

Luther's Anti-Roman Polemics and Popular Belief

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Assessing the impact of any aspect of Luther's life and work was once thought to be a relatively simple matter. The eager researcher had only to read Luther's works intensively, and thus equipped with a close knowledge of the original texts, had only to search diligently for traces of the words and ideas of the great Reformer. The growing density of Luther quotations, acknowledged and unacknowledged, would attest his pervasive influence. Nowadays we are better informed and can avoid such methodological naiveté. More sophisticated approaches to textual criticism have brought us to a more refined means of understanding intellectual influence. We are particularly aware that the impact of a text is often quite detached from authorial intention and that texts have lives of their own. To assess the impact of a phenomenon such as Luther's anti-Roman polemics is a complex task in which we must take account of a network of influences: not just the relation between a text and the author's intentions, life and corpus of writings, but the relations to texts to society, culture and contemporary modes of discourse.¹

The issue of »popular belief« is no less complex, and the parameters involved in its exploration cannot be remotely touched in a short paper. To envisage it as a passive object on which Luther's thought merely »impressed« itself like a seal giving shape and form to featureless wax would be equally erroneous.² »Popular

1 On authorial intention, see Roland BARTHES: *The death of the author*. In: ders.: *Image-music-text: essays/ ausgew. und übers. von Stephen Heath*. Glasgow 1977, 142-48, esp. 146: »We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ›theological‹ meaning (the ›message‹ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.« On the frame of reference for a text, Dominick LACAPRA: *Rethinking intellectual history and reading texts*. In: *Modern European intellectual history: reappraisals and new perspectives/ hrsg. von Dominick Lacapra and Steven L. Kaplan*. Ithaca, NY 1982, 47-85.

2 This appears to have been a tacit presupposition of the discussion on »Luther and Culture« at the Sixth International Congress for Luther Research, LuJ 52 (1985), 152-196, especially the

belief« was something fully exploited by Luther and other reformers in their religious and polemical activity, but it also had a shaping influence on the very nature of the religious movements they precipitated. We need look no further for evidence than the apocalyptic mood of the later middle ages: belief in the reality of prophecy, the imminence of the unmasking of Antichrist, the pervasive presence of Satan in the world, and the potent manifestation of the Holy Spirit as a means of religious reform.

All these beliefs shaped Luther's thought in ways that made it wholly characteristic of his generation and set boundaries for the evangelical movements of the sixteenth century that they were able to transcend only gradually in the course of time.

In this paper, I want to indicate the kinds of dialectic that occurred between Luther's anti-papal polemics and popular belief, in order to understand both phenomena as part of wider cultural processes. In particular, I want to draw attention to three aspects of the topic: what popular belief contributes to Luther's public persona; the nature of Luther's recourse to popular belief in his polemical campaigns; and the long-term cultural impact of such perceived forms of interaction.

I Popular belief and the »public Luther«

If we reflect at any length on the nature of Luther's impact as a public figure, it is immediately clear why we cannot simply rely on »authorial intention« as our main heuristic tool, assessing reception by moving out from Luther's writings. There were in fact many »Luthers«: the multiple manifestations of »Luther the author«, the »Luther« created by the propagandists, the »Luther« perceived by humanists and Catholic opponents, and the »Luther« of popular reception and response, to name but some variations of the Reformer's many-headed public persona.³

suggestion (ebd, 184): »Should not the discussion proceed from what Luther said and thought about culture to what he did about it, and even to whether his actions may have had lasting consequences?«

³ In polemical form, this was the perception of Johannes Cochlaeus when he created his »Septiceps Lutherus« in 1529, most recently commented upon by Peter Newman Brooks in: SEVEN-HEADED LUTHER: essays in commemoration of a quincentenary 1483-1983/ hrsg. von dems. Oxford 1983, v-viii.

»Luther the author« had many sides – he was polemicist, publicist, theologian, biblical scholar, pastoral adviser, and social and political critic. We have not yet begun to unravel the hermeneutic problems of understanding the popular impact of Luther the theologian and biblical scholar. Unless we take seriously the argument that it was possible to accept part of Luther's theological message, to marry it to other theological perceptions, and to create different evangelical syntheses that were no less valid responses to the issue of religious reform, we will never come remotely close to understanding popular religious reception of Luther or of the Reformation movements as a whole.⁴ The same must be said of Luther as writer on social and political issues, where there is still a tendency to see him as taking up the normative stance on all sociopolitical questions of his time.⁵ Luther as pastoral adviser still awaits close investigation, although Bernd Moeller has indicated the significance of the theme by showing that Luther's popularity as an author up to 1520 rested heavily on works directed to questions of piety and devotion.⁶

This last fact seems to have been shrewdly perceived by contemporary propagandists who set about creating a popularised public image of Luther, what I have labelled a »Luther myth«. The components of this myth, embodied in the propaganda pamphlets and visual representations of Luther from the early 1520s, were constructed from the resonances attached to his threefold persona as friar, preacher and doctor. As friar, he exemplified a pious Christian life, as doctor he was a pious teacher, and as preacher he proclaimed the saving doctrine of the Word of God. In all of these personae he was juxtaposed to the pope, to other members of the clergy, to his opponents and to the devil, with whom all his opponents or critics were associated.⁷

4 See the informative study by Paul A. RUSSELL: *Lay theology in the Reformation: popular pamphleteers in Southwest Germany 1521-1525*. Cambridge, NY 1986.

5 For examples, see Martin BRECHT: *Luthertum als politische und soziale Kraft in den Städten*. In: *Kirche und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in deutschen und niederländischen Städten der werdenden Neuzeit*/ hrsg. von Franz Petri. W; Köln 1980, 1-21; DERS.: *Luther und die Probleme seiner Zeit*. In: *Martin Luther: Probleme seiner Zeit*/ hrsg. von Volker Press und Dieter Stievermann. S 1986, 58-74.

