Framing Books and Reading: An Exploration of Sixteenth Century Title Borders

by M. Patrick Graham

INTRODUCTION

When a sixteenth-century book is opened, the human eye quickly scans to find important bibliographic information — author, title, printer, date — and then perhaps examines at greater leisure the decoration of a title-page border before moving along to the leaves that follow. This process is an intricate dance between readers and book producers and is difficult to untangle with certainty at a distance of five hundred years. The following study explores this issue and argues that title-page borders may often have been designed or chosen by printers and their associates in order to frame or contextualize the reading of the book itself, assuming that even in cases where the author or printer may not have given much thought to the border, the reading of the book would have been shaped by the title page and its border anyway by virtue of its position in the work.

The current paper grew out of research for the Iconic Book Symposium, sponsored by Syracuse University and Hamilton College, and drew on the Digital Image Archive, a database of over forty-five thousand images made available to the public generally by the Pitts Theology Library (Candler School of Theology, Emory University).[1] It expands upon a part of the earlier effort by focusing on three types of title borders and seeking to understand their function. The first group of borders typically features symbols of the four New Testament Gospels, images of Peter and Paul, and the Four Doctors of the Western Church. The second group is similar to the first but omits the Doctors of the Church and moves the two great apostles to the side-margins. The third group retains the Four Evangelists and Doctors of the Church, sets them at the sides, and then develops other themes at the head and foot to carry most of the interpretive load of the border.

As for title-page borders generally, they may have been commissioned by the printer or publisher for a particular work but subsequently were reused, borrowed, or copied for many other books or pamphlets. When a border consisted of separate panels, it was possible to create new arrangements by combining elements from various other borders.[2] While in many instances a publication's title border will be essentially decorative and have little to do with the text that follows (the statistic cited by Kohler and Hillerbrand for pamphlets is 75 percent),[3] on other

---

[1] M. Patrick Graham, "The Tell-Tale Iconic Book," *Postscripts* 6 (2010): 117-41. I am grateful to *Postscripts* and its parent company, Equinox Publishing, for permission to use parts of "The Tell-Tale Iconic Book" for the current article and to James W. Watts for editing the *Postscripts* volume and his encouragement of my research for this study.

[2] For a broad introduction to the topic of book illustration, see John P. Harthan, *The History of the Illustrated Book: The Western Tradition* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1981).

[3] Hans Joachim Kohler and Hans J. Hillerbrand, "Pamphlets," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3: 201.

M. Patrick Graham is a Margaret A. Pitts Professor of Theological Bibliography and Director, Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

occasions it may be closely related to the book or in other ways be intended to influence the impact of the work on readers. This is the issue that is the major concern of the present study, which is exploratory and suggestive, rather than conclusive. A review of title-page borders in the Digital Image Archive shows their enormous popularity in the sixteenth century but a transformation in the seventeenth century to designs in which elaborate images came to dominate the title page, with the title and other publication information tucked away into features of the image (e.g., http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1674BranV1/00037544.jpg).[4]

I. Gospels, Apostles, and Doctors

Before moving to a consideration of Hans Holbein the Younger's design for Adam Petri (Basel), it is useful to review briefly the title-border (probably cut by Hans Herman, as "Herman" appears at the base) used in 1515 by Matthias Schürer, a printer in Strasbourg, for a volume of Erasmus' essays (*Lucubrationes*) on Christian topics that emphasized the life and example of Jesus.[5] That title-page border (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1515Eras/00001481.jpg) featured the authors of Scripture — David and Isaiah from the Old Testament and Paul and John from the New Testament — across the head of the page, hence giving them primacy of place, and the two side panels show Jerome and Ambrose (left) and Augustine and Gregory I. The lower panel is decorative. Only the Christian figures are given halos in this rather simple border, and though the authors of Scripture are given the prime location at the head, their images are smaller than the Four Doctors.[6]

Another effort to use heroes of the Christian Bible and church, a year later in Basel, was that of Adam Petri, who employed the design of Hans Holbein the Younger for the title page of Ambrose's collected works (*Omnia opera…*; June/August 1516)[7] and for several subsequent publications as well.[8] In the case of Ambrose's *Omnia opera*, the title border makes the obvious connection with this bishop and seems appropriate for this Catholic author of commentaries, sermons, theological and ethical works, and more. Such usage may indicate that the border was created for such Catholic theological works generally. In July 1520, though, Petri used it for his publication of the first volume of a projected two-volume collection of Luther's more important works (*R.P. Doct. Martini Lutherii Augustiniani theologi Synceri lucubrationum*, http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1520Luth/00001744.

