

Luther's Preaching Within the Framework of Liturgical Tradition

By Ninna Jørgensen

I A World of Postils

In dealing with Luther's preaching practice within the scope of the congress theme »Luther between tradition and renewal«, it is imperative to deliberate his retention of the ecclesiastical year. In spite of occasional glimpses into the promised land of a more ideal reform, this institution remained unaltered until the end of his life and beyond; but unlike the Reformer's notable conservatism in regard to the *catechetical* issue, which was attended by mature reflection, it was not induced by unwavering conviction.¹ Apparently, the systematic occupation with the Sunday texts of the liturgical year in the form of a collection ready for press presented itself in response to a simple request.² Instigated by his prince in the wake of the Leipzig Disputation and the public war generated by it, Luther embarked on the major project of explaining the Epistle and Gospel texts in a composition of the kind, which »they call postils«, *Enarrationes epistolarum et euangeliorum quas postillas vocant*³—or, even more explicit, »quas vulgo postillas vo-

1 E.g. WA 19; 76,7–9: »Dise unterricht odder unterwegsunge weys ich nicht schlechter noch besser zu stellen, denn sie bereyt ist gestellet von anfang der Christenheyt und bis her blieben«. In contrast, e.g. WA 12; 209,16–210,4; for further examples, cf. G. EBELING, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung. Eine Untersuchung zu Luthers Hermeneutik*, 1962, 22 f. It should be noted, though, that Ebeling's references are mainly restricted to remarks in Luther's proposals for reforming the mass. Given the status of Ebeling's work, however, it will be a main reference in this article.

2 Cf. WA 7; 463,12–464,21.

3 WA 7; 458–465; cf. WAB 2; 1,2 f.

cant«⁴. A German translation of his work, *POSTIL || Oder vszleg der Epistel || vnd Euangelien || durch den Aduent [...]*⁵, appeared in Strasbourg, a city which had by then for decades been sparkling with editions of postils in both Latin and German.⁶ Leaving the realm of Latin material fit for sharing with peers, Luther eventually adopted the genre, occasionally referring to it by its popular semi-technical term⁷, and thus handed a blueprint of both down to Lutheran posterity.⁸ His test sermons being overnight superseded by his vernacular expositions, his followers were on the alert to fill in gaps and, working together with Lutheran authorities, to establish good postils to corroborate their church orders. In this perspective, Friedrich must be regarded as a protagonist in the succeeding princely *Lutheranization* of the postil-culture. The princely policy behind the initial request should in other words not be overlooked in Luther's return of gratitude for the concern about his mental health during the commotion.⁹

4 WA 7; 463,16; cf. WAB 2; 273,15.

5 MARTIN LUTHER, *Postil Oder vszleg der Epistel vnd Euangelien durch den Aduent*, Strasbourg 1521 (VD16 L 4550).

6 Cf. the *explicit* »so endet hie dise postil / das buoch der Euangelien mit vil schoener predigen uñ ußlegungen« in: JOHANN GEILER VON KAYSERSBERG, *Euangelia mit vszlegüg des hochgelertē Doctor Keiserspergs*, Strasbourg (Johannes Grüninger) 1517 (VD16 G 743); J.B. ALZOG, *Die deutschen Plenarien (Handpostillen) im 15. und zu Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts (1470–1522). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der religiösen Volksbildung in jener Zeit, besonders in Süddeutschland* (Freiburger Diöcesan-Archiv 8), 1874, 6–8. As for Latin specimens, the predominant work by GUILLELMUS PARISIENSIS, *Postilla super epistolas et euangelia*, was reissued repeatedly in between 1480 and 1510. Moreover, JORDANUS DE QUEDLINBURGO, *Opus postillarum et sermonum*, Strasbourg 1483, after transfer from Uppsala to Copenhagen: inc. c.a. 13343 – 1/2; NIKOLAUS VON DINKELSBÜHL, *Postilla cum sermonibus euangeliorum dominicalium*, 1496, Royal Library Cph., Haun 2864.

7 E.g. WAB 2; 357,26. Cf. however the bibliographical notes in WA 10,1,1; 2, for Luther's conservative employment of the elaborate late medieval titles.

8 C. KOTTMANN, *Das buch der ewangelii und epistel. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung und Gebrauchsfunktion südwestdeutscher Perikopenhandschriften* (Studien und Texte zum Mittelalter und zur Frühen Neuzeit 14), 2009, 36 f. Cf. ALZOG, *Plenarien* (see n. 6), 3. EBELING, *Evangelienauslegung* (see n. 1), 31, is at best misleading.

9 Cf. J.M. FRYMIRE, *The Primacy of the Postils: Catholics, Protestants, and the Dissemination of Ideas in Early Modern Germany* (SMRT 147), 2010, 35. On the following up by Lutheran Princes and Princesses, cf. loc. cit., 77–79; EKO 1, 1902, 164 passim; K. STJERNA, *Women and the Reformation*, 2009, 99. Cf. JOHANN SPANGENBERG's praise of

This brief account of the details in Luther's start-up as a *postillator* shows him being plunged into a society in which the genre was eagerly cultivated by both clerical and lay. Nevertheless, recent research on Luther's sermons has been remarkably reticent about the prevalence of printed postils in the book market of the late 15th and beginning 16th centuries and their potential impact on Lutheran preaching practice. According to a somewhat bold statement by J.F. Frymire, the seminal works by 19th century historians in this field have simply not been followed up.¹⁰ This situation might to a certain degree reflect a long-term effect of the reigning climate in the postwar period dealing with »Luther der Prediger«. ¹¹ Here, a strictly theological evaluation of the oral word as the exclusive medium for transmitting the Gospel was intertwined with the historic-critical declination to accept the bulk of edited sermons as genuine imprints of Luther's live preaching, thus mentally barring the way for an interdisciplinary exchange with the evidence of book history of a thriving culture of postils both before, during and after the Reformations.¹²

In view of this status, the proximity in time to Luther's stay in Melchior Lotther's lodgings in Leipzig and the impression on him by printed postils

joined princely and pastoral efforts in building up Christian society: Dedicatory letter 1542 to Princess Elisabeth von Braunschweig, in his *Postilla*, Nürnberg 1584, Royal Library Cph., 3,246.

10 Cf. FRYMIRE, *Primacy* (see n. 9), 12, notes 10–13, only mentions more recent examples, thus failing to detect the impact on text book presentations by more weighty scholarly monographs.

11 *Luthers Werke in Auswahl* (Cl.A.), Bd. 7, hg. v. E. HIRSCH, 1932 was dedicated to »Luther der Prediger« and introduced by the pompous declamation: »Der Band hat kein andres Ziel, als dem, der sich ein Bild von dem Prediger Luther, so wie er wirklich gewesen ist, vermitteln möchte, alles dazu Nötige [...] in die Hand zu geben« (vii). The subsequent and well-known pejorative characterizations of the postils have to some degree been mollified in Luther's Works as well as in Scandinavian editions, but without really setting a new agenda. Significantly, the title of the publication from the Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg (Bd. 9) as late as 1986 was still »Luther *als Prediger*« (my italics), and its first contribution referred to Erwin Mühlhaupt's annihilating verdict on the postils (G. HECKEL, *Martin Luthers Osterpredigt* [in: *Luther als Prediger* {VLAR 9}, 1986, 9–41], 10).