6 Bernd MOELLER: *Das Berühmtwerden Luthers*. *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 15 (1988), 65-92.

7 Marc LIENHARD: *Held oder Ungeheuer?: Luthers Gestalt und Tat im Lichte der zeitgenössischen Flugschriftenliteratur*. *LuJ* 45 (1978), 56-79; R[obert] W. SCRIBNER: *For the sake of simple*

Given Luther's hostility to the regular clergy, the representation of him as a friar is surprising, and reveals the striking disparity between propaganda image and reality. However, this contradiction had little opportunity to become evident as other layers of connotation were quickly overlaid upon it to thicken up the mythical persona: Luther became a »holy man«, a »man of God«, a divinely inspired prophet, a new Father of the church, a new Moses, Elias, Daniel, John the Baptist, even an *ex post facto* antitype of Christ himself.⁸ Most amazingly, given his condemnation of the cult of the saints, the mythical Luther himself became a living saint, supplied with the nimbus of sanctity, and in one striking broadsheet depicted as a mediator who shows the way to Christ and so to salvation! In this last example, both visual and printed text are quite unambiguous on this central point, the printed text praising God »that you, O lord, have saved us, through Martin Luther, with your Word«.⁹

It will not do to dismiss this as mere allegory or typology, any more than we could read as mere rhetorical exaggeration the identification of the papacy with Antichrist and the devil. The perception of Luther's »sainthood« was as central to the reception of the evangelical message as the revelation that the pope was Antichrist and a creature of the devil. It was the depth of this conviction that led to the creation of a Luther-cult, to belief in Luther as someone whose coming had been divinely foretold and who could himself prophesy, and to the acceptance of miraculous Luther images, beliefs which continued the »Luther myth« into the nineteenth century.¹⁰

We have yet to explore the real depth of the popular resonances of the »Luther myth« created by the propagandists. Can we simply assume that evangelical

folk: popular propaganda for the German Reformation. Cambridge 1981, Kap. 2; Martin WARPNKE: Cranachs Luther: Entwürfe für ein Image. F 1984.

8 R[obert] W. SCRIBNER: Luther myth: a popular historiography of the reformer. In: ders.: Popular culture and popular movements in Reformation Germany. LO 1987, 301-322, esp. 303-309.

9 The broadsheet »Luther führt die Christgläubigen aus der ägyptischen Finsternis« is reproduced in full in Max GEISBERG: Der deutsche Einblatt-Holzschnitt in der ersten Hälfte des XVI. Jahrhunderts. M 1923, Nr. 927; its iconography analysed in Scribner: For the sake of simple folk, 27-29. The passage referred to: »Wir sagen auch o Jesu Christ / ... Mit dankbarkeit, lob, preys und eer / das du uns hast (o mylter her) / Erlöset von der hellen port / Durch Martin Luther, mit deym Wort, / und uns dem hymmel uffgeschlossen.«

10 R[obert] W. SCRIBNER: »Incombustible Luther«: the image of the reformer in early modern Germany. In: ders.: Popular culture and popular movements, 323-353.

propagandists were drawing on existing perceptions of Luther, which they sought to exploit and direct into paths more consonant with Luther's theology? Or did they create his image *ab initio*? The most overt testimony of such contemporary perceptions comes from Hieronymus Aleander, who reported that as Luther stepped from his cart on arrival in Worms a priest three times touched his garment and proclaimed that he had a relic of the greatest of the saints. How far the papal legate's report is factual and how far ironic hyperbole is difficult to discern, and the same can be said of Aleander's other report of a man who argued on the marketplace that Luther was without sin, had never erred and was to be placed above Augustine.¹¹ Did such actions, if accurately reported, represent the impact of a propaganda campaign, or did they provide the raw material from which a propaganda campaign was constructed? The hermeneutic problems here have yet to be fully addressed.¹²

Evidence as direct as Aleander's is disconcertingly thin, but we do find some traces of Luther's mythic persona resonating in public events such as carnival plays performed in 1522 in Danzig and Elbing and in 1524 in Königsberg. That in Danzig featured the pope condemning Luther with bell, book and candle, presumably in sympathy with Luther's view of the matter; that in Königsberg depicted Luther confronting the pope so that »the knavery of the pope, his cardinals and his whole following was clearly revealed«. There is a poorly documented report that when Luther's books were burned in Thorn in 1522 his portrait was placed with them but persistently refused to burn. There was also a carnivalesque burning of the Reformer in 1522 in Altenburg, as an anti-Lutheran reshaping of the customary expulsion of Winter: a Luther-puppet was brought before a mock court, condemned for heresy and burned on a nearby hill.¹³

11 DIE DEPESCHEN DES NUNTIIUS ALEANDER VOM WORMSER REICHTAG 1521/ übers. und erl. von Paul Kalkoff. B 1886, 34. 133.

12 The problems of tracing Luther reception are set out in exemplary manner by Hans-Joachim KÖHLER: Die Flugschriften der frühen Neuzeit: ein Überblick. In: Erforschung der Buch- und Bibliotheksgeschichte in Deutschland/ hrsg. von Werner Arnold. Wiesbaden 1987, 307-344.

13 For Danzig and Elbing, Simon GRUNAU: Preußische Chronik/ hrsg. von M[ax] Perlbach, R[udolf] Philippi und B. Wagner. Bd. 3. L 1896, 646f; for Königsberg, Balthasar GANS: Chronik. In: Königsberger Chroniken aus der Zeit des Herzogs Albrecht/ hrsg. von F[riedrich] A[dolf] Meckelburg. Königsberg 1865, 164; for Thorn, Christian HARTKNOCH: Preußische Kirchen-Historia. F 1686, 865; for Altenburg, Erika KOHLER: Martin Luther und der Festbrauch. Köln 1959, 56.

We have evidence of a less overt kind in numerous incidents of ritualised behavior which attested, or sought to induce, popular disbelief in papal religion: disturbances of the liturgy, mock processions, forms of counter-liturgy, parodies of the Mass, ritual desecration of images, relics and other holy objects, scapegoating rituals and rituals of purification.¹⁴ Two examples from many will suffice to illustrate the nature of these events. On the Feast of the Purification 1523 in Senftenberg in Albertine Saxony, the images which the clergy usually carried in procession were defiled, a bull of indulgence was removed from its carrier and a skull put in its place, while during the ceremony itself a mock procession featuring a straw man on a bier was held outside on the churchyard. In Goslar in 1530 a carnival procession sang satirical songs against the clergy, while there was a mock palm procession which featured the Emperor on an ass and the pope on a sow, followed by the ritual »interment« of the Mass on the marketplace.¹⁵

The immediate influence of Luther's thought or polemic is difficult to discern in these events, but the events can in themselves certainly be seen as ritualised means of coming to terms with the message that the pope and papal religion are harmful to salvation, and must be driven out of the community and the individual heart to attain a right sense of Christian piety. Yet such behaviour represented forms of ritual action deeply rooted in a pre-evangelical mentality and seem scarcely reconcilable with the profound anti-ritualism encouraged by evangelical thought.¹⁶ If they are evidence of popular reception of Luther's message, they also suggest that this message was received and understood in traditional forms. This confirms the evidence of the depiction of »Luther as saint« – the willingness to hear and receive Luther's message may have depended crucially on a deep-seated longing for a holy man, saint and prophet, who was to inaugurate religious reform in a new age of the Spirit. The continua-

14 These are discussed in more detail in R[obert] W. SCRIBNER: *Ritual and Reformation*. In: ders.: *Popular culture and popular movements*, 103-122.