---

[4] A general introduction to the development of the title page, from the incunable period onward, may be found in Garold Cole, "The Historical Development of the Title Page," *The Journal of Library History* 6 (1971): 303-16; and, more recently, Margaret M. Smith, *The Title-page: Its Early Development, 1460-1510* (London: The British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000), who finds the earliest title-page borders in the 1490s (pp. 131-42).

[5] Frank Hieronymus, *Basler Buchillustration 1500 bis 1545*, Oberrheinische Buchillustration 2 (Basel: Universitätsbibliothek, 1984), 125-26.

[6] It is usually (but not always) the case that a book shown with a figure is a tribute to what the person wrote, not to what the person read. In the case of Jerome (appearing with the cardinal's hat), the reference is likely to his translation of the Latin Vulgate, while Pope Gregory I (or Gregory the Great, shown with the papal triple tiara) is remembered as an especially prolific author. F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., "Gregory I., St.," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., rev. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 710-11.

[7] Hieronymus, *Basler Buchillustration 1500 bis 1545*, 200-201.

[8] F. W. H. Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts: 1400-1700*, ed. Tilman Falk and comp. Robert Zijlma (Roosendaal: Koninklijke Van Poll, 1988), 14:157-58.

[jpg](jpg).[9] The border, executed on a single block of wood, features the symbols of the four New Testament Gospels on the corners in the established order,[10] the Apostles Peter and Paul at the top and bottom with their attributes (Peter given the prime placement), and the Four Doctors of the Latin Church along the edges (Gregory I, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine). Both persons and symbols of the Gospels are given halos, and the figures are arranged in an aesthetically pleasing way: some books open, others closed; all the books of the Evangelists and Fathers are finished, except for one that is being written or annotated; and the figures are looking at one another in various ways, though one gestures, perhaps as a preacher. Given the importance of the Church Fathers to define Christian doctrine and practice, the imagery of this title border would have exerted a strong appeal to Catholics and Protestants alike and undergirded the credibility of the author or work presented. By anchoring the corners with the symbols of the four Gospels, visual expression was given to Irenaeus' famous explanation,

> It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the pillar and ground (1 Timothy 3:15) of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh.[11]

Setting the two leading apostles in dominant positions at the head and base and four Western Fathers at the sides, the fence or border for the new work was complete. The impact indeed was to "frame" or assert a context for the new work that it introduced and affirm its orthodoxy — all at a time when Luther's books were being burned and many were speaking out against him.[12] The great reformer is designated, "Reverend Father Doctor" (R.P.Doct.) and "Augustinian" and so presented as an orthodox Catholic cleric, of the order following the rule of one of the Doctors himself. While he had been ordered by Pope Leo X to recant on June 15, 1520, it would not be until January 1521 that he was excommunicated.[13] In this title-border design all the figures, except for Peter and Paul, are shown with books, and so, just as the books of these ancient Christian writers developed and defined the Christian faith, so now Luther instructs the church and must be heard.[14]

---

[9] The second volume never appeared. Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts: 1400-1700*, 14:159. "By the summer of 1520, Luther had written about thirty works for the laity and they had appeared in 370 editions, on average over twelve editions per work." Scott Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 48.

[10] The symbols of the four Gospels are derived from Ezekiel 1:10 and Revelation 4:6-8 (first suggested by Irenaeus of Lyon, but later developed differently by Augustine and Jerome, with Jerome's identification becoming the standard), which describe the four winged creatures around the throne of God. See Heidi Hornik, *The Infancy Narrative in Italian Renaissance Painting*, vol. 1 of *Illuminating Luke* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 3. On many other occasions artists represented the Evangelists themselves and then used these symbols to identify them. Here, however, the symbols themselves hold the books and serve a certain anthropomorphic function. It is suggested in some of the later instances in which the angel and animals appear with their respective Evangelists that these creatures communicate revelation to the authors of the Gospels.