12 Cf. I.D.K. SIGGINS, *A Harvest of Medieval Preaching: The Sermon Books of Johannes Herolt OP* (Discipulus), 2009. For the early also hand-written tradition, cf. the above-mentioned work by KOTTMANN, *Untersuchungen* (see n. 8).

from his office should at least be considered as a possible formative element in Luther's perception of what the required *postillas* might cover.¹³ In his letters to Georg Spalatin from the time when he strove to fulfill his promise to the prince, a chief concern of Luther's was to have the product printed by this technically skilled press office, which was then about to establish a branch in Wittenberg.¹⁴ It is not altogether unreasonable to suspect that he visualized the products from this office when referring to the genre. Since the material on pre-reformation sermons is rather overwhelming, a concrete example might be useful to elucidate how the making and diffusion of printed postils materialized in Luther's nearest surroundings in the decade in question.

In 1515, a complete vernacular edition of the Epistle and Gospel texts with expositions appeared in Paris.¹⁵ It was composed by the humanist and later reformer, Christian Pedersen, who worked in the office of the renown Josse Bade, collaborating with him on classical texts, but at the same time using his equipment in the more private errand of bringing forth religious enlightenment to a reading public with no Latin schooling.¹⁶ In his preface Pedersen justified his translations as an urge to provide simple people with material in their own tongue for the sake of their salvations. The general assumption was that the reading of such material would serve as a legitimate substitute for attending a sermon, since the purpose of both was to attain knowledge of God's will in order to live according to it. As a modern educated European in a metropolis of learning and printing, Pedersen moreover, as a matter of course, cherished the ambition to transmit topical

13 Cf. G. WUSTMANN, *Aus Leipzigs Vergangenheit*, 1885, 39–45; A. PETTIGREW, »Print Workshops and Market« (in: *The Oxford Handbook of Protestant Reformations*, ed. by U. RUBLACK, 2016, 273–388), 379.

14 Cf. WAB 2; 1 f, Nr. 243; WAB 2; 35–37, Nr. 251.

15 The title is in accordance with the old elaborate tradition: *Alle Epistler oc Euangelia som lessis alle Søndager om aared sammeledis jule dag Paaske dagh. Pingest dag. meth deriss udtydning og glose oc eth Jertegen till huer dag med flere artickle som alle menniske nyttelige ere* (All Epistles and Gospels read on all Sundays in the year likewise Christmas day, Easter day, Pentecost with exposition and glosses), ed. by CH. PEDERSEN, 1515 (Royal Libr. Cph. LN 212).

16 H. HORSTBØLL, *Menigmands medie. Det folkelige bogtryk i Danmark 1500–1840* (Museum Tusculanum), 1999, 115.

expositions circulating in his immediate surroundings. His main authority, according not only to internal evidence, but to copious references, was the Latin *Postillae* of Guillelmus (or: Guillermus) Parisiensis. This undisputed bestseller is extant in more than 100 copies, among them two in an exquisite display of craftsmanship from the office of Melchior Lotther in Leipzig, in fact the very same, who reissued Pedersen's postil in 1518.¹⁷ Guillelmus' postil is strikingly absent in the listing of possible sources to Luther's, though it does appear in disguise. Due to an early ascription of much of its contents to the German Dominican, Johannes Herolt, called Discipulus, scholars and librarians have adopted the convention to name the postil after him, a convention, which is, however, likely to divert attention from the works of reference so well-known to the contemporaries.¹⁸

The composer introduces himself and the aim of his work briefly and distinctly. He has collected a commentary to the benefice of poor preachers so direly in need of exegetical and homiletic support for their preparation. He adds that it may furthermore be of interest to others (probably reading lay men and women) with a desire to get into the texts.

Ego frater Guilerinus sacre theologie professor minimus. parisius educatus. Sacrorum euangeliorum ac epistolarum de tempore [...] expositiones in unum colligere volumen. minus expertis clericis et insipientibus praedicatoribus pernecessariam fore iudicavi. Considerans nonnullos cancellistas minus caute et imperite euangelia et epistolas vulgo christiano pronuntiantes procedere. non habentes eorundem expositionum scientiam quae necessaria est. Composui igitur hunc librum pro eisdem [...] ac pro omnibus sacrorum [...] expositionum cupientes.¹⁹

17 Same title (see n. 15) with the addition: *Nev nyglige corrig. Lybs.: Tryckt og sat aff Melchoar Lotther* (transl.: new and recent correction. Leipzig: Printed and set up by Melchior Lotther) (Royal Libr. Cph. LN 2092).

18 Cf. N. PAULUS, Johann Herolt und seine Lehre. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des religiösen Volksunterrichts am Ausgang des Mittelalters (ZKTh 26, 1902, 417–447). Paulus wrote this seminal contribution in an age when much pioneering work was done to disclose authorships.

19 Quoted from the edition by Melchior Lotther, Leipzig 1514 (GUILLERMUS PARISIENSIS, *Postille maiores in epistolas et evangelia*, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 P.lat. 544 (VD 16 E4387), 1. In this edition, the biographical note is inserted as an introduction to the section of Epistles, which follows after the Gospel texts. In other editions they may be placed otherwise. The wording as such has, however, been compared with numerous other editions.

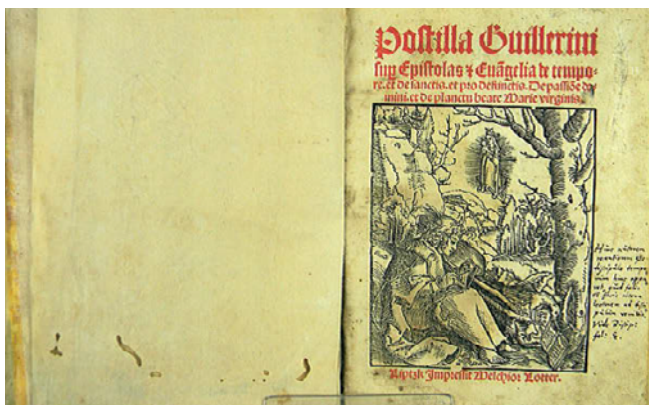


Fig. 1a: Frontpage of: [GUILLELMUS PARISIENSIS], *Postille maiores in epistolas et evangelia* (Leipzig: Melchior Lotther 1514), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 4 P.lat. 544 (VD16 E 4387).



Fig. 1b: First page of: [GUILLELMUS PARISIENSIS], *Postille* (see fig. 1a). Note the stylistic adaptation to the Glossed Bible, which is also found in the Basel edition of Guillelmus' *Postillae* from the same year.

Immediately afterwards he discloses his sources, of which only the work of the Italian Dominican Hugo de Prato (1262–1322), which had been printed early in Strasbourg, is singled out.²⁰ The other authorities are as would be expected.

