



The 'Biblioteca Reussiana ad Bellum Tricenne' at Harvard

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The 'Bibliotheca Reussiana ad Bellum Tricenne' at Harvard

AMONG the many special collections in the Harvard University Library, that entitled by its founder 'Bibliotheca Reussiana ad Bellum Tricenne' has been for more than thirty years one of the least known. Following its acquisition in 1928, this collection of more than 2,600 books and pamphlets pertaining to the Thirty Years' War has remained virtually unnoted¹ and unused by historians. The purpose of the present paper is to attract attention to this rich and unworked mine.

I

The man who brought together this outstanding collection was Rodolphe Reuss (1841-1924), who on the title-page of his handwritten catalogue, now shelved with part of the collection in the Houghton Library, called himself 'ancien Bibliothécaire de la Ville de Strasbourg, Directeur-d'études à l'École pratique des Hautes-Études [Paris], Correspondant de l'Institut, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.'²

Reuss was the descendant of a Palatine family. His great-grandfather was a counselor to a landgrave of Hesse who ruled some Alsatian possessions in the eighteenth century; his grandfather founded a commercial house in Nancy, but after his marriage to a native of Strasbourg moved his business to that city. There in 1804 Rodolphe's father, Edouard, was born, in his time a great Protestant theologian. Edouard's wife and Rodolphe's mother, the former Julie Himly, was the daughter of a Protestant minister; and her brother was to become dean of the

¹ A one-sentence notice appeared in *The Library of Harvard University: Descriptive and Historical Notes* (Cambridge, 1934), p. 90.

² The following sketch is drawn from Reuss's autobiography, *Soixante années d'activité scientifique et littéraire, 1864-1924: Mes débuts littéraires et bibliographie de mes travaux* (Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, Fasc. 31; Paris, 1926). This volume also contains a biographical study by Christian Pfister and the addresses delivered at a special ceremony honoring Reuss, held at Strasbourg in February 1923.

Sorbonne. As late as the eighteenth century, Strasburg possessed an outstanding German university, among whose students was no less a person than Goethe; but in the nineteenth century, under changed administration, it had deteriorated. In his charming recollections Reuss himself describes its low standards. Having been educated earlier at the Strasburg Protestant *Gymnasium*, he was a good judge of the university, which he attended as a student in its *faculté des lettres*. There in 1861 he passed his *examen de licence ès lettres*.

Reuss had been brought up firmly grounded in both German and French culture. As a child he had read German as well as French children's books, and as a youngster, under the guidance of his father, had tasted Schiller's plays. Thus it is not surprising that he went to Germany for his education as a historian. Working in Jena, Berlin, Munich, and Göttingen, he studied with some of Germany's greatest historians, Ranke, Droysen, and Waitz. Under Waitz he wrote his Ph.D. thesis, which was issued in 1865 by a Brunswick publisher under the title *Graf Ernst von Mansfeld im böhmischen Kriege, 1618-1621. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Dreissigjährigen Krieges*. That is to say, Reuss's interest in the Thirty Years' War began as early as his student days. In the 1860's three more items written by him in that area of research were published, two in French and one in German. At first Reuss planned to write a history of Ernest von Mansfeld, one of the great figures of the early part of the Thirty Years' War, but he abandoned the project when two biographies of the general were published in this decade.

After completing his graduate work at Paris, Reuss became a teacher at the Protestant *Gymnasium* in Strasburg. There he lived through the Franco-German War of 1870-71, which was a severe shock to him, especially the siege and shelling of the city, with the attendant danger to his family and the destruction of historical monuments and cultural centers, including two libraries close to the heart of the young scholar. It does not seem to have occurred to him that by making a city into a fortress military authorities *ipso facto* seriously endanger its population and cultural values in case of war. As a result of this shock Reuss became a violent French nationalist, composing a volume of hymns of hate, published in 1871 in Geneva under the title *Lieder des Hasses, politische Gedichte von einem Elsässer*. In this context one may well remember that at that time the cra of *politische Lyrik à la Freiligrath* and Herwegh had barely passed, but while the verses of those poets

were at least good, Reuss's poetry — entirely apart from its content — was abominable. It is significant and characteristic of the Alsatian situation that this piece of hate against Germany was written in German.