[11] *Against Heresies* III.11.8, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 1:414.

[12] Martin Marty, *Martin Luther*, Penguin Life (New York: Penguin, 2004), 53-67.

[13] In the bull *Exsurge domine*, Pope Leo X invokes Peter and Paul, Jerome, and the Christian saints in his condemnation of Luther.

[14] One of the most vigorous and effective opponents of Luther and his followers was Johannes Cochlaeus (1479-1552), whose famous pamphlet, *Septiceps Lutherus* (Leipzig: Valentin Schumann, 1529), featured on its title page a grotesque Martin Luther with seven heads (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1529Coch/00006902.jpg). This woodcut captured the primary theme in Cochlaeus' critique of the Protestants: as is typical with heretics, their thought is flawed and inconsistent. A secondary theme was that the

The Holbein design was roughly copied, executed less expensively on four blocks of wood, and used by Silvan Otmar in Augsburg (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1521LuthC/00001873.jpg), where his compositor on at least one occasion reversed the top and bottom panels (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1523LuthHHHH/00002931.jpg), not an uncommon error among printers of this day but potentially a theological statement as well. Otmar printed many Lutheran publications and so continued to use the Holbein design for these.[15] Another Augsburg printer, Jörg Nadler, produced a much cruder variant of the Holbein woodcut with less detail and a central space for text that broke into the lower panel (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1522KarlE/00014696.jpg), and other printers produced their own versions (e.g., Nickel Schmidt, [http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1526Mens/00003462.jpg] and Joseph Klug [http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1539LuthD/00005515.jpg], whose engravers produced the borders backwards).[16]

Finally, another variation of a title-page border, somewhat reminiscent in overall arrangement of the 1515 Schürer printing of Erasmus' essays mentioned earlier, was that used by Eucharius Cervicornus in Cologne for Platina's *De vita & moribus summorum pontificum historia* (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1529Plat/00017099.jpg). It uses a vertical arrangement to assert a hierarchy of authority. Christ appears at the head as *Salvator Mundi*, flanked by the Four Evangelists (John and Mark on the left and Luke and Matthew on the right), with the Apostles Peter and Paul on the sides (Peter has primacy of place). At the base are the Four Doctors of the Latin Church.[17] Platina (1421–1481) was remembered as a historian of the papacy[18] and for championing Catholic orthodoxy in Rome.

---

reformers departed from the teaching of the Fathers and the historic Christian faith. (On Cochlaeus, see Ralph Keen, "Cochlaeus, Johannes," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 1: 369-71.) Title-page borders such as Holbein designed were used to counter such criticisms.

[15] Richard G. Cole, "Reformation Printers: Unsung Heroes," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 15 (1984): 336.

[16] A striking variant of these woodcuts is that used to introduce a folio volume of John Eck's sermons on the Ten Commandments, published in the Catholic city Ingolstadt by Georg Krapff (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1539Eck/00005506.jpg). The symbols of the Gospels are at the corners (John, Matthew, Mark, and Luke), and on the left are Peter and Saint Willibald (an eigth-century Bishop of Eichstätt, Bavaria), and on the right are Paul and Pope Victor II (r. 1055-1057, from Bavaria), with the Madonna and Child at the base. The two apostles seem to be engaged in vigorous debate or are preaching (especially appropriate for a volume of sermons), and while neither has a book, Pope Victor and the symbols of the Gospels do. Christ (or God the Father) as Pantokrator is at the head. While the import of the whole affirms the orthodoxy of Eck's sermons, it is unclear why Willibald and Victor II are included. The former died in Eichstätt, and the latter had been a candidate for the bishopric of Eichstätt, before becoming pope. (In addition, Victor's body was on the way to Eichstätt for burial but was seized and buried in Ravena instead.) Since the university at Ingolstadt, where Eck taught, was within the bishopric of Eichstätt, it may be that the Willibald and Victor II are shown on the title page to appeal to their ecclesial authority or prestige for Eck's sermons. (Suggestion from Armin Siedlecki, Pitts Theology Library, August 30, 2010.) Hence, the primary aim of this title border is not the assertion of orthodoxy for a suspect author but to honor figures revered among the readers. (Suggestion from Armin Siedlecki, Pitts Theology Library, August 30, 2010.) It was the bishop of Eichstätt, Gabriel von Eyb, who first enlisted Eck (1486-1543) in the Catholic Church's response to Luther. Eck's critique of Luther led eventually to his role in the debate with the reformer at the Leipzig Disputation (1519). Walter L. Moore, "Eck, Johann," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (1996) 2:17-19.

