SUSAN C. KARANT-NUNN

Ritual, Gender, and Emotions

Edited by
MATTHIAS POHLIG

Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation
131

Mohr Siebeck

Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation

Studies in the Late Middle Ages,
Humanism and the Reformation

edited by Volker Leppin (New Haven, CT)

in association with
Amy Nelson Burnett (Lincoln, NE), Johannes Helmrath (Berlin),
Matthias Pohlig (Berlin), Eva Schlotheuber (Düsseldorf)
Klaus Unterburger (Regensburg)

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Essays on the Social and Cultural History of the Reformation

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Matthias Pohlig

Mohr Siebeck

Susan C. Karant-Nunn is Emerita Director of the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies and Emerita Regents' Professor of History at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona; 1998–2010 North American Managing Coeditor of the Archive for Reformation History.

Matthias Pohlig, born 1973; Professor of Early Modern History at the Humboldt-Universität in Berlin.

ISBN 978-3-16-161329-6 / eISBN 978-3-16-161330-2
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-161330-2
ISSN 1865-2840 / eISSN 2569-4391 (Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at *http://dnb.dnb.de*.

The book was typeset by Martin Fischer in Tübingen, printed by Gulde Druck in Tübingen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

Preface

Hardly anyone represents the cultural turn in Reformation history better than Susan Karant-Nunn. Over the course of the last fifty years or so, Reformation historiography has changed and pluralized to a great extent. While the 'old' Reformation history was mainly interested in theology and politics, from the 1960s onward, historians drawing on the new discipline of social history undertook a revision of the field which placed the social actors of the Reformation as well as the dissemination of the Reformation message at the center of research. The urban Reformation and the conflicts that came with it, printing and pamphlet literature, and the question of the popular reception of Reformation ideas are only three examples of this expansion of topics. Since the 1980s, the social history of the Reformation has been supplemented and extended by cultural history. Today, Reformation research examines, for instance, rituals, the body, and emotions. The impressive work of Susan Karant-Nunn is above all an example of such a cultural history, which nevertheless has firm roots in social history.

Reformation history today is a complex, polyphonic field of research. In spite – or perhaps precisely because – of the public presence of the Reformation anniversary in 2017, its future is anything but clear. There is a certain marginalization of European history, especially at American universities, that might sideline the study of Reformation history in the long run. And even within European history, the role of the Reformation is no longer as clear as it once seemed: If it was long assumed that the Reformation was the starting point of modernity and rationality, hardly any Reformation historian today would make such a claim without a plethora of qualifications.

This volume of essays by Susan Karant-Nunn cannot, of course, answer the future questions of Reformation research. However, it showcases the topics and problems that have been at the heart of the history of the Reformation in recent decades. What is more, Karant-Nunn's texts demonstrate the important insights which methodologically open and versatile research into the Reformation is able to achieve. Her essays hint at a variety of institutional and substantive problems such as, for example, the often difficult cooperation between church historians and historians, the sometimes tense relationship between German and American Reformation research, and above all the tensions that have arisen and continue to arise between a more traditional historiography and theory-conscious scholarship that takes up approaches, concepts, and models from anthropology and sociology. Like few others, Susan

Karant-Nunn's work exemplifies the merits of a historiography that combines a close reading of the sources with methodological innovativeness.

For the present volume, I have collaborated with Susan Karant-Nunn in selecting a small number of essays from her large and rich oeuvre. Although all have been published elsewhere, though often in relatively remote locations, the present volume, for the first time, gathers them in one place, thus offering the chance to reread some of the important studies by Karant-Nunn or, indeed, making it significantly easier for those new to the field to become acquainted with them for the first time. Many of the essays collected here were written in the context of Karant-Nunn's work on her major monographs such as *The Reformation of Ritual* (1997) and *The Reformation of Feeling* (2010). Still, the essays are important contributions to the field in their own right. Indeed, many of Karant-Nunn's influential interventions in the scholarly discussion have taken the form of shorter, exploratory essays. In all these interventions, Karant-Nunn has engaged in attentive and appreciative dialogue with the work of fellow historians, taken care to reveal her methodological premises, and gone to great lengths to mark the boundaries of our knowledge. For this reason, too, the essays are not only instructive, but also illustrate her great wisdom and her sympathy to historical actors and historical phenomena as well as the interpretations of her colleagues. Even when the findings which they convey are no longer as surprising today as they were when they were first published (and this in itself is evidence of Karant-Nunn's influence), they are nonetheless impressive for their reflective stance and broad knowledge of sources.

This volume of essays provides a broad insight into Karant-Nunn's fields of research. It brings together contributions dealing with the social and cultural history of the Reformation, the problem of ritual and ritual change, gender relations, and finally the significance of the Reformation for emotions and vice versa. All essays are interested in both theology and society, combine classical social history approaches with an interest in cultural semantics and interpretations, and, finally, evince the author's reception of anthropological theory. Thus, although this collection does not cover Karant-Nunn's oeuvre in its entirety, the texts presented here offer fascinating insights into the work of one of the leading historians of the Reformation.

Without the friendly cooperation of Susan Karant-Nunn this volume would not have come into being, of course. I therefore thank her very much for her time and commitment. I would also like to thank the staff at Mohr Siebeck, first and foremost Elena Müller and Matthias Spitzner, who always provided quick and competent assistance. And finally, I am grateful to Marna Schneider and Grischa Nehls, without whose tireless efforts in proofreading, adjusting the formatting of the text, as well as creating the indexes this book would not have been finished.

Allow me a few final remarks about this collection: Since text files of most of Susan Karant-Nunn's articles were unavailable, the typescripts had to be reconverted from scans of the printed essays. In the process, we have standardized the formatting of the originals, for example with regard to footnotes. In view of these technical difficulties and despite the best efforts of all those involved, it is possible that errors have remained. Responsibility for these lies with me as the editor and I humbly ask for your understanding.

Berlin, 29 May 2022 Matthias Pohlig

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Introduction

I was surprised when, several years ago, Professor Matthias Pohlig, whom I do not know personally, asked me for assistance in deciding which of my English-language essays ought to be included in a volume that he was undertaking to compile and edit for publication in Germany. I regarded this enterprise as so far-fetched that I (rudely) did not respond to him for up to months at a time. To this day, I do not know where the impulse to do this came from. I can only assume that such a book would make some of my obscurely published essays – such as in *festschrifts* – more readily accessible to my German colleagues. But why did they wish to peruse them?

Before I speculate on this, allow me to beg readers' pardon for discoursing about myself. It has long been a convention that scholars did not write about themselves in their works of scholarship. They studiously avoided the first-person pronouns. This detached approach underscored a then-prevalent ideal that historians studied the past and produced a *truer*, more nearly *objective* account of some phenomenon.[1] This ideal may still prevail in Germany, but under pressure of interdisciplinary tactics it has given way in newer Anglophone history – and I suspect in newer Germanophone accounts too – to the admission that the scholar as a *person* is present in every rendition of past persons and events. Individual personality and circumstances, perspective and agenda will inevitably bear upon writings under production on the academic's desktop. The scholar is intimately involved in interpreting what has occurred; she and he are engaged in acts of creativity.[2] Of course, without first admitting to it, no historian should cross the line between nonfiction and fiction, for her purpose remains to illuminate what has long ago transpired in fresh ways, ways that stimulate yet further thought on matters that have seemed till then to be entrenched in our shared intellectual repertoire. I hereby admit to having inserted myself in all my retellings of historical events and my depictions of departed persons. Thus, I beg your indulgence in referring to myself in this preface.

