

Here is the final part of Jennifer's Knust's quest to trace the history of an intriguing Christian manuscript she came across, suspecting it had come to Duke ultimately as a result of Nazi looting decades earlier. Now she details how she tried to track it down.

The entire episode leads her, then to reflect on the Green Family Collection, a group of manuscripts and antiquities purchased by the owners of the Hobby Lobby and the basis of the "Museum of the Bible" in Washington D.C. Any visitor to the museum might assume that acquiring such treasures would be relatively simple and involve no issues of legality, morality, and scandal. On the contrary....

Part III: *Manuscripts are Commodities*

The Antiquariat was (and is) a bookstore. Günther Koch was a bookseller. Indeed, in a counter-claim filed against the Rosenthals in the 1950s, he described himself as uniquely qualified for the position he undertook during and after the war. He reminded the Wiedergutmachungsbehörde I, Oberbayern (Upper Bavarian Restitution Agency I) that he is the author of *Kunstwerke und Bücher am Markte* ("Works of Art and Books on the Market," Eßlingen a. N. Paul Neff, 1915), fluent in thirteen languages, more capable than the Rosenthals of assessing the true value and significance of their collection, and a "Philosemite" to boot. From his perspective, both the Rosenthals and the German government owed him compensation for his troubles. Such a self-serving, self-important, and demonstrably false counter-claim — it was recognized as such by the German court — seems stunning now, more than fifty years later. Yet Koch's lack of regret should serve as a warning to all of us: dripping condescension and an over-active sense of entitlement are professional hazards for those of us with access to the training, institutional support, and privilege that expertise in rare books requires. In Koch's case, his access to the Antiquariat's books came at significant human as well as financial cost: Norbert and his son Paul were murdered in the concentration camps. Norbert's wife Johanna, mother of Ernst, Fritz, and Paul, died as the result of illness, also in the camps (For more information, see ...

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