15 For Senftenberg, AKTEN UND BRIEFE ZUR KIRCHENPOLITIK HERZOG GEORGS VON SACHSEN/ hrsg. von Felician Geß. Bd. 1: 1517-1524. L 1905 – Nachdruck L; Köln; W 1985 –; 456, 18-23 (449); for Goslar, Hans GEISMAR: *Die Goslarer Chronik des Hans Geismar*/ hrsg. von Gerhard Cordes. Goslar 1954, 135.

16 Peter BURKE: *The repudiation of ritual in early modern Europe*. In: ders.: *The historical anthropology of early modern Italy*. Cambridge 1987, 223-238, although the repudiation was not as pronounced as Burke sees it.

tion of this very traditional image as an integral part of Luther's mythic persona shows how powerfully popular belief formed what was to become »popular Lutheranism«.

II The dialectic of popular belief and polemic

Two of the most interesting products of Luther's anti-Roman polemics are small picture-books for popular consumption, the »Passional Christi und Antichristi« and the »Abbildung des Papsttums«. Published respectively in 1521 and 1546, they are separated by the course of Luther's career as reformer. In a language accessible to those with minimal literacy, both effectively popularised many of his central understandings about the nature of the papacy as a form of »false religion«. Their central message was that the papacy was the Antichrist and a product of the devil, both notions with potent popular appeal. The manner in which the figure of the Antichrist was mobilised in the interests of evangelical propaganda has been thoroughly analysed elsewhere, and the papacy's diabolical associations is a well-worked theme.¹⁷ Here I want to call attention to some other aspects of popular belief in these pamphlets which contributed to their polemical impact.

It is possible that the format of the »Passional Christi und Antichristi«, as created by Lucas Cranach the Elder, was suggested by a Hussite antithesis between Christ and the pope, but it also has a similarity to the genre of the Passional, small picture books for pious meditation depicting scenes from the life of Christ or the saints. Luther himself later recognised the instructional value of this type of pious handbook, and attempted to create a »reformed« (but non-polemical) version of it.¹⁸ Cranach's Passional may also have adapted certain features of the *Biblia pauperum*: the constructions of the work around »types« and »antitypes« (here transmuted into antitheses), the provision of

17 Scribner: For the sake of simple folk, 148-188; Hans PREUß: Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist im späteren Mittelalter, bei Luther und in der konfessionellen Polemik: ein Beitrag zur Theologie Luthers und zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit. L 1906.

18 When he added illustrations to the 1527 edition of his »Betbüchlein« of 1522. Two years later, he wrote in justification of this step, »Ich hab fur gut angesehen das alte Passional büchlin zu dem bettbüchlin zu thun, allermeist umb der kinder und einfeltigen willen, welche durch bildnis und gleichnis besser bewegt werden, die Göttlichen geschicht zu behalten, denn durch blosser wort odder lere,«; WA 10 II, 458, 16-19.

short texts (lectiones) describing the simplest level on which the antitheses were to be understood, and the overall instructional purpose. Cranach's *Pas-sional* uses some of the same scenes as those in the *Biblia pauperum* (the Nativity, Christ cleansing the temple, the entry into Jerusalem, the mocking of Christ, the Ascension), albeit in a wholly different order and with other emphases.¹⁹ Its affinity with these earlier works of popular piety is unmistakable, even if the overall picture programme shows no direct influence and was more likely to have been an original creation.

For the popular mind the most powerful resonances would probably have been experienced in those scenes which drew upon the *functiones sacrae*, the dramatised liturgy through which the key events of the liturgical year were marked. Two examples stand out: the entry of Christ into Jerusalem on the ass, an integral part of the Palm Sunday ceremony in most towns, and the Ascension of the Lord, as dramatised on that feastday.²⁰ The latter ceremony is directly referred to in Cranach's last pair of woodcuts, which show Christ ascending into heaven, contrasted with the Antichrist-pope being hurled into the depths of hell. In many churches it was the custom on this day to have a figure of the risen Christ pulled up through a hole in the church roof, after which a rumpus was made above with rattles and clappers, to symbolise the struggle between the devil and the heavenly host. This culminated in a puppet of the devil, often smeared with pitch and tar, being hurled down to the floor below, to symbolise his condemnation to hell. Cranach's striking image established in terms of the »popular liturgy« what became two stock identifications of the papacy: as a puppet, a fake creature of rags and straw; and a creature of the devil.

The two themes of devil and straw puppet were most brilliantly combined in the titlepage of a work not from Luther's immediate circle but undoubtedly influenced by his doctrines, »Vom alten und neuen Gott, Glauben und Ler«. The pope is here represented as a straw carnival puppet unsteadily held aloft on a stool by his supporters, Luthers opponents. He is identified as a diabolical figure by one clawed foot and by two devils who crown him with his tiara. The other half of the woodcut depicts the work of grace, flowing down from the

19 For the programme and structure of the »*Biblia pauperum*«, see *BIBLIA PAUPERUM: a facsimile and edition/ hrsg. von Avril Henry*. Ithaca, NY 1987.

20 R[obert] W. SCRIBNER: Ritual and popular belief in catholic Germany at the time of the Reformation. In: ders.: *Popular culture and popular movements*, 23-28.