We may note the following characteristics, some of which are also reflected in Luther's homiletic style, while avoiding, as far as possible, to see them in retrospect.²¹

1) The Gospel pericopes were explained, first and foremost, according to their literal (historic) sense, thereby invoking (if indirectly) the looming authority of Nicolaus of Lyra.²² Homiletically, this entails a sentence-by-sentence explanation and (sometimes) re-vivification of the narration in details (*historia*) before being followed up by deliberations on their *spiritual* senses. On Christ's feast days, this style tended to assume the air of late medieval ›Jesus stories‹.²³ The importance attached to historical accuracy by late medieval preaching when informing people of the foundation of their salvation might perhaps be illustrated by the existence of extremely abridged *Realkommentare* to the Gospel pericopes, which were to be consulted by preachers so unlearned that they would not know that for instance Bethphage is the name of a location.²⁴

2) In the pursuit of historical factuality, the meticulous dating and reconstruction of the events narrated by the evangelists, ›Jesus' notaries‹²⁵ are

20 His *Sermones dominicales super euangelia et epistolas* had been printed in Strasbourg as early as 1479 and were reissued 1482.

21 Cf. KOTTMANN, Untersuchungen (see n. 8), 10.

22 Lyra's own work was, of course, not a postil but a commentary, though it was referred to as such. According to some Bible historians, the new sense of history in working with the New Testament was ushered in by Thomas Aquinas. Cf. B. SMALLEY, The Gospels in the Schools c. 1100 – c. 1280, 1985, 270, for a balanced judgement.

23 Best known in the tradition of Ludolph of Saxony. Recent translation: LUDOLPH OF SAXONY, The Life of Jesus Christ: Part One, vol. 1: Chapters 1–40 (CistSS 267), trans. by M.T. WALSH, 2018.

24 Cf. HERMANNUS TORRENTINUS, Euangeliorum et Epistularum textus uom breuiusculis conclusionibus, Strasbourg 1514 (VD16 E 4388), 2.

25 The notion of the evangelists as ›notarii Jesu Christi‹ was one of the additions inserted in some Lyon editions to the postil of Guillelmus, which were accordingly promoted as *Postillae maiores totius anni cum quaestionibus de novo additis*. They contain pieces of information including a short admonition in the 1513-Lyon-Ausgabe on stuff,

viewed *in concordance* (»secundum sensum litteralem iuxta concordantias evangelistarum«).

3) Obviously, the quest for historical accuracy might raise the more fundamental problem of the diversity in the rendering of *the Gospel*. This would also, at another level, imply an explanation of the necessity of its being cut up into smaller portions for homiletic use, especially as the Gospel pericopes were usually referred to as *ewangelii/evangelien*. Therefore some editors found it worthwhile, in addition to the naked text with exposition, to qualify the Gospel by its etymology in Greek (»good news«) and to define it as a unity through its referring to Christ the Lord: »Item quattuor euangeliste de eo testimonium dant [i.e. like the prophets]. immo omne quod dicitur in sancto euangelio ad christum dominum refertur«²⁶. This information was not confined to the clergy, but also acknowledged in the vernacular postil. »Es ist zu wyssen, das do nit me dann ein ewangelium ist, das ist ein gut bottschaft oder verkündung von Christ unserm Herrn.«²⁷

4) A closer look at the coherence of liturgical commemoration and text was offered if it did not seem obvious. This is especially the case regarding the relation of the Epistle to the events narrated in the Gospel, where we may find a statement like »quod epistola hodierna et euangelium hodiernum concordant«, and why this is so: Christ's inauguration as king matches the exhortation in Romans to do good deeds, because, as his subjects, the Christians must imitate their prince.²⁸ Torrentinus, who defines the day's theological signification in a few sentences attached to the Epistle, simply asserts that the Pauline epistle aims to prepare for the advent of Christ as recounted in the Gospel.²⁹

In rare cases there might even be a need to explain the choice of the Gospel text for a given commemoration. This is the case in Whitsun, where the

which »quidem unusquisque ecclesiasticus debet scire«, especially regarding questions on liturgical performance, but also the subject of the Gospel, its etymology and its notaries. »Annotationes per modum questionum« in: *Postille maiores* [...] cum questionibus de nouo additis, Lyon 1513 (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 4 P.lat. 541, lxxvi).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ ALZOG, Plenarien (see n. 6), 16.

²⁸ Quote from 1514 Leipzig edition (see n. 19), section on epistles, ii.

²⁹ Cf. TORRENTINUS, *Euangeliorum et Epistularum textus* (see n. 24), 1.

appointed Gospel text is a sermon, which Jesus delivered at a different occasion, i. e. at the last supper. The answer to this enigma is that it predicted and described the love which would be poured out by the Holy Ghost due to the miracle of Pentecost. Pedersen's rendering of Guillelmus' text illustrates how the arguments were adapted to an even wider public:

These words, which are written in the holy lecture, our Lord spoke to his apostles on Maundy Thursday in the evening when he ate his supper with them. Nevertheless they are read today in holy Church as far as Christendom reaches. A doctor called guilhelmus [+ marginal note: guilhelmus] writes that all Christians should today celebrate [...] because (Christ) has today which is the fiftieth day after His worthy uprising condescended to fill all his holy apostles and other godly persons with the dignified Holy ghost, who enlightened their hearts and minds that they understand the holy scripture [...].³⁰

* * *

Independently working on the given task, Luther need not, and did not, refer to a specific work, whether as model or counterpart. The following analogies with Luther's sermon making from his initiation as a postillator in 1519–1521 and right until the end of his career as a preacher, may however be noted:

Ad 1) Preaching year by year on the same pericopes, Luther stuck to the short ancient homily, commenting sentence by sentence.³¹ Ascribing this form to him as a particularity is, however, a shortening, which seems to stem from the assumption that late medieval preaching can be described by inferences drawn from the *artes praedicandi* together with a few selected specimens of thematic sermons which were in accordance with their rec-

30 PEDERSEN, (see n. 15), cxlvi: »Disse forscreffne ord som stonder i denne hellige læst dem talede vor herre til sine apostle sker torsdag at aften der han odh sin nadwere med dem. En dog at de læsiss i dag i den hellige kircke saa vide som cristendommen er. En Doctor heder Guilhelmus scriffuer At alle christne menniske bør i dag at holde stor høgtiid [...] at han i dag som er den tiende oc feretyunde dag effter hans ærefulde opstondelse vilde verdiss til att opfulle alle sine hellige apostle oc andre gudelige personer med den verdige helliand som oplyusde alle deriss hjerter oc sind at de forstå kunde af den hellige skrift [...].« (Original text translated above).