[17] All the fathers, as well as Paul, Mark, and Matthew are shown with books; Luke is holding the portrait of Mary that tradition credits him with painting; Paul offers a sign of blessing toward Peter; and while all the biblical figures have halos, only one of the Fathers does.

[18] Nevertheless, his history of the papacy has been judged uncritical, though readable. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1307.

Hence, the framing of this collection of his works, as has been done here, seems entirely appropriate.[19] The same title border was used by Cervicornus for other biblical works as well.[20]

Therefore, by including the symbols of the Four Evangelists, portraits of the two leading apostles, and portraits of the Four Doctors of the Western Church, the printer affirmed the orthodoxy of the work from the standpoint of the ancient biblical witness and church tradition. Among Lutheran printers the Holbein design proved especially popular.

II. Gospels and Apostles

The second group of title borders retains the symbols of the Gospels at the corners, omits the Doctors of the Latin Church, but places Peter and Paul at the sides in full length figures. An early exemplar of this arrangement is a design after Hans Holbein the Younger but cut by Hans Lutzelburger and used by Adam Petri at Basel for his printing of Luther's German New Testament in December 1522-January 1523 (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1522BiblC/00010607.jpg;[21] another variant of this was created for Adam Petri's octavo format publications, http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1523MelaD/00003002.jpg).[22] As with the other Holbein design, symbols for the four Gospels are in the corners, though they are presented in an order that elevates the two Gospels attributed to disciples who had known the earthly Jesus (Matthew and John) by placing them at the head. Full length portraits of the two apostles are on the flanks (Peter occupying the prime place on the left) with their respective symbols, and a scallop — the symbol of Christian baptism — is delicately worked into the background. While the biblical writers remain, the Church Fathers have disappeared, perhaps to emphasize the greater authority of the biblical authors. The city arms of Basel are at the head with the motto INCLYTA BASILEA (Renown Basel), and the printer's device, featuring a putto riding a lion, is at the foot and dated 1523.[23] All six biblical figures are

---

[19] Though not a title border, a 1585 Parisian printing of Gratian's treatise on canon law (*Decretum Gratiani emendatum et notationibus illustratum*; http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1585Grat/00021152.jpg) features an elaborate, full-page woodcut compilation that has a certain resonance with the Platina woodcut. The central figure is Pope Gregory XIII (1502-1585), holding a book in his lap and surrounded by his advisors. Around the two sides and base are smaller images of Augustine, John, Matthew, Luke, Mark, Paul, and Gregory I (left) and Jerome, Moses, Job, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Saint Ambrose (right). All the figures have books (Moses, the tablets) and their attributes. Gregory studied and taught law in Bologna and later served as a judge under Paul III. As pope (1572-1585) he set about vigorously to reform the church, and among the achievements during his tenure was the publication of a new edition of the *Corpus juris canonici*. The woodcut, therefore, appeared in the year of Gregory's death and served as a tribute to him and his achievements in canon law. The Doctors of the Latin Church and the biblical figures assembled with them represent Gregory's predecessors, devoted to the law of God, and so provide the historical and conceptual background for a celebration of Gregory and his accomplishments.

[20] A commentary on Psalms (earlier attributed to Remigius; http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1530Cath2/00009531.jpg) and for a harmony of the Gospels by Zacharias Chrysopolitanus, which relied on the Latin Fathers Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1535Zach/00015982.jpg). See L. Butler, "Zacharias Chrysopolitanus," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912) http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15743a.htm ; Bruce M. Metzger, "Tatian's Diatessaron and a Persian Harmony of the Gospels," *JBL* 69 (1950): 264.

