



Universität
Basel

Universitätsbibliothek

Fiesole Retreat Basel 2023

Alice Keller





Nova et genuina descriptio inclytae urbis Basileae / per Matthaeum Merian fideliter depicta et sculpta, 1615



Foundation of the University in 1460

In the late Middle Ages, the Rhine City was filled with high dignitaries and foreigners as a result of the Church Council (1431–1448). One of them, Pope Pius II, founded Switzerland's first university in Basel in 1460.

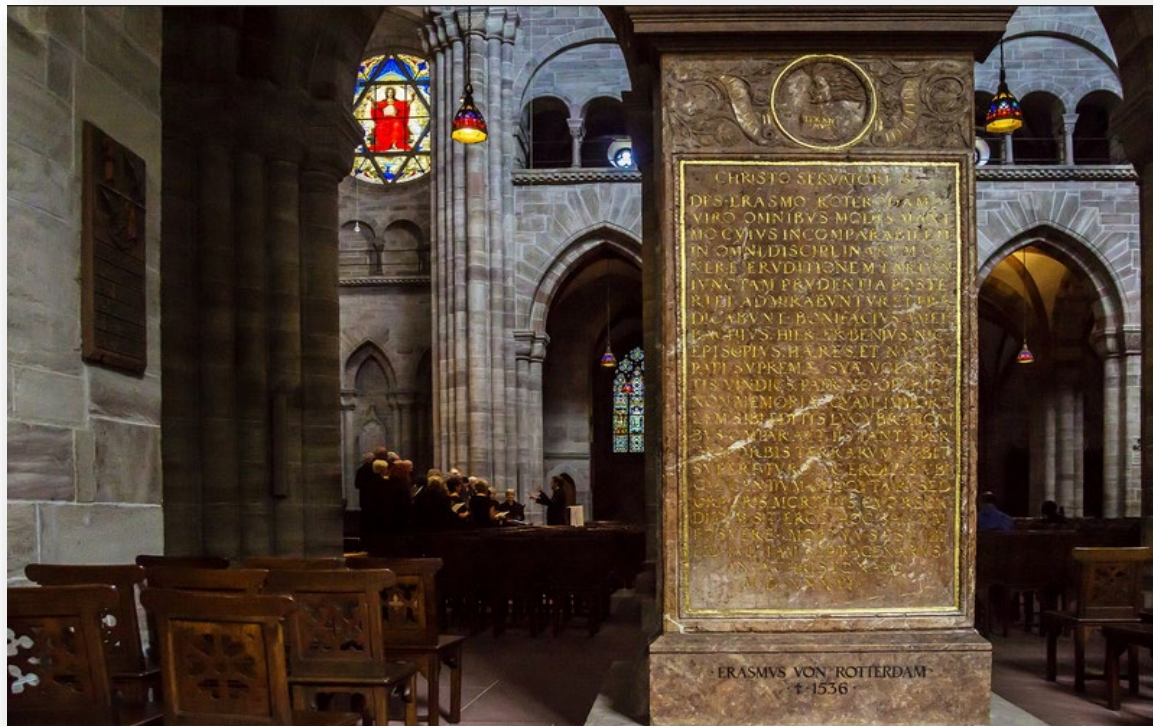
Inauguration ceremony of the University of Basel, 1460

UB AN II 3



Erasmus from Rotterdam was an important Renaissance scholar. He was born in the Netherlands (ca. 1466) and died in Basel (1536). He is buried in the Basel Cathedral.

Erasmus had his main works published by Johannes Froben. A prerequisite for this was the local paper industry blossomed around 1500.





Swiss Museum of Paper, Writing and Printing

Silk ribbons and the birth of industry

From the mid-16th century, immigrants - in particular religious refugees - arrived from Northern Italy and France, including well-known representatives of the silk trade.

They operated the spinning, dyeing and weaving shops, used rural homeworkers to produce silk ribbons, and exported them. As a result, Basel developed into an international centre of the silk ribbon industry.



Science, Enlightenment and the Common Good

Silk ribbon sample book, Emanuel Hoffmann Basel 1770/1780 (HMB).



Basel merchants became very successful and built palaces for themselves above the Rhine.

Science (esp. Mathematics, Bernoulli family / Euler), publishing, printing and philanthropy flourished.

Industries for dyes for silk ribbons formed the basis of the chemical industry.



Basler Mission

The Basel Mission was founded in 1815 by devout members of Basel's wealthy upper-middle classes, and pietists from southern Germany.

From 1828, the organisation started sending its own missionaries to the Gold Coast in Africa and later to Southern India.



Basel today

Basel finally became the largest industrial city in Switzerland in the second half of the 19th century.

The most important industry nowadays is the chemical-pharmaceutical industry.

Two big companies dominate this sector:

- Novartis (orig. Geigy (1758) and Sandoz)
- and Roche (founded in 1896).





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Enjoy your visit!