Father, over the Holy Spirit to the risen Christ, on to figures representing the New Testament and finally to Luther.²¹

More influential as a polemical image was Cranach's figure of Christ on the ass, virtually a representation of the ceremony of the so-called »Palmesel« which in many towns was pulled through the streets with great demonstrations of popular veneration. This formed the basis of the ninth contrasting pair in Cranach's *Passional*, juxtaposing Christ on the ass with the »riding pope«, an image symbolising papal claims to supremacy over the Emperor.²² This image can be said to have had a chain reaction impact in popular oral and literate culture, seen at work in two carnival plays written by Nikolaus Manuel Deutsch and staged on the Kreuzgasse in Bern on 15 and 22 February 1522, the Sundays before and after Ash Wednesday.²³

The first play depicted the »Devourers of the Dead«, showing all the abuses of the papacy occasioned by the traffic in indulgences, requiems and memorials. This play comprised 2000 lines in its published version, and is in six places strongly influenced by Cranach's *Passional*. Special mention can be made of the image of the warlike pope accompanied by warriors, the haughty pope carried by porters (by contrast with Christ, who went on foot), and the Emperor being forced to kneel and kiss the pope's foot (compared to Christ who kneeled to wash his disciples' feet). The second play was simpler, essentially only one scene in the form of a procession with some added dialogue. On one side of the street was depicted Christ riding humbly on his ass, accompanied by a crowd of the poor, the blind, the lame and the sick. On the other side the pope, accompanied by warriors, rode a proud steed in armour. This was also modelled on a contrast in Cranach's *Passional*, and was published in 1524.²⁴

The evolution of these plays reveals some of the complexity of interchange between Lutheran polemic and popular belief. Luther's conviction that the pope was the »true Antichrist« recalled the earlier Hussite contrast between Christ

21 The iconography is analysed in more detail in Scribner: *For the sake of simple folk*, 69f.

22 See Jörg TRÄGER: *Der reitende Papst: ein Beitrag zur Ikonographie des Papsttums*. M; ZH 1970.

23 Nikolaus MANUEL: *Spiel evangelischer Freiheit. Die Totenfresser: »Vom Papst und seiner Priesterschaft«* 1523/ hrsg. von Ferdinand Vetter. L 1923. The most recent discussion, with complete literature, is Peter PFRUNDER: *Fastnachtskultur der Reformationszeit: zur Bedeutung von Fastnachtsspielen für die Verbreitung reformatorischen Ideen; die Berner Spiele von Niklaus Manuel*. ZH 1988. – ZH, Univ., phil. Diss., 1988.

24 On the staging of these plays, Pfrunder: *Op. cit.*, 235-257.

and the Pope. This suggested a powerful visual contrast (Christ and Antichrist), embodied in a printed but preeminently visual work (Cranach's *Passional*), which in turn influenced the writer of a carnival play, first staged in oral and visual form, and then published without illustrations. However, it was the visual contrast of Christ on the ass and the riding pope which became one of the most popular polemical antitheses of the Reformation period, adapted into a single image of Christ on his ass confronting the Pope on his mule, and supplied with the *arma Christi* as a contrast to the papal arms.²⁵

I do not want to rehearse here the means through which such propaganda worked, merely to indicate the extent to which its polemical effect relied on the reality of the popular belief it exploited. When polemical illustrations invoked such revered objects as the *arma Christi* or the *Palmesel*, or pious events such as the *functiones sacrae*, they relied on devotion profound enough to be outraged by the revelation of the »true« nature of the papacy. Much Lutheran polemic would not have worked had it directly attacked the deeply held beliefs of the people; as a psychological mechanism, it had to arouse their piety without alienating it, directing pious outrage against the papacy as something deeply repugnant and hostile to existing Christian devotion. In short, it worked not by repudiating traditional devout feeling but by affirming it.

We can perceive the same process at work in more negative aspects of Lutheran polemic. Twenty-five years after the publication of the *Passional*, Luther played a central role in the production of another small picture book, the »*Abbildung des Papsttums*« of 1545, which reveals another side of his relationship to popular belief. It is a fiercely polemical work which Luther himself saw as summing up two decades of struggle against the papacy. He was said to have called it his »testament«.²⁶ In nine savage woodcuts, it identifies the papacy

25 See Scribner: For the sake of simple folk, 158. For the seventeenth century versions, William A. COUPE: The German illustrated broadsheet in the seventeenth century: historical and iconographical studies. Bd. 1. Baden-Baden 1966, 211; Bd. 2. 1967, 139f and DEUTSCHE ILLUSTRIERTE FLUGBLÄTTER DES 16. UND 17. JAHRHUNDERTS/ hrsg. von Wolfgang Harms zusammen mit Michael Schilling und Andreas Wang. Bd. 2: Historica. Tü 1980, 78-83 (40-42).

26 WA 54, (346) 361-373. For a complete iconographic analysis of the work, R[obert] W. SCRIBNER: Demons, defecation and monsters: popular propaganda for the German Reformation. In: ders.: Popular culture and popular movements, 277-299; for seventeenth century editions WA 54, 372f and Deutsche illustrierte Flugblätter ..., 142-159 (78-86); John Roger PAAS: The German political broadsheet 1600-1700. Bd. 1: 1600-1615. Wiesbaden 1985, 222-227. 229-235. 237f (114-119. 212-127. 129f); Bd. 2: 1616-1619. 1986, 94-102 (285-293).

with political tyranny, monstrous perversions of nature, Antichrist and the devil.

Two woodcuts show, respectively, the pope born of the devil and enthroned in the jaws of hell, another presents the bizarre monster, the »Papstesel«, used to such polemical effect in 1523 that it became a stock propaganda image into the following century.²⁷ Two historical woodcuts show the political treachery of the pope by polemical recounting of papal relations with the Emperor Barbarossa and his great-great-grandson Konradin. A further sheet depicts the »just reward« of the pope and his mendacious prelates by showing their execution by hanging, another the »papal ass« attempting to play the bagpipes. However, the dominant tone is given by four woodcuts which link the papacy to faecal and scatological themes: the »Papal Sowride« shows the pope deceiving the »German sow« with excrement; the »Papal Belvedere« shows peasants baring their bottoms and breaking wind at the pope; the picture entitled »the Pope is adored as an earthly god« shows Landsknechte defecating into the papal tiara; and the »Origins of the pope« is depicted as more a demonic act of defecation than as an ordinary birth.

These illustrations, in whose planning and execution Luther undeniably played a leading role, certainly reflect the coarseness into which he so easily fell in the heat of polemical debate. They also invoke many layers of popular belief: the fear of monstrous misbirths as a sign of moral perversion and divine anger, the association of the devil with the gallows and the privy, the demeanment of honour by hanging in effigy, with its overtones of image magic, and the desacralisation of the holiest of objects by acts of mocking ritual profanation.²⁸ The overall weight of the work was to invoke all these feelings and to direct them against the papacy. It could not have worked as propaganda without presupposing the emotional depth of the belief it sought to exploit. In short, Lutheran polemic and popular belief worked by mutual influence and interaction.