[21] Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts: 1400-1700*, 14A: 68-69; Hieronymus, *Basler Buchillustration* 1500 bis 1545, 409-11.

[22] Hieronymus, *Basler Buchillustration 1500 bis 1545*, 409-11.

[23] Adam Petri operated a press in Basel (1507-1527) until the year of his death. His printer's device with the arms of Basel and the inscription INCLYTA BASILEA has been ascribed to Urs Graf. The device with the putto riding a lion may be the work of Hans Holbein the Younger. Henning Wendland, *Signete: Deutsche Drucker- und Verlegerzeichen*, 1457-1600 (Hannover: Schlüterschen Verlagsanstalt, 1984), 107-109.

given halos and have books (in the earlier Holbein woodcut, Peter and Paul were without books), perhaps driven by the fact that the work this border introduces consists of the books of these Christian figures. The two apostles hold their attributes in the left hand (as with the earlier woodcut) but the book in the right, and both concentrate intensely on their reading — perhaps admonishing those who purchase Luther's translation to do the same. Both design and printing of the title border are beautifully executed, and while many of the same elements are retained from the earlier Holbein woodcut, the 1522 title border has been elegantly recast in order to introduce appropriately Luther's most important work, the translation of the Greek New Testament into German.[24] By 1523, Luther had broken with Rome, and while the writings of the Church Fathers remained important for him and he cited them often, Scripture had greater authority (hence the famous "*sola Scriptura*" slogan)[25] — something clearly signaled by this border. It continued to be used by Adam Petri and his son Heinrich for other works.[26]

Johann Rhau-Grunenberg (fl. 1508-1525) at Wittenberg used a similar design a year earlier (1522), in which he placed the symbols of the Gospels at the corners, Peter and Paul on the margins (in their typical places), a crucifix at the head, and the Electoral Arms of Saxony at the base, framed by the monogram of the printer (IG) and the date 1522 (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1522LuthB/00000288.jpg). This border appropriately introduces Luther's Christmas postils on the Epistles and Gospels. A border with more pronounced Lutheran elements was used for Melanchthon's commentary on Colossians,[27] which reverses the positions of Peter and Paul — a mirror image of the Catholic approach. The resurrection lamb and the Luther rose are below the feet of each apostle, and Christ as savior of the world pronounces a blessing over all (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1528Mela/00003630.jpg) from the head and premiere position on the page. Two shields (one with the printer's initials) are at the base.[28]

Contrasting with this is a thoroughly Catholic variant of the Basel December Testament border used at Munich by Hans Schobser (d. 1530; http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1528Purs/00003509.jpg) to introduce Berthold Pürstinger's (Bishop of Chiemsee in Bavaria) *Tewtsche Theologey*, the first Catholic dogmatic theology. The title-page border is dated 1528 and features the symbols of the Four Gospels at the corners, Christ at the head, Madonna and Child at the base, and Peter (left) and Paul at the sides. Here Peter wears the papal triple tiara, and Mary holds a scepter, and so Catholic readers are assured of the Catholic orthodoxy of the work, which defends the Roman Church from Protestant criticisms.

---

[24] Luther's *September Testament*, though, was issued at Wittenberg without title-border. Petri continued to reprint Luther's translations of the Bible (Pentateuch, v.1; Joshua-Esther, v.2; Job-Song of Solomon, v.3), but since the printer died in 1527, before Luther finished translating the Old Testament (1532), he was unable to complete the project.

[25] At the Diet of Worms (1521) Luther had been accused of subjectivism, that is of privileging his own interpretation of Scripture over that of the Church Fathers and councils.

[26] Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts: 1400-1700*, 14A: 69.

[27] Wittenberg: Joseph Klug, 1528.

[28] Wolfgang Köpfel at Strasbourg introduces Luther's work on usury (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1525LuthI/00003403.jpg) with a design featuring only two figures at the side (Paul and Luther), and none of the Evangelists. Paul is given the greater position on the left and may be instructing Luther. Christ and the Holy Spirit appear at the head, and the scene at the foot is intriguing—perhaps largely decorative and playful, but also, with a bishops' hat on one of those kneeling to the enthroned figure, a possible slap at Rome. Similarly, Morhart's 1535 printing of the Augsburg Confession at Tübingen gives Paul pride of place on the left and may suggest that Paul is showing Peter a text from Scripture. The conversion of Paul is shown at the head and the Delphic Oracle at the foot (with philosophers gathered around the Castalian spring, where the Delphi priestesses bathed before announcing their oracles).