During my fifty-year career, with few exceptions my German counterparts in specifically *church* history showed the least interest of any group in my

[1] I now recall with some amazement the ferment that Peter Novick caused 30 years ago with his book, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[2] See the insightful essay of Susan A. Crane, "Historical Subjectivity: A Review Essay," *Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 2 (June 2006): 434–56.

work, as well as the work of others who drew on anthropology (especially ethnography), sociology, psychology, semiotics, and art history.[3] Initially, not even Robert Scribner was immune to their disapproval. Even my *Doktorvater* Gerald Strauss (an outstanding historian, whose memory I revere), a German by birth and childhood education, urged me before his death to omit all "theory." With the exception of women at work (on the academic fringes) on gender history, thirty years elapsed before a German church historian or historian invited me to make a presentation on a non-gender-related topic.[4] That first host, in June 2000, was Heinz Schilling; I read a paper in his *Oberseminar*.[5] I am now touched that even that previously indifferent cluster within my professional cohort should give rise to this enterprise.

In this preface, then, I can hardly avoid self-references. My obvious line of discussion is bound to be why I took the approaches I did in the essays that Matthias Pohlig suggested as candidates for inclusion and that I ultimately agreed to. I readily assented to the larger categories that Pohlig perceived that the essays naturally fell into.

Certain compositions are the products of the traditional activity of gathering and featuring "new facts." When I was a doctoral candidate, this expectation prevailed. A half century later, the gaps in our knowledge yawn, and we know that in some sense they always will. *What Was Preached in German Cities in the Early Years of the Reformation* purports to be a corrective of facts. As I had labored in the archives on the first generation of Lutheran clergy in electoral Saxony, I had noticed the high individualism that reigned among early candidates for leadership in the churches, until the princes assumed control of spiritual life. Bernd Moeller, who inspired my generation of Reformation

[3] In Germany, colleagues exploring religious history are often employed as members of theology faculties, either Catholic or Protestant. These are described as church historians. In my experience, they are often committed to a denomination and, indeed, are frequently ordained clergy. In my generalization, I do not include faculty in modern history departments (oriented toward 1500 and after) who have been named to chairs in early modern history. They tend to work on a variety of subjects of their choice, which may or may not include the Reformations. Whether they are privately devoted to a faith position is not clear in their scholarship, and they are not clergy. In the United States, the range of types of institutions of higher learning is greater, and the distribution of the faithful among them cannot be readily summarized. In seminaries and fundamentalist-funded colleges and universities, one may generally assume confessional requirements for the right to teach, including that a faculty member's publications be compatible with her or his creed. Faculty in religious studies departments, in my view, vary according to the type of institution of which they are a part. In the U.S., the label of *church historian* will be applicable or not, depending on these several factors.

[4] As my vita would reveal, I did lecture on non-gender subjects and take part in conferences in Germany before 2000, but these occasions were organized by men and women of other, including other European, nationalities.

[5] I actually spoke on a gender-related topic, "Zwischenräume: Die Selbsterfindung der Frauen im Deutschland des 16. Jahrhunderts" (à la Stephen Greenblatt on Renaissance self-fashioning); but in his invitation Professor Schilling did not specify any area.

researchers with his article, *Probleme der Reformationsgeschichtsforschung*, found common theological elements in the sermons of Luther's early followers (*lutherische Engführung*), a conclusion that I could by no means replicate.[6]

With the social revolutions in the Western world in the late 1960s, including the so-called "Women's Liberation Movement," social history laid claim to our profession.[7] The quest of the *Annales* school for *histoire totale* captured the North American imagination. The hotel ballroom in Toronto at which Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie spoke at the meetings of the American Historical Association in 1967 was packed beyond capacity. Especially we younger scholars began to search for historical people who had been excluded from the accounts of many established historians, altogether referred to as subalterns. This category, originating in the British military, included any low-status and marginalized group, including women of many standings, rural clergy, servants, laborers, and miners, even executioners. In the archives where I was reading on a range of other topics, I began to record exceptional anecdotes related to females. It was easy, and genuinely appealing, to begin to include any non-prestigious sector of early modern society in my work; already my dissertation on the rural pastors of Ernestine Saxony showed my attraction to such people. At least three essays in this collection offer further evidence of that appeal: *Preaching the Word in Early Modern Germany*, *"Kinder, Küche, Kirche": Social Ideology in the Sermons of Johannes Mathesius*, and *Reformation Society, Women and the Family*. While I could not avoid interpretation, I see these three as manifesting a shorter distance between textual sources and my recounting of them – as being preponderately factual. Social history remains till today a significant component of my telling of the past. And factual gathering must never go out of style.

But other currents were abroad. At a conference in Flagstaff, Arizona, in 1977, Natalie Zemon Davis, in her comments on a paper I had given, thought that I should consider the framework of Victor Turner in seeking to understand popular culture in Reformation Saxony. My transition to this manner of thinking took several years; I was slow in making it, partly because my colleagues who concentrated on church historical subjects were less friendly to it

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[6] Bernd Moeller, "Probleme der Reformationsgeschichtsforschung," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 76 (1965): 246–57; translated into English in Bernd Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, eds. and trans. H.C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards, Jr. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 3–16. Moeller's assertion to which I responded appeared as "Was wurde in der Frühzeit der Reformation in den deutschen Städten gepredigt?," *Archive for Reformation History* 75 (1984): 176–93.

[7] I urge people reading my account to see Charles Zika's longer, more detailed revelation of his own scholarly development during the same period in "Reformations Past and Future: Global, Multidisciplinary, and Experiential," in *The Cultural History of the Reformations: Theories and Applications*, eds. Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Ute Lotz-Heumann (Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, 2021), 23–38. Lotz-Heumann and I are grateful for his candor.

than those specializing in other fields. The first time I read David W. Sabean's *Power in the Blood*, I wrote incredulously on the title page of my copy, "Historian as writer of fiction!"[8] But later on, I undertook to imitate Bob Scribner and other colleagues whose work I came to regard as providing a model. With Scribner's express encouragement, I took greater interpretive liberties with the rite of women's churching after childbirth. The initial audience, at a summer seminar at the Herzog August Bibliothek, was similarly oriented and thus receptive. The resultant essay, *A Women's Rite. Churching and the Reformation of Ritual*, appears here. A subsequent paper, *Neoclericalism and Anticlericalism in Saxony, 1555–1675*, was rejected by the editors of *The Sixteenth Century Journal* on the grounds that its theoretical analysis, generally anthropological, was unacceptable. Ethnography was evidently to be confined to "primitive" and mainly non-Western societies. The article appeared in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. It too is reproduced here.

From that time forward, looking at the past from an interdisciplinary perspective was encouraged within the Anglophone world, although with less enthusiasm among Reformation historians. The ethnographer's approach to human society colored the way a number of historians looked at past social groups: these were embedded within a multi-faceted culture, which shaped them and from which they could by no means break free.[9] Lutheran clergy were no exception. They carried into their sermons themes and values that had also shaped the homilies of their predecessors. In both theology and praxis, they were heavily indebted to medieval predecessors. Catholic culture decidedly did not dissolve and dissipate around 1500; the Protestant Reformation too carried significant aspects of it forward.[10] Examples of my perception are included here in *Preaching the Word in Early Modern Germany*, and *"Fragrant Wedding Roses": Lutheran Wedding Sermons and Gender Definition in Early Modern Germany*. Yet, the Reformation did effect some changes, and the challenge was, and still is, to reconfigure, to make more porous, the church historians' traditional line between late medieval Catholicism and the emerging dissident positions. The new creeds' polemical representatives notwithstanding, the modern researcher can well note the commonalities that bound both, and indeed all, Christian faith groups in that era. One of the clear locuses of innovation is to be found at the heart of every community in

[8] David W. Sabean, *Power in the Blood. Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[9] The limitations culture places on a people is already an underlying theme in Le Roy Ladurie's *Paysans de Languedoc*, 2 vols. (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1966), and several subsequent editions.