III The long-term cultural dynamic

To depict the full complexity of interactions between Lutheran polemic and popular belief in the age of the Reformation would be to write a history of

27 On the »Papstesel«, Scribner: For the sake of simple folk, 130-132.

28 Scribner: Demons, defecation and monsters, 285-295.

sixteenth century popular culture. The long-term development of these interactions is also such that to write its history adequately would be to write a complete social history of popular Lutheranism. The history of the »Luther myth« may be taken as representative of that development – it was a living, growing thing, a cultural process that has continued until our own day. To do justice to such a long-term dynamic is impossible here and we must be content with a few hasty snapshots, rather than a full film record of the slow unfolding of this particular cultural bloom. We could, however, single out several useful indicators of the process at work: language, proverbs, folk customs, folktales, hymns, ballads, iconography and symbolism. For reasons of space, I can touch only a few of these items very briefly.

Language is both the most interesting and the most complex part of any long-term cultural dynamic, and the history of a single word and its shifting connotations can be a useful guide to its main trend. If we take the word »*papst*«, we can see ways in which Luther's numerous creative usages were to colour its subsequent history in the German language. Thus, there are coinages attributable only to Luther, which have left firm lexical traces, such as the words »*papstgesinde*«, »*papstgötzer*«, »*papstketzer*«, »*papstheuchler*«, »*päpstler*« or »*päpstling*« to describe supporters of the papacy. The regular clergy could be addressed as »*papstschurlinge*« or »*papstplettlinge*«, a supporter of the pope as »*papstmaul*«, »*papstteufel*« or »*papstlarve*«. These are the followers of the »*papstesel*« or »*papstgreuel*«, engaging in »*päpstlerei*«. ²⁹ Many of these words remained unique to Luther and found no wider resonance, but the Reformer's penchant for such neologisms clearly encouraged others to follow his lead, not least Johann Fischart, who added a further list of »*papst*«-words to German vocabulary: »*papsten*«, »*papsthimmel*«, »*papstköpfig*«, »*papstmässig*«. ³⁰

Luther's association with the linguistic evolution of the word is recorded in the fact that parts of Germany, for example in Mecklenberg and Thuringia, interpret the croaking of frogs such that one croaks »Luther, Luther!«, while another replies »Papst, Papst!« ³¹ However, the more colourful forms of develop-

29 Jacob und Wilhelm GRIMM: Deutsches Wörterbuch. Bd. 7. L 1889, 1449-1452; Philipp DIETZ: Wörterbuch zu Dr. Martin Luthers deutschen Schriften. Bd. 1. L 1868. Nachdruck Hildesheim 1961 und 1973, 207f.

30 Grimm: Op. cit. 7, 1449-1452.

31 THÜRINGISCHES WÖRTERBUCH/ bearb. von Karl Spangenberg. Bd. 4. B 1966, 1008; MECKLENBURGISCHES WÖRTERBUCH/ hrsg. von Richard Wossidlo und Hermann Teuchert. Bd. 5. B 1970, 714f.

ment of the word have lost explicit Lutheran associations, while retaining the negative connotations Luther helped to introduce. The Sondershausen usage of »Lügenpapst« to mean a »great liar« has obvious Reformation origins.³² So do those usages which associate the pope with the privy, as in »papsten«, (»to defecate«) or »papst« itself as the name of the privy, an abbreviation of »papststuhl«. These may well have been suggested by Luther's own scatological language, such as his expressions »papstdreck« and »papstfarz«.³³ Other usages seem less coloured by immediately traceable Reformation polemical associations, such as that in Hildburghausen where »papst« denotes a malicious spirit which springs onto the back of unwary travellers (perhaps reminiscent of the devil on Luther's back in sixteenth century interpretations of the famous prophecy by Johannes Lichtenberg?³⁴). The usage in Mecklenburg by which »papst« is a name given to cows or a designation for animals or objects may simply reflect its linguistic demeanment.³⁵ Other usages which have passed into modern colloquial speech, such as the phrase »päpstlicher als der Papst« derive from more recent events, in this case the declaration of papal infallibility in 1870.³⁶

By contrast, the word »pfafe« had a more widespread polemical dissemination. It had already acquired pejorative connotations well before Luther, for example in the usage of Sebastian Brant and Aventinus, but the neologisms formed from the word, such as »pfaffendienst«, »pfaffengeist«, »pfaffengeschwatz«, »pfaffengewalt« or »pfaffenkram«, flowed in great richness after Luther took it into his polemical arsenal. The ability of the word to link evangelical polemic with traditional anticlerical feeling gave it more powerful negative resonance and a greater linguistic impact. Grimm lists 180 forms and variations of the word, compared with only 58 for the word »papst«.³⁷ On this evidence, the Reformation fathered a far greater range of abuse against the clergy than against the pope.

Proverbs provide access to more complex linguistic and cultural processes than the history of single words. They can be seen as a repository of folk belief,

32 Thüringisches Wörterbuch 4, 357.

33 Dietz: Op. cit. I, 207f.

34 On this prophecy, Scribner: Luther myth, 308.

35 Mecklenburg usage in: Mecklenburgisches Wörterbuch 5, 314.

36 Lutz RÖHRICH: Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten. 3. Aufl. FR 1974, 710.

37 Grimm: Op. cit. 7, 1584-1596, for Sebastian Brant and Aventinus, 1584.

embedded in the daily life of peasants and artisans, stating »how things are«, rather than »how they should be«. Yet they can also mediate between educated elites and the lower classes, being pressed into service for moral and pedagogical purposes.³⁸ The kind of cultural dialectic involved here can be seen in Johann Agricola's 1534 collection of 750 German proverbs, which combined two earlier volumes published separately in 1529. Agricola incorporated proverbs from the Bible, classical authors and humanist sources such as Erasmus and Heinrich Bebel alongside selections from those collected by the Brethren of the Common Life in the »*Proverbia communia*« and by the Westphalian Antonius Tunnicius. He added numerous items from Hugo von Trimberg's »*Renner*« and from contemporary authors such as Brant, Thomas Murner and Luther.³⁹