These title borders exhibit a stronger focus on the biblical authors and so on their authority but find other means to affirm loyalty to the Catholic or Protestant churches. This general design may have been more popular with Lutherans than Catholics.

III. APOSTLES AND DOCTORS

The third group of title borders — all Roman Catholic — retains the Four Evangelists and Doctors of the Latin Church, arranges them on the sides, and then develops other themes at the head and foot of the page to advance the interpretive agenda of the title page. This will be presented by means of five title borders that feature variations of a single design by Anton Woensam of Worms (d. 1541). The common elements are the Four Evangelists and the Four Doctors of the Western Church on the sides. The upper and lower panels vary for this popular design, which was used for several publications from 1532 on.

The earliest border in the group was printed by Peter Quentel and introduced the magnum opus of Ortwin Gratius (Ortuinus Gratius), a humanist in Cologne, who also worked for Quentel's press. The work was a collection of sixty-six treatises by various authors on history and theology (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1535Grat/00004819.jpg), compiled to identify abuses in the Catholic Church that later councils might correct. This elaborate title border depicts at the head God enthroned, with the resurrected Christ, Peter, the pope, and a bishop on the left and Mary, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and other women on the right. At the base is a larger panel that dominates the title border by virtue of its measurements and the increased size of its two figures: Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and his younger brother Ferdinand I. They appear with their respective arms and the coats of arms of the seven electors (Mainz, Trier, Cologne, Bohemia, Palatine, Saxony, and Brandenburg). This lower panel is dated 1531 (before Woensam had crafted the other panels), the year that Ferdinand was made "King of the Romans" and so designated as the successor of Charles V and the year that the Schmalkaldic League was formed by Philip I (Landgrave of Hesse) and John Frederick I (Elector of Saxony) to resist any attempts by Charles to subdue the Germans. The quotation under the panel at the head is drawn from Zechariah 1:15 and Deuteronomy 32:23 and threatens the judgment and wrath of God on the nations.[29] This border, therefore, places the authors of the Gospels only slightly above the church's great theologians and so marks a striking change from the Holbein designs. In addition, while the placement of God as judge of all at the head of the page affirms his sovereignty, the depiction of the earthly rulers at the base of the page affirms their roles as divine instruments and so offers balance and instruction on how one should understand human princes. When this volume appeared in 1535, the Schmalkaldic League had just been opened to any territories accepting the Augsburg Confession (1530), and in December of that year, Francis I, King of France joined the league (though later retreating from this position). Therefore, in this turbulent time when Protestant princes were aligning their lands to oppose the Catholic rulers, this work against abuses in the Catholic Church appeared, but its border may be understood to set forth the proper

---

[29] From the Vulgate text of Zechariah 1:15, Woensam has selected, "Et ira magna ego irascor super gentes," but omitted the rest of the verse: "opulentas quia ego iratus sum parum ipsi vero adiuverunt in malum." An English translation of the entire verse from the Vulgate of Zechariah reads, "And, with a great anger, I am angry with the wealthy nations. Though I had been angry a little, truly they advanced further in evil." Similarly, Woensam has omitted from Deuteronomy 32:23, "Congregabo super eos mala," but reproduced, "et sagittas meas conplebo in eis" (woodcut text: sagitas meas complebo). An English translation of the entire verse reads, "I will heap evils upon them, and I will expend my arrows among them." (English translation from Catholic Public Domain Version, Original Edition. Ronald L. ConteJr., transl. and ed.; http://www.sacredbible.org/catholic/index.htm.) The biblical text, therefore, explains why God sits upon his heavenly throne with arrows in his right hand.

context for church reform — i.e., that it be done, not as an attack on the church from outside, but that it be done from within the context of historic Catholic tradition and under the protection of Catholic princes, all this under the sovereignty of God.