[10] Volker Leppin's varied works are at the forefront in demonstrating this point today. I shall provide only one example: "Mysticism and Justification," in *The Medieval Luther*, ed. Christine Helmer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 181–93, which ends succinctly: "Martin Luther is to some degree a late medieval mystic."

the Protestant parsonage, which I have observed in *The Emergence of the Pastoral Family in the German Reformation: The Parsonage As a Site of Socio-religious Change*.

The themes of ritual and emotion are themselves the offspring of an interdisciplinary manner of thinking. The older anthropological literature is replete with ritual studies, including those by that very Victor Turner whom Natalie Davis had found helpful. The cultures of ritual actors provided a symbolic vocabulary that may or may not have been understood literally by all observers. But not all members of a society have the same interests or share an identical world view. Catherine Bell opened to me the idea that hegemonic designers of ritual, as, for example, in the early modern Catholic and Protestant churches, might even miss their marks as bystanders and participants understood ecclesiastical acts in ways that coincided with their own places in the local world.[11] I was under the influence of Bell's ideas when I wrote *Liturgical Rites: The Medium, the Message, the Messenger, and the Misunderstanding*. Indeed, the laity outright resisted certain disciplinary rites imposed by the emerging Lutheran prelacy, described in *"They have highly offended the Community of God": Rituals of Ecclesiastical Discipline and Pastoral Membership in the Community in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century German Parishes*; and echoed recently in *"Sing unto the Lord": An Anthropology of Singing and Not-Singing in the Late Reformation Era*. Ultimately, most parishioners, under the guidance of pastors and with the facilitation of new media, appropriated remodeled rituals and made them their own.[12] Not even the strictest oversight, as in Calvin's Geneva, could enforce complete conformity. *Babies, Baptism, Bodies, Burials, and Bliss* reflects the irreducibility, indeed the ongoing vitality, of folk belief. In some settings, ongoing folkish practices found themselves pitted against the new creeds. I have explored this problem in *Popular Culture as Religious Dissent in the Post-Reformation Era*. *Ritual in Early Modern Christianity* is a summation written for a survey of early modern Christianity.

Culture being a totalizing concept, it contains within itself vast possibilities for scholarly discussion.[13] One of the most vigorous of the last 15 years has concerned the emotions. I have shared with a cadre of fellow historians distributed around the world an attraction to what has become a veritable subfield.[14] The essays in this anthology that represent this strain of my research are

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[11] Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), in particular chap. 9, "The Power of Ritualization," 197–223.

[12] See Bridget Heal, *A Magnificent Faith: Art and Identity in Lutheran Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), on the role of images in fostering and consolidating Lutheran culture.

[13] On this topic, see Ute Lotz-Heumann's and my introduction to *The Cultural History of the Reformations* (as note 7), 11–22.

[14] A high volume of research on medieval and early modern European emotion has been

"With Covered Faces": Emotion Rituals in Early Modern Germany, and *Postscript on the Religious Emotions in the Late- and Post-Reformation Era*.

I have inherently argued in these remarks that I am not alone in being related to and drawing on the currents that have simultaneously gained the professional attention of my disciplinary peers. We never work in an ideational vacuum, in a space devoid of the interests of others. I have continually taken inspiration from the work of colleagues whose books and articles I have read; whose papers I have heard; and whose probing questions in classrooms, auditoria, and book reviews have piqued my thought. In my view, the greatest originality has sprung from those who have crossed disciplinary lines in their considerations. Here I stand apart from the late Steven Ozment and from Brad Gregory, both of whom have taken a stand against the interdisciplinary reach in seeking to understand early modern religion.[15] In effect, I reply to these colleagues in *Patterns of Religious Practice: Nontheological Features*. As I search the horizon for new questions to ask my sources and indeed for new kinds of sources altogether, I find the hope of innovation to lie in examining my extra-disciplinary counterparts' intellectual frameworks. As I hope I have indicated, I am not among the pioneers in experimenting with their perspectives.

During the last generation, newer directions in Reformation-related research have shown the promise of astonishing new insights into our small field within early modern European history. A notable object of research is currently the *experience* of religion by the worshipper – how the ordinary attendee at divine services might have perceived the ecclesiastical environment and the ritual processes. Scholars such as Matthew Millner, Philip Hahn, and Jacob Baum have delved into the use of the senses in Protestant settings.[16]

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lavishly supported by the Australian government through its creation of the consortial Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100–1800 (CE110001011). Over the several years' duration of its grant, it funded research, conferences, and publications on the subject. Online, see http://www.historyofemotions.org.au/ and for current projects http://www.historyofemotions.org.au/research/research-projects/ (consulted 29 July 2021).

[15] Ozment wrote, "The aim of writing or reading about early modern Europe is not to prove or disprove the theories of some nineteenth-century psychologist or twentieth-century anthropologist; it is rather to obtain an understanding of what it meant to be a person in that age." Steven Ozment, *Three Behaim Boys: Growing Up in Early Modern Germany* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), xii. For a lengthy exposition on scholarly transgression, see Brad S. Gregory, "The Other Confessional History: On Secular Bias in the Study of Religion," *History and Theory* 45, no. 4 (2006): 132–49, here 132, beginning: "The rejection of confessional commitments in the study of religion in favor of social-scientific or humanistic theories of religion has produced not unbiased accounts, but reductionist explanations of religious beliefs and practice with embedded secular biases that preclude the understanding of religious believers-practitioners."

[16] Matthew Milner, *The Senses and the English Reformation* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011); Philip Hahn, "Sensing Sacred Space: Ulm Minster, the Reformation, and Parishioners' Sensory Perception, c. 1470 to 1640," *Archive for Reformation History* 105 (2014): 55–91; Jacob Baum,

The reformed body, including its postures, begins to be of interest.[17] I regret that Thomas Lentes's pathbreaking dissertation, *Gebetbuch und Gebärde*, about bodily position and prayerful gesture, has never been published.[18]

Another monument to imaginative thinking is Alexandra Walsham's treatment of the Protestant perception of and even the construction of the landscape in England through the post-Reformation early modern period, in her *The Reformation of the Landscape*.[19] Walsham's approach could produce the excavation of mountainous material if applied to the German-speaking world. Or what about the personalities of Reformers and rulers, those who shaped the emerging non-Catholic religious topography? What perhaps even today do we owe to their unique temperaments, their experiences, their preferences? We could probably agree that Martin Luther and John Calvin, to name but two, were distinctive in taste and character. Did they imprint their features on the soft clay of weakening Catholic allegiance?

Years ago, when I was reading in the Evangelisches Lutherisches Kirchenarchiv in Stuttgart, I was surprised to notice the ambiguity in common Christians' religious identities and practices, in response to their altering geographic locations and their practical needs. I described my findings in *Confessional Ambiguity along Borders: Popular Contributions to Religious Tolerance in Sixteenth-Century Germany*. Since that time, however, colleagues such as David Luebke (working on Westphalian parishes)[20] and Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer (in regard to interfaith convents throughout Protestant Germany)[21] have shown that syncretism and hybridity were prominent features of the Reformation from its beginning in areas where faiths existed in close contact. Continuing attention to the reciprocal influences among the faiths will, I predict, yield yet deeper understanding of religious dynamics in this period.

A global perspective on the Reformation is developing apace, partly at the instigation of Merry Wiesner-Hanks. In the more recent parts of her ex-

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Reformation of the Senses: The Paradox of Religious Belief and Practice in Germany (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019).

[17] See especially chap. 8, "The Practice of Prayer," in Alec Ryrie's superb book, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 144–99.

[18] Thomas Lentes, "Gebetbuch und Gebärde: Religiöses Ausdrucksverhalten in Gebetbüchern aus dem Dominikanerinnen-Kloster St. Nikolaus in undis zu Straßburg (1350–1550)" (PhD diss., University of Münster, 1996). I read it at the University of Tübingen. I have just learned of Lentes's death in 2020, a tremendous loss to all who try to reconstruct late medieval religious experience.