What transforms Agricola's work into a culturally significant record for our purposes are the mini-essays in the style of the medieval *Exemplum* which accompany most of the individual proverbs. As a committed Lutheran, Agricola imbued many of these with the spirit of the evangelical movement, never losing an opportunity to expound the central Gospel message. Luther's work of religious reform is honoured in nineteen places, and his doctrines expounded in twenty-one.⁴⁰ We can even see Agricola himself taking up the work of reform in his inclusion of common curses, which he sought by his commentaries to remove from the realm of »superstition«, indeed from common usage, by repeated reference to the necessity of faith and trust in God alone.⁴¹

The more polemical side of evangelical belief also features in twenty-nine of the commentaries. These range from mere repetition of common anticlerical sentiments (No. 320: »*Wer haben will eyn reynes hauss, der lass Pfaffen, Münch und tauben drauss*«), over proverbs directed against the excessive power of prelates (No. 281: »*Gott ist eine herre, der Apt ist ein münche*«), the position of

38 Ulrich MEISSNER: *Die Sprichwörtersammlung Sebastian Francks von 1541*. Amsterdam 1974, 443. 446f; J. OBELKEVICH: Proverbs and social history. In: *The social history of language*/ hrsg. von Peter Burke and Roy Porter. Cambridge 1987, 43-72.

39 Johannes ARICOLA: *Die Sprichwörtersammlungen*/ hrsg. von Sander L. Gilman. Bd. 2. B; NY 1971, 353-375, for Agricola's sources. The proverbs are cited below according to Gilman's numbering.

40 The figures are from Meissner: *Op. cit.*, 434.

41 For curses, see Agricola: *Op. cit.* I, nos 472-487. 502. 520f. 528f. 626. 643f; the blessings are nos 536-541. 546-549.

Rome and the Pope (No. 257: »Der Bapst ist kommen und Hans in allen gassen worden«) to more explicitly evangelical attacks on the cult of the saints (No. 324: »Ich feyre keynen heyiligen, dem ich nicht gefastet hab«). The association of the papacy with the devil and Antichrist also finds its place (No. 23: »Wo unser herr Gott einen Kirchen hynbauet, da bauet der Teuffel auch ein wirts-hauss daneben«), as well as a non-scatological version of the »Origins of the Pope« (No. 24: »Der Teuffel ist unsers herr Gots affe«), in the description of monks as the devil's failed attempt to imitate divine creation.

Agricola's attack on the papacy and papal religion is low-key by comparison with Luther's virulent polemics, and it often appears as if he sought to avoid a coarse polemical tone. In his 1548 collection, which added a further five hundred proverbs, not only is the polemical tone absent but so too is praise of Luther's reforming work and the earlier attempt at a »reformation by proverb«. ⁴² This was doubtless the result of his alienation from Luther over charges of antinomianism, his cooperation in the creation of the Interim, and Luther's general condemnation of collections of proverbs in 1540. ⁴³ We can but speculate what effect this sea-change had on the development of the »evangelical proverb«, but the further transmission of Lutheran anti-Roman polemic in common German proverbs seems to have reached its peak with the 1534 edition, which was republished four times between 1537 and 1558. Other major collections of the first half of the sixteenth century, from Sebastian Franck (1532, 1541) and Christian Egenolff (1548, 1552) contain minimal traces of anti-Roman polemic, especially if we leave traditional anticlericalism to one side. Franck's collection is gently evangelical, reflecting his characteristic religious stance, and he even records traditional anticlerical proverbs without rancour. ⁴⁴ Egenolff's is entirely lacking in polemical sentiments, and the religious tone of

42 The 1548 edition is reproduced Agricola: *Op. cit.* 2, 1-274. That the evangelical tone did not completely disappear is shown by no. 166: »Wann ain newer Haylge kompt / so vergißt man des alten« (2, 106-108).

43 Agricola: *Op. cit.* 2, 349-352.

44 Sebastian FRANCK: *Sprichwörter, Schöne, Weise, Herrliche Clugreden und Hoffspruch.* F 1541. Proverbs such as »Wann der teuffel kranck ist, so wil er ein Mönch werden« are given without commentary, while the sharpest tone is reflected in his comment to »Kurtze predigt und lang bratwurst«, about »gotlose ungleubige Baalspfaffen« who believe »Got müß erst durch vil wort und werck erweycht werden«; *ebd.* 110^r. For an analysis of Franck's religious views as reflected in the work, Meissner: *Op. cit.*, 389-427.

some commentaries is broadly pious rather than distinctively Protestant.⁴⁵ Although Agricola's main collection was republished many times until the end of the century, the German proverb does not seem to have become a major vehicle for either evangelical instruction or polemic.

This did not hinder Fridericus Petri from proclaiming his intention of providing spiritual wisdom alongside wholesome doctrine and admonition when he published his collection of over 20,000 German proverbs in 1605, strictly speaking, the first modern handbook of German proverbs. Petri did not add commentary, or exposition to proverbs he listed, but sought to further his evangelical instructional purpose by assembling in his first section over 2000 proverbs to do with »God, Christ, belief, prayer, heresy, consolation and hope in the Cross, sin, death, life and blessedness«.⁴⁶ The tone of these proverbs, one suspects mostly drawn from sermons and theological works rather than popular usage, is pious and devotional. There is a concern with heresy, perhaps reflecting intra-protestant disputes, but no polemic.⁴⁷ There are good number of anti-clerical and anti-monastic proverbs scattered throughout the remainder of the collection, but no more than fifty in all and less than a dozen anti-papal proverbs.⁴⁸ It was almost as though Rome and the papacy had ceased to matter in proverbial speech.

This judgment seems to be confirmed in the long-term development of the German proverb. The classic nineteenth century collections record some proverbial interest in Rome, the pope and the papacy, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander,

45 See Christian EGENOLFF: *Sprichwörter. Schöne, Weise Klugreden*. F 1552 – Facsimile edition. Weimar 1967. For bibliography of the Agricola editions, Agricola: *Op. cit.* 2, 321–330.

46 Fridericus PETRI: *Der Teutschen Weisheit, das ist ausserlesen, kurtze, sinnreiche, lehrhafte und sittige Sprüche und Sprichwörter*. HH 1605. For the purpose behind Petri's collection, *ebd.*, Vorrede, ii–viii; for Teil I: »Von Gott, Christo, Glauben, Gebet, Ketzerey, Trost und Hoffnung im Creutz, Sünd, Todt, Leben und Seligkeit«, Ai–Hihi.