This title border was reproduced — though with a different lower panel, and so without the strong political element in the Gratius volume — for Jean Driedo's work on Scripture and tradition (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1543Drie/00009515.jpg)[30] and for Franciscus Polygranus' sermons on the Gospels and Epistles (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1564Poly/00001280.jpg).[31] The lower panel — a bit too narrow for the rest of the border—is devoted to the creation of Eve and shows God breathing on her and placing his right hand on her in blessing. Therefore, beginning with Genesis and the foundational doctrine that God created all, attested by the rest of Scripture and the Doctors of the Church, the reader proceeds to the book of Revelation and its vision of creation before the judgment seat of God. Hence, Woensam's title-page border provided a suitable frame for both works with its comprehensive view of Scripture's witness and its powerful image of God at creation's beginning and end. Just as each of the two authors was known for his opposition to the Lutherans, this border clearly identifies with the Catholic Church.[32]

Another variation of Woensam's title border also incorporates a different panel at the base — Denys the Carthusian's commentary on the Pentateuch (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1548Deni/00009334.jpg)[33] — and so offers a more subdued political tone than that in the 1535 volume. Here, the ecstasy of Denys the Carthusian is witnessed by the pope, bishops, cardinals, and monks on the left and by the Holy Roman Emperor, princes, and other secular figures on the right.[34] The inscription at the base of the panel — presented to balance the one at the head — is from the Vulgate of Psalm 84:5 (English translations, Psalm 85:4) and offers an humble sentiment: "Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us" (NRSV). While the most obvious connection between Denys' commentary and the lower panel lies in his role as an interpreter of Scripture who drew on the generations of earlier interpreters, both authors of New Testament books and the Doctors of the Church, there are more intricate elements suggested. For example, the authority of God as final judge (upper panel) resonates well with the ecclesial and secular rulers (earthly judges), who kneel to receive Denys' revelations at the foot of the page, and the inscriptions at the head and foot of the page unite in their concerns with the wrath of God. In addition, Denys is positioned between the God of heaven, Scripture, and earlier generations of interpreters and the people of the Carthusian's own generation. This volume was published just after the Schmalkald War, as the Holy Roman Emperor was wearing down the Lutheran princes of Germany.

---

[30] *De ecclesiasticis scripturis et dogmatibus* (Vaenundantur Louvain: A Bartholomaeo Grauio; Colophon: Coloniae excudebat Iaspar Gennepaeus, 1543). Driedo taught at the Catholic University of Louvain, which had condemned Luther's teachings in 1519, but was more moderate than many of his peers.

[31] *Christliche Predigen vnd ausslagung über die Episteln vnd Euangelia* (Cologne: Jaspar Von Gennep, 1564).

[32] Jaspar von Gennep, the printer of the Polygranus volume, was also the translator of the Latin sermons. His license to print from the Holy Roman Empire restricted him from printing anything but Catholic works.

[33] *Dionysii Carthusiani Enarrationes piae ac eruditae, in quinque Mosaicae legis libros: hoc est, Genesim, Exodum, Leuiticum, Numerorum, Deuteronomium ...* (Cologne: J. Quentel, August 1548).

[34] Below the figure of Denys the Carthusian, kneeling and lifting his hands to God, is an inscription in a radiant orb: *benedictus deus in scla* ("Blessed be God forever"). Below Denys is a block on which is inscribed the monogram of Anton Woensam (intersected A and W) and on which rests the arms of Pope Clement VII (d. 1534) and the crest of the Holy Roman Emperor.

Yet another variation of Woensam's title border, issued the same year as Denys' commentary on the Pentateuch, incorporates a different lower panel for the publication of *Vitae sanctorum patrum veteris Catholicæ atq[ue] Apostolicæ* (http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1548Vita/00017107.jpg).[35] Here the crucified Christ appears at the base, with angels flying to him with the instruments of his suffering. Female saints appear on the left and male saints on the right (the reverse of the upper panel). Hence, the story of redemption through Christ (base), recounted through the centuries by authors of Scripture and Christian tradition (margins) and honored by the generations of the church's saints, finds consummation in the judgment of God at the end. Most appropriately, this woodcut introduces a history of Christian witness (the lives of the saints and Church Fathers), and once, more, a Catholic press presents the church's literature and witness in a comprehensive frame of redemption and judgment.

