



APUD BASILEAM

Exhibition Catalogue
Printing in Basel
around 1500

An Exhibition at the Taylor
Institution Library, Oxford
May 2019

Alyssa Steiner

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“ARTEM PRESSURAE QUANQUAM MOGU[N]CIA FINXIT / E LIMO TRAXIT HANC BASILEA TAMEN.”

Even though the art of printing was invented in Mainz, it was Basel that lifted it out of the mud. ¹

Michael Wenssler’s effusive praise for the printing industry in the city of Basel during its beginnings in the 1470s is of little surprise considering that he himself was one of the first printers in Basel and collaborated with the other early printers’ workshops. Disregarding the magniloquent tone of Wenssler’s comment and without downplaying the achievements of printers in other incunabula printing towns, Basel nonetheless has a lot to show for itself with some of the most exciting German and Latin texts of the late 15th century and the early 16th century having been printed in the city on the Rhine.

This exhibition traces the history of printing in Basel from the beginnings of printing in the city around 1470, through 1501 when the city joined the Swiss Confederacy, to the end of the 1520s, when Basel went through the Protestant Reformation. The 15th and 16th century were an especially exciting period in the city’s history with many epoch-defining events taking place in Basel. This is evidenced in the printing production of Basel, which was among the first 15 cities in Europe to have workshops producing prints with moveable type after its invention in Mainz around 1450.

Curated based on the Taylor Institution Library holdings, the exhibition takes advantage of all of its resources: from the newest addition to the library’s historical collection to the most recent Taylor Digital Edition, this exhibition shows Basel printing around 1500 through the lens of the Taylor Library Institution’s rich research and teaching collection. The combination of historical material and facsimile editions allowed to provide a comprehensive overview, highlight printing in Basel around 1500 both from the perspective of Literary studies and the History of the Book.

¹ Gasparinus Barzizius: Epistolae, Basel: Michael Wenssler and Friedrich Biel, not later than 1 December 1472, GW 03676. Own translation.

The exhibition was organised by myself, Alyssa Steiner, currently a student reading for a Masters of Studies in Medieval German literature at the University of Oxford as part of the History of the Book Method Option. I have curated the exhibition with the explicit goal in mind to make the Taylor Library Institution's historical holding more accessible and relate it to the modern collection, which is in daily use by the students of the University of Oxford. Moreover, this exhibition hopefully serves as an incentive to explore the amazing College Libraries holdings all throughout the city.

Alyssa Steiner

Oxford, May 2019

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BASEL IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Around 1500 Basel was a mid-sized European city with 9'000 inhabitants.² In comparison, the big cities in the South of Germany Strasburg and Augsburg had a population of 20'000 and 18'000 respectively.³ The importance of the city as a point of reference becomes evident in Johannes Schürpf's account of his travel to the Holy Land in 1497. The councillor of Lucerne compares Jerusalem not to his hometown, but to Basel, one of the most important cities in Southwest Germany

“JERUSALEM IST NOCH SO GROß, ALS BASEL.”

Jerusalem is as big as Basel.⁴

Between 1431 and 1449 Basel had hosted the Council of Basel, one of the 15th century's most important synods. The council secretary Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini described it as a raucous affair filled with cooks and grooms bent on bringing down the papacy.⁵ During that time the city became the centre of reform aspirations within the church and Basel benefitted from a so-called Council University. The beginning of the Council coincided with the first paper mill in Basel in 1433, an important prerequisite for the development of the printing industry.⁶ Three decades later, in 1460, the University of Basel was founded upon a papal bull signed by Piccolomini, who had been named pope Pius II two years earlier. In 1471, Basel received the imperial fair privilege, marking another important event for the city's cultural and economic development.

BASEL IN THE NUREMBERG CHRONICLE

The Nuremberg Chronicle compiled in Latin by the humanist Hartmann Schedel and translated into German by Georg Alt provides an interesting outside perspective onto the city at the Rhine in the late 15th century. The Nuremberg Chronicle is a world history spanning from the beginning of the world to the author's present: 1492/93. The text includes over 1'800 images and is the most

² See Mattmüller, Markus. *Bevölkerungsgeschichte der Schweiz. Teil I: Die frühe Neuzeit 1500-1700*, Basel 1987, p.198-202.

³ See Israel, Uwe. *Johannes Geiler von Keyserberg (1445-1510). Der Straßburger Münsterprediger als Rechtsreformer*, Berlin 1997, p.73.

⁴ Schürpf, Johannes: *Pilgerreise ins Heilige Land, 1498*, in *Luzerner und innerschweizer Pilgerreisen zum Heiligen Grab in Jerusalem vom 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Josef Schmid, Luzern 1957 (*Quellen und Forschung zur Kulturgeschichte von Luzern und der Innerschweiz 2*), p.1-36, p. 15.

⁵ Aeneas, *Letters*, 48, 56. Cited in: Decaluwé, Michiel. *A Companion to the Council of Basel*. Leiden 2017, p.2.

⁶ Günthart, Romy. *Deutschsprachige Literatur im Frühen Basler Buchdruck (Ca. 1470-1510)*. Münster 2007, p. 11.

significant work of woodcut art in the 15th century.⁷ It recounts important events, lists people, miracles, and geographic information, especially of cities. Schedel copied extensive passages from humanist biographies such as Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini's *Tractatus de ortu et autoritate imperii Romani*, ensuring the chronicle's topicality.⁸ The text about Basel starts with an explanation of the city's name, which is followed by an extensive passage about the Rhine. Then the city itself is described and finally all of the churches and monasteries are listed:

"[243r–244v] Basel is a large and very famous city in Switzerland built at a royal border. While the city is so named in Latin, it is called royal after the fashion of the Greek tongue [gr. Basileus means king]. Although it is said in the community that once a basilisk lived here in hiding and that the city's name originated from that and stuck. The Rhine flows nearly right down the middle of the city, but there is a bridge from one side to the other.[...]The city has two sides. On the larger side are three hills. On one is the bishop's church[...]. On the other the Canon Regulars live in St. Leonhard. On the third is St. Peter's church. [...] But on the small side is a very excellent Carthusian monastery and St. Theodora and St. Nicolas and other churches. (own translation)"

Schedel, Hartmann, et al. *Die Schedelsche Weltchronik*. Anton Koberger [Nuremberg 1493]. Facsim. Dortmund 1978.
Taylor Institution Library, ED.482.A.1

Schedel, Hartmann, et al. *Weltchronik 1493*. Anton Koberger [Nuremberg 1493]. Facsim. Cologne 2013.
Private copy.