47 Petri's concern with »heresy« is captured neatly in his version of the well-known verse »Gottes Wort und reine Luthers Lehr / Vergehen wird nu noch nimmermehr / und wenns leid allen Ketzern wer« (*ebd.*, Dii^v).

48 Typical for the anti-papal proverbs are: »Teuffel, Turck und Bapst ist alles eins« (*ebd.*, Tt iii^v); »Wann S. Peters Schlüssel nicht mehr hat wöllen helffen, so haben die Pebste S. Paulus Schwert herfür gesucht« (*ebd.*, Ddd iii^v). Typical for the anticlerical proverbs are: »Pfaffen mehr nach Wolust trachten, denn auff die Schrifft und Bibel achten« (*ebd.*, Q 8ⁱ); »Ein Kloster ist eine Helle, darin der Teuffel Abt und Prior ist, Mönch und Nonnen sind die verdampften Seelen« (*ebd.*, Xiv^r).

for example, listing a total of 219 proverbs in this composite category.⁴⁹ Most have only remote links to Luther and his anti-papal campaigns, except in as far as they are sayings consequential on the existence of religious schism, such as »Dem Papst in den Sattel helffen« (»to bring someone to prominence again«). Only three approach a Lutheran polemical tone: the first is hardly a proverb in the strict sense (»Das Papstthum ist ein Menschensfind, da Gott nichts davon weiss«), but two others catch Luther's characteristic associations of the papacy with the faecal: »Des Papst Cancelley ist ein Cloaca voller Lügen« (from the *Tischreden*) and »Der Papst ist ein Kukuk, er frisst der Kirche ihre Eier und scheisst dagegen eitel Kardinäle aus«.⁵⁰ The latter saying, ascribed to Luther without firm evidence, certainly reflects the polemical tone of propaganda broadsheets such as the »Origins of the pope«. This kind of sampling is certainly a very crude means of assessing long-term cultural development, but the overall impact of Lutheran polemic on the folk wisdom of the German people seems nonetheless to have been meagre.

Folk customs provide another indicator. We can see traces of Reformation polemic in customs such as the »Ablasskäse« ceremony of Wickershain in Saxony, allegedly a commemoration of Johann Tetzel's visit in the area and local unwillingness to purchase his indulgences. Each year on the feast of the Visitation, there was a formal procession from the town of Geithain, comprised of the town council, the clergy, schoolchildren, the town piper, organist and cantors, accompanied by sixteen musicians. The procession wound to the village of Wickershain, half-an-hour away, where an Ablassgroschen was distributed, along with bread and slices from a goatscheese the size of a millstone, produced by a local farmer. Despite the possible evangelical origins of the ceremony, it retained elements of popular belief, for the bread and cheese was taken home and was much sought after in the district because of its special apotropaic power.⁵¹

The link of such ceremonies to Luther's anti-Roman polemics is nonetheless very attenuated, especially by contrast with much more overt examples of a

49 Karl Friedrich Wilhelm WANDER: *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon: ein Hausschatz für das deutsche Volk*. Bd. 3. L 1873 – Neudruck Darmstadt 1964 und 1967 –, 1176-1180 (Papst). 295 (Luther).

50 Ebd 3, 1177 (27). Wander cites as his source a 1577 edition of the *Tischreden*, see WA TR 4, 571, 16 / 27f (4892).

51 Alfred MEICHE: *Sagenbuch des Königreichs Sachsen*. L 1903, 771 f.

»reformation of popular culture« found in the sixteenth century. In Bautzen in 1523, on the mid-Lent feast of Cathedra Petri, two men dressed as monks carried a paper figure of the pope on a bier in a procession to the marketplace, where the puppet was burned. Their action seems to be an evangelical adaptation of the ceremony of »Todaustragen«, the custom whereby Winter was ritually expelled each year and the Summer fetched in. This incident, and others like it, expressed the thought that the pope and papal religion were death to the soul and had to be expelled to let in the springtime of Christ's Word. Luther was so taken by the ideal that he composed in 1541 »A hymn for children, that they might expel the pope at mid-Lent«, and that the parallel might not be lost in the last verse matched the expulsion of the murderous pope with the coming of summer and the return of Christ.⁵²

The hymn was freshened up again in 1569 with the addition of a new verse, »to sing on the way home«, perhaps indicating that the old apotropaic ceremony of »Todaustreiben« had been »reformed« into an evangelical custom.⁵³ But if this was the case, it left few traces in later practice. The custom of the »Todaustragen« continued in the Meissen uplands virtually until the nineteenth century. It was prohibited in Neukirch in Saxony in 1623, but the procession survived in adapted form at the end of the nineteenth century. It is also attested for little towns such as Radeberg near Dresden (in 1745), Sebnitz on the Bohemian border and in Thuringian villages such as Oberhain, Mankenbach and Dobschwitz near Gera, as well as Leissling not far from Naumburg. There was an adapted custom in villages near Schmalkalden involving the interment of Kirmess.⁵⁴ In all of these cases, however, there is no trace of any evangelical or anti-Roman polemical reshaping of the traditional ceremony. Luther's »reform of popular culture« here remained without lasting effect.

The same could also be said of folktales, if there were space here to explore

52 Karl HAUPT: *Sagenbuch der Lausitz*. Bd. 2. L 1863, 53; on »Todaustragen« Oswald Adolf ERICH: *Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde*. 3. Aufl./ neu bearb. von Richard Beitzl unter Mitarb. von Klaus Beitzl. S 1974, 493 f; the Luther hymn in WA 35, 568-575.

