 58 (b)
- j) Lied-Einblattdruck „Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein“, Augsburg, Philipp Ulhart, 1524, Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Shelfmark: Cod. Pal. Germ. 793
- k) Luthers Schrift „An die Radherrn aller stedte deutsches lands: das sie Christliche schulen auffrichten vnd hallten sollen“, Wittenberg, Lukas Cranach und Christian Döring, 1524, Stadtbibliothek Worms, Shelfmark: Mag- LB 181
- l) Luthers Schrift „Deutsche Messe vnd ordnung Gottis diensts“, Wittenberg, Michael Lotter, 1526, Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Jena, Shelfmark: 4 Bud. Var. 635 (8).

3.4 History/provenance

- a) I: The printed edition of the Latin Psalter with annotations by Martin Luther was acquired by Duke Augustus the Younger (1579-1666) for his ducal library. Augustus and his predecessors in the Duchy of Brunswick -Wolfenbüttel are known as collectors of objects and books with close connection to the Lutheran Reformation and Martin Luther himself.
- II: When on April 5, 1554, Luther's inheritance was divided among his four children, the manuscript came into the possession of the youngest of the three sons, the physician Paul Luther (1533-1593). After his death on March 8, 1593, the codex became the possession of his son, Johann Ernst Luther (1560-1637). Johann Ernst Luther gave up the manuscript, which during his lifetime came into the elector's collection of art and library in Dresden. There it must have "come into the old inventories already in the years 1595-1628." This statement refers to a catalogue of the Dresden library drawn up in the years between 1595 and 1628, in which the manuscript first can be shown to be in its present location. To protect the manuscript from damage at the hands of the enemy during World War II, it was deposited in "Cabinet 2" in the deepest cellar of the library, along with 31 other theological manuscripts, where it suffered severe water damage as a result of enemy action in 1945. For over a decade after the end of the war the manuscript remained missing as the collection was surveyed and again brought into order. The binding in which the manuscript was collected and leaves I-XI were lost as a result of the hostile action. In 1966 it was found as the items that had suffered severe damage in the war were being processed by A. W. von Schlegel. In summary: the binding of the manuscript and leaves I-XI had been lost, but the book block, on the other hand, had been only lightly damaged.
- b) The volume of collected items containing the printing of the Epistle to the Romans with interlinear spaces and the attached 40 leaves of handwritten Scholia apparently belonged originally to Sigismund Reichenbach. The volume came later into the Fürst-Georg-Bibliothek, which has been a part of the territorial library of Anhalt since 1927. Prince Georg III of Anhalt, cathedral provost in Magdeburg and after 1545 the evangelical bishop in Merseburg, was the most important collector and founder of the library which was later named after him, received no additional materials after the end of the sixteenth century.
- c) The first two owners (and users) of Inc 2840 after it was printed in Brescia in 1494 were two Jews (names unknown), probably in Italy. At the beginning of the 16th century, the volume was in unknown ownership in South Western Germany and in 1519 it was acquired "second-hand" by Martin Luther. It remained in his ownership until his death in 1546 and then became the possession of his son Paul; in 1594/5, Luther's grandchildren sold Inc 2840 – along with other books from his library – to the elector Joachim Friedrich von Brandenburg. When the Kurfürstliche Bibliothek (predecessor of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) was founded in 1661, the book became part of its primary collection.
- d) In 1891 the Director of the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett discovered the Berlin copy of the printing of the 95 Theses in a London rare book store. It was given to the royal library, today the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, by the Prussian Kultusministerium.
- e) It is assumed that the copy was acquired in the 18th century, because it has been described in "Catalogus Autographorum D. Mart. Lutheri" (18th century, shelf mark Loc A : 68.1.) for the first time. There is no further information about the previous owner and the circumstances of the acquisition.
- f) The presence of the item in question at the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha appears as a result of the collecting activity of Ernst Salomon Cyprian (1673-1745), a famous Lutheran theologian, who served as librarian to Duke Frederick II. of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg after 1713. Cyprian strove to enrich the ducal library with a prolific number of manuscripts written by Martin Luther and other prominent exponents of the Reformation. At the same time, he never ceased to acquire every printed theological work he could. This can be seen as a part of the great efforts around the bicentennial of the Reformation in 1717. Thus the ducal library, today renamed the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, became a treasury of the theological literature written and printed in the Reformation era. The library holds a number of similarly bound volumes which were collected and arranged by Cyprian (printed sermons and tracts by Martin Luther published during his lifetime). The prints are ordered according to date of publication and comprise a total of 605 items. As a result the provenances of the majority of prints contained are lost.
- g) This item was preserved among the documents of the electoral Saxon participants on the
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imperial diet in Worms, in the archive of the elector of Saxony, presumably in Torgau. In 1547, when Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony was placed in prison by the emperor, it was brought to Weimar and deposited in the ducal palace there. Between 1573 and 1584 it came into the possession of the Ernestine Saxon General Archive, in its collection relating to imperial diets, where it is found today.