A New Addition to the Taylor Institution Library's Historical Collection

Along with the two facsimiles, which showcase the range of modern reproductions, the exhibition also includes a page (fol. CLXVIII) of a 15th-century Nuremberg chronicle, which demonstrates the book's impressive format. The father of St Peter's College's Fellow Emeritus Kevin Hilliard bought the leaf in Nuremberg in 1967. It has now made its way to the Taylor Institution Library thanks to Prof. Henrike Lähnemann.

Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.2o.G.1493

⁷ See Green, Jonathan. "Text, Culture, and Print-Media in Early Modern Translation: Notes on the 'Nuremberg Chronicle' (1493)", in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 33 (2008), p. 114–132.

⁸ Schnieper, Xaver. "Die Schedelsche Weltchronik: Eine Einführung und Würdigung". *Stultifera Navis: Mitteilungsblatt der Schweizerischen Bibliophilen-Gesellschaft*, 7/3-4 (1950), p. 85-104, p.90

UNSERE UNIVERSITÄT: THE FOUNDATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BASEL IN 1460

Unsere Universität ('Our University') is a comic book commissioned for the celebration of the 550-year anniversary of the University of Basel. The storyline mixes historical facts with fiction, in order to retell the events surrounding the foundation of the University of Basel. This double page is based on the illumination in the rector's register (1460-1567), which every matriculated student had to sign: it depicts the inaugural ceremony in the Basler Munster, where Bishop Johann von Venningen named Georg von Andlau – kneeling on the left – first rector on April 4th 1460 and hands Mayor Hans von Flachslanden the deed of foundation. Many scholars, who shaped the city in the 15th century and collaborated with printing workshops were associated with the University, namely Sebastian Brant. However, compared to other printing and university towns, the role of the university was secondary.

Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, AN II 3: Rektoratsmatrikel der Universität Basel, Vol. 1 (1460-1567), f. 2v.



Universität Basel, Claudius Sieber-Lehmann, Andreas K. Heyne, and Elena S. Pini, *Unsere Universität* (Basel: F. Reinhardt, 2009), p. 36-37.

Private copy



INCUNABULA PRINTING IN BASEL AND SEBASTIAN BRANT

The first book to have been printed in Basel was Bertholt Ruppel's *Biblia* at the end of the 1460s.⁹ Books printed between 1450 and 1500 are called incunabula (Latin: cradle). Even before incunabula, however, block books had been printed in the city meaning that an illumination, papermaking and book binding industry had already developed before. Block books are short books printed in Europe in the 15th century with blocks of wood carved to include text and illustrations. The city actively promoted printing workshops by reducing the export duty – eventually abolishing it fully in 1506 – and eliminating the obligation to join a guild as well as a reduction of the export duty. Equally as important as the economic and socio-political and location factors were the personal networks of the early printers in the city. The majority of editions in the 15th century were in Latin, only 15% of the entire printing production was in German. The approximately 20 workshops running in the City on the Rhine up to the turn of the century produced about 770 editions.¹⁰

THÜRING VON RINGOLTINGEN'S MELUSINE

Thüring von Ringoltingen, a Patrician from Bern, wrote his adaptation of Coudrette's *Melusine* in the 1450s. The first printing workshop in the city was however only founded in 1537, leaving Basel as the main point of departure for the transmission of the text. The 67 woodcuts, which illustrate the text in Bernhard Richel's 1473 edition of the text closely resembles a 1471 manuscript Niklaus Meyer zum Pfeil made in Basel,¹¹ which was itself based on a 1468 East-Franconian manuscript, which contains 65 illuminations.¹² Richel owned one of the larger workshops in the city, employing a dozen apprentices and producing up to 30 prints.¹³ The carefully edited and illustrated Basel edition was not reprinted in the city itself, but it did however influence many reprints in printing workshops outside of Basel.

At the centre of *Melusine* lays a taboo and the breaking thereof: Raymund, son of an impoverished nobleman, accidentally kills his uncle while on a hunting trip. Still

⁹ *Biblia*. Berthold Ruppel [Basel, um 1468]. GW 04207.

¹⁰ See Günthart 2007.

¹¹ See Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, O I 18.

¹² Rautenberg, Ursula. "Die ‚Melusine‘ des Thüring von Ringoltingen und der Basler Erstdruck des Bernhard Richel", in *Melusine* (1456), by Ringoltingen, Thüring von, Schnyder, André, Rautenberg, Ursula, Coudrette, and Jean, Wiesbaden 2006, p. 61-99, p. 61-2.

¹³ Günthart 2007, p. 28-29.

dazed by the incident he meets three virgins, one of whom is Melusine: she promises to help him if he marries her. He, however, has to swear to never seek her out on Saturdays. Goaded by his brother Raymond spies on Melusine only to discover that she is transformed into a half-serpent:

“Oh, how he caused great misfortune for himself, because, as you will hear, he lost all joy and delight on earth through it! Raymond looked through the hole and saw his wife naked in the bathtub. And from the navel upwards she was an exceptionally beautiful woman, her body and her face unutterably beautiful, but from the navel down there was a mighty, long and threatening serpent tail, glittering blue and with shining silver colour, and with silver sparks, in the manner of a serpent.”

Ringoltingen, Thüring Von, Schnyder, André, Rautenberg, Ursula, Couldrette, and Jean. *Melusine* (1456). Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2006.
Taylor Institution Library, PT1637.R93 A7 RIN 2006

SEBASTIAN BRANT AND JOHANN BERGMANN VON OLPE: A FRUITFUL COLLABORATION

Sebastian Brant (1457-1521) was the most successful German-language author of his time. As Professor of Law in Basel, Chancellor of Strasburg, counsel to Emperor Maximilian I, commentator on current events, interpreter of natural and medical phenomena and much more, Brant was a key figure of Humanist Europe around 1500. As an author and editor he actively shaped the media landscape determined by the newly developed printing press, namely by producing a number of flyleaves. Brant lived in Basel from 1475 and until 1500, when he returned to his native Strasburg, shortly before Basel joined the Swiss Confederacy.

