How could the Protestant Reformation take off from Wittenberg, a tiny town in Saxony, which contemporaries regarded as a mud hole? And how could a man of humble origins, deeply scared by the devil, become a charismatic leader and convince others that the Pope was the living Antichrist? Martin Luther founded a religion which to this day determines many people’s lives, as did Jean Calvin in Geneva one generation later. In this new edition of her best-selling textbook, Ulinka Rublack addresses these two tantalising questions. Including evidence from the period’s rich material culture, alongside a wealth of illustrations, this is the first textbook to use the approaches of the new cultural history to analyse how Reformation Europe came about. Updated for the anniversary of the circulation of Luther’s Ninety-five Theses, Reformation Europe has been restructured for ease of teaching, and now contains additional references to ‘radical’ strands of Protestantism.

Ulinka Rublack is Professor of Early Modern European History at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of St John’s College. She is author of The Astronomer and the Witch: Johannes Kepler’s Fight for His Mother (2015), an Observer Book of the Year, editor of the Oxford History of the Protestant Reformations (2016) and Hans Holbein, The Dance of Death (2016), a Spectator Book of the Year. She was awarded the Bainton prize for her landmark study Dressing Up: Culture Identity in Renaissance Europe (2010).
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Reformation Europe

Second Edition

Ulinka Rublack

University of Cambridge
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Acknowledgements for the First Edition

This book has been written for Bob Scribner, who originally was meant to write it, but died of cancer before being able to do so. I have also written it for him as a teacher whose sheer enjoyment of history, wit, imaginativeness, clarity and boldness was so wonderful to experience. The finishing of the original German manuscript was made possible through a much appreciated additional term of leave granted by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and a slightly different version of this book has already been published as a Fischer Taschenbuch in 2003. No one could wish for a more supportive series editor than Tim Blanning, and Elizabeth Howard and Alison Powell unfailingly provided prompt advice at Cambridge University Press. I am also extremely grateful to friends and colleagues who discussed parts of the manuscript, or helped me in other ways, in particular Hans-Christoph Rublack, Francisco Bethencourt, Daniela Hacke, Scott Dixon, Mary Laven, Jack Goody, Lyndal Roper, Philip Benedict, Robin Briggs and David Lowe. Francisco I also thank for making life so unimaginably happy while I completed and translated this book in Paris, during my leave and two pregnancies, in the middle of our ever more joyous life with João and Sophie.
Note on the Second Edition

This second edition is published in 2017, as the five-hundredth anniversary of the circulation of Martin Luther’s Ninety-five Theses, is commemorated across the world. Cultural historical approaches have generated much fruitful research during the past decade. Recent writing focuses far more on Wittenberg as the locale where Luther shaped his ideas and from which he disseminated them, as well as on his embodied subjectivity and close relationships with other male reformers – ideas which I found to be crucial for an interpretation of the Reformation when I wrote the first edition. There is now substantial interest in the history of emotions and the senses in relation to the Reformations, as well as in the global history of Protestantism. I should point out that this is a companion volume to R. Po-Chia Hsia’s outstanding The World of the Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770 (2nd edn, 2011) in the series.

I have changed some of the structure of the book in order to clarify these arguments and approaches, and have shortened chapters so as to make them easier to use in teaching. In addition to more material on ‘radical’ strands of Protestantism, I have included more illustrations, to underline the importance of visuality and materiality as they shaped and reflected people’s understandings of themselves and the world. I have also updated references to some of the most relevant secondary literature.

I have benefited from my dialogue with colleagues in the course of editing the Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations, published in 2016, and am grateful to all reviewers of this present book’s first edition who made me aware of shortcomings as well as the potential of a cultural historical approach informed by the anthropology of religion and sociology of knowledge. I am furthermore grateful to my colleagues in Cambridge, who bring such energy and intellectual brilliance to the study of the Reformations, as well as to Michael Watson from Cambridge University Press for his support over many years and Katherine Law for stellar support during the preparation of this manuscript for publication.

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Chronology

1378–1417 Great Schism
1402 Jan Hus begins to preach at the Bethlehem church in Prague
1415 Hus is burnt in Constance
1439 Weakening of conciliar movement and reinforcement of papal power
1456 Invention of the printing press and movable metal type in the West
1466 or 1469 Birth of Erasmus
1483 Birth of Luther
1484 Birth of Zwingli
1485 Utraquism is recognised as a legal religion in Bohemia
1509 Birth of Calvin
1512 Luther takes his doctorate and begins lecturing in Wittenberg
1512–17 Fifth Lateran Council
1516 Publication of Erasmus’s New Testament in Greek and an original Latin translation, challenging the approved Vulgate version
1517 Luther’s ninety-five theses
1518 Zwingli begins his ministry in Zurich
1519 Election of Emperor Charles V; Leipzig disputation between Eck, Luther and Karlstadt
1520 Luther threatened with excommunication by Pope Leo X; Luther publishes three programmatic treatises: *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, A Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church and The Freedom of a Christian
1521 Luther formally excommunicated; the Sorbonne judges Luther’s Leipzig arguments to be wrong; meeting of the Imperial Diet in Worms; Frederick of Saxony protects
Chronology