53 WA 35, 570, 18-21: »Der Bapst und Grewel ist außgetriben, / Christus bringt uns den sommer wider, / Den sommer und auch den Meyen, / der Blümlin mancherley.«

54 Johann Georg Theodor Grösse: *Sagenschatz des Königreichs Sachsens*. Dresden 1855, 106 f; Alfred MEICHE: *Sagenbuch der sächsischen Schweiz*. L 1894, 38. 115 f; August WITZSCHEL: *Kleine Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie, Sitten- und Heimathskunde in Sagen und Gebräuchen aus Thüringen*. Bd. 1. L 1866, 193; Bd. 2. 1878, 199. 334.

them in detail. The near-comprehensive collection of around a hundred »Reformation folktales« compiled by Heidemarie Gruppe contains a mixture of historical, aetiological and pious tales. Many invoke miraculous events as evidence of the truth of Protestant belief, and several bear the impress of confessional polemics, especially those relating to the Thirty Years' War. However, the impact of Luther's anti-Roman polemic on the genre was scarcely significant, unless we see this reflected in the sizeable number of Luther folktales, whose survival perhaps owes more to the zeal of Lutheran pastors or teachers than to popular transmission. These form part of a continually refurbished myth of Luther as holy man and saint, rather than resting primarily on his reputation as the opponent of the papacy and often originate in attempts to rebut Catholic polemical attacks on him as immoral or an agent of the devil.⁵⁵

Hymns might be thought to be a more suitable vehicle for popular reception of anti-Roman polemic. Although there is need for caution about treating them as direct evidence of popular belief,⁵⁶ we can use them as indicative of a trend. If we take Philipp Wackernagel's collection of over 4600 Protestant hymns published between 1518 and 1603, we see that in the first generation of the Reformation, up to the death of Luther, hymns with a marked polemical tone accounted for 9% of the total (13% if we include those concerned with the Schmalkaldic War). This decreased markedly, to insignificant proportions, in the following two generations.⁵⁷ In Albert Fischer's and Wilhelm Tümpel's collection for the period 1570–1648, less than a handful reveal any kind of polemical language.⁵⁸ We should not take this as evidence of a complete absence

55 See Heidemarie GRUPPE: *Katalog der Luther- und Reformationssagen des 19. Jahrhunderts*. In: *Volkserzählung und Reformation*/ hrsg. von Wolfgang Brückner. B 1974, 295–324. On the Luther folktales, see Scribner: *Luther myth*; and ders.: »Incombustible Luther«.

56 Some of the problems here are mentioned by Hans-Georg KEMPER: *Das lutherische Kirchenlied in der Krisen-Zeit des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts*. In: *Das protestantische Kirchenlied im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*/ hrsg. von Alfred Dürr und Walther Killy. Wiesbaden 1986, 87–108, esp. 87f.

57 See *DAS DEUTSCHE KIRCHENLIED: von der ältesten Zeit bis zum Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts*/ hrsg. von Philipp Wackernagel. Bd. 3–5. L 1870–1877. Working on the basis of Wackernagel's categorisations, »polemical« hymns for the period 1518–1546 comprised 134 out of a total of 1487, plus another 64 concerned with the Schmalkaldic War. For the period 1554–1584 this reduced to ten out of 1587 and for the years 1584–1603 to nine out of 1605. The relative decline of those with a markedly anti-papal tone is shown by the 13 anti-Calvinist hymns in the last period.

58 Albert FISCHER: *Das deutsche evangelische Kirchenlied des 17. Jahrhunderts/ vollendet und*

of polemical tone in Protestant piety of the period. There are certainly some traces of anti-Roman polemic in individual hymnbooks and prayerbooks of the seventeenth century, sustained by the popularity of first generation hymns such as Luther's »Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort« and hymns on the Last Days by Erasmus Alberus, Nikolaus Hermann or Johann Matthesius, recalling the way in which the pope had inverted all good Christian order.⁵⁹ However, the fate of such hymns was perhaps tied to the persistence of the apocalyptic mood of the age of Orthodoxy, and it may well not have survived the more powerful stream of devotional and instructional hymns that increasingly set the tone in the seventeenth century.⁶⁰

Conclusion

In a short paper it is not possible to do more than throw straws into the wind to indicate crudely the nature of wider currents. However the brief indications outlined above suggest the following conclusions. »Popular belief« shaped Lutheran polemic as much as it was shaped by it, but the most powerful interaction occurred when the polemical mood was most intense, during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Thereafter, its long-term traces are meagre, retreating before an emerging and intensifying Lutheran piety. In

hrsg. von W[ilhelm] Tümpel. Bd. 1-3. GÜ 1904-1906 – Nachdruck Hildesheim 1964 –, which contains 1479 hymns by 267 known authors for this period, only four of which have such traces, and then only in an occasional verse. One is a commemoration of the »Confessio Augustana« (ebd 2, 7f [6], another a Luther commemoration hymn (ebd 2, 299f [286]). One might have expected to find rather more hymns in these last two categories and the question therefore remains of how representative this collection is for our purposes. Tümpel commented that Wackernagel had »included a good deal of ballast« in the interests of comprehensiveness, and he sought to include only those hymns which had »eine wirkliche kirchliche Bedeutung« (ebd. 1, iii), which may well have led to the omission of the kind of polemical hymns extant in Wackernagel's collection. A thorough study would have to work through the vast quantity of hymnbook sources listed by Fischer and Tümpel.

59 For example, the prayerbook by Balthasar SCHNURR: *Geystliches Schatzkämmerlein*. F 1619, containing Luther's »Ein Kinderlied zu singen, wider die zwen Erzfeinde Christi und seiner heiligen Kirche dem Bapst und Türcken«, plus hymns on the Last Days by Erasmus Alberus, Nikolaus Hermann, Johannes Mathesius, Michael Weiß and Schnurr himself, and by two anonymous authors.

60 This is emphasised by Kemper: *Op. cit.*

examining proverbs, folktales and hymns we see, of course, not »popular belief« but the attempt of cultural mediators to influence it. In the long-term we see the mediating process at work, and can gain a crude indication of its success by the persistence of the mediated product. On this basis, the most enduring cultural product of the interchange of Lutheran ideas and popular belief was not so much polemical as pious, typified by the myth of Luther as holy man and saint. Whatever its origins in sixteenth century popular belief, however, we cannot claim that this was a »popular« creation in its later development; it was rather something offered for popular consumption by pious pastors and zealous churchmen.⁶¹ Perhaps the same was true of proverbs, hymns and folktales. To trace these matters properly requires a wider brief than that laid down for this paper, a different investigative framework and a different occasion. It would have to be a full-blooded social history of popular Lutheranism, but so far we are only inching slowly towards that task.

61 On cultural mediators, Peter BURKE: *Popular culture in early modern Europe*. LO 1978, 91-115 (ch. 4) ≙ Peter BURKE: *Helden, Schurken und Narren: europäische Volksliteratur in der frühen Neuzeit*/ hrsg. und mit einem Vorwort von Rudolf Schenda. M; S 1985, 103-127. The interchange between elite and popular, learned and lay culture and the mediating process itself is a problem which has yet to be fully explored, but it is of central importance for understanding the nature and creation of popular Protestantism in early modern Europe.