It is unclear if Johann Bergmann von Olpe was a printer or if he worked exclusively as an editor. Ultimately, this is of secondary importance. More importantly, his editions can be identified by his device: a lily on six hill tops and alongside the motto *Nihil sine causa* or *Nüt on ursach* ('nothing without cause'). He was the only cleric among the Basel printers who printed vernacular texts. He matriculated at the University of Basel in 1471, where he maintained a close friendship with Sebastian Brant. In the 1490s he printed the works of several befriended humanist including Sebastian Brant and Jakob Locher as well as flyleaves referring to topical events.¹⁴

SEBASTIAN BRANT'S *VARIA CARMINA*

¹⁴ Günthart 2007, p.36-38.

Johann Bergmann von Olpe printed Sebastian Brant's collection of Latin lyric, *Varia Carmina*, in 1498. This is Brant's most significant Latin work. The 1498 edition is the only incunabula in the exhibition. This double page includes an author portrait of Sebastian Brant as well as Johann Bergmann von Olpe's motto and printer's mark.



Sebastian Brant, Johann Bergmann de Olpe: *Varia Carmina*. Johann Bergmann von Olpe [Basel: 1498]. Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.8o.G.1498(1).

SEBASTIAN BRANT'S NARRENSCHIFF

This is a facsimile edition of Johann Bergmann von Olpe's 1494 first edition print of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* ('Ship of Fools'). The text was the most successful pre-Reformation German text in Europe and following Jakob Locher's 1498 Latin translation the text was translated into all major European languages, namely two English translations in 1509.¹⁵ The *Ship of Fools* is a moral satire with a typology of over 100 fools. It was the first major German language work, which was written with a printed edition in mind and without prior transmission in manuscript culture. Brant probably personally supervised the printing process of this typographic masterpiece, which combines the woodcuts – probably designed by Albrecht Dürer–, floral marginalia, and type into a harmonious final product.

¹⁵ See Rupp, Michael. „Narrenschiff' und ‚Stultifera navis'. Deutsche und lateinische Moralsatire von Sebastian Brant und Jakob Locher in Basel 1494-1498 (Studien und Texte zum Mittelalter und zur frühen Neuzeit 3). Münster i.W. 2002.

Up to Brant's death in 1521 17 authorised and unauthorised reprints were produced.¹⁶

THE BOOK FOOL

Befitting the location of this exhibition, the Ship of Fool's most famous fool is the bibliophile (the German 'Büchernarr' literally translates to 'fool of books'). Dusting the piles of books that surround him he muses:



[4v] They left the vanguard to me / because I have a lot of books without use / which I don't read and don't understand.

[woodcut]

Of useless books:

I sit in the first row of this ship / that is truly an excellent joke / it hasn't happened without cause/ I bank on my books.

[5r]I have many books / but barely understand a word in them / I hold them in high esteem nonetheless / and will defend them against the flies. [...] I have many books like him [Ptolemy, founder of the library in Alexandria] / but still barely read a thing / why break my mind / and burden myself with studying? / Those who study a lot are dreamers (own translation)!

Sebastian Brant: *Narrenschiff*. Johann Bergmann von Olpe [Basel 1494]. Facsim. Basel 1913. Taylor Institution Library, 97.I.22

¹⁶ See Burrichter, Brigitte: "Die Paratexte in Sebastian Brants *Narrenschiff* und seinen Übersetzungen", in *Rahmungen. Präsentationsformen und Kanoneffekte* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie, Bd. 16), ed. by Philip Ajouri et al. Berlin 2017, p. 107-122.



A SECOND GENERATION OF PRINTERS

With the beginning of the new century, the emerging changes of a generational shift started to become apparent. The publications of the workshops that began production before 1500 had dropped significantly by 1510. Simultaneously, several printers who would become significant in the following years took up their work around 1510, in particular Johannes Amerbach, Johannes Petri, and Johannes Froben.¹⁷ They shifted the printing production in Basel towards humanist literature, which included scriptural editions, classical texts, and new humanist writing. This was also reflected in the prints graphic design with printer's marks and types reflecting humanist thought.

AMERBACH, PETRI, AND FROBEN

While the legal and financial details of the cooperation between the printers are unknown, the allocation of tasks is documented: Johannes Amberbach (ca. 1440–1513), who was the oldest, was responsible for the selection of texts and their preparation for typesetting. Before moving to Basel in 1478, where he became a successful printer, he studied in Paris and travelled Italy, where he probably worked as a printer in Venice. Johannes Petri (1441–1511), burger of Basel since 1488 and member of the Saffron guild was responsible for marketing and the financial aspects of the business. Finally, Johannes Froben, a relative of Petri, is documented as a collaborator of the printer-editor Anton Koberger in Nuremberg, with whom Amerbach maintained a close business relationship. He is documented as a collaborator of Amberbach in 1491. Froben's work would eventually attract Erasmus of Rotterdam. Their collaboration made Johannes Froben one of the most important printers of his time.¹⁸

TYPOGRAPHY: GOTHIC VS ANTIQUA

Johannes Amerbach had a leading role when it came to typography: While Gothic type was used for most prints in the 15th century, he printed his first edition using Antiqua, a Roman type, in 1486. He thereby popularized Antiqua in the German-speaking world and made Basel the centre of Antiqua north of the Alps. The type was paradigmatically associated with humanist thought and predominantly used for Latin texts. Oxford-based printer Richard Lawrence has typeset and printed a

¹⁷ Günthart 2007, p. 4.

¹⁸ Sebastiani, Valentina. *Johann Froben, Printer of Basel: a Biographical Profile and Catalogue of His Editions*. Leiden 2018, p. 45.

comparison between a Gothic and an Antiqua type at the Bibliographical Press at the Bodleian Library. The types used to print this were assembled by hand using a composing stick similarly to how all of the books in this exhibition would have been made. The composing stick and the type highlight the material circumstances of the emerging printing production.

“FERVET INGENS OFFICINA”

The enormous printing workshop was buzzing.¹⁹



Johannes Froben's printer's mark in the 1518 *Utopia* edition.

A printer's mark or device allows the printer to brand his product and advertise his workshop. Froben had developed the mark around 1514 when he shifted his production to represent a humanist agenda.²⁰ This is reflected in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew motti, which bring together two scripture passages and a conglomerate Martial-citation:

Matthew 10:16: I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

Psalm 125:4: Lord, do good to those who are good, to those who are upright in heart.