31 Cf. EBELING, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung* (see n. 1), 21 f.

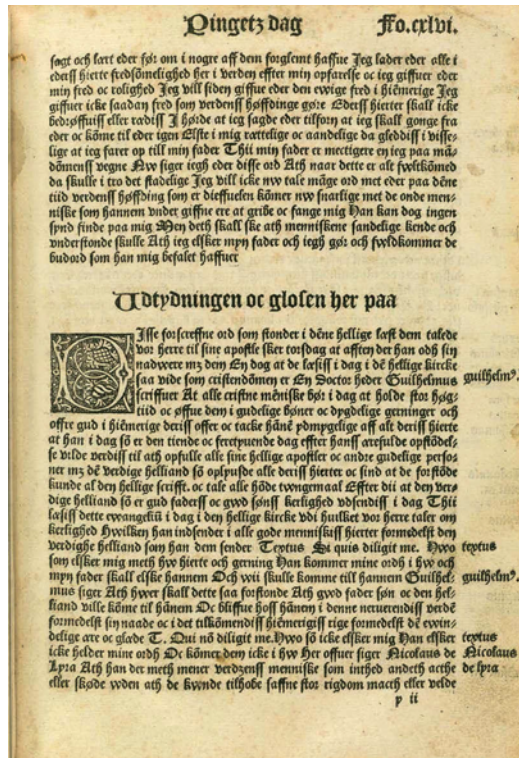


Fig. 2: CHRISTIAN PEDERSEN, *Postil* (Paris: Josse Bade 1515) with references to Guillelmus Parisiensis in text and marginal gloss (Royal Library Copenhagen LN 212).

ommendations.³² The feature of re-narrating in a simple way, especially in regard to the Jesus-stories on Christ's feast days, was in concordance with

³² Cf. U. NEMBACH, *Predigt des Evangeliums*. Luther als Prediger, Pädagoge und Rhetor, 1972, 120, concludes, with a narrow outlook to some *Lehrbücher*: »Bei dem Reformwerk der Kirchenpostille [...] konnte also Luther nicht auf zeitgenössische Arbeiten zurückgreifen«. Deducting likewise from the *artes praedicandi* (and the well-known preaching of Johann Geiler of Kaysersberg): B. KREITZER, *The Lutheran Sermon* (in: *Preachers and People in the Reformations and the Early Modern Period [A New History of the Sermon 2]*, ed. by L. TAYLOR, 2001, 35–63), 37.

contemporary usage. As time passed by, Luther would even recur to integrating iconic legendary details in his simple retelling.³³ It seems to have taken him some time to fully adjust to this style. Regarding the novelty of his preaching, it is far more conducive to look at the considerable change in the contents drawn from this simplified speech. As we shall see, Luther developed his own way of extracting the theological meaning from the retold historical events so that the preaching of law and gospel would stand out clearly.

Ad 2) It is well-known that Luther, in his introduction to the *Wartburg-postil*, described the evangelists as quite worldly chroniclers recording the acts and sayings of Jesus from each their different perspectives.³⁴ Proceeding in his initial work from the exposition of Epistle to Gospel text, he emphasized how different a task this was from that of explaining Paul's letters because of the diverging records.³⁵ »[...] Euangelia primo conferenda sunt et quid singuli Euangelistae in eadem re dicant vel taceant observandum.«³⁶ As pointed out already by Kiessling, who issued this quotation to underscore his point, a recurring example of such efforts was the scrutinizing of the time schedule in the Easter sermons.³⁷ There is no need, however, to progress this far in order to observe the necessity impressed on Luther to consider the multiple statements of New Testament tradition. The information offered in the first Gospel on the riding animal(s) fetched and used for Jesus' entry into Jerusalem differed from that of the other evangelists in as far as Matthew had preserved the Hebrew diction with its *parallelismus membrorum* in the prophecy. So there seemed to have been two riding animals, a she-ass and a still undomesticated foal, though the other evangelists only recalled the foal.³⁸ In a brief note, Luther—himself sensitive to figures of speech—opts for the sensible version of the one animal, while shortly hinting to suggestions by previous postilators that Jesus did ride both an-

33 See below.

34 Cf. WA 10,1,1; 12,2.

35 Cf. WA 7; 472,23.

36 WA 7; 472,24f.

37 Cf. E.C. KIESSLING, *The Early Sermons of Luther and their Relation to the Pre-Reformation Sermon*, 1935, 76.

38 Cf. WA 7; 472,26.

imals, not at once, but changing the undomesticated for the calmer.³⁹ His exposition demonstrates, how much easier it is to deduct some spiritual meaning from the mention of the animals.⁴⁰ It must certainly have been a challenge to convey the meaning of such wordings to the churchgoers while maintaining that their salvations depended on the historical truth thereof.

Ad 3) Given the famous statements on the one Gospel and the quality of it in the entry to his *Wartburgpostil*, it is superfluous to state that Luther found it convenient to comment on the polyphony of New Testament Gospel tradition.⁴¹ The question of his intended counterpart in disputing the analogy to the books of Mosaic law will not be discussed, since it was clearly not the postil tradition here considered, he had in mind.⁴²

Ad 4) Luther invested some effort revitalizing the interaction of commemoration and prescribed text, which was supposed to add to the significance of both. The fundamental theme of the first Sunday of Advent, the inauguration of Christ as king, was for example accompanied by the shouting of the people that his reign might prosper—the *Benedictus*—but the commotion was also a figure of the church singing the *Benedictus* and thus praying on this very day, in this exact time of transition that Christ's reign would prevail.⁴³ Likewise, he followed the lead of his predecessors when, in his first exposition of the Epistle, he investigated the reason for reading the prescribed Pauline text on the first Sunday of Advent, thereby seizing the opportunity to promote his own exegesis, concluding with the emphatic assessment: »Atque haec sit ratio, qua legatur in Adventu haec Epistola«⁴⁴ (»Unnd das sey die recht vrsach / worumb im Advent diss Epistel gelesen

39 Cf. WA 7; 472,28–34. An extremely vivid re-telling is found in GEILER VON KAYSERSBERG, Euangelibüch (see n. 6), 3f: »Dar uss ist zenemen [...] dass der herr vff sie beid gesessen ist / nitt eins mals / aber von einem zuo dem anden. zuo dem ersten / ist er gesessen vff den jungen esel, der blitzet vnnd gvmpet / vnnd was weder zetragen noch zereiten geschicket [...] darnach sass er erst vff die alt eselin / die was zam.«

40 Cf. WA 7; 473,6–10.16–28.

41 Cf. WA 10,1,1; 4,2–4; 8,14–18; 9,6–20; 10,6–9.

42 It is presumably not a long shot to point to Franciscan tradition as formulated in Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*.

43 Cf. WA 7; 479,25–36; 480,1–6.

44 WA 7; 472,2f.

wird⁴⁵). Linking a text to a given day would, however, soon be treated as an issue of Christian liberty.⁴⁶ If, as I shall later suggest, the readings following the liturgical year were to be classified as a ceremonial arrangement, he had already anticipated the argument of his *Invocavit Sermons* on the issue of prescribed texts.⁴⁷

Interlude: Theology and Catechism. Worshipping in a hybrid form

Luther emerged from tradition with the stolen treasure of Egypt, the liturgical year, while preaching the Gospel in a new key, which reflected his anti-pelagian theology.⁴⁸ Given the tenability of the argument above, it may be due to mere coincidence that he appropriated a homiletic culture, which rested firmly on the yearly cycle of fast and festival.⁴⁹ Uncorroborated as it was by a theologically robust argument of his, it would seem but a question of time, when he would flush out the traditional set of pericopes and join Martin Bucer, if not in his reforming zeal, at any case in his efforts to impress on the congregation that »die Christen ein tag halten als den andern / aber alle tag gott feyren / das ist / in lassen würcken und machen / un sye sich gelassen in sein willen geben«⁵⁰. The differentiation of time and place which should be outdated in the New Dispensation concerned him deeply in the years in question. He himself had formulated the view on the Sabbath identical to the one which Bucer turned into a maxime.