Regardless of his anti-German sentiments, Reuss, deeply rooted as he was in his home town and province, decided to stay in Strasburg after the conclusion of the Treaty of Frankfurt; but he refused to join the faculty of the new German university or its library staff. He preferred the more modest job of teacher at the *Gymnasium*, at the same time building the Strasburg municipal library, taking a lively interest in Protestant church affairs, and editing a church paper. These activities filled the years 1872–95, two decades in which he became simultaneously an outstanding local historian and, from the French point of view, the historian *par excellence* of Alsace. 1896 he resigned from the Strasburg *Gymnasium* and moved his family and library to France, settling in Versailles. His friends procured him an assignment to teach seventeenth- and eighteenth-century history at the *École des Hautes Etudes* at Paris. His salary originally was extremely modest, being no more than 2,000 francs, but he soon rose in rank, to become *directeur d'études* in 1917.

Reuss was a prolific writer. From his pen came no less than 144 independent publications (books, pamphlets, and reprints sold separately in the book market) and about 500 papers and book reviews. Moreover he wrote eleven prefaces or introductions to books of other authors. Any historian would agree that the average level of so large a production cannot be very high. In the words of a well-known Latin saying, one may characterize the output as *multa* rather than *multum*. Reuss was not a great historian as were his German teachers or such French historians as Taine or Fustel de Coulanges; yet his life work commands respect.

II

Rodolphe Reuss was still in his twenties when — in the 1860's — he began collecting books. The inspiration may have come to him from an assignment of those years: cataloguing an extraordinarily rich and large collection of Alsatica. In the course of his long life Reuss brought together a library that by the sheer number of books and their value far excelled the average library of a nineteenth-century scholar.

The collection specialized in Alsatica, with emphasis being put on Strasburg material (items both of Strasburg history and with Strasburg imprints), books on German history, and last but not least the collection on the Thirty Years' War that Reuss himself designated as *Bibliotheca Reussiana ad Bellum Tricenne*, the title he gave to his handwritten catalogue mentioned above.³

When Reuss died in 1924, his family sold at auction the main part of the library, retaining for a time the collection on the Thirty Years' War. On deciding in 1927 to dispose of this special collection also, the family wished it to go *en bloc* to some public institution, because of its great scholarly value. A price of 40,000 francs, i. e., about \$1,600, was asked. Harvard's acquisition of a number of Alsatica in the auction of 1924 prompted the Strasburg agent charged with the sale of Reuss's prize collection to offer it to the College Library. Upon receipt of Reuss's catalogue, a careful check was made, and the offer thereupon accepted. As the correspondence indicates, the Library seized the opportunity to strengthen its holdings so magnificently in an area in which it had hitherto been weak.⁴

It happened that just at this time a bequest of close to \$1,000 by Herbert Darling Foster, A.M. 1892, was available. There were no restrictions, but the donor had suggested that the funds be used to acquire books on history. That is to say, a good part of the money needed was on hand. Archibald Cary Coolidge, Director of the University Library, made up the balance; and the trophy of about 1,500 books and 1,130 pamphlets on the Thirty Years' War, many of them contemporary imprints, passed into the possession of Harvard University. This was one of the very latest of Professor Coolidge's many benefactions to the Library during his lifetime, for he died 14 January 1928.⁵ The collection itself bears the accession date of 9 November 1928.

III

This is not the place to describe in detail the contents of the Reuss collection. But as a historian, working on a particular topic in the history of the Thirty Years' War, I have used the collection almost daily

³ Reuss used two bookplates. One is a simple name plate. The other is more elaborate, showing among other things the sky line of Strasburg; it was designed in 1908, possibly by a member of the family.

⁴ The correspondence is preserved in the Harvard University Archives.

⁵ The munificent funds bequeathed the Library in his will were established in 1929.

for several years, and can testify to its excellence. The Reuss library contains such well-known and indispensable items as *Commentaria de Germania sacra restaurata* by Carlo Carafa, the papal nuncio to Germany and the mainstay of the German Counter Reformation, in both the 1630 and 1639 editions; *Belli Sueco-Germanici volumen primum*, 1648, of Bogislav Philipp von Chemnitz; and the *Fuerstl: Anbaltische geheimbe Cantzley*, 1621.