Martial: Prudent simplicity and love of the righteous.

Erasmus of Rotterdam provided his own interpretation of the device: "Froben, who always held up the staff upright, and had nothing but the general interest in view, who did not deviate from the dove-like simplicity and who expressed the wisdom of the snake rather in his signets than his deeds, he is richer in glory than in money."²¹

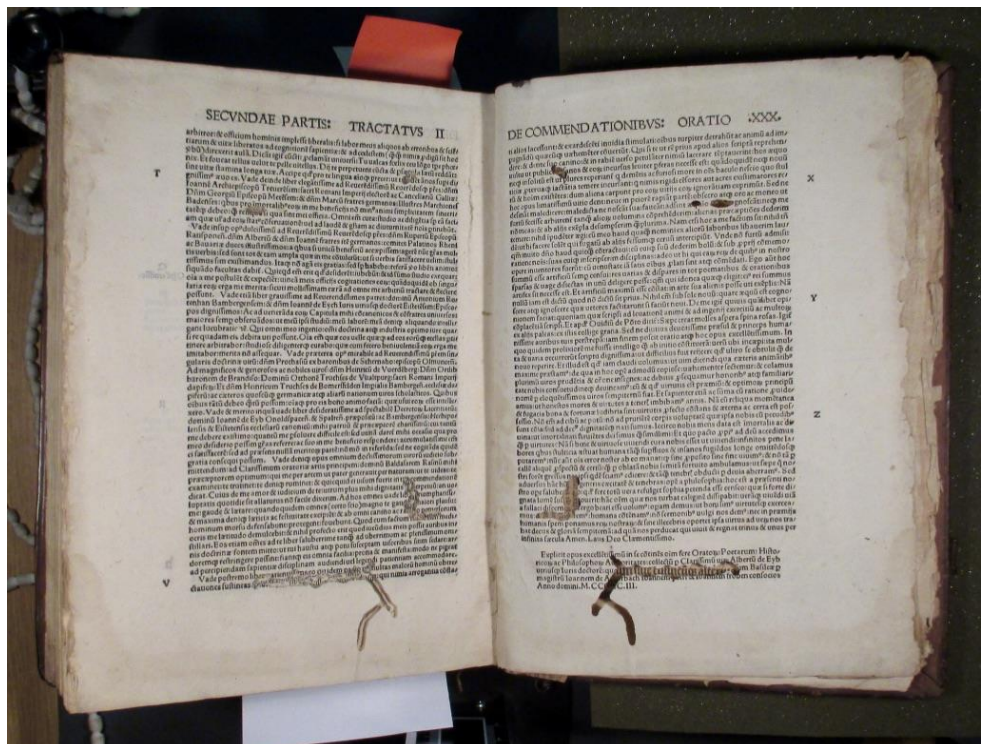
¹⁹ Erasmus of Rotterdam describing Johannes Froben's workshop, Ep. 334, l. 130 (15. Mai 1515)

²⁰ Dill, Ueli. "Johannes Frobens Entwicklung zum humanistischen Drucker", in *Das Bessere Bild Christi* ed. by Dill, Ueli, and Petra Schierl. Basel 2016, p. 45–59, p.55-56.

²¹ Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Adagium 1434: Cassiotoxicus nodus*, first in the edition of 1528. Cited in Wolkenhauer, Anja. *Zu Schwer für Apoll. die Antike in humanistischen Druckerzeichen des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Harrassowitz, 2002, p. 207.

ALBRECHT VON EYB'S MARGARITA POETICA

This is the second Basel edition of *Margarita poetica* ('The Pearl of Poetry') produced by Johannes Amerbach after an edition he produced in 1495. Completed in 1456 by Albrecht von Eyb and first printed in Nuremberg in 1472, the text replaced the medieval florilegia and provided an introduction to humanist thought and view of life. It contains rhetorical samples of Cicero and Italian humanists, roman poetry and letters, and prose excerpts from Cicero, Macrobius, and Lactantius. Finally, the text also contains excerpts from Petrarch, Terence, Plautus, Seneca and humanist model speeches.²²



von Eyb, Albrecht: *Margarita Poetica*. J. Amerbach, J. Petri, J. Froben [Basel 1503]. Taylor Institution Library, VET.GER.I.C.1

Keeping with the tradition of incunabula, the Albrecht von Eyb's name is only mentioned in the colophon at the end of the text. In addition to the author, the colophon usually names the place and date of publishing as well as the printer's name: for, instance, this is collaboration between Johannes Amerbach, Johannes Petri, and Johannes Froben. As if to epitomise the challenges scholars dealing with historical materials face, this copy has been damaged by bookworms, who have eaten away the crucial information provided by the colophon

²² Hieronymus, Frank. 1488 Petri-Schwabe 1988 : Eine Traditionsreiche Basler Offizin im Spiegel ihrer frühen Drucke. Basel 1997, column 9, p.26-7.



ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM IN BASEL

Before coming to Basel, Erasmus of Rotterdam's reputation as an "eloquent defender of both Christian and classical *bonae litterae* had been growing steadily throughout Europe".²³ He had studied in Paris, where he had been exposed to ideas of Italian humanism as well as the scholastic tradition prevalent in Parisian theological thought of the time. He was able to further develop his interest in editing and interpreting Scriptural literature throughout his encounters with English scholars and theologians such as Thomas More, John Colet, and Thomas Linacre.

By 1514 Erasmus had worked with some of the best European scholarly printers in the early sixteenth century. When he arrived in Basel in August 1514 he found a city, ideally located at the Rhine, which made an ideal stopping point for merchants traveling between northern Europe and Italy. Because of the Council of Basel (1431-49) the city was able to absorb the influences of Italian humanism and the city's academic community aided informal contacts with Italian scholars and booksellers.