Die leipliche feyr odder ruge ist, [...] das wir unser handtwerck unnd erbeit lassen anstehen, auff das wir zur kirchen uns samlen, [...] gottis wort horen [...], wilche feyr, wie

45 Cf. LUTHER, Postil (see n. 5).

46 Cf. EBELING, Evangelische Evangelienauslegung (see n. 1), 22.

47 Cf. WA 7; 537, 5–7.

48 Cf. E.H. HERRMANN, Luther's Divine Aeneid: Continuity and Creativity in Reforming the Use of the Bible, in this volume, 85–109; L. GRANE, Modus loquendi theologicus. Luthers Kampf um die Erneuerung der Theologie 1515–1518 (ATHD 12), 1975. As for the reverberation of his lectures on Romans in his sermons from the same time, cf. WA 1; 113,4–36; 105,5–20; 106,18.

49 Cf. E. DUFFY, The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400 – c. 1589, 1992, 11.

50 MARTIN BUCER, Grund und ursach ausz gotlicher schrifft der neuwerungen, an dem nachtmal [...] Tauff, Feyertagen, bildern und gesang, Strasbourg (W. Köpfel) 1525 (VD16 B 8890), 51.

wol sie leiplich ist unnd hyn furter in der Christenheit nit gebotenn von got, wie der Apostel Col.ij. sagt ›Last euch von niemant vorpfflichten zu yrgend einem feyrtag‹ (dan dieselben sein vortzeiten figur gewesen, nu aber ist die warheit erfullet, das auch alle tag feyrtag sein, wie Jsaias lxvi. sagt ›Es wirt ein feyrtag am andern sein‹, widderumb alle tag werckel tag), doch ist sie nodt und von der Christenheit vorordent umb der unvolkommenden leyen und erbeit leuten willen, das sie mugen auch zum wort gottis kommenn.⁵¹

Two mindsets had, roughly spoken, been brought together. Luther wrestled with the question, and it is a characteristic that he found the answer in the practical needs of the common people. In concluding his endeavor to compose a »post-Babylonian« postil⁵², he openly ventilated his alertness of the peril, to which the people were exposed by the continued observance of fixed religious form and behavior, the *ceremoniae*. Confronting the challenge in terms of homiletics, he issued a sketch on three operational orders of preaching, figuratively drawn in the shape of the subject-ridden allegories on the temple.⁵³ Main character is, once more, John the Baptist, the typified preacher of the New Testament, whose preaching signifies the accomplished transition from the old covenant with its ceremonial presentation of God to the new reality resting in the *sanctum sanctorum*. His call to repentance implies his twofold office, the revelation of the true spiritual meaning of the law (*alter ordo*), followed by the indication of the one source of salvation, »[...] primum et summum opus est praedicatoris docere fidem et cum Iohanne monstrare agnum dei, qui tollit peccata mundi.«⁵⁴ This distinctively anti-pelagian sermon is associated with entering the inner yard, the *sanctum*, from the *atrium*, to which, both logically—and according to Luther's argument—the liturgical year belongs. The outer yard of established religious order may, however, benefit the people if rightly used and explained.⁵⁵ This also adds up with his later pronounced acknowledgment of its catechetical value, especially in the keeping of Christ's feast days, which countered the occasionally expressed wish to make it redun-

51 WA 6; 243,21–30.

52 Cf. WA 7; 537,14.

53 Cf. WA 7; 533,26–31; 534,28–31.

54 WA 7; 536,36f.

55 Cf. WA 7; 537,4f.

dant.⁵⁶ The openings of the mature Luther's sermons still reveal conflicting views on the matter, spanning from the extremely pragmatic, almost patronizing, to a marked sensitivity to liturgical expression, which might today be conceived as an early acknowledgement of society's need for *cultural memory*.⁵⁷

Das grosse schone fest nativitatis Christi ist verhanden, de quo multa praedicanda. Cum.3. dies zu handeln, wollen wirs stuecken. Et est ein fein loblich gewonheit, das man die Euangelia stuecke hat auff die Sontag [...] potissimum, das der junge hauffe der her wechsscht, et der einfeltig man, qui se per annum non viel bekomert, ut habeat ein tag ym jar, ut audiat historiam Nativitatis, passionis et resurrectionis, ut sciat, wenn er anderswo [...].⁵⁸

Es ist eyne feyne lipliche gewonheyt, ut euangelia aliqua partita sint ad certa festa, ut repetantur [...].⁵⁹

The simple question is: What did this hybrid form of worship look like in actual preaching? I shall contend that Luther stretched the employment of tradition to its utmost, but in doing so delivered his new message convincingly.

II Teaching from the pulpit

1. A community of mixed literacy

The notes of Georg Röhrer (and a few others), which have by some unforeseen luck been preserved to posterity, provide rightly valued evidence on Luther's live performance. They enable us to discern how he served the dish to the parishioners, Sunday by Sunday, so that it would become solid spiritual nutrition; if I may stay in the image, these notes even show how

⁵⁶ As for the latter, it might be summed up in the notorious summary by EBELING, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung* (see n. 1), 23: »Das Perikopensystem wird offen als Verlegenheitslösung zugegeben«.

⁵⁷ J. ASSMANN, *Der zweidimensionale Mensch. Das Fest als Medium des kollektiven Gedächtnisses* (in: *Das Fest und das Heilige. Religiöse Kontrapunkte zur Alltagswelt [Studien zum Verstehen fremder Religionen 1]*, hg. v. DEMS., 1991, 13–30). I use Assmann's work in this context to indicate that Luther's tribute to the feast is Early Modern in contrast to the culture described by DUFFY, *Stripping* (see n. 49).

⁵⁸ WA 32; 251,2–8 (R).

⁵⁹ WA 32; 251,17f (N).



Fig. 3: A so called 'Hornbook' (London 1625 [?]). The alphabet starting with a cross and ending with an »Amen« followed by the Lord's Prayer. Attached to solid material to avoid wearing out. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library (Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 13813.6).

he provided for *doggy bags* to be brought with them to their homes. Such details have of course disappeared in the polished forms, which the sermons would undergo, when getting ready to be published—for the simple reason that their editors tried to live up to the contemporary ideals of edition.

The transition from next-to-oral into polished—and sometimes tedious—form, must not imply a reduction of the delivered message as for its theological essence. We do not get closer to the annunciation of the *Word* in an absolute sense by adhering to the scraps of the notaries than we do by reading it in a more polished version. What we do get is better information on various devices, which Luther used in order to produce certain effects and which might otherwise be overlooked in the study of his preaching.