1521–5 Wide dissemination of Reformation ideas in urban and rural areas of Germany and Switzerland

1522 Religiousgespräche in Zurich and consolidation of the Reformation

1524 Erasmus challenges Luther in De Libero Arbitrio

1524–5 Peasants’ War

1526 Battle of Mohács; beginning of church and school visitations in Saxony; Balthasar Hubmaier and his supporters settle in Nikolsburg

1530 Confession of Augsburg prepared by Melanchthon and presented to the Imperial Diet

1531 Death of Zwingli in the second Kappel War; Zwingli replaced by Bullinger as the leading Zurich reformer

1532 Reformation in Geneva

1534 Act of Supremacy in England, acknowledging Henry VIII as supreme head of the English church; first big wave of anti-Protestant persecution in France; first complete edition of Luther’s Bible translation finished; election of Pope Paul III

1534–5 Anabaptists take over Münster

1536 Death of Erasmus; first version of Calvin’s Institutio Religionis Christianae; Gustav Vasa confiscates church property in Sweden

1536–8 Calvin’s first stay in Geneva

1537 Danish church order under Christian III; re-opening of Copenhagen’s university with a curriculum similar to Wittenberg’s; introduction of the Reformation in Norway; Henrician Reformation introduced in Ireland

1541 Calvin begins his Reformation in Geneva; first French edition of his Institutio Religionis Christianae

1542 Lutheran church order in Schleswig-Holstein

1544 Second wave of anti-Protestant persecutions in France

1545 Opening of Council of Trent

1546 Death of Luther

1545–7 Schmalkaldic War; death of Henry VIII of England and Francis I of France

1548 Imperial Interim

1549 Consensus Tigurinus; first edition of the English Book of Common Prayer; upper Hungarian cities declare their support for Protestantism
1552 War of the Princes in Germany; second, more reform-orientated version of the Book of Common Prayer
1553–8 Mary Tudor attempts to re-establish Catholicism in England
1555 Peace of Augsburg; reinforcement of persecution of Protestants in the Netherlands
1556 Charles V abdicates
1558 Elizabeth I becomes queen of England
1559 Academy of Geneva founded; first national synod of French Protestants; John Knox returns to Scotland; the structure of the Anglican church is established by Parliament; Christian III of Denmark dies
1559–62 Auto de fe against Spanish ‘Protestants’ in Seville and Valladolid
1560 Philip Melanchthon dies; consolidation of the Scottish Reformation
1562 Massacre of Vassy; First War of Religion in France begins
1563 Council of Trent ends; a Reformed catechism is formulated in Heidelberg; Frederick III establishes Calvinism
1564 Death of Ferdinand I; death of Calvin and succession of Theodore Beza as moderator of the Company of Pastors
1566 Hedge preaching and iconoclasm in the Netherlands
1567 Duke of Alba reinforces persecution of Protestants in the Netherlands
1568 Transylvanian estate assembly recognises Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed and anti-Trinitarian churches
1570 End of Protestant reform movement in Italy
1571 First Protestant church order in Sweden; Battle of Lepanto
1572 St Bartholomew’s Day massacre in France; Holland and Zeeland decide to fight against Spain
1575 Confessio Bohemica of Reformed Utraquists and Bohemian Brothers
1576 Holy League of French Catholics formed
1577 German Lutherans agree on Formula of Concord
1578 Beginning of re-Catholicisation in inner Austria
1581 Declaration of independence of northern provinces in the Netherlands; Second Book of Discipline in Scotland
1585 Antwerp taken by the Spanish
1589 Accession of Henry of Navarre (converts to Catholicism in 1593)
1593 Council of Uppsala, Sweden–Finland commits itself clearly to Lutheranism
1598 Edict of Nantes
1603 Death of Elizabeth I of England; accession of James I
1607 First church order in Norway
1608 Protestant Union founded in Germany
1609 Protestant League founded
1618 The Calvinist Frederick V of the Palatinate elected king of Bohemia; outbreak of the Thirty Years War
1642–6 First English Civil War
1648 Peace of Westphalia; recognition of united northern provinces in the Netherlands as autonomous from Spain; Second Civil War in England
1649 Execution of Charles I of England (30 January) and dissolution of the monarchy (17 March)