After a short stint in England to retrieve his translation of the New Testament he returned to Basel in 1515, where the *Novum Testamentum* was published in early 1516. After that he left Basel, but returned in 1521 and stayed until his death in 1536. It is in Basel, where, according to John Huizinga Erasmus became "Holbein's Erasmus" and "most closely [approached] to the ideal of his personal life":

[D]elivered from the troublesome pressure of parties wanting to enlist him, transplanted from an environment of haters and opponents at Louvain to a circle of friends, kindred spirits, helpers and admirers, emancipated from the courts of princes, independent of the patronage of the great, unremittingly devoting his tremendous energy to the work that was dear to him.²⁴

Throughout his time in Basel he closely collaborated with Johannes Froben and his workshop's "almost unique position" among its competitors is largely due to Erasmus' work as Froben's chief author and editor, which permanently shaped the focus of the Froben press.²⁵

²³ Shaw, Diane. "A Study of the Collaboration Between Erasmus of Rotterdam and his Printer Johann Froben at Basel During the Years 1514 to 1527", in *Erasmus Studies*, 6/1 (1986), p. 31-124,p.32.

²⁴ Huizinga, Johan. *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation*. 1984, p. 151.

²⁵ Shaw 1986, p.32.

ENCOMIUM MORIAE

This is a facsimile of schoolmaster and reformer Oswald Myconius' copy of the 1516 edition of *In Praise of Folly* printed by Johannes Froben. Written in only a couple of days at Thomas More's house in Bucklersbury, *In Praise of Folly* builds on the success of satirical fool's literature initiated by Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*. IN addition to Myconius' notes –probably added in preparation of a lecture on the text–, the copy includes marginal drawings by Hans Holbein the Younger. This bifolium shows Saint Jerome in ecstasy and Folly descending from the pulpit.

Erasmus, Desiderius, Hans Holbein, Heinrich Alfred Schmid, and Helen H. Tanzer (eds.): *Erasmus Roterodami Encomium Moriae, I. E. Stultitiae Laus, Praise of Folly*. Johannes Froben [Basel 1516]. Facsim. V.1 Basel 1931. Bodleian Library, (UBHU) 296944 d.7 (v.1)

“FOLLY SPEAKS: WHATEVER IS GENERALLY SAID OF ME BY MORTAL MEN, AND I’M QUITE WELL AWARE THAT FOLLY IS IN POOR REPUTE EVEN AMONGST THE GREATEST FOOLS, STILL, I AM THE ONE – AND INDEED, THE ONLY ONE – WHOSE DIVINE POWERS CAN GLADDEN THE HEARTS OF GODS AND MEN.”²⁶

A NEWLY ILLUSTRATED EDITION OF *IN PRAISE OF FOLLY*

In Praise of Folly has inspired countless writers and artists, namely Matthew Richardson, who illustrated this 2014 edition of the text. This particular illustration appears to take inspiration from Johannes Froben's trademark printer's device (see p. 13): Mercury's Caduceus has been replace by a ladder with a black cat sitting on top, entangled by two snakes.

Erasmus, Desiderius, trans. by Betty Radice, illus. by Matthew Richardson, *In Praise of Folly: and, Letter to Maarten Van Dorp, 1515* (London: Folio Society, 2014).

Bodleian Library, Week 21 (15)

THOMAS MORE'S UTOPIA

Thomas More's *Utopia* had been originally published under the supervision of Petrus Ægidius after Erasmus had directly interceded on More's behalf with the printer Dirk Martens in Leuven.²⁷ The *editio princeps* was followed by an edition without woodcuts in Paris in 1517. The 1518 edition of Thomas More's *Utopia*

²⁶ Erasmus, Desiderius, et al. *Praise of Folly ; and, Letter to Martin Dorp, 1515*. Penguin, 1971, p. 63.

²⁷ Adam, Renaud., et al. *Passeurs de Textes. 1, Thierry Martens et la Figure de L'imprimeur Humaniste (Une Nouvelle Biographie) : Avec une Liste de ses Éditions et les Adresses aux Lecteurs Signées par L'imprimeur*. Brepols, 2009, p. 86.

was attended to by Erasmus. The book also contains epigrams by More and Erasmus and each of the three parts has its own elaborate frontispiece and dedicatory.²⁸ This bifolium depicts a map of Utopia designed by Ambrosius Holbein for this specific edition as well as the Utopian alphabet designed by Petrus Ægidius for the Leuven edition.

More, Thomas, et al. *De Optimo Reip. Statu, Deque Noua Insula Vtopia [...]* (Basel: Johannes Froben, 1518).
Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.8o.E.1518

New College Library holds a copy of the unauthorized Leuven editio princeps (Shelfmark: BT1.130.9[1])

MEMENTO MORI: REMEMBER THOMAS MORE?

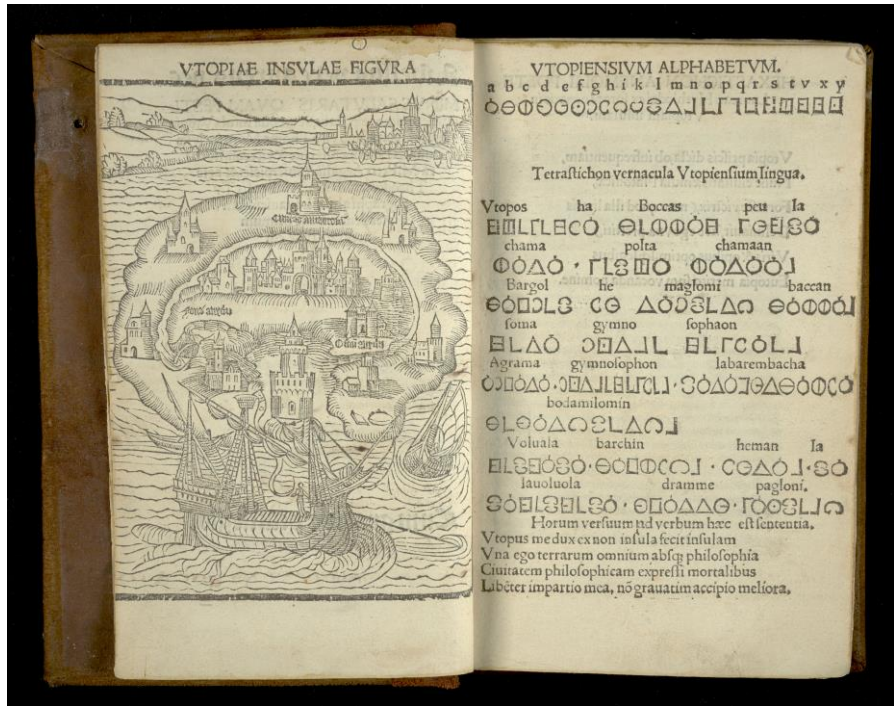
The dictum *Memento mori* ‘remember death’ was the basis for an elaborate wordplay Thomas Mores and Erasmus included in a number of their works: Erasmus had used in the title of his *Encomium moriae*, which translates to *In Praise of Folly* but can also be read as a pun on More’s name: *In Praise of More*. More himself made a similar pun when dealing with a man who was indebted to him. The debtor, reminding More that after death he would have little use for the money owed, finished ‘*memento morieris*’ (remember we will die) to which More replied ‘...you mean *memento mori aeris*’ – remember More’s money.²⁹