[19] Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[20] For example, David Luebke, "Misremembering Hybridity: The Myth of Goldenstedt," in *Archeologies of Confession: Writing the German Reformation 1517–2017*, eds. Carina L. Johnson et al. (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2017), 23–44.

[21] Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer, *Stripping the Veil: Convent Reformation, Protestant Nuns, and Female Devotional Life in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

pansive opus, she repeats that we shall have a better prospect on European religion if we place it within the context of contemporaneous trends outside its boundaries. European divines and lay devout, and not just members of Catholic orders, took the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19–20 very seriously indeed. As they undertook ever greater contact with the extra-European world, they not only bore their faiths with them but intended to fulfill the scriptural adjuration. Women, too, increasingly participated in these activities. Wiesner-Hanks observes that work on especially Protestant women's roles has only begun.[22]

In short, creative thought is present not just among my interdisciplinary comrades but also within the ranks of stalwart conservatives, church historians of the Reformation, my esteemed colleagues. Having resisted for a while, even the latter feel the impulse toward innovation within the circulating literature that draws on the analytical concepts of other disciplines. And, I should gratefully add, previous church historians' works are indispensable points of consultation in every research endeavor of mine. Whatever our theoretical perspectives, our new books and essays are entwined, interdependent strands as in a braid.[23]

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[22] Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Women in the Cultural History of the Global Reformation," in Karant-Nunn and Lotz-Heumann, *The Cultural History of the Reformations* (as note 7), 249–64, especially, on Protestant women, 258–64.

[23] In Britain called a plait; in German *geflochtener Zopf*.

I. Social and Cultural History of the Reformation

What Was Preached in German Cities in the Early Years of the Reformation? *Wildwuchs* Versus Lutheran Unity[1]

Despite intensive research on the incipient Reformation by generations of scholars, there is much that we still do not know about it. Bernd Moeller's article in the 1984 issue of the *Archive for Reformation History*, *Was wurde in der Frühzeit der Reformation in den deutschen Städten gepredigt?* is thought-provoking in both content and methodology.[2] Telling Moeller much about the German Reformation is carrying coals to Newcastle, yet his assertions do elicit a response. Moeller reacts against Franz Lau's description of the early years of the German Reformation as a time of *Wildwuchs*, literally of "wild growth."[3] By this Lau means that, before the Reformation was adopted and directed by urban, new ecclesiastical, or territorial authorities, it was a matter of the individual heart and mind and that, in the cities of the German Empire, numerous preachers conveyed to the masses not only their enthusiasm for the teaching of Martin Luther as they conceived it, but also their own doctrinal convictions. These convictions often resembled Luther's, but inevitably contained elements of the preachers' invention. Having mentioned Billican, Bugenhagen, Menius, Johann Hess, Bucer, Brenz, Hubmair, Schappler, and Capito, Lau advises his readers to take into account that "that which was announced to be the Word of God was in itself not entirely homogeneous but very strongly differentiated […]. Social or legal tones are much more audible than in Luther (J. Strauss), and one will have to reckon with the more significant Reformation preachers having their own theology."[4] Lau summarizes his view as follows:

> "The fact is that at first there were only differentiated Reformation sermons and in part a corresponding congregational life […]. To view as Lutheran the many preachers and writers of the period before 1525 would be very rash. Naturally they all preached the 'Word of God' and felt themselves to be with little or no qualification in solidarity with Luther. For a time this was even the case with Müntzer and longer still with Zwingli. Even a man

[1] Research for this article was financed by the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX).

[2] Bernd Moeller, "Was wurde in der Frühzeit der Reformation in den deutschen Städten gepredigt?," *Archive for Reformation History* 75 (1984): 176–93.

[3] Franz Lau and Ernst Bizer, "Reformationsgeschichte bis 1532," in *Reformationsgeschichte Deutschlands: Ein Handbuch*, eds. Kurt Dietrich Schmidt and Ernst Wolf (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 3–66.

[4] Ibid., 19.

like Schwenkfeld […] noticed only after some while (1525) that his path and Luther's had to diverge. The Reformation preachers of the period before 1525 were a many-faceted society; their sermons were as yet unshaped by new norms; that they all were, like Luther, pious toward those in authority could not be assumed. For the period up to 1525 one can speak only with reservations and with careful commentary of a unified or even of a two- or three-pronged movement. Even the boundary between the classical Reformation and enthusiasm (Anabaptism and spiritualism, etc.) was not sharply drawn and was for many not yet visible at all."[5]

Moeller disagrees. Using 32 synopses, about 1500 printed pages in all, of sermons by 26 authors (preachers) from 27 cities of all types and geographical distribution throughout Germany,[6] Moeller concludes "that in the early years of the Reformation in the urban chancels of Germany from which adherents of the Reformation preached, a diffuse and frequently primitive *Wildwuchs* did not predominate, but on the contrary, a theological teaching that in its basic features and main points was thoroughly unified and relatively self-contained, and which rested upon an underlying theological consensus."[7] These sermons were inspired by the printed teachings of Luther and did not significantly depart from them. Until 1525, they acknowledged Luther's leadership (*lutherische Engführung*) of the reform movement.[8] They concentrated chiefly on practical theology: justification, the church, Christian life, and the end of the world.[9] To the small extent that they were socially critical, they dealt with the Catholic clergy and virtually never with world order.[10]

It would have been helpful to the reader if Moeller had identified his sources more fully. We are allowed to assume that the preachers mentioned in footnotes are those on whom the author bases his conclusions, but one of the striking features of the references is the preachers not included in them. The apparent problem of omission can be explained by looking at several preachers in Saxon and Thuringian cities whose sermons for one reason or another do not form part of Moeller's collection.

Let us begin with Zwickau, in 1518 the largest town in Ernestine domains. It is impossible to state that early Protestant sermons in this urban center were characterized by peaceableness and solidarity with Luther. Such Lutheran stalwarts as Friedrich Mykonius (briefly), Caspar Güttel (very briefly), and Nicolaus Hausmann did indeed expound from city pulpits their interpretation of the Word of God, but this is by no means the whole picture. For example, Johann Sylvius (Wildenauer) Egranus was preacher in Saint Mary's

[5] Ibid., 32 f.
[6] Moeller, "Was wurde in der Frühzeit" (as note 2), 179, 181.
[7] Ibid., 191.
[8] Ibid., 193.
[9] Ibid., 184.
[10] Ibid., 192.

Church until 1521, when he left for the new and burgeoning mining town of Joachimsthal, just across the Bohemian border. There, too, he preached his reform-minded, but never truly Lutheran, Catholic humanist beliefs?[11] So deviant did those who advised Pope Leo X find Egranus's attacks on the church that they succeeded in putting his name along with Luther's on the bull *Exsurge domine.*

The young Zwickau humanist Stephan Roth took notes on Egranus's sermons intermittently between 1519 and 1522, in both Zwickau and Joachimsthal. Egranus criticized the cult of Saint Anne and the exaggerated pomp and circumstance of Catholic ritual.[12] He opposed the pope's distortion of the historical place of Saint Peter.[13] He attacked indulgences.[14] He declared from the pulpit that Christ was the one true priest and men's only intercessor.[15] He affirmed only two sacraments, baptism and holy communion.[16] During Lent in Zwickau in 1519, he testified to his reliance upon Scripture: "The gospel of Christ is the light which ought to shine."[17] Roth noted this in Latin, but Egranus preached to the people in German.