Before getting started it might be useful to be reminded of the first appearance of the *Small Catechism* in small tablets.⁶⁰ They would be hung on the walls in church or at home or carried about. While the originals have been worn out, quite a lot of corresponding boards have survived, due to a more solid material. They display a system of combining the alphabet with the training of the basic prayers, starting with the Our Father. Such boards are known right back to the High Middle Ages both on the Continent and in England, and the system continued unaltered in post-Reformation education. Learning to read letters was for a long time perceived as religious training; the alphabet closed with an *Amen*.⁶¹

The acquired skill would enable teacher and preacher to point to the word he wanted to emphasize, or to ask his audience to pay attention to it in the tablets or booklets they had brought with them. Scholars on literacy have established that common people could, in part—if not read functionally, at least recognize certain words in a specific religious context, a phenomenon, which was coined *religious literacy* by the Nestor in the field, Egil Johansson, and soon after subjected to a closer study.⁶²

Even if considerably more people could read than write, however, writing being taught at a higher level of education, Röhrer and his peers were not necessarily the only ones taking notes during service. Students were of

60 Cf. WA 30,1; 545 f.

61 Cf. N. ORME, *Medieval Children*, 2003, 246–261.

62 Cf. L. GUTTORMSSON, *The Development of Popular Religious Literacy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (*Scandinavian Journal of History* 15, 1990, 7–35).

course used to collecting notes, and Ebeling for instance has rightly pointed out that for Luther lecturing on Biblical texts and preaching on them were not altogether sharply distinct categories.⁶³ Also Latin school boys were trained in this art. Luther's famous suggestion that older children collect their own scrapbooks or *loci communes* more than implies the use of the written word to recollect the sermons.⁶⁴ Random remarks falling incidentally in other contexts may equally testify to a more general custom. In a Swiss pamphlet from 1521 we find the following dialogue:

So sprach der bur. Herr ir habennd geprediget wir soellent das gots wort behalten und unser laeben dar zuo ziehen / das wir leren laeben nach sinem willen. Herr so ist not das ich fliss an leg das zuo behalten. Darff ich ouch uff schriben üwer predigt dass ich ir nit vergass / dann sunst zuo behalten ist mir zuo schwaer [...] so ichs aber in gschryfft het wurd ichs dester minder vergessen.

Der münch sprach. Du magst das wol thuon / [...] Fragt der baur / ob er doerfft die gschryfft do heim laesen vor synem hussgesind / das hab nit alle tag moegen zu seiner predig kummen, Antwort der münch du darffst es wol thuon / und dar durch din gesind underwysen. Dann ein jetlicher hußvatter schuldig ist sin gesind zuo behalten in christenlicher uebung [...].⁶⁵

This exchange of words does not aim at teaching the house father his duties, but to show the friar that he is inconsistent in not allowing the lay people to read »German books« (probably Lutheran literature). As a non-prescriptive source it is, however, of so much more value. Direct prescriptions or admonitions do exist, among them the well-known image of a family gathering after sermon, the house father asking wife, children and servants »was sy an der predig hetten gemerckt«⁶⁶. Again, this scenery is inserted in a passage concerning the right observance of the third Commandment, which provides us with incidental information. A little further on it is added that it is allowed to write down what is heard in sermon if it cannot otherwise

63 Cf. EBELING, Evangelische Evangelienauslegung (see n. 1), 11.

64 Cf. WA 19; 78,18.

65 [PAMPHILUS GENGEBACH], Der gestryfft Schwitzer Baur [...], Universitätsbibliothek Basel, AN 521 (<http://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-339>). Cf. V. SCHMID BLUMER, Ikonographie und Sprachbild. Zur reformatorischen Flugschrift »Der gestryfft Schwitzer Baur« (Frühe Neuzeit 84), 2004, 29.

66 STEPHAN VON LANDSKRON, Himelstrass. im Latin || genant Scala celi, Augsburg, (Johann Otmar) 1510, XI. Royal Libr. Cph. (VD16 S 8921).

be recollected. Writing on a holy day for the sake of earning money would be tantamount to breaking the Sabbath rules, but taking notes in order to recall the sermon is mentioned as an instance of permitted writing. »Schreiben mag ainer das / das er an der predig oder lexie hoert vnd on geschriff nit behalten mag«⁶⁷.

These observations may help shedding light on Luther's practical catechetical efforts in preaching to the people.

2. *Feast days' sermons as a vehicle of catechetical instruction*

The Christmas sermon from 1528, here chosen as demonstration, is referred to in the Nürnberger manuscript (N) which is rather shorter than Röhler's but likewise clearly exhibits the verbal diction.

In his previous sermon, Luther had confirmed the biblical foundation of the article »conceived by the Holy Ghost«⁶⁸. This done, he can proceed directly to the story behind the article on the nativity. The text (marked here in italics) is read out, sentence by sentence, and specific words or sequences commented on according to the homiletic tradition for rendering and explaining the literal sense and making the listeners sensitive to the enormity of the narration.

N: »Nunc hunc articulum de Nativitate Christi de Maria virgine [...].«⁶⁹

[1.] Nos propter simplices historiam tractemus, quodmodo Christus ad nos venerit, das er durch das seyn hercz erwerme. »*Exiit edictum* [...].«⁷⁰

»*Erant autem* [...].« [2.] Nos principale tractare volumus verbum angeli »[...] *Ecce annuncio Vobis*.« »*Vobis*.« Non simpliciter historia aspicienda, sed usus et fructus nativitatis Christi [...].⁷¹

The marked division in two different sections in the following exposition is significant. The recount could only be adopted »fruitfully« if followed by preaching as represented in the angelic words. Turning in this way from the *historia* to the godly message, the mature preacher Luther made ample use of the notion of St. Luke as a mere chronicler of events as they presented

67 Loc. cit., Xli.

68 Cf. WA 27; 486,10.

69 WA 27; 486,10f.

70 WA 27; 487,14–16.

71 WA 27; 491,18–20.

themselves to the outward senses until the breaking-in of the angel changed the whole perspective. Moving on to this level, Luther, however, left the late medieval world of Jesus-stories behind and stepped forward as a thorough anti-pelagian theologian and preacher. He definitely lived up to the homiletic conception of law and gospel as the two necessary centerpieces of any sermon, and he effected this by simply using the pronoun »you« in opposite directions. The angel addresses the whom: »Vobis« indicat, quid nos simus, Nempe peccatores impii, iracundi, superbi, invidi atque plane damnati [...], and hence with all good reason to fear.⁷² Consequently, the angel, with his »nolite timere« makes the addressees turn their eyes away from themselves to what happens in the liturgical *hodie*.⁷³ God has in his mercy let his son be born to the same »you«. Law and Gospel being contained in the one word, are unfolded by this reversal of the direction of view. »You« or »we«, the condemned, but on this very day, gratified.