The *Anbaltische Cantzley*, making public the correspondence files of the Protestant Bohemian commander-in-chief, which had fallen into the hands of the victorious Catholic army after the Battle of the White Hill in November 1620, initiated a literary feud known to German historians as the *Kanzleienstreit*.⁶ Shortly after the appearance of the *Anbaltische Cantzley*, a number of Spanish documents were captured by the Protestants, who published them in three interrelated pamphlets. Then came the publication of Palatine documents that fell into enemy hands when Heidelberg was taken by Tilly in September 1622. With each party forced to defend itself against charges of treason and other sinister practices, one publication led to another in a series of exposures and rebuttals for a period of about five years. Harvard has a strong representation of titles, obtained largely through the Reuss collection. Mention may be made of *Prodromus, oder Vortrab, nothwendiger Rettung vornehmer Evangelischer hohen und nidern Stands* (n. p., 1622), *Cancellaria Hispanica* (Freistadt [Amsterdam?] 1622), *Strich durch die Spannische Cantzley* (Brugghofen [Munich?], 1623),⁷ *Berichts und Antwort, uff die Bayer-Anbaltische geheime Cantzley, erster und anderer Theil* (n. p., 1624), *Boehemische geheimbe Cantzley. Das ist: Consultationes* (n. p., 1624), *Tubus Gallilaeanus. Hebescentibus Ludovici Camerarii oculis, in litura Hispanicae Cancellariae male advertentibus, ad clarius videndum tornatus* (n. p., 1625), *Cancellaria Gallo-Italica Das ist: Unterschiedliche geheimbe . . . gewechslete Schrifften . . . A. P. A.* (n. p., 1625),⁸ *Ludovici Camerarii I. C. unnd anderer Sendschreiben, welche . . . die Pollacken . . . in einem gefangnen Schwedischen Schiff . . . gefunden und bekommen haben*

⁶ See Reinhold Koser, *Der Kanzleienstreit. Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkunde der Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges* (Halle, 1874), and especially the table on p. 86 synoptically surveying the pertinent literature.

⁷ Of 4 leaves, 208 pages; not in Koser. Harvard also has an edition of 1624, 32 leaves, differing at least in title-page from that listed by Koser, pp. 49-50.

⁸ Of 104 pages; a different edition from that listed by Koser, p. 77, n. 183 (third title).

(n. p., 1627),⁹ *Der Unierten Protestirenden Archib . . . Zu abgetrun-
gener notwendigister Rettung der vor disem ausgangnen Anhaltischen
Cantzley with Appendix, in qua originalia ad hunc librum spectantia
. . . exhibentur* ([Munich?], 1628).¹⁰

The Reuss collection is particularly rich in contemporary pam-
phlets. By decades these pamphlets run approximately as follows:

1611-1620	160
1621-1630	170
1631-1640	175
1641-1650	40

Among them are found so-called *relationes*, reports on current events; official releases such as treaties, capitulations of fortresses, and ordi-
nances of military and civilian authorities; sermons, prayers, and
hymns; polemics; soldiers' songs; a very interesting *salva guardia scripta*;
and a few pieces on minor topics.

Although probably the richest on this side of the Atlantic, these
holdings cannot be compared in scope with the two extraordinary col-
lections of contemporary pamphlets in the Stadt- und Universitäts-
Bibliothek of Frankfurt. The older one was brought together by the
Frankfurt patrician Johann Maximilian Zum Jungen (1596-1649),
i. e., by a contemporary during the war itself. Zum Jungen chose only
what he considered political pamphlets, subsuming, rightly for his
time, religious items under the head of 'political discourses.' This great
collection of more than 2,750 items was supplemented when the civic-
minded politician Leopold Sonnemann of Frankfurt acquired as a gift
for the Stadtbibliothek the pamphlets gathered by the deceased poet
Gustav Freytag, which include almost 1,400 items on the Thirty
Years' War alone.¹¹

Some items in the Harvard collection have a particular interest for
the present writer, because of the detective work necessary for their
identification. The story may be of interest. In 1620, after the collapse

⁹ Not listed by Koser, who cites its Latin original, *Cancellaria Suedica* (1627), only
in a footnote (p. 79, n. 186).