How, then, may the career of this man be seen as part of a disorderly growth of the early Reformation? In addition to these teachings, which seem quite compatible with Luther's own although arrived at chiefly through his humanistic studies, Egranus taught his congregations that even if communion had originally been distributed to the laity in both kinds, the church must have had good reasons for changing that practice six to seven hundred years earlier. Christian unity, he said, should not be destroyed over this technicality.[18] The common people should be spared the confusion that attends rapid change.[19] He stated that he had to believe that when the priest gave thanks over the bread, it was changed into Christ's flesh even though the manner of its transformation remained a mystery.[20] Not even the Bible ought to be used as ammunition here: "They should let the Gospel go and stay by the unity of the Church."[21] Someone must have criticized Egranus on this point, for

[11] Georg Buchwald, "Die Lehre des Johann Sylvius Wildnauer Egranus in ihrer Beziehung zur Reformation, dargestellt aus dessen Predigten," *Beiträge zur sächsischen Kirchengeschichte* 4 (1888): 163–202.

[12] Otto Clemen, "Eine merkwürdige Inschrift am Altar unserer Marienkirche," *Alt-Zwickau* 2 (1929): 8; Zwickau Stadtarchiv (hereafter ZSA), Ratsprotokolle (hereafter RP) 1519–1522, 1520, fol. 12.

[13] Buchwald, "Die Lehre des Johann Sylvius" (as note 11), 170.

[14] Ibid., 171–5.

[15] Ibid., 178 f.

[16] Ibid., 182.

[17] Ibid., 195.

[18] Ibid., 187.

[19] Ibid., 189 f.

[20] Ibid., 186.

[21] Ibid., 199.

he defended himself from the pulpit in Joachimsthal on the Thursday before Easter 1522:

"We should not be divided into sects so that we say, 'I am a Martinian, I am an Eckite, I am an Emserite, I am a Philippist, I am a Carlstadter, I am a Leipziger, I am a papist,' and whatever more sects there may be. I will follow Saint Paul and say that I am of Jesus Christ. I preach the gospel […]. In sum, I am a follower of the Gospel and a Christian. Beyond that, I stand by the Church in its honest practices that are not in contradiction to the Gospel […] one must not throw out all the good customs and rules of the Church."[22]

Another formally appointed preacher in Zwickau, and in regular conflict with Egranus between October 1520 and his dismissal in April 1521, was, of course, Thomas Müntzer. Even though we have no collection of this radical's sermons from his year there – we know much more about his preaching in Alstedt and Mühlhausen, also German cities – we dare not overlook his presence or his homiletic potency. In Zwickau, his incompatibility with Martin Luther first became apparent. The clues we possess from his sojourn in Zwickau permit us to say with fair certainty at least this much: Müntzer began to preach against the power of the magistrates, mocking Egranus and the city councilors for their mutual solicitude.[23] He raged against Egranus's reluctance to overturn the ecclesiastical status quo.[24] He sympathized with the economic plight of the ordinary woolweavers who packed Saint Catherine's Church to hear him. He highly praised the nonconformist weaver Niclas Storch as "raised above all priests as the one who best knew the Bible" and said that he was "highly perceptive (*erkannt*) in spirit."[25] He encouraged his listeners at Christmas to physically attack a rural Catholic pastor who dared to attend a sermon.[26] He taught that God could illuminate the individual Christian and that divine messages had a validity that rivaled Scripture's. This is not to deny the similarities between him and Luther that still existed. Luther himself, however, was not a man to cultivate a relationship with spiritual leaders

[22] Ibid., 200 f. On Egranus's stay in Joachimsthal, see Heribert Sturm, *Skizzen zur Geschichte des Obererzgebirges im 16. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1965), 32.

[23] Johann K. Seidemann, *Thomas Müntzer: Eine Biographie, nach den im Königlich Sächsischen Hauptstaatsarchive zu Dresden vorhandenen Quellen bearbeitet* (Dresden and Leipzig: Arnold, 1842), document 5c. For a fuller account of Müntzer's stay in Zwickau, see Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Zwickau in Transition 1500–1547: The Reformation as an Agent of Change* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), chapter entitled "Humanist Oratory, Radical Revelation, Conciliar Resolve: The Coming of the Reformation."

[24] On the relationship between Egranus and Müntzer, see Walter Elliger, *Thomas Müntzer: Leben und Werk* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 132–66; and Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 61–8.

[25] Paul Wappler, *Thomas Müntzer in Zwickau und die 'Zwickauer Propheten'* (Zwickau: R. Zückler, 1908), 12.

[26] ZSA; RP 1519–1522, 1520, fol. 12.

whose views did not coincide with his on every point.[27] The break with Müntzer was not slow in coming.

Müntzer was a preacher in more than one German city, and he had a decisive effect upon his hearers. His popularity with many common people, even with two or three city councilors and one future councilor in Zwickau, cannot be overlooked. Müntzer confessed under torture in 1525 that he had entered into a conspiracy – to do what he did not say – with Zwickau's ever-rebellious woolweavers Hans and Heinrich Gebhart and their following.[28] We may be sure that this association did not aim to foster social and religious harmony in the city. The city fathers invited Luther in April 1522 and Caspar Güttel in June 1523 to preach in Zwickau, in large part to counter the lingering results of Müntzer's activities there.

We see at work in Zwickau, then, in addition to the teaching of Lutheranism by the pastor Nicolaus Hausmann and the guest Caspar Güttel, the biblical humanism of Egranus in Saint Mary's parish and the ever more radical anti-authoritarianism and spiritualism of Müntzer in Saint Mary's and Saint Catherine's churches. Egranus, as observed, continued on in Joachimsthal and Müntzer in Alstedt and Mühlhausen. Even in Zwickau after 1521, all was hardly the tranquil enunciation of Lutheran principles. It seems that Niclas Storch, in order to demonstrate his biblical erudition, must have engaged in something worthy of the label preaching even though he held no position in the church. Do we ignore his work because we have no summaries of his sermons?

Or what of the attacks, beginning about 1526, of the genuinely Lutheran preacher Paul Lindenau on burgomaster and councilor Hermann Mühlpfort? These do not appear in any summaries of sermons, but they were launched from the chancel nonetheless. In March 1527, Lindenau ranted against Mühlpfort before the congregation of Saint Mary's Church, who loved his insubordinate sermons better than Luther's:[29]

> "You whore, you lout, you proud wretch, you haughty boob, you highfalutin donkey. You let yourself think that no one is more clever than you […]. You hold council against me, you brought me here and want to drive me out again because I won't condone your airs, misdeeds, knavery, shitting around, thievery, and whoring! Note well, your power hangs by a thread, and when it is broken, your power will well and soon come to an end."[30]

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[27] Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Luther and the False Brethren* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975).

[28] Dresden Staatsarchiv (hereafter DSA), Loc. 10327, "Wieder Täuffer zu Erfurth, Sachsenburg, Mülhausen, Der gefangenen Aussagen Dr. Johann Eck Schreiber, Thomas Muntzers Bekentnuss, Widerruff 1527 [sic]," fol. 15.

[29] Weimar Staatsarchiv (hereafter WSA), Reg. Ii 245, fol. 32.

[30] *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–), *Briefwechsel* 4, 183 (hereafter WA for Weimarer Ausgabe).

Was Zwickau exceptional in being the scene of widely varied and often polemical preaching during the early years of the Reformation? Let us consider the well-known case of Wittenberg itself. Certainly, Bugenhagen and Luther delivered sermons here, and like those of Güttel and Hausmann in Zwickau, they expounded the emerging orthodoxy. Were Carlstadt and Gabriel Zwilling merely spectacular exceptions to Moeller's rule?