- h) The letter had been in a private collection and came up for auction in 1911 at a public auction of the firm of C. G. Börner in Leipzig. The bid came to an unbelievably high sum for that time, 102.000 Gold Marks, offered by the American industrialist Pierpont Morgan, who subsequently presented the letter to the German emperor Wilhelm II. He in turn gave it to the museum of the Lutherhalle in Wittenberg.
- i) I. Luther's German translation of the New Testament (editio princeps) was acquired by Duke Augustus the Younger (1579-1666) for his ducal library. Augustus and his predecessors in the Duchy of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel are known as collectors of objects and books with close connection to the Lutheran Reformation and Martin Luther himself.
II. It is assumed that the copy was acquired in the early 19th century (library stamp after 1815). In both vols. 1 and 2, inside the front cover, you can find an ex-libris which has not yet been possible to decode. There is no further information about the previous owner and the circumstances of the acquisition.
- j) This broadsheet is bound into a collection of sixteenth century manuscripts which contains, among other items, notes on the history of Augsburg. The manuscript perhaps came from the collection of books belonging to Ulrich Fugger into the Bibliotheca Palatina, which belonged at the beginning of the seventeenth century to the most important libraries in Europe.
- k) All libraries of the Imperial City of Worms were destroyed when the city was occupied and completely burnt down by French troops at the beginning of the War of Palatinate Succession (1689). In 1883, on the occasion of Luther's quadricentennial, the wealthy philanthropist Maximilian Heyl commissioned the Worms bookseller and rare book dealer Julius Stern to assemble a collection of Luther's printed writings. Heyl dedicated the 489 items of the 'Luther-Bibliothek' to the City of Worms. The Worms copy doesn't show any handwritten entry which could give a hint of previous owners. One can only speculate that Stern acquired it at the rare book dealer Theodor Oswald Weigel in Leipzig.
- l) The copy is part of the former library of Christian Gottlieb Buder (1693-1763), which came after his death into the Jena library (today Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Jena). It shows some annotations of a 16th century hand.
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4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

- a) I: Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel
Direktor Prof. Dr. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer
Postfach 1364
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- II: Sächsische Landesbibliothek - Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek
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- b) Anhaltische Landesbücherei Dessau
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- c) Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz
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- d) Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz –as above
- e) Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek – Klassik Stiftung Weimar
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E-Mail: Michael.knoche@klassik-stiftung.de
- f) Forschungsbibliothek Gotha
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Fax: (+49) 361 737-5539
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- g) Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar, Ernestinisches Gesamtarchiv
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99408 Weimar
Tel.: (+49) 3643 870-103
Fax: (+49) 3643 870-100
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- h) Stiftung Luthergedenkstätten in Sachsen-Anhalt, Lutherhaus Wittenberg
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- i) I: Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel – as in a) I
II: Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek – Klassik Stiftung Weimar – as in e)
- j) Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg
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- k) Stadtbibliothek Worms
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- l) Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Jena
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4.3 Legal status

All nominated documents are belonging to libraries, archives or foundations in public domain in the Federal Republic of Germany.

4.4 Accessibility

All items are accessible for scholarly use according to the regulations of the holding institutions.

Most of the documents are accessible on-line as digitized copies.

4.5 Copyright status

All documents are due to their age not under copyright restrictions.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 Authenticity.

The authenticity of the documents rests upon the fact that they are all original manuscripts or first printings from the sixteenth century.

5.2 World significance

The list of manuscripts and initial printings recommended here for admission to the Memory of the World Register provide evidence of the epoch-making beginning of the Reformation that developed out of the work of Martin Luther in the early sixteenth century. These documents are unique and irreplaceable due to their content and message, their material composition, and their preservation through the centuries. The stories of the conservation of these hallmarks in various archives and libraries, which illustrates their place in specific geographical and historical contexts, document quite strikingly the unity that existed in the diversity of the Reformation. Items are being recommended which demonstrate how and in which ways religiously motivated impulses and convictions placed their stamp on political and social life as well as ethical thinking and action up to today. These documents provide clear examples of (1.) the gradual formation of the reformational positions of Martin Luther and his development into a reformer with world-wide charismatic appeal, (2.) the broad impact of the

reformational movement that proceeded from Luther through the tools which the media of the time put at the disposal of Luther and his contemporaries, (3.) the impulse of this movement with its power to shape a new orientation for the entire society and the entire culture, (4.) the impetus for the intellectual penetration of religious positions in the creation of a new relationship between faith and rational pursuit of knowledge. The Wittenberg Reformation, the origins of which are represented in these documents, developed into a movement which still, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, exercises influence around the world, far beyond the religious sphere.