¹⁰ Two copies. Harvard also has another edition, with title beginning *Acta
secreta: Das ist der Unierten Protestierenden Archib* ([Munich?], 1628).

¹¹ On these two collections see *Flugschriftensammlung "Discursus politici" des
Johann Maximilian Zum Jungen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1930) and *Flugschriftensamm-
lung Gustav Freytag* (Frankfurt am Main, 1925), both compiled by Paul Hohenem-
ser.

of the Protestant kingdom of Bohemia, Ernest von Mansfeld became the commander-in-chief of the remnants of the royal troops. He re-assembled and rebuilt the army, so that it was once more a factor in the continuing struggle between the Emperor and the Catholic League, on the one side, and Frederick V, Elector of the Palatinate and ex-King of Bohemia, on the other. Mansfeld was an unusually resourceful general, and he and he alone at that moment thwarted the Catholic party in the Holy Roman Empire. This single-handed opposition was bound to infuriate the victors, and all the more since Mansfeld was not squeamish in his methods and his troops often behaved very badly. Thus there developed another pamphlet war, seventeenth-century style, full of denunciations and invective on both sides. These tracts, of which a good-sized sample is in the Reuss collection, are historically important. The most interesting of them is generally cited as 'the Mansfeld Apologia': it defends the actions and stratagems of the leader of the Protestant forces. For a long time I had been unsuccessful in finding a copy, although I knew the work to exist in French, German, English, and Italian. Finally, I discovered in the Reuss Collection two German editions and one edition in Italian. In the German editions (n. p., 1622) the word 'Apologia' appears late in the titles, one of which reads: *Relation deren Geschichten, ritterlichen Thaten und Kriegsbehandlung: So Herr Ernst Graff zu Manszfeldt . . . Daraus als in einer Apologia*; the other edition appears to differ only in size of type, pagination, and occasional variations in spelling. The word 'Apologia' is missing entirely from the title of the Italian edition (Venice, 1621), which begins *Racconto delle cose accadute all' illustrissimo signor Ernesto Conte di Mansfelt*. But the word stands at the beginning of the title of both the French and English editions, the French ([Paris?], 1621) reading *Apologie pour le très illustre comte le Seigneur Ernest de Mansfeldt*,¹² the English (Heidelberg [London], 1622) *The Appologie of the Illustrious Prince Ernestus, Earle of Mansfield, &c. . . . Translated out of the Originall French Coppie*. A copy of the English edition is at Harvard. I suspect that the French edition is the original one, and that there was also a German edition of 1621.

The Reuss collection is a boon not only to the historian of the seventeenth century, but with its catalogue may also be used by the future historian of the rare book market. Reuss used to jot down in the

¹² Johann Pohler, *Bibliotheca historico-militaris* (Cassel-Leipzig, 1886-99), IV, 627.

volumes and/or in the catalogue the years when he acquired items and the prices he paid. For example, for the first edition of the Carafa book he paid 10 marks in 1883 while twenty years earlier he had paid 2.50 francs for the second edition. Chemnitz's book cost him 1.75 francs and the *Anhaltische Cantzley*, which he acquired in Leipzig in 1865, was his for 4.75 francs.

IV

Being a *general* historian, Reuss as a collector took no particular interest in the *economic* history of the Thirty Years' War and its most important single economic event, the wild inflation of about 1620. This probably explains why there are in the collection only a few pamphlets and one book dealing with that subject. These pieces were recently transferred to the Kress Library of the Graduate School of Business Administration, which had previously assembled five such items. Some of the latter, including one issued by the law faculty of the University of Wittenberg, deal with one of the vital questions of any inflation: can and should creditors, having loaned good money, be forced to receive bad money, i. e., depreciated money, in payment of the debt? Should they in recognition of such payment consider the loan extinguished? However, the most valuable of the Kress Library items referring to this inflation is a copy of the famous *Wachtelgesang* of 1621, written under the pseudonym of Crescentius Steiger. While the inflation was mainly the result of government action, innumerable small men tacked their fraudulent businesses onto nasty government transactions. These men were called 'Kipper und Wipper,' from *kippen*, 'clip,' and *wippen*, literally 'seesaw,' applied in the seventeenth century to fraudulent manipulation in the weighing of full-weight coins. The call of the quail (German *Wachtel*) is supposed to sound like 'kippedewip'; hence the *Wachtelgesang* or 'Song of the Quail,' which satirizes and denounces in bitter terms the activities of the 'Kipper und Wipper.' The Kress copy has a title beginning '*Wachtelgesang, Das ist: Warbafftige, gruendliche und eigentliche Namens-Abbildung*, and consists of eight leaves; the date is contained in a chronogram.¹³