Carlstadt's beliefs, like those of Müntzer in Alstedt and Mülhausen, are well known and require no detailed definition here.[31] What should be remembered is that Carlstadt took the city by storm, chiefly by means of the sermon. Not only was the people's enthusiasm great, but even the city council accepted as the new ecclesiastical order the dramatic changes introduced by Carlstadt, summarized in the *Ordnung der Stadt Wittenberg* of January 24, 1522.[32]

During the turmoil of the Wittenberg Movement, the Augustinian monk Gabriel Zwilling, an admirer but no slavish imitator of Carlstadt, preached his own beliefs to a packed monastery church and in many villages surrounding the city.[33] Zwilling and some of his fellow monks aroused even Carlstadt's concern because of the energy with which they urged upon their avid listeners the complete boycott of Catholic masses.[34] Zwilling declared that the Lord's Supper was not a sacrifice but only a ritual that Christ wished carried out in his memory.[35] Zwilling evidently denied the real presence. Frederick the Wise ordered Gregor Brück to investigate Zwilling.[36] Later that year the elector refused to allow Zwilling to take up the pastorate in Altenburg even though by then Luther was convinced of Zwilling's full submission and loyalty to himself.[37]

Carlstadt's influence was not confined to Wittenberg. We are familiar with his success in Orlamünde, the town to which he withdrew when remaining in Wittenberg became untenable.[38] Carlstadt preached there from the summer of 1523 until September 1524, when Luther succeeded in having him driven out. By this time, Carlstadt was very much a mystic and had come to reject infant baptism. His wife, who remained behind to bear their son, was sent packing when she declined to let the infant be christened.[39] In 1527, the first parish

[31] Hermann Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1905).

[32] Aemilius Ludwig Richter, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Weimar: Verlag des Landes-Industriecomptoirs oder Leipzig: Ernst Julius Günther, 1871), 2: 484.

[33] Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein* (as note 31), 1:313 f., 362–4.

[34] Ibid., 313.

[35] Ibid., 313 f.

[36] Ibid., 314.

[37] WA, *Briefwechsel* 2, no. 500, May 29, 1522.

[38] Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein* (as note 31), 2: 95–143.

[39] Ibid., 219.

visitors had to order some babies baptised, evidence of Carlstadt's influence and not of the spread into Thuringia of Swiss or Austrian Anabaptism.[40]

Carlstadt left a considerable heritage behind him in Saxon and Thuringian cities, in the form of disciples who preached his and not Luther's religious perspectives. He was very popular in Joachimsthal, dedicated a number of treatises to leading citizens of this mining city, and evidently received gifts of money from them on several occasions.[41] Martin Reinhard, who had been with Carlstadt in Denmark, was driven out of his preaching post in Jena.[42]

To the territorial princes, the Albertine George and the Ernestine Frederick the Wise and his brother Johann, who jointly governed the silver-mining cities of the Erzgebirge, one of the most persistent and troublesome of Carlstadt's adherents was George Amandus, preacher in Schneeberg from December 1523 until August 1525.[43] I do not know whether Moeller missed Amandus's treatise, *Wye Eyn Geistlicher, Christlicher Ritter und Gottes Heldt in diser Welt streytten sall*, published in Zwickau in 1524.[44] In this explication of his creed, Amandus reveals his affinity for the mystical *Gelassenheit* or self-abandonment that was central to Carlstadt's thinking. This physically lame cleric aroused both fervor and controversy within the mining population of Schneeberg by preaching the destruction of images. The annalist Christian Meltzer records disapprovingly, "The limping Amandus destroyed the images (*die Bilder gestürmet*) and even did away with the image of Christ on the cross." Following Amandus's example, a peasant from the village of Griessbach took a crucifix and used it to heat his house. George put the rustic in prison for this sacrilege.[45]

On Good Friday 1525, two of Schneeberg's patricians reported to Frederick the Wise – in reality to his brother Johann since Frederick lay dying in Lochau – that the common people were delighted by Amandus's homiletic assaults on authority; when the citizens heard rumors that the princes were going to fire their clergyman, they began conspiring to keep him.[46] Shortly thereafter, on April 25, 1525, a formal interrogation convened, presided over by officials of both branches of the Wettin house. They presented Amandus with a list of twenty controversial statements collected from his sermons

[40] WSA, Reg. Ii 198.

[41] Sturm, *Skizzen* (as note 22), 33; Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein* (as note 31), 1:197.

[42] Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein* (as note 31), 2: 102, 139.

[43] Otto Clemen, "Georg Amandus," *Beiträge zur sächsischen Kirchengeschichte* 14 (1899): 221–23; Felician Gess, "Die Anfänge der Reformation in Schneeberg," *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 18 (1897): 31–55, esp. 37–49.

[44] Zwickauer Ratsschulbibliothek XX. VII. 35^{14}, and XVII. XII. 4^{19}.

[45] Christian Meltzer, *Historia Schneebergensis Renovata. Das ist: Erneuerte Stadt- und Berg-Chronica* […] *Schneeberg* (Schneeberg: Fulde, 1716), 298 f.

[46] WSA, Reg. Ii 131, fol. 2; also WSA, Reg. N 35a, a report by Schneeberg's *Richter* of Amandus's utterances from the pulpit and of an early interview with the preacher.

over more than a year by high-ranking persons who were offended by his utterances. Amandus was alleged to have preached that the community ought to rule the city council and not the other way around, and even that a land should govern its prince.[47] The preacher insisted he had meant only that one should not deny the Holy Spirit and that no one could rule "the ground of our heart" (*den abgrund unsers herzens*).[48] On Corpus Christi 1524, he said that the holiday had been thought up by the devil, and he denied the real presence of Christ's body and blood.[49] In replying, Amandus confirmed this accusation.[50] He was alleged to have criticized anyone who helped to build the new stone Saint Wolfgang Church, saying that the church was a devil's house and calling the pastor a fool and an ass.[51] Amandus answered that the Christian himself is the living temple of God and a church building should be thought of only if man was well provided for and there were extra resources. He admitted to criticizing the pastor as an opponent of Gospel order.[52] On March 25, 1525, he said that no office was so pious (*fromm*) that it was worth hanging anybody over, and that the *Amtmann*, an official of noble status, was a rascal.[53] Amandus could not recall saying this, but he thought anyone who used his office in the service of avarice should be punished.[54] He supposedly set a crucifix on fire in the city weighing office (*in der wag*) and broke up another.[55] Amandus did not deny the act; he said that Christians did not require images to remind them of their annointing (*salbung*); rather, the Holy Spirit reminded men "in their hearts."[56]

Elector Johann, who on May 5 succeeded Frederick the Wise, dismissed Amandus.[57] One miner had to spend two weeks in jail for his effrontery in offering to house Amandus himself, in order to evade the princely edict.[58] The authorities were well aware how attractive Amandus's opinions were and what a danger they posed at a moment when the peasants were in revolt and arousing great sympathy among the miners of the Erzgebirge. The advisors

[47] Ibid., fol. 21. A complete list of the accusations leveled at Amandus along with his replies may be found in Felician Gess, ed., *Akten und Briefe zur Kirchenpolitik Herzog George von Sachsen*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1917), no. 868, 122–7, no. 1. Gess uses DSA, Loc. 4490, "Berghandlung quasimodogeniti auf den Ertz-Gebirgen ao. 1524–1533," fols. 79–94. An Ernestine copy of the questions without Amandus's replies is WSA, Reg. T 116, fols. 131–75.

[48] WSA, Reg. Ii 131, fol. 27.

[49] Ibid., fol. 21.

[50] Ibid., fol. 27.

[51] Ibid., fols. 21f.

[52] Ibid., fol. 28.

[53] Ibid., fol. 22.

[54] Ibid., fol. 30.

[55] Ibid., fol. 24.

[56] Ibid., fol. 30.

[57] Ibid., fols. 5f.

