

Basic Detail Report

Title

Christi und Antichristi

Artist

Cranach School, Philip Melanchthon, Martin Luther

Date

1521

Dimensions

Overall: 8 1/16 x 5 15/16 in. (20.4 x 15.1 cm)

Medium

Printed book; woodcut (border of title page and 26 woodcuts)

Classifications

Books

Credit Line

Mrs. George W. Stevens Fund

Object number

1986.105

Collections

Works on Paper

Label Text

Martin Luther (1483-1546), the founder of the Reformation and Protestantism, was, in 1521, declared a heretic and excommunicated for repeatedly declaring (and publishing) his views which were exceedingly critical of the Catholic Church and the Papacy. In May 1521, the date when this booklet was published, Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, issued the Edict of Worms, declaring Luther an Outlaw, so Luther went into hiding. Luther helped plan this booklet, but the texts were actually prepared by Philip Melancthon and John Schwertfeger, a jurist sympathetic to protestanism. The book contains thirteen pairs of woodcuts (with accompanying text), one of each pair depicting the life and sufferings of Christ, and the other, by contrast, depicting the excesses of Pope Leo and his court, presented as the Antichrist. The book was widely circulated and it shows, at glance, the disdain felt by the early Protestants for the papacy. Shown here is the comparison of Christ carrying the Cross contrasted to Pope Leo (who was quite corpulent) being carried in a litter by several papal attendants. Lucas Cranach, was one of the foremost artists of his day, serving Duke Friedrich the Wise of Saxonony in Wittenberg. Cranach ran a large workshop and was one of the wealthiest citizens of Wittenberg. Cranach provided the designs for the woodcuts, which were executed by his workshop. The Museum possesses a painting portraying MARTIN LUTHER and the WITTENBERG REFORMERS (ca 1543), by Cranach's son Lucas Cranach the Younger, who received his training in his father's workshop.

Not On View