Even in delivering this message, however, Luther made ample use of tradition. In the Christmas sermons, the Bernardine influence is obvious, the notion of the »small child in the manger« with its appeals to affection and remorse going directly back to him. It seems almost superfluous to mention that Guillelmus, in his exposition of the birth of Christ, brings a long quotation from the abbot of Clairvaux to impress on his audience the lousy conditions in which Christ was made not only man, but helpless child, in coming to mankind's rescue »unde Bernhardus. O Xristiane vide qualis propter te factus est Christus«⁷⁴. This observation only serves to underscore that Luther's use of Bernard's preaching in the revivification of the Christmas narrative was mainstream. It is generally acknowledged that Luther appreciated Bernard's emotional and theological grasp of the incarnation,⁷⁵ but it may be less known that the emphatic use of pronouns mainly

72 WA 27; 492,14f.

73 WA 27; 492,16f.

74 GUILLERMUS (see n. 19), vii. Guillelmus' quotation also reverberates Bernard's play with the Nicene Creed's »verbum homo factum« in wordings like »verbum infans factum«, »Deus parvus factus«. BERNHARD VON CLAIRVAUX, Sermo tertius de nativitate Christi et passione (in: DERS., Sämtliche Werke, Bd. 7, hg. v. G.B. Winkler, 1996), 259.

75 Cf. WA 47; 694,27f; WAT 1; 435,27–29, Nr. 871; F. POSSET, Bernhard von Clairvauxs Ser-mone zur Weihnachts-, Fasten- und Osterzeit als Quelle Martin Luthers (LuJ 61, 1994, 93–116), 97.

associated with the second part of the Creed echoed Bernard's Christmas sermons and were perceived as part of tradition by more learned contemporaries.⁷⁶ Bernard had recapitulated the main points of devotion to Christ by rephrasing the articles of the Creed, like:

Devote suscipimus tenerum propter nos,
cruentum propter nos,
pallidum propter nos,
sepultum propter nos reveremur.⁷⁷

In impressing wording of the message further on the minds of the congregation, Luther's Christmas sermon builds up to a high-pitched level, and the text proceeds to single out the personal pronouns in almost all forms.

[...] igitur ›Vobis‹. ›VOBIS‹ magnis literis scribendum, quia impii et sathan illud non credunt, non possuntprehendere tantum thesaurum nobis donatum. Es gehet schwerlich yns menschen hercz. Igitur firmiter credemus Puerum hunc nobis natum. Noster est [...].⁷⁸

Igitur fidem maxime exercere debemus in hoc et talibus verbis Euch, dyr, myr.⁷⁹

The detail of big letters may of course be dismissed as a metaphor. But the »scribendum« only makes sense, if it is seen as an exhortation, delivered orally on the spot, to scribble down on paper or table, now or at home, in order to retain these words.

76 This is evident in the first Danish translation of Luther's *Betbüchlein* by the Reform Catholic Paulus Helie, 1524: PAULUS HELIE, Een cristelig vnderwysningh paa the thy Gudz budord, then menige christen kirkis tro ock loffue. Wor Herris bønn Pater noster, oc huore Jesu Christi død oc pyne schulle rettelige begaas oc tracteris, Rostock 1526. Helie claims that parts of Luther's teaching is true because Luther has picked it up from good men like Bernard. The Danish translator emends Luther's rendering of the Bernardine preaching in the *Sermon von der Betrachtung des heiligen Leidens Christi*, using the original text as source material. N. JØRGENSEN, *Megh till gode. Luther på dansk 1524* (in: *Kirkehistorier. Festskrift til Martin Schwarz Lausten*, red. C.S. JENSEN / L.O. Nielsen, 2008, 109–126), 114.

77 BERNHARD, *In nativitate sermo* 5 (»De Patro misericordiarum misernate [...]«) (see n. 74), 267.

78 WA 27; 493, 13–16.

79 WA 27; 493, 17f.

A test of this assumption might be the polished form, which is found in the Copenhagen manuscript »K«, in which this »scribendum« has disappeared together with a similar oral characteristic.

K: »Exponunt [verbum et cantio], cur natus est Christus et quid commodi illius nativitas nobis adferat. Nobis enim natum et propter nos ad tantam inopiam redactum [...]. Nobis ascribitur, Nobis donatur, Nobis communicatur, quicquid rerum hic geritur. Sed qui aut quid sumus nos? [...] filii irae [...]. Hos consolatur angelus et iubet, ut non in suam personam aut qui ipsi sunt, sed in Christum et qui ipse sit, oculos coniiitamus et attendamus, ut quis est, qui nobis venit, qui carnem nostram assumit [...]. [...] difficilimum creditu est nostrum esse, quod nobis sit natus.«⁸⁰

The copyist has undeniably captured Luther's intention. The pronouns are repeated in abundance, their meaning spelled out, the carrying out of the dogmatic richness implied in the original sermon concise. Deleting every trace of oral performance, the author leans on tradition.⁸¹ All this is consistent with contemporary taste and need. In this form, the sermon can be read out from the pulpit—which the notes cannot! It displays, in other words, the marks of a Lutheran postil.

Röhrer's raw form of the same Christmas sermon displays, on the other hand, an open liking for Luther's almost childish phrasing of the recommendation to use big letters:

R: »Vos: illae 3 literae sunt tam magnae, ut coelum et terra non tam magnae. Si abest vobis, so ist die ander predigt gar umbsunst.«⁸²

Luther seems indeed, to have grown fond with such expressions of the enormity of the letters which may serve to visualize the key words. In 1532, in his Easter sermon on Mark 16, he declares:

R: »Die buchstaben sol man auch mercken et magnis literis signandae: *Resurrexit*. Una litera sit tam magna ut turris.«⁸³

⁸⁰ WA 27; 491,33–493,27.

⁸¹ WA 27; XXII, makes a cautious suggestion which is reproduced by EBELING, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung* (see n. 1), 34, that K was composed to substitute Roth, but proceeds with a rather more convincing contextualization of the postil in learned Lower German surroundings, where the culture of postils was not a novelty arriving with Luther. Cf. WA 27; XXIII.

⁸² WA 27; 493,6–8.

⁸³ WA 36; 161,19–21.

The Easter sermon recurs to yet another distinctive late medieval Creed presentation, referring in details to a well-known illumination which accompanied the article »descendit ad inferna, tertia die resurrexit« in various devotional books.⁸⁴

Finally, the appeal to single out and highlight important words by the use of letters permeates to other known media in an Easter sermon from 1529. When Jesus prevents Mary Magdalene to touch him, he sends her instead to his disciples with the command: »Go, tell my brothers [...].« He is no longer the master she adored, but as God he now calls his believers to embrace him on equal terms as brothers and sisters.