5.3 Comparative criteria:

1 Time

The documents and writings of Luther here recommended epitomize (1.) the continuing impact of the Reformation, (2.), the great historical transitional points within the development of the Reformation, and (3.) those impulses and ideas which continue to shape even our secular society and therefore deserve to be remembered. In this connection the early period of Luther's career claims the focus even though the theology of the reformer actually took on its distinctive "Lutheresque" contours in the last third of his life. Important, however, is that this selection of documents from the two decades following the onset of Luther's activity as a university lecturer in 1513 were marked by a greater confessional openness. The writings of these years thus document the common historical heritage of the thinking of the Reformation. At the same time witnesses can be found in this period (1513-1534) which record the distinctive rupture it made and which illustrate the initial change of values of the time or the courageous stand of an individual for his convictions, which had the power to change the world over a longer period.

2 Place and 3 People

Around the turn of the sixteenth century practically everywhere in Europe renewal movements, inspired by Humanism, took root. They shared a common goal of the reform of the church and piety. They did not all possess, however, the same significance in terms of their geographical impact or their formative power in various spheres of life or their effect through following centuries. A prominent centre of the Reformation was without doubt the town of Wittenberg in the electoral Saxony of that time, with Martin Luther and the group of associates that quickly assembled around him. The Reformation instigated by the then Augustinian-Eremit brother connected with the humanistic renewal movements of the early sixteenth century. It retained, however, its unique character in that it produced a change that permeated the entire culture and had an immensely broad effect and sustained itself over the years. This happened – naturally – also in the interaction and mutual cross-pollination with other reformational efforts in Europe. The starting point for Martin Luther's Reformation was, however, a question that initially was totally his own, namely the question of his relationship with God. The answer to this question went far beyond the boundaries of one individual and touched all levels of human life: religion, politics, society, culture, economics, law.

4 Subject and theme

a) Martin Luther's lectures on the Psalms from 1513/15 stand at the beginning of the impact which the Wittenberg professor made. The text recommended for acceptance in the Memory of the World Register reveals how Luther practiced the late medieval mode of lecturing and the early stages of his "evangelical orientation". The manuscript notes from Luther's hand in his earliest period of influence reveal his way of working with the biblical texts and through that his orientation to the historical sources. This, along with his new hermeneutical approach, cleared the way for his innovative way of dealing with religious norms.

b) The lectures on Paul's epistle to the Romans of 1515/16 provide an exhibit of Luther's development toward a genuinely reformational theology. The notes on these lectures from a student's hand reveal how Luther was heard and understood as a university instructor and how he developed his first direct influence on hearers.

c) Luther's personal copy of the Hebrew edition of the Bible of 1494, published in Brescia, shows the emphasis on reliable original sources that arose out of humanism and was practiced by Luther and the entire Reformation as well as his philological precision. Here one can observe his exchanges with Jewish patterns of interpretation.

d) With his criticism of contemporary practice of indulgences, presented in the form of theses for academic disputation, Luther began to extend his influence beyond that of a university professor and exegete. The Latin 95 Theses against the indulgence appeared immediately in print (in poster form).

These theses document, on the one hand, that Luther here had dared to take the step of placing his ideas before the public, albeit initially the academic public, and that on the other hand, the threshold from manuscript communication to the widespread impact of print had been crossed.

e) Luther's reformational ideas attained an unanticipated reception in the broader strata of the population through a pamphlet composed in the vernacular, his Sermon von Ablass und Gnade [Sermon on the Indulgence and Grace], which contains a proto-formulation of his evangelical understanding of the justification of the sinner in God's sight. The literary form of this sermon, or homily, exhibits at the same time the oral mode of communication through which the new reformational teaching was being spread.

f) The publication Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen [On the Freedom of a Christian] represents the so-called "chief writings of the Reformation" of 1520, in which Luther systematically unfolded his ideas. With this treatment of Christian freedom and the dualism between the freedom and boundness of the individual, Luther attained an immense success through print, extending far beyond the boundaries of his own territory and of the German empire. Its impact on thinking continues to the present.

g) A manuscript draft from April 17/18, 1521, at the time of his hearing before the emperor and the imperial estates in Worms, conveys a direct glimpse into the reformer's thinking and conduct in the midst of the tensions of religion and politics of the time.

h) In his letter to Charles V of April 28, 1521 Luther referred back to his hearing at the imperial diet in Worms – today remembered as a scene of significance for world history – in which he refused to recant his writings and teaching and appealed to his conscience against the law of the land and political coercion.