¹³ The Kress copy was acquired about ten years ago with the Wallich collection, an extremely valuable collection of books and pamphlets on economic history,

During a recent survey of the Reuss collection another edition of the *Wachtelgesang* came to light, with a title beginning *Kippediwip oder Wachtelgesang*, also dated chronogrammically 1621, but consisting of twelve leaves. The four additional leaves contain a poem in the form of a presumed conversation between the various coins then current. This new feature, advertised on the title-page by the words 'Sampt noch einem newen Gcspracch von dem jetzigen untraeglichen Gelt auffsteigen [sic] und elenden Zustand in Muentzwesen,' is cleverly devised, and is based on good information regarding contemporary money matters; it might well deserve an annotated reprinting. This obviously later edition has now joined what is presumably the first edition in the Kress Library. Yet another edition, also dated 1621, twelve leaves, with title beginning *Wachtelgesang d. i. Bericht von dem grossen Schaden*, has been recorded.¹⁴ Interestingly enough, the essential features of the *Wachtelgesang* are found in a number of other contemporary pieces, which thus form a specific minor group of German baroque literature.¹⁵

Also supplementing the Reuss collection are the holdings of the Library of the Harvard Law School on the contemporary law of nations and especially the law of war. Here one can also find the army regulations of the period (the so-called articles of war), a knowledge of which is indispensable for understanding many events of the great struggle. The pertinent material, which is available in a completeness that can hardly be duplicated, came into Harvard's possession by acquisitions made in the academic years 1911-12 and 1931-32. In the earlier year the collection on international law of the Spanish Count Olivart was purchased, a library so large that its catalogue was the standard bibliography in the field at that period. The later year saw

formerly owned by the now deceased Berlin banker Paul Wallich; a brief mention of the collection appeared in the HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, IV (1950), 285-286.

¹⁴For the three editions see Emil Weller, *Annalen der poetischen National-Literatur der Deutschen im XVI. und XVII. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1862-64), I, 382 (No. 547), and II, 559 (addenda).

¹⁵See, e. g., Weller, *Annalen*, I, 379-382 (Nos. 528, 530, 531, 536, 537, 542, 545 — with addenda in Vol. II), and *Ein neues und zuvor nie an Tag gebrachtes Kipp-Wipp- und Münzer Lied* (1622), reprinted in Julius Opel and Adolf Cohn, *Der Dreissigjährige Krieg. Eine Sammlung von historischen Gedichten und Prosadarstellungen* (Halle, 1862), pp. 423-426.

The Kress Library has just acquired a copy of Benjamin Leuber's substantial two-part work on the inflation of the 1620's, *Ein kurtzer Tractat von der Muentze* (Jena-Halle, 1624).

the acquisition of the relevant section of the four-hundred-year-old library of the Princes of Stolberg.¹⁶

From the foregoing presentation it should be evident that a great deal of historical research could be conducted in the Reuss collection. To mention only one promising topic, I would propose a thesis on 'The Thirty Years' War in the Minds of Contemporary Observers.'

FRITZ REDLICH

¹⁶See *Reports of the President and the Treasurer of Harvard College 1911-12* (Cambridge, 1913), p. 140, and *Report of the President of Harvard College . . . 1931-32* (Cambridge, 1933), p. 209; *Catalogue d'une bibliothèque de droit international et sciences auxiliaires* [Olivart], 4 vols. (Paris, 1899-1910); *Catalogue of the Stolberg-Wernigerode Library*, I, Section Kf (Cambridge, 1932, mimeographed; copy available in the Harvard Law Library).

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