R: »Qui vult Christianus esse, discat haec verba: Sie sind mein brueder. Scribite maximis literis, ut sciatis.«⁸⁵

R: »Ideo setzt den text mit grossen buchstaben, quia in eo Euangelium est.«⁸⁶

Also, the latter exclamation reflects hard material reality. Notably in his Bible editions Luther developed a habit of meddling in the typographers' work for the sake of simple people.⁸⁷ Even earlier, and in an unprecedented provocative way, he had used this device in his catechetical treatise on the Mass.⁸⁸ These are well-known instances and should warn us against the tendency to read without further questioning any recommendation of the oral word literally as a prescription for the rightly preached Gospel, while shunning the mention of written or printed letters to the realm of metaphors. The practice of confining to paper hinted at here may suggest that this assumption be revised. Perhaps just as compelling is the commonly shared enthusiasm about the enhanced prospects for preaching the Godly message to the public, which accompanied the release of printed sermons. In a prescript to a collection of sermons by Herolt by the Brethren of the

84 Cf. [ANONYMUS (O.P.)], *L'art de bien viure et de bien mourir*, Paris: Antoine Verard 1494. Library of Congress. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Incun A 75. Extant in a variety of catechisms or *artes moriendi*.

85 WA 29; 297,2f.

86 WA 29; 296,11f.

87 Cf. H. HÖVELMANN, *Kernstellen der Lutherbibel. Eine Anleitung zum Schriftverständnis* (TAzB 5), 1989; G. JENSEN, *Embedded Commentary in Luther's Translation of Romans 3*, (in: *The Unfolding of Words: Commentary in the Age of Erasmus*, ed. by J.R. HENDERSON, 2012, 118–139).

88 Cf. WA 6; 355,28–32.

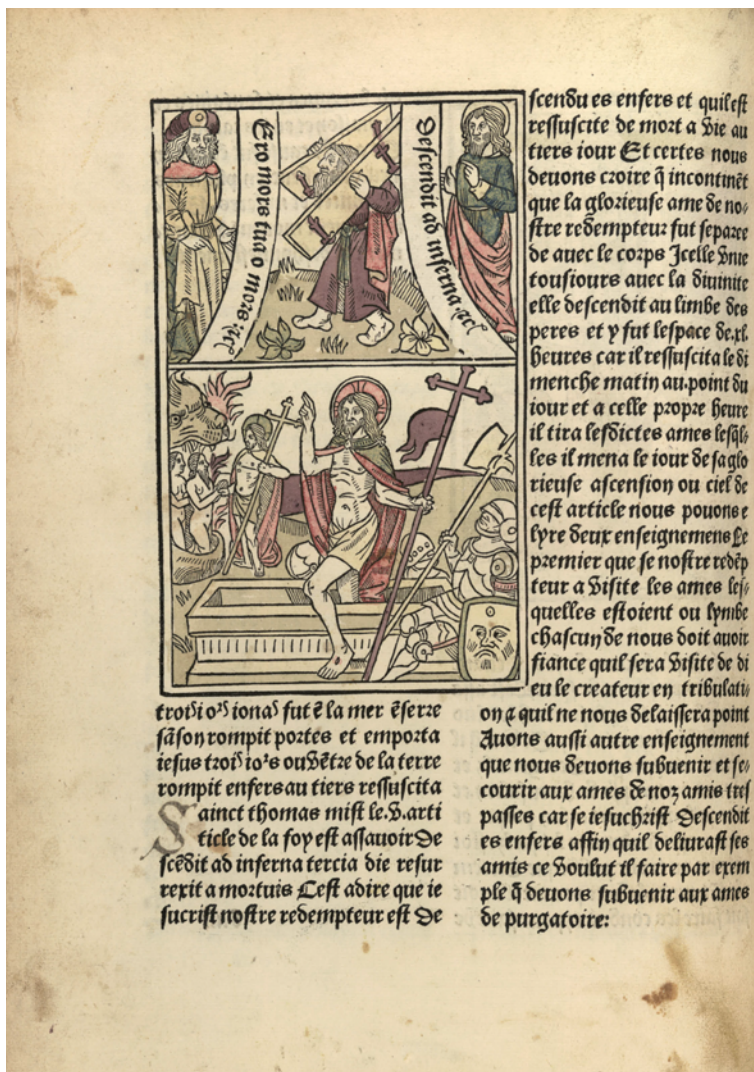


Fig. 4: [ANONYMUS (O.P.)], *L'art de bien viure et de bien mourir* [...] (Paris: Antoine Vérard 1453 [i. e. 1493/94]), Library of Congress. Rare Book and Special Collections Division Incun. 1494. A75 (<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rosenwald.0424>), p. 70. Cf. WA 36; 159,11 f: »[...] ad inferos. Videtis wie mans malet an die wand, quomodo descendat ad inferos et hat ein Chor kappen an et einen fannen in der hand, [...]».

Common Life in Rostock 1476, which is resonant with the initial call for mission to the evangelizing orders, the diffusion of sermons is conceived in stages according to the efficiency of the media employed. Supreme among the arts of the Church is printing in making those sermons publicly known, which have hitherto been hidden behind closed doors to the benefice of few (cf. Matt 10:27).⁸⁹ The one step further needed in order to reach out to all, the use of the vernacular, was shortly after and somewhat unjustly claimed by humanists and reformers, who would turn their backs on their own past for not having delivered sufficiently. But whether speaking loudly in the vernacular or printing the words in bold types, the efforts testify to the conviction of the indispensable character of the *external*, if not necessarily *oral*, word.⁹⁰

To conclude: As mentioned in the beginning, Luther, in commenting on his adoption of the catechetical »Stücke«, claimed that he could do no better than to reproduce the method handed over to him by the church from its earliest days. He never extended such lavish to the liturgical year. But he did include the feast days' pericopes in the basics and let them function as »Stücke« in his preaching. In the sermons above, the function of the historical accounts is identical to that of the articles of the Creed, in so far as they function as catechetical basics, which are to be read out and memorized, but also, and in immediate connection, unfolded in order that their essence be grasped: »This means [...]«. As I have tried to show, this teaching from the pulpit was supported by appeals to fix on paper (or memory) as *take-aways* to be enjoyed in privacy at a later hour.

Generally, and in accordance with this, the catechetical as well as devotional benefit from the maintenance of the liturgical year with its set pericopes was acknowledged in later generations' appreciation of the competence as well as comfort, which church goers had accumulated even in the dark days of papacy, and would still gain, from the repeated listening to the Gospel narratives.

89 Cf. SIGGINS, Harvest (see n. 12), 9.

90 Cf. WA 51; 137,16–20; H. FLACHMANN, Martin Luther und das Buch. Eine historische Studie zur Bedeutung des Buches im Handeln und Denken des Reformators (SuR.NR 8), 1996, 238. Cf. HERRMANN, Luther's Divine Aeneid (see n. 48), 89.

Derowegen die Evangelia vns allen desto lieber vnd anmutiger sein sollen / weil auch die einfeltigen Christen jre Glaubens Articul aus denselben so fein lernen und begreifen mögen [...] ist daher kein Zweifel / dass in vorzeiten viel tausend Christen in Einfalt des Glaubens die Evangelischen Text gehöret / vnd darauss sich jhres Heilandes Jesu Christi getröstet.⁹¹

91 MATTHIAS HOË VON HOËNEG (1608), quoted from FRYMIRE, *Primacy* (see n. 9), 18, note 31.