Finally, Johann Quentel made a somewhat awkward adaptation of this border for the title page of the 1550 printing of Johann Dietenberger's (1475-1537) German New Testament (third edition; http://www.pitts. emory.edu/woodcuts/1550BiblA/00001380.jpg). Dietenberger's translation was first issued in 1534 and went through fifty-eight editions to become the premiere Catholic Bible in the German language for two centuries.[36] Quentel's addition to the Woensam title border was a new (and a bit too large) upper panel that depicted Jesus' transfiguration.[37]   In the scene Moses and Elijah appear in the clouds above Jesus, and Peter, James, and John below. God reigns above all and bears the *globus cruciger* in his left hand, declaring in Latin, "This is my beloved son, listen to him."[38] Here, the transfiguration of Jesus (head) and the story of redemption through Christ (base) bracket those who wrote the New Testament books and interpreted them for the church through the centuries. This provides, therefore, the hermeneutical key for understanding the New Testament: Christ supersedes the authorities of the Old Testament and has redeemed humanity, as those who recorded his witness, interpreted it for the church, and confessed it through their devotion.[39]

This group of title borders presents the sovereignty of God or Christ and the teachings of the Evangelists and Doctors of the Church as the constants. The lower panel serves as the expression of God's gracious provision of earthly rulers, the blessing of creation, the revelation through favored saints, and the redemptive sacrifice of Christ.

Summary

This survey of sixteenth-century woodcut title borders offers the following tentative conclusions, subject to further testing and refinement:

---

[35] *Vitae sanctorum patrum veteris Catholicæ atq[ue] Apostolicæ Ecclesiæ, dicta gestaq[ue] insignia & admiranda excellentium aliquot Dei amicorum utriusq[ue] sexus complecte[n]tes* (Coloniæ: Excudebat Iaspar Gennepæus, 1548).

[36] Karin Brinkman Brown, "Dietenberger, Johann," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 1: 484-85; Hermann Wedewer, *Johannes Dietenberger, 1475-1537: Sein Leben und Wirken* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1967; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersch Verlagshandlung, 1988), 147-197. Citation from Herder edition.

[37] This version of the New Testament, issued before the conclusion of the Council of Trent, includes the Epistle to the Laodiceans and sets Acts after the Pauline epistles.

[38] The full text of Matthew 17:5 is "hic est Filius meus dilectus in quo mihi bene conplacuit ipsum audite," but what is in the woodcut is "hic est Filius meus dilectus, ipsum audite." Though the Bible itself is in German, the names and quotation of Matthew 17 are in Latin.

[39] A completely different woodcut title-border introduced the Old Testament, though it also was a Christocentric design (http://www. pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1550BiblA/00001320.jpg).

1. By framing the title of a book with images of authors of Scripture and their revered interpreters, a printer or publisher is able to enhance the credibility of a more recent author and the work that follows. This may be reinforced by adding images of deity or the insignia of municipal authorities to indicate that higher powers have approved the publication.

2. By the thoughtful arrangement of figures or symbols the printer is able to tap into ancient, accepted traditions that further boost the authority of the work that the border introduces (e.g., the Four Gospels and the proposition of Irenaeus).

3. The authority or preeminence of revered figures may be advanced or muted by their placement on the page (e.g., the head and left margin of the page have particular importance), relation to other figures on the page, and by their size. Symmetry may be an especially effective tool to advance the status of one (contested?) figure by pairing him/her with another one of unquestioned prominence and authority.

4. The omission of certain figures that are expected to appear and their replacement by other figures is a way to signal the loyalties of the printer and author.

5. A certain narrative or affirmation about the future may be advanced by taking the initial and closing elements of that story and using them as brackets on a page — viz., at the head and foot of the title border. This effectively positions the book that follows as the intermediate text in the larger narrative.

6. Quotations of Scripture (or other respected texts) may also be employed to guide the interpretation of a title illustration or the book that follows, and the selection of the language in which this is presented also nuances the appeal.

7. A hermeneutic for the church's reading of Scripture may also be advanced by the selection of elements in the title border.