i) For the development of the German language and the formation of a Protestant piety for everyday life, the translation of the Bible by Luther has a significance that cannot be overestimated. At its beginning stands the September Testament, the translation of the New Testament, which appeared only a few months after Luther's return from the Wartburg. It was ground-breaking in its linguistic form, its artistic framework rendered by Lukas Cranach, and its long-term impact. A first edition of the entire Bible, richly illustrated, was printed in 1534. With it Luther not only made a striking impression on and through the vernacular language but also made what had been a holy book, as the foundational document of Christianity, inaccessible to the "layman", now available for every individual.

j) In similar fashion this teaching reached people through the hymn. Singing thus became an activity through which the new ideas were proclaimed and simultaneously appropriated. The hymn "Nun freut euch lieben Christen g'mein" ["Rejoice, dear Christians one and all"], published as a broadsheet with printed notes, offers a summary of reformational teaching in highly concentrated form and opened the development that led to printed hymnals as the basis for congregational singing.

k) The "layman" was the object of the reformational "education offensive" as well. In his treatise An die Ratsherren [An Open Letter to the City Council Members of German Towns], 1524, Luther appealed to political authorities to take seriously their responsibility for the education of girls and boys and with that also not to neglect the philological studies for the higher education of pastors and other learned people who were beneficial for the common good. Thereby with this appeal he laid the foundation for a new formation of the educational system according to evangelical principles.

l) Relatively late (1525/26) Luther, who regarded rites and ceremonies as externals that might be shaped rather freely, created with his German Mass a new order for the liturgy. It served not only to unify reformational liturgical practice but also made clear that reading, singing, preaching, and praying should involve active participation in the service of worship in understandable form. Despite countless later reforms of the liturgy Protestant spirituality bears the marks of the "German Mass" to this day.

5 Form and style

The list of recommended documents assembles not only manuscript but also printed material in recognition of the significance of the new "mass media" of the sixteenth century for the spread of the Reformation. The documents provide evidence of (1.) the threshold from manuscript to printing which the Reformation of Martin Luther represents, (2.) the application of various media of communication for reaching the goal of the greatest impact possible as well as the conveying and appropriation of content, (3.) the inspiration and mobilization of the public, and (4.) the formation of new cultures of piety. The Reformation of Martin Luther can be described as the first great media event of the early modern period (see 'How Luther Went Viral', *The Economist*, December 17, 2011, 93-5). It used all the literary genres and means of communication at hand and thus was able to have a continuing effect over a long period of time, moving beyond geographical and cultural boundaries.

6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance

The Reformation of Martin Luther redefined the relationship of God and the human being with its appeal to the Holy Scripture as a historical document that could be opened in new ways through humanistic methods and made accessible to all. On this basis, it formed a view of being human that aimed to take seriously each individual regardless of gender, social standing, and individual accomplishment. The “freedom of the Christian” that Luther stressed became a chief theme of the Reformation. That called into question traditional structures and had a tremendous power in shaping the societies of the early modern period and even the present. For the church it meant the abolition of the hierarchy of the holy office and a new orientation toward church law. In popular piety magical interpretations of the world were gradually suppressed, and there occurred in ritual practice a transformation from viewing ceremonial performance to hearing and understanding ideas. The understanding of society moved to a new definition of the order created by the three “estates”, which focused on the tasks of church, politics, and household or family. That took place in connection with the further development of the understanding of “calling” as Luther proposed it, placing the individual’s responsibility and the various responsibilities of the individual spheres of life in the foreground. Appropriate education was to serve to develop all of this – the individual’s transcendent relationship and responsibility for the world in his or her estate or situation – based upon new, appropriate criteria. All this was accompanied by a critical view of the responsibility of political authorities, who at the beginning of the sixteenth century neither could, according to the imperial law in place, tolerate the Reformation, nor did at least some of these authorities want to tolerate it. The demand for “protection for minorities,” the treatment of the right of self-defence, and the long-term development of a theory of the right to resist political authorities were given important stimulus by the Reformation.

6.0 Contextual information

6.1 Rarity

- a) I: Original
II: Original
- b) Original
- c) Original
- d) Original, one of three known copies of this edition.
- e) Original, one of ten known copies of this edition
- f) Original, one of sixteen known copies of this edition
- g) Original
- h) Original
- i) I: Original, uniquely colored and illustrated copy
II: Original, uniquely colored and illustrated copy
- j) Original, the only known copy of this edition
- k) Original, one of several known copies of this edition
- l) Original, one of four known copies of this edition

6.2 Integrity

All nominated documents are unchanged originals from the early sixteenth century.
