



**Staatsbibliothek
zu Berlin**

Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Department of Early Printed Books

Pamphlets of the Reformation

This collection focuses on documentation of the theological disputes of the Reformation (whereby the writings by Martin Luther have been excluded, because they are kept in separate collection). It currently has about 1,800 works, which are generally shelved in alphabetical order. Evacuations and losses due to World War II led to some severe arbitrary gaps. Today, in the last part of the alphabet some very important pamphlets such as those of Zwingli are missing.

In contrast to the pamphlets of later times, the pamphlets of the Reformation were very carefully laid out. Title borders, illustrative woodcuts and initials embellished its few pages. While initials and frames were mostly there for their decorative effects, the pictorial representation, through its own clear language, was also designed to encourage browsers to buy and read. Quite often no printer is mentioned, for in many German states, such as in Saxony until the death of Duke Georg in 1539, the manufacture, distribution and even the possession of reformational writings was prohibited and could be severely punished. Indeed, one Hans Hergot of Nuremberg, a bookseller and printer who had sold such a pamphlet, was executed on Market Square in Leipzig on May 20, 1527 in order to deter others. As a result of these circumstances, the origin of many pamphlets can only be established on the basis of their type fonts and ornamentation. Title borders can be of particular value to determine a pamphlet's origin.