The wordplay also found expression in Ambrosius Holbein’s newly designed Utopian map, which was added to the Basel edition. At first glance the differences with the Leuven edition map are negligible, but Holbein’s map is actually a *memento mori* in its own right. Malcolm Bishop argues that the map actually resembles a skull: the ribs and planking of the ship provide the teeth, the main mast with its rigging defines the nasal cavity, while the other two masts with their rigging mark the limits of the upper jaw. Various rocks and buildings have been turned to face to the left to give the eye sockets and other skull features. Hythlodæus on the left provides the back of the neck, leading the eyes down to the shoulders, and the lower border of the jaw bone, are provided by a newly

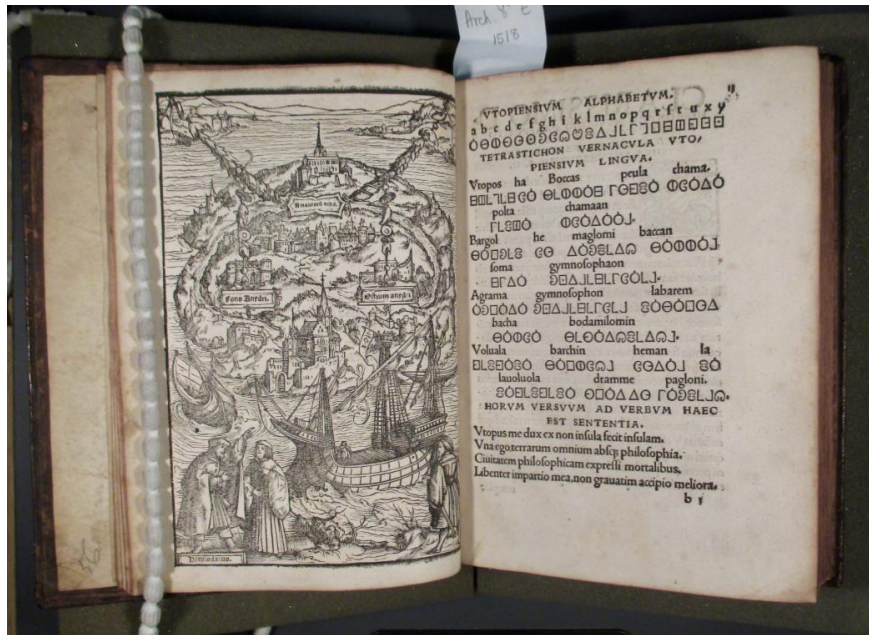
²⁸ Plotke, Seraina. “Epigrammatik im Gattungsverständnis des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts. Die Epigramme von Thomas Morus und Erasmus von Rotterdam in der Ausgabe Froben 1518”, in *Le «sel» antique: Epigramme, satire, théâtre et polémique / Das ‚Salz‘ der Antike. Epigramm, Satire, Theater, Polemik. Leur réception chez les humanistes dans les sources imprimées et manuscrites du Rhin Supérieur / Ihre Rezeption bei den Humanisten: Drucke und Handschriften am Oberrhein*, ed. by Marie-Laure Freyburger Galland and Henriette Harich-Schwarzbauer, Stuttgart 2016, p. 191-200, p.195.

²⁹ Lake Prescott, Anne. “Afterlives”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas More*, ed. by Logan, George M, Cambridge 2011, p. 265-291, p. 268.

added lands mass on which the figures are standing.³⁰



New College Library, Oxford, BT1.130.9(1) © Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford.



More, Thomas, et al. *De Optimo Reip. Statu, Deque Noua Insula Vtopia* [...] (Basel: Johannes Froben, 1518).
Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.8o.E.1518.

³⁰ See Bishop, Malcolm. "Ambrosius Holbein's Memento Mori Map for Sir Thomas More's Utopia. The Meanings of a Masterpiece of Early Sixteenth Century Graphic Art", in *British Dental Journal* 199/2 (2005), p.107-112.



THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION AND BASEL PRINTING

The Reformation in Basel was an urban and public process taking place in pubs and squares, which put into question the old authority of the Church. For instance, reformers organised a big feast on Palm Sunday, where they demonstratively ate a suckling pig during Lent.³¹ Compared to other cities it mainly distinguished itself because of its intellectual nature: its connection to humanism and the relationship with the university as well as the role of the reformer Johannes Oecolampadius, who had assisted Erasmus during the edition of the *Novum Testamentum*.³² Humanism and the Protestant Reformation shared the principle of *ad fontes* and it is therefore not surprising that Froben printed a first anthology of Luther texts in 1518.³³

In 1525 Oecolampadius replaced Mass with a Protestant service, where the entire congregation sung hymns. In 1528, the guilds petitioned the council asking to abolish mass completely. The negotiations did not result in any solution and in 1529 the situation escalated as approximately 300 men stormed the Münster and other churches in the city and destroyed all of the religious images. In light of the vehemence the council had no other choice than to prohibit Mass and to place all of the convents under state rule.³⁴

³¹ Sandl, Markus. "Die Frühphase der Basler Reformation. Ereignisse – Medien – Geschichte", in *Reformation in Basel* (Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde 116). Basel 2016, p.6-28, p.12.

³² Dill, Ueli. "Das Novum Instrumentum von 1516", in *Das Bessere Bild Christi* ed. by. Dill, Ueli, and Petra Schierl. Basel 2016, p.67-84, p.68.

³³ Sandl 2016, p.19.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.15-16.