[58] WSA, Reg. T 92, fols. 24f.; DSA, Loc. 4490, "Berghandlung […] 1524–1532," fol. 120.

of Duke George and of Elector Johann investigated the unrest connected with Amandus's departure.[59] They forbade all future gatherings of the miners' brotherhood (*Knappschaft*) and of the community (*Gemeinde*).[60]

One more example may help to shed light on Moeller's generalizations as they relate to Saxony and Thuringia. Moeller refers to Jakob Strauss's *Ain trostliche verstendige leer.*[61] It is not clear whether Moeller's compilation of sermons also includes the Eisenach preacher's controversial pamphlet, based on one or more sermons of 1523, *Das wucher zu nemen und geben unserm Christlichen glauben und brüderlicher lieb (als zu ewiger verdamnyss reichent) entgegen yst, unuberwintlich leer*, or Strauss's fifty-one theses on usury "gepredigt zu Eysenach durch D. Jacob Straussen."[62] According to Joachim Rogge, Strauss developed his ideas independently of Luther; and, even when between 1522 and 1525 Strauss saw himself as a follower of Luther, his theology departed from that of the Wittenberg nightingale's on several points.[63] Luther and Duke Johann saw particular danger in Strauss's categorical repudiation of taking or paying interest. Luther himself had quickly repented of his own rigid stance in his first *Sermon von dem Wucher* of 1519 and the very next year directed his opposition only toward usury in commerce.[64] Two of Eisenach's officials were incensed by Strauss's words and reported to Johann in January 1524, "The preacher, Doctor Strauss, used these words and said several times in his sermons, 'Dear brothers in Christ, you are not obliged to pay the clergy the interest that derives from usury and *widerkauffen*.[65] For you sin mortally if you pay it. If somebody wants it and takes it from you by force, then give to that one who seizes your coat your cloak also.'"[66]

They accused him too of trying to persuade his hearers to take action (*euch bewegen lassennd*) against the council.[67] They quoted him as saying, "Your councilors are fools, blasphemers and murderers of God. They aren't worthy

[59] DSA, Loc. 4490, ibid.; WSA, Reg. T 91, fol. 43.

[60] DSA, Loc. 4490, ibid., fol. 104. Actually, assemblies were later allowed, as long as the city and mining officials gave prior permission and oversaw them.

[61] Moeller, "Was wurde in der Frühzeit" (as note 2), 179, no. 9.

[62] Joachim Rogge gives a careful summary of Strauss's life and writings in Joachim Rogge, *Der Beitrag des Predigers Jakob Strauss zur frühen Reformationsgeschichte* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1957). On Strauss's writings, see especially 157–90. Rogge states categorically (29) that all the reformer's writings were based upon sermons he had given.

[63] Ibid., 30.

[64] WA 6, 1–9, 36–60. In 1540, Luther specifically supported paying interest to the reformed church for the use of its money (WA 51, 333).

[65] A technical term referring to interest that was rendered to the church or others in perpetuity, that is, the debt was not paid off. Sometimes a church or city paid affluent individuals *widerkeuf* on money borrowed for ecclesiastical or civic purposes, but increasingly, both church and state preferred to take on debts that they would eventually reduce.

[66] WSA, Reg. Ii 126, fol. 5.

[67] Ibid., fol. 6.

to govern a heap of pigs."[68] They asked Johann to initiate a hearing of both sides, and two such hearings took place: one in Weimar and one in Eisenach. Although these did not produce Strauss's condemnation, the preacher's views on usury brought over him a pall of suspicion that he wished to overthrow society's established order; these turned Luther against him[69] and placed Strauss, so far as Lutheran leaders were concerned, in the ranks of radicals like Müntzer and Carlstadt. Strauss abhorred the peasant's revolt.[70] But the fact remains that numerous individuals who had attended his fiery sermons took part in the uprising and believed themselves to act in accord with their preacher's will. So widespread was the belief in a tie between Strauss and Müntzer that under torture Müntzer was asked about him.[71] In the aftermath of the Peasants' War, Strauss was forced to leave Eisenach.

A basic precept of social historians today is that printed tracts alone may not convey a complete picture of the past. We cautious practitioners of the art of describing a foregone era try, at the very least, to see that when we use literature, one excellent source of information, we have before us a representative range of what is available. A lack of documentation from Saxon and Thuringian cities in the early years of the Reformation makes it questionable whether Moeller's collection of sermons is balanced. Assembling a truly representative group of sources is a formidable task.

If only through the presentation of examples – Egranus, Müntzer, Lindenau, Carlstadt, Zwilling, Amandus, and Strauss – I believe I have demonstrated that, at least in Saxony and Thuringia, what was preached in the first few years after 1518 was far more varied and unsettling than Moeller would have us believe. Not only did influential preachers like Müntzer and Carlstadt depart noticeably from Luther at an early date, they gathered adherents, some of whom in turn became preachers. Just when each of these men realized – indeed, just when Luther himself perceived – that they were not bearers of Luther's exact tidings is a highly individual matter, one not central to the theme under discussion. Nearly all felt Luther's inspiration, but they did not see themselves constrained to toe a line that could not yet be drawn in the unsettled dust of the German Reformation. Until 1525, only Luther's remarkable charisma and the bonds he forged with the Ernestine princes might have suggested that the future lay with him. The others were not visionaries. Their tongues were loosed, they were sure, by the same evangelic power that liberated his, and they spoke as earnestly as he.

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[68] Ibid.

[69] WA, *Briefwechsel* 4, 116; WSA, Reg. N 821, fol. 30.

[70] "Auffrur Zwitracht und Uneinigkeyt zwischen woren Evangelischen Christen für zu komen, kurtz auch unuberwindlich leer […] 1525."

[71] DSA, Loc. 10327, "Wider Täuffer zu Erfurth," fols. 13, 47.

A number of these men's sermons have come down to us, all ought to be taken into account. But what about sermons not in our possession, either because their deliverers did not put them into print or because no avid intellectual like Stephan Roth brought pen and paper to church and transcribed them? Some sermons were not printed because they departed too greatly from tolerated teaching. Both magistrates and princes controlled the output of presses where they could; though before the Peasants' War, the need was not as manifest to them as afterward. Too, a great many sermons were ordinary. Irrespective of their theological content, they were neither elocutionary models nor rousers of emotions. No doubt for this reason above all others, we lack evidence of the great majority of Reformation sermons given. Those sermons that did find their way into print were actually few and extraordinary. Finally, many sermons may have been printed that have not come down to us.

Does this mean that we cannot, that we should not, consider unprinted and non-surviving sermons in inquiring into the homiletic utterances of reform-minded men? On the contrary, if we fail to do so, we allow ourselves to see only a part of the available picture. Where we learn of sermons delivered but not recorded, we should bear their alleged content in mind and examine it in the light of ancillary sources. Reports *about* sermons are plentiful. In order to find these, scholars may have to read quantities of obscure material on subjects other than sermons and preachers. We have to rummage in city and other archives among unpublished minutiae. Above all, to inform ourselves on what was being said in the urban pulpits of Germany, we will have to become acquainted in detail with the milieu in each city and with the course of its Reformation. It is impossible to regard Güttel and even Hausmann as characteristic of Reformation preachers in Zwickau if one is aware of the complex, tension-laden course of events there. Whether this was also true of urban centers outside Saxony and Thuringia I must leave to colleagues with appropriate expertise. Johann Friedrich, nephew of Frederick the Wise and himself elector from 1532, described to Luther the situation in urban parishes in Ernestine lands in the middle of 1524:

> "I lament to God that there are so many religious fanatics, which creates for us rulers a very great deal to do. I think, moreover, that they will not be stilled unless you take the time to travel from one city to another through the land (as Paul did) and see with what sort of preachers the cities of the faithful are provided. I believe that here in Thuringia you could do no more Christian deed. Whichever preachers you found unqualified, you could unseat with the help of the civil authority."[72]

Franz Lau grasped the early convolutedness of the religious landscape in German-speaking territories. He realistically saw that in the years before Luther's

[72] WA, *Briefwechsel* 3, 754.

leadership became comparatively undisputed and his theology a touchstone and normative force for most evangelical sermons, preachers could not avoid enunciating individualistic views, even when they thought of themselves as Luther's disciples. One prominent by-product of the beginning Reformation was that it warmed hearts, stimulated minds, and opened mouths. Initially, an optimistic Luther himself urged everyone to read the Bible and let the power of the Word direct him. This every preacher believed himself to be doing, no matter that what issued forth sometimes turned out not to jibe with Luther's or even with any other major reformer's biblical perceptions. The wonder is that as many of Luther's ardent followers managed to agree with him as did, even before his faith was defined, its limits surveyed and staked out.