JOHANNES TAULER'S SERMONS

Adam Petri's edition of Johannes Tauler's sermons stand out from other contemporary editions as it also includes sermons by 14th-century German mystic Meister Eckhart as well as a reformatory preface by the printer himself. Petri writes that true faith would have disappeared in such times if God had not mercifully sent people such as Tauler to teach about God and the Bible. Now old and young, educated and uneducated can understand and follow Christian order in their everyday lives. Both of these innovations probably resulted from Petri's involvement in the project, which was initiated by Johannes Rynmann, the editor of various Tauler-editions between 1508 and 1521/22.³⁵

Tauler, Johannes, and Eckhart. Joannis Tauleri Des Heilige[n] Lerers Predig. Getruckt Zu Basel: [durch Adam Petri], 1522. Print. Taylor Institution Library, 88.I.8

LUTHER'S SERMON ON INDULGENCE AND GRACE PRINTED BY PAMPHILUS GENGENBACH

In the summer of 1518 Pamphilus Gengenbach published a number of Luther-prints. Countless theological pamphlets followed, some of them written or initiated by Gengenbach himself. Even though Gengenbach pledged allegiance to Luther very early on, it is questionable to which extent he understood the full implications of the reformatory positions. It is more likely that he saw Luther's views as a continuation of earlier reformatory movements within the Church.

Gengenbach's own work written exclusively in German position him as an attentive observer of political and religious issues. Among other things he wrote carnival plays, including the *Gauchmatt* in 1519. The play condemns the infidelity of men of all social ranks: going against the advice of the fool, who acts as doorman, men step on the meadow of folly. There Venus and her servants rob the men of all of their belongings and they have to leave the meadow naked and humiliated.³⁶

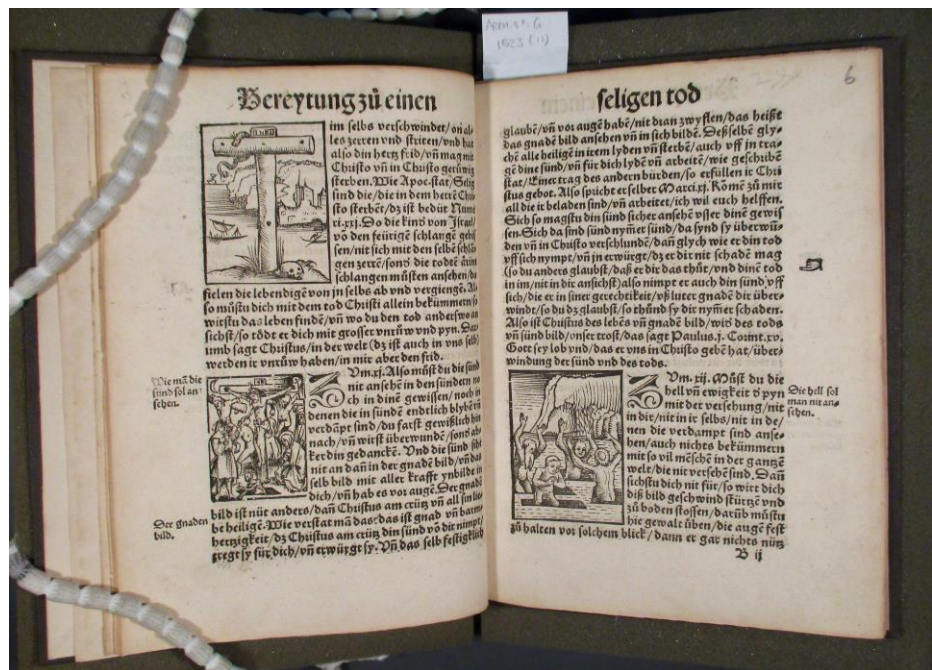
Luther, Martin, and Pamphilus Gengenbach. Ein Sermon Oder Predig Von Dem Ablass Vnd Gnade. Basel] ;: [Pamphilus Gengenbach], 1518. Print. Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.8o.G.1518(5)

³⁵ Otto, Henrik. *Vor- Und Frühreformatrische Tauler-Rezeption: Annotationen in Drucken des Späten 15. und Frühen 16. Jahrhunderts*, Gütersloh 2003, p.38-41.

³⁶ See Worstbrock, Franz Josef. *Deutscher Humanismus 1480-1520, Verfasserlexikon*. Berlin 2005-2015.

LUTHER'S A USEFUL AND VERY CONSOLING SERMON OR TEACHING ON HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD READY THEMSELVES JOYFULLY FOR DEATH PRINTED BY ADAM PETRI

Adam Petri was the main printer of Martin Luther's texts and translations in Basel. This was the second time Petri printed the text *A Useful and Very Consoling Sermon or Teaching on how Christians Should Ready Themselves Joyfully for Death*. This sermon was extremely popular –there were 16 editions before Petri's first edition in 1520 – but Petri added a lot of woodcuts, which had not featured in any of the previous editions. The woodcuts hadn't been specifically produced for this print, but were taken from other works and integrated based on thematic coherence: the woodcuts of the crucifixion and the cross with the snake promising eternal life represent the contemplation of Jesus's death and the death of Saints, which is supposed to dispel fear of death. The election of those who choose to contemplate Christ instead of looking at hell is represented by a small woodcut was originally made in 1515 for a different text. All three woodcuts were made by Urs Graf, who probably also designed Johannes Froben's printer's mark.³⁷



Luther, Martin, and Adam Petri. Ein Nützlich Und Fast Tröstlich Predig : Od Vnderrichtüg, Wie Sich Ein Christen Mensch Mit Freudē Bereyten Sol Zü Sterben. Gedruckt Zü Basel: Durch Adam Petri., 1523. Print. Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.8o.G.1523(11)

Hieronimus, Frank. 1488 Petri-Schwabe 1988 : Eine Traditionsreiche Basler Offizin im Spiegel ihrer frühen Drucke. Basel 1997, column 94, p.253.



THE AFTERLIFE OF EARLY PRINTING IN BASEL

Basel's printing industry in the late 15th and early 16th century lives on to this day. For instance, the Schwabe publishing house in Basel can trace back its history to Johannes Petris workshop, which was founded in 1488. In 1988, Schwabe celebrated its 500-year anniversary by publishing a comprehensive catalogue of the early editions.³⁸ To this day Schwabe runs both a publishing house and a printing press and publishes works in the Humanities and social sciences.

One way through which Johannes Petri's spirit still lives on is the 15th-century printer's mark that Schwabe still uses.



Printed by Johannes Petri's grandson and Adam Petri's nephew Heinrich Petri, this edition from 1559 uses the same printer's mark, which Johannes invented in the 15th century and which the Schwabe publishing house still uses to this day. It illustrates Jeremiah 23:29: *Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

Glareanus, Henricus et al., *Musicae Epitome Ex Glareani Dodecachordo* (Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1559). Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.12o.G.1559

³⁸ See Hieronymus, Frank. 1488 Petri-Schwabe 1988 : Eine Traditionsreiche Basler Offizin im Spiegel ihrer frühen Drucke. Basel 1997.

THE BIBLE IN BASEL: *NOVUM INSTRUMENTUM*

This is an edition of Friedrich Meyer's book *Die Bibel in Basel* (2004). The text chronicles Basel's relationship with the Bible starting with the humanists and the reformers. The most notable product of this relationship was Erasmus' Greek and Latin edition of the New Testament (*Novum Instrumentum*), which was published by Johannes Froben in 1516. The edition was an economic success and sold approximately 9'000 copies during his lifetime. More importantly however, Martin Luther used it as the basis for his Bible translation and the text established itself as the *textus receptus* of Protestantism well into the 19th century. In contrast, traditionalists saw Erasmus' edition as an attack on the textual authority of the Vulgate used by the Church throughout the Middle Ages. As the title indicates, Erasmus was well aware of the explosive force of his text:

"The entire New Testament, carefully reviewed and corrected by Erasmus of Rotterdam, not only in the Greek original, but also evidenced by many manuscripts in both languages, bot older and more correct, and finally following citations, ameliorations and translations of the most acknowledged authors, namely Origen, Chrysostom, Cyril, Vulgurius, Hieronymus, Cyprian, Ambrosias, Hilary and Augustine, together with annotations, which should instruct the reader what was changed for what reason. Therefore, you, who loves true Theology, read, understand and then judge. And don't be offended immediately when you come across changes, but consider first if it wasn't changed for the better (own translation)."

Meyer, Friedrich. *Die Bibel in Basel*. Schwabe, 2004.
Private copy

INDEX OF EXHIBITION ITEMS

The following list registers the exhibited books in terms of a) holding institution, b) nature of item, c) language, d) pages or folios displayed in the exhibition.

1. Schedel, Hartmann, et al. *Die Schedelsche Weltchronik* (Dortmund: Harenberg Kommunikation, 1978).
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, ED.482.A.1
 - b. Facsimile
 - c. German
 - d. 243r–244v (see pic. 3)
2. Universität Basel, Claudius Sieber-Lehmann, Andreas K. Heyne, and Elena S. Pini, *Unsere Universität* (Basel: F. Reinhardt, 2009).
 - a. Private copy
 - b. Comic book
 - c. Cover (see pic. 1)
 - d. p.36–37 (see pic. 4)
3. Ringoltingen, Thüring von, ed. by André Schnyder, Ursula Rautenberg und Jean Couldrette, *Melusine (1456)* (Basel: Bernhard, 1473/74; facsim. reprint: Richel Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2006).
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, PT1637.R93 A7 RIN 2006
 - b. Facsimile
 - c. German
 - d. P.106–107 (see pic. 5)
4. Brant, Sebastian, ed. by Hans Koegler, *Das Narren Schyff* (Basel: Johann Bergmann von Olpe, 1494; facsim. Basel: Frobenius, 1913).
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, 97.I.22
 - b. Facsimile
 - c. German
 - d. 4r–5v (see pic. 6)
5. Brant, Sebastian, and Johann Bergmann, *Varia Carmina* (Basel: Johann Bergmann von Olpe, 1498).
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.8o.G.1498(1)
 - b. Print
 - c. Latin
 - d. 144v–145r (see pic. 7)
6. Eyb, Albrecht von. *Margarita Poetica* (Basel: Johannes Amerbach, Johanne Petri, Johannes Froben, 1503).
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, VET.GER.I.C.1
 - b. Print
 - c. Latin
 - d. The copy is in a very fragile state and without pagination (see pic. 8).
7. Erasmus, Desiderius, illus. by Hans Holbein, ed. by Heinrich Alfred Schmid and Helen H. Tanzer, *Erasmus Roterodami Encomium Moriae, I. E. Stultitiae Laus, Praise of Folly* (Basel: Johannes Froben 1515; facsim. reprint: Basel: H. Oppermann, 1931).
 - a. Bodleian Library, (UBHU) 296944 d.7 (v.1)
 - b. Facsimile
 - c. Latin
 - d. 115v–116r (see pic. 9)
8. More, Thomas, et al. *De Optimo Reip. Statu, Deque Noua Insula Vtopia [...]* (Basel: Johannes Froben, 1518).
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.8o.E.1518
 - b. Print
 - c. Latin
 - d. p. 12–13 (see pic. 10)

9. Tauler, Johannes, and Eckhart, Joannis Tauleri Des Heilige[n] Lerers Predig (Basel: Adam Petri, 1522)
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, 88.I.8
 - b. Print
 - c. German
 - d. f. 1v-2r (see pic. 11)
10. Luther, Martin, Ein Nützlich Und Fast Tröstlich Predig : Od Vnderrichtüg, Wie Sich Ein Christen Mensch Mit Freudē Bereyten Sol Zū Sterben (Basel: Adam Petri, 1523).
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.8o.G.1523(11)
 - b. Print
 - c. German
 - d. f. 4v-5r (see pic. 12)
11. Luther, Martin, Ein Sermon Oder Predig Von Dem Ablass Vnd Gnade (Basel: Pamphilus Gengenbach, 1518)
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.8o.G.1518(5)
 - b. Print
 - c. German
 - d. 1v-2r (see pic.13)
12. Glareanus, Henricus et al., Musicæ Epitome Ex Glareani Dodecachordo (Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1559).
 - a. Taylor Institution Library, ARCH.12o.G.1559
 - b. Print
 - c. Latin
 - d. p.104-105 (see pic. 14)
13. Meyer, Friedrich, Die Bibel in Basel (Basel: Schwabe, 2004).
 - a. Private copy
 - b. Print
 - c. German
 - d. p.22-23 (see pic. 15)
14. Erasmus, Desiderius, trans. by Betty Radice, illus. by Matthew Richardson, In Praise of Folly : and, Letter to Maarten Van Dorp, 1515 (London: Folio Society, 2014).
 - a. Bodleian Library, Week 21 (15)
 - b. Print
 - c. English
 - d. p.36-37

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