One of the strengths of Lau's work is that, despite his deep Lutheran faith, he could regard the events of the past dispassionately. Another is his impressive familiarity with many of the details of the religious flux of the early sixteenth century. Still a third is his common sense. In my judgment, all of these qualities compelled Lau to conclude that the early Reformation was a time of *Wildwuchs*, of the rapid and disorderly growth of the evangelical movement. If he were living today, it would be illuminating to discuss with him redefining the period of *Wildwuchs*: moving the opening date back, say, to 1518, when Luther's reputation began to grow, and ending with 1525, when, in Saxony and Thuringia, at any rate, magistrates and princes stepped in to direct religious belief. Lau is right; the early Reformation years *were* years of spontaneous religious individualism, years in which preaching posts were opportunities to display one's spiritual and worldly sensibilities. Among the early preachers were some of the most dynamic individuals of their cities, men whom those in authority thought they had to rein in.

If Lau remains a model to us, so certainly must Moeller. No book or article on the early modern German city fails to cite his essay, *Reichsstadt und Reformation*.[73] This study abounds with shrewd generalizations based on vast research, and it has had tremendous heuristic value to an entire generation. Another article of Moeller's has touched my own career as profoundly. I shall always remember as a graduate student in the late 1960s sitting in the reading room of the then British Museum with a copy of *Probleme der Reformationsgeschichtsforschung*.[74] Moeller wrote, "In the last decades our research has been concentrated almost exclusively on Reformation *theology* […]. Consequently, we have frequently lost sight of the Reformation as history, as an event of the

[73] Bernd Moeller, *Reichsstadt und Reformation* (Gütersloh: Gütherslohe Verlagshaus, 1962); translated as "Imperial Cities and the Reformation," in *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, trans. Hans C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972).

[74] Bernd Moeller, "Probleme der Reformationsgeschichtsforschung," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 76 (1965): 246–57; translated as "Problems of Reformation Research," in Midelfort and Edwards, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation* (as note 73), 3–16.

distant past, and as a complex network of historical relationships."[75] I am convinced that just as we recall Lau today for the breadth of his knowledge and the accuracy of many of his conclusions about the spread of the Reformation, so must we honor Moeller for his keen and inspiring observations of the 1960s. I am also convinced that his assertions of 1984 bear the closest scrutiny.

[75] From the English translation, ibid., 7.

Preaching the Word in Early Modern Germany

Throughout the high and late Middle Ages, penitential preachers criss-crossed the German countryside, pausing to declaim where they could find an audience. To the basic message of repentance, the mendicant revolution of the thirteenth century added that of correct doctrine as a necessary antidote to apparently rampant heresy.[1] The regular availability of sermons increased markedly, for a defining assignment of the friars was to preach. The more compelling among them, such as Meister Eckhart (1260–1328) and Berthold von Regensburg (1210–1272), attracted throngs. Simultaneously, cities and donors began to establish preacherships, usually in the cathedral or other main church, and chose the best available sacred rhetoricians to fill them.[2] Johann Geiler von Kaisersberg (1445–1510) and Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) were among these. Many people heard these men with enthusiasm, but we cannot be certain how much they did this out of a genuine desire to improve their lives and how much in order to break the tedium of their routine. Very likely, motives combined. All the really popular preachers, those whose names have come down to us, possessed a charisma that itself drew listeners.

On the eve of the Reformation, the impulse to integrate the Catholic Church into society – to "domesticate" the clergy – coincided not only with princes' and patricians' political aspirations but also with an evident yearning to know more about religion. The chasm that separated the laity from the clerical estate needed to be narrowed, in part so that religious information was no longer the purview of a separate order that doled it out to its spiritual inferiors, the laity, as its members saw fit. One aspect of the upsurge in late medieval piety was a passion for direct access to the biblical Word. This assertion of the untrained intellect was a manifestation of self-confidence, of an expansive post-plague mentality. People adjusted their earthly horizons to encompass more of the extra-European world, and they wanted to penetrate

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[1] David L. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Nicole Bériou and idem, eds., *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons: Essays on Marriage, Death, History and Sanctity* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1994).

[2] For a summary of the numbers and functions of early sixteenth-century German *Prädikaturen*, see Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 38–42; also works on particular regions, such as Rudolf Herrmann, "Die Prediger im ausgehenden Mittelalter und ihre Bedeutung für die Einführung der Reformation im ernestinischen Thüringen," *Beiträge zur thüringischen Kirchengeschichte* 1, no. 1 (1929): 20–68.

the heavenly sphere as well. They asked a dual-sided question: how can I live satisfactorily on earth, and how can I live eternally in heaven? In those days, the here and the hereafter formed an integrated whole.[3] Works of art present to us the crowds of people, including old men and young mothers nursing babies, who surrounded the pulpits, where these existed, to hear the Word. Those who could not stand for the considerable length of time that preachers held forth, brought along low, collapsible stools and hunkered down upon them. Initially only canons and other high-ranking clergy, magistrates, and the nobility had permanent seating in churches.

The sermon was essential in establishing and spreading the Reformation movement. By means of numerous maps and charts, Manfred Hannemann has shown us in concrete terms how preaching shaped events.[4] While Bernd Moeller has told us, "No book, no Reformation," it might be just as apt to say, "No sermon, no Reformation."[5] The majority of sermons preached were never printed.

The many elements that came together under the rubric of anticlerical sentiment at the end of the Middle Ages were the products of ecclesiastical contumely toward civic well-being and of abuse of official Catholic teaching.[6] Where these were kept within tolerable bounds, revolution was less likely to break forth. Further, even where it did, virtually every "anticleric," whether a clergyman himself or a layperson, envisioned a calm, reordered Christendom in which godly pastors tended their human flocks.[7] Part of the shepherd's duty was to preach: more people than before desired to *know* about their faith.

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[3] I am once again taking exception to the interpretation of Steven Ozment, who follows Étienne Delaruelle and others concerning "the burden of late medieval religion" per se (Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities* [as note 2], esp. 15–32), although some scrupulous souls such as Martin Luther and Katharina Schütz Zell may have felt that the doctrine of justification by faith lifted a great burden from their shoulders (Elsie Anne McKee, *Katharina Schütz Zell: The Life and Thought of a Sixteenth-Century Reformer* [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 1, 307). See also Ozment's *The Age of Reform 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 208 f., 222.

[4] Manfred Hannemann, *The Diffusion of the Reformation in Southwestern Germany, 1518–1534* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975), passim.

[5] See the essays by Bernd Moeller, Thomas A. Brady, Robert W. Scribner, and Steven E. Ozment on this subject in *Stadtbürgertum und Adel in der Reformation: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der Reformation in England und Deutschland*, ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979), 25–48.

[6] For an introduction to multiple aspects of the anticlerical phenomenon, see the essays in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman, eds., *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); and for the views of one author, Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Pfaffenhaß und groß Geschrei. Die reformatorischen Bewegungen in Deutschland 1517–1529* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1987). In his own contribution to Dykema and Oberman, Goertz points out the complexity of anticlericalism ("'What a Tangled and Tenuous Mess the Clergy Is!': Clerical Anticlericalism in the Reformation Period," 499–519), here at 503.

[7] Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "Clerical Anticlericalism in the Early German Reformation: An Oxymoron?," in Dykema and Oberman, *Anticlericalism*, (as note 6), 521–34, here at 532 f.